

# CITY OF SARCOXIE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

November 2022





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**RESOLUTION:**

**A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE CITY OF SARCOXIE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

*WHEREAS, the Board of Aldermen of the City of Sarcoxie recognizes the importance of planning for the future growth and development of the City and surrounding areas; and,*

*WHEREAS, the City of Sarcoxie solicited input from the public and other stakeholders, and from that input developed a vision for the city's future; and,*

*WHEREAS, the Core Team, working in concert with the Harry S Truman Coordinating Council and other stakeholders, developed a comprehensive plan to serve as a guide for the city's future growth and development, based on examining existing and future conditions; and,*

*WHEREAS, the comprehensive plan contains recommendations in the form of goals, objectives and action steps; and,*

*WHEREAS, achieving the City's vision for the future will be accomplished through the implementation of the comprehensive plan; and,*

*WHEREAS, the comprehensive plan will be practically applied to guide growth decisions.*

*NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Aldermen of the City of Sarcoxie, MO as follows:*

*Section 1. The City of Sarcoxie Comprehensive Plan, dated \_\_\_\_\_, is hereby approved.*

*Section 2. All maps, descriptive matter and other matters in the Plan are intended to be a part of the Comprehensive Plan.*

*Section 3. All prior comprehensive plans, portions thereof, updates thereto, or additions thereto, are hereby repealed to the extent they are inconsistent with the Plan.*

*Section 4. The City Clerk is instructed to maintain a copy at City Hall for public inspection during normal office hours as well as on the City's primary website.*

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# Chapter 1: Introduction



## Overview

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A Comprehensive Plan is a guidance document created by members of the community with a forward-looking vision of the city. It describes where a community is now and where it wants to be in ten years with respect to such attributes as growth, land use, and development. The City of Sarcoxie prepared its first comprehensive plan in 2008. With all of the improvements already realized from this original plan, it is appropriate to revisit such goals in order to continue to improve. To assist with this process, the City contracted with the Harry S Truman Coordinating Council (HSTCC).

The State of Missouri lays out specific laws on comprehensive plans and their impact on zoning regulations. Section 89.040 of Missouri Statute requires that zoning regulations “shall be made in accordance with a comprehensive plan”. A comprehensive plan is not legally binding, but rather a document used to uphold decisions made by the municipality for community guidance and growth. Development and policy decisions should be consistent to the adopted plan, for it was developed with the citizens’ input.

This comprehensive plan will provide a detailed guide for the City’s future based on community input, collaborating with the City’s administration, and analysis and research conducted by HSTCC. It will look at the many parts of the community, how the community functions, and its role in the region. It is intended to provide a rational basis for making local land use decisions and to serve as a blueprint for community-wide efforts to achieve its vision.

## Guiding Principle

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Sarcoxie’s vision is not just defined by the goals outlined within this plan, or what is done to achieve them. Instead, at the root of every goal, project, and decision is a guiding principle to make Sarcoxie the best hometown possible. While this principle is hard to quantify, there are key attributes that resonate with the public and civic leaders. Such components include living in a small town with exceptional opportunities and activities for all generations, quick and local access to multiple amenities and services that larger cities offer, an active school district with the opportunity for personal achievement, and an inviting and safe place to call home.



## The Principles of Planning

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Planning refers to the process of deciding what to do and how to do it. A principle of good planning is that individual, short-term decisions should support strategic, long-term goals. Effective planning requires correctly defining problems and asking critical questions. A planning process should not be limited to the first solution proposed or the concerns of only people who attend meetings.

## The Planning Process

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The City of Sarcoxie in conjunction with Harry S. Truman Coordinating Council (HSTCC) held two public meetings to discuss the needs and desires to determine projects that would greatly benefit the citizens. The first planning meeting was held on June 21<sup>st</sup> 2021 and consisted of a SWOT analysis and basic discussion of what Sarcoxie has and needs.

During the almost 12-month planning process, the Core Team and other civic leaders met to discuss the plan and the included proposed projects. In early 2022, the draft plan was made publicly available on the City's media outlets, website, and paper copies to allow for months of community feedback. The Core Team distributed copies to local organizations and created surveys to collect overall views of the proposed plan. After revising the plan using the collected results, the second meeting was scheduled for June 14<sup>th</sup> 2022. During this meeting, the draft plan was presented and again public feedback was requested through Q&A sessions as well as surveys.

In addition to the data collected from citizens and organizations, HSTCC provided assistance in collecting statistical information from the US Census as well as EMSI datasets to provide specific information regarding population, housing, etc. Because the EMSI datasets collect data from outside of the city limits, the Core Team made the decision to include the EMSI data as well as any other community datasets in the Appendix.

## Going Forward

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As part of this visioning and planning process, each section was reviewed as where are we now (Reality) and what we would like it to be like in 2032 (Vision). In some sections this will be as easy of describing the noticeable differences from 2022 to 2032 and include both quantitative and qualitative goals. From these visions, shorter term "action plans" will be created every even numbered year with the intent of achieving the vision in ten years.



# Chapter 2: Community Profile





## History

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The City of Sarcoxie, Missouri, also known as the "oldest town in Jasper County", is located just off I-44 between Joplin and Springfield. The historic town lies between Exit 26 and Exit 29 on I-44 which once was Hwy 166, the main means of travel to and from surrounding towns before I-44 was completed in 1965. The highway has been moved slightly but still carries travelers to the edge of Sarcoxie's Nationally Designated Historic Business District.

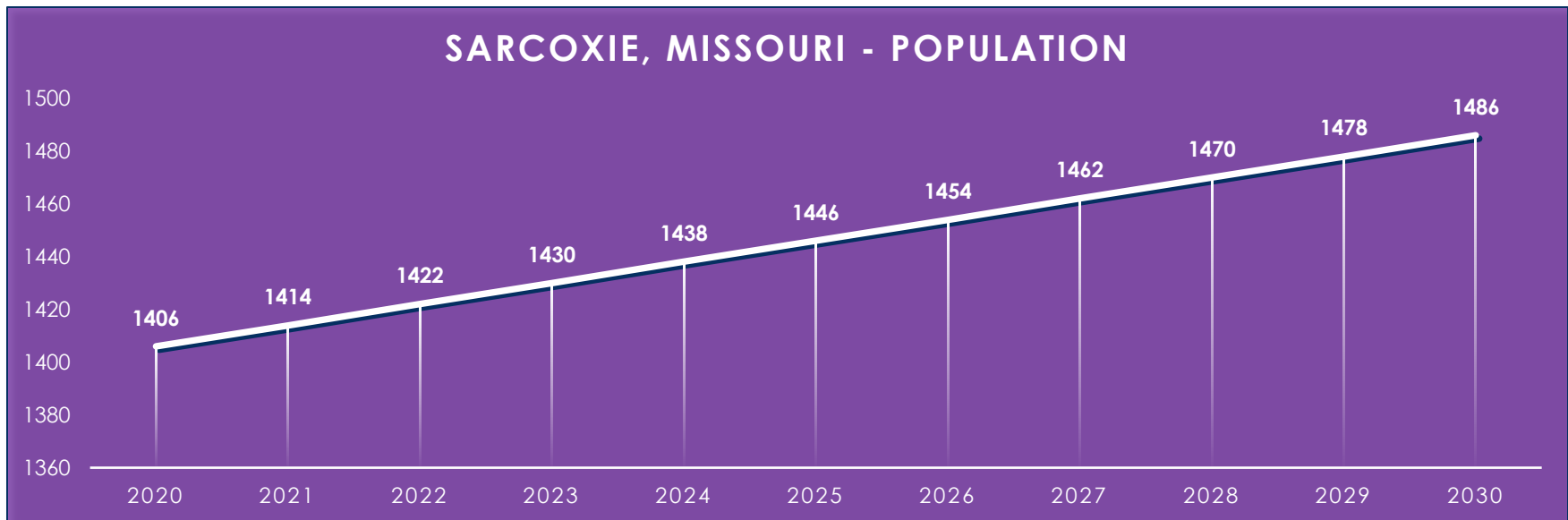
In the late 1800s, Sarcoxie was known as the "strawberry capital of the world" and to this day is still the "peony capital of the world". Surrounding strawberry farmers formed the once known Sarcoxie Horticultural Association, and at one time had around 200 members. Migrant pickers from southern states would make the journey to Sarcoxie looking for seasonal work. During this time, Sarcoxie developed its own form of currency to pay the pickers. A local bank issued these strawberry tokens each holding a different value based on the number of berries collected. The strawberry success reached its peak at the turn of the century but steadily declined before World War II and never returned to its level of harvest.

