



# City of Benton Comprehensive Development Plan

March 24, 2008

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Saline County Adult Education Center  
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Saline County Career Center (Pulaski Technical College)  
Saline County Fair Association  
Saline County History and Heritage Society  
Saline County Library System  
Saline County Office of Emergency Management  
Saline County Road Department  
Saline County Solid Waste Management District  
Saline Home Builders Association  
Saline Memorial Hospital and MEDTRAN  
Saline Watershed Alliance  
Salvation Army Shelter – Benton  
South Central Arkansas Transit  
Springhill Fire Department  
The Boys & Girls Club of Saline County  
Turtle Creek Fire Department  
U.S. Postal Service - Benton Post Office  
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Waste Management of Little Rock

Public input was provided at numerous public meetings and through written comments submitted during the plan development process. A record of public comments received during the public hearing phase and responses to those comments are documented in Appendix C (not included). All those who participated in the planning process and provided input deserve the gratitude of the City of Benton and the entire planning area community.

# **City of Benton Comprehensive Development Plan**

Prepared for  
The City of Benton, Arkansas  
By Metroplan

Adopted on March 24, 2008

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## RESOLUTION 16 OF 2008

### A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE BENTON, ARKANSAS PLANNING AREA; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

WHEREAS, A.C.A. §14-56-402 provides that cities of the first class shall have the power to adopt and enforce plans for the coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the municipality.

WHEREAS, in accordance with A.C.A. §14-56-414(a) "suitable studies" were initiated in January, 2005, to update Benton's comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, following completion of the *Benton Planning Studies Report* in January, 2006, the Benton Planning Area was substantially enlarged, special meetings were scheduled, and planning efforts were directed towards updating the Land Use Plan, the Community Facilities Plan, and the Master Street Plan; and

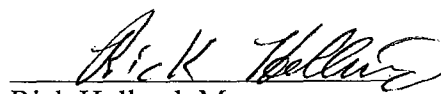
WHEREAS, the plan development process during 2006 and 2007 involved numerous public meetings and citizen involvement focused on economic development strategies, an interim master street plan, land use strategies, updating existing data for the expanded planning area, the built and natural environment, community facilities and services, vision statement, goals and objectives, solicitation and review of public comment on the draft plan, and modification and completion of the comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with A.C.A. §14-56-422 the Benton Planning Commission provided more than 15 days public notice and held public hearings on May 3, 4 and 5, 2007, and on November 13, 2007 voted unanimously to adopt the Benton Comprehensive Development Plan and certify it to the Benton City Council;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOVED by the City Council of Benton, Arkansas, that the Comprehensive Development Plan which is attached hereto as Exhibit "A" for the Benton Planning Area as recommended by the Benton Planning Commission, is hereby adopted.

PASSED AND APPROVED this the 24 day of March, 2008.

  
Cindy Stracener, City Clerk

  
Rick Holland, Mayor

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## Section 1 Benton Plan Development Process

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### 1.1 Municipal Plan Authority

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In 1957, the Arkansas General Assembly passed Act 186 which gave Arkansas cities of the first and second class *...the power to adopt and enforce a plan or plans for the coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the municipality and its environs.* The Act further stipulates that *...Plans of the municipality shall be prepared in order to promote, in accordance with present and future needs, the safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the citizens.*

*The plans may provide, among other things, for:*

- (1) Efficiency and economy in the process of development;*
- (2) The appropriate and best use of land;*
- (3) Convenience of traffic and circulation of people and goods;*
- (4) Safety from fire and other dangers;*
- (5) Adequate light and air in the use and occupancy of buildings;*
- (6) Healthful and convenient distribution of populations;*
- (7) Good civic design and arrangement;*
- (8) Adequate public utilities and facilities; and*
- (9) Wise and efficient expenditure of funds.<sup>1</sup>*

### 1.2 Municipal Planning in Benton

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In 1959 the City of Benton, with the assistance of the City Planning Division of the University of Arkansas, began a planning program under the authority of enabling legislation (Act 186 of 1957). In the early 1960's a planning area map and general plan were adopted by the City as a result of the planning work with the University. In order to implement the plan, the City adopted subdivision and zoning ordinances following plan adoption. Since the initial general plan and ordinances were adopted, Benton has performed major revisions to its planning program, including:

- 1968 – A comprehensive plan and implementing ordinances were developed with assistance of the consulting firm Blaylock, Cook, Threet, Lassiter and Associates.
- 1979 – The comprehensive plan and regulations were revised with the assistance of Hodges, Vines and Castin consultants.
- 1982-92 – A revised comprehensive plan and implementing ordinances were developed with the assistance of Metroplan, a council of local governments.

The most recent efforts to update Benton's comprehensive plan began in January 2005, when at the request of the City, Metroplan initiated planning studies in accordance with A.C.A. §14-56-414(a) which stipulates that *...suitable studies shall be conducted...* prior to the preparation of any plans.

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<sup>1</sup> Arkansas Code Annotated (A.C.A.) §14-56-402, §14-56-403(a) and §14-56-403(b).

### 1.3 Planning Studies Report

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Following extensive research and input from numerous individuals and organizations over a 12 month period, the Benton Planning Studies Report was published in January 2006. The Report provides information to assist decision makers as they review and contemplate potential changes to the comprehensive development plan and associated development regulations. The report combines historic, administrative, regulatory, legal, demographic, economic, financial, geographic and other relevant information in one document.

Starting in February 2006, the Benton Planning Commission reviewed findings, recommendations and questions from Chapter 9 of the Planning Studies Report. During the months of March, April and May, major discussion topics included the planning area boundary, the planning process, and what should be included in the comprehensive plan. Many other discussion topics were introduced. Following their review of the Planning Studies Report, the Planning Commission decided to:

- Enlarge the Benton Planning Area (refer to Section 1.4);
- Schedule special meetings on a monthly basis to advance the comprehensive plan update process (refer to Section 1.5); and
- Include in the comprehensive development plan the three major plan elements identified by statute (refer to Sections 3, 4, and 5).

### 1.4 Benton Planning Area

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A.C.A. §14-56-412(c)<sup>2</sup> states – *The commission shall prepare and maintain a map showing the general location of streets, public ways, and public property and the boundaries of the area within the territorial jurisdiction for which it will prepare plans, ordinances, and regulations. The map shall be known as the planning area map.*

