



CHAPTER 6

GROWTH AREAS & ANNEXATION

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GROWTH AND ANNEXATION PLAN

The City of Springfield is committed to the concept of planned, sustainable, responsible growth. Sustainable growth should strive to balance the demand for new development, quality expectations, and environmental, community, and fiscal resources, while supporting a desirable mix of uses. While the *Forward SGF* Land Use Plan identifies the location of where different types of development should be accommodated within the City's designated growth area, a more comprehensive strategy will be needed to help guide future expansion of the city limits and Urban Service Area. The strategy will also serve as a guide to maximize short- and long-term public investment related decision making to support planned growth.

It is critical the City works closely with surrounding municipal and county governments, utility providers, the regional planning agencies, business and environmental groups, and other stakeholders. The City should facilitate conversations on topics that promote sustainable growth, a resilient economy, and stewardship of the natural and built environment in the greater Ozarks region.



MANAGED GROWTH

Forward SGF identifies numerous approaches to guiding growth and the management of infrastructure and service investments to support existing community needs and development in the City of Springfield. Evaluating future decisions should be made with caution not to exchange short-term growth for long-term stability.

Recommendations for growth and annexation should be further guided by the following objectives:

Prioritize Positive Potential

Prioritize areas for annexation where development will provide a positive benefit to potential new residents, businesses, and property owners without unduly high infrastructure costs or creating a long-term fiscal strain on City resources.

Maximize Opportunities

Maximize development and redevelopment opportunities in urbanized portions of Springfield through market-responsive regulations, infrastructure, and quality of place upgrades.

Plan Infrastructure Investments

Plan infrastructure investments that support strategic City growth in areas of economic opportunity.

Balance Infrastructure Maintenance

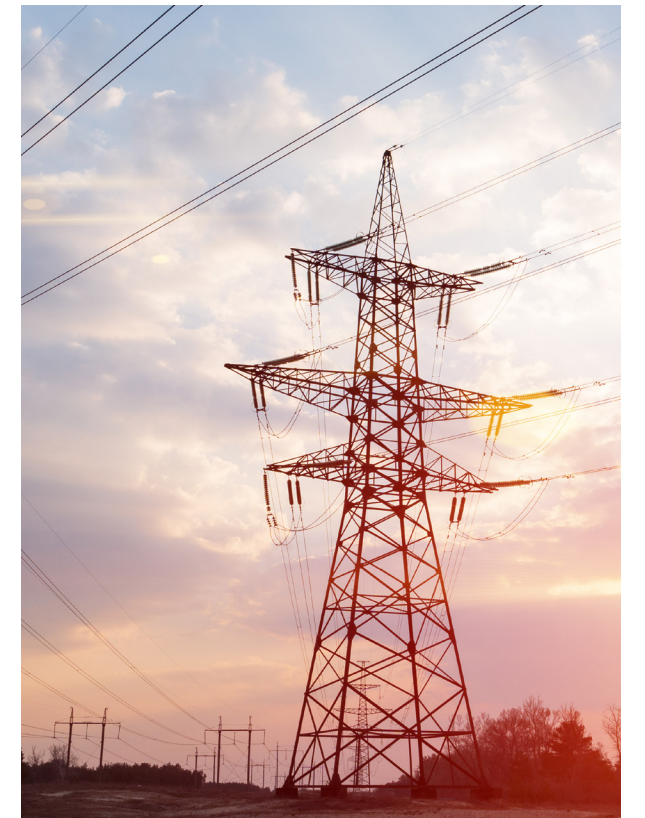
Seek a balanced approach between existing infrastructure maintenance and upgrades to infrastructure in existing incorporated areas designated for more intensive development, as well as the installation of new infrastructure in short-term growth areas.

Target Areas for Service

Target areas for annexation in the short-term where delivery of fire and police services can be accomplished within the response time benchmarks by existing or planned facilities, while proactively planning for these facilities in designated long-term growth areas.

Prioritize Transportation

Prioritize transportation corridors for annexation and infrastructure investment that will have a positive impact on improving the City's physical image and catalyze attractive development.



GROWTH AREAS FUTURE PLACETYPES

Residential Neighborhood: Center City

Typically characterized by a diverse range of single-family homes with varying architectural styles, setbacks, and parcel sizes.

Residential Neighborhood: Traditional

Post-war residential neighborhoods that contain predominantly single-family detached dwellings with uniform setbacks, building designs, and parcel sizes.

