

# **POPLAR BLUFF, MISSOURI**

## **2007 Comprehensive Plan**



**ADOPTED**  
**June 02, 2008**



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City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

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### INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

A comprehensive plan is an official document that helps direct land-use policy and zoning decisions so communities can enjoy planned patterns of growth and development. The comprehensive plan is the legal and conceptual foundation for the city's zoning code and all other land use regulations. The plan should be recognized and utilized as a flexible document, interpreted within the broad spectrum of land development possibilities and ever-changing conditions.

The City of Poplar Bluff's 2007 Comprehensive Plan reviews, updates, and expands upon Poplar Bluff's 1991 Comprehensive Plan. The essential characteristics of the plan are comprehensive, general, and long range. "Comprehensive" means that the plan encompasses all geographic parts of the city and all functional elements affecting the physical development of the community. "General" means the plan summarizes policies and proposals, but does not necessarily indicate specific locations or detailed regulations. "Long range" means the plan looks beyond the foreground of pressing current issues to the perspective of problems and possibilities 15 to 25 years in the future. The purpose of this plan is to protect the public health, safety and welfare of the community while encouraging economic development and efficiency in government services.

The 2007 Comprehensive Plan is the result of an integrated public engagement program and on-going public dialogue that has drawn input from elected and appointed officials, external agencies, city staff and, most importantly, the community at-large. The plan outlines Poplar Bluff's major strengths and weaknesses and provides goals and objectives to help guide future land use decisions. The Future Land Use Plan and Implementation Chapters make specific recommendations about future land use and the strategies that are necessary to make the community's vision a reality. This document addresses the planning elements defined in Missouri Revised Statutes Chapter 89 Section 340, which sets forth the legal foundation and intent of the comprehensive plan, as referenced below:

***RSMO Chapter 89.340.*** *The commission shall make and adopt a city plan for the physical development of the municipality. The city plan, with the accompanying maps, plats, charts and descriptive and explanatory matter, shall show the commission's recommendations for the physical development and uses of land, and may include, among other things, the general location, character and extent of streets and other public ways, grounds, places and spaces; the general location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned, the acceptance, widening, removal, extension, relocation, narrowing, vacation, abandonment or change of use of any of the foregoing; the general character, extent and layout of the replanning of blighted districts and slum areas. The commission may also prepare a zoning plan for the regulation of the height, area, bulk, location and use of private, nonprofit and public structures and premises, and of population density, but the adoption, enforcement and administration of the zoning plan shall conform to the provisions of sections 89.010 to 89.250.*



### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### LOCATION

Poplar Bluff is located in southeast Missouri at the intersection of US Highways 60 and 67 in Butler County. It is about 150 miles from both St. Louis, Missouri, and Memphis, Tennessee and about 200 miles from Springfield, Missouri and Little Rock, Arkansas. The town's first streets were laid out on Crowley's Bluff overlooking the Black River from the west. The City was named after the poplar trees that once flourished on "The Bluff". The bluff itself is a significant natural landmark separating the Ozark Foothills from the lowland Mississippi River Basin. North and west of the City of Poplar Bluff are the foothills of the Ozarks. The swampy lowlands of the Mississippi Alluvial Valley extend south and east. Poplar Bluff is situated between two other landmark rivers, the St. Francis and the Current. A portion of the Current River is part of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways. Poplar Bluff's location on the Black River and in between the Current River and St. Francis River, earned the area the "Three Rivers" nickname.

#### PLANNING PROCESS

Poplar Bluff has had two earlier Comprehensive Plans. The first plan was adopted in 1971. The second plan was adopted in 1991 and updated in 1998. The focus of this plan is identifying the strengths and weakness of the community and developing detailed strategies to address citizen-driven concerns. To formulate a plan that accurately reflected the needs of the community, a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee was formed to guide the planning process. The Citizen Advisory Committee consisted of twenty (20) members representing the diversity of the Poplar Bluff community. The resulting comprehensive plan includes the following key Chapters:

1. Existing Conditions
2. Socioeconomic Analysis
3. Public Services & Facilities
4. Vision, Goals and Objectives
5. Transportation Plan
6. Future Land Use Plan



## Chapter 1: Existing Conditions Report

City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ABSTRACT

The **Existing Conditions** provides an executive summary of the planning process and includes a summary of Poplar Bluff's History and stages of land use occupancy.

The **Socioeconomic Analysis** provides a snapshot of the most recent demographics, economic conditions and a summary of the environmental constraints, existing patterns of land use and zoning.

The **Public Services and Facilities** chapter provides an overview of the services currently provided and identifies strategies for improving and/or sustaining the current level of services, given the anticipated demographic conditions.

The **Vision, Goals and Objectives** presented in this chapter were developed based upon the citizen-defined issues and value statements gathered during the public engagement process. This chapter also includes policy statements that address the development concerns that emerged during the public engagement process, interviews with city officials, and general research for the plan.

The **Transportation Plan** reviews the city's current transportation system and analyzes the flow of traffic through the community. This chapter looks at the existing road and transportation elements of the city and provides recommendations for future improvements.

The **Future Land Use Plan** includes recommendations and strategies for obtaining the preferred physical state or vision for the future of Poplar Bluff, as described in the goals and objectives chapter. Five key future land use strategies are provided to help guide the future, orderly growth of the City. They include; adaptive reuse, infill development, Greenfield development, mixed use development and neighborhood stability. A future land-use map is included that graphically depicts the location of the various future land use categories.

### THE VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF POPLAR BLUFF

The intent of this plan is to take Poplar Bluff into the twenty-first century by providing the necessary guidelines to promote the community's human, economic, and environmental sustainability. The vision, as determined by studying the values and critical issues provided by the residents, is:

***“To preserve the City’s small-town atmosphere while promoting a livable, well-planned community through managed growth, economic development and revitalization efforts”***

More specifically, the following vision statements illustrate the community's preferred future:

- Protect the resources that make Poplar Bluff a great place to live and raise a family and provide excellent, cost-effective services and opportunities for all residents and business owners.
- Maintain the local character and high quality of life while minimizing negative after or side effects from future growth or development.
- Provide access to a wide range of social, cultural, recreational and other resources, events and facilities that enrich community life and promote active lifestyles.
- Collaborate with other governmental agencies to promote regional opportunities and solve regional problems.



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The Poplar Bluff comprehensive planning process defined what residents want Poplar Bluff to be in 20 to 25 years. The plan calls for balanced and carefully planned growth, neighborhood stability and community diversity. It strives to protect and enhance neighborhoods and community character and outlines new planning initiatives such as developing quality neighborhoods supported by an expanded commercial tax base. It foresees:

- Following a hierarchical growth model that prioritizes **restorative development** activity, such as downtown revitalization and adaptive reuse, as the preferred growth strategy, followed by **infill redevelopment** and **Greenfield development**.
- Expanding the supply of dwelling units to provide appropriate housing for all social and economic classes,
- Improving the city's transportation system and pedestrian accessibility, and;
- Preserving neighborhood character, maintaining the city's current quality of life and sustaining and improving the current level of public services and facilities, including the parks and recreation system and schools.

The foundation of the plan rests on the strategy that Poplar Bluff will do what is necessary to preserve its heritage while understanding market demands often change, accepting new trends in development and seizing the opportunity for positive development as it comes along. Today, Poplar Bluff is in a favorable position to take an active role in revitalizing its commercial corridors and historic central business district. This plan recognizes that if Poplar Bluff does not proactively position itself to take advantage of, or even create, these opportunities, they will occur elsewhere and Poplar Bluff will see a decline in its share of the retail and housing market and position of prominence in the Ozark region.

### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

The Poplar Bluff Comprehensive Plan established several citizen-defined goals for each of the main planning elements covered in this Plan. The Comprehensive Plan Goals are as follows:

**Downtown Revitalization:** Promote investment in the City's central business district in order to attract and retain businesses, revitalize downtown and increase commercial and entertainment opportunities that attract people.

**Future Commercial Development:** Create an integrated, balanced community that benefits all residents and businesses by strengthening our positive business climate, proactively planning our future and responding to economic opportunities.

**Quality of Life:** Develop programs that promote community beautification, character enhancement and quality of life by preserving Poplar Bluff's small-town character and building upon the City's premier services, facilities, and nearby nationally recognized outdoor recreation amenities.

**Housing & Neighborhood Stabilization:** Preserve the character and stability of existing neighborhoods, promote neighborhood revitalization, encourage a balanced range of housing options, and promote the continued development of new, high quality residential developments in our residential growth areas.

**Transportation:** The City shall ensure the transportation system provides safe and effective circulation and economic development potential.



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**Future Residential Land Use:** Promote land development that preserves and enhances existing neighborhoods and the natural landscape, topography, vegetative cover, scenic view sheds and natural drainage patterns.

**Parks:** Continue to maintain, enhance and expand the City's parks and recreation system.

**Community Services:** Ensure the availability of public facilities, infrastructure and emergency services that adequately serves Poplar Bluff's present and future needs. These facilities and services include water, sewer, stormwater, cable, roads, schools, police, fire, library and other general services.

The goals adopted for this Plan represent ideals of what Poplar Bluff should strive to become in the next twenty (20) years. The plan also includes several objectives and implementation strategies that provide the focus and direction needed to obtain the preferred future. The implementation strategies provided in this plan form a work program that lays out the development philosophy the City should follow when contemplating future development. Some strategies are clear actions the City should take, while others are recommendations for additional planning work, more study or further public input.

### IMPLEMENTATION

The process of planning for the City is ongoing. Therefore, the Plan's principle value will be in its daily use. The creation and adoption of this document is only one step of the planning process. The City of Poplar Bluff is ultimately responsible for coordinating the physical development of the community through the implementation of this Plan. Implementation of the plan will help direct land use decisions that contribute to the positive development of the community and preserve the City's small town character and family values. The Plan should be reviewed and updated periodically to meet the changing demands of the community and proactively respond to the latest development trends.

### HISTORICAL STAGES OF OCCUPANCY

The historical stages of occupancy presents a "snapshot" of the City of Poplar Bluff from the first settlers to modern day growth and development. This information provides the context for how the City became the way it is, what the City looks like now and sets the stage for establishing goals and objectives for its future. It is important to know where Poplar Bluff presently stands in order to make the best use of policy recommendations related to future land use and development.

### PREHISTORIC STAGES OF OCCUPANCY

Due to its strategic riverside location and abundant environmental resources, the area attracted human activity dating back to prehistoric times. Prehistoric occupation of the area ended roughly between A.D.1350-1450. The immediate area remained unsettled until the late 18th to early 19th centuries. Shortly after 1800, settlers established the first permanent dwellings in current day Butler County. The earliest settlements were located along the old Natchitoches Trace (also known as the Old Military Road) to the west of Poplar Bluff on Cane and Ten Mile creeks, and to the north in the Black River valley. The tall timber in the highlands and swampy lowlands, while majestic, served as barriers as the first pioneers tried to establish areas to grow food and graze livestock.



### **PIONEERING STAGE- (1820-1870)**

Early reports from travelers in the area noted several farms and plantations in the Black River Valley Basin by the 1820's. By the 1830's settlers had also moved onto the higher ground areas outside the swampy lowlands (Schoolcraft 1821; Bell 1957; Babcock 1965; Featherstonhaugh 1968). During the early to middle 19<sup>th</sup> century settlements increased in the area. In 1849, Butler County was organized and Poplar Bluff was established as the county seat. In 1850, the town of Poplar Bluff was laid out on the west bank of the Black River following a Jeffersonian grid pattern of north/south right-angled streets. The streets run parallel with the Black River in northeast/southwest directions. Early Poplar Bluff fell within Oak Street to the north, Henderson to the south, the Black River on the east and 8<sup>th</sup> Street to the west. The public square was situated in the northeast portion of the platted town and was the site of the first as well as subsequent and present courthouses.

On August 13, 1850, Butler County Courts began meeting in the new town (Metcalf 1980:59; Butler County Deed Records Book A:3). The first town plat contained the City of Poplar Bluff's central business district. The first log courthouse was built on the northeast corner of the square. A wood frame courthouse was built on the southwest corner in 1855, and in 1859, a brick structure replaced the wood frame courthouse. Pre-Civil War businesses in the town included two general mercantile establishments and at least two saloons. By the time the Civil War began, there were 10 or more families living in the new town of Poplar Bluff. Although there were no major battles in the immediate area during the war, the movement of troops through town and Butler County severely disrupted the local economy. By the end of the war, half of the families had left town.

### **RAILROAD STAGE- THE BIRTH OF THE CITY OF POPLAR BLUFF (1870-1880)**

In 1870 Poplar Bluff was incorporated and grew slowly through the 1870's and 1880's. Growth was spurred in part by the coming of the railroad. Most of this growth occurred on the west side of the Black River in the Ozark Foothill region. By 1872, the St. Louis, Iron Mountain, and Southern Railroad were completed through Poplar Bluff. A few years later, the Cairo, Arkansas, and Texas Railroad completed a branch, which ran from Mississippi County to Poplar Bluff (Deem 1940:29; Metcalf 1980:5, 66).

### **LUMBER & MANUFACTURING STAGE (1880-1884)**



"A white oak log from the Qulin area."  
(Source Melville-Quilin Historical Society)

Poplar Bluff's strong supply of labor, mild climate, access to rail and abundance of low cost, quality timber gave birth to a booming lumber industry. Several lumber companies were established in Poplar Bluff between 1880 and 1920, resulting in a spike in population growth and the local economy. By 1907, Poplar Bluff had 57 manufacturing plants that provided an estimated 1,400 lumber related jobs.

Lumber was transported to Poplar Bluff by trams, rafts, and steamboats on the Black River to be milled and ultimately shipped coast to coast via rail. During this period, virtually every imaginable type of wood product was produced in Poplar Bluff. Between the 1870's and 1880's, Poplar Bluff also served as a stopover for feeding and watering cattle that were being shipped by rail from Texas. To support the movement



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of livestock, stockyards were established along the rail line in the southern part of town. (Deem 1940:67).

### INDUSTRIALIZATION STAGE (1884- 1920)

The lumber boom in Poplar Bluff brought with it several decades of rapid growth and economic stability. The town became the focal point of the surrounding area. Over twenty (20) businesses were established or expanded during these years of prosperity. In comparison, only eight (8) businesses were said to have been established between 1868 and 1879 in Poplar Bluff. By 1884, there were an estimated 40 businesses and manufacturing firms in the Poplar Bluff area (Goodspeed 1978:478; Metcalfe 1980: 15-58).

Expansion of Poplar Bluff was first to the west with Miller's Addition in 1871, and then to the north with the Jones and Davis Additions in 1885 and 1889. The center of the original platted town became the post-Civil War business district. A brickyard, the stockyards and lumber companies were located south of the central business district along the railroad. A second brickyard was located in the western part of the city, and the Craven Pottery was located in the central part of Miller's Addition. (*Plat on file, Butler County Recorder; Metcalfe 1980:15-58*) Poplar Bluff became a third class city in 1892 during which time development flourished along the flat low-lying lands east of the river. By 1895, there were nearly a dozen hotels and boarding houses within a few blocks of the railroad depot. That same year the city established a waterworks on 2nd Street, and by 1914 an electric light plant was added. A city hall and fire station were constructed in 1902.

In 1904, The Dalton Adding Machine Company began to prosper under the direction of its president Jim Dalton. Mr. Dalton, also a successful Poplar Bluff retailer, grew the Dalton Adding Machine Company to 2,500 employees with sales agencies located worldwide. In 1914, Mr. Dalton moved the Dalton Adding Machine to Cincinnati to leverage more support from regional investors of this new technology. Mr. Dalton's legacy with both his Walter-Dalton-Bell-Anchor department store (located in Poplar Bluff) and Dalton Adding Machine has made Mr. Dalton one of the most successful business entrepreneurs to come from Poplar Bluff. By 1907 there were reportedly fifty-four (54) manufacturing plants operating in the area, including some major international companies, such as International Shoe Company

In 1909, the city's brick streets were first proposed. A floodgate along the Black River and a plan for a large arch were also proposed at the time. The highly anticipated arch was to serve as a "Gateway to Poplar Bluff". The arch was proposed by the Commercial Club, which was organized by the merchants and leaders of the town in 1909. The arch was envisioned as a key entrance feature located at the south end of Main Street, "where throngs of people pass going to and coming from the station" (the Iron Mountain Railroad Station, later the Missouri Pacific Station). The plan included a "spectacular lighting plan" to ensure the landmark was as attractive at night as during the day. While the floodgate and the arch received strong community support, they were never constructed. By 1912 the installation of the brick streets began in the City's business district (Second Street between Cedar and Vine, and Poplar Street from Fourth to Moran Street). By 1913, 3.5 miles of road were paved with bricks. Private enterprise financed the work and





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even hired Henry Rohwer, the “father of the Good Roads Movement” and a leading civil engineer of his time, to oversee the work.

### **AGRICULTURAL STAGE (1920-1927)**

The removal of vast tracts of timber eventually leading to the lumber “bust” in 1920 and the implementation of the drainage programs after 1900 opened vast lands to agriculture. This economy evolved from being solely reliant on lumber to a more diverse, agriculturally based economy. People were once again drawn to the area to take advantage of the profitable farming industry. Poplar Bluff was now known as one of the most agriculturally productive regions in the United States. During this time, Poplar Bluff retained its position as a regional center. New building continued in the downtown area, and the city continued to expand to the north and west bringing with it many Southern influences visible in the design of many of the city’s homes, civic buildings and schools. Adding to this uniqueness, were the city’s brick streets.

### **ECONOMIC DECLINE (1927-1950)**

A destructive tornado damaged much of the downtown in 1927. The tornado killed over 100 people, injured 400 and caused an estimated four million dollars in damages. The damage left from the tornado combined with the negative impacts of the 1930’s Depression and lumber bust in the 1920’s led to a period of economic decline for the next 20-30 years. The population at this point had far exceeded the number of jobs available in the area. Even the agriculture industry saw decline because of overproduction, which also contributed to poor soil conditions. From 1920 to 1930, the City of Poplar Bluff lost almost 8% of its residents as the population dropped from 8,000 to 7551. The city did not see growth return until the 1940’s and 1950’s. While this was a period of economic decline, the City doubled in size through annexation. The Historic Boundaries Map on the following page depicts the major changes in the City’s boundaries from 1922 to 2006.

### **MODERN STAGE- POPLAR BLUFF TODAY (1950- PRESENT)**

The Post-War era was a period of growth for the region as well as Poplar Bluff as cities grew and neighborhoods spread into the countryside. By 1950, the City of Poplar Bluff finally showed signs of rebounding from over two decades of economic decline. New development took advantage of the open land, accessibility and visibility from the areas new highways. As a result, most business chose to locate along US 67 and 60, rather than downtown. In the downtown, brick storefronts were covered with modern materials such as metal and stucco in a desperate effort to attract business, concealing original brick facades and original artistry.

As new commercial development sprung up along the highways and major commercial centers opened, Poplar Bluff once again became the commercial center of the region. In addition to retail goods, Poplar Bluff became the healthcare center of the region. The city’s boundaries doubled in size once again during this period as the city successfully annexed vast areas into the city. Today, The City of Poplar Bluff covers 11.2 square miles and retains its regional importance in southeastern Missouri, drawing from eight (8) counties for trade, healthcare, higher education and employment opportunities and as a national destination for outdoor recreation. Agriculture also remains an important economic generator for the region. Poplar Bluff is in the Ozark Foothills planning region, which includes the five counties of Butler, Carter, Reynolds, Ripley and Wayne and the County Seat for Butler County.



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The Black River Coliseum is a substantial community investment that symbolizes the importance of culture, arts, entertainment and recreation to the area. Located in the city's downtown district, the Black River Coliseum hosts shows, concerts, sporting events and has a large indoor pool that is open to the public. The 115,000 square foot Coliseum attracts a wide range of venues from regional touring acts such as county music super stars Montgomery-Gentry to local arts and crafts shows. In front of the Coliseum is a veteran's memorial wall and fountain and



across the street adjacent to the parking lot is the Railroad Museum. On the corner of Pine and Broadway in downtown is the historic Rodgers Theatre. It first opened in 1949 and after almost 50 years of entertainment, closed in the spring of 1998. Today the theatre hosts community plays and still provides a great opportunity to bring culture, entertainment and vitality back into the downtown.

Since its founding, Poplar Bluff has experienced and welcomed growth as shown on the Historic Boundaries Map. It remains both an entertainment center for the area and an outdoor recreation destination for the nation. The prominent location within the Ozarks along the Black River between the St. Francis and Current River makes Poplar Bluff the "Gateway to the Ozarks". The nearby conservation areas, streams, rivers, and open country, along with the museums, retailers and entertainment venues provide year-round activities for the whole family. The City has a long tradition of annual fairs, parades and festivals. The most celebrated events are the Black River Festival and the Butler County Fair, which draw crowds from around the region.

### ENVIRONMENTAL FRAMEWORK

The environment provides the natural and physical context within which land use activities take place. The intent of this plan is to minimize the negative impacts on the environment. This section provides a brief overview of the environmental framework of Poplar Bluff and highlights some of the more sensitive environmental elements that must be considered in future development and land use decisions.

### FLOODPLAINS

The riparian zone of a river, stream or other body of water is the land adjacent to the centerline of the channel and includes the stream banks and floodplain. Riparian zones can be broad alluvial valleys or narrow strips of stream bank. Riparian zones help control the intensity and frequency of flooding and contain very sensitive ecosystems that support a diverse range of species and vegetation. Riparian areas are prone to periodic flooding, which helps support and maintain these fragile ecosystems. For these reasons, and the fact Poplar Bluff's riparian areas are very scenic and pristine, this plan recommends preserving riparian areas in the form of a greenway system.

Riparian areas are classified into "zones" which refer to the probability of annual flooding. The "100 Year Floodplain" is an area that is expected to flood at least once in a 100-year period. For the purposes of this plan, the 100-year floodplain is also the limits of the "riparian zone" and delineates the recommended greenway locations. The 100-year floodplain can be further divided into two areas



based on flood hazard potential. The **floodway** is the area within and adjacent to the stream banks required to discharge the 100-year flood without raising the water surface elevation more than one foot above base flood level at any point. Obstacles in the floodway can disrupt this function, increasing the both the frequency and severity of flood damage. Therefore, no structure, fence or other permanent, manmade obstruction should be constructed in the floodway. The **floodway fringe** is the area bordering the floodway. This area provides storage during a flood event and functionally reduces the frequency and intensity of downstream flooding by holding floodwaters until they are carried away in the floodway channel. While the floodway fringe's capacity decreases with the presence of obstacles, such as a fence or building, their presence is generally acceptable when regulated properly.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) prepared Flood Insurance Relief Maps (FIRM) for the Poplar Bluff region. The maps define the boundaries of the areas 100-year floodplains to help identify areas prone to flooding. Any future development proposed near a river, stream or other flood prone areas should be identified on the FIRM maps to verify their location within the floodplain and special precautions taken, as needed, for any future development activity. Map 1.3 shows the areas floodplains and natural drainage areas.

### TOPOGRAPHY

Poplar Bluff is located at the convergence of two environmental zones, the Ozark Foothills and Mississippi Alluvial Valley. Both environmental areas consist of a variety of rich soils. Soils in the higher elevations are composed of rich clayey loam with underlying sand or gravelly clay. The surrounding swamplands, drained during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, consist of heavier clays composed of a sandy loam and alluvial soils rich in organic materials and well suited for agricultural use. Some of the largest trees in the region grew out of the fertile lowlands of the Black and St. Francis rivers, nourished by centuries of nutrient rich flood deposits and sedimentation. The natural swamps in the low-lying areas produced enormous cypress, water tupelo, while the higher grounds of the Ozark Foothills grew massive oaks, ash and other hardwoods such as Poplar, for which the city gained its namesake.

These two types of landforms continue to present challenges and opportunities with respect to land use & development. East of the Black River is a vast floodplain and the swampy lowlands of the Mississippi Alluvial Valley. The elevations in this area are between 320-340 feet above sea level. The low-lying flat lands are poorly drained and prone to flooding, but flat and otherwise easily accessible by rail and road. Due to these reasons, and the fact they attract huge concentrations of mosquitoes, they are better suited for agricultural and industrial uses rather than residential and commercial uses. West of the Black River are the rocky soils and hilly terrain known as the Ozark Foothills. This area is characterized by gently rolling topography drained by small streams, which have cut "V" shaped valleys creating steep slopes in some areas. The Ozark Foothills in this area range in elevation from 340 feet to 580 feet above sea level, with the largest changes in elevation occurring along the major stream channels that flow through Poplar Bluff. The Ozark Foothills provide stable soils that are not prone to flooding. These areas are also further from the rail lines and other industrialized areas, yet still easily connected to the downtown and the local schools and parks. Therefore, the Ozark Foothill area is better suited for residential and commercial use.

Excessive or steep slopes, such as those located in the Ozark Foothills, are a factor in many environmental problems and can significantly increase the vulnerability of land to damage from human activities. The potential for erosion and resulting sedimentation due to clearing increases as the slope



increases. Generally, land with a slope of less than five (5) percent is considered moderately sloping and is capable of accommodating most types of development activities. Slopes exceeding 15 percent (15 feet of vertical change per 100 feet of horizontal distance) presents a major development constraint and are unsuitable for intensive development. Steep slopes also pose a problem for septic tank filtration systems, causing health and aesthetic problems. Therefore, slope is an important factor to consider when evaluating the relative suitability of vacant land for future development. Steep slope areas are often economically unfeasible due to the high costs to install public infrastructure and expensive construction techniques required. Therefore, this plan recommends future growth in areas with low to moderate slopes that support more economical development and conventional construction practices. Map 1.4 shows slopes within the project area.

### **UNSTABLE SOILS**

The soils of the lowlands of the Mississippi Alluvial Valley contain soils that are very rich in organic materials, such as clay and shale. These organic rich soils allow significant volume changes, causing subsurface movement during freeze and thaw cycles. This volume change causes heaving or settlement and subsequent cracking of foundations. The leading cause of foundation heave or settlement is change in soil moisture. The removal of vegetation leads to an increase in soil moisture, while the absence of topographic relief leads to ponding. To minimize the negative affects of unstable soils, a soil scientist should review the development area to check for the presence of any unstable soils. In the event unstable soils are present, an engineer should be retained to determine what, if any, construction practices should be followed to minimize any negative after or side affects. Map 1.4 shows the slopes within the study area.

The areas of probable limitations on development lie primarily along the creeks and in areas with steep slopes. Severe erosion and flooding are the main development constraints in these areas. It is recommended that soil tests be performed prior to the development of areas known to have expansive soils and other environmental constraints such as steep slopes, wetlands or flooding. The City should maintain soil maps at City Hall and require developers to identify soil types and measures taken (if any) in the design and drainage of each development.

### **WETLANDS**

Wetlands are included in the definition of waters of the state, which included "waters of the United States within the state of Missouri. Wetlands perform many valuable functions including decreasing the frequency and severity of flooding, water purification, provide feeding and breeding grounds for aquatic habitat and support vegetation that absorb harmful greenhouse gasses. They also offer diverse recreational opportunities such as hunting, fishing and wildlife observation. However, Missouri has lost over 90 percent of the wetlands that once covered 4.8 million acres of the state's total land area.

This plan recommends preserving and enhancing wetlands in accordance with the Federal and state regulations that mandate "no net loss" of wetlands. If a wetland or portion of a wetland is disturbed or eliminated, replacement of that wetland with a wetland of equal quality and quantity is required. The major wetland areas of Poplar Bluff are shown on the Slopes and Wetland Map on the following page. Development should be prohibited from encroaching upon these areas and any other wetland areas found within the project area. The designation of wetlands in itself does not necessarily prevent development, but is an indicator that development will need to be approached in a more sensitive



manner. The appropriate state agencies should be contacted prior to any alteration of any wetland area.

### **THE NEW MADRID FAULT**

The New Madrid Fault is an active seismic zone that lies within the central Mississippi Valley, extending from northeast Arkansas, through southeast Missouri, western Tennessee, western Kentucky to southern Illinois. The fault derives its name from the Great New Madrid Earthquake of 1811-1812, which occurred along this fault line. Historically, this area has been the site of some of the largest earthquakes in North America. During the winter of 1811 and 1812, 4 catastrophic earthquakes, with magnitude estimates greater than 7.0, occurred during a 3-month period. Hundreds of aftershocks followed over a period of several years. The largest earthquakes to have occurred since then were on January 4, 1843 and October 31, 1895 with magnitude estimates of 6.0 and 6.2 respectively. In addition to these events, seven (7) events of magnitude 5.0 or greater have occurred in the area. In 1974, instruments were installed in and around this area to closely monitor seismic activity. Since then, more than 4000 earthquakes have been located, most of which are too small to be felt. On average, one earthquake per year will be large enough to be felt in the area.

Unlike the San Andres seismic zone, which is mountainous and rocky, the New Madrid Seismic Zone (NMSZ) is buried by sediment (sand, clay and other unconsolidated materials). Seismic waves travel greater distances through unconsolidated soils, therefore energy is propagated over a much greater area and result in much more devastating affects. For example, the great quake that took place in the winter of 1811-12 in the NMSZ was felt as far away as Oklahoma in the west and in Boston in the east, an area of approximately 208,000 square miles. By way of comparison, the strongest earthquakes in western United States were limited to 12,000 square miles. Additionally, the NMSZ is much more difficult to study because there are very few surface clues as to the frequency and intensity of past, present and future seismic activity. Regardless, scientists estimate that there is a 90% chance of a major earthquake in the next 50 years.

Earthquakes create subsurface “liquefaction” which causes bridge foundations and other transportation infrastructure and buildings to fail. Therefore, a major earthquake in the New Madrid Seismic Zone could affect the movement of emergency vehicles and other first responders, especially if steps are not taken to prepare bridges and other transportation infrastructure as well as training first response teams. More information about earthquake preparation and hazard mitigation is discussed in Chapter 3, Public Safety.

### **OUTDOOR RECREATION**

There are several state and federally owned natural areas in the area. More specifically, floaters, hikers, anglers, bird watchers and other outdoor enthusiasts are drawn to the spectacular rivers that flow through the area, including the Jacks Fork, Current, St. Francis and Black River. In 1964, 134 miles of the Current and Jacks Fork were designated as the Ozark National Scenic Waterways, making it the first scenic waterway in the United States. Within the boundaries of the park, there are over 300 caves, 20 canoe outfitters and over 50 miles of hiking trails, including seven (7) miles of the Ozark Trail. In the fall and spring the area’s flora and fauna offers a crescendo of colors making the area one of the State’s most popular hiking and auto touring destinations. In the summer, the cool rivers and springs become the draw. On average 1.5 million people visit the Ozark Scenic Waterways each year.



## Chapter 1: Existing Conditions Report

City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

Poplar Bluff and southeast Missouri also provide access to prime hunting and fishing. Lake Wappapello, Wappapello State Park, Mark Twain National Forest, Mingo National Wildlife Refuge, Duck Creek Conservation Area and the “Three Rivers” / Ozark National Scenic Waterways offers thousands of acres of forests and natural areas that are home to a dynamic mix of wildlife and abundant scenic vistas. The area is also located in the Mississippi Flight Pattern that has been used for thousands of years by migrating Canadian geese and many other waterfowl species found in the areas wetlands. Poplar Bluff offers an abundance of lakes, ponds and wetlands linked to the areas beautiful clean rivers. For generations, hunters and anglers have traveled to Poplar Bluff to enjoy the many natural areas and hometown hospitality that Poplar Bluff has to offer. Map 1.5 shows signature outdoor recreation areas.

### EXISTING LAND USE

#### RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

The first residential homes were located just outside the historic downtown. Most of the early homes followed the architectural styles of neo-classical and colonial revival and included styles ranging from Queen Anne to Italianate, both very popular at the turn of the nineteenth century. As the City developed, residential growth spread to the north and west of downtown due in part to the flat topography, good access and desirable building conditions. Today the City’s residential areas are growing north and south, along the improved local highway system. In addition to good highway access, these areas offer undeveloped land that is suitable for residential construction. While, the northern and western areas of Poplar Bluff show an abundance of open land, much of the open land is in Mark Twain National Forest and off-limits for development. Therefore, the city must balance future growth with a strategic combination of Greenfield development, in-fill and restorative development of the city’s established neighborhoods and commercial districts.

#### COMMERCIAL LAND USE

The first commercial development took advantage of Poplar Bluff’s access to the river and early trade routes. These businesses settled in what is now the downtown area. While some businesses remain downtown, most commercial development has shifted to areas with better access and visibility from major highways. These highways include U.S. 67, U.S. 60, and state route 53. The majority of Poplar Bluff’s large-scale commercial development is located off Westwood Boulevard (Business Route 67) and State Highway 53. Just as most of the prime commercial property became built-up along Westwood Boulevard and Highway 53, new commercial corridors opened with the construction of the Highway 67 Bypass and improvements to Highway PP. These two corridors have experienced most of the recent commercial construction activity. State Highway PP between the Bypass and Westwood Boulevard provides great opportunity for future large-scale commercial growth.

#### ZONING

Today land use and development is governed very much the same it was thirty-five (35) years ago. The City’s first zoning code was adopted in 1972 and is still being used today, with some minor revisions. The zoning code separates the city into various land use districts. It follows the Euclidian Principals of zoning, which separates development based upon use and density. The City’s Zoning Map depicts the various zoning districts into which land is classified. Red colors represent commercial use, grey- industrial and yellow-residential. All development within the City shall adhere to the City’s zoning code and map. Any proposed change to the City’s Zoning Map or Zoning Ordinance must be supported by the Comprehensive Plan. Decisions that are not supported by this



## Chapter 1: Existing Conditions Report

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City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

plan may be considered “arbitrary and capricious” by the courts and punishable by law, therefore should be avoided. Given the age of the current zoning code, this plan recommends updating the code to address the recommendations provided in this Plan.

The City of Poplar Bluff contains approximately 6,315 acres of land; 70% of which is zoned for residential use, 58% is zoned for single-family use, 6.7% duplexes and 4.8% for multi-family use. Today, there are approximately 885 acres that fall within one of the city’s three commercial zoning districts, representing approximately 14% of city’s total land mass. The City’s industrial zoned areas consist of approximately 1,075 acres and make up about 17% of the city.



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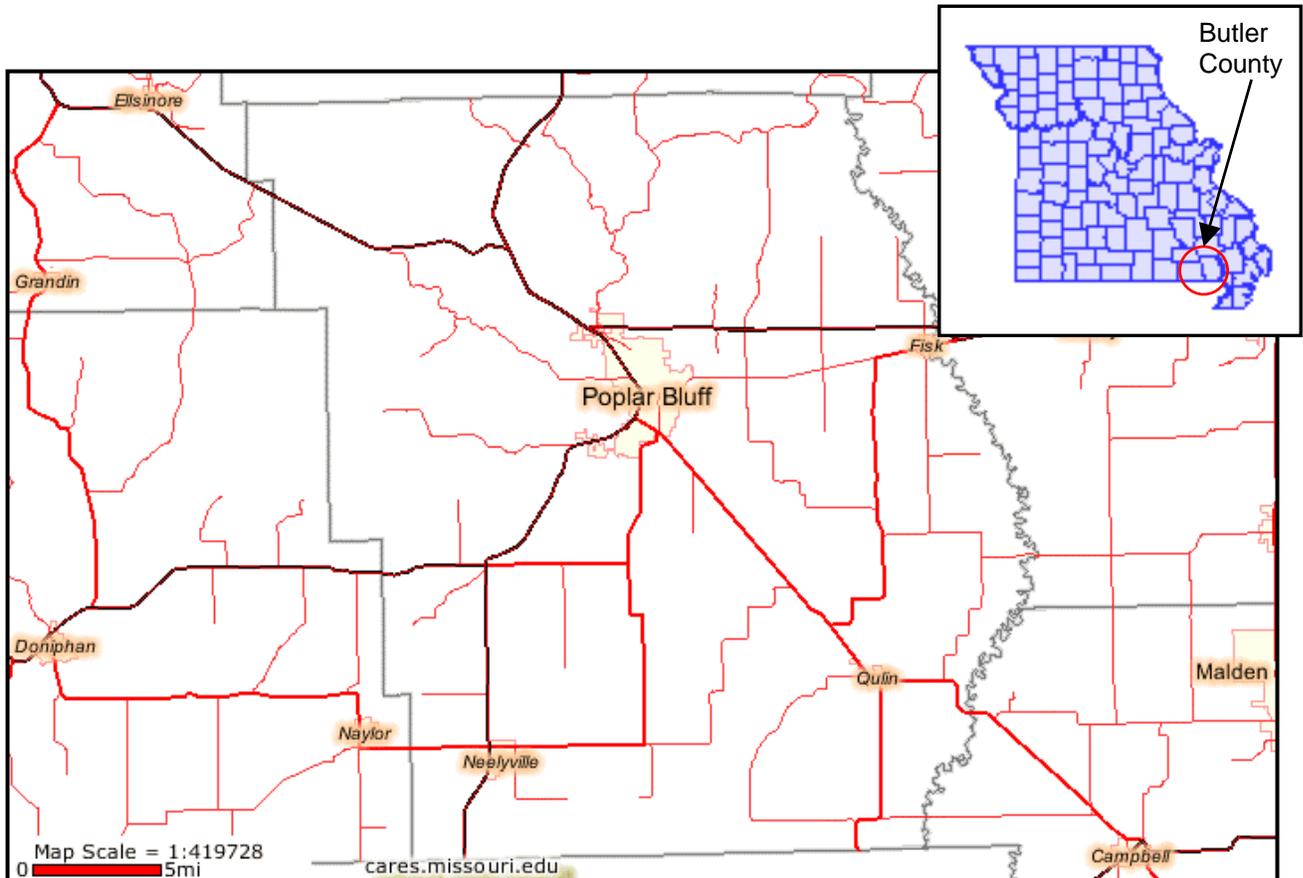
## SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND

The population trends of the state, Butler County and Poplar Bluff were analyzed to determine future social and economic trends and patterns. The socio-economic data evaluated includes statewide population trends, age, housing, workforce, income, commute, retail trade, manufacturing and health care. The current and past socio-economic trends will provide the foundation for future land use and public service recommendations. This information provides an understanding of the City's population and helps direct future planning and land use policies. Population data is also helpful in determining the future requirements for expansion of public utilities and community services. Population and economic growth are interdependent elements that must be in balance for a community to achieve its desired quality of life and economic wellness. The data for this analysis is from the US Census Bureau's decennial census.

