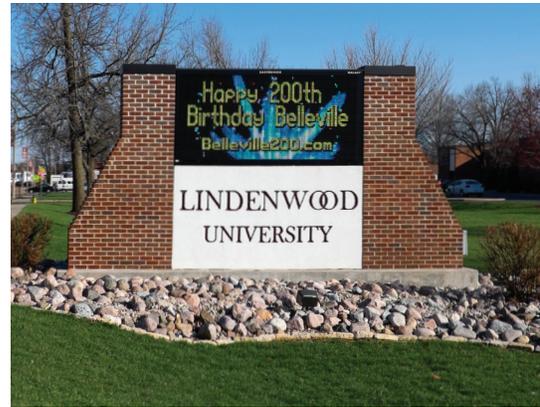


Executive Summary
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
BELLEVILLE
ILLINOIS
200 YEARS
1814-2014



IMAGINE BELLEVILLE

ADOPTED
JUNE 16, 2014



OneSTL Vision – Many Communities. One Future.

The St. Louis region is many connected communities at the confluence of two great rivers, sharing one prosperous, healthy, and vibrant future. Together we will build an inclusive and opportunity-rich region that embraces our unique heritage, geography, and diverse communities.



WE imagine Belleville to be...

- ... a **prosperous** community that cultivates a first-class education system, attracts high-paying jobs, and promotes local entrepreneurship and innovation;
- ... **ready to grow** in an orderly and fiscally responsible manner, including modern infrastructure systems and development regulations that instill confidence among quality investors;
- ... a **revitalized** community that respects the architectural and cultural traditions of the past, while anticipating the interests and needs of future generations;
- ... a **safe** community with friendly neighborhoods and characterized by a spirit of volunteerism and hospitality;
- ... home to residents with **active** lifestyles that expect a variety of choices as to where they live, learn, work, and play; and
- ... an **attractive** physical environment that elicits local pride and catalyzes investment and re-investment opportunities.



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What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Imagine Belleville is a year-long planning and citizen involvement process resulting in the City's *Comprehensive Plan*. The plan's findings and recommendations focus on the physical and economic aspects of growth and development over a 20-year planning horizon. Many Belleville residents asked, "How can we plan more than five years into the future, let alone 20 years?" One goal of the *Comprehensive Plan* is to develop a unified vision, guiding principles, and "big picture" recommendations that provide overarching guidance for current and future decision-makers. The implementation section helps to ground these recommendations in reality by prioritizing short-, mid-, and long-term strategies - with an emphasis on near-term "catalysts" that activate desired change.

Celebrating the Past, Anticipating the Future

The timing of the *Comprehensive Plan* coincides with the community's 200-year anniversary, a significant milestone that brings an increased level of attention and optimism to the planning process. The plan celebrates Belleville's rich history and traditions by building on the community's unique assets and accomplishments. It also identifies challenges and (mis) perceptions that hinder positive improvements. A balanced approach will enable the community to leverage resources and achievements, while at the same time, establish realistic goals and expectations. Once adopted, the plan must operate as a "work in progress" that is regularly revisited to account for inevitable shifts in the community's physical, social, and economic makeup.

Planning Outcomes

Both the planning process and adopted plan have the end result of:

- Unifying the City's vision and associated goals regarding the future growth and enhancement of the community;
- Strengthening partnerships, communication channels, and sense of unified direction across all public, non-profit, and private community stakeholders;
- Engaging widespread citizen involvement in the identification and prioritization of leading community issues and opportunities;
- Guiding regulatory strategies to ensure community values and desired outcomes are managed and promoted;
- Providing greater predictability for residents, land owners, developers, and potential investors; and
- Fulfilling the statutory requirements necessary to establish land use controls (e.g., *Zoning Code*, *Subdivision Code*).

