

City of Hoxie

Comprehensive Plan

June 2013



Prepared with
assistance from:



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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 The Plan

This document contains the officially adopted Comprehensive Plan for Hoxie, Arkansas.

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

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 Comprehensive 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 Hoxie Planning Commission.
- The Hoxie City Council.
- Municipal departments and department heads.
- Organizations promoting economic development in the area.
- Professionals in real estate or development.

The Comprehensive 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 Hoxie. 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 Comprehensive 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 Hoxie 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 Lawrence County Recorder.

The Hoxie Planning Area Boundary comprises those areas surrounding the city that may likely grow to become part of Hoxie in the future.

The Planning Area Boundary depicted on the Comprehensive Plan map includes those lands within the territorial jurisdiction of Hoxie 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 Hoxie 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 Lawrence County.

1.4 Planning Methods

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

The planning team for the 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 matched conventional small town land use classifications. 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 database compiled in GeoStor supplied information ranging from floodplain polygons to digitally orthorectified aerial photography.

Citizens of the city and planning area provided information at public hearings. The steering committee shared its collective experience and first-hand knowledge of development trends in the area. The input and insights from this body and the public helped form a great deal of the plan's goals, provisions, and recommended actions.

The planning team synthesized and analyzed the data during the winter and spring months of 2013. 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 the Land Use Regulations

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

The City of Hoxie was created when leaders from the neighboring town of Walnut Ridge could not come to an agreement with railroad officials about where the railroad tracks should be built. Initially, the Kansas City, Springfield, and Memphis (KCS&M) Railroad wanted their railroad to run through Walnut Ridge. However, they were not able to obtain enough land for a depot and terminal facilities at a reasonable price. Mary A. Boas approached railroad officials and suggested that the railroad use her land instead.

She informed the railroad that she would give them the right of way through her land for no charge. The railroad gladly accepted this offer. Her family received a contract for part of the railroad's construction, and the Boas family built a hotel near the tracks in 1879. Hoxie formally incorporated in 1888 after Lawrence County accepted a petition submitted by Dr. G. W. Parker, F. M. Lee, and A. C. Rogers. The town was named for KCS&M railroad executive, Jack Hoxie.

The city experienced rapid growth in the early 1900s, growing from a community of just over 100 in 1900 to over 1,700 in 1920. This growth was attributed to the success of the KCS&M railroad, and the arrival of the Iron Mountain Railroad, making Hoxie an important crossroads. The Iron Mountain Railroad installed a roundhouse, repair shops, and a railroad office that employed local steel workers, blacksmiths, carpenters, painters, and other skilled laborers and office workers.

With the arrival of the railroad, other businesses moved to the area. An ice plant and stock yards for cattle were opened. This was followed by the opening of the first Bank of Hoxie (which no longer exists), a bottling company, and a lumber company. Jobs remained plentiful, and the town flourished until the early 1920s.

The 1920s were rough for Hoxie. Labor strikes in 1923, new innovations in railroad technology, a fire in 1924, and a tornado in 1927 all served to harm and impede the progress and prosperity Hoxie had experienced since the 1880s. However, the closing of the railroad terminal in 1927 devastated the city, taking with it almost 500 jobs. It wasn't until World War II that the city's fortunes changed, when an army airfield (the Walnut Ridge Army Flying School) was built on the outskirts of Walnut Ridge and large numbers of military personnel moved to the area.

The 1950s saw the integration of Hoxie's school system. Hoxie was one of the first school districts in Arkansas to desegregate following the *Brown vs. Board of Education* court decision. The 1950s through the 1980s also brought renewed growth in the community as the city doubled in population from 1940 to 1980.

Today, Hoxie is a stable, quiet community. Echoes of its prominent railroad past can still be seen, though the industry may not be what it once was. As the city has grown, it and its neighbor Walnut Ridge have become increasingly intertwined and integrated such that the communities have grown together. Going forward, Hoxie can be proud knowing it is building on a strong and colorful past.

2.2 Regional Setting

Located in Lawrence County in northeast Arkansas, Hoxie lies in the far western reaches of the Mississippi Alluvial Plain near the foothills of the Ozark Mountains. It is located approximately 23 miles northwest of downtown Jonesboro. The city borders Walnut Ridge, and is 92 miles northwest of Memphis, 74 miles west of Blytheville, and 125 miles northeast of Little Rock. Other nearby towns include: Minturn, Black Rock, Portia, Powhatan, Swifton, and Pocahontas.

The City of Hoxie is situated at the crossroads of U.S. Highways and Railways. On its south and eastern edges the city is served by the U.S Highway 67 and U.S. Highway 63. It also the crossroads for the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe and Union Pacific Railroads. The nearest airport with commercial airliner service is Jonesboro Municipal Airport, which has scheduled weekday flights to Kansas City and Memphis.

Chapter Three: Trends

3.1 Population

TABLE 3.1.1
POPULATION HISTORY

Year	Population
1970	2,265
1980	2,961
1990	2,676
2000	2,817
2010	2,780

Source: U.S. Census

TABLE 3.1.2
AGE CHARACTERISTICS, 2010

Age	Hoxie	Lawrence County	Arkansas
Under 5 years	7.4%	5.8%	6.8%
5 to 9 years	6.2%	6.4%	6.8%
10 to 14 years	7.3%	6.7%	6.8%
15 to 19 years	7.6%	7.3%	7.0%
18 years and over	74.5%	77.1%	75.6%
20 to 24 years	7.4%	6.2%	6.8%
25 to 34 years	12.3%	10.6%	12.8%
35 to 44 years	13.3%	12.0%	12.6%
45 to 54 years	13.7%	14.3%	13.9%
55 to 59 years	5.2%	6.2%	6.3%
60 to 64 years	5.9%	6.4%	5.7%
65 years and over	13.7%	18.1%	14.4%
65 to 74 years	8.7%	9.9%	8.1%
75 to 84 years	4.1%	5.8%	4.6%
85 years and over	0.9%	2.4%	1.8%
Median Age	36.4	40.9	37.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

TABLE 3.1.3
RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS, 2010

Race	Hoxie	Lawrence County	Arkansas
White	96.2%	97.3%	77.0%
Black or African American	0.9%	0.8%	15.4%
American Indian	0.3%	0.4%	0.8%
Asian	0.0%	0.1%	1.2%
Two or more races	2.3%	1.2%	2.0%
Hispanic	1.5%	0.9%	6.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

TABLE 3.1.4
POPULATION MIGRATION, 2010

Residence One 1 Year Ago	Hoxie	Lawrence County	Arkansas
Same House	82.9%	85.4%	81.3%
Different House in Same County	12.6%	9.5%	11.0%
Different House in Same State	1.1%	3.1%	4.0%
Different State	3.1%	1.9%	3.4%
Foreign Country	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%

Source: American Community Survey Estimates

3.2 Education

TABLE 3.2.1
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT RATES, 2006-2010

Educational Attainment	Hoxie	Lawrence County	Arkansas
High School Grad or Higher, 2000	62.5%	63.3%	75.3%
High School Grad or Higher, 2010	72.8%	74.8%	81.9%
Bachelor's or Higher, 2000	4.3%	8.5%	16.7%
Bachelor's or Higher, 2010	5.8%	9.2%	19.1%

Source: American Community Survey Estimates

3.3 Income

TABLE 3.3.1
PER CAPITA INCOME (2010 DOLLARS)

Geography	1999	2010	% change
Hoxie	\$15,797	\$14,849	-6.0%
Lawrence County	\$17,864	\$15,168	-15.1%
Arkansas	\$21,906	\$21,274	-2.9%

Source: American Community Survey Estimates

TABLE 3.3.2
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2010 DOLLARS)

Geography	1999	2010	% change
Hoxie	\$32,043	\$31,893	-0.5%
Lawrence County	\$35,170	\$30,288	-13.9%
Arkansas	\$41,705	\$39,267	-5.8%

Source: American Community Survey Estimates

TABLE 3.3.3
HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2010 DOLLARS)

Household Income	Hoxie	Lawrence County	Arkansas
Less than \$10,000	15.3%	13.7%	9.9%
\$10,000 to \$24,999	23.5%	30.2%	22.2%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	40.5%	30.0%	28.7%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	13.1%	16.6%	19.1%
\$75,000 to \$99,000	3.9%	4.2%	17.8%
\$100,000 to \$200,000	3.7%	5.1%	9.9%
\$200,000 or more	0.0%	0.2%	1.8%

Source: American Community Survey Estimates

TABLE 3.3.4
INCOME TO POVERTY RATIOS (2009 DOLLARS)

Percentage of Poverty Level	Percentage of Population
Under 50%	10.7%
50% to 99%	17.1%
100% to 124%	7.1%
125% to 149%	9.1%
150% to 184%	10.8%
185% to 199%	3.6%
Over 200%	41.6%

Source: American Community Survey Estimates

TABLE 3.3.5
POPULATION RATES BELOW POVERTY LEVEL, 2010

Poverty Category	Hoxie	Lawrence County	Arkansas
Individuals below poverty level, 1999	24.2%	18.4%	15.8%
65 years and older	28.0%	20.1%	13.8%
Individuals below poverty level, 2010	22.3%	24.5%	18.0%
65 years and older	26.6%	12.5%	11.6%
Families below poverty level, 1999	20.7%	13.9%	12.0%
No husband present	43.9%	37.8%	34.7%
Families below poverty level, 2010	17.8%	20.2%	13.5%
No husband present	35.0%	54.7%	38.1%

Source: U.S. Census

3.4 Housing

TABLE 3.4.1
MONTHLY HOMEOWNER COSTS AS A
PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME (SMOCAPI) RATES, 2010

Affordability Category	Hoxie	Lawrence County	Arkansas
Less than 20.0 %	50.9%	48.2%	46.9%
20.0 % - 24.9 %	16.7%	11.5%	15.4%
25 % - 29.9 %	1.3%	8.6%	10.4%
30 % - 34.9 %	10.3%	7.3%	6.9%
35 % or more	20.8%	24.5%	20.4%
PERCENTAGE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING	77.6%	68.2%	72.7%

Source: American Community Survey Estimates

TABLE 3.4.2
GROSS RENT AS A
PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME (GRAPI) RATES, 2010

Affordability Category	Hoxie	Lawrence County	Arkansas
Less than 20.0 %	17.7%	24.1%	27.5%
20.0 % - 24.9 %	22.2%	16.7%	12.7%
25 % - 29.9 %	21.9%	12.9%	11.2%
30 % - 34.9 %	8.6%	9.0%	9.0%
35 % or more	29.7%	37.2%	39.6%
PERCENTAGE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING	61.8%	53.7%	51.4%

Source: American Community Survey Estimates

TABLE 3.4.3
HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS, 2000-2010

Housing Type & Characteristics	2000	2010
Total Housing Units	1,108	1,237
Single Family	85.7%	79.0%
Multi-Family	11.4%	16.0%
Mobile Home, trailer, or other	2.9%	4.9%
Occupied Units	89.3%	90.4%
Owner Occupied	65.5%	59.5%
Renter Occupied	34.5%	40.5%
Vacant Units	10.7%	9.6%
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	2.4%	1.6%
Renter Vacancy Rate	9.3%	4.0%
Median Monthly Mortgage	\$484	\$611
Median Value of Owner-occupied Units	\$41,700	\$47,000*
Median Rent	\$371	\$519

Source: U.S. Census, *estimated, 2010 ACS

TABLE 3.4.4
HOUSING VACANCY, 1990-2010

Type of Vacancy	1990	2000	2010
For Rent	24	39	19
For Sale	12	18	11
Rented or Sold, Not Occupied	31	16	7
Seasonal Use	9	7	7
Abandoned/Other	25	53	75

Source: U.S Census

TABLE 3.4.5
HOUSING INVENTORY RATES, YEAR BUILT, 2010

Year Built	Hoxie	Lawrence County	Arkansas
2005 or later	0.8%	1.5%	4.8%
2000 – 2004	7.9%	4.9%	9.4%
1990 – 1999	11.7%	14.2%	18.2%
1980 – 1989	15.3%	11.6%	16.5%
1970 – 1979	23.2%	26.4%	20.0%
1960 – 1969	12.8%	15.3%	12.0%
1950 – 1959	11.4%	8.0%	8.3%
1950 or earlier	16.9%	18.1%	10.8%

Source: American Community Survey Estimates

3.5 Employment

TABLE 3.5.1
EMPLOYMENT STATUS, 2010

Status	Hoxie	Lawrence County	Arkansas
% population in civilian labor force	54.7%	52.7%	60.6%
% Employed	51.6%	47.9%	55.8%
Unemployment rate*		10.3%	7.8%

* July 2012 figures (not seasonally adjusted) - Source: American Community Survey Estimates

TABLE 3.5.2
EMPLOYMENT RATES BY INDUSTRY, 2010

Industry	Hoxie	Lawrence County	Arkansas
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	1.9%	8.4%	3.3%
Construction	8.6%	7.2%	7.4%
Manufacturing	27.0%	15.8%	15.0%
Wholesale trade	3.0%	1.6%	2.8%
Retail trade	12.6%	11.4%	13.2%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	3.8%	7.2%	5.6%
Information	0.0%	1.1%	1.7%
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental, and leasing	7.2%	4.2%	5.0%
Professional, scientific, management, and administrative	1.9%	2.9%	6.7%
Educational, health, and social services	22.6%	24.8%	22.4%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services	2.0%	5.6%	7.5%
Other services (except public administration)	5.9%	5.8%	4.8%
Public administration	3.5%	3.9%	4.6%

Source: American Community Survey Estimates

TABLE 3.5.3
COMMUTING TO WORK RATES, 2010

Transportation Mode	Hoxie	Lawrence County	Arkansas
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	89.2%	77.4%	80.9%
Car, truck, or van -- carpooled	6.6%	11.8%	12.1%
Public transportation	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
Walked	1.3%	2.1%	1.8%
Other means	2.3%	1.3%	1.4%
Worked at home	0.7%	7.4%	3.3%
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	20.3	25.9	21.1

Source: American Community Survey Estimates

TABLE 3.5.4
PLACE OF WORK, 1990-2009

Place of Work	1990	2000	2009
Lawrence County	79.3%	67.1%	63.9%
Outside Lawrence County	18.4%	30.4%	35.9%
Outside Arkansas	2.3%	2.5%	0.6%

Source: American Community Survey Estimates

3.6 Demographic Conclusions

The preceding data can tell us a lot about the long-term trends and future of the City of Hoxie. Understanding the story these demographic trends tell will be crucial in planning the community's future.

