

*Springfield and Greene County Vision 20/20  
Comprehensive Plan*  
**Neighborhoods Element**

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# *Springfield and Greene County Vision 20/20*

## *Comprehensive Plan*

# Neighborhoods Element

This element of *Vision 20/20* outlines objectives and actions that Springfield and Greene County will pursue to stabilize or improve existing neighborhoods and to create sustainable, attractive new neighborhoods. The four major sections of this chapter are:

- C Summary of Key Recommendations
- C The Vision and Goals of the *Vision 20/20* Neighborhoods and Housing Focus Groups
- C Neighborhood Planning and Design Principles
- C Objectives and Actions for Neighborhood Planning and Design

## Summary of Key Recommendations

This plan includes numerous recommendations for actions and improvements in neighborhoods of Springfield and Greene County. The major items are summarized here.

- Build a **community of neighborhoods** that are empowered to help address their problems.
- Continue to improve neighborhood public **services and facilities**.
- Promote continuous **public and private investments** in every neighborhood so that each remains an attractive place to live.
- Continue the process of pro-active **neighborhood planning**.
- Design and build neighborhoods to promote **interaction among residents** and a sense of community.
- Create a system of **neighborhood organizations** with which the City and County can work to address needs.
- Preserve and protect **key environmental resources** in each neighborhood.
- Help **identify neighborhoods** with signage, landmarks and urban design.
- Promote **walking and bicycling** in all neighborhoods through appropriate street, sidewalk and trail design.
- Link every neighborhood to the Springfield **park, greenway and open space system**.

## The Vision and Goals of the *Vision 20/20* Focus Groups

The *Vision 20/20* Neighborhoods and Housing Focus Group prepared the following goal, vision statement and six major objectives. These statements have been used to formulate the Neighborhoods Element, which is highly consistent with and supportive of the Focus Group's work.

**Overall Goal:                    Create a community of neighborhoods across the  
Springfield-Greene County urbanized area.**

### **The Vision for Neighborhoods**

Springfield should be a community of neighborhoods that have strong ties to elementary schools, exhibit a small town or "home town" feeling, and are characterized by activities and events that draw the neighborhood together.

The physical character of these neighborhoods should be a source of pride for the community. Streets should be tree lined, historic buildings preserved and the neighborhoods clean, well-maintained, functional and aesthetically pleasing. Linkages to parks and open space should be hallmarks of both old and new neighborhoods. There should be a public commitment to conserve existing neighborhoods and a specific recognition of the importance of redeveloping declining, older neighborhoods.

In addition, Springfield has a strong system of neighborhood organizations. These groups provide a mechanism for coordination and cooperation within the neighborhood and between neighborhoods and public agencies.

#### **1. Preserve the unique character of existing neighborhoods. Foster creative and high-quality development in new neighborhoods.**

Every community has unique characteristics that define different neighborhoods. Characteristics such as house styles, tree-lined streets, neighborhood parks and schools, historical features and topographical features are a few characteristics that distinguish one neighborhood from another. Preserving these features provides for a diverse selection of neighborhoods for residents to live. The development of new high quality neighborhoods will help to ensure the quality of life within the community and provide housing stock that will maintain a long economic life.

#### **2. Design and maintain neighborhoods that promote interaction among residents, include appropriate public facilities, and provide safe places to live, work and play.**

Neighborhoods are the building blocks of the community. The quality of life for a municipality is often measured by the livability and character of its neighborhoods. Strong neighborhoods instill pride among residents, are safe and drug free, create small

town or hometown feelings, provide a network to nurture families, and instill a sense of community characterized by events and activities that promote resident interaction.

**3. Administer services at the neighborhood level whenever possible.**

Services should be tailored to address specific neighborhood needs and issues. Providing services at the neighborhood level may also build familiarity and trust between neighborhoods and service personnel.

**4. Maintain the integrity of the neighborhood's physical resources - yards, houses, sidewalks, streets.**

The City and County should lead the private sector by providing a high level of maintenance of its public facilities, by conducting protective land use planning, zoning and code enforcement, by administering a program of housing rehabilitation loans and grants, and by removing abandoned or severely deteriorated buildings.

**5. Recognize and maintain the original residential character of neighborhoods while encouraging a diversity of land uses where appropriate.**

Neighborhood residents often feel strongly about preserving the character of their neighborhoods and prefer stability to change. The challenge is to find a balance between the need for change and the need for stability. Preserving existing neighborhood values, while accommodating the necessary and inevitable forces of change, requires much open discussion and ongoing communication among all interested parties.

The City and County should adhere to the principle that the more developed and established a neighborhood, the greater the burden of proof is upon the proponent of change. Among the factors to be considered are the social and economic costs of the loss of existing housing; use and site planning compatibility; and the importance of new investment to the long-term residential health of the neighborhood.

**6. Encourage a system of neighborhood organizations in Springfield and Greene County to foster neighborhood pride, build a theme of community and improve communications.**

Neighborhood organizations provide a vehicle for communication between the City and County and their residents. They provide a forum to promote grassroots issues to community leaders and provide a voice for their membership. Neighborhood organizations create a social network that helps to increase neighborhood confidence and they create a sense of unity and safety within the neighborhood. All of these elements foster a sense of ownership in the neighborhood.

## Neighborhood Planning and Design Principles

These major principles, which were crafted by the *Springfield Vision 20/20* Neighborhoods and Housing Focus Groups, guided the preparation of this Neighborhoods Element.

**Diverse:** Each neighborhood should have some diversity of housing types, arranged to be related and mutually supportive. This will help provide attractive and acceptable locations for housing for people in all stages of the life cycle and for a wide range of incomes. It will lessen the problems associated with large areas of attached housing. Diverse housing types can be more easily planned and designed in developing (new) neighborhoods. Inclusion of diverse housing types in existing neighborhoods should relate to areas in transition and should adopt appropriate design and buffering considerations for the particular neighborhood.

**Compact:** Neighborhoods should be relatively compact by virtue of allowing small lots, narrow streets and some attached housing. Compact growth is one of the main objectives of the *Vision 20/20 Growth Management and Land Use Plan*.

**Connected:** Streets, sidewalks and off-road paths should connect neighborhoods to one another, connect different types of housing within a neighborhood, connect housing to parks and schools, and connect housing to any fringe commercial areas.

**Protected:** Neighborhoods (and sub-neighborhoods) should be protected from the negative effects of excessive cut-through traffic by building adequate arterial and collector streets, by allowing traffic to disperse in many directions, and by applying traffic calming techniques to local streets. Protection measures are not necessarily in conflict with connection measures.

**Attractive:** Neighborhoods should be made attractive through the generous use of trees along each street, nearby parkways or greenways, well-maintained streets, decorative street lighting, and careful site planning.

**Friendly to Pedestrians and Bicyclists:** Every neighborhood should have a comprehensive network of sidewalks, interconnected local streets with low traffic speeds, and good connections to the Parkway and Greenway systems.

**Environmentally Sensitive:** Neighborhood planning should respond to sinkholes, streams, steep slopes, major wooded areas and other major environmental features.

**Planned:** Each neighborhood should be planned as a coherent whole so that the final arrangement of housing, streets, trails, parks, businesses and, possibly, schools is attractive and functional and so that lasting value is built.

## Objectives and Actions for Neighborhood Planning and Design

The Objectives of this section are:

**Objective 1 -- Sustainability:** Promote continuous public and private reinvestment to ensure that established neighborhoods remain attractive places to live.

**Objective 2 -- Physical Planning:** Create neighborhoods that are comprehensively planned, include all needed public facilities, provide for bicyclist and pedestrian movement, accommodate a variety of housing types, minimize land use incompatibilities, and exhibit a sense of identity.

**Objective 3 -- Street Network:** Protect neighborhoods from the deleterious effects of high-speed or cut-through traffic while still providing street connections in all four directions.

**Objective 4 -- Park System:** Provide neighborhood park facilities at convenient locations throughout the Springfield urbanized area.

**Objective 5 -- Walking and Bicycling:** Provide pedestrian and bicyclist connections through and among all residential neighborhoods.

**Objective 6 -- Housing Design:** Encourage single-family housing that creates an inviting street corridor and attached housing that is an attractive alternative and is complementary to and linked with the larger neighborhood.

**Objective 7 -- Neighborhood Services and Facilities:** Provide municipal services and facilities with the aim of maintaining or improving older neighborhoods and creating lasting value in emerging neighborhoods.

**Objective 8 -- Neighborhood Organization:** Build a strong system of neighborhood organizations as a means of reducing crime and the fear of crime, improving communications among residents, building a sense of community, and improving communications between residents and public agency personnel.

**Objective 9 -- Role of the Public Sector:** Participate in neighborhood design, stabilization and revitalization through planning, public works and housing assistance programs.

**Objective 10 -- Code Enforcement:** Provide a consistent system of code enforcement for recurring issues that affect neighborhoods.

## Neighborhood Sustainability

**Objective 1 -- Sustainability: Promote continuous public and private reinvestment to ensure that established neighborhoods remain attractive places to live.**

**Actions:**

- 1. Protection.** The City of Springfield and Greene County should protect the best aspects of established areas from negative effects such as excessive auto traffic or incompatible, unbuffered land uses. Conversely, blighted, deteriorating or obsolete activities should be phased out and those sites improved according to an established plan. Guided by the planning and community physical image principles of *Vision 20/20*, private and public investments should aim to enhance or strengthen a sense of neighborhood in all established areas.

When working toward housing variety within an established neighborhood, recognize and maintain the original residential character of the neighborhood.

The City and County should review zoning patterns to assure that current zoning regulations are consistent with the predominant existing residential use in those areas where preservation of that housing is intended. Zoning should protect existing neighborhoods by buffering businesses from residential uses and by buffering single-family and higher density housing. Also, new housing should "fit" into the neighborhood in terms of density, housing value and style. Where possible, the original use or intent of each structure should be retained.

