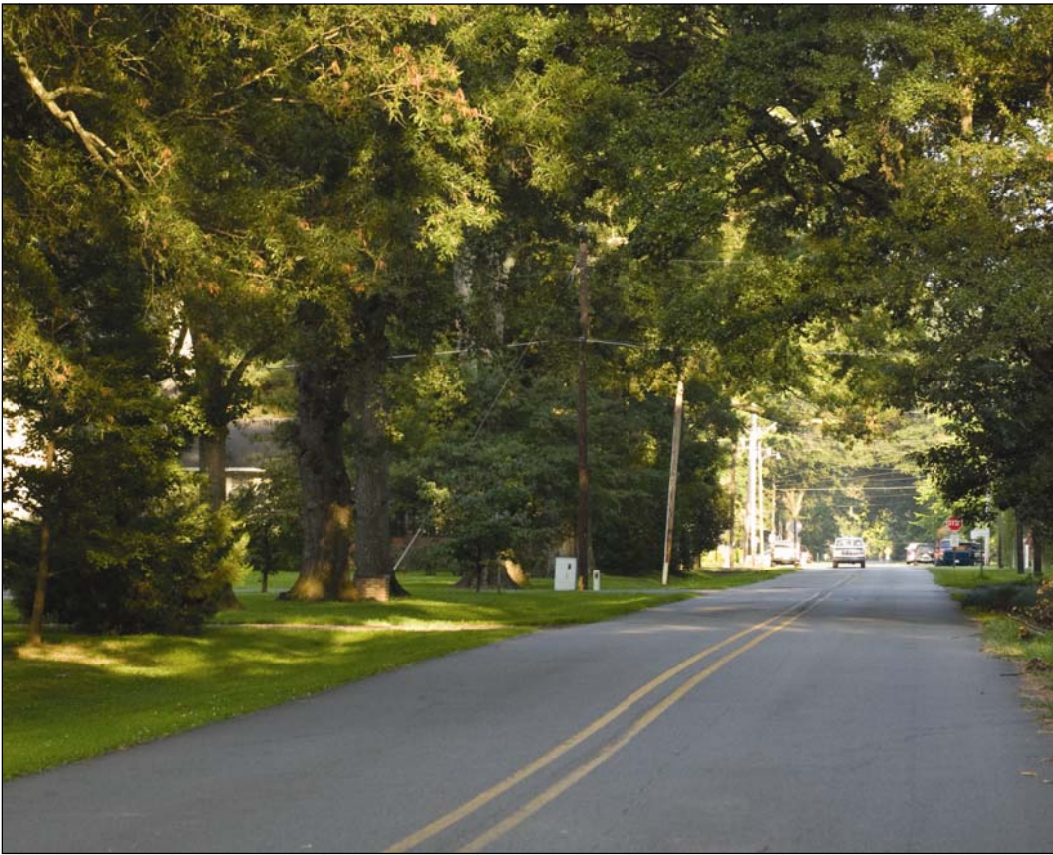


City of Lonoke

General Plan



December 9, 2011
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Prepared with
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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 The Plan

This document contains the officially adopted general plan for Lonoke, Arkansas.

The plan serves as an official policy statement of the City of Lonoke for directing orderly growth and development within its city limits and planning area. The Lonoke Planning Commission directed the preparation of the plan during a process which included careful study of the area. Areas of analysis include Lonoke's history, topography, utility capacity, transportation systems, existing infrastructure, and surrounding land use.

The Planning Commission held a number of meetings and hearings during the planning process. The meetings included public participation. Comments by the public helped amend portions of the plan.

The plan will help guide the decisions of both the Planning Commission and City Council during the planning period, estimated to be 20 years. The General Plan serves all citizens and property owners within the planning area as well as others having a stake in the future of the city. Specifically, it impacts the following:

- Residents of the area who expect a stable social and economic environment
- Potential residents who may be contemplating major investments in the community
- Business owners whose livelihood depends on continued growth and prosperity
- Potential business owners and investors who may move into the city
- The Lonoke Planning Commission
- The Lonoke City Council
- Municipal departments and department heads
- Organizations promoting economic development in the area
- Professionals in real estate or development

The General Plan provides a broad guideline for orderly growth and development. It is not meant to direct land use arrangement precisely nor is it a zoning ordinance. It should serve as an instrument to blend public and private interests in a manner that will best suit the entire community. Citizens and business interests may look at the plan as a "constitution" for the City of Lonoke. Unlike a national constitution, however, it may change more often to meet new challenges and growth issues.

The plan will remain flexible, allowing for necessary modification of land uses. It will plot land usage areas according to long-term community needs, not short-term individual gains. Planning should also be based on sound development principles. The plan seeks to address pertinent community issues as a whole rather than treating isolated problems as they may arise.

1.2 Authority

The purpose of the General Plan is consistent with the provisions of Arkansas Codes, Annotated (A.C.A.), §14-56-403. This section requires that plans of a municipality be "... prepared in order to promote, in accordance with present and future needs, the safety, morals, order, convenience, and general welfare of the citizens." The statutes further state that plans may provide for, among other things, the following:

- Efficiency and economy in the process of development
- The appropriate and best use of land
- Convenience of traffic and circulation of people and goods
- Safety from fire and other dangers
- Adequate light and air in the use and occupancy of buildings
- Healthful and convenient distribution of population
- Good civic design and arrangement
- Adequate public utilities and facilities
- Wise and efficient expenditure of funds

1.3 The Planning Area

The Lonoke Planning Area Boundary appears in graphic form on the plan map, planning area boundary map, and other maps used with this document. The Planning Area Map was prepared in accordance with statutes found in the Arkansas Codes, Annotated § 14-56-413. A copy is on file with the City Clerk and the Lonoke County Recorder.

The Planning Area Boundary depicted on the general plan map includes those lands within the territorial jurisdiction of Lonoke for which it may prepare plans, ordinances, and regulations. This area extends beyond the city limits to include those areas most likely to become a part of the city within a period of twenty years.

The City of Lonoke will, in accordance with A.C.A. § 14-56-422, file the plans, ordinances, and regulations as they pertain to the territory beyond the corporate limits with the county recorder of Lonoke County.

1.4 Methodology

This document contains only the relevant portions of the ideas and data collected and organized during the planning process. During that process, the Planning Commission supervised studies of all pertinent aspects of community growth and development.

The planning team for the general plan gathered and used both secondary and primary data during the planning process. One of the most exhaustive of the primary data files collected was used to create the existing land use map for the planning area. This map identified the various land use areas by polygons. The descriptions generally matched the existing zoning classifications of the City's zoning map. The land use polygons were arrayed in a geographic information system that permitted detailed analysis of the land use relationships that currently exist.

Existing data from various City departments also provided much of the information used in the analysis of existing conditions. Also, information from the State of Arkansas data base compiled in GeoStor supplied information ranging from floodplain polygons to digitally orthorectified aerial photography.

The Lonoke Planning Commission shared its collective experience and first-hand knowledge of development trends in the area. The input and insights from this body helped form a great deal of the plan's goals, provisions, and recommended actions.

The planning team synthesized and analyzed the data during the fall months of 2010. The team then prepared a draft plan outlining initial findings and recommendations. Public hearings provided a venue to fine-tune plan provisions and place them in priority.

1.5 Relationship to Regulatory Documents

The Arkansas planning statutes, in A.C.A. § 14-56-416 (a)(1) provide:

Following adoption and filing of the land use plan, the commission may prepare for submission to the legislative body a recommended zoning ordinance for the entire area of the municipality.

The statutes further provide in A.C.A. § 14-56-417 (a)(1):

Following adoption and filing of a master street plan, the Planning Commission may prepare and shall administer, after approval of the legislative body, regulations controlling the development of land.

These provisions, along with the modern history of planning since the landmark case of Village of Euclid, Ohio v. Ambler Realty Co., 272 U.S. 365 (1926), signify a strong relationship between the plan and its supporting regulations. In simple terms, a municipality first plans, then regulates. The primary supporting regulations consist of the zoning code and development (subdivision) regulations. As stated in A.C.A. § 14-56-412 (e):

In order to promote, regulate, and control development and to protect the various elements of the plans, the commission, after adoption of appropriate plans as provided, may prepare and transmit to the legislative body such ordinances and regulations as are deemed necessary to carry out the intent of the plans, or of parts thereof.

Planners take these provisions literally and encourage municipalities to base decisions in land use and development upon adopted plans to the greatest extent possible. At the same time, it has been noted in court decisions in Arkansas that plans are not legal documents but rather broad statements of municipal policy. The legal force arises from the adopted regulations developed to support the plan. In order to reconcile these considerations, the Planning Commission will first determine if a proposal deviates from the spirit and intent of the plan. If it does, the Commission will then consider an amendment to the general plan before considering the proposal.

Chapter Two: Context

2.1 History

Civil War through Reconstruction

In 1858, the Memphis and Little Rock Railroad was building its tracks through Brownsville, then the county seat of Prairie County, located three miles north of the future town of Lonoke. Five years later, during the Civil War, the tracks were destroyed during a skirmish at Brownsville. After the war, the company decided to take a more direct route and bypass Brownsville, resulting in its eventual demise and the birth of the town of Lonoke.

Lonoke was named by one Major Rombaugh, a civil engineer who surveyed the Memphis and Little Rock Railroad right-of-way, and another man named Robinson. The two men had a contract with the railroad to relocate the depot from Hick's Station, established around 1868, which was approximately two miles east of the town. They suggested naming the town for a massive lone red oak tree that stood isolated on the prairie. Rombaugh spelled the word to give it, as he thought, a Native American sound of "Lo-no-kah," but everyone else pronounced it "Lone-oak."

Isaac C. Hicks and Hamilton Reynolds surveyed the site and completed the town-lot plan in 1869. The first business in Lonoke was the general store W. K. Hocker and Company, which moved from Hick's Station to the new town site in 1868, before it was laid out. In 1869, T. C. Beard and William Goodrum opened a general store.

Lonoke was incorporated as a town on January 22, 1872, and elected its first officials, headed by Mayor Isaac C. Hicks. On April 16, 1873, Lonoke County was created from portions of Prairie and Pulaski counties, with Lonoke the county seat. Within three years, the population had grown to almost 500 people, as most of the citizens of Brownsville moved south with the railroad.

The first courthouse was the building formerly used as the Prairie County Courthouse in Brownsville that was dismantled, moved to Lonoke, and reassembled. In 1928, the town built a new three-story brick courthouse, with the county jail located on the top floor. This building still serves as the current courthouse, though the jail has moved to another site.

Post-Reconstruction through the Gilded Age

In April 1875, the first fire department, known as the Fire Hook and Ladder Company, was organized with J. F. Clement as foreman. In 1927, a water and sewer system was installed through passage of a bond issue.

By 1879, the need for free public education became apparent. To supplement meager state funds set aside for this purpose, the citizens of Lonoke privately subscribed a total of \$10,000 which, added to the state funds, enabled them to inaugurate a free ten-month public school. In 1900, a colossal school building (reputed to be the largest wooden-frame structure in Arkansas, with its two stories and three wings) was built. It burned in 1931, and a brick school was built that continues today as the high school. The Lonoke Colored School began around 1878 with classes through the eighth grade. In 1945, the name changed to George Washington Carver School when it expanded its curriculum through high school. The schools integrated in 1970, with Carver school continuing as the middle school. In 2004, a bond issue was passed to build a new middle school and gymnasium.

Originally, Lonoke was cattle and lumber country, but later, the prairie lands were converted to farmlands. Cotton, corn, and hay were grown and shipped out on its railways. In the spring of 1897, W. H. Fuller planted the first rice crop in Lonoke County. The flat land, with its abundance of water, was ideal for this new crop, and soon, rice rivaled cotton as the area's most profitable harvest. Around 1940, soybeans joined the agricultural mix, and today it is also a crop of economic importance to the area.

Early Twentieth Century

In 1928, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission built what was then the world's largest fish hatchery on the south edge of town. Today named the Joe Hogan Fish Hatchery, its fifty-seven ponds cover 267 acres and comprise the largest state-owned fish hatchery. Farmers developed much of the flat land around Lonoke into their own fish and minnow farms, creating another large part of the local economy.

During World War I, Lonoke was adjacent to Ebert's Field, the second largest training center for Army aviators (maintained by the government in the United States and France). At its peak, the 960-acre base, just west of town, housed approximately 1,500 enlisted men and officers and thousands of planes. The armistice ending the war was signed on November 11, 1918, a short time before the first class could be graduated. In 1986, as part of the Arkansas Sesquicentennial Celebration, a historical marker was installed to commemorate the location of the field, which closed in 1919.

Modern Era

Despite its reputation for agriculture and aquaculture, Lonoke has attracted industries such as MKT Fastening, Remington Arms, Ammonia Hold, Inc., and LLC Industries. The population of Lonoke has grown steadily, in part due to an abundance of industrial, agricultural, retail, healthcare, and educational employment opportunities. Lonoke continues to attract new citizens, businesses, and industries to this centrally located town on the Grand Prairie of Arkansas.

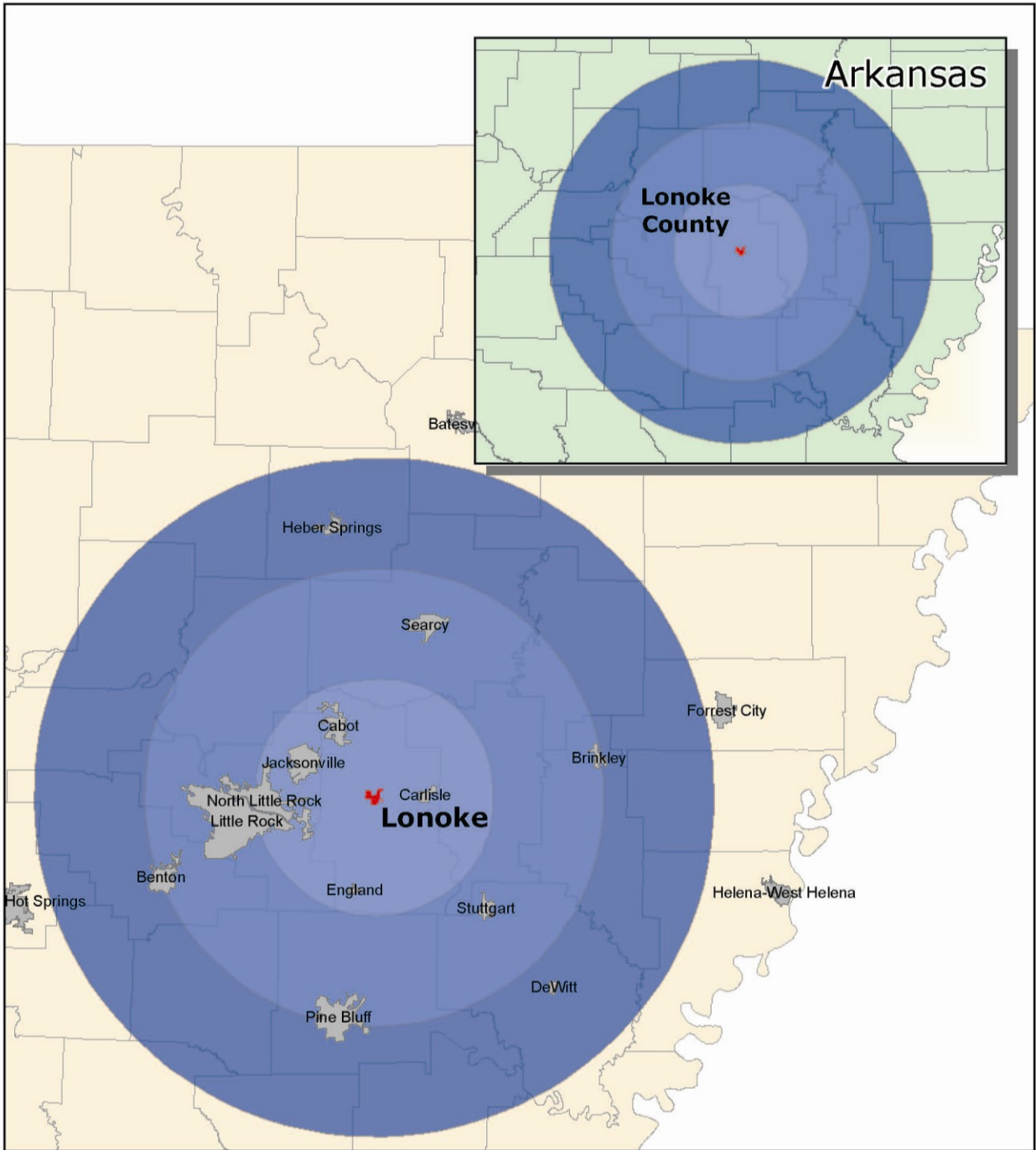
Adapted from the "Encyclopedia of Arkansas"

2.2 Regional Setting

Lonoke is located in the central portion of Arkansas in the Grand Prairie. It is the county seat of its namesake county. The city is about 25 miles east of Little Rock, 110 miles west of Memphis, 40 miles northwest of Stuttgart, and 20 miles south of Cabot. Other nearby communities include: Carlisle, Furlow, Kerr, South Bend, and Woodlawn. Lonoke is connected to the rest of the state via U.S. and State Highways such as Arkansas Highways 31 and 89. These connections include Interstate 40 that runs through the northern portion of the city. Interstate 40 serves as a vitally important Trans-American corridor connecting the East coast to the West coast. Access to this major thoroughfare has helped the city enjoy continued and steady growth, and should continue to serve as an economic boon to Lonoke.

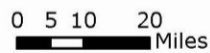
Downtown rests along U.S. Highway 70 and a vacated line of the Rock Island railroad. Although the city is not located along a navigable waterway, and not served by rail; it is located only 16 miles from the Little Rock port, a major multi-modal port facility.

