



CHAPTER 2

FORWARD SGF VISION

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The *Forward SGF Comprehensive Plan* establishes the long term vision for the City and its growth area. This vision is supported by a series of goals and related strategies which will work collectively to achieve measurable change in the Springfield community. In the end, all components of the Plan are driven by one unifying guiding principle: improve quality of place. The following chapter presents the Plan's organization, the *Forward SGF Vision*, and the Plan's themes that are interwoven across chapters.

NAVIGATING THE PLAN

The Forward SGF Comprehensive Plan's structure is made up of five key components: the vision, guiding principle, themes, goals and strategies.



Forward SGF TOP 10

The following are top 10 key initiatives championed by the *Forward SGF Comprehensive Plan* that were developed based on community outreach feedback and top City issues and opportunities. While these initiatives are discussed in various sections across the Plan, they each have a designated section where they are highlighted—marked by the star icon above. In no particular order, the top 10 key initiative include:

- 1. Restore SGF - Neighborhood Revitalization.** Neighborhood revitalization is a top initiative discussed in Chapter 7: Housing and Neighborhoods. It includes Restore SGF, a local initiative that aims to encourage reinvestment and homeownership in Springfield's neighborhoods.
- 2. Place-Based Approach.** This Plan champions a shift in the City's planning focus from use to design with an emphasis on creating quality places to experience through a place-based approach (discussed in Chapter 5: Land Use and Development).
- 3. Comprehensive City Code Update.** This Plan calls for a full update to the City's Land Development Code and Ordinances to align regulations with the recommendations contained in each chapter. The Comprehensive Plan is a policy guide that should inform decision making for years to come, but it is not regulatory. The City needs to update its development regulations to support the Plan's vision.
- 4. UnGap the Map.** This Plan promotes expanding and closing gaps in the trail network, through UnGap the Map, a campaign to fund trail connections discussed in Chapter 11: Parks, Greenways, and Natural Resources. Springfield's trail network is a unique asset that possesses great potential to anchor neighborhood reinvestment and economic development.
- 5. Entrepreneurial Stewardship.** Cultivating an environment for entrepreneurship, businesses growth, live-work opportunities, and starts ups is a key initiative discussed in Chapter 8: Economic Development.
- 6. Corridor Improvements.** The beautification of the City's corridors, including improved planning, right-of-way management, and multimodal access, is a top initiative discussed in Chapter 8: Economic Development, Chapter 12: Subarea Plans, and Chapter 9: Transportation and Mobility.
- 7. Neighborhood Commercial Hubs and Planning.** This Plan promotes planning at the neighborhood level in Chapter 7: Housing and Neighborhoods and forming neighborhood commercial hubs that act as activity centers, discussed in Chapter 8: Economic Development.
- 8. Connecting to Nature.** Leveraging the City's "Basecamp of the Ozarks" brand, the Plan champions enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities, sustainable development, and ecotourism to better connect residents, discussed in Chapter 11: Parks, Greenways, and Natural Resources.
- 9. Growth and Annexation Plan.** This Plan establishes an annexation and growth strategy to promote planned, sustainable, and responsible growth, discussed in Chapter 6: Growth Areas and Annexation.
- 10. Regional Planning and Partnerships.** This Plan promotes regional coordination and planning across all chapters to address local issues that are also tied to the region and surrounding communities. From housing growth and roadway improvements, to trail extensions and stormwater management, the Comprehensive Plan should be a resource in coordinating with neighboring municipalities, county governments, and partner organizations.

FORWARD SGF VISION

In 2040, Springfield will continue to anchor a growing region, flourishing as an economically prosperous core community that celebrates strong community identity and is welcoming to all. Neighborhoods will be revitalized, experiencing a mix of new development and reinvestment in existing housing that offers attractive choices to owners and renters at various stages of life. New housing will be complemented by parks, trails, and other amenities that support healthy and safe living. An increasing number of residents will be able to walk and bike to nearby neighborhood shops and restaurants to socialize with their neighbors and support local businesses.

