



BENTON COUNTY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Proposed General Plan Scope of Work

Project Description

This document is a proposed work program for the production of a Benton County General Plan, strategic plans, and implementing ordinances. Included in this document are a proposed timeline for the achievement of the plan and implementing ordinances and a description of the components of the work program.

Goals for the Project

The overall goal of this project is to complete a county-wide General Plan and to begin its implementation. It is intended for the project to involve a significant amount of public participation. It is hoped that through public participation in the planning process that consensus among the citizens of Benton County may be reached on the many issues which will affect the county's future growth. As part of public participation in the planning process, it is hoped that various stakeholders, interest groups, and individual citizens may all find a way to contribute to the final product – the General Plan, strategic plans, and implementing ordinances.

Generally, the planning process will include three broad elements: land use, transportation and community facilities. Part of the planning process will be to create sub-committees of the Planning Board that will address these elements and the many subtopics included in these broad areas. Although these three broad elements are already identified by this scope of work, other elements may be identified or considered as brought forth through public participation.

The planning process will be a two-part process. First the General Plan and its various elements and maps will be created through public participation. Upon adoption of the General Plan by the Benton County Quorum Court, the second phase of the project will begin. This second phase will include the creation of ordinances, such as a zoning ordinance and revised subdivision rules and regulations that will implement the plan. Strategic plans, which focus primarily on particular elements of the General Plan and the allocation of resources, will be developed to also assist in the implementation of the General Plan.

Ultimately, this proposed scope of work is for the citizens of Benton County. It should be considered as a draft document that will most likely be altered to include the comments of those who review it.

Timeline

A proposed timeline is an essential part of any planning process. However, it is important to remember that achieving the established components within the scope of work is more important than strict adherence to the proposed timeline. The proposed timeline for the General Plan work program is below. The timeline may be adjusted as necessary to achieve the established components as described in this proposed scope of work.

2007

September/October	November	December	January
1. Creation of web page for citizen input 2. Advertisement of start of Planning Process/Call for committee members 3. Creation of committees for citizen & technical advisement 4. Creation of existing land use map 5. Creation of existing community facilities map 6. Review of existing master street plan map and regional transportation plans	7. Gathering of Data 8. Pre-Kick-off Meeting with Quorum Court & Planning Board 9. Kick-off meeting with Planning Board and other officials for citizen input 10. Setting of calendar 11. Data Analyses 12. Identification of needs & policy issues	13. Review and edit of existing conditions and technical reports supplemental to the plan 14. Begin goal setting and policy drafting 15. Evaluation of alternative plans	16. Begin draft of proposed General Plan and map 17. Revise goals and policies

2008

January/February	March	April/May	June
18. "Town" Meetings for citizen input 19. Draft documents presented to Planning Board & Quorum Court in a joint meeting 20. Revisions of plan and map	21. Legal review 22. Public hearing(s) on adoption of plan and map	23. Adoption of the plan and map by the Quorum Court	24. Assembly of citizen input and technical committees 25. Begin draft of implementing ordinances 26. Begin draft of strategic plans

2008

July/August	September	October	November
27. Evaluation of draft implementing ordinances & revisions 28. Evaluation of draft strategic plans & revisions	29. "Town" Meetings for citizen input 30. Draft documents presented to the Planning Board & Quorum Court in a joint meeting	31. Revisions/ Additions 32. Legal Review 33. Public hearings on adoption of strategic plans, implementing ordinances & maps	34. Adoption of the plans, ordinances & maps by the Quorum Court

