



**Introduction**  
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# **IMPLEMENT SPRINGFIELD**

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to solve community problems or concerns, successful city comprehensive plans have the key ingredients of consensus, ideas, hard work, and the application of each of these. This section of the plan contains the inspiration of the city officials and Springfield residents who participated in the planning process. However, the ultimate success of this plan remains in the dedication offered by each and every resident and its implementation.

Successful comprehensive plans are ones that are implemented. Developing plans is the first small step in the implementation process of a plan. What happens with the plan, how it is used in daily decision-making, and the extent to which it is followed over time all influence its overall success.

Implementation refers to the objectives, policies, actions, and time frames that have been identified to carry out the comprehensive plan. This section of the plan includes implementation tools, actions designed to achieve the long-range planning process, links between the plan and capital improvement budgeting, and a process to monitor and update the comprehensive plan. Numerous goals and objectives are presented in this plan. It is recommended to review relevant goals during planning and budget setting sessions each year. Selected elements of the plan or goals of highest priority should be identified for immediate action. Prioritization provides clarity between city procedures and its residents as well as a good jump start on implementing the new comprehensive plan.

## 5.2 IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

## Overview

**Implementation Tools**

The City of Springfield has a number of tools that can be utilized to help implement the comprehensive plan. Implementation tools and methods will help shape development patterns, protect natural resources, improve public infrastructure, and enhance the quality of life for the community's residents. Rarely will a single tool be sufficient to achieve the goals in a comprehensive plan. Most policies and most of the preferred land uses require the use of several tools from different categories in order to be realized, obtained, and sustained. The following tools will play a vital role in the success of Springfield's plan and in achieving identified goals and objectives:

1. **Capital Improvements Financing**--an annual predictable investment plan that uses a six-year planning horizon to schedule and fund projects integral to the plan's action agenda.
2. **Zoning Regulations**--updated land use districts can allow the city to provide direction for future growth.
3. **Subdivision Regulations**--establish criteria for dividing land into building areas, utility easements, and streets. Implementing the Transportation Plan is a primary function of subdivision regulations.
4. **Design Guidelines**—create standards for the design and continuity of development. Design guidelines protect the city's aesthetic appeal and can enhance property values for both new and existing development.
5. **Plan Maintenance**--an annual and five-year review program will allow the city flexibility in responding to growth and continuous program of maintaining the plan's viability.

The following section pulls specific goals and objectives from the Envision section that were identified multiple times and places them into each support program. The result of this identification and prioritization is implementable projects in short, medium, and long term planning periods.

## 5.2 IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

## Capital Improvements

**Capital Improvements Financing**

Fiscal responsibility determines the effectiveness of a comprehensive plan. The ability to strategically finance and implement projects stems from conclusions of the planning process. By prioritizing projects in short, medium, and long terms, Springfield can ensure the best utilization of public resources.

The focus of the public comments received during the Envision process centered on promoting the most efficient use and development of public infrastructure possible. Infrastructure projects should be planned, funded, and constructed in a manner that maximizes the public benefit and minimizes public cost. Well-planned and implemented infrastructure projects should utilize and preserve the natural environment while minimizing any negative impact to environmentally sensitive areas.

The actual investment in implementation projects should take consideration of external and internal forces and opportunities. Public investments include the time and effort that go into management decisions for infrastructure, public services, public lands, and public processes. Such investment or decisions can include:

- Coordinating capital improvements planning throughout all departments to meet the comprehensive plan goals and remain consistent with plan policies.
- Investments and improvements in water, wastewater, and transportation infrastructure made by the city.
- The acquisition, sale, or exchange of land for the purpose of preservation or development.
- Decisions on expenditures for public resources such as streets, parks, trails, property management, and the provision of public services.

The following categories provide general guidance for the city's investment in capital improvement projects and plans.

## Capital Improvements

### ***Transportation***

#### *Short Term (0-5 years)*

The citizens of Springfield value the quality of life provided by a small community including factors like walkability. In order to protect and enhance this amenity, new development should be contiguous and connected to the existing transportation and trail networks.