From Plan to Action

The plan ultimately functions as a guidance document for City officials and staff - and others - who must make decisions on a daily basis that will determine the future direction, financial health, and "look and feel" of the community. These decisions are carried out through:

- Targeted programs and expenditures prioritized through the City's annual budget process, including routine, but essential, functions such as code enforcement and park maintenance;
- Major public improvements and land acquisitions financed through the general fund and other public finance mechanisms;
- New and amended City ordinances and regulations closely linked to the plan's objectives (and associated review and approval procedures in the case of land development, subdivision, and zoning matters);
- Departmental work plans and staffing in key areas;
- Support for ongoing planning and studies that will further clarify needs and strategies, including the City Council's own strategic planning;
- Pursuit of external grant funding to supplement local funds and/or expedite certain projects; and
- Initiatives pursued in conjunction with other public and private partners to leverage resources and achieve successes that neither could accomplish alone.

Plan Themes

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| ■ Attractive | ■ Engaging |
| ■ Cohesive | ■ Inclusive* |
| ■ Collaborative* | ■ Innovative |
| ■ Compassionate | ■ Interdisciplinary |
| ■ Comprehensive | ■ Intergenerational |
| ■ Complementary | ■ Prepared* |
| ■ Connected* | ■ Prosperous* |
| ■ Cooperative | ■ Ready to Grow |
| ■ Distinctive* | ■ Revitalized |
| ■ Educated* | ■ Safe |
| ■ Efficient* | ■ Sustainable |

* Indicates carryover themes from **OneSTL**, a three-year collaborative planning process led by the East-West Gateway Council of Governments.



Overarching Principles



We will strengthen intergovernmental, institutional, and public-private partnerships across our City and region to accomplish shared objectives and leverage limited resources.



We will expand and diversify our employment opportunities through the recruitment of high-paying jobs and support of local entrepreneurs, artisans, and small businesses, as well as major employers.



We will invest in strategic development and enhancement projects that improve Belleville's quality of life, appearance, market stability, and overall health.



We will support long-range investment and reinvestment in reliable, energy-efficient, and modern infrastructure systems.



We will improve the accessibility, connectivity, and safety of all travel modes, including automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, and bus and rail transit.



We will promote compact, contiguous, and predictable growth and annexation patterns that result in the efficient use of infrastructure systems and public safety services.



We will restore the integrity of neighborhoods and business districts through low-impact development practices, new development on vacant lots, historic preservation, and neighborhood-level planning initiatives.



We will balance consistent enforcement ("sticks") of ordinances relating to property maintenance and crime with incentive programs ("carrots") to facilitate individual and neighborhood reinvestment.



We will cultivate an investment climate that attracts high-quality residential and commercial developers that meet the needs of diverse income levels, age groups, and lifestyles.



We will enhance the community's image and reputation by following the principles above along with improved marketing of and positive communication about our City.

Citizen Engagement

"Early and Often"

The ability to implement the *Comprehensive Plan* is directly correlated to the amount of citizen participation and the sense of ownership derived from the 12-month planning process (July 2013 through June 2014). The City hired a multi-disciplinary consulting team of planners, designers, and civil engineers to spearhead the overall planning effort. The project team designed public involvement events to engage a wide variety of citizens at frequent check-in points and across multiple platforms. This engagement process provided opportunities for two-way communication between citizens and local government officials.

As part of the comprehensive planning process, the City hosted an **Online Discussion Forum** to identify community needs and innovative approaches to improve Belleville's prosperity and quality of life. This ongoing, "24/7" dialogue helped to guide the plan's findings and recommendations by soliciting input from citizens who do not typically attend or voice opinions at traditional public meetings. Approximately 170 citizens participated on the website. This forum also complemented other engagement activities by providing an outlet to continue ongoing conversations. The website was organized as a series of question prompts introduced at various points amid the planning process.



Listening Session



Advisory Committee Meeting



Community Workshop



Joint Workshop



Student Outreach

Of these community priorities, which two will be most beneficial to Belleville residents?

