BLUE SPRINGS
MISSOURI

MINUTES OF AUGUST 26, 2026 CITY COUNCIL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MEETING

MEETING INFORMATION

A Comprehensive Plan Meeting for the City Council of the City of Blue Springs, Missouri, was held on Wednesday, August 26, 4:00 p.m. in the 210 Administration Training Room of the Blue Springs City Hall Building, 903 W Main Street, Blue Springs, Missouri with Mayor Chris Lievsay presiding.

COUNCIL ATTENDANCE

Jerry Kaylor

Katie Tholen

Nick Brummel

Galen Ericson

Kent Edmondson

Jeremy Rowan

STAFF ATTENDANCE

Also present were City Administrator Christine Cates, Assistant City Administrator Dennis Dovel, Director of Strategic Initiatives George Schmitz, Communications Manager Brian Spano, Parks and Recreation Director Justin Stuart, Director of City Development Nicholas Hutchison, Senior Director of Finance Karen Van Winkle, Assistant Director of Finance Melissa Braun, Information Technology Director John Schwenk, Planner III Shantele Frie, Planner I Logan Day, and Administrative Assistant Traci Breshears.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER AND CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM

Mayor Lievsay called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. The Director of Strategic Initiatives confirmed a quorum of the Council was present.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MEETING

Olsson Consulting representatives Abby Newsham, Harden Grove, and Shelby Ferguson provided an update on the Comprehensive Plan Update process. Materials used in this discussion included a Visioning Workshop slide presentation and a Leadership Session Handout. Copies of the handout and slide presentation are attached to these minutes and incorporated herein for reference.

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan Meeting is to engage the City Council in a strategic discussion about the future of Blue Springs and to confirm whether the emerging direction of the comprehensive plan reflects the community's aspirations. The discussion helped provide Council with insight from the community feedback received as well as the market and data analysis that had been performed as a part of the due diligence phase of the Comprehensive Plan Update. The discussion focused on six "Big Ideas" identified through the planning process: establishing Blue Springs as a recreation-focused community; strengthening Downtown as the community's heart and gathering place; improving community connectivity; transforming major corridors and activity centers; expanding housing choices for residents at every stage of life; and building a stronger, more financially resilient community.

Council also reviewed and discussed preliminary land use and growth frameworks for the City's future. This included examining potential development sites in Blue Springs and what Council envisions for the properties. Areas discussed were South 7 Highway, Lake Remembrance, and the Woods Chapel / I-70 area.

The next phase includes preparation and staff review of the first draft in September–October, followed by additional City Council, Planning Commission, stakeholder, and public review before final revisions and adoption.

Director of City Development Nic Hutchison prepared a summary of the meeting which is attached and incorporated herein.

ADJOURN

At 5:34 PM the meeting was declared adjourned.

SIGNATURES:

CITY OF BLUE SPRINGS

Chris Lievsay, Mayor

ATTEST

George Schmitz, Director of Strategic Initiatives

Leadership Work Session



BLUE SPRINGS NEXT

The Comprehensive Plan



Session Agenda

- City Council Perspectives & Check-in
- Big Ideas for Blue Springs & Maps
- Discussion

Your Feedback Will Shape the Plan

- **Land Use Policy & Regulations:** where future growth should occur, what types of development are appropriate in different areas of the city, and what policy or regulatory changes may be needed to implement that vision.
- **Economic Development Tools:** identify priority investment areas, redevelopment opportunities, and the economic development tools that should be used to support community goals and private investment.
- **Funding Sources:** establish priorities for grants, capital projects, infrastructure investments, and other strategic funding opportunities needed to implement the plan.
- **Partnerships:** organizations, agencies, institutions, and private-sector partners that should play a role in advancing Blue Springs' long-term vision and strategic initiatives.




"Twenty years from now, what do you hope people say is different or special about Blue Springs?"

BLUE SPRINGS NEXT
The Comprehensive Plan

Big Ideas for Blue Springs

- Outdoor Blue Springs
- Downtown Blue Springs
- Connected Blue Springs
- Great Corridors & Activity Centers
- Housing for Every Stage of Life
- Building a Stronger Blue Springs

Big Idea #1. Outdoor Blue Springs: Becoming the Region's Recreation-Focused Community



Strategic Moves for Blue Springs

- **Establish the Outdoor Blue Springs Identity**
- **Design Growth Around Natural Systems**
- **Create Signature Outdoor Destinations**

IN 2024,
OUTDOOR RECREATION
GENERATED

$1.3 TRILLION
IN ECONOMIC OUTPUT
5.2 MILLION JOBS
2.4% OF GDP

IN THE UNITED STATES

DATA: OUTDOOR RECREATION SATELLITE ACCOUNT
U.S. BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS, 2024





Concept: Lake Remembrance

Big Idea #2. Downtown Blue Springs: The Community's Heart and Gathering Place

Strategic Moves for Blue Springs

- Create a Downtown Catalyst Development Program
- Establish a Year-Round Market & Events District
- Expand Outdoor Activity and Flexible Public Spaces
- Make Downtown the Launch Point for Blue Springs' Outdoor Recreation Experience
- Grow Downtown as a Neighborhood



Market Pavillion in Ottawa, KS



Parklets in Lawrence, KS

Pre-Approved Streamlined Infill Plans







Bike Rental Shop in Downtown Bentonville, AR

Big Idea #3. Connected Blue Springs: A Safe, Accessible, and Connected Community

Strategic Moves for Blue Springs

- Build a Connected Citywide Mobility Network
- Connect People to Parks, Schools, and Recreation
- Strengthen Regional Connections and Future Mobility Opportunities
- Position Downtown as the Community's Mobility Hub





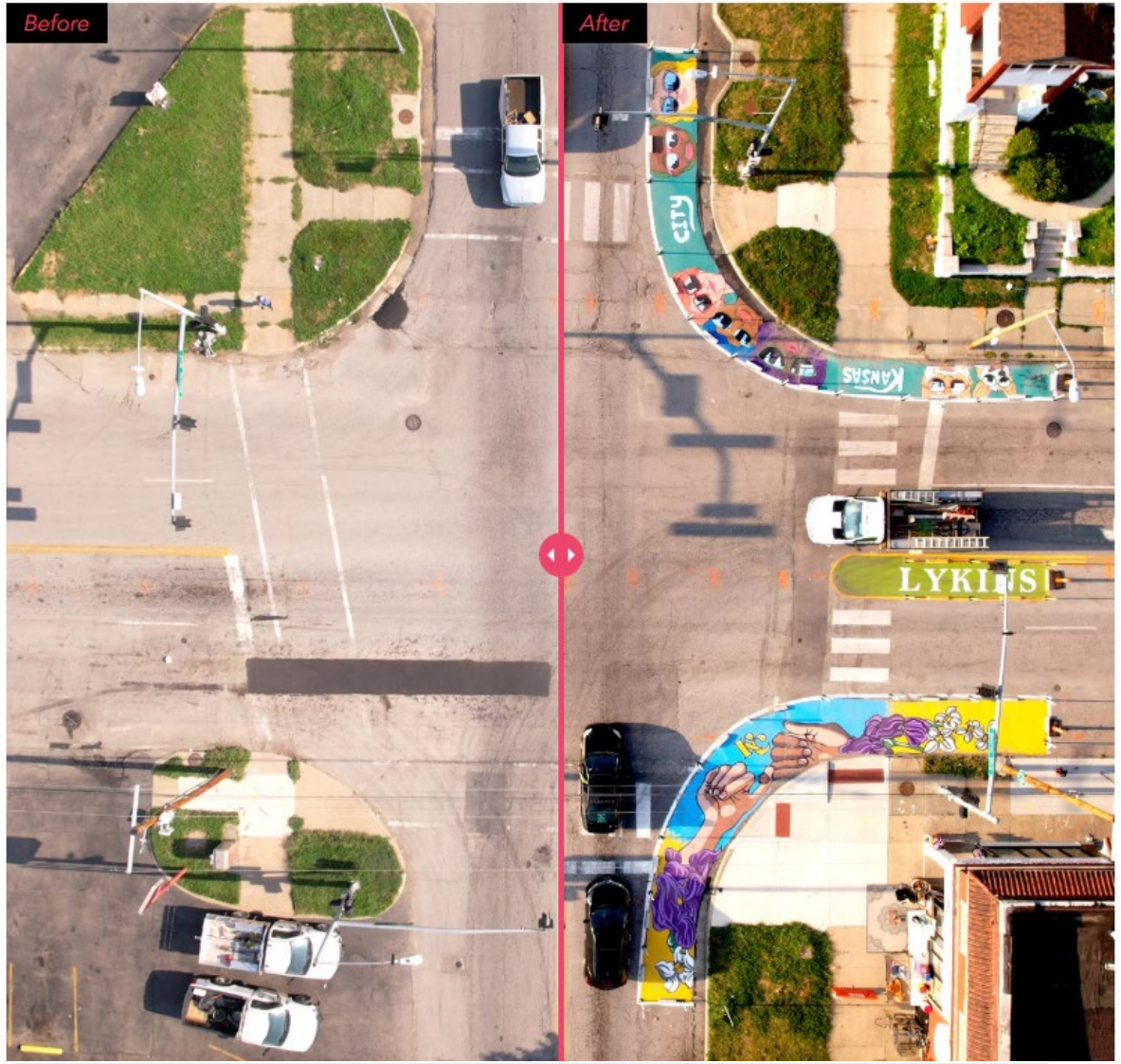


Park(ing) Day in Kansas City, MO



Community Street Painting in Lawrence, KS

Bloomberg Philanthropies



Before/After – Painted Intersection (KCMO)