Mixed Residential

Primarily higher density single-family attached and multifamily residential dwellings. This includes townhomes, rowhomes, duplexes, apartments, student housing, and single-family detached homes that have been converted into multiunit dwellings.

Downtown

Serves as the primary activity center of Springfield, containing a wide variety of uses, such as retail, entertainment, office, hospitality, institutional, multifamily residential, and public gathering spaces.

Mixed Use

Functions as small-scale activity centers that provide a mix of residential, shopping, service, office, entertainment, and dining options. They can include vertically stacked or horizontally laid out mixed of uses.

City Corridor

Predominantly consists of commercial and service-related development varying in scale, ranging from standalone businesses to large retail centers.

Institutional & Employment Center

Contains institutional uses, such as universities, museums, community centers, municipal facilities, and large religious complexes, as well as major medical and office parks.

Business Flex

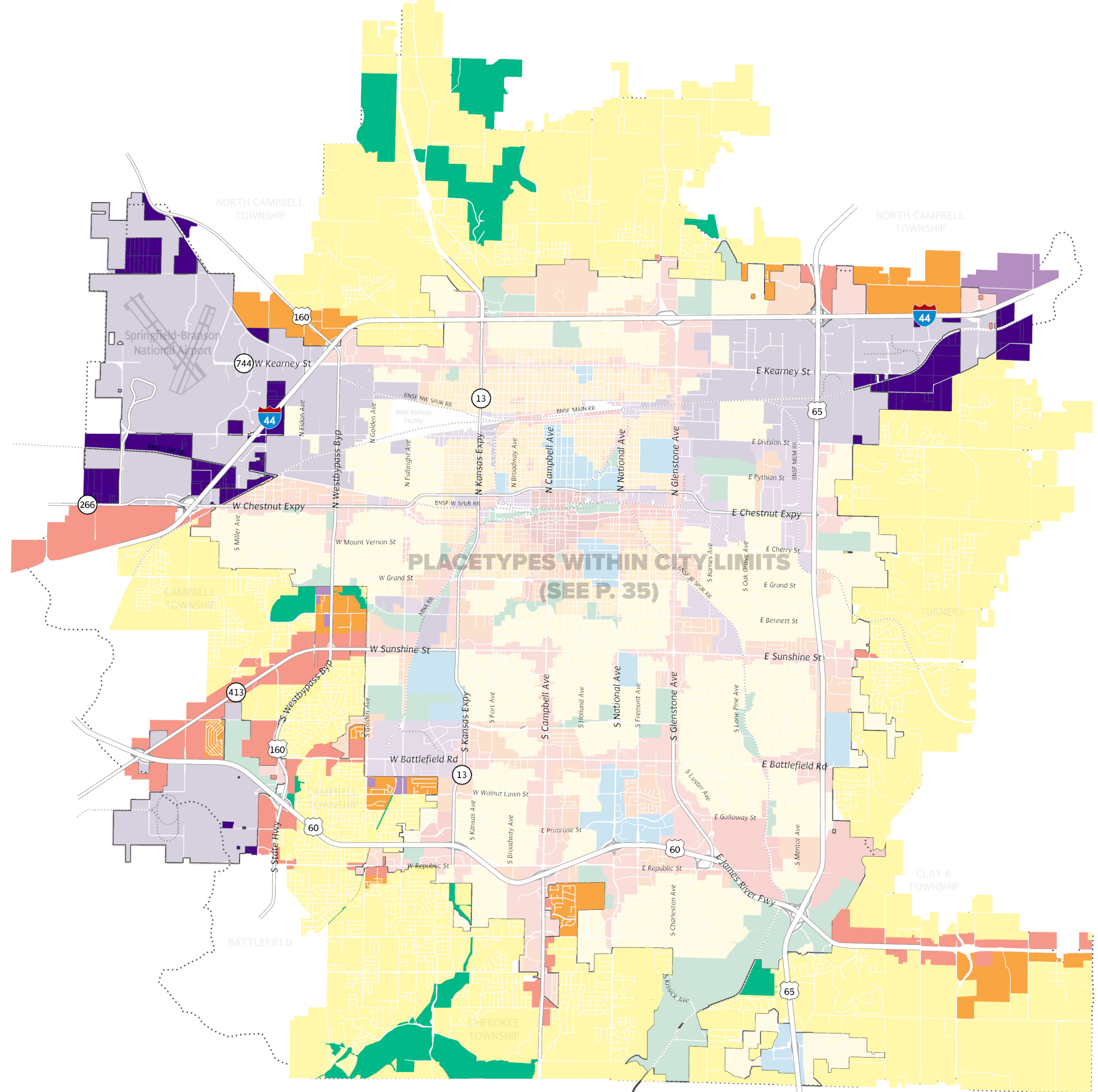
Includes areas with an eclectic mix of light industrial and office uses, complemented by the occasional commercial use, that serve as centers of employment opportunities.

