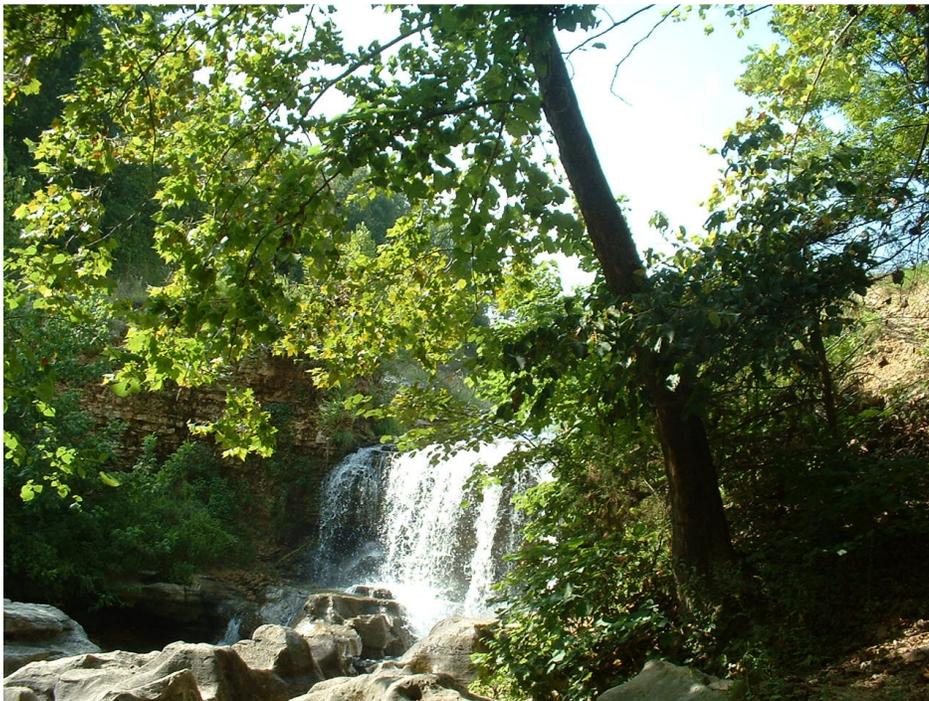


CITY OF BELLA VISTA  
LAND USE PLAN



**Adopted November 28, 2007**  
**Resolution No. 2007-40**

# CITY OF BELLA VISTA LAND USE PLAN

## SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

The city of Bella Vista is developing this Land Use Plan to guide the fledgling city through the next 20 years. Prior to incorporation, Bella Vista operated as a village with municipal type services provided by a property owners association. Bella Vista became a city on January 1, 2007. Along with the responsibilities of running a city of the first class, Bella Vista has certain obligations in the area of responsible planning and management of growth.

The City Council appointed seven representatives of the community to serve on its first Planning Commission. Arkansas law requires that a municipality determine a planning area and prepare a land use plan for future development. The Commission has identified these areas in which Bella Vista may have an interest in their development and the possible effects upon citizens of the city. After careful consideration and respect for neighboring municipalities and residents of Benton County, the Planning Commission recommended approval and the Planning Area Map was adopted by the Bella Vista City Council on August 27, 2007. Both the Planning Area Map and the Land Use Plan are incorporated in this document.

The City Land Use Plan is intended to help prepare for both short and long-range growth and development. The Plan will provide recommendations in areas such as land use, housing, utilities, transportation, economic development, community facilities, parks and open space, historical and cultural resources, agricultural and natural resources, and intergovernmental cooperation. A land use plan provides a guide for making wide choices by describing goals and objectives for the City's future as well as policies to guide day-to-day decisions.

The Planning Commission adopted the following mission statement as it began its work in formulating a Land Use Plan.

“With a neighborly wave, Bella Vista is home to a community of active, involved citizens of all ages. The City must continue its legacy of a balanced pattern of development that harmonizes with the land. Doing so will enable the City to encourage attractive, affordable housing and increased recreational opportunities. As the gateway to northwest Arkansas, Bella Vista must continue to capitalize on the area's natural beauty and provide opportunities for business and industrial investment.”