After almost two centuries, Sarcoxie continues to move forward but never loses sight of its past and influential members. The citizens continue to show their community pride during annual social and sporting events. For a small city, this community has a big heart.



## Population and Projections

Per the US Census Data, collected in 2020, Sarcoxie’s population saw a slight increase from 1,330 to 1,406. This change in population reflects a 5.7% increase over a 10-year timeframe. With the increase in demand for housing as well as the projects proposed in the sections below, the population should continue to increase at or above the 5.7% minimum over the next decade.





# Education

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## PRIMARY EDUCATION

The Sarcoxie R-II School District has two separate campuses. The Wildwood Elementary School provides education from Kindergarten through Grade 5. The Middle/High School campus provides education from 6th to 8th grade, and 9th to 12th grade respectively. The school’s latest enrollment information consists of 718 students with 443 in the middle and high school and 275 in the Wildwood Elementary School. Classroom sizes are smaller than other surrounding schools with a 16:1 student per classroom teacher ratio. Class sizes average 59 students which gives great latitude for students to excel in sports and extra-curricular activities.

The elementary school is centrally located in the city on 11th Street between Clarence Street and Wildwood Lane. The middle and high school is located on the west side of the city along 17th Street between Center Street and Linda Lane. Additionally, the school district has an alternative school located at 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Miner Street.

The school district participates in MSHSAA athletics and provides activities including football, basketball, volleyball, archery, softball, baseball, track, cross country track and golf for the grades 7 through 12. The school district also offers a wide selection of extra—curricular activities for its students.

## COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Sarcoxie graduates wishing to continue their education have many options within a 50 mile radius. Examples include:

- Missouri Southern State University Joplin, MO
- Missouri State University Springfield, MO
- Crowder College Neosho, MO
- Ozark Christian College Joplin, MO



## Community Organizations

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### SARCOXIE YOUTH SPORTS

Sarcoxie has a Youth Sports Association which provides a selection of activities including T-ball, baseball, softball, flag football, full contact football, volleyball, cheer and basketball. Their mission is to promote youth sports in the southwest Missouri area in support of the development of leadership, character, sportsmanship, tolerance, discipline, and athleticism and to nurture youth fitness, volunteerism, and a lifelong love of sports. This organization works in association with the school district and city to secure access to ball fields and gymnasiums to assure a rewarding experience.

### SARCOXIE SENIOR CENTER

Sarcoxie Senior Center located on the northwest corner of the Historical Sarcoxie Square officially opened in May 1994. It became a reality after several dedicated community citizens banded together and went door to door to raise money to start the Center, held several fundraisers, and sold name bricks to be displayed on the entry wall where they still remain on display today. The Senior Center is also available as an event venue for the public.

Currently, the Senior Center is providing well balanced, nutritious meals. All ages are welcome to have lunch. For those who cannot come in to eat, carry out is offered. Delivery service provided by a local volunteer. A monthly Chicken Dinner is held on the first Saturday of each month.

### SARCOXIE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Sarcoxie Area Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit business partner for local small businesses. Their goal is to help further the interest of local small businesses, recognizing local educators and outstanding citizens, and supporting civic events held in the area. Activities range from hosting events such as the Chamber banquet, conducting an annual Christmas lighting contest, city-wide garage sale, etc. They also provide services for members such as marketing small business goods, services, and activities using social media. There are a little over 65 members from within the city limits to the surrounding community. Member dues are reasonable compared to surrounding chamber organizations and fund all Chamber programs, activities, and events.



## LIONS CLUB

Sarcoxie has a Lions Club whose mission is to empower volunteers to serve their communities, meet humanitarian needs, encourage peace and improve the health and well-being of members within their community. 100% of their funding is raised by the community and distributed to help fund community needs such as glasses for children, hearing aids and cataract surgeries for elderly members. The Lions meet once a month at the Senior Center to discuss upcoming events and determine new service projects. They participate in annual events such as Chief Sarcoxie Days, Christmas on the Square, and the setup of the nativity scene just northeast of Center Creek which is viewable from High Street. The Lions Club always welcomes new members interested in serving their community.

## SARCOXIE ALLIANCE

The Sarcoxie Alliance is a not-for-profit organization that focuses on providing grant access to groups and organizations that do charitable work within the city. The Alliance also assists government organizations with acquiring resources to fulfill their roles and responsibilities to the community that are beyond the ability of the government to provide.

## SARCOXIE REDEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The Sarcoxie Redevelopment Corporation was established in 2019 to encourage new investment in blighted areas within the incorporated portions of the city and provide 353 tax incentives that will lead to redevelopment of deteriorated or vacant properties and provide new jobs for the community.

Projects receiving 353 tax incentives are expected to preserve historic structures and structures that contribute to any historic district, occupy vacant or otherwise unusable structures, encourage the construction of new structures, provide new jobs and / or increase housing opportunities.

## SARCOXIE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The Sarcoxie Community Foundation is an affiliate of the Community Foundation of the Ozarks. The SCF was founded in September 2011 and, as of 2021, has distributed more than \$599,450 back to the community. Their mission is to enhance the quality of life in Sarcoxie through resource development, community grantmaking, collaboration and public leadership. The SFC leadership team consists of community members of Sarcoxie.



## Local Points of Interest

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### SARCOXIE CHAMBER HISTORICAL CENTER

The Sarcoxie Chamber Historical Center, originally the Gene Taylor Library and Museum was given ownership by the Taylor heirs to the Sarcoxie Chamber of Commerce. The building now serves as the Sarcoxie Chamber Office maintaining and preserving Sarcoxie's rich history. There are numerous collections of artifacts, photos and data housed and displayed in the Historical Center dating from c. 1880s to present day. Included in the collections are photos of Sarcoxie's century old buildings, pioneer founding fathers and entrepreneurs that introduced prosperity to the city. The three main economical influences that provided for the financial growth of the town are on display. Many young men and women from Sarcoxie served in the military and are proudly displayed in a section designated for the military. Graduating classes from 1897-1970s are featured. A replica of Congressman Gene Taylor's office in Washington D.C. is featured with items from that office.