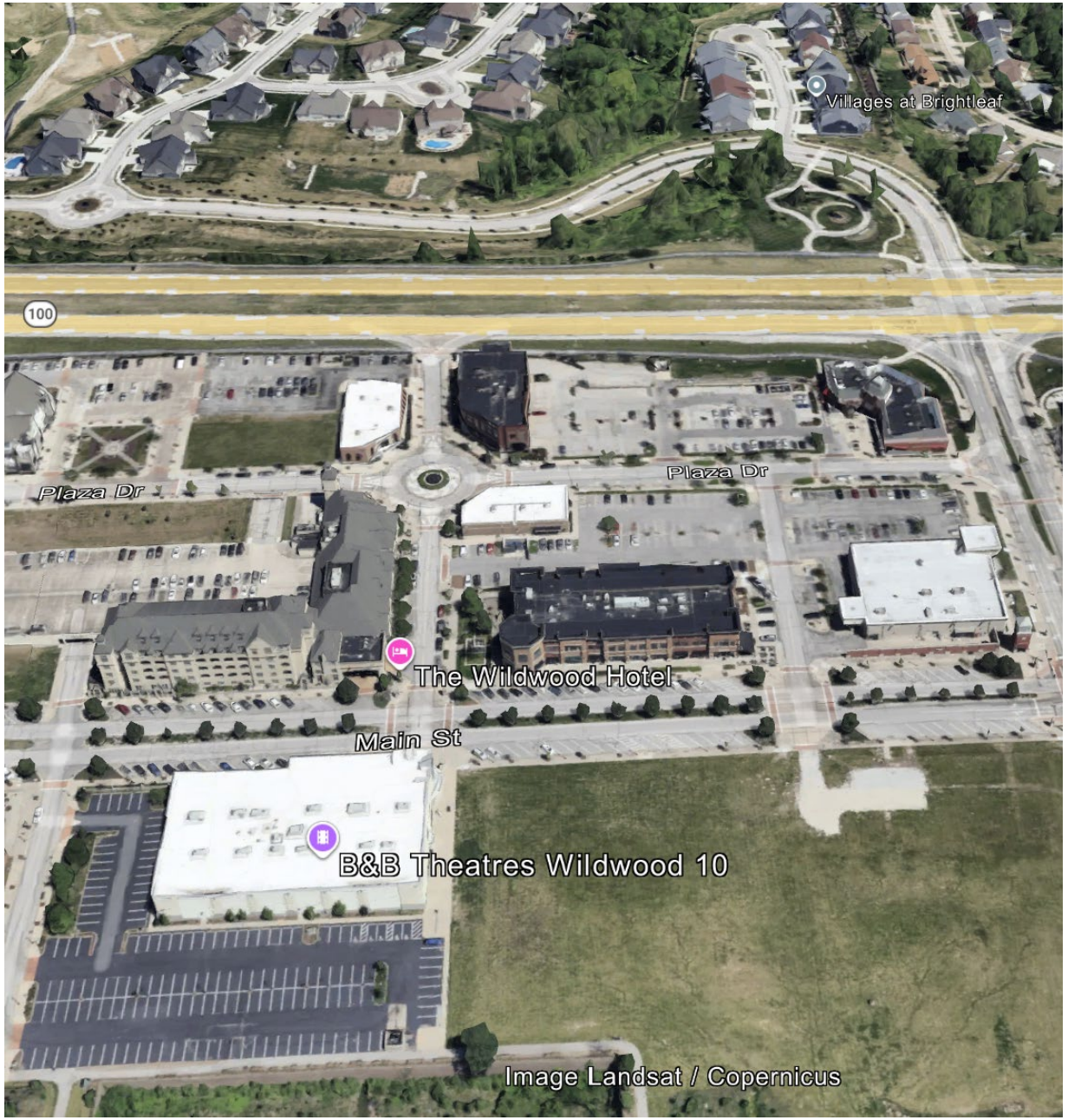
Big Idea #4. Great Corridors & Activity Centers: Transforming Everyday Places into Community Destinations

Strategic Moves for Blue Springs

- Improve Access Management and Corridor Function
- Design Corridors for People as Well as Vehicles
- Strengthen Commercial Activity Centers
- Reimagine US 40 as Blue Springs' Recreation Corridor






Villages at Brightleaf
100
Plaza Dr
Plaza Dr
The Wildwood Hotel
Main St
B&B Theatres Wildwood 10
Image Landsat / Copernicus

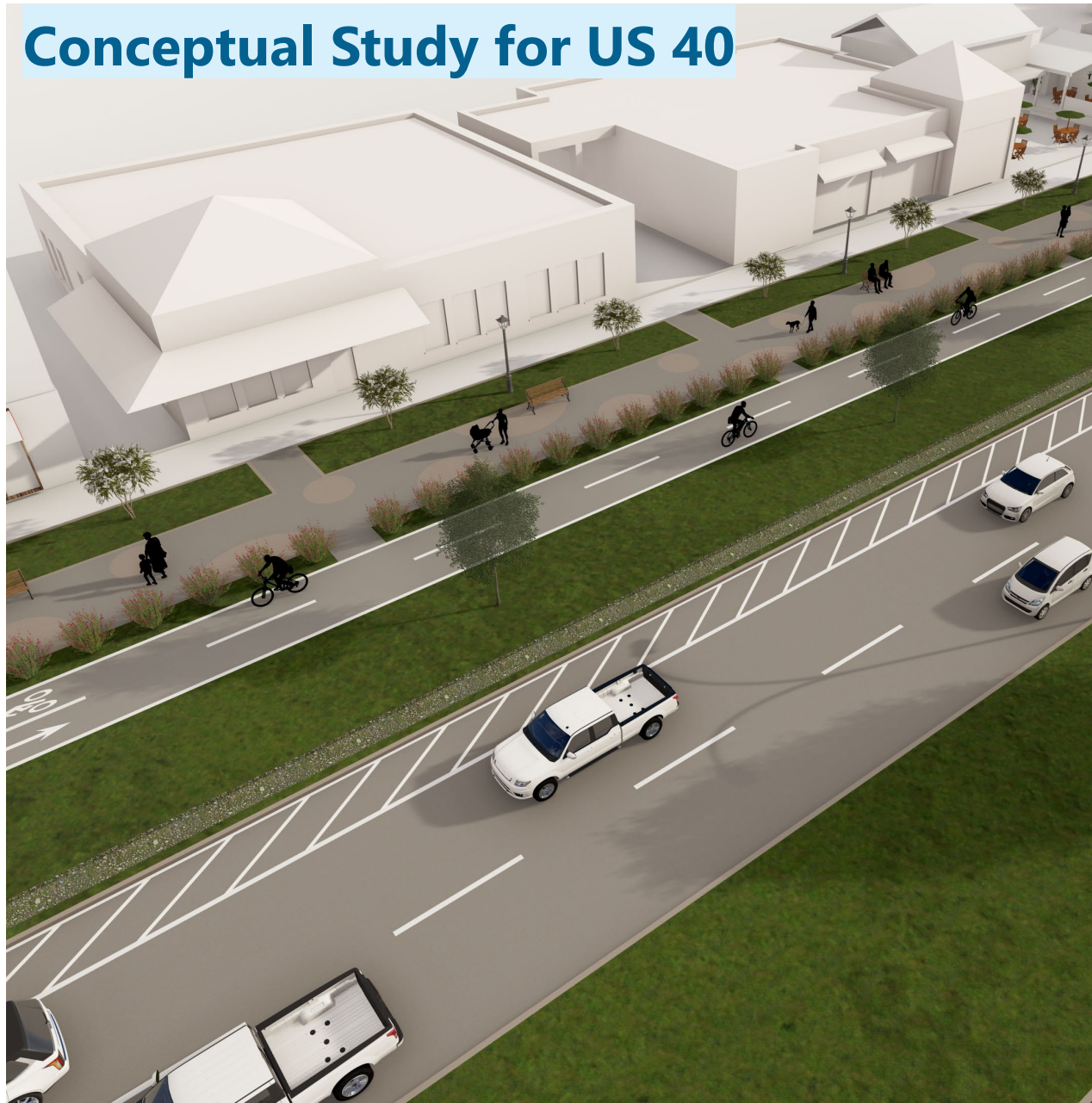




Us 40 Current Street Design



Conceptual Study for US 40



Big Idea #5. Housing for Every Stage of Life: Expanding Housing Choice While Strengthening Neighborhoods







Strategic Moves for Blue Springs

- Expand Housing Options for Aging in Place
- Support Adaptive and Multigenerational Housing
- Encourage Quality Mixed-Density Neighborhood Design
- Focus New Housing in Strategic Growth Areas