Pedestrian access through sidewalks and trails should be incorporated to subdivision regulations and the capital improvement budget for city street development and expansion whenever possible. This accessibility includes expanding and enhancing existing sidewalks and trails. Improvements should be prioritized in areas that can be connected to the MoPac regional trail system.

#### *Medium Term (5-10 years)*

Multi-modal transportation options are a key element to a sustainable community and the quality of life of its citizens. Springfield citizens value convenient and safe transportation options. Subdivision regulations and engineering guidelines should ensure that street intersections be designed or improved to minimize vehicular/pedestrian/cyclist conflicts and eliminate dangerous transportation conditions.

#### *Long Term (Over 10 years)*

Regional connectivity is one of the many assets identified within the planning process by Springfield citizens. The construction of the Highway 34 bridge over the Missouri River and the potential development of an interchange at 192nd and I-80 will likely trigger the need and development of a bypass south of I-80 that may involve Platteview Road, Fairview Road and/or Pflug Road. Community leaders should continually monitor and research such development and give careful consideration of land use and infrastructure decisions. Designation of a bypass should be planned on a regional scale and the city should work with the county in developing a corridor protection over such route to ensure minimal development conflicts.

## 5.2 IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

## Capital Improvements

***Public Utilities******Short Term (0-5 years)***

The concerns of overgrowth (development exceeding the capacity of the community) and spending was discussed during public participation within the planning process. An area with a high level of development pressures must enact policies that prevent overgrowth and its negative effects on the community. In determining such growth capacity, the city must study its current sanitary sewer system and explore options on the expansion of it. Likewise, the city's water system should be continually evaluated and consideration given for alternative water supply.

Subdivision regulations should clearly reflect that the costs of offsite infrastructure impacts for new developments should be financed by developers rather than the community as a whole. To coincide, the city's development fees should be reviewed annually to ensure the appropriate relation between actual costs and revenue.

***Medium Term (5-10 years)***

A community vision is best-realized when regulatory measures harmonize and echo the elements of the comprehensive plan. Coordinated objectives can yield the most efficient development of public utilities in a growing community.

Particular attention should be given to zoning regulations, subdivision regulations, and capital improvement plans that ensure their compatibility to the comprehensive plan; specifically, policies that have infrastructure built with full development potential in mind. If the infrastructure is built to these capacities, this policy safeguards against replacing or improving facilities too soon after construction.

***Long Term (Over 10 years)***

Conservation programs and energy-efficiency practices that reduce operating costs for energy, sewer, and water usage should be adopted and practiced by the city. Incentive programs encouraging the private sector to perform similar practices should be considered.

## Capital Improvements

### ***Parks and Recreations and Trails***

A priority was placed on the development of recreational and environmental opportunities to promote a high quality of life. Springfield residents voiced their opinions to provide opportunities and enhance existing amenities.

#### *Short Term (0-5 years)*

Subdivision regulations should include provisions to ensure that new residential development is immediately served by parks and trails. Parkland should be dedicated in developments according to the Parks and Trails Map, or park fees shall be paid in lieu of land dedication. The quantity of land provided for parks, active and passive recreational areas, fields, and other approved amenities should be one developed in accordance with the Parks and Trails Plan and with the subdivision regulations.

#### *Medium Term (5-10 years)*

Facilities for both youth and adult athletics were discussed as a great way to attract families and visitors to the community. The city of Springfield should consider the development and expansion of recreational opportunities including, but not limited to:

- **New multi-sport complex to meet the growing needs for a regional attraction**
- **Updating city parks equipment, especially the lights for the existing softball field and soccer complex**
- **These options can be explored via a master parks and recreation planning process.**

#### *Long Term (Over 10 years)*

Collaboration in the development of parks and schools is an opportunity to utilize public resources best. This type of placement would eliminate duplicate amenities or inefficient construction while enhancing both parks and schools. The location of new schools should generally coincide with the location of proposed neighborhood parks according to an adopted Parks and Trails Map.

## 5.2 IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

## Zoning and Regulations

**Zoning and Subdivision Regulations, including Design Guidelines**

Zoning regulations are a means to shape the physical development of the city to ensure attractive, functional, and compatible uses of public and private space. The strategic phasing of regulations will ensure quality development throughout the community.

