

2012 Strategic Plan

City of Bella Vista



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Acknowledgements

The preparation of the Strategic Plan could not have happened without the tremendous efforts of the City of Bella Vista's Strategic Plan Task Force. The following citizens volunteered and contributed time, energy, insight and direction for the preparation of the City's Strategic Plan. The Task Force members were:

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Also, special thanks is given to the members of the Bella Vista City Council and the Bella Vista City Staff. Their support of the strategic planning efforts were appreciated.

City Council Members

Mayor, Frank Anderson
Mr. Earl Berdine – Council representative on Strategic Plan Task Force
Mr. Doug Farner
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The most important aspect of preparing the Strategic Plan was the involvement of the CITIZENS of Bella Vista. Their attendance and input at the two rounds of public involvement meetings was invaluable and the citizens provided the direction for the preparation of the Strategic Plan. The community involvement outreach also included the five 4th Grade classrooms at Cooper Elementary School – thanks to Mr. Brew's, Mrs. Fogarte's, Ms. Petree's, Ms. Ray's and Mr. Stinespring's students. Thank-you, Citizens of Bella Vista.

We also thank the following facilities for hosting the community involvement meetings: Riordan Hall, Highland's Crossing, Metfield Clubhouse, and St. Theodore's Episcopal Church.



The most important aspect of preparing the Strategic Plan was the involvement of the CITIZENS of Bella Vista.

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The City of Bella Vista - Uniquely Natural

Plan Objective

The City of Bella Vista faces multiple and complex challenges, chief among them the parallel trends of rising population and service demands coupled with limited, or even reduced, financial resources. As Bella Vista continues to grow and face its challenges, the City must chart a course and create a vision for its future that will ensure its financial viability as well as protect the quality of life that the citizens of Bella Vista enjoy.

This Strategic Plan is designed to chart that course, provide direction and focus, and serve as a means to assess and measure the City's operational performance. As Bella Vista advances, the plan will be continually assessed and adjusted to address the City's challenges and the needs of the citizens as well as aligning with economic reality.

Planning Process

The City of Bella Vista initiated the development of its Strategic Plan in the summer of 2011 to identify long-term direction, short-term goals, and identify actions necessary to move in the right direction and achieve its goals. In order to accomplish this, the City chose a highly participatory process that included six (6) community involvement meetings, monthly workshops with the Strategic Plan Task Force, and various other community outreaches, including visiting with students at Cooper Elementary School to get their perspective on Bella Vista. With the direct input from the community, the strategic planning process:

- Identified Bella Vista's "Big Picture";
- Defined the City's Vision Statement, Mission Statements and Value Statements;
- Identified Bella Vista's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats, and;
- Defined comprehensive implementation actions.

Defining the Big Picture

In order for the Strategic Plan to be considered a success, defining the "Big Picture" needed to be the responsibility of the residents of Bella Vista. Therefore, the first major task of the strategic planning process was to conduct a round of community involvement meetings. In July, 2011, three meetings were held in the following locations: 1) St. Theodore's Episcopal Church, with 53 in attendance; 2) Highland's Crossing, with 64 in attendance; and 3) Riordan Hall, with 90 in attendance. The "Big Picture" was defined by having the attendees answer the following question:

"In ten years, Bella Vista will be _____?"

This simple question sparked a lot of comments, debate and ideas. Participation at each meeting was very high and the results of the three meetings were very similar.

Critical Planning Criteria

As a result of the strategic planning process, the identification of the following six different, yet interconnected, critical planning criteria were defined by the citizens of Bella Vista along with the members of the Strategic Plan Task Force. These six planning criteria are both vision-based and issues-based, thus the City's Strategic Plan is unique, just like the City itself. Unique in the fact that the City of Bella Vista's Strategic Plan is a hybrid of the two most common models of strategic plans – vision-based and issues-based.



"In ten years, Bella Vista will be _____?"



The major issue was the protection of the City of Bella Vista's quality of life by protecting its natural setting, its amenities and its "village" lifestyle.

<p>Governance</p>	<p>This item was identified by the community as both a vision-based criteria and an issues-based criteria. The vision approach for governance described Bella Vista as a model for newly formed municipalities with open communication between the city leadership and the residents. The issues approach to governance questioned the ability of the City and POA to maintain the cooperative spirit that currently exists.</p>
<p>Economic Development</p>	<p>Economic development was seen as an essential, critical element for Bella Vista's success as a City and as a "sense of place." Therefore this item is likewise a vision-based and issues-based criteria. From the vision perspective, economic development is the "tool" to establish and define Bella Vista's "look" as well as the vehicle to drive the redevelopment of existing land uses. From the issues perspective, economic development was defined as a program to promote the City of Bella Vista as a very desirable place to live and work.</p>
<p>Growth Management</p>	<p>Growth management was an issues-based criteria and focused on how the City not only wanted to grow, but how and with what, would it manage that growth.</p>
<p>Quality of Life</p>	<p>Quality of life was another issues-based criteria because it is a reality for the resident's of the City of Bella Vista. The major issue was the protection of the City of Bella Vista's quality of life by protecting its natural setting, its amenities, and its "village"</p>
<p>Public Finance</p>	<p>The residents made it clear during the strategic planning process that they want an understandable definition of the fiscal responsibilities of the City and the POA.</p>
<p>Public Services</p>	<p>Public services basically mirrors the above overview of Public Finance, but with an emphasis on who provides what?</p>

Addressing each of these items will help shape what the City of Bella Vista will be in ten years.

Vision Statement

The City of Bella Vista will continue to be a unique and diverse community of active, involved residents who value the natural setting of wooded hillsides and lakes, the recreational amenities and respect the community's roots and rural, small town atmosphere. The City will continue to grow and prosper by providing quality public services, creating a stable tax base by encouraging quality commercial and residential development, promoting Bella Vista as a tourist destination, and promoting cooperation among the organizations in the community.



Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

Identifying Bella Vista's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & threats were a product of the first three community meetings and a task assigned to the members of the Strategic Plan Task Force. The Task Force members were each given a disposable camera and asked to take pictures of the City's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & threats.

<p>Strengths</p>	<p>Golf courses, Amenities, Community Events, the Lakes, the People, Nature, Rural Setting, City & POA cooperation, Fire & Police, Volunteers</p>	<p>Bella Vista was developed as a retirement destination, amenities rich community in a natural setting.</p>
<p>Weaknesses</p>	<p>Streets, Traffic, no City Center, no Design Guidelines, no "Gateways", lack of Medical, lack of Retail, lack of Motels/Hotels, Code Enforcement, lack of Developable land, membership constraints</p>	<p>Items that are potentially detrimental to Bella Vista's continued growth and success.</p>
<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>Golf Courses, Annexation, Undeveloped Land, Public Safety, Cooperation, New City Center, Community Recreation Center, Redevelopment of Existing Land Uses, Economic Development Plan</p>	<p>A number of opportunities are knocking at Bella Vista's door!</p>
<p>Threats</p>	<p>Golf Courses – what if they are not maintained as necessary? Cooperation between City and POA – what if it stops? Annexation – what if it is not pursued? Water System – should City consider</p>	<p>The threats facing Bella Vista give an indication or warning of probable trouble should these items be ignored.</p>



Executive Summary

It was made abundantly clear that the focus point for the City of Bella Vista's "Big Picture" is maintaining and enhancing the City's Quality of Life.