Exploring Housing Types in Categories of the Future Land Use Map



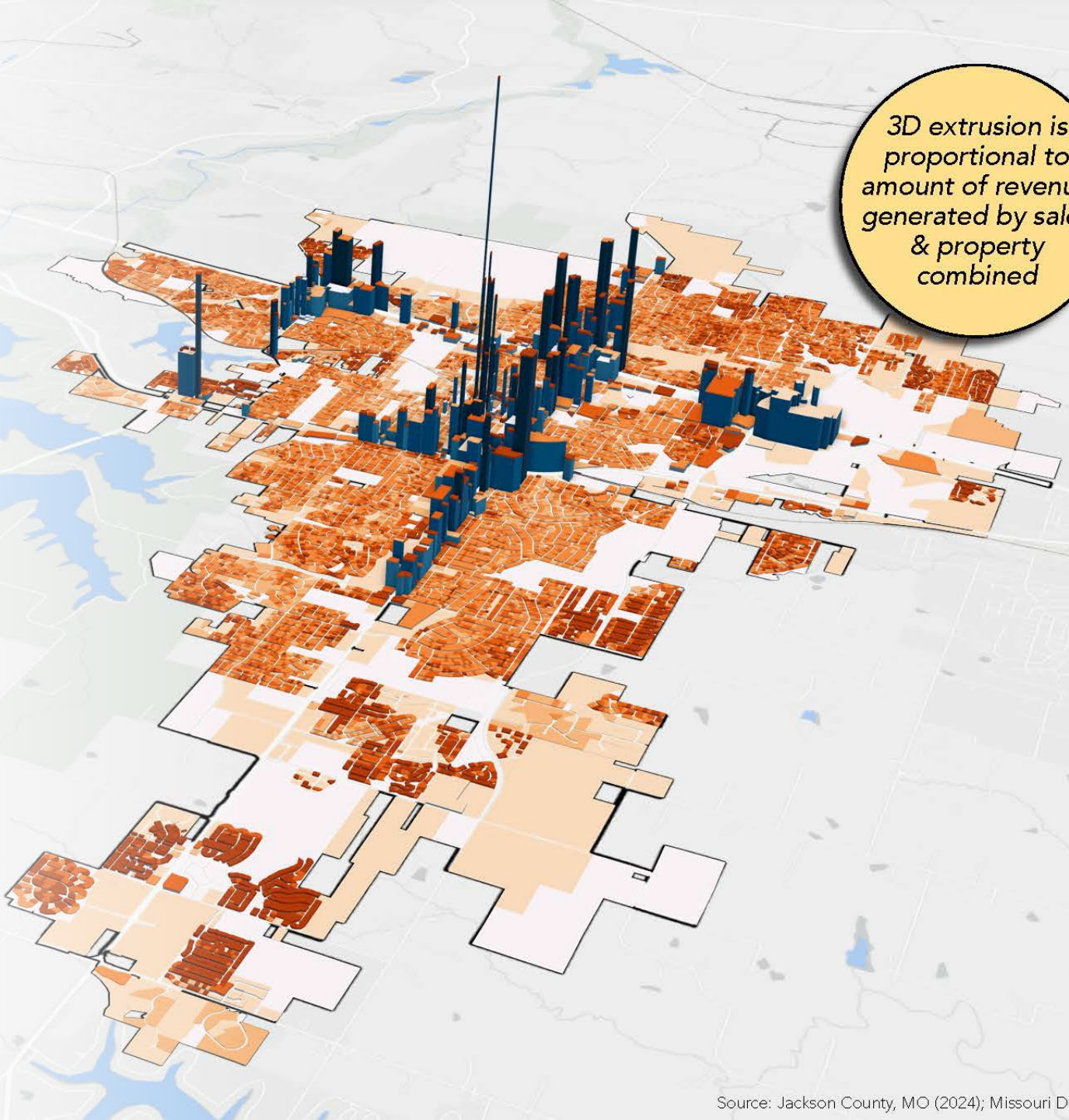
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OPTICOS

Big Idea #6. Building a Stronger Blue Springs: Creating a More Resilient Community for the Future

Strategic Moves for Blue Springs

- Direct Growth and Investment Where It Delivers the Greatest Long-Term Value
- Build a Financially Sustainable and High-Performing Organization
- Expand Partnerships and Funding to Accelerate Implementation



Source: Jackson County, MO (2024); Missouri D

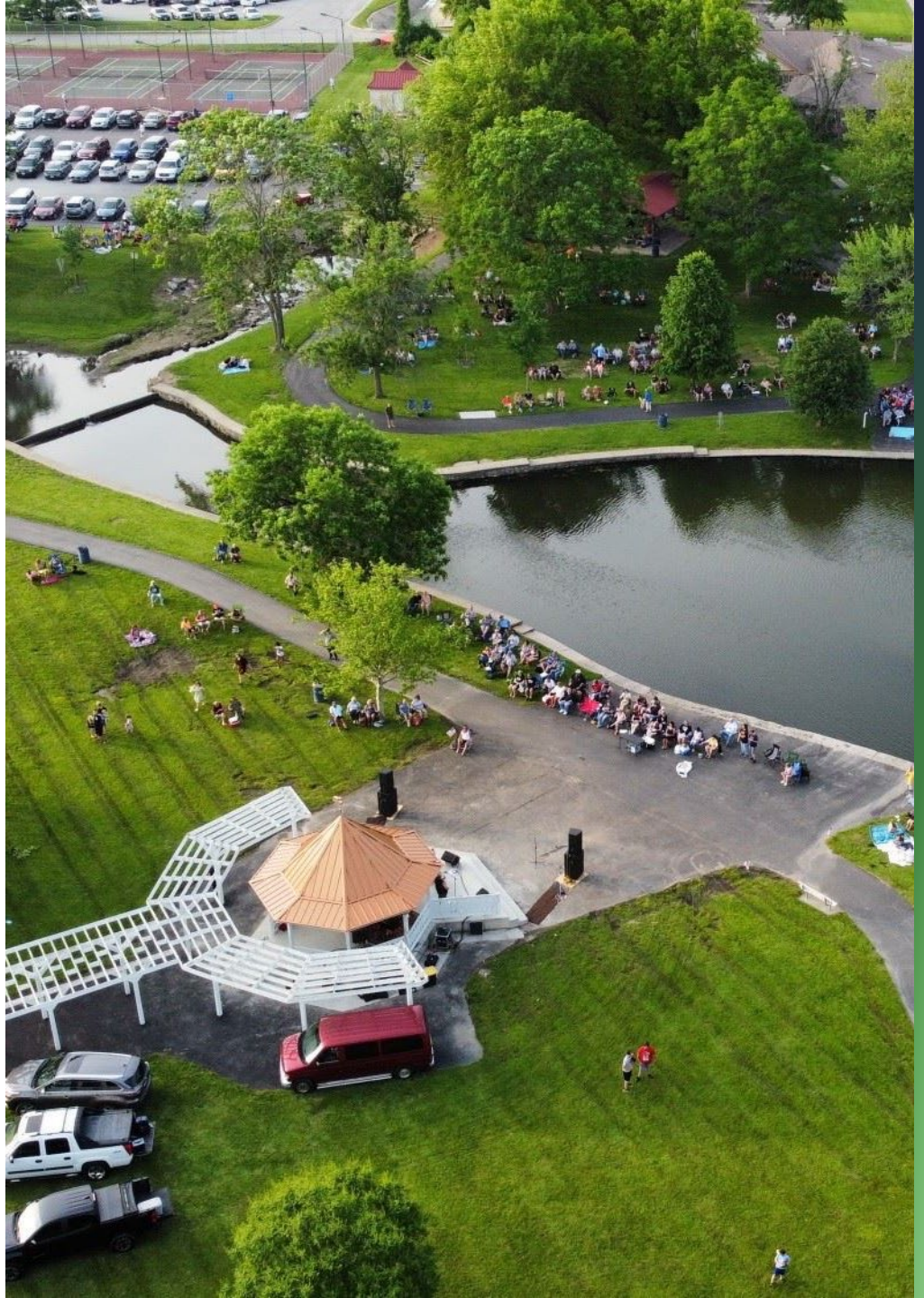
Discussion

- Outdoor Blue Springs
- Downtown Blue Springs
- Connected Blue Springs
- Great Corridors & Activity Centers
- Housing for Every Stage of Life
- Building a Stronger Blue Springs

BLUE SPRINGS NEXT
The Comprehensive Plan

Big Idea #1. Outdoor Blue Springs: Becoming the Region's Recreation-Focused Community

- Is outdoor recreation one of the top things that should **distinguish Blue Springs from other suburban communities**?
- Should **future growth** be directed toward areas that strengthen access to parks, trails, lakes, and natural areas?
- Are there **specific recreation investments** that should be prioritized over the next 10 years?