Industry & Logistics

Consists of light and heavy industrial uses dedicated to a range of industries, such as manufacturing, packaging, warehousing, storage, transportation, commerce, and distribution.

Urban Green Space & Recreation

Consists of Springfield's most significant natural areas as well as major community parks, sports complexes, recreational facilities, and community and educational centers that draw both residents and regional visitors.



STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR ANNEXATION

Forward SGF is a 20-year plan that builds on successes and lessons learned from past planning efforts. The City's former Comprehensive Plan, Vision 20/20, advocated for a similar balanced growth strategy that included the identification of areas appropriate for annexation, infrastructure expansion, and new investment in existing underserved areas of the City. For a variety of reasons, areas identified in the Vision 20/20 annexation plan were not entirely achieved as planned, which has created new challenges for the City moving forward. These existing circumstances and conditions have shaped the greater urbanized area of Springfield and the annexation plan outlined in *Forward SGF*. Future annexations into the City of Springfield, will rely heavily on analysis of a variety of short- and long-term impacts and the need for engagement and coordination from property owners, surrounding jurisdictions, and community stakeholders.

EVALUATING IMPACTS OF ANNEXATION

Annexation proposals should be based on an analysis of the quantitative and qualitative impact to the City and to the property owner(s). Additional land provides more space for the City to develop residentially and commercially, accommodating growth demand. This is generally advantageous; however, there is a financial threshold for annexation that should be evaluated and considered before any existing and/or planned development is determined to be beneficial to the City. Carefully weighing short- and long-term costs will help to ensure the City remains strong during lean times, and financially resilient in the long-term.

Balancing Fiscal Impacts

As discussed in **Chapter 10: Infrastructure and Community Facilities**, the City should evaluate how it funds infrastructure improvements to ensure that current residents do not disproportionately bear the cost of future expansion. The City should also be conscious of the impact on the owners of the property proposed to be annexed, weighing the increased taxes, level of services offered, and potential use and value, if the property remains unincorporated.

When evaluating properties for annexation, the City should consider the benefit of taxes paid on the properties, and sales tax if the property is a commercial business, versus the costs Springfield would incur serving those properties. There are opportunities for Springfield to capture such costs as more customers are located close to existing businesses in city limits. The relationship and demands on infrastructure, emergency services, and resources available for reinvestment should be examined as well. This is to ensure the City can sufficiently focus on improving quality of place within existing underserved Springfield neighborhoods before prioritizing outward expansion.

There are many factors to consider when evaluating annexations and several of these items are discussed in greater detail within this chapter. At a high level, these factors include:

- **Transportation Systems** – Long-term regional connection should be coordinated with Ozarks Transportation Organization (OTO), including securing rights-of-way and expanding the trail network. Regional roadway connections should be designed according to *Forward SGF* street typologies outlined in **Chapter 9: Transportation and Mobility**.
- **Utilities** – City Utilities should be included as a partner for future Urban Service Area boundary changes to help the City grow at a sustainable and fiscally responsible rate. Consideration should be given to potentially requiring consent annexation agreements for all new sewer, water, and gas connections within the USA.
- **Environmentally Sensitive Areas** – Annexation and development in environmentally sensitive areas should be avoided, including sinkhole and flood prone areas. The Flood Control and Water Quality Protection Manual should continue to be implemented to mitigate such hazards and potentially dangerous development.

- **Septic Systems** – The City and surrounding counties should coordinate in aligning sewer connection policies and addressing failing septic systems. Annexation of previously developed, unsewered areas should be approached on a case-by-case basis to ensure the cost of providing services and environmental impacts can be carefully evaluated.
- **Emergency Response** – As the City grows, coordination with police and fire departments will be necessary to ensure public safety services are expanded to sufficiently serve residents.

Benefits of Annexation

In addition to greater tax revenues, there are other benefits of annexation for the City to consider. For example, annexation allows Springfield to cast a larger net, expanding resident resources to participate in local government by voting in municipal elections and serving on City boards. Annexation can provide for population growth, while better reflecting the demographic makeup of the total community. The urbanized area of Springfield goes well beyond the city limits, annexing properties and development corridors can provide the City with the opportunity to influence and incentivize development that aligns with the city's Comprehensive Plan, specifically growth and development. Annexation can also provide an opportunity to add natural amenities or make necessary transportation connections critical to the serve the city and the entire region.

