A Comprehensive Development Plan for Excelsior Springs, Missouri

Prepared with the City of Excelsior Springs
By RDG Planning & Design and Larkin Group
December, 2009
The authors gratefully acknowledge the friendship, support, and cooperation of the residents of the City of Excelsior Springs. It is to them that we dedicate this plan. We would like to express special gratitude to city staff and the Excelsior Springs Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee whose leadership was a critical part of a successful planning process.

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Introduction: Excelsior Springs Plan

A Vision for the Future

Excelsior Springs is a vibrant, historic community in a strategic location for future growth. The city's prospects present both exciting challenges and opportunities.

Excelsior Springs' unique history began with the discovery of its mineral waters in the late 1800s. Founded in 1880 the city grew as a destination for healing waters. Its numerous mineral wells attracted people from a large region to come experience “America's Heaven of Health.” The city used its special features to grow and prosper well into the 1960s when changes in medical science caught up with the city. The city's economy was forever changed but not its unique beauty, character, and history. The Excelsior Springs Plan is designed to provide a comprehensive vision of the city's future, based on taking actions that will improve the lives of residents and make the city uniquely attractive for potential growth.

The Role of a Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive development plan for Excelsior Springs has two fundamental purposes. The first provides an essential legal basis for land use regulation such as zoning and subdivision control. Secondly, a modern comprehensive plan presents a unified and compelling vision for a community, derived from the aspirations of its citizens; and establishes the specific actions necessary to fulfill that vision.

Legal Role

Communities prepare and adopt comprehensive plans for legal purposes. Missouri State Statutes enable cities to prepare a plan for the "general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated development of the municipality which will ... best promote the general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development." Land use regulations, such as zoning ordinances, recognize that people in a community live cooperatively and have certain responsibilities to one another. These regulations establish rules that govern how land is developed within a municipality. The comprehensive plan creates a vision for how a community should develop and thus should guide land use decisions.

The Community Building Role

A comprehensive development plan has an even more significant role in the growth of a community. Based on the participation of residents in the planning of their community, the plan establishes a picture of Excelsior Springs' future. This vision continues to be crucial, as challenges related to population growth and economic changes affect the character of Excelsior Springs. The plan is designed as a working document that both defines the future and provides a working program for realizing the city's great potential.

The Comprehensive Plan: Approach and Format

The comprehensive plan takes a thematic and goal-oriented approach to the future development of Excelsior Springs. The plan is laid out in ten chapters or themes that correspond to the city's most important strategic issues. The traditional sections of a comprehensive plan, such as land use, housing, infrastructure, and transportation, are organized as leading components of each chapter. This enables the plan to tell the story of the city's future development and presents an integrated program for the city's growth.
The plans chapters include:

1. Strategic Planning Process
This section summarizes the findings of the community participation process and identifies key issues and perspectives identified by stakeholders. Based on this process the plan’s goals and guiding principles are established. The chapter identifies “Development Principles,” the general principles and ideas that guide the more detailed elements of the plan.

2. A Profile of Excelsior Springs
This chapter considers Excelsior Springs’s population characteristics and growth, its role in the region, and its emergence as a vital center for government, services, residential development, education and recreation. Through population and land use analysis this theme considers the future growth and development needs of the city.

3. Growth and Land Use
This chapter considers one of Excelsior Springs’s most critical issues - how to accommodate growth and in what direction that growth should occur. It provides a detailed strategy to guide future growth in new development areas.

4. A Recreation Lifestyle
This section describes Excelsior Springs’s parks and sports facilities and outdoor recreation as a part of the regional recreation opportunities available to Excelsior Springs’ residents. It presents improvement plans for new and existing parks and trails to be integrated into the city’s growth, housing, and regional tourism efforts.

5. Quality Public Services
This section inventories Excelsior Springs’ public facilities and services and provides a program of recommendations. This includes an examination of the functionality and conditions of Excelsior Springs’ vehicular and non-vehicular transportation systems.

6. Housing and Neighborhoods
This chapter examines housing demand characteristics, and presents strategies to assure that each area maintains a positive state of health. Important issues include the preservation of the city’s older and historic housing stock, as well as provisions for additional rental and affordable housing opportunities.

7. Downtown Excelsior Springs
This section proposes an innovative development program for the city’s vital town center, a distinctive place that remains an active mixed use center. This theme analyzes downtown, and presents a multi-faceted downtown development program that includes the public environment, redevelopment opportunities, and management strategies designed to improve the district’s already historic environment. It is designed to create opportunities for additional business, and to improve the functioning and financial success of the district.

8. The Character of the Community
This section addresses improvements to Excelsior Spring’s public environment that can enhance the city’s civic quality and appearance to residents and visitors.

9. Implementation
This chapter draws together the analysis and policies of the plan into a program for implementation. It summarizes the recommendations and development policies of the plan, and presents an Implementation Schedule, listing proposed projects and the time frame for their completion.
In developing this section, input from the Steering Committee, residents, and city staff was integrated with the demographic, economic, and land use information detailed in Chapters 2 and 3.
A VISION FOR EXCELSIOR SPRINGS

The specific components of the public participation process included:

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

A Steering Committee

A Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, representing a wide variety of community interests, was the primary contributor to this process. Committee members met regularly to assist in identifying issues, developing vision statements, and prioritizing the community’s goals. They also reviewed the progress of the overall plan.

Community Questionnaire

To begin the planning process, a community questionnaire was completed by over 130. The survey provided insight on important community services and facilities. The results helped to frame the issues and goals for the community, and were addressed in more detail during focus group meetings. The results of the community survey are located in Appendix A.

Focus Group Meetings

Focus group meetings were held in November 2008. Residents, business and property owners, financial institutions, and public officials participated in roundtable discussions to share their opinions of the community and its future opportunities. An overview of comments from the Focus Group meetings is located in Appendix A.

Community Strategic Planning Workshop

A community wide workshop was also held in November of 2008. Interested residents were invited to share their thoughts on the issues and opportunities for Excelsior Springs over the next 20 years.

Community Presentation

A community presentation was held in January 2009 where the Plan’s First Principles were presented to residents. A summary of the public input process and Community Profile (Chapter 2) were outlined to the public as the building blocks for the First Principles or guiding goals for the Plan and the future of Excelsior Springs.

Design Workshops

Two public design workshops were used to engage residents, business owners, and other stakeholders in the planning process. The first workshop, held in February 2009 focused on the entire city. The second workshop, held in April of 2009, focused on opportunities for the downtown. Participants shared their ideas, issues, and concerns informally with planners and designers, while ideas were illustrated for their reactions. The results of the city wide workshop are the basis of the Development Plan outlined in Chapter 3. Results from the Downtown Workshop are presented in Chapter 7.

Open House

A Community Open House was held on July 16, 2009. A presentation providing an overview of the Plan along with visual material was provided in an open format to residents.
FIRST PRINCIPLES
The First Principles are the guiding principles or policies of the Excelsior Springs Comprehensive Plan. Formulating and adopting policies as part of the comprehensive planning process are important for a number of reasons. Some of these include:

- Providing advance notice to private decision-makers, including developers, builders, and property owners, about basic principles that will guide Excelsior Springs’ public decisions. This helps these groups make decisions more efficiently, avoiding conflicts and wasting time and money.
- Providing a framework for consistent decision-making, while providing flexibility for review of individual situations.
- Keeping decisions oriented to overall community goals.
- Increasing interagency communication and cooperation, assuring that different bodies act in accord with similar assumptions.
- Providing a firmer basis for evaluating the costs and benefits of public investments, and their consistency with overall policy objectives.
- Providing for public participation in local government, helping to implement ideas that grow from citizens of the area.
- Providing a general basis for interpreting and applying the comprehensive plan, maintaining the flexibility to respond to individual situations.
- Giving staff a context for developing recommendations for action by local government.

In developing this section, input from the Steering Committee, residents, and city staff was integrated with the demographic, economic, and land use information detailed in Chapters 2 and 3. The committee evaluated preliminary principal statements and action items, and clarified them as needed. These were then presented to the public for further comment.

The subsequent sections of the Excelsior Springs Plan provide more detailed directions toward implementing these policies and, in some ways, illustrate the physical outcome of their application. Decisions by public officials should be grounded in these concepts and directions. However, policies are guidelines rather than laws. Situations arise that require a flexible rather than literal application of these statements. Sometimes, a new or changed policy can create substantial benefits to the city and its residents, and still remain consistent with overall community goals.

Growth and Land Use

Excelsior Springs will grow as a unified community through attractive and sustainable land development.

- Encourage land use concepts that respect landforms and improve on conventional development practices.
- Expand infrastructure into areas that provide maximum yield, efficiency and consistency with plan objectives.
- Connect all parts of the city with a balanced transportation system that provides convenient vehicular access and encourages active transportation.
- Establish land use regulations that relate to the vision of the comprehensive plan.
- Balance development between new development on the edges of the city and reinvestment in older portions of the city.
- Establish incentives for the conservation of established neighborhoods.
» Reuse the old high school building and other underused structures of community importance.
» Use annexation policy to expand the city’s tax base, provide areas for future growth, and preserve critical green space.
» Consider the land use effects of transportation decisions and projects.
» Plan for community commercial nodes that serve present and future populations and provide attractive and welcoming destinations for residents and visitors.
» Identify and encourage business park development that capitalizes on natural and locational assets.
» Improve access routes and transportation links to the interstate and the Kansas City Metro Area.

Downtown Development

*Downtown Excelsior Springs will maintain its role as the city’s image center and core of civic life. Economic and physical development initiatives will combine to conserve and enhance this unique district.*

» Implement a downtown development program rooted in markets and the district’s distinctive features.
» Focus on strategic projects such as the Royal Hotel building to avoid “demolition by neglect”
» Develop policies and remove obstacles to upper level adaptive reuse, including downtown residential development.
» Engage residential property owners in programs to improve downtown housing.
» Complete Historic Design Standards for new construction and major renovation projects.
» Position the Hall of Waters as a community attraction, including better utilization of the Water Bar and spa.
» Provide adequate parking to support residential needs in and around the downtown.
» Establish a downtown brand based on the springs and mineral waters.
» Establish public use and access to the museum.
» Find more functionally appropriate locations for human service providers.

Economic Development

*Excelsior Springs will promote and encourage economic development activities that capitalize on community assets, support the needs of present and future residents, and strive to ensure a stable and diverse economic base.*

» Excelsior Springs’ business leaders should come together to form an Economic Development Group.
» The city, chamber, and economic development group should establish an industrial park.
» Improve connections to I-35 and take action on the Smart Moves work.
» Work with state and local leaders to create tax incentives for residential and commercial developments.
» Promote rail service to industrial areas.
» Create financing programs for improvements to existing businesses.
» Invest in and market major quality of life features such as parks, clean air, cultural amenities, and natural resources.
Tourism

Excelsior Springs will improve its balance of trade by establishing itself as a regional destination, capitalizing on the historical and commercial assets of the city.

- Work with Downtown Excelsior Springs Partnerships and Chamber to establish a paid position that is focused on tourism development in Excelsior Springs.
- Establish a marketing plan and campaign focused on the city’s market region.
- Work to establish a movie theater.
- Evaluate ways to develop and promote the mineral waters.
- Create a network of attractions, focusing on evocative assets such as the Hall of Waters and the Elms.
- Identify two additional community attractions.
- Link the city’s natural and built environment.
- Develop “wayfinding” signage that will guide visitors around the city and to key attractions.

Recreation and Community Wellness

Excelsior Springs will become a healthier city by providing attractive recreation resources to residents and visitors, and providing infrastructure that encourages physical activity.

- Develop a new, multi-use Community Center. Identify a location that functions well, enjoys convenient access by a variety of modes, and is perceived as being the territory of all residents.
- Initiate a community-based process to program and guide the development of a new community center.
- Ensure that the center meets the needs of all generations.
- Improve the city’s existing parks and upgrade park service for all residents.
- Develop and implement an affordable long-range parks plan for the development of an overall parks system. Consider the green system to provide a hierarchy of parks and open spaces, connected to one another.
- Incorporate active transportation into the fabric of the community.
- Encourage the development of commercial recreation.

Human Services

Excelsior Springs will convene providers of human services to improve critical services and help residents in need, and move clients toward self-sufficiency and economic independence.

- Consider a Human Services Campus that coordinates efforts, improves economic efficiency, and provides better service to clients.
- Initiate a process involving stakeholders to establish a coordinated program and consider sites for such a campus.
- Encourage public and private partnerships to address housing (assisted living, subsidized, and affordable), job training, drug and alcohol abuse treatment, and other human services.
Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization

Excelsior Springs will preserve its housing stock and offer a variety of safe, affordable housing alternatives in attractive neighborhoods.

- Establish a community housing partnership that includes a nonprofit development corporation and financing sources to fill market needs not easily met by the private market.
- Encourage local financial institutions to finance rehabilitation of existing housing.
- Sponsor periodic forums with planning and building staff, building contractors, realtors, and other interested persons to review codes and procedures.
- Maintain and enforce the International Building Code.
- Support efforts to provide a variety of housing types and densities to meet emerging demands.
- Create a rental and property owner association that works to build and maintain quality rental property.
- Build on the character and identification of existing neighborhoods.
- Assemble vacant and dilapidated properties in the downtown for infill development
- Implement a comprehensive corridor enhancement along Isley Boulevard.
- Establish neighborhood improvement districts.
- Expand the police presence in troubled neighborhoods, along with expansion of voluntary efforts such as neighborhood watches.
- Decrease densities in specific neighborhoods.
- Establish a street and sidewalk improvement program for older portions of the city.

Community Services

Excelsior Springs will support community services that support and direct future development, ensure effectiveness and efficiency, and control public costs.

- Upgrade water and sewer systems in the older parts of town.
- Improve telephone and wireless access in the city.
- Expand infrastructure into areas that provide maximum yield and efficiency and consistency with plan objectives.
This section examines demographic trends that will affect Excelsior Springs. The analysis examines population and demographic dynamics, including future population, and important regional issues that will affect the quality of the city’s environment.
A PROFILE OF EXCELSIOR SPRINGS

POPULATION HISTORY AND CHARACTERISTICS

This discussion presents important changes in the characteristics and dynamics of Excelsior Springs’ population. Table 2.1 summarizes the historical population change in Excelsior Springs and includes comparisons with Maryville, Warrensburg, Kearney, and Platte City. Table 2.1 indicates:

» Excelsior Springs’s most significant growth period was from 1960 to 1970.
» Despite the decline in the healing waters industry the city’s population grew by 5% in the 1970s.
» Over the past 40 years Clay County has experienced significant growth related to the Kansas City metro area. Excelsior Springs’ growth has not been as dramatic as places like Kearney and Platte City but the city’s population has consistently stayed at 6 to 7 percent of the county’s total population.

To better understand the city’s future population dynamics it is important to look at the composition of the city’s population. Chart 2.1 examines the city’s population divided into 5 year population increments or cohorts. Table 2.2 compares the actual 2000 population with a predicted population for 2000. Average birth and death rates are applied to cohort data from 1990 to determine the 2000 predicted population. The comparison between actual and predicted provides a sense of which cohorts experienced growth (or decline) beyond natural population change.

» Residents between the ages of 15 and 19 made up the largest cohort in 2000. This is a reflection of the Job Corp population in the city. Most communities experience a decline in this population as older teens and young adults leave their home towns to attend college and begin careers.
» Overall Excelsior Springs has a fairly young population. The city’s median age in 2000 was 33.8 and 45% of the population was under the age of 30.
» Excelsior Springs’ population under the age of five experienced an increase in over predicted while their parents cohorts (25-34) showed signs of out-migration. This would likely indicate a higher than average birthrate in the community.
» The growth among residents age 15 to 19 is related to Job Corp. This can effect projecting future populations for the city because these students do not remain in the city to marry and have families.

### Table 2.1: Population Change for Excelsior Springs and Other Nebraska Cities, 1960-2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excelsior Springs</td>
<td>6,293</td>
<td>8,399</td>
<td>8,809</td>
<td>10,354</td>
<td>10,847</td>
<td>11,840</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryville</td>
<td>7,807</td>
<td>9,970</td>
<td>9,558</td>
<td>10,663</td>
<td>10,581</td>
<td>10,830</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrensburg</td>
<td>9,689</td>
<td>13,125</td>
<td>13,807</td>
<td>15,244</td>
<td>16,340</td>
<td>18,629</td>
<td>68.6%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kearney</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>1,433</td>
<td>1,790</td>
<td>5,472</td>
<td>8,214</td>
<td>707.1%</td>
<td>50.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platte City</td>
<td>1,188</td>
<td>2,022</td>
<td>2,114</td>
<td>2,947</td>
<td>4,805</td>
<td>211,952</td>
<td>225.4%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay County</td>
<td>87,474</td>
<td>123,702</td>
<td>136,488</td>
<td>153,411</td>
<td>184,006</td>
<td>211,952</td>
<td>110.4%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000
The decline in population over the age of 75 could be caused by a higher than normal death rate, or older residents leaving the city for services and amenities in other communities.

**Population Projections**

Projecting Excelsior Springs's population helps one to understand the future demographic character of the community and the city's future land use and community services needs. Estimating future growth is a critical first step in the city's planning and policy decisions for future investments. By evaluating Excelsior Springs' historic population and economic trends, along with construction activity, a projected future population can be formulated. Tables 2.3 and Chart 2.2 provide insight into the city's natural population change, population scenarios, and recent construction activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>2000 Predicted</th>
<th>2000 Actual</th>
<th>Difference (Actual–Predicted)</th>
<th>% Variance 1990-2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-9</td>
<td>1390</td>
<td>1560</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 19</td>
<td>1617</td>
<td>1789</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>1656</td>
<td>1537</td>
<td>-119</td>
<td>-7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>1513</td>
<td>1452</td>
<td>-61</td>
<td>-4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>1539</td>
<td>1460</td>
<td>-79</td>
<td>-5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>1186</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>-17</td>
<td>-2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>-22</td>
<td>-4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80+</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>-41</td>
<td>-8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10828</td>
<td>10847</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on natural population change, which calculates the number of births to deaths, the city’s population would increase moderately. However, this could be slightly elevated because of the Job Corp students who will not remain in the community.

During the 1990s the city’s population only grew by 0.5% annually.

Construction activity since 2000 would indicate that the city’s population has grown at about 1.4% annually. During 2008 the residential housing market experienced a significant downturn across the country and slowed growth as people found it hard to sell their homes.

Excelsior Springs’ location, avoidance of the housing bubble, and strong growth during the previous recession in the 1980s supports continued growth for the city.

Although growth during the later part of this decade may not be as strong, the city’s goals should lay the ground work for continued population increases of 1.0% annually resulting in a 2030 population of 14,620. This would predict a more aggressive growth pattern then experienced in the 1990s but not as aggressive as the early part of this decade.

### Table 2.3: Projected Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Pop Change</td>
<td>10,847</td>
<td>11,101</td>
<td>11,226</td>
<td>11,421</td>
<td>11,565</td>
<td>11,618</td>
<td>11,583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5% Annual Growth</td>
<td>10,847</td>
<td>11,206</td>
<td>11,363</td>
<td>11,631</td>
<td>11,905</td>
<td>12,185</td>
<td>12,471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1% Annual Growth</td>
<td>10,847</td>
<td>11,629</td>
<td>11,982</td>
<td>12,593</td>
<td>13,235</td>
<td>13,911</td>
<td>14,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.25% Annual Growth</td>
<td>10,847</td>
<td>11,840</td>
<td>12,293</td>
<td>13,087</td>
<td>13,932</td>
<td>14,831</td>
<td>15,789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.37% Annual Growth</td>
<td>10,847</td>
<td>11,931</td>
<td>12,429</td>
<td>13,304</td>
<td>14,241</td>
<td>15,244</td>
<td>16,317</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Excelsior Springs, U.S. Census Bureau, RDG Planning & Design; 2008
Historically Excelsior Springs’ economy was independent from the Kansas City Metro Area but over the last 20 years an economic transition has occurred in the city with more residents commuting to jobs outside the city. The following section reviews the city’s employment and income trends.
Employment within a community can be assessed in two different ways. One is based on the resident’s employment by occupation, while the other is based on a resident’s employment by industry. Employment by occupation describes the kind of work a person does on the job, as opposed to the type of industry an individual works in, which relates to the kind of business conducted by a person’s employer. For example, a person might be an accountant (their occupation) for a major manufacturer (the industry).

Tables 2.4 and 2.5 examine Excelsior Springs’ employment trends.

- Over 50% of Excelsior Springs’ residents are employed in sales or production and transportation occupation, while 20% are employed in management/professional occupations.
- Like Ray County, Excelsior Springs has fewer people in management and professional occupations than Clay County.
- During the 1990s the city’s population increased by 4.8%, while the number residents over the age of 16 in the workforce increased by 12.3%. This, despite a decrease in those 25 to 34, is a reflection of the strong regional economy of the late 1990s.
- The largest change occurred in what are often tourism dependent positions in arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodations, and food services. This industry accounted for over 65% of the city’s job growth.

Income and Retail Sales

Table 2.6 describes the income distribution for Excelsior Springs, Kearney, and Clay County.

With more residents employed in lower paying sales and services oriented occupations the city’s household incomes lag behind Clay County and Kearney.

Table 2.7: Retail Analysis, 2008 (In Millions of $)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Retail Sales</th>
<th>Consumer Demand</th>
<th>Retail Sales</th>
<th>Gap/Surplus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excelsior Springs</td>
<td>180.9</td>
<td>182.9</td>
<td>-1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kearney</td>
<td>132.9</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberty</td>
<td>519.1</td>
<td>312.2</td>
<td>206.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Claritas, Inc. 2009
Excelsior Springs’ median household income is 76% of Clay County and 64% of Kearney.

Over 41% of the city households earn less than 80% of the county median income, an important breaking point for some housing assistance and financing programs.

Table 2.7 compares the city’s consumer expenditures with retail sales. The gap or surplus between these two identifies areas where the city is an importer or exporter of retail dollars. If sales are greater than consumer expenditures the city is an importer and vice versa.

Many residents of Excelsior Springs think of the city as an exporter of dollars as residents jump in their cars and head further into the Kansas City area for goods and services. While this is true for Kearney and Liberty this is not always the case for Excelsior Springs.

Excelsior Springs attracts retail spending in:

- Motor vehicle and parts dealers
- Gasoline stations
- General merchandise stores (Wal-Mart)
- Non-store retailers (electronic shopping & direct selling)

Excelsior Springs is an exporter of consumer spending in:

- Food and beverages stores (grocery stores)
- Building materials
- Clothing and accessories

Analysis of the city’s retail spending brings to light opportunities for the city. Areas where the city exports dollars identify opportunities to tap into local consumer dollars. At the same time, markets that are importers of dollars are niche areas for the community that should be built upon in the future.

**Housing Values**

There is an interlocking connection between such demographic and economic factors as population trends, income, and employment. Table 2.8 presents a comparison of housing values in Excelsior Springs, Kearney, Platte City, and Warrensburg.

The 2008 estimated home value in Excelsior Springs was lower than comparable cities.

Lower home values correspond to the city’s lower median household income.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>% Owner-Occupied</th>
<th>Median Value</th>
<th>Average Length of Residency – All Occupied Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excelsior Springs</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>$111,444</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kearney</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>$144,521</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platte City</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>$159,219</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrensburg</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>$125,042</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000
More households own their homes than in Platte Center or Warrensburg and stay in their residents longer than any of the comparable communities.

Further analysis of Excelsior Springs’s housing market can be found in Chapter 6 “Housing and Neighborhoods.”

**Commuting Patterns**

In 2000 the average commute for an Excelsior Springs resident was 26 minutes, indicating that a large number of residents work outside the community likely in Liberty and North Kansas City. The older communities of Excelsior Springs and Warrensburg have a slightly higher percentage of workers that walk to work. A tight develop-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Travel Time to Work</th>
<th>% Who Walked to Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excelsior Springs</td>
<td>26.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kearney</td>
<td>26.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platte City</td>
<td>25.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrensburg</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000
Excelsior Springs’ land use plan should establish a development vision, identify directions for future growth, maintain and enhance the quality of existing development, and provide a sound basis for public and private decisions.
GROWTH AND LAND USE

Land use is typically the central element of a comprehensive plan because it establishes the overall physical configuration of the city – the mix and location of uses and the nature of community systems that support them. Because the land use plan is a statement of policy, public and private decision makers depend on it to guide individual actions such as land purchases, project design, and the review and approval process. This chapter integrates existing patterns of development, potential market needs, the character of the natural environment, and potential opportunities into a future land use plan for the city. In addition, it establishes a decision making framework that links the land use plan to the zoning ordinance, guiding decisions about land use change in Excelsior Springs and its surrounding area.

From a legal perspective, land use plans have provided the basis for traditional single-use zoning, sometimes referred to as “Euclidean” zoning. Excelsior Springs’ current zoning ordinance follows this model. It divides the city into six residential, five commercial, and two industrial zoning districts, varying by the intensity and impact of permitted uses. More recently, interest has grown in evaluating the urban character of various parts of a city, implemented by development regulations that address form as well as land use, often referred to as “smart” or “form-based” codes. Excelsior Springs displays a variety of urban contexts, ranging from its mixed-use downtown and finely-scaled historic residential districts, to the suburban scale of newer residential areas and auto-oriented commercial districts. While this chapter considers these issues, it focuses on the land use side of the development equation. The urban design chapter will consider contextual issues in more detail, and the two chapters together will provide a framework for updated development regulations tailored to Excelsior Springs’ unique qualities.

LAND USE PATTERNS IN EXCELSIOR SPRINGS

Excelsior Springs relatively dispersed land pattern emerged from an interplay of geology and major transportation corridors, and resolves into three major urban environments:

- the historic city including downtown and surrounding neighborhoods along and rising on bluffs above the Fishing River valley.
- more contemporary growth along the railroad and old and new US 69 corridors (including Jesse James Drive) and adjacent residential areas.
- transitional neighborhoods that join these two strongly identifiable areas.

Map 3.1 illustrates how land is currently used in Excelsior Springs and the various stages of the town’s development. The city developed after the discovery of the medicinal springs in the Fishing River valley during the 1880s, producing a large core populated by hotels, resort services, bath houses, retailing, and related uses. The attraction of the springs caused residential neighborhoods to grow both in the valley and on the surrounding hillsides. In the early twentieth century, the “City Beautiful” movement came to Excelsior Springs as a community partnership retained the great landscape architect George Kessler to develop a parks and urban design plan to complement the springs and knit the city’s considerable public and private resources into a unified design plan. In 1912, the city core received direct connections to regional cities with the completion of the Kansas City, Clay County, and St. Joseph Railway
electric line, and was also served by the Wabash Railroad. This high-performance interurban operated until 1933, when a combination of highway and steam railroad competition and the Great Depression led to insolvency.

To the west, more conventional development patterns followed transportation corridors that followed relatively flat, upland alignments running from northeast to southwest, and including both highway and railroad corridors. In 1924, Highway 10 was completed, linking Excelsior Springs to Kansas City, and by 1930, US Highway

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Category</th>
<th>City (Acres)</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>ETJ (Acres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>1,707.16</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>14.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Residential</td>
<td>535.48</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family</td>
<td>1,066.80</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>9.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 Family</td>
<td>8.13</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Family</td>
<td>45.44</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Home</td>
<td>51.31</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>212.36</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>24.22</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>102.65</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant/Entertainment</td>
<td>25.52</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>10.07</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown</td>
<td>49.90</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>215.57</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Industrial</td>
<td>39.99</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lt. Industrial/Warehousing</td>
<td>175.58</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic</td>
<td>742.30</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>6.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>45.11</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public-Semi Public</td>
<td>61.73</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic</td>
<td>158.84</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks &amp; Rec.</td>
<td>476.62</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>745.85</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>6.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Developed Land</td>
<td>3,623.24</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>31.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Open Space</td>
<td>2,851.31</td>
<td></td>
<td>24.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Urban Land</td>
<td>166.41</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Area</td>
<td>6,640.96</td>
<td></td>
<td>57.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: RDG Planning & Design, 2008
69 was completed to Cameron. Post-war commercial development followed Jesse James Road, while more contemporary civic and commercial growth followed construction of the current 69 Highway corridor. Recent residential development generally occurs west of the current 69 Highway alignment. Finally, residential growth of various periods filled buildable areas between the traditional core and the transportation corridors. The resulting community, influenced by both history and geology and more conventional factors such as transportation and regional growth patterns, dispersed development over a relatively large area.

**Land Use Characteristics**

Table 3.1 shows how land is used in Excelsior Springs, while Tables 3.2 and 3.3 compare land use in Excelsior Springs to peer communities.

**Residential Uses**

- Most developed land in Excelsior Springs is in residential use and single-family development accounts for about 94% of all residential land.
- Like many towns with difficult topography, Excelsior Springs has a low residential density. It has a net density of about 4,400 people per residential square mile or 2,100 people per developed square mile. With 14 acres of residential land per 100 residents, the city’s dispersed development pattern reflects the number of large lots in city limits.
- Some parts of the traditional core are developed on very small lots, but have relatively large areas of either vacant lots or unbuildable sites.

**Commercial Uses**

- Excelsior Springs’s dominant commercial concentrations occur in the traditional core and along the Highway 69/Jesse James corridor, centered around the Corum Road intersection. Other commercial use areas include outlying parts of the Jesse James and Highway 69 corridors, and on Isley Boulevard on the east edge of the city between Calhoun and Prentiss Avenues.
- The historic downtown area accounts for about a quarter of the commercial land, reflecting the large land area originally devoted to resort-related uses.
- Commercial land uses are relatively stable throughout the city.

### Table 3.2a: Acres Per 100 Residents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excelsior Springs</th>
<th>Papillion, NE</th>
<th>Plattsmouth, NE</th>
<th>Nevada, IA</th>
<th>Pella, IA</th>
<th>39 City Average*</th>
<th>14 City Average*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>6.53</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic</td>
<td>6.38</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>11.38</td>
<td>6.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>6.41</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>6.80</td>
<td>7.12</td>
<td>6.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Developed Area</td>
<td>31.16</td>
<td>14.29</td>
<td>19.57</td>
<td>20.80</td>
<td>36.34</td>
<td>26.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Average of 39 selected communities in the Midwest and average of 14 cities adjacent to larger metro areas.

Source: RDG Planning & Design, 2008
Industrial Uses

» Typical industrial uses developed along the Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern (former Rock Island) Railroad on the northeastern and southwestern edges of the city. The city’s historic mineral water industries were located in and around the downtown core near their water sources. The specialized resort character of the original city tended to push more conventional industry out to the perimeter.

» Contemporary industrial locations are determined by highway and railroad corridors.

» Excelsior Springs has somewhat more land in industrial use than several more typical suburban cities located closer to metropolitan centers.

Public and Semi-Public Uses

» Excelsior Springs falls at or slightly above the comparative sample for amount of land in civic uses, measured on a per capita basis. This is especially notable because the city lacks a large college campus or sports complex. Large-scale civic uses include:
  › Excelsior Springs schools
  › Community churches
  › Excelsior Springs Hospital
  › Large public parks, including Siloam Mountain and East Valley Parks, and Lake Maurer, owned by a faith-based organization.
  › Excelsior Springs Airport
  › Job Corps Center

---

Table 3.2b: Percent of Developed Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excelsior Springs 2008</th>
<th>Papillion, NE</th>
<th>Plattsmouth, NE</th>
<th>Nevada, IA</th>
<th>Pella, IA</th>
<th>39 City Average</th>
<th>14 City Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>47.0%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>37.02%</td>
<td>42.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>6.53%</td>
<td>6.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>6.31%</td>
<td>5.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>24.38%</td>
<td>23.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>25.90%</td>
<td>21.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Developed Area</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Average of 39 selected communities in the Midwest and average of 14 cities adjacent to larger metro areas.

Source: RDG Planning & Design, 2008
Population and development projections help to guide forecasts of land consumption during the planning period. Chapter 2 presented a population growth scenario that produces a 2030 population of 15,789 (Chapter 2 Table 2.3). Table 3.3 builds a 20-year housing demand model based on this projection and the following assumptions:

- Household population at the end of the period excludes residents living in group care facilities, dormitories like Job Corps, and other institutional quarters. The non-household population does not produce a demand for conventional housing units. The residential land forecast in Table 3.3 assumes that the proportion of the non-household population will remain stable through the planning period.
- Average people per household is expected to remain constant at 2.50 over the next twenty years.
- Unit demand at the end of the period is calculated by dividing household population by the number of people per household. This equals the number of occupied housing units.
- The year 2000 vacancy rate of 7.8% will remain stable during the forecast period. Manageable housing vacancy provides housing choice for new residents moving to a community. While this vacancy rate is on the high side of normal for comparable communities, it reflects a number of vacant structures in marginal or uninhabitable condition.
- Unit needs at the end of each period are based on the actual household demand plus the number of projected vacant units.
- Replacement need is the number of housing units demolished or converted to other uses. Homes in poor condition or are obsolete should gradually be replaced in the city’s housing supply.
- Cumulative need shows the number of total units needed between the base year of 2009 and the year indicated at the end of the period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.3: Projected Housing Development Demand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2008</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population at the End of Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11,749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Population at End of Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11,046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average People/Household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit demand at End of Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected Vacancy Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit Needs at End of Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replacement Need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Annual Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: RDG Planning & Design, 2008
Table 3.4: Required Residential Land 2008-2025

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008-2020</th>
<th>2020-2030</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of Demand</td>
<td>Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Family Detached</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Family Attached</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-family</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 2008-2015</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 2015-2025</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,235</td>
<td>319.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: RDG Planning & Design, 2008

The projections in Table 3.3 indicate a cumulative demand for 1,235 housing units in Excelsior Springs between 2008 and 2030. At 53 to 61 units annually this is slightly higher than Excelsior Springs’ peak construction year in 2003.