The public participation process identified sustainability and proper utilization of the environmental and existing cultural amenities of the surrounding landscape. It will be a challenge to minimize environmental impact while developing a built environment that reflects the culture of the community, but one that will set Springfield apart and enhance its appeal.

***Environmental Preservation******Short Term (0-5 years)***

Trees are proven to have a positive impact on property values, environmental quality, and have a positive connotation on the perception of a community or space. Trees also improve the walkability of communities in several ways. They provide shade along trails and sidewalks making walking and biking more enjoyable. Street trees also create a safer pedestrian environment by providing a “buffer” between street and sidewalk, while simultaneously causing vehicle operators to decrease their speed. Trees should be encouraged throughout the community in public areas, right-of-ways, and private space to improve the appearance of Springfield’s spaces and corridors.

Zoning and subdivision regulations, as well as design guidelines, should be reviewed to accommodate the planting and preservation of trees in public and private spaces.

***Medium Term (5-10 years)***

Natural spaces and greenways provide screens, buffers, and passive recreation opportunities at zero-to-little cost to the city or developers. Natural drainage areas, floodplains, and wooded areas should be utilized as greenways that define and connect residential neighborhoods, recreational facilities and public facilities within the community. Areas with particular topographic features that present substantial barriers to development should be maintained in a natural or passively developed condition.

Areas with these traits should be identified and reflected in zoning regulations so that development can accommodate and utilize these areas as amenities.

***Long Term (Over 10 years)***

Springfield’s regional geography and topography lend it to be influenced by several environmentally sensitive areas, waterways, drainageways, wetlands, and floodplains. To conserve and protect these sensitive areas, Springfield may consider conservation easements to ensure minimal disruption or impact caused by development.



## Zoning and Regulations

### ***Built Environment***

Facilitating growth in a manner that is sustainable and minimizes negative impacts on existing development and the environment ensures the best utilization of public and environmental resources. The approval of new development must be contingent on compatibility with the existing community in both use and design.

A community experiencing external development pressures faces the challenge of properly incorporating new development with design elements of the existing built environment. A community can influence its sense of place with a combination of zoning regulations and design guidelines. These measures can ensure that new development and redevelopment effectively complements existing uses and aesthetics.

### *Short Term (0-5 years)*

The connectivity and walkability of Springfield were identified as characteristics that should be preserved and integrated into new development. Subdivision regulations should reflect that streets should interconnect neighborhoods with limited dead-end and cul-de-sac streets. Connected streets best facilitate multi-modal transportation, reducing the number of automobile trips and conserving energy by reducing the length of automobile trips.

### *Medium Term (5-10 years)*

With extreme development pressures, Springfield residents fear the loss of community identity and historic appeal. The city should implement neighborhood conservation programs, including aggressive residential rehabilitation programming, to protect historic neighborhoods and properties.

To promote the preservation, maintenance, and renovation of existing properties the city can explore incentive programs for residents who participate in improving their property's appearance and efficiency.

### *Long Term (Over 10 years)*

Rapid community growth can overextend an infrastructure network and create capacity and maintenance issues for the city; negatively affecting both new and existing residents. Subdivision regulations should be strictly enforced to prevent over-extending community facilities.

Growth limit boundaries can also be implemented based on the most efficient provision of infrastructure. New growth should be guided to areas most able to support new development. This strategy also encourages infill development and redevelopment.

## 5.2 IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

## Zoning and Regulations

***Targeted Corridors***

Springfield's Main Street, in conjunction with Highway 50, Platteview Road, and Pflug Road, was identified as a major community asset and presented a logical area for future development. Commercial development should be targeted to Main Street and Highway 50 corridors to preserve and enhance Springfield's character.

***Short Term (0-5 years)***

Design guidelines ensure an attractive manner of development that complements existing neighborhoods. Urban Design Guidelines should be implemented to influence orientation, architecture, and signage standards in the Main Street, Highway 50, Platteview Road, and Pflug Road corridors. Site design should incorporate elements that promote high-quality developments.

***Medium Term (5-10 years)***

In communities nationwide, historic main street districts have struggled due to development migrating towards auto-oriented centers. To prevent competition between the Springfield Main Street and Highway 50 commercial corridors, Zoning Regulations should identify and target appropriate uses for each district.