Action Plan

The difference between where the City is (current situation) and where the City wants to be (vision) is what the City must do (action). The purpose of the Action Plan is to translate the six critical planning criteria into implementation actions.

Governance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare brochure that describes City's responsibilities 2. Submit an article to the newspaper for each of the City's responsibilities 3. Identify potential public services to be considered in the future
Economic Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare Design Guidelines 2. Prepare Annexation Study 3. Prepare marketing/promotional material 4. Identify key locations for new Town Center(s) 5. Prepare a Community Recreation Center Feasibility Study 6. In cooperation with Cooper and POA, explore the feasibility of redeveloping amenities that might not be the highest and best use of the land 7. Prepare an Economic Development Plan and Program
Growth Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare Annexation Study 2. Prepare a Comprehensive Transportation Plan 3. Update Land Use Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regs 4. Prepare and submit to the newspaper an article that describes the demographic shifts that have occurred between the 2000 and 2010 Census
Quality of Life	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct a quality of life initiative to identify the resident's definition of quality of life and prepare quantitative measures to record progress
Public Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand economic base with preparation of Economic Development Plan and Program and the Sub-Area Plan(s) 2. Prepare 5-year Capital Improvements Program 3. Issue Capital Improvement Bonds to implement infrastructure improvements 4. Study and Implement, if approved by the City Council, Hotel and Restaurant Tax 5. If economic base expands to include Hotel and Restaurant Tax, the City can determine the feasibility of placing a Hotel and Restaurant Tax Bond on the ballot. This type of bond could be a partial funding source for the Community Recreation Center
Public Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine feasibility of new fire station in Highlands area 2. Determine feasibility of the City acquiring the water system(s) 3. Determine feasibility of the City being responsible for the library and animal shelter



Executive Summary

Summary

The City of Bella Vista's strategic planning process was very participatory and provided a clear picture of what the residents want Bella Vista to be in the next ten years. It was made abundantly clear that the focus point for Bella Vista's "Big Picture" is maintaining and enhancing the City's Quality of Life. The following diagram sums up the importance of the City's quality of life with the other critical planning criteria.



The residents want the City of Bella Vista to not only expand its economic base but to think big and promote the development of a new City Center that would house retail, offices, restaurants, community space and a Community Recreation Center. The economic development components would heavily rely on cooperation between the City, the POA, Cooper Communities, the school districts, and the region's major medical providers. The residents do not lack big picture thinking, and this was very evident during the community meetings. Additional items that the residents were in favor of included: annexation, redevelopment of existing land uses, and addressing the City's changing demographics to a "younger" City.

“What does the City of Bella Vista want to be when it grows up?”

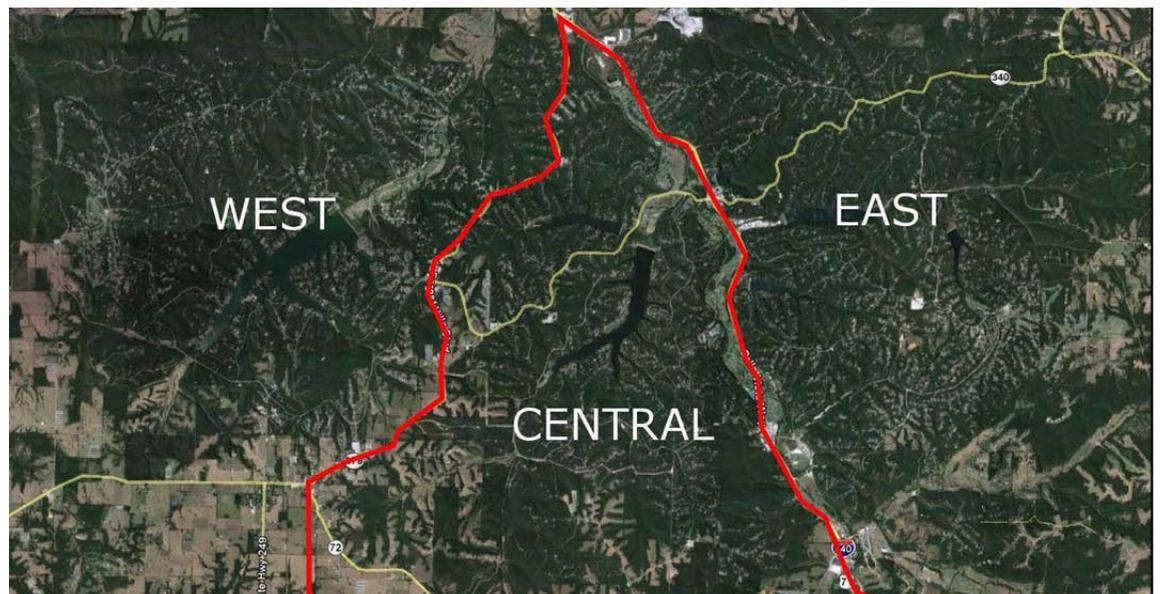


The first step, and probably the most important step, of the strategic planning process was defining the “Big Picture”. As the City stated in their Request for Proposal – “What does Bella Vista want to be when it grows up?”, or put another way, “In ten-years Bella Vista will be _____.”

Getting the community’s input regarding their perspective of what they want the City to be in five to ten years was the focus of the community meetings. Knowing where the residents want their community to go set the direction for the strategic planning process. By defining the big picture, the residents also defined the critical planning criteria that needed to be addressed by the Strategic Plan.

Community Involvement Meetings

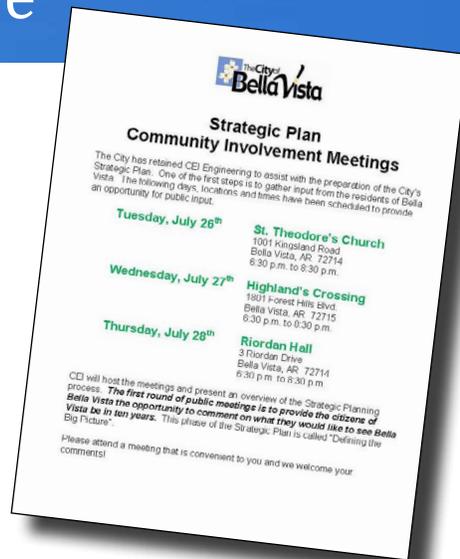
At the onset of the strategic planning process, community meetings were conducted. To increase public participation, the City was “subdivided” into three geographic areas: 1) west area; 2) central ; and 3) east area. Therefore, a community involvement meeting was conveniently located to the residents, regardless of where they lived in the City.