With that thought in mind, the Planning Commission believes the vision of Cooper Communities, Inc. (CCI) and the work of the Architectural Control Committee (ACC) provide a solid foundation for the City of Bella Vista. The Bella Vista Property Owners Association has developed a good mix of recreational opportunities for all and shared many of their amenities with neighboring communities. It is desirable that future growth and expansion of the City be in keeping with the original concept of the developer. The City of

Bella Vista should build upon their lead and encourage and develop facilities for the use of all citizens as the City continues to grow.

Clearly, the City must manage the inevitable change while preserving its small village qualities as envisioned by its developer. The Bella Vista Land Use Plan strives to build a coherent vision of the City's future from the desires of a diverse population. It integrates the aspirations of the City's residents, businesses, neighborhoods, and officials into a bold strategy for managing change.

The Land Use Plan is a planning tool intended to help guide future growth and development of the community. It is *comprehensive* in that it ties together the various elements that make up "the city" including land use, housing, transportation, environment, public facilities and parks and recreation. It is a *plan* because it contains goals, objectives, policies and strategies that all work together, looking to the future and working towards achieving a community wide vision. It is an *implementation tool* that is used to set goals and measure progress towards community betterment. Initially, the Land Use Plan addresses areas of immediate concern with sections added or modified as more historical data and citizen input give direction to dynamic changes as the City grows. The Plan is considered a "living" document, which will be amended and revised as needed and more thoroughly updated periodically.

When adopted, the Land Use Plan will be one of the primary tools used by the City council, Planning commission, and other public/private groups to make decisions about the location of land uses and community facilities, priorities for public investment and extension of public services, business development, and transportation needs.

## **SECTION II: SUMMARY OF MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

In an effort to attain the type of development desired by community leaders and citizens alike, the following recommendations are made:

1. Retain the relatively low-density residential nature of the community through proper development regulations.
2. Grouped commercial services should be located to provide economical operation of businesses, be located on major streets with proper and adequate egress, and be convenient to the community.
3. The City should designate specific areas for industrial land uses. This will protect the industries that choose to locate in the City of Bella Vista as well as help to insure that incompatibility with residential uses is minimized.
4. The preservation of agricultural lands and of historically significant lands, through the proper use of regulatory mechanisms, is critical to retain the character and integrity of the community.
5. Ensure protection of the community's natural environment and open space through careful land use management techniques and controls.
6. Plans for community facilities should be developed in a coordinated and timely manner. Prompt action should be taken to guarantee that an adequate amount of land is preserved to suit the purposes of each of these community facilities
7. The community leaders should become actively involved in urging the entire community to take action to improve the over-all appearance of their community.
8. The Planning Commission recommends the hiring of a staff member by the City as Planning and Community Development Director. This person would oversee planning code enforcement, implement regulation procedures, coordinate infrastructure improvements, and facilitate cooperation between various stakeholders affecting the City in matters of overlapping jurisdiction.
9. The Planning Commission recommends that the City immediately adopt all building codes as well as residential construction standards currently enforced by the Architectural Control Committee by ordinance. By doing so, the City will necessarily need some enforcement and inspection mechanism in place. The Commission further recommends that the City either 1) engages the A.C.C. contractually or 2) absorbs the A.C.C. into City government, to serve as the City's enforcement arm.
10. A master street plan for street infrastructure should be developed to provide access to all land and for the efficient circulation for people and goods throughout the community.

## **SECTION III: PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS**

### **A. LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **1. RESIDENTIAL**

Several goals surface as paramount in the development and growth of the residential environment in Bella Vista. These include:

- a. Provision of a safe living environment that offers quietness, privacy, and a neighborly flavor;
- b. Provision of quality housing of good design at low and medium densities, developed in a manner accessible by an adequate street system to avoid costly infrastructure extensions;
- c. Protection of residential areas from incompatible adjacent land uses;
- d. Stabilization of property values; and
- e. Provision of multi-modal access to residential areas.