- 2. Coordination.** Coordinate public sector actions and investments to promote private maintenance and renewal of established residential, commercial and industrial areas. Job growth should be promoted in mature areas to help reduce economic disparities. Blight and abandonment should not be regarded as unavoidable central area characteristics. Instead, the continual process of change should help keep those locations vital and desirable.

## Neighborhood Physical Planning and Reinvestment

The majority of urban development that will exist in the Springfield metropolitan area by the year 2020 is already in place. These private and public improvements represent a tremendous investment and are essential to the quality of life and financial security of many thousands of people. In addition, the historic fabric of the community provides a sense of place and a physical environment that is nearly irreplaceable. Enhancing and preserving Springfield through the coming decades will involve building on its urban character and heritage.

**Objective 2 -- Physical Planning: Create neighborhoods that are comprehensively planned, include all needed public facilities, provide for bicyclist and pedestrian movement, accommodate a variety of housing types, minimize land use incompatibilities, and exhibit a sense of identity.**

### *Actions:*

1. **Neighborhoods.** Undeveloped land should be planned and designed on the basis of creating identifiable neighborhoods.

A “neighborhood” may be defined by major geographic boundaries such as arterial roads, major streams, railroads or major non-residential areas and containing 3,000 to 6,000 residents. For the purpose of this plan, a typical neighborhood is defined as being approximately one square mile in size. It should be noted that Springfield has many neighborhood organizations that have self-defined their boundaries. Many of these neighborhoods are smaller than one square mile.

Each neighborhood should be supported by public open space, should contain a mixture of housing types (single-family detached and multi-family attached) and should be contained within a convenient walking radius of some retail stores and personal services.

- C Provide neighborhoods with the opportunity for necessary services and facilities (e.g., library services, parks or open space, grocery stores, pharmacies, etc.) through careful planning and mixed use zoning.
- C Identify appropriate urban design elements which bring people together and build pride of place (for example, public space for meeting and talking, sidewalks in residential areas with good connections to shopping and recreational areas, ample green/open space in newly developed areas).
- C Provide variety within the larger community by encouraging developments with special features and a sense of uniqueness. These may include public improvements such as entrance monuments, roundabouts, street islands, boulevard trees and nicely-designed neighborhood parks, well preserved and actively used historic buildings, neighborhood-sized commercial nodes, or distinctive housing styles.

- 2. Redevelopment and Infill.** Redevelopment and infill are keys to strengthening older areas and should follow the community design principles established in the *Land Use and Growth Management, Historic Preservation, and the Community Physical Image Plan* elements of *Vision 20/20*. The City and County should encourage continuous neighborhood reinvestment by providing attractive public facilities and services such as streets and police protection, by removing blighting influences such as incompatible land development, through spot-clearance of severely deteriorated structures, and by providing housing rehabilitation loans and grants through local and non-local funding sources. Historic or architecturally significant buildings and areas should be preserved because they express the city's heritage and add beauty and charm to their surroundings.
- 3. Neighborhood Conservation Strategies.** The City should continue to prepare, with input from neighborhood representatives, targeted conservation strategies for neighborhoods where appropriate. Such programs should be targeted to specific neighborhoods in order to achieve visible results and solve problems deemed to be most detrimental to quality of life in the community. Finally, the City should continue to use the Urban Conservation District designation in areas where there are special needs.
- 4. Planning and Design.** The City should continue its practice of preparing specific plans for each neighborhood or district in which a need for additional guidance beyond *Vision 20/20* is identified. Not all neighborhoods will need a specific neighborhood plan. In some cases, strategies and actions identified in this element can be used to address specific issues. When preparing plans or implementing public improvements, the neighborhood guidelines in the *Vision 20/20 Community Physical Image Plan Element and Parks, Open Space, & Greenways Plan Element* should be observed.
- 5. Historic and Architecturally Significant Buildings.** Protect historic and architecturally significant buildings and sites. Utilize these resources as a foundation of neighborhood and commercial area stabilization or revitalization because they provide an attractive element unavailable elsewhere. Promote the use of various economic incentives, such as loans, grants, and tax credit programs, as tools for the protection and rehabilitation of these historic sites.
- 6. Variety.** Each neighborhood should contain a range of housing types including single-family detached, townhouses, and apartments. Some portion of each type of housing should, ideally, be available for occupancy on either an ownership or lease basis.
- 7. Linkages.** New neighborhoods should be linked visually and functionally to the established portions of Springfield via street connections, bicycle facilities and, where possible, the greenway system.
- 8. Self-Sufficiency.** New neighborhoods should be functionally self-sufficient in terms of neighborhood-scale commercial services and proximity to parks, open space, or greenways.

## Maintaining Traditional Urban Character

One of the strengths and beauties of older neighborhoods is the close-knit, compact mixture of different forms of housing, shops, offices, services and employment areas. It is this urban character that, if properly maintained and fostered, will help keep Springfield economically vital and an attractive place to live and work. New building technologies should be used and more accommodation made for the auto than in the past, but certain elements of the pre-auto era should be respected. It is these urban patterns that will help make Springfield and its older neighborhoods distinct, livable and competitive with other locations that are designed primarily for the auto. These and other recommendations are also described in the *Center City Revitalization Framework*.

### **Actions:**

1. **Mixed-Use Areas:** Support the development of mixed-use areas.
  - C Identify and designate locations as mixed-use that have higher density residential neighborhoods close by, a mix of mutually supportive commercial and entertainment activities, pedestrian-friendly gathering places, transit service, and flexible parking requirements. Several of the proposed Activity Centers, particularly Greater Downtown, can and should flourish as mixed-use areas. Create plans and strategies that promote success for mixed-use areas.
  - C Focus less on separating different land uses and more on the size, design or position of buildings and their relationship to the street, to users and to neighbors. Base plans and zoning on performance standards that measure how various types of buildings interact. Allow a wide variety of activities within these buildings in mixed-use areas.
  - C Develop site plan design standards that attract pedestrians by bringing storefronts and windows to the sidewalk, orienting building faces to the street, and limiting buildings to three or four stories.
  - C Accommodate the automobile but locate parking so that it does not interfere with pedestrian movement and enjoyment. Rear or side parking is definitely preferred. Encourage patrons to travel to mixed-use areas by alternative means. Encourage parking and landscaping strategies that buffer adjacent areas and mitigate negative spillover effects of non-residential parking on residential streets. Encourage shared parking. Landscape all parking areas, particularly any near the street. Build low walls of masonry or hedges that extend the visual effect of the building line (but maintain the “sight triangle” at street intersections).
  - C Require storefront transparency (windows facing the street) to ensure both natural surveillance and an inviting pedestrian experience.



- 2. Housing in Mixed-Use Areas:** Support the development of housing of appropriate form and density in Center City and designated mixed-use areas.
  - C Promote the development of well-designed moderate-density housing adjacent to one or more of the following amenities: shopping, recreational or cultural facilities, and employment centers.
  - C Advance the understanding and acceptance of urban density and traditional urban patterns among businesses and designers; promote traditional urban patterns as a means of improving business, enhancing neighborhoods and reducing traffic congestion.
- 3. Appropriate Housing Forms:** Continue to provide zoning districts that allow and encourage infill or replacement housing that is compatible with neighboring structures in height, setback, lot width, front door orientation, general architecture, and garage placement, particularly in older neighborhoods.
- 4. Neighborhood Preservation:** Maintain and strengthen the character of the city's various residential areas.
  - C Continue to encourage the rehabilitation of older and historic housing rather than demolishing such housing.
  - C Ensure that infill development standards reflect the setbacks, orientation, rhythm, height and scale of surrounding one- and two-family dwellings.
  - C Limit the amount and type of non-residential land uses permitted in low-density residential areas to religious institutions, specific public facilities such

as schools, libraries and parks and other non-residential land uses that can be integrated with low-density housing through proper locating, site planning and facility design.

- C Create traditional setbacks, orientation, rhythm, height and scale of housing in areas where no clear architectural pattern exists.

- 5. Utilizing Historic Resources:** Continue to work with private groups to educate the public about the value of historic preservation as a tool for economic development and neighborhood stabilization. The City will follow the policies established in the *Vision 20/20 Historic Preservation Plan Element*.

### Neighborhood Identity

The Springfield-Greene County community is composed of various districts and neighborhoods. The unique characteristics of these districts and neighborhoods should be accentuated and used to create neighborhood identity.

#### **Actions:**

- 1. Edges.** Clearly demarcate the edge of each district or activity node, and as opportunities arise correct inconsistent edge conditions. As districts grow and expand, adjust district edges in a logical and consistent manner to maintain a clearly defined edge.
- 2. Entry Features.** Incorporate special, landscaped entry or gateway features at all key access points to each major neighborhood or district, particularly in areas of publicly-assisted revitalization.
- 3. Focal Features.** Evaluate all existing districts for the existence of, or the potential to create, focal areas or features, and require that all emerging districts work toward creating these elements. Use focal features as an important element in any publicly-supported revitalization plan. Suggest the creation of such features during site plan reviews to improve property values, and negotiate development bonuses or variances in exchange for these features.
- 4. Identification.** Name and map each current or future neighborhood or district as a basis of design improvements and pride.

Create for each major neighborhood a unique logotype or symbol. Top priority should go to those neighborhoods in which the City is investing in redevelopment and infrastructure improvements in conjunction with private property investments.

## Landscaping

Landscaping within a neighborhood can have a significant impact on the physical appearance of the neighborhood and can increase the quality of life for its residents.