Hoxie is a stable rural community, typical of many traditional delta communities in the region. From 2000 to 2010, Hoxie's population decreased by 1.3%. While concerning, this trend is reflective of a broader trend seen in all of Lawrence County. However, population loss in Hoxie has been slower than in the county as a whole. This trend may soon reverse because of increasing economic opportunities across the area.

The data portrays Hoxie as a steady community with many strengths and opportunities. The city's population is notably age diverse. The city has a healthy balance of young, working age, and older residents. Having too many or too few persons in each of these age categories can present unique challenges for a city. However, a normal distribution is indicative of a healthy community and associated community institutions (schools, churches, nursing homes, etc.) that support the transition of its population through each of phase of life.

Hoxie has seen gains in its levels of educational attainment. From 2000 to 2010, it is estimated the city's high school-educated population share increased by over 10% from 62.5% to 72.8%. This is strong progress, and indicates that a significant share of Hoxie's youth is being put into a

competitively advantageous position to either enter the labor force or pursue higher education. However, the city still significantly trails both the state and county in its percentage of the population with at least a bachelor's degree. Improvement in this area will be key to insuring the community is economically competitive in the 21st century.

All of the trends indicate that though Hoxie is not currently growing in population, it is growing in quality. The general trajectory of the community is one of improvement and progress.

Another area of strength and stability for Hoxie can be found in its income and employment trends. While personal and average household inflation-adjusted incomes have fallen, part of a larger national trend when accounting for inflation, Hoxie residents seem to have weathered these changes better than their counterparts inside Lawrence County. Average household incomes from 2000 to 2010 have decreased 0.5% in Hoxie compared to the 13.9% drop seen in the county as a whole. Mirroring this trend, Hoxie has

seen drops in its percentage of individuals and families in poverty, while Lawrence County and the state have seen these numbers rise. Some of this can likely be attributed to the diversity of employment among Hoxie residents, which are employed in a wide range of economic sectors reflective of statewide trends. This is likely due in part to Hoxie's convenient location to job centers in Paragould, Jonesboro, Newport, and Pocahontas.

In terms of housing, Hoxie has an aging housing stock with nearly two-thirds of its homes having been built more than 30 years ago. This is likely attributable to the city's population, which temporarily plateaued in 1980. While aging, the city's housing stock remains relatively affordable. In addition, an increasing share of the city's housing transitioning to the rental market and declining vacancy rates indicate potential demand for new housing in the homeowner market.

It will be important to sustain housing affordability and maintain the city's housing stock going forward. The city's current drive to increase code enforcement efforts will be critical in preserving Hoxie's housing stock because of the city's high share of rental and/or aging homes. Inevitably more new housing will be needed regardless of future growth.

One way to sustain housing affordability would be to encourage infill development. Infill development is simply development that "fills in" existing platted lots inside the city rather than converting agricultural land outside the city for residential uses. Infill development is usually advantageous because there is typically no need to place new utilities or build new streets, two costly hallmarks of traditional development. In addition, infill development is usually less taxing on city services, which can result in savings passed onto tax payers and utility customers.

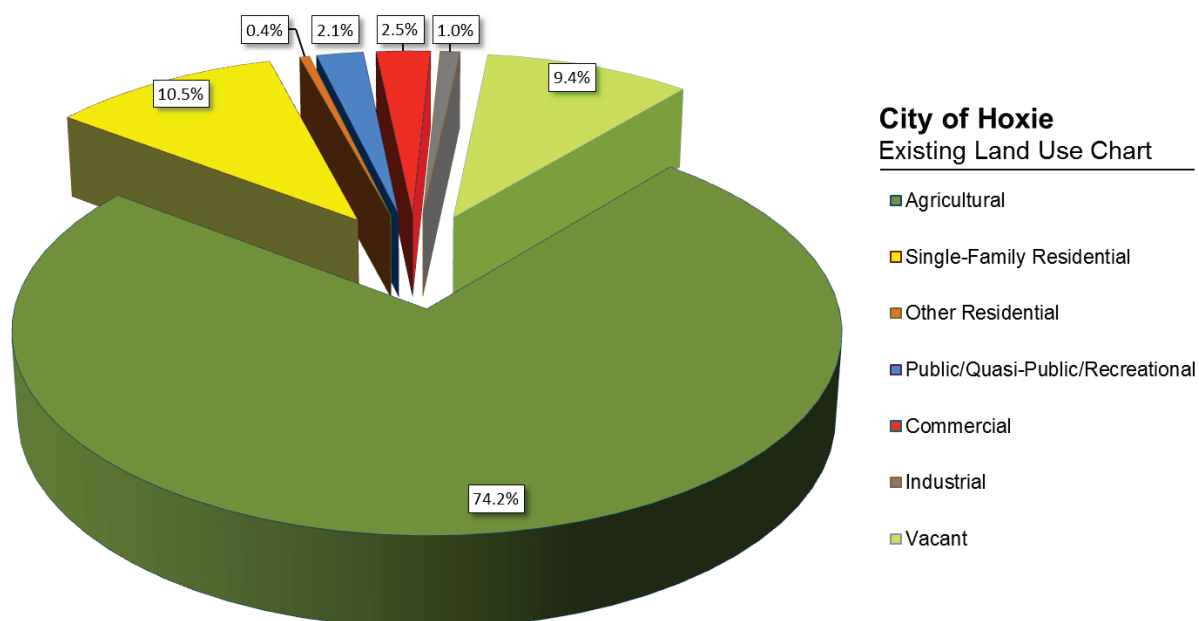
Overall, all of the above trends indicate that though Hoxie is not currently growing in population, it is growing in quality. The general trajectory of the community is one of improvement and progress. While, the city may face challenges, it can rest assured its brightest days still lay ahead.

3.7 Land Use Analysis

City of Hoxie, Arkansas Existing Land Use Study Summary

Basic Facts	Area	Population
City Limits	3,934 acres – 6.1 sq. mi.	2,780

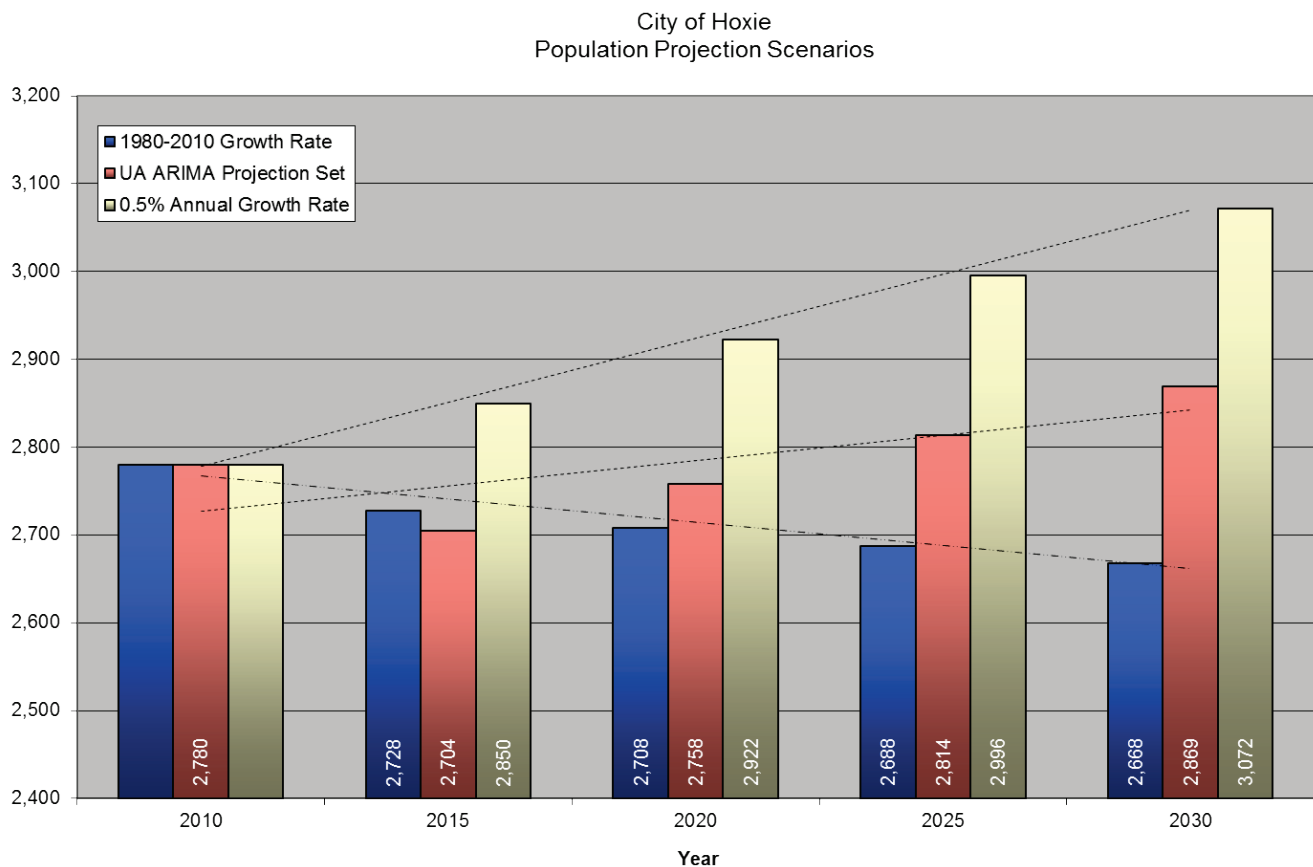
Existing Land Use Type	Area	Percent
General Commercial	91.8 ac.	2.3%
Service Commercial	5.3 ac.	0.1%
Industrial	35.8 ac.	1.0%
Public/Quasi-Public	82.8 ac.	2.1%
Agricultural	2,918.2 ac.	74.2%
Single-Family Residential	411.8 ac.	10.5%
Duplex Residential	2.4 ac.	0.06%
3-4 Family Residential	1.5 ac.	0.04%
Apartment Residential	10.1 ac.	0.3%
Manufactured Homes/Mobile Homes	3.7 ac.	0.1%
Recreational	1.1 ac.	0.03%
Vacant	369.5 ac.	9.4%



3.8 Projected Population Scenarios

In 2000, the population of the City of Hoxie was 2,817, a net gain of 141 persons from 1990. Since 2000, that growth reversed yielding a Census counted population of 2,780 in 2010. Population forecasts for Hoxie through the year 2030 are noted by the figure below. By the year 2030, the City of Hoxie could approach 2,869 persons based on projections using University of Arkansas data. 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 in Hoxie or the area could provide a substantial population increase within a very short period of time. Therefore, to study the effects of future population growth it is important to utilize alternate scenarios.

The first scenario, already provided, would present modest population loss based on linear extrapolation of trends over the last 30 years. This scenario would yield 2,668 persons by 2030. A second growth scenario is based upon data provided by University of Arkansas' ARIMA projections for Lawrence County. This scenario would yield 2,869 persons by 2030. A final higher growth scenario, mimicking traditional growth rates, would assume one-half percent annual growth and yield a population 3,072. 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 possible that over the course of the next 20 years that Hoxie may experience population change resembling each of the scenarios.