For property owners, annexing into the City of Springfield can represent a range of expanded services and opportunities to participate in the future of the greater Springfield community. Springfield offers a variety of programs for residents and neighborhood groups, that may not be available in the County. Depending on location, properties outside the City may have higher overall taxes, when combined with utility surcharges, and rural fire district levies, making annexation an attractive option. In addition, there is a non-fiscal community contribution factor to consider. Residents of unincorporated Springfield cannot participate in city elections, city tax referendums, and cannot serve on certain city advisory boards and commissions

Identifying Annexation Areas

While Missouri State statutes provide a foundation for identifying acceptable annexation areas, they do not set standards for prioritizing growth areas that benefit the City. The City accomplishes this through the Comprehensive Plan, recognizing the general framework, outlined in RSMO 71.012 and 71.015, that annexations shall provide the following:

- The area must be reasonable and necessary for the proper development of the City.
- The City must have the ability to furnish normal municipal services to the area within a reasonable time frame.
- The area must be contiguous and compact to the existing corporate boundaries.

ANNEXATION PLAN

Strategic and continual reinvestment in the City's urbanized area is essential to support and accommodate a growing population. It is equally essential to support growth in emerging markets along the City's edges where economic momentum can help create new jobs and increase commerce. Annexation and growth on the edges should be sensitive to a variety of dynamics including available resources, investment and maintenance costs, and growth trends in the surrounding communities, unincorporated areas, and greater region.

The City should prioritize short-term and long-term areas for future annexation. While not every property identified in each of the following Priority One and Two areas can or should be annexed immediately, each represent areas where opportunities for economic and job growth are promising due to varying combinations of available infrastructure, city services, proximity to major transportation corridors, and advantageous land patterns. Likewise, Priority Three areas include largely residential subdivisions and undeveloped tracts appropriate for future residential growth. As outlined above, some of these areas offer advantages over others, such as shorter response times for emergency services and lower utility costs and taxes. The following sections and accompanying map outline short-term annexation areas that primarily target business development and job growth, while long-term annexation areas are primarily focused on residential growth.

Priority One

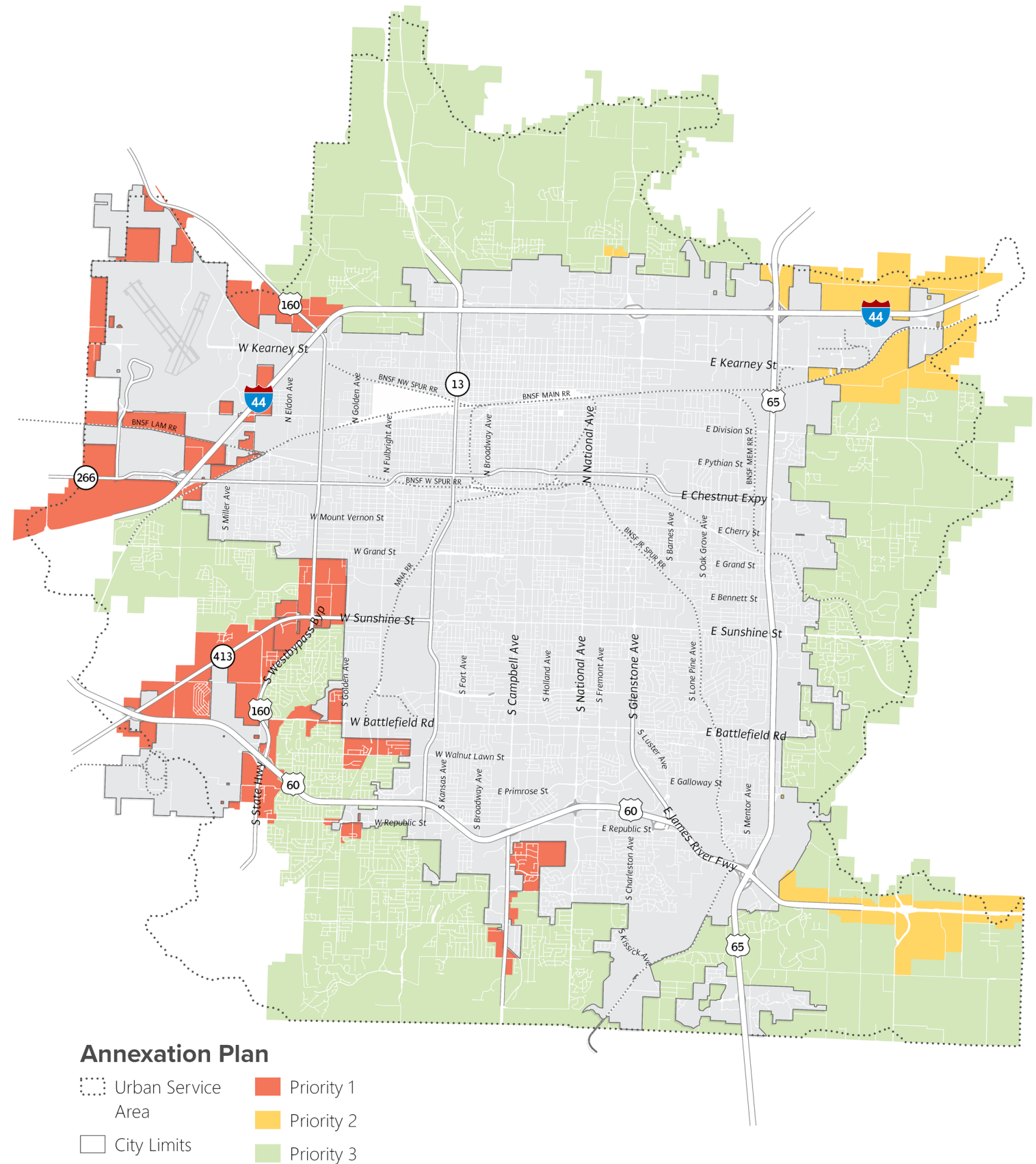
Priority One areas represent short-term growth areas. These growth areas are primarily located on the western and southwestern sides of the City in the vicinity of the Springfield-Branson National Airport, Interstate 44, West Sunshine Corridor, and James River Freeway. The City should consider the strategic value of each property and develop annexation proposals to promote new development, in combination with short-term infrastructure planning over the course of the next two to five years to take advantage of existing momentum and growth south and west of the City.