**Residential Land Needs**

Sustainable community development will involve ongoing housing improvement (including replacement of substandard housing) and moderate, managed growth. During the economic downturn that started in 2008, residential construction declined dramatically. Abnormally low construction rates will eventually produce unmet demands. However, the end of subprime mortgage instruments, tighter underwriting standards, and greater consumer conservatism are likely to increase the demand for both rental housing and smaller and more efficient ownership alternatives.

Table 3.4 calculates residential land demand based on the following factors:

- New construction will be based on the following distribution: 65% single-family detached; 15% single-family attached or townhome; 20% multi-family.
- Average gross residential densities will be 3 units/acre for single-family detached; 6 units/acre for single-family attached or townhomes; and 12 units/acre for multi-family.
- Land designated for residential development during the planning period will be twice the area needed for actual construction to provide market choice and prevent artificial inflation of land cost.

This projection indicates a need for about 320 acres of residential land between 2009 and 2030. At two times the “hard demand,” the plan should designate about one square mile (640 acres) for residential development over the next 20 years. The development concept presented in this document identifies areas where this potential development should occur.
### Table 3.5: Required Commercial Land For Excelsior Springs, 2008-2030

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2030</th>
<th>Demand</th>
<th>Designated Land (x1.5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population Proportion Method</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected Population</td>
<td>11,749</td>
<td>13,235</td>
<td>14,620</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Use/100 res.</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected Commercial Use (acres)</td>
<td>214.56</td>
<td>242.21</td>
<td>267.55</td>
<td>52.99</td>
<td>79.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residential Use Proportion Method</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Land (acres)</td>
<td>1,707.16</td>
<td>1,872.54</td>
<td>2,026.20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial/Residential Ratio</td>
<td>0.1256</td>
<td>0.1256</td>
<td>0.1256</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected Commercial Use (acres)</td>
<td>214.56</td>
<td>235.34</td>
<td>254.65</td>
<td>40.10</td>
<td>60.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: RDG Planning & Design, 2008

### Table 3.6: Estimated Industrial/Business Park Land Requirements, 2007-2025

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2030</th>
<th>Demand</th>
<th>Designated Land (x3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population Proportion Method</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected Population</td>
<td>11,749</td>
<td>13,235</td>
<td>14,620</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Use/100 res.</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected Industrial Use (acres)</td>
<td>217.80</td>
<td>258.09</td>
<td>299.71</td>
<td>81.91</td>
<td>245.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residential Use Proportion Method</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Land (acres)</td>
<td>1,707.16</td>
<td>1,872.54</td>
<td>2,026.20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial/Residential Ratio</td>
<td>0.127579505</td>
<td>0.127579505</td>
<td>0.127579505</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected Industrial Use (acres)</td>
<td>217.80</td>
<td>238.90</td>
<td>258.50</td>
<td>40.70</td>
<td>122.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: RDG Planning & Design, 2008

**Commercial and Industrial Land Needs**

A growing population needs additional commercial services, and commercial growth is also a key part of Excelsior Springs’ economic development strategy. While this plan does not include a retail market analysis, adequate commercial space should be identified to meet market demands. However, designating too much commercial land can produce inefficient land patterns, further scatter urban development, and require customers to travel excessive distances, usually by private automobile. In contrast, sustainable land development patterns should locate commercial development closer to customers and be designed to encourage active transportation modes such as pedestrian, bicycle, and potentially public transportation.

The demand for future industrial land is linked to opportunity and recruitment, rather than exclusively to population growth. A single major corporate decision can dramatically increase (or decrease) the projected industrial demand in a community.
In addition, a decision by the city to pursue industrial development aggressively can affect industrial land needs.

Despite these differences, similar projection methods are used to predict future commercial and industrial land needs. For Excelsior Springs the two methods used are:

- **Population proportion.** This method relates land needs to population projections. It assumes that the absolute amount of commercial or industrial land per 100 people will remain relatively constant and that new development will grow in proportion to population growth.

- **Residential use proportion.** This assumes a constant relationship between the amount of land used for residential and commercial purposes, thereby relating commercial and industrial growth rates to residential development rates.

Table 3.5 compares the results of these methods for commercial uses and suggests a demand for 40 to 53 acres of commercial land during the next 20 years. This accounts for only new commercial construction and not for additional commercial operations on existing vacant sites. To provide alternatives sites, the land use plan should designate 1.5 times the “hard demand” for commercial land. Thus, for planning proposes the city should designate at least 80 acres of land for future commercial development.

Table 3.6 calculates additional industrial land needs within the city. Based on increasing population and residential use proportion methods described above, Excelsior Springs should absorb between 40 and 80 acres of new industrial land. In order to provide maximum flexibility, the land use plan should designate about three times the demand or 122 to 245 acres for industrial and business park uses.
The analysis and calculations presented earlier estimate how much new land the city will need to serve potential growth. However, this new development should use land efficiently, be environmentally and economically sustainable, and reinforce the quality and character of Excelsior Springs. “Smart growth” principles, applied to overall city development policy, can combine the desire of the city and its builders to take advantage of opportunities and the public benefits of environmental sensitivity, economic efficiency and enhancement of community and civic life. These principles, adapted to Excelsior Springs, establish patterns that should guide the city’s overall development. Excelsior Springs will grow smartly if it:

» **Encourages Community Design that Uses Land Effectively**

Excelsior Springs will convert about one square mile of land into urban development during the next twenty years. Most of this land will be within the existing city limits, but outside the perimeter of existing development. To avoid stretching city services over wide areas, which increases both the cost of government and the distance that people must travel to their destinations, new growth should generally be adjacent to existing development, or take maximum advantage of underutilized “infill” areas to produce a unified, economically efficient, and attractive city.

» **Encourages Project and Building Design that Balance Compactness and Efficiency**

Contemporary urban development, framed by automobile transportation, frequently spreads out over the land, and lacks the human scale and detail often found in traditional neighborhoods. For example, Downtown Excelsior Springs has an intimate human scale that has made it delightful for customers and visitors for 120 years. In contrast, the Crown Hill and Jesse James area, the city’s primary commercial node, provides a variety of businesses that offer valuable services to residents. Yet, the large building scale, dominance of parking lots, traffic noise, distance between buildings, and lack of pedestrian access and public space create a far less satisfactory environment. Compact and efficient project and building design uses land and resources effectively, preserves more open space, and can provide memorable settings and experiences.

On the other hand, large-scale retailers with efficient purchasing and distribution systems are part of life and provide variety, convenience, and sometimes low prices to customers. These stores, and the shopping centers that are sometimes attached to them, build large buildings with large parking lots that are different from traditional downtowns. Smart growth principles should resolve contradictory preferences and demands. Well-planned large-scale development can have a level of detail and scale that take some of the virtues of traditional town environments and apply them to contemporary, lower-density development.

» **Mixes Land Uses**

In the center of Excelsior Springs, residential, retail, recreation, and hotels are located closely together. For example, lovely residential streets like Elms Boulevard and the Concourse are better places because they relate strongly to other environments, such as the Elms Hotel or Thompson Avenue. The Wabash BBQ would be less interesting if located out on a highway and surrounded by a parking lot. On the other hand, more contemporary growth tends to “zone” different land uses away from one an-
other. The concept of single-use zoning grew out of a need to separate living places from major industries to protect the health of residents, and this is still good policy in some cases. But mixing compatible but different uses in a modern setting creates more interesting and efficient communities. Providing uses that are closer and linked to one another can also reduce the number of miles that people must travel by car to conduct their daily lives. Plans and land development policies that provide appropriate use mixing also provide greater flexibility for those who build communities, and avoid unnecessary regulation.

» Creates Housing Opportunities and Choices
Most of Excelsior Springs’ residential areas outside of Downtown are single-family in nature, and multi-family development tends to occur along commercial corridors. Yet, more diverse housing types will be needed to meet changing housing needs and preferences. Consequences of the mortgage crisis and subsequent economic downturn of 2008-2009 and demographic change include greater eventual demand for multi-family development because of tighter mortgage financing; smaller lot single-family development in innovative design settings high quality smaller houses on small lots; and attached housing for empty-nesters. Residential development may also be incorporated into mixed use projects to reduce the separation between living places and activity centers. Excelsior Springs should provide opportunities for people at all stages of life to find their place in the city.

» Promotes Walkability and Community Health through Routine Physical Activity
Historic Excelsior Springs, clustered around the mineral springs and resorts in the compact Fishing River Valley, was an eminently walkable place that celebrated physical health. Visitors typically traveled to the resorts by train, and walked between hotels, clinics, and shops. This pedestrian-friendliness was reinforced by the pattern of half-sized blocks that doubled street frontage and determined the unique scale of the town center. As houses were built on winding streets above the valley, they were often still connected to the core by stepped walks. However, discontinuous streets, lack of sidewalks, topography, and spreading development together make walking or cycling difficult to other parts of town. Despite a pathway along Highway 69 between the hospital and high school, most residents are entirely dependent on cars for even short trips. People who don't have cars struggle to find safe routes through the city to services and schools.

Land use patterns and new investments that promote “active transportation” will create a better city. Local commercial services, schools, and major activity centers should have safe and comfortable routes to most neighborhoods, within the limits of topography. This expands transportation options and increases opportunities for social interaction. Equally important, incorporating physical activity into the daily routine of citizens creates a healthier and more physically fit community.

» Encourages Identifiable Development Areas with a Sense of Place
Traditional development in Excelsior Springs had a strong image and even included “micro-neighborhoods,” usually oriented around one street or a group of contiguous blocks. Examples of these include the Elms District, the Concourse, Excelsior Street, the East Broadway/Temple Street area, and Old Orchard Avenue. Other residential areas, including more recent growth, often occurs in defined and sometimes isolated pods, largely caused by incremental development and topography. However, these
areas do not appear to have strong identities and rarely provide community space. A smart growth concept for Excelsior Springs should increase the highly desirable pattern of neighborhood identification and a larger sense of belonging to a city.

The city should also encourage construction and preservation of buildings that contribute to the character of the community, both specific to their setting and part of the common fabric of the city. For example, the residents of Excelsior Springs agree strongly on the need for a community recreation center, but have been frustrated by an inability to agree on a location. Major civic investments like this should be part of everyone’s neighborhood, but should also strengthen the surrounding environment. Additionally, private new development should be influenced by its urban context.

» *Preserves Open Space and Important Environmental Areas*
The landscape of wooded hills and deep valleys dominates much of the image of Excelsior Springs and defines many of the city’s most important public spaces. By preserving open spaces, the city balances the built and natural environment and provides habitat for plants and animals, recreational opportunities, and places of natural beauty. Open spaces also add real property value to adjacent development.

While passive in use, however, these environmental assets should not be absent of use. The Fishing River Valley, Siloam Mountain, and East Valley Park are the central parts of the city’s park system. The structure of Excelsior Springs’ wooded hills ties several otherwise isolated neighborhoods. Smart growth principles applied to Excelsior Springs will incorporate these features into the city’s overall growth concept, using them as ways to add quality to the city.

» *Diversifies Transportation Modes*
Many communities have begun to realize the need to provide a wider range of transportation options. A completely auto-dependent city limits access of such groups as young people and seniors. In addition, the Job Corps includes a large population without easy access to cars. An increase in the city’s physical size should not reduce access. Techniques that increase the ability of all residents to move freely around the city include better coordination between land use and transportation, increasing connectivity within the street network, and developing multi-modal (or complete) streets that accommodate all forms of transportation. Creating a convenient and pleasant pedestrian and bicycle system also involves establishing a network of alternative routes, providing reasonable walking distances between destinations and keeping parts of the city connected to one another.

» *Achieves Community and Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions*
Excelsior Springs should be a great place to live, work and play – a “resort for its own residents.” City government should stay close to its constituents through techniques that measure the priorities of residents. Ideas developed by the community and the implementation of the smart growth principles cannot occur without the collaboration of citizens, and partnerships between neighborhoods, developers, nonprofit organizations, and the city will build accelerate implementation of the Excelsior Springs Plan.

**The Physical Character of Excelsior Springs**
Each community has distinctive assets and features that can strengthen it if used to best advantage. A comprehensive plan should consider the underlying structure
and order of the community as well as its city’s basic systems, such as land use and infrastructure. This environmental structure helps define the town’s sense of place and inner harmony, and can build a vision for the future that grows from its intrinsic character. In addition to satisfying the numbers of population forecasts and land needs, the Excelsior Springs land use plan is also designed to respond to the poetry of the place.

The previous land use analysis described three primary development areas, framed by history, geology, and transportation – the traditional resort core of downtown and immediately surrounding neighborhoods; the transportation-oriented development of the primary road and railroad corridors; and the primarily residential areas that fill the gaps between them. Within this generalized development analysis, several features both determine the form of the city and guide future development policy.

**Geology: Hills, Springs, and Valleys**

Many towns owe their origin to railroads, rivers, locations at crossroads, or industries. Excelsior Springs’ development grew from the interaction of groundwater and mineral-rich soils in the Fishing River valley, creating springs that became storied for their medicinal values. These subterranean water resources created the resort

![Area Topography](image)
town, but the Fishing River and tributaries helped create the deep valleys that make the city physically distinctive. The primary Fishing River valley cuts across the city from northwest to southeast, generally from Crystal Lake to Lake Maurer, with major bends in the downtown area. A major tributary drains from the north along the Salem Road/Main Street corridor, meeting the main stream near Isley and Marietta, just south of downtown, while a secondary tributary west of Titus Avenue flows into the river west of Lake Maurer. The steep slopes rising above these valleys define both the city’s major open spaces, including Siloam Mountain and East Valley Parks, and the hill neighborhoods surrounding the main street district. These hills and deep valleys offer both native tree cover and dramatic vistas of the play of natural and built environments. Some of the hill areas are relatively undisturbed, except for trails carved through the trees. This natural environment, both beautiful and distinctive, creates both intriguing possibilities and imposing challenges for the future city.

The Fishing River Floodplain

The deep valley formed by the river and its tributaries, limited flood storage area, and the shape of the surrounding watershed have produced repeated flooding (and often flash floods) in the valley, and particularly in the central core. Major floods in downtown occurred in 1941, 1943, 1947, 1951, 1969, and most recently 1993. The lower level of the Hall of Waters, with its historic swimming pool, has been especially vulnerable to inundation. A number of properties along North Main have been acquired as part of flood abatement efforts.

Downtown

The center of Excelsior Springs conveys the sense and scale of a resort community of the 1880s. Because the town was founded as a resort, serving visitors from all over the country attracted by the fame of its curative waters, its downtown district was both large and highly varied, evolving as a sequence of smaller districts following the meandering Fishing River. From south to north, this sequence progresses through:

› The Elms District, including the landmark resort hotel and the residential boulevard that leads to Highway 10, connecting the city to Kansas City.
› Thompson Avenue, a curving commercial street paralleling the river that bridges between the Elms area and the major downtown core.
› The downtown core, between Main and Thompson, from the river to Broadway, home to some of the largest traditional hotel buildings.
› The linear Broadway district, the “main street” corridor of the town.

The physical quality of the district is reinforced by special features, including half-sized blocks that double the amount of building frontage over more typical downtowns, and the changing orientations and backdrops offered by the winding river. With the decline of the health resorts during the 1960s, Downtown entered a long economic decline, which has begun a substantial reversal during this decade. Greater appreciation for the district’s resources and an understanding of the importance of the core to the overall community led to such significant investments as the rehabilitation of the Oaks Hotel, streetscape improvement projects along Thompson and Broadway, the initial revitalization of the Elms, and the start of new downtown businesses. The district is now challenged by the economic downturn of 2008-2009, leading to reductions in discretionary spending and the availability of funding for
large projects; the size of the area’s building inventory; the scale of strategic projects such as the vacant Royal Hotel; and residential deterioration in surrounding neighborhoods. However, this district, fully with potential fully realized, can become an economically strong and physically compelling regional destination.

**Historic Architecture**

The Elms Hotel of 1912 and Hall of Waters, the great art deco monument to the springs, are the city’s two iconic structures, and are important stops for visitors to the city. However, other parts of the built environment, including other historic downtown buildings, vestiges of the city’s heritage such as the Superior Pagoda, great residential avenues such as Old Orchard Avenue and the Concourse, the Wabash depot, Lake Maurer, and many others, make Excelsior Springs an exceptionally evocative place for living, business, and exploration. Together, these places and their special quality both suggest another period in time and the possibility of an exceptionally rewarding future.
Transportation Corridors

US Highway 69 and the former highway along Jesse James Road form the city’s formative transportation corridors (after abandonment of the Wabash and Kansas City, Clay County, and St. Joseph interurban) run in a northeast to southwest, and became primary locations for larger-scale commercial, civic, and industrial development.

Land Use and Development Objectives

The community plan for Excelsior Springs should build on these features and knit them together into a community network that permeates the town. However, past development patterns and challenging topography tend to divide the city into sections that are isolated from each other. Excelsior Springs’s growth program must have clear objectives, based on smart growth principles that ultimately build a unified and fully healthy community. These objectives include:

- Establishing a framework for development that relates land use, transportation, infrastructure, parks and recreation, and natural resources.
- Making the most effective use of existing infrastructure investments.
- Encouraging compact growth that uses land efficiently, minimizes typical travel distances, and keeps all parts of the city in reasonable contact with one another.
- Designating growth areas that provide the appropriate amount and locations of land for various land uses.
- Strengthening continuity and linkages between the existing city and future growth areas.
- Taking full advantage of distinctive characteristics, including landforms, waterways, woodlands, and urban districts.
- Providing a mix of residential densities.
- Preserving long-term growth options for the city.
- Increasing public access to environmental resources.
- Employing sustainable practices that minimize the impact of urban development on the natural environment, provide for more economically efficient delivery of services, and improve individual and community health.

The key concepts for Excelsior Springs’ land use and development plan include:

Policy Districts
Hearts of Community
Residential Growth Centers
Major Opportunity Sites
Street Connectivity and Transportation
Urban Corridors
Active Transportation: A Linked Greenway and Trail System
Decision Making Framework
Annexation Policy

Excelsior Springs development character may be conceived as an aggregation of eight “policy districts” – broad areas of the community that have specific characteristics and identities. These districts provide the building blocks for large-scale policies that
can both guide their internal enhancement and their linkages to other parts of the community. These districts are often defined by edges or barriers such as hills, waterways, major roads, and railroads, and include:

» The “historic crescent,” Excelsior Springs’ traditional core, encompassing Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods in the Fishing River valley.

» Uplands neighborhoods, traditional residential areas that scale the hills above the valley.

» Midtown residential, housing areas between traditional residential areas and major transportation corridors.

» The Corridors, including parallel road and railroad corridors that include civic, major commercial, and surrounding residential development.

» “Excelsior Commons,” a cluster of existing and future community investments at the geographic center of town.

» Residential growth areas, primary locations for contemporary residential development.

» Enterprise centers, providing quality sites for industrial development.

» Excelsior Greenbelt, incorporating the open hills and woodlands that wind through the town.

1. Historic Crescent

Vision

» A revitalized image center for the city and a regional destination, with renewed urban residential development surrounding and reinforcing the historic commercial district.

» A highly connected district that encourages users to move easily and comfortably through its various components and links the natural and built environments.

» An economically strong center for business enterprise, the arts, and regional conferencing and tourism.

Characteristics

» The “historic crescent” follows the Fishing River and includes the Elms historic district, Downtown, original residential areas east of Downtown and south of Isley Boulevard, and the eastside commercial node along Isley Boulevard.

» Principal transportation corridors are St. Louis Avenue/Isley Boulevard, Marietta Street, and Broadway.

» Major greenway and trail along the Fishing River begins at Marietta Street and extends to Golf Hill Drive.

» The historic heart of the city, featuring the Hall of Waters and Elms Hotel as signature landmarks.

» Economic growth potential as restored destination shopping district, regional tourist and conferencing destination, and renewed residential environment.

Land Use and Development Policies

» Identify and implement strategic reuse projects in the Downtown core, with a focus on highly visible buildings that adapt to market-based reuse programs.

» Implement major residential renewal or redevelopment projects on traditional neighborhood streets adjacent to Downtown.

» Improve the function, safety, and appearance of the transportation system. Make gateways to the district clear and safe for motorists and pedestrians crossing those arterials.
Fully utilize important public buildings. Implement a comprehensive reuse program for the Hall of Waters that improves city government accommodations, increases public use and access to common space, and envisions development of the lower (pool) level of the buildings as an extension of the Fishing River greenway.

Establish development design guidelines consistent with the scale and proportion of the core district.

Encourage dense or small-scale developments consistent with the district’s scale.

Increase pedestrian and bicycle access to the Fishing River greenway from Downtown streets.

Implement a corridor improvement program along the Isley Boulevard corridor, including street greening, residential rehabilitation, and commercial area enhancement.

Relocate land uses and human services that are poorly accommodated by their current downtown locations to more appropriate sites.

Chapter 7 presents a comprehensive vision for Downtown Excelsior Springs that illustrates these policies in greater detail.

2. Uplands Neighborhoods

Vision

Renewed residential environments that take advantage of scenic views and their natural setting, and both strengthen and are strengthened by their adjacency to the historic core.

Characteristics

Location of the city’s oldest housing stock with distinctive architectural styles and dramatic changes in the terrain.

Includes several areas. Largest and most substantial is west of the traditional core, extending above the river valley to a ridge along Old Orchard and Kimball Avenues. A smaller and more rugged sub-area is immediately north of downtown. The third area includes Garland and Prospect Avenues south of Siloam Mountain and East Valley Parks.

Small residential lots and narrow, irregular streets that follow the slope of the land, often with limited connections.

Redevelopment must update older infrastructure.

Land Uses and Development Policies

Implement residential rehabilitation programs to upgrade existing housing stock.

Encourage desirable new investment through infrastructure and financing tools in uplands areas. Focus attention on high-image sites, such as the former high school building.

Demolish dilapidated structures.

Through a redevelopment agency or community development corporation, assemble and redevelop buildable sites with new housing.

Rehabilitate infrastructure, including local streets and stepped walks, to leverage private market reinvestment in the neighborhoods.

Develop a unified pedestrian system, including improved paths and sidewalks, to connect uplands neighborhoods with the core district and other community facilities.
3. Midtown Residential

**Vision**
- Stable, primarily single-family neighborhoods with good street and pedestrian connections to both the traditional town and more recent development.

**Characteristics**
- Various periods of construction, but typically post-World War II residential representing first stage growth beyond the city's traditional neighborhoods.
- Located between the ridge lines above the Fishing River valley and the major northeast to southwest transportation corridors.
- Regular street pattern on relatively rolling topography, interrupted by drainages and steeper slopes in places.
- Incremental development and limited street continuity, with Titus Avenue as primary north-south spine.
- Intermittent development pattern, with more urban-density, small lot residential streets north of Kearney Road.

**Land Uses and Development Policies**
- Reinforce residential character through code and zoning enforcement and infill residential development on buildable lots.
- Implement a residential rehabilitation programs on a spot basis.
- Improve sidewalks and pedestrian/bicycle connections to community facilities and traditional core. Remove substantial barriers to pedestrian access.
- Where necessary, rehabilitate infrastructure, including local streets.

4. Corridors

**Vision**
- High quality consumer commercial development within the framework of a cohesive public environment.
- A linear district connecting substantial commercial, civic, and residential developments to each other and surrounding city neighborhoods.

**Characteristics**
- Mixture of uses (but not mixed use) along primary northeast to southwest highway corridors: Jesse James Avenue and existing Highway 69.
- Primary auto-oriented community commercial center at confluence of Jesse James, Highway 69, Kearney Road, and Crown Hill Road.
- Older commercial corridor uses interspersed with residential along North Jesse James corridor, with some opportunities for redevelopment or new uses.
- Educational and hospital uses along new 69 corridor, with newer, “small box” commercial on northern edge of city.
- Auto-oriented commercial and strip centers, flanked by multifamily development along West Jesse James.
- Poor pedestrian access and little connection among uses.
- Industrial development concentrated along railroad, and along Corum Road south of the Jesse James corridor.

**Land Uses and Development Policies**
- Strengthen primary retail and commercial node along the Kearney Road/Jesse James corridor between the railroad and the 69/10 junction by developing infill sites, encouraging redevelopment of underutilized commercial centers, and improving local circulation.
Conceive of this commercial node as a unified district, with improved lighting and landscaping, cooperative marketing, accommodations for pedestrian and bicycle transportation,

» Provide internal connections that link existing commercial and multifamily development within the central node.

» Direct low-impact industrial uses to undeveloped portions of the rail corridor.

» Encourage mixed use development on key opportunity sites, most notably the Tracy Avenue (both sides) to Rose Lane parcel between Jesse James and US 69.

» Provide safe and pleasant pedestrian and bicycle connections between Kearney Road and major community uses such as the library, high school, and hospital.

» Provide improved local traffic access and cross-connections throughout the entire corridor.

» Limit nuisances and negative effects to surrounding property through proper site design and landscape buffers.

» Protect existing residential neighborhoods within or adjacent to the corridors through management of external effects and improved building and site design guidelines.

» Implement an overall corridor enhancement plan.

5. Excelsior Commons

Vision

» An educational, civic, and recreational nucleus for the city, accessible to all parts of the city and perceived as common territory by most residents.

Characteristics

» Central core of community facilities emerging near the geographic center of the city, centered at the intersection of US 69 and Wornall Road.

» Major features include Excelsior Springs High School/Middle School campus, Westview Elementary School, public library, Powell pond park, and Crown Hill Cemetery. Primary commercial node adjacent to the south, Excelsior Springs Hospital about ½ mile north.

» Situated between the Historic Core and Residential Growth areas, with potential connections to both the new and old parts of the city.

» Highway 69 pathway extends from the Wornall intersection and High School to hospital.

Land Uses and Development Policies

» Parcel between Highway 69 and Jesse James south of Wornall Road is a priority civic development site, and the leading recommended site for a new community center.

» Integrate this district with nearby commercial and residential areas through improved pedestrian/bicycle pathway connections.

» Encourage surrounding development that complements a civic and public facility core.

» Utilize grades and views, and build with the nature of the land. Provide site features that provide amenities and manage stormwater effectively.

» Limit any negative effects on surrounding residential areas by requiring landscaping and buffering.

» Calm arterial traffic and provide protected pedestrian connections to unify community features on both sides of Wornall and Highway 69.
6. Residential Growth Areas

Vision

» New residential areas that provide a mix of housing types, developed around neighborhood parks and greenways, and well-connected to the surrounding city by streets and pathways, systems that connect them to the entire city.

Characteristics

» Currently open land, adjacent to newly developing residential areas along Excelsior Springs’ western edge.
» Rolling landscape contrasts with more dramatic slopes in other parts of the city.
» Drainage corridors and wooded areas provide opportunities for public open spaces.

Land Uses and Development Policies

» Define three primary growth areas: a southern area, generally south of Coronado between the hills and McCleary Road; a central area using infill sites between Highway 69 and North McCleary south of Tracy Avenue; and a north area between Tracey and NE 150th Street.
» Include a neighborhood park/commons serving each growth area, with locations based on drainageways and expanding sites to incorporate a menu of neighborhood park facilities.
» Incorporate these neighborhood greenways into the city-wide trail and greenway system.
» Provide mixed residential styles and densities to accommodate a range of housing preferences and needs.
» Provide an interconnected street system between neighborhoods and accommodate all modes of transportation.
» Develop Corum Road/Crown Hill Road as a parkway between emerging residential developments. Develop to complete street standards, accommodating motor vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle transportation.

7. Enterprise Centers

Vision

» Contemporary settings for existing and new businesses and low-impact industries that take full advantage of the city’s transportation, locational, and environmental assets.

Characteristics

» Adjacent to transportation corridors, including Highway 69, the DM&E Railroad, and Midwest National Air Center.
» Higher impact uses that should be buffered from surrounding lower intensity uses.
» Existing industrial areas have good access to Highway 69.

Land Uses and Development

» Primary industrial locations include completion of the Johnson Industrial Park; the industrial district north of Plummers Road between the railroad and US 69; and the McCleary Road corridor between Highway 69 and the railroad.
» Annex and capitalize on regional industrial/commercial mixed use opportunity adjacent to Clay County Regional Airport.
» Market locations on major assets -- resources, quality of life, physical environment, regional airport facilities, Highway 69, access to Interstate 35, and railroad service.
Encourage a mixture of industrial, light industrial and business park uses.
Include adequate buffering and landscaping in all new development, offering an appealing image of the city.

8. Excelsior Greenbelt

Vision

A unique preserve of wooded hills and natural areas that permeate the city, using low-impact trails and passive public uses to knit historic and contemporary Excelsior Springs together.
A signature feature and attraction that complements such image features as the traditional core and the Fishing River greenway

Characteristics

Undisturbed natural areas, characterized by woodlands and steep slopes.
Trails carved through these areas provide a sense of seclusion in the middle of a city.
Permeate the city, connecting relatively separated neighborhoods with each other and major features such as the Elms and Lake Maurer.

Land Use and Development Policies

Identify the Excelsior Greenbelt as a signature feature for the community and a unique urban nature preserve.
Maintain as undisturbed open spaces with a well-defined nature/walking trail network, composed of spines and loops.
Secure public access on trails and pathways through easements and charitable donations rather than outright property purchases to the greatest degree possible.
Work with current property owners and public agencies to develop a use program for Lake Maurer, possibly combining continued nonprofit use, expanded public access, and some private development, and incorporating elements of the lake area’s historic recreational and amusement role. Connect Lake Maurer into the Excelsior Greenbelt.
Use nature preserves to connect residential clusters and the historic core.
Provide clear wayfinding graphics and trail markets.
Locate trails to balance seclusion with security, providing periodic visibility from adjacent roads.

Hearts of Community

Establish two civic focuses that are the territory of all Excelsior Springs citizens and form the centers of community life: the traditional Downtown core and the “civic node” at Wornall and Highway 69, anchored by a new community recreation center.

Many communities struggle with a bifurcation of traditional and contemporary development. Residents of newer areas, typically the locations of new schools and large-scale retailing, tend to be self-contained and lose their connection with the old town center. “Old town” residents, on the other hand, see contemporary development as separate from the life of the town as it once was. As a result, towns often have difficulty maintaining a sense of common interest and territory, and begin to grow apart as they expand physically. This frequent problem is especially difficult in Excelsior Springs, where topography has isolated neighborhoods into separated development pods.
The "disunity problem" has been especially clear in the city's efforts to develop a community recreation center. Most citizens understand the need for and support development of a center that will provide recreational and community facilities for people of all ages. However, locating the facility has emerged as a major stumbling block, as different groups have divergent views on the best site. Some people, for example, believe that a recreation center should be located downtown to strengthen the traditional center and reinforce its civic importance. Others point out that downtown is remote from much of the population and lacks a large enough site outside of flood-prone areas. Others have advocated a location at Excelsior Springs Airport or on the western edge of the city. Consensus for this key facility has been hard to reach.

The ideal site should be convenient to all people, and part of their perceived territory. It should also fit into a community concept that recognizes the importance of the traditional town center and other districts. This plan recommends a “binuclear” concept – recognizing and reinforcing the vital importance and emotional power of the traditional core through significant investment, but also understanding that the city's geographic and population center has moved to the west. The best solution is developing a second “heart of community” around the intersection of Wornall Road with Jesse James and US 69, referred to in this plan as Excelsior Commons. This area already boasts significant public features, including the high school/middle school campus, Westview School, the water tower, Powell Lake park, and Crown Hill Cemetery. In addition, the site is near the Excelsior Springs Hospital to the north, and the Mid-Continent Public Library branch and the Jesse James commercial corridor to the south.

An existing site south of Wornall between the highway and Jesse James, previously platted for commercial development but largely unused, is an ideal site for the community recreation center. Completion of this project would clearly establish this area as common ground for all of the city's residents. Effective development of this node should include:

» *Design of the recreation center with the landform.* The site, sloping down from north to south, lends itself to a walk-out concept, with upper level primary access from Wornall Road. The building design should take advantage of excellent views to the south.

» *Reconstruction of the Wornall Road underpass.* This badly outdated, single-lane underpass below the DM&E is already hazardous and should be widened on a priority basis to accommodate full traffic movements as well as pedestrians and cyclists.

