



City of Arkansas City

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

AGENDA

Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 5:30 PM – 400 W Madison Ave, Arkansas City, KS

GoTo Meeting: <https://meet.goto.com/356071989> or call +1 (646) 749-3122 **Access Code:** 356-071-989

Call to Order

Roll Call

Consent Agenda

1. Meeting Minutes, **January 10, 2023 meeting.**

Consideration

2. Consider a recommendation on the proposed 2022 Comprehensive Plan updates

Other Items

Adjournment



City of Arkansas City

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

AGENDA

Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 5:30 PM – 400 W Madison Ave, Arkansas City, KS

Chair Ian Kuhn called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

Roll Call:

☒ Mary Benton ☒ Lloyd Colston ☒ Brandon Jellings ☒ Ian Kuhn ☒ Kyle Lewis
☒ Cody Richardson ☒ Tom Wheatley

Staff present at roll call: Principal Planner Josh White, Administrative Assistant Terice Watts, Communications Director Shana Adkisson.

Consent Agenda:

1. Meeting Minutes, **December 13, 2022** meeting.
 - a. Tom Wheatley made the motion to accept the meeting minutes as written and Lloyd Colston made the second motion. Motion carried.

Public Hearings:

2. Hold a public hearing on the proposed 2022 Comprehensive Plan updates:
 - a. Chair Ian Kuhn explained what the public hearing was about and that anyone that would like to speak to the Planning Commission, would get three minutes to do so. Before Ian opened the public hearing, Josh White summarized the thoughts and ideas that went into updating the existing Comprehensive Plan.
 - i. Josh went on to explain the plan and the purposes of the plan in order for growth in Arkansas City. The goals of the plan are to help economic growth that is inside of the city limits as well as a growth area outside of the city limits. Josh went on to give a small explanation to the chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. Josh explained that after the Comprehensive Plan was re-done in 2013, the zoning regulations were completely re-written which had not been done since the 1960's; because there was such a long period of time; things were missed in the zoning regulations.
 - ii. Ian explained to the members of the public that this was
 - b. Citizens present were:
 - i. Jim Sybrant 1816 E Chestnut Ave:
 1. Feels like notification did not have enough time. Suggested a newsletter.
 - a. Lloyd Colston addresses where the public notices were published and encouraged to use the city website. States Shana, Communications Director is done a great job in getting the information out there.

- b. Shana noted that the newsletter is being placed on the water bills that includes meeting information. This meeting was also publicized to the Wichita media.
 - c. In response to a comment regarding why a small group of citizens was present, Ian stated that the citizens were informed and have a responsibility to keep up with the meetings through the different avenues they are made available.
- 2. Planning Commission never been used properly in AC.
 - a. Sleeth Ball field – should be recommended as a mobile home park.
 - i. RV Parks – need to be available for temporary workers. Ian noted he himself has some interest in developing an RV Park and the City gave him initial support.
 - ii. Mobile Home = Low Income Housing
 - b. Ian explains housing was discussed extensively; the plan is fluid. He also stated that the Plan was more general, but comments would be noted.
 - c. Mr. Sybrant felt that some more specific housing plans should also be created.
- ii. Ken Harader 1313 N 1st St:
 - 1. Thought that this meeting was about the 101 acres; wants to know who brought it up to the commission to try to get it passed through so quickly. Josh encouraged him to speak with the City Manager as he didn't have any specific information about it.
 - 2. Ian told him that this commission would bring this concern up to the commission.
 - 3. He also commented that he wished the City Manager attended these meetings.
- iii. Evelyn Shoup 1126 N 14th St:
 - 1. Lincoln School-inquired about zoning. Ian and Josh explained that was rezoned.
 - 2. Old Hospital zoned? -inquired about zoning. Josh explained it was zoned residential in 2014. This preceded the Wilson Park Master Plan. She felt this would be a good place for a replacement library. She presented examples from surrounding towns. She also argues that we need the library to make digital resources more accessible.
 - 3. Noted that her streets in her neighborhood needs improvements. They are too narrow in places.

4. Noted that there are programs available for housing and lots of building going on.. Felt the city was moving in a positive direction as a whole.
5. Asked if the Planning Commission met with the City Commission. Ian noted that perhaps a representative would go before them.

iv. Bob Mathews 900 N D St:

1. Agrees that there wasn't enough public notice. Not everyone has internet access. Josh noted that any publications were available in his office for viewing at anytime during the regular business hours. Lloyd also noted that the library could be used for internet access.
2. Rentals: Several are empty, underutilized
3. City tearing down housing-go to the college and utilize the carpentry classes to get new houses built or fixed up.

v. Mr. & Mrs. Nuss

1. Asked about the 101 Acres that was discussed at the city commission meeting. Josh noted it was designated as residential on the future land use map but was not within the city and not zoned. Jim Sybrant also offered some additional information on that property.
2. Asked if the Plan would be acted upon. Ian said the idea was to set goals and timelines. Unfortunately, plans don't always go as planned. Some things get done, some don't and the next plan looks at the accomplishments since the last plan. He also noted that the City Commission implements the plan.

- vi. Brandon noted that it was important to ensure that the goals were attainable in the time set. Ian recommended this public hearing be continued to the next meeting.

Adjournment

Lloyd made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:53 PM and Brandon Jellings made the second. Voice vote carried the motion.



Planning Commission Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 2/14/23
From: Josh White, Principal Planner
Item: Comprehensive Plan Recommendation

Purpose: Consider a recommendation on the proposed 2022 Comprehensive Plan updates

Background:

At the January meeting a public hearing was held regarding the 2022 Comprehensive Plan. At the hearing, a number of citizens spoke and raised a few additional action items. Staff reviewed the meeting recording and determined that two new actions should be added to the Plan. One such item involved Chapter 3 Housing which suggests that the City should consider developing housing plans for specific areas to target. Another topic discussed at the hearing was the library. The library isn't specifically discussed in the plan except in Chapter 2. Considering most of the issues involve the building being a historic structure an action was added to Chapter 5 under the historical resources goal. The action suggested was to develop a facility plan for the library to identify the best course of action.

At this meeting, the public hearing could be reopened for additional public input if the Planning Commission desires. At the close of the hearing, staff recommends approval of the plan and the direction would be for the Planning Commission to make a motion to recommend the City Commission approve the Plan. Upon such a vote, staff will prepare to present the Plan to the City Commission at a study session in the near future will eventual adoption likely sometime in March or possibly April.

If further discussion is needed on the Plan, staff suggests calling a special meeting as the March 14 meeting already has a full agenda.

Action:

Hear staff report, hold public hearing, make a motion to recommend approval/disapproval of the 2022 Comprehensive Plan to the City Commission.

Attachments:

Executive Summary, Chapter 3 & 5, the full draft 2022 Comprehensive Plan is available by visiting <https://www.arkcity.org/neighborhood-services/page/2022-comprehensive-plan-update>

- 3.1 Introduction**
- 3.2 Vision**
- 3.3 Background**
- 3.4 Recommendations from the Cowley County Five-year Housing Action Plan (2014-2019)**
- 3.5 Housing Findings, Recommendations and Strategies from the 2021 Housing Assessment Tool**
- 3.6 2021 Housing Needs Survey**
- 3.7 Accomplishments**
- 3.8 Goals and Actions**

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Housing is an essential part of any community. The citizens of Arkansas City, and housing and community development experts as well, recognize that the availability of housing that is safe, affordable and suitable is critical to an acceptable quality of life. The City must plan for housing that meets the need for both the existing diverse population, and a slow-growing and diversified future population. This is not just a matter of planning for additional housing units, but of planning for a needed mix of housing types and costs. While the population is not forecasted to grow significantly, the recently completed 2021 Housing Assessment Tool (HAT) identified a housing shortage in Arkansas City, particularly in moderate and low income, single family housing, senior housing, and apartments. Top priorities identified in the HAT include improving the quality and supply of housing of all types. Other priorities not directly related to housing include maintaining and improving infrastructure, including the streets, water and wastewater systems. The City also needs to work on attracting retail and industrial businesses, development of parks master plans and development of a transportation plan.

The current Arkansas City household size of 2.41 per unit, as reported in the U.S. Census American Community Survey 2019 5-year estimate the total estimated population is 11,868. There are an estimated 5,776 housing units of which 4,641 are occupied. The Wichita State University Center for Economic Development and Business Research predicts that the Cowley County population will experience a slight increase through 2030 before declining slightly each 5-year period through 2070.

3.2 VISION

Arkansas City will maintain, and improve upon, its neighborhoods of well-maintained houses and yards, historic homes, tree-lined streets and parks. The community recognizes that these neighborhoods are, and will continue to be, some of its greatest assets. The continuation of these neighborhoods as quality places to live is integral to the City's future growth and vitality. Arkansas City will have a supply of housing that provides single-family as well as multi-family dwellings, both owner-occupied and renter-occupied, and housing which is safe, of good quality and affordable regardless of a resident's level of income.

3.3 BACKGROUND

The availability of good quality new housing, and well-maintained existing stock, is critical to the ability of the community to maintain and build upon the diversified economic base envisioned in this Plan. For example, a businessperson considering Arkansas City as a site will want to know that good quality housing exists nearby for both executives and employees. Likewise, an existing business having trouble filling workplace vacancies because of an inadequate supply of affordable housing for its employees will factor that problem into its decision-making regarding expansion or relocation. If the community has housing stock which serves to retain young people in the community, as well as provides for senior citizens, it will require attention to very different housing needs.

Simply put – in order to achieve the goal of an expanded and diversified economic base, the housing stock must cover a wide range of prices. There are measures the City can take to promote not just quality and quantity of housing, but also selection across the price range.