2.3 Regional Map



Lonoke, Arkansas

Regional Location



Legend



Chapter Three: Trends

3.1 Population

TABLE 3.1.1
POPULATION HISTORY
LONOKE, ARKANSAS

Year	Population
1940	1,715
1950	1,556
1960	2,359
1970	3,140
1980	4,128
1990	4,022
2000	4,287
2010	4,245

Source: U.S. Census

TABLE 3.1.2
RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS, 2000
LONOKE AND SELECTED ENTITIES

	Lonoke	Lonoke County	Arkansas
White	73.3 %	91.0 %	80.0%
African American or Black	23.4 %	6.4 %	15.7%
American Indian	0.8 %	0.5 %	0.7%
Asian	0.3 %	0.4 %	0.8%
Hispanic (of any race)	1.8 %	1.7 %	3.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**TABLE 3.3.3
AGE CHARACTERISTICS, 2000
LONOKE AND SELECTED ENTITIES**

	Lonoke	Lonoke County	Arkansas
Under 5 years	7.6 %	7.1 %	6.8%
5 to 9 years	7.2 %	7.9 %	7.0%
10 to 14 years	7.4 %	8.6 %	7.2%
15 to 19 years	6.7 %	7.7 %	7.4%
18 years and over	73.7 %	71.3 %	74.6%
20 to 24 years	6.1 %	5.4 %	6.8%
25 to 34 years	12.0 %	13.7 %	13.2%
35 to 44 years	13.8 %	17.2 %	14.9%
45 to 54 years	11.9 %	12.9 %	13.1%
55 to 59 years	5.3 %	5.0 %	5.2%
60 to 64 years	4.3 %	4.1 %	4.4%
65 years and over	17.7 %	10.4 %	14.0%
65 to 74 years	7.3 %	5.6 %	7.4%
75 to 84 years	6.5 %	3.4 %	4.8%
85 years and over	3.9 %	1.4 %	1.7%
Median Age	37.2	34.7	36.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

3.2 Education

**TABLE 3.2.1
EDUCATION ATTAINMENT, 2000
LONOKE AND SELECTED ENTITIES**

	Lonoke	Lonoke County	Arkansas
High School Grad or higher 1990	60.2 %	67.1 %	66.3%
High School Grad or higher 2000	68.9 %	77.6 %	75.3%
Bachelor's or higher 1990	11.4 %	10.0 %	13.3%
Bachelor's or higher 2000	16.1 %	14.6 %	16.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

3.3 Income

TABLE 3.3.1
PER CAPITA INCOME (1999 DOLLARS)
LONOKE AND SELECTED ENTITIES

	1989	1999	% change
Lonoke	\$13,907	\$15,598	12.2 %
Lonoke County	\$13,759	\$17,397	26.4 %
Arkansas	\$14,134	\$16,904	19.6 %

TABLE 3.3.2
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (REAL DOLLARS)
LONOKE AND SELECTED ENTITIES

	2000	2008	% change
Lonoke	\$31,558	\$38,094	20.7 %
Lonoke County	\$40,314	\$48,664	20.7 %
Arkansas	\$32,182	\$38,815	20.6 %

TABLE 3.3.3
POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LEVEL, 2000
LONOKE AND SELECTED ENTITIES

	Lonoke	Lonoke County	Arkansas
Individuals Below Poverty Level	15.0 %	10.5 %	15.8%
Families Below Poverty Level	11.9 %	8.1 %	12.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

3.4 Housing

**TABLE 3.4.1
HOUSING INVENTORY, YEAR BUILT, 2000
LONOKE AND SELECTED ENTITIES**

	Lonoke	Lonoke County	Arkansas
1990 – Mar. 2000	13.3 %	34.9 %	22.1%
1980 – 1989	15.9 %	18.9 %	18.0%
1970 – 1979	27.9 %	20.4 %	22.6%
1960 – 1969	19.7 %	11.1 %	14.4%
1940 – 1959	13.9 %	9.6 %	15.8%
Pre-1940	9.3 %	5.1 %	7.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**TABLE 3.4.2
MONTHLY HOMEOWNER COSTS AS A
PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 1999
LONOKE AND SELECTED ENTITIES**

	Lonoke	Lonoke County	Arkansas
Less than 15 %	48.8 %	42.6 %	45.3%
15 % - 19 %	22.3 %	21.3 %	17.3%
20 % - 24 %	6.5 %	13.3 %	11.7%
25 % - 29 %	4.0 %	7.1 %	7.3%
30 % - 34 %	5.8 %	4.7 %	4.5%
35 % or more	12.6 %	10.5 %	12.7%
Not Computed	0.0 %	0.5 %	1.2%
PERCENTAGE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING	81.6 %	84.3 %	81.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

TABLE 3.4.3
HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS, 1990-2000
LONOKE, ARKANSAS

	1990	2000
Total Housing Units	1,616	1,703
Single Family	77.8 %	81.4 %
Multi-Family	13.8 %	12.3 %
Mobile Home, trailer, or other	8.35 %	6.3 %
Occupied Units	92.3 %	93.7 %
Owner Occupied	68.5 %	65.4 %
Renter Occupied	32.5 %	34.6 %
Vacant Units	7.7 %	6.3 %
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	2.8 %	2.0 %
Renter Vacancy Rate	6.9 %	5.3 %
Median Value and Contract Rent		
Median Value of Owner-occupied Units	\$43,100	\$63,000
Median Contract Rent	\$219	\$475

3.5 Employment

TABLE 3.5.1
EMPLOYMENT STATUS, 2000
LONOKE AND SELECTED ENTITIES

	Lonoke	Lonoke County	Arkansas
Percent of population in civilian labor force	58.2 %	65.2 %	60.3%
Employed	55.3 %	62.6 %	56.6%
Unemployed	2.9 %	2.5 %	3.7%
Unemployment Rate*		6.4 %	7.5 %

* May 2010 figures
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

TABLE 3.5.2
EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, 2000
LONOKE AND SELECTED ENTITIES

	Lonoke	Arkansas	Location Quotient
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	8.4 %	3.7 %	2.3
Construction	5.4 %	7.0 %	0.8
Manufacturing	16.1 %	19.4 %	0.8
Wholesale trade	3.1 %	3.3 %	0.9
Retail trade	12.1 %	13.0 %	0.9
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	6.0 %	5.9 %	1.0
Information	3.8 %	2.2 %	1.7
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	5.7 %	4.8 %	1.2
Professional, scientific, management, and administrative	3.7 %	5.4 %	0.7
Educational, health and social services	18.8 %	19.6 %	1.0
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	5.9 %	6.3 %	0.9
Other services (except public administration)	4.3 %	5.0 %	0.9
Public administration	6.6 %	4.3 %	1.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Location Quotient is a measure of industry concentration.

TABLE 3.5.3
COMMUTING TO WORK, 2000
LONOKE AND SELECTED ENTITIES

	Lonoke	Lonoke County	Arkansas
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	82.3 %	82.0 %	79.9%
Car, truck, or van -- carpooled	15.3 %	13.7 %	14.1%
Public transportation (including taxicab)	0.0 %	0.2 %	0.4%
Walked	0.7 %	1.1 %	1.9%
Other means	0.9 %	1.0 %	1.0%
Worked at home	0.8 %	2.0 %	2.6%
Mean work travel time	19.8	27.5	21.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

3.6 Demographic Conclusions

While much of the provided data is a decade old, it can provide some valuable insight into long-term trends occurring within the community. Lonoke is a stable, diverse, and growing city which has seen its population growth rate increase within the last 10 years. Between 1980 and 2000 the community saw very little growth, as the population only increased by about 150 people over the 20 year span. As the city has grown in population, it has also grown in other ways.

Since 1990, the community has seen personal income growth and increases in educational attainment. The city's proportion of college graduates exceeded that of the county in 2000, but Lonoke lagged behind the county in its proportion of high school graduates. The city also saw growth in per capita income between 1989 and 1999, but this growth was slower than that seen in Lonoke County and the state. This disparity can at least partially be attributed to the prominence of Lonoke's larger than normal aged population, which is more likely to be on fixed incomes. The city has a much higher proportion of its population that is retirement age compared to the county.

Lonoke appears to have a shortage of available non-rental homes. This is evidenced by a low homeowner vacancy rate and a lower than normal percentage of homes constructed within the last 20 years, compared to both the county and state. While it is difficult to estimate the exact size and nature of the shortage, the convergence of the above indicators provide evidence of a shortage. As such, the city should seek to interest developers into providing new housing within the community as older portions of the housing stock become dilapidated.

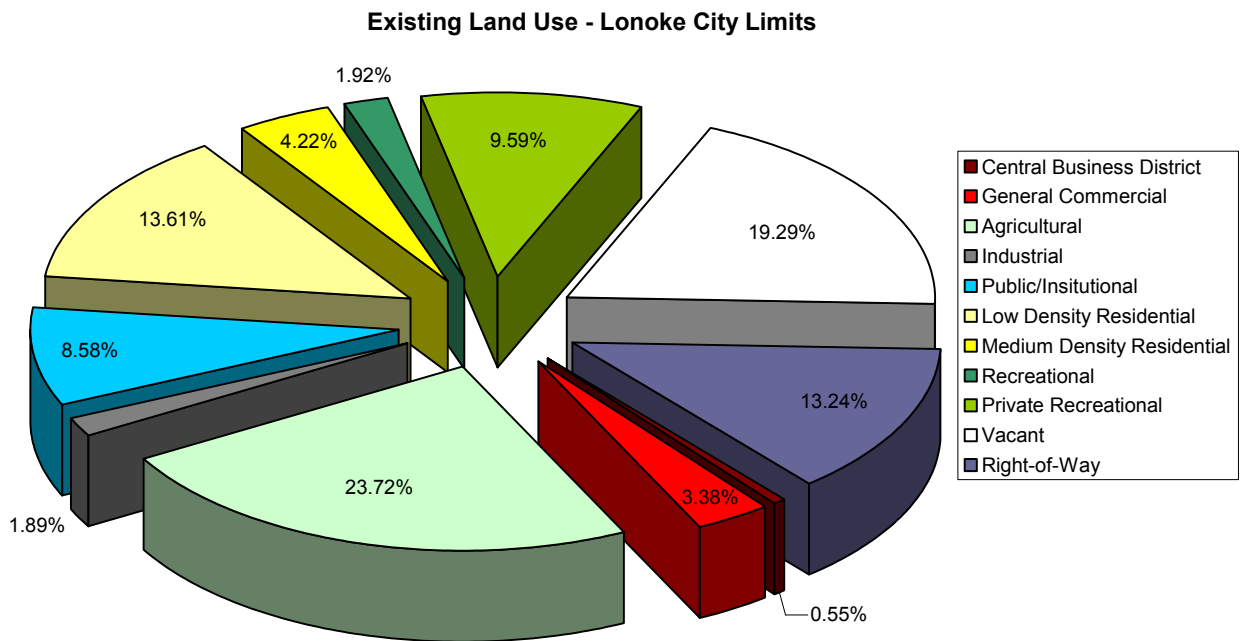
Lonoke is a growing community with many great opportunities and resources. Despite challenges in the areas of income growth, Lonoke has a strong local agriculture industry and a low unemployment rate. The city also enjoys very affordable housing with easy access to a major job market. These factors and the community's small town atmosphere provide its residents a high quality of life. New housing is needed in the city, and the city should seek to diversify its population by retaining youth in the community.

3.7 Land Use Analysis

Existing Land Use Study Summary

Basic Facts	Area	Population	Floodplain
City Limits	3,188 ac. – 4.98 sq. mi.	4,720 est. 2010	275.30 acres
Planning Area	12,428 ac. – 19.42 sq. mi.		

Existing Land Use Type	Area (City)	Percent	Area (PA)	Percent
Central Business District	17.5 acres	0.55 %	17.5 acres	0.14 %
General Commercial	107.9 acres	3.38 %	109.9 acres	0.88 %
Agricultural	756.1 acres	23.72 %	8,237.7 acres	66.28 %
Industrial	60.3 acres	1.89 %	96.7 acres	0.78 %
Public/Institutional	273.6 acres	8.58 %	343.5 acres	2.76 %
Low Density Residential	433.9 acres	13.61 %	886.5 acres	7.13 %
Medium Density Residential	134.6 acres	4.22 %	134.6 acres	1.08 %
Recreational – Public	61.2 acres	1.92 %	61.2 acres	0.49 %
Recreational – Private	305.7 acres	9.59 %	305.7 acres	2.46 %
Vacant	615.1 acres	19.29 %	1,529.7 acres	12.31 %
Right-of-Way	421.9 acres	13.24 %	705.4 acres	5.68 %

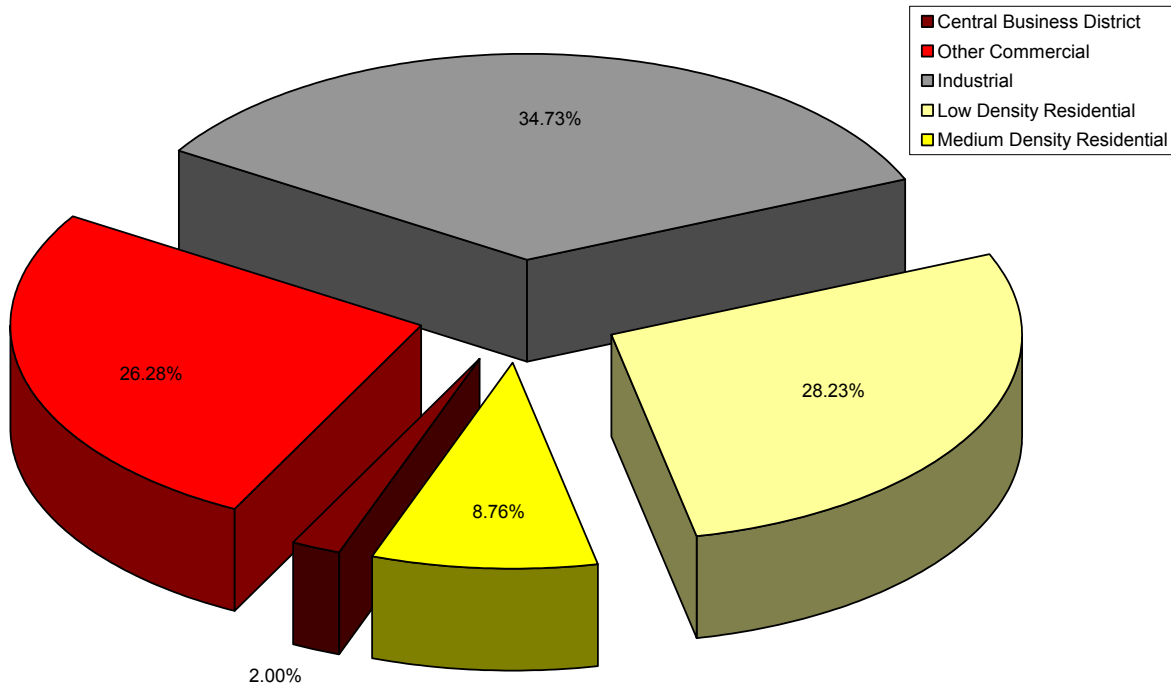


**City of Lonoke, Arkansas
Zoning Study Summary**

Basic Facts	Area	Population
City Limits	3,188 acres – 4.98 sq. mi.	4,720 est. 2010

Zoning District	Area	Percent
CBD - Central Business District	56.01 acres	2.00 %
GC, QB - Other Commercial	735.23 acres	26.28 %
M - Industrial	971.84 acres	34.73 %
R-1 - Low Density Residential	798.91 acres	28.23 %
R-2 - Medium Density Residential	245.17 acres	8.76 %

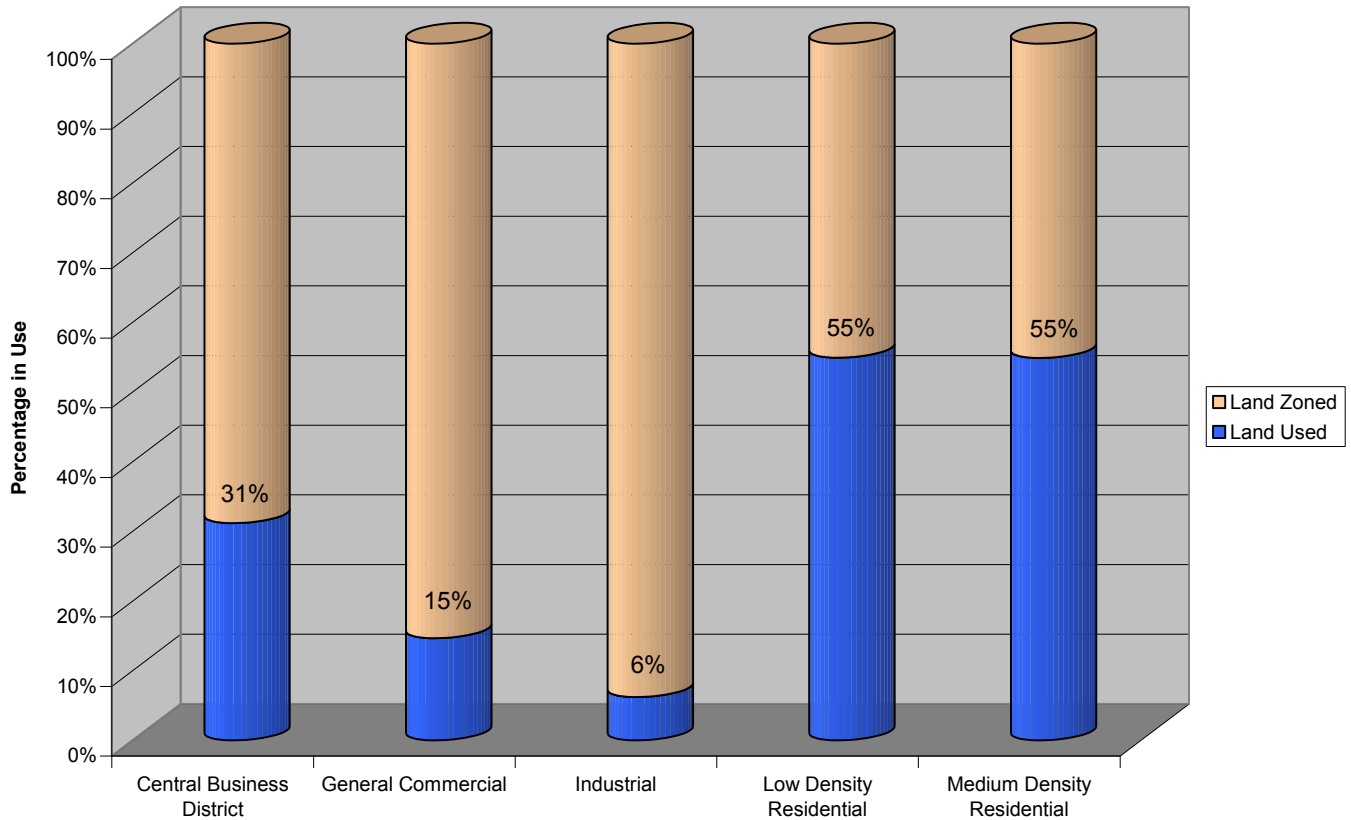
Zoning Districts as Percentage of Area



Aggregate Land Use Analysis Summary

Use Classification	Area Zoned	Area in Use	Percent in Use
Central Business District	56.01 acres	17.46 acres	31 %
Other Commercial	735.23 acres	107.89 acres	15 %
Industrial	971.84 acres	60.28 acres	6 %
Low Density Residential	789.91 acres	433.92 acres	55 %
Medium Density Residential	245.17 acres	134.58 acres	55 %