### **Actions:**

1. **Street Trees.** Trees should be planted in the public right-of-way along every street, including commercially-oriented arterial roads and local residential streets. Landscaping along the streets should be a joint public and private effort and could take advantage of both the public right-of-way and the private setback space.
2. **Neighborhood Tree Planting Program.** Plant trees along all streets in residential neighborhoods based on a plan that specifies the species for each street. Tree species should be randomly mixed to protect neighborhoods from losing all of their trees due to disease, drought, or severe storms. Supplemental street tree planting should be included in the City's and County's capital improvements program and annual budget.
3. **Private Landscaping.** Encourage developers to incorporate landscaping in a variety of ways, including:
  - C Overstory trees in addition to the boulevard street trees
  - C Foundation planting around buildings
  - C Special landscaping along walks and steps
  - C Small entry features for each residential unit or complex
  - C Hedges or landscaped borders to define the boundaries of each property.

## Street Lighting

Residential neighborhoods shouldn't be lighted to the same extent as commercial areas, but there should be sufficient lighting to make the streets safe for pedestrians and motorists.

### **Action:**

1. **Lighting Program.** Develop a street lighting program for all residential neighborhoods. Establish lighting standards (application, spacing, configuration) for various residential street categories. Residential area developers should be given a choice of several types of street lights that can be maintained by City Utilities so that developers who wish to install a more decorative fixture and pole may do so. Identify the responsible agency and the funding source(s) for installing and maintaining the pedestrian-scaled street lights.

## Commercial Areas

“Neighborhood scale” shopping has a wide appeal but requires specific market criteria in order to maintain itself as viable businesses. As retailing and transportation have evolved, small shopping areas oriented to the pedestrian have given way to much larger complexes with ample front-door parking and major roadway access. Springfield has followed this national trend. “Big-box” retailing requires very large sites and big store footprints, two features that do not fit well in older neighborhoods.



### **Actions:**

- 1. Traditional Commercial Design Standards:** Support urban design standards that emphasize a traditional urban character in those commercial areas that were designed with a pedestrian orientation.
  - C Identify commercial districts in the city that reflect traditional urban form and develop appropriate standards and preservation objectives for these areas. The *Center City Plan Element* is a major step in this direction. Plans and zoning regulations for the Walnut Street and Commercial Street Historic Districts also contribute to the preservation of these urban streets.
  - C Enhance unique characteristics of the traditional commercial districts by encouraging appropriate building forms and designs, historic preservation objectives, appropriate site plans, and by maintaining high quality public spaces and infrastructure.
  - C Enhance pedestrian or transit-oriented commercial districts with street furniture, tree planting, bicycle racks, and improved transit amenities.

- C Orient new buildings to the street to foster safe and successful commercial districts, particularly in Center City.
  - C Limit the construction and visual impact of billboards in neighborhood commercial districts.
2. **Acceptable Locations:** Limit auto-oriented commercial districts to major arterial streets where the surrounding development pattern will not support high levels of pedestrian use or to streets where auto-oriented land uses can be compatibly concentrated.
  3. **Pedestrian Features in Auto-Oriented Commercial Areas:** Provide adequate transit service and convenient, safe pedestrian access in auto-oriented commercial districts.



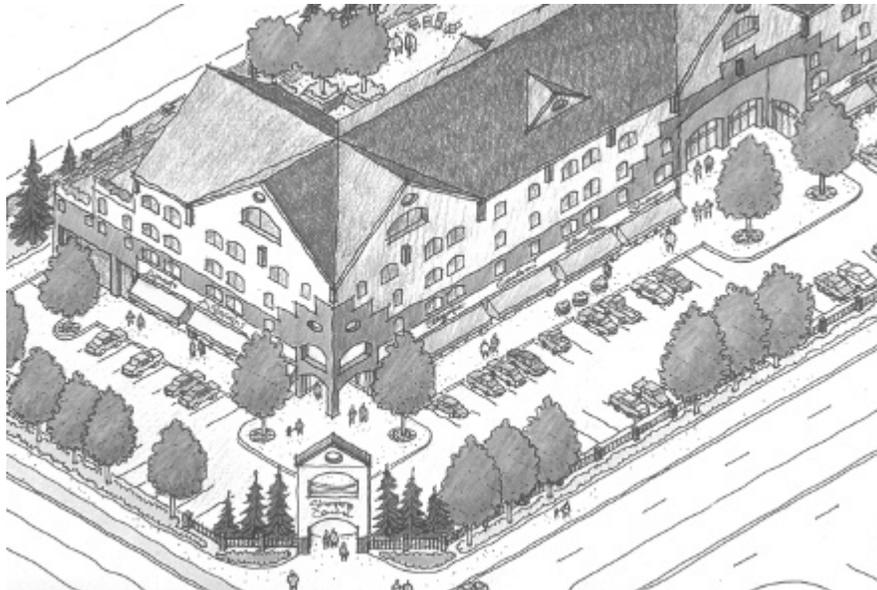
### Site Planning and Design

The use of sound planning and design techniques can have a significant impact on future neighborhoods and as part of revitalization and conservation efforts. Various techniques are available and have been proven in other communities.

#### **Actions:**

1. **Techniques.** Use a variety of development and redevelopment strategies such as the neighborhood unit concept, planned mixed use developments, open space subdivisions, neo-traditional areas, or other innovative design concepts to build strong neighborhoods and a sense of community.

2. **Incentives.** Encourage innovative development and redevelopment, through the use of incentives and appropriate regulations, to achieve desired residential and nonresidential development patterns that are also environmentally responsible. Provide incentives for developments that protect natural areas or environmentally sensitive areas through land trusts, open space zoning or other techniques such as density bonuses for open space development.
3. **Efficiency.** Encourage sites to share functional site design elements (such as shared access, shared parking, coordinated landscaping, linked open space, detention and retention areas, etc.) when such elements support a more efficient and attractive development pattern
4. **Environmental Protection.** Require protection of natural features such as trees, slopes, streams, and lakes in new developments.
5. **Open Space.** Preserve open space in new developments by using cluster subdivisions, planned unit developments, transfer of development rights between land owners, conservation easements, etc.
6. **Mixed- and Multiple-Use Development.** Encourage developments with innovative site plans that combine various residential densities, and where appropriate, a mix of uses including neighborhood-serving nonresidential uses.
  - C Establish guidelines for mixed-use development.
  - C Encourage carefully designed mixed use projects that combine office, retail, and/or residential land uses within the same development.
  - C Ensure appropriate buffering between developments to reduce the impact of conflicting uses.
  - C Encourage creative subdivision design with strong controls for the preservation of open space.



## **Encroachment of Institutional Land Uses into Neighborhoods**

As Springfield has grown, so have some of its major institutions such as colleges, universities, hospitals, churches and government offices. This institutional growth has had many benefits to the community such as jobs, tax base, visitor attraction, entertainment and cultural activities, and prestige. Guiding continued growth will be positive for the community but it is also important that these institutions be compatible with their surroundings. Springfield has a good history of crafting plans and regulations that balance these sometimes competing interests, and the City should continue to pay attention to the needs of all stakeholders in this process.

Expansion of several institutional land uses over the past decade has caused conflicts with surrounding residential areas. Institutional encroachment often goes unnoticed as properties are acquired one by one. Since the encroachment is located in residential areas, housing stock is removed to make room for institutional related uses. This pattern of property acquisition often takes several years to complete. During this time, houses are removed leaving vacant lots. On occasion, single houses are left behind and surrounded by institutional land uses when terms of sale between the property owner and the institution can not be resolved.

The City has worked with institutions and neighborhoods in the past to resolve various issues. Discussions with St. John's Medical Center, Southwest Missouri State University, Ozarks Technical Community College, and several governmental units in the government plaza area have produced positive results.

Related problems include:

- C Access to institutional parking lots is often adjacent to or through neighborhoods.
- C Parking lot lighting spills over into neighborhoods.
- C Large expanses of asphalt and buildings change the neighborhood character.
- C Housing stock is either demolished or removed from neighborhoods.
- C Vehicular and pedestrian activity increases.
- C Parking can spill over into neighborhoods during large institutional events.
- C Surface water is not adequately ponded and drained, resulting in localized flooding.

The City has used various methods to deal with institutional encroachments. Encouraging campus plans indicating future boundaries, developing cooperative agreements with institutions as to the direction of future growth, and coordinating neighborhood meetings between neighborhoods and institutions are a few methods that have been used in the past. A recent agreement with SMSU even included a land trade between the University and the City which assisted in the creation of a green space buffer to separate the neighborhood from University-owned property and a regional detention basin that addresses neighborhood flooding. These methods have had success in the past and could be used to resolve future conflicts between institutional uses and neighborhoods.

**Actions:**

1. **Institutional Growth:** Continue to work closely with institutional partners to ensure that the scale and form of expansion will occur in a manner compatible with surrounding areas.
  - C Colleges, medical complexes, governmental building areas and other large property interests should concentrate their greatest density and height in the interior of their campuses.
  - C Work with institutions to create building forms on the edges of institutional properties that are most reflective of neighboring properties.
  - C Encourage institutions to develop master plans indicating future boundaries, through a process that involves participation and input from neighborhood property owners and residents. Both the institution and the City should ultimately approve these master plans.
  - C Continue to work to build consistent and clear communications between institutions and affected neighborhoods.
  - C Encourage institutions to provide adequate buffers and green space to separate institutional uses from the residential uses.
  - C Encourage institutions to consider parking decks to minimize encroachment into surrounding areas.

## **Neighborhood Street Network**

The street system is a fundamental element of the neighborhood design. The street pattern controls traffic flow, determines the ease of pedestrian and bicyclist movement, defines views and vistas, orients the user, unites the community, and creates a physical framework into which houses and other buildings are placed.

The problems of cut-through traffic and speeding affect many neighborhoods. Typically, high levels of cut-through traffic result when major businesses or institutions are located near residential areas and street system conditions are such that it is faster and/or easier to use minor residential streets than collector or arterial roads.