While owner-occupied housing comprises the majority of residential units in Arkansas City, attention may need to increasingly turn to the supply and cost of rental units. If the cost of new housing rises at rates above that for family household incomes, rental property will be in greater demand. Further, for some segments of the population rental property has become the preferred choice for housing – regardless of income. In particular, young workers, as well as retirees, will frequently select rental housing over owner-occupied housing – especially where rental properties exist in quality and quantity and across a broad range of rental payments.

There are blighted residential areas in Arkansas City where intervention is necessary. The City government can take a number of initiatives in order to improve on current conditions, to maintain and preserve what is already attractive, and to promote good qualities in future housing development. These initiatives include both direct action by the City government, and also the City government encouraging certain actions of, and investments by, the private sector.

While Household data from 2020 wasn't immediately available, the 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates provide reasonable data that can be used as a substitute. In 2019, there were 4,641 households and 2,782 families. The 2020 Census reported a total of 5,382 housing units of which 4,467 were occupied and 915 were vacant. The City's racial mix was 69.7% White alone, 3.1% Black or African American alone, 3.1% American Indian and Alaska Native alone, 0.4% Asian alone, 0.7% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and 8.4% from other races and 14.3% from two or more races. The Hispanic or Latino population, which has grown significantly in recent years, stood at 21.8%.

Also available in the 2019 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates are some of the characteristics of housing in Arkansas City with an average household size of 2.41 persons, and an average family size of 3.13. The 4,641 households included 40.6% married couples living together, 40.1% were non-families and 35.4% were households comprised of individuals living alone. At the ends of the population continuum, 33.8% of the households had children under age 18, and 15.3% had a person 65 years or older who was living alone.

HOUSING DATA						
HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS	2010		2015		2019	
American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error
Occupied housing units	4,571	±250	4,674	±212	4,641	±211
HOUSEHOLD SIZE						
1-person household	28.6%	±3.5	30.2%	±3.4	35.5%	±3.6
2-person household	34.1%	±4.0	32.0%	±3.6	27.9%	±3.2
3-person household	16.7%	±3.3	15.0%	±2.9	15.9%	±2.9
4-or-more-person household	20.5%	±2.8	22.7%	±3.2	20.6%	±2.7
OCCUPANTS PER ROOM						
1.00 or less occupants per room	96.0%	±1.6	97.6%	±1.3	97.7%	±1.1
1.01 to 1.50 occupants per room	3.5%	±1.5	2.1%	±1.3	2.0%	±1.2
1.51 or more occupants per room	0.5%	±0.6	0.3%	±0.4	0.3%	±0.5
HOUSEHOLD TYPE (INCLUDING LIVING ALONE) AND AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER						
Family households	64.5%	±4.1	63.7%	±3.4	59.9%	±3.7
Married-couple family	45.8%	±4.0	42.7%	±3.7	40.6%	±3.6
Householder 15 to 34 years	8.9%	±2.8	10.9%	±2.4	10.4%	±2.2
Householder 35 to 64 years	29.2%	±3.4	22.3%	±2.9	21.8%	±2.8
Householder 65 years and over	7.7%	±1.8	9.5%	±1.7	8.4%	±1.6
Other family	18.7%	±3.5	21.0%	±3.1	19.3%	±3.4
Nonfamily households	35.5%	±4.1	36.3%	±3.4	40.1%	±3.7
Householder living alone	28.6%	±3.5	30.2%	±3.4	35.5%	±3.6
Householder not living alone	6.8%	±2.8	6.1%	±2.3	4.6%	±1.6
FAMILY TYPE AND PRESENCE OF OWN CHILDREN						
With related children of householder under 18 years	34.5%	±4.0	33.7%	±3.6	33.8%	±3.1
With own children of householder under 18 years	29.7%	±4.0	30.2%	±3.8	29.9%	±2.8
No own children of householder under 18 years	4.8%	±2.4	3.6%	±1.5	3.9%	±1.6
No related children of householder under 18 years	65.5%	±4.0	66.3%	±3.6	66.2%	±3.1
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE	2.62	±0.13	2.49	±0.10	2.41	±0.10
AVERAGE FAMILY SIZE	3.19	±0.16	3.05	±0.13	3.13	±0.13

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS CONTINUED	2010		2015		2019	
American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error
HOUSING OCCUPANCY						
Total housing units	5,534	±243	5,532	±207	5,776	±214
Occupied housing units	4,571	±250	4,674	±212	4,641	±211
Vacant housing units	963	±195	858	±165	1,135	±189
Homeowner vacancy rate	2.4	±1.8	3.1	±2.5	1.3	±1.6
Rental vacancy rate	7.5	±5.5	3.7	±2.5	14.6	±5.6
UNITS IN STRUCTURE						
Total housing units	5,534	±243	5,532	±207	5,776	±214
1-unit, detached	4,381	±270	4,578	±223	4,607	±239
1-unit, attached	89	±36	28	±23	25	±21
2 units	188	±98	152	±65	145	±67
3 or 4 units	285	±129	216	±84	326	±99
5 to 9 units	85	±66	173	±77	194	±93
10 to 19 units	33	±49	10	±16	55	±53
20 or more units	232	±73	193	±73	187	±72
Mobile home	241	±107	182	±70	237	±107
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	±109	0	±16	0	±16
HOUSING TENURE						
Occupied housing units	4,571	±250	4,674	±212	4,641	±211
Owner-occupied	2,934	±264	2,589	±200	2,807	±195
Renter-occupied	1,637	±214	2,085	±200	1,834	±241
Average household size of owner-occupied unit	2.60	±0.16	2.39	±0.14	2.37	±0.14
Average household size of renter-occupied unit	2.64	±0.26	2.61	±0.17	2.46	±0.21
VALUE						
Owner-occupied units	2,934	±264	2,589	±200	2,807	±195
Less than \$50,000	1,247	±198	901	±117	1,008	±157
\$50,000 to \$99,999	1,134	±167	1,080	±159	1,108	±157
\$100,000 to \$149,999	313	±100	363	±97	378	±113

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS CONTINUED	2010		2015		2019	
American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error
VALUE (CONTINUED)						
\$150,000 to \$199,999	169	±65	149	±65	174	±67
\$200,000 to \$299,999	49	±33	71	±39	105	±46
\$300,000 to \$499,999	22	±26	15	±15	14	±17
\$500,000 to \$999,999	0	±109	0	±16	7	±13
\$1,000,000 or more	0	±109	10	±12	13	±20
Median (dollars)	58,000	±5,477	66,500	±3,642	64,100	±4,798

GROUP QUARTERS POPULATION (DECENNIAL CENSUS)	2000	2010	2020
Total:	496	562	597
Institutionalized population	177	129	183
Correctional facilities	0	2	0
Nursing facilities/Skilled-nursing facilities	166	106	159
Other institutional facilities	11	21	24
Noninstitutionalized population	319	433	414
College/University student housing	231	401	402
Other non-institutional facilities	88	32	12

YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION	1939 or Before	1940-1949	1950-1959	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999	2000-2009	2010- Present
NUMBER OF HOUSES	2,905	184	795	222	278	174	71	92	65

**Source: City of Arkansas City Neighborhood Services Division, Cowley County Appraisers Office, 2020.*

3.4 HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COWLEY COUNTY FIVE-YEAR HOUSING ACTION PLAN (2014-2019)

The following points were extracted from the Housing Action Plan and present the priority housing programs proposed for Cowley County from 2014-2019. In the Plan the purposes were defined and an estimated cost for each program and any available cost subsidies. The entire Housing Action Plan and County Comprehensive Housing Study are available as an appendix to this Plan.

- Create a Cowley County Housing Partnership (CCHP), as the lead local group for Community housing capacity building, educational and promotional activities in Cowley County.
- Establish an Employer's Housing Assistance program, encouraging major employers in the County to become directly involved with assisting their employees in obtaining affordable housing
- Initiate a Continuum of (Housing) Residential Care Program in the County, directed at persons and families 62+ years of age
- Create a Cowley County Land Bank Program
- Organize a County-Wide Housing Investment Club
- Plan and implement an annual Cowley County Housing Summit
- Area-wide Housing Code Inspection and Rental Licensing Program, to provide year-round, on-going housing inspection and enforcement and licensing program.
- Single Family Owner Housing Rehabilitation Program, 145 units moderate rehabilitation at \$30,000 to \$38,000 per unit in Cowley County, by 2019, to meet the needs of low- to moderate-income households
- Purchase and Demolition of 45 substandard, dilapidated housing units in Cowley County, by 2019 and establish a Land Bank of property (lots) for redevelopment purposes
- Single Family Purchase-Rehab-Resale/Re-rent Program, 60 units, 3+ bedroom houses, standard amenities in Cowley County, by 2019, to meet the affordable homeowner/renter needs of low- to moderate-income households (51% to 80% AMI)
- Develop Elderly Rental Housing Programs, 46 units: Arkansas City: 24 Winfield: 22. Scattered Site, Mixed income, 2-bedroom Duplex or Triplex units, standard amenities, to meet the rental housing needs of low- to moderate-mixed income elderly households (51%+ AMI)
- Develop Cowley County Elderly Homeownership Initiative, 80 units: Arkansas City 34, Winfield 34, and Remaining Communities 2 each. Scattered site, mixed income, 2 & 3 bedroom single family, patio home and duplex units, standard amenities, complete accessibility design, to meet the needs of moderate-income elderly households (65%+ AMI)
- Develop Housing Rehabilitation/Modification Program, 70 units: Arkansas City 26, Winfield 20, and Remaining Communities 4 each. Standard amenities, complete visitability, accessibility design, to meet the needs of very-low- to moderate-income (0 to 80% AMI) Elderly and Special Population Households, with a person with a disability.
- Develop, as needed, up to 72 units of affordable elderly rental housing in a licensed Assisted Living Facility with supportive/specialized services for near-independent and frail-elderly

residents of the Cowley County Communities. Arkansas City and Winfield 28 units, Dex 16 units.