Springfield's economy will continue to thrive with beautified commercial districts and a diverse mix of businesses that support well-paying job opportunities and a strong tax base. At Springfield's core, Commercial Street will continue to be strengthened as a unique destination unto itself while Downtown will emerge as a renowned destination for jobs, dining, shopping, and entertainment that attracts visitors from across the region and beyond. Aging corridors will be repositioned with commercial reinvestment, multifamily development, and placemaking strategies that grow support for businesses and strategically concentrate activity to provide recognizable destinations.

Springfield will embrace its identity as the "Basecamp of the Ozarks," home to a well-connected system of parks, open spaces, trails, and recreational opportunities that links to the region's many natural assets. The protection of the Ozarks' environment and ecology will be made a priority. New investments in the transportation network will allow community members to conveniently and safely reach community destinations, no matter if they are walking, biking, taking the bus, or driving. Continued maintenance and improvements to utilities, infrastructure, and community facilities and services will ensure high quality of life for Springfield's growing population long into the future.

While much of Springfield's growth will take place within established neighborhoods and corridors, strategic annexation and smart growth will enable the City to develop new neighborhoods and districts on its periphery. Coordination with neighboring communities and service providers will ensure Springfield's outward growth maximizes use of infrastructure and minimizes the premature conversion of farmland and natural areas.

VISIONS OF CORE ELEMENTS

In addition to the *Forward SGF Vision*, which provides an overarching vision for the community, the following section provides vision statements specific to the core elements of the Comprehensive Plan. This includes the Housing and Neighborhoods; Economic Development; Transportation and Mobility; Infrastructure and Community Facilities; and Parks, Greenways, and Natural Resources chapters. They provide an aspirational narrative for each element that outlines what the City should work towards achieving over the next 20 years based on the community's goals, needs, and desires.

CORE ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

In 2040, Springfield will be composed of healthy, thriving, and welcoming residential neighborhoods that contain a wide variety of housing choices. Quality, affordable housing opportunities will be available to people of all backgrounds and stages of life, drawing new families and young professionals, while allowing residents to age in place. Newcomers can choose from attractive suburban living to traditional or historic neighborhoods in an urban setting. Springfield will flourish with "Complete Neighborhoods," where a variety of day-to-day amenities, like restaurants, shops, schools, and parks will be approximately a 15-minute walk from one's home.

Neighborhood revitalization will be a top priority for the City, providing critical reinvestment into blighted neighborhoods, improving the quality of the housing stock and sense of place. Beautification efforts will drive private investment, building residents' sense of ownership, pride, and identity for the long term. Assets that make each neighborhood unique will be celebrated through branding and preservation in close collaboration with neighborhood organizations. Springfield will provide an authentic urban living experience with revitalized neighborhoods, housing, and places of experience and social refuge that neighboring communities cannot offer.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In 2040, the Springfield area economy will thrive due to its diverse mix of businesses, attractions, housing options, and improved quality of place and living experience. Companies locating to the area will provide high quality jobs that draw talent from across the country and encourages local college graduates to stay in Springfield and jumpstart their careers. Young professionals, families, and retirees will be attracted to the City's assets and livability, including top-rated public and private schools, higher education institutions, natural attractions, and a bustling Downtown. The City's economic resurgence will be seen in residential areas, with diverse housing options and neighborhood commercial centers that serve as hubs of activity, attracting and retaining a wide range of residents, investors, and visitors. Springfield will become a destination for major events, sports tournaments, and outdoor recreation, drawing thousands of visitors annually.

The City will continue to be proactive in attracting investment, ensuring a development-friendly environment, while requiring a higher standard of development that prioritizes people, place, and prosperity. This includes ensuring the provision of necessary infrastructure, multimodal access, high speed internet, and a skilled, educated, and diverse workforce to support the growing business community. In line with the vision of the City's economic development plan, new employment areas will be strategically planned, while older business areas will be targeted for reinvestment and redevelopment. The City will drive a strong regional economy and emerge as the recognized leader in forging partnerships and attracting investment that is beneficial, not only to Springfield, but the vitality of the surrounding region.