Priority Two

Priority Two areas represent long-term growth areas. These growth areas are primarily located on the eastern side of the City in the vicinity of two important eastern gateways at Interstate 44 and Hwy 65 and James River Freeway and Hwy 65. The City should consider the strategic value of each property and assemble annexation proposals in advance of new development. While these areas represent great opportunities for economic development and job growth, comprehensive infrastructure and emergency service planning will need to be improved in these areas. As outlined in **Chapter 8: Economic Development** and **Chapter 10: Infrastructure and Community Facilities**, the City should prioritize planning of facilities and infrastructure to support new development over the course of the next 5 to 10 years to take advantage of existing land patterns and proximity to these emerging development corridors.

Priority Three

Priority Three areas represent long-term growth areas. These growth areas are comprised mainly of residential subdivisions, housing, and traditional community support services located around the perimeter of the City, adjacent to Priority One and Two growth areas. While these areas are not net revenue generators, they may be equally valuable in terms of growing the City's population base and expanding the City's reach in a community involvement capacity. Some of these areas are also strategically important to help access potential growth areas that are currently not contiguous to the City. Assembling annexation proposals for Priority Three residential areas will involve considerable study and may involve a range of incorporation strategies, including municipal elections. These large areas represent long-term growth areas that will require extensive planning to provide a full range of City services, as they can significantly impact fiscal resources.