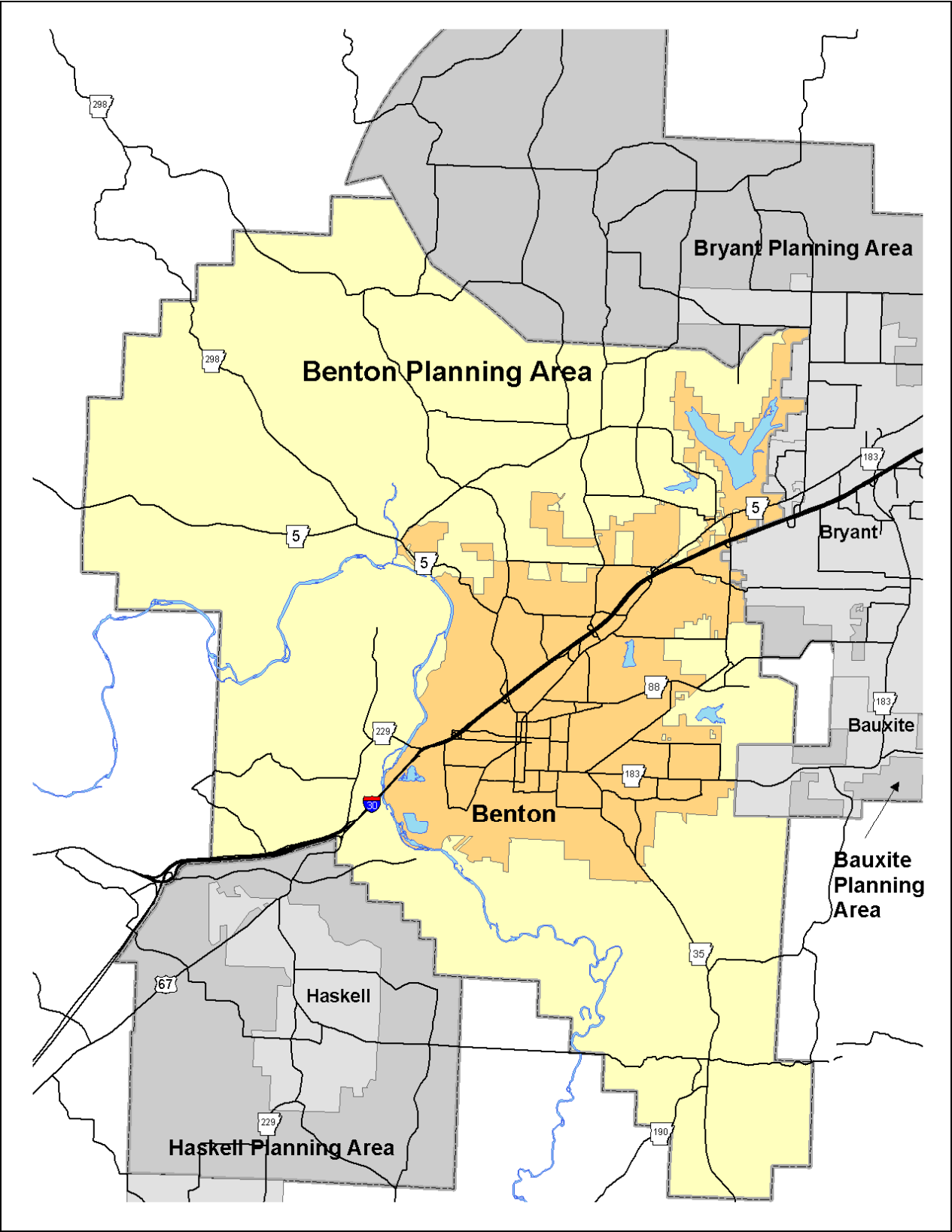
The preparation and maintenance of the planning area map is an administrative function Act 186 assigns exclusively to the municipal planning commission. Action by a city's legislative body should not be requested. The purpose of the planning area map is to allow municipalities of the first and second class to establish boundaries beyond their corporate limits within which the municipal authority, rather than the county, is principally responsible for planning and regulating subdivision development. However, the county planning board must be provided copies of proposed plats in these areas and up to 60 days for review and comment.<sup>3</sup> A.C.A. §14-56-413(a)(1)(B) stipulates that the territorial jurisdiction within which a municipality can plan and regulate may include land lying within five miles of the city limits. This area may be further limited by proximity to other municipalities with planning commissions. If two cities are less than ten miles apart, as is the case for Benton and Bryant, Bauxite and Haskell, then *...the limits of their respective territorial jurisdictions shall be a line equidistant between them, or as agreed upon by the respective municipalities.* Benton coordinated with neighboring municipalities to establish common planning area boundaries that were in effect when Metroplan initiated planning studies for Benton's comprehensive plan update.

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<sup>2</sup> Section of Act 186 of 1957, as amended, entitled "Powers and duties of commission."

<sup>3</sup>A.C.A. §14-17-208(i), enacted as Act 422 of 1977, as amended.

Map No. 1  
Benton Planning Area



On April 25, 2006, the Benton Planning Commission voted to approve a new Benton Planning Area Map, which significantly expanded the municipal planning boundary to the north, west and south using section lines and quarter sections. The new boundaries did not violate previously established common planning area boundaries with neighboring municipalities. As required by A.C.A. §14-56-413(b), signed copies of the new Benton Planning Area Map were filed with the Benton City Clerk and the Saline County Recorder (22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Circuit Clerk). Map 1 shows the current Benton Planning Area, as well as the planning area boundaries Benton shares in common with the cities of Bryant, Bauxite and Haskell. In the future, as annexations affecting territorial jurisdiction occur, it may be necessary for Benton to re-negotiate the common planning area boundaries previously established with neighboring municipalities.<sup>4</sup> On March 11, 2008, Benton's Planning Area was revised again due an annexation by the City of Bryant, and Map 1 was revised accordingly.

### 1.5 Benton Plan Development Meetings

Numerous public meetings were held to update the comprehensive plan. The Benton Planning Commission held special meetings staffed by Metroplan during the months of March, April, May, June, July, August and October 2006. The findings and recommendations of the planning studies report were reviewed during the first three special planning commission meetings. During these meetings the planning commission decided to enlarge the planning area and determined that the comprehensive plan should include three major elements. The next three special planning commission meetings focused on those major plan elements, namely the master street plan, land use plan and community facilities plan.

The special planning commission meeting in June focused on updating the master street plan. Rather than wait until the comprehensive plan was adopted, it was subsequently decided to adopt an Interim Master Street Plan, for which the planning commission held a public hearing on August 1, 2006. The Benton City Council adopted the proposed Interim Master Street Plan at their regular meeting on August 28, 2006.

The Benton Department of Community Development staffed A Vision of Economic Development meeting at the downtown Market Street Events Center on July 14, 2006. The meeting was facilitated by Jerry L. Smith, Director of the Center for Regional and Community Development at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro. Meeting participants evaluated 13 strategies for economic development and selected six preferred strategies (refer to Section 1.6).

At the special planning commission meeting on July 25, 2006, the focus was on land use. Meeting participants reviewed nine land use development strategies drafted by Metroplan and selected five preferred strategies (refer to Section 1.7). Subsequently, a sixth strategy was included following a special meeting of the Planning Commission.

At the August 17, 2006 meeting of the Saline County History and Heritage Society, Boyd Maher, representing the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, gave a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Local Historic Districts in Arkansas". The reaction of those present was positive. An inventory of historic structures in the downtown area is

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<sup>4</sup> Note: Arkansas' statutes do not prohibit a city from annexing into a neighboring municipality's planning area or territorial jurisdiction.

currently underway in order to determine the boundaries of a historic district that could be included in the national historic register. The historic district boundaries will be established in concert with the creation of a Benton Historic District Commission and a local historic district ordinance to help preserve historic structures.

At the special planning commission meeting in August, the focus was on applying the preferred economic development and land use strategies to the land use and community facilities plan elements. In order to advance the plan development process, it was decided to invite meeting participants and the general public to participate in a series of workgroup meetings to be held prior to the next special planning commission meeting. Workgroups were established for each of the three major plan elements and meeting times were scheduled.