The police department has worked with neighborhoods in the past on patrolling and enforcement to reduce the speed of traffic, especially cut-through traffic. This has provided some success at reducing speed, although when the area is not monitored speeds tend to return to previous levels. Traffic calming standards were introduced in the Phelps Grove Neighborhood Plan, which was the first where thresholds were established for neighborhood traffic.

**Objective 3 -- Street Network: Protect neighborhoods from the deleterious effects of high-speed or cut-through traffic while still providing street connections in all four directions.**

**Actions:**

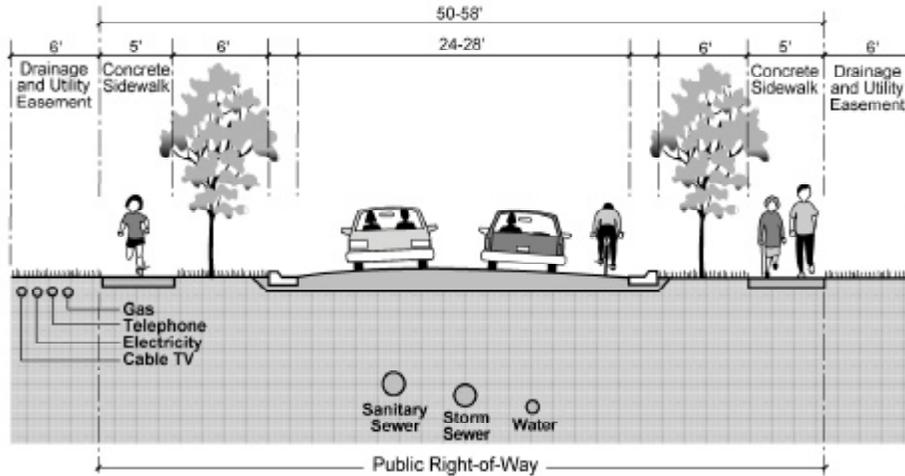
1. **Connections.** Require all new residential subdivisions to provide public street movement to each cardinal direction unless impractical because of natural, environmental or similar conditions. Ensure there is proper coordination between Springfield and Greene County when reviewing plats near the municipal boundary.
2. **Arterial Streets.** Reserve sufficiently wide public right-of-way for any additional arterial road by adopting an “official map” of the planned road system. Right-of-way width beyond what may normally be required through dedication at the time of a land subdivision should be acquired by purchasing. The necessary width of the future arterial road right-of-way should be determined based upon the standards included in the *Vision 20/20* Transportation Plan.
3. **Collector Streets.** Collector streets should be planned for each future neighborhood at the “sketch plan” phase and should link across neighborhoods to arterial roads and other collector roads. City and County planners should work with each land developer to plan the general alignment of collector streets beyond the limits of smaller subdivisions to ensure area-wide continuity.
4. **Local Streets.** Local streets should be designed to create a totally interconnected system to the extent possible, and local streets should be built relatively narrow so as to accommodate slow-speed movement to and from land parcels.
5. **Traffic Calming.** Traffic calming techniques may be used to discourage cut-through traffic, especially commercial traffic, and/or to slow traffic speeds. A list and short description of these techniques is presented in the *Vision 20/20* Transportation Element. The most practical of these is the narrow street width, as shown above, but others may be used based on the review and advice of a traffic engineer when conditions warrant. It should always be kept in mind, however, that when traffic is constrained along one route it tends to flow to another nearby route, possibly creating unintended effects.

These techniques are particularly useful in older neighborhoods that have higher densities and a greater mixture of housing types and land uses. However, the City’s or County’s professional traffic engineer should always be consulted before deciding on any street design modifications regarding the use of traffic calming techniques, since they may result in unintended and unexpected negative consequences. Alterations should be undertaken on a comprehensive, neighborhood-wide basis.

6. **Street Widening.** When widening existing streets, purchase the entire house and lot instead of leaving narrow front yards. The acquired property can be used as landscaped public open space or park along one or both sides of the new street. (Example: Grand Avenue improvements.)
7. **Enforcement:** Continue the use of strategic traffic enforcement in City and County neighborhoods.

**Table 18-1  
Local Streets in New Single-Family Residential Areas**

	Right-of-Way Width	Distance between Curb Faces	Boulevard Width	Sidewalk	Public Trees
<b>Parking Both Sides</b>	58'	28	14'	Both Sides; 5'	Between Sidewalk and Curb; 40-50' Spacing
<b>Parking One Side Only</b>	50'	24	12'	Both Side; 5'	Between Sidewalk and Curb; 40-50' Spacing



Note: Private utilities may be located in right-of-way and/or easement.



## Park System

### **Objective 4 -- Park System: Provide neighborhood park facilities at convenient locations throughout the Springfield urbanized area.**

The intent, as expressed in the Parks, Open Space, and Greenways element, is to provide residents the recreational opportunities generally offered in a neighborhood park, within a reasonable distance. Neighborhood park facilities should be provided in existing mini and neighborhood parks, designated school parks, community parks, and along the greenway system. While this approach may not provide parks within walking distance for everyone, parks would be accessible within a reasonable driving distance. A policy of connecting people with parks is also expressed in the Park plan element whereby the use of greenways, streets, and a “conservation network” that preserves natural minor drainageways, would provide additional recreational opportunity and open space.

#### **Actions:**

- 1. Ensure Open Space Connections:** As each new subdivision is developed, it should include plans for continuing the open space network by assuring sufficient and appropriate open space for connection to adjacent subdivisions. The open space could remain under private ownership and be managed by a homeowners organization or a local land trust. Selected portions of the network could be transferred to public ownership for neighborhood use and connection to the greenway.
- 2. Neighborhood Initiative:** In the event that a neighborhood group wants a park not shown in the plan, a feasibility study should be performed that determines the need for an additional neighborhood park. The study should include an analysis of population (existing and projected), physical assets and barriers, distance to other parks (existing and planned), and the availability of private recreation facilities. Next, the priority must be established in relation to existing priorities; and if the priority is high, the proposed park will be integrated into the implementation strategy. Depending on the level of priority and funding availability, it may be necessary for the neighborhood group to participate in the park financing. By utilizing the Neighborhood Improvement District concept, the neighborhood could assess themselves and help finance the park acquisition, construction, and maintenance. Parkwood Park in northeast Springfield is an example of this technique.
- 3. Location Criteria:** If an additional neighborhood park is to be provided, its location should be selected according to the following criteria:
  - Central location within the neighborhood
  - Local or collector street
  - Street frontage on at least three sides
  - Quality land, not "left-over" land
  - Connect to greenway and conservation network
  - Protect natural resources.

- 4. Planning:** A site plan should be prepared for each neighborhood park to improve access, circulation, and maintenance. Park layout should be edged with public streets to make it accessible and landscaping and major features located so as to be visible and inviting and to spread the benefits of the park back into the neighborhood.



## Bicyclist and Pedestrian Systems

**Objective 5 -- Walking and Bicycling: Provide pedestrian and bicyclist connections through and among all residential neighborhoods.**

**Actions:**

- 1. Planning.** Every residential neighborhood should accommodate bicycling and walking and be connected to the rest of the city via bicycle lanes or paths and sidewalks. Pedestrian and bicyclist networks should be comprehensively planned for each neighborhood to ensure coordination and continuity among individual subdivisions, commercial sites, parks, schools and greenways. Narrow easements or public rights-of-way solely for pedestrians and bicyclists should be used to make critical connections when a motorized passage is not desirable.
- 2. Bicycle System.** Every local residential street should accommodate bicycling by virtue of its traffic-calming characteristics and connections with many other roads. On-street lanes and off-streets paths should link neighborhoods to one another and overcome obstacles such as major roads, streams and railroad tracks. The greenway system should be used in conjunction with on-street lanes (both new and retro-fitted) to provide a city-wide network that is continuous and relatively safe.
- 3. Pedestrian System.** Every local residential street should also accommodate walking via sidewalks and connections with many other roads. Sidewalks should be required along both sides of every local, collector and arterial Street. The

minimum width should be five feet so that two adults may walk comfortably side-by-side. Sidewalks should be separated from the street by a minimum 6-foot wide strip of grass and trees. Where residential densities are extremely low or other circumstances dictate it, a sidewalk need be provided on only one side of the street. The sidewalk network should connect to the greenway pedestrian trails and also link to commercial areas, parks and schools. Missing segments of the sidewalk system should be completed.

## Housing Design

**Objective 6 -- Housing Design: Encourage single-family housing that creates an inviting street corridor and attached housing that is an attractive alternative and is complementary to and linked with the larger neighborhood.**

***Actions:***

***Detached (Single-Family) Housing***

- 1. House Front Setbacks.** Maintain the current minimum setback requirements that allow houses to be built relatively close to the street. Continue to require that infill housing in existing neighborhoods consider building setbacks of existing houses.
- 2. Suburban, Traditional, and Neo-Traditional Design.** Support the building community as it provides housing to meet the varied needs and demands of area homebuyers. Work cooperatively with the building community in meeting these varied needs and demands and ensure that regulations continue to encourage current housing design concepts as well as traditional and neo-traditional housing designs that emphasize streetscape and neighborhood interaction.