ANNEXATION CONSIDERATIONS

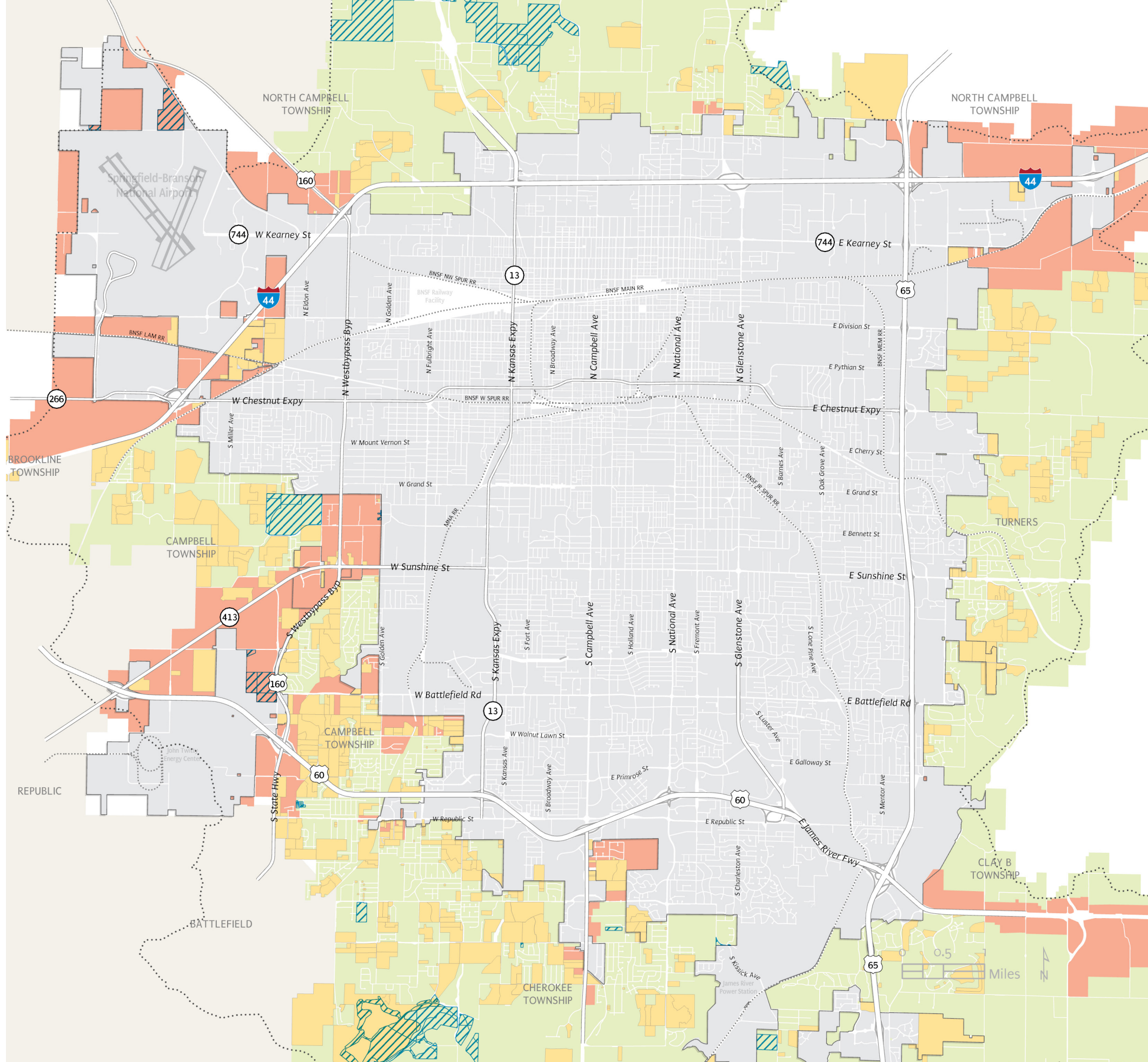
The following strategies will help to further guide the prioritization of annexations :

- The City should prioritize annexation of City, City Utilities, Park Board, and Ozark Greenways-owned properties.
- The City should prioritize annexation of properties with an “Irrevocable Petition and Consent to Annexation Agreement” that are revenue-generating and located along major corridors and areas of potential economic activity.
- The City should evaluate annexation proposals on a property-by-property or case-by-case basis but work to coordinate annexation of multiple properties simultaneously when possible, to maximize the time and cost efficiency involved in processing.
- The City should engage with area Fire Protection Districts in evaluation of potential impact resulting from annexation of property by the City.

- The City should be conscious of impractical boundary configurations created when annexing properties on only one side of a street, skipping over properties, or creating islands of unincorporated properties.
- The City should weigh the anticipated impact of annexation on the ability to provide timely and professional emergency services, including personal requirements, capital requirements, necessary and available infrastructure, call volume, and standards of cover.
- The City should evaluate the age and condition of existing infrastructure in areas desired for annexation, as well as future maintenance costs.
- The City should weigh the comprehensive advantages of both long-term revenue growth and population growth, including a variety of demographic considerations associated with providing services to new residents and property owners.
- The City should weigh the fiscal impacts of annexation against the opportunity to grow the population base, increase resident participation in city elections, tax referendums, and expand the reach of citizens to serve on city advisory boards and committees.
- The City should weigh the strategic value of incorporating geographic areas that facilitate growth in new areas.

