

# ***Town of Avoca***

## ***2010***

# ***Comprehensive Land Use Plan***

***Adopted 2010***

# **TOWN OF AVOCA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

The Avoca Planning Commission has formulated the Comprehensive Plan to:

- Provide a basis for making decisions concerning the future growth and development in the community and surrounding planning area;
- To coordinate and give direction to public and private development; and
- To protect the public interest in a manner that will not stifle individual initiative and creativity.

The Planning Commission and the Town of Avoca recognizes the need to encourage a logical and orderly development of the lands within its corporate limits and the area within the territorial jurisdiction for which it has planning authority, the Avoca planning area.

The Comprehensive Plan is a long-term policy and planning tool to be used as a guide to the future development of the area, and as such, it provides a consistent framework within which individuals and public officials can make their own development decisions, knowing that they are all working toward common, compatible goals. The Plan sets forth how our physical environment should be developed for the health, safety, convenience, prosperity and welfare of all the people in the community. It is the intent of the Plan to provide for each of the respective components that are statutorily required for land use and development controls—a land use plan component for zoning purposes, and a master street plan component for subdivision controls.

The Planning Commission also recognizes that Avoca cannot plan in a vacuum. It must be aware of surrounding communities' development plans, and plan and act accordingly.

It is for these purposes that the Comprehensive Plan has been developed and adopted.

## **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 single-family character, and 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, and be convenient to the community.
3. The Town should designate specific areas for industrial land uses. This will protect the industries that choose to locate in the Town of Avoca, 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. Develop a Master Street Plan that adheres to the Northwest Arkansas Regional Transportation Study and the Federal Functional Classification Guidelines; that contributes to logical development of the community; ensures the safe and efficient movement of people and goods; and relates to the region's multi-modal transportation system. In addition, the Master Street Plan should strive to support and enhance the character of the Town.
7. 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.
8. The community leaders should become actively involved in urging the entire community to take action to improve the over-all appearance of 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 Avoca. These include:

- a. Provision of a safe living environment that offers quietness, privacy, and a neighborly atmosphere;



- b. Provision of quality housing of good design at low and medium densities, principally single-family in character, and 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 and protection of property values; and
- e. Provision of multi-modal access to residential areas.

To achieve these objectives, it is essential to:

- a. Develop residential areas at relatively low densities that will preserve the current character of Avoca;
- b. Develop residential areas that will accommodate medium density units;
- c. Develop, adopt and use updated 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. Use land which provides for the most efficient and effective use of available investments in public utilities and services; and
- h. Adopt a Master Street Plan to guide traffic movement and to develop differing categories of streets.

## **2. NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL**

In continuing with the primary goal of retaining the existing characteristics of Avoca, the neighborhood commercial district has as 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. 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;

- e. Discouraging the indiscriminate mixing of commercial development into residential zones; and
- f. Provision of multi-modal access to commercial areas.

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

- a. Revise 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. Through zoning, restrict the location of new general commercial development to commercial nodes, generally at the intersection of major streets;
- f. Restrict non-commercial, incompatible uses from locating in areas zoned general commercial;
- g. Assure traffic safety by guaranteeing sufficient off-street parking, off-street loading facilities, and well-located ingress and egress points;
- h. Provide adequate physical screening, and open areas to serve as a buffer between the commercial uses and abutting residential areas; and
- i. 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 incompatible, 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;
- 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 part of the economic system of Avoca, is of the utmost importance. As a crucial element in retaining the nature of the community, it is doubly important to preserve and protect historical, cultural, and environmentally significant lands.

Efforts to achieve this objective can be furthered by adhering to the Comprehensive Plan, the Land Use Map, and all available regulatory mechanisms.

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

The challenge of creating a community that is in harmony with its natural surroundings and provides a healthful environment for people cannot be stressed enough. Two overriding principles have emerged with this challenge:

- The first is to recognize that the existing natural systems that have evolved are not without their own capacities to serve development.
- The second principle concerns impacts. Some natural systems are more able than others to sustain the impact of development and use.

A series of basic policies to ensure protection of our natural environment and open space have developed from these two principals:

- a. Parks and open spaces should be established so as 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 incompatible uses and from pollutants generated by urbanization 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. Vulnerable urban development should not be located in areas of natural hazards to life and property, such as in floodplains and in areas of unstable soils;
- e. Development using on-site sewage treatment should be severely restricted from areas of unsuitable soil and geological conditions, and from floodplains; and
- f. Present and future drainage basins should receive only urban development compatible with protection of water quality.

## **B. CIRCULATION**

To establish an effective manner of circulation of people and goods throughout the community, and to provide access to all parcels 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 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 into the Functional

Classification System for Benton County, and designed in accordance with the functions they perform in the network.

**URBANIZED AND SMALL URBAN AREA  
FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS**

**FUNCTIONAL SYSTEM**

**GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS**

Expressway/  
Freeway

Serves statewide and interstate travel.  
Serves virtually all the urbanized area.  
Provides an integrated continuous statewide network.

Principal  
Arterial

Serves the major traffic movements within urbanized areas; such as between central business districts, and outlying residential areas, between major intercity communities, or between major suburban centers.  
Serves a major portion of the trips entering and leaving the urban areas, as well as the majority of the through traffic desiring to bypass the central Town.  
Provides continuity for all rural arterials which intersect the urban areas.

Minor  
Arterial

Serves trips of moderate length at a somewhat lower level of travel mobility than principal arterials.  
Provides access to geographic areas smaller than those served by the higher systems.  
Provides intra-community continuity but does not penetrate identifiable neighborhoods.