Percentage of Zoned Land in Use

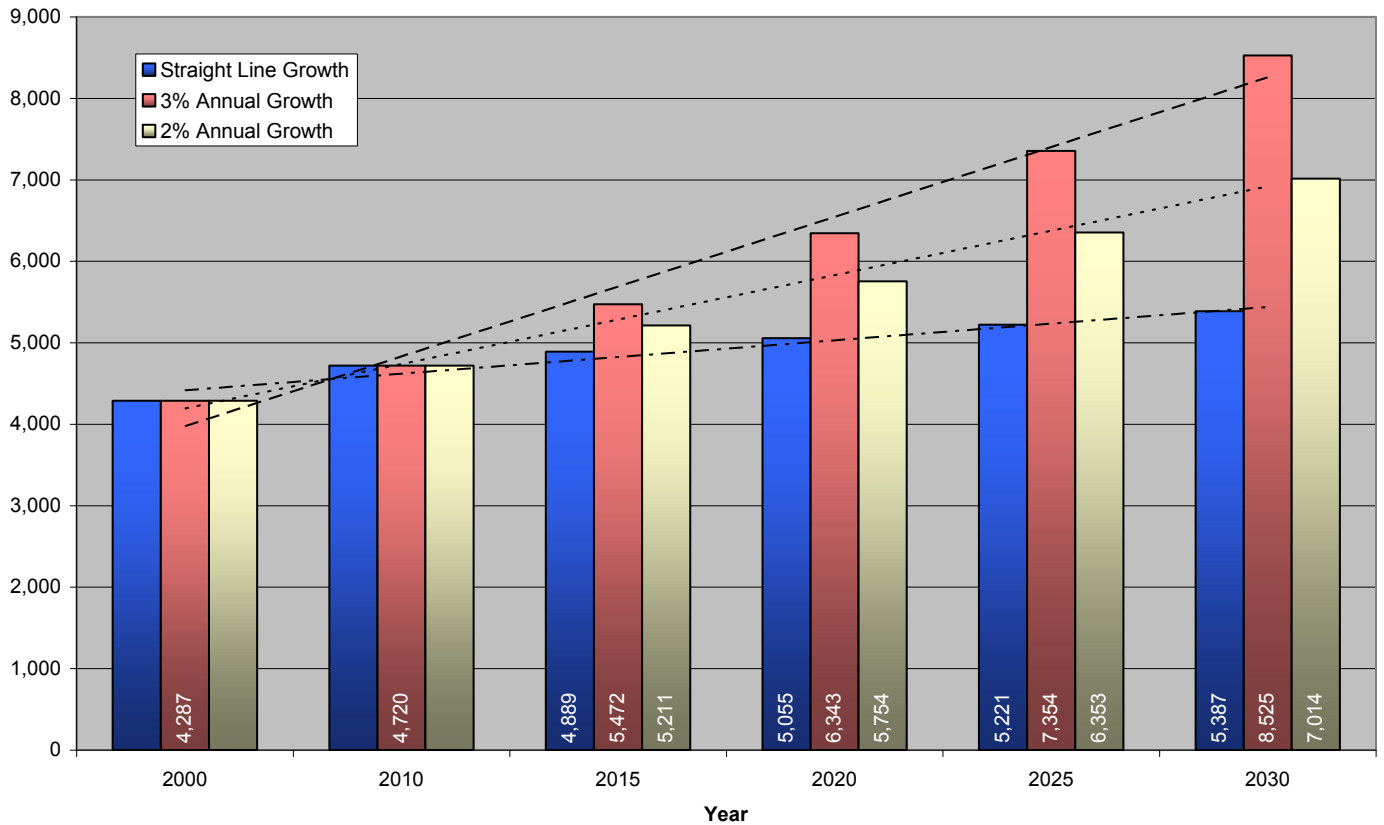


3.8 Projected Population

In 2000, the population of the City of Lonoke was 4,287, a net gain of 265 persons from 1990. Since 2000, growth has continued yielding an estimated population of 4,720 in 2010. By the year 2030, the City of Lonoke could approach 5,387 persons using straight line projections. However, such projections can be unreliable as the factors affecting local population can be very volatile and difficult to predict. For example, the addition of as little as 100-200 jobs, or diversion of suburban growth from other communities to Lonoke could provide a substantial population increase within a very short period of time. Therefore, to understand the effects of future population growth this study will utilize alternate scenarios.

The first scenario, already provided, would provide very low population growth as stated above. A second medium growth scenario would assume two percent annual growth over the next 20 years. This scenario would yield 7,014 persons by 2030. A final higher growth scenario would assume three percent annual growth and yield 8,525. These three scenarios present a range of growth possibilities for the city. The likelihood of any of these scenarios occurring rests both within and outside the control of the city and its residents. It is likely over the course of the next 20 years that Lonoke may experience growth period resembling each of the scenarios.

City of Lonoke
Population Growth Scenarios



3.9 Housing and Land Use Projections

Over the next 20 years, a net increase in population for the City of Lonoke is expected to be approximately between 667 to 3,825 persons. This population increase will generate a demand for new housing given the city’s historical low housing vacancy trends. Assuming a density pattern of three units per acre, it is estimated that between 90 to 500 acres of new development will be required to meet residential housing demand for the City. That figure equates to roughly between 265 and 1,500 new homes over the next 20 years. Taking into account residential land use absorption represents approximately 75% of all areas converted (25% for other supporting services: commercial expansion, industrial developments, schools, churches, parks, open space, streets, and other land use activities) it can be determined roughly between 120 and 675 gross acres will be demanded and likely converted from rural or vacant use to urban purposes within the next 20 years.

With regard to future land use needs, Lonoke’s future growth cannot be accommodated within the current city limits for the studied planning period by use of vacant land alone. Conversion of current agricultural land within the city to urban uses will be required to provide for the city’s future residential growth. This will likely occur toward the city’s western edge. However, commercial growth will continue to be accommodated in the form of new development near the Arkansas Highway 31 Interchange and with redevelopment along the Center Street corridor leading to downtown. Until the interstate highway interchange is placed on the Arkansas Highway 89 corridor it is unlikely the corridor will possess enough vehicle traffic to support increased commercial uses.

Considering land uses further, Lonoke currently has a distribution of land uses typical to many small, older Grand Prairie/Delta cities. The city is very compact and the city limit boundary serves as a stark divider between urban and agricultural uses, meaning residential and commercial uses congregate almost exclusively within the city. This is due in large part to the high suitability and value of the lands surrounding the city for agricultural uses. The city has a healthy amount of commercial uses for its population size, though continued commercial growth in the city during the Great Recession indicates the city has been commercially underserved. Of the city's residential uses, single-family homes predominate and constitute the largest form of improved land use across the city. It is likely most future residential development in the city will come in form of single-family homes.

The city's land use patterns do have one concerning trend, however. The city appears to be currently zoned in an inefficient manner. Only 15% of the areas zoned for highway and neighborhood commercial uses are occupied. This likely indicates that areas not suitable for commercial uses have been zoned commercial. While this may not seem like a negative issue, commercial zoning can often serve to increase the value of property. Therefore, if areas that are not suitable for commercial development are zoned commercially, this can serve as a barrier for transfer and development of those properties to appropriate uses.

For Lonoke to continue to grow, annexation will need to take place. However, annexations can often come with up-front costs that can take decades to recoup. As such, the city should carefully consider any future annexations, accepting only those annexation proposals that would present a financial benefit to the community as justified through use cost-benefit analysis.

3.10 Implications and Conclusion

The data provided in this report paint a portrait of Lonoke as a growing community of a unique character and charm, with its best days lying ahead of it. The city is anchored by a strong downtown that is a hub for many of the city's cultural, political, and institutional entities. The plan should develop strategies that will work to retain downtown's strength despite continued residential and commercial growth at the city's edges. Therefore, a strong emphasis will need to be placed on maintaining and improving the fabric and economic vitality of downtown, the heart of the city.

The Center Street corridor is now and will likely continue to be the city's primary commercial corridor for the foreseeable future. As the Lonoke grows, this corridor will slowly be redeveloped. This has already been seen with developments such as the Dollar General Store at the corridor's intersection with 9th Street. The plan should create policies to guide redevelopment along this corridor such that it occurs in a way that benefits both the community and the long-term viability of Center Street.

Given the city's previously identified compact form, noted housing shortage, and potential for future suburban growth, accommodating new development will need to be a key focus of the general plan. This should be addressed in a number of ways. For example, planning for the convenient movement of future residents will be a priority and ensuring the city has a sound master street plan will be vital. Also, working to ensure that future growth follows access to utilities will be key in easing burdens on city infrastructure.

Chapter Four: Goals and Strategies

4.1 General

This section sets forth the goals, objectives, and policies which will guide the development of the general plan. They are based on the history, trends, geography, and issues facing the city. The goals are the end toward which the plan is directed and represent the overall vision of the city. The objectives are the means to achieving this end. An objective represents a clear “milepost” along the strategically chosen path to the goals. The policies set forth a course of action. Once the plan is adopted, these policies will outline the specific actions and stances the City will take in order to achieve its goals.

The main purpose of this plan is to influence community growth; however, there are several other issues the City should address before tackling growth issues.

First, the City should focus on fixing the basics, such as the utility and road system. Next, the City should focus on building on assets that already exist in the community. Then the City should focus on creating neighborhoods of choice and building family wealth. These areas stress that a city which is growing in population may not be as important as a city which is growing in quality. Such quality can be measured in terms such as median income levels, family health, education levels, employment opportunities, and quality neighborhoods. Addressing these areas first will add to the overall success of the City’s strategies for growth and development.

4.2 Fixing the Basics

GOAL 4.2.1: To build and maintain a solid foundation for community growth and development.

Objective 1: To be aware of current city trends and to prepare and maintain a plan for future growth.

Policies - It is a policy of the City that:

1. Zoning patterns will conform to the land use component of the general plan.
2. Future street construction will conform to the transportation component of the general plan.
3. Development proposals will be evaluated in terms of their compatibility with the community facilities component of the general plan.
4. All development or re-zoning requests must conform to the general plan.

Objective 2: To identify and build upon successful redevelopments.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Encourage development submittals that build upon or complement existing successful developments.
2. Encourage partnerships with local businesses, organizations, and community groups so that these groups can begin to pool their resources, work together, and understand that their fates are intertwined.
3. Development approvals will be based on the most efficient use of municipal resources.

Objective 3: To ensure Lonoke maintains a balanced pattern of land uses.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Ensure land is used for its best suited uses.
2. Buffer sensitive land uses such as residential neighborhoods from intrusive and intensive uses.

4.3 Building on Assets

GOAL 4.3.1: To build on existing assets within the community.

Objective 1: To build and maintain a diversified economic base.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Build upon its economic base so that it will not be vulnerable to future changes and can attract a variety of employers.
2. Provide welcoming gateways into the community that will maintain economic viability as attractive commercial areas.
3. Protect and preserve agricultural and aquacultural land within and near the city until needed for conversion to urban uses.

Objective 2: To develop a positive image through aggressive marketing.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Maintain a distinctive identity with features such as a logo, signature gateways, signature banners and signage, a city motto, and other unifying improvements.
2. Support local institutions such as the Chamber of Commerce.
3. Actively build upon the identified assets of the community such as the Hogan State Fish Hatchery, the city's historic charm, downtown, the Two Prairie Bayou, and Civil War heritage relating Lonoke's role in the Little Rock Campaign.

Objective 3: To create programs to attract visitors.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Use Downtown as an event center as much as possible.
2. Expand recreational amenities in order to attract people in the region to the city.
3. Work to better promote the Hogan State Fish Hatchery and the city's aquaculture industry.

Objective 4: To improve Downtown as the city center.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Encourage practices be used for the maintenance and renovations of downtown properties.
2. Support projects that connect the various businesses and activities currently existing in downtown.
3. Promote downtown as a multiple use area with varying attractions so that cumulative attraction will result in a higher level of activity for each of these functions than the function could generate on its own.
4. Ensure that signage and landscaping will work to unify buildings and functions in the downtown area.
5. Use downtown as often as possible for outdoor activities that will draw people to visiting the area.

6. Work to make downtown more accessible so that all residents have an opportunity to experience the area.
7. Encourage downtown merchants to think cohesively and coordinate their marketing efforts.
8. Promote uses that will encourage development of downtown as a distinctive and inviting district.

4.4 Creating Neighborhoods of Choice

GOAL 4.4.1: To enhance residential areas and provide quality neighborhoods for all residents.

Objective 1: To create residential neighborhoods that are functional and offer easy access to work centers, the central business district, and community facilities such as parks and schools.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Promote new neighborhoods that are planned as integral developments combining a variety of design elements, uses, densities, and housing options.
2. Promote traditional neighborhood design where applicable, featuring a street grid, neighborhood commercial uses, and a compact design.

Objective 2: To keep and attract people who work in Lonoke and elsewhere to live in the city.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Work to create a diverse range of housing options so that everyone from first time homebuyers to advancing professionals can locate in the city.

Objective 3: To preserve, protect, and enhance the environment.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Develop and maintain a recreational master plan and trails plan that will consider the community's needs as it evolves.
2. Encourage new developments that are designed to be compatible with the natural and built environments of the surrounding area.
3. Encourage public green space.
4. Work to preserve the city's existing floodplains from intrusion of new development that may alter existing drainage patterns.

Objective 4: To expand public space.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Work to provide open green spaces and trees throughout community. These could be neighborhood parks, trails, or conservation areas as part of development.
2. Keep streetscapes, public spaces, and canopied streets attractive and well maintained within the constraints of budget limitations.
3. Provide a balance between open space and development.
4. Work to locate public art in places throughout the community with the help of local students and other community members.
5. Work to preserve forests, floodplains, and other natural areas so that these areas will remain safe and clean and can be used as an outdoor amenity for the community.

Objective 5: To preserve Lonoke’s small-town atmosphere.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Reinforce community identification, pride, and cohesiveness by supporting neighborhood and community activities and providing opportunities for community members to volunteer in city events or improvement projects.
2. Ensure new development is compatible with existing patterns of development.
3. Work to encourage infill development within existing neighborhoods.

4.5 Building Family Wealth

GOAL 4.5.1: To increase the welfare, wealth, and overall quality of living for families in the community.

Objective 1: To increase the percentage of high school graduates entering college.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Involve students in volunteer opportunities and encourage them to become an active part of the community.
2. Encourage after-school programs that will help students develop a college mindset at an early age.
3. Work to create additional recreational opportunities for teens.

Objective 2: To increase the percentage of young people returning to work in Lonoke after completing higher education.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Work to make youth a vital part of the community by encouraging them to get involved in extracurricular activities.
2. Promote community pride by supporting lessons on the city’s history in local schools and downtown visits as part of High School reunions.
3. Promote these and other programs that will foster strong ties to the community among youth.

Objective 3: To work with Arkansas Economic Development Commission and the Chamber of Commerce to support local business growth and encourage new businesses to locate in the city.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Encourage local ownership, entrepreneurial training, business mentoring, downtown revitalization, community supported agriculture, and a farmers market.
2. Work to recognize businesses that exhibit “best practices” and to provide training workshops to encourage local business.

4.6 Influencing Community Growth

GOAL 4.6.1: To manage development in a way that will maintain community stability and prosperity.

Objective 1: To assure that residential properties develop so that the values of adjacent properties do not suffer and the character of residential property is not affected by the encroachment of non-residential uses.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Avoid blighting influences that may lead to neighborhood decline by expanding code enforcement efforts within the constraints of the budget.
2. Protect existing neighborhoods from intrusions of adverse land uses and commercial developments.
3. Promote infill development to maximize the potential of underutilized property within the city.
4. Review all proposed developments in relation to specific and detailed provisions which at a minimum:
 - Regulate the subdivision of land.
 - Regulate the use of land in accordance with this Plan and ensure the compatibility of adjacent land uses.
 - Regulate areas subject to seasonal and/or periodic flooding.
 - Ensure safe and convenient traffic flow on- and off-site and accommodate vehicle parking needs.
 - Ensure that developments do not result in a reduction in any adopted level of service for infrastructure.
 - Protect against adverse impacts to the environment.
 - Ensure the availability of suitable land for utility facilities necessary to support proposed development.

GOAL 4.6.2: To maintain a functional and desirable transportation system.

Objective 1: To maintain connectivity and harmony among the various neighborhoods of the city.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Ensure collector streets will be focused on connectivity, minimizing the distance between the home, office, and retail areas. They will be located to provide uninterrupted connection between residential streets and arterials and between recreational, educational, and shopping facilities in the neighborhood.