The goal of the Historical Center is to provide a location where Sarcoxie's history can be viewed and information can be shared with visitors and school groups. The Chamber Historical Museum provides a place where Sarcoxie's local community can become educated regarding past history and celebrate our city's unique history.

The Chamber meets monthly on the 3rd Tuesday. Visitors are always welcome. Requests to hold civic meetings are encouraged.

### SARCOXIE VETERAN MEMORIAL

On the southwest corner of the square stands the Sarcoxie Veteran Memorial dedicated to the Sarcoxie community members who have served or have fallen in the line of service. The planning and construction was accomplished through a local veterans committee and was completed in 2019 with the assistance of public donation and support.



## CENTER CREEK COUNTRY CLUB

About 4 miles northwest of Sarcoxie, just north of Exit 26 from I-44, lies a small 9-hole golf course. While it may be smaller than other courses, this challenging course is a frequent destination for local golfers and golfers of neighboring cities. It continues to host many tournaments throughout the year and the green fees and membership fees are comparable to or better than surrounding courses.

## CAVE SPRINGS SCHOOL

About 9 miles northeast of Sarcoxie, this historical schoolhouse near Cave Springs was used for 128 years. The one-room, brick Cave Spring School was built in the early 1840s to educate children of the Cave Spring community. During the Civil War, it served as a federal militia garrison and after the war, it was the seat of county government after the Jasper County Courthouse was burned down. It is on the National Register of Historic Places.

## Surrounding Attractions

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Sarcoxie is within 2 hours of many nationally recognized attractions ranging from zoos & aquariums, theme parks, outdoor trails, etc. Some examples include:

- Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center Joplin, MO
- George Washington Carver National Monument Diamond, MO
- Dickerson Park Zoo Springfield, MO
- Wonders of Wildlife National Museum & Aquarium Springfield, MO
- Silver Dollar City Attractions Branson, MO



# Chapter 3: Citizen Services & Community Facilities





## Overview

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Community facilities are buildings or places owned or operated by the local government designated to engage in, or conduct, a range of community, recreational, social or health related activities that enhance community wellbeing. Community facilities are essential for the health, social wellbeing and economic prosperity of communities.

Citizen services are functions of local government that directly interact with the public for specific purposes. These services play a vital function in our goal to make Sarcoxie the best hometown possible.

All community facilities and citizen services are overseen by the mayor and board of aldermen. The mayor serves as the chief executive officer of the city and oversees daily operations of the city government.

Detailed below are community facilities and services that directly impact residents. Functions not noted below (i.e., City Clerk, Collector, Public Works, etc.) play crucial roles in keeping everything running and available but operate more in the background.

## Public Safety Services

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## POLICE DEPARTMENT

### REALITY 2022

The Sarcoxie Police Department is staffed with a police chief, two full time officers, and multiple part time and reserve officers. In addition to general patrol and responding to calls for assistance, the department provides traffic and nuisance enforcement as well as emergency medical assistance. Because of the size of the department, the City is unable to provide 24/7 coverage. The department's pay scale is below the average of comparative or larger departments in the Jasper, Newton and Lawrence County area. This has an adverse impact on recruitment and retention. As such, today's typical active-duty officer has less than five years of experience. Elected officials recently worked with police command staff to develop guiding principles on the conduct and operations of the department in a manner consistent with the values of the community.

### VISION 2032

The Sarcoxie Police Department will be made up of five full time officers as well as reserve and part time officers. This staffing level ensures an officer is on duty 24 /7. The pay scale for the department will be at or above the average pay scale of the Jasper, Newton and Lawrence County Sheriff's Offices. The average experience level will be ten years. The guiding principles introduced in 2022 will have evolved in to a deeply embedded culture. While still a small department, it takes full advantage of technology and citizen goodwill to leverage their level and quality of service provided.



## FIRE DEPARTMENT

### REALITY 2022

The Sarcoxie Fire Department is an all-volunteer department that, prior to 2015, operated as a combined department with a neighboring department. Since separating, the department has acquired new equipment, renovated the station, established operating procedures to prepare for long term growth and improvement. Voluntary ISO audits in 2016 and 2020 have improved the city's ISO rating from a 7 to a 5 - demonstrating improved fire protection and resulting in reduced property insurance premiums for city residents.

In late 2021, the City entered into an agreement with Mercy to maintain part-time ambulance service in and around the city. This has resulted in significantly improved response times for medical calls. This agreement was expanded in 2022 to include 24/7 coverage.

A major concern is volunteer recruitment and retention. A lack of active volunteers directly effects the department's ability to respond to 100% of all calls for service. To improve this, the City implemented a new retention and recruitment program in 2022.

### VISION 2032

In 2032, the department will be made up of 20 active volunteers led by a paid full time Fire Chief. The department will respond to 100% of all calls in the city. The department will have identified key requirements to achieve an ISO rating of 4 and will be working to achieve it. Citizen goodwill towards the department will have been enhanced through competent service and public events.



## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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### REALITY 2022

The City is creating an emergency management department and has appointed an Emergency Management Director. The primary responsibility of emergency management is to prepare for critical incidents larger than is normally handled by any single department. Emergency Management coordinates and oversees the City's response to such emergencies and assists with large community events. The director is currently working to codify the department and create operating procedures.

### VISION 2032

Emergency Management will be fully funded and established as a department on par with the police and fire departments. All emergency plans and procedures are documented, reviewed and tested annually. The department also has a small but well-trained group of volunteers who assist in emergency operations.



## Residential Services & Community Facilities

Sarcoxie provides many public services to its citizens ranging from public safety to recreation. Besides the City operated services, Sarcoxie has many other facilities and services available to the citizens within the city limits. Such services include:

- U.S. Post Office
- Pinnacle Bank
- Sarcoxie Publishing Company
- Community Outreach Center

### RESIDENTIAL TRASH SERVICE

#### REALITY 2022

The City contracts with outside vendors to provide weekly residential trash pickup in provided poly carts. The City also provides access to a roll off dumpster for large items and the occasional large volume of residential trash as well as a disposal site for lawn debris, needles, unused prescription medications as well as recyclables such as cardboard and plastic. There has been limited success with scrap metal recyclables.

#### VISION 2032

The City has improved its recyclable program so that citizens have an easy and consistent means to dispose of such items. There is a new site for lawn debris and a better location for the public access roll off dumpster.



