

Capability Assessment: City of Springfield

Development Plans

Vision 20/20

In order to begin the process of developing a mitigation plan for the city of Springfield one must consider current plans for the city's development. The Vision 20/20 process, which first began in 1994, continues. Springfield undertook a community-driven planning process where citizens – working with City and County staff and a nationally recognized consulting firm – identified distinct visions for various issues, and then developed actions and policies to implement what became the comprehensive plan. The plan was designed for a 20-year timeframe subdivided into a series of five-year-plans. Since then, the community has supported Vision 20/20 priorities by passing a number of referendums directly related to those goals.

Several issues from the original Vision 20/20 focus groups will be revisited and several new topics will be added. The focus areas for Vision 20/20 – The Future is Now include, among other things, creation of affordable housing spaces, development of the center city region, growth management and land use and expansion of public transportation.

Affordable Housing

The city recognizes a need to provide affordable and adaptable housing units that can service a diverse segment of the population. These units would provide accommodation options for people with low to moderate income and/or special needs. The following is an example of some measures being taken by the local government to provide such housing.

1. Supporting and expanding home repair programs. New programs may be created if those existing are not adequate.
2. Encouragement of universal design in housing that will make residences able to meet the needs of the elderly and disabled.
3. Enforcement of existing health and building codes on residential property owners.
4. Encouragement of employer assisted homeownership programs.
5. Continuing the Springfield Police Department's Landlord Training Program.

Center City Plan

Revitalization of Springfield's downtown area should not only improve the quality of the local community but also carries the potential to attract further business to the Springfield-Greene County region.

1. Supporting community arts events
2. Creation of a mixture of low to moderate income housing in the downtown area
3. Promotion of the private investment in and redevelopment of the downtown area's fringe neighborhoods.

4. Preservation of buildings with historic, architectural, or cultural significance.
5. Promotion of mixed development downtown that can accommodate residential, retail, and entertainment venues.
6. Increase the availability of hotel accommodations in the downtown area.
7. Completion of the streetscape project.

Growth Management and Land Use

The goal of Springfield-Greene County's development plan focuses on cost-effective growth that will preserve the community's quality while fostering economic potential.

1. Implementation of a unified development ordinance to be used throughout the urban service area.
2. Strategic annexation of land surrounding Springfield.
3. Prioritization of infrastructure maintenance in a bid to attract business.
4. Balancing southward fringe growth in Springfield with development to the north, northeast, and west.
5. Extension of city sewage service within the urban service area.
6. Encouraging heavy development of land already serviced by large highways to limit urban sprawl.
7. Creation and maintenance of public open space (parks for example).
8. Metropolitan planning that considers smaller cities to the south of Springfield and development in Christian County.
9. Conservation and protection of Greene County's natural resources.

Regional Strategic Plan

Given the Springfield-Greene County area's ties to regional communities, planning with these communities in mind adds potential for and improved regional economic and social base.

1. Coordination of transportation services on a multi-county level.
2. Ensure that labor skills are adequately balanced throughout the region.

Transportation

The availability of good public transportation and streets for private transportation remain an absolute need. What good is a commodity if it is inaccessible?

1. Construct residential areas with multiple points of ingress and egress where possible.
2. Fix gaps in sidewalks.
3. Improve substandard streets.

Citizen input will again be a vital component of the process. City and County staff will work with citizen groups already established in those areas and offer numerous opportunities for general public input.

The process will include creating a Scorecard to document Vision 20/20's progress in implementing 100 policies for smart growth. A storefront will be established to display the efforts and successes of the Vision 20/20 groups. Citizens will be invited to public meetings and events to review the effort as it proceeds.

Building Codes

The City of Springfield is a Class 1 city with municipal government provided by the City Charter shall be known as a "council-manager government." Pursuant to the provisions of the Charter and subject only to the limitations imposed by the state constitution and by the Charter, all powers of the city shall be vested in an elective council which shall enact local legislation, adopt budgets, determine policies, and appoint the city manager, who shall execute the laws and administer the government of the city.

The city has all powers of local self-government and home rule, and all powers possible for any city to have under the constitution and laws of Missouri, or those powers which the legislature would be competent to grant; except as prohibited by the constitution or laws of the state, the city may exercise all municipal powers, functions, rights, privileges and immunities of every name and nature whatsoever. Such powers are exercised in the manner prescribed in the Charter, or, if not prescribed, in such manner as may be prescribed by the council.

Springfield has adopted the 2006 version of the International Building code, International Residential code, International Mechanical code, International Plumbing code, International Fuel Gas code, International Private Sewage Disposal code, International Fire code and the 2005 National Electric code.