A. Improve the appearance, quality, and compatibility of development (e.g. code updates, design guidance, historic preservation)

B. Strengthen Belleville's sense of community and neighborhood identity (e.g. gateways, neighborhood plng., street design)

C. Create community focal points and destinations (e.g. commercial and employment centers, parks, business/industrial parks)

D. Increase Belleville's public service capacity to accommodate desired growth (e.g. infrastructure, staffing, facilities)

E. Absorb some amount of growth within the city (e.g. neighborhood plng., dev. of

Listening Sessions were useful in identifying preliminary issues and opportunities at the beginning of plan development. Approximately 80 individuals representing a wide variety of community interests participated in small group discussions in August and November 2013. One session was held on-site at Memorial Hospital to include local and commuter employees.

Advisory Committee Meetings provided immediate feedback on the emerging plan content. Participants represented a diversity of community interests and areas of professional expertise, effectively serving as the “eyes and ears” of the community. The group met seven times in independent and joint workshop settings to engage in visioning, mapping, ranking, and discussion exercises.

Community Workshops were hosted at convenient times and locations scattered throughout the City to optimize public input. These events were designed to bring the community’s “big picture,” long-range planning effort down to a more neighborhood-oriented level while still focusing residents’ attention on citywide issues. Three rounds of workshops (six total meetings) were scheduled at the beginning, middle, and end of the planning process to obtain input and feedback at key project milestones.

Joint Workshops were essential to broadening the planning conversation and building consensus among community leaders. At the beginning and end of the planning process, the City Council, Planning Commission, and CPAC met together to identify issues and needs, evaluate policies, and prioritize implementation strategies. A mid-point briefing also served as an interim check-in point to ensure consistency with the community’s vision.



Growth Capacity and Infrastructure



Guiding Principles

- We will recognize the long-term value of our public infrastructure investments and our ability to use these essential facilities and services as a tool for influencing the appropriate location and intensity of development in and around the City.
- We will act on local government's core responsibility to protect the public health and safety by continually prioritizing adequate support of our police and fire services in the form of staffing, vehicles, equipment, facilities, and training/certification.
- We will use our public infrastructure upgrades and investments to strengthen our support for and ties to key drivers of Belleville's economy, including Scott Air Force Base, local higher education campuses, and medical facilities, as well as other major employers and concentrations of retail, office, and industrial activity.
- We will continue to evaluate opportunities to bring strategic properties and facilities into the Belleville City limits, where it makes financial sense, where the City's zoning and other development standards will help to protect private and institutional investments, and where access to municipal infrastructure can spur activity in targeted economic development sectors, such as hotels, restaurants, and other hospitality offerings.
- We will continue to treat our local schools and higher education assets as part of our vital community "infrastructure," which also factor into Belleville's capacity to achieve its long-term growth objectives.
- We will be vigilant in monitoring opportunities to weave green spaces and elements into both our growing and redeveloping areas to meet the need for more parks, trails and preserved open spaces as identified in the City's *2008 Parks, Recreation and Greenways Master Plan*.



Strategic Recommendations

CONTINUE TO EXPAND BELLEVILLE'S CITY LIMITS THROUGH STRATEGIC ANNEXATIONS

- Compatible development patterns
- Fiscal benefits and constraints
- Non-fiscal benefits such as protection of gateways into the City
- Utility infrastructure provision and extension policies
- Annexation agreements

INCREASE BELLEVILLE'S PUBLIC SERVICE CAPACITY TO ACCOMMODATE DESIRED GROWTH

- Predictable increases in public safety staffing
- Vehicle, equipment, and technology upgrades

- Regionalized storm water management
- Up-to-date master plans
- Fire training emphasis

PREPARE TO ABSORB SOME AMOUNT OF GROWTH WITHIN THE CITY OR CONTIGUOUS TO EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

- Neighborhood planning and improvements
- More residential near strategic community destinations
- Assistance for existing and new emerging small businesses
- Street and trail enhancements and connectivity
- Fire prevention



10,000

NEW RESIDENTS OVER THE NEXT 25 YEARS

Comparison of Population Projections for City of Belleville



Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative; Belleville Parks, Recreation and Greenways Master Plan (2008); Belleville Comprehensive Plan 2000-2020 (2000).