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

In 2040, Springfield will be a highly connected community that provides a variety of safe, reliable, and affordable transportation options to residents, workers, and visitors of all ages and abilities. Springfield will lead the region by example as it continues to grow as a transportation hub, supporting transit-oriented land uses. Transportation improvements will be used to enhance the community's unique identity, beautify the City, and contribute to placemaking. All users of the transportation system will have mobility options that are connected, efficient, and convenient whether they drive, walk, bike, take transit, move freight, or access air travel. The City will embrace innovation and leverage transportation investments to bolster economic growth and tourism.

INFRASTRUCTURE & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

In 2040, the City of Springfield will continue to equip the community with the necessary utilities, infrastructure, and community facilities needed to foster high quality-of-life and a supportive business environment. Strategic planning for sustainable growth and development of infrastructure and community facilities in close coordination with local stakeholders and regional partners will help meet future needs. Infrastructure and community facilities will be safe, reliable, resilient, and of high quality and design excellence, with the capacity to serve growing demands. Capitalizing on the region's natural resource appeal and infrastructure development will be sensitive to and enhance the valuable natural environment.

Capital improvement and community facility projects will be funded through innovative, diverse funding avenues, including public-private partnerships, recognizing these assets are essential to the vitality of Springfield's existing and future population. Such projects will emphasize multi-use functions, provide equitable access, connect public spaces, and support beautification initiatives throughout the City. Additionally, Springfield's residents and businesses will recognize the value of and develop a sense of community ownership towards these critical public assets to support future growth and economic development.

PARKS, GREENWAYS & NATURAL RESOURCES

In 2040, the City of Springfield will be home to a first-class parks and trails system that connects, engages, and inspires residents and visitors across all neighborhoods and throughout the region. This integrated system will provide safe and equitable access from residential areas and businesses to Springfield's parks, recreation, sport facilities, and other community destinations. The City will support healthy living and regional tourism, while providing for multimodal transportation options. The City's cutting-edge recreational facilities will be functional, dynamic, attractive, and welcoming to all, while remaining sensitive to surrounding natural environments.

In Springfield, nature will be a part of everyday life and a core component of the community's identity. Green spaces will be seamlessly interwoven into the urban fabric as a connected and healthy ecosystem that highlights Springfield's natural assets. Tree preservation, reforestation, and ecosystem restoration will ensure these assets are thriving for future generations. Springfield's quality amenities will help foster outdoor lifestyles for residents and drive investment as enthusiasm grows. The community at large will be stewards of the environment and leaders for sustainability in southwest Missouri. The City will embrace its role as Basecamp of the Ozarks, linking neighboring communities and natural areas across the region. Innovative partnerships and synergies will be created to further develop Springfield's system of parks, trails, greenways, and natural resources into an outdoor recreation destination and a jumping off point for regional exploration.

City Council PRIORITIES

The following presents the current City Council Priorities, which were considered during the planning process. Over time, the City of Springfield's elected officials should evaluate and modify their priorities, considering this plan and other City plans and projects that represent top community concerns and priorities.

QUALITY OF PLACE

Those features of physical environment and qualities of life that make a location a desirable, competitive and economically vibrant place to live.

LEGISLATIVE ENGAGEMENT

The deliberate formation of a positive relationship with local and regional legislative delegates to affect positive outcomes in legislative policy.

FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The ability of a municipal organization to adequately meet its primary service delivery needs and financial commitments over the long-term, while also preserving a healthy financial condition.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

A sustainable economic climate that fosters low poverty, affordable options for quality housing and wage levels that allow the opportunity for people to participate in quality-of-life endeavors.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The effective delivery of police, fire, and emergency management service, including prevention efforts and protection from events that could endanger the safety of the general public such as crimes, emergencies, or disasters.

Guiding Principle QUALITY OF PLACE

Throughout the hundreds of hours spent in in-person meetings and thousands of lines of input received through online engagement tools, one unifying concept emerged: **Quality of Place**.