## ***Attached Housing Design***

1. **Acceptable Alternative to Detached Housing.** Attached housing should be created as an attractive, essential and acceptable alternative to conventional detached housing.
  - Encourage the use of a **single-family design “vocabulary”** in multifamily and attached buildings. This means that multi-family housing should have elements commonly found in single-family housing such as pitched roofs, articulated facades, entrances visible from the public street, porches or balconies, and a maximum height of three to four stories. When garages cannot be located to the rear or on the interior of the block, they should be set back similar to the requirements for single-family housing.
  - Attached housing should be built in **groupings** so that it fits into the overall residential context rather than being sequestered into large project sites.
  - Attractive and acceptable locations for attached housing should be **“master planned”** into each major neighborhood (approximately one mile square) by continuously updating neighborhood sketch plans and referring to them when reviewing subdivision proposals. The Land Use Plan Map and the Zoning Map should be refined and adjusted to reflect current thinking about the inclusive design of each neighborhood.
  - Attached housing should be located at **high-amenity locations** along the Parkways and the Greenways, and overlooking parks.
  - **Duplexes** should be designed for visual compatibility with single-family housing, should be scattered among the neighborhood rather than concentrated, and may be used as a transitional building type near larger buildings and street intersections.
2. **Variety of Housing Types.** Encourage a range of densities, housing types and building configurations; discourage large housing projects that consist of a single building type.
  - If a multifamily building or attached housing is developed near single-family detached housing, ensure that the **width of the building facade facing the street** is similar to that of a single-family house. Attached units should be grouped in rows of no more than four or six units to avoid a monolithic appearance.



- When combining housing types, it is preferable for the transition between types to occur at the rear rather than the front (i.e. across a courtyard or parking area rather than across the street).

**3. Appropriate Exterior Design For Attached Housing.** Site plans for attached housing should provide an attractive street frontage and some useable outdoor spaces for the residents, whether it be ground-level or a balcony.

- Encourage front and back facades with **appropriate levels of formality**. The front, as the more public side of the house, should receive the more formal treatment, with trash/recycling storage, play equipment and outdoor storage located in the back. The main entry should face the street.
- Buildings should address the street with **varied and articulated facades**, frequent entries and windows. Porches and balconies should be encouraged, and facades consisting of long blank walls or series of garage doors should be prohibited.



- **Driveways and garages** should be located to the rear of the lot or interior of the block. **Porches and front steps** should face the local street.
  - Encourage **unity as well as diversity** by specifying a common design vocabulary among the buildings, a clear pathway system and shared outdoor space that unifies and integrates the site.
  - **Define all outdoor spaces**, distinguishing between those reserved for residents and those open to the public. Enclose the shared outdoor space with buildings, low fences or hedges, and paths. Clearly define the boundaries and transitions between shared and private outdoor space.
  - Provide convenient **access to shared outdoor areas**, amenities such as play equipment, seating and tables to encourage their use, and vegetation for seasonal shade.
  - **Control access by nonresidents** via gateways, fences, plant materials or enclosed location. Locate outdoor spaces to allow for easy surveillance from inside homes.
- 4. Private and Public Space and Security.** Provide visual indications of the boundaries between private space, public space and shared space.
- Encourage clearly defined private or semi-private outdoor space (for each housing unit) such as a **yards, patios, porches or balconies**, with direct access from inside the unit. Clearly define the boundaries of private outdoor space with elements such as fencing, sidewalks and vegetation.
  - Encourage the use of a **front entry, for each unit, that faces the street** and is visible and accessible from an adjacent public path. The “backs” of each unit

should be reserved for private outdoor space and resident parking. Where individual entries are not possible, minimize the number of units that share a single entry.

- Use semi-private outdoor spaces such as **porches and patios** to increase the sense of privacy and security within the home. Provide opportunities for surveillance of shared outdoor areas such as streets, sidewalks and play areas from within the home.



**5. Streets and Parking Areas.** Provide street connections between attached and detached housing developments to allow social interaction. Reduce the adverse visual effect of the parking area through careful location and landscaping.

- On large sites, extend the network of surrounding streets through the site to improve circulation, visibility, security and integration into the surrounding neighborhood.
- Encourage **resident parking near each home**, with a direct paved path to front or back door, while locating visitor parking near public spaces and public paths. Promote the use of parking spaces that are visible from within the resident's home and provide sufficient lighting.
- In most cases, **parking lots should be located to the rear** of homes. If they must be located on the street frontage, they should be screened by a low hedge, fence, gate or similar visual buffer.
- **Use landscaping** in and around parking lots to provide shade and visual relief.

- 6. Sidewalks and Paths.** Provide a clear path system that connects each housing unit to destinations within the site and the surrounding neighborhood. Paths should be logical and predictable in their routes and should be linked to the public sidewalk system. Keep public paths at the edge of the site; distinguish between public paths and private outdoor space; and make paths visible from shared and private spaces.

## Neighborhood Services and Facilities

**Objective 7 -- Neighborhood Services and Facilities: Provide municipal services and facilities with the aim of maintaining or improving older neighborhoods and creating lasting value in emerging neighborhoods.**

### **Actions:**

- 1. Basic Services.** The City and County should ensure that basic services are available in all neighborhoods, and that the quality of service or facility provided is consistently high from one neighborhood to the next.
  - The City should continue to strive to provide sanitary sewer service to all houses within the urbanized area, and adequate storm water drainage should be provided to minimize the chance of flooding of homes.
  - Streets and sidewalks should be maintained in a safe, even condition by implementing a systematic replacement or resurfacing program.
  - The collection of trash and recyclables should be consolidated within neighborhoods to minimize the number of trucks in the neighborhood. This could be accomplished by the City controlling the service and negotiating contracts with private haulers for various sectors of the community.
- 2. Neighborhood Schools.** The Springfield Public School Board should maintain neighborhood elementary schools whenever feasible. The Board is encouraged to consider the effect on neighborhoods when recommending relocating or closing an elementary school. The School Board should work with City or County planning staff to develop a plan for re-use of any school property that is slated for closure prior to closing the school.

The Park Board and School Board should continue to follow the practice of developing “school parks,” which involves integrating neighborhood parks and school playgrounds and periodically opening school gymnasiums and auditoriums for community use.
- 3. Coordination with other Agencies.** The City and County should continue to work with community organizations such as the Americorps Programs to improve older neighborhoods through neighborhood clean-ups and housing repair.

**4. Health and Safety Ordinances and Code Enforcement.** Provide minimum standards for dwellings and property and establish a system that provides for enforcement of all codes on a city and county-wide basis.

- The City should continue to provide a network of Code enforcement personnel.
- The City and County should provide for exceptional public health and safety in older neighborhoods by enforcing the Housing Code and health ordinances, including rubbish and weeds, the noise ordinance, and residential parking ordinances.

In 1996 the City of Springfield proposed a comprehensive systematic code enforcement process for exterior maintenance. The proposed process involved systematic visual inspections of the exterior of all residential properties throughout the City. Under this proposal, properties would be inspected for any exterior violation of the City Code. This program prompted much public debate and discussion about systematic inspections for aesthetic reasons. This proposal was rejected by City Council and was never implemented.

The City has conducted other systematic inspections in the past. The most recent program, Project Neighborhood Preservation, was conducted in the early 1990's. This program focused systematic inspections on sanitary violations in areas of past complaints. Each property in designated areas was inspected for weeds, trash, inoperable vehicles, and surfacing sewage. The program was successful in eliminating violations through voluntary compliance.

Project Neighborhood Preservation could be used as a model for limited scope systematic sanitary inspection to improve the overall quality of life in neighborhoods without getting into housing aesthetics issues. An increased focus on environmental sanitation not only promotes good health but inspires pride through cleanliness and tidiness.

- Continue the use of the City's Service Request System as a means for citizens to register complaints on code violations and other issues. Investigate the possibility of centralizing all service requests to one phone number. The City should strive to connect all departments to the Service Request Database to improve the flow of information and ensure a timely response to registered complaints.
- Continue and expand the Neighborhood Teams program to strengthen communication between City staff and neighborhood organizations.

**5. Housing Maintenance and Rehabilitation.** Support and encourage housing maintenance through educational and financial assistance.

- C **Training:** Establish a program through a community organization (i.e. Americorps) to provide housing maintenance training for property owners.

- C **Volunteer Labor:** Establish a “Christmas in October or April” program. This program organizes volunteers during one weekend a year, usually in October or April, to perform housing maintenance in low-income neighborhoods.
  - C **Financial Assistance:** The City should continue and increase, when possible, its financial assistance for housing maintenance and rehabilitation through these and other programs.
  - C **Standards:** Set minimum standards for housing conditions and ensure that they are met.
  - C **Funding:** Allocate funds for housing rehabilitation loan programs and provide matching funds for appropriate federal programs.
  - C **Vacant Buildings:** Enact restrictions on empty residential and commercial buildings regarding how buildings are boarded up and how long they can remain boarded up.
  - C **Dangerous Buildings:** Continue enforcing the dangerous buildings ordinance that allows the City to remove a dangerous abandoned buildings. Increase funding in support of the dangerous building removal program.
- 6. Safety and Security.** The use of Police Substations and/or Police Area Representatives (PAR) should be encouraged to provide a visible police presence in neighborhoods. The PAR program operated within the City assigns officers to specific beats to function as Community Oriented Police (COP) officers.
- C **Police Area Representative (PAR) Program:** Continue to expand the PAR program to provide more PAR Officers in neighborhoods. Provide the appropriate resources to fully implement a COP program within the City.
  - C **Neighborhood Watch Programs:** The Police Department and Sheriff’s Department should work with neighborhoods to identify and establish additional neighborhood watch programs in all neighborhoods.

## Neighborhood Organization

**Objective 8 -- Neighborhood Organization: Build a system of neighborhood organizations as a means of reducing crime and the fear of crime, improving communications among residents, building a sense of community, and improving communications between residents and public agency personnel.**

**Actions:**

- 1. Neighborhood Pride.** The City and County should encourage neighborhood activities, block parties, contests and events to enhance community spirit. The City should establish Neighborhood Pride awards to recognize those individuals and organizations that contribute to neighborhood goals.
  
- 2. Neighborhood Security.** The City and County should encourage activities that will make Springfield and Greene County's neighborhoods safe places to live, work, and play.
  - C Establish a system of active, effective neighborhood watch groups throughout Springfield and Greene County neighborhoods.
  