Components

1. Creation of a web page for citizen input- The creation of a web page for the planning process will allow citizens to view documents and make comments regarding the plan or other aspects of the planning process. These comments can be e-mailed to the Planning Board and Quorum Court and/or be posted on the website for other citizens to view. This use of internet technology will allow greater citizen participation in the planning process since it may be viewed and interacted with at the convenience of the viewer. The web page is intended to allow citizens a way to be involved with the planning process when they are unable to attend meetings in person. The web page will also allow the easy distribution of information concerning upcoming meetings or plan progress.
2. Advertisement of start of planning process/Call for committee members- The start of the planning process will be advertised in local newspapers and issued to the press in the form of press releases. The advertisements will inform the public about the upcoming process and will direct interested parties to the county website or county planning office for more details. Those interested in taking part in the planning process will be asked to complete an “Interest Form” and then will be assigned to a specific committee based upon their expressed interest and/or technical knowledge. Local organizations will also be contacted directed to notify them of the start of the planning process.
3. Creation of committees for citizen & technical advisement- Three committees will be formed for citizen and technical advisement during the planning process. The three committees will be the land use, transportation, and community facilities committees. At least two Planning Board members will be assigned to each committee. Others on the various committees may include interested citizens, elected officials, and those who have volunteered their technical knowledge in the planning process. The following describes the type of tasks in which each committee will be involved.
 - Land Use Committee – The Land Use committee will be responsible for reviewing the accuracy of the existing land use map, analyses of gathered data as it pertains to future land use, identification of land use issues and needs, and recommending policies to the Planning Board for inclusion in the General Plan. (Further described in the following sections of this report.)
 - Transportation Committee – The transportation committee will be responsible for reviewing existing transportation plans in the county, reviewing an inventory of county roads, assessing needs and the level of service of existing roads, proposing new road connections, classifying roads into a functional classification system, and recommending policies to the Planning Board for inclusion in the General Plan. (Further described in the following sections of this report.)
 - Community Facilities Committee- The community facilities committee will be responsible for reviewing the accuracy of the community facilities map, determining the availability of public services in the county, identification of public/quasi-public needs or issues, and recommending policies to the Planning Board for inclusion in the General

Plan. The Community Facilities Committee may include a wide range of topics from utility availability, parks, or watershed protection. Sub-committees of may be necessary to address all items under the broad term “community facilities.” (Further described in the following sections of this report.)

4. Creation of existing land use map- Utilizing the county’s GIS system, an existing land use map will be generated on a parcel level basis. Property in the county will be classified into the categories listed in this section. If during the mapping process, a category not listed is determined to be appropriate, the list will be amended as needed. Additionally and where needed, planning department staff or volunteers will conduct windshield surveys to determine the existing land use. This existing land use map will provide the Planning Board, Quorum Court, and various committees with a recent “snap shot” of the county’s development pattern. The existing land use map will help identify land use trends in the county and project where future development will occur. The relationship of the existing land use and transportation facilities in the county will also be identified in the mapping process. The land use of property within the boundaries of cities and towns will also be needed in order to assess trends and accurately plan future land uses where the unincorporated area and city come together.

Existing Land Use Categories:

- Agriculture
 - Incidental or Accessory Agriculture - Hobby farming; Farming done for subsistence or small-scale sales.
 - Commercial Agriculture - Large-scale crop or animal farming; Farming for mass production and intended for commercial markets.
- Commercial
 - Corridor Commercial – Retail uses developed one parcel/business at a time, without a specific development plan, and located along or near a state highway.
 - Incidental or Accessory Commercial – Commercial activities conducted on a small-scale that are not located along or near a state highway and which may be conducted in connection with on-site residence.
- Residential
 - Low Density Residential – Housing densities equal to or less than one dwelling unit per net acre.
 - Medium Density Residential – Housing densities greater than one dwelling per acre up to four dwelling units per net acre.
 - High Density Residential – Housing densities greater than four dwelling units per acre up to six dwelling units per net acre.
 - Urban Density Residential – Housing densities greater than six dwelling units per net acre.