Defining the Big Picture

The locations for the three community meetings were:

1. EAST - St. Theodore's Episcopal Church
 - a. July 26, 2011
 - b. Attendance - 53
2. WEST - Highlands Crossing
 - a. July 27, 2011
 - b. Attendance - 64
3. CENTRAL - Riordan Hall
 - a. July 28, 2011
 - b. Attendance - 90



Each meeting lasted approximately two hours and the level of participation was very high. The audience was clearly informed at the beginning of each meeting that the Strategic Plan was for the City of Bella Vista and not the POA. This clarification helped minimize POA comments and allowed the audience to clearly voice their comments, ideas, frustrations and dreams for the City of Bella Vista. All three meetings were conducted in the same format – a brief overview (fifteen minutes) of the Strategic Plan was presented and then the following question was kept on the projection screen:

“In ten years, the City of Bella Vista will be _____?”

This question kicked-off the public input phase of the meeting. During the public input portion of the meetings, all of the comments were written down on flip charts and posted on the wall of the meeting room. At the conclusion of each meeting, all the flip charts were reviewed and all of the comments were categorized by similar headings. Based on the analysis of all the comments received, the residents defined the following critical planning criteria (not ranked in any specific order):

1. Governance
2. Economic Development
3. Growth Management
4. Quality of Life
5. Public Finance
6. Public Service

Another outcome of the information received at the community meetings included what the residents want the City to be known for. Each of the three community meetings revealed the same answers:

“In ten years the City of Bella Vista will be known for _____?”

1. its quality of life,
2. its outdoor amenities,
3. its natural setting,
4. being a planned, vibrant and green City,
5. being the City that doesn't look like a City, and
6. being a quality outdoor community.



Defining the Big Picture

Since they and the City were going to "grow up" at the same time, their ideas were important.

Additional "Big Picture" Input - Cooper Elementary School's 4th Graders

As part of the Strategic Plan's community involvement efforts, the five 4th Grade classes at Cooper Elementary School were asked for their input on October 6, 2011. Mr. Brew, Mrs. Fogarte, Ms. Petree, Ms. Ray, and Mr. Stinespring each allowed a 30-minute time period with their class and during that time an abundance of information was received. The kids were told that a Strategic Plan was a fancy term for what does Bella Vista want to be when it grows up. Since they and the City were going to "grow up" at the same time, their ideas were important. Each class was asked the same questions and their answers were almost identical from class to class:

1. What do you like about living in Bella Vista?

Summary of 4th-grader's answers:

Nature, trees, nice people, pools, parks, library, schools, views, lakes, fishing, neighborhoods, churches, not crowded, small city

2. What do you do to have fun?

Summary of 4th-grader's answers:

Hiking, biking, movies, video games, miniature golf, shopping, go-carting, sports, swimming (pools and lakes), playing outside, playing with friends

3. What fun things are missing in Bella Vista?

Summary of 4th-grader's answers:

Shopping, restaurants, splash park/water park, more athletic fields, a fun place for the family to all play together, hotels, farmers market, a place to go to (village center), beaches, skating (roller and ice), museums (children's, natural history)

4. If you could wish for one thing in Bella Vista, and it would come true, what would that be?

Summary of 4th-grader's answers:

More shopping, place for family to play together, more affordable, more police and fire stations, better roads, bigger library, a place closer to home for my mom and dad to work, a big indoor family play area, hospital, children's museum.



The comments that the kids have for Bella Vista parallel those comments of the "grown-ups" who attended the Community Involvement meetings. In their own words, they too, identified the critical issues as governance, public services, public finance, quality of life, growth management and economic development.

Critical Planning Criteria

Each of the critical planning criteria shared the following common discussion points at the community meetings.

1. Governance

- a. Cooperation between City/POA/Cooper
- b. Establish a Public/Quasi Public/Private Partnership
- c. Clearly define the roles of each member of the partnership
- d. "The POA is us"
- e. Dual leadership – how to deal with this?
- f. Collaboration with the School Districts
- g. Regional "partnership" with other municipalities/governmental agencies in NWA

2. Economic Development

- a. Annexation
 - i. Bypass
 - ii. Other locations
- b. Establish/define the "Bella Vista" look
- c. "Town Square" mixed use development
- d. Community Recreation Center
- e. Performing Arts Center
- f. Expansion of Commercial and Retail opportunities
- g. Design Guidelines
 - i. Architectural
 - ii. Land Use
- h. Adaptive reuse of existing land uses
 - i. Verify covenants – some land could revert back to Cooper if current land use is abandoned (i.e. some golf courses, other amenities)
- i. Changing demographics of the community
- j. Septic constraints
- k. Housing
- l. Marketing "Bella Vista"

3. Growth Management

- a. Annexation
 - i. Bypass
 - ii. Other locations
- b. Future Land Use Plan
- c. City's Zoning Ordinance
- d. City's Subdivision Regulations
- e. Environmental
 - i. Connecting open space/green space corridors
 - ii. Conservation areas
- f. Transportation
 - i. Bypass
 - ii. County Roads
 - iii. Regional Transit
 - iv. Pedestrian and Bicycle "friendly" transportation corridors

4. Quality of Life

- a. "Natural" amenities
- b. POA amenities
- c. Resort lifestyle
- d. Green space
- e. Village concept

5. Public Finance

- a. Clearly define the responsibilities of the City and POA
- b. Funding Sources
- c. Capital Improvement Plan
- d. Capital Improvement Bonds
- e. Expansion of Economic Base

6. Public Services

- a. Clearly define the responsibilities of the City and POA
 - i. City provides: _____
 - ii. POA provides: _____
- b. Utilities
 - i. Water
 - ii. Sanitary Sewer
 - iii. Capacity Analysis
- c. Roads
- d. Public Safety
 - i. Police
 - ii. Fire
 - iii. Emergency Medical Services
- e. Library
- f. Animal Shelter



Defining the City
of Bella Vista's
Vision Statement
presents the image
of what Bella Vista's
"success" will look
like.

VISION STATEMENT

The City of Bella Vista will continue to be a unique and diverse community of active, involved residents who value the natural setting of wooded hillsides and lakes, the recreational amenities and respect the community's roots and rural, small town atmosphere. The City will continue to grow and prosper by providing quality public services, creating a stable tax base by encouraging quality commercial and residential development, promoting Bella Vista as a tourist destination, and promoting cooperation among the organizations in the community.

VALUE STATEMENTS

The values listed below are among the community's most important, as identified through the first round of community involvement meetings:

- **Residential Community**
 - o The City of Bella Vista is principally a single-family residential community
- **Quality Municipal Services**
 - o The City of Bella Vista residents need and expect safety, efficiency and continuously improving municipal services.
- **Livability is Paramount**
 - o The City of Bella Vista attracts residents by: 1) its natural setting; 2) its rural, small town atmosphere; and 3) its recreational opportunities. Life is good where we live.
- **Protect the Environment**
 - o The City of Bella Vista residents enjoy the natural setting of the City. When the leadership considers community decisions, a high priority needs to be given to the protection and enhancement of trees, open space, clean water and air, amenities, and protecting existing and future neighborhoods.