Nine public meetings of the workgroups were staffed by Metroplan over a four week period, at which much progress was made in refining each major plan element. In addition to the workgroup meetings, an inter-agency technical meeting was held to coordinate city and county minimum right of way and roadway design standards.

The special planning commission meeting in September was rescheduled for October 3<sup>rd</sup>, at which staff summarized progress made by each of the workgroups. Significant progress was reported for the land use plan and master street plan workgroups. Although the community facilities plan workgroup also made progress in identifying existing and future community facilities, the group did not reach a consensus on the location of proposed major parks and recreational facilities. None of the workgroups developed recommendations for specific goals or objectives.

During the remainder of 2006 and first quarter of 2007, staff worked to draft comprehensive plan documents, including updates of information previously reported in the Benton Planning Studies Report and the assembly of other pertinent data.

A draft of Section 1 of the Comprehensive Development Plan, including a vision statement, goals and objectives, was provided to the Planning Commission. Based on comments received at the regular planning commission meeting in January 2007, the draft vision statement was modified and additional objectives were added to emphasize the importance of enhancing the aesthetic appeal and visual appearance of the built environment in order to create a sense of place and strengthen community identity.

## 1.6 Economic Development Strategies

On July 14, 2006, 13 possible economic development strategies were reviewed at a Vision of Economic Development meeting, which was held at the Market Street Events Center. The following six strategies were preferred (in order of preference) by meeting participants.

1. Leverage Scenic and Quality of Place Amenities to Attract Knowledge Workers (30%)
2. Cooperating with Neighbors (28%)
3. Commercial and Retail Development or Redevelopment (16%)
4. Business and Industry Retention and Expansion (12%)
5. Attraction of the Retirement Industry (7% tied)
6. Tourism Development (7% tied)

The remaining economic development strategies reviewed at the meeting were not selected by any of the participants. Although the following seven strategies were not selected by meeting participants, any and all economic development strategies may be considered in conjunction with the development of an economic development plan (refer to Section 1.9.2 Objective 3.1).

- Agri-business Opportunities
- Attract New Industry
- Improve the Efficiency of Existing Firms
- New Business/Entrepreneur Development
- New Product Commercialization
- Outside Sources – Including Aids and Grants Received from State and Federal Government
- Recovering Lost Resources

The preferred economic development strategies were described as follows.

1. Leverage Scenic and Quality of Place Amenities to Attract Knowledge Workers: *Knowledge workers are “equipped to maintain and expand our technological leadership role in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”; workers who can think, work with ideas, and make decisions. Also known as “gold-collar” workers, knowledge workers are sometimes identified by their professional specialty, e.g., lawyer, doctor, programmer, information system designer, information specialist librarians, teacher, and scientist (Source: Center on Education and Training for Employment). Workers in these categories place a high priority on the quality of the community, including scenic, cultural, and ongoing training opportunities is a critical factor in attracting these workers to the community.*
2. Cooperating with Neighbors: *It seems apparent that many communities may have limited resources to foster economic development. Clusters of communities could give consideration to forming organizational structures for the purpose of planning and developing cooperative and complementary economic development activities. Cooperative ventures can provide cost-effective community services and facilities at levels that provide the quality-of-life residents desire. Clusters of communities have the opportunity to enhance the political “clout” of the area, and pool resources to promote and develop the area. Such cooperation can range from police or fire protection services, to jointly sponsored festivals and events, to a merchant in one town providing merchandise to outlets in neighboring communities, to publishing a business directory of the cluster.*
3. Commercial and Retail Development or Redevelopment: *This strategy involves targeting the community to become a strong retail center for the surrounding rural area, or possibly a specialized retail center. Improving the business sector’s ability to capture dollars is a must. Marketing surveys of customer’s needs and buying habits will help identify areas needing improvement, such as: store hours, providing outstanding personal service, merchandising and display practices, shopping as a pleasurable experience, merchandise lines, customer relations and more.*

4. Business and Industry Retention and Expansion: *This strategy requires community leaders to work closely with existing local businesses to provide them the support necessary to remain viable in the community. In addition to the fact that 80 percent of new jobs come from existing businesses, it is to attract new business into a community. An important example is a business that will possibly close because of the retirement of its owner. The community could develop a plan where a new entrepreneur can gradually buy into the business.*
5. Attraction of the Retirement Industry: *This strategy emphasizes the amenities of life that attract retired people to live in the community. Retirees in a community mean additional business activity and should be considered an industry. The elderly import income to the community, living on prior savings or investments in the form of social security, private pensions, stocks, bonds, real estate or savings accounts. They require basic services such as groceries, housing and health care, and tend to spend their income locally. Well-organized public transportation, meal service, health care, recreation and other services focused on the elderly can go a long way in keeping the buying power of the "silver-haired industrial base" in the community. Wisconsin researchers have found that \$4,000 of social security payments is sufficient to create a full-time equivalent job in the local economy. This is in contrast with the need of \$91,743 in manufacturing or \$65,516 in agricultural sales to produce one job.*
6. Tourism Development: *This strategy focuses on identifying opportunities for developing a community event, facility or attraction that brings people to the community to spend recreational dollars that may create new jobs.*

## 1.7 Land Use Development Strategies

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On July 25, 2006, eight possible land use development strategies were reviewed at a special meeting of the Benton Planning Commission. Five preferred strategies were selected by meeting participants. The first five strategies listed below (in order of preference) were preferred by meeting participants.

1. Reserve Land for Parks, Trails and Open Space (39%)
2. Encourage Local Street Connections Between Neighborhoods (28%)
3. Encourage Mixed-Use Districts and Neighborhoods (11% tied)
4. Encourage Moderately Higher Densities Where Possible (11% tied)
5. Facilitate Development on Both Sides of the Saline River (11% tied)
6. Establish Neighborhood Commercial Nodes at the Intersection of Arterials<sup>5</sup>

The following two land use development strategies were not selected by any of the meeting participants.

- Continue Current Development Patterns
- Disperse Multi-family Residential Around the City

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<sup>5</sup> At the special Planning Commission meeting on August 22, 2006, this strategy received considerable support from those present and has since been included as a preferred strategy. In subsequent workgroup meetings the concept of having different types of commercial nodes based on scale and market area was briefly discussed and received limited support.

The preferred land use development strategies were described as follows.