- Public/Quasi-Public – Public/Quasi-public uses will be represented as one color on the map but will include the following: schools, parks, municipal/county properties, fire stations, cemeteries, utility stations, etc. Point symbols will be developed to distinguish between the types of public uses.
 - Industrial – Industrial uses will be represented as one color on the map and will include all heavy uses that may range from manufacturing to mining.
5. Creation of existing community facilities map- The existing community facilities map will be developed in connection with the existing land use map but will focus on the location, quality, and capacity of public/quasi-public uses. The community facilities map will identify large transmission lines and easements of utilities, and sites of upcoming utility, park, school or other expansions. The intent of the community facilities map is to gauge where adequate public/quasi-public services are presently located and project where such services will be located or needed in the future. The availability of public services will tend to indicate where increased densities or lower densities of development can be expected in the future.
 6. Review of existing master street plan and other transportation plans- The current Benton County Road Plan and the transportation plans of other entities in Benton County will be reviewed by the Planning Board, staff, and various committees. The Benton County Road Plan will be reviewed for consistency with the transportation plans of the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Council and the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department. Additionally, the Benton County Road Plan will be reviewed for consistency with the road plans of cities in Benton County. Further review of the Benton County Road Plan will identify deficiencies of the current plan and propose new connections. Roads in Benton County will be inventoried to assess needs and level of service, and will be classified into the following functional classification system.

Functional Classification System:

- Interstate/Toll-Way – Roadways that are fully controlled access facilities that are typically constructed by the state, and which carry the highest volume of traffic. These roadways are designed for movement of traffic within the region and between states and are typically a part of the nation’s Interstate Highway System.
- Principal Arterial – Roadways that are the primary means of traffic movement within the county. These roads are heavily traveled and provide a primary means of vehicle movement between cities in the region and outlying portions of the county. These roads tend to be state highways and may connect to areas outside of the county. These roads are generally different from Interstate/Toll-Ways in the amount of access control to the facility, the amount of daily traffic, speed of vehicles, and the characteristics of the right-of-way.
- Minor Arterial – Roadways that are a secondary means of traffic movement within the county. These roads are heavily traveled but tend to provide for the movement of traffic

in a limited area of the county. These roads primarily serve to connect Principal Arterial roadways and Collector roadways. Minor Arterial roadways may connect to destinations outside the county but generally only do so as a secondary means of access to destinations.

- Collector – Roadways that are a means of connecting Local roads with roads of higher classification, such as Principal or Minor Arterials. Collector roads serve to gather and disperse traffic from low traffic roadways to higher traffic roadways. Collector roadways generally do not extend outside the county.
 - Local- Roadways that are a means of providing traffic movement at low volume and low speed. Local roads are generally intended to serve as the immediate means of access for residential lots by vehicular traffic. Local roads generally do not extend outside of the county.
7. Gathering of data- Gathering of data during the planning process will consist of obtaining information concerning the physical and demographic characteristics of the Benton County. This is a basic step in the planning process in which the area to be planned is studied as it exists today and how it might exist in the future. Soils and topographic data will be gathered from available sources while the most current estimates concerning population and demographics will be obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. Information of this sort may also be obtained from various organizations, such as the University of Arkansas or Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Council. Essentially, the most up-to-date information concerning the physical area and future demographic, social, economic, and housing characteristics of Benton County will be obtained for analysis.
 8. Pre-kick-off meeting with the Quorum Court & Planning Board - The Pre-kick-off meeting with the Quorum Court & Planning Board will be to review the progress of the planning process and provide any needed information regarding the upcoming process. This meeting will serve to provide basic information to the Quorum Court and Planning Board and provide for any adjustments to the process as identified by the court or board.
 9. Kick-off meeting with Planning Board, and other officials for citizen input – The kick-off meeting will be the official start of the planning process and will be held at a venue able to accommodate the expected interest in the process. Elected officials will be encouraged to participate in the kick-off meeting as desired or speak as part of the agenda. During the kick-off meeting, citizens will be introduced to the work program and how the planning process typically occurs. An overview of the responsibilities of each committee will be given to citizens. Citizens will then be asked to select an area of interest (land use, transportation, or community facilities) in which to serve and will be encouraged to adhere to a set of principles for participation in the process. The set of principles for participation in the process are listed below. Thereafter those attending the meeting will be asked to break into their committees and begin general dialogue. The committees will be given a description of their tasks and will be presented with the information gathered to-date concerning their particular area of interest (land use, transportation, and community facilities). The

committees will also be asked to set a calendar for meeting times which is discussed further in this report.