MISSION STATEMENTS

The City of Bella Vista demonstrates its commitment and support of its vision for the community, its natural resources, its commercial, residential, and environmental needs by:

- Providing opportunities for citizens of Bella Vista to participate in and support City Boards, Commissions, Organizations and their related activities and continued cooperation with the separately owned and operated water and sanitary sewer system.
- Continuing to improve a sound, stable infrastructure that meets the needs of citizens and businesses. Such infrastructure includes well-maintained streets, environmentally sensitive storm water management system, and continued cooperation with the separately owned and operated water and sanitary sewer systems.
- Working in collaboration with citizens, business, other governments, and community organizations/associations to plan for and respond to citizen needs, and provide timely, efficient and consumer friendly services.
- Continuing to grow our diverse population and be a place that children to retirees are proud to call home, in great part, because of our small-town values and citizen involvement.
- Promoting the City of Bella Vista as a desirable tourist destination offering a wide variety of recreational amenities, cultural offerings, lodging, dining, shopping and other attractions.
- Planning and implementing a balanced, but conservative and sustainable, annual budget that insures uninterrupted delivery of public safety and other quality municipal services to our citizens.
- Pursuing realistic annexation strategies.
- Seeking viable locations for commercial/retail economic development opportunities to expand our tax base and employment opportunities.
- Encouraging the development of a City of Bella Vista “town square” to create a unique and identifiable sense of place for the City.



Current Situation Analysis

"It is desirable that future growth and expansion of the City be in keeping with the original concept of the developer."

CURRENT SITUATION ANALYSIS

The purpose of analyzing the City of Bella Vista's current situation is to confirm, or better define, the critical planning criteria that need to be addressed by the Strategic Plan. Through the course of the community involvement meetings and the Task Force meetings, six (6) critical planning criteria have been identified.

The critical planning criteria are:

1. Governance
2. Economic Development
3. Growth Management
4. Quality of Life
5. Public Finance
6. Public Service

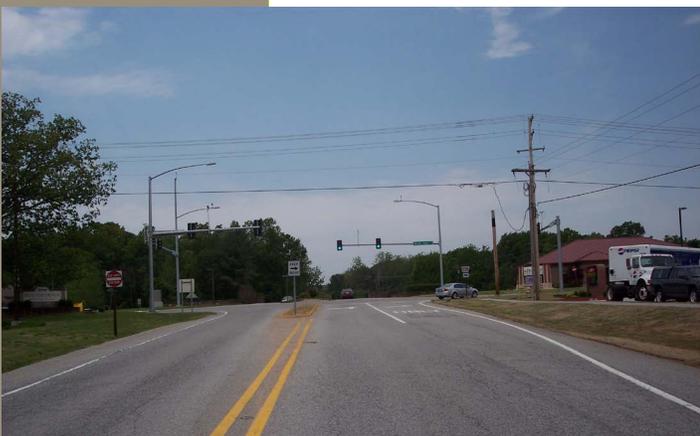
During this phase of the Strategic Planning process, the City's ordinances and regulations were reviewed. Each of these ordinances and regulations were "good" starting points from which the City could initiate its governance of the newly incorporated municipality. In addition to the adopted ordinances and regulations, the Report of the Bella Vista Transition Task Force was also reviewed. This document was prepared, by citizens, prior to incorporation and defined the transition strategy for various public services following incorporation. The Transition Plan also clearly defined immediate, mid-term and long-term actions the newly formed municipality would need to take.

Data Collection and Analysis

Report of the Bella Vista Transition Task Force – this document (Transition Plan) was the product of seven village residents (all of whom were POA members) plus three ex-officio, nonvoting members from the Concerned Citizens for Bella Vista and the Bella Vista Property Owners Association. "These two organizations recognized the need for some preliminary planning so that the formation of a new town and the transfer of certain municipal services would move forward as smoothly as possible should the voters in November 2006 decide to incorporate." (pg. 3).

The Transition Plan clearly documented the required functions of municipalities, according to Arkansas state law, as being:

1. Fire Protection (now provided by City)
2. Solid Waste Management (now provided by City)
3. Street Maintenance (now provided by City)

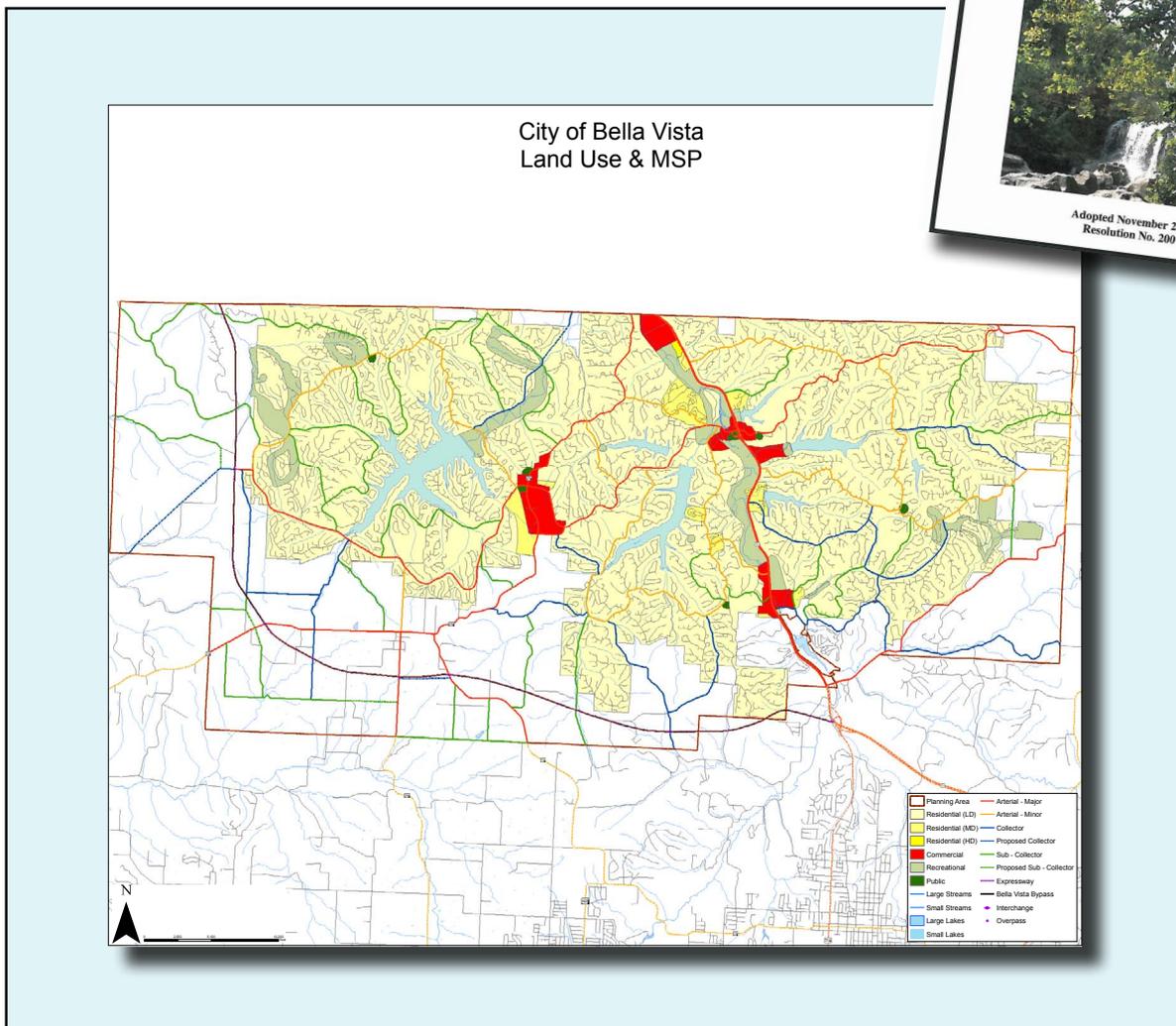
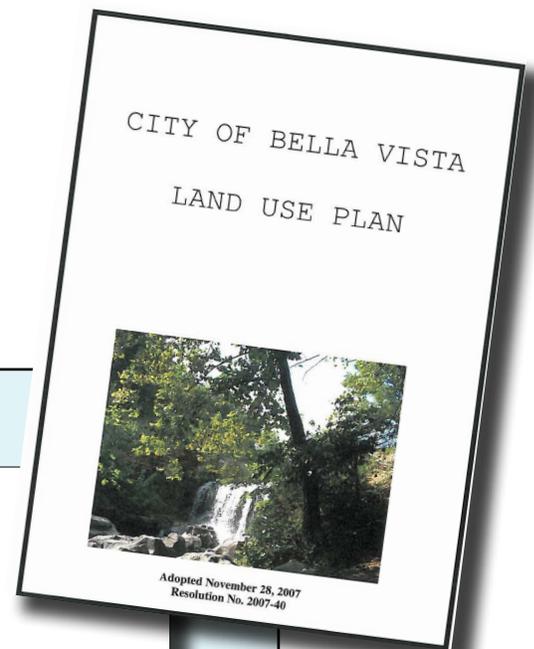