- Single Family Rental, Credit- or Lease-To-Own Program, 31 units. Arkansas City 15, Winfield 16. Scattered Site, Mixed Income 3+ bedroom houses with standard amenities to meet the affordable housing needs of moderate-income households (51 to 80% AMI)
- General Rental Housing Program, 90 units. Arkansas City 40, Winfield 38, Remaining Communities 2 each. Scattered Site, Mixed Income duplexes, town homes, patio homes and apartments, consisting of 2 & 3 bedroom units with standard amenities, to meet the affordable rental housing needs of moderate-income workforce households (51% to 125% AMI)
- Family Homeownership Initiative, 202 units. Arkansas City 54, Winfield 60, Remaining Communities 3 each, Rural County 70. Scattered site, Mixed Income, Single Family Units, 3+ bedroom units with standard amenities to meet the affordable housing needs of low- to upper-income family households (51%+ AMI)
- Single Room Occupancy Housing Program, 20 rooms, 10 each in Arkansas City and Winfield, to meet the needs of low- to moderate-income, single person workforce households (35% to 80% AMI).
- Owner/Rental Housing Initiative for Special Populations, 18 units: Arkansas City 8, Winfield 10. Scattered site, 2 & 3 bedroom units, standard amenities, complete visitability and accessibility design, to meet the affordable independent living housing needs of persons with special needs (0% to 80% AMI)
- Downtown Owner & Rental Units, 58 units: Arkansas City 26, Winfield 32. Mixed Income, Scattered site, 1 & 2 bedroom apartments, families and elderly households.

3.5 HOUSING FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES FROM THE 2021 HOUSING ASSESSMENT TOOL (HAT)

In 2021, the City applied for a Community Development Block Grant for Housing Rehabilitation. As part of the application process, the City completed a Housing Assessment Tool (HAT). The following is a brief excerpt from the HAT. The full document will be included with this Plan as an Appendix.

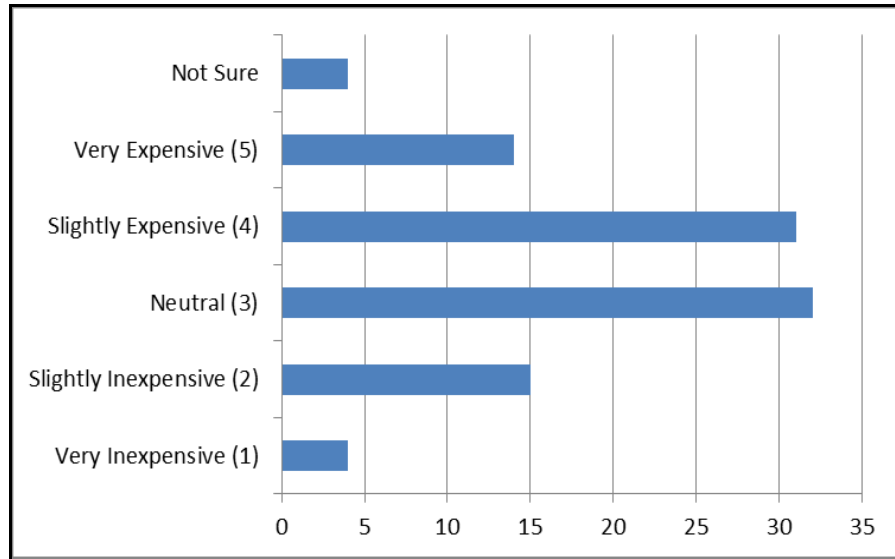
The specific housing needs identified are moderate- and low-income, single-family housing; senior housing; and apartments. Currently, due to a lack of available and suitable senior housing and complexes, many senior citizens are choosing to stay in their larger homes. This has a ripple effect by causing a shortage of low- and moderate-income homes for families desiring to move out of their apartments or rentals and into “starter homes”. In addition, the housing stock within the City is extremely old, with 62% of houses having been built before 1960, so there is a need to demolish and rebuild homes or at least significantly renovate them, to bring these homes up to modern and adequate living standards.

Apartments are also needed, partly because of local college students, but also due to the largest employer, Creekstone Farms, busing in numerous employees every day from outside of Arkansas City. During one meeting, a local builder indicated that enough demand existed for a new 100-unit complex (in addition to an additional manufactured housing subdivision). Adding more apartments also could have the added benefit of adding pressure to local landlords to fix up their own rentals, improving the overall quality of rental housing in the community.

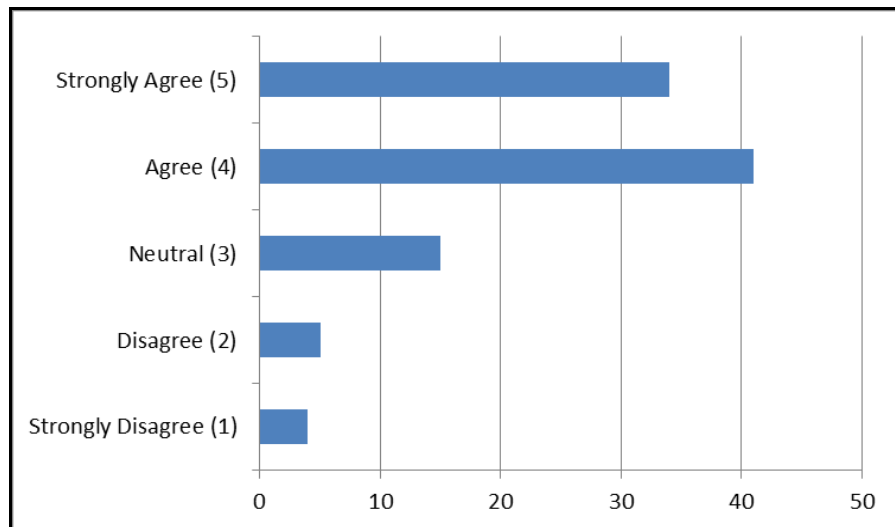
The biggest opportunity that exists within Arkansas City is a community that recognizes the need to improve upon the housing options and quality. The community seems willing to come together and collaborate to address this need.

3.6 HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY 2021

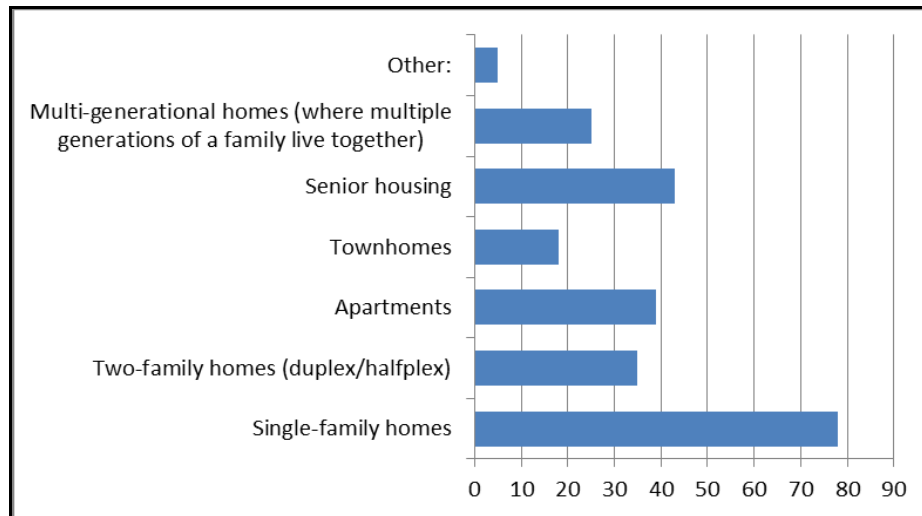
In 2021, a Housing Needs survey was conducted through the FlashVote platform. Respondents were asked how inexpensive or expensive housing is in Arkansas City. From these responses, it would appear that housing in Arkansas City is becoming more and more expensive compared to local wages. This was likely influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic which has caused housing prices to rise nationwide and in Cowley County as well according to the County Appraiser.



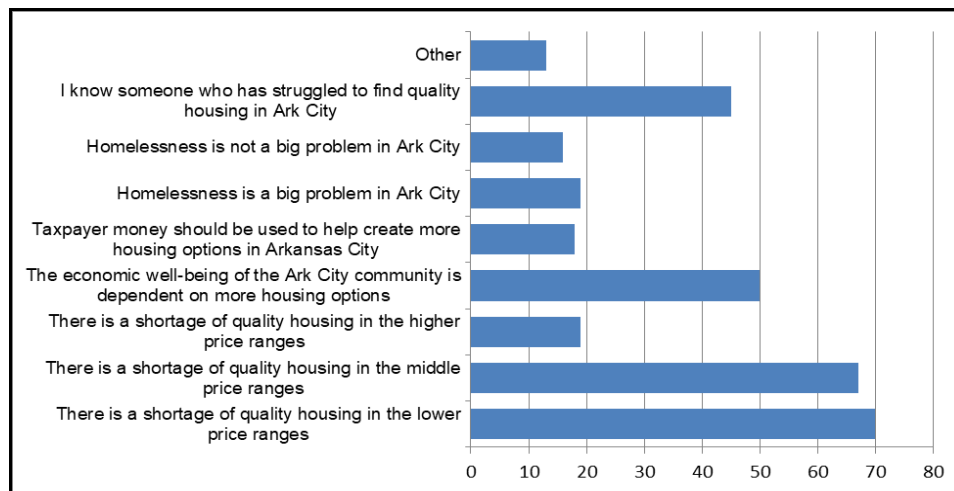
In another question, respondents were asked about their opinion that the range of housing costs should match people's incomes. This question is similar to the first. Unsurprisingly, the majority of respondents felt that housing costs need to match local wages.