Annexation Considerations

-  Publicly-Owned Properties Inside Growth Area
-  Consent to Annex Properties
-  Urban Service Area
-  Long-Term Growth Opportunities
-  City Limits
-  Municipal Growth Boundaries





URBAN SERVICE AREA

Springfield's original Urban Service Area (USA) policy was adopted by City Council in 1984, as the City's urban growth area. The goal of the USA was to discourage new development in unincorporated areas of the County where urban services were not available, minimizing sprawl and preserving rural land and natural resources. The USA represents a geographic area where the City and Christian and Greene Counties agree on a reasonable area to preserve for future urbanized growth that the City may someday annex. Within the USA are varying levels of priority, but overall, this represents Springfield's future long-term growth boundary. In establishing the USA, participating agencies will work together to ensure growth is well planned with the understanding that it may someday be incorporated into Springfield. Springfield's ownership of the sewer system provides the leverage needed to ensure the kind of growth Springfield desires.

Coordination on future planning boundaries and policy changes with City Utilities and Christian and Greene Counties is necessary to align planning with a larger commitment for responsible, balanced community and utility growth, as well as environmental stewardship.

It will be critical that the City and City Utilities work closely with surrounding counties and municipalities to prevent the premature development of unincorporated areas that are not served by sustainable infrastructure and maximize the utilization of land and resources. Coordinated planning will also be critical in defining future strategic growth plans for each jurisdiction, in addition to establishing cooperative plans that benefit the entire region. The development of the policies in the *Forward SGF Comprehensive Plan* represents the foundation through which to facilitate those important conversations.

EXPANSION OF THE URBAN SERVICE AREA

The USA concept recognizes that annexation of properties into the City and the supply of services and connection to utilities often occur separately. To facilitate new development in the growth area where water or sanitary sewer infrastructure is or could be made available, but immediate annexation is not feasible, the USA policies should provide guidance for infrastructure connection and coordinated planning.

The timing of these decisions must preserve the long-term viability of future annexation and development and ensure financial sustainability of respective infrastructure extensions. Through the USA policy, the City of Springfield has historically required an "Irrevocable Petition and Consent to Annexation Agreement" be recorded prior to connecting to the City's sewer system or when City Utilities extends a water main. Greene County has also coordinated plan review with City staff for new development in the USA.

Changes to the USA policy should consider the following:

- The City of Springfield should formally amend the USA to match the current boundary agreements and strive to keep documents and related maps current when future boundary agreements are made.
- The USA boundary should be reassessed when significant infrastructure or utility plans or studies are completed that might impact the USA boundaries and policies.
- Future updates should continue to require annexation, if practical, and be expanded to require an "Irrevocable Petition and Consent to Annexation Agreement" be signed when gas, water, or sanitary sewer service is extended and connected to by a new customer within the USA.

- The City should work closely with Greene and Christian Counties to consider aligning land use, development, and design codes for properties located within the USA, to promote consistent development standards in the urbanized areas surrounding Springfield.
- The City should work with the adjoining Counties to merge these recommendations and past policies into a revised USA policy that is unilaterally supported and enforced by each jurisdiction.
- As needed, the City should orchestrate amendments to the USA boundary and policies via a separate ordinance, that incorporates recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan.

As development continues to occur in Southern Greene and Northern Christian Counties, the City should begin discussion with the Cities of Ozark and Nixa, as well as Christian County, about establishing annexation boundary agreements to guide future annexation for all communities. In addition, the City should consider whether to amend or grant exceptions to the current USA in this area.

Similarly, the City should also work with the Cities of Republic, Battlefield, Willard, and Strafford to ensure that the current annexation boundary agreements are mutually beneficial and whether the City should consider amending or granting an exception to the USA in these areas. In general, the City should work with neighboring municipalities to ensure that urban services (primarily water and sewer) are provided in locations where urban development is desired and in a way that promotes the sustainable expansion of utilities. This would include a preference toward gravity sewer that minimizes the number of sewer lift stations required to serve an area.