To achieve these goals, it is essential to:

- a. Develop residential areas at relatively low densities that will preserve the current nature of Bella Vista;
- b. Develop residential areas that will accommodate medium density units;
- c. Develop, adopt and use subdivision and zoning regulations as well as building and housing codes;
- d. Require development to be connected to utilities and utilize zoning as a means to guide the progression of development;
- e. Protect the character and integrity of single-family, residential areas;
- f. Protect residential neighborhoods from inappropriate non-residential influences through the design of streets which discourage through-traffic, and the use of regulatory controls;
- g. Encourage the use of land which provides for the most efficient and effective use of available investments in public utilities and services.

## **2. NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL**

In continuing with the primary goal of retaining the existing characteristics of Bella Vista, the neighborhood commercial district has its goals:

- a. Provision of an area or areas for offices, and light commercial uses, not incompatible with adjoining residential uses. Together with community facilities and compatible residential uses, this district becomes a buffer between general commercial and strictly residential uses; and
- b. Provision of multi-modal access to neighborhood commercial districts.

To obtain these goals, the following actions must be taken:

- a. The neighborhood commercial district should be encouraged to locate on major streets on the fringe of residential neighborhoods in convenient proximity to living areas;
- b. Uses within this district should be limited in size so as to avoid large concentrations of traffic;
- c. Sufficient off-street parking should be required, however, not to the extent that it will cause high ratios of impervious ground cover; and
- d. Residential-office uses may encourage adaptive reuse of older residential structures, thereby helping to prevent blight.

## **3. GENERAL COMMERCIAL**

Again, the goal of retaining the current character and aspects of the community remains a priority. Other goals to be met in general commercial land use areas:

- a. Provision of accessible, convenient and attractive commercial locations, while avoiding over-zoning of the area for general commercial development;
- b. Location of general commercial development at the intersection of major streets for convenient access and to discourage strip commercial development;
- c. Identification of areas within the community for future general commercial development;

- d. Encouragement of attractive, safe and sanitary commercial development; and
- e. Discouraging the indiscriminate mixing of commercial development; and
- f. Provision of multi-modal access to commercial areas.

In order to realize these goals, the City must take the following actions:

- a. Adopt a zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to guide commercial development to desired locations and provide the standards to which that development will be built;
- b. Encourage planned, integrated commercial areas by discouraging spot commercial development in residential neighborhoods and the stringing out of commercial development along streets;
- c. Adopt a future land use plan map, which identifies potential commercial locations;
- d. Adopt codes to insure safe and sanitary development;
- e. Restrict non-commercial uses from locating in areas zoned general commercial;
- f. Assure traffic safety by guaranteeing sufficient off-street parking, off-street loading facilities, and well-located ingress and egress points;
- g. Provide adequate physical screen and area to serve as a buffer between the commercial uses and abutting residential areas; and
- h. Encourage attractiveness by designing areas to integrate with residential areas through the generous use of landscaping.

#### **4. INDUSTRIAL**

The chief goals for industrial development are:

- a. Provision of sites which are level, well drained and located adjacent to major thoroughfares;
- b. Allocate land in sufficient quantity so that industrial growth can continue to the benefit of both industry and the community. This will ensure that industrial land is protected from encroachment by non-industrial uses;

- c. Provide for ample utilities and services to support industrial development; and
- d. Encourage multi-modal access to industrial areas.

These goals can be achieved through the following operations:

- a. Adopt development regulations to provide for quality development;
- b. Identify and reserve suitable land for future industrial growth through participation in the Arkansas Community of Excellence (“ACE”) Program;
- c. Provide adequate services, utilities and accessibility;
- d. Develop or seek programs that will provide alternative transportation modes;
- e. Insulate industrial sites from other activities by location or buffers; and
- f. Require provision of ample off-street parking and loading space.