Next, respondents were asked what they felt the greatest housing needs were. The majority of respondents felt that traditional housing offerings are the most important needs in Arkansas City. There also appears to be a desire to create additional senior housing. There doesn't appear to be as much support for townhomes. Other housing needs listed included: Income based housing, room shares, and community projects aimed at providing assistance to improve existing housing.



It appears from these responses that respondents felt that there are shortages of quality housing in the lower and middle price ranges but that the higher price range housing is sufficient. There was also a strong sense that the economic well-being of Arkansas City is dependent on more housing options. Respondents didn't feel that homelessness was an issue in Arkansas City, but many did note that they knew someone who had struggled to find quality housing and some of the additional responses indicated there was some need for a homeless shelter. Additional responses to this question included:



- *There is a shortage of people who are able to pay rent and be quality renters in Arkansas City.*
- *Renter should make 3 times income compared to rent cost. So, \$600 rent the tenant should make \$1800 mo [per month]*
- *Our City needs a women/children homeless shelter*
- *Prices of homes are where they should be; it's the exorbitant property taxes that price people out.*
- *Tax rates need to be way lower. We pay the same percentage as people in Nashville.*
- *Many homes & yards are poorly maintained.*
- *There are a lot of dilapidated homes, whether habitable or not, they need updated, torn down or [rebuilt]*
- *Revitalization of single-family homes instead of demolition. Also need preexisting homes codes*
- *Many of the homes in town need painted, repaired, new wiring.*

- *Money should be used to repair existing homes and surrounding areas. Improve the face of downtown.*
- *With our aging community we need more assisted living areas*
- *We should waive the fees for the contractor building the duplexes south of Creekstone. They're needed.*

From these additional comments we can also see that it is difficult to find rental properties in a range that residents can afford. There is also a need to improve the existing housing stock. One suggested that fees should be waived to encourage new development and another suggested that codes should be relaxed to encourage revitalization of existing homes.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to add any additional comments they had. Many of the same themes were found in these comments. A number of references are made to beautification and code enforcement. There seems to be support for both unless it hinders proper development. There was mixed opinions on whether tax dollars should be used to support housing projects. There was some support for senior housing and affordable housing as well. The responses are printed here without editing except to remove names of individuals.

- *Majority of people take care of their property, but a minority do not, and it leads to the decay of properties to uninhabited state or demolition.*
- *Tax dollars should not be used to provide housing. I am not opposed to tax abatements for a period of time for new single family or duplex housing.*
- *There should be income-based housing options for teenagers who are not yet 18, but whose home lives are horrible. They have after-school and weekend jobs and some income, but fail at school, because of their home life. They cannot sign a regular lease due to their age and fall through the cracks.*
- *"A nice senior condominium community*
- *More 55+ housing needed*
- *It seems there is a shortage of people who can actually pay reasonable rent and take reasonable care of a rental house, i.e. pay on time, keep lawn mowed, etc. It has been my experience that many people move in, get behind rent, destroy the house, sneak in animals, and move out in the night leaving your house destroyed. Sadly, it is hard to find qualified tenants. This has NO racial bias, it has been the same across the board, regardless of race.*
- *The City should create a fund that will help citizens fix up their properties. Money could be loaned for qualifying projects with little or no interest charged.*
- *Beautification ordinance need to be enforced.*
- *Affordable housing close to shopping is highly needed.*
- *We need to invest in restoring what we currently have.*
- *We need to help owners to develop their vacant houses into decent properties for rentals. There are many vacant houses that can be used.*
- *I think we need to take a closer look at what we have and utilize it in a more constructive manner. We need to restore buildings and repurpose them. We should also make efforts to educate people about stewardship responsibilities related to the care and upkeep of our homes and community spaces. Then we need to help some accomplish this task by lending a helping hand until they can continue these tasks on their own, much like the "teaching man to fish" adage. Services such as these will not only project a better image to the world around us but also*

demonstrate a genuine commitment to each other as a community. Ultimately, we have everything we need, we just need to combine a little ingenuity, creativity, and care for what we have been provided; including each other.

- *Help the contractors out that are trying to solve the problem.*
- *We want people who get a job in Ark City to live in Ark City. How many people work in AC, but live in another town? Habitat for Humanity has met a need one house at a time.*
- *AC needs senior housing for middle income persons like Winfield. Duplex, apartments etc.*
- *I support removing or updating dilapidated housing and renovating/revitalizing neighborhoods. More incentives are needed to support this type of initiative to provide options for varying income levels.*

3.7 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A number of housing studies have been completed since the 2013 Plan was adopted. Those plans have been implemented at various degrees. In 2014, a comprehensive study and plan was commissioned by Cowley County to identify housing needs of the entire county. The implementation of this plan was to be completed by 2019 as summarized in Section 3.4. This plan estimated that 199 new housing units would be needed in Arkansas City, with 94 being owned units and 105 being rentals. By the end of 2019, 75 new housing units had been built, but with no housing development happening in the downtown area. This study established a need for housing within the city prior to the current housing challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic but unfortunately this goal was not fully met.

In 2018, a Moderate-Income Housing grant was awarded to the City for infrastructure at Compass Point Addition. 54 total housing units are planned when this project is complete set for the end of 2022. This project requires that all renters have incomes in the moderate-income range as defined by the Department of Commerce. Also, in 2018, the City established a new Land Bank program to supplant the existing program. The new program provided new guidance and developed a Land Bank Board of Trustees to oversee the program. The Land Bank is used to take tax delinquent properties and put them back on the tax rolls.

In 2019, a 48-unit senior housing complex was built that was funded using Low-Income Housing Tax Credits. These two projects helped to bring housing from multiple income ranges and age groups. Several individual contractors have been taking advantage of the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan's tax rebate program to build in-fill housing.

In 2021, the City completed a Housing Assessment Tool as part of an application for a housing rehabilitation grant through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The award would be for \$300,000 and would rehabilitate 12 houses in the Oklahoma and Colorado Avenue neighborhood in Northwest Arkansas City. As this plan was being finalized, it was learned that the City was awarded this grant amount. Also, in 2021, the City established a Rural Housing Incentive District in the Downtown Historic District allowing tax incentives for property owners wishing to develop their upper floors into housing.

The City also has an active code enforcement program. The City enforces the 2015 International Property Maintenance Code to remove the accumulation of debris/junk, noxious weeds and abandoned vehicles, as well as demolishing dangerous structures. In 2018, the City passed an ordinance that modified Municipal Code to lessen standards for landlords. The provision allowed landlords to work on their rental properties without being licensed.

3.8 GOALS AND ACTIONS

Arkansas City should be filled with many different types of residential neighborhoods, featuring well-maintained and attractive housing, which will meet the needs of residents by providing safe, suitable and

affordable places to live. Achieving this result can be sped up by greater engagement and proactive policies by the city government.

Housing and Neighborhoods – The City should contain a wide variety of housing and neighborhood types ranging from traditional and historic neighborhoods to modern subdivisions. The City should include a variety of neighborhoods consisting of single-family site-built homes, and manufactured housing, townhouses, and multi-family housing structures, located consistent with the future land use map. Housing should be compatible with the general character of the surrounding neighborhood. The City should feature residential neighborhoods with public spaces where neighbors can meet and in some areas of the City those neighborhoods should allow limited and small-scale commercial sites that serve residents of the area.

Goals or actions are organized around priorities. Generally, where specific actions build on a goal, they will be listed immediately following the goal. Some goals may not have specific actions. Short term priority means it should be achieved within the next 5 years. Medium term priority means it should be achieved within 5-10 years. A long-term priority means it should be achieved in 10 or more years.

GOAL/ACTION	PRIORITY		
	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG
ENCOURAGE THE AVAILABILITY OF HOUSING FOR ALL AGES AND INCOME GROUPS	X		
Develop Senior Housing	X		
Encourage reinvestment in existing homes	X		
Encourage Rehabilitation/Removal where necessary through code enforcement	X		
Establish additional Rural Housing Incentive Districts	X		
Continue use of Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Rebate Program	X		
Consider developing housing plans for specific areas to target	X		
ENCOURAGE MORE BUILDERS TO INVEST IN HOUSING BY FINDING WAYS TO REDUCE THE COST TO BUILD	X		
Waive fees based on volume of housing units proposed	X		
Expand land bank and consider donating land from the land bank to housing developers	X		
Evaluate permit fees and other related development fees	X		
ENCOURAGE THE REMOVAL OR REHABILITATION OF DILAPIDATED OR DETERIORATED STRUCTURES	X		
Apply for housing grants to remove dilapidated structures	X		
Use Land Bank to forgive demolition costs if owner agrees to donate land.	X		
Waive fees for demolition	X		
Evaluate permit fees and other related development fees	X		
Create a fund to help citizens fix up their properties	X		
Continue use of Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Rebate Program	X		

Chapter Five: Parks, Recreation, Natural and Historical Resources

5.1	Introduction
5.2	Vision
5.3	Background
5.4	Community Survey Responses and Comments
5.5	Parks and Outdoor Spaces
5.6	Recreational Activities
5.7	Natural Resources
5.8	Historical Resources
5.9	Accomplishments
5.10	Goals and Actions

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Park areas and recreational programs serve the citizens of Arkansas City in multiple ways. For the individual, parks, open space and recreation programs provide the opportunity to improve physical and mental health, and the opportunity for relationships with others that enhance social well-being. Parks and recreation facilities and programs should be central to a community's pride in itself, serve citizens of all ages, give choice to citizens for leisure activities, enhance the environment, and promote tourism and economic development.

The City owns a number of parks providing open space and recreational opportunities. The parks have baseball and softball fields, soccer fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, and a variety of playground equipment. Walking, running, hiking and biking takes place over the trails and in the parks. Recreational programming is also available, particularly for youth sports, which is important for team activity, skill building, and confidence.