The Transition Plan also identified possible functions to be provided by the City in the future as being:

1. Water System
2. Storm Water Management
3. Wastewater Treatment

City's Land Use Plan – one of the first documents prepared for the newly incorporated Bella Vista, the land use plan is almost 5-years old and in need of updating to better reflect Bella Vista's specific needs. It is important to note that the basis of the Land Use Plan was:

"It is desirable that future growth and expansion of the City be in keeping with the original concept of the developer."



Current Situation Analysis

All land uses should be required to landscape and enhance the community.

Master Street Plan – this plan was also prepared shortly after incorporation and needs to be updated to better reflect the City’s specific needs. Like the Land Use Plan, the Master Street Plan stated: “The primary goal of the Master Street Plan is to maintain the character of the original City and to compliment the natural beauty of the area.” The Master Street Plan also identified a number of “projects” that need to be studied. The Strategic Plan would recommend the preparation of a comprehensive Transportation Plan and that a Transportation Capital Improvements Program be prepared and implemented.

Zoning Code – the Zoning Code was adopted on December 9, 2009 (Effective 1/8/10) and has been amended three times (10/10, 12/4/10 and 7/2/11). The City’s Zoning Ordinance is based on zoning ordinances typically adopted in northwest Arkansas. These “typical” zoning ordinances are called Euclidean Zoning, called such after the town of Euclid, Ohio and a U.S. Supreme Court case in 1926 and “segment” a municipality into “districts” each with their own permitted land uses and dimensional standards. To better promote the City of Bella Vista as a low-density, recreational/residential development, as well as promote the existing land use pattern of the City, the following recommendations are given:

1. Conduct educational workshops with the Planning Commission to present to them contemporary zoning approaches that are in line with the City of Bella Vista’s development patterns.
2. A zoning approach that fits very well into the City’s development pattern is called Performance Zoning. Performance Zoning establish standards and criteria to control or limit the impacts of proposed uses or activities on adjacent properties. Performance Zoning is well suited in locations where environmental protection is desired (i.e. the saving of trees, slopes, topography, streams, creeks, etc.). Performance Zoning is generally flexible about where development is located as long as the impact of the development is kept within specified acceptable limits. In other words, look at the City of Bella Vista’s existing land use patterns. Bella Vista offers condos and single family residences all within close proximity to each other and to golf courses, club houses, open space, and other recreational amenities. This existing land use pattern that was developed in Bella Vista is very Performance Zoning oriented! The “mingling” of various residential densities with commercial and recreational land uses is normal in the City of Bella Vista.
3. As an intermediate step to preparing a new Zoning Ordinance, the number of zoning districts could be reduced to better reflect the goals and objectives of the Land Use Plan. For instance, the existence of four (4) commercial districts seems excessive for the City. For a recreational-residential community such as Bella Vista, two commercial districts, well-worded, should be ample – Neighborhood Commercial and a Mixed Use Commercial.
4. To achieve the goals and objectives of the Land Use Plan, the Zoning Ordinance should not have any “sacred cows”. Therefore, it is recommended to eliminate the exemption of single-family and duplex residential exemption from the landscape ordinance. All land uses should be required to landscape and enhance the community.



Subdivision Code – the Subdivision Code was adopted by Ordinance 2009-10 and was Effective on 9/4/09. Like the Zoning Ordinance, the Subdivision Code is very similar to other Subdivision Codes in northwest Arkansas and to date is serving the City of Bella Vista well. No recommendations and/or amendments are offered at this time.

Sign Code – the Sign Code was adopted by Ordinance 2008-19 and has been amended once on 9/4/09. Overall the Sign Code covers the necessary items for comprehensive sign control. The one major recommendation to be offered is for the City to seriously consider preparing design guidelines that would also include signage design guidelines. City-wide design guidelines will greatly improve the City’s appearance as well as assist code enforcement.

Building Code – the Building Code took effect on 11/20/09 and is a well defined document for code compliance and enforcement.

Flood Damage Prevention Code – this code, adopted by Ordinance 2008-05, sets the overall approach of the City of Bella Vista with flood damage prevention. In the near future, the City will need to consider preparing a detailed, comprehensive Storm-Water Management Program to guide the City’s storm water issues.

Census Data – during the ten year period between the 2000 and 2010 census, Bella Vista experienced significant growth. In 2000 Bella Vistas population was 16,582 and in 2010 Bella Vista had grown 59.6% to a population of 26, 461. Not only was the population increase significant, the census data reveals that the stratification of the population was getting younger. Bella Vista has always promoted itself as a recreational retirement community. Over the past ten to fifteen years there has been an immigration of families into Bella Vista. This immigration of families has reduced the median age significantly as well. In 2000 the median age was 61.2 years. In 2010 the median is was 50.8 years. The median age no longer signifies a retirement demographic. A brief overview is provided below and population forecasts are presented on the next page.



Age Bracket	% of total in 2000	% of total in 2010
Over 65	41.9	31.5
Under 18	12.3	17.9
Under 5	3.6	5.5



The median age no longer signifies a retirement demographic.