Objective 2: To maximize roadway capacity and preserve corridors to allow for future roadway construction.

Policies - It is a policy of the City that:

1. Residential streets will be designed to provide good access to abutting properties while also discouraging use by through traffic.
2. Collector streets shall be designed in such a manner as to minimize traffic speeds near residential areas.
3. Direct residential frontage on collectors will be discouraged.
4. Site plans reflect the fact that controlling access points to arterials results in fewer accidents, increased capacity, and shorter travel time. Access Management shall protect the roadway capacity by requiring the property owner to limit entrances on the street. Where possible, regulations controlling access points along streets classified as collector and above will be established and enforced.
5. Subdivision regulations include the provisions required for the attainment of all necessary right-of-ways at the time of subdivision approval.

Objective 3: To create a more walk-able community by building corridors that are inviting and functional for pedestrians. Infrastructure improvements will not focus solely on streets and automobile transportation, but will consider the broader transportation environment, including sidewalks, streetscapes, bike paths, trails, and overall connectivity of pedestrian routes.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Ensure sidewalks run along streets, making pedestrian transportation both functional and safe.
2. Ensure sidewalks and bike paths form a safe, uninterrupted connection between the home, office, and retail areas.
3. Ensure bike paths are distinguished from car lanes by signs, painted stripes, or other distinguishable markings or are located apart from the street.
4. Preserve parks, street trees, and green space along pedestrian pathways to shade the path and make it an attractive alternative to driving.
5. Install traffic calming devices where appropriate in order to slow down traffic speeds and make streets more inviting and safe for pedestrians.

GOAL 4.6.3: To coordinate land use planning, growth, and utilities in the most efficient and effective manner.

Objective 1: To provide all areas within Lonoke with adequate sanitary sewer and water distribution facilities and to assure the availability of utilities for the continued growth of the city.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Control the extension or provision of utilities in order to carry out the provisions of this plan.
2. Ensure that no proposed development will result in a reduction in the adopted level of service for utilities.
3. Require all developments within the Planning Area Boundary to be served by central water and wastewater services if technically feasible.
4. Require all developments to install public utilities and become annexed to the City as a condition of tying onto City utilities.
5. Require all future development plans to have adequate public utilities before being approved by the City Planning Commission.
6. Coordinate the extension or provision of utilities in order to carry out the provisions of this plan.

GOAL 4.6.4: To promote sustainable development.

Objective 1: To ensure that future development will neither exceed the ability of the land to maintain vital natural functions, nor the availability of public facilities to support that development.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Promote higher density development in areas served by wastewater utilities in order to control outward expansion.
2. Promote mixed-use development in order to allow innovative use of vacant land that cuts down on automobile traffic and discourages outward expansion.
3. Work to ensure new developments and new city infrastructure are environmentally sensitive.
4. Work to ensure new development does not negatively impact the city's stormwater drainage system.

GOAL 4.6.5: To maximize the use of land.

Objective 1: To achieve well-planned developments that feature a maximum use of the land, good traffic circulation, convenient access and egress, and a pleasant environment for the residents and to reduce per capita cost of municipal services.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Promote higher density development in areas served by wastewater utilities.
2. Promote a balance of infill development and new development.

GOAL 4.6.6: To protect and ensure the long-term commercial viability of Lonoke’s primary commercial corridors.

Objective 1: To ensure quality development and redevelopment occurs along the U.S. Highway 70, Center Street, and Arkansas Highway 89 corridor.

Policies – It is a policy of the City to:

1. Use innovative planning regulations to control the design and visual aesthetic of development along high priority corridors.
2. Encourage greater use of attractive landscaping and signage along certain corridors.
3. Control building placement, uses, and parking along high priority corridors.

Chapter Five: Plan Elements

5.1 Land Use Standards

Many land use plans focus on the separation of different types of land uses. This approach often fails to take into account whether or not proposed land uses actually create any adverse influence on one another. In other words, the strict separation of land use types becomes an end in itself and not an element of the urban design process. In departure from this approach, this plan emphasizes the nature of land uses. Thus, the size, use intensity, traffic generation, and the overall aesthetics of a development become more important than the actual activity conducted on the property.

The Future Land Use categories established by this plan were developed in order to address particular issues facing the Lonoke community. Therefore, the following land use categories offer solutions to actual urban issues and do not simply respond to a desire to separate various land use types.

Agricultural/Open Space

Character: Reserved for natural preservation, agriculture, very low density residential uses, and recreational uses under both public and private ownership. This use area includes floodplains and current large scale farms. These areas are not intended to generate demand for municipal services. Areas designated specifically for open space are generally confined to floodplains.

General uses: Recreation, Natural Preservation, Limited impact development, and Agricultural uses
 Density: < 1 unit per acre
 Lot size: N/A
 Utility requirements: None
 Appropriate zoning: New zoning district (A-1)

Recreational

Character: Intended solely for recreational uses. Areas currently designated for recreational use are listed on the future land use map. Potential future recreational areas are specifically denoted. It is expected that as the city grows additional areas will be given the recreational designation due to the addition of new park space.

General uses: Parks, Golf Courses, Trails
 Density: N/A
 Lot size: N/A
 Utility requirements: None
 Appropriate zoning: All zones

Central Business District

Character: Area intended to serve as the city center of Lonoke. A mix of uses is allowed as one might find within a downtown environment. All development should enhance the visual aesthetic of the city. This area is intended to be the city's heart and focal center; housing the city's chief governmental, financial, social, cultural institutions.

General uses: General Commercial, Office, Entertainment, Second-story Residential mixed-use structures
 Density: N/A
 Lot size: N/A
 Utility requirements: Sewer and water services
 Appropriate zoning: C-1

General Commercial

Character: Area intended for the city's primary commercial streets. All development should enhance the visual appearance of the city. Special regulations for design, signage, and landscaping may apply. Alternatives to simple "strip" commercial development are encouraged.

General uses: All commercial, office, etc.
 Density: N/A
 Lot size: N/A
 Utility requirements: Sewer and water services
 Appropriate zoning: C-2

Low-Impact Commercial

Character: Area intended for commercial uses of low intensity that generate less traffic, noise, and other impacts that could negatively affect adjacent properties. All development should enhance the visual appearance of the city. Special regulations for design, signage, and landscaping may apply.

General uses: Low Intensity Commercial, Office, etc.
 Density: N/A
 Lot size: N/A
 Utility requirements: Sewer and water services
 Appropriate zoning: C-3

Office/Institutional Mix

Character: Area intended for office and institutional uses that are more compatible near residential neighborhoods. These areas should serve as buffers along arterial roads. Commercial retail operations are not intended for these areas. All development should enhance the visual appearance of the city.

General uses: Low Intensity Commercial, Office, etc.
 Density: N/A
 Lot size: N/A
 Utility requirements: Sewer and water services
 Appropriate zoning: C-3

Industrial

Character: Designation allotted for medium and large scale industrial uses. Uses within the district should not present a nuisance to adjoining property owners by way of the creation of excessive noise, vibration, odor, smoke, toxic substances, and/or hazards harmful to the health, safety, and welfare of the community.

General uses: Manufacturing, Wholesaling, Warehousing, Mining
 Density: Not applicable
 Lot size: Minimum ½ acre
 Utility requirements: Sewer and water service intended
 Appropriate zoning: I-1

Rural Residential

Character: Area intended for a variety of rural uses, predominately single-family residential on large lots. If sewer service becomes available, these areas should be converted to higher intensity designations.

General uses: Single-family, small scale commercial and industrial
 Density: < 1 unit per acre
 Lot size: Minimum 1 acre
 Utility requirements: None
 Appropriate Zoning: Outside City

Low Density Residential

Character: Area reserved for single-family homes following development patterns similar to the majority of existing residential development within the community.

General uses: Single-family homes
 Density: < 4 units per acre
 Lot size: Minimum 7,000 square feet
 Utility requirements: Sewer and water services
 Appropriate zoning: R-1

Medium Density Residential

Character: Area intended for single-family homes, townhouses, duplexes, tri-plexes, four-plexes, and other multi-family structures. This area is intended to provide residential housing at medium densities, offering a greater diversity of housing choice. Apartment complexes should only be located at the periphery of existing neighborhoods and where available infrastructure can support them.

General uses: Single-family, townhouses, duplexes up to four-plex structure, apartments
 Density: < 8 unit per acre, not to exceed 18 units per acre
 Lot size: Minimum 5,000 square feet for single-family
 Minimum 7,500 square feet for multi-family
 Utility requirements: Sewer and water services
 Appropriate zoning: R-1, R-2, R-3

Affordable Housing Residential

Character: Area intended for single-family homes, manufactured homes, and manufactured home parks. These areas provide a maximum diversity of housing choice and incorporate a mix of densities and residential uses following a more generally scattered pattern of land use.

General uses: Single-family homes, manufactured homes
 Density: < 8 units per acre
 Lot size: Varying Requirements
 Utility requirements: Sewer and water services
 Appropriate zoning: New zoning district (R-MH)

Planned Development

Character: Area intended for either medium-high density residential development, commercial development, or both that is master planned as a cohesive unit. Development is intended to occur through the Planned Unit Development process.

General uses: Medium-density Residential, Commercial
 Density: < 18 units per acre
 Lot size: N/A
 Utility requirements: Sewer and water services
 Appropriate zoning: New zoning district (PUD)

Public/Semi-Public

Character: Area allocated for public uses that otherwise are not wholly compatible with other districts in this land use plan. These developments should be handled on a case-by-case basis. This district is specifically set aside for schools, jails, airports, campuses, and other similar uses.

General uses: Schools, jails, airports, campuses
 Density: Not applicable
 Lot size: Not applicable
 Utility requirements: Sewer and water services
 Appropriate zoning: All districts

5.2 Downtown

Like all cities, Lonoke is a dynamic place where among other elements, economic and cultural changes greatly affect the community. The community that exists today is not the same community that existed thirty years ago or the one that will exist thirty years from now. As such, it is important to carefully and responsibly identify and plan for areas of potential change.

Lonoke’s downtown is the “heart” of the community in many senses. The central business district serves as the governmental, cultural, institutional and financial hub for the community. In a literal sense it is also the heart of Lonoke, being located in the center of the city at the crossroads the city’s two primary corridors. However, as in so many other small communities, the role of Lonoke’s downtown as a retail center is changing.

The plan encourages continued redevelopment of downtown. Plan goals and objectives recognize the role of downtown as becoming a district of diverse uses. This diversity should include a wide of array of uses including governmental offices, churches, banks, loft apartments, professional offices, shops, restaurants, and boutiques. What ties these uses together is the urban fabric of downtown, the uniqueness of its buildings, and its pedestrian-friendly scale. Future development and redevelopment in downtown should carry forward the unique and historic character of downtown.

A key in maintaining downtown Lonoke, will be maintaining its status as the heart of the community. This will mean working to keep community institutions such as banks, churches, and government offices in the city’s downtown. It will also mean ensuring downtown remains well-trafficked. As Lonoke grows vehicle traffic will increasingly become a concern. When faced with this issue many cities look to bypass the downtown. However, the city should work to provide adequate traffic capacity using existing facilities, and

considering bypassing downtown as a last resort. Doing so will help guarantee the longevity and vibrancy of downtown.

Preserving the city's historic assets is particularly important in downtown. Downtown represents the historic center of the community and provides current residents a connection to the city's historic past. The city currently has a historic district representing the downtown area. The historic district now stands as a symbolic district. However, the district could be tied to regulations governing historic preservation in the district. A less invasive alternative option would be draft building design guidelines to encourage downtown property owners to use best practices in renovation and redevelopment. Regardless, these regulations could help ensure Lonoke's downtown is properly maintained for later generations.

Though downtown has faced many changes, the only certainty is that it will likely face more changes. Meeting these challenges will require a steadfast commitment to downtown by not only the city, but the entire community. The comparative health of the city center remains a factor by which visitors and potential investors will judge the community.

5.3 Transportation System

Roads

During meetings with the city planning commission, transportation was commonly cited as an area of concern. Accordingly, transportation was given serious consideration in the formulation of this plan. By and large, the current transportation system meets the current needs of the community. However, timely expansion of this system will be critical as the city grows and expands.

Overall, the street system should represent a well-planned network of arterials, collectors, and local streets. Local streets have the lowest speed and carrying capacity, and filter traffic to collector streets. Collector streets allot for more traffic and higher speeds, and serve as primary connections to arterial streets. Arterial streets have the highest carrying capacities and primarily serve to permit through traffic. Within Lonoke, U.S. 70 and Arkansas Highway 31 or N. Center Street are examples of arterial roads.

In addition to maintaining the streets already in place, the plan recommends a number of roadway extensions, new routes, and traffic-way improvements. The most prominent among these are proposed highway interchanges along I-40. The proposed interchange at Arkansas Highway 89 could have a tremendous impact on Lonoke. The development of this improvement could aid the city's efforts in attracting a major industrial employer, and make additional areas viable for commercial or other large scale development. The plan map shows service roads near this interchange that would provide access to the properties fronting I-40.

An additional roadway project would be an extension of John Pack Rd south and east connecting with N. Center St. The extension would serve as relief route for traffic for Center Street diverting traffic west to Arkansas Highway 89. This project will be costly as it crosses a creek and through floodplains. This project should only be given priority once traffic demands along N. Center Street exceed potential capacity for the roadway.

Other significant roadway proposals include an extension of 9th Street westward from Dismuke St to Arkansas Highway 89, and westward extensions of SW Front Street, Palm Street, and Fish Hatchery Road. These would provide east-west alternatives across the city. They would additionally extend the city's current street grid pattern that has served it very well.

Sidewalks and Trails

Although providing adequate roadways for automobiles is very important, it is also necessary to adequately provide for the needs of pedestrians. Sidewalks and trails are often overlooked within many cities' transportation systems. This leaves portions of the community without safe means of getting from their homes to school, work, or shop. As such this plan recommends further development of the city's trail system and sidewalks.

The trail system would serve to provide a recreational outlet for Lonoke's citizens as well as provide important pedestrian links between common destinations. Strategic investment in this system and other pedestrian facilities would make significant progress toward creating a comprehensive transportation system in Lonoke.

Contained on the general plan map are proposed routes for the recommended trail system. The trail system should at a minimum connect existing city parks, schools, and downtown. Former railroad right-of-way along U.S. Highway 70 is proposed to serve as the east-west backbone for the trail system. A trail connecting downtown to the city ballpark in the east portion of Lonoke is already constructed and in-use. Development of this trail system could allow users such as children and teens to travel safely between their neighborhoods, schools, and parks.

Automotive and Pedestrian Transportation Principles

The primary functions of the streets are to provide an efficient mode of circulation of automotive and pedestrian traffic within and through the community, and to provide access to all parcels of property. The parking and storage of automobiles must be considered a secondary function of the street, and should always be subordinated to the interest of good, efficient traffic movement. Herein lays a major cause of disorganization and disharmony in many cities. Along major streets, strip commercial development and angle parking impede efficient traffic movement, because the street tends to serve as a "driveway" and parking lot as well as a traffic artery.

Streets, more than being purely automotive roadways, also provide for the movement of pedestrians. Adequate facilities for automobiles and pedestrians are a necessity of properly functioning streets. Pedestrian facilities should be designed and constructed to encourage utilization while making the user feel safe. This entails setting back sidewalks a minimum of five feet from the curb, planting trees and landscaping within the sidewalk setback, and/or providing attractive, adequate street lighting. Without proper amenities, sidewalks can become useless stretches of concrete or paving.

In order to form a basis for the preparation of an overall traffic movement plan, streets should be classified according to function, that is, the role for which they should serve in the circulation system. The classification of major streets and highways is defined as the grouping of roads and streets into classes of systems according to the character of service they will be expected to provide. Character of service is expressed by traffic mobility, land access, or some combination of these. Before this designation can be

made, a thorough understanding of the function of each street and highway must be established. The definitions and characteristics of the several types of highway facilities – arterial, collector, and city/local – were obtained from standards developed by the United States Department of Transportation. A summary of these definitions is presented in the following paragraphs.

Arterial – This class of street brings traffic to and from the expressway and provides for major movements of traffic within or through a city. Arterials, including primary (or major) and secondary (or minor) arterials, interconnect the principal traffic generators within the city and serve to connect smaller outlying communities with the city. Arterials handle trips between different areas of the city and form an integrated system. Typical trip lengths exceed one mile; truck, bus, state and federal routes are located on major arterials; and commuting trips concentrate on these routes.

This concentration of major traffic requires the provision of such traffic aids as progressive traffic signal systems and land markings. Although traffic volume cannot be considered a criterion, these routes are the most heavily used in the city. The arterial's primary function is to move traffic, but they also normally perform a secondary land service function. Thus, abutting property may have limited access, and parking and loading, which are secondary elements to traffic service and normally restricted altogether to improve capacity and traffic flow.

Collector – This class of street serves internal movement and provides access to the arterial system. Collectors do not handle long, through trips and need not be continuous for any great length. In a grid street pattern, however, a street several miles long may serve as a collector rather than an arterial if its predominant use is only to reach the next junction with an arterial.

Collectors rarely carry state or federal number routes, although they may connect less important rural roads with the major urban arterial system. Collectors may be used for bus or truck movements that give direct service to a particular area but are rarely used for through routes. For example, a collector street in an industrial area would properly carry both truck and bus movements which serve or terminate in that area.

Local – The sole function of city streets is to provide access to adjacent land. Local streets make up a large percentage of the total street mileage. Local streets, in most cases, carry daily volumes of 500 vehicles or less. Most trips begin on local streets, which in turn provide access to either collector or arterial streets.

The primary difference between the functional types applicable to Lonoke is the relative importance of land access versus traffic mobility. Residential streets are designed primarily to provide access to land; carrying through traffic is a secondary task. Collector streets have the dual function of carrying traffic as well as providing access to abutting properties. As traffic volumes increase, this dual function for these creates major conflicts. Arterial streets have both functions, but carrying traffic is the more important. The highest level of traffic service provided by the various classifications of streets is the expressway, which is devoted entirely to traffic service and provides no service directly to the land.