1. Reserve Land for Parks, Trails and Open Space: *This strategy would seek to maximize the potential benefits that parks, trails and open space can have on economic development, habitat preservation and quality of life. Benton's comprehensive plan will include a land use plan and a community facilities plan. Both of these plan elements can be used to help reserve land for existing and proposed parks, trails and open space. Benton is fortunate to be located along the Saline River, which has been designated a scenic river and included in Arkansas' extraordinary resource waters. The flood plains along the Saline River and its tributaries include wetlands and other wildlife habitat that should be protected from urban development. One option would use trails and parks to buffer the natural habitat areas along the Saline River and its tributaries. Another option would seek to create neighborhood lakes in the upper reaches of the intermittent streams, surrounded by trails, parks and residential developments. Placing a park or trail on the plan would, in combination with revisions to the subdivision regulations, force developers to "provide for reasonable dedication of land for such public or community facilities, or for a reasonable equivalent contribution in lieu of dedication of land, such contribution to be used for the acquisition of facilities that serve the subdivision."*
2. Encourage Local Street Connections Between Neighborhoods: *This strategy would seek to connect new subdivisions with neighboring areas, thereby dispersing motor vehicle traffic rather than forcing all trips to use the arterial network which results in systemic delay and traffic congestion. These street connections can be negotiated during the subdivision review process. The potential adverse effects of speeding motorists and too many motorists using a residential street can be avoided by good subdivision street layout and design. Another benefit of providing more street connectivity is the increased ability of pedestrians, joggers and cyclists to travel along the safer low-volume streets.*
3. Encourage Mixed-Use Districts and Neighborhoods: *This strategy would bring many daily activities within walking distance of homes, and would be applied in designated areas, such as older historical districts and downtown Benton. Zoning regulations would be revised for these areas to increase residential densities and permit a mix of housing types and land uses. Two- and three-story buildings could combine ground-floor retail with office and/or residential uses on the upper floors. Building codes, design standards, on-site parking requirements, minimum lot sizes and building setbacks may also be modified for these areas. Streetscape improvements would help to create an attractive environment for pedestrians, such as narrower streets with parallel parking and wider sidewalks with lighting, benches, and other amenities. Public buildings and neighborhood parks would be sited in the core of these areas.*
4. Encourage Moderately Higher Densities Where Possible: *This strategy would use the land use plan, zoning and subdivision regulations, and city utility connection fees to encourage smaller single-family lots, infill development, and redevelopment of large lot estates into moderately higher density residential use. Higher densities would increase the number of lots per acre and total accessed value, while reducing the cost of providing infrastructure such as city water and sewage services, drainage facilities and streets.*

5. *Facilitate Development on Both Sides of the Saline River:* This municipal growth strategy values the desirability of developing land on the other side of the Saline River, and recognizes that needed public infrastructure is currently lacking or inadequate. Public infrastructure needs include water service with sufficient pressure to fight fires, sanitary sewage service including a treatment plant [note: Benton Utilities has subsequently indicated that the existing wastewater treatment plant could be expanded to service areas on the opposite side of the river], storm drainage facilities, and more and better streets including new river crossings and more travel lanes on the I-30 Saline River Bridge.
6. *Establish Neighborhood Commercial Nodes at the Intersection of Arterials:* Most of the commercial land uses in the Benton area are located along the I-30 corridor. This strategy would establish commercial nodes at the intersection of arterial streets in neighborhoods outside the I-30 corridor. This would make it easier for people living nearby or using those arterials to obtain goods and services, and thereby help to reduce traffic congestion in the I-30 corridor.

## 1.8 Public Outreach and Plan Refinement

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During March, 2007 a draft of the plan document was distributed to City staff and made available to participants in the public meetings held during 2006. Comments received during March resulted in minor modification of some sections of the draft plan document. However, no changes were made to the draft plan document in cases where a substantive comment evidenced the need for additional public input and discussion. The resulting draft plan document was then released for public comment.

Shortly before the draft plan document was released for public comment, presentations were made by City Staff to civic groups and by Metroplan Staff to the Saline Home Builders Association on April 11<sup>th</sup>. No changes were made to the draft plan documents following these presentations.

Legal notices were published in the Benton Courier on April 15, 16 and 17, 2007 formally initiating a 15 day public comment period on the draft plan that was subsequently extended from May 4<sup>th</sup> to May 7, 2007. During the public comment period, the draft plan was presented in summary form by Metroplan staff at a special meeting of the Benton Planning Commission on April 16<sup>th</sup> and on April 19<sup>th</sup> to the Benton City Council. Three public hearings were held on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> to solicit public comment regarding the draft plan. Copies of draft plan documents were also made available for public review on the City's website, at the Bob Herzfeld Memorial Library and the Benton Municipal Complex.

All written comments regarding the draft plan are provided in Appendix C (not included in this document), as are any written responses provided by staff, and any actions taken by the Benton Planning Commission to revise draft plan documents at public meetings held on June 12, July 10<sup>th</sup>, August 28<sup>th</sup>, and October 29<sup>th</sup>.

The Benton Planning Commission reviewed final edits to draft plan documents, adopted the Benton Comprehensive Development Plan and certified it to the Benton City Council by a unanimous vote of the entire commission on November 13, 2007, and at subsequent meetings made several minor changes and additions to the plan document, most recently on February 12, 2008.

## 1.9 Vision, Goals and Objectives

Although initially drafted by staff, the vision statement, goals and objectives of this comprehensive development plan are a reflection of community input received at public meetings and in written comments as detailed in Appendix C (not included).

### 1.9.1 Comprehensive Development Plan Vision Statement

Benton is Saline County's central city and central Arkansas' gateway to the Southwest. As Benton grows and develops it can enhance its livability and become central Arkansas' premier suburban community by developing unique public spaces, such as its historic downtown and recreational facilities along the Saline River. Enhancing the aesthetic appeal and livability of the built environment will reinforce Benton's attractive qualities, help create a sense of place and strengthen community identity. Meaningful citizen input, resource preservation, great neighborhoods, safe environments, exemplary community facilities, and multimodal mobility are all integral to accomplishing this vision.

### 1.9.2 Goals and Objectives

Goal 1 – Citizen Involvement: To obtain meaningful citizen input in all planning processes.

Objective 1.1 Develop and implement a public participation program in accordance with applicable Arkansas statutes and in consultation with affected municipal boards and commissions.

Objective 1.2 Provide timely notification of public hearings and other opportunities to participate in the planning process to the citizens of Benton and the surrounding community.

Objective 1.3 Actively solicit citizen participation through a diverse, open and wide-ranging communication program that utilizes the news media, internet, public access television, and other appropriate methods.

Objective 1.4 Make information readily available to the public in order to educate and develop a knowledgeable citizenry.

Goal 2 – Preservation of Natural Resources, Open Space and Historical Sites: To preserve, protect and maintain natural resources, open space, and historic sites for present and future citizens including wetlands, lakes, streams, woodlands, wildlife habitats, open spaces, ground water resources, archeological sites, and cultural and historic sites, buildings and structures.

Objective 2.1 Discourage floodplain land development that would diminish flood storage capacity or decrease the rate of ground water infiltration.

Objective 2.2 Develop, update and implement a storm water management plan in order to help reduce water pollution and flooding.

Objective 2.3 Participate as needed in regional air quality awareness and pollution reduction efforts.

Objective 2.4 Preserve, protect and maintain archeological, cultural, and historic sites, buildings and structures, including the creation of local

historic districts and historic parks in partnership with private non-profit organizations, Saline County and the State of Arkansas.

Goal 3 – Economic and Community Development: To expand, improve and diversify the local economic base, tax base, and the availability of goods and services by encouraging and facilitating appropriate residential, commercial and industrial development and redevelopment.

Objective 3.1 Develop, update and implement an economic development plan for Benton within three years.

Objective 3.2 Leverage scenic and quality of place amenities to attract knowledge workers, including the creation and/or enhancement of mixed-use/multi-use districts.

Objective 3.3 Revitalize the central business district and adjacent neighborhoods through streetscape improvements and other public actions to encourage private investment.