3.9 Housing and Land Use Demand

Over the next 20 years, a net increase in population for the City of Hoxie is expected to be approximately between 89 to 292 persons. This population increase will generate demand for new housing. Assuming a standard growth density pattern of three units per acre, it is estimated that between 12 to 40 acres of new development will be required to meet residential housing demand for the City. That figure equates to between 36 and 117 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 20 and 50 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, Hoxie's future growth can easily be accommodated within the current city limits for the studied planning period. Both infill development and conversion of agricultural land will likely occur to absorb development demands for the city. Based upon topography and existing infrastructure, future growth demands can be most easily and efficiently met west utilizing existing vacant lots inside the city. Much of the city's vacant developable land is already platted and has access to streets and utilities.

City utilities currently have enough excess capacity to accommodate projected growth. This means the city is already well positioned to absorb growth without having to provide much additional infrastructure. Such a position is enviable as any future growth will provide both economic benefit to the city and its residents, and result in greater efficiency in service delivery for the city.

Considering land uses further, Hoxie currently has a distribution of land uses typical to many East Arkansas cities. The city's periphery is dominated by agricultural uses and single-family residential is the prevailing housing type throughout Hoxie. It is likely most future residential development in the city will come in the form of single-family homes.

3.10 Steering Committee Findings

The following contains the findings and recommendations provided by planning steering committee. The identified issues cover a wide variety of topics; however, a few central themes emerged.

Infrastructure – This topic was identified as both a strength and major area of concern. For potential economic development projects, Hoxie is well positioned. Resting at the crossroads of major highways and railroads makes the community and region attractive to a variety of industries. However, the city utility infrastructure is aging and in some areas inadequate. The sewer system has many old lines that will need eventual replacement and inflow and infiltration is additionally an issue. The water system has many lines inadequate for fire protection and needs upgrades to its storage capacity. Utilities are one of the key determinative factors to enabling community growth. Given the importance of this issue, careful study of the utility system will be necessary.

Parks – Increased recreational and leisure opportunities in the form of parks and public spaces were identified as a need for the community. Based upon this perceived need it will be important to inventory current community facilities and assess their adequacy to national standards. Possible future recommendations may include improvements of current parks, addition of a new park, and expansion of the trail system to connect the city's important recreational, cultural, and other institutions.

Commercial Development – Even from casual observation one can tell Hoxie is commercially underserved for its population size. This is due in part to its proximity to Walnut Ridge, where many more businesses are located. This presents several challenges for the community. It serves to siphon off potential tax revenues for the city, which in turn creates a difficulty for the city to provide city services commensurate to its needs. Defining strategies to attract new commercial development as well as encourage redevelopment will be key to this planning effort.

Code Enforcement – The city has recently begun a new program to place an increased priority on code enforcement. However, dealing with past mistakes and unique situations provide an on-going challenge for these efforts. The renewed emphasis is vital to maintaining the community's health, safety, and welfare as well to move the community forward. It will be important to craft programs and regulations that will aide and enhance the city's code enforcement efforts within its existing staffing and budget constraints.

Quality of Life – Providing high quality of life is an important component to creating a community of choice and fostering growth. While quality of life issues may be secondary to more pressing needs such as infrastructure improvements, they should not be forgotten. Beautification projects along with code enforcement efforts can change community appearance and create community pride. Potential recommendations may include identifying areas or projects that could cost-effectively enhance quality of life for Hoxie residents.

Housing, Taxation, Transportation, Economic Development, Zoning – These issues were additionally addressed by the steering committee, and will be subject to further discussion and examination.

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. Policies represent specific actions and stances the city will take in order to achieve its goals and objectives.

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

Guiding Principle: *We will work to make Hoxie a regionally competitive community that is a community of choice for its residents, and provides an excellent place to grow, live, and prosper.*

First, the City should focus on fixing the basics, such as addressing abandoned and dilapidated housing. Next, the City should focus on building on assets that already exist in the community. Then, the City should focus on creating a community of choice with a high quality of life. 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, educational outcomes, employment opportunities, recreational opportunities, and quality neighborhoods. Addressing these areas first will help ensure Hoxie is a sustaining community that is competitive in the 21st Century.

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, maintain the comprehensive plan, and use it to guide future growth.

Policies - It is a policy of the City that:

1. The planning commission will conduct annual reviews of its comprehensive plan and land use regulations to ensure they remain applicable and up-to-date.
2. The city's land use regulations will be consistent with and designed to carry out the provisions of the comprehensive plan.
3. Future street construction will conform to the transportation component of the comprehensive plan.
4. Development proposals will be evaluated in terms of their compatibility with the comprehensive plan.
5. All development or re-zoning requests must conform to the comprehensive plan.

Objective 2: To use code enforcement as a means to enhance the community.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Use city resources to enforce the city's zoning and subdivision regulations.
2. To focus code enforcement efforts on neighborhoods where blighting influences could serve to destabilize property values.
3. Use a collaborative approach with property owners in addressing code enforcement violations by helping property owners in need identify resources to assist them.
4. To use the provisions of Arkansas law such as the "City Cleanup Tools" Act and other laws to address nuisances and unsightly, unsafe, and unsanitary conditions on private property.

Objective 3: To provide decent, safe, and affordable housing for all Hoxie residents.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Use the condemnation process to systematically remove dilapidated and unsafe structures in the city.
2. To coordinate with community organizations in providing new housing in the city.
3. Encourage infill development in the city's existing platted subdivisions.
4. Encourage greater home ownership rates in the city.

4.3 Building on Assets

GOAL 4.3.1: To strengthen and celebrate the city's human assets.

Objective 1: To foster greater community pride.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Encourage the teaching of Hoxie history to all Hoxie students.
2. Collaborate with Hoxie Schools on community projects.
3. Find new and innovative ways to bring the community together.
4. Foster greater community care and concern by working to develop greater community pride.

GOAL 4.3.2: To build on existing physical 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. Protect and preserve agricultural land within and near the city until needed for conversion to urban uses.
3. To attract future potential employers by marketing the city's multi-modal transportation advantages.

Objective 2: To enhance the city's appearance.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Provide welcoming gateways into the community that will maintain economic viability as attractive commercial areas.
2. Work with community organizations to encourage and develop programs aimed at community beautification.

GOAL 4.3.3: To coordinate land use planning, growth, and utilities in the most efficient and effective manner.

Objective 1: To provide all areas within Hoxie with adequate sanitary sewer and water distribution facilities and to assure the availability of utilities for the 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 4.3.4: To provide a functional and efficient transportation system.

Objective 1: 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.

4.4 Creating a Community of Choice

GOAL 4.4.1: To create a community with a high quality of life.

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

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Promote compatible infill development of the city's existing neighborhoods.
2. Reinvest in the infrastructure of the city's existing neighborhoods.
3. When necessary, encourage new neighborhoods that are planned as integral developments combining a variety of design elements, uses, densities, and housing options.

Objective 2: To preserve, protect, and enhance the environment.

Policies - It is a policy of the City to:

1. Encourage new developments that are designed to be compatible with the natural and built environments of the surrounding area.
2. Encourage public green space.
3. Work to preserve the city's existing floodplains from intrusion of new development that may alter existing drainage patterns.
4. Work with agencies like the Arkansas Forestry Commission to encourage the planting of trees throughout the city.
5. Consider drainage in the development review process.

Objective 3: To preserve Hoxie'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 compatible infill development within existing neighborhoods.

Objective 4: To enhance recreational opportunities and create a walkable community.

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. Install traffic calming devices where appropriate in order to slow traffic speeds and make streets more inviting and safe for pedestrians.
4. Strive to meet recognized benchmarks for recreational facilities and trail development.

GOAL 4.4.2: 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. Protect existing neighborhoods from intrusions of adverse land uses and commercial developments.
2. Promote infill development to maximize the potential of underutilized property within the city.
3. 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.

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 impacts of a development become more important than the actual activity conducted on the property.

These land use standards directly correspond to the Future Land Use Categories depicted on the Comprehensive Plan Map and describe the intended future character for each area.

Open Space Preservation

Character: Reserved for natural preservation, resource conservation, and recreational uses under both public and private ownership. This use area includes floodplains and environmentally sensitive areas. Development is not intended for these areas. However, uses which have little or no impact on the surrounding areas or that can be mitigated can be allowed.

General uses: Recreation and Natural Preservation

Density: N/A

Lot size: N/A

Utility requirements: None

Appropriate zoning: 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

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: Minimum 5,000 square feet

Utility requirements: Sewer and water services

Appropriate zoning: C-1

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/Agriculture

Character: Area intended for a variety of rural uses including large and small-scale farms operations and single-family residences on large lots. If sewer service becomes available, these areas should be converted to higher intensity land use designations.

General uses: Single-family residential, small-scale commercial, and agriculture

Density: < 1 unit per acre

Lot size: Minimum 1 acre

Utility requirements: None

Appropriate Zoning: Outside City / New District (A-1)

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: New District (R-1)

Medium Density Residential

Character: Area intended for single-family homes, townhouses, duplexes, tri-plexes, and four-plexes. This area is intended to provide residential housing at medium densities, offering a greater diversity of housing choice.

General uses: Single-family, townhouses, duplexes up to four-plex structure

Density: < 12 units per acre

Lot size: Minimum 7,000 square feet for single-family

Minimum 10,000 square feet for multi-family

Utility requirements: Sewer and water services

Appropriate zoning: New District (R-1, R-2)

Medium-High Density Residential

Character: Area designed for high intensity residential uses that include four-plexes, apartments, retirement centers, etc. This category is intended to provide for a greater diversity of housing choice and provide affordable housing options. These areas should be adequately served by a collector level street or higher.

General uses: Multi-family dwellings, retirement centers, etc.

Density: < 15 units per acre

Lot size: Minimum 3,000 square feet per dwelling unit

Utility requirements: Sewer and water services

Appropriate zoning: New District (R-3)

Manufactured Home 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 District (R-MH)

Public/Institutional

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

Utility/Right-of-Way

Character: Area allocated for public uses such as roads, railroads, utilities, etc. These lands are primarily to be held in public hands, but may also be held in private ownership. Areas no longer in use for rights-of-way or utilities are intended to revert to ownership of adjacent property owners or be used for new public purposes such as recreational trails.

General uses: Roads, utilities, etc.

Density: Not applicable

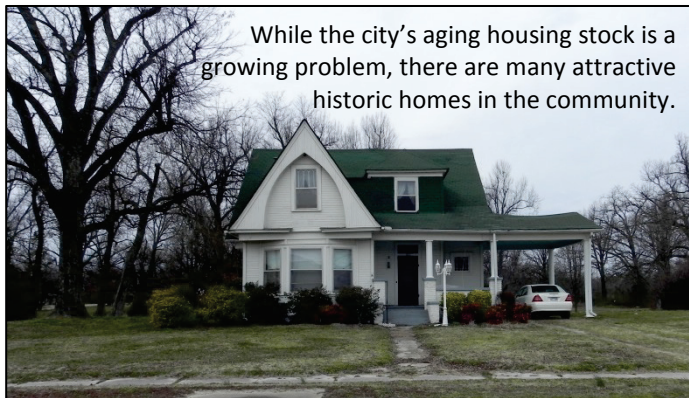
Lot size: Not applicable

Utility requirements: None

Appropriate zoning: All districts

5.2 Housing and Code Enforcement

Housing is one of Hoxie's most pressing and important issues. From 2000 to 2010, the city saw a small population decline, but also saw a rise in its number of housing units. Despite these statistics, vacancy rates in the city have decreased and it's common to hear about how hard it is to find a house to buy inside Hoxie.



While the city's aging housing stock is a growing problem, there are many attractive historic homes in the community.

This situation is a result of the city's aging housing stock. Since 1990, the city's number of abandoned houses has tripled. These abandoned homes are problematic for a number of reasons. They serve as a blighting influence on neighboring properties, serve to decrease property values, discourage community and financial investment, and they also squeeze the city's already tight housing market. This makes working to eliminate dilapidated and abandoned houses a top priority for the city.

However, the city must also work to encourage home building and homeownership. The city has a long term downward trend in homeownership rates. Though rental property serves an important role in every community, homeownership is important to maintaining community stability. Many studies have shown homeownership encourages neighborhood investment and accrues many long-term benefits for the homeowner and community. Anecdotally, it appears the major housing gap for the city rests with "starter homes" and affordable housing.

The plan recommends the city work with community organizations such as Hoxie Schools and local banks to explore the creation of a Community Development Corporation (CDC). The CDC would be a non-profit organization devoted to acquiring vacant property and developing affordable housing in the city. As an example, the CDC could work with the city in acquiring property that was relinquished as a result of a condemnation, contract with a homebuilder to construct an affordable house or renovate an existing home, and assist the homebuyers through the purchasing process by coordinating financing. Funds from the house sales could be used to acquire more property and more houses. As such, the CDC could become a self-sustaining entity. An example of a model organization is the Argenta CDC in downtown North Little Rock.

Using a CDC is one example of many paths the city could follow. However, the important point is that the city should look to take an active role in addressing the community's housing needs. Doing so may generate greater private sector interest in addressing market shortfalls and kick start other community improvement.