## PUBLIC LIBRARY

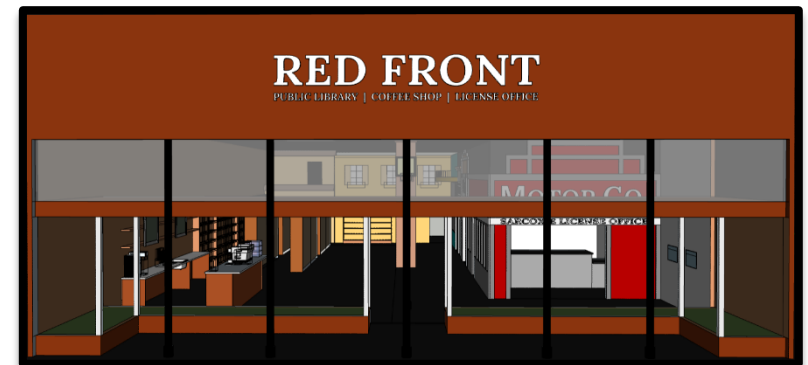
### REALITY 2022

The Sarcoxie Public Library is located on the south side of the city square in a 4,500 square foot building. Originally built as the Red Front Mercantile, it has served as the site of the city library since 1993. Today's library has a collection of over 14,000 items available to the public as well as public access computers and free Wi-Fi for patrons. It offers services such as book clubs, summer reading programs, and special programs for pre-school aged children and seniors. Historically, the library has explored additional public service roles such as workforce development training, public training seminars and other services that have not been as well received by the public as was hoped. Following national trends, the library has also seen a steady shrinkage of use over the past decade despite offering improved amenities and completing major repairs / improvements to the building. As such, it struggles financially due to a lack of public use and the expense of conducting operations in a building that is too big for its volume.

Sarcoxie's public library will and should always be an important city resource. To protect its long-term viability, the library has been temporarily closed so the building is currently going through major renovations that should be completed in 2022. When finished, the library will be part of a bigger facility called The Red Front. In addition to the library, the refreshed facility will also hold the Sarcoxie License Office and a coffee shop.

### VISION 2032

The Red Front has been a significant contributor to the overall vibe of the downtown area. With expanded hours of operation, the library and coffee shop are regular destinations for locals as well as a complimentary service for out-of-town guests. The additional services offered in the Red Front continue to attract new patrons to the library and bring about an increase in circulation as well as inspire additional services to the public.





## LICENSE OFFICE

### REALITY 2022

The license office on the downtown square provides local access to state vehicle title and registration services locally to citizens and surrounding area customers. The license office operates under a contract between the City and the Missouri Department of Revenue and has a reputation for quick, friendly service resulting in a dramatic increase in customers from surrounding cities. In its current operation, the office is staffed by a full-time manager and two part-time clerks. The license office operates 41.5 hours a week and averages 100 transactions a day. In late 2022, the license office will be relocated to a newly renovated facility to provide customers with more spacious and comfortable seating and waiting area.

### VISION 2032

The license office will continue to grow its customer base requiring staffing levels to increase to two full time and three-part time clerks. It continues to be noted for fast and friendly small-town service.



## COMMUNITY BUILDING

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### REALITY 2022

The Gene Taylor Community Building is located at 5th and High Street. Its location is at a gateway to the downtown area. Designated as a park asset, the community building is available for public events and can be rented as a venue for private events. The Park Board makes continuous improvements and modernizations to the facility and operates under a documented long term improvement plan.

### VISION 2032

The community building has been fully modernized and aesthetically contributes to the downtown area. The parking lot has been expanded and redesigned to allow for at least 10% more parking for events at the building and overflow for larger events in the downtown area.





## STEBBINS MEMORIAL PARK

### REALITY 2022

Stebbins Memorial Park is the city's main park. It encompasses one city block and includes swimming pools (detailed separately), playground equipment, public restrooms, covered pavilions and a baseball field. The Park Board has been operating with an improvement plan for the park over the past four years. This has involved renovating physical structures and replacing potentially dangerous playground equipment. In the fall of 2022, the public restroom and the swing sets are being replaced with modern amenities and ADA compliance. Other playground equipment has already been purchased or refurbished and installed as well.

A current issue is whether to maintain the ball field given the school district's building of additional ballfields to support the area youth sports organization. If the need for this ball field continues to shrink, the community will have to decide if there is a better public use for this area.



### VISION 2032

Stebbins Park has been fully modernized and is a primary recreational area for the public. All electric lines in the park are buried and streetlights adequately light the general area with an emphasis on attractions. All recreational offerings at the park will be fully utilized with no stagnant assets.



## SARCOXIE CITY POOLS

### REALITY 2022

Located in the southeast corner of Stebbins Park, the current three pool complex began operation in 2004. Historically, a public swimming pool has always been popular for Sarcoxie residents. Unfortunately, this type of activity has seen a steady decline in attendance and revenue that helps cover costs. At the same time, costs have continued to steadily increase. In 2019, the smallest of the pools was permanently shut down due to mechanical failure and a lack of use. Sarcoxie will need to decide what the future holds for this resource. While there should always be some sort of water recreation, there may be more effective alternatives that is a more responsible use of tax dollars.



### VISION 2032

To see a well-attended pool or water attraction that helps to either raise the revenue or reduce the expenses to operate the system.



## DOWNTOWN SQUARE

### REALITY 2022

The city square and downtown area has seen significant improvements since the 2008 comprehensive plan. One of the most significant developments has been getting the square federally registered as a historic district in 2014. Since then, steady improvements have been achieved. Streetlights have been renovated with banners added, the front facades of most buildings have been renovated, inactive buildings have been transitioned to more active owners, the historic city bell and gazebo have been renovated, most power lines have been buried, public restrooms built, a new digital sign installed, and roughly 25% of sidewalks have been rebuilt. In 2019 a new veteran's memorial was added to the southeast corner of the square.

In 2022, at least four properties on or close to the square are on target to go through or finish major renovations with new ventures operating out of them. The City is also working with the Sarcoxie Alliance to develop a venue on a grass lot at 5th and Center. This site will help support farmer's markets, craft shows, and other activities that help draw crowds to the square.

### VISION 2032

The city square has become an active and vibrant hub of Sarcoxie. All buildings are occupied, well maintained and compliment the ambiance. Soft area music, plenty of seating and improved lighting helps create a pleasant environment to hang out with friends and family. There are at least four options for restaurants, coffee shops and bars. At least once a month there are big events happening with live music or entertainment. Just off the square is a natural area to wander around.

A short walk north of the square is the city's historic calaboose. Economic improvement is possible because the impact of Swifty Branch as a flood source has been eliminated. Additional parking has been created to accommodate larger crowds. The area is covered with security cameras to help create a very safe environment. The area is decorated for various holidays to be a destination. All sidewalks have been replaced.



## OLT SOFT PARK / CARNIVAL GROUNDS

### REALITY 2022

The Ozark Land Trust’s “Sarcoxie Cave and Spring Preserve” is a 3-acre tract of land located just west of the city square. Nestled between wooded hills and an inactive railroad tract, it includes a cave, spring and pond in a meadow that feels separated from the rest of the world. The cave harbors the federally endangered Ozark cavefish and the rare Arkansas darter has been found in the spring.

In 2016, the City entered in to an agreement with the OLT to develop the OLT property in to a soft park. Over the past few years, a dam has been rebuilt to maintain the pond depth, a bridge across the stream has been replaced and much work has been done to clean up the property.

The carnival grounds are a roughly 4-acre tract of land located between the OLT land and Swifty Branch. Its open area is well suited for larger city events. It is easily accessible from the square over a small concrete bridge over Swifty.

### VISION 2032

The combined soft park and carnival grounds is an active hub for walkers and people wanting to get out into the wilderness – in a small-scale sort of way. The carnival grounds includes a free fishing pond for area youth as well as multiple picnic areas where small gatherings can enjoy a campfire and relax in an open-air environment. Visitors of the downtown area can walk through an arched gateway and cross the bridge on to a grassy plain with the entryway to the soft park just a few steps further away.