New businesses locating to the Highway 50 Corridor should cater to the needs and desires of Springfield residents as well as those traveling and commuting to and from Omaha. Strip commercial development should be discouraged and avoided when possible. The Main Street Corridor should be viewed as an attraction via retail and tourist activity. Business activity that complements tourist activity should be oriented to and around the Springfield Main Street Corridor.

***Long Term (Over 10 years)***

Funding mechanisms can be created to establish and manage financial assistance programs and incentives to funnel investment in specified locations. The development of a Community Redevelopment Authority and Improvement Districts can help fund improvements to buildings and streetscape of the Main Street and Highway 50 corridors. The use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and special assessment funds could give these areas a competitive advantage and encourage compatible and attractive development.

## Plan Maintenance

### Programming and Plan Maintenance

#### Annual Review of the Plan

A relevant, up-to-date plan is critical to sustain the planning success. After adoption of the comprehensive plan, opportunities should be provided to identify any changes in conditions that would impact elements or policies of this plan. An annual review of the comprehensive plan is recommended to evaluate the accuracy and appropriateness of the plan. The annual review should occur during the city's budgetary time periods to make the most efficient use of funds.

The annual review process needs to involve regularly monitoring trends and changes in the local, regional, state and federal landscape. Such trends and changes may include changes in development activity and use, trends in development regulation amendments, and changes in planning and zoning law. Each year at the annual review, a report should be prepared by the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and/or the Planning Commission that provides information and recommendations on whether the plan is current in respect to population and economic changes and if the recommended policies are still valid for the city and its long-term growth.

The Planning Commission should hold a public hearing on this report in order to:

1. Provide citizens and/or developers with an opportunity to present possible changes to the plan;
2. Identify any changes in the status of projects called for in the plan; and
3. Bring forth any issues, or identify any changes in conditions that may impact the validity of the plan.

#### Data Management

##### *Short Term (0-5 years)*

New American Community Survey estimates are released annually. These estimates have some margin of error and may not change dramatically, but they are the most current data available. Springfield should annually update/request the geodatabase from Sarpy County GIS department. Making decisions from current information is very important as new development occurs across the community.

##### *Medium Term (5-10 years)*

Community engagement and participation is vital to truly serving the needs of residents. The city should utilize multiple methods and forms of technology to provide education about the planning and civic process to its citizens.

##### *Long Term (Over 10 years)*

Ensuring ongoing updates of demographic, economic, and housing data from U.S. Census, American Community Survey will be essential in providing the most accurate information for community-based decisions. If data is lacking, special studies should be conducted to provide more relevant information.

## 5.2 IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

## Plan Maintenance

**Coordination with others**

The collaborative view of Springfield brought different people together with similar visions of Springfield. This momentum can continue at the local, regional, and statewide levels through coordination with other entities to provide opportunities within Springfield. Continuing this participatory process may align a Springfield project on the wish list to another organization's budget or plans.

*Participate and attend area meetings*

Springfield leadership should strive to maintain the partnership with other municipalities and the county and continue to participate and attend regional meetings.

Changing needs and conditions will necessitate future review, evaluation, and updating of the comprehensive plan and its supporting documents. Intergovernmental coordination of all planning activities affecting land uses within the city is necessary to assure an integrated, comprehensive plan for Springfield. The following policies establish a framework for the future utilization and evaluation of the comprehensive plan.

**Policies**

- Springfield will continue to implement an ongoing citizen involvement program that provides residents opportunity to be involved in all phases of the planning process.
- Springfield will review any development concepts or proposals, which conflict with the future land use map, and goals or policies, in light of changing needs and conditions and in keeping with established procedures of Plan evaluation, amendment, and update.
- Springfield will undertake a major update of the comprehensive plan and review of all supporting documents every ten years to ensure that adequate factual basis for planning decisions exists.
- Springfield will undertake a major review of the Future Land Use Plan at least every five years in order to measure and identify shifts in development and requirements for suitable use of the land within the community.

## Plan Maintenance

### **Plan Amendment Procedures**

It is anticipated that each year individuals and groups may come forward with proposals to amend the comprehensive plan. It is recommended that those proposals be compiled and reviewed once a year at the annual review. By waiting to review all proposed amendments at the same time, the effects of each proposal can be evaluated for conflicts of other proposals and their net impact on the comprehensive plan.