Objective 3.4 Cooperate with neighboring communities to develop complementary economic development activities and to promote business investment in the general area.

Objective 3.5 Encourage the retention and expansion of existing local businesses by providing the support necessary for them to remain viable in the community.

Objective 3.6 Market Benton as a desirable business location, as well as a great place to live.

Objective 3.7 Encourage the provision of essential services and desired amenities necessary to attract and retain retirees to the Benton area.

Objective 3.8 Encourage and facilitate the development of land uses and special events that attract tourists and other visitors to shop and spend recreational dollars in Benton.

Goal 4 – Land Use Development and Urbanization: To provide for the orderly and efficient transition of land from rural to urban use in conjunction with municipal annexations and/or the development of land for any public or private use.

Objective 4.1 Develop and maintain an up-to-date land use plan for the planning area.

Objective 4.2 Coordinate the provision of municipal utilities and services, in particular wastewater collection and treatment, to facilitate moderate density urban development.

Objective 4.3 Encourage sustainable and efficient development patterns that reduce the public cost of extending utilities and providing services.

- Promote and encourage infill development.

Objective 4.4 Encourage the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings and structures.

Objective 4.5 Encourage traditional neighborhood design in targeted areas, such as in and near the central business district.

Objective 4.6 Encourage a mix of activities, uses and densities and the application of pedestrian and/or transit oriented design in targeted neighborhoods.

Objective 4.7 Encourage the development of attractive and well built affordable housing.

Objective 4.8 Encourage the development of housing that is appropriate to each neighborhood.

Objective 4.9 Encourage the redevelopment of housing, other real property, and complementary community facilities in order to strengthen and enhance targeted neighborhoods.

Objective 4.10 Encourage land uses that strengthen neighborhood identity by creating or preserving attractive and unique built environments and public places.

Objective 4.11 Encourage the development of high quality neighborhoods that take advantage of natural settings and feature special amenities, such as golf courses, recreation centers, trails, lakes, parks, and open space.

Objective 4.12 Encourage dedication of land for public use in concert with the community facilities, street, and recreation plans.

Objective 4.13 Encourage development of a built environment that is visually attractive and incorporates high quality construction standards.

Objective 4.14 Seek a dispersed pattern of multi-family rental housing and avoid any potential adverse impacts on neighborhoods of concentrating rental housing.

Goal 5 – Community Facilities and Services: To facilitate the provision of necessary or desirable community services in a timely, orderly, and efficient manner.

Objective 5.1 Develop and maintain an up-to-date community facilities inventory, plan and map for the planning area that identifies public facilities in cooperation with public bodies and other organizations having financial responsibility for such facilities.

Objective 5.2 Maintain an up-to-date master plan for parks, recreation and open space that promotes and encourages a physically fit, healthy and attractive community.

Objective 5.3 Ensure that municipally owned community facilities are provided in a timely, orderly, and cost-effective manner.

Objective 5.4 Facilitate land development on both sides of the Saline River through the timely provision of municipal utilities and services in conjunction with any annexations.

Objective 5.5 Establish guidelines regarding the general distribution, location, and characteristics of municipally owned community facilities, in order to optimally locate these facilities.

- Seek to locate public facilities where they can do the most good for the community at large and the neighborhoods selected to host these facilities.

Objective 5.6 Create efficiencies in the delivery of public services by using the availability of public facilities and services as a tool to guide land development.

Objective 5.7 Provide high quality community services and facilities.

Goal 6 – Transportation: To serve the mobility needs of area residents, workers and visitors by providing an integrated multimodal transportation system that is safe, efficient, accessible, convenient, affordable, sustainable, and supportive of desired development patterns and other community goals and objectives.

Objective 6.1 Develop and maintain an up-to-date master street plan and map for the planning area that is compatible with the roadway plans and design standards of the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, Metroplan, Saline County, and neighboring municipalities.

Objective 6.2 Develop and adopt access management plans for arterial roadways in order to reduce traffic congestion, maximize public investment in added roadway capacity, and provide safe access to abutting land uses.

Objective 6.3 Encourage local street, pedestrian and bikeway connections between neighborhoods in order to reduce indirect travel and traffic congestion on arterial roadways and enhance safety for non-motorized modes of transportation.

Objective 6.4 Encourage neighborhood and facility designs that support a range of transportation choices and are visually attractive.

Objective 6.5 Require construction and rehabilitation of accessible pedestrian facilities wherever needed and feasible, such as in the vicinity of schools and colleges, stadiums, public parks, tourist attractions, bus stops, medical facilities, signalized intersections, transit oriented developments, commercial areas, shopping centers, central business district, churches, bridges, public buildings, mixed-use/multi-use areas, moderate to high density areas, traditional neighborhoods, and streets connecting pedestrian activity areas.

Objective 6.6 Encourage the creation of bikeways, both on-road and off-road.

Objective 6.7 Encourage the linking of public parks, schools, neighborhoods, commercial areas, and other destinations in the planning area with a network of multi-use trails for pedestrians and bicyclists, including trails buffering riparian habitat along the Saline River and other streams.

Objective 6.8 Provide for the safe and efficient movement of goods on classified roadways designed and built for trucks and other heavy vehicles, while minimizing any associated safety, noise and air pollution impacts on residential areas and other sensitive land uses.

Objective 6.9 Facilitate the movement of people and goods to and from industrial and business parks, commercial areas, residential neighborhoods and community facilities, including schools, parks, cultural and historic sites, and government buildings.

Objective 6.10 Facilitate travel across natural and man-made barriers such as the Saline River and Union Pacific railroad, by providing new and improved bridges and overpasses.

Objective 6.11 Provide for a multi-modal transportation system that effectively supports economic growth and guides land development in concert with the land use and community facilities plans.

Objective 6.12 Require sub-dividers to dedicate sufficient right-of-way and easements along existing roadways for the planned roadway cross-sections, sidewalks and other facilities.

Objective 6.13 Require sub-dividers to construct all roadways within their subdivisions that are functionally classified as local or collector streets, and to construct at least to the centerline of local and collector streets on the edge of their subdivisions.

Objective 6.14 Require sub-dividers to participate in any necessary capital improvements made to arterial roadways located within or on the edge of their subdivisions.

Objective 6.15 Devote sufficient resources to operate and maintain the existing and planned multimodal transportation system in partnership with transportation agencies and other responsible governmental units.

Objective 6.16 Participate in any feasibility and alignment study for the proposed Saline County Parkway in partnership with other affected local jurisdictions, the AHTD and Metroplan.

Objective 6.17 Systematically evaluate transportation system deficiencies, identify improvement needs, prepare associated cost estimates, and develop a recommended list of transportation improvement projects for which public and/or private funding should be sought.

Goal 7 – Plan Implementation: To coordinate comprehensive development plan implementation.

Objective 7.1 Develop or update any plans, plan elements, and improvement programs as needed, including but not limited to an economic and community development plan, and a master plan for parks, recreation and open space.

Objective 7.2 Develop or revise municipal policies, procedures and/or regulations including, but not limited to, public participation procedures, historic district ordinance, economic development policies, zoning ordinance, control of development ordinance, and access management policies.

Objective 7.3 Coordinate with private developers, public utilities, community service providers, transportation agencies, and governmental units to

assure that land is reserved for planned community facilities, sufficient rights-of-way are obtained, and roadways and other facilities are constructed in accordance with design standards.