DEFINING “QUALITY OF PLACE”

Within the context of a Comprehensive Plan, which focuses primarily on land use and development policy, Quality of Place is defined by the built environment and the community's ability to provide amenity-rich neighborhoods and commercial districts. As highlighted in the adjacent images, this includes supporting the development of **complete neighborhoods**, fostering **stewardship** and neighborhood reinvestment, and creating a **vital economy**.

Creating Complete Neighborhoods

Quality Places begin with healthy neighborhoods that host a range of diverse housing types, that are well-connected with multi-modal facilities and access to goods, services, and community facilities. Where home ownership is in decline and vacancies are threatening to rise, reinvestment and intervention is needed to foster safe, healthy housing, stabilize property values, and enhance neighborhood stewardship. By guiding future growth and new investment towards a 15-minute walking model, Springfield neighborhoods will be more well-rounded with a greater mix of uses that support livable, walkable, and complete neighborhoods.

Stewardship

Creating a city with Quality Places requires investment, maintenance, and a strong sense of pride and ownership. Amenity-rich environments where people choose to live, work, and play relies on the entire community being good stewards of the natural and built environment. Caring for neighborhoods and resident health and taking responsibility and ownership for the use and protection of the environment and the ecology of the land and natural resources are all critical to economic and social health. To be more welcoming, livable, and business-friendly the city prioritizes promoting and protection its image, character, and identity.

Creating a Vital Economy

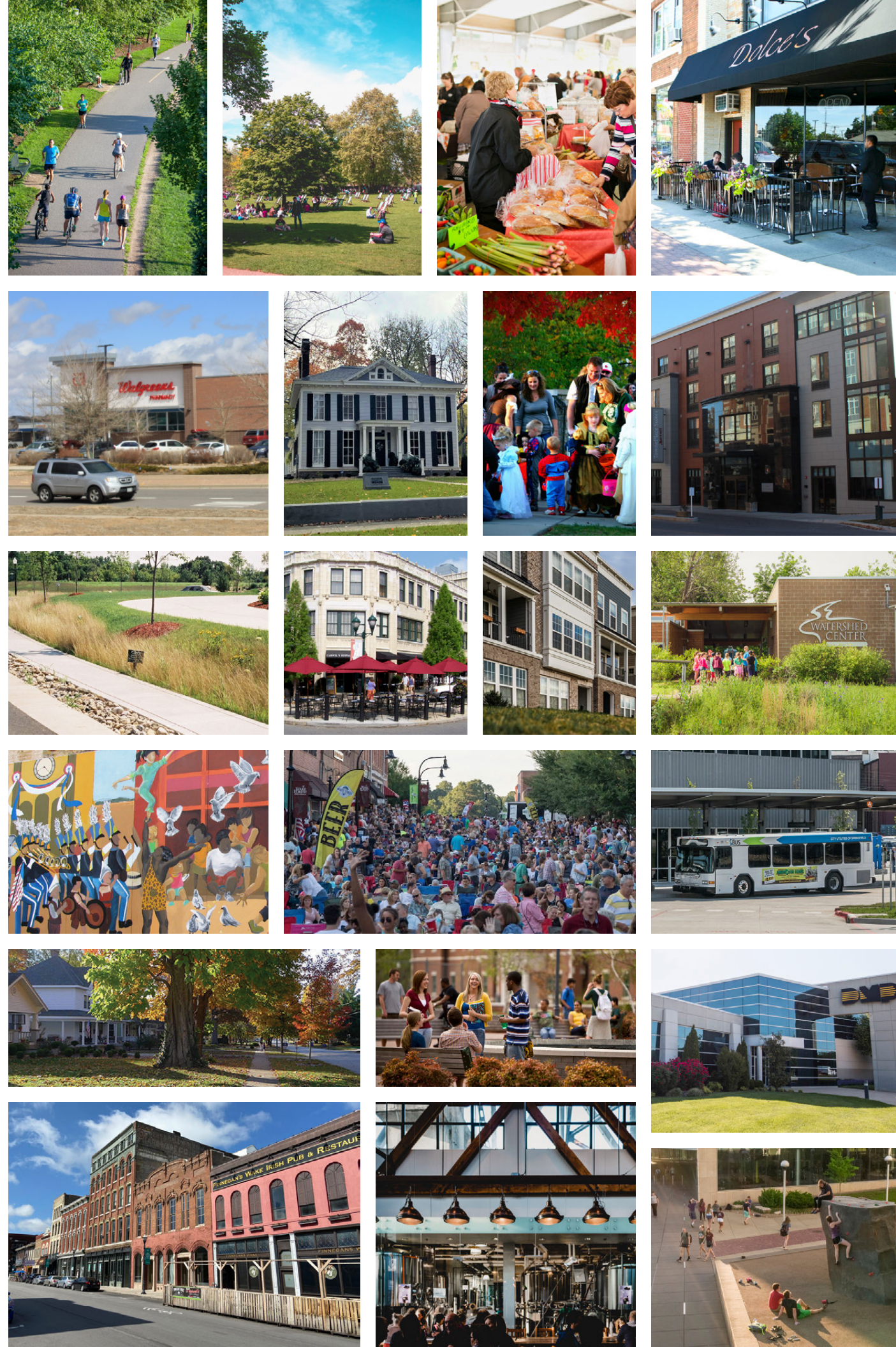
Quality places that are vibrant and prosperous require investment, maintenance, and re-imagining the city's urban spaces, corridors, and districts to ensure they are amenity-rich for a modern workforce that chooses place before profession. A vital economy must be competitive and should promote flexibility and offer incentives to attract entrepreneurs, start-ups, and a remote workforce. Through an exchange of use flexibility for quality design and construction, Springfield will encourage and attract new development and redevelopment with a higher standard and Quality of Place.