Though Hoxie has seen new housing starts, many of these homes are not affordable for most residents.



Property Maintenance and Code Enforcement

Property maintenance is another important aesthetic issue and should be a main priority of the City. Simple factors such as tall grass 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 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.

As was previously stated, addressing the growing number of dilapidated and abandoned houses in Hoxie should be a top priority for the city. State law provides cities the authority to remove dilapidated and unsafe structures. Section 14-56-203 of the Arkansas Code, Annotated, sets forth the authority as follows.

Cities of the first and second class shall have the power to order the removal or razing of, or to remove or raze, any buildings or houses that in the opinion of the council have become dilapidated, unsightly, unsafe, unsanitary, obnoxious, or detrimental to the public welfare and shall provide, by ordinance, the manner of removing and making these removals.

Utilizing an effective code enforcement program will be essential to ensuring Hoxie is a competitive community in the region.

However, before doing so the city should first explore other options of compelling the property owner to remediate the problem to ensure the city is not exposed to undue legal risk. For example, the city might cite and fine the property owner for violations of the building

code. If that avenue has been exhausted without improvement of the situation, the condemnation procedure may be an appropriate measure to use. If the city does not currently have an ordinance dealing with the removal and demolition of unsafe structures, sample ordinances are available from the Arkansas Municipal League.

Using strict code enforcement will provide the city a strong foundation for future community improvement. A community where codes are well-enforced provides certainty for property owners and encourages additional investment, and is absolutely essential to creating a community of choice that is competitive in the 21st century.

5.3 Quality of Life

Recreation

Recreational opportunities in the form of parks and trails are a key component to providing the type of high quality of life that attracts and retains residents. This is in large part because proximity to a job is often a secondary concern in deciding where to live. This places Hoxie in a position where it must compete against communities throughout the region for new residents. However, given the city's nearness to Walnut Ridge, Hoxie should be careful to work collaboratively in providing the recreational facilities needed throughout the area. For example, providing a city swimming pool may not be the most efficient

Having a good parks system will be important to attracting and retaining current and future city residents.

use of city funds since the City of Walnut Ridge already provides one. In this sense, the city should consider the recreational facility demands and supply of the entire area when planning future facilities.

From review of the current recreational facilities provided in Hoxie and Walnut Ridge, it appears most regional recreational needs are being met. However, Hoxie itself is very disproportionately underserved compared to Walnut Ridge. Of the more than 130 acres reserved for recreation in the park systems of the two cities, there is only a little more than an acre within Hoxie. As a general rule of thumb about 10 acres of park space is needed for every 1,000 people.

The plan proposes the development of an additional community park within Hoxie. The facility should not serve to duplicate the services provided by Stewart Park in Walnut Ridge, but should provide for the needs of the community. At a minimum, the 10-20 acre facility should include playgrounds, open space for passive recreation, pavilions, and walking trails. The park could even include a community museum devoted to preserving the unique history of Hoxie. Potential locations for this park are shown on the plan map.



The city's existing park facilities are attractive and well maintained.

Future development of parks and other recreational opportunities in the city should be closely tied to new development. As the city grows, it will important to ensure new facilities are built. The city should consider parks during the development review process for the new subdivisions. Often times, many developers are willing to construct park facilities at their own expense and deed these properties over to the city. Exploring these options could allow the city to significantly expand recreational opportunities without incurring great expense. However, the city must evaluate each proposal objectively and only accept those that would benefit the city and its residents long term.

Neighborhood Reinvestment and Beautification

Another way to increase quality of life in the city is to encourage greater neighborhood reinvestment. The city can take a lead in this area by improving infrastructure in existing neighborhoods. This may come in the form of street repairs, utility line improvements, sidewalk projects, etc. These types of investment are a sign to the community that the city is committed to neighborhood improvement and encourages residents to also reinvest. However, reinvestment may not always take the form of hard infrastructure. It might include soft-scape improvements like landscaping and beautification.

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 in 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, Adopt-A-Street programs, a community garden project, or other programs.

City beautification can be an important component to instilling greater community pride.

5.4 Commercial and Economic Development

Commercial Uses

Initial study of Hoxie's land uses revealed that the city appears to be commercially underserved for a community of its size. The city's proximity to Walnut Ridge plays a large role in this condition, as the cities function as one larger commercial base. Naturally, Walnut Ridge being the larger community is also the location of many more of the businesses. However, other conditions are at play as well.

The relocation of the U.S. 67 Highway to the city's east has created a climate of uncertainty for business. Existing businesses are reluctant to expand or improve because the impact of the new freeway is still unknown. At the same time, businesses are reluctant to move out by the new highway because its connection south to Newport is still not finished. Unfortunately, until these conditions change it is unlikely that Hoxie will see a great deal in terms of commercial development or redevelopment.

Once the new U.S. 67 Highway is completed the U.S. 63 Highway Interchange area will become much more attractive for commercial development. The city has already positioned itself to encourage development by providing the necessary utilities for properties near the Interchange.

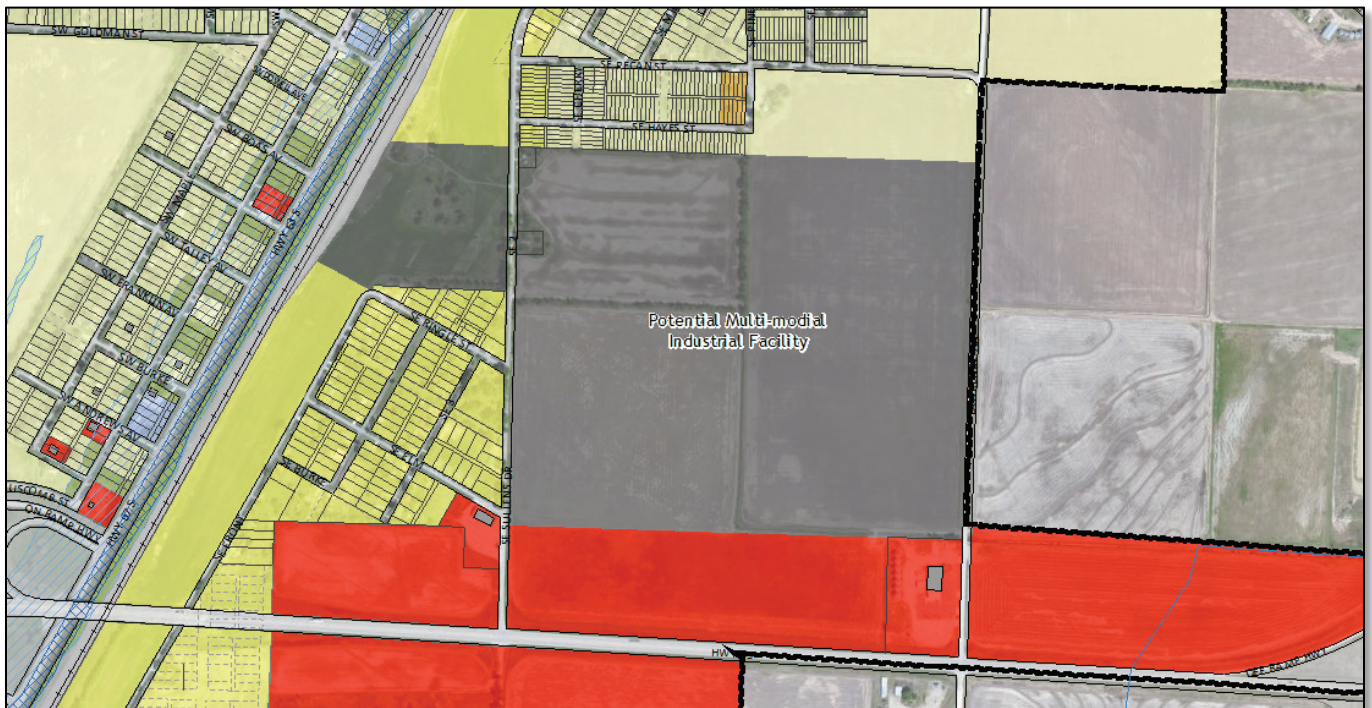
Once the U.S. 67 Highway freeway is completed, this stretch of U.S. 63 Highway should see new commercial development.



Apart from the highway frontage near the U.S. 63 Highway Interchange, the plan recommends that new commercial development be limited to existing commercial corridors. Expanding commercial zoning rights to other areas in the city would likely serve to dilute existing commercial districts and unnecessarily drive up property prices, leading to a zero sum gain. Commercial businesses often function best within districts that are reasonably compact and filled with other successful businesses.

Industrial Development

Hoxie has a unique mix of transportation options that make it attractive for industrial development. The city rests at the junction of two important rail systems, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railway and the Union Pacific railway. Those two railways tie the city into nationwide shipping networks. The city also lies in vicinity of 3 different U.S. Highways. These are the U.S. 67, 63, and 412 Highways. The city and neighboring communities have worked together to identify a suitable site for major industrial development. This site is labeled on the plan map as a “Potential Multi-modal Industrial Facility.” Although no industry is currently targeted for this site, it remains a high priority location and should be reserved for future industrial development.

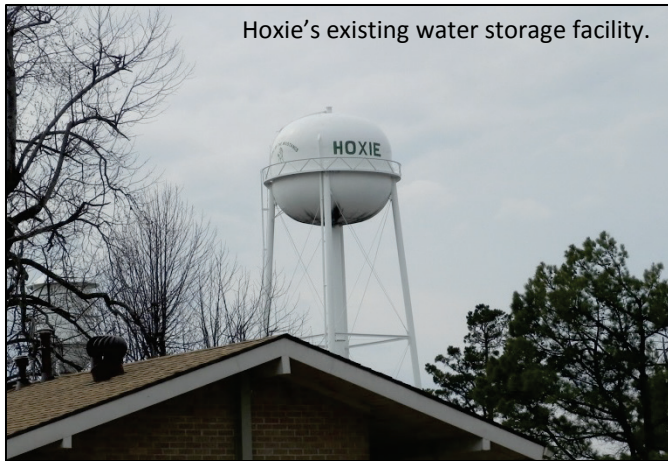


As was stated in above paragraph, the city has worked with neighboring communities to attract industrial development. The city should be lauded for using this approach. This type of collaborative method has been used successfully in other areas of the state. And, whether an industrial development locates in Hoxie, Walnut Ridge, Portia, or elsewhere in Lawrence County, Hoxie will likely grow and benefit.

5.5 Urban Growth

Utilities

Hoxie's water and sewer systems will have a significant role in guiding and enabling the city's growth. Plan policies support growth in areas that are already serviced by the City water and sewer system. This means directly encouraging infill development. Infill development is simply new construction that "fills in" vacant properties.



Hoxie's existing water storage facility.

The city has a good amount of existing vacant platted property. By and large, these properties are turn-key development opportunities, meaning all that is required is a building permit to start development. The street, sewer, and water utilities are typically already all in place.

Infill development doesn't just make sense for developers, however. It also helps ensure that existing improvements the city has made to its utility systems remain cost-efficient and in turn maintain low rates for users. This is because the city does not have to maintain new lines or pump

stations over a greater area. This also means that as the city reinvests in the infrastructure of existing neighborhoods it will be getting a greater return for the tax dollars that are spent.

It is also 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 encroachment from other water service providers. 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.

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.

Unless necessary to strategically position the city for long-term growth, Hoxie will likely not need to consider annexation in the foreseeable future.

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.

Annexation will likely not be needed within the next 20 years. In recent years the city annexed a great deal of land to the south and east in anticipation of the construction of the new U.S. 67 Highway. While this land will be important strategically over the long term, it is likely to remain agricultural for some time. The city's growth will likely most easily and economically occur on lands already inside the city limits.

5.6 Transportation System

Roads

As has been stated, Hoxie is one of Arkansas' most unique cities. Its position directly at the junction of two major railways is both advantageous and problematic. In the past, that proximity was important for those working for the railroad, as is evidenced by the city's development patterns. However, when creating a modern transportation system based around the automobile, those railroads serve to separate and divide the city.

The city also rests at the junction of two important U.S. Highways that are intended to skirt around the city. Dealing with these transportation issues properly are of great importance in this plan.

Overall, a street system should represent a well-planned network operating like a circulatory system. 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 Hoxie, Texas Street and SE Lindsey Street are examples of arterial roads.

To develop this street system, the plan recommends a number of roadway extensions, new routes, and traffic-way improvements. These projects are denoted on the comprehensive plan map. Prominent among these is the improvement and extension of both Owl City Road and Tedder Drive. Both of these roads would provide an above grade crossing over the BNSF railway. Currently, there is no overpass across the BNSF railway, an issue of both convenience and safety. For emergency response it can mean delays for fire trucks and ambulances when every second counts. An event like a train derailment could paralyze the city. These roadway extensions will serve dual purposes in increasing safety and convenience in the community and opening up new land for development. Similar overpasses on the Union Pacific are less feasible because of area constraints.