5.2 VISION

The City, working alongside the Recreation Commission, Cowley College and USD 470, will establish, preserve and manage public parks, open space and recreational facilities, and will provide a range of recreational and cultural opportunities to benefit and enrich the quality of life of current and future residents of all ages.

5.3 BACKGROUND

A. 2003 Plan Recommendations Relating to Parks, Recreation, Natural and Historic Resources

Key Findings for Parks & Natural Resources:

- Arkansas City has approximately 320 acres of parks, or 30 acres per 1000 population. This compares favorably with national park standards. Much of the park acreage is in riverside open space areas.
- Development from a natural resource's standpoint should occur in the Osage Prairies, including areas north of the City, east of the Walnut River, and south of the Arkansas River.
- Because of the difficulty of extending city services across the Arkansas River, the two most environmentally sound areas for urban expansion are the areas north and northwest of Arkansas City, and the areas between the Walnut River floodplain and C-4 school.
- Development should be avoided in the floodplains where there is insufficient levee protection. Levee system expansion beyond that now being constructed by the Corp of Engineers to enhance

existing levees should be avoided for the protection of wetland and riparian areas that serve as wildlife habitats and natural flood absorbers.

Recommendations: Develop and maintain a park and open space system to serve the needs of all the citizens of Arkansas City, in particular enhancing park and public places.

- Develop a long-range plan for development of the Walnut River and Arkansas River Greenway around the City which would include development of a system of connecting hike/bike trails.
- Encourage the preservation of the Walnut River floodplain for agricultural or natural areas to enhance the character of the Highway 77 bypass.

5.4 SURVEY RESPONSES AND COMMENTS

When asked for their input in 2013 in the community survey conducted for this comprehensive plan, citizens responded they are generally satisfied with the public park and recreation facilities and programs. The complete survey, and responses, are found at Appendix A.

A large majority of respondents were satisfied with the maintenance of (71%) and the number of (72%) city parks, walking and biking trails (64%), and with the swimming pool (53%). They were somewhat less satisfied with the tennis courts, soccer fields, and softball fields, as shown below.

		VERY DISSATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	SATISFIED	VERY SATISFIED	TOTAL RESPONSES
A.	Maintenance of City parks	2%	4%	23%	51%	20%	682
B.	The number of City parks	2%	3%	23%	51%	21%	685
C.	Walking and biking trails in the City	2%	6%	29%	39%	25%	704
D.	City swimming pool	3%	5%	40%	38%	15%	706
E.	Tennis courts	2%	3%	47%	33%	15%	706
F.	Number of soccer fields	2%	4%	58%	24%	11%	657
G.	Number of softball fields	2%	1%	48%	33%	16%	697
H.	Youth athletic programs	3%	5%	35%	40%	17%	700
I.	Adult athletic programs	3%	8%	50%	31%	9%	703
J.	Other recreation programs, such as classes & special events	4%	10%	40%	35%	12%	704
K.	Cultural programs	4%	11%	43%	31%	10%	646
L.	City community centers	3%	8%	43%	35%	11%	699
M.	Arkalalah Fall Festival	3%	5%	15%	41%	36%	719

Satisfaction with some of the recreational programs was less clear, though youth programs had a higher satisfaction rate at 57% satisfied or very satisfied, than adult at 40%, and 50% taking a neutral position.

It is likely that many respondents who do not participate in or utilize those particular programs and facilities responded as "neutral".

When asked if they supported extension of the hike and bike trail on the west side of the City, 54% said that they do support that extension:

Hiking and Biking Trails: Would you support an extension of the hike and bike trail on the west side of the City, south of Chestnut, to improve safety for travel to the Cowley College Sports Complex?

Yes: 54% **No: 46%** **TOTAL RESPONSES: 658**

As development of wetlands has been an issue of discussion in recent years, there were several questions in the 2013 survey posed about possible City action relating to wetlands. The responses to those survey questions are as follows:

Wetlands:

A. If it were likely to result in savings for taxpayers, would you support the City, in partnership with others, developing a wetland area near the Arkansas River to provide wildlife habitat and destination point on the hike and bike trail?

Yes: 76% **No: 24%** **TOTAL RESPONSES 672**

B. Would you support such a wetland area becoming a City park?

Yes: 65% **No: 35%** **TOTAL RESPONSES 654**

C. Would you like to see the City's historic canal carry water supplied by a wetland?

Yes: 62% **No: 38%** **TOTAL RESPONSES 654**

Survey Comments

The 2013 community survey asked for citizen comments on the present condition of the City, and for concerns and hopes for the future. Many of those comments are set out in Appendix B. Some of the comments relating to parks and recreation are as follows:

- *We love Arkalalah, its local culture, people love it, and it brings the downtown to life. We need to work out how to bring that kind of life and energy to our city in smaller ways year-round.*
- *I think that we have enough sports fields of any kind. They are an eye sore. We have more than enough trails. What a waste of money. There are miles of streets that people can walk.*
- *During these tough economic times it is important to have a very conservative approach. It is necessary to take care of city services, police, fire, water, streets, sanitation and similar necessary items. Parks, hike & bike trails, arts and other cultural expenditures should be cut back until times improve.*
- *City also needs to invest in social and human capital -- Big Brothers, Habitat, arts, historic preservation. A major recreational project, like a river walk, redevelopment of park at bridge on south end of town.*
- *The city has a huge perception problem. Ark City looks less favorable to visitors and residents alike due to the condition of some of the parks. Boarded up structures, play equipment in poor repair (the*



Wilson Park hosts many events in the community, including National Day of Prayer, Farmers Market and Art in the Park. The rotunda is an icon for Arkansas City and is over 100 years old. Two playgrounds, picnic areas, tennis courts and other facilities make Wilson an important park for the community, at about 4.7 acres. Serving as a gateway to the downtown is the locomotive that abuts Summit Street. It reflects the importance of railroads to Arkansas City's history, and also evokes memories of childhood play and adventure. The newest amenity to the park is a swing which can be utilized by those in wheelchairs.



The largest regional open space maintained by the City is the **Prairie Passage Recreation Area**, which is 165 acres. The natural trail system (not improved with rock or asphalt) is maintained by the Parks Division, and the ponds on the grounds and tree cover make it a very enjoyable way to spend an afternoon. Other regional parks include Cherokee Park and Walnut Park.

The **USD 470 Sports Complex**, approximately 33 acres in size, is adjacent to the Arkansas City High School, on North 15th Street. The complex has fields for baseball and softball, including one that is used for college level play. Soccer is also played on the fields, both by the high school and the recreation program.



The City operates a nine-hole golf course located at 3202 N. Summit called **Spring Hill Golf Course**. The course was built in 1928 and is very challenging with a hilly terrain; one hole has a 70-foot elevation from tee to green. In addition, an eighteen-hole course is located at 8731 US Highway 166. That course is operated privately by

Great Life Golf & Fitness as a private club with additional amenities including 24-hour/7 day a week fitness facilities, swimming pool and driving range.

Other community amenities include the skate park, ponds and lakes for fishing or camping, and several community building facilities. The Middle School track area is also used by the community a great deal for exercise outdoors. The Cleo Graves Hogan recreational building is located in Ranney Park and used for parties and other gatherings. The Agri-Business building at Paris Park is also frequently used for community meetings and events.

Trails, Pedestrian and Bicycle Paths

Trails provide healthy and recreational alternatives to vehicular transportation. Trails are often established in urban areas to connect major public services, parks and sporting areas, and schools. Arkansas City has developed several trails including the Poplar Walking Trail, Hike/Bike Trail and the Kneebler Pond Walking Trail. The Poplar Walking Trail, a 1¼ mile-long asphalt path, has a spectacular view of the native prairie area being developed within the boundary of the trail.

The Hike/Bike Trail was opened in 2011 and financed with Kansas Department of Transportation enhancement funding. The 2.5-mile trail begins adjacent to Paris Park, travels west along the Mill Canal, then south on the levee system for the Arkansas River, which is the southwestern edge of the community, and back east to the Charles Dow Sports Complex. The total Hike/Bike Trail is anticipated to be nearly seven miles when remaining lengths are constructed. Those lengths go northeast again, often along a levee, but this time the Walnut River levee, with termination at the Poplar Walking Trail area. An additional pedestrian and bicycle connection will be built in 2022 through the middle of the community, through a combination of sidewalks, bike lanes, and/or trail from Cowley College to its new sports complex in southern Arkansas City. This was the project that 2013 survey respondents indicated support for and could be the next addition to the trail system. The City is currently pursuing grants for an additional trail called the Central Trail that will run north from Paris Park Pool along 6th Street to the Northwest Community Center and eventually northward to Kansas Avenue and beyond. Lastly, for hiking and biking enthusiasts who enjoy a less improved amenity, the Prairie Passage Recreation Area is home to the Kneebler Pond Walking trail, five miles of natural surface in a wooded area with a large pond, on the eastern edge of the community.