## ARENA & SHOW BARN

### REALITY 2022

Located a block east of the city square, the arena is a roughly 1-acre pipe fenced enclosure well suited to equestrian and livestock activities. It includes a small concession stand and an elevated press box. Directly adjacent to the arena is an open sided barn that has historically been used for the livestock show during the annual Chief Sarcoxie Days Festival.

Today, these properties have challenges. The arena is prone to flooding and the show barn is showing its age. The lack of usage of these properties has made spending money to upgrade them undesirable. At present they are only used during the Chief Sarcoxie Days event.

### VISION 2032

A new more functional show barn has replaced the existing structure. The City has found more events or usage for these facilities.



## CALABOOSE

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### REALITY 2022

Until 2019, the old city jail was just a dilapidated concrete storage shed. That changed when the current owners donated it to the City to be converted to a museum. The task of cleaning it out and getting it renovated was taken on by the Youth Advisory Council of Sarcoxie (YACS).

Today the building has been cleaned out, the main door has been rebuilt in a historically accurate manner and the original jail doors have been recovered and stored on site. Over the next year, the jail will be completed with era accurate furniture installed, focused lighting, and informational signage installed.

### VISION 2032

The Calaboose has been fully restored and maintained in a manner that makes it easy for the curious to explore.



# Chapter 4: Infrastructure



## Overview

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The City of Sarcoxie's infrastructure are critical systems for the residents that live within our community. These systems necessarily continue to grow and evolve with many envisioned improvements and foreseen additions to the city.

## Water System

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The City's water system is made up of two wells each with chemical treatment systems, two elevated water storage tanks, an estimated 10 miles of distribution pipes ranging from 3/4 inch to 10 inches and water meters at each service connection. A 2021 analysis by MoDNR determined the water system had adequate pumping capacity for anticipated growth through 2032 but lacked adequate storage for expected growth. The City also has a DNR approved 20 year water improvement plan that was approved in 2019.

The water system has multiple challenges that will have to be addressed through the next 10 years.

- Less than 80% of all water pumped from wells is accounted for through individual meters. A contributing factor is that most water meters are several years past their rated life expectancy which reduces their accuracy. New "smart" meters are currently being installed. The City also contracts with a vendor to conduct annual leak detections.
- According to DNR, the City does not have enough water storage capacity for expected growth through 2032. The only way to improve this is to add an additional storage tank.
- The water distribution system is not sufficient to ensure "looping" or redundant supplies of water to various sections of the city. This results in unpopular water pressures and non-uniform pressures throughout the city. It also can cause pressure drops in sections of the city when there is heavy water usage in other parts of the city. Improving this will require increasing the size of existing water supply lines and adding additional lines to ensure water circulates and comes from multiple directions.
- A majority of the water distribution system is very old – some is even the original pipes. To address this, the DNR approved water improvement plan includes creating a new 10" loop around the city. This loop will dramatically improve the average fire flow available and eventually be the primary water main for the entire water system.

In early 2022, the city acquired new technology to provide automated communication to public works to advise when the system is at risk of failing. This is vastly superior to previous technology and will result in preventing city-wide low-pressure incidents.





## VISION 2032

Issues with inconsistent or low pressure have been largely eliminated due to additional storage and larger, additional supply lines. New water meters and leak detection have dramatically improved water accountability to at least 90%. At least 25% of the 10" loop around the city has been complete with a set plan and timeline in place to complete the remaining 75% of the work. As part of the additional upgrades that have taken place, the City has prepared for future developments by extending water to the outer edges of city limits. The City continues to embrace new technology to improve efficiency and ensure a robust system.



## Sewer System

The City's sewer system is made up of roughly 10 miles of sewer mains, three strategically located lift stations, and a 3-cell lagoon treatment system. The system is currently going through a grand funded engineering evaluation with the final report expected in 2023. This evaluation will also help with planning DNR mandated improvements to the lagoon treatment system. There are two pressing issues with the sewer system that will have to be addressed over the next 10 years.

- Inflow and infiltration (I&I) in to the sewer mains is a significant issue. Stormwater getting in to the sewer distribution system can overwhelm the treatment system, cause bypasses out of manholes, and cause residents to see slow or no flows of discharge water. In worst case scenarios, this can even cause sewer to backflow in to service lines and low elevation drains. This can be caused by illegal transfer of stormwater in to sewers by residents, broken and aged sewer lines, and a lack of proper drainage of stormwater throughout the city.
- Another issue is sewer mains that become full or partially blocked. This can be caused by tree roots, collapsed mains and obstructions caused by residents placing improper items in to the sewer system.

Addressing these issues is labor intensive and never ending. A large component of this involves a consistent program of cleaning, smoke testing and camera inspecting sewer mains. Identifying and fixing these issues can include replacing sections of sewer main or lining them to restore rated flows.

### VISION 2032

In 2032, the city has made a lot of headway on the sewer system. The lagoon system has been converted to partial land application and is fully compliant with MoDNR. Major improvements have been made to the distribution lines in which 10% has been lined or replaced. Additionally, the city has cleaned and inspected the lines and has created a documented system to inspect and maintain sewer mains. All sewer bypasses will have been eliminated with the exception of extreme weather events.

Check valves in all qualified services lines will have been installed to prevent backflows. This will happen in part through new enforceable city code as well as the inspection of service lines to ensure users are not illegally discharging to the sewers which cause the backflows.



## Stormwater Management

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Efficient stormwater management requires the strategic movement of stormwater through the city. This is done to prevent entry into the sewer system, protect personal property, and ensure safe movement through the city.

The City's stormwater transportation system is primarily made up of ditches and culverts as well as curbs and gutters along main streets. Decades of neglect, and a lack of maintenance and government oversight has resulted in many of these systems becoming less efficient or not working at all.

Starting in 2021, in conjunction with city engineers, public works began a program of mapping and improving stormwater flow through the ditches. This will be a significant and time consuming process that will take several years to fully implement.

### VISION 2032

By 2032, all neighborhoods have had ditches trenched, additional curbing has been added to major streets improving the flow of stormwater. Main culverts have been replaced and expanded to allow better flow, and a there is an effective maintenance program to ensure the system stays at optimum effectiveness.



# Chapter 5: Transportation



## Overview:

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Sarcoxie is served primarily by Interstate 44, a major East – West route in the Midwest providing an efficient route from the Will Rogers Turnpike in Oklahoma to Saint Louis, MO. The city is centrally located between two exits of I-44 that are approximately 3 miles apart.

The city is also served by 37 Highway which runs directly through the city. This is a principal highway running North – South that provides access to Interstate 44, the city of Monet, MO, tourist destinations in the Ozarks, a scenic route into Northwest Arkansas and access to US Highway 60.

The city is located approximately 15 miles from US 71, a major North – South route in the Midwest connecting Kansas City, MO to the Northwest corner of Arkansas and on to the southern portions of Louisiana.

Commercial and private air service is provided by several airports that are all located within reasonable distances. The following are the primary airports utilized by the local area:

- |  |                 |           |
|--|-----------------|-----------|
| • Joplin Regional Airport              | Joplin, MO      | 31 miles  |
| • Springfield-Branson National Airport | Springfield, MO | 48 miles  |
| • Northwest Arkansas National Airport  | Bentonville, AR | 83 miles  |
| • Tulsa International Airport          | Tulsa, OK       | 129 miles |
| • Kansas City International Airport    | Kansas City, MO | 191 miles |

The city has a currently unused rail system that runs right through the downtown area. This line, currently owned by Burlington Northern (BNSF) runs from Carthage, MO through Sarcoxie and on south to Monet, MO.