Other roads within the system will be important for economic development. The U.S. 63 Highway corridor is likely to see increased commercial development. However, the full commercial potential of the city's highway frontage may not be realized without proper access control. This is due to the fact that the Arkansas Highway and

Transportation Department is expected to be very reluctant in granting direct access to the highway. The plan proposes that a parallel set of access roads run along the city's U.S. 63 Highway frontage. These access roads will allow more of the city's frontage to realize its full development potential and, in turn, provide needed sales tax revenue to the city. Although the city could require these roads be built by developers as the property develops, it might also consider providing this infrastructure with city funds in advance of development.



While the plan proposes the widening and construction of numerous roads, it is intended that most of these road projects be built and constructed as property is developed. In this way, existing residents and the tax payers will not be burdened with handling costs for these road projects. Rather, those costs will be borne by the developers that create the necessity for the new roads and which stand to gain from their construction. However, circumstances may arise where it is advantageous for the city to be proactive in widening or constructing roads to meet the needs of the community and help direct growth in an orderly manner.

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 can leave many people in the city without safe means of getting from their homes to school, to work, or to shop. As such this plan recommends further development of the city's sidewalks and trail system.

The city's current trail system ties Hoxie to Walnut Ridge along an abandoned railroad right-of-way. The trail system serves to provide a recreational outlet for Hoxie's citizens. However, the trail system should be expanded further to serve more areas of the city. The plan map shows the proposed expansion of the system. Attention should be given first to extending the trail south on SW Lawrence Street across the BNSF railway. From there trail should be extended to the Hoxie School campus and city park. The trail system should at a minimum connect existing city parks, schools, and residential areas. This will help ensure that children are provided safer means to travel to some of their most common destinations.



Hoxie's existing trail will provide a backbone for future trails.

Other extensions of the system can be added later. One such example is the Texas Street spur. This proposed trail route would run along Texas Street, the city's primary gateway, within existing highway right-of-way. While serving an important recreational function, the trail could also be used to beautify this stretch of highway if properly landscaping and lined with benches and decorative lighting.

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. 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, the role 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 areas 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 Hoxie 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 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.

Chapter Six: Implementation

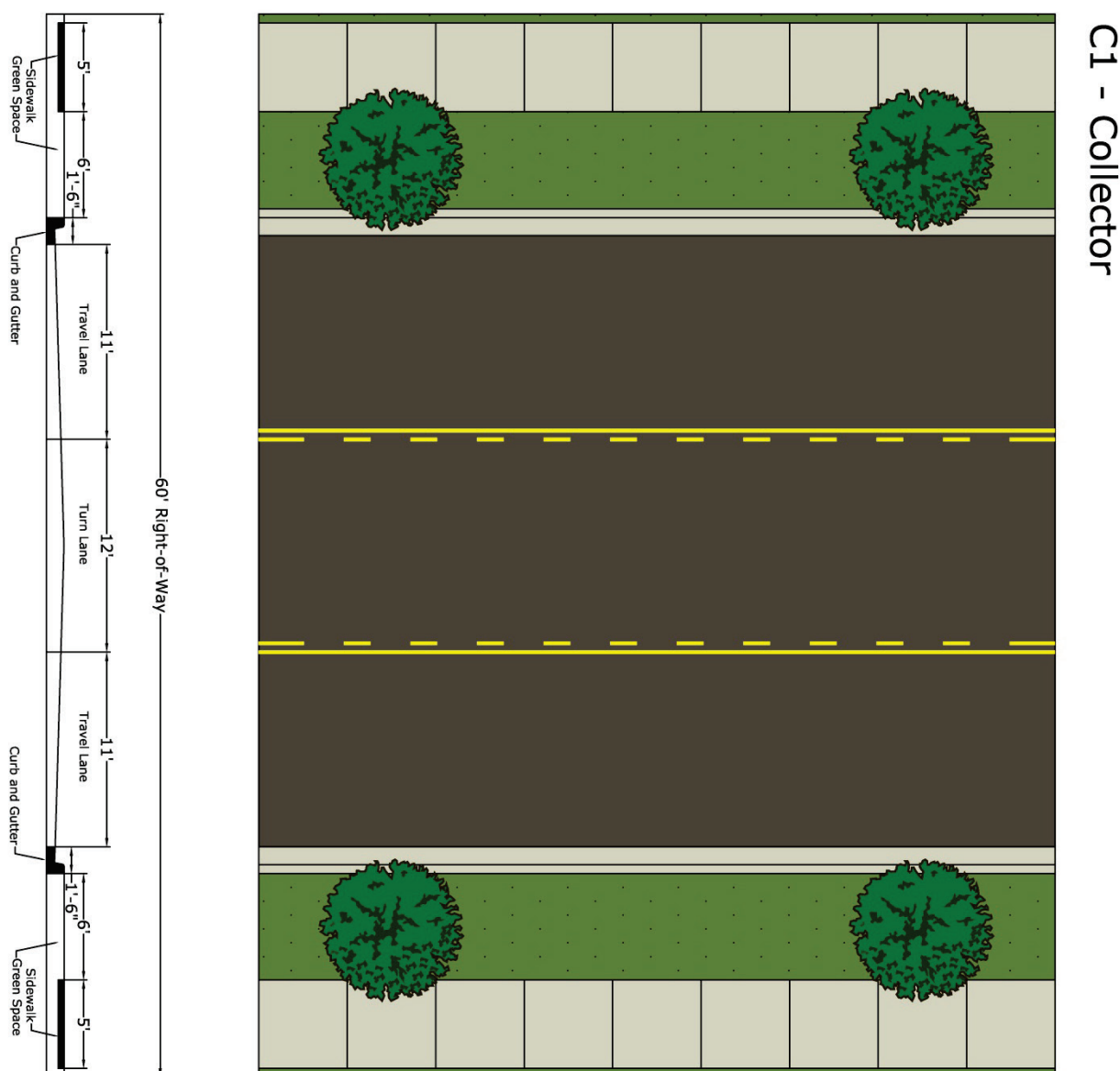
Included in this section are actionable steps and goals that will be used to carry out the proposals in the comprehensive plan. The city should work toward developing a work program to implement these recommendations following the general time lines provided.

Implementation Action	Time Frame			
	Short (0-3 yrs.)	Medium (3-7 yrs.)	Long (7+ yrs.)	Ongoing
Regulatory				
<i>Conduct annual reviews of the Comprehensive Plan</i>				✓
<i>Conduct annual reviews of the Zoning Regulations</i>				✓
<i>Evaluate development proposals and rezoning on compatibility with the Comprehensive Plan</i>				✓
<i>Work to use zoning protection reserve the potential multi-modal industrial facility site for industrial use</i>				✓
<i>Preserve and protect the city's floodplains and floodways</i>				✓
<i>Ensure frontage roads are included or considered as part of any development proposal of the US Hwy 63 frontage</i>				✓
Code Enforcement and Housing				
<i>Condemn and tear down the city's dilapidated and unsafe structures</i>	✓			✓
<i>Enforce Zoning Regulations</i>				✓
<i>Explore creation of a Community Development Corporation</i>		✓		
<i>Directly encourage infill development for new housing</i>				✓
Low Cost/No Cost				
<i>Encourage Teaching of Hoxie history to all students</i>	✓			
<i>Collaborate with Hoxie Schools on community projects</i>	✓			✓
<i>Encourage home building and homeownership</i>	✓			✓
<i>Work to encourage community beautification with landscaping and community beautification programs</i>	✓	✓		
<i>Consider creation of a community beautification committee charged with creating community programs such as: neighborhood clean-up days, Adopt-a-Street, community gardens, etc.</i>	✓			

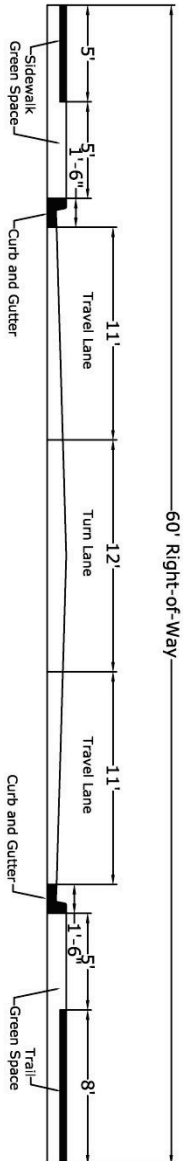
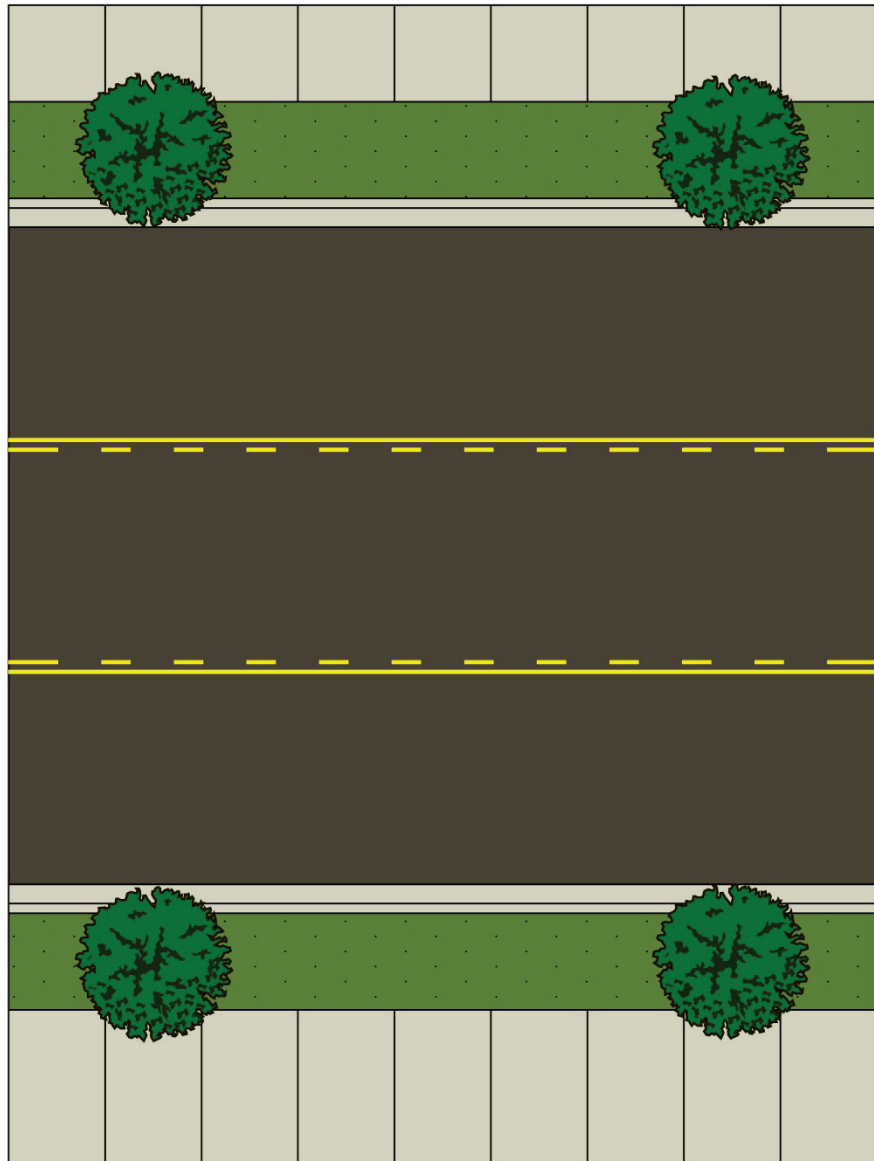
Implementation Action	Time Frame			
	Short (0-3 yrs.)	Medium (3-7 yrs.)	Long (7+ yrs.)	Ongoing
Infrastructure and Community Facilities				
<i>Reinvest in the infrastructure of the city's existing neighborhoods</i>				✓
<i>Develop a new community park</i>			✓	
<i>Establish formal utility service boundaries for water and sewer services and file them with the Arkansas State Water Plan</i>	✓			
<i>Adopt formal policies with regard to the extension of city services outside of the city limits</i>	✓			
<i>Extend and further develop the city's trail system</i>		✓	✓	
<i>Extend Tedder Drive north to Midway Rd across the BNSF railway and west to US Hwy 63 (intended to provide additional above grade rail crossing)</i>			✓	
<i>Extend NE Jackson St. to State St.</i>			✓	
<i>Extend Owl City Rd. north to NE 5th St. across the BNSF railway</i>		✓		
<i>Extend SE Affinity St. to Owl City Rd.</i>			✓	
<i>Extend Park Ave. to SE Andrews St.</i>			✓	