Objective 7.4 Conduct and/or participate in technical and feasibility studies as needed to clarify public capital improvement needs, estimate costs, and identify funding alternatives.

#### 1.10 Adoption or Amendment of Plans, Ordinances, and Regulations

All plans for the coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the City of Benton and its environs and any implementing ordinances and regulations shall be adopted or amended only in conformance with A.C.A. §14-56-422, which states –

- (1) (A) *The planning commission shall hold a public hearing on the plans, ordinances, and regulations proposed under this subchapter.*  
(B) *Notice of public hearing shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the city, at least one (1) time fifteen (15) days prior to the hearing.*
- (2) *Following the public hearing, proposed plans may be adopted and proposed ordinances and regulations may be recommended as presented, or in modified form, by a majority vote of the entire [planning] commission.*
- (3) *Following its adoption of plans and recommendation of ordinances and regulations, the [planning] commission shall certify adopted plans or recommended ordinances and regulations to the legislative body of the city for its adoption.*
- (4) *The legislative body of the city may return the plans and recommended ordinances and regulations to the commission for future study or recertification or, by a majority vote of the entire membership, may, by ordinance or resolution, adopt plans and recommended ordinances or regulations submitted by the planning commission. However, nothing in this subchapter shall be construed to limit the city council's authority to recall the ordinances and resolutions by a vote of the majority of the council.*
- (5) *Following adoption by the legislative body, the adopted plans, ordinances, and regulations shall be filed in the office of the city clerk. The city clerk shall file, with the county recorder of the county in which territorial jurisdiction is being exercised such plans, ordinances, and regulations as pertains to the territory beyond the corporate limits.*

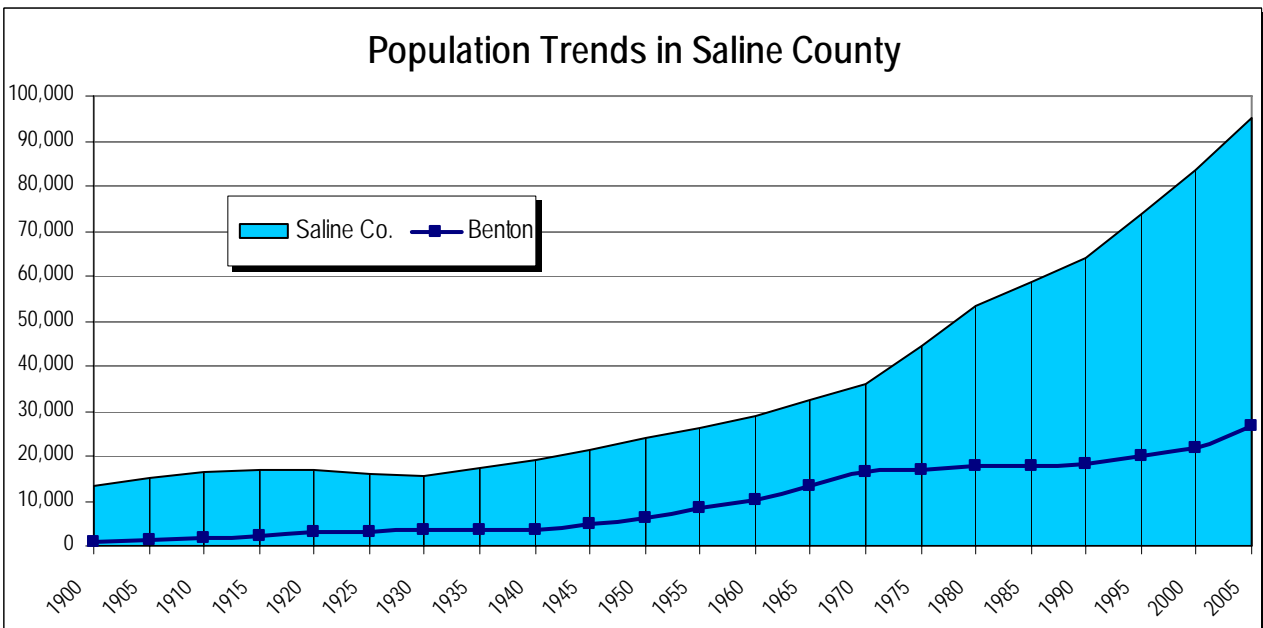
## Section 2 Benton Population and Economy

In developing a comprehensive plan for Benton's future, population and economic data is essential. This section provides population forecasts based on past trends and Benton's anticipated share of Saline County's and the metropolitan area's growth over the next 23 years. The characteristics of Benton's existing population and economy are discussed, as are the economic risks and opportunities looking into the future.

### 2.1 Population Trends

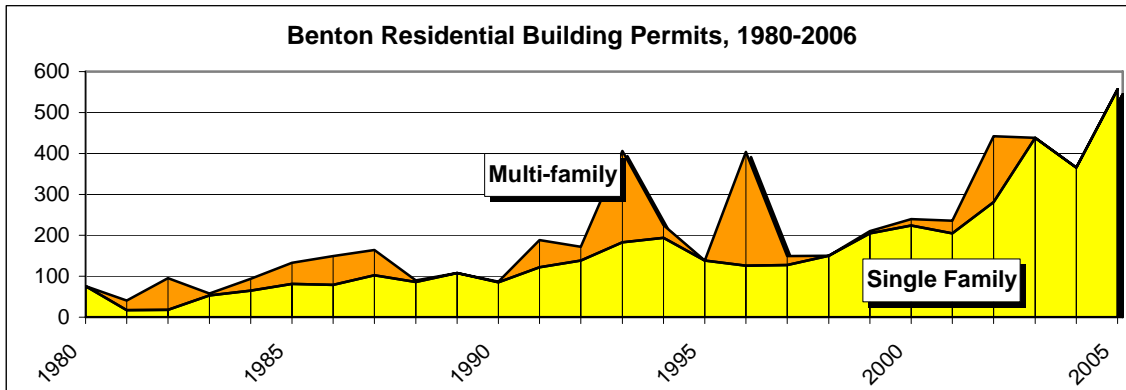
As Chart 1 shows, Benton's population grew during each decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, from a town of just over 1,000 residents in 1900 to a city of nearly 27,000 by the year 2005. Saline County's population growth was even more consistent than Benton's, except during the 1930s when the county actually lost population due to out-migration. Benton's role within the county changed during the century. Benton residents were under eight percent of the county total in 1900. Benton's population growth stagnated during the Great Depression and then accelerated during the 1940's, fueled by a boom in bauxite mining during World War II, and afterwards, due to the region's emergence as a bedroom community for the metropolitan area. By 1970, Benton had a population of 16,500, and accounted for over 45 percent of the county's population. Since 1970, Benton's population growth has been significantly outpaced by population growth elsewhere in Saline County. During the 1970's and 1980's, population growth accelerated in Bryant, Shannon Hills and unincorporated areas, due in part to concerns regarding public schools and crime in Pulaski County. In Benton there was little growth during the 1970s and 1980s, due to the phase-out of bauxite mining. During the 1990s, however, Benton's population grew by 20.5%, and by 2000 constituted 26.2% of county population. The October 5, 2006 special census of 27,717 confirms that Benton's population grew by 26.5% from 2000 to 2006.