Civic Center
Stadium
8th & Pine
Convention Center
Arch-Laclede's
Landing
East Riverfront
5th & Missouri
Emerson Park
Jackie Joyner-Kersey
Center
Washington Park
Fairview Heights
Memorial Hospital
Swansea
Belleville
College
Shiloh-
Scott



Travel Options

The number of residents traveling by bicycle, motorcycle, or taxicab to/from work between 2000 and 2011 increased from 109 to 320 residents. Belleville also experienced an increase in the number of residents commuting by public transit, increasing from 559 to 787 residents.



Mobility



Guiding Principles

- We will invest in the critical transportation infrastructure necessary to develop a robust and diversified economy.
- We will strive to implement transportation investments that result in the creation of a network of centers, corridors, and neighborhoods that will provide structure for guiding new growth and development.
- We will ensure land development and transportation investments are coordinated to enhance the function and aesthetics of the City's major corridors.
- We will strive to implement transportation investments that result in the safe, secure, and efficient movement of people and goods to, from, through, and within the City.
- We will execute improvements to the transportation system that make the most cost-effective use of existing infrastructure.
- We will strive to provide a variety of linked transportation options serving the City, so that all residents and visitors can go where they need to go by driving, walking, biking, or using public transit.
- We will implement circulation routes within and through neighborhoods to reinforce the connection between residents and the services they need on a daily basis.
- We will adhere to state air quality plans in future transportation investments, by being consistent, or in conformity to, levels set in the plans.



Strategic Recommendations

IMPROVE BELLEVILLE'S REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

- Intergovernmental cooperation
- High-speed rail between Chicago and St. Louis
- Scott Air Force Base connectivity and proposed "Gateway Connector" to IL 158
- Direct and efficient access to St. Louis

ENHANCE THE APPEARANCE AND FUNCTIONALITY OF BELLEVILLE'S MAJOR ROADWAY CORRIDORS

- Streetscape design, landscaping, and pedestrian-scale lighting
- Road design parameters and guidelines
- Access management policies
- Master Thoroughfare Plan

DEVELOP A SYSTEMATIC STREET REPAIR AND IMPROVEMENTS STRATEGY

- Residential street revitalization program
- Prioritization of improvements close to employment, services, parks, and schools
- Joint-funded project initiatives
- Capital Improvements Program (CIP)

STRENGTHEN CONNECTIVITY AND INCREASE CHOICES BETWEEN TRAVEL MODES

- Greenways linkages and system development (hike/bike trails)
- Convenient travel accommodation for all lifestyles
- Traffic management and traffic calming strategies
- Transit linkages and alternatives (Park-and-Ride, MetroLink Rail, carpooling)
- "Complete Streets" policy

Housing and Neighborhoods



Guiding Principles

- We will mobilize our diverse network of public, private, and non-profit partners to implement a holistic approach to neighborhood assistance, incentive, and enforcement programs.
- We will facilitate compatible development of vacant or underutilized properties (i.e., infill) for the purpose of restoring vitality to existing neighborhoods and optimizing existing infrastructure systems.
- We will support the strategic placement and convenient access to community destinations - whether a workplace, school, park, community garden, recreation or community building, or neighborhood commercial center - that enliven neighborhoods and catalyze private-sector investment and reinvestment.
- We will strengthen neighborhood pride, safety, and appearance by implementing a systematic and feasible approach to improving local streets, sidewalks, off-street trails, and other neighborhood improvement projects.
- We will respect historic sites and structures for the purpose of preserving the community's culture and sense of ownership.
- We will foster an attractive and predictable development climate that accommodates market demand for multiple income levels and household age groups, while at the same time, protecting neighborhoods from incompatible or ad hoc development decisions.
- We will encourage interconnected, environmentally sustainable, and physically attractive housing practices that strengthen the identity of Belleville's neighborhoods – not just individual subdivisions.
- We will set aside conservation areas, greenbelts, and other open space amenities to encourage healthy lifestyles and mitigate the environmental impacts of land development.