» *Development of pathways connecting the site to both new and established parts of town.* The site is served by the existing Highway 69 path between the hospital and high school.

» *Redesign of the Highway 69 and Wornall intersection for improved pedestrian/bicycle and local vehicular crossings of the highway.*

Although the site may have some issues the general location offers a site that is generally common territory for all residents. Landforms and soils may effect the ultimate layout of the site but the size of the area provides several alternatives.
Residential Growth Centers

New "greenfield" residential growth in Excelsior Springs should be focused in three west-side growth areas, designed around community space and connected to the rest of the city and each other by streets and greenways.

The discussion of policy districts identified three primary residential growth areas that are contiguous to existing contemporary development and are either served by existing infrastructure or require only incremental extensions. Common attributes of these residential growth centers include:

- A mixture of housing types and lot sizes.
- Organization around continuous street patterns, including a "community street" where possible that connects residential areas with a park or important community facility. Community streets should be multi-modal complete streets, including sidewalks and bike lanes or other bicycle accommodation.
- New neighborhood parks and greenways, designed as central open spaces that become neighborhood focuses.
- Location of higher-density residential development along community streets, parks and greenways, or at transitions to higher intensity land uses and services.

South Growth Area

This area is located between Corum Road, South McCleary Road, the DM&E corridor, and St. Louis Avenue, and incorporates the existing West Wind subdivision. Highlights of its development concept include:

- A high-density development area north of Coronado and east of Corum Road, defined by the railroad and extensive wooded hills.
- Medium-density urban residential on the north and western edges of the development area.
- A major neighborhood greenway and park extending southwest of Rainbow Drive, with adjacent medium-density residential.
- A connected system of community streets that extends Rainbow Drive as a parkway to South McCleary; continues Coronado west and south to West Springs Way; and includes a loop that serves the Johnson industrial park, the development area east of Corum, and the "bend" of Corum Road.
- An elementary school site near the current Corum Road bend.
- A neighborhood pathway system that connects to the Jesse James commercial corridor, Excelsior Commons along a new north-south trail on the edge of the woodlands, the south greenway, and the proposed Excelsior Greenbelt.
- A pathway to Lake Maurer along St. Louis Avenue.

Central Growth Area

This area is located between Highway 69, Tracy Avenue, Crown Hill Road, and North McCleary Road. Highlights of its development concept include:

- An outdoor public recreation complex using two open sites west of Lodwick Lane and north of Highway 69, and between Kearney Road, South McCleary, and the highway. Part of this site may be jointly developed with the future Flack Memorial Church.
» Medium-density urban residential south of Tracy (NE 144th Street) and west of the high school campus.
» A major neighborhood greenway and park extending west from the high school, roughly paralleling Tracy Avenue.
» Extension of Crown Hill Road as a multi-modal complete street north to and beyond Tracy Avenue.
» A connected system of community streets that connects Crest and Larkspur as an east-west link and Leslie Lane as a north-south connection.
» A neighborhood pathway system that connects the neighborhood greenway to the proposed recreation complex, and east-west links through the greenway and along local streets to Excelsior Commons.

**Northwest Growth Area**

This area is located between Highway 69 and an extended Crown Hill Road, from Tracy Avenue to Brunke Road. Highlights of its development concept include:

» A neighborhood greenway and park extending west from the hospital campus to the extended Crown Hill Road, with adjacent medium-density residential development.
» Extension of Crown Hill Road as a multi-modal complete street between Tracy Avenue and Brunke Road.
» A connected local street system.
» A neighborhood pathway that connects the hospital and existing Highway 69 trail to the west edge of the high school campus and on to the proposed recreation complex.

**Major Opportunity Sites**

*Excelsior Springs should capitalize on significant development opportunities that have special potential because of strategic location or unified public ownership.*

This plan is intended to provide a context for private and public decisions and review for the residential growth centers. However, these areas will generally develop as a result of natural market demand for new housing in the area. Major opportunity sites, on the other hand, provide substantial development potential that will require more active public involvement. These major opportunity sites, along with potential land use and public actions, are described below. Downtown and its specific development opportunities are discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

**Site 1: Excelsior Springs Memorial Airport**

**Location:** South of Highway 10 between Doniphan Lake Road and East Golf Hill Road, adjacent to Excelsior Springs Golf Course.

**Existing Land Use:** Municipal general aviation airport

**Existing situation and proposed land use:** Current airport receives light use and duplicates service provided by the Clay County Regional Airport, a much more highly developed facility on the west side of town. If the airport remains, the facility should be self-supporting. A strategy for accomplishing this would be a long-term lease to an operating agency for airport administration; and leasing and development of sites along taxiways perpendicular to the main runway for private aviation hangars. The proceeds of these leases along with an annual assessment of users would be utilized
to sustain the airport. Under this scenario, ownership of the underlying site should remain with the City of Excelsior Springs.

Alternatively, the site should be redeveloped, probably for residential development related to the adjacent golf course. The surrounding golf course, wooded drainage corridor to the east, and wooded hills to the west provides an excellent potential development site. Use of sustainable techniques such as green infrastructure and geothermal space conditioning should be considered.

**Public Actions:**

» Decision on disposal of the airport.
» Request for proposals and selection process.

**Site 2: Mosby Development Site**

**Location:** North side of US 69 and east of Clay County Regional Airport, between Cameron Road and DM&E spur.

**Existing Land Use:** Open land

**Proposed land use:** Commercial development between one-way paired roadways, industrial/business park development north of Highway 69.

**Public Actions:**

» Annexation.
» Infrastructure extensions.
» Possible assistance with internal streets.

**Site 3: North Tracy Triangle**

**Location:** Triangular site bounded by Tracy Avenue, Jesse James Road, and US Highway 69.

**Existing Land Use:** Mixed use, including developed and underused commercial, vacant land, and scattered residential use.

### Summary of Land Potential for Various Uses (Acres)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Low Density Residential</th>
<th>Medium Density Residential</th>
<th>High Density Residential</th>
<th>Commercial or Mixed Use (Acres)</th>
<th>Industrial or Business Park (Acres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>Units</td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>Units</td>
<td>Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Growth Areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>432</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>270</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunity Areas</strong></td>
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<td>Memorial Airport</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mosby Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Tracy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Highway 69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>422</td>
<td>2,232</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>432</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: RDG Planning & Design, 2009
Proposed land use: Mixed use development, incorporating new commercial, existing stable uses, and higher-density residential uses, unified by a site master plan. Project benefits from adjacency to the hospital and nearness to Excelsior Commons area.

Public Actions:

- Sponsorship with landowners of master planning process
- Possible assistance on site assembly
- Funding assistance through tax increment financing.

Street Connectivity and Transportation

As Excelsior Springs grows, it should maintain a connected street network, providing alternative routes for moving around the city.

Street system connectivity and wayfinding is complicated by Excelsior Springs’ terrain and pattern of incremental development. The idea of a unified city requires an effective transportation framework that connects neighborhoods with one another and with activity centers. In addition, these key streets should also accommodate pedestrian and bicycle transportation, or provide alternative nearby routes to serve destinations along their corridors. Elements of Excelsior Springs’ transportation system, described in more detail in the Transportation section of this plan, include:

Principal Arterials. These primary regional highways include US Highway 69 and State Highways 10 and 92.

Arterial system. These streets complement the regional arterial system by providing major intra-city and sometimes regional access. Arterial access in the city is relatively limited by topography. Components of the city’s arterial grid are described in further detail in Chapter Five.

Collector system. The collector system is critical to making an overall network work effectively and providing alternatives to arterials for local trips between neighborhoods and to local activity centers. The plan with its growth areas proposes an extensive system of linked collectors, many of which use existing streets, with extensions into new neighborhoods. A continuous collector system assures that the city’s neighborhoods remain connected to each other.

Local street networks. Developments should provide a web of local streets to provide well-distributed access. Subdivision standards should establish minimum required levels of street connectivity. One way of measuring connectivity is calculating the ratio of street segments to nodes (intersections and street endpoints).

Complete streets and parkways. Complete streets are multi-modal streets that accommodate vehicular traffic, bicycles, and pedestrians in an attractive public environment. The “complete street” concept applies to both arterial and collector streets and should be integrated into the transportation and park and pathways network of the city.

Pedestrian and bicycle links to activity centers. Excelsior Springs’ pedestrian and trail system should be functional as well as recreational, providing access to major centers of activity. A system of interconnected sidewalks should be constructed along designated routes providing safer pedestrian access for all residents.
**Context sensitivity.** While transportation standards often mandate specific width and design standards for different street types, design should relate to the specific urban context of the street. These design standards are considered in more detail in Chapter 8, Community Character.

Major street projects that implement the concepts included in this section include:

- Extension of Crown Hill Road north to Brunke Road as a parkway with complete street characteristics.
- Improvement of Wornall Road, focusing on reconstruction of the DM&E underpass and the US 69 intersection.
- Improvement of Kearney Road (Highway 10), including development of a sidepath and an improved road section.
- Connection of Jesse James Road and Brunke Road on the north side of the hospital campus, coordinated with the hospital's development plans.
- Realignment and improvement of the Saratoga Street entrance to Downtown.
- Redesign of the Elms Boulevard/Saint Louis Avenue/Thompson Avenue intersection.
- Probable reconstruction of the Isley Boulevard bridge over the Fishing River.
- Development of collector street links identified in the plan.

**Urban Corridors**

*Excelsior Springs should maintain the design quality of its major community corridors, allowing them to serve as attractive gateways into the town and supporting the business and community environment.*

The city's principal entrance highways (Highways 69 and 10) constitute the city's front doors and are critical business and commercial addresses. As such, they are an important part of the city's economic development program, and their appearance and adjacent land uses set the tone for other aspects of city development. General land use and development polices for these corridors include:

- Implementing land use regulations that encourage mixed uses, generally including residential, office, civic, and consumer commercial uses. The actual mix of these uses depends on the specific context.
- Adopting land development standards that limit the amount of parking directly visible from the corridors, and encourage a stronger visual relationship between the road and buildings.
- Maintaining a quality public environment, with attractive sidewalks, landscaping, street graphics, and lighting as appropriate.
- Completing an enhancement program along Isley Boulevard to upgrade the street's appearance with new curbs, sidewalks, and street trees.
- Improve entrances to key community districts and destinations.
- Improve the clarity and readability of directional graphics.

**Active Transportation: A Linked Greenway and Trail System**

*Excelsior Springs' neighborhoods, activity centers, civic districts, and major open spaces should be linked by a comprehensive and continuous greenway and trail system that serves both transportation and recreation purposes. This system should build on Excelsior Springs' historic reputation as a community devoted to healthy living.*

![Image of Excelsior Springs street scene]
Creating an active transportation network (including pedestrian and bicycle transportation) connected to land use and development, is a key consideration for a sustainable and healthy Excelsior Springs. From a development perspective, a city that encourages human-powered access includes:

- Public infrastructure that connects neighborhoods and destinations;
- Absence of barriers that discourage or obstruct pedestrians and cyclists; and
- Project designs that provide safe and pleasant passage from the public to private realm.

The success of pedestrian and bicycle transportation systems can be measured against five key criteria:

- **Directness**: The system should provide relatively direct routes to destinations without taking people far out of their way.
- **Integrity**: The system should connect to places and provide continuity, rather than leaving users in dead ends or uncomfortable places.
- **Safety**: The system should be physically safe to its users and not present hazardous conditions.
- **Comfort**: The system should understand the various capabilities and comfort levels of its users. For example, senior citizens may take a relatively long time to cross a street, and some bicyclists are not comfortable riding in mixed traffic. The system should reflect these differences.
- **Experience**: The system should be pleasant to users, particularly in a beautiful environment such as Excelsior Springs.

The city now has two significant and pleasant trails, both of which demonstrate the potential of active transportation. These include the Fishing River Trail, between Marietta Street downtown and Golf Hill Drive; and the Highway 69 Trail, between the medical center and high school. However, these are fragments, only the beginning of a complete transportation system. Many streets lack sidewalks and often present direct hazards to users, closing off options to many users. The development concept and its principles are dedicated to changing this over time, to the great advantage of the city’s residents and visitors.

The development concept plan and transportation plan both identify trail possibilities and show how pathways are intertwined into the city’s future development pattern. These plans identify four key pathway corridors that include:

- An East-West Pathway, linking the traditional Downtown with the Highway 10 corridor and West Jesse James Road mixed use district. This path serves both traditional and newer commercial development and consumer services, and intersects with the principal north-south corridor to major civic and recreational destinations, including Excelsior Commons.
- A north-south Jesse James Trail, extending the existing Highway 69 south through Excelsior Commons, over Highway 10 and an intersection with the east-west pathway, and on to the south growth center and Lake Maurer.
- Corum/Crown Hill Parkway, a north-south complete street between Saint Louis Avenue and Brunke Road.
- A Lake Maurer Trail, a sidepath from the Elms District along Kansas City Avenue and Lake Maurer Road to Saint Louis Avenue and the south growth center.
Local trails within greenways of the residential growth areas.

- The Excelsior Greenbelt Trail system of low-impact pedestrian ways through the wooded hills of the city.

Other initiatives, address street design from complete transportation, potential bicycle routes, and project design to encourage pedestrian access, are discussed in the Transportation and Urban Design elements of the plan.

**Decision Making Framework**

*Excelsior Springs' future land use map and policies should provide both guidance and flexibility to decision makers in the land use process.*

A Land Use Plan provides a development vision for the city that guides participants in the process of community building. However, it cannot anticipate the design or specific situation of every rezoning application. Therefore, the plan should not be taken as an inflexible prescription of how land must be used. Rather, it provides a context that helps decision-makers, including city administrative officials, the Planning Commission, and the City Council make logical decisions which implement the plan’s overall principles.

The Land Use Plan establishes a number of categories of land uses, some of which provide for single primary uses while others encourage mixed uses. The discussion below identifies various use categories and establishes criteria for their application. This forms a framework for findings by the Planning Commission and City Council that provides both needed flexibility and consistency with the plan’s overall objectives.

**Land Use Compatibility**

Some of the most difficult issues in plan implementation arise at boundaries where more intensive uses are proposed adjacent to less intensive uses. Table 7.3 provides a land use compatibility guide, assessing the relationships between existing land uses and providing a basis for review of proposals based on their geographic context.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Category</th>
<th>Use Characteristics</th>
<th>Features and Location Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Agriculture, Open Space**       | - Generally in agricultural or open space use.  
- Agriculture or open space uses will remain the principal use during the planning period.  
- Extension of urban services is unlikely during the foreseeable future, and may not be feasible.  
- Extremely low residential densities, typically below 1 unit per 20 acres, may be permitted.                                                                                                                                  | - These areas should remain in primary open space, grasslands, or agricultural use. Urban encroachment, including large lot subdivisions, should be discouraged.  
- Applies to areas designated for conservation, including floodplains and steep topography.  
- Primary uses through the planning period will remain open or agricultural.                                                                                                                                                     |
| **Urban Reserve**                 | - Generally in agricultural or open space use.  
- Reserve areas can eventually be served with municipal water and sewer and may be in the path of future urban development. However, development will occur after the planning horizon contained in this plan.                                                                   | - These areas should be reserved for long-term urban development.  
- Primary uses through the planning period will remain in open land uses.  
- Any interim large lot residential development should accommodate future development with urban services.                                                                                                                                               |
| **Conservation Residential**      | - Restrictive land uses, emphasizing low-impact housing and open space.  
- Civic uses may be allowed with special use permission.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | - Applies to steep slopes and hilly environments with significant environmental features.  
- Development regulations should promote reservation of common open space and design of projects to take best advantage of open space resources. Lot clustering techniques may be used.  
- Special regulations are needed to promote conservation developments.                                                                                                                                                           |
| **Rural Residential**             | - Restrictive land uses, emphasizing housing and open space.  
- Civic uses may be allowed with special use permission.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | - Applies to areas where conventional large lot subdivisions have been established.  
- In many cases, houses use individual wastewater systems and are unlikely to experience extensions of urban services. Large lot residential is likely to be the permanent development stage.  
- Gross densities will generally be less than one unit per acre.                                                                                                                                                                   |
| **Single-Family (or low-density) Urban Residential** | - Restrictive land uses, emphasizing single-family detached development, although innovative single-family forms may be permitted with special review.  
- Civic uses are generally allowed, with special permission for higher intensity uses.  
- Developments will be provided with full municipal services.                                                                                                                                                                         | - Primary uses within residential growth centers.  
- Should be insulated from adverse environmental effects, including noise, smell, air pollution, and light pollution.  
- Should provide a framework of streets and open spaces.  
- Typical densities range from 1 to 4 units per acre, although individual attached projects may include densities up to 6 units per acre in small areas.                                                                                   |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Category</th>
<th>Use Characteristics</th>
<th>Features and Location Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medium-Density</td>
<td>- Restrictive land uses, emphasizing housing. &lt;br&gt; - May incorporate a mix of housing types, including single-family detached, single-family attached, and townhouse uses. &lt;br&gt; - Limited multi-family development may be permitted with special review and criteria &lt;br&gt; - Civic uses are generally allowed, with special permission for higher intensity uses.</td>
<td>- Applies to established neighborhoods of the city which have diverse housing types, and in developing areas that incorporate a mix of development. &lt;br&gt; - Developments should generally have articulated scale and maintain identity of individual units. &lt;br&gt; - Develop in projects with adequate size to provide full services. &lt;br&gt; - Tend to locate in clusters, but should include linkages to other aspects of the community. &lt;br&gt; - Typical maximum density is 4 to 12 units per acre, typically in a middle range. &lt;br&gt; - Innovative design should be encouraged in new projects. &lt;br&gt; - Projects at this density may be incorporated in a limited way into single-family neighborhoods. &lt;br&gt; - May be incorporated into mixed use projects and planned areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>High-Density</td>
<td>- Allows multi-family and compatible civic uses. &lt;br&gt; - Allows integration of limited office and convenience commercial within primarily residential areas.</td>
<td>- Locate at sites with access to major amenities or activity centers. &lt;br&gt; - Should be integrated into the fabric of nearby residential areas, while avoiding adverse traffic and visual impacts on low-density uses. &lt;br&gt; - Traffic should have direct access to collector or arterial streets to avoid overloading local streets. &lt;br&gt; - Requires Planned Unit Development designation when developed near lower intensity uses or in mixed use developments. &lt;br&gt; - Developments should avoid creation of compounds. &lt;br&gt; - Attractive landscape standards should be applied. &lt;br&gt; - Typical density is in excess of 10 units per acre. &lt;br&gt; - May be incorporated into mixed use projects and planned areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Home</td>
<td>- Accommodates mobile homes that are not classified under State law as “manufactured housing.” &lt;br&gt; - May include single-family, small lot settings within planned mobile home parks. &lt;br&gt; - Manufactured units with HUD certification that comply with other criteria in State statute may be treated as conventional construction.</td>
<td>- Develop in projects with adequate size to provide full services. &lt;br&gt; - Generally locate in complexes, but should include linkages to other aspects of the community. &lt;br&gt; - Typical maximum density is 8 units per acre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed Use (MU)</td>
<td>- Includes a variety of commercial uses, including large-scale buildings and parking areas. &lt;br&gt; - Includes major retailers, multi-use shopping centers, restaurants, and other services. &lt;br&gt; - Includes uses with impact compatible with major retailing, including high-density residential, hotels and lodging, and offices.</td>
<td>- Should be located at intersections of arterials or other major streets, including Highway 69 intersections. &lt;br&gt; - Traffic systems should provide alternative routes and good traffic flow, including safe pedestrian routes. &lt;br&gt; - Negative effects on surrounding residential areas should be limited by buffering and project design. &lt;br&gt; - Good landscaping and restrictive sign standards should apply. &lt;br&gt; - Good pedestrian and bicycle links should be provided, including non-motorized access to surrounding residential areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Use Category</td>
<td>Use Characteristics</td>
<td>Features and Location Criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Elms District** | Historic District encompassing the historic Elms Resort.  
- Includes a variety of residential and civic oriented uses with some lower impact commercial uses.  
- Includes large open spaces around the Elms resort. | - New development should enhance the existing historic district with the similar scale and features has the existing residential and civic uses.  
- Should emphasize pedestrians and provide easy connections for pedestrians to surrounding uses, especially the downtown.  
- Traffic systems should provide good internal traffic flow.  
- Traffic corridors should also have the scale and relationship to buildings as existing corridors like Elms Boulevard.  
- Good landscaping and restrictive signage standards should be maintained. |
| **Neighborhood Commercial** | • Includes a range of low impact commercial uses, providing a variety of neighborhood services.  
• Accommodates service related commercial uses.  
• Includes low to moderate building and impervious coverage. | • Should be located along major streets and in areas close to residential growth centers.  
• Should emphasize pedestrian scale and relationships among businesses.  
• Traffic systems should provide good internal traffic flow.  
• Negative effects on surrounding residential areas should be limited by location and buffering.  
• Good landscaping and restrictive signage standards should be maintained.  
• Good pedestrian/bicycle connections should be provided into surrounding areas.  
• The dominance of automobiles should be moderated by project design.  
• Typical zoning would be C-1 or C-1a Transitional Commercial/Residential. |
| **Urban Redevelopment** | - Existing areas with a mixture of residential and commercial uses.  
- Higher density residential development and a large number of single-family conversions to multi-family units.  
- Narrow street corridors with limited off-street parking. | - Redevelopment areas tend to be located in the oldest parts of a city but can include degrading older commercial corridors.  
- Areas should be master planned to ensure quality and predictability.  
- Redevelopment projects should enhance surrounding neighborhoods with similar scale and features.  
- Projects should provide the necessary parking to limit negative effects on neighborhood but not to the detriment of the neighborhood character.  
- Good pedestrian and bicycle links should be provided, including non-motorized access to surrounding residential areas. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Land Use Plan Categories and Use Criteria</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Commercial** | - Includes a variety of commercial uses, including auto-oriented commercial development.  
- Commercial may also be accommodated in MU areas.  
- Should be located along arterials or other major streets, and in areas that are relatively isolated from residential, parks, and other vulnerable uses.  
- Traffic systems should provide alternative routes and good internal traffic flow.  
- Negative effects on surrounding residential areas should be limited by location and buffering.  
- Activities with potentially negative visual effects should occur within buildings.  
- Development should maintain good landscaping, focused in front setbacks and common boundaries with lower-intensity uses.  
- Pedestrian/bicycle connections should be provided for consumer-oriented uses. |
| **Downtown Mixed Use** | - Traditional downtown district of Excelsior Springs.  
- Includes mix of uses, primarily commercial, office, and upper level residential.  
- Primary focus of major civic uses, including government, cultural services, and other civic facilities.  
- Developments outside the center of the city should be encouraged to have “downtown” characteristics, including mixed use buildings and an emphasis on pedestrian scale.  
- Establishes mixed use pattern in the traditional city center. May also apply to planned mixed use areas.  
- Recognizes downtown development patterns without permitting undesirable land uses.  
- District may expand with development of appropriately designed adjacent projects.  
- New projects should respect pedestrian scale and design patterns and setbacks within the overall district.  
- Historic preservation is a significant value. |
| **Limited Industrial/Business Park** | - Limited industrial provides for uses that do not generate noticeable external effects.  
- Business parks may combine office and light industrial/research uses.  
- Limited industrial uses may be located near office, commercial, and, with appropriate development standards, some residential areas.  
- Strict control over signage, landscaping, and design is necessary for locations nearer to low intensity uses.  
- Zoning regulations should encourage business parks, including office and office/distribution uses with good development and signage standards. |
| **General Industry** | - Provides for a range of industrial enterprises, including those with significant external effects.  
- General industrial sites should be well-buffered from less intensive use.  
- Sites should have direct access to major regional transportation facilities, without passing through residential or commercial areas.  
- Developments with major external effects should be subject to review. |
| **Civic/Public Facilities** | - Includes schools, churches, libraries, and other public facilities that act as centers of community activity.  
- May be permitted in a number of different areas, including residential areas.  
- Individual review of proposals requires an assessment of operating characteristics, project design, and traffic management.  
- Variable zoning. |
**Compatibility Rating Key**

5: The proposed use is identical to existing land uses or completely compatible. Development should be designed consistent with good planning practice.

4: The proposed use is basically compatible with the existing adjacent use. Traffic from higher intensity uses should be directed away from lower intensity uses. Building elements and scale should be consistent with surrounding development.

3: The proposed use may have potential conflicts with existing adjacent uses that may be resolved or minimized through project design. Traffic and other external effects should be directed away from lower-intensity uses. Landscaping, buffering, and screening should be employed to minimize negative effects. A Planned Unit Development may be advisable.

2: The proposed use has significant conflicts with the pre-existing adjacent use. Major effects must be strongly mitigated to prevent impact on adjacent uses. A Planned Unit Development is required in all cases to assess project impact and define development design.

1: The proposed use is incompatible with adjacent land uses. Any development proposal requires a Planned Unit Development and extensive documentation to prove that external effects are fully mitigated. In general, proposed uses with this level of conflict will not be permitted.

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**TABLE 7.3: Land Use and Compatibility Matrix**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use Type</th>
<th>uRD</th>
<th>CRS</th>
<th>RR</th>
<th>LDR</th>
<th>MDR</th>
<th>MBH</th>
<th>HDR</th>
<th>Elms</th>
<th>NC</th>
<th>uRD</th>
<th>Mu</th>
<th>CoM</th>
<th>DT</th>
<th>IND</th>
<th>CIV/SCH</th>
<th>GWY/Park</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation Development (CSR)</td>
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<td>Low Density Residential (LDR)</td>
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<td>Medium Density Residential (MDR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobile Homes (MBH)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Density Residential (HDR)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Elms District (Elms)</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban Redevelopment (URD)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed Use (MU)</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Commercial (COM)</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Industrial/Business Park (IND)</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civic/Public Facilities (CIV/SCH)</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parks, Open Space &amp; Recreation,</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preserves, Floodplain (GWY/Park)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annexation Policy

Excelsior Springs should implement an annexation policy for areas that are experiencing development, meet Missouri statutory requirements, and meet one or more criteria for incorporation into the city.

The city should establish an annexation policy that at the least incorporates the following criteria:

» Areas with Significant Pre-existing Development. Areas outside the city that already have substantial commercial, office, or industrial development are logical candidates for annexation. In addition, existing residential areas developed to urban densities (generally higher than 2 units per acre) should be considered for potential annexation.

» A Positive Cost Benefit Analysis. The economic benefits of annexation, including projected tax revenues, should compensate for the additional cost of extending services to newly annexed areas. The city's review policy for annexation should include the following information:
  › Estimated cost impact and timetable for providing municipal services.
  › The method by which the city plans to finance the extension and maintenance of municipal services.
  › Identification of tax revenues from existing and probable future development in areas considered for annexation.
  › Calculation of the added annual operating costs for urban services, including public safety, recreation, and utility services, offered within newly annexed areas.

» Public Services. In many cases public service issues can provide compelling reasons for annexation. Areas for consideration should include:
  › Parcels that are surrounded by the city limits. In these situations, city service may offer enhanced public safety service with improved emergency response times.
  › Areas served by municipal infrastructure.
  › Areas to be served in the short-term by planned improvements, including trunk sewer lines and lift stations.

» Key Economic Development Imperatives. Annexation may be required to take full advantage of substantial development opportunities. For example, development of the potential Mosby development site, adjacent to Clay County Regional Airport, is likely to require city services and potential development financing tools.
Excelsior Springs’ residents enjoy access to a variety of park and recreation facilities, including the excellent facilities at Excelsior Springs High School. Parks and recreation are a vital component of community life, therefore, it is essential that the city provide additional facilities as the community grows in order to maintain a high level of park and recreational services.
PARKS AND RECREATION

FACILITY ANALYSIS

This chapter examines Excelsior Springs’ existing park and recreation system. It covers all city-owned and operated recreation areas and any other park with public access. It considers:

» Current levels of service in the existing system.
» Service coverage to identify park and facility development needs.
» Condition inventory of existing parks.

The adequacy of park facilities is evaluated in three ways.

Facilities by Classification. Parks are classified into different categories to determine the level and area they serve.

Facilities by Geographic Distribution. The service radius of each facility is analyzed to identify geographical gaps in service.

Facilities in Relation to Population Service Standards. National standards for the provision of park and recreation facilities are applied to Excelsior Springs’ present system.

Facilities by Classification

In order to systematically analyze the park system, Excelsior Springs’ major recreation and open space areas are classified as follows:

Overall Park Space. Park land in the Excelsior Springs planning area covers about 90 acres. Traditional park area standards set by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) suggest 10 acres of park land per 1,000 residents. At present, Excelsior Springs contains about 7.6 acres per 1,000 residents. This does not include the facilities at the high school as they are not part of the city’s park system and they are a very specialized use. (Map 4.1)

The park classification system developed by the NRPA is used to classify Excelsior Springs’ facilities. Table 1 lists Excelsior Springs’ park facilities by category. These categories include:

Mini-Parks. Mini-parks generally address specific recreation or open space needs. These parks typically cover less than one acre and have a service radius of less than ¼ mile. Because of maintenance difficulties with multiple smaller sites and their small service area, most cities discourage the development of mini-parks. While Excelsior Springs currently has two mini-parks, Lincoln Parks and Kent & Outlook Park, the City should not plan for any future mini-park development. Parks of less than three acres provide limited services and numerous mini-parks create higher maintenance costs for the Parks Department.

Neighborhood Parks. Neighborhood parks are considered the basic unit of a community’s park system and provide a recreational and social focus for residential areas. These parks desirably provide space for informal active and passive recreational activities. The typical service radius for neighborhood parks is between ¼ and ½ mile, easy walking distance. Neighborhood parks adequate in size to accommodate the requisite facilities often contain at least 5 acres; between 5 and 10 acres is consid-
The Excelsior Springs planning area contains 4 neighborhood parks. Although elementary schools can also serve as neighborhood parks, they are not considered in this analysis. NRPA standards call for between 1 and 2 acres of neighborhood parkland per 1,000 residents. Excelsior Springs currently has about 13.7 acres of neighborhood parks, which translates into 1.2 acres per 1,000 residents.

**School Parks.** School park facilities can help to meet neighborhood park needs, particularly when located in areas not served by a neighborhood park. The grounds of Excelsior Springs’ elementary schools function as neighborhood parks but the location of these facilities offers limited assistance at filling service gaps.

**Community Parks.** These typically include areas of diverse use and environmental quality. Such parks meet community-based recreation needs, may preserve significant natural areas and often include areas suited for intense recreation facilities. Typical criteria for community parks include:

- Adequate size to accommodate activities associated with neighborhood parks, but with space for additional activity.
- A special attraction that draws people from a larger area, such as a swimming pool, pond or lake, ice skating rink, trails, special environmental or cultural features, or specialized sports complexes.

Community parks generally contain between 30 and 50 acres and serve a variety of needs. The typical service radius of a community park is approximately ½ mile to 3 miles. Traditional NRPA guidelines for community park areas call for 5 to 8 acres per 1,000 residents. Community parks serving the Excelsior Springs planning area include the City’s Siloam Mountain, Raper, and the consolidated Fishing River Linear Parks, East Valley, Paul Craig, and Jim Piburn. Athletic facilities associated with the city’s high school and middle schools also function as community parks. With 5.8 acres per 1,000 residents, Excelsior Springs meets the NRPA standard for community parks.

**Level of Service Analysis for Future Development**

As outlined earlier in the Excelsior Springs Plan, it is projected that the City will have a population of 14,620 by 2030. Table 4.2 identifies the future park needs associated with this future population based on current community standards. This analysis, which is based on a ratio of park land to the city’s projected population, suggests a need for an additional 55 acres of park land by 2020. For neighborhood and community parks Excelsior Springs meets the national standards and therefore the city existing ratios are used to determine future needs. However, at 7.7 the city falls slightly below the national standard of 10 acres per 1,000 residents. This slightly higher ratio is used to evaluate the city’s overall needs. The additional 35 acres may be in one community park or split between two neighborhood parks. Several factors must be considered when determining a community’s future park land needs. Some of these include gaps in services coverage and community demands. These factors are discussed further in subsequent sections of this chapter.