## Streets

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Sarcoxie has a total of 15 miles of paved roads within the city which can be classified into multiple groups.

**Freeways** are multi-lane highways that provide access between cities and other freeways. Access points are highly controlled by a very limited number of intersections, a median, and access restrictions along the sides. These highways are maintained by the State and designed for heavy traffic of all types at high rates of speed.



- Interstate 44 is the only freeway that has direct connections to the city with a freeway entrance / exit point on both the east (Exit 26) and west side (Exit 29) of the city.

**Major Arterial Roads** move traffic across or through the city. Access to major arterial roads can be subject to controlled access from collector streets and properties that front the road. Major arterial roads intersect with collector streets and freeways but not local streets. These roads are maintained by the State and intended for heavier traffic flows and commercial traffic with slow to medium rates of speed. Sarcoxie has two major arterial roads:

- Business Loop I44 is the primary east west route through the city. Alias' include High Street, Blackberry Road, and from 14th Street west to County Road 60, it is also called 37 Highway.
- 37 Highway is the primary north south route through the city from High Street south to the Jasper/Newton County line. It is also called 14th Street.

**Collector Streets** channel traffic between local streets as well as to major arterial streets. Collector streets intersect with local streets, other collector streets, and major arterial roads. These streets are maintained by the City and intended for slow speeds and heavier traffic flows and limited commercial traffic. As a matter of City policy, collector streets receive preferential treatment on maintenance, snow clearing, sidewalks, etc. Sarcoxie collector streets include:

- 5th Street
- 11th Street
- 17th Street
- Center Street
- Joplin Street
- City square

**Local Streets** allow access to residential properties and are intended to serve local traffic only. Local streets intersect with collector streets, other local streets and in some circumstances major arterial roads. These streets are maintained by the City and not intended for commercial use or high traffic flows. The majority of streets within the city limits are local streets.

The City primarily relies on signage and police presence to control the flow of traffic and behavior of drivers. In some instances, the city has successfully used enhanced traffic calming mechanisms such as speed tables in areas where signage and police presence were not enough.



Due to the expense of asphalt, the City's current priorities of street maintenance/repair include maintaining existing streets by crack sealing and concrete patching. High traffic roads are starting to show severe deterioration and replacement of the non-existent road base is highly needed.

Funding for street maintenance is primarily from motor fuel taxes and based on the gallons of fuel sold in the city and the population. As population and number of gas stations grow, as well as the state mandated fuel-tax increase, the city expects to see an improvement in available funding.

## Sidewalks

The city has roughly 4 ½ miles of sidewalks. A 2018 study by the Harry S Truman Coordinating Council indicated less than 10% were in good condition while almost 81% were in poor condition. Sidewalks are maintained by the City and individual property owners.

Beginning about 5 years ago, the City has been working to replace sidewalks in the downtown area. Unfortunately, due to the loss of the local concrete plant, this project has been delayed. The City intends on restarting this project in 2022.

### VISION 2032

In 2032, as a result of the noted increase in funding, the City has made significant improvements to collector streets and has improved a minimum of 20 blocks of streets. Where applicable, curbing has been repaired or replaced. The City will have continued coating existing streets to minimize deterioration. Street signage will have been standardized and is fully compliant with MoDOT requirements. Narrow sections of collector streets have been evaluated and, if feasible, widened to alleviate bottlenecks of traffic.

Sidewalks on collector streets will have been significantly improved. If feasible, additional sidewalks have been added to create a loop around the city along collector streets. The City has partnered with the school district to determine cross-walk locations, signage, and other components of a safe school route.



# Chapter 6: Land Use





## Land Use

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Land Use refers to the current or planned future use of specific tracts of land. The location and relationship of one land-use type to another directly influences land values, public service requirements, transportation and infrastructure needs. While a particular parcel of land may be suitable for a variety of uses, the relationship between its potential use and the use of surrounding land is very important to consider. Some uses are favorable to one another while other uses may be detrimental in the same location. Types of land use in Sarcoxie can be categorized as:

**Agriculture:** Land actively used for agricultural purposes including animal grazing or growing of crops or hay. This is different than vacant land due to it being actively used for a productive purpose.

**Commercial:** Property used as a business office, restaurant, or retail purpose. Parcels designated as commercial are generally lighter impact than industrial and manufacturing uses.

**Government/Institutional:** Government or institutional properties that don't pay taxes. This includes city or school facilities and special districts such as fire, churches, libraries or road districts.

**Industrial/Manufacturing:** Land identified as industrial or manufacturing facilities with heavier impacts on the community with respect to transportation, utility use, or stormwater runoff.

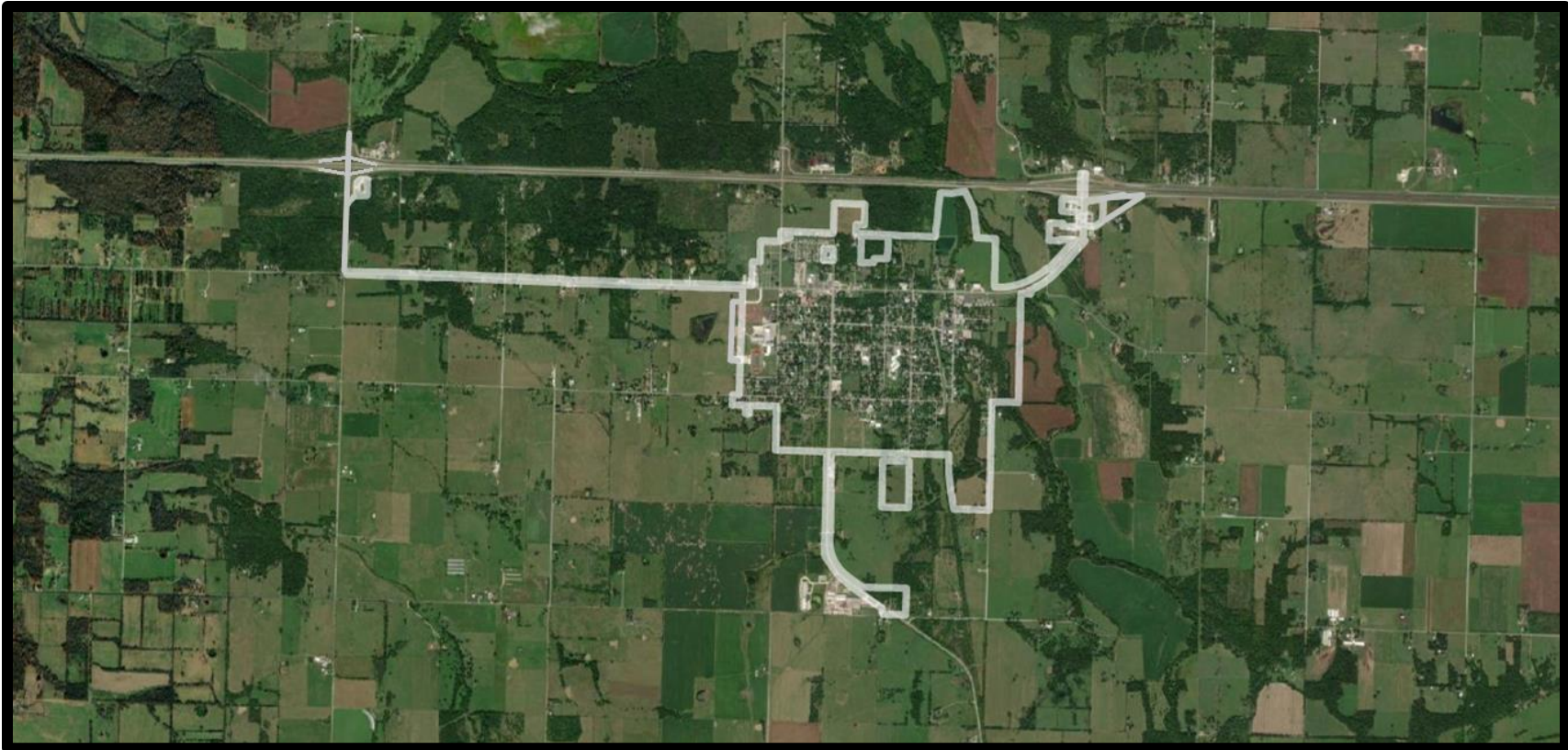
**Multi-Family Residential:** Residential properties with more than one unit are classified as multi-family. This includes duplexes, fourplexes, and apartments.