The City has also put into place, ordinances related to apartment safety, housing, dangerous buildings, and zoning, all of which establish regulations and standards for ensuring the safety and welfare of the occupants.

Planning & Zoning

Springfield is a zoned community where business, industry and residential development are controlled to allow good neighbors to live in a growing community.

Capital Improvements Program Planning

The following strategies, endorsed by the City Council, and recognized as the underlying philosophy of the Capital Improvements Program:

1. The City of Springfield's primary responsibility is the protection of life, health, and public safety. Projects which address serious health and safety needs should receive the highest rating.
2. Improving the City's existing infrastructure also rates high. Projects which improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the City's basic service systems; and projects which enhance City government's ability to provide basic services should receive the second

highest rating. The City Council states as a matter of policy that, all other considerations being equal, improvement of existing infrastructure should rate higher than construction of new infrastructure improvements.

3. Construction of new infrastructure improvements (new streets, new parks, greenways, etc.) is necessary to keep up with the community's growth.

Mitigation Programs

The main mitigation programs is in the area of floodplain management (regulations updated 2002) and participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Floodplain Management programs are based on policies to protect the general welfare and health of county residents. The programs are designed to safeguard health, safety and property in times of flood; restrict avoidable increases in flood size; mitigate losses at the time of construction of public facilities; and protect the public from buying land unsuited for the intended use due to flood hazards.

The Federal Clean Water Act requires certification for any construction, placement, and disposal of fill material or earth movement within a floodplain or body of water. After serious flooding in 1993, floodplain regulations were revamped and continue to be scrutinized.

The City of Springfield participates in the National Flood Insurance Program. The city's floodplain ordinance requires all structures in floodplains to be placed 12 inches above the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) or 100-year water surface elevation as established by FEMA. This ordinance also restricts development in floodways to those developments that will cause no increase in the BFE. This ordinance has had a positive effect on storm water quality, erosion, and pollution runoff into streams and tributaries by causing buffer strips to develop along major waterways. The City of Springfield currently has 129 NFIP policies in effect.

The county and city floodplain regulations are aimed at restricting new development in floodplains. Following the 1993 floods, the county and city instituted a property acquisition program. This program is funded through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. 120 properties (110 homes, 10 vacant properties) have been purchased in Springfield. The Springfield properties have been acquired with a combination of grants and Storm water Level Property Tax monies, totaling \$9 million since 1993.

It should be noted however that in 2008 FEMA released updated Flood Insurance Rate Maps that changed the boundaries of some floodplains in Greene County. As a result of this change some properties previously listed as floodplains are no longer categorized as such. Other properties, previously not listed as such, are now considered to be in floodplains.

Storm water regulations are designed to minimize the harmful effects of erosion, sedimentation, and flooding from storm water runoff. This is accomplished by measures to mitigate erosion both during and after construction, the detention and controlled discharge of differential run-off from development, and a well designed storm water conveyance system.

Other Capabilities

1. The county and city are able to receive National Weather Service warnings. A vast number of the population can be alerted within 15-20 minutes (estimated) of an incident, responders within 3-5 minutes and key officials within 15 minutes.
2. Public school students receive curricular training on hazards and emergency programs during the school year. Businesses, preschools, private organizations, community leaders, and averages citizens have been exposed to emergency preparedness training.
3. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) capabilities allow for limited hazard areas base maps to be available to interested parties.

The capabilities of emergency management, fire protection, law enforcement, emergency medical services are detailed in Section 2.

Intergovernmental and Interagency Coordination

The following meetings occur on a routine basis:

Weekly Meetings:

- Springfield City Management Team Meeting
- Vision 20/20 Meetings (ongoing)
- Chamber of Commerce Meetings
- Springfield-Greene County Department Heads
- Springfield City Council

Monthly Meetings:

- County Court Commission Meeting
- City/County Staff Meeting
- Local Emergency Planning Committee
- Ozarks Watershed Committee Meeting
- Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Law Enforcement Neighborhood Watch Meetings
- Neighborhood Association Meetings
- Downtown Association Meetings
- Radio Amateur Communications Emergency Service
- County Mayors Meetings
- Greene County Fire Chiefs
- Watershed Meetings

Quarterly:

- Southwest Missouri Emergency Support Organization Meeting
- Public Safety Collaborative
- County Safety and Security Meeting
- Regional Homeland Security Oversight Committee

Bi-Annual:

- County Commission – City Mayors Meetings