## **5. AGRICULTURE**

Preservation of agricultural lands as valuable resources and a critical part of the economic system of Bella Vista, is of the utmost importance. As a crucial element in retaining the nature of the community, it is doubly important to preserve and protect historically significant lands.

This objective can be met simply by adhering to the Land Use Plan, the Land Use Map, and all other regulatory mechanisms.

## **6. OPEN-SPACE SYSTEM AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

The overall ambiance of Bella Vista has been enhanced through the open space, common areas, and recreational facilities provided by the Property Owner’s Association. Bella Vista must continue this legacy through a balanced pattern of development that harmonizes with the land. Doing so will ensure the continued protection of the area’s scenic beauty and maintain a healthy environment for the public enjoyment.

While all natural systems have an innate ability to disperse the influences of human intervention over time, some ecosystems are more fragile than others. All ecosystems work together in harmony to create our natural environment.

In order to protect the environment that we all share, development must be carefully managed to protect areas from degradation due to the impact of use and development. The following basic policies and objects to accomplish these goals:

- a. Parks and open spaces should be established in strategic locations to take advantage of, as well as protect, natural processes and unique landscape features and to provide for an assortment of outdoor recreational and other activities;
- b. Environmentally critical areas of land and water and historically significant lands should be protected from higher levels of land use classification through setbacks and landscape buffers. These areas should also be buffered to protect them from pollutants generated by growth patterned in the area;
- c. Wooded areas that serve functional purposes in aesthetics and pollution control should be preserved as part of an urban forest and open space system;
- d. Development should not be located in areas of natural hazard to life and property such as flood zones and unstable soils.
- e. Development of hillsides should be limited where topography exceeds safe slopes.
- f. Present and future development of drainage basins should receive only urban development compatible with protection of water quality and concentrated flows of storm water should be avoided.

## **B. CIRCULATION**

To establish an effectual manner of circulation of people and goods throughout the community and to provide access to all pieces of land, an efficient well-balanced system of streets and roads is required. The various streets and the quantity and type of traffic they handle have a substantial impact on the adjoining and surrounding property.

The following are traffic policy goals and the actions necessary to achieve them:

1. Logical development of the community requires –
  - a. Easy access to public facilities from all properties;
  - b. Protection of public assembly areas and neighborhood playgrounds from through traffic;

- c. The separation of different or incompatible land use area through wide right-of-way; and
  - d. Providing adequate access to commercial areas of the community by way of routes avoiding residential neighborhoods.
2. Safe and efficient movement of people and goods requires –
- a. Provision of pedestrian walkways and sidewalks within commercial neighborhoods and along major streets where required for public safety;
  - b. That an assortment of streets be provided, specifically designed to serve the variety of particular traffic needs in the area;
  - c. That each thoroughfare and its parking be designed with adequate capacity to accommodate anticipated traffic; and
  - d. That thoroughfares be planned so that commercial traffic is, to the extent possible, kept off residential streets.

Additionally, the circulation system should relate to the regional multi-modal transportation system. It should be located and designed to serve, but not disrupt, existing and future work and living areas and shopping/leisure areas. In return, land use areas, densities, and activity centers should be located in anticipation of transportation service requirements.

Since the various streets and the traffic they handle have a great impact upon the adjacent and surrounding property, it is recommended that streets should be classified in accordance with the functions they perform in the network.

## **C. COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

### **1. PUBLIC RECREATION FACILITIES**

The primary goal of recreation policy is the provision of a recreational program to serve all residents of the area, while preserving scenic areas and open space for the public and enjoyment.

This can be achieved by:

- a. Properly distributing recreational areas and facilities throughout the community;
- b. Situating recreational areas and facilities on suitable land;

- c. Locating appropriate recreational areas and facilities, whenever possible, near or adjacent to other public facilities; and
- d. Diversifying recreational areas and facilities in physical character, type, size, and extent of development.
- e. Currently, most recreational areas are within the purview of the POA and are not within the scope of the existing city.

