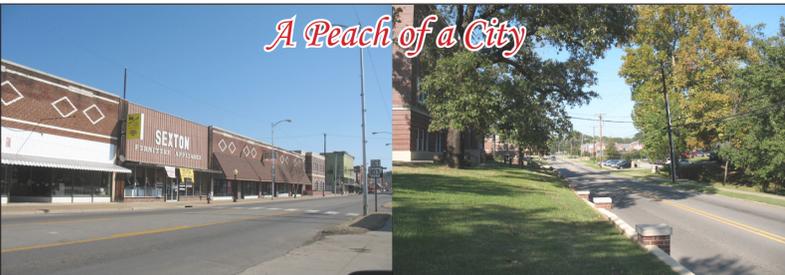


# A Peach of a City



## Clarksville, Arkansas Comprehensive Plan Summary

### INTRODUCTION

This plan states the official policy of the City of Clarksville regarding growth and development within its Planning Area. The Clarksville Planning Commission directed the preparation of the plan after careful study of the area. Topics of study included community history, topography, utility capacity, transportation systems, financial condition, existing infrastructure and surrounding land use.

The Planning Commission held a number of meetings and hearings during the planning process. All meetings included public participation. Comments and ideas generated by the public make up portions of the plan.

### ABOUT CLARKSVILLE

#### History

The city of Clarksville, named for early settler Lorenzo N. Clark, is over 150 years old. In 1838, just two years after Arkansas achieved statehood, a courthouse was built in the area on the same site the present courthouse stands today. This town was the newest addition to Johnson County, formed in 1833 from the western portion of Pope County.

In 1848 the city was incorporated. Over the next 25 years, the small town of Clarksville struggled to survive and rebuild during the devastation of the Mexican-American War, Civil War, and several large fires, but the community persisted and reached a population of a few hundred residents by the 1870s.

In 1873, Clarksville was put on the map when the Iron Mountain Railroad was extended to the city. The resulting influx of immigrants into Clarksville and the waning use of steamboat and stagecoach travel helped the city surpass nearby towns like Spadra in size and

popularity. Over the years, Clarksville grew into a vibrant city while maintaining its historical roots.

One important component of Clarksville's history and future is the University of the Ozarks. This institution was originally founded in 1834 in nearby Cane Hill, making it the oldest institution of higher education in the state.

In 1891, the school was moved to Clarksville and renamed Arkansas Cumberland College. In 1920, the school became College of the Ozarks and later, the University of the Ozarks. This college was the first in Arkansas to graduate a woman (1872) and the first historically white college in the state to admit an African-American student (1957).



Gateway to the University of the Ozarks

The city of Clarksville experienced many hardships in its beginning, but its determined population and educational leadership helped the city grow into a vibrant town with a rich history.

#### Trends

The Clarksville population increased 32.2 percent from 1990 to 2000 to 7,719 residents. During this time, the number of high school graduates increased to 66.9 percent, while the number of college graduates

decreased to 15.7 percent. In both of these categories Clarksville fell below the state average.

In 2000, the per capita income in Clarksville was \$16,305, and the median family income was \$30,758. While both of these income levels increased from 1990 to 2000, both are lower than the county and state average. In 2000 Clarksville also had a greater percentage of residents living below poverty level than the county and the state. Additionally, 7.3 percent of Clarksville residents were unemployed, almost twice the state average.

Despite low income levels, 82.4 percent of homeowners in Clarksville were living in housing classified as affordable in 2000, a greater percentage than in the county and the state. Also, 6.5 percent of Clarksville workers walked to work, more than in Ozark, Russellville, or the state.

### Planning Area

Clarksville is located near Spadra Creek at the foothills of the Ozark Mountains in the Arkansas River Valley and is the county seat of Johnson County, AR.

Clarksville has two major east-west corridors running through its Planning Area, U.S. Route 64 and Interstate 40. North-south corridors include Arkansas Highways 103, 194, and Scenic Highway 21. The Clarksville Municipal Airport is in the western section of the Planning Area. The city is also located on the Union-Pacific Railroad's main line. This is the largest railroad in the United States. In addition, Lake Dardanelle is located just south of the Planning Area and connects to the Arkansas River.