**Facilities by Geographical Distribution**

As previously noted, neighborhood parks comprise the basic unit of a park system. Geographic neighborhood park service can be evaluated using the standard of a ¼ and ½ mile service radius. These tend to be considered comfortable walking distances; however, large community parks pull in much larger areas often requiring the
### TABLE 4.1: Park System Analysis, Excelsior Springs Planning Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Total Acres</th>
<th>Playground Areas</th>
<th>Playing Fields</th>
<th>Courts</th>
<th>Special Facilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNITY PARKS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing River Linear – East Valley – Paul Craig – Jim Piburn</td>
<td>Isley Blvd.</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>basketball court</td>
<td>walking trail; gazebo; off-street parking; (3) shelters; grills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siloam Mountain</td>
<td>Isley Blvd. &amp; Marietta St.</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3) new shelters; restored restroom facilities; monument cross; park benches; grills; off-street parking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raper</td>
<td>Orrick Rd.</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>soccer &amp; baseball practice fields</td>
<td></td>
<td>restrooms; lighted practice fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Community Parks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kibler</td>
<td>Kibler Rd. &amp; Persimmon Dr.</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>unstructured open space</td>
<td>basketball court</td>
<td>picnic tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regent</td>
<td>S. Kansas Ave.</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>skate park; tennis court; basketball court</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyside</td>
<td>Dunbar Ave. &amp; Beverly St.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>softball backstop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powell Lake (under development)</td>
<td>Wornall Rd.</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) shelters; off-street parking; fishing pier; fountain; amphitheater*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Neighborhood Parks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MINI PARKS</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>Kansas &amp; Osage Aves.</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>shelter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent &amp; Outlook</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Mini Parks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SCHOOL FACILITIES PROVIDING COMMUNITY PARK AMENITIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) baseball fields; softball field, football field; (2)soccer fields; (10) tennis courts</td>
<td>running track</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specialty Parks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isley Park Woods</td>
<td>East Valley Ave.</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>State Nature preserve; nature trail network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Specialty Parks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
use of a car. Map 4.2 illustrates the location of Excelsior Springs’ recreation facilities, as well as the service radius of each park. Nearly the entire eastern or older portion of Excelsior Springs is adequately served by existing parks. The post-World War II developments west of Jessie James and south of the Prospect have lacked additional park space. The current development of the park at Wornall and Lynn roads will begin to fill this gap. The southern portion of the city is much more disconnected, with large wooded areas separating developments. Identifying new parks in areas that are already developed will be difficult, making pedestrian connections to the city’s existing parks especially important.

### TABLE 4.2: Future Park Land Needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park Type</th>
<th>Existing Acreage</th>
<th>Existing Acres per 1,000 Residents</th>
<th>2030 Total Park Land Needed</th>
<th>Additional Parkland Needed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Parks</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Parks</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>16.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mini &amp; Specialty Parks</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Park and Recreation Area</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>146.2</td>
<td>55.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: RDG Planning & Design
An evaluation of Excelsior Springs’ recreational facilities based on quantitative national standards is summarized in Table 4.3. Projections for future demand are also presented, based on a 2030 population of 14,620. The 2030 demand for each type of facility is determined based on present levels of service in Excelsior Springs if the existing standard is higher than the NRPA standard. Major findings of this analysis include the following:

- The city has an existing shortage of baseball and softball fields and a swimming pool. If the city wishes to maintain its current level of service to residents new recreation facilities will need to be constructed over the next 20 years. This may require a new sports complex to accommodate additional baseball, softball, and soccer fields. A cautionary note should be made in regards to Excelsior Springs’ estimated deficiencies. National standards are not appropriate for every community but should provide a general benchmark. When deciding to expanding the city’s recreational facilities the current level of service and services provided in the region should be taken into consideration.
- This analysis does not take into consideration the demand for practice space or the growing interest in soccer. One soccer field per 10,000 may accommodate the demand for a high school team but does not address the need for younger and older players or their practice needs.

### Facilities in Relation to Population Service Standards

An evaluation of Excelsior Springs’ recreational facilities based on quantitative national standards is summarized in Table 4.3. Projections for future demand are also presented, based on a 2030 population of 14,620. The 2030 demand for each type of facility is determined based on present levels of service in Excelsior Springs if the existing standard is higher than the NRPA standard. Major findings of this analysis include the following:

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- This analysis does not take into consideration the demand for practice space or the growing interest in soccer. One soccer field per 10,000 may accommodate the demand for a high school team but does not address the need for younger and older players or their practice needs.

### Table 4.3: Park and Recreation Services in Relation to Population, Excelsior Springs Planning Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Type</th>
<th>NRPA Standard</th>
<th>Existing Quantity</th>
<th>Present Need</th>
<th>2008 Surplus</th>
<th>2030 Need</th>
<th>2030 Surplus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Deficit)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Deficit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball Fields</td>
<td>1 per 3,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball Fields</td>
<td>1 per 3,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball Courts</td>
<td>1 per 5,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football Fields</td>
<td>1 per 20,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>

#### Golf Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Type</th>
<th>NRPA Standard</th>
<th>Existing Quantity</th>
<th>Present Need</th>
<th>2008 Surplus</th>
<th>2030 Need</th>
<th>2030 Surplus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Deficit)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Deficit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 9-hole standard</td>
<td>1 per 25,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 18-hole standard</td>
<td>1 per 50,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 driving range</td>
<td>1 per 50,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Picnic Shelter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Type</th>
<th>NRPA Standard</th>
<th>Existing Quantity</th>
<th>Present Need</th>
<th>2008 Surplus</th>
<th>2030 Need</th>
<th>2030 Surplus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Deficit)</td>
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#### Playgrounds

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<th>NRPA Standard</th>
<th>Existing Quantity</th>
<th>Present Need</th>
<th>2008 Surplus</th>
<th>2030 Need</th>
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<th>Present Need</th>
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<th>2008 Surplus</th>
<th>2030 Need</th>
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#### Swimming Pools

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<th>Present Need</th>
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#### Tennis Courts

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<th>NRPA Standard</th>
<th>Existing Quantity</th>
<th>Present Need</th>
<th>2008 Surplus</th>
<th>2030 Need</th>
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#### Sand Volleyball Courts

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<th>Facility Type</th>
<th>NRPA Standard</th>
<th>Existing Quantity</th>
<th>Present Need</th>
<th>2008 Surplus</th>
<th>2030 Need</th>
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<td>(2)</td>
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<td>(3)</td>
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Source: RDG Planning & Design
PARK DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Map 4.3 presents the plan for future parks, trails, greenways, and open spaces in Excelsior Springs. The overall concept for this system:

- Allows the park system to grow with the City;
- Proposes new centers for recreation, which are integrated into the overall system;
- Provides recreational facilities needed to meet community priorities;
- Envisions a linked park system, molding Excelsior Springs’ future open space system into a green network that unites the community;
- Establishes a trail system linking major community features; and
- Provides an equitable mechanism for financing of new park facilities.

The components of this program include:

- PARK SYSTEM EXPANSION
- GREENWAYS AND TRAILS
- PARK SITE IMPROVEMENTS
- NEIGHBORHOOD PARK FINANCING

PARK SYSTEM EXPANSION

Excelsior Springs will need to provide new park and open space areas as growth occurs in order to maintain a high level of park and recreation service.

All areas of the community should be served by a neighborhood park, establishing adequate service to all of the city’s neighborhoods. Map 4.3 illustrates the proposed locations for future parks and open space in Excelsior Springs.

The majority of Excelsior Springs’ growth will likely occur to the west and south. Growth should also occur within the heart of the existing city, through redevelopment and infill projects. Additional neighborhood parks will be need:

- In the southwest growth area, west of Corum Road
- In the northwest growth area, north of Tracy Avenue and Lynn Road.
- Neighborhood park features in a new sports complex at Kearney Road and Lodwick Lane

Infill development will increase demand for neighborhood park services in developed parts of the city. Therefore, addressing the issues identified in the Park Site Improvement section and constructing park linkages will be important.

A high quality neighborhood park is determined by both size and features. New neighborhood parks should include at least the following features/amenities:

- Picnic area with shelter
- Restroom with drinking fountain
- Toddler’s playground (ages 2 to 5)
- Children’s playground (ages 5 to 12)
- Informal ballfield
 › Flat open practice area of 1 acre
 › Basketball courts
 › Walking paths and sidewalks
 › Lighting
 › Tree planting and landscaping
 › Site furnishings

An existing demand for an additional sports complex, providing soccer and baseball/softball fields, has also been noted. In Map 3.3 and Map 4.2 a site for this complex has been identified at Kearney Road and Lodwick Lane. This site:

 › Provides easy access to Highway 69 and regional traffic.
 › Can be easily connected to the city’s greenway system and trail system through the drainage corridor to the north and along local streets to the new western park.
 › Offers easy access to the high school/middle school complex and trail linkages to the proposed community center.
 › Is adjacent to the commercial amenities along Highway 69 and Jessie James Road.

This type of facility is important to meeting the recreational needs of Excelsior Springs’ residents but also has important economic benefits. Local residents are less likely to make trips to other regional cities, thus spending consumer dollars in these other communities but this type of facility can also be a regional draw. The facilities at Excelsior Springs High School are a good example of the regional events that a community can attract and thus the consumer spending that comes with the associated visitors.

GREENWAYS AND TRAILS

Excelsior Springs should develop a trail system that links destinations within the city and provides a quality of life amenity.

Trail development has become a significant amenity to communities across the nation. This is no longer an amenity found only in the state’s largest communities. Trails are now a feature that many people seek out when moving to any size community. The benefits to trail development not only include recreation but also:

 › Health and physical activity
 › Transportation
 › Economic and community development
 › Improved community image and quality
 › Historical interpretation and linkages
 › Environmental education and preservation
 › Corridor conservation for multiple uses

Excelsior Springs has completed two important trail segments in the community, along Highway 69 and the Fishing River. Expansion and connection of this system should be a priority of the city including connections to community destinations, neighborhoods, and the city’s green spaces. For Excelsior Springs, and its steep terrain, good trail connections are difficult but even more important. The city’s terrain has created a disconnected transportation system, making the utilization of greenways and forested areas even more important.
A multi-purpose trail system should follow six basic principles:

1. The system should be community wide. Excelsior Springs’ community destinations are spread out throughout the city, including the city’s parks, schools, shopping, and recreation destinations. A city wide system not only provides access to all of these destinations, but fosters contact among all Excelsior Springs neighborhoods and helps visitors appreciate the city and its unique qualities.

2. The system should benefit a wide variety of users. Pedestrians and bicyclists are, and probably will continue to be, the dominate users of trails. Yet, opportunities in the greenways and forested areas can meet the needs of a wide variety of users. Trails can serve all types of people with many different interests and capabilities – seniors, children, families, people with disabilities, and visitors to the area. Indeed, new user groups and requirements are likely to emerge in the future.

3. The system should have multiple benefits. Recreation and physical activity continue to be the fundamental values of trail development. We have become increasingly aware that health and physical activity benefits are no longer just “amenities.” Yet, trails have benefits beyond recreation and health. These benefits include community transportation, education, family experience, safety, and economic development.

4. The system should create economic opportunities. Trails are increasingly important to the effort of attracting residents and investments. The success of the national trail movement has caused people to expect their own communities to provide a quality trail system.

5. The system must be strategic and sustainable. In today’s economy, governments at all levels face serious financial limitations. While these limits affect capital development, the operational costs of trails must also be considered. Trails that are neglected or deteriorated do not serve the needs of the community and waste community resources. Excelsior Springs’ system must be strategic and focused on areas that will most efficiently meet both user needs and the overall goals of the city.

6. The system should build on and enhance existing efforts. The city has completed two important links in the trail system and there exists an extensive informal system within the forested areas bordering the city. Future trail development should utilize and build off of these corridors.

Greenways
The primary greenway opportunity is the Fishing River and the forested slopes wrapping around the city and linking the city’s parks and future growth areas. This greenway can become an open space spine linking the city’s disconnected parts. Major segments of the city’s greenway system include:

› A Fishing River greenway that follows the river and undeveloped drainageways that flow into the River.

› A forested greenway that follows the unmarked trails that have been cut through the forested areas that encircle the city.

› The drainageways in the western part of the city, following the four to five drainageways west of Highway 69 including the Williams Creek system. Some development has occurred around these drainageways but there remain...
opportunities to construct trail linkages through these areas. These greenways should connect into the larger trail system and provide linkages to important community destinations.

**Trails**

Major components of the recommended trail system include:

- A Kearney Road connection that crosses the Dakota, Minnesota, & Eastern Railroad. This will be an important link between the downtown and the western portion of the city.
- A Jessie James connection that links the Kearney Road segment with the existing Highway 69 trail. This segment will play an important part in connecting the proposed community center and the rest of the city.
- A Downtown connector linking the Fishing River trail to the Kearney Road trail and the western portion of the city.
- Westside trail links that utilize the city’s street system and the greenways in the area to connect the western portion of the city to community destinations.

The trail system is also detailed in Chapter 3: Growth and Land Use.

**PARK SITE IMPROVEMENTS**

*Excelsior Springs should implement a regularly budgeted, incremental program of park site upgrades.*

Continued investment in Excelsior Springs’ existing park system will ensure its status as a major community asset. While a detailed park analysis would be based on user surveys and is beyond the scope of this plan, this section identifies preliminary needs at each park. Any improvement program should identify priority parks for improvement and a general budget to be spent every year on one or more of these parks. This should be done through a participatory process in the development of a community wide park and recreation plan.

Some common system-wide themes for Excelsior Springs’ park system include removal of obsolete play equipment at all parks, sidewalk connections to the parks, and connecting existing parks with a future trail system.

**Park Site Rehabilitation**

**East Valley Park**

- Connect the boardwalk with the Siloam Mountain sidewalk.
- Replace shelters for consistency throughout the park system.
- Continue routine maintenance.

**Isley Park Woods**

- Continue to implement state regulations for a nature preserve.
- Evaluate the need to map trails that have been cut through the woods for visitors to the area. Under state regulations these trails cannot be formalized and maintained but they are a unique amenity that should be brought to the attention of visitors to the city.
Fishing River Linear Park
› Work with the Army Corp of Engineers to identify alternatives for a new foot bridge across the Fishing River.
› Connect the trail to the downtown across Marietta Street.
› Reconstruct the gazebo to be as historically accurate as possible.
› Continue routine maintenance.

Sunnyside Park
› Ensure proper sidewalk connections to the park.
› Continue routine maintenance.

Siloam Mountain Park
› Connect the sidewalk path with the East Valley boardwalk to create a connected loop.
› Evaluate the need for an additional play structure at the only shelter that does not have one.
› Ensure sidewalk access to the park, connected to the parks internal sidewalks.
› Continue routine maintenance.

Lincoln Park
› Improve sidewalk access to the park.
› Continue routine maintenance.

Kibler Park
› Improve sidewalk access to the park.
› Continue routine maintenance.

Regent Park
› Evaluate ways to improve the safety of the park entrance on Orrick Road.
› Update restrooms.
› Replace field lights.
› Improve sidewalk access to the park.
› Continue routine maintenance.

Powell Lake (unofficially named park at Wornall and Lynn Roads)
› Complete implementation of the park master plan.
› Ensure sidewalk access to the park.
› Ensure construction of trail linkages between the park and residential developments in the area.

Jim Piburn Baseball Park
› Replace field lighting.
› Determine the long term maintenance and improvement needs of the bleachers.
› Continue routine maintenance.
Paul Craig Park

› Complete construction of the basketball court.
› Construct a sidewalk that links the baseball field, playground equipment, and Fishing River trail.
› Continue routine maintenance.

Kent & Outlook Park

› Following closer of the reservoir, acquire the site to add space to the existing park.
› Continue routine maintenance.

High School Sports Complex

› The city assists in maintaining the softball, baseball, and soccer fields at the high school. These fields are all in good to excellent condition. The biggest need is to provide additional practice space as these fields cannot accommodate the city’s existing demand.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK DEDICATION

Excelsior Springs should implement a park dedication mechanism to ensure the reservation of well-located and appropriately sized open spaces.

Excelsior Springs Park and Recreation Board’s taxing authority does provide a mechanism for maintaining and expanding the park system. With a limited amount of funding available and the need to match city growth with park service the city may consider the development of a park dedication program. A mechanism to facilitate park dedications is necessary to assure the reservation of well-located and appropriately sized open spaces. Neighborhood Park dedication can be calculated one of two ways: dedication based on park land need per person or as a percentage of the total development area. In addition to requiring a quantity of land Excelsior Springs park land dedication policy must take into account the quality of the land. The city’s policy should require that the land be appropriate for neighborhood park development, including at least 1 acre of flat ground and a limited percentage of the area utilized for stormwater drainage.

Approach I: Park Land per Person

Step 1. Determine persons per household averages, usually by dwelling type. In 2000 Excelsior Springs’ average was 2.63 persons per owner occupied unit and 2.24 per renter occupied unit.

Step 2. Establish Parkland Acre per 1,000 population standard. Excelsior Springs’ existing standard is 7.7 acres per 1,000, however the Park Board should work to increase that to the national standard of 10 acres per 1,000 residents.

Step 3. Alternate A: Count actual lots in proposed subdivision/development, determine total population, and multiply by park land acre/1,000 population standard to determine required dedication.

Step 3. Alternate B: Use minimum lot size in zoning district, reduce to get Net Density, determine total population, and multiply by park land acre/1000 population standard to determine required dedication.
Approach II: Park Land as a percentage of total development area

Under this approach a city ordinance establishes the amount of park land as a percentage of the total development area, varying the percentage in accordance with the minimum lot area per unit. The following provides an example of this approach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential Uses: Min. Lot Area</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Land Area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40,000 – 25,000 sq. ft. or greater</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>24,999 – 8,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,999 – 2,499 sq. ft.</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Other Funding Alternatives

Other park and trail funding techniques include:

- **General Obligation (GO) Bonds.** GO bonds obligate general tax revenues toward retirement, and represent the highest level of security to bondholders. Issuance of GO bonds requires voter approval. These bonds typically form the core of park financing mechanisms, with proceeds used for a variety of rehabilitation and development purposes.

- **Transportation Enhancements (TE):** TE funds are appropriated through federal transportation legislation (currently SAFETEA-LU) for trails, corridor beautification, and enhancement. This program is administered through the Missouri Department of Transportation and provides 80% funding for approved projects. Matching funds could be provided through the Park and Recreation Board’s general funds.

- **Surface Transportation Program (STP):** This is the primary federal road financing program, also appropriated through SAFETEA-LU and successor programs. STP funds may be used for trail facilities that are developed as part of a major transportation corridor.

- **Private Foundations and Contributions:** Foundations and private donors can be significant contributors to park development, especially for unique facilities or for major community quality of life features.
CHAPTER 5

QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES

This section examines Excelsior Springs' vital infrastructure and public facilities and suggests modifications to assure continued service to the city as it grows.
PUBLIC FACILITIES

Excelsior Springs’ public facilities and infrastructure should be managed and directed to encourage new development, solve existing problems and support the needs of its current residents.

PUBLIC FACILITY INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

The City of Excelsior Springs provides key services through a variety of city-owned buildings and facilities. The following section presents an inventory and evaluation of these varied facilities. The assessment of each facility is based on existing conditions and potential community needs. Proposed or desirable changes in facilities and services are noted.

Excelsior Springs City Hall

Excelsior Springs’ city offices have been located in the historic Hall of Waters since the 1940s. The limestone structure was completed in 1937 and at the time centralized the city’s mineral water system. The building includes:

- An indoor pool
- Mezzanine area where planning, zoning, and conference rooms are located
- City offices and the historic water bar on the 1st floor
- Council chambers and court room for municipal court
- Mechanical systems in a lower basement level

The pool was closed in 1991 and the spa and water bar closed in 2007. The building has off-street parking on the west side of the building, which has become the main entrance to the building. Handicap accessibility is limited to the city offices and council chambers.

Evaluation

The building is in good conditions with continued maintenance and upgrades needed. Energy efficiency improvements will need to be made to the building in the coming years to address the cost of maintaining the historic structure. The boiler system will need to be updated or replaced for the spa to be reopened. The city has looked at several options with initial recommendations to have electric radiant heat for the building and boilers for specific spa equipment.

Recommendations

A comprehensive review and assessment of the building is needed to prioritize projects and ensure preservation of the building. Possible projects include:

- Boiler system and HVAC improvements.
- Address the use and associated repair issues of the pool.
- Repairs to the tower to address loose blocks.
- Replacement of patio walls, this repair is scheduled for 2009.
- Replacement of the concrete patio area.
- New windows and heating system.
- Moving the handicap entrance from Broadway to Main Street.
- Security updates.
- Shades that control the temperature in the Water Bar area during the summer months.
- Updates to the court room.
The city will need to identify ways to improve the energy efficiency of the building to control long term utility cost.

**Police Department**

The Excelsior Springs' Police Department is located at 301 South Main Street next to the Hall of Waters. The department also has an animal shelter located along Mauer Road on the south side of the city. The department headquarters was built in 1989 specifically for the department with over 10,000 square feet. Municipal court has offices at this location but the court itself is located at the Hall of Waters. The building is handicap accessible with some off-street parking and additional parking at the municipal lot to the south. There is a sally port and property bay, with additional cruiser parking outside of the building.

The department handles all 911 calls within the 630 prefix and has a staff of 22 sworn-officers, four reserve officers, and 14 civilian employees. There is a fleet of seven patrol cars and nine support vehicles including an animal control vehicle. The department supports the community policing concept and has very active D.A.R.E. and SRO programs with 2 school resource officers. Department activity in 2008 included:

- 2,946 traffic stops
- 362 speeding tickets
- 812 bookings
- 2,359 police reports
- 39 DWI. In 2008 DWIs were down from a range of 70 to 100.

**Evaluation**

The police station is in good condition and is meeting the city's needs. The animal shelter is in fair to poor condition and will need to be replaced.

**Recommendations**

- Continue routine maintenance on the department headquarters.
- Consider relocation of the animal shelter closer to the city's public works yard. The new location could provide additional security for the building and officers.

**Excelsior Springs Fire Department**

The Excelsior Springs Fire Department is located along the 1100 block of Tracy Avenue. The 16,000 square foot metal building was built in 1995 specifically for the department. In addition to the truck bays the one story building has office and meeting space. The building is handicap accessible. Equipment bays include 6 bays on the south side and another 6 bays on the north side of the building. The department has 21 full-time members and 25 additional personnel comprised of a combination of part-time and paid-volunteers. On a daily basis 6 full-time members are on duty, and an average of 5 part-time/volunteer personnel are available to respond to calls.

The city serves a 2 mile radius around the city with all 911 calls handled by the Police Department. In addition to fire suppression and hazardous materials mitigation, Fire Department personnel provide advanced life support ambulance services to the city. Allowing for patient choice, the department transports to any hospital in the metro area with approximately 40% going to the Liberty Hospital and another 30% going to Excelsior Springs Hospital.
**Evaluation**

Overall the station is in good condition. There has been some water damage but that has been correct by replacing the tower roof and siding. The parking lot will need to be replaced in the next five years. Additional personnel are needed to meet the goal of 15 personnel at a residential fire within 8 minutes of receipt of the 911 call reporting a fire. The department’s equipment and apparatus are in good condition. Issues related to apparatus include a lack of a reserve pumper, an older pumper truck that will need to be replaced in the next 3 years, and the need for a 100 foot aerial ladder over the current 75 foot.

In 2009 the Department’s ISO classification was reassessed and remains at a five. The city would like to achieve a rating of three which will improve industrial and commercial insurance ratings. In addition to the issues listed above the, the city will also need to:

- Construct an additional fire station south and west of the downtown. Travel distance from a fire station to residential properties must be less than 1.5 miles. The need for additional fire stations must be addressed to improve the city’s classification, and bring it into compliance with nationally recognized fire safety standards. The dispersed nature of the city means there is a need for two additional stations but this will not be financially feasible and one station will address the classification issue.
- Address low water flows, especially in the downtown.

**Recommendations**

- Identify a location for an additional fire station in the southwest quadrant of the city.
- Improve water mains and water flow in the downtown. These improvements will be necessary for any future infill projects.
- Complete planned purchase of additional pumper truck using the public safety sales tax. Retain older truck as a reserve apparatus.
- Implement a recruiting campaign to increase the number of on-duty fire personnel in the community.

**Public Works Facilities**

The Public Works Department is located along South Marietta Street. The facility covers 10 to 15 acres and includes:

- A 6,000 square foot office built in 2000. The wood frame building has two levels and a stone veneer.
- A carwash built in 2000.
- The Ominbus barn built in 2000 with 12,000 square feet.
- A street maintenance barn with 7,200 square feet.
- A 2,800 square foot Water Department barn.
- A public works shop with 7,000 square feet and an older shop with 5,400 square feet.
- A 1,500 square foot Parks and Recreation maintenance barn.
- School bus barn built in 1994.
Unless noted, most of the structures are over 25 years old, constructed with wood frames and tin siding. The salt barn, rock piles and snow plows are also stored on site. The salt barn was replaced in 2008 with a lean-to for equipment.

**Evaluation**

The newest buildings are in excellent condition and the older structures are in fair to poor condition. The city will need to eventually replace and consolidate the oldest barns at the facility and provide additional storage space for equipment.

The Parks and Recreation barn is maintained by the Parks Board and is one of the older structures at the facility. The building is not heated and does not provide adequate storage for Parks equipment.

**Recommendations**

› Continue routine maintenance on the facility grounds and structures.
› Replace older barns with larger structures that will allow for consolidation and equipment storage.
› Work closely with the Parks and Recreation Board to replace their existing barn.

**Community Center**

In 1954 the building at 112 Thompson Avenue was purchased from the Elks Lodge by the Recreation Department. The building has over 5,000 square feet with a finished basement. The lower level of the brick structure is handicap accessible and is the location of the Senior Center. The facility uses the city lot to the south and has some on street parking directly in front of the building. The building has a fully equipped kitchen, two offices, and a large multi-purpose room.

**Evaluation**

Overall the building is in fair condition with routine maintenance and upgrades done on a regular basis. Over the last 10 years work has included:

› Refurbished kitchen and offices.
› Upgrades to the entries.
› A new roof.
› Interior painting.
› Replaced stairs.

In the coming years the brick work will need to be tuck-pointed, the carpeting replaced in the senior center, and painting of exterior trim. The building is at capacity and lacks the necessary room to expand services and offerings to the community.

**Recommendations**

› Continue routine maintenance.
› Construction of a new community center that provides for expanded services and opportunities for community members.
› Evaluate the long-term use of the building following construction of a new and larger community center.
Excelsior Springs Golf Course

The historic Excelsior Springs Golf Course was first opened to the public in 1910 along East Golf Hill Drive. The course has 18 holes over 150 acres. It was originally constructed as a nine-hole course and expanded to 18 holes in 1915. In 1928 another 18 holes were added. In 1936 the city constructed the airport on the back 18 holes and acquired the entire course in 1949 for $85,000. Additions to the clubhouse were made from 1965 and 1969. Automatic sprinklers were added in the 1970s and additional lakes were built on the 18th tee & 11th green in 1980. A driving range was built in 2001. Other amenities include asphalt cart paths, zoysia fairways, and a historic log cabin adjacent to the club house marking the original settlement in 1825.

**Evaluation**

The course is in good condition and highly regarded in the region receiving a 3.5 star rating from Golf Digest. The courses staff was also voted Most Friendly Staff in the region. The course will require routine maintenance with some larger capital projects. These projects include:

- Significant improvement or replacement of the existing club house to address roof leaks, lack of insulation, and the demands of a modern club house.
- Replacement of cart paths.
- Replacement of the 4th to 5th greens that were originally built in the 1940s.

**Recommendations**

- Evaluation of the existing club house to determine alternatives that meet the courses existing and future needs.
- Replacement of oldest greens.
- Replacement of cart paths.
- Routine maintenance on the course and all structures related to the course.

Excelsior Springs Memorial Airport

The Excelsior Springs airport is located east of the Golf Course along E. Golf Hill Road. It was constructed in 1936 and includes:

- A 2001 foot by 45 foot asphalt runway with a parallel grass runway that is 2,200 feet by 60 feet.
- GPS approach along with visual flight rules.
- A two-story, wood frame terminal that is currently unoccupied. The building is not fully handicap accessible and has off-street parking.
- Two T-hangers and two secured and heated hangers. The T-hangers have a combined 14 spaces and the secured hangers have 11 spaces.
- A fueling station that is closed until repairs and upgrades are completed.

The privately run airport at Roosterville will likely close in the next five years. This will create additional demand at the Excelsior Airport, including demand for hanger space.

**Evaluation**

Overall the facility is in fair condition despite inconsistent maintenance. The main runway will need to be sealed in the next two to five years while the ramps and parking areas will need to be resurfaced in the next one to two years. The fueling station needs immediate upgrades to be brought back into service.
Recommendations

- Complete needed upgrades and repairs to the fueling station necessary for operation.
- Resurface ramps and parking areas in the next two years.
- Seal runway in the next five years.
- Evaluate the need to hire a full time manager.
- Construct additional hangers in the next five to ten years.

Excelsior Springs School District

Facilities in the Excelsior Springs School District include three elementary sites, one middle school, one high school, early childhood center, career center, and district offices.

Lewis Elementary 501 Leavenworth

Lewis Elementary is 56 years old and was originally constructed as the districts middle school. The three story building houses grades K through 5th. It is in good condition with regular maintenance and upgrades. Recent improvements have included the playground area and main entrance to control access to the building.

Westview Elementary 500 W. Jessie James Road

Westview Elementary is the districts largest elementary in the fastest growing part of the city. The one-story building houses grades k through 5th. The biggest challenge for the building will be the growing enrollment.

Elkhorn Elementary School – 34684 Highway 10

Elkhorn Elementary is located outside the city limits of Excelsior Springs in Ray County. The one-story building was built in the 1960s and serves grades k through 5th. In the last several years a multi-purpose room and gym structure have been added to the building along with a new geothermal system. Overall the building is in good condition.

Table 5.1: Excelsior Springs Historic School Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Elkhorn Elementary</th>
<th>Lewis Elementary</th>
<th>Westview Elementary</th>
<th>Middle School</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>836</td>
<td>2,780</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>659</td>
<td>876</td>
<td>2,848</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>886</td>
<td>2,898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>2,927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>907</td>
<td>2,945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>889</td>
<td>2,974</td>
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<td>280</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>2,965</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>739</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>2,988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>257</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>831</td>
<td>2,964</td>
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<td>1999-00</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>2,980</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Excelsior Springs School District, 2009
**Excelsior Springs Middle School 701 Crown Hill Road**
The middle school, built in 1997, is a one story building for 6th through 8th grade. The building is adjacent to the High School, allowing for shared recreation facilities. Recent work has included a new roof and geothermal heating and cooling system. Overall the building is in good condition and will only need routine maintenance over the next several years.

**Excelsior Springs High School 612 Tiger Drive**
Construction of the high school began in the 1970s and was completed in two phases. Since 2001 the district has added a performing arts center, tiger stadium and gym space, increased the size of the kitchen and improved building security and access control. Overall the building is in excellent condition with a commitment to long term facility needs, including the installation of a geothermal heating and cooling system.

**Early Childhood Center 113 Line Street**
The Early Childhood Center is located south of the former Roosevelt High School. The building was constructed in 1969 and has 16,590 square. It is used for Title 1 Preschool and Early Childhood Special Education. The board room, technology center, and maintenance offices are also housed at this location. The new transportation terminal, built in 2009, is located across the street. The building is in good condition following a remodel completed in 2006, including the installation of geothermal.

**District Central Offices 100 North Thompson Avenue**
The District Offices were originally constructed for Bank Midwest in 1965. The school district purchased the building in 2006 and remodeled the building in 2007. The building has about 10,000 square feet and 16 employees. It is in good condition and has dedicated parking in lots to the north and west.

**New Area Career Center 614 Tiger Drive**
The Career Center was constructed in 2004 and serves six sending schools along with the Excelsior Springs District. The center offers career education and training in auto body, nursing, HVAC, computer services, building trades, and vocational business classes. The district also has an agreement with Job Corp to provide services to their students.

**Evaluation**
Overall the district’s facilities are in excellent to good condition. The district has made significant investments in the last several for maintenance, upgrades, and expansions. Extra commitment has been given to upkeep issues, ensuring longevity of the existing facilities.

**Recommendations**
- Continue routine maintenance and upkeep at all facilities.
- Continue efforts to improve the security and energy efficiency of all buildings.
- Evaluate the need for additional parking at Westview Elementary. Work closely on this issue with the future development of a community center in the area.
Public Facility Priorities

From the above analysis and the First Principles identified in Chapter 1 the following priorities were identified.

- Construction of a new community center.
- Complete evaluation of the Hall of Waters to determine priority projects and ensure preservation of the historic building.
- Construct an additional fire station.
- Complete planned replacement of the Airport fueling station and plan for replacement of ramps and parking areas.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

This section presents an inventory and evaluation of the city’s existing infrastructure systems. It includes water distribution and storage, wastewater collection and treatment, solid waste disposal, and transportation.

Sanitary Sewer

**Wastewater Collection**

Excelsior Springs’ wastewater collection system has 84 miles of lines ranging from 6 to 27 inches. There are some smaller lines but all new lines are required to be a minimum of six inches. In the older portions of the city most of the lines are clay with some asbestos cement and iron. All new installations are PVC. The system serves only the City of Excelsior Springs with some discussions of taking in Mosby. There are areas of the city that because of terrain are on septic systems while receiving city water.

**Evaluation**

The collection system is in fair to poor condition. There is a preventative maintenance plan, but it has been delayed due to budget issues. There is a significant problem with infiltration and inflow (I & I). An I & I study done by TREKK Design Group, Inc. in 2006 indicates a significant problem with rates ranging from 50% to 200% during large storms. I & I issues are caused by the usual breakdown of older lines. A number of these older lines also parallel the river, crossing the river, or have manhole covers that are submerged during large rainfalls. A long range replacement and upgrade program needs to be established. The current approach is more reactionary and does not deal with the larger issues in the collection system or the issues this creates at the treatment plant. The system also depended heavily on traditional stormwater collection and discharged directly into the city’s waterways. In the future the city will need to encourage more “green” solutions that allow stormwater to be filtered in a natural way before entering local waterways. These solutions should also decrease the amount and velocity of stormwater runoff.