5.4 Tourism and Recreation

Local Tourism

While tourism has not often been a consideration of most Lonoke residents, the assets which Lonoke possesses provide the city a unique charm among communities in the Little Rock Metropolitan area. These assets could be further developed to increase the community's local tourism potential. Local tourism is usually defined as those visitors to a city from surrounding area that generally do not spend the night. For Lonoke the target market is the over 800,000 residents of the Little Rock and Pine Bluff Metropolitan areas as well those individuals within an hour drive east of the city.

Among Lonoke's potential draws are the Hogan State Fish Hatchery, Downtown Lonoke, Lonoke Depot, and the city's many nationally registered historic homes. The Hogan Fish Hatchery is the largest state-owned warm-water fish hatchery in the United States, producing some 4 million fish per year. However, it is located at the south edge of the community away from most activity in the community. It should also be noted Lonoke is home to Anderson Minnow Farm, the world's largest minnow farm.

Greater promotion and connection of these assets could lead to greater local tourism in much the same way the community of Scott has become an attraction in the regional area. Examples of this type of promotion including labeling Lonoke the "Minnow Capital of the World," installing minnow or fish-related public art and sculptures downtown, or even providing literature and a website that map out attractions for potential visitors.

Trails

As baby boomers age and obesity becomes an increasing problem, many cities are looking at ways to help their citizens stay healthier. Currently, programming offered through the Parks and Recreation department via the community center is working to help meet the need. However, the provision of proper infrastructure must play an additional role. As discussed in the following transportation section, the creation of a city-wide trails system would help meet this need. It would allow for various public recreational facilities to be connected and provide a healthy option for those that choose to walk instead of drive.

Parks

Lonoke is served by three parks and a community center located throughout the community. The city's parks feature a variety of active recreation offerings from playgrounds to baseball and softball facilities. The city's community center is a state of the art facility featuring a gym, exercise equipment, space for community gatherings, and swimming facilities. These facilities currently adequately serve the city. However, as the city grows current recreational offerings will need to expand.

The plan recommends development of a new park in the western portion of the planning area as the city grows. The park should be of the type and nature to adequately serve residents of new growth in the western portions of the city. An additional recommendation is the creation of a possible natural preserve along the Two Prairie Bayou near Arkansas Highway 31. This natural preserve would provide passive recreation and wildlife viewing opportunities to visitor and residents. It is proposed to feature a trail along the bayou that will connect to the city's trail system, and could also include a small visitor center to would provide information on Lonoke's attractions to visitors.

5.5 Urban Growth

Utilities

Lonoke's water and sewer systems will have a significant role in guiding and enabling future growth. Plan policies support growth in areas that are serviced or may be easily serviced by the City water and sewer system. Currently, nearly all developed areas of the city are served by city water and sewer service. However, the area surrounding the proposed Arkansas Highway 89 interchange on I-40 is not served by municipal water or sewer. It is not anticipated nor recommended that this area receive new development until the proposed interchange is constructed. However, once built, the city should be proactive in extending adequate utilities to stimulate new commercial, industrial, and residential growth in that area. It is recommended the city use this approach in other areas of the community to encourage growth where land can be most easily and economically served by city utilities. Doing so will help prevent proliferation of costly force sewer mains and pump stations

It is recommended the City establish formal utility service boundaries for water and wastewater utilities. Once formally established the service boundaries should be filed with the county recorder. The water service boundaries should also be filed with the state and appended to the state water plan. This will allow the service boundaries to become officially recognized and prevent further encroachment from local rural water districts. Additionally, the City should adopt formal policies with regard to service extension outside of the city limits. Such a policy might state that City services may not be extended without annexation or a pre-annexation agreement if not currently contiguous with the city limits. Adopting such policies will work to provide greater incentive for annexation into the City, and ensure the city receives a mutual benefit from those it provides services to in the form of tax revenue.

Stormwater Management

Though often ignored, proper stormwater management is an important component to guiding future urban growth. Communities often do not take the issue seriously until drainage problems create localized flooding or degrade water quality in nearby streams, rivers, and municipal water supplies. Localized flooding generally occurs due to irresponsible land development of commercial sites and residential subdivisions. Poor development practices disrupt the natural hydrological functions of land by pushing stormwater off a property more quickly and in greater quantities. If these irresponsible development practices become common place the problems only magnify as more water is quickly pushed off more and more properties creating greater flood hazards.

Proper development practices seek to slow the run-off of stormwater by either retaining or detaining it on-site. This ensures local recharge of the water table occurs and prevents flooding from excess run-off at drainage choke points downstream. To ensure responsible development practices occur, the city should carefully consider drafting stormwater regulations. While potentially unpopular, such regulations will save money and heartache for both the city and its residents in the long-run.

Annexation

Municipalities in Arkansas may annex adjacent land by one of three methods. The first method is by direct election determined by a majority of the qualified electors voting on the issue, i.e. the voters of the municipality and the voters of the area proposed for annexation. Section 14-40-302 of the Arkansas Code, Annotated, sets forth the authority as follows.

- (a) By vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the total number of members making up its governing body, any municipality may adopt an ordinance to annex lands contiguous to the municipality if the lands are any of the following:
 - (1) Platted and held for sale or use as municipal lots;
 - (2) Whether platted or not, if the lands are held to be sold as suburban property;
 - (3) When the lands furnish the abode for a densely settled community or represent the actual growth of the municipality beyond its legal boundary;
 - (4) When the lands are needed for any proper municipal purposes such as for the extension of needed police regulation; or
 - (5) When they are valuable by reason of their adaptability for prospective municipal uses.
- (b)(1) Contiguous lands shall not be annexed when they either:
 - (A) Have a fair market value, at the time of the adoption of the ordinance, of lands used only for agricultural or horticultural purposes and the highest and best use of the lands is for agricultural or horticultural purposes; or
 - (B) Are lands upon which a new community is to be constructed with funds guaranteed, in whole or in part, by the federal government under Title IV of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 or under Title VII of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1970.
- (2) Any person, firm, corporation, partnership, or joint ventures desiring to come within this exclusion must have received from the Department of Housing and Urban Development a letter of preliminary commitment to fund the new community under one (1) of the federal acts.
- (3) If any lands are annexed that are being used exclusively for agricultural purposes, the lands may continue to be used for such purposes so long as the owner desires and the lands shall be assessed as agricultural lands.

The second method of annexation deals with land surrounded by a city's boundaries. These "islands" may be annexed by the passage of an ordinance calling for the annexation of the surrounded land in accordance with A.C.A. § 14-40-501 et. seq.

The third method of annexation is by the petition of a majority of the real estate owners of any part of a county contiguous to and adjoining any part of the city. The process must conform to the provisions set forth in A.C.A. § 14-40-601 et. seq.

Of these methods, annexation by petition is the most common and generally the least controversial. Continued reliance on this method, however, tends to produce irregular corporate limits. Such irregularity can, in turn, cause problems providing public safety and other municipal services. A common misunderstanding is that annexation by petition is done by one property owner. In reality, a majority of owners of the majority of a given area may secure a petition by annexation without the agreement of other property owners in the given area.

Annexation by election allows the municipality to select the configuration it feels is suitable for urbanization. It gives the city the greatest control in deciding which lands should be annexed for which the city can provide effective and efficient delivery of public services. Furthermore, strategic use of this annexation method enables the city to grow in a rational manner in terms of land area.

The city should carefully examine all annexation requests using cost-benefit analyses, and only accept those that may strategically benefit the city. These analyses should consider both those economic considerations that can be measured and political considerations which cannot be as easily measured. Such examinations should provide cost outlays for additional city service provision and/or potential sales tax revenue increases as well as acknowledge the long-term political ramifications for an annexation. Using these types of analyses would allow the city to see the impacts of annexation in a more transparent way.

Development of land at urban densities will largely depend upon the availability of wastewater collection systems. Since the City of Lonoke has the only public wastewater system in the area, annexation should be made a requirement for connecting new subdivisions or large-scale developments to its system. For proposed developments that are not contiguous, pre-annexation agreements could be useful if all other options are found to be unworkable.

5.6 Gateways and Beautification

Gateways

Some of the most important aesthetic features of a city are its gateways and major corridors. This is the first thing people see when they enter the city, and, in a way, these areas illustrate the city's character and priorities. Consequently, the design of these areas should be a priority for the City.

Lonoke's primary gateway is Arkansas Highway 31 leading from I-40 to Downtown Lonoke. The city has already identified the importance of this corridor by providing welcome signage, good lighting, street trees, and signature signage along the corridor. The plan recommends the City continue to implement beautification projects around its gateways. For example, the city could work with a local volunteer group to install landscaping in the greenspaces at the highway interchange, or provide increased landscaping at other areas along the corridor.

Enhancing this and other gateways should go beyond beautification projects. Because the area around the Arkansas Highway 89 interchange is undeveloped, and Arkansas Highway 31 is likely to see continued redevelopment the city will be in a position to exercise some control over the look and feel of these areas. Often, communities do too little to regulate the design and landscaping of important commercial areas out of fear they may drive away growth. Subsequently, many cities are left with unattractive, short-lived developments that end up being long-term liabilities rather than assets for the community.

This plan proposes the creation of two overlay districts. These proposed districts are listed on the general plan map. Overlay districts are superimposed zoning districts designed to enhance specific areas by issuing development requirements that supersede those of the underlying zoning district. These planning tools can be used to effectively guide design and development in areas like the N. Center Street corridor and the Arkansas Highway 89 interchange. The overlay regulations would likely place additional requirements on permitted uses, signage, landscaping, building facades, building placement, and parking.

Property Maintenance and Beautification

Property maintenance is another important aesthetic issue and should be a main priority of the City. Simple factors such as graffiti or broken windows can change the perception of an area, and, in turn, decrease property values, and lead to blight and increased crime. The City should continue to enforce codes uniformly and strictly. If the City feels its regulations are too strict or hard to enforce, it should revisit and possibly revise these codes instead of becoming lenient with enforcement. Code enforcement is a large task, and as Lonoke grows, the City may need to consider hiring new staff, including additional code enforcement officers, to uphold a system of effective enforcement.

As mentioned in the previous city beautification can instill community pride and make a community more attractive to visitors. However, beautification projects often enjoy much success when the community is engaged and committed. In order to gain community support for beautification projects, the City should work to get the community involved in the effort. If residents have invested their time into beautification projects, they are more likely to support continued efforts by the City. The plan recommends the City support and help organize community beautification projects to get residents involved. These might include neighborhood clean-up days, “Yard of the Month” competitions, Adopt-A-Street programs, a community garden project, or other programs.

5.7 Economic Development

Industrial Development

The economy of the greater Lonoke community has traditionally relied heavily on agriculture and aquaculture to provide jobs. This is not likely to change in the foreseeable future. However, with recent reports from the United States Geological Service issuing warnings on future depletion of the Mississippi Alluvial Aquifer, the area may be less able to rely on agri/aquaculture practices that depend heavily upon irrigation. Accordingly, the city should seek to greater diversify its local economy by attracting industrial development.

With this in mind, the plan proposes the development of an approximately 1,000 acre industrial supersite in the northwestern portion of Lonoke. This super site would be located in immediate proximity to the proposed Arkansas Highway 89 interchange and would have easy access to and frontage along Interstate Highway 40. The Lonoke Chamber of Commerce and City are currently working together to attract an industry and plan for the eventual development of this site. Development of this site could have a tremendous impact on the growth and future of the City of Lonoke and should be planned carefully.

While seeking new industrial development is important, it will also remain important to work toward retaining existing industries within the city. The City and Lonoke Chamber of Commerce should work toward rewarding industries that retain jobs and investment within the community. Retention of existing industrial employers within the community should remain a top priority.

Retail Development

There are several corridors within Lonoke capable of supporting commercial and retail development. Examples can be seen in U.S. Highway 70, N. Center Street, and SW Front Street. Each of the roads bear similar levels of traffic, though N. Center Street receives the most traffic. While each of these corridors can support commercial development, the city should seek to concentrate commercial uses within the city. For example, the plan recommends intense concentration of commercial development along N. Center Street and from the I-40 area to downtown.

However, along portion of SW Front Street and U.S. Highway 70 the plan recommends greater restraint in converting vacant or rural uses to commercial or retail uses. It is recommended that commercial uses along this corridor be of a less intense nature. Following this type of development pattern will help promote stronger commercial districts and will work to preserve the long term viability of N. Center Street as the city's major commercial corridor.

In addition, there are significant amounts of land available near Lonoke's existing and proposed interstate interchanges. Development of these lands should be handled carefully. The City should seek to promote development compatible with the context of the properties. Therefore, auto-oriented retail and services uses are recommended for these areas. However, the City should work to ensure development within these areas portrays a positive image of Lonoke.

Chapter Six: Action Plan

Included below are actionable steps and goals that will be used to carry out the proposals in the general plan. The primary step towards implementing the Lonoke General Plan will be adoption by the City Council. Adoption will communicate to all stakeholders the City's commitment to Lonoke's future and its policies for future development. The steps below will be used to implement and fulfill the goals of the general plan. The City should take these steps and form a timeline, budget, and overall plan of action for implementing the steps below.

6.1 Low Cost/No Cost

These achievable items are included as projects the city and/or non-profit agencies can undertake with very little capital investment.

Downtown

1. Work with community organizations and Chamber of Commerce to plan at least monthly regular events downtown, with weekly events planned during summer months.
2. Develop recreational programming in downtown for all major holidays.
3. Work to create Main Street program or utilize an existing institution to help coordinate marketing and support for downtown businesses.
4. Encourage downtown businesses to hold seasonal open houses with standard hours for all businesses.
5. Develop and promote business retention programs.

Beautification

1. Consider creating a City Beautiful Commission.
2. Work with area organizations to expand community programs aimed at beautification such as a "Keep Lonoke Beautiful" program.
3. Place and maintain welcome signage at all of the entrances to the City of Lonoke.
4. Work with community volunteers to provide landscaping near key gateways into the city.
5. Work to increase code enforcement efforts within existing labor and budgetary constraints.
6. Host seasonal Community Cleanup Days to encourage volunteerism in local cleanup and beautification projects.

Future Development

1. Continue a cooperative development atmosphere in Lonoke.
2. Work with developers to interest them in building high quality affordable housing.
3. Use the land use element of the general plan to guide future land use decisions.
4. Upon adoption of the plan, work to educate citizens and developers about the general plan.
5. Work to use the general plan as a policy guide for the future of Lonoke.
6. Encourage growth and development in areas with ready access to city utilities.
7. Encourage development along Lonoke's existing Interstate Highway interchange.
8. Promote quality redevelopment of the Center Street corridor.

6.2 Regulatory

1. Review and revise the zoning and subdivision code regulations to meet the provisions of this plan.
2. Work with the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) to develop regulations regarding access management along U.S. Hwy 70 and Arkansas Highway 89 and 31.
3. Require street right-of-way dedications and enforce zoning setbacks for all new development as specified by street plan roadway standards.
4. Consider drafting and developing downtown design guidelines or historic district regulations.
5. Adopt policies concerning pre-annexation agreements and service provision for current and future utility customers outside the city.
6. Review current street construction standards.
7. Maintain and revise, as needed, the city's general plan including its land use, transportation, and community facility portions.
8. Revise regulations to require land use plan amendments prior to seeking rezoning approval.
9. Create formal trail standards for the city's trail system.
10. Develop a recreation master plan for the city.
11. Require new street development within the City of Lonoke and its Planning Area to comply with the streets standards and proposed street locations provided within this plan.

12. Require private streets to comply with the provisions of this plan and the city's street constructions standard if they are to be accepted as public streets.
13. Create a new planned unit development zoning district.
14. Create a specific zoning district for the placement of manufactured homes.
15. Create a zoning district for agricultural land protection.

6.3 Community Enhancement

Downtown

1. Work to provide aesthetic enhancements within the city's distinct downtown district.
2. Work collaboratively with community organizations in exploring ways to improve downtown.
3. Encourage greater pedestrian use downtown by improving pedestrian crossings, particularly at the intersection of Center and Front Streets.