### POPULATION

Poplar Bluff's total population, as of the US Census Bureau's last decennial census (2000), was 16,651, making it the third largest city in Missouri's 8th Congressional district behind Cape Girardeau and Sikeston. Poplar Bluff is the County Seat of Butler County (pop. 41,582) and the largest city within the county. The City of Neelyville, (population 487) is the second largest, the City of Quin (population 467) is a close third and the City of Fisk (population of 363) is the smallest city in Butler County. Figure 2.1 shows the location of Poplar Bluff and the surrounding cities.

Figure 2.1: Butler County & Area Cities

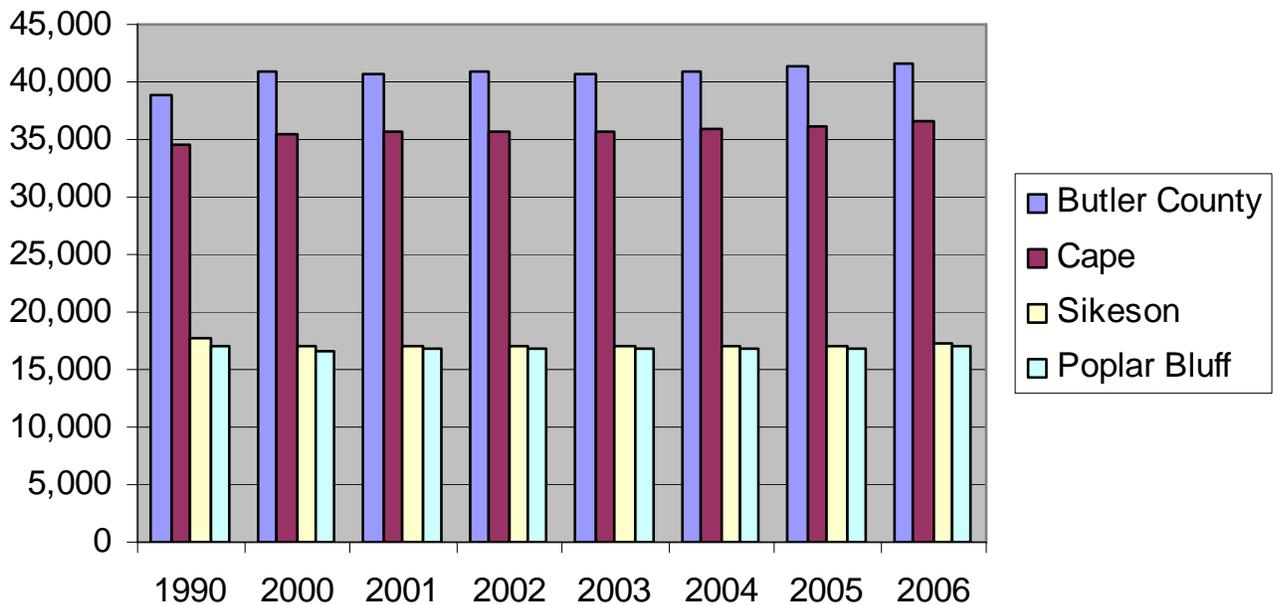




Although Poplar Bluff is the largest urban area in Butler County and one of the largest in southeastern Missouri, its population has declined in the last two consecutive decades. This is the first time the city ever showed back-to-back population declines in the decennial census. In fact, the only other time Poplar Bluff showed a decline in its decennial census population was 1930. Meanwhile, Butler County has increased in population during the last two decennial census counts. Butler County's growth comes in part from Poplar Bluff residents moving into unincorporated areas of the county. This is a common trend in older cities, where undeveloped land and housing choices are limited.

However, since the 2000 census, Poplar Bluff has reversed its population losses. From the year 2000 to 2006 the population of Poplar Bluff has grown almost 2.5%, increasing by over 400 residents. Considering the city lost 2% of its population from 1990 to 2000, the recent population growth is a noteworthy change. By comparison, during this same period, Butler County grew by 1.75%, Cape Girardeau grew by 3.60% and Sikeston only grew by 1%. Poplar Bluff has edged within just over 100 residents of the City of Sikeston's population. In 1990, Sikeston had 645 more residents than Poplar Bluff. Today, Sikeston has only 105 more residents than Poplar Bluff. While Poplar Bluff's population has declined during the last two decennial census counts, the city has shown steady growth since the last decennial census. The last six years of recorded growth should put the City of Poplar Bluff on track for a strong population increase during the next decennial census in 2010. Figure 2.2 illustrates the population comparisons for Poplar Bluff and other peer cities from 1990 to 2006. Table 2.3 shows the actual population figures and percent change.

Figure 2.2: Population Comparisons





**Table 2.1: Southeast Missouri Population Data Comparison**

	<i>Butler County</i>	<i>% change</i>	<i>Cape</i>	<i>% change</i>	<i>Sikeston</i>	<i>% change</i>	<i>Poplar Bluff</i>	<i>% change</i>
1990	38,765		34,438		17,641		<b>16,996</b>	
2000	40,867	5.42%	35,349	2.65%	16,992	-3.68%	<b>16,651</b>	-2.03%
2001	40,719	-0.36%	35,606	0.73%	16,951	-0.24%	<b>16,825</b>	1.04%
2002	40,847	0.31%	35,614	0.02%	16,986	0.21%	<b>16,808</b>	-0.10%
2003	40,751	-0.24%	35,592	-0.06%	16,966	-0.12%	<b>16,717</b>	-0.54%
2004	40,996	0.60%	35,927	0.94%	16,999	0.19%	<b>16,757</b>	0.24%
2005	41,338	0.83%	36,203	0.77%	17,113	0.67%	<b>16,931</b>	1.04%
2006	41,582	0.59%	36,621	1.15%	17,164	0.30%	<b>17,059</b>	0.76%

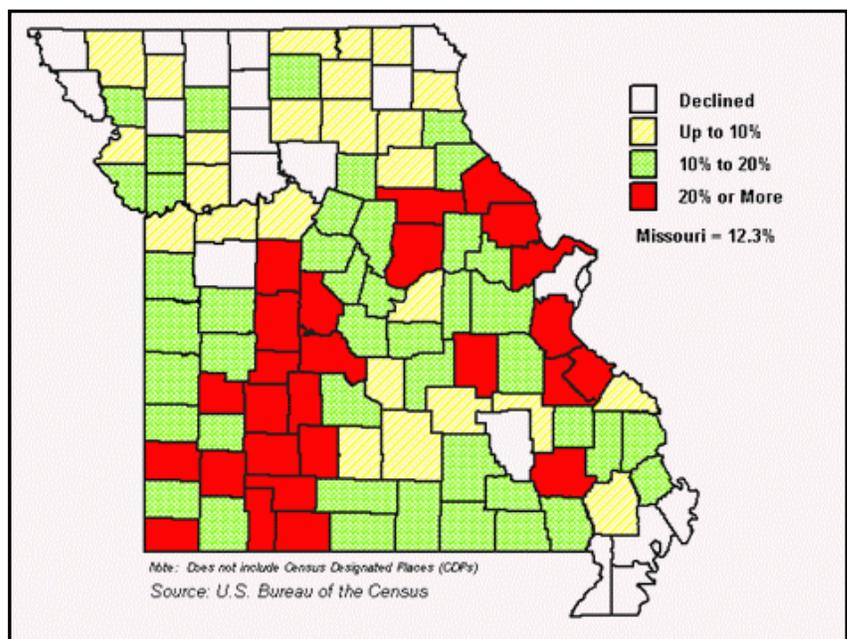
**STATEWIDE TRENDS**

While Poplar Bluff continued to lose population during the last two census counts, Butler County and many of the other rural areas in the state experienced population growth. This “shift” in population represents a statewide trend towards decentralization. Decentralization occurs when metropolitan areas such as St. Louis and Kansas City lose population to rural, non-urban areas. The 1990 and 2000 census showed a trend towards open-county living or decentralization, specifically in the rural Ozark counties, where growth rates have steadily outpaced metropolitan areas. Decentralization also occurred in rural cities during this same period as families moved from towns to the adjacent suburban/rural zone.

The trend since 1990 has been for the population living outside the city limits of any town (aka open-country) to increase at a more rapid rate than the in-town population. In 2000, only 69% of Missouri’s population lived in a town or city and 31% lived in the open country. The population living in incorporated places increased by 8.1% in 2000 while the population living outside the city limits of any town or city increased by 12.3%. The trend toward open-country living has been occurring statewide, especially in the Ozark regions. It is estimated that three-fourths of Missouri’s in-migration population has located in non-metropolitan counties. This trend was confirmed by the 2000 Census and the most recent census findings depicted in the table at right.

The trend towards open-country living can be attributed to several factors: lower property taxes, a preference to have a larger piece of land on which to live, a preference

**Figure 2.3: Population Change Outside Incorporated Areas**





## Chapter 2: Socioeconomic Analysis

City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

for open-country living and the availability of affordable housing. These factors are all applicable to the study area and the surrounding region. According to the Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis, the following factors have contributed to the latest growth trends within the state of Missouri:

- Significant population growth is occurring at the edge of metropolitan areas. New housing developments are appearing outside the city limits because construction sites are available and land values are somewhat cheaper.
- There has been significant population growth in many rural counties, especially in the Ozarks, generated largely by people moving to Missouri from other states. This trend suggests that residents are expressing a preference for an open country place to live.
- In addition, much of the new construction is located on waterfronts which are located outside the city limits of any town the two major lake areas – such as Lake of the Ozarks and Branson-Taneycomo.

Additionally, the Brookings Institute's 2002 report "***Growth in the Heartland-Challenges and Opportunities for Missouri***" found similar findings. The following conclusions from the Brookings Institute Report are provided herein to further understand the demographic changes occurring and possible consequences;

- Decentralization imposes significant cost on communities and taxpayers. Specifically, highly dispersed, low-density development patterns increase the capital and operational costs governments incur when they provide roads, sewers and water infrastructure, schools, police and fire services.
- Decentralization is hurting the city's competitiveness by eroding Missouri's quality of life. In particular, it weakens the state's downtown cores, spreads-out metro areas and presents environmental challenges that deprive the state of the urban vitality, convenience, and ecological strengths increasingly valued by leading companies and workers.
- Decentralization is threatening the environment and natural areas. The proliferation of open-county rural homes in recent decades have scattered septic systems throughout the countryside, many of which are in need of repair or replacement due to leaking or inadequate systems.
- The pace of the state's land consumption has been increasing. Specifically, more land was developed in the five years between 1992 and 1997 (219,600) than over the preceding 10 years, when 215,800 acres of Missouri countryside was converted to more urban areas.
- Missouri's current pattern of growth is eroding the state's rural heritage. The state's widespread scatter of residential developments, retail centers and fast food outlets are gradually effacing the farm traditions, rural scenery, and small-town atmosphere that connect the state to its roots.
- Missouri's current pattern of growth is straining the state's transportation system and burdening Missourians with increasing travel costs. Most notably, the widening area that needs to be served by high capacity roads has increased the costs of building and maintaining an adequate highway network.



Overall, the population trends occurring both in Poplar Bluff and throughout the State offer both opportunities and constraints. While rural areas throughout the state, including Butler County, gain population and job growth, older cities are losing population, jobs and their share of retail sales dollars at unprecedented rates. Cities, such as Poplar Bluff, must follow the principles of managed growth and develop sensible transportation and infrastructure-investment policies to protect the vitality of the city's inner core and the integrity and ecological diversity of the surrounding open-country. Poplar Bluff's unique natural assets, centered along the three rivers and Mark Twain National Forest, play an important role in the community's future economy, which we believe relies on tourism and retirees who desire the city's small town charm and close proximity to the state's signature natural areas.

### AGE DISTRIBUTION

An important component of population is age distribution. An analysis of the growth and decline of various age cohorts help predict the level of services needed for parks, schools, medical facilities and other public services. The following census findings help differentiate Poplar Bluff from other communities and provide important information to retailers and services providers.

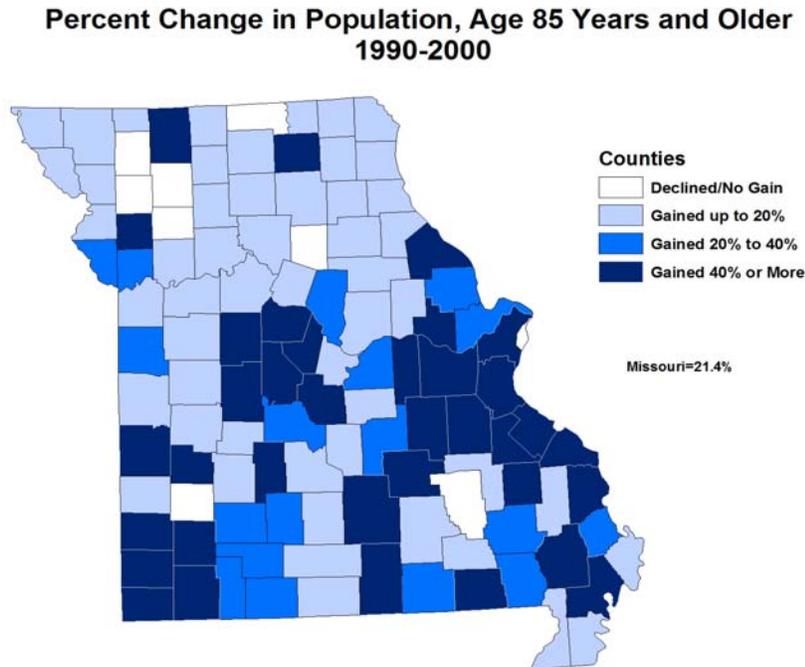
- Only 47% of the Poplar Bluff's adults are married, resulting in a large population of single adults.
- Females outnumber males 54.5% (9,067) versus 45.5% (7,584).
- Average family size is 2.91. National Average: 3.14. State average is 3.04
- Median age is 38.7. National Average: 36.4. State average is 37.2

These findings show that Poplar Bluff's population has a large concentration of single, middle aged females. This is a positive indicator for the workforce and retailers because female's make-up almost half of the employment force and contribute to well over half of all retail spending. The above findings also confirm that the City's population is aging, with a median age well over the national average. Poplar Bluff and Butler County are both showing a strong increase in the population over 65. While only 13.5% of the State's population is over 65, 19.5% of Poplar Bluff's population is over 65. For the past four decades, one of the fastest growing age cohorts both locally and statewide has been the population over 85. During the 1990s, the 85 and over population grew by 21.4% in Missouri. Figure 2.4 illustrates the counties that produced the most growth of the population 85 and older. As the map shows, the majority of this growth is occurring in the Ozark region.

The steady growth of the population cohorts over 65 indicate the Baby Boomers (those born between 1946-1964) are fast approaching retirement age. The previous plan estimated that one-third of all city residents will be over age 55 by the year 2010. As the City's population ages, the demand for services needed by the older age cohorts will increase. The City should proactively evaluate the areas medical facilities, health care services, parks & recreation services and facilities, multi-modal transportation options, housing and retail services to ensure the City is adequately prepared to meet the demands of its aging population. In addition to meeting the needs of the City's aging residents, these same service and infrastructure improvements will be attractive to retirees and tourists in the upper age cohorts looking for a community that caters to their individual needs and active adult lifestyles.



**Figure 2.4: Percent Change in Population Age 85 Years & Older (1990-2000)**



SOURCE:USDC, Bureau of Census. Census of Population and Housing (2000 SF-1:1990 STF-1)

While the over 65 population continues to grow, the city is losing its young adults age 18-34. As of the 2000 Census, only 8.8% of the City's population was between the ages 18-24. During this same period, the city's population age 25-34 declined more than any other single age group, down to 11.4% from 14.6% in 1990, a loss of 604 young adults. This decline in the City's young adult population can be attributed to many factors that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Many people in that age cohort are students who leave the community for higher education,
- Many are working professionals who leave the area for employment; or
- Young adults are very mobile and oftentimes choose to live in areas that appeal to other young adults.

Regardless of why or where young adults are going, they are a desirable age group to retain. Aside from being the future of the community, they support local business and enhance the local workforce. Therefore, this plan recommends provide housing, commercial services, entertainment, cultural venues, higher educational institutions and other quality of life amenities that appeal to young adults age 18 to 34.

In summary, Poplar Bluff is very popular among baby boomers that now range in age from 40 to 60 and those over 65. This observation is based on the fact age groups from 35 to 54 and over 75 and



older experienced a much larger increase in population than the balance of all other cohorts from 1990 to 2000. As a result, the median age of Poplar Bluff is well above the state and national averages. The city will need to be prepared to provide the level and type of services and amenities demanded by an aging population, while also providing the housing, services and quality of life factors that attracts and retains young adults and children. The availability of good salaried jobs, diversified housing options and entertainment/cultural attractions are key factors that the City should consider to attract young adults while also serving the needs of the aging population.

**HOUSING STOCK**

The houses in Poplar Bluff span a wide range of quality, conditions and age. Most are older single-family homes that follow the neo-classical and colonial revival architectural designs. Queen Anne and Italianate styles were also popular during the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Poplar Bluff, but not as prevalent as the neo-classical and colonial revival designs.

There were 7,057 households in 2000, up just one (1) from 1990. Of the 7,057 households, 7.4% had children under the age of 18 living with them, a decrease of 3.2% from 1990. Just over 17% of the City’s housing stock is occupied by someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. In 2006, the average household size was 2.27 and the average family size was 2.91. The estimated median home price in Poplar Bluff was \$60,900 in 2005, an increase of over 21% (\$10,700) from the 2000 estimate of \$50,200. Still, the City’s median home value is well below the state average of \$89,900. The table below provides a snapshot of the past housing construction activity and estimated costs.

<b>Table 2.2: Housing Construction</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Homes Built</b>	<b>Average Cost</b>
1996	37 buildings	\$71,600
1997	18 buildings	\$92,700
1998	31 buildings	\$67,200
1999	19 buildings	\$69,600
2000	22 buildings	\$84,500
2001	27 buildings	\$72,800
2002	31 buildings	\$73,300
2003	33 buildings	\$68,800
2004	40 buildings	\$112,600
2005	33 buildings	\$61,100
2006	27 Buildings	\$70,700

*Source: <http://www.city-data.com/city/Poplar-Bluff-Missouri.html>*

During the past ten (10) years, the City has averaged fewer than 29 new homes per year. However, in 2006 Poplar Bluff only issued 27 residential building permits, the lowest since 2000. The City of Jackson saw a similar slump in new housing construction in 2006, which was the worst year in this decade for new home construction in Jackson, with just 48 permits issued. Previously, the City of Jackson averaged 75 homes per year. This data confirms that southeast Missouri is also experiencing the nationwide slump in the housing market.



## Chapter 2: Socioeconomic Analysis

City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

In 2006, there were an estimated 7,870 housing units in Poplar Bluff, 10% of which were vacant, 51% owner occupied and 39% renter occupied. While the vacancy rate mirrors the State's vacancy rate, the percent of owner occupied housing is well below the state average of 70.3. Poplar Bluff's median household value in 2000 was \$59,400. By comparison, the state's median household price in 2000 was \$89,900 and \$119,600 nationally. The median contract rent paid in Poplar Bluff in 2000 was \$270, while the median rent statewide was \$384. These figures show that the City is served by an affordable housing stock that offers significantly more rental housing than the state average.

**Table 2.3: Structure Type of the City's Housing Stock**

Structure Type	# of Dwellings
Single Family, detached	5,791
Single Family, attached	679
3-4 Unit Apartments	514
5-9 Unit Apartments	276
10 to 19 Unit Apartments	163
20 to 49 Unit Apartments	117
50 or more Unit Apartment Complexes	181
Mobile homes	144
Boats, RVs, vans, etc.:	5
Total Housing Units	7870

Source: <http://www.city-data.com/city/Poplar-Bluff-Missouri.html>

### EDUCATION

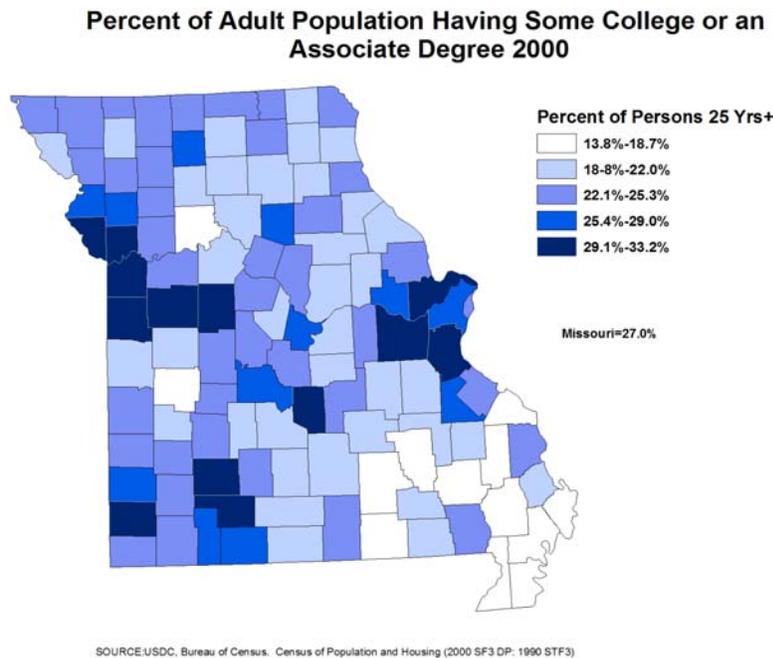
Studies have shown that adults that have some education beyond high school are more productive workers than workers without college or an associate degree. Therefore, the significant increase of post-secondary education throughout the State during the 1990s was a very positive economic development indicator. Of particular importance was the fact that the regions having the lowest percentage of adults having education beyond high school in 1990, made the most substantial percentage increases in education. Poplar Bluff was one of these regions. Table 2.4 shows the gains the City has made since 1990 in the areas of education attainment, see items in bold.

**Table 2.4 Education Attainment (2000 versus 1990)**

Subject	2000		1990		Change	
	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.
Over 25 Yrs of Age	11,076	67	11,187	65.8	-111	1.2
<b>Less Than 9th Grade</b>	<b>1,405</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>2,459</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>-1,054</b>	<b>-9.3</b>
9-12 grade, No Diploma	2,145	19.4	2,233	20	-88	-0.6
High School Grad or GED	3,427	30.9	3,237	28.9	190	2
<b>Did Not Attend College</b>	<b>6,977</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>7,929</b>	<b>70.9</b>	<b>-952</b>	<b>-7.9</b>
<b>Some College, no degree</b>	<b>2,749</b>	<b>24.8</b>	<b>1,938</b>	<b>17.3</b>	<b>811</b>	<b>7.5</b>
Bachelors	668	6	866	7.7	-198	-1.7
<b>Graduate or Prof. Degree</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>2.1</b>



**Figure 2.5: Percent of Adult Population Having Some College or an Associates Degree (2000)**



As indicated on Figure 2.5, counties that have more than 25 percent of the adults with at least some post-secondary education are located in the State's three (3) metropolitan areas. However, there are several non-metro counties in this category, including Butler County, that are exceptions. Many of the non-metropolitan counties that have high percentages of post-secondary education have community colleges. For example, Three Rivers Community College in Poplar Bluff is a major factor behind the educational attainment in Butler County. Meanwhile, the surrounding counties in the Bootheel and Southeast Ozarks have the lowest percent of adults having some education beyond high school. The low percentage in lower ranking regions may be partially explained by the lack of access to education and job-training programs.

### WORKFORCE

The following summary of the areas workforce was derived from the results of a special demographic study that targeted the specific rural areas throughout the state called "PUMS" (Public Use Micro-Sample areas). This specialized study of the 2000 census data provided some interesting information regarding the State's rural communities. The study included a 14 county region and excluded the State's three metropolitan areas. Data captured concerned the variables of age, education, employment, class of worker, poverty, and income.



The study found that both the Bootheel and the Poplar Bluff Regions had the largest percentage of persons 16 and older without a high school degree, with 37 and 34.6 percent respectively. Less than 10 percent of the population in the Bootheel and Poplar Bluff Regions had a bachelor’s degree or higher. According to the 2000 census only 67.9% of the City’s population 25 years or older graduated from high school, only 12.2% had a bachelor’s degree or higher and only 6.2% had a graduate degree or higher. Of all the areas studied, the Poplar Bluff Region had the smallest percentage of its population employed. As a result, over 20 percent of the Poplar Bluff and Bootheel region are living in poverty, according to the PUMS study, which was conducted by the Office of Social and Economic Analysis at the University of Missouri (OSEDA), <http://www.oseda.missouri.edu>.

The region surrounding Poplar Bluff is challenged by employment problems. Few jobs are available to City and county workers as the unemployment rates in Butler County continue to exceed the state average. The growth of non-farm proprietor employment over the 1980’s and 1990’s indicates that the area continues to shift away from an agricultural-based economy. This trend indicates that while service, retail, and governmental industries are growing, agricultural employment is declining in Butler County. The top employers and estimated number of employees is provided below in Table 2.5.

<b>Table 2.5: Poplar Bluff’s Top Employers - 2007</b>	
<b>Employer Name</b>	<b># of Employees</b>
Briggs & Stratton Corp.	1460
Poplar Bluff Medical Ctr.	1300
Nordyne, Inc.	1100
Poplar Bluff R-1 School District	690
Wal-Mart Supercenter	500
Gates Rubber	450
Veteran’s Administration Hospital	400
Three Rivers Community College	313
Mid-Continent Nail	205
<i>Source: City of Poplar Bluff</i>	

**INCOME**

Another challenge facing Poplar Bluff and the extended southeastern Missouri region is poverty. Personal income is and has been below the state averages. Personal income in Butler County has declined while the regional cost of living has increased. In addition, the percentage of families with incomes below the poverty level in Poplar Bluff was twice the state average from 1970 through the 2000 census. The average household income for Poplar Bluff and Butler County was \$31,559 and \$38,000 respectively. In 2000, the median household income in Butler County was \$27,775, only 72% of the State per capita income of \$37,934. The 2000 median household income for the City of Poplar Bluff was \$22,068, up from \$19,398 in 1990, yet still 42% lower than the state median household income.

As the population ages, the percentage of income spent on housing related costs and medical expenses increases. The housing, medical and related retail industries that provide the aforementioned services will benefit from this increased demand. The City should encourage the development of these markets and service delivery sectors. Recreation services, public safety, public transportation, housing assistance, and water and sewer service to residential developments are all



areas that need careful evaluation to ensure they meet the needs of the aging population. However, financing future capital improvements will be difficult as the percentage of population on fixed income is likely to continue growing, increasing the number of individuals who are unlikely to support future tax increases due to spending limitations.

**COMMUTE**

A strong economic indicator is when a City’s workforce lives close to their respected place of employment. Ninety-three percent (93%) of the Poplar Bluff’s workforce, age 16 and over, work in Butler County and over 79% work within the city limits. As a result, the mean travel time to work was just over 14 minutes, well below the state and national averages, which in 2000 were 23.8 minutes and 25.2 minutes respectively. Working close to home or from home is an important quality of life factor that also minimizes the local workforces’ reliance on costly fossil fuels. Table 2.6 shows the commuting habits of the local workforce.

<b>Table 2.6: Workforce Commuting Habits (1990 versus 2000)</b>						
<b>Subject</b>	<b>2000</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>Change</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Workers 16 and Over	5,950		6,408		-458	-7.1
Work in County of Residence	5,536	93	5,891	91.9	-355	1.1
Work in Place of Residence	4,717	79.3	4,971	77.5	-254	1.8
Drive Alone to Work	4,776	80.3	4,936	77	-160	3.3
Carpool	721	12.1	870	13.6	-149	-1.5
Public Transportation or Taxi to Work	152	2.6	99	1.5	53	1.1
Cycle or Walk to Work	129	2.2	283	4.4	-154	-2.2
Work at Home	125	2.1	146	2.3	-21	-0.2
Mean Travel Time to Work	14.3		14.1		0.2	1.5

Another significant factor related to commuting is the daytime population change due to commuting. While many communities lose population due to decentralized jobs, Poplar Bluff’s daytime population actually increases by almost 50% or 8,119. The City’s increased daytime population provides a strong marketplace for local restaurants, retailers and other commercial service providers.



### COMMUNITY TAPESTRY – THE FABRIC OF AMERICAN’S NEIGHBORHOODS

The Community Tapestry™ system is a proven segmentation methodology developed and enhanced by Claritas, Inc and ESRI over the past 30 years. The system, now owned and operated by ESRI, utilizes 65 segments called “Tapestry Lifestyles” to classify communities based on their socioeconomic and demographic composition. These segments are broken down to the U.S. Census Block Group level throughout the United States. The system is used by planners and national retailers to determine localized purchasing patterns and within the site selection process.

Table 2.7 details the top “Lifestyle Clusters” that make up well over 80% of the 8-County trade area that is centered around Poplar Bluff. It is included in this Plan to provide a better understanding of the spending habits and lifestyles of the greater Poplar Bluff market area. It gives outside retailers a profile of the eight (8) county market segment and raises some quality of life issues the City should be prepared to address in the future. These include, but are not limited to, the following conditions;

- Providing continuing educational and training to the areas workforce;
- access to quality, salaried jobs;
- providing healthy meals to a culture “on-the-run”; and
- diversifying the housing stock to provide more choices, especially in the affordable housing/1<sup>st</sup> time homebuyer market segment.

This following information was obtained from the “***Crossroads of Opportunity***” report prepared by the Greater Poplar Bluff Area Chamber of Commerce with support from Butler County, the City of Poplar Bluff and information provided by the US Census Bureau and Claritas, Inc’s “Mirovision Lifestyle Report”- currently owned and operated by ESRI under the name Community Tapestry™.



**Table 2.7: Community Lifestyle Clusters**

Lifestyle Clusters / Parent Classification	Butler County Households
<p><b>“Rustic Homesteaders” / Mainstream Families</b></p>	<p><b>5,384 (33%)</b></p>
<p><b>RUSTIC HOMESTEADERS:</b> These are primarily rural households, containing married, middle aged adults, with older children. They have little education beyond high school, low income and work in blue-collar occupations.</p> <p>Adults in the Rustic Homesteaders segment are more likely than average to be over 45 years, and very likely to be between 55 and 64. Children in this segment are more likely than average to be 10 to 17 years old. They tend to be family households and have children present. Both the household and per capita incomes are about 30% lower than the national average. Rustic homesteaders live in rural areas of the country. Educational attainment beyond high school is below average. This segment ranks third for the percentage of adults having earned a high school diploma as their highest level of schooling completed. Most work in blue-collar professions with the second highest percentage of individuals working in three employment categories: farming, forestry, and fishing; precision production and crafts; and transportation and material moving. Almost 80% are homeowners with their value being 40% below the national median. One in five Rustic Homesteaders live in mobile homes ranking them second in this category.</p> <p>Rustic Homesteaders are the second most likely to own a rifle or shotgun, to drive a regular size pick-up truck and to own a separate freezer. They are also very likely to go fishing, obtain financial advice from a banker and listen to country music radio stations.</p>	
<p><b>“Buy American” / Mainstream Families</b></p>	<p><b>3,750 (23%)</b></p>
<p><b>BUY AMERICAN:</b> These are married families, many with children, living in suburban and rural areas. Most are homeowners with low property value and household income, working in blue-collar occupations. Relatively few have education beyond the high school level. Adults in this segment are more highly concentrated than average in the age ranges over 45 and any children tend to be older (between 10 and 17 years). Buy American households have about an average likelihood to contain one, two and three to four persons and they are more likely than average to be married, family households. Their household and per capita incomes are almost 30% lower than the national average. Buy American households are found in all regions of the country and are concentrated in suburban and rural areas at rates over 30% above average. Most adults have not gone beyond a high school education. Most workers are employed in blue-collar professions and they rank fifth in machine operators. For their housing, this segment lives mostly in owner-occupied, single family units. Median property value is 40% below average and almost half live in homes built before 1959. They are almost 20% more likely than average to have no worker in the household.</p> <p>Buy American is the most likely to purchase fishing equipment and dog food. They are among the top five segments in owning a motor home or camper and driving a regular size pick-up truck.</p>	



**Table 2.7 Con't: Community Lifestyle Clusters**

Lifestyle Clusters / Parent Classification	Butler County Households
<p><b>“Trying Metro Times” / Mainstream Singles</b></p>	<p><b>1,655 (10%)</b></p>
<p><b>TRYING METRO TIMES:</b> This segment typically consists of younger, single adults with young children, and seniors, located in urban and suburban areas. They are typically renters, with very low income and education, working in blue-collar occupations. Adults in this segment are typically found in the age ranges between 21 and 29 years and all ranges over 70 years. Children in this segment are most likely to be nine and under. People in the segment are less likely than average to be married or living in family households, but children are present in 37% of the households, which is similar to the national average. Household and per capita incomes are both less than 70% of the national averages. Trying Metro Times households are found in concentrations over 20% above average in both suburban and urban areas. Schooling beyond high school is below average. Over 18% of these households contain no worker (ranking them ninth) while another 33% have one worker. Most workers are employed in the blue collar positions, particularly in the machine operators and laborers categories.</p> <p>This segment is 30% more likely to car pool or walk to work with a commuting time that is relatively short. An above average percent are renters and pay a rent, which is below the national average. Most live in housing constructed before 1959 and use utility gas as their heating fuel. Over half obtain their financial advice from friends or family.</p>	
<p><b>“Bedrock America” / Young Accumulators (14%)</b></p>	<p><b>1,427 (9%)</b></p>
<p><b>BEDROCK AMERICA:</b> This segment consists of families with children, located primarily in rural areas. They have low income and education levels and homeowners with low property value and work in blue-collar occupations. Adults in this segment are slightly more likely than average to be between 50 and 64, while children tend to be in the 5 to 17 year range. They are 9% more likely than average to have children and 17% more likely to have three to four persons in the household. The household income is 19% below average and the per capita income is 20% below. Households in this segment are 88% more likely than average to live in rural areas, particularly in the states of Arkansas and Maine. They rank eighth in terms of ending their education upon graduating high school and are 20% more likely than average to have just attended some high school. They are 24% more likely than average to work in blue-collar occupations ranking fourth in precision products and crafts. They are 12% more likely to own their home and their property value is 21% below average. Their housing is typically a single detached unit (15% above average) or mobile home (twice the national average). About 60% of these households have two or more vehicles. They are also very likely to own an American-made car.</p>	



**Table 2.7 Con't: Community Lifestyle Clusters**

Lifestyle Clusters / Parent Classification	Butler County Households
<p><b>“Settled In” / Mainstream Families</b></p>	<p><b>1,083 (7%)</b></p>
<p><b>SETTLED IN:</b> These are primarily older couples, with no children in the household, or single person households. They live in suburban areas, have medium levels of income and education and a high likelihood of being retired. Adults in this segment tend to be over 55, and are very likely to be in the 60 to 69 range. They rank fourth in average age and third in having two persons in the household. They also score 14% above average for having one-person households. Their household income is 9% below average, but their per capita income is 3% above. They rank second in the percentage of households that receive retirement income (46% above average). They are over 52% more likely than average to live in suburban areas and are found in high concentrations in the Great Lakes Region and the Midwest. They are 14% more likely to own their home, their property values are just slightly below average and they rank second in housing built between 1940 and 1959. They are more likely than average to have graduated high school, and about average in attending at least some college. They work in white and blue-collar occupations at levels similar to the national average, but score over 10% above average for administrative support and protective services. They also score above average in living in single-family units and duplexes and having one vehicle in the household. They rank third in the share of civilian veterans. Settled In is among the top five segments in redeeming coupons at drug and discount stores, shopping at a convenience food mart and participating in a utility’s balanced billing program.</p>	
<p><b>“Building a Family” / Young Accumulators</b></p>	<p><b>904 (6%)</b></p>
<p><b>BUILDING A FAMILY:</b> These are slightly younger than average households, with children, located in rural areas and living in older homes. They have low income, property value and education levels and work in blue-collar occupations. This segment is more likely than average to have children and is over 10% more likely than average to have five or more people in the household. They rank slightly higher than average in all age ranges under 17 years, scoring over 10% above average in the 10 to 17 range. In all other ranges they score very near or below the national average. Both the median household and per capita incomes are 25% below the national average and they are almost 50% more likely than average to have incomes below the poverty level. With a concentration 80% above average, this is primarily a rural segment. These households are less likely than average to have continued their education beyond high school. They are almost 30% more likely than average to work in blue-collar occupations, ranking ninth in the farming, fishing and forestry and machine operators segments. They are slightly more likely than average to own their home and their property value is 23% below the national average. Also, they are more likely than average to live in housing built prior to 1939. This segment often eats at fast food restaurants and purchase used cars.</p>	

**RETAIL TRADE**

Poplar Bluff’s original downtown business district is no longer the economic or employment engine it once was. Today the majority of the area’s retailers have moved into the strip centers along Westwood Boulevard (Business 67), leaving many of the downtown buildings vacant. However, Poplar Bluff has been, and remains, a major trade center drawing from a number of the surrounding counties. This is in part due to the City’s location and efforts of the Chamber and other business groups and governmental agencies to attract and retain businesses. The location of the City, in the center of Butler County along Highways 53, 67 and 60 provides both opportunities and constraints. While State Highway 67, 60 and 53 provide good access to the City’s commercial districts, the Highway 67 Bypass pulls cross-state travelers away from the city’s downtown and commercial retail



areas. Additionally, Highway 53, Highway 67 and Business 60 are only two lanes wide and rural in nature. Slower moving trucks and farm equipment impede the flow of traffic and are not conducive to higher speed transportation.