**Parks and Open Spaces:** City parks and land used as designated open space, either for water detention or buffered open space. These properties likely won't be developed or should not be developed in the future.

**Single Family Residential:** Properties containing a single-family residence and oftentimes a vacant adjacent parcel under the same ownership.

**Vacant:** Properties with no existing structures or in use as agriculture or parks, recreation, or open space are identified as vacant. These provide an opportunity for infill development.

**Mixed Use:** A mixed-use land use designation has been added for the future land use map. This use encourages a variety of uses on those parcels and is primarily located in the midtown area.



**Figure 1** shows a map of potential future land use of areas outside of but immediately adjacent to city limits shown in the gray outline. While Sarcoxie does not have direct control over land use of parcels outside of current boundaries, this map can help to identify those that might be appropriate for annexation and potential future use.



## Zoning

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Zoning is a significant land use planning tool that provides controls and standards for development within the community. Zoning tries to balance the amount of residential, commercial and industrial land within the community to best segregate those uses into enclaves that are of benefit to all. It provides a measure of protection to land owners ensuring a minimum of land use conflicts between types of uses. Zoning codes also provide standards that mitigate those conflicts to permit them to exist next to each other with the minimum amount of harm. The stated intent of zoning codes is “to promote the health, safety, quality of life, comfort and general welfare of the city; to preserve and protect property values throughout the city; to restrict and regulate the height, number of stories, and size of structures; the percentage of lot coverage; the size of yards, courts and other open spaces, and the density of population; to divide the City into zones and districts; and to regulate and restrict the location and use of structures and land within each district or zone.” While sounding ominous, it is absolutely the intent of the code to enhance the quality of life through regulation.

The City of Sarcoxie does not have zoning and past efforts to establish zoning has proven to be extremely unpopular with residents. To date, the absence of zoning has not been significantly impactful on the city. Current land use show the majority of commercial and industrial development tends to be along the primary thoroughfare corridors and downtown area. This is a natural growth process that tends to place those commercial activities in a location that is most advantageous to its continued use and future growth. There is very little mixture of commercial and residential land uses within the community. It is believed that zoning will be more impactful as the city expands.

Absent zoning, there is little control to be had to protect neighborhoods from undesirable developments or land use detrimental to surrounding properties. The only other means the city government has to shape land use is to consider incentives for property owners to create deed restrictions on development and use of land. Such incentives could be used as leverage to ensure acceptable development of desirable land uses. Such undesirable developments could also put burdens on utilities and services the City could not support and ultimately deny.



## Annexation

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Annexing unincorporated land is the exclusive means of adding land in to the city. The City's current policy is to only pursue voluntary annexation. At the same time, a voluntary annexation does not guarantee automatic access to city water and sewer. The city has annexed high way right of ways of 37 Highway south to the Jasper Newton County Line, Business Loop 44 west to exit 26 and east to Exit 29. This enables any property along these corridors to voluntarily annex in to the city.

## Development

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Sarcoxie is currently seeing serious inquiries for development in the city ranging from potential housing developments to a travel center at Exit 29 as well as others. With this ongoing interest in revitalization and development, the City must always ensure the hometown qualities are maintained. This will be particularly true for the historic downtown area. With new development or growth, the downtown area may experience pressure to redevelop. New investment would be beneficial, but the historic nature should be preserved.

The priority for possible new development should be to encourage it where infrastructure is already present. This reduces the amount of investment required from the City to expand infrastructure. Constructing new businesses or houses when infrastructure such as roads, water, sewer, gas, and electric are already provided lowers the costs for both the private property owner and required public investment.

## Flood Zones

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Portions of Sarcoxie, and the surrounding area are located within federally recognized flood zones. When reviewing future land use and construction Sarcoxie can review FEMA maps to determine if construction will be located in a flood plain. This will help determine development is desirable given the property's risk of flood damage in the future. Although, Sarcoxie does not flood as often as surrounding areas, portions of the city are located in a 100-year flood zone with Center Creek and Swifty Dry Branch as potential flood sources.



## Development (Cont.)

There will be times when new development will need infrastructure to be installed or expanded. In this case, the City should work with the property owner to fund the infrastructure expansion. The full burden of cost in installing new infrastructure that will benefit a new development should not fall to the City. Rather, the property developer should fund the necessary improvements. It is also important to ensure any new development retains storm water runoff onsite so that adjacent or down watershed properties are not negatively impacted.

When reviewing future land use and construction Sarcoxie can review FEMA maps to determine if construction will be located in a flood plain. This will help determine if flooding will occur in the future. Although, Sarcoxie does not flood as often as surrounding areas, portions of the city is located in a 100 year flood zone with Center Creek and Swifty Dry Branch as potential flood sources.

### VISION 2032

In 2032, the City will have seen significant developments occur at Exits 26 and 29 as well as along High Street. The downtown area will have realized improvements in flood zones through investment in controlling Swifty. The City will have developed a 12-acre holding north of the city in to a light commercial park with at least two occupants. There will be at least one new subdivision located on previously unincorporated land. The City will be fielding a steady flow of inquiries for investment and development.

The anti-zoning sentiment will have shifted to acceptance of a reasonable and unobtrusive zoning laws that involve grandfathering existing uses and mostly impact future developments of currently unincorporated properties that choose to annex in to the city.



# Chapter 7: Housing



## Overview

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According to the 2020 US Census, Sarcoxie has approximately 648 houses within city limits. This number is consistent with other surveys and many of these houses share similar characteristics. 77.4% of Sarcoxie residents reported they own their house rather than rent.

The average commute time for residents is 23 minutes which appears to be slightly better than the national average which is around 27 minutes. Sarcoxie is often referred to as a bedroom community in which not many jobs reside inside city limits but with major cities less than 30 miles from Sarcoxie, residents can comfortably commute back and forth.