**Recommendations**

- Establish a replacement program for older lines, with priority placed on those lines that are frequently flooded.
- Identify combined wastewater and stormwater lines and establish a phased program for separating these lines.
- Identify funding sources for a phased replacement program.
- Establish a routine maintenance program for cleaning and jetting the system.
**Lift Stations**

There are eight city-owned lift stations and no private stations in the city. The newest station was constructed in 2001. All stations are operational and in good condition. I & I is also a problem for the lift stations. There is direct infiltration at the McCellups station and surcharging issues at other stations. When the surcharges occur these stations have to be by-passed. Over the next five to ten years the city will need to replace and upgrade all of the lift stations.

**Waste Water Treatment Plant**

Excelsior Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant is located in the southwest portion of the city, adjacent to Prathersville. The plant has a maximum capacity of 2.5 million gallons per day (mgd) and averages between 2 and 2.5 million mgd. In 2006 Larkin Group completed an investigational study to determine future directions for the Waste Water Treatment Plant. Recommendations included:

1. Improvements necessary to meet scheduled implementation of new Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MoDNR) effluent permit limits. Specifically the Ammonia limits to be met by October 28, 2009 and Fecal Coloform limits to be met by October 28, 2012.

2. Improvements necessary to meet future population projections and growth related to wastewater flows.

To meet the new limits, the study proposed modifications be made to the plant operations during an interim Pilot. The city is currently implementing the recommended Pilot program. The city's existing system consists of a lagoon and overflow, the Pilot will take the city to a Biological Nutrient System (BNS).

**Evaluation**

The facility itself is in good condition, while the treatment systems are in fair to poor condition. The completion of the Pilot program should address issues related to the treatment system and begin to address the mandatory requirements of the discharge permits. The Pilot program should also increase the capacity of the plant to 3 mgd. Additional work may be necessary to meet the permitting requirements.

**Recommendations**

- Complete implementation of the Pilot program.
- Upon completion of the Pilot program determine future needs to meet permitting requirements and capacity needs.
- Address I & I and issues within the collection system to decrease the burden on plant systems and increase the capacity of the plant, ensuring the opportunity for future growth within the city.
- Evaluate the need for staffing and management changes at the plant including the establishment of a chief plant operator.
- Evaluate current codes and ordinances to allow for wastewater reductions such as the use of gray water.

**Stormwater Collection System**

Excelsior Springs lies within the Fishing River drainage basin. There are a few closed storm sewer lines in the older part of the city but most of the conveyance is by street and ditches. The western portion of the city drains to Williams Creek which then drains into the Fishing River. The newer portions of the city are more likely to have
separated storm sewer lines. There are a number of rural developments on larger lots that use an open drainage system. The city has completed a five year Stormwater Management Plan.

**Evaluation**

The city's trouble spots center on the older parts of the city, along the Fishing River and around the older rock box culverts. Following the 1993 flooding a number of homes were removed from the Fishing River floodplain. There are still some locations like Kings Addition along Jill Lane where homes were built adjacent to the creek. Box culverts have been rebuilt along McCleary Road and at one of the access roads to a lift station. Due to increased federal requirements the city may need to consider establishing a stormwater utility. The city does not have dedicated funding for stormwater management improvements and upgrades, nor is there a way to address future regulations for stormwater discharge.

**Recommendations**

- Improve the capacity of box culverts on Tiger Drive, McCleary Road, and Mauer Road.
- Identify combined sewer lines and establish a separation program.
- Budget for one additional staff person to implement and manage a Stormwater Management Plan.
- Begin preparations for funding future stormwater regulations through the development of a stormwater department. The utility's taxing authority must provide adequate funding for more than just maintenance issues but have the capacity to address federal regulations. The utility should also have the capacity to provide citizen education on stormwater management issues and protection of the city's water resources.
- Review city codes and ordinance to ensure that they do not prohibit the use of “green” solutions to stormwater management.
- Encourage the use of best management practices to limit or decrease the amount of stormwater runoff from all new developments. This should include the adoption of the APWA Best Management Practices manual.
- Prepare a watershed study, necessary for many grant applications that will assist in addressing stormwater management issues.

**Water System**

**Water Supply**

Excelsior Springs' history is based on its water and the natural healing mineral waters that it offered at its numerous hospitals. Today the water industry of the early 1900s no longer exists but Excelsior Springs still provides quality water to its residents and visitors alike. City water is now provided from a field of nine wells located south of the city adjacent to N Highway. Six of the nine wells are active and the newest well was constructed in 2001. The wells average 750 gallons per minute and were flow tested in 2009. The city does have a wellhead protection program in place.

**Evaluation**

The wells are in good condition with no indication of reduced capacity. Water quality is good and the flow test completed in 2009 will be used to establish a maintenance and upgrade program for the wells.
**Recommendations**

- Based on the flow test completed in 2009 establish and implement a maintenance and upgrade program for all active wells.
- Establish a water conservation program in the city that promotes wise water use, decreasing the demand on the system.

**Water Treatment Plant**

Excelsior Springs Water Treatment Plant is located south of the city on 108th Street. Plant capacity is 5 million gallons per day (mgd) and averages between 2 and 2.5 mgd. Its maximum daily demand is 3 mgd. A large upgrade of the facility was completed in the late 1990s.

**Evaluation**

The plant is in good condition and has received necessary upgrades over the years. Raw water quality is good and treatment focuses on mineral removal to soften the water. The plant is currently functioning under an expired State permit. The city is working with State officials to determine which regulations they must comply with, including changes to discharge requirements.

**Recommendations**

- Routine maintenance
- Complete work with the state to determine permitting requirements.
- Evaluate the need for staffing and management changes at the plant including the establishment of a chief plant operator.

**Water Storage**

Excelsior Springs has a total of seven reservoirs composed of standpipes, towers, and underground reservoirs. These include:

- A one million gallon reservoir north of downtown, the oldest in the system.
- A 500,000 gallon tower on Highway 69.
- A 500,000 gallon tank off of N Highway.
- A 500,000 gallon standpipe along Golf Hill Drive.
- A two million gallon tower north of the city adjacent to the pasta plant.
- A second 200,000 gallon tower north of the city at the pasta plant.
- A 100,000 gallon tower at the airport.

There are also two 500,000 gallon clearwells at the water treatment plant. In 2008 the Highway 69 tower was cleaned and coated and the exterior was painted in 2009.

**Evaluation**

The newer tanks are all in good condition and there is no need to increase the city’s storage capacity. There is a need to replace the oldest reservoirs in the next five to ten years. Tanks to be replaced include the north downtown reservoir, Golf Hill, and the airport tower. These will be replaced with a new tank on N Highway. The biggest concern is the north downtown tank, which is in poor condition due to the age of the tank.

**Recommendations**

- Continue routine maintenance
- Construct a new tank along N Highway to replace the city’s oldest three tanks.
- Continue to evaluate the city’s water storage needs as the city grows.
**Water Distribution System**

Excelsior Springs has over 270 miles of water mains ranging from two to 16 inches. Most of the system is composed of eight and 10 inch lines, while the main lines from the plant are 16 inches. The older lines are a mixture of iron and concrete, all new lines are constructed of PVC. The system is almost entirely looped with dead end lines a result of the city’s terrain. There are some connections off of the main supply lines before they reach the storage tanks. The city also supplies water to county water districts in Ray and Clay County; the cities of Lawson, Mosby, Prathersville; and some residential developments to the south of the city.

**Evaluation**

Excelsior Springs’ distribution system is aging and in poor condition. Replacement of aging infrastructure will be a top priority for the city over the next ten years. Some work will need to be completed on the distribution and transmission lines related to the tank upgrade. The city has a mixture of fire hydrants that will need to be upgraded and standardized.

**Recommendations**

› Establish a replacement program for the city’s oldest lines. This work should be done in conjunction with improvements to the sanitary sewer collection system, street reconstructions, and other needed utility work.
› Establish a routine upgrade program for the city fire hydrants.
› Evaluate ways to increase water conservation.
› Continue routine maintenance.

**Solid Waste Collection**

Allied Waste provides solid waste collection for all households inside city limits. Businesses within the city contract independently for waste collection. In June 2009 the city established a new contract with Allied Waste. The new contract will provide curbside recycling and yardwaste collection. Households will receive a 65 gallon yardwaste container with the option to upgrade to a 95 gallon container and an 18 gallon non-sorted recycling container. The city also has a recycling center where residents can drop off material and one yard waste collection day in the spring, mid-summer, and fall.

The city’s recycling center was built in 2008 with grant assistance. The facility takes paper, plastic, cardboard, tin, aluminum, and scrap metal. Material is then transported to a Kansas City facility. The city is part of the Mid-America Council and does alternating years of hazardous household waste collection and bulk items. Use of the recycling center has increased weekly. The city has been able to receive some payment for materials but is currently only receiving payment for scrap metal and aluminum. If payment for disposal would become necessary, the city does not have the necessary funding.

**Evaluation**

The recycling center is in excellent condition.

**Recommendations**

Continue routine maintenance on the Recycling center.
Infrastructure Priorities

Based on the above review of the city's infrastructure systems the following priorities have been identified.

- Establish a replacement program for the city's oldest water and sewer lines. These programs should provide a coordinated effort to ensure efficiency and cost savings for the city.
- Complete implementation of the Pilot program at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and complete a follow-up evaluation to determine additional permitting needs and growth opportunities.
- Construct new water storage facility to replace three of the city's oldest storage tanks.

Transportation

This section examines important elements of the transportation system that will assist in developing specific projects and policies. It discusses the structure of the city's street system and the role that its individual parts play.

Unlike many cities across the country, Excelsior Springs' street system did not grow from the survey's grid system. Instead the system was dictated by the sloping hills and the Fishing River. The city's initial plating in and around the downtown was based on long narrow blocks adjacent to the Fishing River. The surrounding neighborhoods climbed the hillsides in a less structured pattern.

Existing Street Classification

The Street Classification Map (Map 5.1) displays the city's existing Federal Functional Classifications. A street segment must be designated part of the Federal Aid system to be eligible for Federal funding when implementing major improvements. Streets in Excelsior Springs are placed in the following functional categories:

**Principal Arterials.** These roads serve regional needs and connect major activity centers. They include:
- Highway 69
- Highway 10

**Minor Arterials.** These streets connect with and complement the principal arterial system by linking activity centers and connecting various parts of the city together. As a general rule, these streets are spaced at 0.5 to 1.0 mile in developed urban areas. Streets currently in this classification include:
- Lynn Road/Tiger Drive
- Jessie James Road
- Titus Avenue
- Rowell Avenue
- Dunbar Avenue
- Old Orchard Road
- Kimball Avenue
- Cliff Drive
- Beverly Street
- North Kansas City Avenue
Collectors. The collector system links neighborhoods together and connects them to arterials and activity centers. Collectors are designed for relatively low speeds (30 miles per hour and below), in newer developments these are typically 32 feet wide with parking on one side, and provide unlimited local access. Collectors in Excelsior Springs’ system include:

- McCleary Road
- Corum Road/Crown Hill Road
- Dunbar Street
- North Maple/Henrie Street
- North Main Street
- Golf Hill Road
- Y Highway
- Old Time Drive/Orrick Road/Prospect Street
- Divide Street
- Garland Road
- Wornall Road

Local Streets. Local streets serve individual properties within residential or commercial areas. They provide direct, low-speed access for relatively short trips.

Civic Streets. These are streets that provide special civic spaces for the community by connecting major features together. These streets are likely classified as part of the city’s minor arterial and collector system. Civic streets should accommodate pedestrians and should have a wider rights-of-way ranging from 80-100 feet while typical rights-of-way in Excelsior Springs range from 50-100 feet. These streets should include Jessie James Road, Kearney Road, Isely Boulevard, St. Louis Avenue, Marietta Street, and Wornall Road.

Traffic Capacity Analysis
A capacity analysis compares the traffic volumes on a street segment with the design traffic capacity of that segment. The ratio of volume over capacity (V/C) corresponds to a “level of service” (LOS), which describes the quality of traffic flow.

Measures of Level of Service (LOS)
System performance of a street is evaluated using a criterion called the “level of service” (LOS). LOS is a qualitative measure that generally focuses on speed and smoothness of traffic flow under specific volume conditions. A ratio of volume to capacity (how much traffic the street carries divided by how much traffic the street was designed to carry) provides a short method for determining LOS. LOS categories are described as follows:
**LOS A:** Free-flowing operation. Vehicles face few impediments to maneuvering. The driver has a high level of physical and psychological comfort. Minor accidents or breakdowns cause little interruption in the traffic stream. LOS A corresponds to a volume-capacity (V/C) score of 0 to 0.60.

**LOS B:** A reasonably free-flowing operation. Maneuvering ability is slightly restricted, but ease of movement remains high. LOS B corresponds to a V/C score of 0.60 to 0.70.

**LOS C:** Stable operation. Traffic flows approach the range in which traffic increases will degrade service. Minor incidents can be absorbed, but a local slowdown will result. LOS C corresponds to a V/C score of 0.70 to 0.80.

**LOS D:** Borders on unstable traffic flow. Small traffic increases produce substantial service deterioration. Maneuverability is limited and comfort reduced. LOS D represents a V/C score of 0.80 to 0.90.

**LOS E:** Typical operation at full design capacity of a street. Operations are extremely unstable because there is little margin of error in the traffic stream. LOS E corresponds to a V/C score of 0.90 to 1.00.

**LOS F:** A breakdown in the system. Such conditions exist when queues form behind a breakdown or congestion point. This condition occurs when traffic exceeds the design capacity of the street.

Table 5.2 presents the capacity of various street sections at LOS D, the point at which congestion problems begin to occur.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Type</th>
<th>2-Lane</th>
<th>3-Lane</th>
<th>4-Lane</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimal Access</td>
<td>12,500</td>
<td>16,550</td>
<td>25,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>12,300</td>
<td>16,250</td>
<td>25,300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed Zoning</td>
<td>11,200</td>
<td>14,850</td>
<td>23,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Business District</td>
<td>9,400</td>
<td>12,650</td>
<td>20,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Cautions about the LOS System

The Level of Service measure is ultimately a measure of traffic speed. Clearly, LOS is an important measure because the fundamental purpose of streets is to move traffic. However, LOS does not measure other important values, including:

- Neighborhood preservation
- Environmental quality
- Economic vitality and access
- Energy conservation
- Efficient development patterns
- Pedestrian environment
A development pattern that improves LOS, can involve driving longer distances. This ultimately increases the amount of traffic and the total number and length of vehicle trips. Thus, while LOS is a useful tool, it should not be used to the exclusion of other values. The transportation system should serve, rather than dominate, the overall environment.

Although measures to improve LOS, such as widening roadways and adding lanes, can improve the flow of traffic, they can also diminish the quality of the pedestrian environment. These measures can also increase traffic speeds, which can in turn decrease pedestrian safety.

### Table 5.5 Performance of Key Street Segments, 2000 & 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Area</th>
<th>Capacity (VPD)</th>
<th>2000 Count</th>
<th>2008 Count</th>
<th>V/C Ratio</th>
<th>2008 Estimated LOS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Highway 92</td>
<td>12,500</td>
<td>6,490</td>
<td>6,119</td>
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<tr>
<td>Highway 92: City Limits</td>
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<td>2,072</td>
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<td>12,500</td>
<td>3,188</td>
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<td>North Highway 69</td>
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<td>8,140</td>
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<td>Highway 69 &amp; Jessie James Road</td>
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<td>Highway 69 &amp; Tracy</td>
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<td>10,554</td>
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<td>Jessie James &amp; Highway 69</td>
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<td>4,120</td>
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<td>Jessie James &amp; Tracy</td>
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<td>Jessie James &amp; Titus</td>
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<td>3,214</td>
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<td>Jessie James &amp; Kearney Road</td>
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<td>2,874</td>
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<td>Kearney Rd. &amp; Jessie James</td>
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<td>12,440</td>
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<td>Kearney Road &amp; St. Louis</td>
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<td>19,250</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Louis &amp; Marietta</td>
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<td>14,014</td>
<td>14,888</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isley &amp; Saratoga</td>
<td>9,400</td>
<td>14,630</td>
<td>15,384</td>
<td>1.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isley &amp; Y Highway</td>
<td>11,200</td>
<td>7,518</td>
<td>7,496</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Highway 10/Isley Boulevard</td>
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<td>9,388</td>
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<td>St. Louis &amp; Prospect</td>
<td>12,300</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis &amp; Titus</td>
<td>12,300</td>
<td>1,262</td>
<td>1,231</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marietta &amp; Isley</td>
<td>9,400</td>
<td>13,888</td>
<td>14,192</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marietta &amp; Garland</td>
<td>12,300</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marietta: City Limits</td>
<td>12,300</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y Highway &amp; Isley</td>
<td>11,200</td>
<td>1,490</td>
<td>1,464</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y Highway: City Limits</td>
<td>12,300</td>
<td>1,990</td>
<td>1,746</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Missouri DOT, 2007
Operational Analysis

Table 5.3 illustrates the performance of Excelsior Springs’ streets and compares traffic volumes between 2000 and 2008 for road providing regional access. Presently, drivers in Excelsior Springs experience LOS “A” conditions on nearly all major street segments except for those streets in and around the downtown where pedestrian quality is important. Based on the traffic counts provided at the Missouri Department of Roads website, Excelsior Springs’ traffic counts decreased over the eight year period. There could be several reasons for the decrease. Changes in reporting techniques or large scale road construction in the region could be just two of the reasons.

Transportation Priorities

› Improved access to the downtown at the districts two major intersections, St. Louis Avenue and Elms Boulevard, and Isley Boulevard and Saratoga Street.
› Improved pedestrian access around the city including a crossing of the railroad to connect the eastern and western portions of the city and improved access along Kearney Road.
› Improvements to Isley Boulevard including new curb and gutter, sidewalks, and landscaping.
› Continue to monitor the Isley Boulevard bridge over the Fishing River.
All neighborhoods in Excelsior Springs should provide a positive housing environment for its citizens. The city’s housing supply should offer all residents of Excelsior Springs the opportunity to live in a decent house that is within their means.
**HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS**

Excelsior Springs’ existing and future housing stock is critical to the city’s growth and development. Neighborhoods are one of Excelsior Springs’ most important economic development amenities, and the city’s housing supply represents its single largest cumulative capital investment. This chapter considers housing conditions and establishes a program to meet the city’s housing needs. The purpose of the chapter is to assess housing needs and strategies that will enable the city to increase overall production of housing and help to define future housing and community development directions.

**HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS**

This discussion will examine housing value and physical characteristics of Excelsior Springs’ housing stock.

**Housing Occupancy and Tenure**

Table 6.1 compares changes in housing occupancy for Excelsior Springs and indicates:

- Home ownership in the community increased while the number of rental units decreased during the 1990s.
- Some poorer quality units left the market slightly lowering the city’s vacancy rate.
- Home values increased at a faster rate than rental rates.

**Housing Values and Rental Rates**

Table 6.2 provides a comparison between the Excelsior Springs’ median home value and contract rent with other Missouri cities. The analysis indicates that:

- Excelsior Springs has the lowest median home value but the largest change over the ten year period.
- Although Excelsior Springs’ home value is just over $20,000 less than Clay County’s, the city is more comparable to the state wide average, which was $89,900 in 2000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.1: Change in Key Housing Occupancy Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Housing Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner Occupied Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Owner Occupied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter Occupied Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Renter Occupied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacancy Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Contract Rent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Overall, Excelsior Springs provides affordable housing for its residents with rents lower than Clay County and Kearney. Only Maryville, a college city, had lower rent levels in 2000.

**Construction Activity in Excelsior Springs**

Chart 6.1 (also displayed in Chapter 2) illustrates the city’s building permit activity between 2000 and 2008. After peaking in 2003 and 2004 Excelsior Springs has seen a steady decline in the number of residential building permits. The city built nearly 60 units in both 2003 and 2004. The national downturn in the housing market also impacted Excelsior Springs in 2008 with the lowest number of building permits issued over the eight year period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Median Value</th>
<th>Median Rent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excelsior Springs</td>
<td>49,300</td>
<td>82,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryville</td>
<td>47,400</td>
<td>86,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrensburg</td>
<td>62,600</td>
<td>91,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kearney</td>
<td>72,100</td>
<td>114,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platte City</td>
<td>70,700</td>
<td>111,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay County</td>
<td>68,200</td>
<td>104,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Housing Costs and Affordability**

Table 6.3 presents an Affordability Analysis, relating household income ranges with housing cost categories. This affordability analysis is based on owner occupied units value being two to two and a half times a household’s total income and affordable rental units accounting for about 30% of a household’s monthly income including utilities. In this analysis, a positive balance indicates a surplus of housing within the affordability range of each income group, while a negative balance indicates a shortage.

The analysis indicates that:

- Excelsior Springs is experiencing a shortage of housing for those households earning less than 68% of the city’s median income of $36,657 in 2000.
- The greatest negative balance in 2000 was for households earning between $50,000 and $100,000 a year. This indication of a backlog in housing in excess of $100,000 in cost, combined with low interest rates, may have fueled the construction surge in 2003 and 2004. As a result, most recent construction has focused on market rate units.
- The shortage of units affordable to higher-income households also suggests a continuing market for “move-up” housing. Occupancy by high-income households in relatively low-cost housing creates competition that may make it more difficult for moderate-income families to find affordable housing. It is likely that the limitations on the credit market in 2008 only further strained housing choices for these households.
Excelsior Springs, like many communities, already has a significant supply of affordable housing within its existing housing stock. The challenge will be identifying ways to capitalize on this supply.

Table 6.4 presents the current estimated income distribution (by percent of households) of Excelsior Springs, paired with affordable monthly housing costs for each income range. In this table, affordable monthly housing costs include utilities and represent about 30% of a household’s monthly income. These target costs are matched to strategies that can deliver housing affordable to each income range. For example:

- Programs that are most appropriate to families earning between $25,000 and $35,000 can produce housing with monthly costs between $625 and $875, including utilities, corresponding to houses with mortgages in the range of $50,000 to $80,000. Strategies that can deliver housing in this price range include rehabilitation of existing housing, manufactured housing, and affordable single-family development using financing devices such as deferred second mortgages.

These strategies are considered in more detail in the Housing and Development Policies portion of this plan.

Table 6.5 presents a ten-year housing development and pricing program for Excelsior Springs, based on the city’s relative income distribution. The program provides production targets for various cost ranges of rental and owner-occupied units. The development program is based on the following assumptions:

- New development in Excelsior Springs will be about 65% owner-occupied and 35% renter-occupied housing. This is comparable to the 2000 owner/renter distribution of occupied housing.
- Owner-occupied housing will be distributed generally in proportion to the income distribution of households for whom ownership is a realistic strategy. Some of the market for lower-cost owner-occupancy may be shifted toward market rate rentals.
- Lower-income households will generally be accommodated in rental development.
The analysis indicates a need for about 186 owner-occupied units with prices below $125,000 and 143 units with effective rents below $625 in current dollars, a total of 329 “affordable” units. Therefore, to meet half this projected need, a housing program for Excelsior Springs should establish an average annual production target of about 33 affordable units.

It is important to note that affordable housing can be produced indirectly through a filtering process. Thus, a unit that meets the needs of a high-income, empty-nester household may encourage that household to sell their current home to a moderate-income family. Filtering processes rarely satisfy an affordable need on a one-to-one basis, but they do realistically address part of the market demand. The easy credit of the last 10 years could have also created a back log of demand for rental housing, as many households will no longer qualify for the once easy credit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Target</th>
<th>Number of Households 2009</th>
<th>% of Households</th>
<th>Affordable Monthly Housing Costs (including utilities)</th>
<th>Price Ranges for Ownership Housing</th>
<th>Appropriate Housing Types and Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Under $15,000          | 748                       | 16.2            | $0-374                                                 | Less than $27,500                 | • Public housing  
• Section 8 certificates  
• Section 42 tax credit rentals  
• Existing housing rehab grants |
| $15,000-24,999         | 546                       | 11.8            | $375-624                                               | $27,500-49,999                    | • Section 42 tax credit rentals  
• Mobile home/manufactured housing  
• Existing housing rehab grants  
• Acquisition with rehab grants/loans. |
| $25,000-34,999         | 640                       | 13.9            | $625-874                                               | $50,000-79,999                    | • Existing housing rehab  
• Market rate rentals  
• Affordable single-family development |
| $35,000-49,999         | 734                       | 15.9            | $875-1,249                                             | $80,000-109,999                   | • Market rate rentals  
• Affordable single-family development  
• Subdivision development with infrastructure assistance |
| $50,000-74,999         | 863                       | 18.7            | $1,250-1,874                                           | $110,000-169,999                  | • Market-based single-family  
• Subdivision development with infrastructure assistance |
| $75,000+               | 972                       | 23.5            | $1,875+                                                | Over $170,000                     | • Market-based single-family  
• Subdivision development through special assessments |
| Total                  | 4,623                     | 100.00          |                                                        |                                   | Source: Claritas, Inc.; RDG Planning & Design, 2009
### Table 6.5: Ten Year Housing Development and Pricing Program, 2010-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2010-2015</th>
<th>2015-2020</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Need</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Owner Occupied</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable Low: $60-100,000</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable Moderate: $100-130,000</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Market: $130-200,000</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Market: $250,000+</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Renter Occupied</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisted: Less than $400</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable: $400-625</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market: Over $625</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Claritas, Inc.; RDG Planning & Design, 2009
HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Preservation of existing housing and development of new housing to support new growth are vital elements of Excelsior Springs' community development strategy. While land use and community investment strategies are important to housing planning, specific efforts are needed to address housing priorities. This section considers initiatives, which, if combined with existing programs, can help address, these major priorities.

The city’s primary housing challenges include:

- Developing an effective, multi-faceted neighborhood conservation and rehabilitation program.
- Maintaining the structural integrity of older homes and the quality of Excelsior Springs' existing housing supply.
- Establishing a cooperative, community-wide system for the development of affordable housing.
- Increasing the quantity and quality of rental housing available to Excelsior Springs' present and prospective residents.

Excelsior Springs should consider polices that include:

**Neighborhood conservation**

**A variety of housing types**

**Central district housing**

**Senior housing**

**Neighborhood Conservation**

Excelsior Springs should implement neighborhood conservation programs, including an aggressive residential rehabilitation program.

The preservation of existing neighborhoods and housing stock is important to any city but has become even more important as new construction has dropped and demand for affordable units has risen. Much of Excelsior Springs' affordable housing stock is already in place. Indeed, rehabilitation and preventive maintenance are the city's most cost-effective way to assure a continued supply of good housing. At the same time the city has an opportunity for both larger and smaller scale redevelopment opportunities. These range from the redevelopment of Excelsior Street to more scattered city owned lots around the older parts of the city.

Despite a demand for redevelopment of these lots with affordable housing, Excelsior Springs lacks the developers willing to take on the risk of these sorts of projects. Often in redevelopment areas this role is filled by nonprofit community development corporations (CDC's) – private, nonprofit developers who build housing or other community development projects that normal, profit-making businesses are not yet ready to enter. In some cases, CDC's are organized as Community Housing Development Organizations or CHDO's, having a specific number of community representatives on their boards of directors with access to low-income housing tax credits and other development incentives.

Community development corporations often grow out of established organizations that have identified housing as vital to their work, or of other community organizations (such as churches, human services groups, or community action agencies) that identify housing as a critical need. These could include faith based organizations for
economic development groups. Increasingly, housing development has become vital to economic development. Without sufficient new available housing, recruiting new employers to Excelsior Springs will be significantly more difficult.

The nonprofit development corporation’s housing role may change over the years as interest by the private market changes or there are changes in the overall housing market. Additionally, the nonprofit should not function as a contractor, but rather work through existing contractors or even manufactured home suppliers.

**Neighborhood Conservation Strategies**

Excelsior Springs should institute measures to repair existing housing units in poor and fair condition and carry out programs to protect existing good housing stock. Neighborhood conservation strategies could be a joint effort between the city and a CHDO. These strategies include:

» **Land Use Policies.** Excelsior Springs should maintain zoning and land use policies that protect the integrity of its neighborhoods. New zoning proposals should be evaluated with a view toward their effect on surrounding neighborhoods. The zoning ordinance should encourage project design that reduces land use conflicts between residential and other uses; and should establish buffering and screening standards to minimize external effects on neighborhoods.

» **Rehabilitation.** Excelsior Springs should develop rehabilitation programs (including the use of private loans leveraged by Community Development Block Grant and HOME funds) to promote the stabilization of housing stock that is in need of significant rehabilitation. These programs should emphasize the leveraging of private funds to extend the use of scarce public resources.

In addition to conventional rehabilitation programs, Excelsior Springs should promote the use of programs, which help to convert existing rental housing stock to owner-occupancy. These programs include the FHA 203(K) program, an FHA mortgage insurance program, which combines loans for purchase and rehabilitation of property into a single, unified loan.

Of particular concern is the deteriorating condition of some of the city’s rental stock. Conditions are particularly difficult in the concentrated multi-family areas around downtown. Development and enforcement of a strong housing standards ordinance, together with upgrading the housing stock through new affordable construction, can put significant competitive pressure on these units to upgrade or leave the market.

» **Purchase and Resale.** In this approach, the city’s CHDO/CDC would purchase and rehabilitate suitable houses for resale to new owners. The CHDO and/or private lenders finance the acquisition and rehabilitation, with a take-out on the interim financing funded as the FHA or conventional mortgage. Houses are marketed through the normal real estate sales process, or by the development group. A purchase and resale program can be combined with an effort to build affordable housing for seniors, described above.

» **Infill Development.** Several sites in Excelsior Springs within the built-up city provide good opportunities for residential development. These include open lots scattered around the city and larger clusters in the northeast quadrant of the city. A Housing Partnership can be helpful in packaging and financing appropriate projects on these sites.
Rent-to-own. The traditional approach of developing multi-family developments for low-income households is frequently difficult to locate in small communities. A new type of development, called “rent-to-own” combines affordable housing with future opportunities for homeownership.

This new approach provides an opportunity for households of moderate income establishing themselves in Excelsior Springs to rent a home while building equity toward eventual purchase. In this program, the Excelsior Springs’ housing partnership would build new rental housing in single-family, duplex, townhouse, or four-plex configurations. These units would be built with the assistance of the Section 42 tax credit, providing a significant incentive for equity investment. A portion of the family’s rent is placed in an escrow that is directed toward a downpayment. At the end of a specific period, the residents can then use the accumulated escrow as a downpayment to purchase either a new house or an existing unit. Rent-to-own units also include homeowner training and counseling, preparing tenants to graduate to ownership after expiration of the tax credit recapture period.

A Variety of Housing Types

Excelsior Springs’ new growth areas, along with land development regulations, should encourage a variety of housing types.

Excelsior Springs should continue to integrate a variety of housing types in new growth areas. Land development ordinances should provide adequate flexibility to accommodate innovative or economical designs within traditional town patterns. Some of these configurations may include:

» Cluster Subdivisions. In clusters, the overall density of a single-family project, including open space, must comply with the maximum density requirement of the zoning district. However, individual lots have smaller area and setback requirements. Clusters are useful when infrastructure cost should be minimized or environmental features exist which should be protected.

» Single-Family Attached Development. Here, single-family units comply with the minimum lot sizes of the zoning district, but have a common wall. The opposite side yard is ordinarily larger than normal. This housing type provides construction economies and more useful side yards.

» Townhouses. Townhouses, which are three or more attached units, can be developed as owner-occupied or rental housing. They provide construction and land use efficiencies, while continuing the sense of a single-family neighborhood.

» Multi-Family Development. Multi-family development should be integrated into the structure of new neighborhoods, rather than developed on peripheral sites. Design standards should provide a residential scale and prevent creating a “project” look.

Central District Housing

Excelsior Springs’ central district offers innovative, amenity-rich housing opportunities that could appeal to significant market groups. Housing development in this area should be a special community priority.

Communities of all sizes have proven the popularity of downtown housing and its ability to play an important role in business district reinvestment. Excelsior Springs has several opportunities in its central district, including both adaptive reuse and re-development of sites in marginal use. Downtown housing can also take advantage of specific incentives such as historic tax credits to inject additional equity into projects.
Such projects can take advantage of programs such as:

» Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) or HOME funds. These funds can provide gap financing for low and moderate-income housing in downtown districts. They are typically used to reduce private capital needs, producing housing costs affordable to the target population. CDBG funds are administered by the State of Missouri and are restricted to projects that principally benefit low and moderate-income households or eliminate slums and blight.

» Section 42 (Low-Income Housing Tax Credit). This is an investment tax credit to investors in projects that reserve a specific percentage of units for low-income residents. The Section 42 credit, administered by the State, offers 4% or 9% annual investment tax credit for ten years, depending on the level of low-income occupancy.