The introduction of the Wal-Mart Superstore and new K-Mart in 1990 increased the percentage of workforce employed in retail trade, and improved Poplar Bluff’s share of the regional retail trade dollars by decreasing the seepage of local retail spending and drawing customers from a larger retail market. Since the arrival of Wal-Mart, the City has served the retail needs well beyond the local population, securing itself as a major retail destination for the region.

<b>Table 2.8 Poplar Bluff Retail Centers as of 1990</b>	
<b>Retail Centers</b>	<b>Square Footage</b>
Wal-Mart Superstore	211,000
Valley Plaza	200,932
Central Business District	174,912
Mansion Mall	147,657
Poplar Bluff Square	118,100
K-Mart Shopping Center	86,000
Key Rexall	70,000
Bluff Estates	30,700
Hillsdale Plaza	25,000
Westwood Village -	18,000
<b>Total (as of 1990)</b>	<b>1,082,301</b>
<i>Source: City of Poplar Bluff</i>	

**MANUFACTURING**

The Industrial Park is located on the “South Side” and is home to Briggs and Stratton (the city’s second largest employer), Gates Rubber, Starting USA and other manufactures. The ‘Sale Barn” is also located on the South Side and plays host to a livestock auction every Friday and provides grounds for a large outdoor flea market on the weekends. Manufacturing currently employs 17.5% of the areas workforce, making manufacturing the second largest employment sector. One component of the City’s workforce that is attractive to manufacturing industries is the areas low wages. The workforce must increase its educational attainment in order to command higher paying, salaried jobs. Until then, manufacturing will continue to represent a significant percentage of the city’s workforce.

**HEALTH CARE SERVICES**

During the last two decades, Poplar Bluff has expanded into a regional health care provider, generating significant growth in health care employment opportunities. Education, health and social



services currently provide 30.1% of the local jobs, more than any other employment sector. Today, Poplar Bluff draws health care consumers from most of the counties in southeast Missouri and northeast Arkansas. An estimated 93% of the City's health care consumers come from a 50-mile radius. The Veterans Administration Hospital facility draws from the largest geographic area, serving four (4) Missouri and five (5) Arkansas counties. The primary service area for that hospital extends from Wright, Douglas, and Ozark counties on the west to the Mississippi River on the east and from Dent and Perry Counties on the north to the border counties in Arkansas to the south.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

There are many economic development factors that make Poplar Bluff an ideal location for locating a business. A snapshot of the key economic development highlights are provided below. The items listed below were provided via the Poplar Bluff Chamber of Commerce's report entitled "**Crossroad of Opportunity**".

- During 2000-2004 there were 75 new buildings constructed in the greater Poplar Bluff area, with a combined value of \$33 million. In 2005, the city recorded the largest single annual growth in commercial development with 28 projects valued at \$9.5million.
- Poplar Bluff's retailers generate \$480 million in annual retail sales and \$685 million of retail sales is generated in Butler County. The greater retail area generates \$1.8 billion in sales
- Poplar Bluff has an enhanced enterprise zones which provides relief from real estate taxes allowing business owners to concentrate on productivity and expansion
- The latest census data shows that in one year the city's average income increased by 9%
- 6,000 employees are employed by 14 plants located in Poplar Bluff
- There are over 500 hotel rooms in the local area.
- The major road network in the area, converge in Butler County at Poplar Bluff which includes US67, US60, US160, MO53.
- Approximately \$60 million of construction projects have been completed in recent years in Butler County, including improving Highway 60 (east and west) and Highway PP to four lanes and connecting the 67 bypass to Westwood Boulevard. The latest and most significant road investment is improving Highway 67 for approximately 50 miles to four lanes. These projects greatly improve the access to the City and improve traffic flow.
- Poplar Bluff has the largest school district in Southeast Missouri and recently achieved the highest Missouri assessment program test scores to date.
- The Poplar Bluff School District has an excellent student to teacher ratio, including an 18-1 ratio in 5-6, 16-1 ratio in the junior high and 19-1 in high school.
- Poplar Bluff is the geographical center of a trade area covers an eight (8) county area with a population of 175,000 people (over 65,000 households) and produces \$1.8 billion in annual retail sales, with \$685,000,000 of that coming from Butler County.
- Average Daily Population based on traffic counts using a REMI Model:

Poplar Bluff	60,000 +
Butler County	110,000 +



## Chapter 2: Socioeconomic Analysis

City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

- Economic Pull Factor: Butler County is ranked sixth in the State of Missouri with a pull factor of 1.62 (For every \$1 earned in Butler County \$1.62 is spent here). (Ranked 6th in the state)
- Butler County retailers have the following market shares:
  - Auto sales, parts and service 36%
  - Furniture and home furnishings 50%
  - Electronics and appliances 56%
  - Building materials and hardware 30%
  - Health and personal care 37%
  - Apparel and accessories 66%
  - Sports, hobby and music 72%
  - General merchandise 39%
  - Miscellaneous retail 60%
  - Non-store retail 36%
  - Eating and drinking places 43%
- A correlating activity that parallels retail in terms of attracting users from a wide area is healthcare, particularly hospitals. Butler County has a general medical hospital, a VA hospital, and three major clinics.
- Butler County accounts for 25% of the eight-county trade area population.
- Total retail sales and per capita retail sales in Butler County are approximately 40% greater than within any other county in the eight-county trade area.
- Total sales have grown from \$308 Million in 1992 to \$457 Million in 1997 and to an estimated \$509 Million in 2000 in Butler County.
- Butler County appears to experience an outflow of food sales and gasoline sales. Generally both of these categories are traditionally activities of local consumption and are conducted in other locations only when the retail outlets do not exist locally. In the case of food sales it is likely that a significant amount of food sales are being reported in the General Merchandise category because they occur in one of the discount department stores, which reports all of their sales in the General Merchandise category.

### SUMMARY

Much of the attractiveness of Poplar Bluff is attributable to its small town atmosphere and quality residential development. Currently, the City is experiencing an increase in overall population growth, which may be attributed, at least in part, to its excellent school system, low city property taxes; and convenient location to highway access. However, decentralization is weakening the downtown core that historically provided the cultural attractions, entertainment destinations and other amenities that attract young professional and families. Additionally, the City is falling short in several key socioeconomic areas that measure a community's quality of life. A brief summary of these key socioeconomic indicators include:

- Average household income is **significantly below** state average. (\$31,559 versus \$48,451)
- Median house value is **significantly below** state average. (\$50,200 versus \$89,900)
- Unemployed percentage is **above** state average. (7% versus 5%)



## Chapter 2: Socioeconomic Analysis

City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

- Percentage of the adult population with a high school diploma or GED is **below** state average. (67.9% versus 81%)
- Percentage of population with a bachelor's degree or higher is **significantly below** state average. (12.2% versus 21.6%)

Poplar Bluff has been, and is, a regional center drawing people from surrounding rural counties for retail trade, employment and health services. As a regional center, the city must plan not only for the local population, but also for the dispersed rural market base that benefit from the services offered. The demographics and economics of the region become as important as the demographics and economics of the city itself. Economic growth increasingly comes to those places that attract and retain the largest supply of talented workers or "human capital". Surveys show that the most important locational factors used to site new businesses are based on regional development patterns, downtown vitality, the proximity of housing to work, natural amenities and close by outdoor recreation. Economic gains are made when workers and businesses cluster in tight geographic proximity, thereby gaining quicker access to new ideas and technologies. The City should focus on providing these key locational factors to attract and retain a quality workforce and improve the quality of life for all residents, new and old.



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### **PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES OVERVIEW**

#### **DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC SERVICES**

The public facilities and services available to residents of the City of Poplar Bluff include police, fire protection, streets/public works, administration, court, parks, recreation, cable, water, sewer, schools and library. Some of these services are provided by governmental jurisdictions and agencies besides Poplar Bluff. The quality and availability of these services influence the type, timing, and density of development in the future. Generally, the more compact the community, the more efficient the delivery of these services. Compactness can be achieved by encouraging development adjacent to the existing built-up area rather than allowing “leap-frog” development, which skips over large tracts of undeveloped land. A second means of increasing service delivery efficiency is to cluster those land uses which have the greatest need for fire and police protection, such as high value commercial uses or hazardous industrial uses. This clustering will allow the concentration of protection efforts where it is most needed and minimize costly utility runs and infrastructure costs.

#### **Recommendations**

The most cost-efficient solution to accommodate future growth and the distribution of public services is to concentrate development in areas which can be served by existing facilities rather than in areas which require new facilities. However, future public utility expansions will be needed to sustain and encourage growth. The city must consider the timing, size and direction of these expansions as well as the availability of alternative sites which could be more easily served prior to investing in costly infrastructure projects. The following sections provide a brief overview of the public services in Poplar Bluff and recommendations for future improvements.

### **PUBLIC SAFETY**

Police and fire protection is provided to all residents of Poplar Bluff. The availability of these two public services is essential to maintaining the day to day health, safety and welfare of Poplar Bluff’s residents.

#### **CITY OF POPLAR BLUFF POLICE DEPARTMENT**

The Poplar Bluff Police Department is a full-service department, located at 330 N. 2nd Street. The Department consists of 42 sworn officers, seven (7) telecommunications and six (6) civilian employees. The Department provides services to the entire City of Poplar Bluff, which includes over 17,000 residents. The Department is led by the Chief of Police and an Assistant Chief of Police. The Department’s mission is to provide a level of service that strives to achieve the safest possible environment and enhance the quality of life in Poplar Bluff.

The Department is broken down into two (2) divisions: patrol and administrative. The largest and most visible component of the police department is the patrol division. Patrol officers are charged with protecting the health, safety and welfare of the community. The division responds to all calls from the community and is responsible for handling a wide variety of duties including emergency response, crime investigation, traffic accident investigation, and traffic enforcement. The patrol officers work closely with members of the business community and area neighborhoods to ensure a safe, livable environment. To the extent possible, the officers provide a high level of visibility in order to minimize conditions or situations that may foster criminal activity. Patrol officers are the first responders to all



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major crimes and other emergencies and are the front line of defense for the City of Poplar Bluff and its citizenry.

The administrative division is charged with managing resources in a way that maximizes the training and safety of department personnel while providing access to the latest police protection technology. Other police department services include:

- School Resource
- Reserve Division
- Communications
- Criminal Investigations
- Narcotics
- Code Enforcement
- Office Staff
- Evidence
- Neighborhood Watch
- Animal Control

Poplar Bluff operates the police department on a quality of life basis. This means that additional services and resources are applied as needed beyond baseline services to address evolving problems and issues. Included in this approach to policing is maintaining a four (4) minute response time for all calls and a (2) minute response time for “hot calls”.

### Recommendations

The Police Department adequately serves the community from their present location, however the facilities are aging and in need of serious repair. The key to the Department’s future success is retaining sufficient personnel, providing a high level of training and outfitting officers with the latest technology in law enforcement and communication equipment.

### CITY OF POPLAR BLUFF FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Poplar Bluff Fire Department serves a ten (10) square mile region providing fire protection and emergency services to over 18,000 people. The Department consists of 33 trained personnel, including one (1) fire chief, six (6) captains and 21 firefighters and provides the following services:

- Firefighting
- Hazardous Material Response
- Vehicle Rescue (Extrication)
- Search & Rescue

The Department operates out of three (3) stations at the following locations:

**Headquarters/Station #1**  
300 S. Broadway

**Station #2**  
2777 Barron Road

**Station #3**  
507 Highway 53

The Poplar Bluff Fire Department currently has an Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating of four (4) on a scale of 1-10, 1 being exemplary. This rating system is extremely important to the entire community because virtually all US insurers of homes and commercial property use ISO’s Public Protection Classification (PPC) in calculating premiums. A Community’s PPC depends on three (3) main factors:

- **fire alarm and communications systems**, including telephone systems, telephone lines, staffing, and dispatching systems



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- **the fire department**, including equipment, staffing, training, and geographic distribution of fire companies
- **the water supply system**, including condition and maintenance of hydrants, and a careful evaluation of the amount of available water compared with the amount needed to suppress fires

Generally, communities with low PPC ratings enjoy lower insurance costs than communities with higher PPC ratings. Not only is this an increased financial burden on the citizens, but this risk is also passed on to local businesses. For this reason, new business tends to choose communities with high ISO ratings. Therefore, maintaining a robust and well trained fire department is not only important for the safety, health and welfare of the community, but also for public relations and economic development effort which strive to attract and retain businesses and homeowners.

### Recommendations

In order to meet response times and provide fire and rescue assets where they are most needed, the department has an immediate need for a new station (Station #4), to be located in the western portion of the city in the PP Highway vicinity and nine (9) new firefighters to operate the new station. The number of firefighters within the Department has remained constant for the last thirty (30) years or so, meanwhile, the City has continued to grow and develop. The addition of the aforementioned personnel and Station #4 is critical if the community wants to maintain the current level of fire protection and maintain the current response times, which are currently getting longer as the population grows in the city's fringe areas. Water supply to these areas is also a concern. At the present staffing levels, the Department only has six (6) fire fighters manning the City, one (1) of which is operating the pumper truck. The Department also only has two (2) individuals responsible for record keeping and other administrative tasks. In summary, the Poplar Bluff Fire Department has an immediate need for future expansion and additional personnel to provide fire protection, training and administrative responsibilities.

### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The City also is responsible for maintaining an Emergency Response Plan. The City must continue to take a lead roll in coordinating police, fire and other first responders in the area and conduct ongoing updates to the Emergency Response Plan to ensure the area is prepared for both natural and manmade hazards. It is important to take precautions to ensure the area's transportation network, hospitals, emergency facilities and the distribution of food, water and shelter continue to function during and after an earthquake, tornado or other devastating natural or manmade event(s). Studies show that on average, 25% of businesses that close during a disaster do not come back. By making plans now to raise awareness and prepare the community and coordinate first response details, the area will be better positioned for future disasters. Special consideration should be given to earthquake preparation and raising awareness of the New Madrid Fault.

### Recommendations

The City should continue to educate the community on fire prevention, tornado preparedness and how to prepare for an earthquake and what to do during an earthquake. The National



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Disaster Education Coalition, recommends promoting the following earthquake preparation strategies through annual media and community outreach efforts;

- Pick "safe places" in each room of your home. A safe place could be under a sturdy table or desk or against an interior wall away from windows, bookcases, or tall furniture that could fall on you. The shorter the distance to move to safety, the less likely you will be injured. Injury statistics show that persons moving more than 10 feet during an earthquake's shaking are most likely to experience injury.
- Practice drop, cover, and hold-on in each safe place. Drop under a sturdy desk or table, hold on, and protect your eyes by pressing your face against your arm. Practicing will make these actions an automatic response. When an earthquake or other disaster occurs, many people hesitate, trying to remember what they are supposed to do. Responding quickly and automatically may help protect you from injury.

For more information please see the fact sheet entitled "Preparing for Disaster", prepared by The US Department of Homeland Security, FEMA and the American Red Cross located in the Appendix.

### GENERAL CITY SERVICES

The command post for most municipal services takes place at City Hall. The City Hall Facility is located at 101 Oak Street in the northern edge of the Central Business District and was formally the old McPheeters Clinic and Lucy Lee Hospital. The City purchased the City Hall Complex in 1989. The purchase included a 40,000 square foot main building and a 5,000 square foot metal building. The administration offices, Municipal Utilities, Police Department, Emergency Management and Municipal Court moved into the facility in January 1990. Additional City offices located elsewhere include:

- Street Department - located on Johnson Street near the Power Plant.
- Parks and Recreation - located near Hillcrest Park on Second Street.
- City Transit – located on the northern edge of the junior high school property.
- Animal Control and Dog Pound – located on Butler Street off Highway 67.
- Housing Authority – located in the Twin Towers Housing Complex.

The following is a list of some of the City's Boards and Commissions that meet on a regular basis for the purpose of improving and sustaining a high quality life within Poplar Bluff;

- **Planning & Zoning:** The Planning & Zoning Commission is responsible for the development and adoption of the City's Comprehensive Plan and the review of various development plans, subdivision plats and special use permits. The members are appointed by the City Council and serve limited terms pursuant to the City's code.
- **Building Standards Board:** The Building Standards Board holds and conducts all hearings relative to the mandatory demolition or repair and maintenance of buildings and structures required by the housing code of the city.



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- **Historical Preservation Commission:** The Historical Preservation Commission's purpose is to help to identify historic, archaeological and architectural characteristics of Poplar Bluff, which represent elements of the city's cultural, social, economic and architectural history; to designate landmarks, historic places and districts and to educate the public on matters of preservation.
- **Housing Authority Board:** The Poplar Bluff Housing Authority Board oversees the operations of the Housing Authority, an independent agency that maintains affordable housing for seniors and family units at various locations throughout the city.
- **Park Board:** The Park Board has sole responsibility for the expenditure of money credited to the park fund and control of the city parks. The Park Board is an autonomous board appointed by the City Council.
- **Library Board:** Manages the library's resources and helps coordinate special events, exhibits and fund raisers. The Library Board is an autonomous board appointed by the City Council.

### SPECIFIC CITY SERVICES

The City of Poplar Bluff provides the following services to residents:

- Maintenance to the city's transportation system
- Mosquito abatement
- Operating the City's cemetery
- Repairing and maintaining city vehicles
- Concrete street slab replacement and pothole repair of all City-owned rights-of-way.
- Planning and zoning control throughout the City. This includes site development and subdivision plan review for all private properties within the City.
- Administering the City's building permit and inspection process.
- Enforcing the City's Stormwater Management Program. Flooding, particularly flash flooding is a major concern. This development and enforcement of this program is strongly recommended to help reduce the frequency and intensity of flooding.
- Maintaining, staffing and programming all City-owned parks and recreation facilities, including a swimming pool, nine (9) lighted baseball/softball fields, three (3) lighted soccer fields, five (5) picnic pavilions, two (2) paved multi-purpose trails, a boat launch, and golf course with driving range and many other park amenities.
- Maintaining and operating the Poplar Bluff Municipal Airport with includes a 5,000 foot runway that handles 15,000 operations annually.

As indicated above the City provides a wide variety of public services from several facilities located throughout the area. However, these services are for most part housed at City Hall, which has outlived itself.



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### Recommendations

Today, City Hall does not provide the space and modern updates needed to provide effective community services. This Plan recommends substantially upgrading the existing City Hall Facility or relocating City Hall into an existing building in the Central Business District that could be adaptively reused as a centralized facility. If City Hall is rebuilt, it should stay in or near the Central Business District and be promoted as a redevelopment catalyst to increase the confidence to invest in the downtown area.

The new complex should be designed to accommodate a variety of City Departments and Divisions. In addition, the new or redesigned facility should also serve as a civic complex that would house a variety of municipal facilities, community events and include a park or other outdoor gathering area(s).

### PARK SYSTEM

The City of Poplar Bluff owns and operates twelve (12) park and recreation facilities. The park system offers a variety of amenities including an indoor community recreation center, indoor and outdoor swimming, golf, tennis, basketball, horseshoes, activity fields, pavilions and playground equipment. The City's parks and recreation facilities and the Comprehensive Plan's future recommendations are discussed further in Chapter 5.

### POPLAR BLUFF PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Poplar Bluff Public Library, located at 318 Main Street, was built in 1936 and recently renovated and expanded in 1998. The \$1 million expansion doubled the size of the library and created off-street parking and community rooms. Additional expansion of the children's library, wireless access and additional book storage and reading areas is scheduled for completion in 2009.

### BLACK RIVER COLISEUM

Built in 1999, the Black River Coliseum is an 115,000 square foot multi-purpose center with a seating capacity of 5,000. The Coliseum is located in the City's historic downtown district and hosts concerts, sporting events, family shows, trade shows, conventions, banquets, and many other events of all sizes including business meetings, training classes, receptions, and seminars. The City's Indoor Aquatic Center is also located in the Black River Coliseum.

### MARGARET HARWELL ART MUSEUM

The City owns and operates an art museum that has an accompanying Children's Museum. The Margaret Harwell Museum is located at 421 North Main Street and the Children's Museum is located at 417 Lester Street. The Margaret Harwell Art Museum opened to the public in November 1981. The museum was made possible by a generous contribution from Margaret Harwell and the City's purchase of the Dalton House, which houses the library. In 1995, the City purchased property behind the Dalton House to expand the museum to include a children's education center, now called the "Children's Museum." The Children's Museum offers classes and annual activities oriented towards children.

The museum hosts monthly exhibits and sponsors several annual festivals and special events. The Arts Festival & Art on the Run and the Annual Poplar Bluff Artist's Guild Regional Art



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Exhibit are both held in the fall, drawing crowds from near and far. The Museum attracts an estimated 10,000 visitors each year.

Other museums and local attractions include:

- Poplar Bluff Railroad Museum (Cultural Attractions- Events- & Facilities; 303 Moran Street
- Poplar Bluff Museum (Cultural Attractions- Events- & Facilities; 1010 North Main Street),

### FRISCO DEPOT

2008 marks the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the construction of the Frisco Depot, built in 1928. It is the only remaining Frisco depot in Missouri. The depot currently houses the Poplar Bluff Railroad Museum. The Depot is a beautiful building that follows the Spanish Revival architectural style with its curvilinear gables and a red clay tile roof. The Depot was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1994 and is an important historic resource for the City and region. The Depot was recently upgraded with a new roof and other miscellaneous improvements.



**Frisco Depot (1928) Poplar Bluff, Mo**

### THE GREATER POPLAR BLUFF AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Greater Poplar Bluff Area Chamber of Commerce serves as both the industrial and commercial recruitment arm of the City. The Chamber's mission is to provide leadership, business services and to promote economic growth and industrial development to the greater Poplar Bluff area. On-going efforts of the Chamber include proactive efforts to attract industry to Poplar Bluff, enhancements to downtown and assistance to new and small businesses. The Chamber also works in a number of areas to give support to existing businesses in the city by working with state and local governments to support legislation that is advantageous to the business community. The Chamber provides ongoing promotional efforts to bring new business



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to the community by promoting tourism and sponsoring special events. The Chamber's priorities include, but are not limited to:

- Conduct the "Shop Poplar Bluff First" campaign for the holidays
- Promote and develop plans and procedures to attract visitors to the area. Work with the local tourism related entities to keep our calendar of events updated for upcoming events and opportunities
- Promote improvement in local transportation measures by working cooperatively with the City of Poplar Bluff, Butler County and the Missouri Department of Transportation to find ways to ensure our continued growth.

### THE POPLAR BLUFF HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Poplar Bluff Housing Authority is an independent agency that maintains 189 apartments for seniors and 286 family units at the Twin Towers, Hillcrest and Wilson housing centers. These units provide affordable housing for the elderly and other low income families. There is also a recreation/exercise area, a library with Internet access and a dining area open to the public for lunch. Its governing board is appointed by the City Council.



### MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

Since 1917 the City of Poplar Bluff has been the owner and service provider of Municipal Utilities, which covers most utility needs, including electric, water, sewer and cable to the residents of Poplar Bluff.

**City Cable:** City Cable is the newest division of Municipal Utilities. Digital cable and high-speed cable internet access is provided over a hybrid fiber optic/coaxial system

**Electric Department:** The City purchases wholesale power from Grand River Dam Authority and Southwestern Power Administration to provide most of the power needs of the community. The City also owns a 33 megawatt generating station that provides peak power needs and can produce access power to be sold to the open market when advantageous.

**Water Department:** The Water Department obtains their water supply from the Black River which is fed by numerous springs throughout its drainage area and a continuous release from the Clearwater Reservoir. Clearwater Reservoir was completed in 1948 and designed to control flooding. The reservoir does not provide municipal storage of potable water. Storage is provided at the City's five (5) elevated storage tanks. The City has a total storage capacity of 2,850,000 gallons and an average pumping capacity of 4,000 gallons per minute or 5.76 million gallons per day (MGD). The City of Poplar Bluff uses approximately 3.075 million gallon per day (MGD), therefore the City's water supply and storage is adequate to support the present population along with modest future growth. The city should pass on the cost to expand the



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City's Water supply to any new land users or developers that requires upgrades to the City's water supply or distribution system.

**Sanitary Sewer Department:** The Sanitary Sewer Department's system has a four (4) cell aerated lagoon treatment plant, that was recently upgraded with aeration improvements, increasing the City's sanitary treatment capacity to well over 3 million gallons per day,

### SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

The city requires each individual residence and business to have trash removal service. However, each resident and business owner is responsible for contracting their own trash removal services. Currently, waste hauling is provided by a variety of contractors that all adhere to various pick-up schedules and times.

#### Recommendations

It is recommended that the City develop a unified trash, recycling and yard waste hauling contract. The contract should apply to all single family residents and require only one trash hauler to provide services to all of the City's single family homes. In addition to weekly solid waste pick-up, the contract shall include yard waste removal, recycling and annual bulk and white goods pick-up services for one competitive fee. By contracting solid waste removal services to one contractor, the City will reduce the number and frequency of trash trucks on city streets, thereby reducing wear and tear of the city's streets and improving safety and aesthetics.

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS

#### POPLAR BLUFF R-1 SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Poplar Bluff R-1 School District consists of a public high school, a junior high, a 5th and 6th grade center, a kindergarten center, three (3) elementary schools and a head start facility. An overview of the larger school facilities serving the educational needs of the City include:

1. The Poplar Bluff High School is located at 1300 Victory Lane and has 1,300 students.
2. Poplar Bluff 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Junior High has an enrollment of 750 students and is located at 550 North Westwood.
3. The Poplar Bluff 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Center is located at 3209 Oak Grove Road and has an enrollment of 744 students.
4. The Poplar Bluff Technology Center, located at 3203 Oak Grove Road, provides technical training to 10-12<sup>th</sup> grade students.

#### THREE RIVERS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Three Rivers Community College, located at 2080 Three Rivers Boulevard, is a two-year institution that had a total enrollment of 3,273 and a full-time enrollment of 2,641 in 2007. Three Rivers is the only college located in Poplar Bluff. The college was founded in 1966 and classes



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began in 1967 with a student body of 138 students. In 1979 the college moved to its present location on a 70 acre campus in the northern portion of the City.

The college offers two-year Associates of Arts and Associates of Science degrees in a number of fields; vocational-technical programs designed to provide job training for the areas workforce; and continuing Education and Community Services Programs which are developed, as needed, to meet the needs and interest of the community.

### **SUMMARY**

The availability of municipal services, low cost of living and small town, family-friendly character are critical elements in the retention and attraction of residents. The low cost of living is due in part to the cost effectiveness of the city's utility services and availability of affordable housing. The functional capacity of the existing utility infrastructure allows years of service to the city's existing population. The recommendations provided herein should be implemented to ensure the community continues to enjoy a full range of municipal services and a high quality of life. As the City grows, the city's police, fire, parks and utilities must be expanded to accommodate well-planned growth. The City must plan for future growth and forge relationships early with landowners and service providers in outlying areas to ensure future utilities and infrastructure is provided in a cost-effective, sustainable manner.



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### Goals & Objectives- “Implementing the Community’s Vision”

#### Introduction

The preparation of the 2007 Poplar Bluff Comprehensive Plan included an extensive and structured program of citizen involvement. This section presents citizen defined issues and recommendations that form the overall vision for the future and the values held by the community. The following is a summary of the public engagement activities that were conducted in the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan.

First and foremost, a **Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)** was formed to provide a local perspective and better understand the issues as they relate to the Comprehensive Plan. The CAC also serves as a sounding board as the planning team reported monthly findings, observations and recommendations. The CAC consisted of the following individuals:

- Rob Barth
- Greg Batson
- Becky Brooks
- Janet Brown
- Margaret Carter
- Tucker Davis
- Paul Duckett
- Bruce Eady
- Dale Gaebler
- Roger Hogg
- Larry Kimbrow
- Ernie Lawson
- Robbie Myers
- Ken Parrett
- April Piland
- Roger Robinson
- Melanie Thomas
- Ben Traxel
- Bill Turner
- Susan Williams

An initial series of **Stakeholder Interviews** were conducted with the various heads of city departments. This was done to begin developing issues and concerns from the city government perspective.

#### CAC CHARRETTE

The first Planning Charrette was held with the CAC on March 16, 2006. The CAC members identified a master list of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, or SWOT Analysis for Poplar Bluff. After developing the list, each member was provided a set of two stick-on dots for each factor and asked to put a dot by the items they felt were the most important. The participants, in no particular order, identified the following strength, weaknesses, threats and opportunities.

#### Strengths

- Having a center of higher education in town and a general perception of a higher educational standard for the city.
- An excellent location including 4-lane highway access
- A lower cost of living
- Citizens involved with their local government, and
- Being a regional shopping hub

#### Weaknesses

- A declining downtown and the perception of it being unsafe
- Low income levels



- Methamphetamine use, especially among the youth, and
- A general economic malaise in a variety of sectors

### Opportunities

- The widening of Highway 67
- The potential for Annexation and Growth
- Available commercial land, and
- The Black River

### Threats

- Potential loss of jobs from a plant closing
- National economy
- A loss of educated citizens, and
- The potential to grow too fast

### TOWN PLANNING OPEN HOUSES

A series of **Town Planning Open Houses** were held after initial thoughts and ideas had been developed and vetted with the CAC. A series of nine (9) presentation boards were placed on easels in a semi-circle in the room and participants were asked to walk through the presentation topics. At the end of their review, they were asked to fill out a comment form. Specific topics presented at the open houses included:

- An introduction to the planning process, the CAC, CAC identified issues, and a direction board explaining the presentation process, and
- Five (5) boards providing concepts and asking questions about Land Use, Transportation, Parks, Structures, and Economic Development

A public survey was also developed in order to more fully reach out to the public. Groups of questions were specifically designed to understand issues and concerns while others were included to understand which groups in the city felt a specific way. A summary of the Town Planning Open Houses is provided in Appendix A.

The second series of **Planning Open Houses** were held to present draft drawings and ideas to the public. Again, comment forms were provided to attendees for response.



### SUMMARY

All participants in the public engagement process were encouraged to share their expertise as residents, consumers and members of the community as they discussed specific planning issues related to the City's comprehensive plan. After review all the information gathered during the public engagement activities, consensus was built in the following areas

- Residents express significant civic pride. This pride can be a stepping stone by:
  - Meeting the unmet needs of the citizens
  - Reinvigorating and renovating existing resources (ex-parks, brick streets, downtown, river)
- Residents clearly desire more diverse retail options.
- One of the major challenges will be to control where and how retail develops as well as to create a positive environment for retail developers.
- Expansion through annexation, better quality streets, and overall maintenance (ex-brick streets, downtown, derelict homes) are priorities to the residents.
- Parks and Utilities are strengths.
- Can expand park system and access through connections.
- Financing the city's future directly tied to utility revenues.
- Lack of sufficient jobs and lower incomes continue to trouble residents.
- Citizens are less certain about the city's future when it comes to housing, ethnic diversity, street lighting, and recreational programs. Not a focus of residents now but planning needs to address.
- Family is a significant focus. Using full, family oriented "thinking" in design and programming of city spaces appears critical to success.

The findings were based on each participant's insight into their community and perception of the planning issues within their neighborhoods. The public engagement findings were instrumental in identifying the needs of Poplar Bluff's neighborhoods, businesses and quality of life concerns. This information will help establish a direction for the future of the City and its neighborhoods and businesses. A summary of the public engagement activities is provided in Appendix A.



### THE VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF POPLAR BLUFF

The Poplar Bluff comprehensive planning process defined what residents want Poplar Bluff to be in 20-25 years. The Future Land Use Plan recommends balanced and carefully planned growth, neighborhood stability, restorative development and historic preservation. The recommendations also identify new planning initiatives; such as developing quality neighborhoods supported by an integrated park system and diversified retail and commercial choices. The vision developed for this Plan to help guide the city into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is:

***“To preserve the City’s small-town atmosphere while promoting a livable, well-planned community through managed growth, economic development and revitalization efforts”***

The goals adopted for this Plan represent ideals of what Poplar Bluff should strive to become in the next 20-25 years. The plan also includes several objectives and implementation strategies that provide the focus and direction needed to obtain the preferred future. The implementation strategies form a work program that lays out the development philosophy the City should strive to achieve. Some strategies are clear actions the City should take; others are recommendations for additional planning work, more study or further public input.

#### OVERVIEW

The formulation of a vision, goals and objectives is a critical process in the preparation of a comprehensive plan. Goals are general statements that address the City’s long-range plans and desired outcomes. They provide the philosophical framework upon which the objectives of the comprehensive plan are based. Objectives more specifically define how a goal will be achieved. The next level, policies, provides physical actions or steps that help further explain and define the goals and objectives. The stability and growth of Poplar Bluff depends directly on its ability to provide the desired public services, facilities, opportunities and community amenities. These and other factors that influence the growth of Poplar Bluff have been considered in the development of the following goals and objectives.

The goals and objectives developed for this plan respond to the critical issues raised during the Town Hall Meetings, interviews with stakeholders and the conditions observed and researched during the formation of this plan. The goals and objectives will assist public officials in guiding their decisions relating to services, land use development and neighborhood preservation. Obtaining these goals will require the coordination and leadership of all levels and forms of government, both internal and external to the City, plus strong support from community groups and private enterprise. The goals and objectives have been broken down, in no particular order, into the following eight (8) planning elements:

1. Downtown Revitalization
2. Future Commercial Development
3. Quality of Life
4. Housing and Neighborhood Stabilization
5. Transportation
6. Future Land Use
7. Parks
8. Community Services



In addition to the following goals, objectives and implementation strategies, the Community Facilities & Services Chapter, Park Plan, Transportation Plan and Future Land Use Plan also provide recommended strategies and land use policies that, when implemented, create a more livable community that retains and attracts residents and businesses.

### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

The Poplar Bluff Comprehensive Plan established several citizen-defined goals for each of the main planning subject areas, or elements covered in this Plan. The Comprehensive Plan Goals are as follows:

#### DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

##### Goal

“Promote investment in the City’s central business district in order to attract and retain businesses, revitalize downtown and increase commercial and entertainment opportunities that attract people”

##### Objectives & Implementation Strategies

- Support the Downtown Redevelopment / Main Street program/group.
- Develop and implement a downtown master plan includes improvements to the streetscape, mixed land use redevelopment strategies, parking analysis, financing options, branding solutions, marketing, and business recruitment.
- Identify and procure funding for infrastructure improvements such as people gathering spaces, parks, trails, facades improvements, alley improvements, utility upgrades and flood control.
- Encourage the cooperation of all business and civic groups with an interest in the downtown work together in a unified effort to enhance the downtown experience.
- Create a special planning district or overlay that facilitates the preservation and adaptive reuse of the historic Downtown.
- Revitalize the riverfront area and improve access to the river by implementing the recommended greenway system.
- Encourage and aggressively promote new community events that capitalize on Downtown Poplar Bluff’s social, professional, cultural, recreational and entertainment opportunities.
- Encourage the development of boutique style specialty shops, restaurants, hotels and entertainment establishments within the historic downtown district.
- Develop a central theme or focus for the redevelopment of downtown.
- Develop design guidelines that require future redevelopment applications to preserve the historic character of downtown and provide a base level of architecture that fits within and contributes to the historic downtown.



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- Create a special financing district to share the costs of public improvements such as the installation/improvement of sidewalks, street lighting, adequate parking provisions and other site amenities such as landscaping and the creation of outdoor meeting places.

### FUTURE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

#### Goal

“Encourage integrated, balanced growth that benefits all residents and businesses by strengthening our positive business climate, proactively planning our future and responding to economic opportunities.”

#### Objectives & Implementation Strategies

Poplar Bluff currently appears to be leaking consumer spending and business activity to the surrounding areas in the area of specialty retail. This may be attributable, at least in part, to the absence of such retailers within the local Poplar Bluff marketplace. To create and maintain a diversified revenue base, the city should create a targeted economic development program that encourages diversification of the City’s retail base as well as other revenue sources. This program should include the development of zoning and development regulations that encourage innovative and/or state-of-the-practice development strategies and tenant mixes along with strategic business recruitment and retention efforts along with the following objectives and implementation strategies;

- Encourage commercial and mixed-use redevelopment focused primarily along the Westwood Boulevard and Pine Street (Business 60) corridors, along both sides of PP Highway and within the City’s historic downtown.
- Develop programs to attract light industrial land-uses such as technology based enterprises, medical, warehousing, light assembly, manufacturing, and transportation distribution into the city’s industrial areas shown on the Future Land Use Map.
- Develop an economic diversification plan that facilitates long term economic stability and reduces the City’s economic dependence on a few industries.
- Conduct a detailed market analysis to establish viable development “niches”.
- Recruit businesses that provide a better variety of retail shops, restaurants, and entertainment establishments.
- Improve and maintain the supply and quality of Poplar Bluff’s work force and promote local employment opportunities for Poplar Bluff residents to maximize the number of residents. Providing jobs within the City helps reduce spending outside the city and increases revenue within the City.
- Work with local community colleges to provide worker training that meets the needs of existing and anticipated businesses.
- Work with local school districts, trade schools and community colleges to develop programs providing school-to-career readiness in support of a skilled workforce for Poplar Bluff.



## Chapter 4: Goals & Objectives

City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

- Promote efforts that make the city more attractive to working families by improving housing options, educational opportunities, and other services that are attractive to working families.
- In accordance with the Chamber's goals, conduct and promote a "Shop Poplar Bluff First" campaign.-
- In accordance with the Chamber's goals, promote and develop plans and procedures to attract visitors to the area. Work with the local tourism related entities to plan and promote monthly events.
- In accordance with the Chamber's goals, promote improvement in local transportation measures by working cooperatively with the Chamber and the Missouri Department of Transportation to find ways to ensure future growth includes the following:
  1. A continued partnership in widening Highway 67 between Poplar Bluff and Fredericktown.
  2. Place a stop light in front of PBRMC.
  3. Evaluate options for a by-pass to service the Industrial Park.
- Reenergize community pride in the downtown area
- Focus on the clean-up and revitalization of the downtown area.
- Promote and restore the economic health, community pride, and quality of life for Poplar Bluff residents and visitors.

Poplar Bluff has been, and is, a regional center drawing people from surrounding counties for retail trade, employment and health services. As a regional center, the city must plan not only for its own population, but also for those who benefit from the services offered. The demographics and economics of the region become as important as the demographics and economics of the city itself. Economic growth increasingly comes to those places that attract and retain the largest supply of talented workers or "human capital". Surveys show that the most important locational factors used to site new businesses are based on regional development patterns, downtown vitality, and the proximity of housing to work, natural amenities and outdoor recreation. Economic gains are made when workers and businesses cluster in tight geographic proximity, thereby gaining quicker access to new ideas and technologies. The City should focus on providing these key locational factors to attract and retain a quality workforce and improve the quality of life for all residents, new and old.



### QUALITY OF LIFE

#### Goal

Develop programs that promote community beautification, character enhancement and quality of life by preserving Poplar Bluff's small-town character and building upon the City's premier services, facilities, and nearby nationally recognized outdoor recreation amenities.

#### Objectives & Implementation Strategies

The city will need to be prepared to provide the level and type of services and amenities demanded of an aging population, while also providing the housing, services and quality of life factors that attracts and retains young adults and children. The availability of good salaried jobs diversified housing options and entertainment/cultural attractions are key considerations that the City should consider to attract young adults while also serving the needs of the aging population. The following quality of life objectives and implementation strategies are also recommended;

- Protect the resources that make Poplar Bluff a great place to live and raise a family. More specifically, continue providing excellent, cost-effective services and opportunities for all residents and business owners.
- Maintain the local character and high quality of life while minimizing negative after or side effects from future growth or development.
- Provide access to a wide range of social, cultural, recreational and other resources, events and facilities that enriched community life and promote active lifestyles.
- Collaborate with other governmental agencies to promote regional opportunities and solve regional problems.
- Develop plans for major entrances into the city to create an aesthetically pleasing gateway corridor leading into the community. Gateways serve as a focal point, and can consist of monument structures, distinctive building designs or unique landscaping and lighting schemes.
- Maintain and build upon Poplar Bluff's existing recreational and cultural successes.
- Preserve landforms and drainage patterns when designing sites for development. Excavation and fill of any identified wetland or floodplain is strongly discouraged. The appropriate state or federal agency should review projects involving these natural areas.
- Require the installation of quality landscaping along roadway rights-of-ways and parking areas and promote the use of landscaped berms, vegetation and decorative screening to provide buffering between different zoning districts and/or uses.
- Expand City parks where practical to include the use of environmental corridors and bike lanes on specific streets to form an interconnected park network that is fully and easily accessible from all districts within the City for pedestrians and cars.



- Require future development, including stormwater and utility improvements, to provide all necessary property right-of-way and consider easements for bicycle/pedestrian corridors.

### HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION

#### Goal

Preserve the character and stability of the City's existing neighborhoods and promote the continued development of new, high quality residential development in the City's residential growth areas that offer a range of housing options.

#### Objectives & Implementation Strategies

- Expand the supply of dwelling units to provide appropriate housing for all social and economic classes such as assisted living facilities, multi-family developments and planned residential subdivisions
- Preserve neighborhood character by maintaining the city's current quality of life and sustaining the current level of public services and facilities, including the parks and recreation system and schools.
- Support and encourage the development of neighborhood organizations that promote civic activities and empower residents to strengthen and protect their neighborhoods.
- Research available home improvement and low-income housing grants and provide applications for the applicable grants (Federal and State) at City Hall and sponsor programs to raise awareness and promote the utilization of the grants to help improve and maintain the city's housing stock, specifically those of elderly and low-income homeowners.
- Neighborhoods should be encouraged to incorporate central gathering places such as, community gardens, parks, trails and playfields into their design in order to provide a common space for personal interaction.
- When possible, neighborhoods and major parks should be linked together via sidewalks, or a greenway consisting of bicycle paths and trails. One solution is to create a preservation corridor along natural corridors and watersheds such as the Black River. The intent is to create a linear park system connecting to activity centers, parks and neighborhoods throughout the community. A conservation easement is one method of establishing a public use corridor that would support passive recreation, pedestrian traffic, and the preservation of natural features.
- Encourage quality infill development of different housing types and density/intensity to coexist with existing neighborhoods.
- Develop planning and development regulations that protect residential neighborhoods from encroachment of incompatible activities or land uses that may have a negative impact on the residential living environment.
- Develop a plan to extend basic utilities to all existing neighborhoods and new subdivisions.



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City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

- Develop an annexation plan addressing the provision of infrastructure and the development of new residential growth areas, particularly along the bypass.
- Use existing neighborhood organizations and/or leaders to assist in the education of housing maintenance programs.
- Continue strict, consistent code enforcement to prevent property deterioration and to protect property values.
- Budget for infrastructure needs such as sidewalks, streets, water lines and sewer lines.
- Develop small-scale incentives, including “rent-to-own” programs, to help meet the demand for affordable housing.
- Implement a pilot infill project: Target the redevelopment of underutilized parking lots.
- Promote financing programs for home repairs and maintenance (target low income, disabled, and elderly) to help sustain the City’s current supply of affordable housing.
- Conduct a housing survey of every neighborhood. Map results and prioritize areas in need of assistance.

### TRANSPORTATION

#### Goal

The City shall ensure the transportation system provides safe and effective circulation and economic development potential.

#### Objectives & Implementation Strategies

- Make sure the Highways 60 and 67 upgrades are done in a manner that promotes and supports the city’s goals and objective contained herein. Go beyond basic engineering requirements and try to make improvements in the areas of aesthetics and multi-modal access.
- Provide a thoroughfare system, which includes signage, road improvements, and the addition of new roads, that allows safe and efficient travel through the City- with special emphasis on improving cross-town accessibility. The arterial and collector street system should be laid out with an emphasis on connecting neighborhoods and encouraging access within and between neighborhoods.
- Streets should be designed to a pedestrian scale including the installation of pedestrian level lighting, street furniture, street trees and landscaping.
- Sidewalks should be required on both sides of every street unless alternative pedestrian routes are available.
- Consider modifying signal timing and installing turn lanes where traffic flow tends to back up or increase safety risks.
- Consider sidewalks and bicycle lanes for all planned roadway improvements.



## Chapter 4: Goals & Objectives

City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

- Implement a community-wide greenway system- starting with a pilot project/trailhead in the downtown area and extending along the Black River. The greenway is intended to increase pedestrian travel, encourage active lifestyles and expand year-round park and recreation options for all ages.
- Trailheads, picnic areas, restroom facilities and parking areas should be provided at the major points of access to primary trail/pathway segments. Additionally, educational kiosks should be located at trailhead locations and along trail routes.
- Implement access management techniques along all major collector roads and arterials as recommended in Chapter 6.
- Consider traffic calming measures at all pedestrian crossings to reduce vehicular speeds and improve the safety and circulation patterns for pedestrian users. Traffic calming measures may include but are not limited to, alternative paving materials, on-street parking, lighting, landscaping, reduced lane widths, choke points, traffic circles or any combination thereof that reduce apparent street width and protects pedestrians from moving traffic.
- Implement traffic calming downtown to help slow traffic, beautify and increase pedestrian safety and convenience. Use traffic calming at key corner locations to provide safer pedestrian crossings and better orientation for both pedestrians and drivers.
- Support and assist in the implementation of the US 60 and Business 60 interchange recommendations as provided in Chapter 6.
- Implement the airport improvements recommended in Chapter 6.
- Promote and facilitate the creation of gateway features such as professional landscaping-including crepe myrtle plantings, monument signage and other aesthetic features at the City's primary, secondary and transitional gateways.
- Manage and maintain the current transportation system assets, capacities and levels of service.
- Ensure that congestion on the City's roadways does not reach levels which compromise economic competitiveness or the quality of life.
- Address all modes of transportation when considering transportation improvements with an emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle linkages to community activity centers.
- Coordinate land use, transportation, economic development, environmental quality, and community aesthetics in all transportation improvements in a manner that meets today's needs without compromising the ability to address the needs of future generations.
- Updated the City's sign ordinance and other design standards to help create a consistent, more desirable physical and visual streetscape.



### **FUTURE LAND USE**

#### **Goal**

Promote land development that preserves existing neighborhoods and the natural landscape, topography, vegetative cover, scenic view sheds and natural drainage patterns.

#### **Objectives & Implementation Strategies**

- Follow a hierarchical growth model that prioritizes restorative development activity, such as downtown revitalization and adaptive reuse, as the preferred growth strategy, followed by infill, redevelopment and Greenfield development.
- Promote the provision of housing, commercial services, entertainment, cultural venues, higher educational institutions and other quality of life amenities that appeal to young adults age 18 to 34.
- Encourage development in areas where municipal services can most easily be extended. New development should not be permitted until such time municipal services are available.
- Parks and open space should be designed as an integral part of new development based on an overall plan. Linear parks and trails should be incorporated into the design of new development to ensure they tie into existing or proposed trail/greenway plans.
- More unique types of development such as conservation subdivisions and cluster developments should be encouraged in order to attract residential growth.
- The cost to extend the infrastructure required to serve new development should be shared by the new development areas.

### **PARKS**

#### **Goal**

Continue to maintain, enhance and expand the City's parks and recreation system.

#### **Objectives & Implementation Strategies**

- Support improvements as needed to keep pace with the latest trends in park and recreation services, facility market demands and the acquisition of additional parkland and the establishment of open spaces, greenbelts and trails as needed to serve the City's population.



## Chapter 4: Goals & Objectives

City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

- Greenway and trail development provides recreation amenities that are accessible to users of all ages and function to preserve open and environmentally sensitive areas. Promote and facilitate open space and environmental protection as recommended in Chapter 5.
- Promote Outdoor Recreation Tourism- Poplar Bluff is in a unique geographic position to capitalize on ecotourism, conservation and recreational opportunities throughout the Ozarks.
- Connect the city's parks and open spaces with a system of trails, sidewalks and bicycle lanes. Connecting the city's recreation areas, neighborhoods and schools helps to improve functionality and increase the utilization of park and transportation systems.
- Promote Healthy City Initiatives

### COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES

#### Goal

Ensure the availability of public facilities, infrastructure and emergency services that adequately serves Poplar Bluff's present and future needs. These facilities and services include water, sewer, stormwater, cable, roads, schools, police, fire, library and other general services.

#### Objectives & Implementation Strategies

- As the population ages, the percentage of income spent on housing related costs and medical expenses will increase. The housing, medical and related retail industries that provide the aforementioned services will benefit from the increased demand. The City should encourage the development of these markets and service delivery sectors. Recreation services, public safety, public transportation, housing assistance, and water and sewer service to residential developments are all areas that need careful evaluation to ensure they meet the needs of the aging population.
- Promote compact, low impact development throughout the community. Compactness can be achieved by encouraging development adjacent to the existing built-up area rather than allowing "leap-frog" development, which skips over large tracts of undeveloped land. A second means of increasing service delivery efficiency is to cluster those land uses which have the greatest need for fire and police protection, such as high value commercial uses or hazardous industrial uses. Clustering will allow the concentration of services and infrastructure and minimize costly utility runs and infrastructure costs.
- Construct a new fire station (Station #4) in the western portion of the city near PP Highway and hire nine (9) new firefighters to operate the new station.



## Chapter 4: Goals & Objectives

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- Upgrade the existing Police Department facilities and continue to evaluate the need for upgraded or improved public safety services (police, fire, etc) and identify appropriate locations for the development of new facilities to accommodate future growth needs.
- Substantially upgrade or relocate City Hall into a building in the Central Business District that could be adaptively reused as a centralized facility that could accommodate a variety of city departments and functions. If City Hall is rebuilt, it should stay in or near the Central Business District to serve as a redevelopment catalyst to increase the confidence to invest in the downtown area.
- Develop and award a unified trash hauling contract to minimize truck traffic on the City's roads and neighborhoods. Make sure the contract includes weekly yard waste removal in the summer and fall, recycling and annual bulk and white goods pick-up services
- Formulate an annexation policy based upon future growth patterns, ability to provide public facilities and services, and suitability of land for development.
- Plan for long-term infrastructure improvements to serve future development along Highway PP, Highway 60, and Downtown and along the bypass.
- Concentrate public capital investments into areas that are contiguous with currently developed land and that are currently served by existing facilities.
- Require new development to install sidewalks, landscaping, preserve trees and share in the cost of the construction of other infrastructure improvements.
- Initiate development agreements that help pay for the direct and indirect costs of new infrastructure development.
- Implement access management solutions along Westwood Avenue, and wherever curb cuts are closely located and/or unnecessary.
- Encourage project developments to incorporate alternative transportation elements (pedestrian walkways, bike facilities, public transit etc.) into proposed site improvements.

### SUMMARY

Much of Poplar Bluff's character and desirability is attributable to its high quality of living. Poplar Bluff is well known for its established single-family residential neighborhoods that enhance and reinforce the City's family-friendly atmosphere. The City's school and park systems, low property taxes and central location are a few of the factors that make Poplar Place a great place to live, work and raise a family. Poplar Bluff strongly desires to remain a family-oriented community, while recognizing the diverse and evolving needs and desires of its citizenry. One challenge the City faces is that many of the older structures (commercial and residential), which met the market demands at the time they were constructed do not provide the features and amenities needed to compete in today's marketplace. To address this shift in market demand,



## Chapter 4: Goals & Objectives

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City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

City policies should promote restorative development as a primary option; replacement, infill or redevelopment as a secondary option; and Greenfield development as a third option.

In order to maintain and enhance Poplar Bluff's quality of living and promote its economic stability, the City must continue providing excellent municipal services and develop innovative approaches to encourage on-going investment within the community. The purpose of the goals and objectives is to show how these two key issues (neighborhood stability and economic diversification) can be addressed while simultaneously ensuring that Poplar Bluff maintains its family-oriented character and grows responsibly.



**APPENDIX A: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY**

**Strengths**

<b>Issue</b>	<b># of Dots</b>
Black River Coliseum	2
Industrial Base	3
Education/College	5
Utility Costs	1
Location	4
Airport	0
River	2
Involved Citizens	3
Collaboration	0
Law Enforcement Cooperation	0
Low crime Rate	0
Veteran's Hospital	1
Highway Patrol Regional HQ	0
General Baptist HQ	0
County Seat	2
Regional Shopping Hub	3
4-lane highway access	3
Low cost of living	4
Recreation	0
Destination Market	2
Diverse Religious Community	0
Tyler H	0
Good senior Citizen Care	0
Gene Bess	0
Healthcare	0
Multiple Income Bases	1
<b>Strengths Total</b>	<b>36</b>

**Weaknesses**

<b>Issue</b>	<b># of Dots</b>
Downtown Decline – unsafe	3
Road Infrastructure	2
Educational Levels	2
Public Transit (lack of)	1
Limited Shopping (retail)	2
Low Income Levels	3
Drainage (stormwater)	1
Lack of current shopping	3
Lack of cooperation (perception) between city & county	0
Limited City Boundaries	1
Communication	0
Appearance	0
Methamphetamine	3
Older neighborhoods in decline	2
Lack of Historic Preservation	2
Landlords	1
Junkyards	2
Losing Population	0
Cliques/Good Old Boys	0
Lack of County Ordinances	0
Lot Size Too Small	0
Lack of Identity	0
Congestion on 67	0
Perception of Poor Healthcare	0
Track record of lack of planning	0
Lack of enforcement	2
Lack of active recreation (trails, sidewalks, etc)	0
Hick/small town perception	0
Image/PR	2
<b>Weaknesses Total</b>	<b>32</b>



## Chapter 4: Goals & Objectives

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### Opportunities

Issue	# of Dots
Highway 67 widening	8
Available Commercial Land	5
Develop A Draw	0
Develop Black River	5
Tourism (Natural)	1
Black River Coliseum	0
Downtown	3
Historic Preservation	2
Redevelopment Opportunities	1
Potential For Annexation & Growth	7
<b>Opportunities Total</b>	<b>32</b>

### Threats

Issue	# of Dots
National Economy	2
Gas Prices	0
Loss of Jobs/Plant Closings	12
Brain Drain	5
Natural Disasters	1
Rail Accidents	0
Grow Too Fast	4
Revenue Challenges	8
<b>Threats Total</b>	<b>32</b>

Additionally, the CAC members were asked to describe what they feel constitutes a “Great Town”. Their answers included the following.

### A Great Town Is or Has...

Shopping	Location
Live & Work	Vibrant
Family	Good Appearance
Safe Environment	Progressive
Good Educational Environment	
Community Identity	
Employment Opportunities	
Good City Services	
Welcoming	
Healthcare	
Morale/Pride in Community	
Reasonable Cost of Living	
Cultural/Recreation	



**Town Planning Open House Summary**

**General Statement Questions**

General Statement questions were ones in which a basic statement was made and the respondent was asked if they agree or disagree, with varying degrees to each (ex – Agree Strongly).

While every question had some disagreement, residents agreed

- Poplar Bluff is a great place to live
- Poplar Bluff is a great place to raise children
- They want Poplar Bluff to grow in size and population
- They are proud to live in Poplar Bluff
- Poplar Bluff is a great place to retire, and that

Residents did not agree with that the city has a sufficient variety of retail stores.

**Specific Issue Questions**

Specific Issues questions were focused on ascertaining citizen’s response to more detailed issues in the city.

Citizens generally agreed on the following

- The City of Poplar Bluff should expand through annexation
- The City should require curbs on most streets
- The City should have more sidewalks.
- Support keeping the old brick streets
- The historic downtown area should be restored
- Generally pleased with the City's utilities
- The City should have more parks and walking areas.
- Traffic movement is a problem for Poplar Bluff
- Poplar Bluff should continue to spend money to clean-up derelict houses
- Poplar Bluff should invest money in marketing itself.
- Poplar Bluff should invest money in providing incentives to bring new companies into town.

Area residents did not agree with the following statements

- There are sufficient employment opportunities in town.

**Poplar Bluff’s Favorite Destinations**

To the Question of “If you were to recommend a place or a highlight of Poplar Bluff for others to visit, where would it be?” the answers broke out into 12 major groupings. The rank of these groups was:

None	24.4%
Museums, Library, & Historical Sites	14.5%
Other	13.3%
Black River Coliseum	9.7%
Wappepelo & Natural Resources	7.2%
Parks	6.3%
Three Rivers Community College	5.7%
Water Park	5.1%
Shopping	5.0%
Downtown	3.4%
Restaurants	2.4%
Churches	2.4%



## Chapter 4: Goals & Objectives

City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

There were more mixed results when it came to the following questions

- Support for a tax or bonds to fund street improvements
- That the City's streets are too narrow
- That there are sufficient housing options in the City
- Poplar Bluff should have more ethnic diversity
- Poplar Bluff has adequate street lighting
- There are sufficient recreation programs for youth in Poplar Bluff
- There are sufficient recreation programs for seniors in Poplar Bluff.

### Specific Issue Questions

- The City of Poplar Bluff should expand through annexation.
- The City should require curbs on most streets.
- The City should have more sidewalks.
- I would support a tax or bonds to fund street improvements.
- The City's streets are too narrow.
- I support keeping the old brick streets.
- The historic downtown area should be restored.
- I am generally pleased with the City's utilities.
- There are sufficient housing options in the City.
- The City should have more parks and walking areas.
- Poplar Bluff should have more ethnic diversity.
- Traffic movement is a problem for Poplar Bluff.
- Poplar Bluff has adequate street lighting.
- Poplar Bluff should continue to spend money to clean-up derelict houses.
- Poplar Bluff should invest money in marketing itself.
- There are sufficient recreation programs for youth in Poplar Bluff.
- There are sufficient recreation programs for seniors in Poplar Bluff.
- Poplar Bluff should invest money in providing incentives to bring new companies into town.
- There are sufficient employment opportunities in town.



## Chapter 4: Goals & Objectives

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### General Attitude Questions

The General Attitude questions were utilized to give a greater understanding of how and why residents make their choices of living in or near Poplar Bluff, as well as a basic feel for long term issues for citizens.

- Family was the single most chosen response as to why people choose to live in the Poplar Bluff area instead of other places. However, many people chose multiple reasons for choosing to live in Poplar Bluff.
- The most common reason for those that live in the city to continue to live within the city was utilities and services. As in other questions, some people chose multiple answers
- For those living outside of the city, the most common reason to not live in the city was fewer neighbors.
- The greatest weakness identified is low income levels
- Poplar Bluff area residents see the future of Poplar Bluff as being similar to today but with more residences and businesses.
- A large majority of those responding to the survey plan to stay in Poplar Bluff for a long time.

### General Attitude Questions

- Why do you choose to live in the Poplar Bluff area instead of other places?
- If you live inside Poplar Bluff City Limits, why do you choose to live in the city instead of outside the City?
- If you live outside City Limits, why do you choose to live outside the city instead of in the City?
- Which statement best describes how you want Poplar Bluff to look 25 years from now?
- Which statement best applies to you and your plans for the future?
- Which of the following do you feel is Poplar Bluff's greatest weakness?

### Demographic Questions

Demographic questions were intended to find out which groups answered the questions as they did in order to understand if needs of specific groups, for example, older, fixed income citizens. The last question, color of survey, was inserted to evaluate where the survey originated as surveys were both mailed out in resident utility bills as well as handed out at public facilities.

A majority of the surveys were answered by

- Female citizens of Poplar Bluff



## Chapter 4: Goals & Objectives

City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

The highest percentage of respondents falls into each of the following demographic “slots”:

- Married
- In the 50-54 age range
- Caucasian
- Lifelong resident
- High School level educational achievement
- Annual income range of between \$20,000 and \$40,000

Evaluation of questions based on demographic groups suggests:

- City residents’ responses show more support for annexation than those who live outside the city limits.
- Those living in the city appear to have more concern with city issues (such as investing in city improvements) yet these residents also show the least support for increasing tax revenues to meet these needs.
- Base demographics show that, 50% of city residents are married while 70% of those outside city limits are married. City residents have far more single, divorced, widowed and elderly populations.
- The college educated group seems to be more open to city expansion, marketing the city, and general progress issues. They also appear to feel more confident about the city’s future.
- Overall, the high school educated group appears to be less happy with city services, youth programs, city utilities, housing options, employment, and income levels than the college educated group.
- Support of higher education would benefit the city immensely.
- The 30-34 and 50-54 groups’ responses were often similar, yet showed more departure from the responses of the 70-74 age group. Most of these departures were income based.
- The 70-74 group shows the lowest annual incomes of the three groups which is reflected in their lower support for retail options and tax initiatives.
- However, the 70-74 age group shows stronger support for city maintenance issues, annexation and increased employment opportunities, albeit without much support for funding of these issues.
- Interestingly, the 50-54 and 70-74 groups appear to have more civic pride than the 30-34 group, who stated they are more likely to live in Poplar Bluff because of job opportunities.

### **Demographic Questions**

- Gender
- City Resident
- Marital Status
- Age Group
- Ethnic Group
- Resident Description
- Education Level
- Annual Income Level
- Color of the Survey



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### Parks & Recreation Plan

#### PARK SYSTEM

The City of Poplar Bluff owns and operates fifteen (15) parks and recreation facilities encompassing almost 350 acres. The newest recreation facility is the Black River Coliseum which houses the City's Indoor Aquatic Center and the 115,000 square foot multi-purpose center which has a seating capacity of 5,000. The park system offers a variety of active and passive amenities including indoor and outdoor swimming, golf, tennis, basketball, horseshoes, soccer fields, baseball fields, pavilions, shelters, playground equipment, fitness trails and natural areas.

#### Park Classification

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) developed a classification system to serve as a guide for community parks and recreation planning. The system describes several categories of parks, recreation areas and open spaces, which in combination make up a unified municipal park network (*Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*, NRPA, 1995).

**Mini Park:** Addresses limited, isolated or unique recreational needs.

- Service area: ¼-mile radius

**Neighborhood Park:** Serves as recreational and social focus of the neighborhood

- Emphasizes informal active and passive recreation.
- Service area of ¼ to ½-mile radius.

**Community Park:** Serves similar but broader purposes of the neighborhood park.

- Focuses on meeting community-based recreation needs.
- May preserve unique landscapes/open spaces.
- Service area of ½ to 3-mile radius.

**Natural Resource Area:** Serves lower intensity of use

- Lands set aside to preserve unique natural resources and remnant landscapes.
- May include open or green spaces and areas of visual/aesthetics buffering.
- Service area: entire community

**Greenway:** Serves to form interconnected park system

- Ties park system components together with green corridors.
- Size: 25 foot width minimum, 200 feet or more optimal (for right-of-way; actual path will vary, with 8 foot width minimum)
- Service area is based on resource availability and opportunities

**School Park:** Combines parks with school sites

- Service area is based on school district site distribution but is frequently similar to neighborhood park function.



**Sports Complex:** Serves to consolidate a single purpose use

- Concentrates programmed athletic fields to larger and fewer sites.
- The service area is the entire community or more in urban and suburban area.

**Special Use:** Covers a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward single-purpose use.

- Service area: variable

### Park Area Guidelines

The NRPA establishes recommended acreage guidelines for the three (3) basic types of parks found in most communities; mini-parks, neighborhood parks and community parks. Mini-parks and neighborhood parks are small in scale and are expected to serve neighborhood areas. Community parks typically serve two or more neighborhoods, but can serve entire smaller communities. Table 5.1 shows the NRPA guidelines for the recommended acreage of the various park types per 1,000 population of the community.

**Table 5.1: Park Area Guidelines**

Park Type	Acreage	Acreage/1000- people	Service Area
Mini Park	0-1 Acre	0.25 to 0.5 Acres	1/4 Mile radius (5 Min Walk)
Neighborhood Park	1-10 Acre	1.0 to 2.0 Acres	1/2 Mile radius (10 Min Walk)
Community Park	10-50 Acre	5.0 to 8.0 Acres	3 Mile radius

*Source: NRPA guidelines*

### Inventory of Existing Park Facilities

Within the context of the classification system outlined above, Poplar Bluff's park system was inventoried. The following table lists these park facilities according to the NRPA classification, acreage, and ownership. While some parks may serve more than one function, they are listed under their primary classification.



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City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

**Table 5.2 Poplar Bluff Area Existing Supply of Parks**

Park Type and Names	Acreage	Location	Ownership
<b>Mini Parks</b>	<b>&lt; 1 Acre</b>		
Ferguson Grove	0.28 Acre	N Central	Public
Rotary	0.50 Acre	North	Public
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>	<b>1-10 Acres</b>		
Wheatley	1.21 Acres	Central	Public
Linc	6.00 Acres	East	Public
Smiley Park	4.99 Acres	Central	Public
<b>Community Parks</b>	<b>10- 50 Acres</b>		
Ray Clinton	28.19 Acres	Central	Public
Whiteley	25.0 Acres	South	Public
Hillcrest	25.0 Acres	North	Public
Hendrickson	16.0 Acres	North	Public
Bacon Memorial	40.0 Acres	Central	Private
<b>Sports Complex</b>	<b>1- 50 Acres</b>		
Municipal Golf Course	152.0 Acres	South	Public
Black River	21.17 Acres	East	Public
McLane Park	75.47 Acres	North	Public
<b>Natural Resource Area</b>	<b>&gt; 1 acre</b>		
Wiseman	6.57 Acres	CBD	Public
McLane Park	75.47 Acres	North	Public
Sportsmans	15.0 Acres	East	Public
<b>Special Use Areas</b>	<b>&gt; 1 acre</b>		
Indoor Aquatic Center	N/A	CBD	Public



**The Current Supply of City Parks**

Based upon the above guidelines and the City’s past and present population growth, an analysis was conducted to determine the supply of parkland. As *Table 5.1* shows, the City has had an historic deficit, and is expected to have a future deficit, of land dedicated to mini-parks and neighborhood parks. The City’s community parks are in-line with the recommended NRPA standards, however there are presently no community parks in the western portion of the City. It must be noted that Poplar Bluff is situated near many signature natural areas dedicated to public use. These areas play an important role in the park and recreation needs of the community, but are not included in this analysis because they are located outside the city’s limits. A map showing the City’s current supply of parks is located at the end of this Chapter. A map showing the area’s signature outdoor recreation and public use areas is provided at the end of Chapter 1

**Parks Distribution Guidelines**

The NRPA establishes recommended service areas for the three (3) basic types of parks. Mini-parks and neighborhood parks should be accessible on foot to people in their neighborhoods wanting to use them. This means they should not be separated from their service areas by major streets, creeks or other major physical obstacles, and sidewalks should be available. Community parks serve multiple neighborhoods or larger portions of the community, and should be serviced by arterial/collector streets.

<b>Table 5.3: Park Land Surplus/Deficit Analysis- City of Poplar Bluff, 1990 – 2006</b>						
Park Type/Current Poplar Bluff Acreage <i>Guidelines (in italics)</i>	<b>Year</b> Population					
	<b>1990</b> 16,996		<b>2000</b> 16,651		<b>2006</b> 17,059	
	Need	Surplus (Deficit)	Need	Surplus (Deficit)	Need	Surplus (Deficit)
Mini-Parks <b><u>7.8 ac.</u></b> <i>@ ¼ to ½ acres per 1,000 population</i>	4.25 to 8.5	3.55 to (0.7)	4.25 to 8.5	3.55 to (0.7)	4.25 to 8.5	3.55 to (0.7)
Neighborhood Parks <b><u>12.2 ac.</u></b> <i>@ 1 to 2 acres per 1,000 population</i>	17.0 to 34.0	(4.8) to (21.8)	17.0 to 34.0	(4.8) to (21.8)	17.0 to 34.0	(4.8) to (21.8)
Community Parks <b><u>170.36 ac.</u></b> <i>@ 5 to 8 acres per 1,000 population</i>	85.0 to 136.0	85.36 to 34.36	85.0 to 136.0	85.36 to 34.36	85.0 to 136.0	85.36 to 34.36
Note: S = Surplus, D = Deficit; Parentheses ( ) indicate deficits						



### Situation of Parks & Recreation

Although Poplar Bluff's park system does not meet all of NRPA's guidelines, it has been well appointed and maintained. Within the last ten (10) years there have been extensive updates, improvements and additions to the city's park and recreation system. These include the addition of the Black River Coliseum & Indoor Aquatic Center, McLane Park, Wheatley Park and Wiseman Natural Area. However, the City needs more activities for young adults, more park facilities and a better connection (visually and physically) to the Black River. Overall, the City's parks and recreation facilities are well maintained, adequately programmed and enjoy high utilization rates.

The Parks and Recreation goal established for this plan is: "Continue to maintain, enhance and expand the City's parks and recreation system. This includes making improvements as needed to keep pace with the latest trends in park and recreation services, facility market demands and the acquisition of additional parkland and the establishment of open spaces, greenbelts and trails as needed to serve the City's population. Recommendations to assist in accomplishing this goal are included later in this chapter.

### Recreation Facilities

The City owns and maintains the Ozark Ridge Golf Course, Indoor Aquatic Center and thirteen (13) public parks that offer a wide range of active and passive outdoor and indoor recreation opportunities to the public. *Table 5.2* shows the names and acreage of each of the City's parks. Poplar Bluff actively utilizes all of these facilities to promote active and passive recreation for the entire community.

#### Ozark Ridge Golf Course

The Ozark Ridge Golf Course is one of the many highlights of the City's park system. The 18-hole, championship course is recognized as one of the finest public courses in the Mid-South. The challenging course hosts special events, league play and open play 12 months a year, weather permitting. The course also has a large driving range and stocked pro shop complete with food and drink concessions.