Chapter Seven: Street Standards

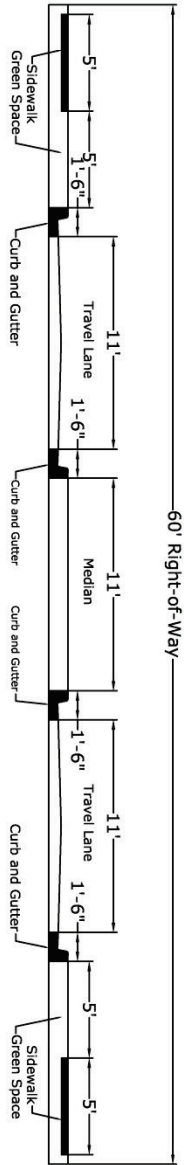
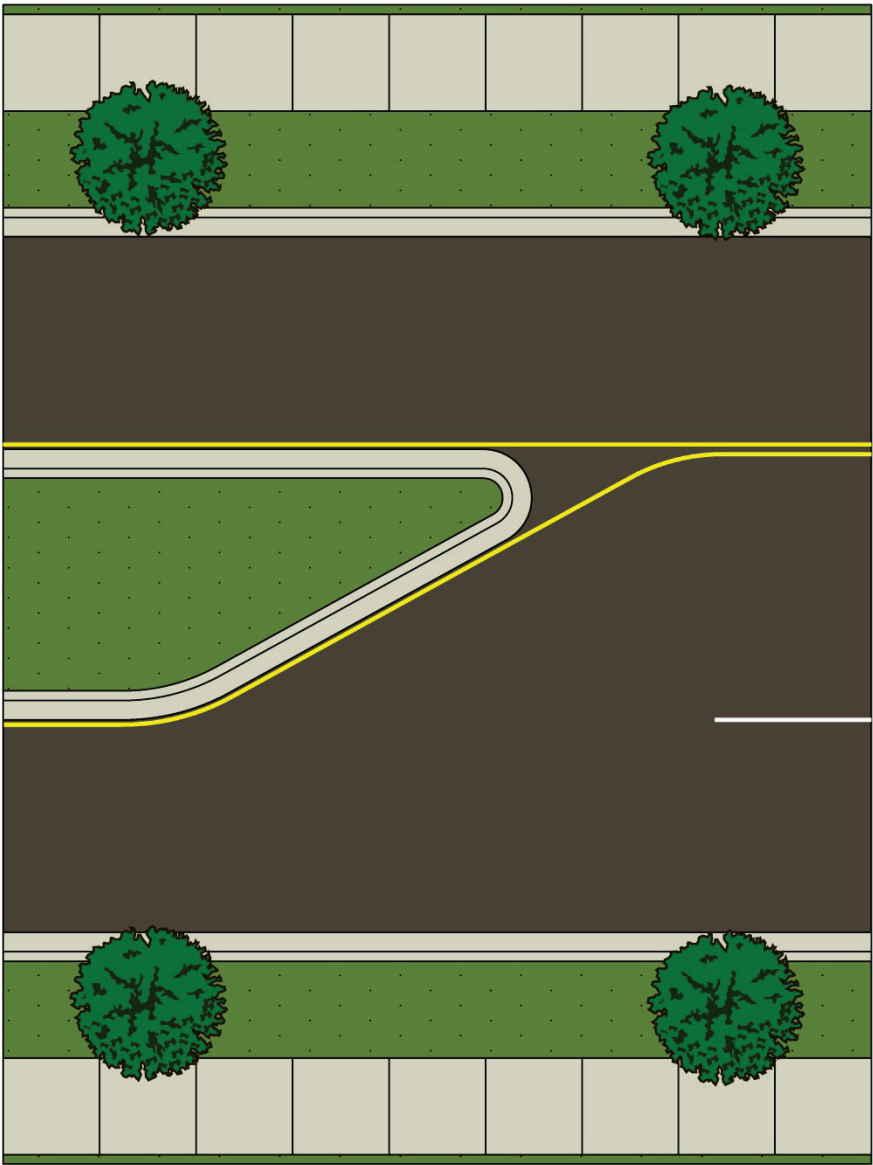
All arterial streets are state managed highways and shall be constructed to the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department's standards.



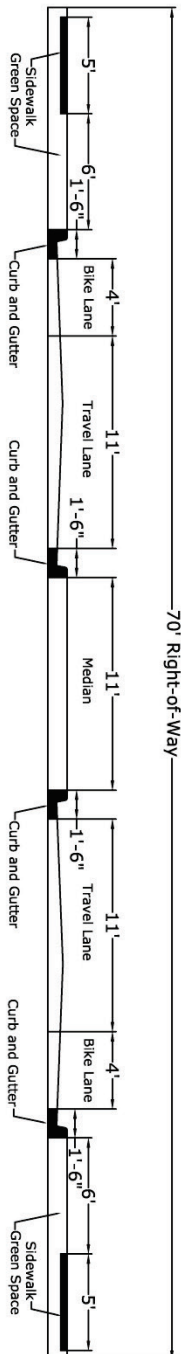
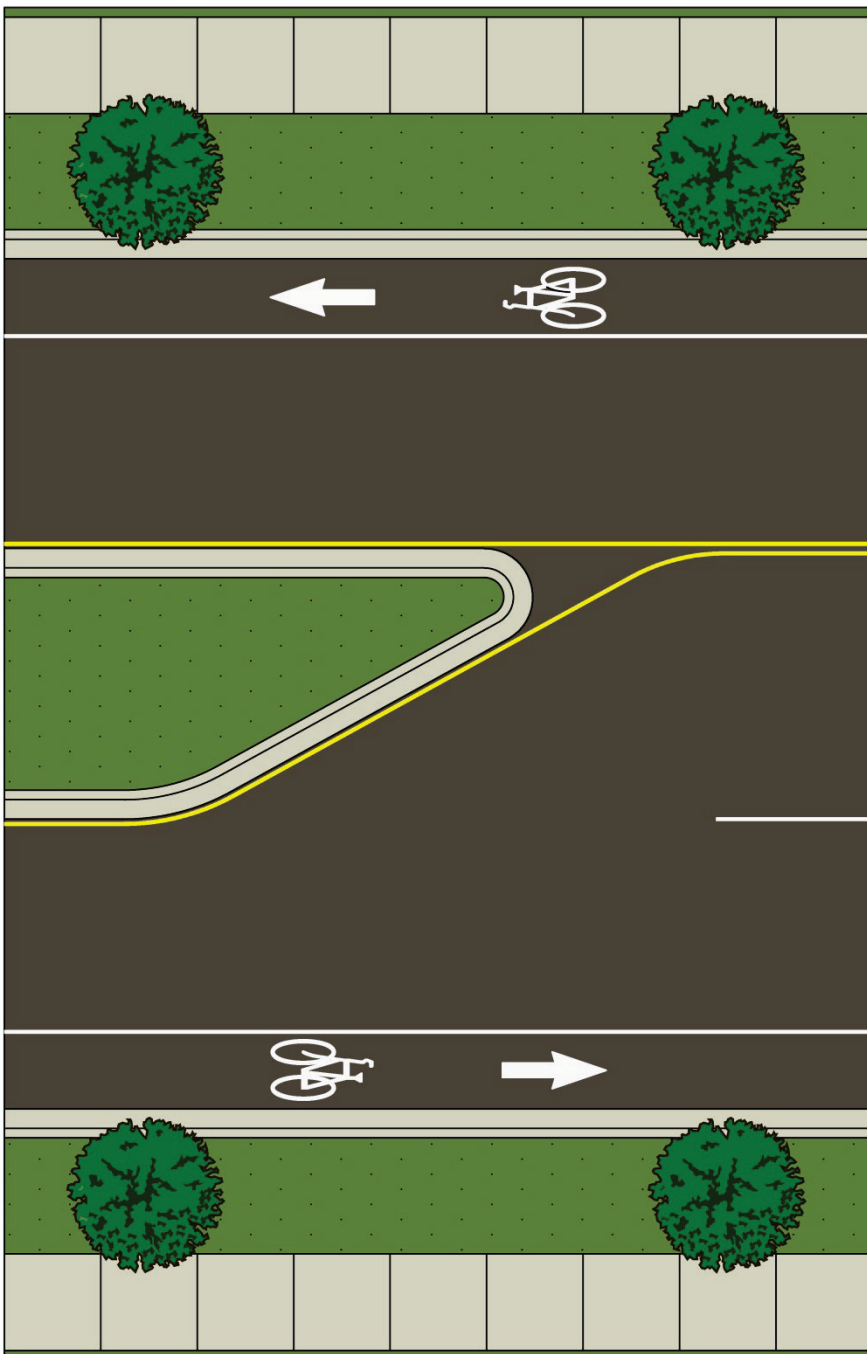
C2 - Collector with Trail



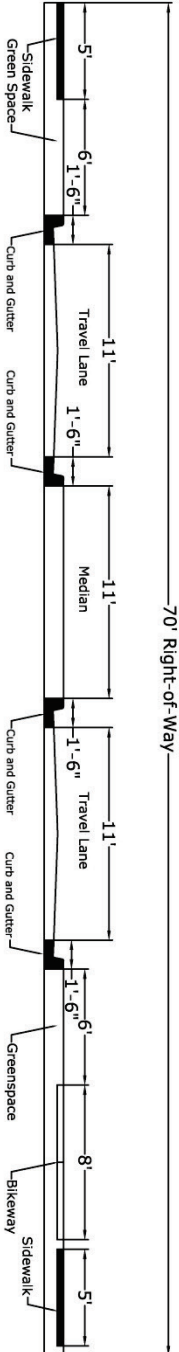
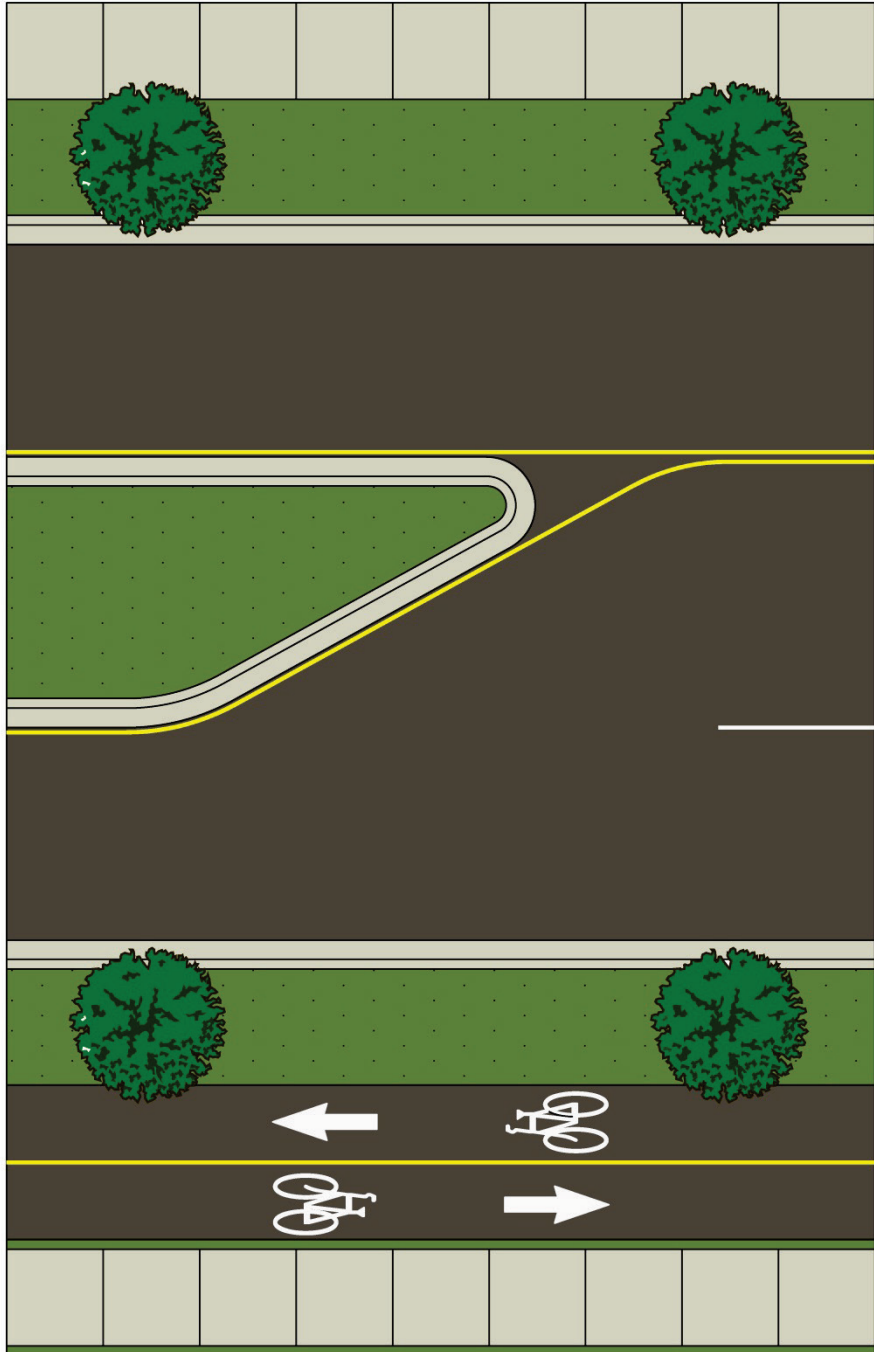
C3 - Collector Boulevard