Principles for the Participation Process

- Treat each other with respect at all times and put personal differences aside in the interest of the success of the planning process.
- Stick to the topics on the meeting agenda; be concise and not repetitive.
- Work as team players and share all relevant information. Focus on honesty and tactfulness. Avoid surprises. Encourage candid, frank discussions.
- Ask if you do not understand.
- Offer mutually beneficial solutions. Actively strive to see the other's point of view.
- Follow through on commitments.
- Share information discussed in the meeting with any organizations that you represent and bring back to the committee their opinions as appropriate.
- Encourage open-mindedness and creative thinking and share relevant information.
- Speak one at a time in the meetings as recognized by the leader.
- Everyone will participate, but no one will dominate.
- Agree that it is okay to disagree and disagree without being disagreeable.
- Make your statements and responses concise and to the point.
- Support and actively engage in discussion.
- Do your homework. Read and review materials provided and be familiar with the subject being discussed.
- Make every attempt to attend all meetings.

10. Setting of Calendar – Once the three committees have been formed, each group will select a chairman. Each group will then be asked to set a calendar for meeting in accordance with the proposed timeline in this report. The committees may choose to meet separately or at the same time. Planning Board members and staff will meet with the committees as scheduled.

11. Data Analyses– In conjunction with staff, the members of each committee will analyze the gathered data and created maps. The committees will be responsible for reviewing the data

and maps for accuracy as well as the other functions of their committee as described previously in this report.

12. Identification of needs and policy issues-From the gathered data, maps, and citizen input the committees will begin to identify needs within the county and issues of policy that should be addressed in the General Plan. Each committee will keep a working list of needs and policy issues. Work within the committee will strive to take specific instances of needs or problems and make general statements about potential policies regarding the issues. A final list of needs and policy issues will be produced by each committee.
13. Review and edit of existing conditions and technical reports supplemental to the plan-Once each committee has completed the accuracy review and identification of needs and policy issues, the Planning Department staff will generate an Existing Conditions report and deliver it to the committees. Each committee will review the report and propose additions or corrections to the report.
14. Begin goal setting and policy drafting-During the time period that the committees are reviewing the Existing Conditions report, the committee members will also begin to formalize goal and policy statements to be included in the plan. These goals and policies will be generated from the list of needs and policy issues produced by each committee. The goals and policies will be assembled by the Planning Department staff and delivered to the Planning Board for review.
15. Evaluation of alternative plans- After the Existing Conditions report has been edited and reviewed by the Planning Board, the committees and the Planning Board will select the format of the General Plan. The committees will recommend to the Planning Board a format - whether it is a bound volume with an accompanying map or if the plan and map should be combined in a pamphlet form or other form.
16. Begin draft of General Plan & map – Once a format of the General Plan is decided, the Planning Board and staff will begin to assemble a draft of the goals and policies. The committees will work to complete the proposed future land use map, the proposed master street plan map, and the proposed community facilities plan map. In conjunction with one another, the committees will determine proposed future land uses throughout the county, proposed street improvements or construction, and proposed community facility creation or extensions.
17. Revise goals and policies-After the committees have completed the draft General Plan map, the Planning Board will review and/or edit the entire General Plan draft. The Planning Board will then determine the time and date of “Town” meetings on the draft.
18. “Town” meetings for citizen input- At least three “Town” meetings will be held on the General Plan draft. These meetings will be held in various parts of the county and will seek to draw comments from citizens and/or community leaders. These meetings will seek to inform the public on the proposed General Plan and its components. These meetings will primarily seek to involve citizens who have not been involved in the process to-date.