Future Development

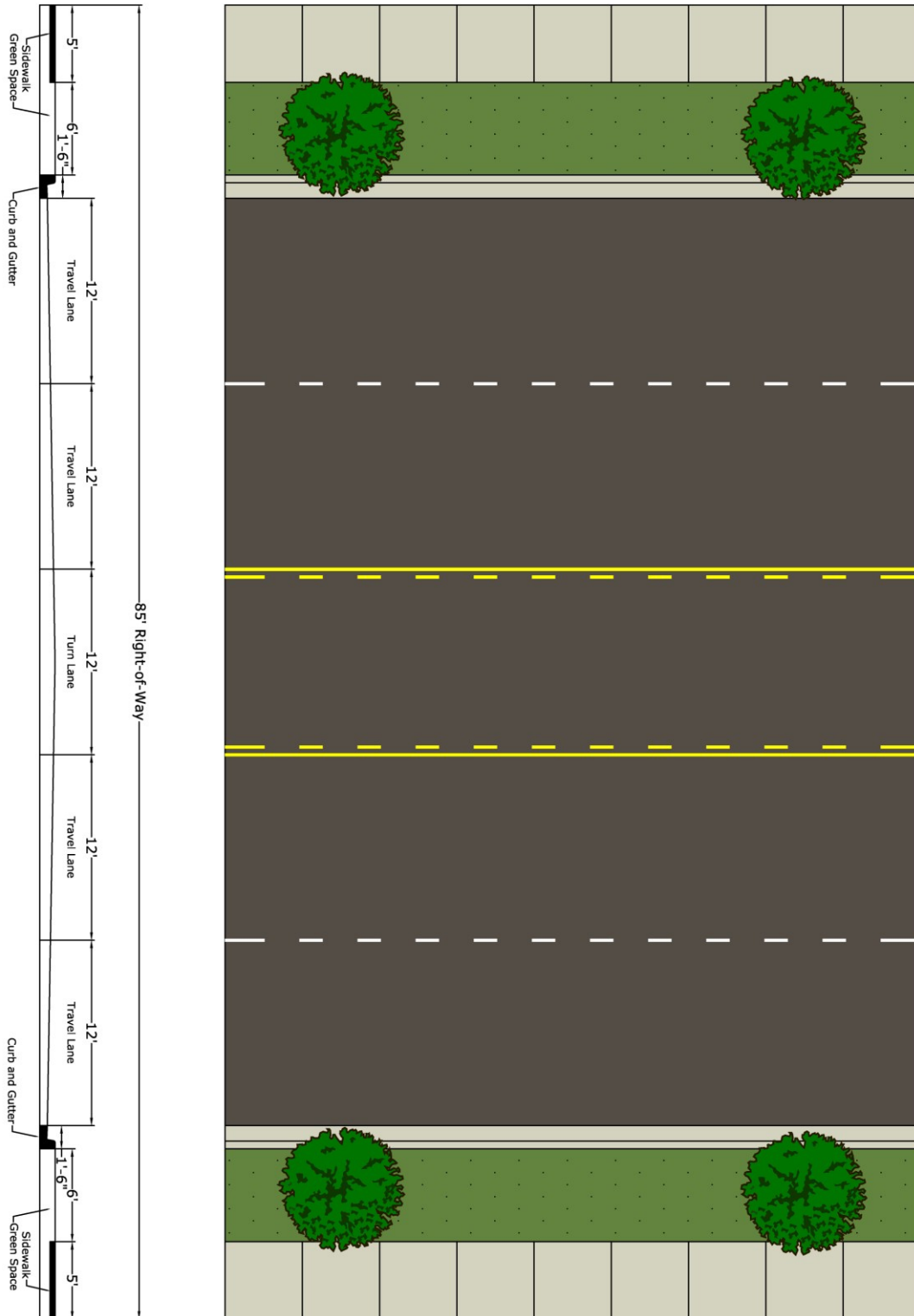
1. Evaluate opportunities to form partnerships in regional economic development.
2. Develop a capital improvements plan for constructing portions of the proposed trail system, street projects, and other capital investments.
3. Work with the Chamber of Commerce in exploring ways to partner in attracting new industries.
4. Work to further develop Lonoke's system of city parks and trails.

Preserving and Promoting Community Assets

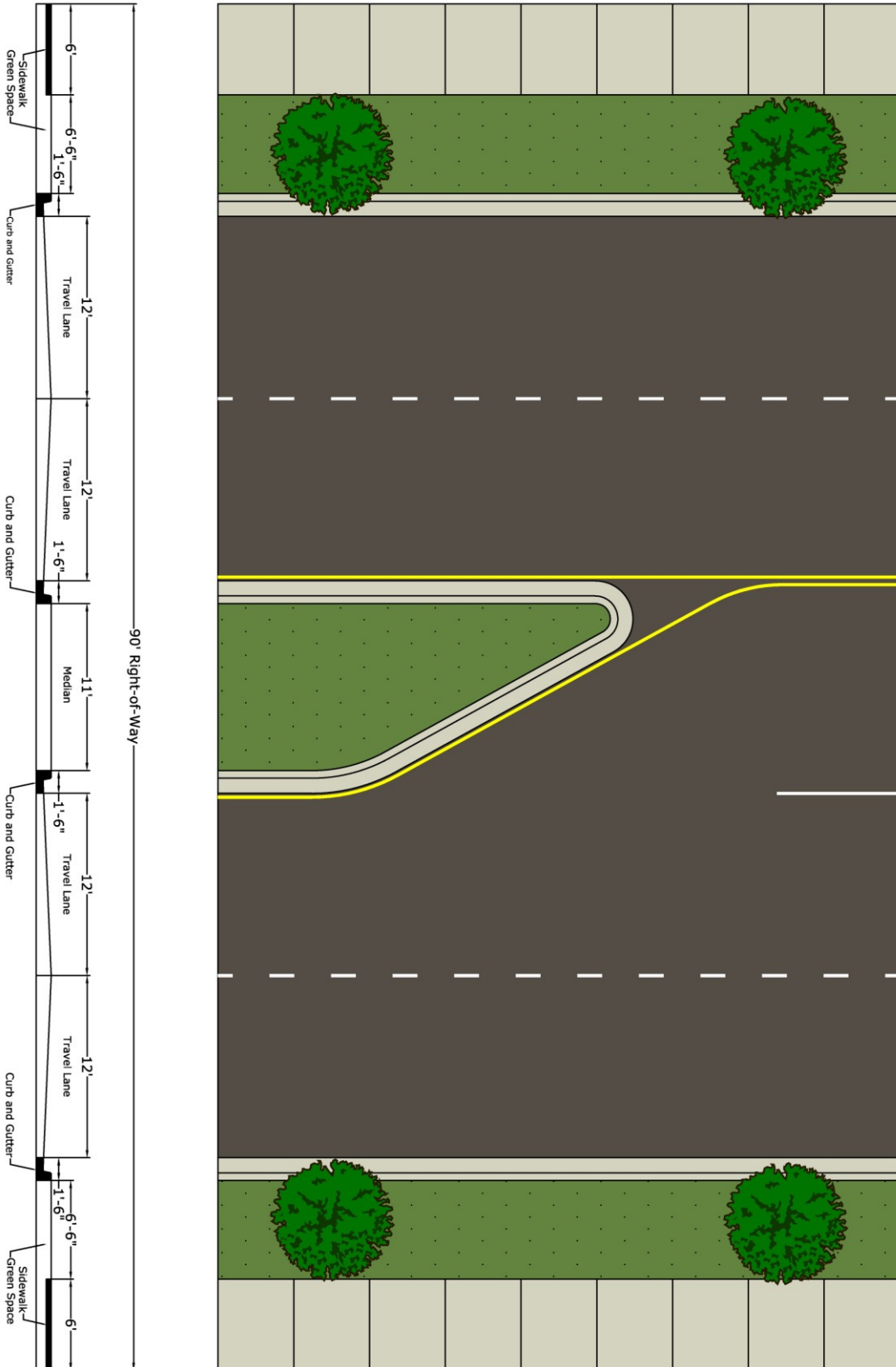
1. Maintain and continue to enhance the primary gateways and corridors into the city.
2. Form partnerships to promote local recreation and tourism.
3. Work with the Chamber of Commerce to attract retirees to community.
4. Develop regulations for development along streams.
5. Continue to develop and enhance the community's tourist attractions in order to further develop potential economic opportunities.
6. Work to develop a Natural Preserve Park along the Two Prairie Bayou.

Appendix One: Street Standards

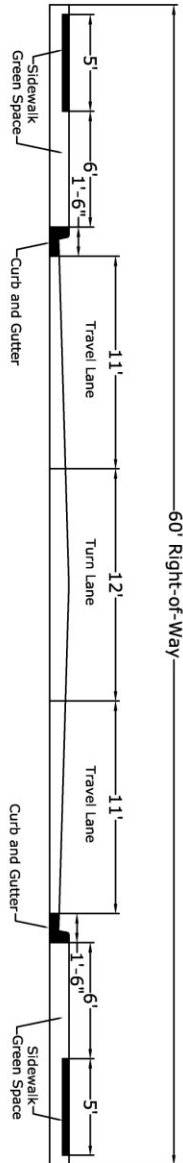
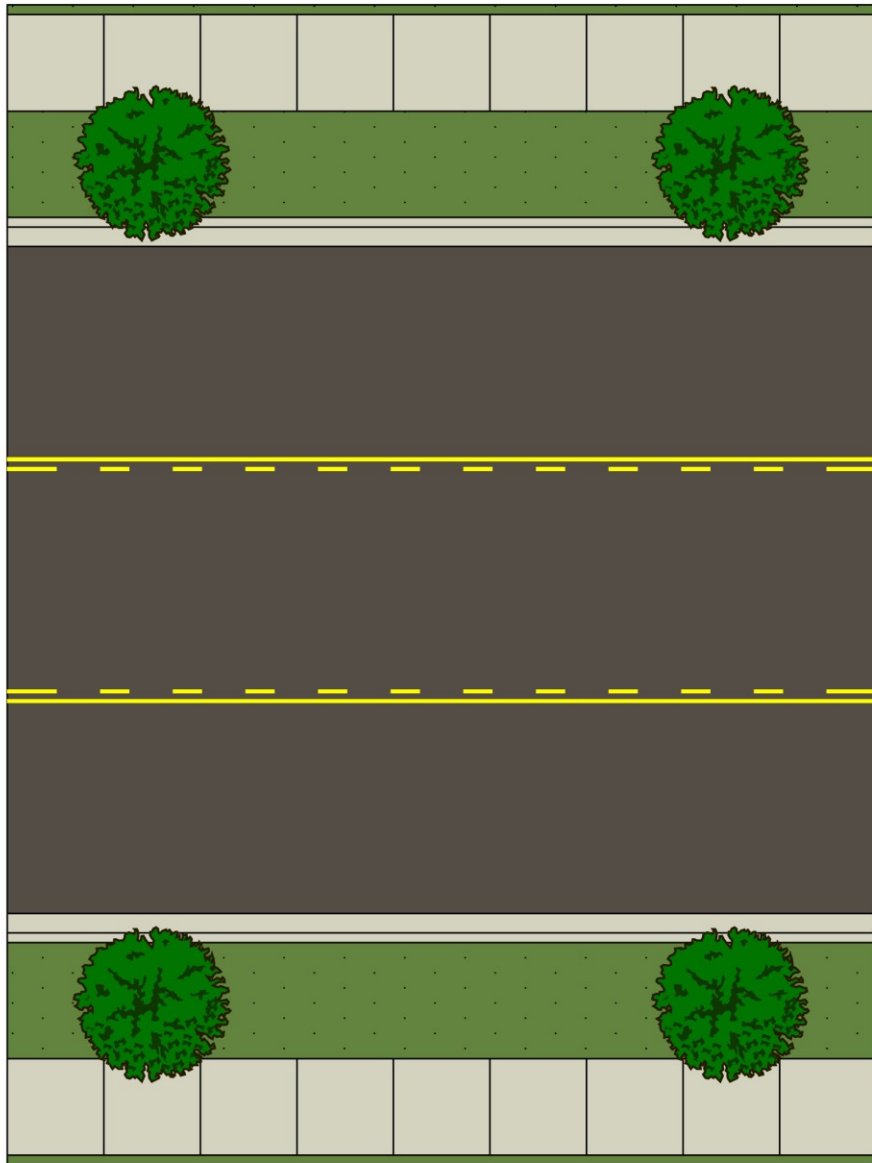
A1 - Arterial



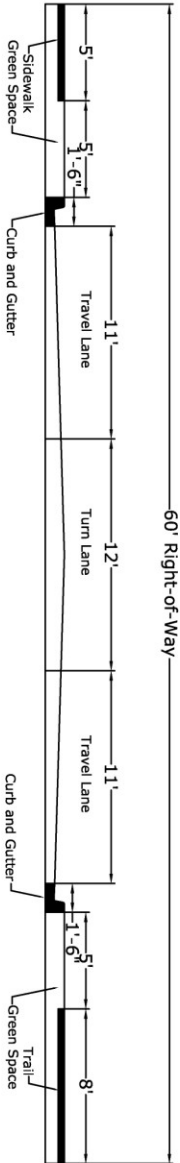
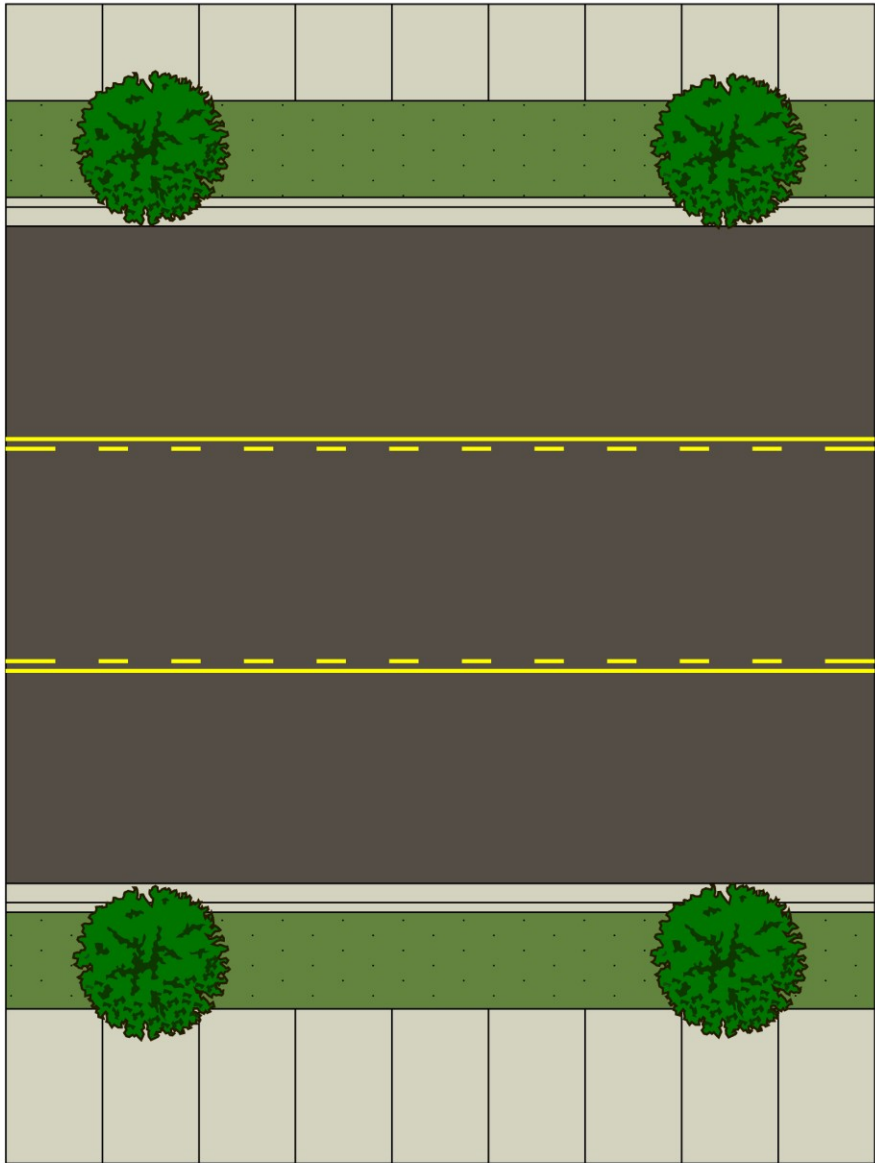
A2 - Arterial Boulevard



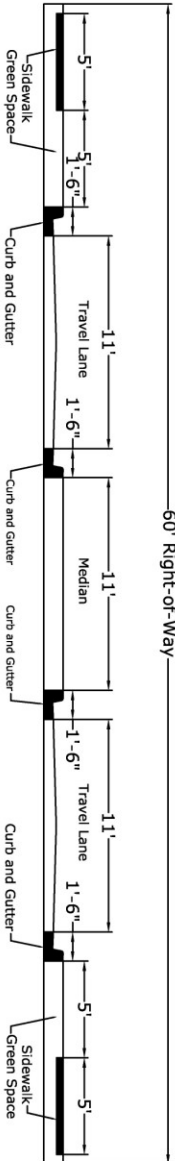
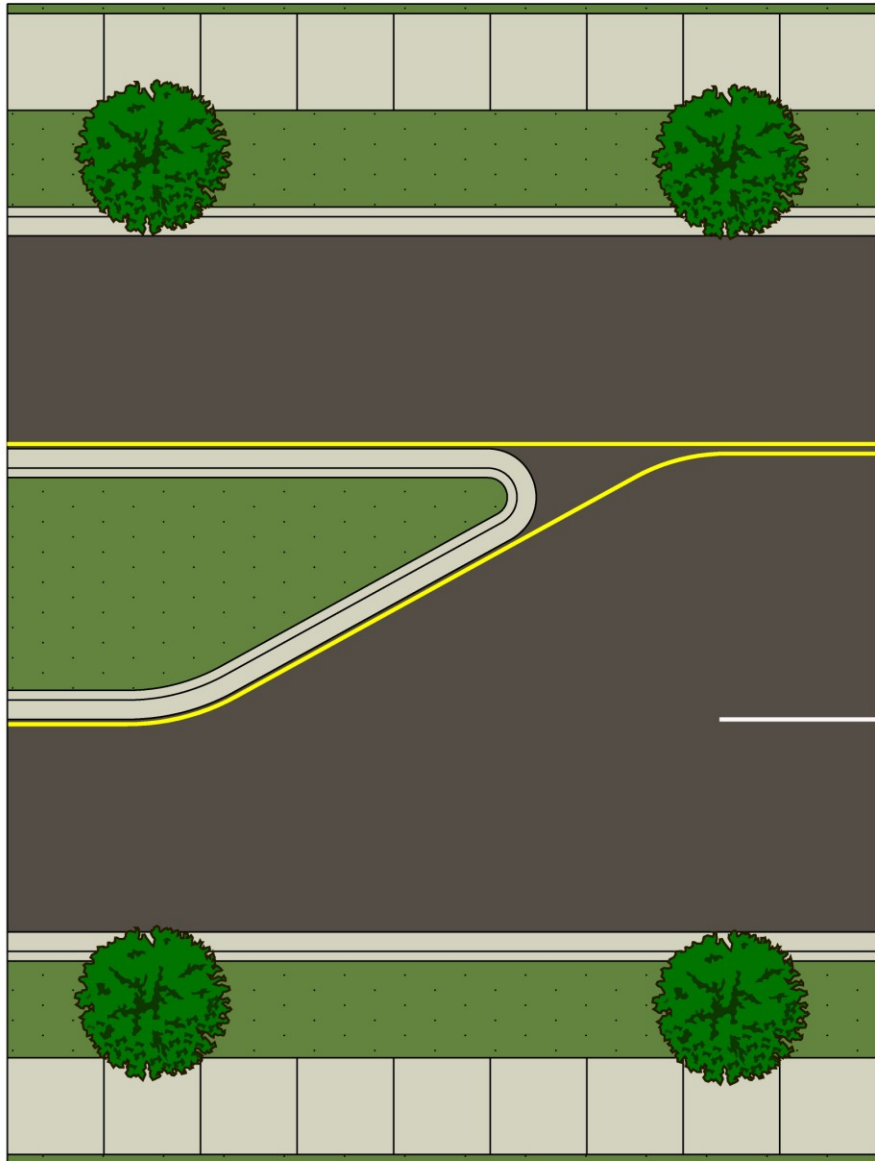
C1 - Collector