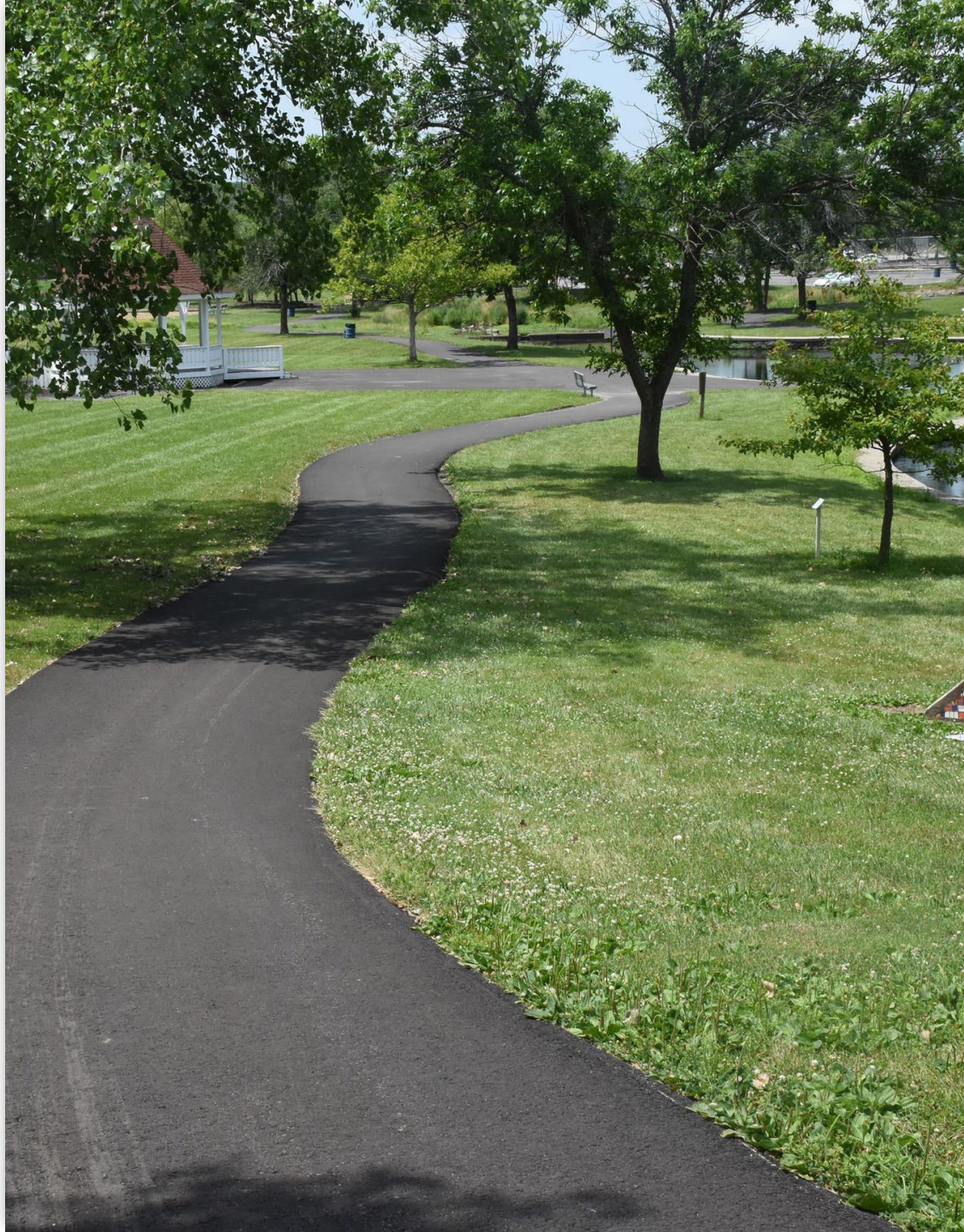
Big Idea #2. Downtown Blue Springs: The Community's Heart and Gathering Place

- Is Downtown the City's **highest-priority reinvestment area**, or are there other areas that should receive equal attention?
- Should the City take an **active role in catalyst redevelopment projects downtown**, or primarily focus on infrastructure and public realm improvements?
- What kinds of **infill housing options** are most appropriate in the broader downtown area?



Big Idea #3. Connected Blue Springs: A Safe, Accessible, and Connected Community

- Should trails, sidewalks, and bicycle facilities be **treated as core infrastructure investments** alongside roads and utilities?
- Where are the most important **connectivity gaps** the City should prioritize?
- Should the **primary goal** be recreation, transportation, safety, or all three?



Big Idea #4. Great Corridors & Activity Centers: Transforming Everyday Places into Community Destinations

- Should MO-7 and US-40 evolve beyond transportation corridors to **become destinations that contribute more** to Blue Springs' identity and sense of place?
- How aggressive should the City be in pursuing corridor improvements such as **access management, beautification, redevelopment, and multimodal connections**?
- Do you support introducing additional **mixed-use and residential development** along portions of MO-7 and US-40 to support businesses, create activity, and improve corridor aesthetics?





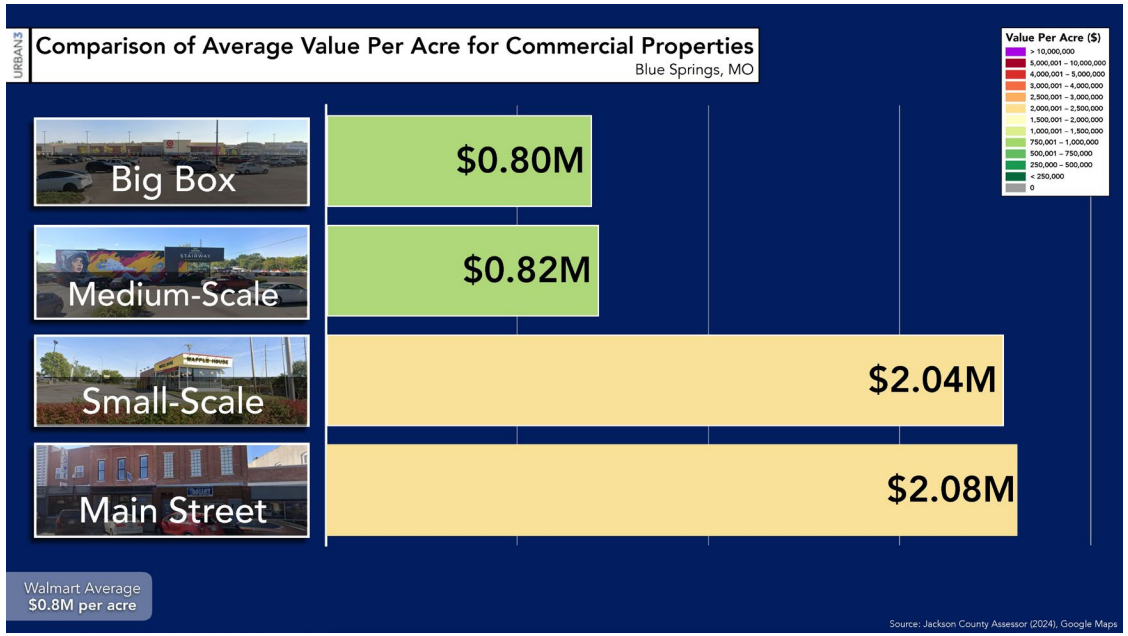
Big Idea #5. Housing for Every Stage of Life: Expanding Housing Choice While Strengthening Neighborhoods

- Which housing gap is most important to address: **housing for seniors, young professionals, workforce households, or growing families**?
- Should new housing choices be **concentrated in specific growth areas**, activity centers, and Downtown, or distributed throughout the city?
- Is **expanding housing choice** a high priority, moderate priority, or low priority for Blue Springs?



Big Idea #6. Building a Stronger Blue Springs: Creating a More Resilient Community for the Future

- Should future growth be evaluated not only on tax revenue generated, but also on the **long-term cost** of maintaining infrastructure and services?
- Should the City prioritize **reinvestment in existing areas** before extending new infrastructure into undeveloped areas?
- What types of projects deserve the **highest priority for public investment** over the next decade?



What's Next?

- **Draft #1 | September–October**
  - City Staff and Technical Committee Review
- **Draft #2 | November**
  - City Council and Planning Commission Review Work Session #3 to be scheduled
- **Draft #3 | January**
  - Stakeholder and Public Review Work sessions and open house
- **Draft #4 | Final Draft**
  - Final revisions, Implementation Dashboard, and adoption process

Your Feedback Will Shape the Plan

- **Land Use Policy & Regulations:** where future growth should occur, what types of development are appropriate in different areas of the city, and what policy or regulatory changes may be needed to implement that vision.
- **Economic Development Tools:** identify priority investment areas, redevelopment opportunities, and the economic development tools that should be used to support community goals and private investment.
- **Funding Sources:** establish priorities for grants, capital projects, infrastructure investments, and other strategic funding opportunities needed to implement the plan.
- **Partnerships:** organizations, agencies, institutions, and private-sector partners that should play a role in advancing Blue Springs' long-term vision and strategic initiatives.



Purpose of This Discussion

Olsson has been working with City staff, stakeholders, residents, and community leaders to prepare **Blue Springs Next**, a comprehensive plan that will guide the City's growth, investment, and development decisions over the coming decades. Throughout the planning process, the project team has gathered community input and worked with City leadership to identify the opportunities, challenges, and priorities that will shape Blue Springs' future. The plan is now entering a critical phase where Council direction will help refine major recommendations, framework maps, and long-term strategies before preparation of the draft plan is completed.

The purpose of this work session is to engage the City Council in a strategic discussion about the future of Blue Springs and to confirm whether the emerging direction of the comprehensive plan reflects the community's aspirations.

The session will begin with a conversation about the community's long-term vision. Councilmembers will be asked to reflect on the qualities that should distinguish the city from other suburban communities, and which opportunities and challenges deserve the greatest attention. Establishing this vision will provide an important foundation for evaluating future policies, investments, and development decisions.