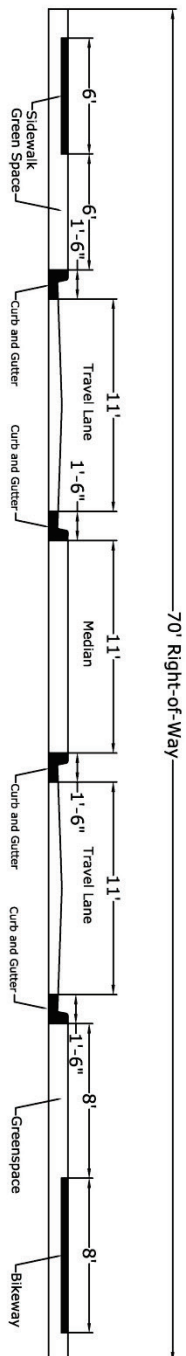
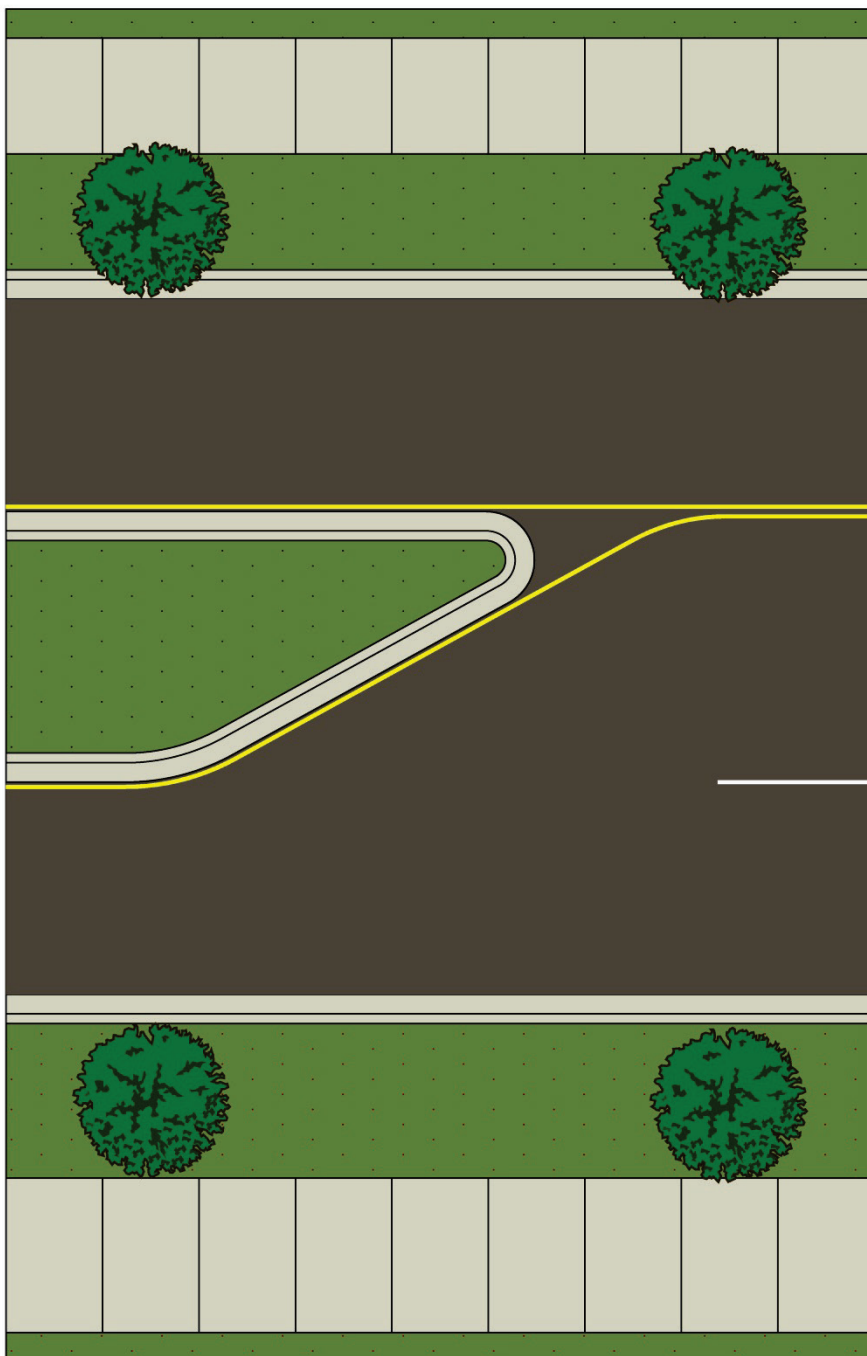
C4 - Collector Boulevard with Bike Lanes



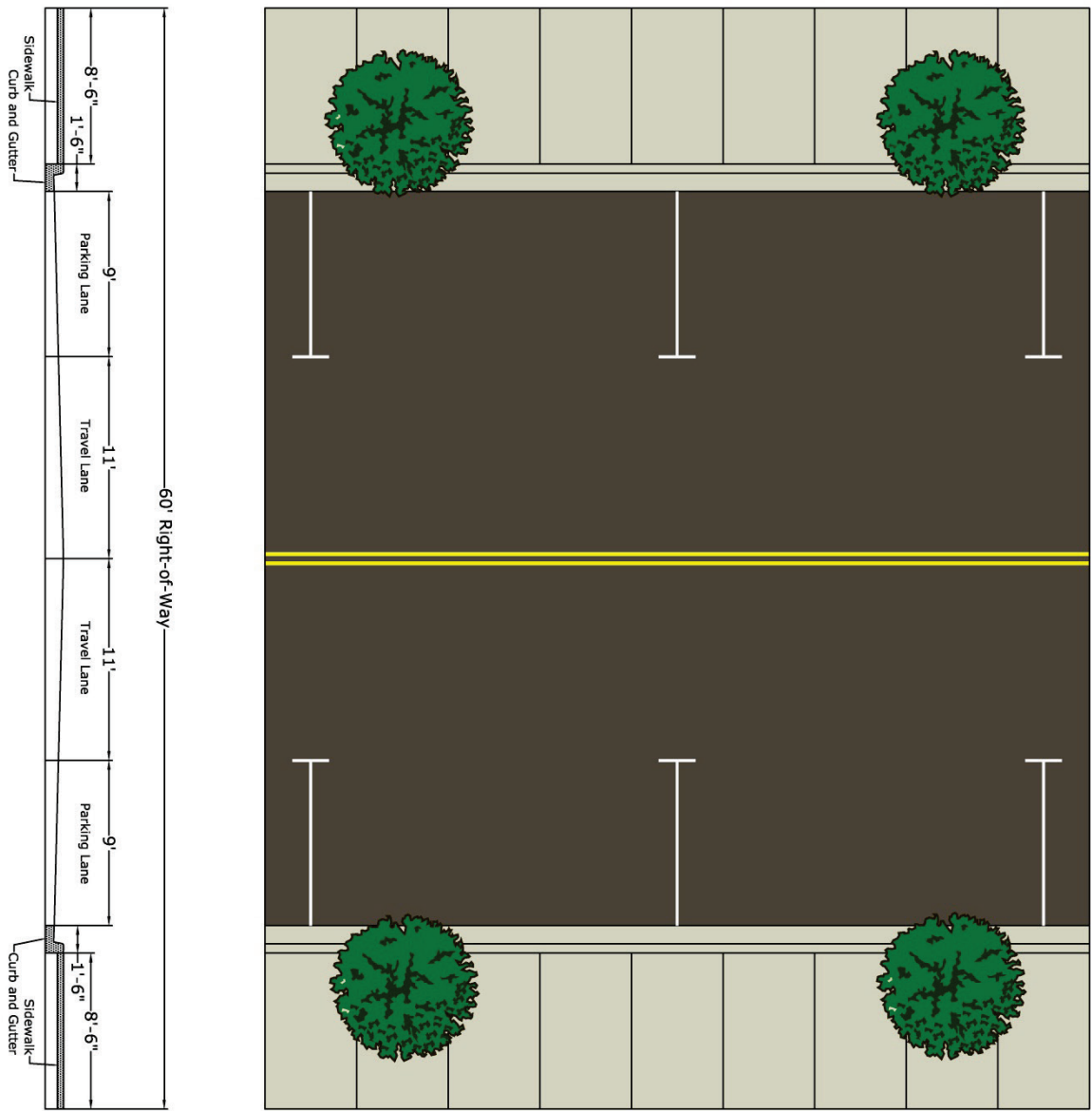
C5 - Collector Boulevard with Bikeway



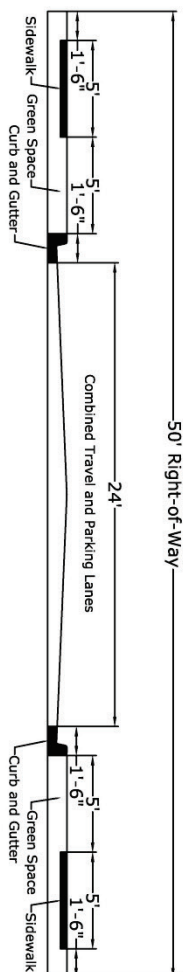
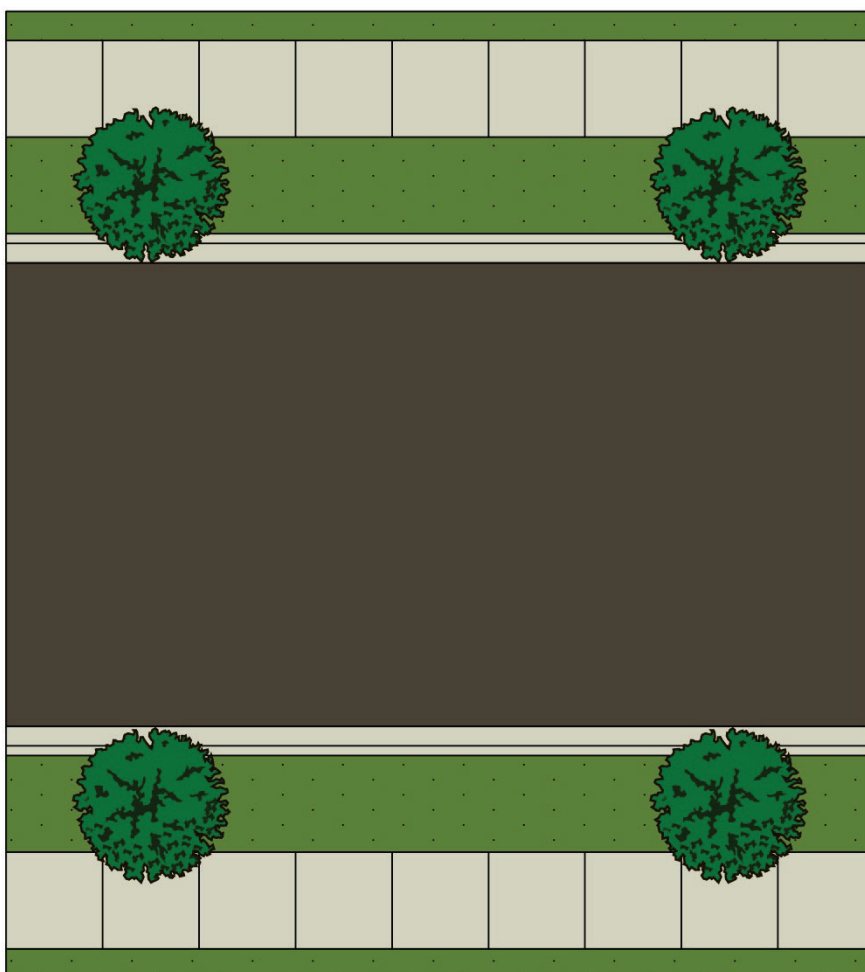
C6 - Collector Boulevard with Trail