#### Indoor Aquatic Center

The Poplar Bluff Indoor Aquatic Center is located inside the Black River Coliseum and provides the following activities year round:

- Lap Swim: Lap swim is held every Monday through Saturday from noon until 1 p.m. During this time recreational swimming is restricted to provide uninterrupted swimming for those wishing to lap swim.
- Family Swim Night: Thursday nights are Family Swim Night. Admission fees are reduced for children accompanied by an adult.
- Aqua Aerobics: Water aerobics is offered to the public and provides swimmers and non swimmer alike a 45 minute workout designed to meet all the guidelines of a well-



balanced aerobic workout, including stretching, toning, flexibility, cardiovascular fitness and fun.

### **Outdoor Recreation & Public Use Areas**

In addition, to the City owned Parks, there are several state and federally owned natural areas nearby, including Mark Twain National Forest, Wappapello State Park, Mingo National Wildlife Refuge, Duck Creek Conservation Area and the Ozark Scenic Waterways. One of the area's privately owned recreational facilities is the Bluff Falls Water Park. Bluff Falls, located at 2801 Cheshire Boulevard, is owned and operated by Dr. John Patty and family, and has been providing Poplar Bluff with outdoor and indoor recreation for the last several years. The Park offers a variety of outdoor games, water activities and includes two first class banquet rooms and pavilions. The area is also served by five (5) golf courses in addition to the Ozark Ridge Golf Course, which include:

1. Westwood Hills Country Club (Poplar Bluff)
2. Lakeview Country Club (Neelyville)
3. Sycamore Hills Country Club (Doniphan)
4. Hidden Trails Country Club (Dexter)
5. Victory Lake Golf Course (Corning)

Poplar Bluff and southeast Missouri provide prime hunting and fishing year round. Mark Twain National Forest offers thousands of acres of forests and natural areas that are home to a variety of animals, flora and fauna. The Mississippi Flight Pattern runs through the project area. It has been used for thousands of years by migrating Canadian geese and many other waterfowl species found in the areas wetlands. Poplar Bluff offers an abundance of lakes, ponds and wetlands linked with beautiful clean rivers such as Black River, Current River and St. Francis River. For generations, hunters and anglers have traveled to Poplar Bluff to enjoy the many natural areas and home town hospitality that Poplar Bluff has to offer.

### **Recommendations**

The City should consider the acquisition of additional property adjacent to the existing parks and recreation facilities and develop strategies to finance these acquisitions and fund future improvements to keep the City's park system state-of-the-art. Poplar Bluff should also undertake the preparation of a new Parks and Recreation Master Plan to update the 1976 Parks and Recreation Plan.

### **Outdoor Recreation Tourism**

Poplar Bluff is in a unique geographic position to become the "pass through/outfitter" for ecotourism, conservation and recreational opportunities throughout the Ozarks. Building and leveraging on this concept, Poplar Bluff should focus on becoming a destination where a visitor could conceivably jog on trail near their hotel to various developments in the area, enjoying wetlands, floodplain, forests, and parks along the way.

### **Community-wide Greenway**

Connecting and linking parks and open spaces has become a vital component of park and recreation planning. Greenway trail systems are being integrated into cities and towns across



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the country as a means to improve the quality of life by increasing connectivity and promoting the most popular recreational activities which include walking, running, biking, and skating. The list of potential benefits of a greenway trail system extends to the community, economy and environment. The benefits include;

### 1. Community-wide Benefits

- Providing alternate transportation routes linking schools, parks, shopping centers and workplaces.
- Connecting people with the natural world and providing outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Restoring vitality to damaged and abandoned areas like rail corridors.
- Linking important cultural and historic sites.
- Expanding resources through volunteerism.

### 2. Economic Benefits

- Reducing public costs of flooding through appropriate land use.
- Increasing values of nearby homes and businesses by up to 32 percent, which increases local tax revenue.
- Providing new locations suitable for recreation-related business. Studies show 85 percent of Missourians are interested in nature-related activities.
- Attracting visitors who purchase lodging, food and recreation services.
- Involving agencies that create jobs and buy local goods and services.

### 3. Environmental Benefits

- Preserving biodiversity of plants and animals.
- Increasing recharge of groundwater.
- Directing development and growth away from valuable natural resource areas.
- Providing refuge and safe migration routes for wildlife.

### 4. Personal Health Benefits:

- Improving air quality with protected urban forests.
- Improving water quality by filtering pollutants.
- Offering sanctuaries of calm to escape the stress of modern life.



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Additionally, greenways help build strong communities by encouraging people to spend more time outdoors, exercise, have fun and socialize with each other. They also help connect users to the many wonderful and ever changing sights, sounds and smells nature has to offer. Poplar Bluff needs a well connected system of trails connecting to the local and regional natural and manmade destinations to serve both the recreation and transportation needs of the area. It is the goal of this plan to connect all residents to the area's natural areas, downtown and other regional trails such as the Ozark Trail with an integrated trail, path and share-the-road bicycle/pedestrian system. This integrated trail system supports the ecotourism concept by blending natural exploration with big city amenities such as cultural and entertainment venues.

### Implementation Strategies

This plan recommends using open areas, stream corridors and existing parks as future locations for a City-wide greenway. Zoning set asides, environmental requirements, community land trusts, conservation easements, preservation corridors, and land dedications are some tools available to save open lands. Areas recommended for preservation include the Pike Creek and Black River greenways and other wooded, steeply sloped areas and riparian zones. These areas, as well as other sensitive natural features should be protected from future development that may result in negative or unintended environmental impacts.

The implementation of a city-wide sidewalk expansion and bicycle lane/share the road program is also needed. These improvements along with the recommended greenway supports multi-generational activities such as walking, jogging and cycling while increasing the accessibility to the city's parks and other destinations. Grant and local, state and federal funding mechanisms for these kinds of improvements currently exist through MoDOT, DNR and local organizations. A system of pedestrian pathways that provide linkages between schools, parks, recreation facilities, shopping areas, community gathering area, neighborhoods, open lands, trails, etc. can be accomplished most expeditiously if Poplar Bluff requires future development to include or contribute toward such facilities as a part of the development process. This Plan recommends making connections to the city's existing parks, recreation areas, neighborhoods and schools a top priority. These connections are needed to functionally improve and diversify the city's transportation system and increase the utilization of park, recreation and trail systems.

This plan envisions constructing the greenway trail network in phases. The first phase should start at the Old Frisco Railroad and S. 11th Street South of Westwood Boulevard and continue behind the commercial district along Westwood Boulevard and follow Pike Creek through the Valley Plaza and Roxy Road areas to Route PP. The second recommended phase will bring the greenway trail to the northern portion of the CBD providing connections to the Three Rivers Community College Campus and adjoining neighborhoods. The trail will end at the proposed stoplight at Crestwood Boulevard and Westwood Boulevard in front of Poplar Bluff Regional Medical Center. The proposed greenway trail system is shown on the Existing and Future Parks Map located at the end of this chapter.

### Healthy City Initiatives

Poplar Bluff is in a unique position to address social issues through its park's system. Increasingly, public wellness campaigns are connecting local parks with local health care



facilities. Poplar Bluff is a major regional center for health care. Therefore, the City is positioned favorably to thematically brand its community centers, trails, parks, recreation, and health care as health giving amenities and education centers. Health Care entities such as the Robert Woods Johnson Foundation (RWJF) offer millions of dollars annually in the form of grants to cities to help address and implement healthy city initiatives. Promoting healthy lifestyles through the enhancement of the City's park and recreation system and ongoing outreach and technical assistance is recommended. Funding for such programs should be sought from grants such as those supported by the RWJF and other local, state and national entities.

One issue that was considered of serious concern by the local citizens during the public participation phase of this plan was the widespread use of methamphetamine. Parks and recreation can play a role, working with health care, police and various other entities to provide better options to citizens as well as play a role in health recovery. Finally, no one should minimize the general mental health benefits a community receives from merely having enjoyable green space scattered and yet connected throughout the community. When one combines the potential for connecting to regional open space and recreational assets with the potential for local parks to provide for better community health, clearly open space, parks and recreational opportunities in Poplar Bluff are not a pleasant amenity but a significant driver in how the Poplar Bluff area progresses.

### **Unrealized Recommendations from Past Plans**

The following is a mixture of unrealized recommendations taken from the City's 1991 Comprehensive Plan and outcomes of the current planning process. They are included here as part of the future Park & Recreation Plan recommendations and implementations strategies.

#### **1. Indoor Recreational Facilities**

An indoor recreation facility is needed, in addition to the Black River Coliseum that includes a gymnasium, racquetball courts, basketball courts, exercise room, indoor walking and jogging track, indoor pool, multi-purpose rooms for arts, crafts, and public meetings, and office space for the Park Department.

#### **2. Acquisition of Additional Park Land**

Both the comparison of Poplar Bluffs existing park land with national standards as well as the results of the community attitude survey indicate a need for and a desire for additional park land in the city. Park land is needed not only to reduce the noted deficiencies in certain categories of parks, but also to provide space for additional outdoor recreational facilities. Based on the analysis of park land allocation in Poplar Bluff, the following recommendations are made:

- a. Creation of four to six mini-parks, playgrounds or small neighborhood parks in parts of the city currently under-served by parks. Proposed locations of new parks are illustrated in Figure 5-1.

#### **3. Addition of Landscaped Areas**

The addition of park-maintained "landscape areas" is recommended in several parts of the city. These areas may include:



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- a. A hiking trail along the Black River.
- b. Landscaped areas in the Poplar Bluff downtown as part of an overall downtown revitalization program
- c. Community entryways where major highways enter the town to match what has been done on the North entryway. Such entryways create an important positive impression of the community to visitors and residents alike.
- d. Continue to landscape highly visible thoroughfares and boulevards. Community passageways set important images of the community. Systematic flower-plantings, tree-plantings, and other forms of landscaping of these boulevards can make a difference in how the city is viewed.

### 4. Additional Outdoor Facilities

- a. Additional picnic tables in landscaped areas along Black River in Wiseman Park.
- b. New basketball courts.
- c. New playgrounds in conjunction with further mini-park development.
- d. A multi-use and interpretative trail along Black River in conjunction with downtown revitalization.
- e. Increased recreation options for senior citizens.
- f. Sand volleyball courts to be located in either existing or proposed parks.
- g. Additional soccer fields.



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### INTRODUCTION

#### GENERAL

Transportation systems are a vital part of any community and are a major emphasis of any comprehensive planning effort. This Chapter describes the existing transportation systems within the environs of Poplar Bluff, Missouri and provides a long-range plan for future modifications to and expansion of the existing transportation network. Significant emphasis is placed on the local streets. The local street system was identified as having the greatest need for improvement and also receives the highest utilization among local residents. Lastly, this plan focuses on the local street system because the City has the greatest ability to influence and implement future improvements..

#### BACKGROUND

Poplar Bluff is located at the intersection of two major United States highways – US 60 and US 67, making Poplar Bluff a regional transportation center for the Southeast Missouri Region. US 60 provides a connection to Interstate 44 at Springfield, Missouri and Interstates 55 and 57 at Sikeston, Missouri. US 67 provides a connection to St. Louis, Missouri to the north and Little Rock, Arkansas to the south. Major state routes include Route 53, Route 142 and Route 160. These routes provide a lower functional capacity than the aforementioned interstates and highways, but provide critical connections to smaller towns and local destinations in the region.

In addition to the highway network, rail lines also provide an important role in local and regional transportation network. The railroads were one of the principal drivers for Poplar Bluff's growth and development throughout the previous century. The railroads still provide transportation for freight goods to, from and through Poplar Bluff and provide a competitive advantage to the City's Industrial Park, which is linked to the lines. Limited passenger travel is also available through daily Amtrak service.

Another transportation asset for the City of Poplar Bluff is its airport. The Poplar Bluff Memorial Airport is a general aviation level facility that provides air travel access mainly through charters and private business planes. Currently, there is not a regularly scheduled commercial carrier based at the airport. Recreational flying is also supported by the facility.

Other modes of transportation typically included in a municipal transportation system include bus, light rail, bicycle and pedestrian. While Poplar Bluff is too small to support a light rail system, the City does offer other limited public transportation choices. There is a limited bus service that operates both a limited fixed route system as well as an on-demand service, very similar to a shuttle service. The City's pedestrian and bicycle network is extremely limited.

#### STREET CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Before proceeding further with the Transportation element, it is appropriate to explain the classification system and terminology used to evaluate the street system in Poplar Bluff. A lack of understanding of this classical functional system is believed to have contributed significantly to some of the challenges the City of Poplar Bluff faces with its current street network.



Transportation planners and engineers use a Functional Classification System to describe the different levels and types of use of city streets. Most street ordinances also use this system to establish minimum standards of design and construction for different types of streets. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) provides the standard for street and highway functional classifications in its publication “A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets” (AASHTO, 2004). The following definitions may be inferred from the Green Book for urban streets:

**Arterial:** A street that provides the highest level of service at the greatest speed for the longest uninterrupted distance, with some degree of access control. This classification is generally subdivided into principal arterial and secondary arterial.

**Collector Streets:** A street that provides a less highly developed level of service at a lower speed for shorter distances by collecting traffic from local roads and connecting them to arterials. Since collectors provide a dual function of distributing traffic to local streets while at the same time moving increasing volumes of traffic to an arterial, provisions must be made to allow left hand turns and move traffic forward at a reasonable rate of speed.

**Local Roads:** A street that consists of all roads not defined as arterials or collectors; primarily provides access to land with little or no through movement.

While there is no direct relationship between functional classification and traffic counts, traffic counts and speeds are typically higher on higher functionally classified roadways. Arterial streets have the highest traffic counts. Local streets have the lowest traffic loads. Collector streets have intermediate levels of traffic. Since they carry more traffic, arterial streets should be wider to handle more lanes. Points of access to adjacent lots should be limited and on-street parking is generally prohibited on arterial roadways. These elements increase the frequency of stops and turning movements, both of which create conditions that are contrary to driver’s expectations. Major intersections with arterial roads should be grade-separated to maintain constant, uninterrupted traffic flow. Local roads have fewer lanes and slower posted speed limits allowing for more points of access and narrower lane widths. On-street parking is common, especially if adjacent lot sizes are small.

In an ideal world, a completely planned community would develop a branching network of collectors and arterials to funnel traffic from local streets to various destinations. In reality, though, growth occurs in phases. Frequently, streets that are originally thought to serve a local function gradually change in use as traffic patterns change. As traffic on a local street increases, a point is logically reached at which the local street is no longer functioning as a local street and is beginning to function as a collector. At that point, the street should ideally be upgraded (widened, etc) to match the geometric characteristic desirable for a collector street. Similarly, as traffic patterns change, a street that was formerly an arterial may be downgraded to a collector status. The problem lies in assigning a quantitative value to the traffic count that triggers a change in functional classification. Since municipalities and state transportation agencies frequently collect traffic data on a recurring basis, having some information relating traffic load to functional classification would be immensely helpful to local street departments and planners. Unfortunately, this type of information is currently not available and costly to obtain.



### ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

#### HIGHWAYS AND STREETS

The City's street department records include limited inventories of the street network dating back to the 1970's. In 1994, the department began assembling a more detailed inventory, including length and pavement type, for all the street segments inside city limits. The most recent City inventory (completed in 2004) reports 128.12 miles of streets inside the city limits. There were 79.18 miles of asphalt pavement, 30.71 miles of concrete pavement, 2.27 miles of brick pavement, 15.81 miles of gravel, and 0.07 mile of mixed pavement. These numbers do not include roadways that are maintained by MoDOT. Annexations that have occurred in the last three (3) years have increased the total road mileage under the City's control, however, these areas have not yet been inventoried. The department is encouraged to continue expanding the data collected on the streets.

The street department inventory does not include functional classification. The following assessment is not exhaustive, but is generally qualitative, based on the local authors' knowledge of and experience with the local street network.

#### PRINCIPAL ARTERIALS

For the purpose of this plan, principal arterials have been defined as those major thoroughfares that move traffic to and from Poplar Bluff and other destinations outside of the Poplar Bluff area. This definition is generally consistent with AASHTO. All of the Principal Arterials in the Poplar Bluff area are state-maintained infrastructure. These include Route 60, Route 67, and Route 53. It is important to note that only very small portions of these highways are inside the incorporated limits of Poplar Bluff. Although the City of Poplar Bluff has little to no influence on the maintenance and/or development of these highways, discussions of their significance to the area and the needs identified by the planning team are included.

US Route 60 is the principal east-west arterial in the Poplar Bluff area. Route 60 is presently a four-lane expressway from about Van Buren – located about 50 miles west of Poplar Bluff – to its intersection with Interstate 55 about 45 miles east of Poplar Bluff. East of I-55, Route 60 merges into Interstate 57, which continues to Chicago, Illinois. A 50 mile long segment of Route 60 west of Van Buren is presently two-lane. Improvements to these segments are underway and by 2010, Route 60 is expected to be four-lane all the way to Springfield, Missouri, which is where Route 60 intersects with Interstate 44 and other major north-south routes. In general, there are no major deficiencies on Route 60, other than the need for more interchanges and grade separations to replace numerous at-grade crossings.

US Route 67 is the principal north-south arterial in the Poplar Bluff area. Route 67 can be described as connecting Little Rock, Arkansas with St. Louis, Missouri (although it continues as far as east-central Iowa to the north and all the way to the Texas-Mexico border to the south). In April 2005, the City of Poplar Bluff passed a sales tax that enabled the expansion of about 46 miles of two-lane roadway north of Poplar Bluff to a divided four-lane highway. Completion of this project in 2012 will provide a four-lane highway from Poplar Bluff to St. Louis. South of Poplar Bluff to the state line, Route 67 also needs four-lanes and major reconstruction. Route 67's potential as a major north-south thoroughfare will also be limited until the State of Arkansas upgrades about 70 miles of highway to four lanes immediately south of the state line. The completion of Route 67 as a four lane expressway from Little Rock to St. Louis has been widely accepted as a high priority to the citizens of Poplar Bluff.



State Route 53 is a two-lane rural arterial that runs southeast from Poplar Bluff and terminates at Route 25, at Holcomb, Missouri. It is the primary transportation route to and from the agriculturally rich region of the Missouri “Bootheel” and partially facilitates transportation between Poplar Bluff and Memphis, Tennessee. Route 53 is in poor shape and needs significant reconstruction.

In general, the principal arterial system in the Poplar Bluff area is believed to be adequate. The existing roadways need upgrading, as discussed below, but no new principal arterials are believed to be necessary.

### SECONDARY ARTERIALS

For the purpose of this plan, secondary arterials have been defined as those arteries carrying traffic to destinations within the city limits or to the city limits. All of the secondary arterials in the Poplar Bluff area are also maintained by the state transportation agency. The secondary arterials include Business Route 67 (Westwood Boulevard), Business Route 60 (Pine Street), the portions of Route 53 inside city limits, and Route PP (Kanell Boulevard).

Business Route 67 (Westwood Boulevard) is the principal north-south arterial running through Poplar Bluff and connecting to interchanges with Route 67 at the northern and southern limits of the city. The present alignment of Business 67 was constructed before 1935 and has been the primary driver of commercial development in the city since its construction. Until 2001, Business 67 was US Route 67, carrying the full load of through traffic, until a limited access bypass was constructed to the west of town. The roadway transitions from a divided four-lane roadway to a five-lane roadway at the north end of town, which continues south approximately 3.75 miles to the intersection of State Route 53. This five-lane section of Westwood Boulevard is the main commercial area in the City. South of Route 53, Westwood Boulevard returns to a divided four-lane roadway for 0.5 miles, then transitions to three lanes for 2.5 miles to its intersection with US Route 67.

Business Route 60 (Pine Street) is the principal east-west arterial in Poplar Bluff. The present alignment was US Route 60 until a limited access bypass was built north of the city in 1986. Business 60 exits from westbound Route 60 (there is no exit from eastbound Route 60) east of the city limits as a divided four-lane roadway. The divided four-lane continues about 1.8 miles to near the present city limits, whereupon it transitions to an undivided four-lane with no center median or barrier for a distance of about 3 miles to its intersection with Westwood Boulevard. From this intersection, Business 60 continues north coincident with Business 67/Westwood Boulevard. Business 60 provides access to the historic Downtown District. Business 60 should be widened to five lanes from Westwood Boulevard to the city limits; however, there are several physical obstructions that would make this impractical and likely cost-prohibitive. As an alternative to five lanes, the addition of turn lanes at certain intersections, the addition of a center barrier in certain locations, and the improvement of several intersections, are recommended. However, significant improvements to the roadway are not envisioned in the near future at this time.

A 1.1 mile segment of State Route 53 is located within the city limits of Poplar Bluff. Route 53 begins at its intersection with Business 67. There is a 0.2 mile segment of five-lane roadway between the intersection and the bridge over the Union Pacific Railroad. This bridge presently carries two (2) lanes but has the width for a third. East of the bridge, the roadway is three (3) lanes for 0.9 miles to the intersection of Ditch Road and State Route 142. Route 53 then transitions into a two-lane



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roadway and continues southeast from Poplar Bluff. Route 53 needs to be widened and curbed within the city limits.

State Route PP (Kanell Boulevard) begins at its intersection with Westwood Boulevard and travels west from Poplar Bluff until it intersects with Route 60 about 20 miles west of Poplar Bluff. Route PP is actually a former alignment of Route 60. From Westwood Boulevard to the Pike Creek Bridge, it is a three-lane roadway. From Pike Creek Bridge to the 67 bypass, a distance of about two (2) miles, it is a five-lane roadway. These two (2) segments were recently reconstructed and opened in 2000. The main needs for improvement on Route PP are west of the Bypass, an area that is presently outside the city limits. As traffic develops as predicted, the Pike Creek Bridge will need to be widened to accommodate four-lanes of traffic. Currently, it is adequate for the present traffic patterns. The planning team believes that major expenditures on the bridge should be postponed until sufficient development occurs on the PP-Highway corridor to justify four or five lanes on the bridge.

There are several other lettered state routes and one numbered state route that are in the secondary arterial/major collector categories and are of significance to Poplar Bluff. These include Route M, Route W, Route WW, Route AA, Route T, and Route 142. All of these roadways are maintained by MoDOT. They serve to connect the City of Poplar Bluff with the surrounding countryside, which is primarily residential or agricultural land use.

### COLLECTORS

For the purposes of this study, existing collectors have been defined as streets and roads that have a minimum roadway width of 36 feet and that connect to arterials or other collectors. Thirty-six (36) feet is the minimum practical width to allow a center turn lane, which is an important requirement of a major collector street. This definition is somewhat of a departure from convention in that it does not consider the actual functional use of the street. Portions of several streets originally constructed as local streets or roads are now functioning as collectors. However, most of these streets functioning as collectors are in need of significant upgrades to allow them to function effectively as collectors. To map all of the streets presently functioning as collectors, but not designed with the collector function in mind, could give a false sense of a working network, which is not the case in Poplar Bluff. It is also important to note that not all of these streets meeting the width criterion are presently functioning as collectors. The existing streets within Poplar Bluff that meet the width criterion for a collector are:

- Vine Street from 10<sup>th</sup> Street to the Union Pacific Railroad Crossing
- Route 53 from Westwood Boulevard to Ditch Road
- Hershel Bess Boulevard from south limit of TRCC Campus to 600 feet north of Kanell Boulevard
- Main Street from Pershing Street to Clinton Park
- Broadway Street
- Ditch Road from the railroad overpass to Route 53 and 5th Street from Pine Street to the railroad overpass
  
- Sunset Boulevard from Westwood Boulevard to Westmore Drive
- 2nd Street from Elm Street to Clinton Park



Other than the original sections of town, it is obvious that the streets and road were not laid out with the collector function in mind. The lack of a good collector network is believed to be the major cause of traffic congestion in Poplar Bluff.

**LOCAL STREETS AND ROADS**

All other streets and roads in Poplar Bluff not identified above are functionally classified as local streets and roads. Although several of the local roadways actually function as collectors in that they gather traffic from other local streets – they have not been constructed to that standard or planned with that function in mind.

**TRAFFIC VOLUMES AND LEVELS OF SERVICE**

Traffic volumes are measured by their Level of Service (LOS). The LOS system of measuring flow efficiency in intersections and in roadway segments is described in *Figure 6.1*. Traffic conditions are divided into various categories ranging from LOS A (very good travel condition) to LOS F (very poor, very congested travel). A roadway that is generally operating at an acceptable level will fall in the range of LOS A to C. As the traffic capacity and efficiency of flow become less acceptable, the LOS will generally fall into the E and F categories. LOS D is frequently found to be acceptable for relatively short periods of time in heavily traveled corridors such as Westwood Boulevard and Business 60, but is generally not acceptable along non-arterial roadways.

**Figure 6.1: Level of Service Description**

	Level of Service	Description
<b>A</b>		<b>FREE FLOW.</b> Low volumes and no delays.
<b>B</b>		<b>STABLE FLOW.</b> Speeds restricted by travel conditions, minor delays.
<b>C</b>		<b>STABLE FLOW.</b> Speeds and maneuverability closely controlled due to higher volumes.
<b>D</b>		<b>STABLE FLOW.</b> Speeds considerably affected by change in operating conditions. High density traffic restricts maneuverability, volume near capacity.
<b>E</b>		<b>UNSTABLE FLOW.</b> Low speeds, considerable delay, volume at over slightly over capacity.
<b>F</b>		<b>FORCED FLOW.</b> Very low speeds, volumes exceed capacity, long delays with stop-and-go traffic.



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**Table 6.1: Poplar Bluff Traffic Volumes (Average Weekly Traffic (AWT))**

LOCATION	Owner	Traffic Counts	Count Date
Westwood Boulevard	City	TBD	TBD

The most congested area within the City's transportation system as illustrated in *Table 6.1*, is Highway 67 (Westwood Boulevard). Traffic along Westwood Boulevard reaches a level D or E. The City should consider the implementation of various access management solutions to help relieve traffic congestion along Westwood Boulevard. This corridor experiences peak period traffic congestion and should be considered by the Missouri Department of Transportation for supplemental traffic improvements.

### BRIDGES

Major bridges within the present city limits include the Pine Street Bridge and the Vine Street Bridge which both cross over the Black River. The bridges on Route 60 over the Black River are regionally significant, although outside the city limits. No major improvements to these bridges are believed necessary.

Smaller bridges are also found over Pike Creek on Route PP (Kanell Boulevard), Roxy Road, S. Westwood Boulevard, South 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Route 142, Fair Street, and Lone Star Road. The bridge on Lone Star Road is new. The Westwood Boulevard bridges are in generally good shape, as is the bridge on Kanell Boulevard and Route 142. The Kanell Boulevard/Pike Creek Bridge is often discussed as a priority for widening and/or replacement. However, until traffic loads increase significantly, the existing structures are adequate. The Roxy Road and Fair Street bridges are in poor shape and need to be replaced.

The railroad has two bridge crossings along State 53 and on Ditch Road. No known deficiencies exist on these structures.

The bridges over Black River are regionally important structures that support transportation within Poplar Bluff and the movement to and from other important trade centers such as St. Louis, Missouri, Memphis, Tennessee and Little Rock, Arkansas. Damage to or loss of any of the bridges supporting the traffic network for Poplar Bluff should be addressed in the City's emergency plans.

### AIR FACILITIES

The Poplar Bluff Municipal Airport, a General Aviation level airport located approximately one (1) mile east of the existing city limits, services the air traffic into and out of the City. The airport does not have regularly scheduled commercial flights for passenger travel. The airport is a 256-acre facility. The City recently acquired sixteen (16) acres on the north end of the airport to accommodate future runway expansion. There is currently one (1) north/south runway that is 5,007 feet long and 100 feet wide. This includes a 1,000-foot extension identified in the 1991 Plan. It has a full-length taxiway that is 40 feet wide. The airport provides an adequate runway length for most of the private commercial and recreational aircraft that currently use the facility. The airport has a 42 foot by 62 foot terminal building for administrative use. The 12,300 square foot asphalt apron has 20 tie-down spaces available. There are 39 hangers available for aircraft storage. The airfield has navigation aids available for non-precision instrument approach to the runway. The airport is in the process of



implementing a Global Positioning System (GPS) navigation aid through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

The airport's runway and taxiway are constructed to the level of Basic Utility Stage II (C-II) as defined in the FAA's Airport Design manual. These pavements are capable of handling aircraft with 30,000 pounds single axle weight ratings. The Poplar Bluff Regional Airport has a specialized master plan called the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) that identifies improvements recommended for the airport. The ALP was prepared by S. H. Smith & Co., Inc. (Smith&Co., 1990) and approved by the Missouri Department of Transportation. It details the existing airport facilities and the scheduled plans for improvements and upgrades to the facility in five-year increments. The airport has a Fixed Base Operator (FBO). The FBO provides aircraft maintenance services as well as providing daily administrative services for the Poplar Bluff Municipal Airport.

### **RAILWAYS**

The Union Pacific railroad owns and operates the rail lines that run through Poplar Bluff. It has a switchyard that is located in the central area of Poplar Bluff. The rail line provides freight transportation for the agricultural and industrial businesses in Poplar Bluff. Amtrak provides passenger service. This service allows rail passengers from the area to reach the major passenger rail terminals at St. Louis, Missouri, and Dallas, Texas.

### **PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES**

Sidewalks are limited in the City of Poplar Bluff. Most of the sidewalk networks are located in the older, central parts of the City. Most of these areas were developed prior to the 1950's. After 1950, automobile ownership soared and became the primary mode of travel during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, during which time sidewalks were not required.

However, today City ordinances require sidewalks for all subdivisions that are developed inside the city limits. However, the city has frequently waived the requirement for many years. This is a long-standing practice. An interesting example is the subdivision on Sunset and Sylvan. This subdivision was actually developed by the City of Poplar Bluff in the 1950's. This subdivision – with the City as the developer – was built without any sidewalks or provisions for future sidewalks.

The survey conducted as part of this report had 68% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the question "The City should have more sidewalks." This high response rate indicates that pedestrian walk routes have again become important to the community. An inventory and study of the condition of the City's sidewalks was completed in 1990 (Smith&Co., 1990). A copy of this report is on file with the City of Poplar Bluff.

Pedestrian walk and bike trails have become very popular in communities in recent years as sources of recreation and exercise for citizens of all ages. Poplar Bluff has been proactive in providing at least the walk trail facilities; however, they are currently only located at the City's Hendrickson, Ferguson Grove and McLane Parks. Bacon Park, run by a local civic organization, also has a trail. None of these trails connect with other pedestrian transportation networks. The City has recently secured grants to develop the first portions of a backbone walking and biking trail system within the city. This system is more fully discussed in Chapter 5 of this report.



**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

Public transportation in Poplar Bluff is provided through Southeast Missouri Transportation Service, Inc. (SMTS). SMTS is a non-governmental, non-profit general public transportation service that is mostly funded through grants and donations. Curb-to-curb bus routes are limited at this time and are mainly oriented to serve the lower income and elderly residential facilities. SMTS also offers point pickup and drop off transportation, although prior coordination is required. They provide transport from the residential areas of this limited portion of the city’s population to mostly medical and retail facilities. There is also privately owned taxicab service available throughout the city.

**TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS IDENTIFIED IN THE PREVIOUS PLAN**

The Comprehensive Master Plan adopted in 1991 and updated in 1998 presented several major transportation-related recommendations. Many of these recommendations have been addressed, while many others remain unrealized.

**REALIZED 1991 PLAN GOALS**

The following improvements identified as priorities in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan have been implemented or finished, as described below. The authors believe the progress made on these projects is a validation of the comprehensive planning process.

**Table 6.2: 1991 Plan- Realized Goals**

Recommendation	Status
Four-lane US 60	Nearing Completion. Only a 50 mile stretch of two lane roadway remains between Springfield and Sikeston.
Four-lane US 67	Major progress made. Poplar Bluff passed a sales tax in 2005 to partially fund improving US 67 to four-lanes between Poplar Bluff and Fredericktown.
Install traffic signal at Sunset Boulevard and Westwood Boulevard	Completed.
Widen and straighten Route PP	Completed.
Widen and straighten Three Rivers Boulevard	Completed.
Widen County Road WW (Ditch Road)	Completed.
Pave all gravel streets inside City limits (Note: The 1998 Addendum set a target date of 2005 to have all gravel streets paved.)	Progress made, but the deadline of 2005 to have all gravel streets paved has been missed. The City has reduced its inventory of gravel-surfaced roads from 21.07 miles in 1991 to 14.17 miles as of June 2007.

**UNREALIZED 1998 PLAN UPDATE GOALS**

The 1998 Update to the 1991 Plan proposed the following improvements for the streets and highways that have seen little or no progress to date. The team preparing this plan studied the transportation needs of the community independent of the recommendations of the previous comprehensive master plan and its addendum. Many of the uncompleted recommendations presented in the 1998 addendum were identified in the present planning process. Several modifications to these recommendations have been identified and are discussed below.



**Table 6.3: 1998 Plan Update- Unrealized Goals**

Recommendation	Status
Construct new interchange on US 60 at Marble Hill Road (North Main Street)	A group of citizens opposed the interchange at Marble Hill Road due to concerns about its effect on traffic through residential communities. Other significant challenges include impacts to a cemetery. This plan reaffirmed the need for an interchange in this vicinity, but identified an alternative location about 1 mile east, to tie into a new arterial street.
Develop a grid pattern for residential/commercial development alternative routes	The goal was too general for action. This plan has developed a proposed grid of new arterials and collector streets that if implemented will provide the grid previously identified.
Improve Railroad Avenue from Henderson Avenue to RTE 53 to accommodate community center traffic	The present planning team did not identify this project as a priority. This plan emphasizes alternative means to access the historic downtown through an additional river crossing and the Grand Avenue arterial.
Extend RTE 53 to the US 67 Bypass	The present plan kept this project.
Develop east bypass from RTE 53 to RTE 60	The present plan presents two bypasses – an inner ring and an outer ring.
Extend road from Three Rivers Community College to the US 67 Bypass	This goal has been modified slightly in the present plan. A collector has been proposed from the college to Township Line Road that passes over 67 Bypass. MoDOT rules will not allow another interchange in this vicinity.
Major improvements to Oak Grove Road	Design of improvements to Oak Grove Road is underway.
Extend 16th Street from Vine Street to Business 67/ RTE 53 intersection	This project was determined by the planning team to be impractical based on engineering principles.
Widen and Straighten (9th St) from Main to Poplar	The present plan kept this project. The intersection of 9 <sup>th</sup> and Main has also been suggested for a roundabout.
Extend 14th Street from Pershing to Harper St.	This project is very problematic due to the presence of Bacon Park. An alternative solution has been identified by upgrading 10 <sup>th</sup> street to collector status from Davis to Vine. A roundabout at 14 <sup>th</sup> Street and Highland Drive would facilitate traffic from 14 <sup>th</sup> street to 10 <sup>th</sup> street via Pershing.
Extend White Oak Street to Barron Road	The present plan kept this project and extended White Oak eastward to the proposed Grand Avenue arterial.

**FUTURE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section discusses the future transportation needs identified by the planning team. The transportation improvements focus largely on the vehicular mode of transportation – i.e., the street network.

**COLLECTOR AND ARTERIAL STREETS**

The most obvious problem with the traffic network in Poplar Bluff is the lack of an integrated collector-level street network. This shortcoming is illustrated in the Roadway Classification System Plan (Map 6.1). Many of the existing streets were developed as local roads – frequently as county roads before the City incorporated those areas – that now are functioning as collectors and carrying relatively high levels of traffic. In addition, the streets that are functioning as collectors are not continuous – traffic



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may have to “jog” over a block or cross a commercial parking lot in order to continue in the desired direction. For visitors unfamiliar to the area, the lack of connectivity can be a daunting challenge.

The proposed Transportation Improvements Plan (Map 5.2) presents a comprehensive grid of collector streets that will support the traffic movement through the City and reduce congestion on the existing arterials. These proposed collector corridors are laid out to support both north and south movement as well as east and west movement through out the City and in the future planning areas. A summary of individual projects for street improvements is included in Table 6.1.

In addition to the collector street network, two (2) new arterial corridors are recommended. The first, labeled Arterial F, would connect from the intersection of Route W and Westwood Boulevard at the north end, cross Kanell Boulevard about midway between Westwood Boulevard and the Route 67 Bypass, and connect to the Route 53/Westwood Boulevard intersection on the south. This will provide an arterial corridor to the developing area west of the existing city limits where growth is expected to continue. Planning work is underway for the north half of this recommended arterial and a Transportation Development District has been formed to provide partial funding.