Building on that discussion, the Council will review and discuss six major opportunities that have emerged through the planning process. These "Big Ideas" explore topics such as outdoor recreation, downtown reinvestment, transportation connectivity, corridor redevelopment, housing choices, environmental stewardship, and fiscal sustainability.

The session will also include a review of the draft framework maps that will serve as the foundation for the comprehensive plan. These frameworks address future growth, land use, mobility, and community identity, and will guide future decisions about development, infrastructure, and community investment. Council feedback will help confirm the overall direction of these frameworks before they are translated into final digital maps and incorporated into the draft plan.

The objective of today's discussion is not necessarily to resolve every issue, but rather to identify areas of strong consensus, highlight any outstanding questions, and ensure the project team has the direction needed to advance preparation of the draft plan. Input received during this session will directly inform revisions to draft plan recommendations, framework maps, and implementation strategies.

Thank you for your continued participation and leadership throughout this process. Your insight and feedback are essential to creating a comprehensive plan that reflects the community's values, addresses future opportunities and challenges, and establishes a clear vision for Blue Springs' future.

Big Idea #1: Outdoor Blue Springs: Becoming the Region's Recreation-Focused Community

Introduction

Blue Springs has an opportunity to establish a distinctive identity within the Kansas City metropolitan region by embracing and investing in one of its greatest competitive advantages: access to outdoor recreation, parks, trails, lakes, conservation areas, and natural amenities. The City is uniquely positioned between several regional destinations, including Blue Springs Lake, Lake Jacomo, Fleming Park, Landahl Park, Burr Oak Woods Conservation Area, and an expanding network of local parks and trails. Yet many of these assets currently function as independent destinations rather than components of a larger, coordinated experience. The purpose of this initiative is to establish Blue Springs as a community where recreation is more than a park system. Recreation should become part of how the City promotes itself, attracts investment, supports local businesses, and creates memorable experiences for residents and visitors.

Strategic Moves for Blue Springs

- Establish the Outdoor Blue Springs Identity
- Design Growth Around Natural Systems
- Create Signature Outdoor Destinations
- Grow and Steward Blue Springs' Natural Assets

Discussion Questions

Should outdoor recreation become a defining component of the City's identity? Is recreation a quality-of-life investment, an economic development strategy, or both? How important is the connection between Downtown and regional recreation destinations?

Big Idea #2: Downtown Blue Springs: The Community's Heart and Gathering Place

Introduction

Downtown Blue Springs represents one of the community's greatest opportunities to create lasting economic, social, and fiscal value. While many communities attempt to replicate large regional shopping districts or entertainment centers, Blue Springs possesses something increasingly rare: an authentic downtown environment with historic buildings, locally owned businesses, civic destinations, public gathering spaces, and significant redevelopment opportunity. Rather than attempting to compete with regional shopping centers, Downtown Blue Springs should be strengthened as an authentic, walkable destination centered around local businesses, community events, outdoor recreation, and small-scale entrepreneurship. Downtown can become the community's gathering place while also serving as the front door to Blue Springs' emerging identity as an outdoor recreation community. Expanding housing, strengthening business recruitment, activating public spaces, and strategically redeveloping City-owned properties can increase daily activity while creating a destination that attracts both residents and visitors.

Strategic Moves for Blue Springs

- Create a Downtown Catalyst Development Program
- Establish a Year-Round Market & Events District
- Make Downtown the Launch Point for Blue Springs' Outdoor Recreation Experience
- Expand Outdoor Activity and Flexible Public Spaces
- Grow Downtown as a Neighborhood

Discussion Questions

Is Downtown the community's highest-priority reinvestment area? What role should Downtown play in the future? How aggressive should the City be in pursuing catalyst redevelopment opportunities?

Big Idea #3: Connected Blue Springs: A Safe, Accessible, and Connected Community

Introduction

Blue Springs has made significant investments in sidewalks, trails, and recreational facilities that support walking, bicycling, and outdoor recreation. However, many destinations remain disconnected by gaps in the transportation network, making it difficult for residents to safely and comfortably travel between neighborhoods, schools, parks, commercial areas, and community destinations without driving. As Blue Springs continues to grow, active transportation should be viewed as more than a recreational amenity. A connected walking, bicycling, and mobility network can improve public health, support economic development, expand transportation choices, increase safety, and strengthen quality of life. By building on existing assets and strategically closing key gaps, Blue Springs can create a transportation system that serves residents of all ages and abilities while supporting broader community goals.

Strategic Moves for Blue Springs

- Build a Connected Citywide Mobility Network
- Connect People to Parks, Schools, and Recreation
- Position Downtown as the Community's Mobility Hub
- Strengthen Regional Connections and Future Mobility Opportunities

Discussion Questions

What level of investment should be made in trails, sidewalks, and active transportation? What missing connections are most important to residents?

Big Idea #4: Great Corridors & Activity Centers: Transforming Everyday Places into Community Destinations

Introduction

US Highway 40 and Missouri Route 7 serve as two of Blue Springs' most important transportation corridors. They function as major gateways into the community, support commercial and industrial activity, and accommodate large volumes of regional traffic every day. However, decades of auto-oriented development have created corridors characterized by fragmented access, aging properties, limited pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, safety concerns, and a lack of visual identity. The long-term success of Blue Springs will be influenced by how these corridors evolve over time. Because US 40 and Route 7 play critical regional transportation roles, significant reductions in roadway capacity are neither realistic nor desirable. Instead, the opportunity lies in reimagining these corridors as places that balance mobility with safety, economic vitality, and community character. Through strategic access management, corridor beautification, redevelopment, enhanced wayfinding, and improved walking and bicycling connections, these corridors can better support businesses while creating a more attractive and memorable experience for residents and visitors.

Strategic Moves for Blue Springs

- Reimagine US 40 as Blue Springs' Recreation Corridor
- Design Corridors for People as Well as Vehicles
- Strengthen Commercial Activity Centers
- Improve Access Management and Corridor Function

Discussion Questions

Do Councilmembers support reimagining MO-7 and MO-40 as more than transportation corridors? How much emphasis should be placed on beautification, redevelopment, access management, and placemaking?

Big Idea #5: Housing for Every Stage of Life: Expanding Housing Choice While Strengthening Neighborhoods

Introduction

Housing plays a critical role in the long-term success of Blue Springs. As household needs continue to evolve, communities that offer a variety of housing choices are better positioned to attract new residents, retain existing households, support workforce needs, and remain competitive within the Kansas City region. While single-family neighborhoods will continue to be an important part of Blue Springs' character, there is growing demand for housing options that serve residents at different ages, income levels, and stages of life.

Many residents seek to remain in Blue Springs throughout their lives, yet the community's housing supply does not always provide the range of options necessary to support that goal. Young professionals entering the housing market, growing families, empty nesters looking to downsize, older adults seeking to age in place, and workers employed in the community all have different housing needs. Expanding housing choice can help ensure that residents are able to find homes that meet their changing circumstances without having to leave the community.

Strategic Moves for Blue Springs

- Expand Housing Options for Aging in Place
- Encourage Quality Mixed-Density Neighborhood Design
- Focus New Housing in Strategic Growth Areas
- Support Adaptive and Multigenerational Housing

Discussion Questions

What types of housing should be most focused on? Where could new housing options be focused?

Big Idea #6: Building a Stronger Blue Springs: Creating a More Resilient Community for the Future

Introduction

The long-term success of Blue Springs will depend not only on what the community builds, but on its ability to maintain, operate, and reinvest in those assets over time. Communities across the country are facing growing financial pressures as construction costs, infrastructure expenses, equipment costs, insurance premiums, technology investments, and personnel costs continue to increase. At the same time, state and federal funding sources can fluctuate, development patterns are changing, and residents increasingly expect high-quality services, parks, public safety, and infrastructure. These trends require communities to think differently about growth, investment, and long-term financial sustainability. Growth alone does not guarantee fiscal health. New roads, utilities, parks, and public facilities create maintenance obligations that can last for decades. Every public investment should therefore be evaluated not only based on its initial cost, but its lifetime cost to operate, maintain, repair, and eventually replace. Building a resilient Blue Springs means strengthening the City's ability to adapt to changing economic conditions, maintain service levels, diversify revenue sources, leverage partnerships, pursue external funding opportunities, and make strategic investments that maximize long-term value. It also means recognizing that development patterns influence municipal finances. Development that makes better use of existing infrastructure can often generate significantly more tax revenue while requiring fewer new public investments than development that continually expands outward. A resilient community is one that grows strategically, invests wisely, embraces innovation, and continuously strengthens its capacity to respond to future challenges and opportunities.