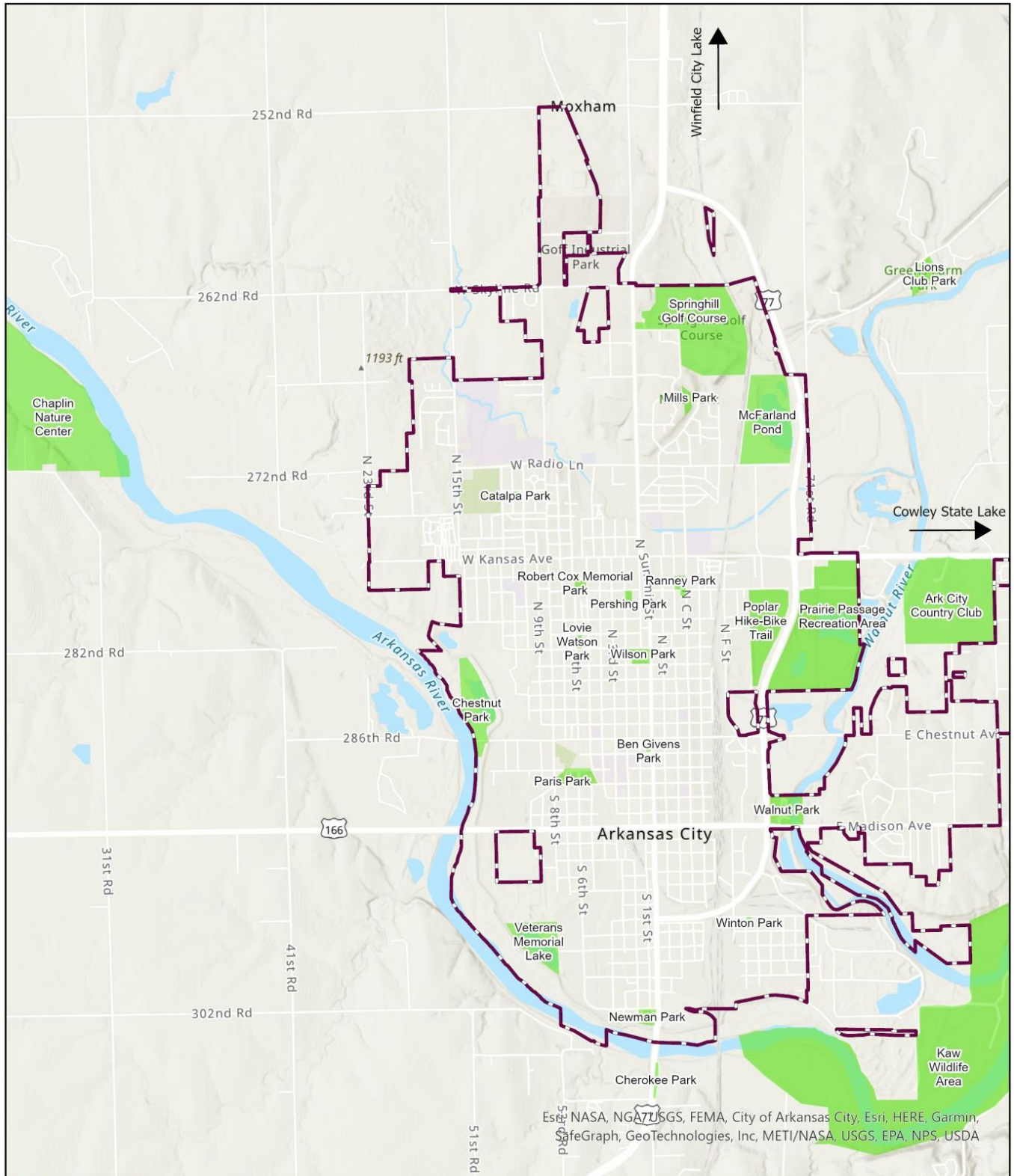


Future Needs

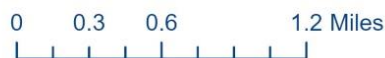
Some possible recreation improvements for the future include improvements to the Dow Recreational Complex with improvements to existing soccer fields. Another feature that could be considered is a dog park, an enclosed area for dogs and dog owners to train, exercise and socialize. The Baseball Complex at 15th Street & Radio Lane could use some improvements including the addition of ticket booths at the north and east entrances. The existing Recreation Center building is also in need of improvements. The building is out of date with ADA requirements and needs HVAC improvements. There also needs to be a discussion about the moving of the facility to better house its programs. A recent study of Paris Park Pool revealed a number of issues that will also need to be addressed in the near future to continue the use of the pool.

As the community plans for the future, attention should continue to be given to ensure good connections to parks and recreation, social and education institutions as well as shopping and major employment areas. In addition, when building roads or bridges, non-motorized needs must be considered. Grants and loan programs should be used when possible to improve recreational facilities.

Parks



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 Parks



	ACREAGE	SHELTER	RESTROOMS	TABLES & PICNIC	PLAYGROUND	BASKETBALL	BASEBALL / SOFTBALL	DISC GOLF	FOOTBALL/ SOCCER	TENNIS	BOAT RAMP	CAMPING	FISHING
Neighborhood Parks:													
Ben Givens City Center Park	0.2												
Catalpa Park	0.5			X									
Lovie Watson Park	1.3	X	X*	X	X	X							
Mills Park	4.7												
Pershing Park	1.7	X	X*	X	X	X	X						
Ranney Park	1	X		X	X	X	X						
Robert Cox Memorial Park	1.7	X		X				X					
Winton Park	0.9	X		X	X	X	X						
Community Parks:													
Cherokee Park	3.1			X									
Paris Park	6	X	X	X	X					X			
Prairie Passage Recreation Area	165							X					X
Walnut Park	12.6		X	X	X						X	X	X
Wilson Park	4.7	X	X	X	X					X			
Other Community Recreation:													
Skate Park (Paris Park)	0.2												
Paris Park Pool	2.9			X	X					X			
Veterans Memorial Lake	80	X	X	X							X		X
High School Sports Fields	33						X						
Middle School Sports Complex	18								X	X			
CCCC Softball Fields	2.2						X						
CCCC Track/Field/City Ballpark	28						X						
Newman Park (RV Sites)	5	X	X	X								X	
Spring Hill Golf Course	10												
Charlie Dow Sports Complex	4								X				
Cleo Graves Hogan - Rec Bldg (Ranney Park)		X	X										
Regional Parks:													
Chaplin Nature Center	230		X										
Cowley County State Lake	198												
Kaw Wildlife Area	4,341												
Lions Park	10		X	X			X						
Winfield Lake/ Timber Creek Reservoir	19,876	X	X	X	X							X	X
Walking Trails:	Length												
Hike-Bike Trail	2.5 mi.												
Kneebler Pond Trail	5 mi.												X
Poplar Hike-Bike Trail	1 mi.												
Veterans Memorial Lake Trail	1 mi.	X	X	X									X

*Full restroom facilities are not available, but a portable toilet is available on site.

5.6 RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The city's recreational program, overseen by the Arkansas City Recreation Commission Board, serves residents of all ages and provides many types of activities. The Recreation Commission is a joint city/school entity, with two members appointed by the City, two by the School Board, and one at-large. The Recreation Center is located downtown at 225 E. 5th Avenue where it has its offices as well as a fitness center. The fitness center is a membership center and offers weight/strength building, cardiovascular equipment and sauna.

The Recreation Commission manages the Aquatic Center at the high school and the outdoor pool in Paris Park, providing lap swimming, water aerobics, recreational swimming and swim lessons.

Sports programs for local youth include baseball, softball, gymnastics, basketball, football, wrestling, soccer, tennis, swimming, volleyball, and golf. Other youth offerings include zumba, martial arts, cheerleading, fishing, dances and gaming.

Adult offerings include classes, activities and fitness. Included in these are bingo, weight loss and exercise, zumba, martial arts and horseshoes. Sports include softball, volleyball, golf and tennis.

Fitness equipment is also available at Cowley College to the public as a membership program at the Ben Cleveland Wellness Center. In addition, there are local private fitness centers, providing opportunities for aerobic and strength training. Private groups and individuals also provide dance, cheerleading, and club sports.

Water-related recreation opportunities within thirty minutes of Arkansas City include Winfield Lake, Cowley County State Lake, and Kaw Reservoir (Oklahoma). Among the activities available at these lakes and reservoirs are camping, fishing and boating.

Located east of Arkansas City is Camp Horizon, which is open to the public for camping, outdoor challenge course and mountain bike trails. Another favorite for leisure time is hunting which is also available in the area.

5.7 NATURAL RESOURCES

Kaw Wildlife Area is one of two areas near Arkansas City preserving wildlife habitats. It is owned by the U.S. Corp of Engineers and managed by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. The area is 4,341 acres of land and river, with about one quarter of it cultivated, and the balance in grasslands and riparian timber. A portion of the cultivated area is left standing for wildlife food and cover. Some hunting is allowed.

The Chaplin Nature Center is the second wildlife area located several miles west of the City. It is owned by the Wichita Audubon Society. There are a number of hiking trails, stretching over five miles and providing multiple opportunities for exploration. There is a visitor center, with programs including a naturalist. This is a valuable means for exploring the bottomland timber and prairies, upland prairies, and the Arkansas River, allowing view of the many species of birds as well as the wide range of trees. The Center is an amenity to the local area as well as a tourist attraction for south central Kansas and north central Oklahoma.

Features that have long defined the community are the Arkansas and Walnut Rivers. They make possible activities that people enjoy, such as fishing, kayaking, boating, floating and hiking. However, they are also critical habitat for animal and plant life and essential to natural cleaning of stormwater and the air. Two wildlife habitat terms of note are wetlands and riparian areas, both found abundantly in the Arkansas City area. Riparian areas comprise the areas along the riverbanks and streams that feed them. Wetlands include marshes, ponds or other particularly moist areas that also are filled with animal and plant life.

The City's 2003 Comprehensive Plan covered in great detail natural habitats that should be protected. Those include the Arkansas River Corridor (essentially the floodplains associated with the river), the Walnut River Corridor (also floodplain), the Bolton Uplands (south of the confluence of the rivers), the Creswell Uplands (near C-4 school and land near Walnut River), and the Osage Prairies. The Prairie has the greatest potential for development that would have the least impact to the environment. A map showing these areas is included in this chapter as Map 1.

According to the 2004 USGS Lower Ark Model Report #5204, one key natural feature that serves Arkansas City is the Arkansas River Alluvial Aquifer, enabling a ready source of water resources, even in drought conditions. According to this report,

“Hydraulic properties of an aquifer provide important information in the evaluation of ground-water problems by giving an indication of well yield in a particular aquifer and by providing the necessary data for ground-water modeling. Hydraulic properties include estimates of hydraulic conductivity, transmissivity, storage coefficient, and specific yield. Under unconfined conditions, as is the case in the alluvial aquifer in the modeled area, the storage coefficient and the specific yield are virtually equal.”