  - C Increase the use of community crime and drug prevention programs like Ozarks Fighting Back.
  
  - C Provide alternative activities so that children do not get involved in criminal activities.
  
- 3. Organization and Structure.** The City and County should work to empower neighborhoods through local management by:
  - Encouraging neighborhoods in organizing and developing leaders from within their membership
  
  - Encouraging the coordination of activities and resources among neighborhood organizations.
  
  - Assisting in the development of Neighborhood Leadership Workshops to aid in developing leadership skills and educate the leadership about the concepts contained in this plan element.
  
- 4. Communications.** The City and County should strive to improve communications and cooperation with neighborhood organizations, including:
  - Notifying neighborhood organizations of rezonings, public hearings, etc. within their neighborhood. Incorporate the neighborhood organization's comments into staff reports.
  
  - Notifying neighborhood organizations of significant criminal activity in their neighborhood.
  
  - Encouraging community involvement in developing self-help solutions to housing and neighborhood problems.

## **Role of the Public Sector**

In order to achieve visible results, the public sector must work with neighborhood residents in assessing the condition of a neighborhood. The following discussion provides a structure to measure the stability of a neighborhood and recommend conservation strategies to assist in improving the quality of life in the neighborhood.

**Objective 9 -- Role of the Public Sector: Participate in neighborhood design, stabilization and revitalization through planning, public works and housing assistance programs.**

### ***Actions:***

Springfield should continue, or initiate, these neighborhood improvement activities:

- Assessment of Neighborhood Condition
- Neighborhood Planning
- Use of the Neighborhood Conservation Office
- Targeted Neighborhood Improvements
- Urban Conservation Districts
- One or more Local Neighborhood Housing Services Programs
- Housing Assistance Programs
- Master Planning for New Neighborhoods

### **Assessment of Neighborhood Condition**

When formulating a neighborhood improvement strategy, it is helpful to analyze the neighborhood's general condition so that the strategy can match the need. This section defines three categories or stages that could be used to classify all neighborhoods. Each stage also lists targeted conservation strategies that can be implemented to improve neighborhood condition. Neighborhoods should be ranked according to the condition of their housing stock, social stability, infrastructure and other factors. Each neighborhood may have several different stages within it. However, the neighborhood should be identified by one particular stage.

Other indicators can be used to further provide a snapshot of the health of a neighborhood. These may include the percentage of units rented vs. owned, the average age of the housing, the exterior building conditions, the mix of housing types, and demographic characteristics such as age, income, poverty status, female head of household, and number of children. All indicators should be compared to city averages. The following represent indicators and strategies for housing within neighborhoods. Separate indicators and strategies could be developed for infrastructure.

### ***Neighborhood Stages and Strategies***

***Stable Neighborhoods*** Sound housing stock, stable real estate values, few potential land use conflicts, and minimal social problems.

Conservation Strategies Requires little public intervention - encouragement for the creative use of land and emphasis on the enforcement of property maintenance codes.

***Transitional Neighborhoods*** Evidence of some deterioration in housing stock, some instability or variation in housing values for similar types of structures, periodic pressures from inappropriate land uses, and occasional social problems.

Conservation Strategies Requires concentrated revitalization efforts - rehabilitation subsidies, carefully applied code enforcement efforts, gradual land use changes, maintenance of infrastructure and public facilities and focused public/private initiatives.

***Opportunity Neighborhoods*** Have great opportunity for improvement, are going through major changes or need help, especially with housing, infrastructure and amenities. Housing noticeably deteriorated, have a seriously eroded housing market, are pressured by incompatible land uses, and have extensive social problems including crime and unemployment.

Conservation Strategies - Diligent clearing or upgrading of abandoned, dilapidated structures, programs to help increase safety and perception of safety, incentives for infill development where appropriate, and projects to enhance economic development.

### **Neighborhood Planning**

The Springfield Neighborhood Conservation Office is responsible for coordinating and developing neighborhood plans, which are policy documents and recommend strategic actions to guide neighborhood development and revitalization. Plans have been developed for:

- Mid-Town Neighborhood
- Phelps Grove Neighborhood

- Rountree Neighborhood
- Walnut Street Area
- West Central Neighborhood
- Westside Neighborhood.

There is a need to develop neighborhood plans for other areas in the city. Existing plans have been developed with the assistance of neighborhood residents and property owners. This process has been effective and would be the recommended course of action in the future. In areas where an established organization does not exist, the City could assist in establishing one. This provides a solid base to build participation in the plan. In addition, neighborhoods in the established areas of the city should be targeted for planning efforts. These areas typically have the greatest need and would benefit most from neighborhood planning. Areas with the greatest need for neighborhood plans should be given the highest priority. Conditions which would merit a high priority would include:

- Evidence of disinvestment
- Deteriorating housing conditions
- Large numbers of vacant or abandoned buildings
- High percentage of low-income residents
- Need for community facilities or neighborhood improvements
- Opportunities for redevelopment or revitalization.

***Actions:***

1. **Neighborhood Planning:** The City should initiate and monitor the progress of neighborhood plans. Staff should be assigned to each plan to facilitate all activities associated with the planning effort.
2. **Identification:** Neighborhoods should be ranked in priority for planning through the neighborhood assessment process. This ranking should be monitored on a yearly basis in conjunction with the Planning and Development Department's annual work program. If neighborhood conditions change in a lower priority neighborhood, it can be raised in priority during the development of the annual work program.

**Neighborhood Conservation Office**

The City maintains a Neighborhood Conservation Office (NCO) to coordinate policies that relate to City services and assist neighborhoods in developing neighborhood plans and special programs.

***Action:***

1. **Organization:** The City should continue the use of the NCO to provide coordination of policies and programs affecting neighborhoods.

## Targeted Neighborhood Improvement

A well-maintained housing stock is one of the most important features of a stable neighborhood. The City should strategically target public funds and improvements in neighborhoods in order to provide a noticeable improvement.

### **Actions:**

- 1. Establish Program:** Establish a program where a portion of CDBG and HOME funds are allocated to improve specific neighborhood blocks.
- 2. Competitive Grant System:** Develop a competitive grant system to award block improvement funding.

## Urban Conservation Districts

A section in the zoning ordinance allows for the creation of an Urban Conservation District (UCD). A UCD is an overlay zoning district that can be used to enact specific regulations for an area or neighborhood. A UCD may only be designated after preparation of an Urban Conservation/Neighborhood Plan. Four UCDs have been established in Springfield; Mid-Town, Phelps Grove, Rountree and Walnut Street. This form of district has been successful in addressing unique problems in specific neighborhoods. For example, the Walnut Street UCD modified the permitted uses and established design review in order to encourage preservation of historic structures. The Rountree UCD required screening and bufferyards between incompatible uses at a time when bufferyards were not required elsewhere in the City.

The four neighborhoods that have been designated as UCDs have experienced reinvestment and renewed interest. Because of this, other neighborhoods have expressed a desire to be designated an Urban Conservation District. Designation as an Urban Conservation District should not be viewed as an end in itself. Designation should only take place when there is a unique need that cannot be addressed through existing ordinances.

### **Action:**

- 1. Establish Criteria for Designating UCD:** Investigate the creation of an Urban Conservation District if three or more of the following conditions exist or if there is a “unique condition” that warrants ordinance modification such as was accomplished in the Walnut Street Urban Conservation District.
  - Overcrowding of structures
  - Illegal conversion of residential structures
  - Presence of structures below minimum code standards
  - Abandonment

Conditions of blight or deterioration due to excess trash, refuse, and/or deferred housing maintenance that affects the health and safety of area residents.