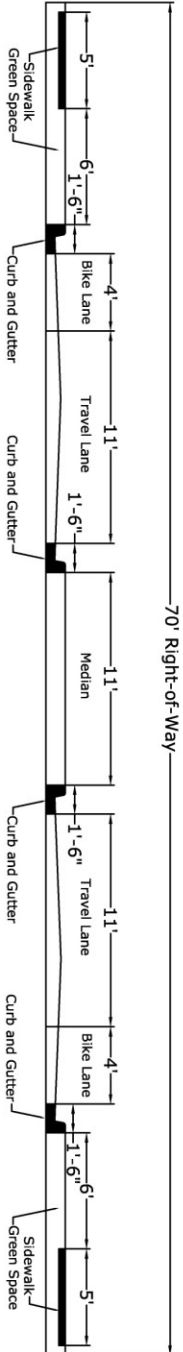
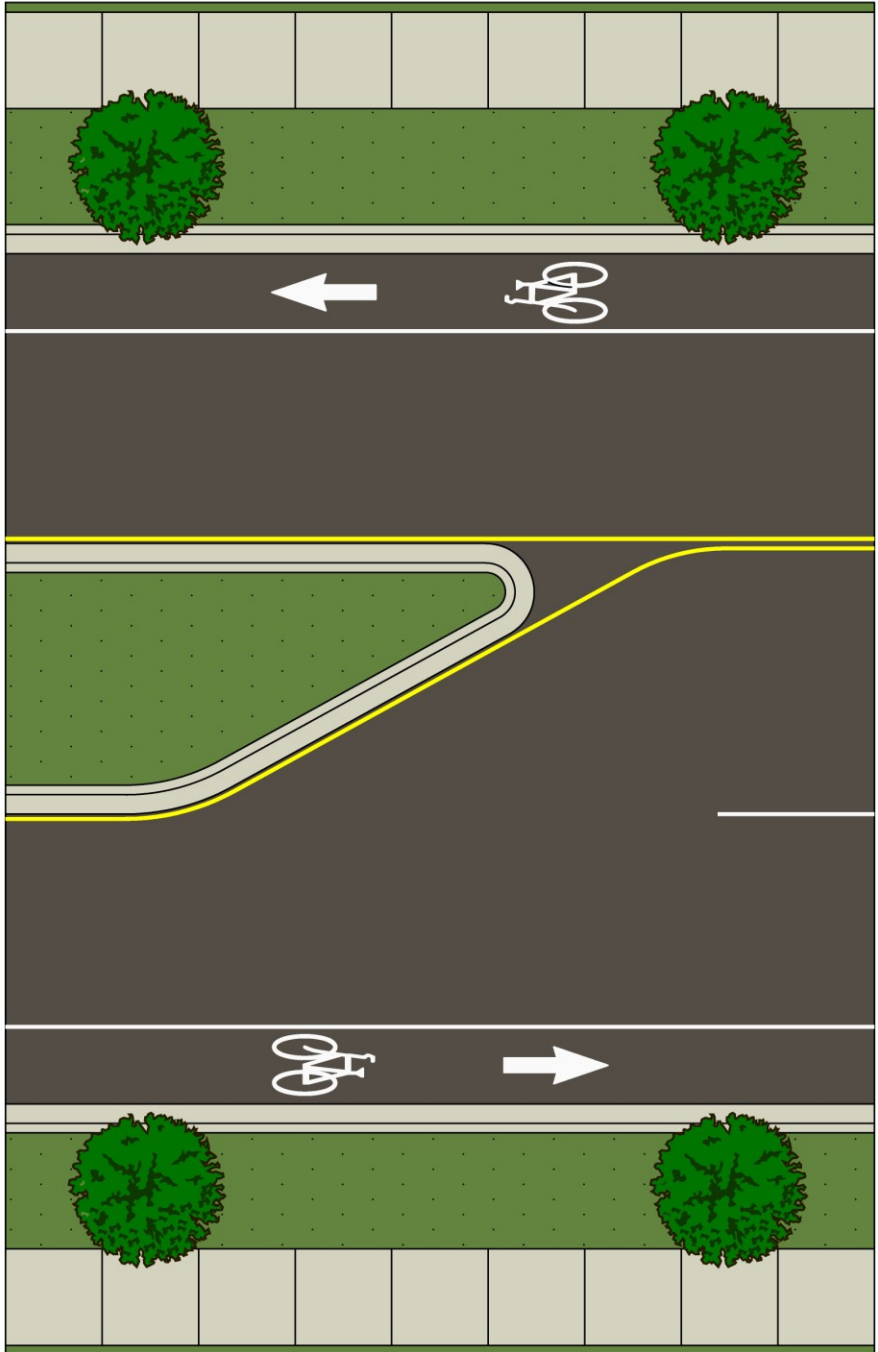
C2 - Collector with Trail



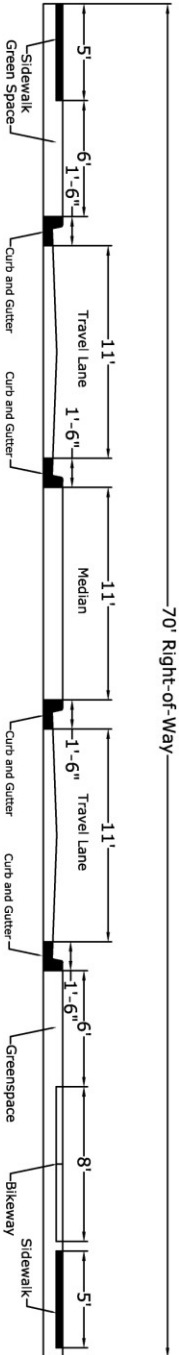
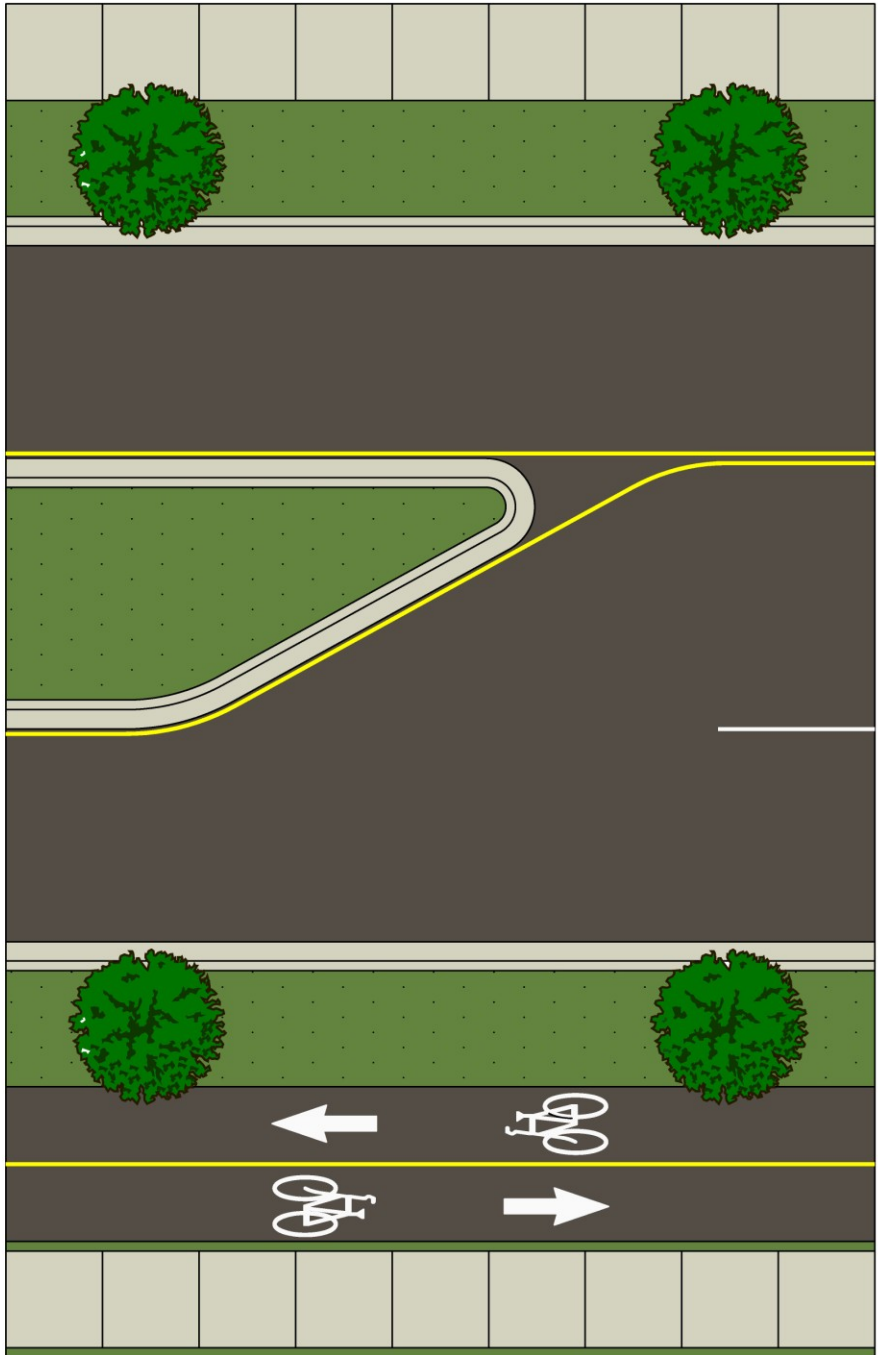
C3 - Collector Boulevard



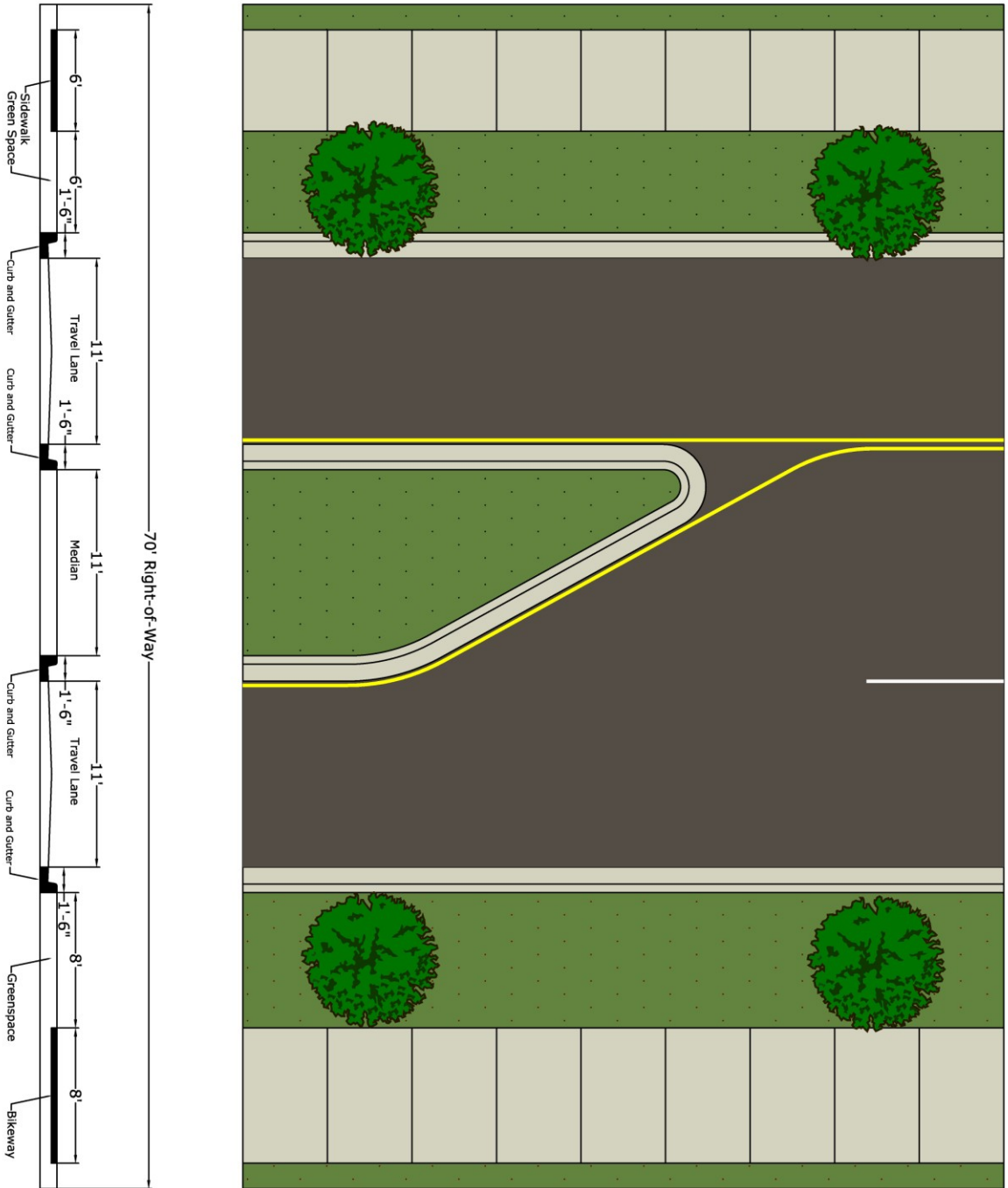
C4 - Collector Boulevard with Bike Lanes



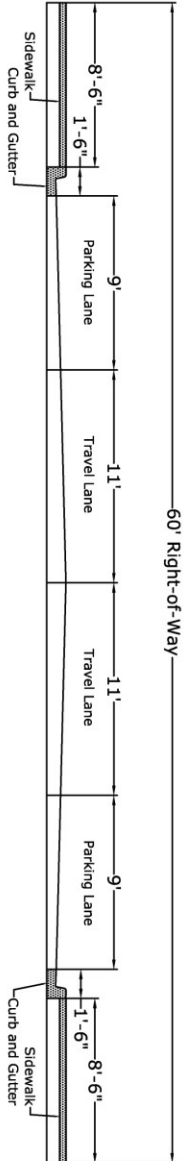
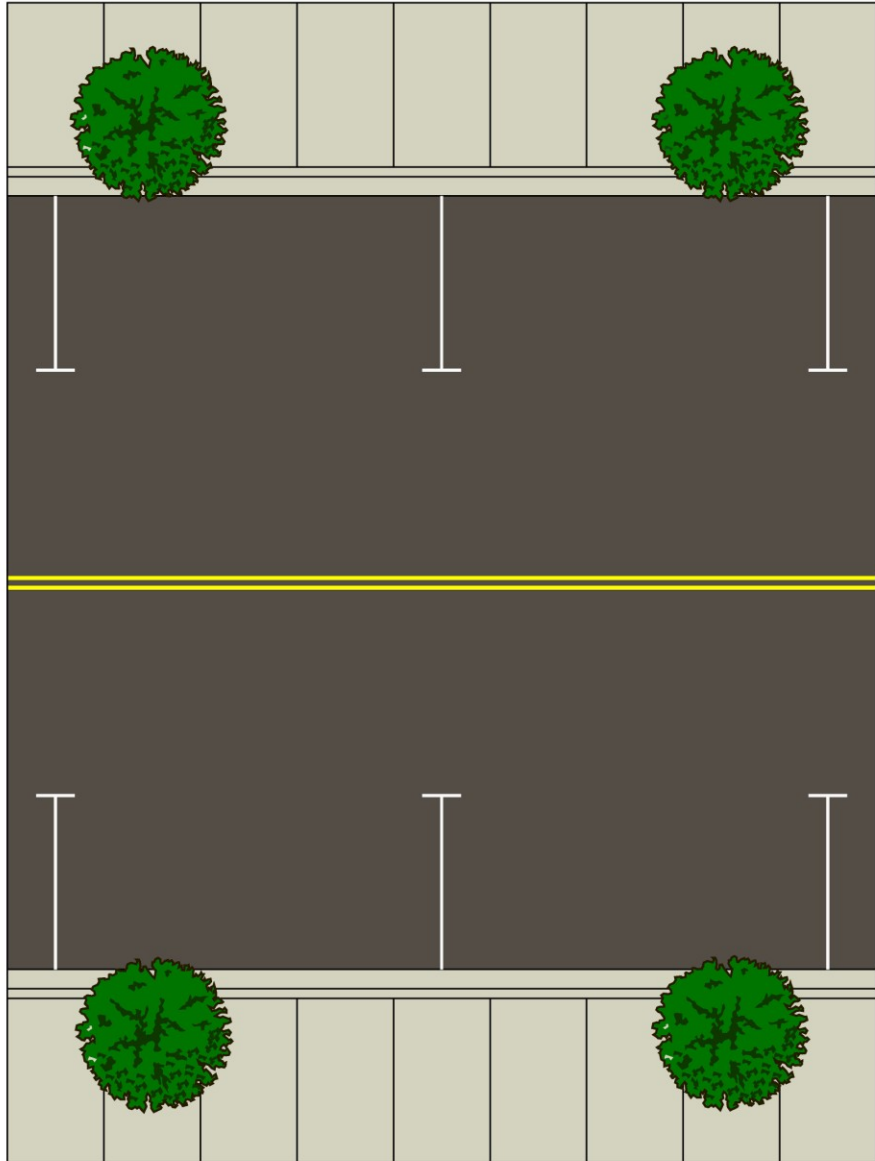
C5 - Collector Boulevard with Bikeway