Collector

Collects traffic from local streets and channels it into the arterial system.  
Provides both land access and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Local

Comprises all facilities not on higher systems.  
Provides access to land and higher systems.  
Through traffic usage is discouraged.

**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's enjoyment.

This can be achieved by:

- a. Properly distributing recreational areas and facilities through out 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.

## **2. FIRE STATIONS**

The public fire protection system must afford maximum security from fire loss while minimizing costs of service and fire insurance costs.

The community can realize this goal by:

- a. Locating fire stations on adequate sites and directly adjacent to major streets for the utmost accessibility to development within its service area and the least amount of friction to adjacent land uses;
- b. Avoid duplication of fire station service areas to lower community fire protection costs;
- c. Work directly and cooperatively with other area fire departments that also serve the community.

## **D. CIVIC BEAUFICATION**

A set of urban design proposals to improve the image and aesthetic quality of the community is the primary goal of civic beautification.

This goal can be reached through various regulatory tools, such as:

- a. A sign/billboard ordinance;
- b. An overlay district on the approaches to the community; and
- c. Preservation of plant and wildlife habitats and species through the zoning and development codes.

## **E. UTILITIES PLAN**

### **1. WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM**



The primary goals for the water distribution system include:

- a. Provide sufficient quantity of high quality water for the domestic needs of community residents.
- b. Have available capacity to provide for fire protection purposes.

To realize these goals, the following actions should take place:

- a. Developers will be responsible for the construction of water system improvements required to provide the level of service determined by the respective water systems.
- b. Provide sufficient capacity in each development for providing adequate fire protection, as well as meeting future area needs.
- c. Water distribution system is provided through Benton County Water District No. 1 and is a separate entity from the Town of Avoca.

## **2. SEWAGE COLLECTION AND TREATMENT SYSTEM**

The Town of Avoca does not currently have a municipal sewage collection and treatment system. As such, individual on-site systems, or such other systems as may meet State Department of Health requirements are necessary. With regard to such systems, goals are to:

- a. Insure a healthy and attractive living environment for the community by making every effort to ensure that on-site and alternative wastewater systems are permitted by the State Department of Health, and are adequately maintained.
- b. Assure that malfunctioning systems that are observed by, or brought to the attention of Avoca, are immediately referred to the Health Department for prompt repair.
- c. Discourage, through all means possible, the placement of septic systems in designated floodplain areas.

The Town may eventually pursue implementation of a sanitary sewer system in all areas of the municipality. Principal goals with regard thereto would be:

- a. Provide the entire community with wastewater collection and

disposal facilities that will insure a healthy and attractive living environment for all citizens;

- b. Assure that the most effective method, and cost efficient system of wastewater collection and treatment is provided.

To achieve these goals, the Town should:

- a. Maintain control of the sewage collection and treatment system so as to better monitor and provide for a safe, efficient, and economical system, and a clean and sanitary living environment.

#### **SECTION IV. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

Demographic statistics for the community:

<b><u>AVOCA</u></b>	<b><u>POP</u></b>	<b><u>UNITS</u></b>
1990	269	104
2000	423	168
2010 (est.)	517	204

<b><u>BENTON CO.</u></b>	<b><u>POP</u></b>	<b><u>UNITS</u></b>
1990	97,499	41,444
2000	153,406	64,281
2010 (est.)	214,097	91,105

#### **SECTION V. CONCLUSION**

A comprehensive plan is a statement of a local government's determination as to how its area should be developed and appear at some reasonable future date. In the Town of Avoca's case, it puts forth goals for land use such as retention of the existing character of the community, preservation of agricultural and historically significant lands, and encouragement of urban growth patterns that will protect the community's natural environment and open space.

To achieve these goals, governments must be able to plan the future use of land to see that the plan is carried out. In actuality, such a plan must inevitably restrict, provide for, and guide development where it is appropriate. Land use regulations may perform these functions. They provide development guides and standards, establish certain restraints on development, and offer inducements to encourage better design and land use.



Zoning can provide considerable enforcement of the Comprehensive Plan. It is the most common and most powerful land use regulation employed by local governments. Zoning acts as a guide for development when it designates specific areas for specific uses. For example, this allows for all types of income classes in residential areas to occur in appropriate locations within the community. It can also encourage commercial and other development to occur at a time and place that the government deems suitable. In addition, zoning may be used as a means to preserve desirable characteristics of the community, and prevent the encroachment of undesirable and incompatible land uses within the community.

Subdivision regulations establish the legal and substantial process of controlling the division of property, and set forth design standards relating to suitability of land, public access, conformance to plans, streets and easements, utilities, sediment control, and so forth. These regulations may also be employed by local government as a means to achieve Comprehensive Plan goals. These regulations may be used, in conjunction with the County, in the community's planning area (within its territorial jurisdiction), to control development.

While zoning and subdivision regulations give local governments power to regulate land use, governments should also be open to the use of new urban development tools.

The Comprehensive Plan, then, is a forward looking document, with the power of zoning and subdivision regulations behind it. In addition to these implementation tools, the Plan has the power of human resources behind it, whether they are in the form of the planning commission, elected officials, or the general citizenry. These parties should consult and use the Plan frequently and diligently. It should be updated routinely to reflect changes in attitudes of those it is intended to serve.

By effective use of the Comprehensive Plan, and its implementing tools, the Town of Avoca can continue to encourage a logical and orderly development of land within its corporate limits, and in its planning area. Furthermore, the community can continue to strive for and maintain the high quality of life it currently enjoys.