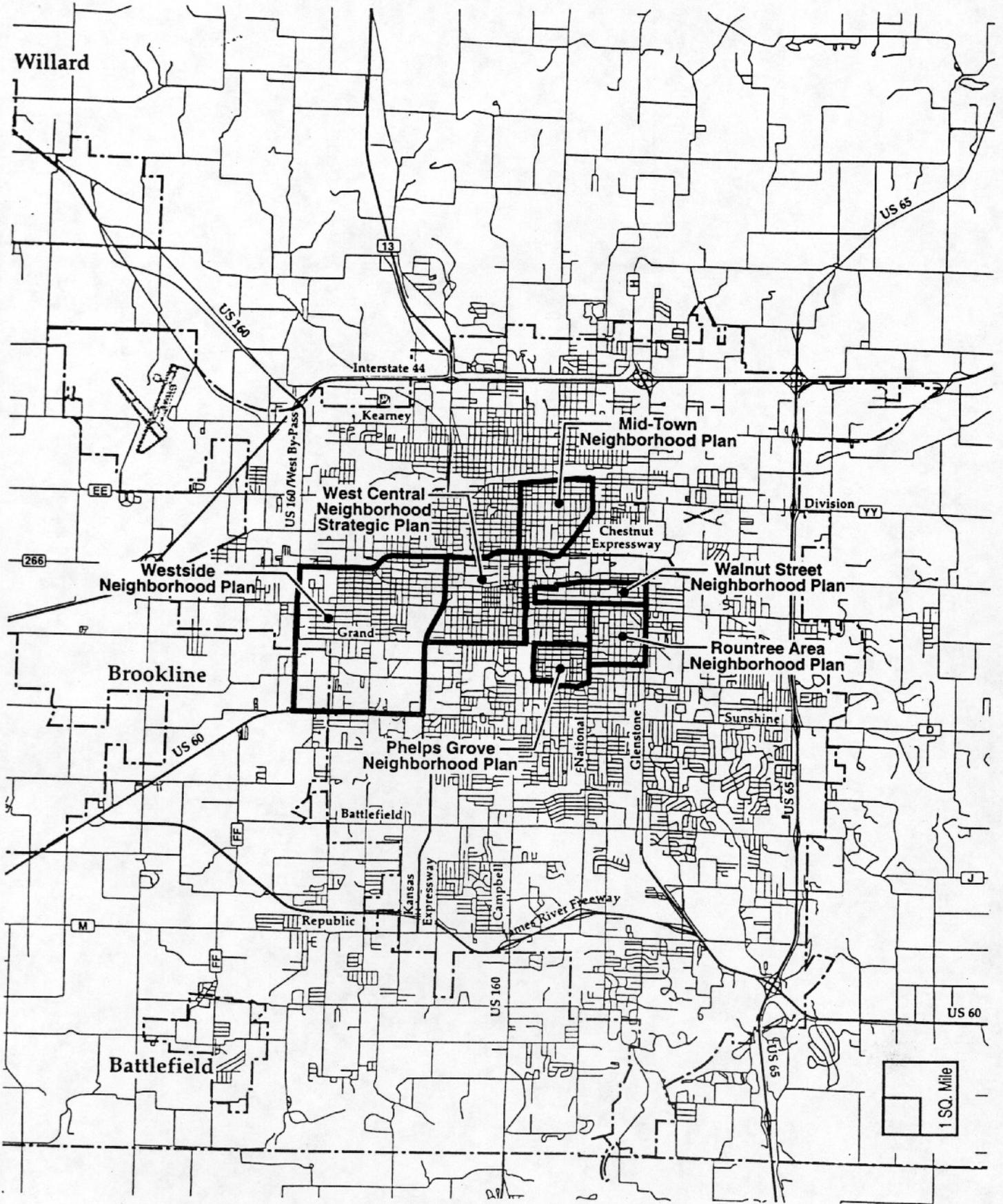


Figure 25-1  
Areas Addressed by Neighborhood Plans

--- City Boundary



Springfield-Greene County  
Comprehensive Plan

## **Residential Permit Parking District**

The City of Springfield has designated several Residential Permit Parking Districts to address the problem of non-residential parking within residential neighborhoods. In most instances, the parking intrusion was the result of parking demands from an adjacent institutional use. The Rountree and Phelps Grove Residential Parking Districts were impacted by SMSU, and the neighborhood south of Kickapoo High School was impacted by student parking from the high school.

Designation of a Residential Parking District, which would require registration of vehicles and display of a tag in order to park on the street, should not be undertaken without a study that confirms a parking problem in the area. Complaints from a neighborhood are not sufficient reason to designate a Residential Permit Parking District. A survey should be undertaken to document the problem.

### ***Action:***

#### **1. Establish Criteria for Designating a Residential Permit Parking District:**

Conduct a survey of the neighborhood in question before designation of additional Residential Permit Parking Districts. Designation should be based on documentation of a significant problem. Examples of previous studies and documentation for Rountree and Phelps Grove neighborhoods should be used as a guide.

## **Springfield Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc., Programs**

The City, in conjunction with neighborhood representatives, should investigate establishing a Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) Corporation. An NHS would be a private organization that works toward improving neighborhoods by providing residents with a wide range of home ownership services such as:

- Home buyer counseling
- Loan origination, packaging and referrals to secure financing needed to buy a house or to refinance a house in conjunction with rehabilitation
- Home rehabilitation and improvement funds
- Rehabilitation specialists to provide consulting and technical assistance
- Post-purchase counseling to help clients with budget counseling, delinquency counseling and technical advice.

These private services would complement the housing assistance programs currently being provided in Springfield.

A Springfield NHS could be affiliated with the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation and be a member of the national NeighborWorks Network. The NHS would be a partnership of residents, lenders and City government. Lenders would agree to provide mortgage and rehabilitation loans on favorable terms. City assistance would be in the form of targeted public improvements and services. To be selected as the NHS service area, there would need to be a neighborhood demonstration of enthusiasm and commitment to invest private capital and effort in home ownership and rehabilitation.

The Springfield Department of Planning and Development should investigate the potential of establishing a local NHS with assistance from the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation and local neighborhood leaders.

### **Housing Assistance Programs**

Springfield should continue to plan comprehensively and strategically for the use of funding from outside sources to meet the housing needs of low- and moderate-income families and individuals. These programs are helpful in maintaining the housing stock and providing a “safety net” for needy individuals in the neighborhoods.

**HOME Investment Partnership (HOME)** – HOME funds are available through an entitlement program of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. These funds provide financing for the rehabilitation of rental housing, which will be available to low income persons at an affordable rent. Fifteen percent of HOME funds are also reserved for the City’s Community Housing Development Organization. These funds are set aside for new construction activities for affordable housing.

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** – The City also uses CDBG funding for rehabilitation of owner-occupied single family dwellings. CDBG funding is available to owner-occupants that meet specific income guidelines and live in the CDBG program area. This program offers a long-term low interest loan for qualified improvements.

**Springfield Public Housing Authority** – The Housing Authority of Springfield (HAS) owns over 700 public housing units for the elderly and disabled, and families. Rental assistance is also provided through Section 8 vouchers and certificates.

**Private Sector** – Other forms of housing assistance are provided by the private sector or other social service agencies.

### **Master Planning for New Neighborhoods**

Springfield and/or Greene County should prepare a master plan for each new “neighborhood” when the first development sketch plan arrives. The planners should work with the developer and other landowners in a defined area (about one square mile or smaller) to plan the general land use pattern, the collector and arterial street system, the neighborhood park location, the details of the greenway system (if applicable), and other elements that will be necessary to create an attractive, complete, and efficient neighborhood.

By working with land developers from the concept plan phase, the City and/or County can help create residential neighborhoods that:

- C Protect housing from the negative effects of excessive traffic, unattractive views or incompatible development.
- C Have a street connection to all four cardinal directions when feasible.

- C Minimize the use of cul-de-sacs to only those instances where they are needed to protect major environmental features.
- C Locate neighborhood parks and design the street system so the parks are easily accessible to the neighborhood and are linked to other parks and schools via bicycle routes (along quiet local streets and/or by on-street lanes and off-street paths).
- C Provide sidewalks along both sides of all local and collector streets and along at least one side of each arterial street.
- C Provide trees in the public street right-of-way along at least one key street in each residential subdivision.
- C Include traffic calming techniques such as narrower paved widths, traffic circles, and corner curb bump-outs.

## Code Enforcement

### **Objective 10 -- Code Enforcement: Provide a consistent system of code enforcement for recurring issues that affect neighborhoods.**

This section identifies common Code enforcement issues affecting neighborhoods and recommends actions. The issues addressed are:

- Overcrowding
- Front yard parking
- Dilapidated, vacant and abandoned buildings
- Neighborhood land use conflicts
- Nonconforming uses
- Bulk trash items
- Inoperable vehicles
- Trash

Each issue in this section is divided into four components.

- A description of the issue.
- A list of related problems.
- Past responses by the City of Springfield.
- Actions that should be applied to the problem.

### **Overcrowding**

The issue of overcrowding of housing units has been a concern throughout Springfield. It has been particularly noticeable in the residential neighborhoods adjacent to colleges and universities within the city. Overcrowded structures are a threat to the health and safety of the residents and often contribute to the blight of a neighborhood through their related problems.

Related Problems:

- Overcrowded structures typically do not have adequate off-street parking which forces occupants to park on the street.
- Residential structures may not have adequate fire escapes for the number of occupants.
- Because of inadequate off-street parking, front yard parking violations are more prevalent.

The zoning ordinance currently allows a family (persons related by blood, marriage or adoption) or three or fewer unrelated persons to live together as a single housekeeping unit. This ordinance is enforced on a complaint basis only.

**Actions:**

1. **Enforcement:** Continue enforcement of the zoning ordinance as it relates to overcrowding and provide a means of consistent enforcement.
2. **Ordinance:** In areas of documented overcrowding, consider the use of an Urban Conservation District ordinance to require rental registration and tenant occupancy permits.
3. **Coordination:** Work with neighborhoods to identify overcrowded properties.

**Front Yard Parking**

Front yard parking has become an increasingly important issue in the older established neighborhoods of the city. Front yard parking violations include any vehicle parked between the front line of the house and the street, excluding approved driveways and parking areas. These violations tend to increase in areas where other blighting factors are present. As one person begins parking in their yard, others inevitably follow. Over time, grass and ground cover begin to die from oil and gasoline leaks and repetitious driving. This creates a perception of an unkempt neighborhood. Front yard parking by itself may not cause a neighborhood to decline; however, when coupled with other factors such as discarded appliances, trash and inoperable vehicles, it can severely dampen neighborhood confidence.

Related Problems:

- Unsightly appearance of vehicles parked haphazardly in front yards affects neighborhood pride.
- Repetitious driving in yards kills ground cover which leads to soil erosion.
- Deterioration of street curbs due to vehicle traffic in front yard.

The City has used both zoning inspectors and police officers to inspect front yard parking violations. The most successful approach has been the use of a zoning inspector/police officer team.

The use of zoning inspectors requires a larger time commitment on the part of staff. Current procedures require the inspector to send a zoning violation letter and require the vehicle to be moved within three days. This method works well in educating first time offenders; however, it is not as effective on chronic violators. Typically, chronic violators will comply with the violation notice for a short period of time but will resume the practice after the violation notice has expired. This requires a second violation notice to be sent before a court summons is issued.

The Police Department however, has the ability to write a ticket whenever a violation is present but will often give a warning notice first. It has been the practice of the zoning inspectors to send a violation letter and then provide a list of violators to the Police Area Representative (PAR) officer. Officers use this list to issue future front yard parking tickets.

**Actions:**

1. **Coordination:** Work with neighborhoods to identify properties with chronic front yard parking violations.
2. **Enforcement:** Continue the joint use of the Zoning Inspector/ Police Area Representative (PAR) officer to enforce front yard parking violations.
3. **Ordinance:** Review the Front Yard Parking Ordinance and enforcement policy to determine if it can be enforced more effectively.