Many of the houses in Sarcoxie were built prior to 1975 with almost 30% of the Sarcoxie houses dating back to the 1930s. Because of the age of these homes, values are averaging a worth of \$70,000. Sarcoxie has seen a few newly constructed homes over the last two years and many of the older housing inventory have been renovated which has significantly raised the home values since the last census survey.

While these surveys provide fairly accurate details, this market as well as some of the irregular counts in location regarding city limits, the City has decided that in future planning, an in-house data collection will be developed to determine actual residences and occupied status data.

Additionally, this data will be used to plan how to improve the overall goal of increasing housing inventory in Sarcoxie. With the recent demand in housing, and potential job market change, Sarcoxie is in need of more, newer, family housing.

## Sarcoxie Rental Housing Corporation

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Sarcoxie Rental Housing Corp is a 32-unit property located at 400 E. High Street for elderly, handicapped or disabled individuals. This property is conveniently located within walking distance of the local grocery store, and is only minutes from the local Senior Center, downtown square, and surrounding cities such as Joplin, Carthage, and Mt. Vernon.





## REALITY 2022

The City has been working steadily to improve the housing inventory in Sarcoxie. The primary focus has been to improve the worst portions of the inventory which is primarily made up of abandoned and or dilapidated structures. These efforts have been through the enforcement of dangerous building laws and changing the economics of maintaining an empty house through proof of insurance requirements and registration of vacant and dangerous buildings. The City has also been more assertive in nuisance and weed enforcement.

Another major focus has been cleaning or removing dangerous and vacant houses in Sarcoxie to remove these eyesores from surrounding properties. The idea has been to find ways to protect residents from declining property values affected by a few poorly maintained properties.

The city has two main housing types; rental properties, and forever homes. Many of the houses were built prior to 1975 and dilapidated properties seem to need more work than the property's current value. Rental properties are typically full or filled quickly after advertising. With the lack of new housing, any house that enters the market is usually purchased quickly.

## VISION 2032

By 2032, the city will have at least one subdivision or the addition of at least 30 new residences. This is expected to result in the expansion of city limits through annexations of property currently outside of city limits. With the addition of these homes, the city will have new infrastructure and an attractive neighborhood for marketing to new homeowners from the surrounding areas. Additionally, we would see an increase in population of at least 100 residents.

The City has also continued its diligent but fair efforts to improve the worst houses in the inventory, created a method to track vacant properties as well as other key measurable, and established local ordinances referencing the International Building Code for development and new construction.





# Chapter 8: Economic Development



## Overview

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### REALITY 2022

Sarcoxie is a bedroom community with most local businesses supporting this environment. The city also enjoys additional retail services that market to interstate highway traffic at two exits.

The most frequent types of jobs in Sarcoxie can be classified as part time / secondary income type positions in retail or service industries.

The historic square and downtown area is currently a significant focus for development.

There are no significant manufacturing facilities within city limits. Sarcoxie is limited in its ability to support these types of industries because of the current sewer system.

Current economic development activities are primarily handled by the Mayor and CORE Team. There is currently not a dedicated Economic Development Director.

### VISION 2032

The City and Chamber of Commerce partnership has increased in which both entities play major roles in Sarcoxie's economic development.

Both Exit 29 and Exit 26 have expanded industries that successfully target an increased traveler base bringing in tax revenue without overly impacting basic city services.

High Street has developed 5 new commercial facilities with room for additional developments.

The city has continued to see economic growth on the downtown square.



## Additional Economic Development Considerations

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To assist with economic development efforts there are a number of noteworthy resources and considerations that will be impactful in starting or improving business in Sarcoxie.

- The Sarcoxie Redevelopment Corporation provides startups and business expansions, in blighted areas, with potential 353 property tax abatements.
- Sarcoxie and the surrounding area was qualified as an Economic Enterprise Zone (EEZ) in 2010. This program has been incorporated in to the larger "Missouri Works" program. Because of the prior EEZ designation, the area enjoys expanded benefits in the newer program.
- The City hosts a Business Expo which promotes local business through an annual event where local entrepreneurs can network with citizens and other entrepreneurs in the area. The City continues to partner with the Chamber of Commerce to provide resources in an effort to increase development in Sarcoxie.



# Chapter 9: Community Identity & Branding

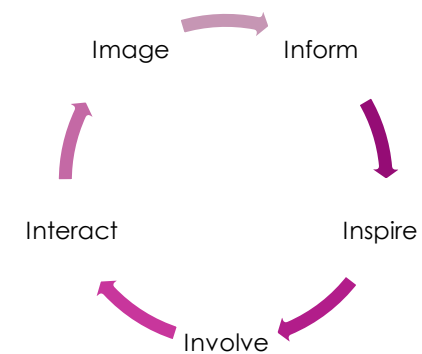


## Overview

Every project or plan in this Comprehensive Plan is intended to work towards the overall mission of making Sarcoxie the “Best Hometown Possible”. While these projects will most likely be performed by the government and local civic entities, there is still a need for community interaction. The main challenge to keep citizens engaged in the community is to improve the overall image of how they view their hometown. The City has recognized the need to establish a new or updated image of Sarcoxie also referred to as a Community Identity. In order to create this identity, Sarcoxie must make great efforts to strengthen community engagement and branding opportunities.

## Community Engagement & Branding

Community engagement can range from smiling at a neighbor from across the street to serving at a local fundraising event. Sarcoxie has the opportunity to make sure everyone feels special and that they can make a difference in their community. This is done by creating a cycle that **informs** the public of ongoing change that **inspires** them to get **involved** in community **interactions** and maintain the **image** of Sarcoxie.



Branding is really just promoting the image of Sarcoxie in a recognizable format. This is usually done through the use of logos, color schemes, icons, and other visual representations of what makes Sarcoxie the “Best Hometown Possible”. Citizens should be able to easily recognize these brands so they can begin to revisit the cycle and maintain the image that creates a sense of pride to the community.



## REALITY 2022

Community Engagement is led by the Core Team with a significant contribution from the Community Engagement Specialist, a paid part-time position within the City's organization. Our specialist currently plans and executes events, maintains a welcome program for new residents, and engages with the public through communication platforms.

We still lack community engagement regarding citizen and public input on impactful changes in Sarcoxie.

The City's logo/brand, adopted in 2021, was recently digitally refreshed to show a cleaner and clearer appearance for a more professional representation.

Currently, there are no written standards on how our formal and official documents are formatted as well as no branding enforcement for the use of the City's logo.

## VISION 2032

Press releases are frequently published with quality information to the majority of local media outlets. Our social media platforms effectively reach all generations in a positive and professional manner. The City holds at least one public event per month.

The welcome program continues to provide helpful information to new residents. The use of photos and videos have also increased within the City organization through the areas of economic development, recruitment, event promotion, and many more.

The City's logo is utilized in every official publication. All departments have official letter head that are professional and appealing. Professional standards for written communications have been put in place and are culturally accepted by all organizations.

The City has adopted laws governing its branding, marketing and social media.



## Appendix: EMSI Data

The following EMSI (Economic Modeling Specialist International) data is a comprehensive analysis that is collected for community developers to help make economic and community impactful decisions.

This data has been collected for the City of Sarcoxie as well as the surrounding areas that makes up the Sarcoxie community. This data may present higher numbers or values that have been calculated or averaged using a larger footprint than the actual city boundaries.