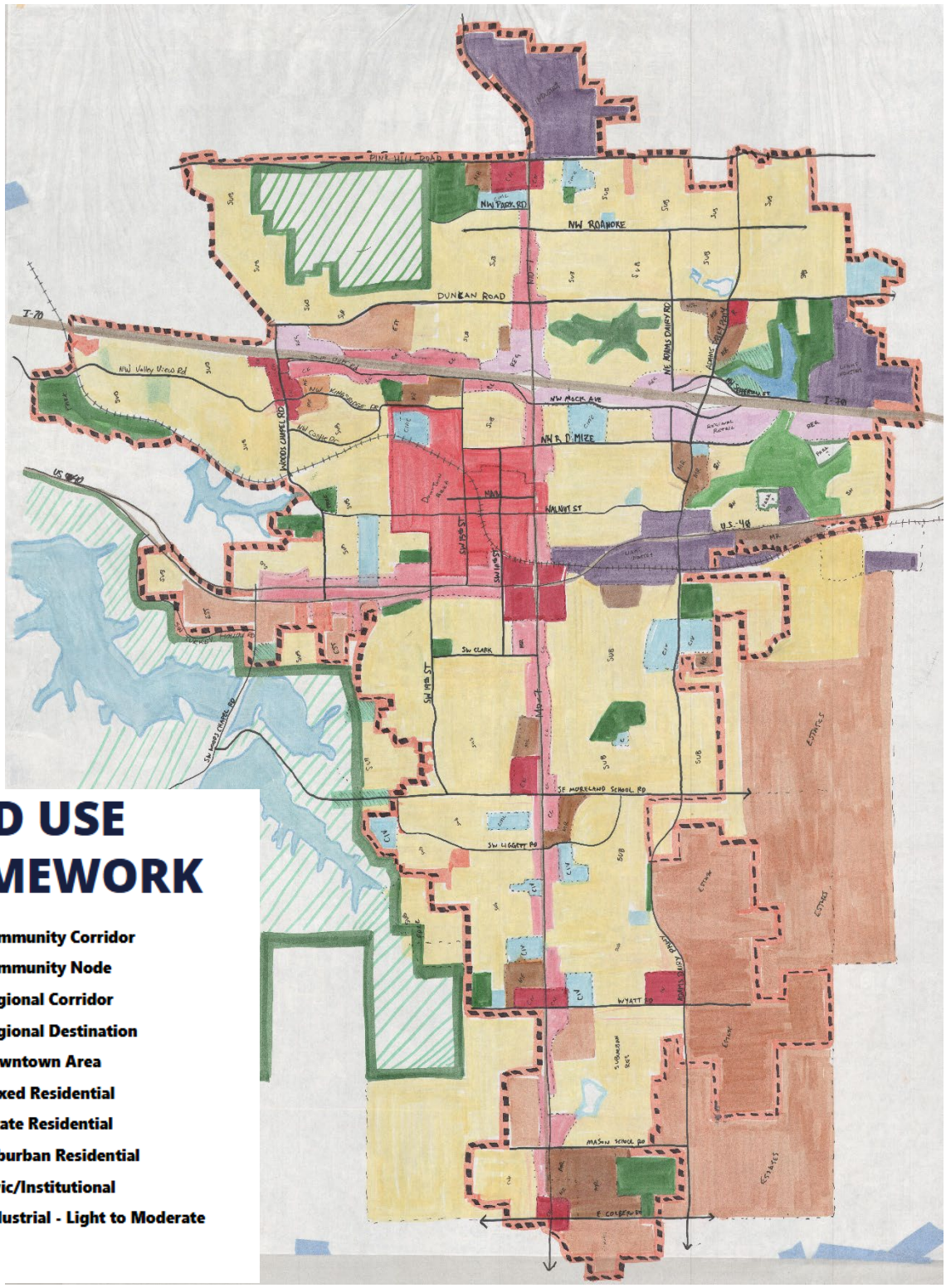
Strategic Moves for Blue Springs

- Direct Growth and Investment Where It Delivers the Greatest Long-Term Value
- Build a Financially Sustainable and High-Performing Organization
- Expand Partnerships and Funding to Accelerate Implementation

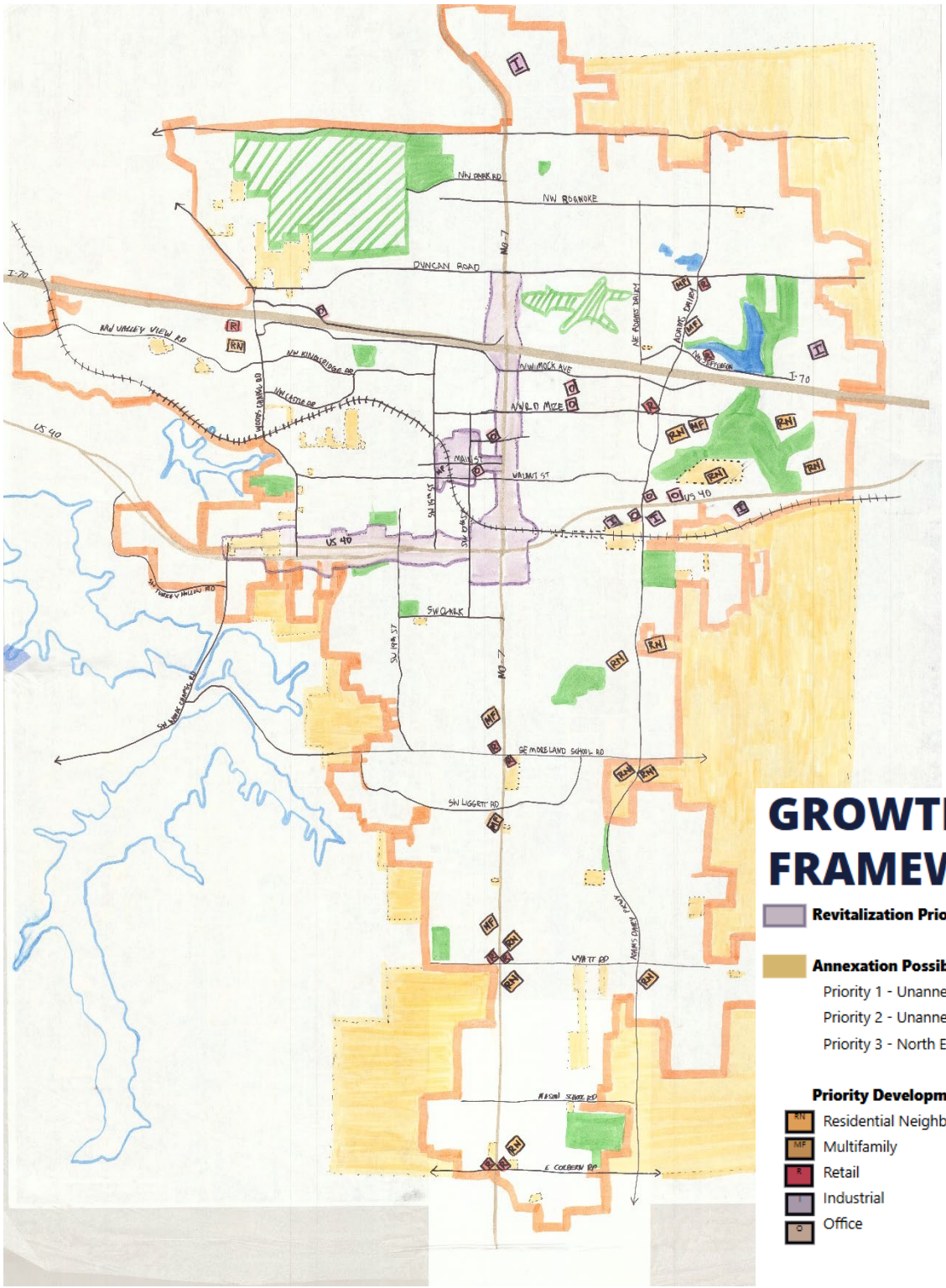
Discussion Questions

What should be the City's approach to long-term fiscal sustainability and strategic investment? How should public dollars be prioritized??