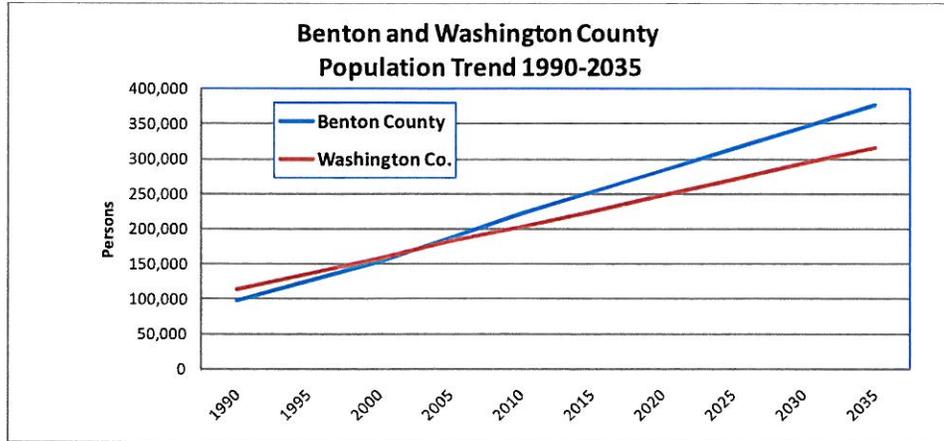
Current Situation Analysis

"It is desirable that future growth and expansion of the City be in keeping with the original concept of the developer."

Population Trends and Projections for the Northwest Arkansas Two-County NARTS Region

YEAR	Historic Population Trend					Population Projections				
	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Benton County	97,499	125,453	153,406	186,598	221,339	252,299	283,259	314,219	345,179	376,139
Washington Co.	113,409	135,562	157,715	182,782	203,065	225,479	247,893	270,307	292,721	315,135
Two County Area	210,908	261,015	311,121	369,380	424,404	477,778	531,152	584,526	637,900	691,274

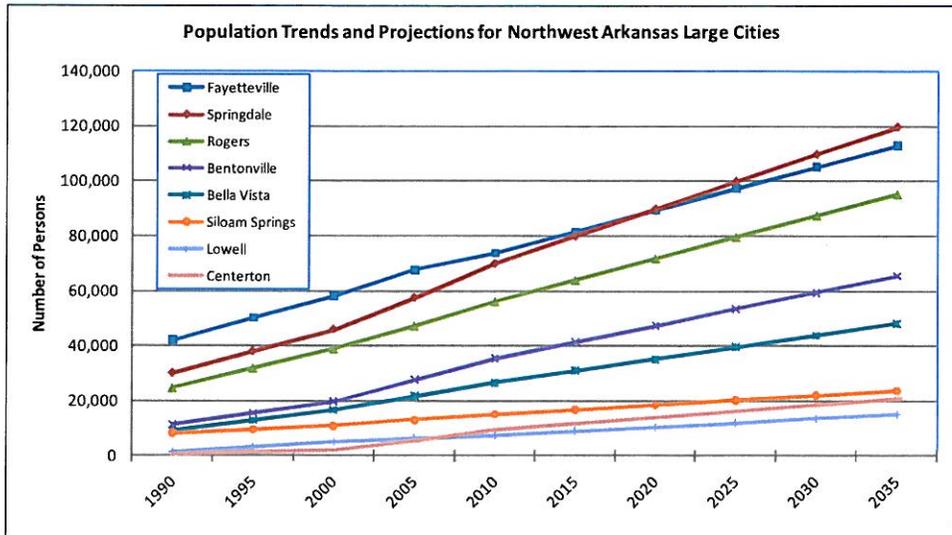
Source: Figures from 1950 to 2000 are from the U.S. Census;
Projections based on building permit data, End of 2nd Quarter, 2005; Source: NWARPC



Population Trends and Projections for Larger Cities in the NARTS Two-County Area

	NWA Population Trend					Population Projections				
	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Fayetteville	42,099	50,073	58,047	67,545	73,580	81,450	89,321	97,191	105,061	112,931
Springdale	29,941	37,870	45,798	57,317	69,797	79,761	89,725	99,689	109,653	119,617
Rogers	24,692	31,761	38,829	47,165	55,964	63,782	71,600	79,418	87,236	95,054
Bentonville	11,257	15,494	19,730	27,465	35,301	41,312	47,323	53,334	59,345	65,356
Bella Vista	9,083	12,833	16,582	21,496	26,461	30,806	35,150	39,495	43,839	48,184
Siloam Springs	8,151	9,497	10,843	13,054	15,039	16,761	18,483	20,205	21,927	23,649
Lowell	1,224	3,119	5,013	6,254	7,327	8,853	10,379	11,904	13,430	14,956
Centerton	491	1,319	2,146	5,406	9,515	11,771	14,027	16,283	18,539	20,795
Benton County	97,499	125,453	153,406	186,598	221,339	252,299	283,259	314,219	345,179	376,139
Washington Co.	113,409	135,562	157,715	182,782	203,065	225,479	247,893	270,307	292,721	315,135
Region	210,908	261,015	311,121	369,380	424,404	477,778	531,152	584,526	637,900	691,274

Source: Figures from 1950 to 2000 are from the U.S. Census; Projections are based on Census figures and building permit trends compiled by NWARPC



Note: "Large Cities" includes cities with a population of over 5,000 in the latest official census



Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

In addition to reviewing existing City ordinances and regulations, the members of the Task Force were each given a disposable camera and asked to take pictures of Bella Vista's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The Task Force members took this assignment seriously and an abundance of photographs were taken. Some of the photographs are shown here to better illustrate Bella Vista's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Strengths

These items represent the various components (both tangible and intangible) of the City of Bella Vista that make it a desirable place to live and work.



Golf / Amenities - Bella Vista was developed as a retirement destination, amenities rich community. The golf courses, all the various amenities, and the natural setting attracted thousands of residents to live here.



Community Events – regardless of the season, Bella Vista has a variety of community events that draw visitors to the community.

Natural Setting



Other Strengths included: animal shelter, recycle center, soccer fields, developable land, city & POA cooperation, Fire & Police, Chapel, businesses, rural setting, architecture, neighborhoods, library, schools, geographic location, mild-winters, four-seasons **and the People!**



Current Situation Analysis

Weaknesses

Bella Vista's weaknesses include items that are potentially detrimental to Bella Vista's continued growth and success as well as areas of concern that are not currently "weaknesses" but if ignored will be in the near future.



Streets – Bella Vista is not alone when it comes to street repair and maintenance issues.



"Old" Bella Vista – although not in the City Limits, this area is highly visible at Bella Vista's southern "gateway".



Traffic – growth combined with the "ridgeline network of roadways" create points of congestion – on both 540/71 and local streets.

Should these two community "benefits" (library and animal shelter) be ran by the City at some point in the future?



Code Enforcement

– deteriorating structures are seen by the residents as a lack of code enforcement.

Other weaknesses included: Lack of medical offices and clinics, lack of retail, 540/71, no mixed use (land developments that are typically multi-story and have retail, office, and restaurants on the ground floor and residential units on the second and third floors), lack of commercial land, lack of design guidelines, clear cutting of trees, lack of hotels/motels and a lack of a well-defined "City Center".