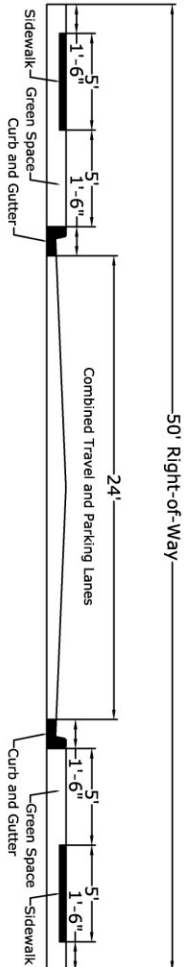
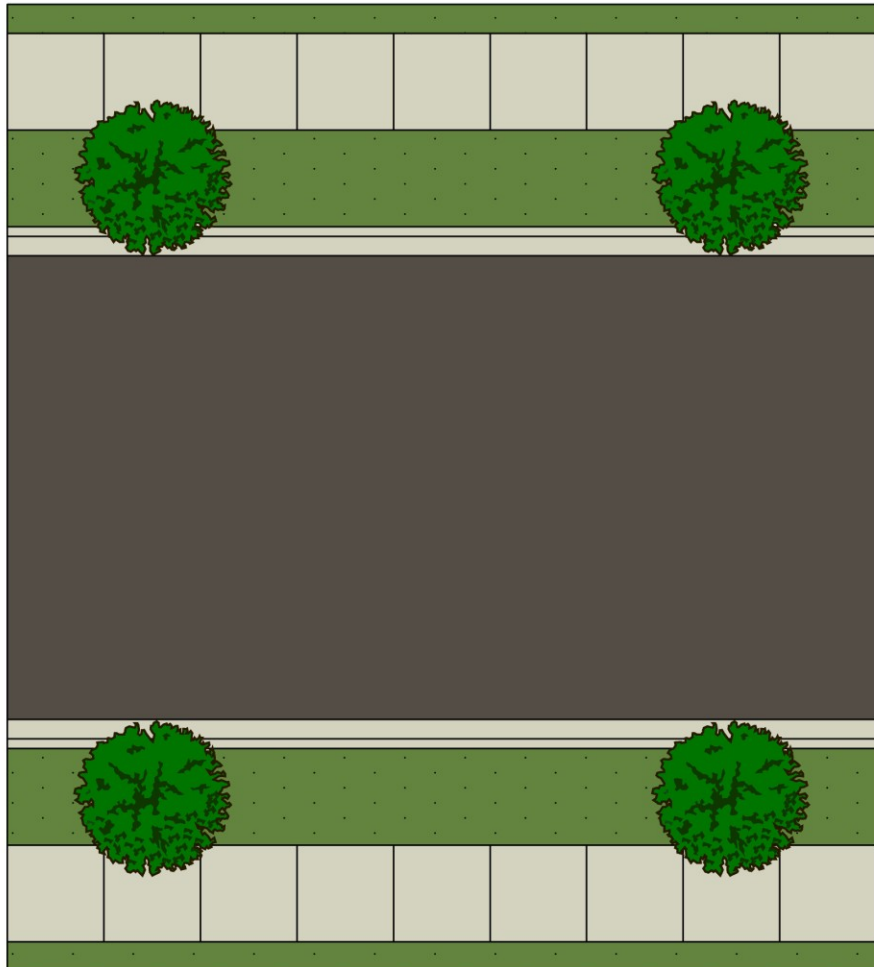
C6 - Collector Boulevard with Trail



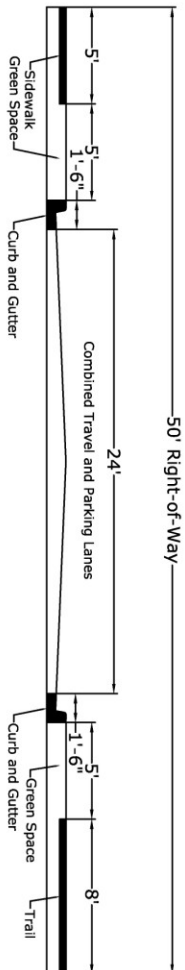
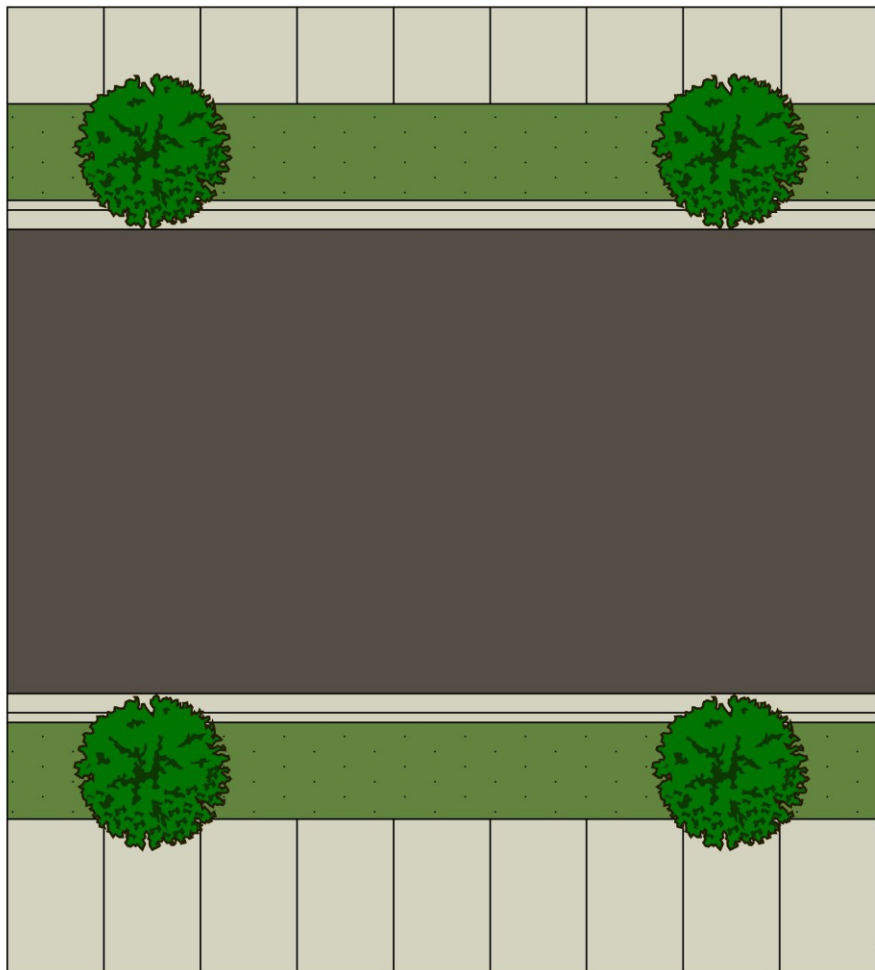
C7 - Collector Urban



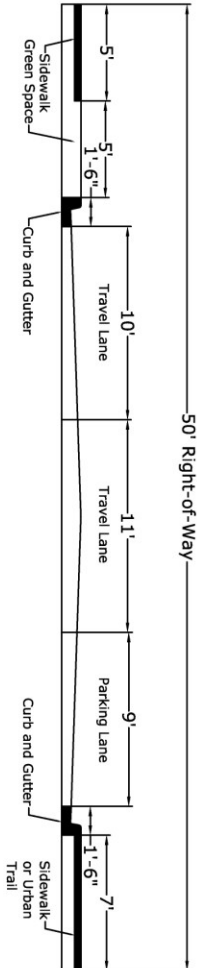
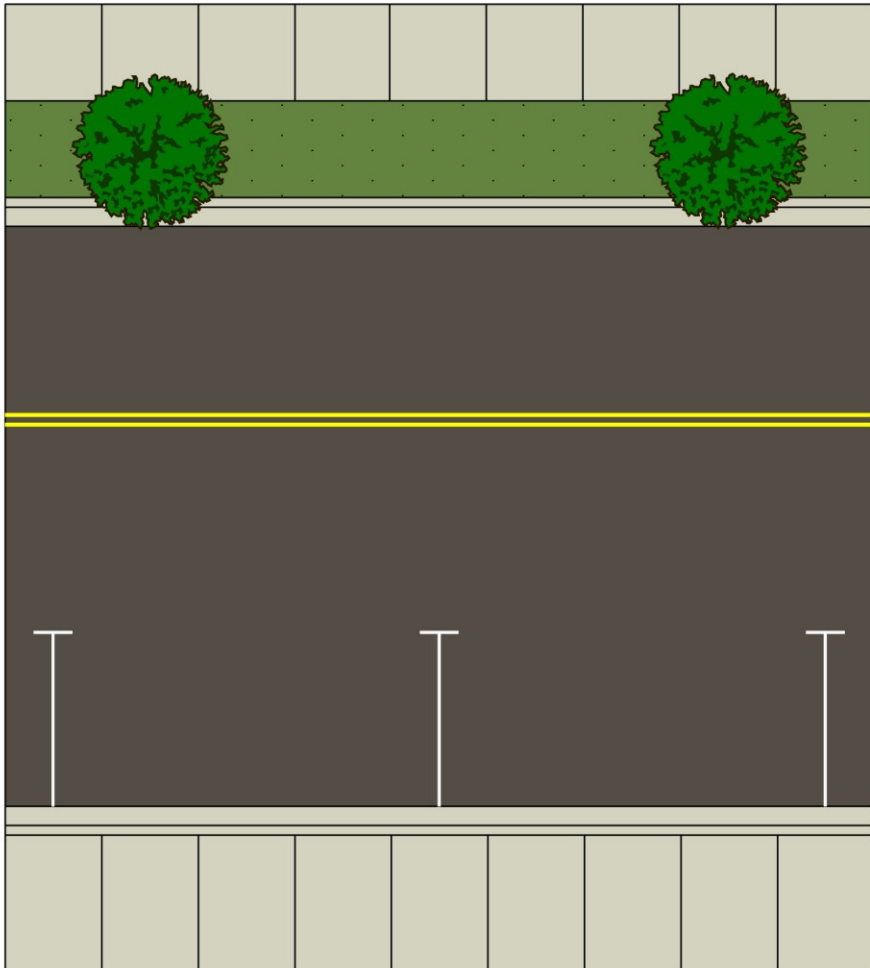
L1 - Local



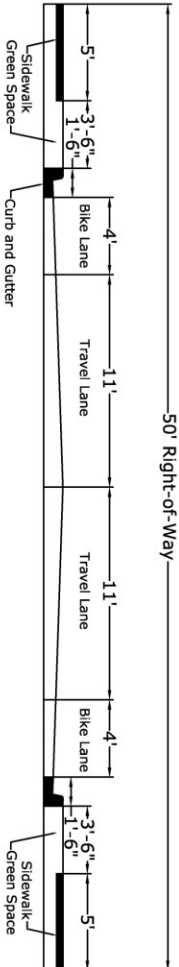
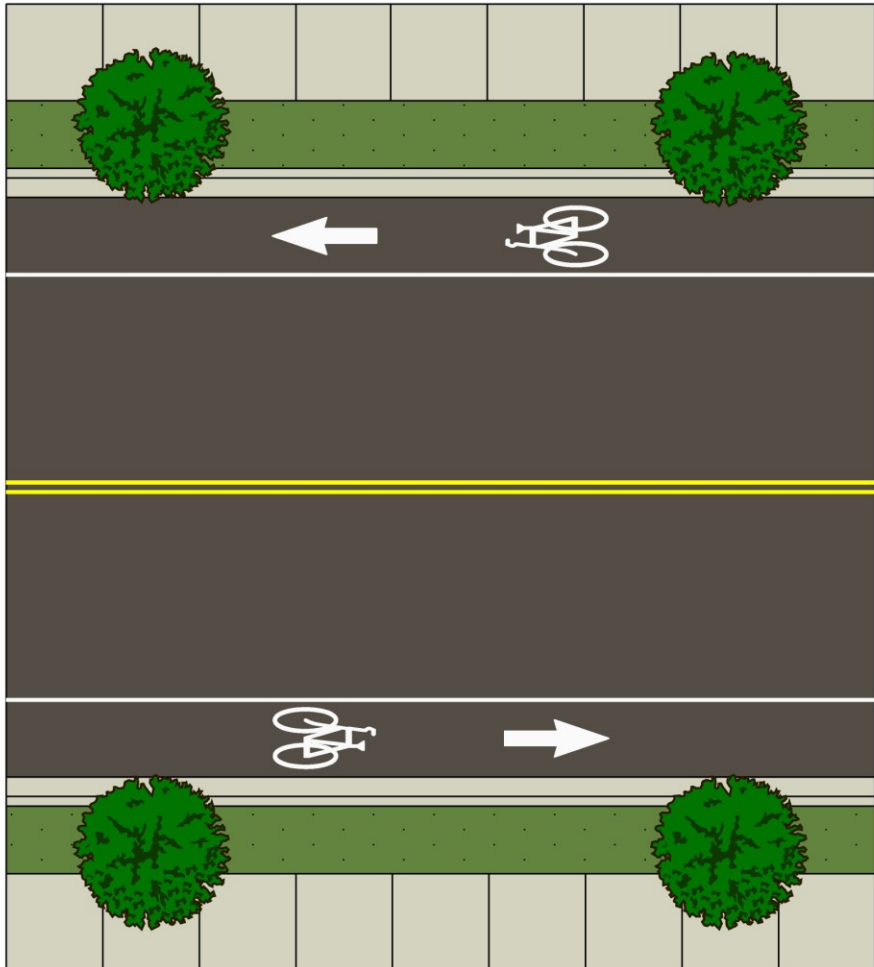
L2 - Local with Trail



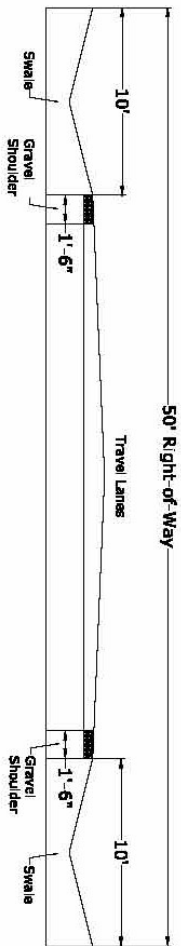
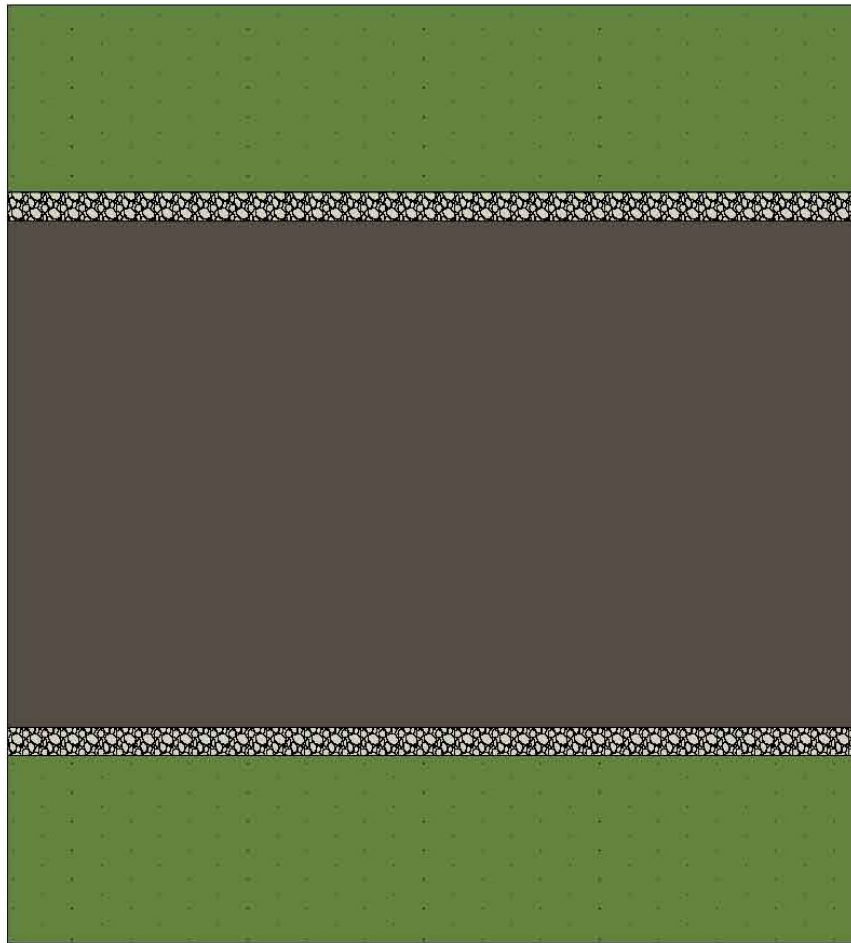
L3 - Local with Single Striped Parking Lane



L4 - Local with Bike Lanes



L5 - Rural Local



Appendix Two: Adopting Document

RESOLUTION NO. 12-1-2011
A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A GENERAL PLAN
FOR THE CITY OF LONOKE, ARKANSAS

WHEREAS, cities of first and second class and incorporated towns have the power to adopt and enforce plans for the coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the municipality and its environs; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Lonoke, Arkansas wishes to adopt a General Plan contain Land Use, Transportation, and Community Facilities Plans; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has appointed a Planning Commission and the Planning Commission has undertaken the following:

- (1) Prepared a work program;
- (2) Prepared a Planning Area Map;
- (3) Made studies of the present conditions and the probable future growth of the municipality and its neighboring territory;
- (4) Prepared a General Plan for the city's planning area; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a duly advertised Public Hearing on October 17, 2011, to allow discussion and citizen comments on the proposed document; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission adopted the plan and has forwarded it to the City Council for certification.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF LONOKE, ARKANSAS, THAT:

- 1. The General Plan is hereby adopted.
- 2. The City Clerk is directed to maintain a copy of the plan in her office for public review.

PASSED THIS 9th DAY OF December, 2011

ATTEST:

Wayne McGee
Mayor

Regina Watson
City Clerk