» Historic Tax Credits. This program offers an investment tax credit of up to 20% to qualified investors for rehabilitation of buildings on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Rehabilitation must be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Historic Rehabilitation. The Oaks is an example of a project that mixed Low Income Housing Tax Credits and Historic Tax Credits. A more detailed description of the redevelopment of Excelsior Street into an urban residential street is provided in Chapter 7: Downtown Excelsior Springs.

Senior Housing

Excelsior Springs should encourage construction of independent living residential development for seniors.

Excelsior Springs’ many natural amenities, senior services and excellent health services make Excelsior Springs a very attractive community for retirement age residents from the surrounding region. The city should encourage more new market-rate senior housing developments, within the constraints of the market.

Affordability problems are often most severe among low-income elderly renters. Developments in Excelsior Springs currently provide housing assistance to low-income seniors. Excelsior Springs’ development regulations should continue to permit flexibility in permitting these facilities in a variety of urban settings, including residential neighborhoods. The city should also continue to monitor needs for additional moderate cost senior housing.

Senior Housing with Ownership Transition Program

Development of moderately-priced housing may be combined with efforts under a CHDO to create a Senior Housing with Ownership Transition Program. Here, the CDC/CHDO would partner with the City of Excelsior Springs to build one or two-bedroom attached units, with a target cost of $80,000 per unit (for example). The CHDO agrees to purchase the senior resident’s current home at $50,000. That home is then rehabilitated and resold. If the rehabilitation cost of the house is an additional $25,000, total sale price for a substantially new house may be $80,000. The senior purchases the new attached unit, using the sale proceeds of the house as a substantial downpayment. The balance is amortized with an approximate monthly cost of $300. Assuming that additional costs for maintenance and utilities is $125 per month, the new housing setting costs the senior household $425 per month, a moderate price for an appropriate new ownership unit.
Downtown Excelsior Springs should build on its unique history and character to grow as a distinctive activity, investment, and image center that attracts visitors and residents from around the region.
DOWNTOWN EXCELSIOR SPRINGS

Downtowns occupy a special place in the economies and emotions of their communities. They express the values, history, and health of their individual communities, and no two downtowns are exactly alike. For Excelsior Springs, downtown is especially important. The legendary mineral springs that led to the founding of the resort town and propelled its growth were discovered in and around downtown. Here, the decorative stands and pagodas that marked these water sources were built, and great resorts, bath houses, and hotels were developed. Here, tourists arrived by train and trolley from around the region and nation to take advantage of the real or imagined medicinal benefits of the waters, and entrepreneurs built new businesses to serve these many customers. Here, in the middle of the Great Depression, the city built the landmark Hall of Waters, capping development of a centralized mineral water system and expressing the essence of the place and its resources. And here, for more than a century, thousands of people have come to seek recreation, healing, and delight.

But if Downtown Excelsior Springs was the unique heart of its community, it also experienced unique reversals. Magazine articles and medical research debunked the therapeutic value of the mineral springs and the clinics and that had grown up around them. The interstate highway system missed the city and channeled metropolitan Kansas City growth in a somewhat different direction, and changing economic forces, consumer preferences, and marketplace competition further hurt downtown’s viability. And flooding on the Fishing River and its tributaries created periodic havoc and severe disruption.

Yet, Downtown has battled back and emerged as a district with substantial potential, despite current economic challenges. The Elms Hotel, after a significant renewal program during the 1980s, is still an icon for the city and serves a substantial conference and retreat market. The historic Hotel Snapp (later the Oaks) was completely rehabilitated as a retirement community, and new businesses and restaurants have opened on Broadway. As a result, the community feels a renewed sense of optimism and possibilities for this distinctive district. Ultimately, Downtown Excelsior Springs is a vital mixed use district that will benefit from strong private action and beneficial public policies and investments. This chapter provides a realistic development program for the traditional heart of Excelsior Springs, designed to help it expand its role as a vital center for commerce, recreation, and activities.

ANALYSIS

This section examines important features of downtown Excelsior Springs that can help determine development policy directions.

Land Use Patterns and the Surrounding Environment

Downtown Excelsior Springs follows a bend in the East Fork of the Fishing River and is generally defined by the river on the south, Dunbar Street on the west, Excelsior Street on the north, and Saratoga Street on the east. The river valley and the steep slopes that rise above it both limit the district and reinforce its character. Unlike rectilinear central districts that are built on a standardized grid system, Downtown Excelsior Springs can be viewed as a progression of individual sub-districts that follow its waterways. These sub-districts include:
The Elms Historic District, focused around Elms Boulevard and Kansas City Avenue south of St. Louis Avenue.

Thompson Avenue, oriented to that curving street but encompassing an area between St. Louis Avenue, Marietta Street, Dunbar Street, and South Street.

Broadway, the traditional “main street” district from Kansas City Avenue to Saratoga Street.

The Fishing River greenway, including the Saratoga Street connection to Isley Boulevard.

Map 7.1 illustrates these four connected sub-districts discussed below.

The Elms Historic District. The major feature of this area is the campus of the landmark Elms Hotel, built in 1912. The Elms, with its main entrance off Regent Avenue, is connected to St. Louis Avenue by Elms Boulevard, a one-block long residential avenue lined by distinctive single-family homes and featuring a wide, well-landscaped median. Surface parking lots on the south side of the block have replaced some of the street’s residential fabric. Kansas City Avenue, parallel to and one block west of Elms Boulevard, links the area to Lake Maurer and includes a mix of two-story residential structures, churches, and commercial development along St. Louis Avenue.

Thompson Avenue. This area links the Elms District with the more traditional “main street” character of Broadway. The curving avenue is lined with one and two-story commercial buildings, often with a walk-out level on slopes dropping down to the Fishing River and the north tributary creek. Larger buildings, including a housing authority tower, the former McCleary Clinic, and the Church of Christ define the St. Louis Avenue frontage. This sub-district also includes two of the city’s grand hotels, the Oaks, now converted to senior housing, and the vacant Royal, along the south side of South Street between Main and Thompson. Residential Concourse Avenue curves off Thompson to Kansas City Avenue, and is anchored by the historic Woods Memorial Church. Land on the western edge of this subdistrict, between Kansas City and Dunbar, is commercial at automobile scale, although a former grocery store has been converted to a church.

Broadway. Broadway forms the “main street” of Downtown Excelsior Springs and is generally fronted by one and two-story tra-
ditional brick storefront buildings. However, an unusual platting of 240 by 180 foot blocks, usually with intervening alleys, doubles the proportion of front facades and creates an unusual sense of intimacy and very fine scale. Buildings along and south of Broadway house retail, service, and office uses, while the Excelsior Street, once primarily residential, has lost a significant amount of its housing to demolition, and deterioration. Spring Street forms one of the axial gateways to the Hall of Waters, and includes distinctive architecture and the Paradise Playhouse. The Hall of Waters visually and functionally connects Broadway to the riverfront greenway.

The Broadway sub-district also includes a number of social service agencies and facilities. Some of these services, including residential services, are located on sites with inadequate open space or in buildings not appropriate to their needs.

**The Fishing River Greenway.** The greenway includes wooded areas, the riverfront trail, and the downtown ballfield. Fishing River Linear Park offers some public access to the riverfront, but lacks a connection between trails on the north and south sides of the river. Saratoga Street, a connecting local street between Isley Boulevard and Broadway, includes both single- and multi-family uses.

Map 7.2 displays land and building use patterns in the downtown district.

*Historic Significance*

Excelsior Springs’ rich history and architectural heritage are important environmental and economic assets to the downtown, making historically appropriate rehabilitation a particularly important revitalization strategy. Currently, Downtown has two National Register historic districts and a number of historic and contributing buildings, including a mix of civic and private structures built between 1900 and 1940.

Buildings or districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places include:

- Clay County State Bank (Excelsior Springs Historic Museum)
- Elms Hotel
- Hall of Waters
- Excelsior Springs Hall of Waters Commercial East Historic District
- Excelsior Springs Hall of Waters Commercial West Historic District
- Wyman School (outside but near Downtown district)

The district has also lost many historic structures over the years, including its historic hospitals and hotels. While these losses are irreversible, reconstructing the small pagodas and pavilions built around the mineral water wells is a more distinct possibility. At one time, over twenty of these unique structures were scattered throughout the community, most located in and around the downtown. Of these, only the Superior Pagoda remains, but efforts are underway to reconstruct them or place markers at their locations. This work should be coordinated with a program to interpret the city’s history as part of a regional heritage tourism strategy.

*Circulation and Parking*

Downtown Excelsior Springs, like the entire city, should provide a transportation and circulation system that is safe, convenient, easy to understand, and accommodating to all forms of transportation. In this finely-scaled, visitor-oriented district, several demands on the system are especially important, including:
Clear entrances from regional approach routes for visitors.
Safe movement across major routes for pedestrians, with clear and comfortable movement along the major “processional” route from the Elms to the Broadway district, using Elms Boulevard, Thompson Avenue, and Broadway.
Sidewalk and trail continuity.
Improved connections between the built environment of downtown and the natural and recreational resource of the Fishing River greenway.
Convenient and reasonable abundant parking.
Improved bicycle access and parking.

**Traffic Flow and Circulation**

Downtown's unusual geography, constrained by its location in a valley between the river and bluffs, limits both street connectivity and entrance routes. Primary north-south routes include:

- **Kansas City Avenue/Dunbar Street**, with access to south to Lake Maurer and north to northside neighborhoods. Dunbar crosses the railroad at grade and leads to North Jesse James Road via Miller Avenue.

- **Elms Boulevard/Thompson Avenue** between Regent Street at the Elms and Cliff Drive. The Elms/Thompson intersection with St. Louis Avenue is extremely difficult and discussed in more detail later.

- **Marietta/Main Street** between south side neighborhoods, Regent Park, and the hills and rural areas to the north. North Main Street follows the creek corridor and becomes Salem Road north of town.

Major east-west routes are somewhat more limited and include:

- **State Highway 10 (Kearney Road/St. Louis Avenue/Isley Boulevard)**, linking the west side of the city and the West Jesse James commercial corridor with Downtown and continuing east. The highway intersects with the downtown street system at Kansas City Avenue and the very difficult Thompson Avenue intersection. West of downtown, the highway climbs a bluff with a switchback, and St. Louis Avenue continues as County Highway H to the southwest to Liberty.

- **Broadway**, providing local neighborhood access.

Major issues presented by this system include:

- **The Highway 10 (St. Louis Avenue) and Thompson Avenue intersection**. The geometrics of this intersection are extremely challenging, caused by a sharp S-curve along Highway 10, with Thompson and Elms Boulevard intersecting at opposing bends in the curve. This alignment forces eastbound traffic making a left turn into downtown via Thompson into a very hazardous and uncomfortable position; makes a through movement from Elms Boulevard (and the city's major hotel) to downtown very difficult; and forms an almost impossible obstacle for most pedestrians attempting to move between the hotel and downtown.

- **Visible Downtown access**. The situation at the Highway 10 intersection is complicated by the lack of easily visible alternative entrances into Downtown. If motorists bound for Downtown from the west miss the Thompson Avenue turn or feel unsafe making it, there is no apparent recovery route. They quickly cross the Fishing River bridge with no visible route back to the Broadway district, and are almost immediately on the edge of the city. Saratoga Street offers a possible route,
but its acute intersection with Isley and lack of signage prevent its use. Temple Street, another potential recovery route, is one-way southbound.

» **One-way circulation.** West of Linden Avenue, Broadway, Temple, and Saratoga form a one-way clockwise loop, designed to accommodate two-sided parallel parking on narrow streets. While this system works successfully for local residents, it is confusing to visitors in its current form, and further complicates the problem of entering downtown from Highway 10, the principal regional approach route. Other local streets in the district offer parking on both sides, but also are limited to one-way circulation.

**Parking**

The historic downtown developed in a pre-automotive environment, when visitors from around the region and country arrived by train and interurban. In a different transportation era, most visitors arrive by car, and parking must be convenient but not dominant. Downtown’s small blocks and relatively narrow streets contribute to its character and intimate scale, but somewhat complicate parking. Major parking resources include:

» **On-street parking.** Most of the district’s relatively narrow local streets provide one-way circulation with parking on both sides. Both Thompson Avenue and Broadway west of Linden are wide enough for two-way circulation. The shallow blocks of the Broadway sub-district, which generate the greatest parking demand, also provide a proportionately large amount of curb length for on-street parking.

» **Private off-street lots,** including the Elms parking lot and the “Hitch Lot” along South Street west of Thompson Avenue.

» **Public lots,** including the Hall of Waters lot and the north side of Broadway east of Elizabeth Street.

In reality, Excelsior Springs provides an adequate supply of parking to meet its current demand; however, many people believe that parking is scarce, and this perception must be addressed by future policy.

**Active Transportation: The Pedestrian and Bicycle Environments**

Downtown Excelsior Springs is an intimate district, originally built around people walking between hotels, resorts, clinics, shops, and parks. Many of its streets, large and small, provide appealing walking experiences. Downtown’s pedestrian quality has also been improved by relatively recent streetscape enhancements on Thomson Avenue and Broadway.

The new Fishing River greenway trail, following the north bank of the river, terminates at the reconstructed Marietta Street bridge, and uses that bridge to connect with an older trail along the south side of the river, eventually leading to Siloam Mountain and East Valley Parks. This trail is connected to Broadway along Penn Street and by a stepped walkway between the Hall of Waters and Penn Street.

Despite the generally walkable nature of the district, substantial issues and opportunities remain, including:

- The extremely hazardous, and for many people impossible, crossing at St. Louis Avenue and Thompson/Elms Boulevard.
- A general lack of clear crosswalk definition and markings.
- Pedestrian connections between the Fishing River Trail and the Thompson and Broadway commercial streets.
Possibility of dual pedestrian/service use of alleys.
Potential for new, small public spaces off the primary pedestrian system.
Gaps in connectivity between different parts of the downtown district.

Despite its hilly terrain, Excelsior Springs offers significant opportunities for bicycle transportation. These are discussed more fully on a citywide basis in other sections of this plan. However, downtown currently lacks significant accommodations for bicycle transportation with the notable exception of the well-developed trail between Marietta Street and Golf Hill Drive. However, the district’s fine-grained local street grid, low traffic volumes, small scale, and nearby destinations can make short distance bicycle transportation an important part of the access picture for the district. The availability of loaner bicycles at the Elms underscores a logical demand for facilities in the area.

**Transit**

Excelsior Springs provides a fixed service route bus service, the Omni Bus. This service operates six times a day at one-hour headways, operating on a loop that begins and ends at the Hall of Waters. The route serves the two downtown public housing towers, the Excelsior Springs Medical Center, and commercial destinations on the west side of the city.

**Assets, Issues, Opportunities**

Downtown Excelsior Springs mixes a resurgent business community with other problems of disinvestment, underutilized land, building deterioration, and economic uncertainty. The city’s center prospered as a retreat for the Kansas City metropolitan area and other neighboring population centers and, to some extent, the nation. Ironically, the fateful Saturday Evening Post stories of August, 1963 that effectively destroyed the city’s treatment and clinic industry also demonstrated the national reach of Excelsior Springs with its waters and clinics. The recovery from that trauma and the resulting rebranding of Downtown has spanned almost five decades, and has produced considerable progress. Yet, the role of the district remains a subject of considerable community debate. Should downtown be a vital center for its own community or a tourist attraction? Should it focus on a specific niche such as conferences and business retreats or should it evolve as a neighborhood? Is there a feature or theme that can recover the magic of the city center during the heyday of the springs and clinics? If so, how does this district compete with other thematic and lifestyle centers, some genuine and others modern “re-creations” of main street districts, that have appeared in the marketplace? The city center and its constituent businesses and stakeholders continue to struggle with these questions.

Developing a coherent downtown revitalization program requires clarity about potential markets and audiences, and an understanding of the types of features and services that downtown must offer to appeal to those audiences. Establishing this clear foundation for a viable, long-term downtown development strategy must answer three specific questions:

- What are the markets and potential customers for downtown Excelsior Springs?
- What are the expectations of these various market groups and what must downtown offer to appeal to them?
- What assets and opportunities does downtown provide to meet these expectations?
Markets and Customer Expectations

Potential markets can be conceived both in terms of both geography and customer groups. Geographic markets are based on market “rings” related to the distance that people will travel to patronize a specific business center. This distance is related to the distribution of competitive markets and the nature of a specific center, and becomes much more complex in or near metropolitan areas. For downtown Excelsior Springs, these market areas include:

- A primary market that includes residents of Excelsior Springs and directly adjacent communities;
- A secondary market includes a broader area, extending 10 to 20 miles away, where potential customers may have an affinity for Excelsior Springs but are also drawn to competitive market centers; and
- A tertiary market that incorporates visitors from a broader region. The economy of Excelsior Springs (like other resorts) was built on the tertiary market – people attracted to the city by its springs, therapeutic clinics, and support businesses. When the tertiary (or tourist) market collapsed during the 1960s, the district’s economy also collapsed.

Potential audiences from each of these markets have different expectations and needs:

» Typically, audiences in the primary, or local, market area are primarily focused on basic goods and services, with competitive prices, variety, and good service standards. In Excelsior Springs, basic goods and services are clustered at the Crown Hill intersection and along west Highway 10. Downtown’s logical market niche includes specialized retailing, establishments offering individualized service, personal services, offices, restaurants, and other sectors that thrive in a small-scale, pedestrian environment. In normal residential markets, housing development is another substantial demand generated by primary market audiences that downtowns can and should fulfill.

» Secondary market audiences will be attracted to downtown for many of the same reasons as the primary market. However, because Excelsior Springs competes with other destinations, downtown’s experiential quality, convenience, and ease of use will factor into consumer choice. At the margins, an appealing downtown may also improve the ability of outlying retailers and services to retain customers from the secondary market. Big box stores tend to be viewed as commodities, and a thriving downtown may well be a separator that helps determine choice. The potential housing market is somewhat smaller for the secondary market, and will tend to focus on seniors and older adults moving into the larger town to be closer to services such as the medical center, churches, and shopping.

» The tertiary market is still a significant potential economic base for downtown Excelsior Springs, even though it can never again grow to its pre-1960 level. This market is highly focused on the experience offered by the district as well as destination services, specialized shops and restaurants. In times of economic austerity, the affordable travel and conferencing facilities that Excelsior Springs can offer become particularly appealing to customers from the Kansas City, Saint Joseph, and even Omaha and Des Moines metropolitan areas. Significant focuses include business or organizational meetings and small conferences, and day and weekend leisure travel.
Assets and Opportunities

Given the nature of these potential markets, the downtown development program should establish conditions that increase the customer base and expand business and property investment. Accomplishing this objective will require a carefully orchestrated effort to enhance experience, create incentives for investment, assemble and redevelop underutilized land, and improve the district's image and ease of customer use. The district has a variety of assets that provide a basis for this strategy and other issues that it must address, including:

» **Unique History.** The history of the place, including its springs, clinics, and spas is unique to the region and continues to exert a powerful influence that is expressed physically by the architecture of the Hall of Waters and other structures such as the grand hotels and pavilions. Ironically, water has become a multi-billion dollar global business while it disappeared as an enterprise in Excelsior Springs. Historic interpretation and reconstruction offers possibilities for enhancing the experience of the historic town center.

» **Fishing River Greenway.** The Fishing River brings quality green space, with both active and passive recreation, into the center of downtown. The greenway on both sides of the river includes trails, hiking and nature study experiences, ballfields, and even commercial possibilities. However, access to the greenway is limited and not fully integrated into either the commercial or hospitality environment of the district. Integrating green space and recreation into a downtown environment can reinforce the downtown experience and has particular appeal to a conference and retreat market.

» **Neighborhood Character and Underutilized Land.** Parts of Downtown Excelsior Springs have a residential quality that shows the potential for integrating neighborhood living into the downtown environment. For example, Elms Boulevard, with its fine architecture, small lots, street relationship, and green median creates a distinctive environment and a pattern that can be replicated in other parts of the district. Concourse Avenue is also an attractive residential block. Downtown has underused land that can be redeveloped to strengthen its neighborhood quality. For example, Excelsior Street retains some of the vestiges of its residential quality, but has lost most of its fabric to disinvestment. The city owns two key multi-family properties between Broadway and Excelsior Street that can help anchor residential redevelopment.

» **The Elms and other Grand Hotels.** The Elms is a tremendous resource for the city, a historic resort hotel and contemporary conference center that is critical to the city’s ability to build a conference and retreat business and fundamental to any growth in the short-term tourism sector. The building and its campus also form a transition between Downtown and the wooded hills of the city’s natural environment. But two other grand hotels also recall an earlier history in Excelsior Springs. The Snapp (Oaks) Hotel has been successfully reused as a senior living community. The remaining hotel, the Royal, is vacant, but its site overlooking the Fishing River and its architectural character make it an important adaptive reuse focus.

» **A Sound Building Stock.** In addition to the three remaining great hotel buildings, other buildings in Downtown provide significant opportunities. These buildings range from the large floor plate of the former stable on Thompson Avenue to the two-story storefront commercial structures of Broadway.

» **Wayfinding and Transportation Issues.** Downtown’s unusual geography and irregular street pattern adds character but complicates matters for visitors. Finding key destinations like the Elms, Hall of Waters, and the Broadway district is difficult,
and existing wayfinding signs are hard for motorists to process. The Highway 10 and Thompson Avenue intersection, a key gateway to the district, is hazardous for both drivers and pedestrians; and travelers who miss this intersection will have difficulty recovering. A downtown program must remedy these significant circulation problems.

*The Human Services Issue.* While a difficult issue for public discussion, available, low-cost space has encouraged occupancy by human service providers that poorly accommodate clients and, consequently, work against downtown development and reinvestment objectives. The community has a responsibility to provide places for services and have a common interest with providers to provide good therapeutic settings. A cooperative relationship could mutually benefit clients, providers, and the downtown community by providing appropriate facilities.

The following section presents development policies and concepts designed to help downtown Excelsior Springs take full advantage of its unique potential.

**Downtown Excelsior Springs Development Policies: Preservation, Reuse, and Infill**

Downtown Excelsior Springs has enormous potential to grow by serving its local and regional markets in specific ways. For local audiences, it should become a civic, commercial, activity, and increasingly residential neighborhood, growing in importance to residents of Excelsior Springs. For regional markets, it should focus on short-stay tourism and recreation from surrounding metropolitan areas, with a strong meeting and conference component. A strategy designed to take advantage of these market opportunities is based on:

- Establishing downtown as a mixed-use neighborhood that offers both quality services and distinctive features appealing to local and regional markets.
- Improving the district’s accessibility and ease of use for both visitors and local residents.
- Creating public spaces to provide places for activity, and strengthening the connections between the built and natural environments.
- Reinforcing the processional quality and natural flow among the downtown’s four sub-districts.
- Complementing the district’s economic vitality with new housing development.
- Capitalizing on, and in some cases re-creating, the historic themes of Excelsior Springs, while supplementing these themes with a quality of contemporary creativity.
- Redeveloping or increasing utilization of strategic buildings and sites with uses that strengthen the quality of an iconic downtown.
- Improving access to and convenience of finding parking downtown, encouraging visitors to experience the district as pedestrians.
- Maintaining the Elms as a critical private investment and public resource, essential to both the character of downtown and the ability of Excelsior Springs to market itself for regional tourism, events, and conferencing.

The components of this program include:

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The downtown experience begins with points of entry. Excelsior Springs should welcome customers with attractive gateways into downtown that both guide them safely into the city center.

While visitors find downtown pleasant once they are “inside,” getting through the front door is challenging. The two keys to entering the district are the St. Louis Avenue intersection with Elms Boulevard and Thompson Avenue, and the Isley Boulevard and Saratoga Street intersection. Redesign of these gateways will improve their safety and visibility, increasing comfort levels and reducing frustration.
**St. Louis Avenue Gateway**

The existing condition here requires the visitor to make a difficult and sometimes counter-intuitive turn onto either Elms Boulevard or Thompson Avenue at the point where the primary street, St. Louis Avenue, makes a sharp S-curve. This is complicated by a lack of traffic control. The result is a virtually impossible crossing for pedestrians or motorists from Elms Boulevard to Thompson, and awkward turning movements that seem to put eastbound to northbound turning movements directly in the face of oncoming traffic. Improving this critical intersection should be a high priority, benefitting the district by improving its image, improving safety, and tying the Elms directly and safety to the primary commercial district. The redesign concept includes:

- Acquiring the car sales lot on the southwest corner of St. Louis and Elms Boulevard.
- Using this land to realign St. Louis Avenue, replacing the S-curve with a gradual curve.
- Slightly modifying Thompson Avenue to align with Elms Boulevard, forming a near right-angle intersection with St. Louis.
- Installing a median on the west leg of St. Louis Avenue, with a protected left-turn pocket for the northbound turn to Thompson Avenue.
- Signalizing the intersection.
- Developing clearly delineated crosswalks.
- Creating gateway gardens on the northwest and southwest corners of the intersection.
Saratoga Gateway

An effective eastern downtown gateway provides a recovery route for eastbound travelers who miss the Thompson Avenue intersection, a new entrance for people arriving from the east, and a direct route to the ballfield and eastern part of Broadway. The logical location for this entrance is Saratoga Street, currently a one-way northbound street. Saratoga, on the edge of the Fishing River Linear Park and Jim Piburn Ballfield, offers an attractive entrance to downtown, but suffers from poor visibility and a difficult intersection from Isley Boulevard. An improved eastern gateway along Saratoga Street includes:

- Acquiring available houses along Isley Boulevard east of the existing Saratoga Street.
- Rebuilding Saratoga Street to form a T-intersection with Isley Boulevard.
- Establishing two-way traffic flow on Saratoga, using a median with other design features consistent with precedents on Elms Boulevard. South of Broadway, the Saratoga Towers parking lot may be incorporated into the southbound traffic flow.
- Gateway monuments that clearly define the intersection, potentially alluding to the art deco architecture of the Hall of Waters District.

Possible Saratoga and Isley Entrance Improvements
DOWNTOWN LIVING

Downtown Excelsior Springs should grow as a residential neighborhood, augmenting existing housing by developing new neighborhoods on underutilized land within the district.

Downtown Excelsior Springs already has significant housing assets, including historic single-family blocks along Elms Boulevard and Concourse Avenue; the Colony Plaza and Ruey Anne housing towers; the Oaks Hotel restoration and other private multi-family buildings; and mixed-density residential streets like Saratoga and Temple Streets. Housing helps revitalize traditional business districts by creating activity and populating them into evening hours. However, traditional residential streets such as Excelsior Street have deteriorated over time and other sites are underused. Developing new, equity-based housing on these sites will add new investment and expand ownership in Downtown Excelsior Springs.

Three focus residential opportunities can provide new housing options and redevelop deteriorated or underused sites.

**Excelsior Street**

Often, stabilizing “main street” districts depends on the health of streets adjacent to the main commercial blocks. Excelsior Street is considered by many to be a major liability for the commercial district. Yet, its vacant sites present a major opportunity, reinforced by recent city acquisition of two multi-family properties that contribute to the quality of the historic district. This plan envisions a new, pedestrian-scaled Excelsior Street, lined by affordable single-family houses in historic styles, located on small lots. Elements of the new Excelsior Street include:

» Through redevelopment authority powers, assembling vacant sites and deteriorated houses along Excelsior Street on the blocks between Linden and Marietta Streets. Sound houses and multi-family buildings should be incorporated into the redevelopment master plan.

» Redesigning Excelsior Street as a slow-speed two-way street with on-street parking. The street should use traffic calming features such as neck-downs at intersections, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and street landscaping.
Excelsior Streets Neighborhood

» Developing about 20 new small-lot, single-family homes in historic styles.
» Two-way traffic and calming features including landscaping and improved intersections. Garage access is provided from the alley to the south or Foley Street on the north.
» Rehabilitating city-owned multi-family properties through partnerships with private developers, using the porte cochere of the building on the Penn to Elizabeth block as a walkway between Excelsior Street and Broadway.
» Acquiring and relocating the substance abuse residential treatment facility at Excelsior and Elizabeth.
» Upgrading Elizabeth Street as a two-block boulevard on axis with the Hall of Waters, connecting that historic building with a planned winery project planned for the hill above Foley Street.
» As part of the Elizabeth Street project, developing a small, interpretive open space with reconstruction of a historic springs pavilion that previously existed on the site. The northwest corner of Excelsior and Elizabeth provides a site for a commercial pavilion, possibly related to the winery.

Ruey Anne Townhomes

The block between Broadway and Excelsior Street south of the Housing Authority’s Ruey Anne Tower is a largely underused parking lot. However, this block presents an attractive housing site along Broadway, and its grade provides walkout possibilities. Reuse of the site includes:

» Redesigning Ruey Anne Tower’s parking with a loop off Excelsior Street.
» Developing up to ten attached townhomes, with front entrances and yards facing Broadway. Garage access would be provided on a walkout level, with direct access from the proposed Ruey Anne parking loop.
Redevelopment of this site is dependent on the state of soils. Previous uses might have produced some contaminants and remediation costs must be manageable.

Concourse and Kansas City Site

This potential redevelopment site includes a former grocery store, now used as a church; several older houses; and one commercial building. Concourse Avenue also cuts through the site to an awkward intersection at St. Louis Avenue. Redevelopment on a decision by the church to move to a more permanent location. This redevelopment project includes:

- Assembling the property on the redevelopment site through a redevelopment authority.
- Redesigning the street pattern through the site. Concourse through the site would be vacated and replaced with a loop at Kansas City Avenue that defines Concourse Green, a new neighborhood park, and provides a front entrance for new townhomes. A local driveway loop around the back of the development provides access to rear-loaded garages. Dunbar Street would intersect directly with St. Louis Avenue, leading to southbound Concourse and northbound St. Joseph Avenue south of St. Louis Avenue.
- Developing between 20 and 25 townhomes in three attached structures, wrapping around the new Concourse Green.
- Connecting Concourse Green with the former city fire station with a strong pedestrian crossing across the relocated Dunbar Street.
- Reusing the fire station, with incentives including adjacent parking, clearer access, and area redevelopment. Private commercial development of this building is preferable to public or quasi-public uses.
- Reconstruction of the stepped walkway to Wildwood Street, and connection of the walkway to the fire station and the rest of the downtown pedestrian circulation system.

TRAILS & PASSAGeways

Excelsior Springs should improve downtown trail and pathway access to utilize hidden assets and create a unique experience that links the built and natural environments.
The Fishing River Trail is an important amenity that suggests how pathways can enhance downtown by knitting its natural and built environments together. However, the trail lacks clear access to most of downtown, and does not link easily to another trail or to Siloam Mountain and East Valley parks on the south side of the river. The downtown program should integrate the Fishing River greenway and its trail into the fabric of downtown with links between the trails and parks on both sides of the river, and better connections to the Broadway and Thompson Avenue business streets. This will be accomplished by:

- A new pedestrian bridge across the river near the Hall of Waters, connecting the new northside trail to older southside trail in Siloam Mountain Park. This bridge should be at the approximate location of an earlier pedestrian bridge, but its landing should be moved uphill to avoid the footing damage that plagued the earlier structure. An interpretive plaza may be developed at the base of the bridge, where the trail and the paths from the Hall of Waters and upper parking levels intersect.
- A walk behind Broadway buildings on the north side of Piburn Ballfield. This new walk will intersect with an existing stepped walk leading down from Broadway and should connect to the proposed new pedestrian bridge.
- Improving the south side (Siloam Mountain Park) trail with new paving and an extension to the Marietta Street bridge.
- A Thompson Avenue Passageway and link to the Fishing River Trail at Marietta Street. This passage would use a break in buildings on the east side of Thompson, just north of the Excelsior Springs Standard Building. This passageway would provide a barrier-free pathway and open space down the slope to lower-level parking behind the Thompson Avenue buildings, and continue with a new bridge across the Fishing River tributary to connect with the main trail at Marietta Street.
- A bicycle route to the Elms and Lake Maurer, connecting the Thompson Avenue passage and Fishing River Trail to Marietta Street, continuing over the new Marietta Street bridge to Regent Street, then over the Regent Street bridge to the Elms and continuing south to Lake Maurer along Kansas City Avenue. This route may use both on-street signage and pavement markings and an off-street sidepath where possible.
COMPLETE ACCESS

In addition to trails, downtown's overall transportation network should accommodate all modes of transportation comfortably, pleasantly, and safely.