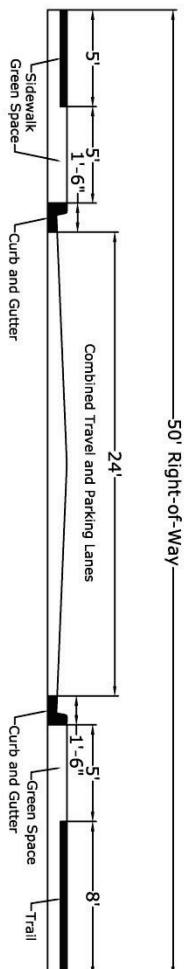
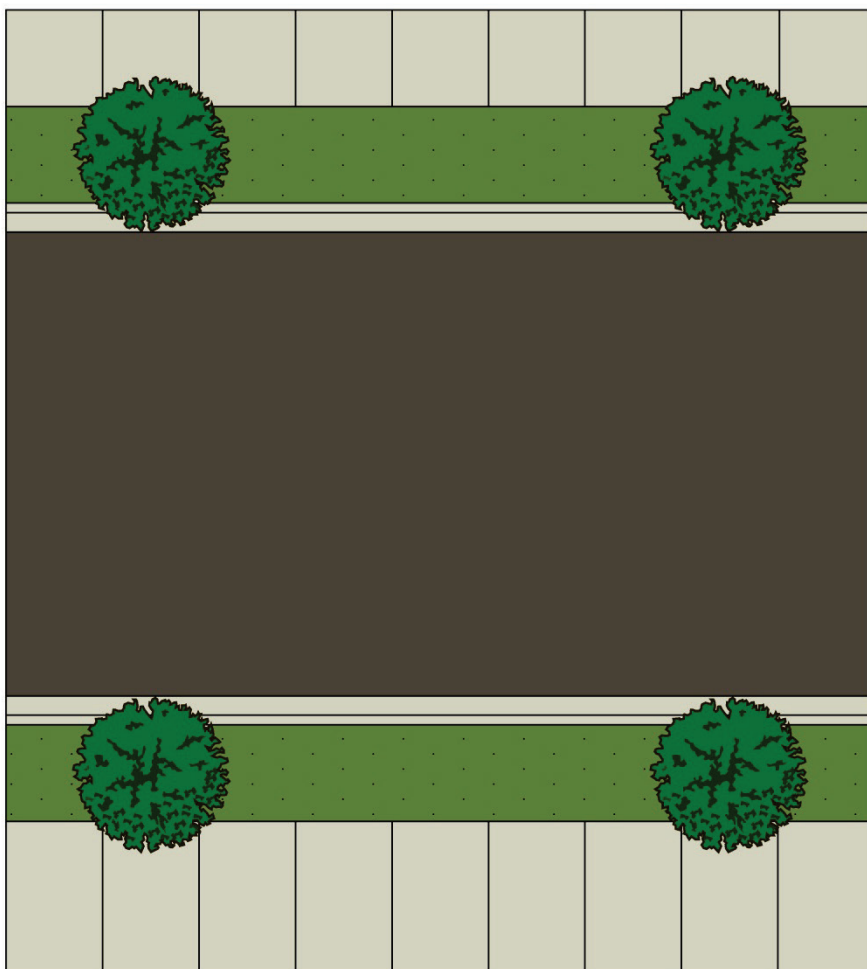
C7 - Collector Urban



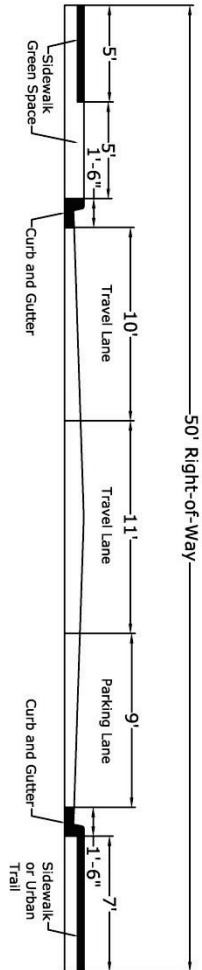
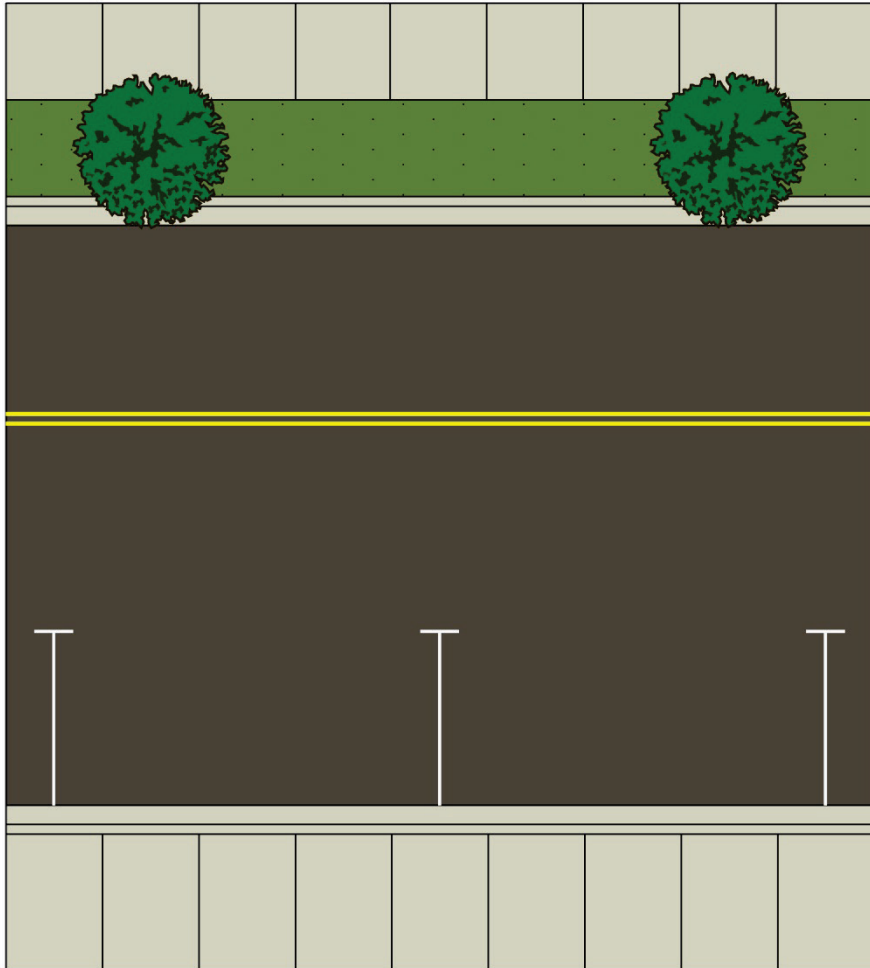
L1 - Local



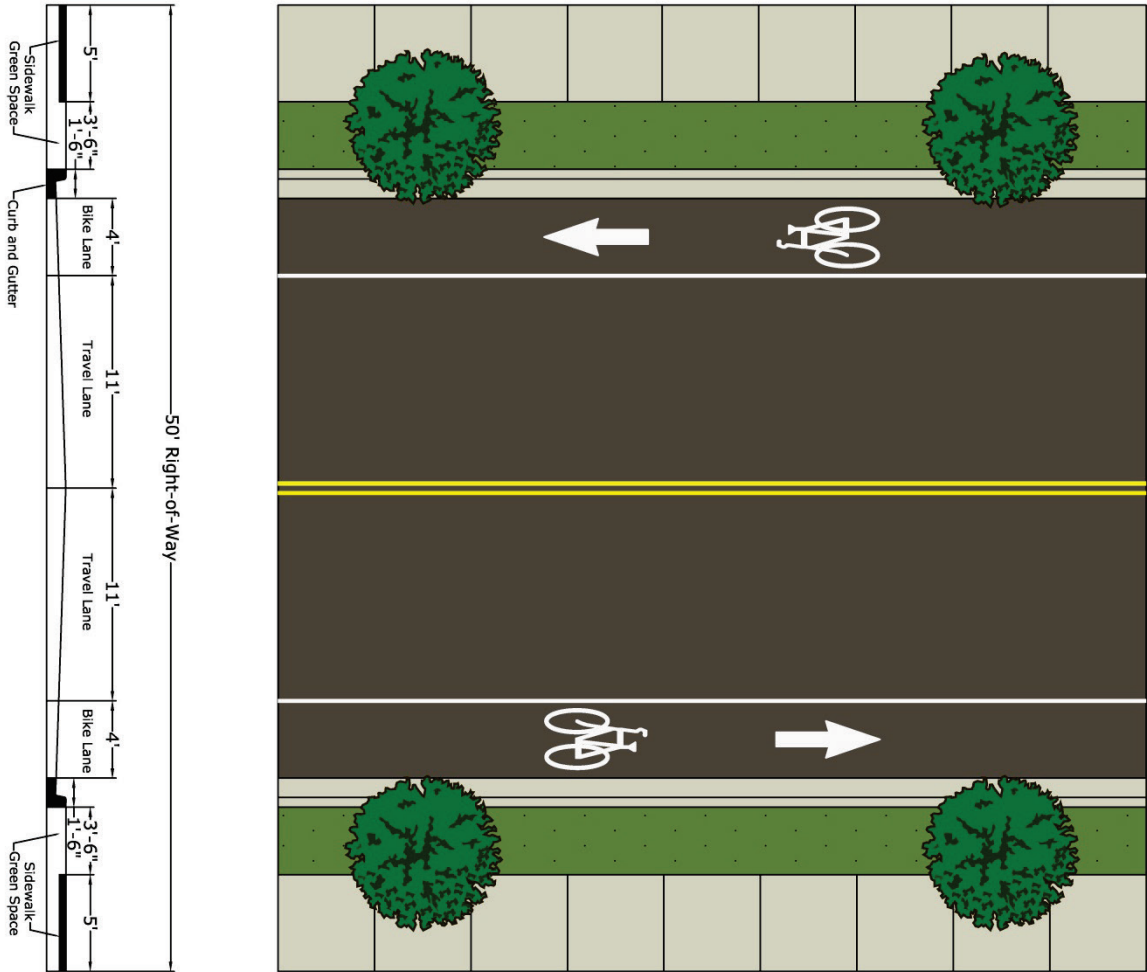
L2 - Local with Trail



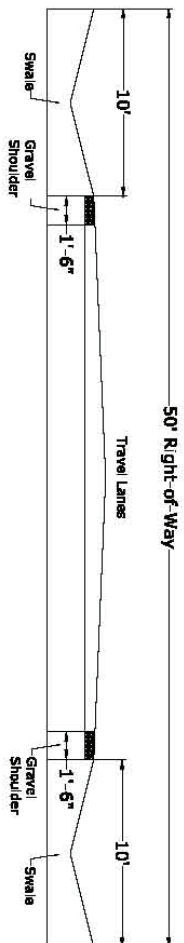
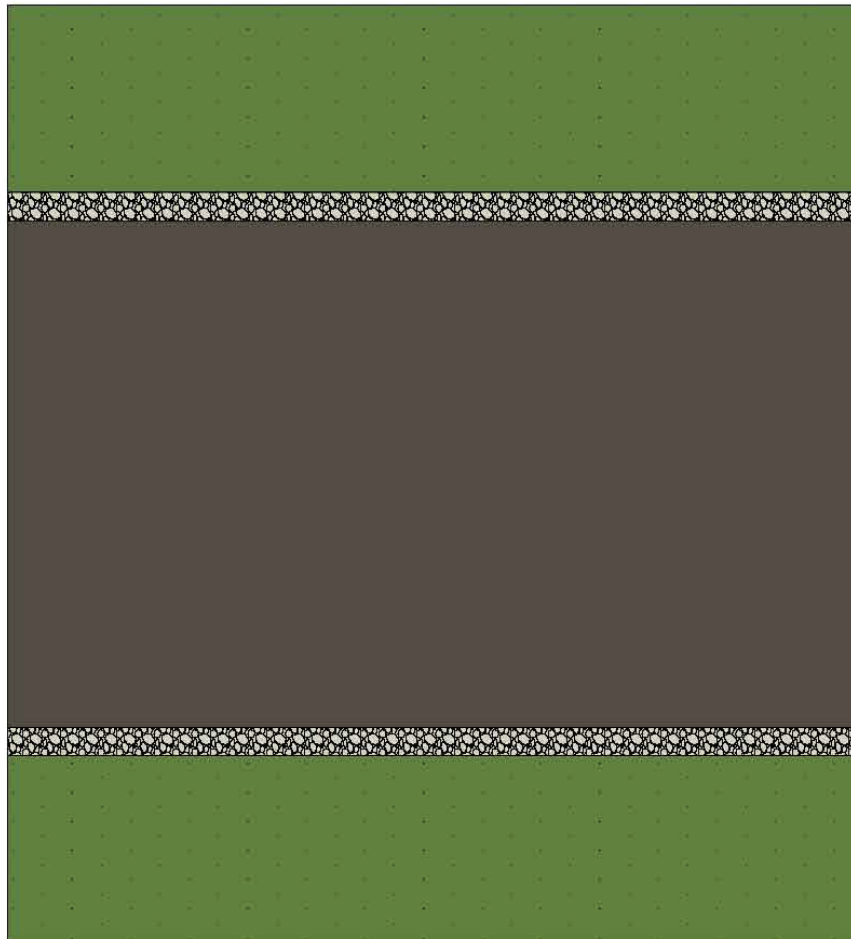
L3 - Local with Single Striped Parking Lane



L4 - Local with Bike Lanes



L5 - Rural Local



Chapter Eight: Plan Map