QUALITY OF PLACE IS MULTI-FACETED

Quality of place is the result of numerous decisions, policies, and initiatives working toward the same end. The intentional design and beautification of commercial areas, integration of diverse housing options, creation of formal and informal gathering spaces, multimodal connectivity, and installation of public art—these all play a role in elevating Quality of Place. Whether one is taking a stroll at lunch, meeting up with friends, taking a walk with their kids, or just grabbing a street bench and “taking it in,” public and private initiatives should combine with one another to create quality places in Springfield that people seek out to experience and enjoy.

FORWARD SGF “NORTH STAR”

Quality of Place is interconnected across all Plan elements and should act as a lens through which future growth, investment, and City initiatives are directed. While the Comprehensive Plan should be used to inform decisions and specific sections should be referenced depending on the topic at hand, Quality of Place should serve as a north star used to guide all future decision making. When considering a project, Quality of Place should act as a litmus test: Will this initiative improve quality of place? How can this project be modified to improve how Springfield residents experience this place in our community?



THEMES

The *Forward SGF* Comprehensive Plan contains three themes: Community Physical Image, Arts, Culture and Historic Preservation and Health and Well-Being. These crucial aspects of quality of place relate to multiple topics across chapters and have been treated as cross-cutting themes, weaving through each element of the Plan rather than individual chapters. The Goals for each theme were curated during the Goal Setting Focus Group series as part of the community outreach process. Theme-related recommendations are incorporated throughout the Plan where relevant and are identified using the thematic icons shown on this page.

THEME #1

COMMUNITY PHYSICAL IMAGE

DESCRIPTION

Community members of Springfield have a strong desire to enhance the community's physical image, leveraging the City's assets to build its appearance, reputation, and identity. The City should establish itself as the urban gateway to the Ozarks, a city of authenticity that celebrates both the urban and the natural. This authenticity will be developed through the community's unique position in the Ozarks, celebrating its rich history, culture, and growing diversity. Youth and families will be attracted to Springfield's excitement and activity, with a revitalized Downtown and Historic Commercial Street at its core.