Downtown should provide a complete transportation system, handling all modes safely and effectively. The improved trails and gateway intersections discussed above contribute to this, but other important features include:

- Clearly readable pavement markings or contrasting surface treatments at key pedestrian crossings.
- A dual-use Alley Pathway, utilizing the alley between Broadway and Spring between Thompson and Main. The alley connects the Excelsior Springs Museum with the Good Samaritan Center and passes adjoins a planned small park at Marietta and Broadway. The pedestrian scale and character of adjacent buildings gives this alley special potential.
- Short boulevards to support key projects and development areas, recalling the character and dimensions of Elms Boulevard. These short segments should include sidewalks with landscaped setbacks from curbs and landscaped medians. They include Linden Street from Broadway to Excelsior, forming the east end of the Excelsior Street development area; Elizabeth Street from Broadway to Foley; and the Saratoga Street gateway segment.
- Developing the bicycle transportation system presented in Chapter 3, and the Lake Maurer route discussed above. Bicycle parking facilities should be provided at strategic locations in the district and along this system.
THE STABLE AND HITCH LOT

The redevelopment of the historic Hitch Lot area should provide additional green space in the downtown and create a regional draw for artists.

The creekside parking lot between Thompson Avenue and South Street was historically a “hitch lot,” a parking area for visitors to the downtown arriving on horseback or carriage. This, along with the adjacent two-level stable building along Thompson Avenue provides an intriguing opportunity for developing a new downtown destination, themed around the arts. A substantial community project related to the arts is especially appropriate because of longstanding community traditions, the presence of a substantial number of artists and craftspeople in the surrounding region, and the city’s status as the hometown of the famous American minimalist Donald Judd. The project concept features:

- A multi-purpose open space on the majority of the hitch lot, providing a community green for unstructured activity and landscaping and site treatment to detain stormwater flows into the adjacent creek. The hitch lot park should be designed simply, because it is subject to relatively frequent inundation from the creek.
- A parking lot to serve surrounding buildings, including the stable building and Woods Memorial Church. A ramp behind the church connects the lot to Concourse Avenue.
- A series of grass terraces leading down to park level from Thompson Avenue. These descending terraces would form a amphitheater, with a performance stage at the bottom, or park, level.
- Reuse of the vacant stable building for artists’ studio, workshop, and sales space. The structure’s high ceilings and reinforced concrete floors make it ideal for artists working on large pieces who have difficulty finding work spaces with good access to customers. Alexandria, Virginia’s Torpedo Factory Art Center and Omaha’s Bemis Project show that such creative centers can be both a dynamic presence in a city center and a focus for economic development.
A ROYAL IMAGE

The Royal Hotel is a critical part of the Downtown fabric and should be a focus for adaptive reuse.

Of Excelsior Springs’ three extant grand hotels, only the Royal remains unused. This historic building, opposite the successfully rehabilitated Oaks, frames Marietta Street and defines the edge of downtown along the Fishing River. Its reuse is likely to include a mix of commercial and residential uses, and will require a development package that closes financing gaps and provides adjacent parking.

A redevelopment program for the Royal should include:

› A public/private financing partnership that uses tax increment financing, tax credits, CDBG and/or HOME Investment Partnership funds, and other sources necessary to close a financing gap.
› A parking solution that uses the grade change of River Street to develop a supporting parking deck with two flat plates. The deck’s upper level would be accessed at grade on the Thompson Street and connect into the Royal hotel at the first or second story of the building. Marietta Street provides access to the deck’s lower level.

ENTERPRISE FUND

Downtown should complement its façade rehabilitation financing program with incentives for desirable start-up businesses.

Downtown Excelsior Springs offers low-interest loans for façade rehabilitation, an essential ingredient of a main street revitalization strategy. However, façade programs are often not sufficient by themselves to generate desirable investment in new business. Downtown growth is a critical part of a comprehensive community.
economic development strategy, and an enterprise fund, analogous to those offered for industrial projects, would complement current programs. Such a fund can help targeted business types survive their challenging early years. Two alternative approaches would 1) provide start-up capital or 2) reduce occupancy costs.

In capital-based programs, a civic entity, such as a downtown development corporation, provides a working capital loan, much as a bank or venture capitalist might. Repayment may be deferred until the business reaches a specific revenue threshold, or may be made through proportionate participation in profits. Occupancy cost reduction programs may establish a reduced rental and utility cost to the business, again increasing to market rate when the business reaches a specific revenue threshold. Then, the initial subsidy is repaid by a percentage of incremental revenues over that threshold. Both approaches require revolving funds that should be managed by an investment committee, following specific guidelines for underwriting and eligible business targets.

**AN URBAN HISTORIC PARK**

_Downtown should use its unique history as a special attraction that supports overall business development goals._

Downtown's buildings, hills, and streams provide a distinctive and attractive physical environment. But its colorful history can provide a truly unusual visitor experience that complements its other assets. One way to take advantage of this history is by envisioning the district as a thematic historical park, marked by special features of moderate cost. A prototype at a national level is the Lowell (Massachusetts) National Historical Park, where historic interpretation of the industrial revolution and the commercial fabric of a central business district are intertwined. Excelsior Springs can apply the ideas of other urban historical districts to its own theme of the therapeutic waters.

Elements of an Excelsior Springs Urban Historical Park could include:

- **A “Walk of the Waters,”** that weaves the sites of springs, historic clinics, resorts, and other features into a self-guided and/or docent-led tour. Interpretive graphics, images, and even public art can mark nodes along the route. The trail itself can be delineated with pavers or special inlaid ceramics, along with attractive, pedestrian-scaled directional information. This concept is most famously used in Boston's Freedom Trail.

- **Reconstructing the pavilions that marked the springs.** These attractive and sometimes fanciful structures were important to the traditional cityscape, but only one structure from this period remains. Reconstructions where possible at their actual sites along the Walk would add color and interest, and could also accommodate vendors. Tower Grove Park in St. Louis is famous for its restored Victorian pavilions. A different sort of pavilion reconstruction could also distinguish Excelsior Springs, and could even provide construction training programs for students at the high school, community college, or the Job Corps Center.

- **An enhanced Hall of Waters.** This landmark houses city government, but its water bar, steam rooms and therapeutic areas, and lower level pool are well-preserved but unused features. The Hall of Waters should be the starting and ending points of the historic Walk, and its facilities, while probably
not restorable to full function, can offer visitors a taste of the resort in its
day. The Water Bar and great hall could interpret both the local waters and
waters of the world, and, through a concession, serve these various products.
Mannequins and cosmetic restoration, along with interpretive material, could
bring the steam rooms back to life, and simulated water and figures could also
give viewers a sense of the pool in its historic use. The pool deck could also
be used for vendors, displays, and even food services, and in good weather
should be opened to the surrounding river environment.

This concept could be aided by the State of Missouri and operated as a State Historic
Park. Of the concepts, the Hall of Waters restoration is the most expensive, but
also may be attractive to private donors. The overall project could greatly enhance
the visitor and customer experience, and support overall business development and
economic growth.

Excelsior Springs offers low-interest loans for façade rehabilitation, an essential in-
gredient of a main street revitalization strategy. However, façade programs are often
not sufficient by themselves to generate desirable investment in new business. Downtown growth is a critical part of a comprehensive community economic development
strategy, and an enterprise fund, analogous to those offered for industrial projects,
would complement current programs. Such a fund can help targeted business types
survive their challenging early years. Two alternative approaches would 1) provide
start-up capital or 2) reduce occupancy costs.

ELMS REINVESTMENT

*Maintaining the Elms as a quality hotel and conference center is indispensible to downtown development.*

The historic Elms, along with its grounds is, to many people, synonymous with Ex-
celsior Springs. It remains an attractive site for short vacations, events, and corporate
meetings and retreats. Its continued improvement and development as a first-class
event and lodging facility is an essential part of this downtown development pro-
gram. The city and downtown community should support continued enhancement
and restoration in any way feasible, including the use of tax increment financing. In
addition, reinvestment in conferencing facilities may require public financing. In
this scenario, the conference facilities of the hotel may become a public convention
or conference center, owned by an operating authority and marketed in cooperation
with the hotel. This could be done in tandem with a substantial private reinvestment
in the hotel facility itself. It is an approach used in other cities where hotels and
public convention centers were developed in the same or adjacent buildings. The
Watertown (South Dakota) Event Center is an excellent example of such a coopera-
tive development.
CHAPTER 8

CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNITY

Excelsior Springs’ natural and constructed environments give the city a distinctive physical character. As the city moves into the future, it should strengthen its visual appearance, recognizing that maintaining community quality is an important priority in competitive environments.
Community character addresses the overall appearance of a community – the relationships of different parts of its built environment and the interaction between the urban and natural settings. Chapter Three, DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES, considered large-scale elements of urban design, such as the patterns of development and the forces that help form the city. This chapter will consider the design of specific elements of Excelsior Springs’ urban environment, including landscaping of the public environment and of major private development projects, streetscape, signage, downtown appearance, residential neighborhoods, and major transportation corridors.

People sometimes consider good community design a luxury, unnecessary to the process of business and economic growth. Yet, enhancing the quality of a community is a strategic economic decision, adding value to the community, increasing property values and producing a city that its residents find rewarding. Good urban design promotes community growth and establishes an environment for healthy neighborhoods. Just as the land use, transportation, parks, and community services elements of this plan define aspects of its development vision, the community character plan also helps to describe a long-term vision for the city.

People choose to live in places that are attractive and have a high quality of life. The design of Excelsior Springs will continue to be important to the city as it competes on a regional and national basis for investment and residents.

GOALS

In developing its community character program, Excelsior Springs should:

» ASSURE THAT COMMUNITY ENTRANCES AND MAJOR TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS CONVEY A STRONG STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY QUALITY AND ACCOMMODATE A VARIETY OF USERS.

Excelsior Springs’ gateways are a visitor’s first interaction with the community, and convey a powerful first impression to visitors. The city’s front doors should welcome and invite visitors, making a dramatic statement about the quality and character of the community. But entrances and corridors are also important to residents who use the city every day. Attractive residential streets also add value to their surroundings and provide avenues on which people travel at slower speeds. Many communities such as Excelsior Springs find that the aesthetic upgrading of key community corridors creates significant economic benefits by encouraging better development standards.

» PROVIDE CONSISTENT STANDARDS FOR THE DESIGN OF PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

Excelsior Springs’ terrain has caused the city to spread with auto-oriented development around Highway 69 and the access to the Kansas City area. This area’s “big boxes,” strip centers, and free-standing buildings surrounded by parking lots, contrasts with the more compact and smaller scale of the city’s traditional downtown. However, development patterns have left these two areas feeling like separate communities. Enhancement and improvement of private design standards will provide continuity throughout the city and contribute to the quality of the city.
» MAINTAIN THE HIGH QUALITY AND HISTORIC CHARACTER OF THE DOWNTOWN.
Excelsior Springs’ historic downtown is a signature district and is an intimately-scaled and interesting historic commercial district. Continued investment in the district can help it grow as both an attraction to visitors and a retail and civic neighborhood. The continued conservation and enhancement of this unique district’s quality should remain a fundamental part of city policy.

» CAPITALIZE ON EXCELSIOR SPRINGS’ NATURAL SETTING BY CONSERVING DISTINCTIVE OPEN SPACES AND INCREASING RECREATIONAL USE AND ACCESS TO FORESTED AREAS AND DRAINAGEWAYS.
Excelsior Springs’ natural setting creates major open spaces in the city landscape. This setting has helped to reinforce Excelsior Springs’ unique development pattern of partially self-contained residential areas separated by major landscape and topographic features. A plan true to the character of Excelsior Springs must make good use of these natural resources by increasing recreational use and access and preserving distinctive landscapes.

» ENHANCE THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVE THE APPEARANCE OF THE CITY’S STREETS AND NEIGHBORHOODS.
Enhancing community character means strengthening the quality, intimacy, and identification of the city’s neighborhoods. However, small neighborhoods that are separated from one another also can produce a disjointed city. Therefore, the community character plan should propose policies that weave these neighborhoods together into a continuous civic web.

THE COMPONENTS OF COMMUNITY CHARACTER
The Excelsior Springs Community Character Plan includes four major components, each addressing parts of the urban environment that make Excelsior Springs distinctive. These components include:

GREEN CHARACTER, addressing the city’s natural and open space environment, and the connections between city and nature.

TRANSPORTATION CHARACTER, addressing the city’s above ground framework, its transportation system, and including the city’s major corridors and gateways.

PLACE CHARACTER, addressing the nature of important places in Excelsior Springs’ private and public environment, and including the principles that should guide development.
GREEN CHARACTER

The founders of Excelsior Springs were drawn to the area for its healing mineral waters. The original city developed in the Fishing River Valley and the steep hills surrounding the valley. With growth Excelsior Springs’ urban development moved up the hills and into the rolling hills of the surrounding area. The city’s connection to nature and healthy living is permeated by the undeveloped steeps slopes that are often covered by native tree canopies and a variety of wildlife. The Fishing River valley and surrounding slopes have established much of the overall character of the city. This plan considers goals, objectives, policies, and implementation measures to help the city conserve natural landforms and expand the use of these features.

Goal 1: Greenway Corridors as the Spine of the City’s Open Space System

Excelsior Springs’ forested slopes are a significant part of the city landscape and limit development and connections between neighborhoods. These features form a major community asset that can define the city’s future open space network. The policies of the plan propose using these areas and the drainage corridors that cut through the hills as the core of the city’s future open space system, connecting developed areas of the city.

Objectives
1. Existing trails within undeveloped areas should be incorporated into the city’s trail system and become a formalized part of the city’s transportation system.
2. Waterways in their natural condition should be enhanced as part of Excelsior Springs’ trail and greenway system in developing areas.
3. Waterways and bodies of water should increase the value of adjacent development. Consequently, this development should relate to this asset and should maintain public access to it.
4. Development should not increase the size of Excelsior Springs’ existing 100-year floodplain.

Policies
1. Greenway and trail development should be focused within the city’s existing greenways and along major waterways. These include the large parcels of undeveloped and forested areas that cover the hills surrounding the city and the drainage corridors of western Excelsior Springs. Development here should include trail construction; trail support facilities and infrastructure such as signage, benches and other site furnishings; and trailheads. In those areas where paths have already been cut through, routes should be formalized with signage and maintenance. Other routes should remain more natural for hikers and bikers looking for a more unique experience. The city may also consider neighborhood park features such as playground equipment and shelters in greenways that are adjacent to residential areas and serve neighborhood park functions.
2. Easements for trail corridors should be acquired for the forested areas. Land in the floodplain adjacent to the creek corridors should be acquired through purchase and easement. Both types of corridors should be maintained as public open spaces.
3. Development adjacent to water resources should maintain public access and should be connected to the trail and greenway system. Development should not increase the extent of the 100-year floodplain or cause damage to or erosion of improvements along the system.
Goal 2: A Complete Trail and Pathway System

Earlier sections of this document address the pathway and trail system. This network is important on a number of levels: it connects the city's neighborhoods and activity centers, provides an important recreation resource and community amenity, and supplements the street system. It should also build on the city's reputation as a health destination. Excelsior Springs has a relatively extensive pathway system, but many residents do not realize that these routes exist within the forested areas around the city. The city has fewer formalized trails and no connection between the eastern and western trails. The pathway system should be major community resource that can be enhanced by the development of additional multi-use, off-road, or separated roadside trails.

Objectives

1. Excelsior Springs should develop a complete trail network that increases the number of multi-use trails. Excelsior Springs' forested areas and waterways will provide the routes for many of the off-road trail connections.
2. Excelsior Springs should develop a program of multi-modal roadways along routes that provide the easiest grades, including new street connections.
3. A sidewalk improvement program should be established that identifies sidewalk routes within neighborhoods. The width and grade of some streets limit sidewalk construction but at a minimum a sidewalk system should be established along those streets with the easiest grades and adjacent to neighborhood parks.
4. The existing pathway and trail system should be in a state of good repair, and the un-official trails should be upgraded.
5. The pathway system should be connected to pedestrian circulation in neighborhoods, commercial and mixed use areas, and should provide access to most of the city's major recreational, civic, cultural, and commercial facilities, especially the new community center.
6. New parks should also be connected to the pathway system.

Policies

1. The city should complete the Excelsior Springs' Greenway, a system around the city that connects many of Excelsior Springs' major open spaces and community features. The major component of this system uses undeveloped spaces within the city. Pathways have already been cut through these areas. Easements for these routes will need to be purchased along with signage and maintenance. The former inter-urban line should also be utilized to connect the southern portions of the city.
2. The city should establish standards for roadside pathway construction, and assure that pathways continue to be incorporated into major street projects. Major priorities for pathway extension or improvement should be the Kearney Road link between the downtown and the Jessie James Road area.
3. The city should provide landscaping improvements and trail amenities at strategic points along pathways and proposed multi-use trails.
4. Major private and public developments should be served by the pathway system. An example is connection of the new community center to a pathway system.
Goal 3: Conservation of Steep Slopes

Excelsior Springs’ hillsides and views define the physical character of the city and provide a beautiful backdrop to a historic community. Only the steepest slopes surround the Fishing River Valley were left undeveloped while other areas were more sparsely developed with minimal access. Redevelopment of these areas should protect the integrity of the hills, native tree canopies, and the unique neighborhood character.

Objectives:

1. Redevelopment of Excelsior Springs’ hillsides should limit the amount of impact on the natural environment, including storm water run-off. View should be preserved and appropriate access provided.
2. The city’s growth has inevitably taken urbanization into the surrounding hills. Development should maintain the character of the landscape by minimizing serious land disturbances.

Policies:

1. Excelsior Springs should encourage the use of conservation design techniques, such as lot clustering and common open space, in redeveloping the hills north of downtown.
2. The city should limit development in the forested hills surrounding the city with slopes that have a grade of 15% or greater remaining undisturbed.

Goal 4: Green Streets

Streets cover more than 20% of Excelsior Springs developed area and make up the city’s largest public space, using more land than parks and civic spaces put together. Their appearance has a major impact on the visual quality of the city. Elements that contribute to the successful functioning of major streets as public spaces include:

- Linear greenways on both sides of the street with sidewalks and/or pathways on both sides of the street. Sidewalks and pathways should be set back far enough from the street to provide separation from vehicular traffic and provide adequate space for street landscaping and snow storage.
- Attractive landscaping that provides shade and helps define the pedestrian and motorized domains of the street.
- Public art installations can become thematic elements that provide definition for the street and can help streets act as virtual outdoor galleries. Some communities install public art on a consignment basis, providing outdoor display space for artists and assuring a changing and dynamic streetscape.
- Ornamental or colored paving surfaces, defining sidewalk edges, raised medians, bike lanes, or other areas of special focus.

While major streets are very important and experienced by most people, most of Excelsior Springs’ streets serve residential areas and have a major impact on neighborhood environments. Streets of appropriate width, combined with sidewalk setbacks and street landscaping can provide both more attractive residential settings and prevent traffic from moving through neighborhoods at excessive speeds.

Objectives

1. Excelsior Springs’ major streets should include landscaped environments that
include trees, landscaped areas, and special features such as public art. Landscaping should be incorporated into all new major street construction projects.

2. Excelsior Springs’ local streets should be appropriately landscaped to reinforce the residential character and reinforce the quality of Excelsior Springs’ residential areas.

**Policies**

Excelsior Springs should define Urban Design Corridors, the major street corridors to which Green Street standards should be developed and applied. These standards, including sidewalk and pathway setbacks, street section, and street landscaping should be incorporated into the design of each new major street construction project. In addition, the city should program retrofits for some corridors. Urban Design Corridors should include:

- Kearney Road
- Jessie James Road
- St. Louis Avenue
- Isley Boulevard
- Kansas City Avenue
- Marietta Street
- Wornall Road
- McCleary Road
- Tracy Ave
- Highway 92

Of these corridors, Isley Boulevard is especially important as a major entrance to the city and a concern of many residents. As a gateway corridor into the downtown area, it is especially important that this corridor function well while, at the same time, present an image consistent with Excelsior Springs’ concern for quality landscape.

On local streets in new neighborhoods, apply guidelines or complete small projects that improve the green quality of the streets. Alternatives include medians or roundabouts at intersections that add landscaping and calm traffic; incentives for planting street trees; and encouraging sidewalk setbacks of at least 8 feet on local streets.

The city should implement a neighborhood street greening program, providing assistance to neighborhoods seeking to implement upgraded public landscaping on both community streets and local neighborhood streets. Subdivision regulations should also be revised to require tree planting and landscaped traffic calming techniques such as intersection medians and roundabouts where appropriate in new residential neighborhoods.

**Goal 5: Good Landscaping on Public and Private Property**

Greening of the public environment is very important and can help enhance Excelsior Springs’ already attractive cityscape. However, reasonable landscaping of private development projects, focused along major civic corridors, is also very important. The city’s development regulations should be upgraded to require focused landscaping of such projects. Landscaping should occur where it makes the most difference – at the public/private interface and between land uses with potential conflicts. In addition, landscaped areas can help to manage stormwater by increasing permeable surfaces and reducing the quantity and speed of urban runoff into drainage ways.
However, new development requirements do not typically apply to previously developed property. To address this, Excelsior Springs may consider a pilot landscape incentive program, providing financial incentives on a competitive basis to encourage existing projects to provide landscaping. Recognizing that most existing developments usually cannot fully comply with new standards, the incentive program should establish priorities, beginning with landscaping adjacent to public right-of-ways.

**Objectives**

1. All new public and private development should be attractively landscaped to improve the visual quality of the city, manage stormwater, provide shade in the summer, help define access and circulation ways through large projects, and increase the economic value of properties in the city.

2. Large expanses of paving should be broken with landscaping to reduce the effects of summertime heat.

**Policies**

1. The City should review its land development regulations, upgrading its landscaping requirements. Key focuses for reasonable landscape requirements include:
   a. Perimeter landscape borders adjacent to public right-of-way for multi-family residential and non-residential projects. Industrial projects should provide perimeter landscaping along Urban Design Corridors.
   b. Landscaped bufferyards at the boundaries of uses in potential conflict, such as commercial projects developed adjacent to single-family residential development.
   c. Internal parking lot landscaping.
   d. Facilities and structures required for stormwater management.

2. The City of Excelsior Springs should review its own properties for compliance with future ordinance requirements for specific sites.

3. The City should encourage landscape upgrades of existing properties by instituting a pilot landscape incentive program.

4. The City should encourage the use of innovative landscape materials and techniques that reduce maintenance costs and water consumption while maintaining a quality visual landscape. Areas for potential new or improved standards include parking lot landscaping and stormwater management, efficient irrigation techniques, and innovative landscape design.

**TRANSPORTATION CHARACTER**

From their earliest history, cities have been places of settlement where people gathered to conduct business. In America, though, mobility dominates much of how people think about cities and towns. Outside of home and workplaces, much of city life is spent moving from one place to another, and the street has become the public space that citizens experience most. Automobiles, the most common method of travel along these streets, are far more important to most people than a utilitarian conveyance. In our cities, we have become creatures of movement.

Transportation facilities, including streets and railroad corridors, make up nearly one-quarter of Excelsior Springs' developed area. The dominance of streets in the cityscape makes their design and scale especially important. For example, a standard arterial channel width of 60 feet (two moving lanes in either direction and a center
left turn lane), accounts for much of a motorist’s cone of vision at 35 miles per hour. The average pedestrian moving at 4 feet per second requires about 15 seconds to cross the street; a senior citizen will take about 20 seconds to make the same crossing. These different perceptions affect the nature of the experience and the visibility of signs and buildings along the street.

Transportation arteries, including both the railroad and major roads, are also the corridors of commerce in Excelsior Springs and nearly every other community. They provide the access and visibility that retailers, service providers, and industries need to thrive. Therefore, urban corridors are closely tied to economic development, and improvements can also “fertilize” the business environment that they offer.

**Goal 1. Functional and Attractive City Corridors**

Transportation facilities are first and foremost conduits for movement. Street design usually stops here, and roads are often engineered like sewers – sized to accommodate a projected flow, but with relatively little regard for the surrounding context. Yet, streets are also public spaces and economic development tools, and should be considered part of the cityscape.

Excelsior Springs’ major streets include both open and urbanized contexts. For the most part, the Green Street principles identified above should guide development of these emerging corridors. Urbanized contexts have well-established land use patterns, sites that can be developed more effectively or intensively, and have, in many cases, contextual constraints such as limited right-of-way, steep slopes, adjacent buildings and parking lots, railroads, and other limitations. They require a far more specific design strategy that combines functional, aesthetic, and economic development objectives.

**Objectives:**

1. Excelsior Springs’ major corridors must meet their required transportation functions safely and efficiently, and will clearly and safely navigate people to their destinations.
2. These corridors should provide an attractive travel experience to their users, and will present a positive community image to both residents and visitors.
3. These corridors will provide high quality locations for future business and economic development projects, and will create conditions that encourage additional investment and property improvement.

**Policies:**

1. Isley Boulevard/St. Louis Avenue

   Isley Boulevard and St. Louis Avenue are the gateways into the downtown. Isley from the city’s western edge should be improved to include new sidewalks and gutters, street lighting, and landscaping. The intersection of Isley Boulevard and Saratoga should also be improved to increase the visibility of the downtown entrance and improve safety. Redevelopment along this corridor should remove dilapidated properties and create high quality mixed use environment.

   The intersection of St. Louis Avenue and Elms Boulevard is the main entrance to downtown but leaves visitors confused as to how to access downtown. The line of site for pedestrians trying to cross the intersection often
leaves them feeling unsure and unsafe. Improvements to this intersection and the Isley Boulevard and Saratoga intersection are described more fully in Chapter 7: Downtown Excelsior Springs.

2. Emerging Corridors
Wornall and McCleary roads will increase in importance and traffic levels with development on Excelsior Springs’ west side. These sections require detailed review as development occurs. Proper street sections along with green street amenities and access for pedestrians and bicycles should all be components of these streets.

**Goal 2: Streetscape Elements**

Streetscape elements include street graphics, lights, wayfinding and traffic information, landscape, street furniture, and sidewalk materials. These features can define the image of the street and, by extension, the city. Often, though, sign elements, lighting, and other parts of the streetscape are not designed, but are placed according to individual, unrelated decisions, and produce a kind of visual chaos. In some cases, institutional standards, including the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), makes the installation of well-thought out, coherent but non-standard systems very difficult as well. People traveling through may ignore the ensuing chaos, but at best the environment that they experience is neutral, and does not effectively communicate the quality of the city. Instead, Excelsior Springs’ transportation environment should project the city's image, and should include high quality, uniform streetscape components.

**Objectives:**

1. All streetscape elements on major transportation corridors should have a consistent design vocabulary and be maintained in a way that is consistent with the original design and installation.
2. Excelsior Springs’ key corridors should effectively direct visitors to important community destinations.

**Policies:**

1. Excelsior Springs should design and gradually install a community wayfinding system along its corridors that direct visitors to destinations in a clear and attractive way. The city should work with the Missouri Department of Transportation to explore flexibility in its interpretation of the MUTCD and to develop a wayfinding system along Highway 163 that is acceptable to DOT and attractive, economical, and clear to users.
2. Excelsior Springs should establish design and material standards for street lights, signage, street furniture, and other features along major transportation corridors.
3. Commercial corridors and districts should develop graphic themes, individual but with a unified family resemblance, and, in cooperation with the City Engineering Department, install these graphics according to accepted uniform standards.
**Goal 3: Gateways**

Like buildings, communities have entrances – points of transition between the “outside” and the “inside.” At these gateways, the traveler passes into the urban sphere of influence, and the city has its first opportunity to communicate its quality and sense of place. Excelsior Springs’ gateway corridors are: Highway 69, Highway 92 and Isley Boulevard.

**Objectives:**

1. Excelsior Springs should develop a community gateway enhancement program that will effectively communicate the quality of the community.
2. The Isley Boulevard gateway requires special attention as the oldest corridor and the most concerning to residents. Improvements to this corridor should include a mixture of public and private realm projects. Public realm improvements should include improved sidewalks and curbs, new pedestrian lighting, and street trees. Private realm improvements should address dilapidated and vacant structures along the corridor.

**Policies:**

1. Similar entrance features to Kearney Road should be done at the appropriate scale along Isley Boulevard, Highway 92, and the northern extent of Highway 69.
2. The city should place the improvements to the Isley Boulevard corridor within their one to five year capital improvement program.

**Goal 4: Building Design and Scale along Corridors**

Many of Excelsior Springs’ major urbanized transportation corridors are largely commercial in character, although they also include other land uses. These buildings often do not relate well to the street. They are often set back far from the property line, with parking lots usually separating the building from the street. Wide streets are attractive if they are defined by a building edge; however, deep setbacks and adjacent parking lots make signs a more evident part of the streetscape than buildings. In addition, front doors also are not connected to sidewalks and pathways; and the building’s major façade is usually oriented to the parking lot, with little attention paid to other building elevations. Clearly, the appearance and function of transportation corridors depends on the type of edge condition established by adjacent private development.

**Objectives:**

1. Buildings and adjacent private development on major corridors should contribute to the quality of the street environment and should enhance the experience of the motorized or non-motorized traveler along the corridor. A strongly defined building edge is especially important along wider streets.
2. A clear connection should be provided between public sidewalks and pathways and the entrances of buildings and adjacent major development.
3. Buildings should be at least as apparent as signs and parking lots to travelers along major corridors.
4. The visual impact of parking lots directly visible and adjacent to the street should be reduced although the route from the street to parking areas should be extremely clear.
Policies

1. Excelsior Springs should encourage site designs that place commercial buildings closer to the street and locate parking lots to the side or rear of principal buildings. However, building setbacks should comfortably accommodate future widening when street expansion is reasonably expected. The city should include standards for site design that emphasizes buildings over parking, and locates parking behind or to the side of buildings along major corridors.

2. Excelsior Springs should require as part of site plan review a direct, safe route from public sidewalks or pathways to the main entrances of commercial buildings.

3. Developments should manage the number of curb cuts along major corridors by providing common access points, circulator roads, interconnected parking lots, and rearage roads to the greatest degree possible. This access management will require coordination among several properties in a business area.

PLACE CHARACTER

All parts of a city are important and contribute to the character of the community. But some places are especially important because of their historic or symbolic role in the growth of the city, their visibility, their role in the everyday life of citizens, or special physical and even spiritual qualities. People think of special places on many levels, beginning with their home, church, or other places of special individual importance. When we think about special places in a city, we address areas of civic importance that are typically the territory of all members of the community. Sometimes, these areas are referred to as “image centers” – the places that define the visual and even economic quality and health of the overall city.

Often, these places of civic importance focus around historic parts of the city, such as downtowns. Downtown Excelsior Springs’ scale and architecture history reflect the city’s history as a major destination for its healing waters. However, places of civic importance are not limited to downtown districts. Major commercial corridors and adjacent shopping and activity centers also have great community importance. Thus, Jessie James Road, Kearney Road, and Isley Boulevard are major civic resources. The character of these corridors can be improved by applying some of the time-honored principles and patterns that we observe in older, more established parts of the city.

This section presents goals, objectives, and policies that apply to areas of civic importance, both old and new. It is designed to identify and apply civic design elements to these important areas, improving the image of the city and the quality of residents’ engagement in the places that they experience most often.

Goal 1: Define Areas of Civic Importance

In most cities, the traditional city center and adjacent neighborhoods are seen as having the most community importance. The seats of government, finance, and business are often clustered in these areas. For example, downtown Excelsior Springs includes the historic Hall of Waters, the center of city government. For Excelsior Springs many of the city’s other major civic destinations have moved out to the Jessie James Road and Highway 69 corridors, including the Library, banking institutions, and churches. These newer areas have developed with little continuity to each other or other destinations in the city.
These areas of civic importance are related to the Urban Design Corridors discussed above. However, the concept of areas of civic importance addresses adjacent development along these major corridors.

**Objectives:**

1. Excelsior Springs should define the downtown, the Wornall Road corridor between Jessie James and McCleary roads, and Jesse James south of Wornall as areas of civic importance that receive special design review and attention as they grow and change.
2. Streets and public spaces within areas of civic importance should receive special design attention. In many cases, the major streets in these areas are identified as Urban Design Corridors, making them subject to specific streetscape and landscaping standards discussed in the TRANSPORTATION CHARACTER section of this chapter. Private development in these areas should respond to their importance as image centers for the community, and should be designed or retrofitted to improve their visual quality and the experience offered to users.

**Policies:**

1. Excelsior Springs should establish specific design objectives for the private and public built environment within these defined Areas of Civic Importance.
2. Private development in each area should be consistent with its respective design vision. For the downtown this should be based on historic design standards.
3. Sign regulations should accommodate the need for businesses to identify premises and to advertise goods and services. However, design guidelines for signage should generally favor smaller, lower-scale signs and include incentives for excellent design of street graphics.
4. In most cases, development should provide for good access for both motorized and non-motorized methods of transportation. Projects within these areas should be related and connected to each other, with these areas emerging as more unified districts.
5. The city should have mechanisms within its development regulations to review the nature of development within these areas for their consistency with the design objectives for the area.

**Goal 2: A Distinctive Heart of the City**

Downtown Excelsior Springs is a compact and yet diverse district, rich in historic and cultural importance, and alive with reinvestment. After years of struggle following the hospital closures the district is finding a new niche and a new vitality. Downtown Excelsior Springs is becoming a more active mixed use center, with an attractive, pedestrian scaled street scene and an interesting mix of businesses along its corridors. The downtown is marked by historic and modern high rises along with iconic Hall of Waters and Elms Resort. The district is a vital image feature and, as such, adds considerable economic value to all property. Continuing efforts to strengthen downtown should be viewed as investments that ultimately enhance the economic value of land and homes throughout Excelsior Springs. Chapter 7: Downtown Excelsior Springs provides a detailed vision for the district.

