



# VISION STATEMENT

Fort Smith Comprehensive Plan Update





## WHAT IS A VISION STATEMENT

The Vision Statement is an expression of the community's collective values and aspirations in the form of a description of what the community wants to become in the future. It answers the question "where do we want to be?" Ultimately, it is the destination for the comprehensive plan; the Vision Statement sets the stage for defining "how we get there."



## BY 2035...

**THE CITY OF FORT SMITH** is recognized throughout the region and the nation as an exceptional community, characterized by its authenticity and proud frontier heritage, its outstanding quality of life, home town character, vibrant downtown and scenic riverfront. This outstanding livability, coupled with our strategic location, affordability and skilled workforce, has fueled growth, investment and the diversification of our economy. Our success is a result of purposeful and coordinated actions to leverage our assets and overcome our shortcomings, motivated by our vision and guided by our comprehensive plan. With “True Grit” perseverance, a united front of local government, citizens, businesses, institutions and civic groups acting in partnership, realized our vision by advancing progress on four fronts:

- 1. RETAINING AND ENHANCING COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF LIFE**
- 2. PROMOTING SOUND GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**
- 3. GROWING AND DIVERSIFYING OUR ECONOMY**
- 4. UNITING OUR PEOPLE, INSTITUTIONS AND GOVERNMENT**



## RETAINING AND ENHANCING OUR COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF LIFE

### ➔ BY 2035

- Fort Smith retains its authentic home-town atmosphere of safe, livable and well-maintained neighborhoods which provide a range of housing choices and convenient access to schools, parks, shopping and community facilities.
- We value the “green” in Fort Smith: our trees, river and streams and other irreplaceable natural scenic and recreational resources.
- Our network of parks, greenways and trails provide quality recreational opportunities, enhancing quality of life and property values, connecting neighborhoods and supporting healthy active lifestyles.
- We retain our proud frontier heritage and identity, protecting and promoting our historic districts, landmarks and cultural assets.
- Fort Smith enjoys enhanced community aesthetics achieved by raising the bar of expectations for appearance and upkeep; and through beautification efforts along our corridors and gateways, neighborhoods and activity centers.
- We promote our thriving cultural life – our museums, entertainment venues, festivals and special events, engage our youth, young adults and young at heart.





## 2 PROMOTING SOUND GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

### ➔ BY 2035

- Downtown Fort Smith and its scenic riverfront is activated with new housing, retail and entertainment attractions supporting day and nighttime activity and a vibrant urban lifestyle, one with a distinct flavor of historic Fort Smith.
- Fort Smith has responded to changing demographics and a diversifying population with a greater array of housing and lifestyle choices to serve our aging population and to attract and retain young adults and families.
- Our infrastructure systems: water, sewer, drainage and solid waste, are provided in a coordinated manner that ensures adequate capacity to meet long term needs, supports desired development patterns and conserves both natural and fiscal resources.
- We have reversed blight and obsolescence by promoting infill, redevelopment and adaptive re-use of buildings in downtown, and our older neighborhoods and commercial areas.
- Mobility has been enhanced with key linkages such as I-49, a deeper river channel, greater road network efficiency and connectivity and expanded mobility choices including transit, bicycle and pedestrian friendly streets and trails.
- The completion of I-49 has triggered and supported new investments, including development in Chaffee Crossing and new commercial, industrial, and residential development in strategic locations.



# 3 GROWING AND DIVERSIFYING OUR ECONOMY

## ➔ BY 2035

- Our economy has grown and prospered by taking advantage of our strategic location within the region and our crossroads position with multiple modes of travel on our interstate highways, railroads, river and airport.
- We have improved our workforce skills, readiness and retention by linking curricula in our Fort Smith School District high schools and the technical and industrial training programs at the University of Arkansas – Fort Smith with the workforce needs of present and desired future employers.
- We have retained our traditional manufacturing base, while transitioning to a more diversified economy by promoting home grown entrepreneurs, leveraging the research and brainpower at the University of Arkansas - Fort Smith and by maintaining the trained and motivated work force and the technology infrastructure necessary to attract new employers.
- Our expanded array of challenging and well-paying employment opportunities allows Fort Smith to retain its best and brightest youth and attract new families to make Fort Smith their home.
- The addition of the U.S. Marshals Museum, along with a transformed riverfront and the many historic and cultural attractions, festivals and entertainment venues in downtown, has placed our city on the national map as a heritage tourism destination.



# 4 UNITING OUR PEOPLE, INSTITUTIONS AND GOVERNMENT

## ➔ BY 2035

- We are a friendly, welcoming and caring community of citizens who embrace their diversity and who are actively engaged with their schools, houses of worship, civic organizations and their local government.
- We are a community with a shared identity, where pride and confidence in a bright future has overcome complacency.
- We have a business-friendly and citizen-friendly government, one with fair and transparent codes and regulations and with policies that align government priorities to reflect the needs and aspirations of the community.
- Fort Smith government prides itself on transparency and open communication, fiscally sound and resourceful funding of public facilities and services and its exercise of leadership to realize the vision of Fort Smith's future.