**Dilapidated, Vacant and Abandoned Buildings**

Input from neighborhood organizations and the VISION 20/20 Neighborhoods Focus Group rated dilapidated, vacant and abandoned buildings as an increasing problem confronting neighborhoods. Vacant buildings have a blighting effect on the neighborhood in which they are located. They are an attractive nuisance to minors, transients and other trespassers. Vacant property is also attractive to the criminal element for drug transactions and other illegal activity.

The city's current ordinance requires vacant buildings to be structurally sound, secure from entry and weather tight. Many buildings do not meet these requirements and are either boarded up or demolished. If the buildings are secured and made weather tight they can remain in that condition indefinitely. This situation is the source of significant problems in many neighborhoods. A vacant boarded up building not only causes blight on the surrounding properties but is a disinvestment in the neighborhood. Current ordinances can only force action on a dangerous property. No action can be taken on properties that are not dangerous and secure.

**Related Problems:**

- Vacant and abandoned buildings are an attractive nuisance and provide ideal locations for criminal activity.
- Unsightly appearance blights surrounding properties.

- Vacant and abandoned buildings deteriorate more rapidly due to lack of attention.
- Dilapidated, vacant and abandoned buildings lead to disinvestment in neighborhoods.

The City has stepped up its enforcement of dangerous buildings. Additional funding has been allocated to demolish more properties that are considered dangerous. City staff are also researching methods other communities have used to deal with vacant buildings. Currently the only method being used to deal with dilapidated, vacant and abandoned buildings is the City's dangerous building ordinance. Two neighborhoods associations also keep a list of vacant buildings and routinely monitor the status of these buildings. All of the properties on these lists are inspected by the city and are required to comply with city ordinances.

**Actions:**

1. **Ordinance:** Revise the city's current dangerous building ordinance so that buildings that are beyond repair will be demolished in a timely manner.
2. **Housing Rehabilitation:** Encourage efforts to save dangerous housing stock that is in salvageable condition. Rehabilitate housing stock in good condition as opposed to demolition.
3. **Code Inspections:** Focus housing code inspections on dilapidated, vacant and abandoned buildings so that they strictly comply with the code.
4. **Property Acquisition:** Use Chapter 99 redevelopment provisions under State statutes to acquire vacant and abandoned structures for rehabilitation or demolition. Lots that are left after demolition should be made available for new construction of housing units.
5. **License Fee:** Investigate the possibility of imposing a license fee on vacant structures or creating some type of disincentive for allowing a vacant/abandoned building.

**Neighborhood Land Use Conflicts**

Land use conflicts have been noted as a concern to neighborhoods. Single family areas that are adjacent to commercial or industrial land uses typically generate the most complaints. Neighborhood residents expect to live in areas free of heavy traffic, noise and foul odors. Unfortunately many commercial and industrial uses generate these problems. When commercial/industrial and residential land uses are adjacent to each other, problems can arise. Conflicts can also arise between residential land uses. Problems such as noise and trash are common complaints from single family residential land uses located adjacent to multi family residential land uses.

Related Problems:

- The hours of operation of a commercial/industrial land use often conflict with times when neighborhood residents are at home.
- Commercial and industrial land uses tend to generate more traffic which may use neighborhood streets.
- Noise and foul odors may be generated as a by-product of these land uses and are not conducive to a residential environment.

When land use conflicts come up between residential and nonresidential land uses the City has addressed each conflict on a case-by-case basis. In some cases complaints are reviewed by the appropriate department and results are presented to neighborhood residents. In other cases a zoning study is completed to determine if any changes are needed to the zoning in the area.

**Actions:**

1. **Code Enforcement:** Work with affected parties to determine if any zoning code violations are present.
2. **Buffers:** Encourage existing businesses to develop larger buffers between their operations and residential land uses. Review current buffer yards to determine appropriateness and effectiveness.
3. **Zoning:** Review existing zoning to determine if any zoning changes are needed in the area.

**Nonconforming Uses**

A legal nonconforming use is defined as a use that does not comply with the current zoning regulations but did comply with the regulations when the use was established. These types of uses can include restaurants, retail stores, and manufacturing businesses in a single family zoning district. Under the current zoning ordinance, these activities are prohibited in residential zoning districts. However, any legal nonconforming uses still in existence can continue to operate as long as they do not suspend operation for a year or more. Nonconforming uses can cause problems in residential areas. They may increase traffic in neighborhoods, cause foul odors or loud noises and disrupt the residential character of the neighborhood. These problems are often difficult to deal with because they are generally normal activities or outputs from the use.

Related Problems:

- Noise, foul odors and traffic problems tend to cause problems with surrounding properties.
- Conversions of property without adequate review by the City and County may contain code violations.

The zoning ordinance requires registration of all nonconforming land uses. The burden of registration presently is on the property owner. Since many nonconforming land uses are small in nature, they are difficult to track. The purpose of registration is to create a comprehensive list of all nonconforming uses. This enables the City to monitor these uses over time and make a determination if the use has ceased. The benefit of this approach is that when a nonconforming use ceases operation for at least one year, any new use must comply with current zoning regulations.

**Actions:**

1. **Enforcement:** As nonconforming land uses are destroyed or discontinued, ensure that they are not rebuilt.
2. **Registration:** Implement a schedule to register all nonconforming uses in the City and the County.

**Trash**

The issue of trash in the City's and County's neighborhoods is a significant problem. Yard waste, waste paper, discarded toys, and other junk can be found in a number of neighborhoods. Some items are still in usable condition, which makes enforcement under the trash ordinance difficult. Other items may not be useable but are being stored outside, which contributes to the trashy appearance of some properties. The City currently does not require trash service for residential properties. Residents are required by ordinance to properly dispose of trash. This can be accomplished by the resident personally hauling trash to an approved disposal area or contracting with a trash hauler for trash service.

Related Problems:

- Trash, garbage and other debris provide shelter and food for rodents.
- Lack of City-required trash service creates a disincentive to dispose of trash properly.

Some neighborhood organizations have organized an annual brush and trash clean up with the help of private trash haulers. The city does not conduct any type of annual trash pickup or clean up. The current method of enforcement for trash complaints is through health code violations.

**Actions:**

1. **Study City-Wide Trash Disposal Service:** Investigate the feasibility of a citywide ordinance requiring all residents to have a trash disposal service. This service could be contracted to private trash haulers with costs attached to utility bills. The number of trash collection trucks on the streets could also be reduced if the City were to control the service and contract with private haulers to serve entire areas.

- 2. Spring Clean-Up:** Organize and implement a “Spring Clean Up” pilot project for CDBG eligible areas. This project could take the form of an annual trash pick-up if successful.
- 3. Ordinance:** Clarify the City ordinance regarding the blighting effect of trash and investigate the need for a County ordinance.

### **Bulk Trash Items**

The presence of large bulky appliances and other trash items has been identified as a general problem in Springfield and Greene County neighborhoods. Items such as tires, refrigerators, washers, dryers, couches, chairs as well as other household items can be found in yards and on porches, vacant lots and roadside ditches throughout the city and county. This problem is particularly noticeable in the older central city neighborhoods. These items often are not in working condition and have been moved outside the house to make room for a replacement. In other situations, bulk trash items are often illegally dumped in ravines, sinkholes, and near lightly traveled roads throughout the County.

#### **Related Problems:**

- Appliances and furniture placed outside create a feeling of litter in the neighborhood and contribute to the blighting effect.
- Bulky trash items provide a place for harboring rodents and snakes.
- Defunct refrigerators and freezers can cause a safety problem for children unless doors are properly dismantled.
- The size of such items makes it difficult to dispose of properly.
- Trash haulers can not take refrigerators or freezers due to landfill restrictions on chloroflorocarbons CFCs (i.e. Freon). All CFCs must be properly removed before a trash hauler can take these items.
- Additional fees are charged by trash haulers to remove bulk trash items from property.
- Bulky trash items placed in ravines and sinkholes pose a threat to underground water supplies.

Springfield’s current response to these large items is to treat them as a health code violation. Complaints for bulky items are registered and inspected through the Health Department. If a violation is found, a violation letter is sent to the appropriate property owner. The property owner then has 14 days to remove the violation. If the violation is not corrected, the owner receives a court summons to Municipal Court. Items reported on City right-of-way are turned over to the Public Works Department for clean up.

#### **Actions:**

- 1. Trash Pick-Up:** Investigate the feasibility of an annual city-wide bulk trash pick-up. Work with local scrap metal dealers to pick up large defunct appliances for recycling or proper disposal.

## **Inoperable Vehicles**

Problems with inoperable vehicles are similar in nature to the problems associated with bulky trash items. There are many reasons why a vehicle may be inoperable. It may have been involved in an accident, have had a costly mechanical breakdown or the owner may not be able to afford the upkeep of the vehicle. These types of factors often make it difficult to dispose of the vehicle. Thus owners end up parking them and allow them to deteriorate which contributes to the blight of a neighborhood. In addition to the blighting effects of inoperable vehicles, they also pose safety concerns.

### **Related Problems:**

- Inoperable vehicles are an attractive nuisance to children.
- They are dangerous due to their inoperable condition (i.e. broken glass or vehicle damage from an accident, dangerous or flammable liquids such as gasoline, oil and antifreeze.).
- They provide a place for harboring rodents.
- They create an unsightly appearance in neighborhoods.

### **Actions:**

- 1. Neighborhood Organizations:** Work with neighborhood organizations to identify locations of inoperable vehicles. Increase compliance through proactive enforcement in all neighborhoods.
- 2. Removal:** Encourage local automobile salvage yards to remove inoperable vehicles at no charge to the owner.
- 3. Public Awareness:** Develop a public awareness campaign concerning inoperable vehicles.