BOUNDARY AND SERVICE AREA AGREEMENTS

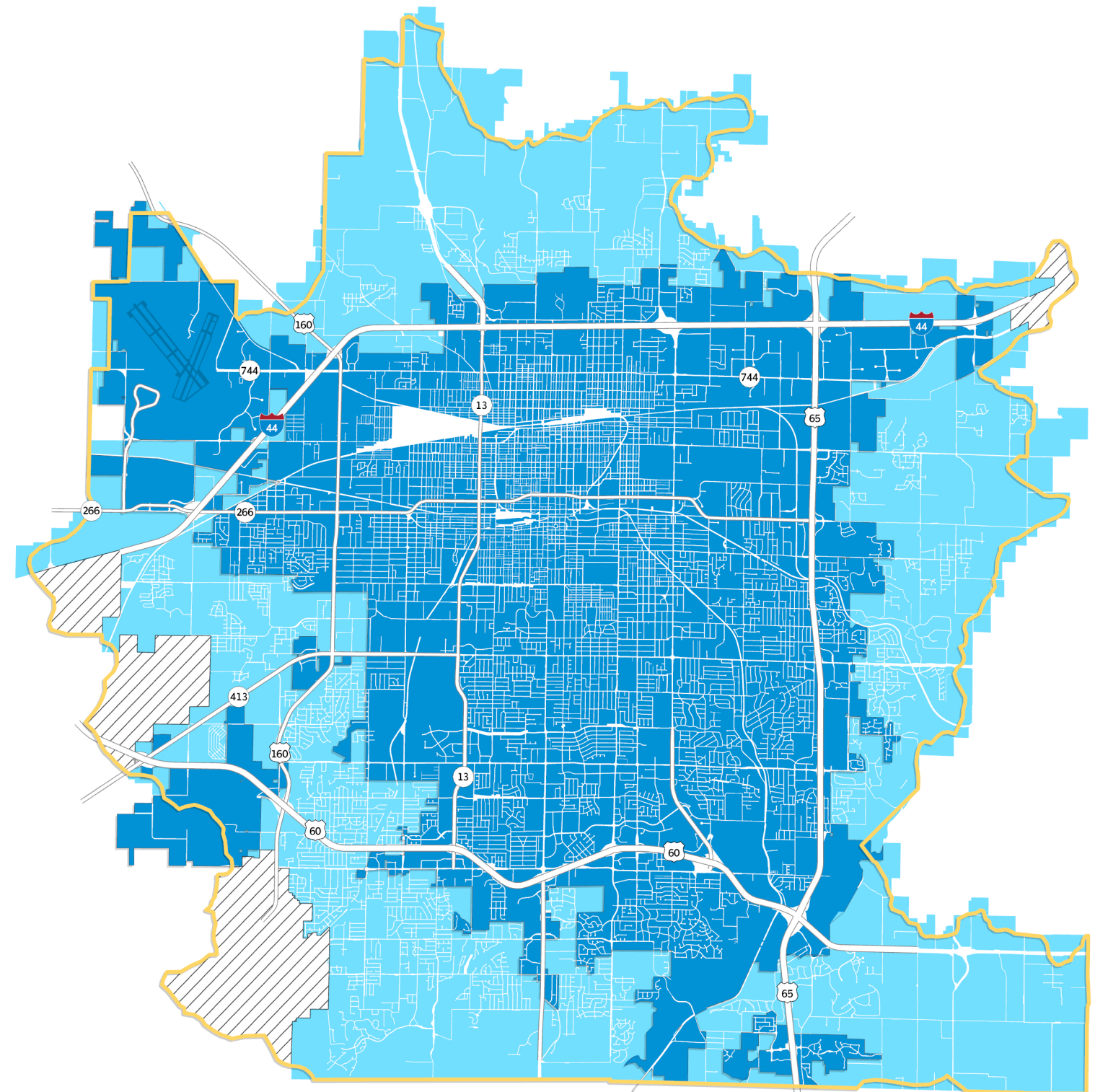
In addition to coordinating future amendments to the USA with Christian and Greene Counties, the City also has local growth boundary agreements with neighboring municipalities. Springfield has agreements with all immediately adjacent communities, except Ozark and Nixa. These agreements prohibit participating municipalities from annexing any land within the boundary of another's planning area. The City also has sewer service contracts with three of these communities: Battlefield, Strafford, and Willard. These communities collect waste and send it to a centralized location, which is then collected by Springfield and treated at City facilities.

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Regional Planning

The City of Springfield and City Utilities represent major stakeholders in the region and carry a significant responsibility to lead the way in hosting conversations with area planning colleagues and utility providers to promote intergovernmental cooperation and planning coordination. In particular, the City of Springfield should focus on improving communication among surrounding municipalities and counties on matters of land, transportation, and infrastructure planning. The City of Springfield should work towards convening a routine planning summit, at least semi-annually, to share important updates and coordinate activities that could benefit the entire region.



Urban Service Area

- ▭ Existing Urban Service Area
- ▭ City of Springfield
- ▭ Revised Urban Service Area
- Boundary Agreement Amendment Needed