The topography of Clarksville consists mainly of rolling hills. Elevations range from 340 ft. to 650 ft. above sea level, generally increasing from south to north. Spadra Creek is located in the Planning area and is surrounded by floodplain. Floodplain accounts for a large percentage of vacant land in Clarksville and trisects the city into three main areas of development.

### ISSUES & RECOMMENDATIONS

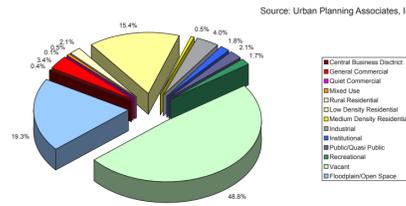
Throughout the planning process, the community and planning team identified issues facing the city and developed the following recommendations.

#### Annexation and Growth

Currently, the City of Clarksville is not very dense and has quite a bit of vacant land. Before annexing, the City will work to develop the vacant areas within the city that are not in the floodplain. Balancing expansion with infill development will ensure the City takes full advantage of the streets, services, and utilities already in place. The plan recommends making annexation a requirement for connecting new subdivisions or large-scale developments to the City system.

### Land Use

According to the land use survey, 48.8 percent of land in Clarksville is vacant, not including vacant land within the floodplain. This is a significant portion of the city, and city staff and the Planning Commission will work to promote infill development where appropriate. Other land uses within the city are shown in the chart below.



Clarksville, Arkansas Existing Land Use

### Downtown

The downtown area is a major asset to the city of Clarksville. In order to rejuvenate and build on this asset, the City will work to attract more people and businesses to the area. Specialty shops, restaurants, and small retail businesses generally work well in modern downtown areas. The City will collaborate with other entities to coordinate downtown businesses so that they work together to promote the area. Signature signage, landscaping, and entryways could help to unify the area aesthetically. A comprehensive, well-connected sidewalk system would help bring residents, especially college students, downtown without increasing automobile traffic.

### Transportation

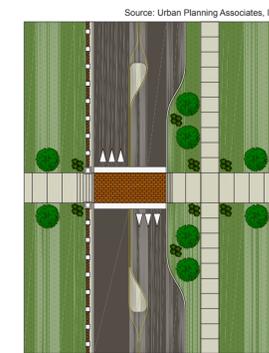
Congestion near the interchange of Rogers St. with Interstate Highway 40 is an issue in Clarksville. The City plans to widen Rogers St. in the future if the funds become available, and there are many options the City can take to decrease traffic if it remains a problem. When making a decision, the City will consider the costs and benefits of each option and its impact on neighborhoods, retail, the environment, and other factors in the community.

The plan also suggests the City continue a grid system where possible to increase connectivity and improve traffic flow. In addition, the plan strongly suggests the City require half or whole street improvements as well as right-of-way dedications for new development along unimproved rural roads. Crawford St. is one corridor in particular that needs improvements. The City should employ strict access management principles along this roadway, limiting curb cuts to the greatest extent possible. Residential and commercial development should follow strict access guidelines along the

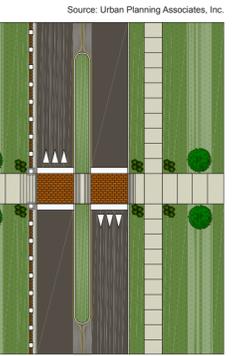
roadway frontage in order to enable better traffic flow. Furthermore, the plan recommends future roadway improvements allot for the safe use of multiple transportation methods. A comprehensive system of sidewalks, trails, and bike lanes are important to the health of the community and its environment.

Traffic calming devices can make pedestrian mobility safer and slow down traffic in neighborhoods. The plan recommends installing traffic calming devices in all locations where pedestrian traffic may be high, especially around schools and trail crossings.

The drawings on this page illustrate two possible traffic calming devices for College Ave. adjacent to the University of the Ozarks campus. Neckdowns and medians are devices that slow motorists and alert them to upcoming pedestrian crossings by narrowing the roadway. In addition, the curb extensions of a neckdown shorten the distance the pedestrian must travel on the street, and a median breaks the crossing into two shorter trips.