Chart No. 1



Source: Decennial Census, and U.S. Census Bureau and Metroplan estimates.

Chart No. 2



Sources: City of Benton and *Metrotrends, Demographic Review and Outlook*.

Also a measure of population growth, as well as housing demand, the number of new residential units permitted began increasing after 1981, when only 41 residential units were permitted as shown in Chart 2. Although single family units have usually outpaced multi-family units, 1993 and 1996 were exceptions to this rule, when 223 and 278 multi-family units were permitted, respectively. Permitted single family units have increased significantly since 2002, with a peak of 557 units in 2006.

The foregoing discussion concerns population growth trends within Benton's city limits and does not account for growth in rural portions of Benton's existing planning area. Table 1 indicates that planning area population grew by about 9.8% during the 1990s.<sup>6</sup>

By 2000, at least 75% of this growth and 63% of the planning area population was inside Benton's city limits.

Table No. 1  
Benton Planning Area Growth, 1990-2000

| TAZ Data   | 1990   | 2000   | Change | %Change |
|------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| Population | 32,908 | 36,131 | 3,223  | 9.8%    |

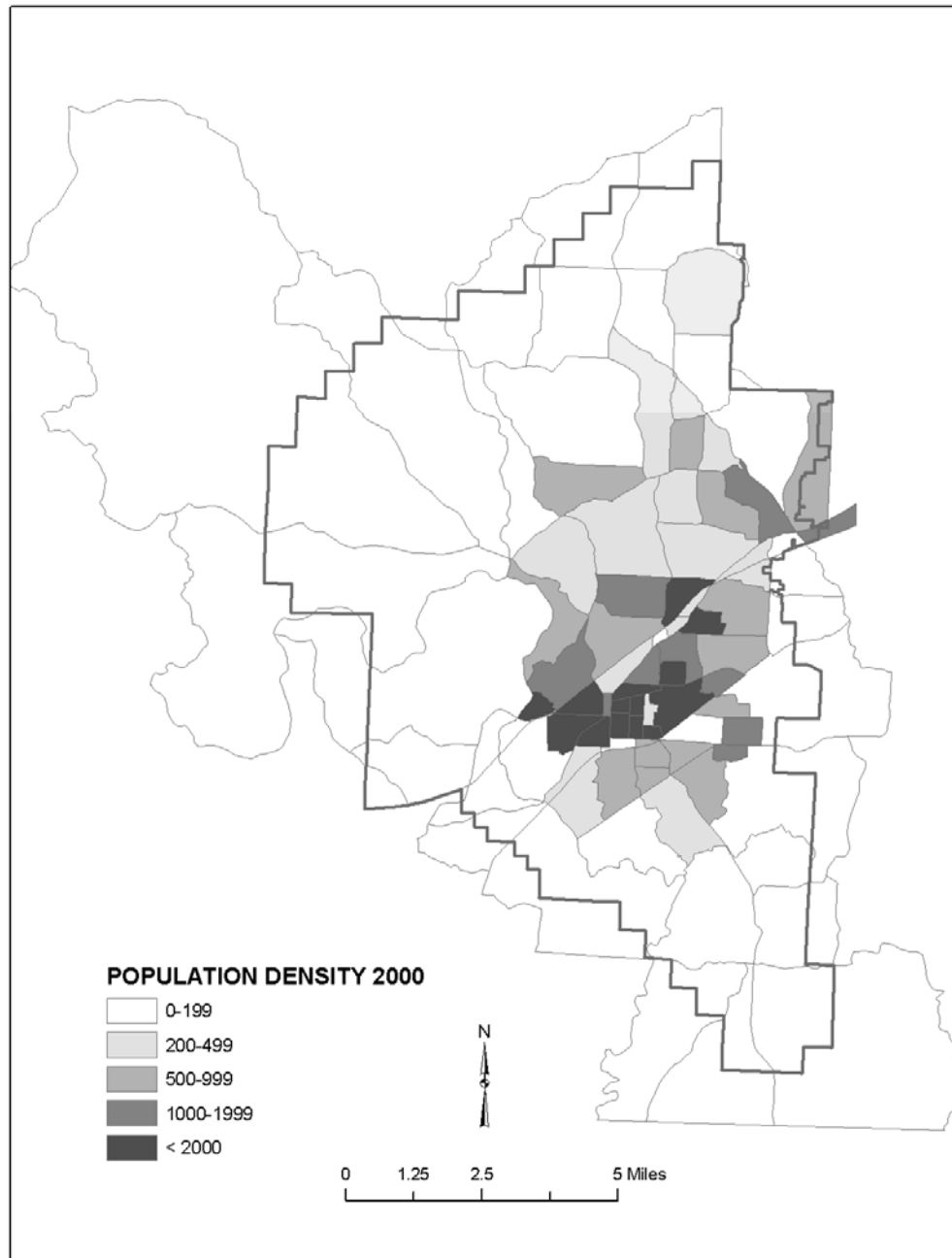
Source: Decennial Census

<sup>6</sup> The analysis uses data reported by traffic analysis zone (TAZ). However, some TAZs extend beyond the planning area boundary (refer to Map 2).

### 2.2 Population Density

Map 2 shows that population density varied substantially in the Benton Planning Area in 2000. As expected, the older neighborhoods near downtown were the most densely populated, while the less developed zones on the periphery were the least densely populated.

Map No. 2



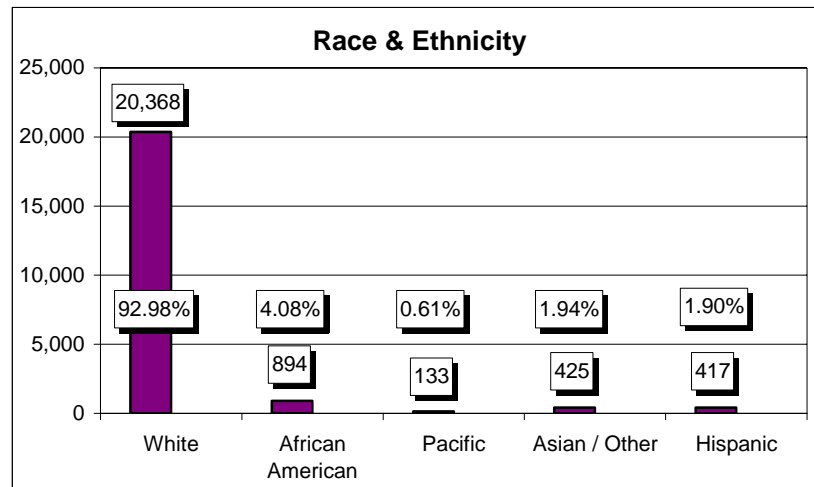
Source: 2000 Decennial Census<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Data mapped by Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ).

### 2.3 Race and Ethnicity

Benton and Saline County have a proportionately larger white population than the state or U.S. average. The exact mix in Benton for the year 2000 is shown in Chart 3. Note that the "Other" category primarily shows persons of two or more races, and represents a new classification established with Census 2000. It is also important to note that Hispanic population is a separate classification, best described as an "overlay" category, since persons of Hispanic origin can be of any race.