### *Conditions for Plan Amendment*

Comprehensive Plan amendment procedures are necessary to determine what constitutes conformity or non-conformity with the plan. It is impossible to set hard and fast rules for such decisions but consistent criteria should be used when making this determination. The following criteria are recommended:

- A request for increases in residential density or non-residential floor area in excess of the guidelines established in the plan, depending upon the degree of increase, may require a plan amendment.
- Land use request involving minor differences in boundaries from those shown in the plan should be considered in conformity with the plan unless precedent would be set for more extensive and non-conforming changes in adjacent areas.
- Requests for variations or changes in the alignment of designated roadways should be considered in conformity if the continuity of the roadway is maintained, the alignment does not result in traffic safety problems or reductions in needed capacity, does not constrain the proper development of contiguous properties, and does not conflict with or preempt other planned uses or facilities.
- Requests to deviate from plan-specified requirements such as open space and traffic reduction measures generally should not be permitted in order to ensure equitable treatment of all property owners and to avoid arbitrary decisions which would undermine the legal foundations of the plan. If changes are to be made, they should be done through a plan amendment process.
- The final criteria must always be whether the request, whatever its nature, will set a precedent for cumulative changes which are not consistent with the plan. Therefore, in those instances where the implications of the request are not easily observed or detected, a request for a plan amendment should be required.

### *Unanticipated Opportunities*

If new or innovative development opportunities arise which impact several elements of the plan, a plan amendment may be proposed and considered separate from the Annual Review and other proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments. The city should compile a list of the proposed amendments received during the previous year; prepare a report providing applicable information for each proposal, and recommend action on the proposed amendments. The comprehensive plan amendment process should adhere to the adoption process specified by Nebraska law and provide for the organized participation and involvement of citizens.

## 5.2 IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

## Plan Maintenance

*Methods for Evaluating Development Proposals*

The interpretation of the Comprehensive Plan should be composed of a continuous and related series of analyses, with references to the goals and policies, the land use plan, specific land use policies, and the transportation plan. Moreover, when considering specific proposed developments, interpretation of the comprehensive plan should include a thorough review of all sections of the comprehensive plan.

If a development proposal is not in conformance or consistent with the policies developed in the comprehensive plan, serious consideration should be given to making modifications to the proposal. Otherwise, the following criteria should be used to determine if a comprehensive plan amendment would be justified:

- the character of the adjacent neighborhood
- the zoning and uses of nearby properties
- the suitability of the property for the uses allowed under the current zoning designation
- the type and extent of positive or detrimental impact that may affect adjacent properties, or the community at large, if the request is approved
- the impact of the proposal on public utilities and facilities
- the length of time that the subject and adjacent properties have been utilized for their current uses
- the benefits of the proposal to the public health, safety, and welfare compared to the hardship imposed on the applicant if the request is not approved
- comparison between the existing land use plan and the proposed change regarding the relative conformance to the goals and policies
- consideration of city staff recommendations

## Plan Maintenance

### *Strategic Planning*

The identification and achievement of goals and objectives of highest priority will ultimately lead to the success of other goals and objectives. It will be critical to earmark the specific funds to be used and the individuals primarily responsible for implementing the priority goals, objectives and actions in Springfield. These goals have been identified more specifically within the city's strategic plan. The plan should be updated on a regular basis and be consistent with the general goals and objectives identified within the Comprehensive Plan.

### *Public Education*

In addition to the implementation tools, broad public support and involvement is necessary in the development and use of any implementation policy or program. If adequate support is to be developed, a program educating residents is necessary. People who understand the needs and ways of meeting those needs of the community must take the initiative to stimulate the interest and the understanding required to ensure action is taken. The Springfield City Council should annually strive to implement an active public participation process by creating an educational process on land use issues. The city should continue to use its website and make the comprehensive plan and development regulations available online. The use of web based social media will also be useful in receiving valuable feedback. Ongoing education and promotion will be an important factor in sustaining interest and motivation from community members. Some of the objectives of the comprehensive plan cannot be achieved unless the actions of two or more public agencies or private organizations can be coordinated. Frequently, constraints prevent organizations from working with one another (i.e. financial resources, legal authority, restriction of joint uses of facilities, etc). Efforts should be made to bridge this gap with open communication, cooperation, and the realization that the issue at hand could benefit the health, safety, and general welfare of the residents in Springfield.