In simple terms, the large alluvial aquifer provides a steady base flow of water to the stream. While this provides security to the community for its future water needs, it also means the community must do what it can to ensure no harm occurs to the aquifer, a large area reaching north to Wichita, so water demands do not put too much strain on the aquifer. As the Wichita area has seen strong growth over the years, with greater demand on water resources, this will be an area of concern, particularly in low precipitation years.

Floodplains have been regulated by the City since the early 1980s, with the most recent version adopted in October 2010. Flood areas are important to maintain, not only for protection of life and property, but also for animal habitat. There will be more discussion on the floodplains in Chapter Six.

5.8 HISTORICAL RESOURCES

The following is borrowed from a 1983 National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, describing the downtown area of Arkansas City:

The architectural expression of the buildings in the commercial area reflects the mood of the community at the time they were built. The district consists of five main commercial blocks along Summit Street and two and a half blocks of Fifth Avenue in the vicinity of Summit Street. The boundaries were chosen to include the main commercial core of Arkansas City with their limits defined by the location of key or particularly significant buildings. Generally, the boundaries follow the property lines of the buildings facing onto Summit Street and Fifth Avenue with the exception of the west side of the 100 block of North Summit which has been eliminated from the district since most of the structures there do not contribute to the district. At the south end of the district, the west side of the 400 block of South Summit, except for the Syndicate Block, a key building, has been eliminated from the district.

There are many historic buildings and areas in Arkansas City. The most well-known are the following:

Burford Theatre & Commercial Building, 110-118 S. Summit, In November 1919, J.B. Burford and his associates purchased Highland Hall, the town's first opera house that was built in 1883, as an initial step toward their plan to build a moving picture palace. They also purchased the Isabella Block building next door, to the south of Highland Hall. The Saddle Rock Café had operated in the Isabella Block at 118 S. Summit St. since at least the early 1900s. The buildings were razed in 1924 for construction of the new Burford Theatre. It opened in September of that year and the opening represented an investment of \$300,000. The two-story Burford Theatre, connected to the adjacent Burford Commercial Building,

has a total frontage of 125 feet. The theater was built as a venue for vaudeville shows, local artistic productions and movie events. Ginger Rogers performed on the Burford stage as part of a vaudeville act in the mid- to late 1930s. The Arkalalah coronation was held at the theater in the 1930s, the early years of the town's annual fall festival. Actress Janis Carter, who starred in the movie "Santa Fe," visited the theater in 1951 for the staging of the movie's premiere. The theater underwent several changes to its interior through the years. It closed in 2004, and then-owner B&B Theatres donated the building to the Arkansas City Area Arts Council. The council led a 12-year, \$7.5 million effort to restore the theater to its original 1920s look. Community volunteers, professional construction workers and a New York-based restoration firm worked long hours to restore the theater, which reopened in 2016. The prairie-style structure with Neoclassical decorative elements is a three-bay buff building with wreath and garland.



Ireland Hall/Old Arkansas City High School is located at 300 W. Central and was constructed in 1890. It is three stories, a rectangular Richardsonian Romanesque structure with basement. It was constructed of white Silverdale limestone set in red mortar. Because the mortar was not waterproofed pink streaks appeared due to moisture and the stone absorbed the color, resulting over time in a pink color. Artistic features of lions' heads and dragons carved in stone, along with two massive chimneys and a clock tower, contribute to the spectacular appearance of this distinctive building. Ironically, clocks were never installed in the tower. The first high school class, with 194 students, started on September 7, 1892, although the building was not completely finished until 1893. It remained in use as the high school until 1922, when a new high school was opened. Arkansas City's sixth graders used the school until 1941.

After the last students left, the old high school was used by the USO during World War II, as a teen town, and also by the Red Cross.

By 1949, time had taken its toll and the school board was considering selling the old school. But interested persons suggested the building should be made available for the local junior college. A new chapter in the life of this old building began when Cowley County Community College acquired it in 1971. In 1974, the building was added to the National Register of Historic Places and declared a state landmark.

After the college secured funding for a renovation of the lower portion of the building, which was completed by the summer of 1982, "The Red School House" returned to its original mission of education. The building was officially dedicated on December 12, 1982, and named after W.H. "Pat" Ireland, a strong community supporter who served on the college's Board of Trustees for nearly 10 years. Today, Ireland Hall is home to Cowley College's Criminal Justice, Cosmetology and Institute of Lifetime Learning programs.

Pilgrim Congregational Church/Vinelif Church is located at 101 N. 3rd Street.

Construction of one of Arkansas City's most impressive historic buildings, the Pilgrim Congregational Church, began in 1891 and finished in 1893. It was completed just a few years after the old high school (now Ireland Hall), built in 1890. Both buildings are wonderful examples of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture, and both are built of cut Silverdale stone blocks with the Roman arches and towers typically found in this style.

The Congregational Church was one of Ark City's oldest churches. Several of Ark City's founding fathers, who originally came here from Emporia, were Congregationalists. Among them were A.A. Newman, Lyman Beecher Kellogg and Henry Brace Norton. (The latter two men were instrumental in securing and staffing the Kansas State Normal School in Emporia, now known as Emporia State University.)

The Congregational Church in Ark City had grown to 154 members by 1892. During the 1870s, its early members joined members of other denominations and met in several different locations in town. In 1887, the Reverend D.D. DeLong, a popular minister, was secured to unite the people and the church was incorporated. A building committee was formed in 1889.

Built of sandstone with limestone trim, the church features a bell tower 78 feet high. In 1949, it became home to the Nazarene Church and, in 2002, the Vinelife Family Church. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2005.

HISTORIC STRUCTURES IN ARKANSAS CITY

The following is a list of prominent buildings with locations and date of construction. It is important to note that a number of buildings have been lost over the years including the Gladstone/Elmo Hotel and the Fifth Avenue Opera House. The loss of buildings is primarily due to neglect of the property owner but also due to fire. The City strives to inform property owners of the importance of maintenance and preservation of our historic resources. Additional information on many of these buildings can be found in the Arkansas City Downtown Historic District Walking Tour brochure.

Historic Name	Address	Year Built
Red Head Motor Co.	118-120 N Summit St	1912
Summit Barber Shop	112 N Summit St	1899
Osage Hotel	100 N Summit St	1920
Feagin/Thomas Drug	100 S Summit St	1920
Bryant Hardware	102 S Summit St	1920
Burford Theatre	116-118 S Summit St	1924
Home National Bank	126 S Summit St	1917
U.S. Post Office	120 E 5 th Ave	1915
Howard Building	200 S Summit St	1931
Beekman Building	202-204 S Summit St	1932
Zadie Building	206-210 S Summit St	1920
Ormiston Building	212-214 S Summit St	1932
Wright-Burton Hardware	218-220 S Summit St	1912
The KP Castle Block	226 S Summit St	1889
Creswell Building	300 S Summit St	1886
Sheridan Block	308-310 S Summit St	1895
Eagle Block	312-314 S Summit St	1886
Summit Block	316-322 S Summit St	1886
Newman's Department Store	400-402 S Summit St	1917
S.H Kress & Company	321-323 S Summit St	1910
Ford Auto Sales Building	317-319 S Summit St	1915
Oklahoma Tire and Auto	313-315 S Summit St	1922
Crescent/Beard Building	301-303 S Summit St	1905
American National Bank	227 S Summit St	1890

Historic Name	Address	Year Built
Kirkpatrick's Furniture	223-225 S Summit St	1900
The Parker Block	219-221 S Summit St	1893
Kuntz Clothiers	209 S Summit St	1884
White House Café	207 S Summit St	1884
Harris (Rexall) Drug	205 S Summit St	1895
C.R. Anthony Dry Goods	203 S Summit St	1920
Matlack Building	201 S Summit St	1880
Matlack Building Addition	109 W 5 th Ave	1887
Traveler Building	117-119 W 5 th Ave	1912
Cornish Photography Studio	125 W 5 th Ave	1924
I.O.O.F Hall	201-205 W 5 th Ave	1910
Carnegie Library	213-217 W 5 th Ave	1906
Arkansas City Office Building	112-116 W 5 th Ave	1928
First National Bank	127 S Summit St	1883
Conrad Block/Strand Theater	125 S Summit St	1895
Royal Café	117 S Summit St	1895
City Hall	118 W Central Ave	1919
Central Christian Church	206 W Central Ave	1921-1923
Old High School	300 W Central Ave	1890
Redeemer Lutheran Church	320 W Central Ave	1941
Pilgrim Congregational Church	101 N 3 rd St	1891-1983
First Church of Christ, Scientist	201 N A St	1915-1916
Trinity Episcopal Church	220-224 N A St	1922
5 th Ave United Presbyterian Church	122-124 S B St	1874
Sacred Heart Catholic Church	320-326 S B St	1919-1920
First Presbyterian Church	321 S 1 st St	1913-1915

5.9 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A study of existing parks was conducted in 2017. Part of the purpose was to determine if the community would benefit from the closure of certain parks and other city owned properties. As a result, some changes were made to the parks system. Brock Park at 501 S 6th Street was closed and the horseshoe pits there were moved to Pershing Park. The property has since been sold to Habitat for Humanity to build houses on. Cox Park was also discussed but it was repurposed and adopted by the Walnut Valley Disc Golf Association who built a disc golf course on the site. The playground still exists there. Catalpa Park and Mills Park were also discussed but ultimately, they were not changed due to deed restrictions and reverter clauses attached to them that would have made redevelopment as anything other than a park very difficult.