Neckdown on College Ave.



Median on College Ave.

### Beautification

As the city grows and develops, it should work to protect its corridors and gateways from transitional degradation. Landscaping and sign regulations, welcoming signage, and overlays can help protect these gateways and corridors. The corridors are important to the identity and beauty of the city because they are the first thing visitors see.

The City should also develop and promote uniform downtown design guidelines for the maintenance and renovation of downtown properties. These suggestions can supplement the building facade regulations already in place and help maintain safe, durable, and attractive developments that compliment the existing character of the city.

The city should also promote community involvement in beautification projects to foster support for future regulations. Possible community projects include neighborhood clean-up days, "Yard of the Month" competitions, Adopt-A-Street programs, and a community garden.

### Recreation

As the city grows and expands, the City will need to provide additional recreation options for its residents. The plan proposes the City develop parks in the western portion of the city, within the two circles noted on the map. The plan also indicates a new park in the central portion of the city, south of Lucas St. It would protect the floodplain from harmful development. Another possible area for parkland and preservation is the vacant land along Crawford St., north of I-40. Spadra Park is another possible area for a municipal park and is labeled as such on the plan map.

Another important element of the plan is its trail system. The plan proposes an extension of the existing Spadra Creek trail south down Rogers St. to Spadra

### GROWTH POLICIES

The growth policies for the City of Clarksville provide a guide for land use and development decisions. These policies have been adopted to promote the future of Clarksville as a stable, well-planned community.

#### Residential Policies

- Code enforcement efforts will be continued as the budget allows. Code enforcement will include the maintenance of residential properties in order to control blighting influences that could destabilize property values in existing neighborhoods.
- Future residential development will be encouraged in the existing urban area and those areas served by sanitary sewer.
- Developers will be required to install all improvements in new residential areas to standards of the City of Clarksville.
- In the design of residential areas, principles and standards included in the Master Street Plan shall be followed. Collector streets shall be located to provide uninterrupted connection between minor streets and neighborhood recreational, educational and shopping facilities and major streets.
- It is intended that a park facility be located within one-half mile to one mile of all city residents.
- Church sites should be located near the outer edge of a neighborhood on a collector street with convenient access to a major street. They should be planned to provide insulation of residential units from church traffic. Such sites should be designed in such a manner that existing neighborhoods do not suffer traffic congestion.
- Existing neighborhoods will be protected from intrusions of adverse land uses.
- Access to residential lots should be from residential streets and not directly from collectors or arterials.
- Residential neighborhoods should remain free from through traffic except for local traffic, service vehicles and emergency vehicles.

#### Commercial Policies

- Major commercial developments should be planned so that they do not reduce the level of service on adjacent streets.
- Access control for commercial development will be a major issue in plan review.
- Businesses and offices requiring a location adjacent to the primary retail areas of the City should be located between intensely developed retail areas and medium and high density housing areas.
- Where commercial development is proposed adjacent to major streets, it is intended that, where possible, the principal means of access be provided from frontage roads and not directly from the major streets.
- "Strip" type commercial development should use shared drives and cross parking where possible.

- The City will require developments that are major traffic generators to install necessary traffic control measures so that the existing level of service on all adjoining streets is not diminished.

#### Industrial Policies

- Sites which meet industrial objectives will be made available for development in the Clarksville Area.
- The City Council in its official capacity will actively encourage industrial development in the designated areas. In so doing, desirable industries will be assisted through use of revenue bonds to finance construction or expansion, and where possible the City will extend public utilities to industrial sites.

#### Streets Policies

- Major streets designated on the Master Street Plan Map will systematically be widened and improved to meet standards contained in the Master Street Plan. These major streets will be respected in all new development.
- Developers will be required to dedicate extra right-of-way and construct collector streets to meet standards set forth in the Master Street Plan. Any street above collector size will be eligible for city funds over and above the cost of a collector.
- Cross-town movement will be accommodated through improvement of arterial and collector facilities reflected in the Master Street Plan.
- A Capital Improvements Budget setting forth a schedule of improvements in conformance with the Master Street Plan will be maintained by the City.
- All new subdivision plats shall conform to the Master Street Plan unless the Planning Commission formally revises the plan.
- Mixed use developments that encourage pedestrian access and reduce motor-vehicle trip ends will be encouraged.