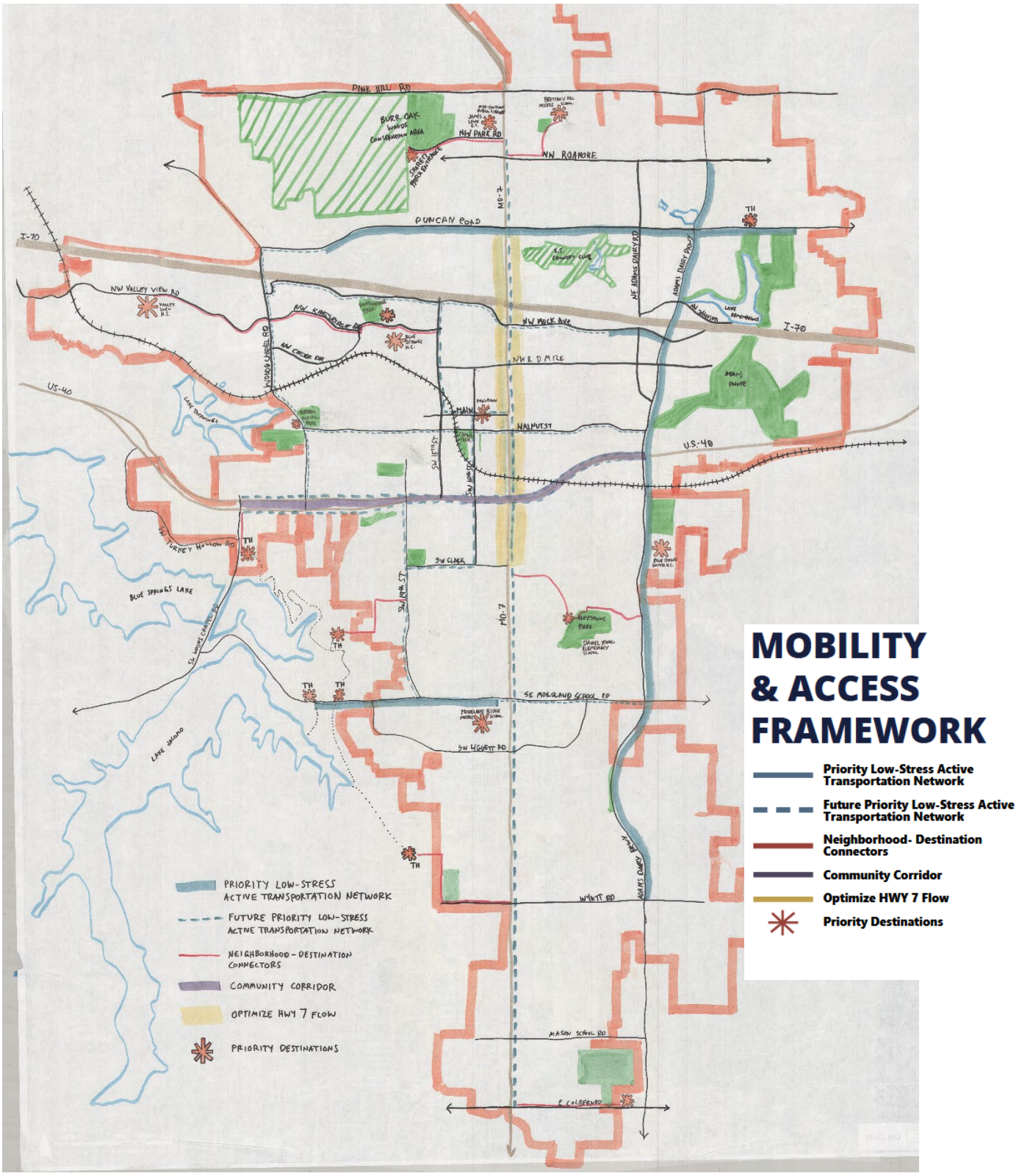
Land Use Framework



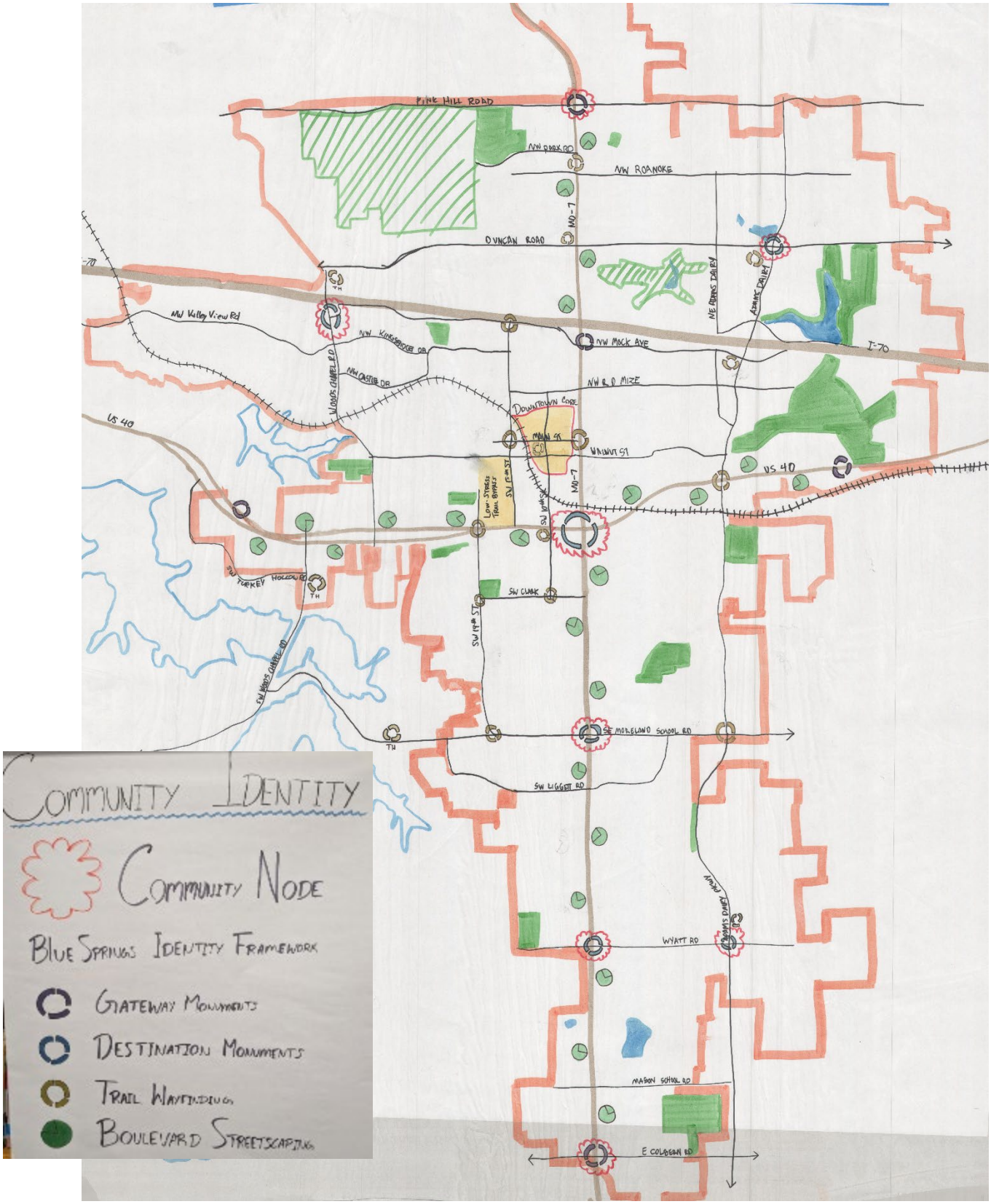
Growth Framework



Mobility Framework



Community Identity Framework



BLUE SPRINGS
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Title: Blue Springs Next Comprehensive Plan Workshop

Meeting: City Council Direction and Summary

Date: August 26, 2026

Blue Springs Vision

During the work session, City Council emphasized that the Comprehensive Plan needs to establish its own identity for Blue Springs, and not try to replicate other communities in the metro such as Lee's Summit, Overland Park, Leawood, etc. There was a general consensus that Blue Springs is working to become a community that other communities in the metro look to as a model.

There also seemed to be consensus around the idea of working towards making Blue Springs an attractive place to live at all stages of life, particularly young families; and having young residents return back to Blue Springs. Particularly students who graduate from Blue Springs School District will want to return back to live, work, and raise their families. And while the plan is looking in the immediate 20 years, there was consensus around ensuring that decisions that are made today remain relevant 40 years into the future.

There was also a strong desire to avoid repeating past patterns of development and regulation simply because they have historically been the City's approach. Council encouraged the City and Olsson team to be willing to think differently, and continually move projects and ideas forward.

Major themes identified as central to the future of Blue Springs included:

- A strong and identifiable community identity.
- Downtown as the heart of the community.
- Greater connectivity between neighborhoods, destinations, parks, commercial areas, and downtown.

- Strategic/concentrated economic development rather than dispersed development.
- A wider range of housing and lifestyle choices.
- Creating places where residents can live, shop, recreate, and socialize without relying exclusively on vehicles.

Big Idea 1 – Outdoor Blue Springs

The Olsson team identified outdoor recreation as a potential distinguishing characteristic for Blue Springs because of the City's parks and proximity to Blue Springs Lake, mountain biking, fishing, kayaking, and other recreational opportunities. Council generally agreed that outdoor recreation is an important asset and could become part of Blue Springs' community identity and economic development strategy. There was also a notion that it should not be construed to developing overly restrictive landscaping or tree preservation regulations.

Landscaping

Council discussed previous landscaping requirements that resulted in excessive vegetation obscuring businesses and signage. The idea moving forward is to focus on landscaping quality and ensuring there is long term maintenance in place to avoid previous issues. There was also mention of considering alternatives for landscaping consider greater investment in public art to help with beautification throughout the city. Overall landscaping is important but instead of focusing on the compliance only during the development process, thinking through long term maintenance.

Lake Remembrance Area

There was significant discussion regarding the future of the Lake Remembrance property. The initial Olsson concept appeared primarily recreational/open space oriented (Low Impact Commercial Development). Several members expressed concern about the concept not taking full advantage of the site, and see the site as one of the largest development opportunities for the City. The take away from the conversation is that there is general support for higher end residential development, townhomes, or other housing types in the area. There is a desire to see more regional commercial opportunities such as restaurants, retail, entertainment, and green space/walkability. The site could also potentially connect to the proposed amphitheater, adams landing, Iconic and ADP. There seemed to be general consensus that the site not be preserved like park space, but create a balance of development and natural space. Ultimately want to create an area where residents can live, work, shop and play.

There was conversation around regional commercial centers such as Zona Rosa, but want any development to be economically sustainable and reflect the current market conditions and not just duplicate another development.

Economic Development/Incentives

Council discussed the possibility of working with the property ownership group after the comprehensive planning process to see if any momentum can be created for the site. The council generally seemed to be in support of the consideration of economic development incentives if the project is prompting the growth they want to see and provides the public benefit.

Big Idea 2 – Downtown Blue Springs

Council and the Olsson team discussed downtown as a primary community destination and one of the areas where the City can most directly influence future development. There was support for continuing to leverage City-owned property as a catalyst for private development. The Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel was identified as an important implementation step that can help refine the City's strategy for its downtown properties.