Strategic Recommendations

HELP LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS BUILD CAPACITY TO LEAD HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVES

- Neighborhood planning and sub-area plans
- Private and non-profit collaboration through the Belleville Neighborhood Partnership
- Leadership training, technical assistance, and data collection

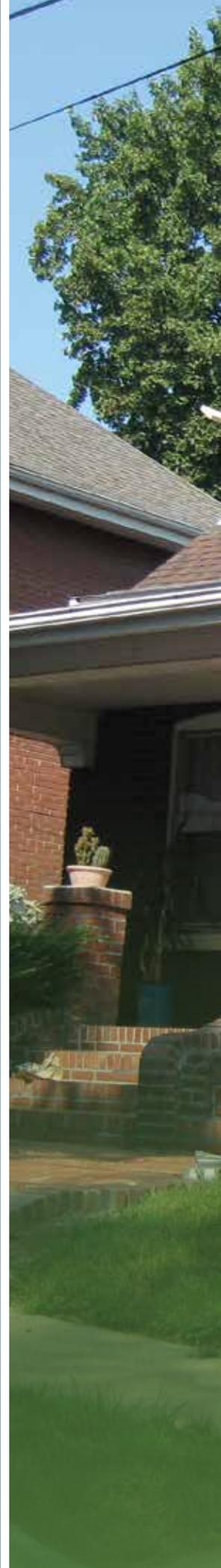
OPTIMIZE BELLEVILLE'S FINANCIAL AND REGULATORY TOOLS

- Capital Improvements Program (CIP)
- Regional, state, and federal grants

- Volunteerism ("sweat equity")
- Updates to regulations and guidelines

PRIORITIZE, FUND, AND IMPLEMENT ESSENTIAL PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

- Infill programs
- Safety and code enforcement programs
- Education and outreach
- Homebuyer/developer financing
- Beautification and community gardens
- Capital improvements
- Homeowner rehabilitation





Permits Issued for Single-Family Detached New Construction

Belleville's composition of housing types should accommodate the whole spectrum of life-cycle stages: college students, young professionals, families, empty nesters, and seniors. The key strategy is to develop and rehabilitate the City's housing stock for no single user type. Instead, homes should be constructed for those seeking affordable, mid-level, and premium options.



Scott Air Force Base contributes **\$2.3 BILLION** annually to the regional economy.



ONLINE DISCUSSION FORUM

What are Belleville's top accomplishments in recent years?

Bringing Lindenwood University to Belleville

“Having an academic institution like Lindenwood is a tremendous asset to the City, in addition to educational opportunities close to home...”



Economic Development



Guiding Principles

- We will increase our community capacity to “tell our story” of civic pride, accomplishment, and competitive advantages through collaborative marketing and dedicated personnel, allowing us to more widely broadcast our positive image and unique brand on a regional scale.
- We will use our business assistance programs and infrastructure investments to reinforce our community values – high-quality and attractive developments that create good jobs, respect the community’s historic character, and focus investments in strategic locations throughout the community.
- We will use incentives, policies, and regulations to cultivate a “business friendly” environment, while at the same time, prioritizing the redevelopment and repurposing of land and buildings supported by existing social and physical infrastructure.
- We will facilitate entrepreneurship, targeted innovation, and “mom and pop” establishments by strengthening partnerships and increasing communication channels between businesses and resource providers.
- We will increase the linkages between jobs and housing by reducing commutes through mixed-use and transit-oriented development patterns, improving infrastructure access to/from Belleville businesses, and recruiting compatible job opportunities within existing retail and business centers.
- We will dedicate our resources to building the capacity of our neighborhoods, in part, with the economic development goal of improving our image and marketability to a wider variety of prospective employees and employers.
- We will continue to leverage and support Belleville’s most successful physical and economic assets in order to expand the sphere of influence to surrounding areas and increase community benefit.
- We will embrace economic, cultural, and geographic diversification as we promote the growth of our businesses and neighborhoods.