The Library and Animal Shelter were also identified as possible weaknesses only in the sense that they are totally not-for-profit entities and for the most part staffed by volunteers. The concern, therefore perceived weakness, is what if the level of volunteers significantly drops? Should these two community "benefits" be run by the City at some point in the future?

Another perceived weakness was the issue of a POA membership vs. non-POA membership. As the City grows geographically (i.e. annexation) its boundary will be well beyond the POA's boundary. These City residents will not have POA membership and the City needs to consider how it will provide recreational opportunities to all of it's citizens.

Opportunities

A number of opportunities are knocking at Bella Vista's door. In fact, some of the opportunities already exist and need to be recognized and broadcast as such. The existing opportunities include:

The Golf Courses



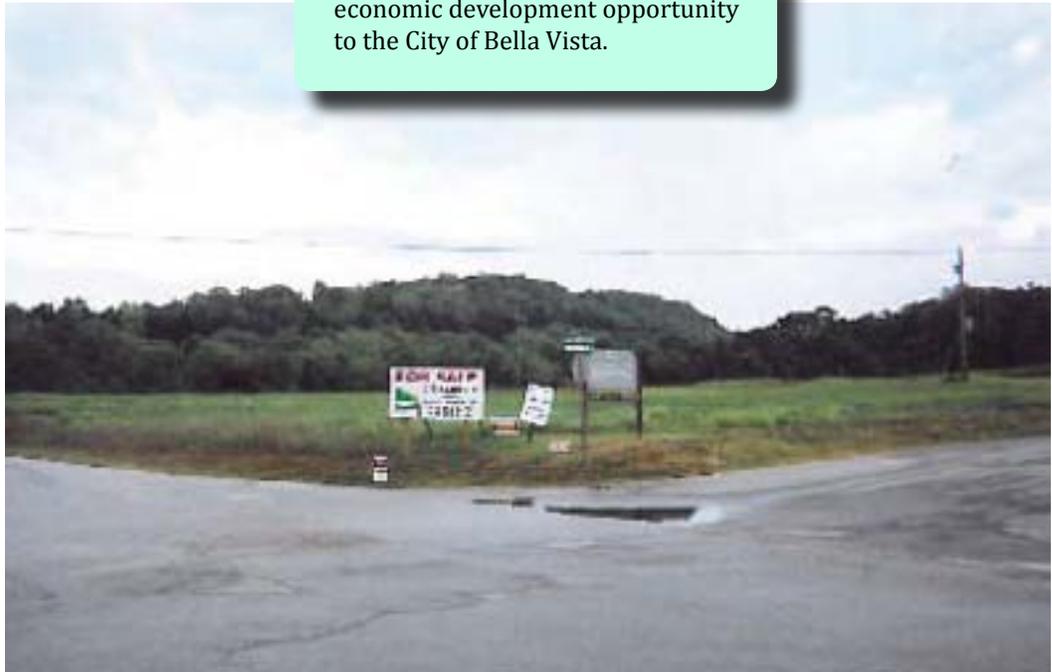
Public Safety - Fire & Police



Current Situation Analysis

*"We are confronted
by insurmountable
opportunities"
Pogo*

Undeveloped Land - brings economic development opportunity to the City of Bella Vista.



Annexation - with the proposed By-Pass, annexation opportunity exists in a south westerly direction. (City limits in yellow and By-Pass in purple)





Cooperation – continued cooperation between the City and the Bella Vista Village Property Owners Association is one of the greatest opportunities for the City as well as the POA. Both entities need each other to succeed and both entities need to focus on what they do best – in a nutshell, the City to govern and the POA to provide resort class amenities.



Town Center - Bella Vista is in need of an identifiable, unique, mixed-use town center or village square. The existing Bella Vista center, shown in the picture, is functional but rather limited in what it can offer to the residents of Bella Vista.

Other opportunities include: potential redevelopment of existing land uses, better marketing of all the good things Bella Vista has to offer, and the preparation of an Economic Development Plan.

*"Vision is the art of
seeing the invisible."
Jonathan Swift*

Threats

The threats facing Bella Vista basically give an indication or warning of probable trouble if these items are not addressed, altered, or given the same amount of attention that they presently receive.

Dangerous Intersections

With the road network built on ridgelines, this situation is hard to totally eliminate. Appropriate signage and the use of "passing blisters" can be of aid. These situations can be addressed in a Transportation Plan and Capital Improvements Program



Golf – although a POA function, when a golf course becomes unfeasible, the realities of high repair costs and low rounds of golf mandates that a serious discussion regarding the land area's highest and best use take place.

Additional threats include: the cooperation between the City and the POA, will it continue?; adequate and efficient maintenance of the amenities; annexation – what if another municipality annexes desirable areas that would be of benefit to Bella Vista?; the ownership of the water systems – shouldn't the City seriously consider acquiring the water system(s) as part of its public services?

“Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”
Margaret Mead

Overview of Critical Planning Criteria

As a result of the strategic planning process, the identification of six different, yet interconnected, planning criteria was defined by the citizens of Bella Vista, along with the members of the Strategic Plan Task Force. These six planning criteria are both vision based and issues based, thus the City's Strategic Plan is unique, just like the City itself. Unique in the fact that Bella Vista's Strategic Plan is a hybrid of the two most common models for strategic plans – vision based or issues based.

1. Governance

The governance planning criteria was seen by the community as both a vision and an issue. The vision approach for governance described the City of Bella Vista as a model for newly formed municipalities with open communication between the city leadership and the residents. The issues approach to governance questioned the City's ability to continue the cooperative spirit with the POA and Cooper Communities. At “issue” was the community's level of trust regarding successful cooperation between these entities. The challenge for the Action Plan is to address both the vision and issues based approaches as voiced by the residents.

2. Economic Development

Economic development was seen as an essential, critical element for Bella Vista's success as a City and as a “sense of place”. Therefore, economic development is also a vision based and an issues based critical planning criteria. From the vision perspective, economic development was seen as the component to establish and/or define the City's “look” as well as the vehicle to drive the redevelopment of existing land uses. From the issues perspective, economic development was defined as a program to promote the City of Bella Vista as a very desirable place to live and work.

3. Growth Management

Growth management was an issues based planning criteria and focused on how the City, not only wanted to grow, but how and with what, would it manage that growth. This planning criteria element took a very common sense approach.

4. Quality of Life

Quality of life was another issues based criteria because it is a reality for the residents of the City of Bella Vista. The major issue was the protection of Bella Vista's quality of life by protecting its natural setting, its amenities, its recreational lifestyle and the “village” concept. The residents coined a term for Bella Vista during the strategic planning process – “the City that doesn't look like a City.”

5. Public Finance

During the strategic planning process, the residents made it clear that they want an understandable definition of the fiscal responsibilities of the City, as well as, the POA. Although the pre-incorporation educational material was very well presented, additional repetition of who is responsible for what will go very far in defining the roles of the City and the POA. Identification of the City's funding sources, and potential funding sources needs to be addressed.