### *Special Studies and Plans*

Additional studies and plans can be helpful to further explore and define a vision of a certain area, corridor, or development site. Conducting studies and making decisions area by area can enhance the Comprehensive Plan. Some examples of additional planning efforts that can further develop ideas expressed in plan include:

- **Downtown Master Plan and Implementation**
- **Strategic Plan Updates**
- **Springfield Sewer Study**
- **Sarpy County Regional Sewer Study**

## 5.2 IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

## Plan Maintenance

*Community Growth*

New development should, to the greatest extent possible, be contiguous to existing development or services. This would allow for the logical and cost effective extension of streets and utility services. The city may authorize non-contiguous development if:

- The developer pays for the “gap” costs of extending services from the existing connections to the proposed development.
- The extension would open up needed or desirable areas of the community for additional growth.
- Issues related to adjacent/transitional agriculture are properly addressed.

The Future Land Use Plan is one of the statutory requirements of a Comprehensive Development Plan, as stated in the Nebraska State Statutes. The Land Use Plan, along with the Transportation Plan, provides the necessary tools to direct future development in and around Springfield. The City’s Land Use Plan is based on existing conditions and projected conditions for the community. The need for residential uses will be driven by the future population, the ratio of owner-occupied to renter-occupied housing units, and the projected number of future dwelling units needed. New residential development can drive the need for additional commercial development, additional streets, public and park facilities, and industrial development. Therefore, decisions regarding future residential development will have a direct impact on other uses throughout the entire community. Conversely, commercial and industrial development in a community will lead to further economic development and the need for more residential units and overall growth and expansion of the city.



## 5.3 ANNEXATION

### **Annexation**

As Springfield grows, it must look for opportunities to extend its borders and continue to provide a high quality of life for its residents. To do this, the State of Nebraska has established a process for communities to expand their municipal boundary via annexation so as to include any contiguous or adjacent lands, lots, tracts, streets, or highways as are urban or suburban in character and in such direction as may be deemed proper.

There are three ways annexation can be pursued. These include:

1. Property owners can request annexation.
2. The municipality can annex any contiguous or adjacent lands, lots, tracts, streets, or highways that are urban or suburban in nature.
3. At the time land is platted adjacent to Springfield's Corporate Limits it could be annexed at the time of approval of the final plat with a pre-annexation agreement.

In the case of the first method, the property owner must submit a plat prepared by a licensed surveyor. The plat must be approved by the city engineer and filed with the clerk along with a written request signed by the majority of the property owners and inhabitants in number and value of the proposed annexation properties. Annexations must be approved by both the Planning Commission and City Council.

In order to adopt an annexation ordinance, a majority of affirmative votes are required by the governing body at each reading of the ordinance. Then the certified map is filed with the County Assessor, County Clerk, and Register of Deeds along with a certified copy of the ordinance. The city then shall provide substantially the same services as the other inhabitants of the city as soon as practicable. Adequate plans and necessary city council action to furnish such services shall be adopted no later than one year after the date of annexation.

#### *Areas for Potential Annexation for Springfield*

There are a number of areas surrounding the city's current corporate limits that may be eligible to consider for annexation in the future. The qualifications to be met for an area to be included in the city's corporate limits are requirements imposed by state statutes. The matters to be considered when any area is being evaluated for inclusion in the city's corporate limits include: the requirements of state statutes, the conditions of the infrastructure, the existing and available services, the maintenance of existing services, the extension of city services, the method of finance for the extension of city services, the time for extension of city services, population, taxes and revenue, the area's debts, obligations and assets, land uses and valuation, and the interests of the city.

The City of Springfield has identified several areas or SIDs adjacent to the corporate boundaries as potential areas of annexation. Such areas or SIDs include South Crest II, county fairgrounds, Springfield Business Park, and any future residential developments on the west side of highway 50 and northeast of Springfield. The city shall review these areas and others when appropriate to consider future growth and annexation.