In 2015, the Wilson Park Master Plan was developed. It set out a plan to redevelop the park for the whole community. To date, the historic train has been restored and construction on a new farm and art market pavilion with additional parking has been completed.

In 2017, a Historic Preservation Fund grant was awarded to the City and with the grant a resurvey of the Downtown Historic District was conducted. Now each building in the district has more information attached to it and it is easier to understand why it is so important to preserve our historic buildings and resources. The survey will be used as a tool to carry out further goals related to historic preservation.

In 2020, the City was awarded another Historic Preservation Grant in which a walking tour was created. The brochure was created and released in 2021 in time for the City's 150th Anniversary Celebration in July. A web application is also a companion to this printed brochure.

In 2021, a Facility Evaluation Report for Paris Park Pool was also conducted. From that a committee was formed to discuss the future of the pool as well as any other potential recreational facility opportunities in the Paris Park area.

5.10 GOALS AND ACTIONS

Goals represent overall vision and desired outcomes. They describe the kind of community Arkansas City leaders hope to offer to citizens to meet their expectations and needs for active living. The following goals and associated actions provide the outline of recreational amenities, programs and the preservation of natural and historical resources.

Goals or actions are organized around priorities. Generally, where specific actions build on a goal, they will be listed immediately following the goal. Some goals may not have specific actions. Short term priority means it should be achieved within the next 5 years. Medium term priority means it should be achieved within 5-10 years. A long-term priority means it should be achieved in 10 or more years.

Goal/Action	Priority		
	Short	Medium	Long
Make improvements to parks and playgrounds to meet the needs of persons of all ages.			
Continue development of the Wilson Park Master Plan	X		
Develop and implement a Master Plan for Paris Park		X	
Develop a set of goals for each of the smaller neighborhood parks. Designate the Beautification and Tree Advisory Board to develop these plans and make a recommendation to the Planning Commission.		X	
Develop a dedicated funding stream for park maintenance and redevelopment.	X		
Protect and preserve the natural resources, particularly along the rivers, both for natural features and flood protection	Short	Medium	Long
Encourage developers to assist in the development of McFarland Pond and access for public use		X	
Promote the maintenance and preservation of historical resources	Short	Medium	Long
Encourage staff to individually list City Hall on the State and National Register of Historic Places or list as part of an expansion of the historic district.	X		
Expand the existing historic district to match the recommendations from the 2017 Resurvey of the Downtown Historic District	X		
Encourage the listing of the historic churches as thematic nomination on the State and National Register of Historic Places as recommended by the 2017 survey.	X		
Encourage the creation of markers to be attached to significant buildings to tell passersby about the history of the building	X		
Encourage property owners to maintain their properties by assisting them in identifying and accessing public and private resources for historic preservation	X		
Encourage upper floor housing to preserve integrity of buildings using Rural Housing Incentive Districts, Tax Credits etc.	X		
Develop a facility plan for the historic public library identifying deferred maintenance, expansion options or the relocation of the facility to another site and the disposition of the current building if that were to occur.	X		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

AN OVERVIEW TO THE ARKANSAS CITY 2022 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

One primary purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to provide a rational basis for zoning decisions, patterns of land use, and actions (both public and private) affecting the physical development of Arkansas City as well as its economic development. This Plan seeks to coordinate publicly financed capital improvements, such as streets, sewers and water lines, with private development activities that produce homes and businesses.

Another primary purpose of this Plan is to identify and articulate the needs and desires of the citizens of Arkansas City. While undertaking such a task is always challenging – and results are inherently subject to differing interpretations – this Plan enjoys the benefit of multiple surveys completed by citizens in 2021-22 and much of the results from the 2013 Survey are also still recognized. These survey results – which are reported in detail throughout the text of the Plan – are supplemented by input from other sources from the community as well as numerous other recent studies on housing, the economy, infrastructure, and community health. That input – both fact and opinion – was first extensively reviewed and analyzed by the Arkansas City Planning Commission. This document is the work product of citizens who are knowledgeable of their community's past, its present, and who desire to convey and energize the possibilities for the future.

This Comprehensive Plan, once it is adopted by the City Commission, is the City's official policy guide for future development. As such the Plan: sets out the City's planning-related goals; provides a data resource base for long-range and strategic planning; identifies factors influencing growth and development in the area; makes recommendations as to future land use and development in the area so as to guide future planning decisions; and recommends adoption of zoning regulations to enable implementation of the goals set forth in the Plan. Those goals are to **promote economic growth and land use development, and to do so in a manner which protects, and enhances, the factors which already make Arkansas City a good place to live.**

The Planning Area for this Plan includes the land within Arkansas City's corporate city limits as well as unincorporated lands specified as the City's "Growth Area". The Future Land Use Maps which are part of the Plan cover the Planning Area.

While Kansas law does not require any city to adopt a Comprehensive Plan, a proper plan is recognized in the law as a means to help cities reach goals and develop an environment that is aesthetically pleasing, safe, operates efficiently, and strives for equitable treatment for all citizens.

While a Comprehensive Plan is not itself a law that can be enforced – as compared to zoning regulations which are – the Plan nonetheless plays a direct role in land use regulatory actions by the City, and as such directly affects property owners and developers. The Plan will be used as a guide by the Arkansas City Planning Commission and City Commission when considering rezoning, condition use permits, and other requests. A legally recognized criterion for City consideration of a rezoning is whether the proposed rezoning is consistent with the City's adopted plan.

This revision to the 2013 Comprehensive Plan updates the plan including by providing updated data and the update of goals and actions. This document should not be construed as a brand-new plan but rather an updated and revised one. The Planning Commission desired to develop goals that were measurable and specific. Every attempt has been made to achieve that directive. In each Chapter, with the exception of the first two, goals and actions are organized around priorities. Generally, where specific actions build on a goal, they will be listed immediately following the goal. Some goals may not have specific actions listed. Short term priority means a goal or action should be achieved within the next 5 years. Medium term priority means it should be achieved within 5-10 years. A long-term priority means it should be achieved in 10 or more years. A brief synopsis of each of the Chapters follows:

Chapters One and Two provide some basic background information, demographic data, history and trends relevant to Arkansas City and some detail as to the nature and extent of some of the assets and resources which help define the “character” of the community. For example, schools, civic organizations, community events and municipal services are described. No attempt has been made to fully list and describe all elements of the community, as such would be a task that would overshadow the fundamental purpose of this Plan.

Chapter Three – Housing and Neighborhoods: The goals relating to housing can be stated generally as taking actions to **encourage residential development that will serve the entire community**. This means housing size, type (single-family, detached, duplexes, etc.) and cost that meet the needs of large families and small, higher, middle and lower income, young adults and seniors. It is not the goal of the City government to play a direct role in the housing market but to seek to remove as many obstacles as is possible.

Chapter Four – Economic Development: The goals relating to Arkansas City’s economic development are as broad and far-ranging as those for housing: to take actions that will **promote the growth of existing businesses and at the same time create an atmosphere that will appeal to new employees that the community wants to have**. The role of the City will be to encourage and facilitate the efforts of organizations presently engaged in economic development activities.

Chapter Five – Parks, Recreation and Natural and Historic Resources: The 2013 community survey identified a general sense of satisfaction with the number and maintenance of existing City parks. Survey responses also showed support for extending the hike and bike trail, and for development of a wetland for wildlife habitat and park and hike and bike trail purposes. The City owns a large number of parcels and structures, including small and seldom-used parks. The City should study each of those properties and determine whether disposition is in the best interests of the community.

Chapter Six – Infrastructure and Transportation: The 2013 survey, and other sources, reveals the community is well aware of the importance of a reliable supply of good quality water, the public sewer system and stormwater management. The goals set out in this chapter show the need for capital improvements with respect to all of those municipal services. As for the transportation infrastructure there is a need for a systematic program for improvements to streets and sidewalks to catch up on deferred maintenance.

Chapter Seven - Community Health: This chapter shows the connection that exists between housing and health of community members, the economy and health, and municipal services and programs and health. The community's health care resources are described, including the City-County Health Department, and recent studies relating to health care and conditions are summarized. The impact of the Coronavirus pandemic cannot be overemphasized. COVID-19 has changed the healthcare picture forever. It brought to the forefront issues on how public health is handled. Now, more than ever, the City must work to promote public health by promoting our local health institutions and to ensure that public health is looked at in all planning decisions.

Chapter Eight –Land Use/Growth Management: The goals in the Plan relating to how the City grows, and what land use is most appropriate for a given piece of property, are broad and far-reaching. Implementing strategies to attain land use goals is important to achieving other goals set forth in the Plan.

The 2013 Plan called for the City’s new land use regulations, and development occurring in accordance with those regulations, to preserve the existing character of Arkansas City while at the same time promoting the area’s economic development, growth and prosperity. Sufficient land area needs to be identified to serve housing needs. Those regulations were developed and have, for the most part, worked well. However, with changes in the community and technologies there is a need to update the regulations to reflect the current trends in place today.

Any updates to the City’s land use regulations and future zoning actions need to take into account the goals relating to commercial and industrial growth. Again, the goal is not just “enough” land zoned to meet such

demands, but land that is well-suited and well-situated for such development given all the interrelated goals of this Comprehensive Plan.

Future Land Use Maps: The Future Land Use Maps are a component of this Plan. They show the desired future land use for property within the corporate city limits and within the designated unincorporated area known as the "Growth Area". The land uses as designated on the map do not specifically utilize the proposed new zoning regulations' classification of zoning districts, instead use is made of more generic land use classifications (agricultural, industrial, residential, etc.) that will be more useful to citizens, property owners and the Planning Commission and Governing Body as rezonings are considered.

It is important to understand that the Future Land Use Maps are not zoning maps. They do not impose zoning upon any property. The maps provide a picture of what the community believes the best and/or most likely land uses will be in the future.