6. Public Services

Public Services basically mirrors the overview of Public Finance, but with the emphasis on who provides what? Confusion still remains regarding what does the City provide, what does the POA provide and do both entities need to be in existence? Why can't the City “do it all”?



Action Plan

The difference between where we are (current situation/status) and where we want to be (vision) is what we do (action plan). The purpose of the Action Plan is to translate the six identified critical planning criteria into implementation steps.

Governance

1. Strategy: Establish a Public/Quasi-Public/Private Partnership
The City of Bella Vista, the Bella Vista Village Property Owner's Association and Cooper Communities need to cooperate and communicate with each other and the public.
2. Goal: Clearly answer the question – "Who does what?"
3. Objective: Define Bella Vista's municipal responsibilities.
4. Implementation Steps:
 - a. Prepare brochure that describes the responsibilities of the City
 - b. Submit separate articles to the newspaper that focus on each of the City's municipal responsibilities.
 - c. Post all the above on the City's website.
 - d. In cooperation with the POA and Cooper, prepare similar newspaper articles describing what each entity does and how each entity interacts with the other.
 - e. Identify potential public services to be considered in the future (i.e. water system, library and animal shelter).
5. Responsible Entity: City staff
6. Resources: Staff time
7. Timeline: Immediate action item

Economic Development

1. Strategy: Define the City of Bella Vista's "Look" and promote the City
2. Goal: Bella Vista is a contemporary, recreational residential community.
3. Objective: Establish design guidelines and promotional material to "sell" the benefits of Bella Vista.
4. Implementation Steps
 - a. Prepare Design Guidelines that define a unique design theme for all land uses as documented in the City's Land Use Plan.
 - b. Prepare an Annexation Study that anticipates strategic expansion of the City's boundaries.
 - c. In cooperation with the POA, prepare marketing/promotional material for mass distribution.
 - d. Identify key, potential locations for a "Town Square" mixed-use development and prepare a Sub-Area Plan(s) to be adopted by the City Council and incorporated into the City's Land Use Plan.
 - e. Prepare a Community Recreation Center Feasibility Study, in cooperation with the POA and other interested entities..
 - f. In cooperation with Cooper Communities, explore the feasibility of redeveloping current amenities that might not be the highest and best use of the land.
 - g. Prepare an Economic Development Plan and Program
5. Responsible Entity: Item 4a – Design Guidelines – RFP process
Item 4b – Annexation Study – City Council
Item 4c – Marketing Materials – RFP process
Item 4d – Sub Area Plan(s) – RFP or City Staff
Item 4e – Feasibility Study – RFP process
Item 4f – Redevelopment Feasibility – City Staff
Item 4g – Economic Plan – City Staff in cooperation with Chamber of Commerce

6. Resources: Item 4a – budget estimate of \$30,000
Item 4b – Alderman/Staff time
Item 4c – budget estimate of \$25,000
Item 4d – budget estimate of \$20,000
Item 4e – budget estimate of \$50,000
Item 4f – Staff time
Item 4g – Staff time
7. Timeline: Item 4a – Design Guidelines – Immediate (2012)
Item 4b – Annexation Study – Immediate (2011)
Item 4c – Marketing Materials – Immediate (2012)
Item 4d – Sub Area Plan(s) - Immediate (2012)
Item 4e – Feasibility Study – Short Range (2013)
Item 4f – Redevelopment Feasibility – Immediate
Item 4g – Economic Plan – Short Range (2013)

Growth Management

1. Strategy: Managing the City's growth.
2. Goal: The City of Bella Vista's growth is planned and managed.
3. Objective: Establish and prepare necessary growth management tools.
4. Implementation Steps:
 - a. Prepare Annexation Study that anticipates strategic expansion of the City's boundaries.
 - b. Prepare a Comprehensive Transportation Plan
 - c. Update City's Land Use Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations.
 - d. Prepare and submit an article to the newspaper describing the demographic shifts that have occurred in Bella Vista between the 2000 and 2010 Census.
5. Responsible Entity: Item 4a – Annexation Study – City Council
Item 4b – Transportation Plan – RFP process
Item 4c – Updates to City documents – City Staff
Item 4d – Census Article(s) – City Staff
6. Resources: Item 4a – Alderman/Staff time
Item 4b – budget estimate - \$50,000 - \$75,000
Item 4c – City staff time
Item 4d – City staff time
7. Timeframe: Item 4a – Immediate (2011)
Item 4b – Transportation Plan – Short range (2013)
Item 4c – Updates – Immediate (2012-2013)
Item 4d – Census Article – Immediate (2011-2012)

Quality of Life

1. Strategy: Maintaining and Enhancing the City of Bella Vista's existing Quality of Life for all residents
2. Goal: The City's quality of life improves over the next five years (both perception and physical amenities and attributes).
3. Objective: Preserve Bella Vista's natural and man-made amenities
4. Implementation Steps:
 - a. Conduct a quality of life initiative to identify the resident's definition of quality of life and prepare quantitative measures to record progress.



5. Responsible Entity: City of Bella Vista in cooperation with the POA
6. Resources: City Staff and POA Staff time
7. Timeframe: Short range (2013)

Public Finance

1. Strategy: Fiscally sound decision-making
2. Goal: Leverage the City's financial resources with "outside" funding sources
3. Objective: Access State and Federal funding for infrastructure
4. Implementation Steps:
 - a. Expand economic base with preparation of the Economic Development Plan and Program and the Sub-Area Plan(s).
 - b. Prepare a five-year Capital Improvements Program
 - c. Issue Capital Improvement Bonds to implement infrastructure improvements
 - d. Study and implement, if approved by the City Council, Hotel and Restaurant Taxes (further reinforcement of an expanded economic base).
 - e. If economic base expands to include the Hotel and Restaurant Tax, the City can determine the feasibility of placing a Hotel and Restaurant Tax Bond on the ballot for the residents to decide. This type of bond could be a partial funding source for the Community Recreation Center.
5. Responsible Entity: 4a – 4e – City staff
6. Resources: City Council and City Staff time
7. Timeframe: Item 4b – Capital Improvement Program
Immediate (2012)
Items 4c-e - Mid Range (2014)

Public Services

1. Strategy: The City of Bella Vista offers municipal services as required by law
2. Goal: Bella Vista offers municipal services at service levels necessary to maintain, as well as, promote growth of the City
3. Objective: Improved level of service on an annual basis.
4. Implementation Steps:
 - a. Determine feasibility of a new fire station in the Highlands area
 - b. Determine the feasibility of the City acquiring the water system(s) and exploring alternative methods or water systems for the provision of water. This feasibility should also address the issue of water service to non-POA members.
 - c. In cooperation with the POA, prepare a brochure that identifies the services provided by the City and the services provided by the POA.
 - d. Determine the feasibility of the City being responsible for the Library and the Animal Shelter.
5. Responsible Entity: City Staff
6. Resources: City Council and City Staff time
7. Timeframe: Item 4a – New Fire Station – Immediate (2012)
Item 4b – Water Acquisition Feasibility – Long Range (2015)
Item 4c – Brochure – Immediate (2012)
Item 4d – Additional Services – Long Range (2015)





Beautiful Bella Vista