**Objectives**

1. Downtown Excelsior Springs will maintain its quality as the city’s image center, a visually attractive place filled with activity, a place that people find delightful to experience.
2. Downtown will grow stronger by taking advantage of development opportunities on underused sites both within and outside of the central commercial core.
3. Downtown should provide an environment that supports the growth and prosperity of local small business, services, restaurants and entertainment, and specialty retailing.

**Policies**

1. Downtown Excelsior Springs should expand the street improvement work that has been done along Thompson and Broadway to other streets in the district.
2. The downtown entrance from Isley should be more visible as described in Chapter 7.
3. Signage should direct visitors from the Highway 69 corridor into downtown. Currently the twisting roads and changes in street names often make it challenging for visitors to find the district.
4. The district should complete development of historic design standards and utilize them with both rehabilitation and infill projects.

**Goal 3: Public Art**

Public art can become an important part of Excelsior Springs’ cityscape. In many cities, highly successful programs have displayed sculpture on a loaned basis, and have brought delight to both residents and visitors. Neighborhood groups and students may also make their mark with art in the public environment. These projects add personality and distinctiveness to the city.

**Objectives:**
1. Public and environmental art should be a part of the cityscape.
2. Excelsior Springs should identify locations as focuses for public art. These areas may include Urban Design Corridors, places of civic importance, public facilities, parks, and special districts.

**Policies:**
1. The City should incorporate public art in major public projects, including large transportation projects.
2. Public art should include work by significant local and regional artists, but also should incorporate the work of others, such as students, in appropriate places in enhancement projects.
3. Public art should include both permanent installations and works on exhibit temporarily on either a loan or consignment basis.
4. Excelsior Springs should utilize a Public Art Commission to help organize and manage the public art program. The Commission may spin off a 501(c) 3 support organization that can accept tax deductible contributions.

**Goal 4: Historic Preservation and Conservation**

Excelsior Springs has a rich history that stretches over 130 years. This history is particularly reflected in the city’s architecture in downtown and in surrounding neighborhoods. Excelsior Springs has done a superb job of conserving the Hall of Waters and Elms Resort, historic icons in the city. At the same time notable structures like the Royal Hotel have falling into disrepair and single-family homes have been divided into multi-family homes around the downtown.
**Objectives:**

1. Excelsior Springs should institute activities and programs that recognize, protect and, where necessary and possible, increase the economic life of historic buildings, sites, and districts.
2. The City should initiate policies that make it easier to reuse historic buildings.
3. In general, the city should protect and conserve its existing housing and building stock.

**Policies:**

1. Excelsior Springs should consider instituting and enforcing a Property Maintenance Code, and work with private sector on programs that finance improvements necessary to fund the rehabilitation of worthy structures.
2. Excelsior Springs should complete development of the Historic Design Guidelines and use them in conjunction with a conservation and preservation ordinance that discourages the demolition of historically or architecturally important buildings, provides guidelines for the modifications of these buildings, and provides flexibility to encourage the rehabilitation and reuse of these structures.

**IMPLEMENTING CHARACTER**

**An Organizational Framework**

The Community Character Plan proposes a variety of policies that use the inherent character of Excelsior Springs to create an even better and more attractive community. These recommendations fall in four implementation categories:

- **Guidelines and Review**, involving changes to the city’s Land Development Ordinances to guide the nature and quality of new private development.
- **Modifications of Normal Practice**, involving changes in the way that major public projects are completed. Examples include integrating visual design improvements and enhancements into arterial street or highway projects.
- **Retrofit or Revisions of Existing Development**, involving improvements that enhance the function and appearance of existing private developments.
- **New Capital Projects**, including improvements that will be included in the city’s capital or operating budget.

While each of these categories requires different implementation and priority setting processes, a common, citizen-based constituency should unify them and help form partnerships between the public and private sectors. This organization may be referred to as the Excelsior Springs Character Committee. The scope of a Community Character Committee extends beyond that of a city government-based regulatory and advisory committee. It should ultimately review project priorities and build partnerships that improve the city’s design quality. The new committee should include a variety of interests, including city agencies and staff, the development and business communities, design professionals, economic development professionals, neighborhood associations, and other interests.

Care must be taken in defining the oversight role and composition of the Character Committee to insure that this review body complements, rather than duplicates, the roles of existing appointed bodies. For example, the design review function is established in the Community Development Committee and the City would not want to burden developers with another review body and function. The key is to carefully
assign components of Community Character to a body that can then "own" these community enhancement issues and provide a review and recommendation function for the City Council when opportunities to implement Community Character components arise.

Assuming the creation of a Character Committee, the plan recommends the following implementation steps.

Guidelines and Review. Excelsior Springs should undertake a review and revision of its development ordinances, including its zoning and subdivision ordinances. However, full implementation of the Community Character element requires new guidelines that will affect the design of residential and commercial development. These features will not necessarily add cost to development. They will direct the design of projects to promote greater connectedness and continuity with the character of the city. The Character Committee is one of the stakeholder groups that should be involved in a participatory process to complete ordinance modifications.

Expansion of Normal Practice. This simply includes expansion of efforts by public works to include design enhancements in public projects. An existing example of this is the design of the Public Works offices. Expansion of this type of design aesthetic is most applicable to street and transportation improvements, but also affects other public works projects. It is particularly important that this element of the comprehensive plan should be prepared under the aegis of the Engineering and Parks Departments.

Retrofits. These are in some ways particular challenges, because they involve the redesign of private properties. The Excelsior Springs Character Committee, representing both the private and public sector, can be an extremely useful catalyst in helping to improve the functional and aesthetic design of these projects. The city should also be prepared to offer assistance in these projects, sometimes creating capital requirements.

Capital Projects. The Community Character element recommends a series of capital projects that are both large and small. Some require city funding, some public/private partnerships, and others can use external sources such as Transportation Enhancement funds. Setting priorities should be a community-based process; as a result, this plan does not recommend a top ten projects list. Instead, the Character Committee, representing a variety of public and private interests, should review this element in detail and develop a system for assessing priorities. This should produce an Excelsior Springs Character Capital Plan that considers a variety of funding sources, and becomes part of the city's Capital Improvement Program.
The earlier chapters, with their narratives and maps, are the core of the Excelsior Springs Plan. This chapter addresses the scheduling of plan implementation by both public agencies and private decision makers.
KEY AREAS INCLUDE:

**Development Policies and Actions.** This section summarizes the policies and actions proposed in the Excelsior Springs plan, and presents projected time frames for the implementation of these recommendations.

**Annexation Policy.** This section outlines an annexation policy based on developing land within the existing city limits and annexing land for future growth.

**Plan Maintenance.** This section outlines a process for maintaining the plan and evaluating progress in meeting the plan’s goals.

**DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

The following tables in this chapter present a concise summary of the recommendations of the Excelsior Springs Plan. These recommendations include various types of efforts:

**Policies,** which indicate continuing efforts over a long period to implement the plan. In some cases, policies include specific regulatory or administrative actions.

**Action Items,** which include specific efforts or accomplishments by the community.

**Capital Investments,** which include public capital projects that will implement features of the Plan.

Each recommendation is associated with specific goals and a general timeframe for implementation.

- On-going implementation
- Short-term indicates implementation within five years
- Medium-term within five to ten years
- Long-term within ten to twenty years

**Table 8.1: Implementation Chart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Districts: Historic Crescent</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>On-Going</th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Long</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify and implement strategic reuse projects in the Downtown core, with a focus on highly visible buildings that adapt to market-based reuse programs.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement major residential renewal or redevelopment projects on traditional neighborhood streets adjacent to Downtown.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve the function, safety, and appearance of the transportation system. Make gateways to the district clear and safe for motorists and pedestrians crossing those arterials.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully utilize important public buildings. Implement a comprehensive reuse program for the Hall of Waters that improves city government accommodations, increases public use and access to common space, and envisions development of the lower (pool) level of the buildings as an extension of the Fishing River greenway.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish development design guidelines consistent with the scale and proportion of the core district.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Table 8.1: Implementation Chart</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Type</strong></td>
<td><strong>On-Going</strong></td>
<td><strong>Short</strong></td>
<td><strong>Medium</strong></td>
<td><strong>Long</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage dense or small-scale developments consistent with the district's scale.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement a corridor improvement program along the Isley Boulevard corridor, including street greening, residential rehabilitation, and commercial area enhancement.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase pedestrian and bicycle access to the Fishing River greenway from Downtown streets.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relocate land uses and human services that are poorly accommodated by their current downtown locations to more appropriate sites.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Policy Districts: Uplands Neighborhoods**

| **Action** | **Type** |
|----------------------------------|
| Implement residential rehabilitation programs to upgrade existing housing stock. | Action | X |
| Encourage desirable new investment through infrastructure and financing tools in uplands areas. Focus attention on high-image sites, such as the former high school building. | Capital | X |
| Demolish dilapidated structures. | Capital | X |
| Through a redevelopment agency or community development corporation, assemble and redevelop buildable sites with new housing. | Action | X |
| Rehabilitate infrastructure, including local streets and stepped walks, to leverage private market reinvestment in the neighborhoods. | Capital | X |
| Develop a unified pedestrian system, including improved paths and sidewalks, to connect uplands neighborhoods with the core district and other community facilities. | Capital | X |

**Policy Districts: Midtown Residential**

| **Action** | **Type** |
|----------------------------------|
| Reinforce residential character through code and zoning enforcement and infill residential development on buildable lots. | Policy | X |
| Implement a residential rehabilitation programs on a spot basis. | Policy | X |
| Improve sidewalks and pedestrian/bicycle connections to community facilities and traditional core. Remove substantial barriers to pedestrian access. | Capital | X |
| Where necessary, rehabilitate infrastructure, including local streets. | Capital | X |

**Policy Districts: Corridors**

| **Action** | **Type** |
|----------------------------------|
| Strengthen primary retail and commercial node along the Kearney Road/Jesse James corridor between the railroad and the 69/10 junction by developing infill sites, encouraging redevelopment of underutilized commercial centers, and improving local circulation. | Policy | X |
| Conceive of the Kearney Road/Jesse James and Highway 69 node as a unified district, with improved lighting and landscaping, cooperative marketing, accommodations for pedestrian and bicycle transportation, Provide internal connections that link existing commercial and multifamily development within the central node. | Capital | X |
| Direct low-impact industrial uses to undeveloped portions of the rail corridor. | Policy | X |
| Encourage mixed use development on key opportunity sites, most notably the Tracy Avenue (both sides) to Rose Lane parcel between Jesse James and US 69. | Policy | Capital | X |
| Provide safe and pleasant pedestrian and bicycle connections between Kearney Road and major community uses such as the library, high school, and hospital. | Policy | Capital | X |
| Provide improved local traffic access and cross-connections throughout the entire corridor. | Policy | X |
| Limit nuisances and negative effects to surrounding property through proper site design and landscape buffers. | Policy | X |
### Table 8.1: Implementation Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>On-Going</th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Long</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protect existing residential neighborhoods within or adjacent to the corridors through management of external effects and improved building and site design guidelines.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement an overall corridor enhancement plan.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Policy Districts: Excelsior Commons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>On-Going</th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Long</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parcel between Highway 69 and Jesse James south of Wornall Road is a priority civic development site, and the leading recommended site for a new community center.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate this district with nearby commercial and residential areas through improved pedestrian/bicycle pathway connections.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilize grades and views, and build with the nature of the land. Provide site features that provide amenities and manage stormwater effectively.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage surrounding development that complements a civic and public facility core.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit any negative effects on surrounding residential areas by requiring landscaping and buffering.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calm arterial traffic and provide protected pedestrian connections to unify community features on both sides of Wornall and Highway 69.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Policy Districts: Residential Growth Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>On-Going</th>
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<th>Medium</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Define three primary growth areas: a southern area, generally south of Coronado between the hills and Mc Cleary Road; a central area using infill sites between Highway 69 and North McCleary south of Tracy Avenue; and a north area between Tracey and NE 150th Street.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require developments to have a mixture of residential styles and densities that accommodate a wide range of residents.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include a neighborhood park/commons serving each growth area, with locations based on drainageways and expanding sites to incorporate a menu of neighborhood park facilities.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporate these neighborhood greenways into the city-wide trail and greenway system.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include a neighborhood park/commons serving each growth area, with locations based on drainageways and expanding sites to incorporate a menu of neighborhood park facilities.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide an interconnected street system between neighborhoods and accommodate all modes of transportation.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designate a greenway and trail system between newer and older parts of the city.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop Corum Road/Crown Hill Road as a parkway between emerging residential developments. Develop to complete street standards, accommodating motor vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle transportation.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Policy Districts: Enterprise Centers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>On-Going</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary industrial locations include completion of the Johnson Industrial Park; the industrial district north of Plummers Road between the railroad and US 69; and the McCleary Road corridor between Highway 69 and the railroad.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex and capitalize on regional industrial/commercial mixed use opportunity adjacent to Clay County Regional Airport.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market locations on major assets -- resources, quality of life, physical environment, regional airport facilities, Highway 69, access to Interstate 35, and railroad service.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage a mixture of industrial, light industrial and business park uses.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include adequate buffering and landscaping in all new development, offering an appealing image of the city.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Table 8.1: Implementation Chart</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>On-Going</td>
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<td>Medium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development Centers: Greenbelt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify the Excelsior Greenbelt as a signature feature for the community and a unique urban nature preserve.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain as undisturbed open spaces with a well-defined nature/walking trail network, composed of spines and loops.</td>
<td>Policy Action</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure public access on trails and pathways through easements and charitable donations rather than outright property purchases to the greatest degree possible.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with current property owners and public agencies to develop a use program for Lake Maurer, possibly combining continued nonprofit use, expanded public access, and some private development, and incorporating elements of the lake area’s historic recreational and amusement role. Connect Lake Maurer into the Excelsior Greenbelt.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use nature preserves to connect residential clusters and the historic core.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide clear wayfinding graphics and trail markets.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Locate trails to balance seclusion with security, providing periodic visibility from adjacent roads.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hearts of Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish two civic focuses that are the territory of all Excelsior Springs citizens and form the centers of community life: the traditional Downtown core and the “civic node” at Wornall and Highway 69, anchored by a new community recreation center.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design of the recreation center with the landform. The site, sloping down from north to south, lends itself to a walk-out concept, with upper level primary access from Wornall Road.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reconstruction of the Wornall Road underpass.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of pathways connecting the site to both new and established parts of town. The site is served by the existing Highway 69 path between the hospital and high school.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redesign of the Highway 69 and Wornall intersection for improved pedestrian/bicycle and local vehicular crossings of the highway.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residential Growth Centers</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>New “greenfield” residential growth in Excelsior Springs should be focused in three westside growth areas, designed around community space and connected to the rest of the city and each other by streets and greenways.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common attributes of these residential growth centers include:</td>
<td>Policy Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>- A mixture of housing types and lot sizes.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Organization around continuous street patterns, including a “community street” where possible that connects residential areas with a park or important community facility. Community streets should be multi-modal complete streets, including sidewalks and bike lanes or other bicycle accommodation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- New neighborhood parks and greenways, designed as central open spaces that become neighborhood focuses.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Location of higher-density residential development along community streets, parks and greenways, or at transitions to higher intensity land uses and services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Opportunity Sites</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excelsior Springs should capitalize on significant development opportunities that have special potential because of strategic location or unified public ownership.</td>
<td>Policy Action</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Connectivity and Transportation</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 8.1: Implementation Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>On-Going</th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Long</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As Excelsior Springs grows, it should maintain a connected street network, providing alternative routes for moving around the city.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension of Crown Hill Road north to Brunke Road as a parkway with complete street characteristics.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of Wornall Road, focusing on reconstruction of the DM&amp;E underpass and the US 69 intersection.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of Kearney Road (Highway 10), including development of a sidepath and an improved road section.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection of Jesse James Road and Brunke Road on the north side of the hospital campus, coordinated with the hospital's development plans.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realignment and improvement of the Saratoga Street entrance to Downtown.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redesign of the Elms Boulevard/Saint Louis Avenue/Thompson Avenue intersection.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probable reconstruction of the Isley Boulevard bridge over the Fishing River.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of collector street links identified in the plan.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Urban Corridors**

Excelsior Springs should maintain the design quality of its major community corridors allowing them to serve as attractive gateways into the town and supporting the business and community environment. Implementing land use regulations along the urban corridors that encourage mixed uses, generally including residential, office, civic, and consumer commercial uses. Adopting land development standards that limit the amount of parking directly visible from the corridors, and encourage a stronger visual relationship between the road and buildings. Maintaining a quality public environment, with attractive sidewalks, landscaping, street graphics, and lighting as appropriate. Completing an enhancement program along Isley Boulevard to upgrade the street’s appearance with new curbs, sidewalks, and street trees. Improve entrances to key community districts and destinations. Improve the clarity and readability of directional graphics.

A Linked Greenway and Trail System

Excelsior Springs’s neighborhoods, activity centers, civic districts, and major open spaces should be linked by a comprehensive and continuous greenway and trail system that serves both transportation and recreation purposes. Construct an East-West Pathway, linking the traditional Downtown with the Highway 10 corridor and West Jesse James Road mixed use district. Construct north-south Jesse James Trail, extending the existing Highway 69 south through Excelsior Commons, over Highway 10 and an intersection with the east-west pathway, and on to the south growth center and Lake Maurer. Construct Corum/Crown Hill Parkway, a north-south complete street between Saint Louis Avenue and Brunke Road. Construct a Lake Maurer Trail, a sidepath from the Elms District along Kansas City Avenue and Lake Maurer Road to Saint Louis Avenue and the south growth center. Construct local trails within greenways of the residential growth areas. Establish the Excelsior Greenbelt Trail system of low-impact pedestrian ways through the wooded hills of the city.
### Table 8.1: Implementation Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>On-Going</th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Long</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Park System Expansion</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>All areas of the community should be served by a neighborhood park, establishing adequate service to all neighborhoods.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of a new neighborhood park in the southwest growth area.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of a new neighborhood park in the northwest growth area.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of neighborhood park and sports complex in the area of Kearney Road and Lodwich Lane.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development, implementation, and funding of a systematic park site improvement plan.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Greenways and Trails</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilize the city’s greenways including the Fishing River and forested areas surrounding the city to develop a trail system that links the eastern and western portions of the city.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop an on– and off-street trail system that connects the city’s existing trails and community destinations.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Park Site Improvements</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Valley Park</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Connect the boardwalk with the Siloam Mountain sidewalk.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Replace shelters for consistency throughout the park system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Continue routine maintenance.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Isley Park Woods</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Continue to implement state regulations for a nature preserve.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Evaluate the need to map trails that have been cut through the woods for visitors to the area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fishing River Linear Park</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Work with the Army Corp of Engineers to identify alternatives for a new foot bridge across the Fishing River.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Connect the trail to the downtown across Marietta Street.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Reconstruct the gazebo to be as historically accurate as possible.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Continue routine maintenance.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyside Park</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ensure proper sidewalk connections to the park.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Continue routine maintenance.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siloam Mountain Park</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Connect the sidewalk path with the East Valley boardwalk to create a connected loop.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Evaluate the need for an additional play structure at the only shelter that does not have one.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ensure sidewalk access to the park, connected to the parks internal sidewalks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Continue routine maintenance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lincoln Park</td>
<td>Capital</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Improve sidewalk access to the park.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Continue routine maintenance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kibler Park</td>
<td>Capital</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Improve sidewalk access to the park.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Continue routine maintenance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regent Park</td>
<td>Capital</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pave existing parking lot.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Improve sidewalk access to the park.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Continue routine maintenance.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Table 8.1: Implementation Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>On-Going</th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Long</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Raper Park</strong></td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Evaluate ways to improve the safety of the park entrance on Orrick Road.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Update restrooms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Replace field lights.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Improve sidewalk access to the park.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Continue routine maintenance.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Powell Lake (unofficially named park at Wornall and Lynn Roads)</strong></td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Complete implementation of the park master plan.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ensure sidewalk access to the park.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ensure construction of trail linkages between the park and residential developments in the area.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jim Piburn Baseball Park</strong></td>
<td>Capital</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Replace field lighting.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Determine the long term maintenance and improvement needs of the bleachers.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Continue routine maintenance.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Paul Craig Park</strong></td>
<td>Capital</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Complete construction of the basketball court.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Construct a sidewalk that links the baseball field, playground equipment, and Fishing River trail.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Continue routine maintenance.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kent &amp; Outlook Park</strong></td>
<td>Capital</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Following closer of the reservoir, acquire the site to add space to the existing park.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Continue routine maintenance.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Chapter Five: Public Facilities

#### Public Facility Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>On-Going</th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Long</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction of a new community center.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete evaluation of the Hall of Waters to determine priority projects and ensure preservation of the historic building.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct an additional fire station.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete planned replacement of the Airport fueling station and plan for replacement of ramps and parking areas.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Infrastructure Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>On-Going</th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Long</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish a replacement program for the city’s oldest water and sewer lines. These programs should provide a coordinated effort to ensure efficiency and cost savings for the city.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete implementation of the Pilot program at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and complete a follow-up evaluation to determine additional permitting needs and growth opportunities.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Construct new water storage facility to replace three of the city’s oldest storage tanks.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Transportation Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>On-Going</th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Long</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved access to the downtown at the districts two major intersections, St. Louis Avenue and Elms Boulevard, and Isley Boulevard and Saratoga Street.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Improved pedestrian access around the city including a crossing of the railroad to connect the eastern and western portions of the city and improved access along Kearney Road.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvements to Isley Boulevard including new curb and gutter, sidewalks, and landscaping.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue to monitor the Isley Boulevard bridge over the Fishing River.</td>
<td>Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>Table 8.1: Implementation Chart</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>On-Going</td>
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<td>Medium</td>
<td>Long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Six: Housing and Neighborhoods</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Neighborhood Conservation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Excelsior Springs should implement neighborhood conservation programs, including an aggressive residential rehabilitation program.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Variety of Housing Types</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Excelsior Springs’ new residential development should encourage a variety of housing types.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land development regulations should not impeded the development of housing variety in the community.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central District</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excelsior Springs’ central district should offer innovative, amenity-rich housing opportunities.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Senior Housing</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Excelsior Springs should encourage construction of independent living residential developments for seniors.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Seven: Downtown Excelsior Springs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Downtown Living</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excelsior Springs should capitalize on existing downtown housing and encourage new market rate housing opportunities within and around the district. This will include the necessary infrastructure improvements to support redevelopment.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entering Downtown</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The city should enhance the Elms Boulevard and Saratoga Street entrances into downtown to improve safety, welcome visitors, and guide them easily into the district.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trails and Passageways</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excelsior Springs should improve trail access in and around the downtown and utilize hidden assets to create a unique and high quality experience.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complete Access</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>In addition to trails, downtown’s overall transportation network should accommodate all modes of transportation comfortably, pleasantly, and safely.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A Royal Image</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Royal Hotel should be restored in a way that draws visitors and residents and stabilizes the existing building and surrounding area.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Stable and Hitch Lot</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The redevelopment of the historic Hitch Lot area should provide additional green space in the downtown and create a regional draw for artists.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENTERPRISE FUND</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown should complement its façade rehabilitation financing program with incentives for desirable start-up businesses.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8.1: Implementation Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>On-Going</th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Long</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AN URBAN HISTORIC PARK</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown should use its unique history as a special attraction that supports overall business development goals.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ELMS REINVESTMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining the Elms as a quality hotel and conference center is indispensable to downtown development.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Eight: Community Character</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green Character: Greenway Corridors</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct trail corridors in western Excelsior Springs with supporting facilities and infrastructure such as signage, benches and other site furnishing, and trail heads.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In areas where paths have already been created, routes should be formalized with signage and maintenance.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquire easements for trail corridors in the city's forested areas and along creek corridors.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage public access to all water resources and connect adjacent developments to the trail and greenway system.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibit developments that increase the extent of the 100-year floodplain or cause damage to or erosion of improvements along the drainage system.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green Character: A Complete Trail and Pathway System</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete a trail system around the city that connects Excelsior Springs' major open spaces and community features.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish standards for roadside pathway construction, and incorporate pathways into major street projects</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct a Kearney Road pathway that links eastern and western portions of the city.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide landscaping improvements and trail amenities at strategic points along the city's pathways and multi-use trails.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of pathways to the community center and any other major private or public development.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green Character: Conservation of Steep Slopes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage the use of conservation design techniques in redeveloping the hills north of downtown.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit development of the forested hills, specifically those with grades of 15% or greater should remain undisturbed.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green Character: Green Streets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporate landscaping into all new major street construction projects.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscaping of local streets should reinforce the quality of residential areas.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement a neighborhood street greening program, providing assistance to neighborhoods seeking to implement upgraded public landscaping.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Landscaping on Public and Private Property</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review and upgrade of the city's existing landscape ordinance.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review and upgrade city owned property for compliance with upgraded landscaping ordinance.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 8.1: Implementation Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>On-Going</th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Long</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish a pilot landscape incentive program for existing properties.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage the use of innovative landscape materials and techniques that reduce maintenance costs and water consumption while maintaining a quality visual landscape. Areas for potential new or improved standards include parking lot landscaping and stormwater management, efficient irrigation techniques, and innovative landscape design.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require detailed review, inclusion of green street amenities, and pedestrian and bicycle access along emerging corridors like Wornall and McCleary roads.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation Character: Functional &amp; Attractive City Corridors</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and implement comprehensive corridor development plans for Isley Boulevard, St. Louis Avenue, and Kearney Road.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require detailed review, inclusion of green street amenities, and pedestrian and bicycle access along emerging corridors like Wornall and McCleary roads.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation Character: Streetscape Elements</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and install a community wayfinding system along corridors that direct visitors to destinations in a clear and attractive way.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with MDOT to install wayfinding along Highway 69 that is acceptable to the DOT and attractive, economical, and clear to users.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish design and material standards for street lights, signage, street furniture, and other features along major corridors.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of graphic themes for commercial corridors that are individual but with a unified family resemblance.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation Character: Gateways</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrance features similar to the existing Kearney Road sign should be done at the appropriate scale along Isley Boulevard, Highway 92, and the northern extend to Highway 69.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvements to Isley Boulevard should be placed on the city’s one to five year capital improvement program.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation Character: Building Design and Scale Along Corridors</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage site designs that place commercial buildings closer to the street and locate parking lots to the side or rear of principal buildings. However, building setbacks should comfortably accommodate future widening when street expansion is reasonably expected.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require as part of site plan review a direct, safe route from public sidewalks or pathways to the main entrances of commercial buildings.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developments should manage the number of curb cuts along major corridors by providing common access points, circulator roads, interconnected parking lots, and rearage roads to the greatest degree possible.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Place Character: Define Areas of Civic Importance</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Define areas as Areas of Civic Importance that receive special design review and attention as they grow and change.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish specific design objectives for the private and public built environment within defined Areas of Civic Importance.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that sign regulations accommodate the need for businesses to identify premises and to advertise goods and services while encouraging excellent design of street graphics.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide good access for both motorized and non-motorized methods of transportation in Areas of Civic Importance.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8.1: Implementation Chart

<table>
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<th>Short</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Long</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Projects in Areas of Civic Importance should be related and connected to each other, with these areas emerging as more unified districts.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish mechanisms within development regulations to review the nature of development within these areas for their consistency with the design objectives for the area.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place Character: A Distinctive Heart of the City</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand the street improvement work that has been done along Thompson and Broadway to other streets in the district.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve the visibility of the downtown from Isley Boulevard (as described in Chapter 7).</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installation of signage that directs visitors from Highway 69 into downtown.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete development of historic design standards and utilize them with both rehabilitation and infill projects.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place Character: Public Art</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The City should incorporate public art in major public projects, including large transportation projects.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public art should include work by significant local and regional artists, but also should incorporate the work of others, such as students, in appropriate places in enhancement projects.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public art should include both permanent installations and works on exhibit temporarily on either a loan or consignment basis.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excelsior Springs should utilize a Public Art Commission to help organize and manage the public art program.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place Character: Historic Preservation and Conservation</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider instituting and enforcing a Property Maintenance Code, and work with private sector on programs that finance improvements necessary to fund the rehabilitation of worthy structures.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excelsior Springs should complete development of the Historic Design Guidelines and use them in conjunction with a conservation and preservation ordinance that discourages the demolition of historically or architecturally important buildings, provides guidelines for the modifications of these buildings, and provides flexibility to encourage the rehabilitation and reuse of these structures.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementing Character</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish an Excelsior Springs Character Committee to review projects and build partnerships that improve the city's design quality. A variety of interests should be included in the committee.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementing Character: Guidelines and Review</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake a major revision of development ordinances, including zoning and subdivision ordinances, in an effort to make them clearer and easier to use.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make appropriate changes to ordinances to conform to the land use concepts in this plan.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create additional guidelines that affect the design of residential and commercial development. This will be required for full implementation of the Community Character element of this plan.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include the Character Committee as a stakeholder group to complete ordinance modifications.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand of efforts by public works to include design enhancements in public projects.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the function and appearance of existing development. The Character Committee should take a lead role in improving the functional aesthetic design of existing projects.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide financial assistance for enhancements to existing projects. Capital requirements may need to be created.</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8.1: Implementation Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital Projects</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>On-Going</th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Long</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set project priorities, for projects included in Chapter 8, based upon a community input process.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Chapter 8 in detail and develop a system for assessing project priorities. This should be conducted by the Character Committee. The result should be an Excelsior Springs Character Capital Plan, ultimately becoming a part of the Capital Improvement Program.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Character Committee should establish priorities and application guidelines, and be the initial review agency to evaluate neighborhood improvement projects.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Plan Maintenance**

Because the scope of the Excelsior Springs Comprehensive Plan is both ambitious and long-range, its recommendations may appear daunting. Thus, the city should implement an ongoing planning process that uses the plan to develop year-by-year improvement programs. In addition, this process should evaluate the plan on an annual basis in consideration of the development events of that particular year.

A key feature of this process is an annual action and capital improvement program. In such a program, the Planning Commission and City Council use the plan to define annual strategic work programs of policies, actions, and capital investments. This program should be coordinated with Excelsior Springs's existing capital improvement planning and budgeting process, even though many of the plan's recommendations are not capital items. This annual process should be completed before the beginning of each budget year and should include:

- A specific work program for the upcoming year. This program should be specific and related to the city's financial resources. The work program will establish the specific Plan recommendations that the city will accomplish during that year.
- A three-year strategic program. This component provides for a multi-year perspective, informing the preparation of the annual work program. It provides a middle-term implementation plan for the city.
- A six-year capital investment program. This is merged into Excelsior Springs's current capital improvement program.

In addition, this process should include an annual evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan. This evaluation should occur at the end of each calendar year and include a written report that:

- Summarizes key land use developments and decisions during that year and relates them to the plan.
- Reviews actions taken by the city during that year to implement plan recommendations.
- Defines any changes that should be made in the plan.
In order to implement many of the objectives described in the plan, the city will need to consider outside funding sources. The following table presents possible funding sources available to the City of Excelsior Springs. This should not be viewed as a complete list, but rather one that should be reviewed and modified each fiscal year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOURCE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Improvement District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Facilities Grant Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Bond Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Preservation Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DREAM Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estate Taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Development Account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Tax Credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Sale Proceeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOURCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Option Economic Development Sales Tax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri Downtown Economic Stimulus Act (MODESA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Assistance Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Preservation Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private and Foundation Philanthropy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOURCE</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Trails Program (RTP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Abatement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Increment Financing (TIF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Increment Financing (TIF)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Map 3.1
Existing Land Use
Excelsior Springs, MO

- Single-Family Residential
- Large Lot Residential
- Rural Residential
- 2-4 Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Mobile Home
- The Elms District
- Downtown Commercial District
- Office/Financial Services
- Restaurant/Entertainment
- Retail
- Auto Retail
- Service
- Light Industrial
- General Industrial
- Civic
- Schools
- Parks & Rec
- Agriculture/Open Space
- Public Facility
- Parking
- Vacant
- Vacant Building
- Road
- Railroad
Map 3.3
Development Concept
Excelsior Springs, MO

- Low Density Residential (LDR)
- Medium Density Residential (MDR)
- High Density Residential (HDR)
- Elms District
- Neighborhood Commercial (NC)
- Urban Redevelopment (UR)
- Mixed Use (MU)
- Commercial (COM)
- Downtown (DT)
- Industrial (IND)
- School
- Civic
- Greenways (GWY)
- Parks
- Arterial Streets
- Collector Streets
- Existing Streets
- Proposed Streets
- Existing Trails
- Proposed Trails
- Nature Trails
- Railroad
Map 4.2
Park Service Radius

- Public Park
- 1/4 Mile Service Radius
- 1/2 Mile Service Radius

- Road
- Railroad