Strategic Recommendations

PROMOTE BELLEVILLE’S EXISTING OR POTENTIAL ASSETS

- Hotel and convention center
- Transit-oriented development
- Aquatic center
- Dedicated PR staff and collaborative marketing initiatives
- Scott Air Force Base / MidAmerica Airport

FOCUS ON GROWING, DIVERSIFYING, AND EXPANDING SMALL AND LOCAL BUSINESSES

- Linkages between industry and education

- Online library of business resources
- Small business financing
- Incubator and live-work accommodations

CULTIVATE A “BUSINESS FRIENDLY” ENVIRONMENT TO RETAIN AND ATTRACT BUSINESSES

- Business assistance programs
- Availability of commercial and industrial sites
- Updates to regulations and guidelines
- Content-rich economic development marketing website

Land Use and Character



Guiding Principles

- We will encourage new development and significant redevelopment where adequate public services and utility capacity are already in place or projected for improvement.
- We will effectively manage future growth to achieve a compact and fiscally responsible pattern of development. Preferably, development should occur on vacant infill areas and/or areas contiguous to existing development and then sequentially outward as adequate facilities become available. New development or redevelopment on vacant parcels in an existing neighborhood should maintain compatibility with existing uses and the prevailing character of the area.
- We will encourage development patterns that provide appropriate transitions and buffering between differing land use intensities. Where developments of incompatible intensities abut, there should be adequate landscaping and screening to separate them.
- We will prioritize community enhancements along Belleville's most visible and heavily used gateways, corridors, and districts.
- We will maintain and enhance Belleville's historic and cultural assets in accordance with preservation guidelines and development standards.
- We will promote neighborhood development patterns that are highly walkable, meaning there is a mixture of uses within convenient distances so that automobiles are not essential for relatively short trips.
- We will include a variety of housing types and sizes to accommodate the needs of existing and prospective residents. This includes, but is not limited to, youth, college students, single professionals, families, empty nesters, and seniors.
- We will develop multi-family housing at a density and scale that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, available utilities, and roadway capacity. Larger multi-family developments should be located on sites with adequate space for off-street parking, accessory structures, and recreational activity.
- We will protect the natural beauty of Belleville through the development of a comprehensive system of parks, trails, and open spaces and by avoiding developing sites on environmentally sensitive land, to the extent possible.



Strategic Recommendations

IMPROVE THE APPEARANCE, QUALITY, AND COMPATIBILITY OF DEVELOPMENT

- Updates to regulations and guidelines
- Requirements of development and redevelopment agreements
- Historic preservation policies
- Mitigation of traffic impacts

STRENGTHEN BELLEVILLE'S SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY

- Gateway enhancements
- Gateway and corridor overlay districts

- Neighborhood and street design standards
- Neighborhood planning and sub-area plans

CREATE COMMUNITY FOCAL POINTS AND DESTINATIONS

- Commercial and employment centers
- Mixed-use and transit-oriented development
- Parks, recreation, and hike-bike system
- Business and industrial parks
- Downtown parking





Livable Centers

Downtown Belleville contains all the characteristics of a “livable center.” It is compact and mixed use, designed to be walkable, and connected and accessible. Downtown serves as the City’s historic center, housing St. Clair County buildings and a number of longstanding cultural, commercial, and civic amenities. As Belleville looks to the future, it will be necessary to create new livable centers to accommodate different needs and offer geographic diversity.





Acknowledgments

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