Farmers Market / Downtown Activation

Ideas discussed included:

- Exploring a permanent or semi-permanent market pavilion.
- Maintaining parking functionality when the market is not operating.
- Exploring sponsorship opportunities to reduce public cost.
- Expanding the vendor mix beyond traditional produce vendors.
- Partnering with organizations that curate art, crafts, makers, and regional vendors.
- Using events and programming to bring regional visitors downtown.

The Olsson also discussed parklets and outdoor dining programs that allow businesses to temporarily utilize on-street parking spaces. Council expressed interest but stressed that adequate parking must be maintained before removing existing spaces.

Parking

Council noted that downtown parking may involve both supply and management.

Strategies discussed included:

- Clear parking signage and wayfinding.
- Better identification of public parking.
- Ensuring adequate parking behind or near businesses before converting street parking to other uses.

Public restroom availability was also identified as an ongoing downtown issue.

Expanded Downtown Area

Council responded positively to expanding the conceptual downtown area across MO-7 to include areas such as Hobby Lobby/OfficeMax and Rotary Park. The area was identified as a redevelopment opportunity that could potentially become part of a larger downtown activity node.

Downtown Housing

Council supported viewing downtown as a complete neighborhood rather than only a Main Street commercial district. Potential strategies discussed included: residential infill, missing-middle housing, diversifying housing types, and potential pre-approved housing plans to reduce development timelines and encourage reinvestment.

Big Idea 3 – Citywide Connectivity

Connectivity was repeatedly identified as one of the most important components of Blue Springs' future identity. Council expressed strong support for creating a connected system linking: Neighborhoods, schools, parks, downtown, commercial areas, recreational destinations, and regional trail systems.

The goal should be to give residents meaningful transportation options beyond cars. Council supported designing bicycle and pedestrian facilities that are comfortable enough for families and inexperienced users, rather than only experienced cyclists. Grade-separated multi-use trails were identified as the preferred “low-stress” facility.

Alternative Trail Construction / ADA

Council asked whether lower-cost trail or sidewalk alternatives could be used in locations where terrain makes traditional sidewalks difficult. Examples included: Asphalt trails, trails through drainage areas, and alternatives to traditional curb-and-gutter concrete sidewalks. The Olsson team will verify ADA requirements and available design

flexibility with its transportation engineers. Duncan Road was specifically referenced as an area where pedestrian connectivity is currently difficult.

Regional Connectivity

Council encouraged the Comprehensive Plan to think beyond Blue Springs' municipal boundaries. Potential regional connections included: blue springs lake, lake Jacomo, fleming park, connection to little blue trace, woods chapel road, grain valley, and the Jackson County trail system. It was discussed that we could look at partnerships with Jackson County, nearby municipalities, MARC, and other agencies to help create greater regional trail connections.

Big Idea 4 – Corridors and Activity Centers

Council discussed shifting away from continuous strip-commercial development along MO-7 and US-40 toward a hub-and-spoke development model. The general concept is to allow MO-7 and US-40 to function primarily as transportation corridors connecting concentrated activity centers rather than continuing commercial development along their entire length.

Concentrated Development Nodes

Council generally supported concentrating commercial development in fewer, stronger locations. Potential regional destinations that were discussed included: Adams Dairy Landing, Iconic, Lake Remembrance, Downtown, and a future regional destination on the south side of Blue Springs to tap into Lee's Summit. These neighborhood serving nodes would include uses such as grocery stores, restaurants, coffee shops, services, small scale retail and general neighborhood amenities. There was concerned raised that having too many small scale commercial nodes dilutes the market and is what contributes to vacancies and stalls commercial development. The Comprehensive Plan should work to create clearer priorities for a smaller number of areas.

MO-7 Corridor

Council discussed whether some existing commercial areas along MO-7 could eventually transition to residential or other uses. These developments would generally access local streets or shared internal streets rather than MO-7 directly. Council cited existing areas where residential neighborhoods back up to MO-7 but take access from another roadway as a potential model. There was not general consensus on this concept or approach that could be discussed further to solidify guidance. There was also conversation about creating greater connectivity outside the existing street system to

allow community members to travel without getting on a major thoroughfare. The idea being to support access management but also allow MO-7 to function better as a major transportation corridor.

Commercial Locations

Council generally did not support establishing retail at every major intersection. Existing and future commercial development should instead be concentrated in locations with sufficient surrounding rooftops and market demand. The Olsson team was asked to evaluate the market demand necessary to sustain commercial nodes.

US-40 Corridor

Council supported exploring US-40 as a major multimodal connection between Blue Springs Lake and downtown. Council specifically emphasized that any multimodal improvements must include safe opportunities to cross US-40. Current traffic speeds and volumes make walking across the corridor difficult for families and children. Council encouraged extending the concept beyond MO-7 and considering connections west toward Woods Chapel, Blue Springs Lake, and potentially the Little Blue Trace.

MoDOT Coordination

Council identified MoDOT as a major implementation concern because MO-7 and US-40 are state highways. There was concern about the City's ability to coordinate improvements given previous challenges involving traffic signals and corridor improvements. There was not general consensus about assuming ownership of significant portions of MoDOT's roadway network.

Specific Development Areas Summary

Lake Remembrance preferred direction: Comprehensive mixed-use destination, significant residential components, restaurants and retail, green space and recreation, walkability, strong connections to surrounding development, potential regional destination, avoid treating the entire site solely as park/open space, and consider incentives if necessary to achieve the desired development. Olsson will look at additional market analysis to determine feasibility of these development types.

Woods Chapel Property

Olsson presented the large cleared development area near Woods Chapel. Council generally envisioned a stronger commercial component than was shown during the

design charrette. Potential uses discussed included: Grocery or neighborhood-serving commercial, some housing, limited higher-density housing, townhomes or fourplexes as transitions, and trails and open-space buffers. Council acknowledged that surrounding residents may strongly oppose significant multifamily development. The area already contains substantial residential density, including existing apartments and neighborhoods, making it potentially appropriate for a stronger commercial node.

MO-7 / Shrout Farm

The property was discussed as another potential neighborhood activity center. Council requested that the Comprehensive Plan identify what the City wants the property to become, rather than simply documenting what a private developer may currently be considering. Potential preferred uses discussed included: Higher-end townhomes/villas, restaurants, neighborhood-oriented retail, grocery or similar anchor, a coordinated rather than piecemeal development pattern. Council requested additional market analysis regarding what commercial uses would realistically succeed in the area.

South Blue Springs Growth

Council supported continued growth and potential annexation to the south and southeast. There was interest in ultimately bringing additional unincorporated areas into Blue Springs where practical. Council indicated that long-term development in this area should not remain exclusively rural or large-estate residential. Instead, future growth should include a broader mix of uses and housing densities.

Southern Activity Center

Council expressed interest in identifying a future regional or subregional destination on the south side of Blue Springs. Potential areas discussed included: Colbern Road and MO-7, Areas farther east along Adams Dairy Parkway, or Wyatt Road and surrounding areas. The goal would be to avoid repeating the strip-commercial pattern of MO-7. Instead, commercial development should be concentrated into a planned center surrounded by a variety of housing. Uses discussed includes: grocery, medical offices, restaurants, retail, high end housing, townhouses, and public space.

Council noted that the area could potentially serve not only Blue Springs but also residents of Pleasant Hill, Lone Jack, eastern Lee's Summit, Lake Lotawana, etc. The Olsson team will evaluate what types of regional destinations are realistic given market conditions and distance from I-70.

Sports and Recreation Destination

Council discussed whether a regional sports complex could be part of Blue Springs' economic development strategy. Examples included facilities in Olathe, Liberty, and other metro communities that generate tournament travel. Council emphasized that a successful complex would need to be designed around tournament operators and regional users, not only demand from Blue Springs residents.

The Olsson team will review previous Parks and Recreation planning and community feedback regarding demand for these facilities and may involve its sports facility specialist.

Annexation

Council generally supported future annexation where it contributes to logical City growth. Priorities discussed included: Cleaning up existing unincorporated pockets within City boundaries, evaluating areas near Blue Springs Lake, considering properties between Blue Springs and Jackson County parkland, and future growth south and southeast of the City. The Comprehensive Plan should identify the long-term development pattern that is in the City's best interest rather than simply preserving the existing rural pattern indefinitely.

Additional Council Discussion Needed

Council determined that additional discussion is necessary before the Comprehensive Plan advances substantially further. A second Council work session was requested prior to completion of the draft plan.

Topics to discuss include: housing mix, single family vs. multi-family, townhomes and duplexes, affordable housing, and appropriate locations for higher density housing. There also needs to be continued conversation around the development nodes and determine target areas, 7 and 40 redevelopment, and future activity centers.

It would also be good to confirm that council wants to move from a dispersed, corridor oriented development pattern to a more organized community that is centered around a number of strong walkable activity centers that have multi-modal transportation connectivity. The Comprehensive Plan needs to be ambitious in order to change the existing development pattern rather than just documenting them.

The future Blue Springs envisioned by Council is a community with:

A distinct identity.
A strong downtown.
Regional destinations.
Connected neighborhoods.
A variety of housing.
Strategically concentrated commercial development.
Outdoor recreation as a meaningful asset.
And places where people can live, work, shop, gather, and recreate within the same community.