The second new arterial corridor starts at the intersection of County Road 302 and Route 142 at the southeast corner of the Industrial Park, following along Route 142, Ditch Road, and South 5th Street to Pine Street, then from Pine Street and North 2nd Street and Grand Street north to a proposed interchange on US 60, to be located about one mile east of Marble Hill Road. This arterial corridor would provide improved access for the City’s Downtown area as well as improve traffic movement to the area immediately west of the Black River.

For long term planning purposes, an arterial-level bypass is suggested to the south and east of Poplar Bluff. The new bypass would connect at the US 67/South Westwood Boulevard/Route M interchange, following along County Roads 302 and 305 to a new bridge over the Black River, then follow Route AA to the existing interchange of Route T and US 60 east of the City. This arterial bypass would support heavy traffic volumes, including truck traffic to and from the businesses in the Industrial Park. A section of this bypass has been conceptually planned and federal funding was earmarked for construction. However, after the election of 2006, the earmarked funds have been tied up in Congress and their future is uncertain. The remainder of the bypass would require significant funding support from outside sources in addition to funding commitments from the City. This project has been questioned by some in the public as being too ambitious for a City project. However, this project has potentially important impacts on the City and is an important priority to the County government and many people who live on the east side of the Black River and south of Route 60. As a result, the planning team feels it is important to include the entire project in this comprehensive plan.

### **ACCESS MANAGEMENT**

Access management includes the planning, design and limitation of points of access within the public roadway system. The goals of access management are to improve roadway safety, increase traffic flow and capacity, minimize congestion, protect taxpayers’ investment in the roadway and create better conditions for non-automobile transportation modes. The following access management standards, as described by MoDOT, should be drafted into a city ordinance and implemented when appropriate.



**TABLE 6.4: ACCESS MANAGEMENT STANDARDS**

<b><i>Access Management Standard</i></b>	<b><i>What it means</i></b>	<b><i>Why is it important</i></b>
Implement and Develop a Roadway Classification System	Access management standards should vary by the functional roadway type. The system classification should be mapped.	Allows access management standards to properly fit the functional role of the highway, street, or road. The higher the function, the less direct access is allowed.
Driveway Spacing and Density Standards	Controlling the distance between driveways and the number of driveways per unit of frontage. Said standards shall vary with the roadway classification, the expected land use, and the speed limit for the road.	Short spacing between driveways and high driveway densities generate conflict points that in turn lead to higher accident rates and more traffic congestion.
Corner Clearance and Intersections Setbacks	The minimum distance allowed between an intersection and the first driveway.	Insufficient corner clearance is a major cause of access-related accidents.
Sight Distance Standards	The sight distance conditions under which a driveway should not be allowed.	A driveway opening where there is insufficient visibility is inherently dangerous.
Driveway Geometric Standards	The width, turning radius, throat length, approach, angle, grade and surfacing for driveways. These can vary by the expected land use served by the driveway and the roadway classification.	Insufficient driveway geometrics lead to slow driveway entrances and exit speeds. This leads to conflicts between turning and through traffic. Good driveway geometric design can help pedestrian and bicyclists.
Raised Medians	Islands placed between traffic lanes.	Restricts turning movements and minimizes dangerous or unnecessary left turns through oncoming traffic.
Median Opening Standards	Where openings in medians will and will not be allowed.	Too many median openings or closely spaced median openings detract from proper functioning of a median.
<b><i>Source: DOT Access Management Classification System and Standards</i></b>		

Reducing the frequency and number of driveways and intersections and restricting turning movements at intersections or driveways help reduce potential traffic conflicts and congestion. Various techniques can be applied to reduce the existing frequency of driveways or curb-cuts. These include;



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- Providing alternative parcel access;
- Eliminating unnecessary or redundant curb cuts;
- Consolidating curb cuts by requiring shared entrances; and
- Relocating access points to adjoining streets, where possible.

High volume roadways and driveways on opposite sides of an arterial or busy collector roadway should generally be lined up across from each other. The maximum offset for such driveways should be no more than 6 feet. When driveways cannot be aligned, the minimum offset spacing should be 125 feet. The presence of a non-traversable (e.g., raised) median would of course mitigate any such requirement. Roadways containing a raised median can generally allow a higher concentration of right-in and right-out driveway access points than it can accommodate when left-turns into and out of driveways are permitted. Regardless, the presence of too many driveways has a serious negative impact on the roadway that leads to congestion, even if they only allow right-in and right-out movements. As a result it is recommended that the spacing of driveways along arterial roadways and busy collectors is limited subject to parcelization and adjoining use constraints.

Access management is recommended along all major collector roads and arterials, including but not limited to, Westwood Boulevard, Kanell Boulevard, Pine Street and Highway 53 as it passes through the city limits. These corridors experience peak period traffic congestion and should be considered for the above recommended access management techniques. However, these standards can only apply where sight distance allows. Driveways should not be allowed where sight distance is inadequate, even if the driveway spacing standard would otherwise allow or mandate it at that location.

### TRAFFIC CALMING

The Institute of Transportation Engineers describes traffic calming as changes in street alignment, installation of barriers, and other physical measures to reduce traffic speeds and/or cut-through volumes, in the interest of street safety, livability, and other public purposes. While traffic calming can occasionally use such physical measures to make traffic uncomfortable, thereby lowering traffic speeds, most traffic calming devices are meant to slow traffic in comfortable and often subtle ways.

Traffic calming measures should be considered at all pedestrian crossings to reduce vehicular speeds, increase driver awareness and help establish right-of-way for pedestrian users. Traffic calming measures, include but are not limited to, alternative paving materials, on-street parking, lighting, landscaping, reduced lane widths, choke points, traffic circles or any combination thereof that reduce apparent street width and protects pedestrians from moving traffic. Traffic calming is also recommended downtown to slow traffic, beautify and increase pedestrian safety and convenience. Using traffic calming at key corner locations in the downtown will provide safer pedestrian crossings and better orientation for both pedestrians and drivers.

### INTERCHANGES

Currently, the City of Poplar Bluff and the surrounding region are served by four (4) fully functional interchanges and one interchange with partial access to the expressway system maintained by the state transportation department. The interchanges consist of a cloverleaf interchange at US 67 and US 60 and diamond interchanges at US 67 and Route M/S, Westwood Boulevard, US 67 and Route



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PP, and US 60 and Route T/Route AA. A partial high speed flyover interchange serves westbound traffic from US 60 to Business 60 and eastbound traffic from Business 60 to eastbound US 60. The westbound traffic from Business 60 to US 60 and the eastbound traffic from US 60 to Business 60 must travel to the diamond interchange for US 60 and State Route T to reverse direction and utilize the flyover ramp. There is also an onramp to southbound US 67 leading from the school complex in the northeast corner of the grade separation of Oak Grove Road over US 67.

The US 60 and Business 60 interchange has limited access, as described previously. This interchange should be improved to allow access to Business 60 from the eastbound lanes of US 60 and to allow traffic from Business 60 to access the westbound lanes of Highway 60. The recommended solution is to install additional ramps and an overpass bridge at the interchange. An alternative would be to reroute a portion of Business 60 to tie into the south side of the existing diamond interchange at Route T and Route AA. Route AA has relatively minor traffic counts and could be rerouted into Business 60 south of the interchange. This project will require extensive involvement with MoDOT and additional studies to determine the best possible solution. Some preliminary discussions have occurred between MoDOT and city representatives.

A new interchange is proposed between the existing interchanges of US 60 on the north side of Poplar Bluff. This interchange would support traffic flow to and from the proposed Grand Avenue arterial to serve the eastern side of the City. This interchange would probably be a diamond interchange with four (4) ramps and an overpass bridge. The exact level of service for this interchange would be established after more in-depth studies and coordination with MoDOT.

Finally, the southbound highway access ramp at the school complex near Oak Grove Road and the US 67 bypass an interchange should be expanded. The addition of an on-ramp from Oak Grove Road to southbound US 67, an off-ramp from southbound US 67 to Oak Grove Road two exit ramps and another off-ramp from northbound US 67 to Oak Grove Road would provide better access to the school and provide relief to the heavy traffic on Oak Grove Road. Adding access to this existing grade separation has been discussed as a possible solution in conjunction with the Oak Grove Road upgrade and the preliminary design of Arterial F underway by private developers. Again, detailed study of this project in conjunction with MODOT is required in order to determine the effect of these modifications on the state transportation system.

### INTERSECTIONS

This plan also presents site-specific recommendations for traffic improvement. Corresponding to the road categorical improvements discussed above, many of the intersections in the City need to be improved. Some of the intersections are problematic in their existing state due to such factors as space constraints, narrow pavement widths, intersection offsets, and/or extreme intersection angles. These existing intersections are:

- Business 67 (Westwood Boulevard) and State Route W
- Business 67 (Westwood Boulevard) and Oak Grove Road/Katy Lane
- Business 67 (Westwood Boulevard), State Route PP (Kanell Boulevard) and Harper Street
- Business 67 (Westwood Boulevard), Maud Street and Valley Plaza entrance
- Business 67 (Westwood Boulevard) and Business 60 (Pine Street)



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- Main Street and North 9th Street
- Business 60 (Pine Street) and 5th Street
- Vine Street and 5th Street
- Highland Drive and North 14th Street

In addition to the existing intersections, the major intersections of the proposed arterial and collector roads depicted in Site Project Plan will need to be improved. These intersections improvements are summarized in Table 6.4. Additional detailed studies and traffic modeling will need to be conducted to determine the specific improvements needed at each location. The planning team recommends the consideration of roundabouts and other traffic calming techniques at certain of these intersections.

### BRIDGES

Four (4) new possible bridge sites crossing the Black River were identified. These include a bridge on the extension of Davis Street to the Business 60/Route VV interchange; a bridge on the extension of Ashcroft Road; a bridge on the extension of Henry Street; and a bridge on the proposed new southeast bypass. The bridges on Ashcroft and Henry Street should be considered as alternate locations for the same solution – it is unlikely that both bridges would be necessary.

### AIRPORT

The current Missouri State Airport System Plan recommends that the Poplar Bluff Municipal be classified as a Regional Airport. The Plan defines regional airports as “those primarily serving general aviation activities with a focus on serving business activity including small jet and multiengine aircraft.” The airport will need to conduct several major projects in order to fully meet the intent of the Missouri State Airport System Plan in addition to its own Airport Layout Plan.

The Poplar Bluff Municipal Airport has continued to utilize Airport Improvement Program grants to expand, improve and maintain the runway and taxiways. Long-term projects identified in the approved Airport Layout Plan and the Missouri State Airport System Plan to improve the safety and service level of the airport include:

- Parking ramp strengthening expansion
- Extend runway 18-36 and the taxiway from 5,007 feet to the ultimate planned length of 5,900 feet
- Install new navigation and visual aids
- Construct a 3,200 foot cross wind runway Construct additional t-hanger facilities
- Working with adjacent property owners to remove airspace encroachments

In addition to the aircraft facilities listed above, several additional projects will need to be planned. The terminal building should be evaluated as the number of air operations increase to determine what level of expansion is needed to accommodate the pilots and passengers utilizing the facility. The existing passenger parking area needs to be repaired and ultimately expanded to accommodate increased airport usage.

Routine maintenance also needs to be considered in planning for the budgets of the airfield. Sealing the asphalt pavements and repairing cracks should be scheduled every seven (7) to ten (10) years.



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Repainting airfield markings should follow the same maintenance schedule. Additionally, maintenance of the existing hangers should be routinely conducted in order to extend their service life.

### RAILWAYS

Railways are not identified as an item requiring future planning in this study. Improvements to this multimodal transportation resource are typically driven by economic factors between the railroad company and its customers.

### PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES

More than 68% of the survey respondents agreed with the statement “The City should have more sidewalks.” It is recommended that sidewalks as well as bicycle lanes should be considered for all of the City’s planned roadway improvements in areas where pedestrian and bicycle facilities are not currently present and in the locations where new roadways are to be built.

This Plan also recommends the creation of a community-wide greenway. The greenway is intended to increase pedestrian travel, encourage active lifestyles and expand year-round park and recreation options for all ages. The implementation of a linear park system is an effective way to create a “preservation corridor” that provides multi-generational open space and recreational opportunities. Equally important is its ability to integrate the city’s precious signature natural areas with its urban areas and key traffic generators. Trail locations and sidewalk improvements should link to the City’s roads, historic downtown, schools, colleges, churches, businesses, recreational facilities and neighborhoods. The general location of the recommended trails and greenways are shown on the Future Land Use and Transportation Map. Trailheads, picnic areas, restroom facilities and parking areas should be provided at the major points of access to primary trail/pathway segments. Additionally, educational kiosks should be located at trailhead locations and along trail routes. Trailheads, kiosks and trailway improvements must be designed and located in areas that attract a wide range of users. Table 6.5 provides the recommended pedestrian improvement strategies.

**TABLE 6.5: RECOMMENDED PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES**

Type of Improvement	Description	Recommendations
Install new sidewalks & upgrade existing sidewalks.	Install sidewalks along all streets and upgrade all existing sidewalks in need or repair.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Install sidewalks along all new roads</li> <li>▪ Upgrade existing sidewalks in disrepair</li> </ul>
Install new trails	Acquire needed ROW and provide necessary improvements to create connections to the city’s existing trails, parks, institutions, business centers, neighborhoods and other activity centers/traffic generators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Install a Riverfront Trail to Three Rivers Campus</li> <li>▪ Include trailheads, comfort stations, parking and other amenities to complement the trail segments.</li> <li>▪ Provide connection to the Ozark Trail</li> </ul>
Create or improve pedestrian crossings and bike lanes where needed	Re-stripe existing ROW to provide safe bicycle lanes. Provide designated pedestrian crossings where needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bike lane needed on Westwood Blvd.</li> <li>▪ Crosswalks needed at all major trail &amp; pedestrian crossings.</li> </ul>



Some recommended methods of obtaining land and/or right-of-way for an integrated trail system is the creation of community land trusts, conservation easements, preservation corridors, and land dedications. The City should consider acquiring rights to property in the general vicinity of the recommended greenway locations. It is recommended that the location and design of greenways and sidewalk improvements utilize existing built and natural topography whenever possible to minimize erosion, preserve existing vegetation and mitigate any negative impacts on surrounding land uses. The implementation of a comprehensive trail system increases accessibility options to the City's activity centers and reduces demand for vehicular travel.

### **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

The City's public transit service, as provided through contract with Southeast Missouri Transportation Service, Inc. should be monitored periodically to insure that the needs of riders and potential riders are being met.

### **GATEWAY FEATURES**

Several key intersections and corridors within Poplar Bluff serve as a primary means of access to the community. These intersections and points of interest are often a visitor's first impression of the city. These key intersections and corridors function as "gateways" into Poplar Bluff and should be improved to positively influence visitors' perceptions of Poplar Bluff and promote the quality of life and vitality of the community. As such, special attention and planning consideration should be given to these gateway locations.

The planning and design considerations given to gateways should be based upon a hierarchy of importance, based upon purpose, location, traffic volumes, street function and visibility. Gateways should be identified as primary, secondary and transition gateways. The creation of gateway features including professional landscaping, crepe myrtle plantings, monument signage and other aesthetic features should be planned at the City's primary, secondary and transitional gateways.

### **Primary Gateways**

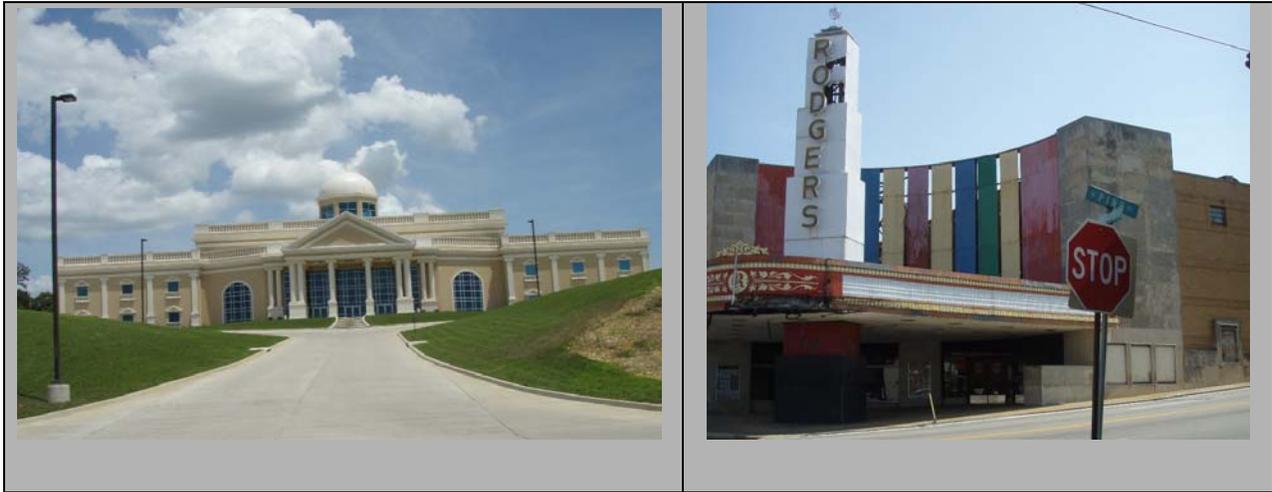
Primary gateways should be located at the main entrances to the city and identify Poplar Bluff as a whole. The Map 7.1 shows the locations of the primary gateways. The major features of these gateways should include are:

1. A prominent feature such as large-scale public art, statuary, fountains, gardens or park-like settings;
2. A building or structure of special architectural significance. If a building or structure is proposed within one of the primary gateway locations, special consideration should be given to the building orientation, design and material selection.
3. Signage to clearly identify entrance into Poplar Bluff. Brick, stone or other high-quality materials and the city crest/logo should be incorporated into the signage to further establish the gateway; and



4. Landscaping, including crepe myrtle plantings, to accent the proposed gateway features. A combination of street trees, ornamental trees, shrubbery, ground covers and ornamental plantings should be used to accent and coordinate the design.

**Figure 6.2: Landmarks as Primary Gateway Features**



Gateway features may consist of prominent architecture or local landmarks within the city, welcoming visitors, reminding residents of the City's past, present and future.

### Secondary Gateways

Secondary gateways should identify the City of Poplar Bluff as a whole, but on a smaller scale than the primary gateways. These gateways are identified as the intersections between major roadways. Secondary gateways include intersections such as at Westwood Boulevard and Pine Street. As opposed to primary gateway features, secondary gateways are intended to be at a pedestrian scale. The major features of the secondary gateways are:

1. A prominent features such as public art, statuary, fountains, gardens or park-like settings;
2. Signage of brick, stone or other high-quality material;
3. Landscaping, including crepe myrtle plantings, to accent the surrounding corridor and prominent features. A combination of street trees, ornamental trees, shrubbery, ground covers and ornamental plantings should be used to accent and coordinate the design;
4. Benches, trash receptacles, pedestrian scale lighting, unique paving patterns at crosswalks, and other streetscape elements.

### Transition Gateways

Transition gateways are identified for those areas where a distinct change in activity or land use takes place or a specific district begins along an arterial or collector roadway. Transition gateways are used to identify the entrance into unique destinations or corridors. Special interest should be given to the Downtown area, specifically as one enters the CBD from Main Street and Pine Street. Transition



gateways are also appropriate for entrances into business parks, industrial parks, parks & recreation facilities, institutions and residential neighborhoods.

A gateway feature, reminiscent of the one proposed almost 100 years ago at Main Street, leading to the downtown is recommended. The original gateway feature was proposed at the south end of Main Street and was to include a large arch that would serve as a “Gateway to Poplar Bluff”. The 1909 plan included a “spectacular lighting plan” to “ensure the landmark was as attractive at night as during the day”. To memorialize this plan and celebrate the City’s history and vitality, a gateway arch, complete with a lighting plan, is recommended at Main Street leading downtown. Gateway features should also be planned and installed at all the major entries into the City.

Transition gateway features should be smaller in scale and magnitude than primary or secondary gateways, potentially as simple as a single element. The major features of the transition gateways are:

1. Signage to clearly identify the entrances into the unique district;
2. Landscaping, including crepe myrtle plantings, to accent the streetscape and signage—a combination of street trees, ornamental trees, shrubbery, ground covers and ornamental plantings to accent and coordinate the design; and
3. Benches, trash receptacles, pedestrian scale lighting, unique paving patterns at crosswalks, and other streetscape elements.

**Figure 6.3: Transitional Gateway Features**



*A single element such as a monument sign, clock tower or fountain can announce the transition into unique districts*

The city should work closely or partner with local developers to ensure that adequate aesthetic considerations are given to development near identified gateway locations. As part of the site plan review process the city should consider the visual impacts of development at the “gateway” locations. Building, design, orientation and parking should also be carefully planned to minimize any negative physical or visual impacts. Many of the gateway locations identified have been developed, making the efforts to establish the gateway concept difficult. Initial improvements may focus around landscaping. Over time, as redevelopment occurs or partnerships are formed, and as funding becomes available, the larger-scale elements like public art, monuments and signage can be added.



For those areas that are not currently developed or in which limited development has taken place, efforts to establish the gateway concept should begin immediately. Conceptual plans for development of gateways in these locations should be developed, so that as development does begin to occur a clear vision can be presented. This vision would serve as the basis for requirements for land dedication or acquisition and special design considerations.

The City should consider partnering with businesses and property owners to develop incentives that encourage the private sector to fund the acquisition, installation and ongoing maintenance of gateway features. For example, in exchange for the design, installation and maintenance of a gateway feature, the City might allow a private citizen, group or business to be publicly recognized within the design of the Gateway in a manner similar to the adopt a highway program.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Overall, Poplar Bluff's transportation system lacks connectivity. This is a partial cause of the periodic congestion problems being experienced. Better traffic circulation along Westwood Boulevard and improved north/south transportation connectivity should mitigate many of Poplar Bluff's current local traffic circulation problems. However, these improvements must look beyond purely local impacts. An effective transportation system integrates and enhances the social, physical (environmental) and economic components of the region. These issues and any proposed improvements must be viewed from the perspectives of the regional uses as well as the local user. Key issues to consider include efficient travel, safety, aesthetics, traffic congestion, community support, and cost/benefit analysis. In the implementation of future transportation improvements, MoDOT recommends considering the following elements to assure any changes are made in the best overall public interest.

- **Preservation of the existing infrastructure:** manage and maintain the current transportation system assets, capacities and levels of service.
- **Congestion management:** ensure that congestion on the City's roadways does not reach levels which compromise economic competitiveness or the quality of life.
- **Alternative modes of transportation:** all modes of transportation must be addressed with an emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle linkages to community activity centers.
- **Sustainable development:** coordinate land use, transportation, economic development, environmental quality, and community aesthetics in a manner that meets today's needs without compromising the ability to address the needs of future generations. Much of the current roadway system was not built with this concept in mind and retrofitting has proven to be exceedingly costly from both economic and social perspectives.

Roadway design standards have been developed by the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) for the design and construction of arterial, collector and local roadways. Projects funded with governmental funds are typically required to be built to AASTO standards. Therefore, it is recommended that future improvements comply with AASHTO standards, to the extent possible. Consideration should also be given to the existing development conditions and other local constraints.



### TRANSPORTATION ORDINANCES AND STREET STANDARDS

The City of Poplar Bluff has adopted ordinances and standards for new street construction within the City. These standards address right-of-way widths, pavement widths and pavements thicknesses generally required for new local roads. It is the opinion of the planning team that the transportation-related provisions in the present City ordinances are inappropriate for the present and future needs of Poplar Bluff. The standards established in these ordinances are frequently ignored by developers and city personnel and/or waived by Planning & Zoning Commissions and City Councils. This fact in itself is a strong argument that the ordinances as written are inadequate. An in-depth study should be conducted to that identifies the appropriate planning and construction standards for the various categorical uses, whether they will remain local roads or may later need to be developed to collector or arterial standards.

### SIGNAGE AND STREETScape STANDARDS

Traffic Chaos is a term used to describe roads with physical and visual barriers that inhibit traffic flow and compromise the driving experience. Physical and visual barriers create uncomfortable circumstances and conditions that are contrary to driver's expectations. These externalities tend to confuse drivers and cause them to slow down, creating further confusion and chaos.

Traffic chaos is most often created by distractions. These can be in the form of excessive signage along the road edge, excessive numbers of entrances off of the roadway, as well as excessive or erratic lighting. Westwood Boulevard possesses many of these characteristics. As you drive along Westwood Boulevard, you are bombarded with a variety of sizes and types of business signage within your viewshed. In fact, the many distractions make it easy for visitors to miss roadway signage (such as road names, directional signage, etc). Flashing lights on signs merely add to this distraction.

These distractions and others that cause visual chaos should be addressed through the development of an updated sign ordinance and other design standards that help create a consistent, more desirable physical and visual streetscape. Poplar Bluff's ability to development and implement the recommended graphic and design guidelines that address signage, lighting and entrances along major commercial districts is vital to the city's future economic development and transportation system improvements.

### ESTIMATE OF CONCEPTUAL IMPLEMENTATION COSTS

The plan of proposed improvements depicted in the figures and tables and described in the text above was intentionally prepared without regard to the cost of implementation. In other words, it is a wish list based on the collective desires of the planning team, the CPAC, city staff, and other stakeholders in the planning process. The planning team recognizes the cost of implementing the wish list in its entirety is likely prohibitive. In order to facilitate the development of an implementation plan, the planning team has prepared conceptual estimates of probable cost for the projects identified herein. For comparative purposes, the following unit costs were assumed for the street projects.

Arterial Road	\$2,000,000 per mile
Major Collector	\$1,600,000 per mile
Minor Collector	\$1,200,000 per mile

These costs are based upon typical construction costs for pavement, curbs, gutters, and simple drainage structures at the present time. Because of the varying types of land use (such as residential



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City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

or commercial) that the transportation corridors go through, the right-of way costs are outside of the scope of these conceptual cost figures. Specific studies are needed for each project to more precisely determine the project costs. These studies will identify project specific issues to be addressed such as major drainage improvements, earthwork quantities, signage or signalization requirements, sight distance limitations, utility relocations, and right-of-way issues. The estimated costs of the street improvements are presented in Table 6.5 and total over \$153 million.

In addition to the roadways, several site specific recommendations for improvements have been identified. They are not presented in this plan. These site specific items are specific intersection upgrades, river crossings, and rail crossings. The estimated cost of this group of improvements is about \$46 million.

The conceptual costs for transportation improvements may appear daunting upon first reflection. Many of the significant projects, such as the south bypass and the interchanges, are projects that will require the commitment and financial assistance of the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) and from federal sources. Also, projects that are identified along roadways maintained by the MoDOT (US 67, US 60, BUS 67, BUS 60, RTE 53, and RTE 142) are projects where at least partial funding should be sought through that agency. Several of the proposed street improvements are for streets that have not been built yet. Sharing the costs for these projects with private developers for those areas should also reduce the City's capital expenditures. A proposed method for this process is that the private developers will assume the costs of building roads to a local road level with the City providing funds to construct the roads to a collector or arterial level. At the minimum, the City should require adequate right-of-way widths to allow for future road improvements along identified collector and arterial corridors.

The projects included in these tables should be run through a comprehensive prioritization process that is outside of the scope of this present plan. The planning team recommends that a committee of stakeholders be convened to rank each project in numerical order of perceived priority. This prioritized list, combined with the conceptual estimates of cost, will enable the development of an implementation and funding plan that can make a major part of this "wish list" a reality.

The City of Poplar Bluff has shown dedication to improving its transportation system, especially by approving a transportation tax to fund the expansion of US 67 north to the Fredericktown area. The respondents to survey conducted as a part of this plan indicated that 69% were either agreeable or neutral to a supporting a tax or bonds to fund street improvements. These factors indicate that the citizens of Poplar Bluff are committed to improving the overall transportation network of the community.

### CONCLUSION

The City of Poplar Bluff is an important transportation center in the Southeast Missouri region. Its significance will probably increase when the four-lane expansions to US 60 and 67 are completed. Communities that are located at the intersections of four-lane expressways have tended to show growth levels that outpace other regional communities. As part of this growth, Poplar Bluff should identify the areas adjacent to the existing city limits where this growth is most likely to occur and plan for the road networks in these areas.

Currently, the City has a very limited number of major roadways capable of handling large volumes of traffic. Westwood Boulevard (BUS 67) is the only identified arterial or collector level road that



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supports north and south bound traffic through the City. Pine Street (BUS 60) and RTE 53 are the only two arterial or collector level roads that handle east and west bound traffic east of Westwood Boulevard (BUS 67). East and west bound arterial or collector traffic west of Westwood Boulevard (BUS 67) is directed along Kanell Boulevard (RTE PP). The City needs to identify additional corridors for arterial and collector level roadways to relieve the traffic on the limited existing arterial and collector level roadways. These corridors need to extend through significant portions of the existing city and areas planned for future growth. Ultimately, the City should maintain as a planning consideration the construction of an arterial level bypass route to the south and east of the City. This route would support heavy transport traffic to and from the City's Industrial Park. Additional, detailed studies of these projects are needed in order to determine the most advantageous routes and more accurately determine the advantages, disadvantages and costs a transportation corridor will have.

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City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

**TABLE 6.6 – SUMMARY OF ROADWAY PROJECTS**

Project Name	From Street	To Street	Functional Classification	Description	Annexation Required?	Length (Miles)	Estimated Cost	Priority
Arterial F	Kanell Blvd	Westwood Blvd	Arterial	New Construction, Widen and Reconstruct Existing	Y/N	2.16	\$4,320,000.00	
Bypass East-Hwy A / CR 613 / CR 608	Highway B	Highway 53	Arterial	New Construction, Widen and Reconstruct Existing	Y	5.60	\$11,200,000.00	
Bypass South-CR 306 / CR 302	Highway 53	67 Bypass	Arterial	New Construction, Widen and Reconstruct Existing	Y/N	4.49	\$8,980,000.00	Bypass South-CR 306 / CR 302
Grand Avenue	Pine Street	60 Bypass	Arterial	New Construction, Widen and Reconstruct Existing	Y/N	3.00	\$6,000,000.00	Grand Avenue
Highway 142	Highway 53	CR 306	Arterial	Widen and Reconstruct	Y/N	1.36	\$2,720,000.00	Highway 142
Highway A	Highway B	60 Bypass	Arterial	Widen and Reconstruct	Y	1.96	\$3,920,000.00	
Highway T	60 Bypass	T Outer Road	Arterial	Widen and Reconstruct	Y	0.28	\$560,000.00	
Highway W	60/67	Shadowbrook	Arterial	Widen and Reconstruct	N	0.58	\$1,160,000.00	
Kanell Blvd	Westwood Blvd	Township Line	Arterial	Widen and Reconstruct	Y/N	2.79	\$5,580,000.00	
Pine Street	Westwood Blvd	Main Street	Arterial	Widen and Reconstruct	N	0.82	\$1,640,000.00	
Arterial F	Westwood Blvd	Kanell Blvd	Arterial or Major Collector	New Construction	Y/N	1.90	\$3,800,000.00	
10th Street	Davis Street	Pine Street	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	N	0.91	\$1,456,000.00	
10th Street	Pine Street	9th Street	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	N	0.31	\$496,000.00	
11th Street	Pine Street	Highway 53	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	N	1.27	\$2,032,000.00	
14th Street	White Oak	Davis St.	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	Y/N	1.38	\$2,208,000.00	



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City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

**TABLE 6.6 – SUMMARY OF ROADWAY PROJECTS**

Project Name	From Street	To Street	Functional Classification	Description	Annexation Required?	Length (Miles)	Estimated Cost	Priority
Barron Rd	Katy Lane	Grand Avenue	Collector	New Construction, Widen and Reconstruct Existing	N	2.78	\$4,448,000.00	
Baskey Road	Highway B	CR 558	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	Y	1.10	\$1,760,000.00	
Baughs Lane	Seifert Dr.	Barron Rd	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	N	0.14	\$224,000.00	
Charlton Lane	White Oak	Barron Rd	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	N	0.49	\$784,000.00	
Collector A - CR 441A	Township Line	Scarlett Drive	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	Y	0.30	\$480,000.00	
Collector B	Woodland Meadows	Township Line	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	Y	0.38	\$608,000.00	
Collector B	Township Line	Misty Lake Rd.	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	Y	0.46	\$736,000.00	
Collector C	Township Line	Arterial F	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	Y/N	1.72	\$2,752,000.00	
Collector C	Arterial F	Kanell Blvd	Collector	New Construction, Widen and Reconstruct Existing	Y/N	0.72	\$1,152,000.00	
Collector D	Township Line	Arterial F	Collector	New Construction, Widen and Reconstruct Existing	Y	2.25	\$3,600,000.00	
Collector E - CR 468	Collector G	Westwood Blvd	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	Y	1.55	\$2,480,000.00	
Collector F	Roxie Road	CR 468	Collector	New Construction, Widen and Reconstruct Existing	Y	1.66	\$2,656,000.00	
Collector G	Kanell Blvd	Westwood Blvd	Collector	New Construction, Widen and Reconstruct Existing	Y	3.24	\$5,184,000.00	



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**TABLE 6.6 – SUMMARY OF ROADWAY PROJECTS**

Project Name	From Street	To Street	Functional Classification	Description	Annexation Required?	Length (Miles)	Estimated Cost	Priority
Collector H	Kanell Blvd	Highway M	Collector	New Construction	Y	2.61	\$4,176,000.00	
Collector K	Ditch Road	Highway A	Collector	New Construction, Widen and Reconstruct Existing	Y/N	3.53	\$5,648,000.00	
Collector L	Business 60	CR 604 - Collector K	Collector	New Construction, Widen and Reconstruct Existing	Y	1.00	\$1,600,000.00	
CR 471	CR 468	Westwood Blvd	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	Y	0.46	\$736,000.00	
CR 558	Business 60	Highway A	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	Y	1.06	\$1,696,000.00	
Cravens Road	Westwood Blvd	CR 302	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	Y/N	0.93	\$1,488,000.00	
Crestwood	Iron Bridge Rd	Westwood Blvd	Collector	New Construction, Widen and Reconstruct Existing	Y/N	1.00	\$1,600,000.00	
Davis Street	Parkview Drive	Grand Avenue	Collector	New Construction, Widen and Reconstruct Existing	N	1.21	\$1,936,000.00	
Davis Street	Grand Avenue	Business 60	Collector	New Construction, Widen and Reconstruct Existing	N	1.08	\$1,728,000.00	
Grand Avenue	60 Bypass	Honeysuckle Lane	Collector	New Construction	Y	0.50	\$800,000.00	
Grey Street	14th Street	Main Street	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	N	0.31	\$496,000.00	
Harper Street	Westwood Blvd	Grand Avenue	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	N	1.28	\$2,048,000.00	
Highland Drive	Westwood Blvd	Parkview Dr.	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	N	0.38	\$608,000.00	
Highway B	Business 60	CR 557	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	Y	3.54	\$5,664,000.00	



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**TABLE 6.6 – SUMMARY OF ROADWAY PROJECTS**

Project Name	From Street	To Street	Functional Classification	Description	Annexation Required?	Length (Miles)	Estimated Cost	Priority
Highway M	Township Line	67 Bypass	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	Y	0.18	\$288,000.00	
Iron Bridge Rd	Oak Grove Rd	Kanell Blvd	Collector	New Construction	Y/N	1.54	\$2,464,000.00	
Kanell Blvd	Kanell Blvd / Township Line	CR 445A	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	Y	0.50	\$800,000.00	
Kendall Street	Westwood Blvd	9th Street	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	N	0.29	\$464,000.00	
Lela Street	9th Street	11th Street	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	N	0.09	\$144,000.00	
Main Street	9th & Main Street	Honeysuckle Lane	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	N	2.40	\$3,840,000.00	
Maud Street	Westwood Blvd	Main Street	Collector	Widen And Reconstruct	N	0.70	\$1,120,000.00	
Miller Road - CR 448	Kanell Blvd		Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	Y	0.50	\$800,000.00	
Oak Grove Road	Township Line	Woodland Meadows	Collector	New Construction	Y	0.38	\$608,000.00	
Parkview Dr.	Davis Street	Highland Drive	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	N	0.10	\$160,000.00	
Peach Street	Pine Street	Collector L	Collector	New Construction, Widen and Reconstruct Existing	Y/N	1.67	\$2,672,000.00	
Seifert Drive	Orr Road	14th Street	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	N	0.23	\$368,000.00	
Sunset Drive	Kanell Blvd	Westwood Blvd	Collector	New Construction, Widen and Reconstruct Existing	N	0.70	\$1,120,000.00	
Sunset Drive	Westwood Blvd	14th Street	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	N	0.67	\$1,072,000.00	
Township Line	60/67	Kanell Blvd	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	Y	2.75	\$4,400,000.00	



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City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

**TABLE 6.6 – SUMMARY OF ROADWAY PROJECTS**

Project Name	From Street	To Street	Functional Classification	Description	Annexation Required?	Length (Miles)	Estimated Cost	Priority
Township Line	Kanell Blvd	Highway M	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	Y	2.56	\$4,096,000.00	
White Oak	Westwood Blvd	Grand Avenue	Collector	New Construction, Widen and Reconstruct Existing	Y/N	3.10	\$4,960,000.00	
Windwood St	Oak Grove Rd	Crestwood St.	Collector	New Construction, Widen and Reconstruct Existing	Y	0.34	\$544,000.00	
Woodland Meadows	CR 4412	Pinecrest Dr.	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	Y	0.84	\$1,344,000.00	
Oak Grove Road	Westwood Blvd	67 Bypass	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	N	0.96	\$1,536,000.00	
Oak Grove Road	67 Bypass	Township Line	Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	Y	0.84	\$1,344,000.00	
Maud Street	Kanell Blvd	Westwood Blvd	Minor Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	N	0.98	\$1,176,000.00	
9th Street	Main Street	Lela Street	Minor Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	N	1.34	\$1,608,000.00	
Lucy Lee Drive	Westwood Blvd	Channon Dr.	Minor Collector	Widen and Reconstruct	N	0.36	\$432,000.00	
Roxy Road	Maud Street	Collector G	Minor Collector	New Construction, Widen and Reconstruct Existing	Y/N	1.88	\$2,256,000.00	
					TOTAL	90.39	\$152,776,000.00	



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### FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

#### INTRODUCTION

The Future Land Use Plan serves as a guide for the planned and orderly growth of the City of Poplar Bluff. Zoning changes, subdivisions new development or redevelopment should be reviewed for compliance with the future land use plan during the planning & zoning process. The Plan anticipates modest, well planned growth provided the long-range goals of this plan are implemented incrementally. The Plan includes the Future Land Use Map and supporting text, both of which must be considered when making decisions regarding a new use or change in use. The Plan is a fluid document that should be periodically reviewed and updated to accommodate the latest trends in development and lifestyle changes.