Beautification of the City will require quality design standards and public-private investment, together with placemaking initiatives that foster local sense of pride. Streets should be interlaced with art, greenery, and public gathering spaces, creating attractive urban environments that are visually engaging. Neighborhoods and their streetscapes, each defined by their own memorable character, should be geared toward pedestrians. Natural assets should be preserved and enhanced, with green spaces coalescing new development to form a verdant community. Springfield will be a city of its community: engaging, inviting, and receptive to the ever-changing needs of the people and the region.

GOALS

1. Create beautiful, multimodal corridors along Springfield's major streets and thoroughfares enhanced with streetscaping elements.
2. Develop unique, pedestrian-scale neighborhoods that are well connected to commercial centers and community destinations across the City.
3. Plan for private developments and public capital improvements that act together as catalysts for future quality development within the City.
4. Revise development regulations and design standards to ensure future development is of high quality and reflective of the community's desired image.
5. Seek opportunities to create social environments and activities such as public spaces, outdoor seating areas, and festivals to encourage community engagement with one another.
6. Revitalize Downtown and Historic Commercial Street and promote a synergy between the two districts as the center of Springfield's activity, while attracting a diverse range of visitors of all ages and backgrounds.

THEME #2

ARTS, CULTURE & HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DESCRIPTION

Springfield should continue to flourish as a community that celebrates its local arts, culture, and history as integral and defining aspects of the City. Education and engagement programs should be used to raise awareness and cultivate a sense of community ownership and appreciation for valuable cultural and historic resources. Realizing the vision for other topics covered in *Forward SGF*, such as economic development and community identity, will require strategic use of arts, culture, and historic preservation to enhance Springfield as a desirable place to live, work, and visit.

The City's investments in its artistic infrastructure and stewardship will play an essential role in supporting high quality of life. Walkable environments should be created throughout the community, with public art and historic structures woven into the urban fabric, making the City visually interesting and beautiful. The integration of arts, culture, and historic preservation into future developments, streets, and public areas should become an expected standard, as well as the continued support for Springfield's local creative community.

GOALS

1. Support arts, culture, and historic preservation in City codes, policies, and future development.
2. Highlight, promote, and connect Springfield's artistic, cultural, and historic assets through innovative strategies and technology.
3. Secure public funding mechanisms to allow the City to properly inventory, invest, and maintain its existing and future artistic, cultural, and historic capital and institutions.
4. Highlight arts, culture, and historic preservation as community assets across all aspects of quality of life, forming a unified identity for Springfield.

THEME #3

HEALTH & WELL-BEING

DESCRIPTION

Health and well-being should be integrated into all aspects of quality-of-life in Springfield through mindful collaboration with public agencies and private service providers. This will help establish local policies and practices that improve public education around individual health at every stage of life, starting with Springfield's youth. Increased awareness on best health practices and behavioral choices at an individual level will effectively improve overall public health.

Springfield should continue to grow into a city that supports an active and healthy lifestyle. This includes a robust system of trails, parks, and recreational facilities that are accessible from all neighborhoods. Residents from any socioeconomic group should be able to reach essential destinations, including healthcare facilities, food stores, jobs, and schools, without relying on the availability of a personal automobile.

Affordable and attractive housing options should be supported for all stages of life and income groups. Community members should also have the opportunity to enjoy increased quality of life and economic stability through higher-paying employment options. Through a combination of enhanced education, access, and connectivity, Springfield will help ensure public health and individual well-being is a community priority.

GOALS

1. Support active and healthy lifestyles as well as increased accessibility to essential facilities for all socioeconomic groups, including walking, biking, and public transit.
2. Promote equity within the City's housing stock by ensuring residents of all socioeconomic backgrounds can attain quality housing that they can afford.
3. Increase environmental stewardship, protection of natural resources, and supply of parks, open space, and recreational facilities to create a healthy living environment.
4. Reduce disparities regarding food access, housing, education, environmental, financial, and social factors that contribute to poor health in the community.
5. Through close coordination with public and private health-related organizations, proactively integrate health into all aspects of quality of life and inclusively educate and engage the public on best health practices.