19. Draft documents presented to Planning Board & Quorum Court in a joint meeting- After completion of the “Town” meetings, the proposed General Plan and map will be presented to the Planning Board and Quorum Court in a joint meeting. Comments received during the “Town” meetings will be delivered to the Planning Board & Quorum Court at this time.
20. Revisions of plan and map- Any revisions to the General Plan and/or map desired by the Quorum Court or Planning Board will be made by staff.
21. Legal review- The proposed General Plan and map will be forwarded to the county attorney for legal comment, review, opinion, and/or edit.
22. Public hearing(s) on adoption of plan and map- After legal review and approval of the General Plan and map by the county attorney, the Planning Board will hold a public hearing on the plan and its contents. This hearing will seek to satisfy the requirements of Arkansas state law for the adoption of plans by counties. Subsequent to the hearing(s) the Planning Board will recommend adoption of the plan and map to the Quorum Court.
23. Adoption of the plan and map by the Quorum Court- Upon acceptance of the General Plan and map, the Quorum Court may adopt the plan and map in accordance with state law.
24. Assembly of citizen input and technical committees- After the adoption of the General Plan and map by the Quorum Court, the Planning Department will call again for committee members. The committee members will be organized into the following groups to work on the ordinances to implement the General Plan:
 - Zoning Committee- This committee will seek to implement the future land use element of the General Plan by the drafting of a zoning ordinance and map for Benton County.
 - Subdivision Committee – This committee will seek to implement the master street plan element of the General Plan by the drafting of revised subdivision rules & regulations for the county.
 - Community Facilities Committee – This committee will seek to implement the community facilities element of the General Plan. This committee may have several sub-committees based upon the board range of topics that may be included in the term “community facilities.” The proposed ordinances generated by this committee will vary in nature and may be able to be accommodated within the zoning or subdivision ordinances.
 - Capital Improvements Committee – This committee will seek to implement the elements of the General Plan that will typically require the expenditure of public funds. While no topic will be excluded from the consideration of the committee, the Capital Improvements Committee will be charged with the production of five-year

strategic plan for county road improvements. In this way, the committee will seek to implement the master street plan element of the General Plan.

25. Begin draft of implementing ordinances- The Planning Department staff will provide draft ordinances to the committees for review, edits, additions, or corrections. The documents will be designed by staff to implement the various elements of the plan. However, these documents will be modified as needed by the various committees.
26. Begin draft of strategic plans- The Planning Department staff will provide draft strategic plans to the Capital Improvements Committee for review, edits, additions, or corrections. These documents will be designed by staff to implement the various elements of the plan. However, these documents will be modified as needed by the various committees.
27. Evaluation of draft implementing ordinances & revisions-Once the committees have completed their edits, additions, and corrections to the proposed implementing ordinances, the committees will forward the documents with their recommendations to the Planning Board. The Planning Board will review and evaluate the documents and make any necessary revisions.
28. Evaluation of draft strategic plans & revisions- Once the Capital Improvements Committee has completed the edits, additions, and corrections to the proposed strategic plan(s), the committee will forward the documents with their recommendations to the Planning Board. The Planning Board will review and evaluate the document and make any necessary revisions.
29. “Town” meetings for citizen input- At least three “Town” meetings will be held on the proposed strategic plans, implementing ordinances and maps. These meetings will be held in various parts of the county and will seek to draw comments from citizens and/or community leaders. These meetings will seek to inform the public on the proposed documents and their components. These meetings will primarily seek to involve citizens who have not been involved in the process to-date.
30. Draft documents presented to the Planning Board & Quorum Court in a joint meeting - After completion of the “Town” meetings, the proposed strategic plans, implementing ordinances and maps will be presented to the Planning Board and Quorum Court in a joint meeting. Comments received during the “Town” meetings will be delivered to the Planning Board & Quorum Court at this time.
31. Revisions and/or additions- Any revisions to the documents and/or maps desired by the Quorum Court or Planning Board will be made by staff.
32. Legal Review- The proposed strategic plans, implementing ordinances and maps will be forwarded to the county attorney for legal comment, review, and opinion.
33. Public hearings on adoption of strategic plans, implementing ordinances & maps- After legal review and approval of the strategic plans, implementing ordinances and maps by the county

attorney, the Planning Board will hold a public hearing on the documents and their contents. This hearing will seek to satisfy the requirements of Arkansas state law for the adoption of planning documents by counties. Subsequent to the hearing(s) the Planning Board will recommend adoption of the documents to the Quorum Court.

34. Adoption of strategic plans, ordinances, and maps by the Quorum Court- Upon acceptance of the strategic plans, implementing ordinances, and accompanying maps, the Quorum Court may adopt the documents in accordance with state law.