The future land use recommendations were developed with consideration given to the comments recorded during the public engagement sessions, public opinion surveys, Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee meetings and collaboration with City staff, boards and commissions and the current and past land use practices and development trends. The future land use recommendations consider the compatibility of various land use categories and indicate how land may be best utilized or redeveloped in a manner that helps achieve the community's vision, which states:

***“To promote the City’s small-town atmosphere, quality work force and natural amenities while providing a more livable, well-planned community through managed growth, economic development and revitalization efforts”***

The Future Land Use Plan depicts a number of traditional land use categories and provides a range of land use growth and revitalization strategies. These strategies seek to create opportunities for a wide range of uses while ensuring compatibility through design rather than through the delineation of physical boundaries on the map. The decision to locate new uses and activities in the City should be based upon an understanding of the existing conditions, anticipated growth projections and factors such as land use externalities, the principles of sustainable planning and design and the need for compatibility between the built and natural environments. The purpose of the following sections is to provide the background knowledge necessary to turn community goals into productive community action.

#### EXISTING CONDITIONS

The existing core community, which includes the downtown area, the city’s established neighborhoods and the Westwood Boulevard commercial corridor, is essentially built-out. While these areas are mostly developed, they are considered growth areas as they provide great opportunities for infill and redevelopment. Unlike the areas on the fringe of the city’s limits, these areas are easily served by city services and already have infrastructure in place. However, opportunities for new large-scale development are very limited within the present city limits. Most new development, whether residential, commercial or industrial, will have to occur in undeveloped areas outside the existing corporate limits or as limited infill development in existing established areas. The biggest challenge facing the city in the area of future land use is the ability to balance its resources by protecting and preserving the built community while investing in infrastructure to expand into new areas. The Future Land Use Plan includes strategies for both revitalizing the city’s inner core and the designation of growth areas outside the present City limits to accommodate future development.



### GROWTH PROJECTIONS

The City of Poplar Bluff experienced slow growth during the 1990s. It is anticipated that the city will perform similarly for the next 10 years. It is projected that Poplar Bluff's population will grow to approximately 20,000 by 2020. As a regional economic center of commerce in Southeast Missouri, the city will continue to expand and experience demand for new land area as residential, commercial, medical and retail service demands increase. The new Highway 67 improvements have already spurred growth and will continue to stimulate economic development as traffic volumes increase. In order for Poplar Bluff to accommodate anticipated growth levels, the City will need to consider implementation strategies, such as infill, redevelopment and Greenfield development. Since the availability of large undeveloped sites within the current city limits is very limited, annexing land will be necessary. A major consideration of future annexation is identifying areas to be preserved and areas where growth can occur in a well planned manner following efficient expansion and management of infrastructure.

### Future Land Use Map Categories

The *Future Land Use Map* and future land use recommendations will not become reality unless the daily decisions and implementation activities in Poplar Bluff support the proposed plan. The decision to locate new uses and activities in the City should be based upon factors such as impact on existing development, capacity of adjacent streets, planning and design principles, and the need for compatibility between the built and natural environment. The recommendations of this plan should be used with a sense of flexibility. Development proposals that do not exactly match the *Future Land Use Map* and future land use goals, objectives and recommendations, but reflect market place demands, should be given reasonable consideration so long as they do not present significant new public service burdens on the community or negatively impact the health, safety and welfare of the community.

The colored areas shown on the *Future Land Use Map* include all land within the city plus areas identified by the community as desirable for annexation. The future land use categories include.

- Rural Residential/Agriculture
- Low-Density Residential
- Medium-Density Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Nodal Commercial
- Commercial
- Downtown / Mixed Use
- Industrial
- Park/Open Space
- Public/Institutional

The future land use category matrix, Table 7.1, on the following pages is designed to work with the Future Land Use Map at the end of this chapter. The Future Land Use Map is meant to portray a conceptual plan, with the understanding that the general areas identified on the map are correct, but there may be slight modifications to their precise boundaries when a lot-by-lot analysis is conducted during plan implementation. The intent of the Future Land Use Map, land use matrix and the following is to preserve and enhance the City's successfully established residential and commercial areas and promote revitalization efforts along the City's corridors and in the historic downtown.



## Chapter 7: Future Land Use

City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

**Table: 7.1 Future Land Use Categories & Descriptions**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Density</b>	<b>Proposed Uses</b>
<b>Rural Residential / Agriculture</b>	No more than 1 dwelling unit per 3 acres.	-Agricultural -Single Family Detached -Planned Cluster Subdivisions -Public & Institutional Uses -Parks
<p>Areas designated as "Rural Residential/Agriculture" generally have limited access to infrastructure such as paved roads and connections to municipal utilities. Therefore the uses should be limited to existing agricultural and residential uses, new single-family homes located on lots greater than 3 acres and future parks and other uses where public utilities are not immediately necessary. Compact, cluster subdivisions, schools and other institutional uses are recommended as planned uses in areas that are served by city utilities. The cost to extend or improve utilities and roads should be shared by the developer and installed prior to occupancy of any new homes or buildings.</p>		
<b>Low-Density Residential</b>	Average minimum lot size no less than 10,000 SF. Paved roads and connections to city utilities required.	-Single Family Detached -Planned Cluster Subdivisions -Public & Institutional Uses -Parks
<p>Development in areas designated as "Low Density Residential" should have access to infrastructure such as paved roads and connections to municipal utilities. Low Density Residential areas are intended for subdivisions containing an average lot size of over 10,000 square feet. Areas designated as Low-density residential that do not have paved roads or proper utility connections should adhere to the Rural Residential categorical recommendations, until such time the necessary road and utility improvements area provided. Single-family attached dwellings (villas) and cluster homes are recommended as planned uses. Homeownership is encouraged.</p>		
<b>Medium-Density Residential</b>	No more than 7 dwelling units/acre on lots generally greater than 5,000 s.f.	-Single Family Detached -Single-Family Attached -Public & Institutional Uses -Parks
<p>Areas designated as "Medium-Density Residential" generally consist of existing single-family and attached single-family homes. The area is characterized by subdivisions containing lots between 5,000 and 10,000 square feet, a mix of residential styles served by municipal services and paved roads and driveways. New development should follow similar patterns of growth and be served by city sewer, water and residential streets that comply with the City's subdivision, roadway and storm water standards. Single-family attached dwellings (villas) and cluster homes are recommended as planned uses. Homeownership is encouraged.</p>		
<b>Multi-Family Residential</b>	No more than 10 dwelling units/acre.	-Duplex, permitted use. -Apartments -Zero Lot Line -Single Family Homes -Public & Institutional Uses -Parks
<p>Areas designated as "Multi-Family Residential" generally contain attached single-family homes and multifamily dwellings. Multi-family residential area should be served by municipal utilities and infrastructure including sewer connections and paved streets and parking surfaces. Any new use or major redevelopment of an existing multi-family structure should provide buffers between single family residential and non-residential uses and any improvements necessary to bring streets and other infrastructure into compliance with the City's standards. Single or unified ownership and perpetual control and maintenance of any multi-family structure and common use areas (parking, playgrounds, clubhouses, etc) are encouraged.</p>		



## Chapter 7: Future Land Use

City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

**Table: 7.1 Future Land Use Categories & Descriptions Con't.**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Density</b>	<b>Proposed Uses</b>
<b>Nodal Commercial</b>	Mixed-use is encouraged. Single tenant big box, truck stops and fuel-only filling stations are discouraged. Generally lots over 2 acres and buildings greater than 10,000 SF are envisioned.	-Mixed Uses -Limited Retail -Limited Commercial Service -Limited Office -Limited Medical -High Density Residential
<p>Nodal commercial areas are generally located at intersections of major roads as shown on the Future Land Use Map. Small-scale commercial uses, including limited retail, commercial services, office, daycare, financial services, dental or medical services, dry cleaning, food or drug sales, automobile oriented uses, postal/mailling services and any mix of the above uses are envisioned. Uses should serve a wide range of local and regional users, while being sensitive to the adjacent residential or rural uses—both existing and permitted. Developments containing drive-through lanes or outdoor storage should require a special use permit. Requirements addressing signage, parking, buffering, landscaping and the preservation of existing structures are recommended whenever proposed development adjoins existing development, residentially zoned areas or public use areas. Development with multi-story buildings may have increased density.</p>		
<b>Downtown</b>	FAR 1 to 2 – ( <i>determined on a case by case basis</i> )	-1st Floor Retail-Comm. Service -2nd Floor Residential/Office -Public and Institutional Uses -Parks
<p>The City's downtown should serve as a focal point for economic development and revitalization efforts. Multi-family residential dwellings, commercial service (tailors, barbers, salons, etc), specialty retail, small offices, parks and public/institutional uses are encouraged in the City's "Downtown" area. The scale and character of any development or redevelopment should be compatible with the surrounding uses. Detailed architectural plans should be required to ensure the historic character of the downtown is maintained. Density bonuses and waivers from the City's parking requirements and other restrictions are recommended to encourage redevelopment efforts. Public improvements, streetscape enhancements and other amenities may be required to mitigate any deviations from the City's parking and density standards.</p>		
<b>Commercial</b>	FAR for new uses .5 to 1 by-right and 1 to1 for planned developments.	-Commercial Service & Retail -Office -Medical -Mixed-Use -Parks & Institutional Uses
<p>Retail sales and services, medical, office, financial uses, restaurants, hotels, entertainment, convenience stores and automobile-oriented sales and services located along major commercial corridors are envisioned in the City's Commercial areas. Compact developments containing a horizontal and/or vertical mix of tenants and uses are encouraged. Big box developments, uses with drive-through accommodations and other uses that generate high volumes of traffic are recommended as planned or special uses. Commercial developments should have direct access to a major road(s). New commercial development should be concentrated along the City's existing commercial corridors along Westwood Boulevard and Highways PP, 60, 67 and 53. Access control, professional landscaping, buffering, and monument signage (in lieu of pole signage) is recommended to minimize traffic and/or other visual and physical land use impacts. Smaller, less intense commercial uses should be directed to the downtown area or encouraged to be tenants in an existing development.</p>		



## Chapter 7: Future Land Use

City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri

**Table: 7.1 Future Land Use Categories & Descriptions Con't.**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Density</b>	<b>Proposed Uses</b>
<b>Industrial</b>	Density should be determined on a case by case basis. All industrial uses should include buffering from less intense uses and public use areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Manufacturing / Assembly</li> <li>-Warehousing</li> <li>- Distribution</li> <li>- Outdoor Storage</li> <li>- Vehicle &amp; Equipment Sales</li> </ul>
<p>Areas designated as "Industrial" are intended for environmentally "clean" manufacturing and industrial operations, including warehousing, transportation and distribution related uses. All industrial uses should provide on-site buffering to screen outdoor storage areas and other operational impacts from any existing or proposed uses that are less intense, including any public use area or right-of-way. Building types include concrete, masonry and tilt-up buildings. Metal buildings should meet the design recommendations provided in this Chapter. Pole buildings should be prohibited. All uses that include the storage of inoperable automobiles, boats, RVs or other such inoperable equipment should contain sight proof screening, approved by the City. Any new use or extension of an existing use that requires the storage of inoperable vehicles or other inoperable equipment should be required only as a special use.</p>		
<b>Park/Open Space</b>	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Public and Private Parks</li> <li>-Trails</li> <li>-Greenways</li> <li>-Community gathering areas</li> <li>-Play fields &amp; other active and passive recreational areas</li> </ul>
<p>Park/Open Space uses are allowed in all of the designated future land use categories. Uses include active and passive public parks, open space and recreational areas. Watershed areas and other environmental corridors shown on the Future Land Use Map and Parks &amp; Greenway map are designated for future greenbelts, trails and environmental corridors. These areas should be designed to serve as natural corridors for the area's wildlife and passive and active trail connections to other park, natural areas, neighborhoods, schools and other destinations. All areas containing public improvements should provide public access, pursuant to ADA standards. FEMA designated floodplain areas, wetlands, drainage areas and other sensitive environmental areas have been designated as Park/Open Space on the Future Land Use Plan. These areas should be preserved for park/open space for the purposes of creating a linear greenway system that connects to the City's parks and other destination centers.</p>		
<b>Public/Institutional</b>	As determined on a case-by-case basis and depending on the level of compatibility with surrounding zones and uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Schools</li> <li>-Churches</li> <li>-Libraries</li> <li>-Government Facilities</li> </ul>
<p>Public/Institutional uses should be allowed in all future land use categories, subject to City approval, provided the applicable zoning and design criteria are met for each use. All public and quasi-public uses and facilities should provide access to arterials, public transportation and served by municipal utilities.</p>		

### Future Land Use Plan

The following section provides background for each of the future residential land use categories and recommendations for implementing the Future Land Use Plan.



### **RURAL RESIDENTIAL / AGRICULTURE LAND USE**

Rural residential areas are characterized by single-family dwellings on large lots and farming operations. A density of one (1) dwelling unit per three (3) acres is considered low density. Generally, the areas anticipated for future rural residential development are at the fringe of the City's present limits or outside the City's present limits. The City should annex any areas that might be developed in the near future to ensure greater control of the timing, density and type of development.

The areas designated as Rural Residential/Agriculture on the *Future Land Use Map* should be limited to existing agriculture uses or agriculturally related uses, single-family detached residential dwellings, parks and institutions. No multiple-family development is recommended. All proposed residential development that is not served by city sewer or water should provide at least three (3) acres per house lot. Areas served by publicly provided sewer and water may be developed at a higher density pursuant to the principals of conservation subdivision design provided in this Plan. Conservation subdivisions are recommended as a tool to help preserve sensitive natural areas, reinforce the area's agrarian culture and small-town atmosphere and protect the area's agricultural lands, which are the most productive in the region.

### **LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL LAND USE**

Low density single family residential areas are characterized by single-family detached dwellings with an average lot size of 10,000 square foot or approximately four (4) dwellings per acre. Areas designated as low density residential are located adjacent to existing low-density residential areas and at the fringe of the City's present limits. Low-Density Residential areas should be limited to single-family detached residential dwellings, parks and institutions. No multiple-family development is recommended. All proposed residential development that is not served by city sewer or water should provide at least three (3) acres per house lot. Conservation subdivisions are recommended as a tool to help preserve sensitive natural areas, reinforce the area's agrarian culture and small-town atmosphere and protect the area's agricultural lands, which are the most productive in the region.

### **MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL LAND USE**

Medium density single family residential areas are characterized by single-family detached dwellings with some attached and multiple family dwellings developed at densities of four-to-seven (4-7) units per acre. Future "Medium-Density Residential" development should include subdivisions with lots that are generally no less than 5,000 square feet and no more than 10,000 square feet and in keeping with the character and densities of the surrounding neighborhoods. No multiple-family development, other than attached single-family dwellings (duplexes and villas), are recommended in the areas designated for medium density single family residential use, except as approved as a planned development.

The locations designated for future Medium-Density Residential development are north and west of the downtown and extending to the city limits and beyond. Most large-scale medium density residential development is anticipated in the southwest city limits and land just outside the City's southwestern limits where land is generally flat, plentiful and accessible. Much of the areas designated as Medium-Density Residential on the *Future Land Use Map* are already developed or built-out. Therefore, most future development activity will be in the form of in-fill, tear-down or redevelopment projects. All in-fill and redevelopment proposals should be consistent with the surrounding residential neighborhood and blend harmoniously with the



surrounding land uses with regard to general character, density, structure height, and bulk requirements. In-fill densities should be limited to not more than 125% of the average density of the surrounding residential development(s). All proposed Medium-Density Residential development should comply with the future residential design and compatibility standards contained herein.

### **MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL LAND USE**

Multi-family residential areas are characterized by single-family attached or multifamily dwellings at densities greater than seven (7) units per acre. The "High-Density Residential" Future Land Use Category is proposed for several relatively small areas that are either already zoned or developed as multi-family or viewed as transitional. Transitional refers to single-family residential areas that have been converted to two or more family units and adjacent to commercial or higher density residential areas that are typically suitable for higher density residential development than is allowed by the present zoning. These areas are recommended for a planned and coordinated mixture of single and multiple-family residential types that are compatible with the nearby residential neighborhoods. Developments in these areas should, at its perimeter, represent the adjoining neighborhood's average densities transitioning to smaller lot sizes and/or higher densities in the interior of the proposed development. Any future development, redevelopment or in-fill development in these areas should be consistent with the character of the surrounding residential neighborhoods and blend with the surrounding land uses with regard to architectural character, density, structure height and bulk requirements. In-fill densities should be limited to the average density of the existing adjacent densities. All future high-density residential development shall have direct access to a major road and follow the residential design guidelines contained herein. It is recommended that a new planned residential district be created to govern high-density residential and mixed use redevelopment and infill activity.

### **NODAL COMMERCIAL LAND USE**

Nodes are places where commercial activity is concentrated at intersections of major roads. Business owners tend to prefer locating at intersections or nodes due to their ease of access and high visibility. The commercial concentration at the intersection of Highway PP and Westwood Boulevard is a good example of an exiting commercial nodal opportunity area. Commercial nodal development is recommended at most intersections of two or more major roads. All future nodal development should include public right-of-way improvements necessary for safe, convenient vehicular and pedestrian accessibility. Compact, mixed-use development is the preferred land use in the designated nodal development areas.

New, smaller scale commercial, office and retail development is recommended along existing and future intersection(s) along Highway 60. Nodal commercial development in these areas and other areas that can serve dispersed residential neighborhoods is recommended. This increases the convenience, choice and competition within the marketplace by dispersing commercial services throughout the city. Nodal development may include a wide range of light (not exceeding 10,000sf) retail and office uses in newly developing districts as well as redeveloping areas within the city's core. Development may consist of single, stand alone uses or multi-tenant developments containing a mixture of horizontal and vertical uses. Generally, ground floor uses should be limited to retail, hospitality and commercial service type uses and the upper stories reserved for office and residential uses, with residential on the upper floors.



Future Commercial Nodal opportunity areas are labeled “Neighborhood Commercial” on the *Future Land Use Map*.

### COMMERCIAL LAND USE

Areas designated as Commercial include Poplar Bluff’s existing retail and commercial areas which consist primary of strip centers and stand alone buildings. Over the last 60 years, commercial development has occurred along the City’s most traveled roadways, resulting in commercial corridors. This continues today as virtually all of Poplar Bluff’s major businesses have highway frontage. Unlike the early commercial structures in downtown Poplar Bluff, today’s commercial buildings are predominantly large, single story structures with large parking areas in front. As a result, Poplar Bluff’s commercial areas, such as along Westwood Boulevard, consists of single-story retail strip centers and stand-alone mercantile structures. Some of the city’s commercial areas have suffered from years of disinvestment and are becoming underutilized. Visually, these areas lack architectural integrity and appear cluttered. Many of these properties suffer from vacancy and high turn-over rates which further diminish their vitality and character. While there are many exceptions, overall, the City’s existing commercial corridors are in need of beautification and in some cases redevelopment. The challenge faced by the City of Poplar Bluff is finding the balance between investing in new development or reinvesting in what is already there. To remain competitive with other cities in the region, Poplar Bluff must allow and encourage improvements to its existing commercial districts. The future economic stability of Poplar Bluff will rely on the revitalization of these existing commercial districts along with new commercial development along Highway PP and future commercial development and annexation of the City’s key commercial nodal opportunity areas.

Most of the recent commercial development activity in Poplar Bluff has occurred along Highway PP. The City should continue to support well-planned commercial development along Highway PP. This plan recommends making Highway PP the City’s “premier” commercial corridor and a regional destination for shopping, entertainment and hospitality. Among the future land use recommendations that received the most support from the community was the development of a regional commercial center, such as a lifestyle center or mall along Highway PP. Therefore, any future land uses or development types that support this recommendation should be directed to the Highway PP corridor. Recommended land uses include retail, financial, big-box stores, commercial services, medial, financial, hospitality and any combination thereof. Mixed-use development is recommended along the State Highway PP and as a redevelopment option along Westwood Boulevard. The synergistic mixture of like uses increases the frequency and duration of consumer visits. Clustering uses together also increases the convenience and walkability of the City’s commercial districts and decreases the average VMT (vehicles miles traveled) per family or consumer.



### **Downtown**

The area designated as “Downtown” is the City’s original historic central business district and consists of a wide array of commercial, civic and residential uses. Poplar Bluff’s historic downtown is in need of revitalization. Over the years many of the businesses and residents have abandoned the city’s urban core, leaving vacant buildings behind and accelerating the depreciation of the city’s once vibrant downtown and historic neighborhoods. However, these same vacant buildings & homes also provide opportunities for future adaptive reuse and revitalization efforts. Many of the older, large homes have already been converted to apartments or businesses. While this Plan supports these efforts, careful planning is needed to mitigate the negative effects of these conversions, such as incompatible land uses, increased density, increased traffic and over-crowding that may detract from the character and quality of life of the community.

The character of the city’s downtown and historic building stock cannot be duplicated. Downtown Poplar Bluff is authentic; it houses the city’s historic structures that front brick streets and tell the story of Poplar Bluff’s past. Today, there is a strong resurgence of baby-boomers moving back to the downtown areas. This plan envisions downtown Poplar Bluff as an area to attract new housing types and reestablishing it as the cultural, entertainment, recreation and hospitality center of the City and the region.

### **INDUSTRIAL**

The future industrial use category includes a range of industrial uses from warehousing to heavy manufacturing and including office warehouse, contractor yards, motor vehicle repair, wholesale uses and business parks. In addition to the recommendations stated in the Future Land Use Matrix, the following items should be addressed prior to the approval of any new or expanded industrial use:

1. Building types should include concrete, masonry and tilt-up buildings. Pole buildings should be prohibited.
2. Buildings should avoid long, monotonous, uninterrupted walls or roof planes on any building face visible from adjacent uses or public right of ways. Metal buildings should contain architectural features such as textured/masonry/stucco surfaces, accents and fenestration such as windows, doors and other offsets or other breaks in the wall or roof planes.
3. All uses that include the storage of inoperable automobiles and other equipment should contain sight proof screening, approved by the City.
4. Any new use or extension of an existing use that requires the storage of inoperable vehicles or other inoperable equipment should be required only as a planned use.

### **PARKS AND RECREATION**

The City’s park system should include trails, linear parks, community parks, neighborhood parks and regional parks that meet the needs of all residents. The City must continually look at opportunities to purchase property adjacent to existing parks and property for new parks in areas that are presently not located near a park or public use area. Along with the expansion of existing park and development of new parks, the city must continue to maintain and enhance existing parks. Improving pavilions, benches and other equipment in the City’s existing parks and providing new pavilions and equipment in parks that currently do not have pavilions, etc. is



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recommended. In addition, the City should develop and sponsor more recreational activities for teens and young adults. Sports oriented activities such as bowling, skating, racket sports and a youth center were all highly-ranked park and recreation activities recommended during the public engagement process. Providing a greater range of activities, including concession stands and vending machines at select parks is also recommended.

Parks should utilize the opportunity to connect to each other, primarily through the development of a greenway system. The greenway system should include trails, trailheads, nature areas, and be designed to help control flooding. Parks, recreation and greenway should be viewed as a community-wide responsibility rather than the sole responsibility of the City. While the Future Land Use Plan depicts several areas for future park/open space, property owners should not be expected to contribute property to public park/open space without fair compensation or the ability to develop the property according to the surrounding future land use categories. If more than one future land use category exists- the less intense land use category shall apply. Generally the areas designated for future parks/open space are located within a floodplain or other environmentally sensitive areas, therefore not suited for future development.

Many funding organizations prefer public-private and multi-jurisdictional partnerships when considering grant allocations for the development or improvement of parks and greenways. Poplar Bluff should investigate the establishment of partnerships with other public and private sector providers of recreation. The City should partner with the local school district, Three Rivers Community College, the Chamber, local churches, Butler County, local businesses and statewide agencies such as the Missouri Department of Conservation to help procure funding and implementation support for future park and recreation improvements. Additional Park and Open Space recommendations and implementation strategies include:

1. A river trail following the Black River and its tributaries is recommended. The trail should include strategically placed trailheads and connections with other trails and destinations. At least one water-themed trailhead is recommended in the Downtown area with a spray-play park/fountains or similar water feature. Information kiosks, parking areas and park amenities, such as age-appropriate play equipment, fitness trails and landscaping are recommended to increase the utilization and enhance the overall park/trail experience.
2. Three (3) new parks are recommended, they are shown on the Future Land Use Map in the following general locations; along the Black River, specifically north of the Downtown and in the southwestern and northern portion of the City.
3. A skate park and other "themed" parks should be considered in future park expansion plans following the completion of an integrated public survey or other community input designed to gauge support for such improvements.
4. Trails should be provided to connect the City's parks, schools, neighborhoods and other destinations and to reduce the reliance on automobile use.
5. Recreational trails should be provided in the City's parks to encourage outdoor recreation and strengthening connections between people.
6. Future park improvements should be focused in the city's older, inner city parks. Recent park improvements have occurred in parks located in the fringes.



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7. New development should provide parks or payment in-lieu of parks to ensure a balanced supply of parks and recreation activities for all.
8. The City should develop a Poplar Bluff Events Committee to create and implement ongoing special activities and community events that bring people together and promote active lifestyles.
9. Additional parking should be provided at McLane Park.

### **INSTITUTIONAL**

The Institutional Land Use category includes governmental and quasi-public uses and places of assembly—such as churches. All public facilities and places of assembly should have direct access to a major roadway and employ the use of alternate access roadways. Institutional uses should be permitted in most future land use categories, subject to site plan review and compliance with the applicable zoning and design regulations. If an institutional land use stops being used as an institutional use, the future land use category should revert to the adjacent future land use classification. In the event there are two adjoining uses, the most restrictive use should apply. The following institutional and public improvements are recommended;

1. Revitalize city hall or develop a new city hall facility in its present location or somewhere else in the downtown area.
2. Install a new water tank north and east of the existing Bypass and Highway PP.
3. Develop a future infrastructure plan to extend utilities in the city's anticipated annexation areas and develop an ordinance that requires developers to share in the cost of related roads, utilities and other infrastructure costs.
4. Continue improving emergency preparedness/first responder plans relating to homeland security and natural disasters relating to the New Madrid Fault / Earthquake and other acts of God.
5. Promote, expand and continue to improve the Three Rivers Community College.
6. Develop strategies to increase the utilization and generate more revenue at the Coliseum and all other City-owned park & recreation facilities and community events. Develop a plan to finance ongoing, escalating maintenance costs of the Black River Coliseum.
7. Provide more ongoing educational opportunities to better position the City's workforce for the new job market and quality, salaried jobs.



### Future Land Use Implementation Strategies

Despite Poplar Bluff's modest population over the last two decennial censuses, growth is inevitable. The US Census Bureau forecasts that between 2003 and 2025 the United States will grow by 58 million people, roughly 2.75-3 million a year. As demonstrated in the 2000 census findings, Missourians' appetite for open country living will continue to steer development in areas that are previously undeveloped, aka Greenfields. Greenfields are characterized by low density areas located outside the city's urban limits and often including significant natural and agricultural resources. We estimate that a majority of Poplar Bluff's future growth will occur as Greenfield development. However, redevelopment, adaptive reuse and infill development plays a critical role in the stabilization and revitalization of the City's urban core.

The following sections provide adaptive reuse, redevelopment, infill and Greenfield development strategies. By implementing these strategies and avoiding low-density single-family subdivisions and strip centers that lack connectivity, usable open space and the efficient use of infrastructure, the City of Poplar Bluff can grow responsibly while maintaining its small town atmosphere and hometown family values. The following sections provide the recommended future land use strategies, in order of importance. Promoting Downtown Revitalization and Adaptive Reuse are the most preferred growth option.

#### **DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION & ADAPTIVE REUSE**

Downtown Poplar Bluff has undergone many revitalization projects over the years. The most recent improvements included the construction of the Black River Coliseum, the Harwell Art Museum, expansion of the library facilities and renovations to the St. Louis-San Francisco depot. These improvements are critical in increasing the confidence to invest in the downtown and bringing life and vitality to the streets and establishments of the City's downtown. The City must work to eliminate barriers, perceived or real, that might slow or deter the redevelopment process and to ensure ongoing successful revitalization efforts. Grants and technical assistance should be sought through programs such as the DREAM Initiative and the Missouri Main Street program.

#### **Adaptive Reuse & Revitalization Recommendations**

1. Market downtown Poplar Bluff as the premier location for new housing types and as the cultural, entertainment, recreational and hospitality center of the region.
2. Promote the adaptive reuse and revitalization of the city's older buildings and homes, specifically those located in the Historic Downtown and urban core.
3. Evaluate past adaptive reuse projects and other land use conversions to evaluate the most effective approaches for the future and avoid duplicating past mistakes.
4. Track down the ownership of dilapidated buildings and facilitate steps toward code compliance and reinvestment to reverse depreciation. Help procure funding in the form of grants or tax credits to help fund the adaptive reuse or revitalization of historic or architecturally significant structures or sites.
5. Develop zoning procedures and development incentives to encourage horizontal and vertical mixed-use revitalization efforts and redevelopment and permit mixed use, including lofts, live-work units and relief from parking requirements. One recommended strategy for implementation is the development of a historic downtown overlay district.



6. The City should create a walkable, outdoor shopping district Downtown with integrated shops, entertainment and restaurants offering unique, high quality merchandise, al-fresco dining (roof-top & sidewalk), cultural attractions, art galleries and annual street festivals and entertainment.
7. Eliminate one-way streets unless a certified traffic engineer deems a one-way restricted street is mandatory for the health, safety and welfare of the community.
8. Develop connections, visual and physical, to the Black River, Black River Coliseum and Three Rivers Community College.
9. Conduct a parking study in the downtown to determine any shortages or surpluses of parking.

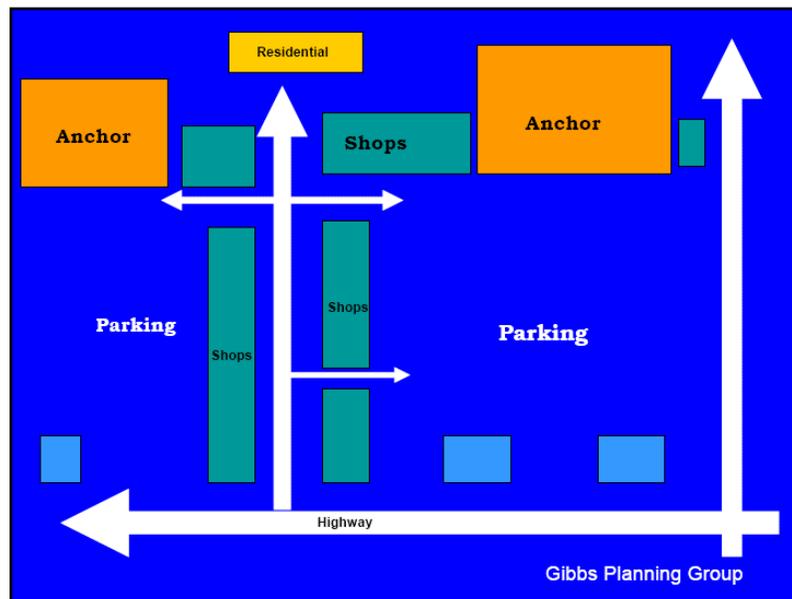
### COMMERCIAL REDEVELOPMENT AND INFILL

Today there is an estimated 5 billion square feet of retail space, 500 million of which is vacant. Meanwhile, retail space per capita continues to climb. A 2004 study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers, the world's largest professional services organization, found that "20-30% of retail is redundant" and characterized the nation's retail sector as being "under-demolished". Poplar Bluff is no exception. The success and dominance of certain big-box retailers cannibalizes all competing retailers leaving behind a patchwork of vacant stores. Revitalizing these vacant stores and redeveloping the city's existing commercial districts with market-driven infill will increase the confidence to invest and slow property depreciation.

Older commercial strip centers built during the last thirty (30) years followed inefficient land use practices. For example, parking areas in most of the commercial areas, excluding downtowns, have been overbuilt. Local ordinances required parking capacities that were far in excess of what was needed on a day-to-day basis. This plan views the city's large, empty parking lots as a form of land-banking. These "land reserves" provide access to existing infrastructure, employment centers, schools, institutions and roads all within walking distance to many of the city's existing neighborhoods and shopping districts. This plan recommends developing these prime commercial areas as infill

development that blends-in or enhances the existing development. Figure 7.1 shows how shops and building fronting the "highway" can be added in empty parking lots of existing shopping centers to increase utilization and improve on-site circulation.

Figure 7.1- Commercial Infill Strategies





The introduction of synergistic land uses such as cafes, coffee houses, retail and financial institutions can interject new life into these aging, underutilized commercial centers. Permitting underutilized parking areas to be used as strategic commercial infill sites offer property owners the opportunity to procure more return on their investment. The new development also attracts and retains more consumers, creating a spontaneous marketplace where visitors park once and patronize multiple businesses. However, oftentimes the years of disinvestment combined with the ever changing retail and commercial markets make these older buildings and commercial centers unsuitable for rehabilitation. When rehabilitation is deemed too costly or impractical, redevelopment is recommended.

### **Recommendations for Infill, Tear Down & Redevelopment Sites**

1. A blight study is recommended to help identify blighted commercial areas and to initiate redevelopment efforts and reinvestment.
2. Expedite the demolition process for buildings that cannot be feasibly brought into code compliance, are not historic or architecturally significant in accordance with the blight study referenced above, and as needed to protect the integrity of the downtown and other aging commercial areas.
3. The City's zoning code should be reviewed and updated to encourage/incentivize compact, mixed-use development on existing infill lots and regulate undesirable land use conditions.
4. Replace or retrofit old commercial structures by making them more energy efficient and compatible with the latest market trends and choices.
5. Promote the utilization of underutilized parking areas as commercial infill sites that compliments the existing commercial tenants, increase property values and generate more tax revenues.
6. Updated the city's parking regulations to better respond to the latest land use trends. For example, the latest trend in retail development is to relax or eliminate parking requirements and let the market dictate the most appropriate parking configuration.