#### Community Facilities Policies

- Areas for recreational and educational facilities should be provided in accordance with the locations as presented in this plan.
- The approximate location of schools and parks and design of each site will be planned as an integral part of the future development of the area.
- When possible, park and playground sites will be placed on land already in public ownership.
- Drainage easements and areas not suitable for development because of poor drainage will be utilized as public open space when it becomes feasible to develop and maintain them as such.
- The city will introduce neighborhood parks and sidewalks as a way for families to socialize within their communities.
- The city will encourage alternate means of transportation through the introduction of bike trails and pedestrian ways.

- The city will encourage the maintenance of open space areas, particularly within flood-prone areas.
- The Comprehensive Plan will take into account the plans of all city departments in order to allow efficient use of city capital and maintenance resources.
- Fire stations will be located and adequately equipped and staffed to provide protection of life and property in the community as efficiently and economically as possible.
- New fire stations and police sub-stations will be strategically placed and planned for in high growth areas.
- Fire stations will be continuously maintained and periodically remodeled to keep them up-to-date.

#### Development Review Policies

- The Planning Commission policy regarding plat review is to simplify approval for lot-splits and minor subdivisions.
- The Planning Commission will not accept plats or surveys for which the plat or survey and the city's review process are both conducted by the same Professional Surveyor.
- The Planning Commission will consider the provisions of the Arkansas Fire Prevention Code in its analysis of development plans.
- The Planning Commission will consider the overall effects of development plans upon the municipal transportation system.
- The Planning Commission's policy on land development is that new development will not result in additional costs to existing taxpayers without a proven benefit that exceeds such costs.

### PLAN

Included below are action steps that will be used to carry out the proposals and policies incorporated into the Comprehensive Development Plan. The City should take these steps and form a timeline, budget, and overall plan of action for implementing the steps below.

#### Low Cost/No Cost

- Promote the historic assets of the community.
- Stripe strategic areas of the city for bike lanes.
- Work with developers to interest them in building high quality affordable housing.
- Continue a cooperative development atmosphere.
- Coordinate downtown businesses.
- Promote an adopt-a-street program to help keep Clarksville's roads clean.

#### Inter-Institutional

- Work with the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department to make sure that a pedestrian trail is included in the Rogers St. Overpass widening.



Historic Train Depot and Chamber of Commerce Office

- Work to develop partnerships between the University of the Ozarks and the community.

#### Asset Building

- Clean up the primary gateways into the city.
- Acquire and operate Spadra Park.
- Work toward a comprehensive pedestrian trail system through the entire planning area.
- Create special, signature signage for the downtown area to facilitate tourist and visitor way-finding.
- Complete the Poplar Street/Highway 21 connector.
- Enhance the pedestrian corridor between the University of the Ozarks and downtown Clarksville.
- Develop a university district with well-defined, signature gateways.
- Work with developers to impart a vision of neo-traditional/traditional development as the norm rather than the exception.
- Encourage higher densities in existing developed areas.

#### Regulatory

- Develop overlay regulations for Crawford Street to protect the appearance of this key gateway into the city.
- Develop regulations requiring developers to provide parkland for new subdivisions.
- Develop regulations requiring all new subdivision and business development to be responsible for bringing the half of street they front on up to city standards.
- Analyze the current PUD regulations.
- Institute utility service extension policies.
- Review zoning and code regulations.
- Work to develop a land bank or land trust housing program.
- Revisit current regulations regarding access management principles.
- Revisit current plans regarding implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## A Vision for the Future



College Avenue Today



With proposed neckdown and landscaping

Adopted by the Clarksville Planning Commission  
May 27, 2008

Adopted by the Clarksville City Council  
July 14, 2008

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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