### **FUTURE RESIDENTIAL IN-FILL DEVELOPMENT**

The City's present housing stock does not provide the variety needed to meet current and anticipated future housing needs. This was confirmed by the public engagement results. Further analysis of the city's housing stock discovered that the higher density housing types, such as small lot detached single family dwellings, attached single-family villas, condominiums, and townhouses are in short supply. Meanwhile these higher density housing types are frequently preferred by young families, singles and seniors-who make up the majority of the city's homeowners. As the average age of the head of household increases, the ability or desire to maintain large properties decreases, resulting in less demand for larger homes. Therefore, as the City's population ages, the demand for housing types suitable to the city's aging population will increase. As a result, the demand for maintenance-free living coupled with the limited income levels in the region indicates an increase in the market demand for low-maintenance, high-quality dwelling types that are modestly priced.



The only remaining residential growth opportunities within the city's current boundaries is the redevelopment of existing sites and the occasional vacant or underutilized site that has escaped previous development. The *Future Land Use Map* shows higher density residential development at locations north and south of downtown as a redevelopment option for sites that are already zoned multi-family. The construction of mixed-use developments within the City's commercial areas will also allow for some new, moderately priced, housing types not currently available in Poplar Bluff.

The preservation of existing neighborhoods is a critical goal of this plan; therefore, infill development must be carefully planned and designed to blend with surrounding neighborhoods. Well planned residential infill development will allow the City to increase the number of housing units without radically changing the character of the neighborhoods, provided the following development guidelines are followed and any anticipated negative land use externalities such as traffic, noise, glare or light are mitigated.

### **Recommendations for Infill, Tear Down & Redevelopment Sites**

The following guidelines should be following to increase the compatibility of future infill, tear down and redevelopment activity.

1. Unless identified otherwise on the Future land Use Map, areas that are presently being used for residential purposes should remain residential.
2. Encourage higher density residential redevelopment and infill north and south of downtown.
3. All development should blend well with the existing built and natural environment. For example, when developing in or adjacent to established neighborhoods containing larger lots than those proposed, the proposed lot sizes should best represent the existing neighborhood lot sizes and densities adjacent to the development and transition to smaller lot sizes and/or densities within the interior of the proposed subdivision. Allowing an increase in density for infill development helps off-set the cost of development and compensate for added site features or other amenities.
4. When an infill or redevelopment site is located within 50 feet of a site with an existing dwelling structure, and fronts on the same street, a front yard setback that is within 5 feet of the setback of the established dwelling structure should be used. For example, if an existing dwelling structure has a front yard setback of 20 feet, then the new building should have a front yard setback between 15 and 25 feet. If there is more than one dwelling structure fronting on the same street within 50' of the site, then an average measurement should be taken of the setbacks of the impacted dwelling structures.
5. Relate the size (bulk) and proportions of new structures to the scale of adjacent buildings. Avoid buildings that violate the existing scale of the area in height, width, or massing, see Figure 7.2.



Figure 7.2



Illustration Courteously of the City of Ashland, OR Site, Design and use Standards

6. Break up uninteresting boxlike forms into smaller, varied masses. Avoid single monolithic forms that are not relieved by variations in massing and architecture similar to the techniques utilized with adjoining structures.

Figure 7.3



Illustration Courteously of the City of Ashland, OR Site, Design and use Standards

7. Avoid roof shapes, directional orientation, pitches, or materials that would cause the building to be out of character with quality buildings in the area.

Figure 7.4

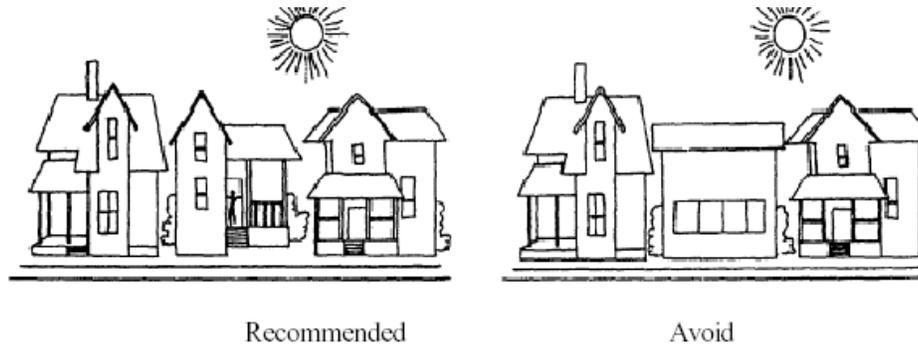


Illustration Courteously of the City of Ashland, OR Site, Design and use Standards



### GREENFIELD DEVELOPMENT

While adaptive reuse, redevelopment and infill development are the preferred development alternatives, the city cannot rely solely on them to accommodate future growth and the latest development trends. There are not enough in-fill sites available to make infill the only viable growth strategy. Additional factors that may limit adaptive reuse and infill include;

- The infrastructure within the City's urban core areas is too small or in some cases too old to serve the functional capacity of most large-scale new development, and the necessary infrastructure upgrades are typically cost-prohibitive.
- Land assembly within the city's inner core typically involves many different landowners (many with different interests) making it very difficult, costly and time consuming to obtain unified ownership.
- The cost of land and construction within the city's core is much higher compared to the land and construction costs outside the city's core.
- The NIMBY sentiments from residents will generally prohibit or at least prolong the approval process necessary for any large-scale infill development within an established area.

Due to these constraints, infill development is limited to small-scale redevelopment and adaptive reuse of single lots or clusters of adjacent lots under single ownership. In light of these infill development constraints, Greenfield development becomes the more practical, affordable and achievable solution when contemplating large-scale development options.

The first step in the Greenfield development process is deciding where to build and where not to build. During the public engagement process, the participants identified connecting the City's parks via a system of greenways and trails as a priority. Therefore, this Plan recommends preserving watersheds, greenbelts and other natural features to help implement the recommended greenway system. The City should take a proactive approach to preserve sensitive natural areas such as riparian zones, wetlands and significant woodlands. These areas provide irreplaceable environmental benefits, such as erosion control and habitat protection. Increasing environmental regulations, combined with the recommended greenway and open space requirements will result in mixed-use development that is more vertical, compact and walkable than conventional land consumptive conventional subdivisions.

Land preservation efforts must take place before development occurs to make sure sufficient green space is preserved. Protecting and restoring the natural features in and around Poplar Bluff should not be viewed solely as an amenity, but a necessity, just like a utility or other public infrastructure. Identifying the green infrastructure first will make identifying the "hard" infrastructure, such as roads and utilities much easier. Therefore, the first step in achieving sprawl-free Greenfield development is to identify both ecologically sensitive land and land suitable for development.

The next step is to begin meeting with developers and landowners to inform them of the City's future land use plans and desired preservation areas. Keeping all parties informed of the development process and forming partnerships among the development players will increase the level of predictability within the development process.



### Greenfield Development Recommendations

1. The City should takes steps to acquire or preserve areas designated as future greenways or environmentally sensitive areas, first by annexing the areas into the City then by preserving the areas in perpetuity by establishing a conservation easement, land trust or through deed restrictions. Preservation efforts should take place before development occurs. Refer to the Future Parks and Greenway map to identify preferred environmental corridors. Preference should be given to greenbelts that connect to the city's parks and other destination centers and provide habitat corridors that connect to larger wildlife areas.
2. All future development should follow the principals of smart growth, which include:
  - a. Compact, multi-use development
  - b. Open space conservation
  - c. Expanded mobility
  - d. Enhanced livability
  - e. Efficient management and expansion of infrastructure, and
  - f. Funneling infill, redevelopment and adaptive use in areas already built-up when possible.
3. The City should form partnerships with the local landowners and developers and keep appraised of the latest development proposals and development trends.
4. Development should have adequate access to the City's existing road network.
5. All new development shall provide a high level of accessibility and connectivity. Cul-de-sacs should be minimized and all future development shall provide connections to existing and anticipated developments. All new development shall be accessed from a fully improved, dust-free right-of-way built to city standards and providing connections to a major arterial roadway.
6. New housing shall provide a variety of choices to the homebuyer. The city's housing stock needs to provide housing options for all stages of the life cycle, from first-time home-buyers to assisted care facilities.
7. The development footprint should be reduced to the extent possible to avoid disturbing natural water courses, ponds, wetlands, steep slopes, wooded areas, rock outcrops, view sheds (both urban and natural) and other significant natural and manmade features. The developer should utilize development approaches such as the principles of low impact development (LID) including but not limited to clustering, site feature





preservation, innovative use of stormwater management techniques, vegetation preservation, etc.

8. The city should adopt development standards for all new commercial and high-density development. Well-planned development requires careful attention to details, from the design of the streets to the form and appearance of a building.
9. The City should encourage higher density housing alternatives in new residential development areas that provide better affordability and efficiency. The use of small housing clusters, common areas, natural landscaping and thoughtful site selection and neighborhood design can make higher density residential areas more livable and help reinforce the perception of spaciousness.

### **REGIONAL SHOPPING & ENTERTAINMENT**

There is strong public interest to increase the selection and quality of retail and entertainment opportunities within the city. Construction of a regional shopping mall was identified as the recommended solution during the community engagement activities. Two (2) basic options have emerged in the development of regional retail centers; big box strip centers and mixed-use centers.

#### **Big Box Centers**

Big box centers contain several large retail stores as anchors along with a variety of smaller supporting services and shops. These centers are characterized by their large parking areas and monotonous, box-like buildings-the origin of their namesake. The distance between shop entrances and parking is vast, violating the pedestrian scale and decreasing walkability. Due to the overall scale, brightly lit parking areas and high traffic, big box commercial centers are not compatible with residential land uses and most commercial uses. Additionally, big box centers are often plagued by vacancies as the volatile retail industry is susceptible to high levels of turnover. Finding compatible replacement tenants for large spaces, oftentimes exceeding 100,000 square feet, is very difficult. When one tenant vacates, a huge dead zone is created that negatively impacts the entire center. If the space is not leased by desired tenants, second and third rate tenants will eventually move in, paying reduced lease rates and selling questionable merchandise and services.

Despite the above analysis, conventional big-box development has and will continue to succeed in most markets. However, the construction of new big-box retail centers have slowed as market demands shift. Changing consumer tastes, boredom with redundant formats, and time constrained lifestyles has sent shopping center developers searching for new formats. The pressure for innovation in the retail market has never been higher as consumer's demand for something different reaches unprecedented levels.

#### **Mixed-Use**

Today, the enclosed malls first introduced in the 1950 are being converted or replaced with open air, outward facing malls that are designed for the pedestrian, rather than automobile. The latest trend in the retail market is a new form of a "mixed-use mall" that builds upon the strength and diversity of a downtown or historic Main Street. These main-street malls are sometimes referred to as "town centers" for this reason. Town centers typically include residential dwellings, which bring "life" to the center and fashion-oriented boutique stores which give the



center “style”. Therefore, town centers are also referred to as “lifestyle centers”. These two terms are used interchangeably in the Plan.

Lifestyle Centers are not just retail destinations. They provide a festival marketplace that includes entertainment, alfresco dining, unique shopping experiences, creative window displays as well as casual public settings that encourage civic-oriented activities such as meeting, mingling, strolling, exercising and people watching. Town Center designers have learned that the shops alone do not bring back repeat visitors. A successful town center needs quality public spaces that relate to an identifiable architectural theme and interactive storefronts that reinforce the human scale.

Through good design and thoughtful tenant selection, mixed use developments can successfully integrate a wide range of land uses. The goal is to allow visitors to become citizens again and not feel like consumers, which in turn increases the length of visits to the site and the number of visits. Non-retail activities bring life to shopping districts around the clock and increases public accessibility, creating a spontaneous marketplace. This results in a development wherein the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The synergies created between complimentary tenants, well-planned site amenities and pedestrian activity can create a sense of place that visitors want to experience again and again. As a result, mixed use developments have become very successful and are gaining considerable popularity.

A lifestyle center or similar mixed-use center is recommended for Poplar Bluff. A lifestyle center would provide the retail and entertainment choices and opportunities desired by the community. It would also provide a centralized meeting place that encourages both chance encounters among residents as well as planned social engagements of all types and sizes. Lifestyle centers provide a diversity of shops and activities that compliment, rather than compete with, downtown businesses and big box retailers. A successful lifestyle center will increase the city’s share of the regional retail spending attracting consumers from a larger geographic region and limiting the need for local residents to travel outside the city for retail goods and services. The commercial corridor along Highway PP is the most suitable location for a future Town Center. The key to successful mixed land use planning is connectivity, compatible design and synergistic land uses located in a compact, integrated setting that adheres to the following design elements:

1. Design to the human scale and maintaining a traditional town center atmosphere throughout.
2. Balance the needs of retailers/consumers and civic facilities/citizens in an integrated unifying setting.
3. Buildings on the edge must provide a smooth transition with the surrounding uses.
4. Architectural design must maintain a high level of visual interest.
5. Buildings should be pulled close to the street to accommodate pedestrians by providing easy access, window displays and shelter. Incorporate architecture and building technology that allows the outdoor areas of the town center to adapt to the local climate and seasonal changes.
6. Awnings, stoops, balconies and porches should be used to establish a connection between indoor and outdoor space.



7. Provide outdoor amenities such as public art, benches, fountains, dramatic lighting, the use of crepe myrtles and other festive landscaping, banners and ornamentation.
8. Include a combination of sit-down restaurants and outdoor vendors. Restaurants create excellent land use synergies with retail as they comfort consumers, provide spontaneous meeting places and prolong consumer stays.

### Outdoor Recreation Sales and Services

One area the project team felt was a missed opportunity in the Poplar Bluff area is outdoor retail and services. The *Outdoor Industry Association* reports that outdoor recreation generates \$289 billion annually in retail sales and services. In 2006, Cabala's, (the #2 outdoor retailer based on sales) and Bass Pro (#3) generated over \$4.18 billion in combined sales (\$2.1 billion and \$2.08 respectively). Wal-Mart, the undisputed retail sales leader, is also the #1 outdoor recreation sales leader by a long shot. According to the company, of their \$345 billion annual sales, roughly 5%, or \$17.2 billion, comes from sporting goods.

Therefore, it comes as no surprise that most of the area's sporting goods and outdoor recreation sales pass through Poplar Bluff's Wal-Mart. This makes it very difficult for a major outdoor outfitter to penetrate the outdoor recreation market in southeast Missouri. Additionally, the major outdoor outfitters already have locations in Springfield, Branson, Columbia and St. Louis. The steady increase in direct sales, both catalog and internet, also continue to absorb more and more of the outdoor recreation market. According to *Outdoor Business'* November 2007 Industry Report, Backcountry.com generated \$82 million in direct sales and has been generating a 50% increase in sales each year for past five years, making it one of the biggest growth stores in the outdoor industry this decade. While top outdoor industry giants and the direct sales are driving industry sales volumes, independent outdoor retailers play a significant role in sustaining the outdoor recreation market.

According to the *Outdoor Industry Association*, "Specialty stores are where products first hit the market, where introductions are critically important to new trends, and where people who are established users can have a strong conversation in the store about the kinds of products they need..." As competition from national retailers and the internet continues to increase, many independent specialty retailers have learned not only to survive, but to thrive. Independent, specialty retailers are a core part of the market that is driving product innovation. Specialty retailers can fill market niches to the Poplar Bluff area that are presently not being met. Therefore, this Plan recommends focusing economic development resources on attracting independent, specialty outdoor retailers to the area that offer the following opportunities:

1. Provide a retail experience that can't be delivered in a big box environment.
2. Offer localized services, brands and knowledge of outdoor recreation, hunting and fishing specific to southwest Missouri and its abundant outdoor recreation resources.
3. Provide customers with more product and localized outdoor recreation information via editorial reviews, chat rooms, workshops and gear guides.
4. Host annual events that draw outdoor recreation consumers from throughout the region to test the latest equipment and meet the "pros" and other celebrity outdoor advocates and accomplished sportsmen. The World Duck Calling Contest in Stuttgart, Arkansas is a good example of such an event.



5. Create a natural history museum showcasing taxidermy mounts native to the area and/or indoor water features displaying fish species that are indigenous to the area, similar to those found at the major outdoor retailers. Locate the museum in the City's downtown.
6. Provide in-store demonstrations showcasing the latest outdoor recreation products.
7. Host outdoor education workshops, safety instructions, cooking clinics and skill competitions for all ages.
8. Promote local outdoor recreation service providers such as guides, canoe liveries, cycle clubs, environmental groups, etc.
9. Organize activities and tours of the area's signature natural areas to promote outdoor education, active lifestyles and environmental stewardship.
10. Utilize grants to help promote outdoor education, environmental awareness and active lifestyles.

A good example of the recommended independent/specialty retailer is Grizzly Jig Co. Grizzly Jig is an independent manufacturer and retailer of specialized fishing equipment and supplies located in downtown Caruthersville, MO. Grizzly Jig attracts anglers and sportsman from all over the nation to the City's downtown as they stock up on supplies specially designed to fish the unique conditions of nearby Reelfoot Lake. Grizzly Jig has helped revitalize downtown Caruthersville and in the process has become the self-proclaimed "Nation's #1 Crappie Store". The City of Poplar Bluff offers similar opportunities.

### **HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD STABILITY**

The "traditional household" has changed dramatically over the last 20 years. Today only 25% of homebuyers are the traditional two parent/two child household. This change in household demographics requires a diverse mix of housing types, sizes and prices ranges. Twenty (20) years ago golf courses, subdivision pools and other materialistic amenities "sold" homes. Today's homebuyer wants more intrinsic elements; such as neighborhoods that possess a sense of place, connectivity, safety, convenience and diversity. Today home purchases are driven by local or regional access to good jobs, education, medical, recreation and a full range of hospitality, entertainment and shopping opportunities where one can feel a part of the community.

The small town character and family values found in many of the local neighborhoods are defining characteristics of Poplar Bluff and highly valued by the community. Quality neighborhoods offer housing choices, provide residents with a sense of identity and connection to their community, and encourage continuous renewal and reinvestment. The following recommendations are intended to promote the preservation of the City's neighborhoods and promote quality neighborhoods in all future residential infill and new development.

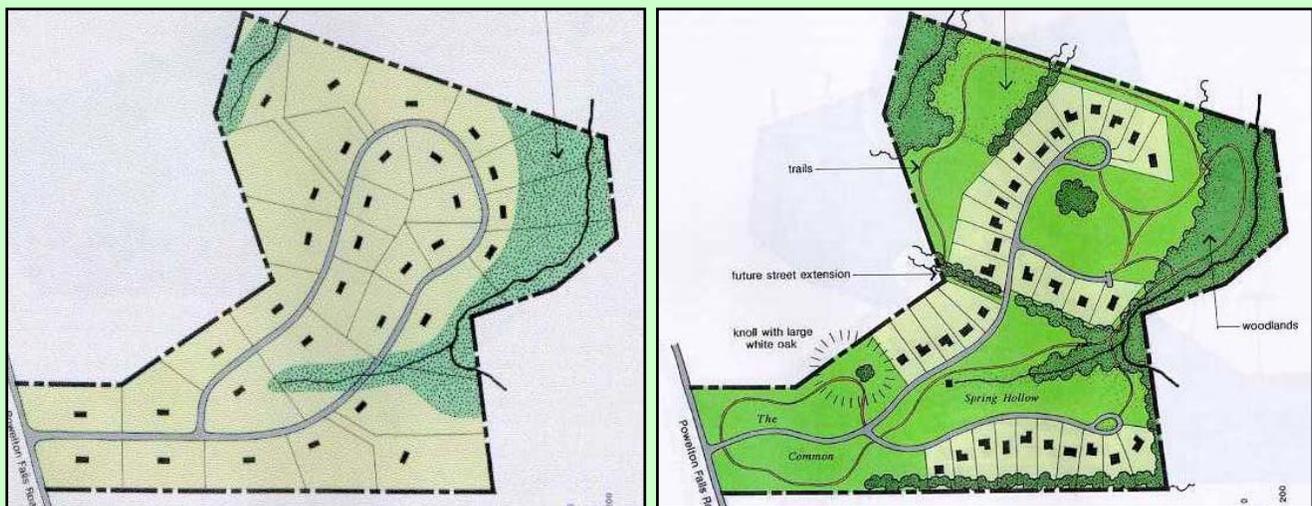


### Conservation Residential Subdivision Design

Conservation residential subdivision design is recommended as a development option whenever a new residential subdivision is proposed in an undeveloped area, primarily in the suggested annexation areas. These areas are largely undeveloped, but contain precious agricultural land and sensitive natural areas that should be preserved. The intent of conservation subdivision design is to preserve natural areas while permitting residential densities that are equal to the City's underlying residential zoning districts. It is recommended that Poplar Bluff develop a conservation residential overlay zoning district that encourages appropriate development in these areas.

Generally, conservation subdivision design maintains the same density as a conventional subdivision and allows the same uses as permitted in the underlying zoning district. This is a concept known as "density neutral". The biggest difference is that a conservation subdivision preserves 50% or more of the development site. This is accomplished by minimizing the development footprint by building compact subdivisions with smaller lots, leaving vast areas undisturbed. Lake and golf course developments follow the same subdivision design concept as conservation subdivisions. Conservation subdivisions would require relief from the City's minimum lot sizes and setbacks. Developing environmentally sensitive lands in this manner provides for a more sustainable use of land and resources. The land conserved as a result of cluster or conservation subdivision design should be dedicated in perpetuity as undeveloped common ground or open space. Figure 7.5 illustrates the difference between conventional and cluster subdivision design.

**Figure 7.5 Conventional Subdivision Design Versus Cluster Subdivision Design**



Source: Randall Arendt- "Conservation Subdivisions"



### **Future Residential Development Guidelines**

The City should adopt a Conservation Overlay as part of the City's Zoning Code to be used in conjunction with the City's conventional residential zoning districts. The overlay should be used as an option for all new residential subdivisions. The intent of the conservation overlay is to preserve the natural environment and provide significant areas for public use while achieving the same residential density as a conventional subdivision. The conservation overlay should allow greater design flexibility by reducing the minimum and maximum standards for setbacks, lot widths and lot area. Developers are able to achieve the same density because the lots can be smaller, and clustered closely together leaving much more area for open space.

The conservation overlay should allow greater design flexibility by reducing the minimum and maximum standards for setbacks, lot widths and lot area. "Cluster developments" typically consist of homes that are moved closer to the street with side set-backs that are minimized and in some cases eliminated. Developers are able to achieve the same density because the lots can be smaller, and clustered closely together leaving much more area for open space. "Cluster developments" typically consist of homes that are moved closer to the street with side set-backs that are minimized and in some cases eliminated. To achieve a sustainable balance between public and private spaces in residential developments, quantitative performance standards are recommended in the City's zoning code to regulate the quantity, configuration and quality of open space to be established as a part of the Conservation Overlay District.

### **Affordable Housing Strategies**

Multiple family housing is a necessary housing option for residents of Poplar Bluff who cannot afford to own a house or who chooses not to accept the responsibilities. Total units in a multiple family housing complex range from two and up. Rents vary greatly depending on the location and quality of the units. Concern surrounding many multiple family housing units stems from instances where buildings are poorly maintained, trash and personal items are stored incorrectly, and traffic generated from many people living in a small area causes problems. These negative land use externalities can be avoided by proper planning and administration of city ordinances. Strict implementation of safety and maintenance codes, zoning ordinances and law enforcement can resolve some on-site problems, but the building must also have considerate tenants and a good owner. Enforcement of tenants' rights and empowerment through self-policing can initiate change on the part of residents.

The City of Poplar Bluff can offer two kinds of assistance for neighborhood improvements; direct support and indirect support. Direct support involves action and spending on the part of the City of Poplar Bluff that goes directly to the residents of the city. The first step in direct neighborhood assistance involves improving infrastructure in neighborhoods where conditions are deteriorating. The city can initiate neighborhood revitalization by identifying deteriorating streets and budgeting capital improvements to improve street surfaces, curbs, gutters, and sidewalks. The City of Poplar Bluff should conduct a housing conditions survey of every neighborhood to classify and identify housing as well as infrastructure conditions, throughout the city. Then by mapping these conditions, areas may be prioritized for assistance.

In addition to direct spending on neighborhood infrastructure, the City of Poplar Bluff can collect and distribute state and federal funds that can be used for home mortgages and improvement loans. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has a number of



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programs aimed at housing for which a unit of local government must apply. HUD offers Community Development Block Grants which are applied for by units of local government or non-profit organizations and are used to “*fund a wide range of activities to provide decent housing, create suitable living environments, and expand economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income persons.*” Many more such programs exist and more information can be obtained from those agencies directly.

The second type of assistance the City of Poplar Bluff can offer for improving the city’s housing stock is indirect support. This can be accomplished through encouragement of homeowner and neighborhood associations and by managing construction through smart city growth. Homeowner and neighborhood associations enable residents of Poplar Bluff to accept the responsibility of improving the conditions within their neighborhoods. Through the establishment of homeowner associations, by-laws can be created that legally bind residents of the neighborhood to design restrictions and maintenance standards. Neighborhood associations have less legal standing than homeowner associations, but provide a venue for neighbors to meet and act as a group. Peer pressure for maintaining houses and local initiatives for neighborhood improvements are responsibilities that neighborhood associations usually reinforce.

Smart growth is a policy intended to keep the number of available housing units equal to the demand. The result of such a policy would be to limit the availability of new houses on the edge of town while promoting the occupancy of houses and use of vacant parcels in established neighborhoods. This policy should be adopted in conjunction with other actions mentioned above to work towards a better overall living environment for the entire city. Table 7.2 Provides an overview of the recommended housing program policy statements & implementation strategies.



**Table 7.2: Housing Program Policy Statements & Action Plan**

Policy Statements	Recommended Actions	Priority
Through application for grants (federal and state) and direct spending, the City of Poplar Bluff will <u>directly</u> assist efforts to improve and maintain the city's housing stock.	Develop programs and financing options that facilitate home repairs and maintenance.	High
	Conduct a Housing Survey of every neighborhood, map results and prioritize areas in need of assistance.	High
	Apply for appropriate Community Development Block Grant monies.	Medium
	Develop a plan to extend basic utilities to all existing neighborhoods and new developments	Medium
	Provide assistance by collecting and disseminating information on public and private funds for residential improvements and mortgage assistance.	High
The City will indirectly support efforts to expand and maintain the city's housing stock by adopting appropriate programs, policies and ordinance amendments.	Assist in the establishment of neighborhood associations. The associations should act as the organized voice and representation of Poplar Bluff's neighborhoods-both new and old.	High
	Encourage a balanced range of high-quality housing options that meet all socio-economic needs	Medium
	Encourage smart growth through the provision of utilities and infrastructure to new growth areas; and annex these areas as well as areas poised for growth prior to development activity.	Medium

**Neighborhood Landscape Recommendations**

Trees enhance the economic value of properties. A study in Amherst, Massachusetts found that trees contributed 7% to the value of the average residential property and as much as 15% in some instances. Trees and supplemental landscaping features introduce a form, size, scale, texture, color and changing visual image associated with seasonal change or variation in wind and sun conditions which are pleasing, tranquil and desirable. Shade, wind breaks, and attraction of songbirds and other wildlife are also benefits of substantial plant communities within housing areas. By far the easiest way to capture these benefits for the residents of a housing area is to preserve the existing vegetation of a site as it is developed, rather than relying on newly planted materials to grow and mature, slowly recreating an environment which already existed in many cases. To enjoy these benefits, the Comprehensive Plan recommends requiring landscaping, primarily through preservation of mature trees and existing vegetation for all new development and the implementation of an ambitious tree preservation program and landscape guidelines.

**Neighborhood Stability Recommendations**

The following housing and neighborhood stability strategies are recommended for immediate implementation:



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1. A range of housing choices is needed to meet the needs of residents of differing economic levels, age groups and lifestyles. Diversifying the housing stock is recommended so people can “age in place” rather than moving outside the city at any given stage of the life cycle. Neighborhoods should offer a choice of well designed and low maintenance housing types, sizes and values.
2. Affordable housing should be viewed as part of the infrastructure of the community. The City should consider requiring developers of large residential subdivisions (over 10 acres or 50 dwellings) to provide a percentage of homes for 1<sup>st</sup> time buyers and/or a percentage of maintenance-free homes designed for retirees, singles or busy professionals in much the same way as contributions to the capacity of roads or availability of parks are required.
3. All neighborhoods should be linked to surrounding residential areas and when possible, share commercial spaces and open space resources.
4. New neighborhoods should include distinct features at its boundaries to create a sense of entry and foster a sense of pride and belonging among residents. Distinct features may include monumental entrance features, enhanced street intersections and pedestrian crossings and public spaces such as common ground areas and neighborhood parks.
5. All residential streets should be pedestrian-friendly and include sidewalks on both sides. Sidewalks should be attractively landscaped and laid out in an interconnected network to encourage walking.
6. Higher density is recommended to achieve a more affordable housing stock. Higher density housing results in less land per unit, less site preparation, less infrastructure and typically less finished floor area, all of which hold down the hard costs of housing.
7. Encourage front porches on new houses. Front porches allow homeowners to comfortably spend more time near the front yard and street. This creates a greater opportunity to know ones neighbors, maintain a casual surveillance of the area, and thereby maintain a safe residential neighborhood. This also reinforces a small-town ambiance.
8. Require visually appealing, points of beautification within subdivisions. The development of points of beautification within new subdivisions can enhance the perception of neighborhood, a characteristic that is important in the development and maintenance of small-town atmosphere. Beautification areas should be encouraged particularly at entrances, but should not encourage the inclusion of subdivision identification monument signs. Recommended beautification amenities include fountains, public art and unique landscaping and planning designs.
9. De-emphasize garages that extend past the front of the house. Garages which extend out from the front of a house create an emphasis on the automobile system of a neighborhood, diminish the effects of inviting front doors and porches, and are simply less attractive than the house itself. All of these effects break down the pedestrian oriented quality which is sought for new residential areas in the City of Poplar Bluff. A maximum percentage of street façade devoted to garage area should be established as a control measure for visual quality.



10. Alleys are recommended in small lot neighborhoods. The use of alleys allow homes to be moved closer to the street and garages, trash receptacles and other utilities to be located in the rear, creating a more traditional, walkable neighborhood.

### **GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

Growth management can be described as a conscious public decision to restrain, accommodate or encourage development. Management techniques can be applied to any type of growth, but of particular concern to the City of Poplar Bluff is the current and future supply of quality commercial, residential and industrial development opportunities. The growth of the land uses mentioned above are managed in part by proposing areas of commercial, residential and industrial growth on the Future Land Use Map and developing strategies for each district. In addition to proposing land uses, the city can manage growth by extending the city boundary and concentrating municipal services within the planning area. This strategy will minimize sprawl and the inefficient use of the land, resources and municipal services.

The purpose for managing growth in the City of Poplar Bluff are multi-fold, they include:

- the preservation of farmland & the income generating potential of the natural land,
- the prevention of overextending municipal services and infrastructure,
- the prevention of vacancies and thus economic decline within existing city neighborhoods and commercial areas, and
- the control of types and quality of development at the city periphery.

The rate, manner and location in which the City of Poplar Bluff allows residential, commercial and industrial land uses to grow will have significant effects on conditions within the city's existing neighborhoods and commercial areas. In the current development environment, it is more economical for commercial and residential developers to construct new buildings on agricultural land than it is to redevelop an existing site or renovate an existing building within the city. As a result, most developers' prefer locations at a city's perimeter. When this growth is allowed to progress unchecked, older sections of the city tend to be left to deteriorate. For cities to avoid vacancies, deterioration, and eventual blight among older sections of town, new construction should be balanced with maintenance and renovation of existing buildings. To best accomplish this balance, the city may need to offer incentives to encourage inner city development.

The challenge faced by the City of Poplar Bluff is finding the balance between investing in new developments or reinvesting in what the city already has. To remain competitive with other cities in the region the City of Poplar Bluff must allow and encourage commercial development by providing adequate commercial and industrial property with good access to the City's transportation system and utility services. Potential for commercial development exists in several areas as indicated on the Future Land Use Map. Future commercial development in these areas can be used to generate city tax revenue, expand employment opportunities, and increase shopping and entertainment alternatives for area residents as well as tourists and travelers. However, this growth must not occur in a manner that will contribute to the further deterioration of downtown. Businesses that could feasibly operate in a downtown building should be given incentives to do so.



To manage the growth along Highway 67 and PP, the City of Poplar Bluff must be able to regulate the location, type, and quality of development. However, the City of Poplar Bluff has limited jurisdiction of land development outside its boundary. There are several areas along the bypass that are not located within the corporate limits of Poplar Bluff. These areas fall under the jurisdiction of Butler County, which does not have the same level of land use restrictions as the city. For the city to have full control of the type, quality, and nature of future land use, it must annex the appropriate growth areas prior to development activity.

Another area poised for commercial expansion, which will also require annexation, is the intersection of Highway 60 and Grand Avenue and the future location of Arterial F & Highway 60. Much of the land around these intersection locations is undeveloped and prime locations for a future “nodal” development. For this to be feasible however, the City of Poplar Bluff will need to extend its boundary as well as the needed municipal services to support such development.

### **Annexation**

The community has expressed support for annexation throughout the comprehensive planning process. Many believe annexation is necessary to preserve the natural character of the area and provide for future residential growth. In response to the community’s support, and due to the City’s ability to provide centralized services to adjacent unincorporated areas, the city should prepare an organized annexation plan that identifies and prioritizes the annexation of specific parcels within the City’s growth areas. The annexation plan should include thorough inspections of all public infrastructure within the proposed annexation area and a thorough service provision evaluation. Once the plan is completed, the City should immediately begin acquiring pre-annexation agreements with adjoining land owners. Partnerships between the City, property owners and developers should be established early in the process to help avoid unanticipated repercussions during or after the annexation process. To the fullest extent possible, future development and land uses within the annexation area should comply with the Comprehensive Plan’s land use recommendations and the City’s Zoning Code.

Annexation of any land into the City of Poplar Bluff should be considered carefully. While each situation is different, the end result should provide specific benefits to the city as well as the annexing area. The areas of land shaded on the Future Land Use Map that fall outside the City’s limits are the areas the City should consider for future annexation. Before any annexation decisions are made, the following general questions should be considered.

- Will the annexation lessen demand to develop in-fill property or redevelop existing sites and buildings within the current city boundary?
- Will the annexation place any unacceptable political, financial, physical or operational demands or expectations upon the city for the provision of services or infrastructure?
- Will the annexation allow for more appropriate guidance of future development within the annexation area?
- Will the annexation bring existing land uses into the city that are desirable and have some benefit to the city in terms of revenue or the sense of community?



- Is the annexation in the best interest of the city as a whole?
- Does the annexation make economic sense from both long and short range perspectives?

### **Annexation Procedures**

The City Council of the City of Poplar Bluff processes all annexation petitions and determines if they comply with state statutes. The procedures for annexing unincorporated land in Butler County can be summarized by two methods of annexation; Voluntary and Involuntary Annexation.

Under the voluntary method, residents in affected portions of Butler County petition the city and request annexation. The petition is then reviewed by the City Council to determine if the annexation is reasonable and necessary. If the City Council agrees, the annexation can be approved without the time and expense of an election. Voluntary annexations can only be accomplished through a petition process involving 100% of the annexing property owners.

The involuntary method requires the preparation of a plan of intent. The proposal must legally delineate the area to be annexed and provide proof that the proposed annexation meets the statutory criteria. The annexation petition must be presented at a public hearing. Following the public hearing, an election is held in which all registered voters in the city and all registered voters in the annexation area must vote separately on the annexation. The vote must be a majority in favor in both the city and the annexation area to be approved.

### **Annexation & Growth Management Recommendations**

1. Develop an annexation plan addressing the provision of infrastructure and the development of new residential growth areas, particularly along the bypass and the city's other growth areas. The City must annex its growth areas to ensure full control of the type, quality, and nature of future land use.
2. Formulate an annexation policy based upon future growth patterns, ability to provide public facilities and services, and suitability of land for development.
3. Encourage development in areas where municipal services can most easily be extended. New development should not be permitted until such time municipal services are available.
4. Conduct thorough inspections of all public infrastructure within the proposed annexation area and complete a thorough service provision evaluation- prior to annexation.
5. Develop partnerships with property owners and developers early in the annexation process to help avoid unanticipated repercussions during or after the annexation process.
6. All future development should comply with the Comprehensive Plan and the City's Zoning Code.
7. Promote the preservation, maintenance and renovation of the city's existing buildings and established districts. Direct business development towards the CBD.