Chart No. 3



Source: 2000 Decennial Census

The African-American population in Benton was just 4.1% in 2000. This can be compared with 21.9% for the four-county MSA, and 31.9% in neighboring Pulaski County. During the 1990s, growth in African-American population ran at or slightly below Benton's population growth as a whole.<sup>8</sup>

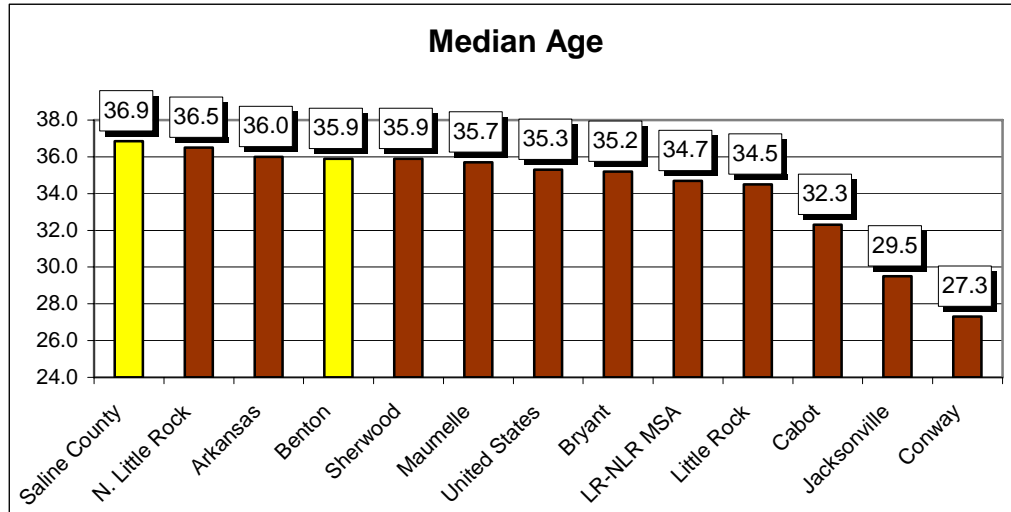
Hispanic population in Benton was less than 2% in 2000, but has grown rapidly. The number of Hispanics increased from 113 to 417 during the 1990s, a growth rate of 269%. Asian population is even smaller, but grew from 38 in 1990 to 123 in 2000, a 223% increase. If growth in these groups continues at the rate seen over the 1990-2000 period, Hispanic and Asian populations can be expected to increase substantially as a share of Benton's total population.

The majority of Benton's African-American population is concentrated in the southern part of Benton. Census tract 102.01, south of downtown, has the majority (79%) of the city's African-American population. Hispanic and Asian groups seem to be scattered somewhat evenly throughout the city, although minor concentrations can be found in and near downtown, as well as east and south of downtown.

<sup>8</sup> Racial classifications changed with the 2000 census, which for the first time had categories for multiple races. Thus, while the share of African-Americans decreased slightly in Benton from 4.4% in 1990 to 4.1 % in 2000, the proportional change may simply reflect the new classifications.

## 2.4 Demographic Profile

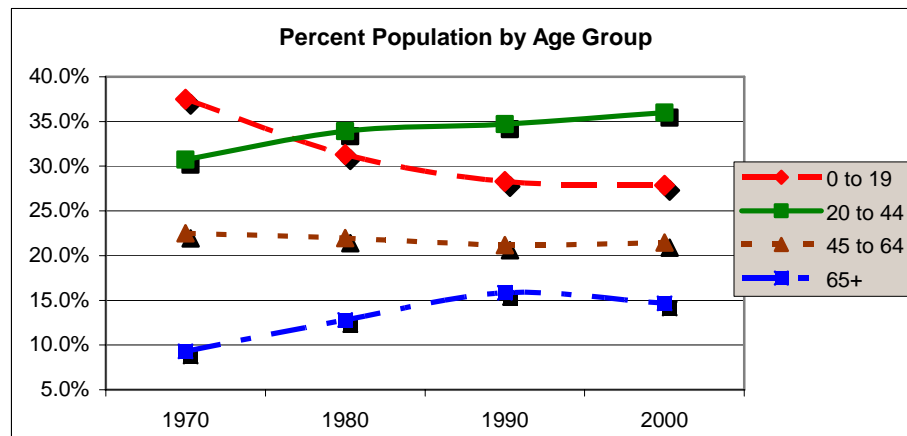
Chart No. 4



Source: 2000 Decennial Census

Chart 4 compares the median ages in Benton with median ages in other central Arkansas communities, the state and nation. Benton's population is somewhat older than most other cities in the region, and older than the national median age. Benton is tied with Sherwood for having the second-highest median age among the major cities (over 5,000 population) of the four-county central Arkansas region, and only North Little Rock has an older population. Saline County has the oldest median age of all areas charted, due to the large number of retirees and the predominantly white population in the county.

Chart No. 5



Source: 2000 Decennial Census

Chart 5 shows that Benton's population age 65+ peaked proportionally in 1990 at nearly 16%, and declined to 14.7% in 2000. At the same time, population in the primary working ages, 20 to 44 and 45 to 64, grew somewhat. This trend differs from regional and U.S. averages, where population in the 20 to 44 age groups began declining after 1990. The chart shows that the percent of young people in the population was in sharp decline between 1970 and 1990, but appears to have

stabilized during the 1990s. While Benton has an older population than average, the chart shows that Benton saw less aging of the population than average from 1990 to 2000. This probably reflects the up-tick in Benton's migration-driven population growth after 1990, particularly in adults age 20-44. In sum, migration to the city during the 1990's appears to have partly counter-balanced aging of the population.

Chart No. 6

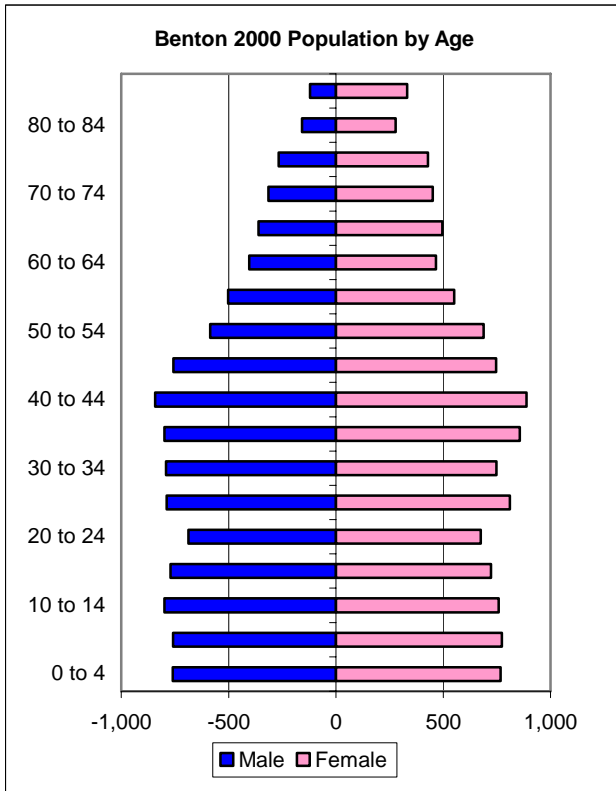
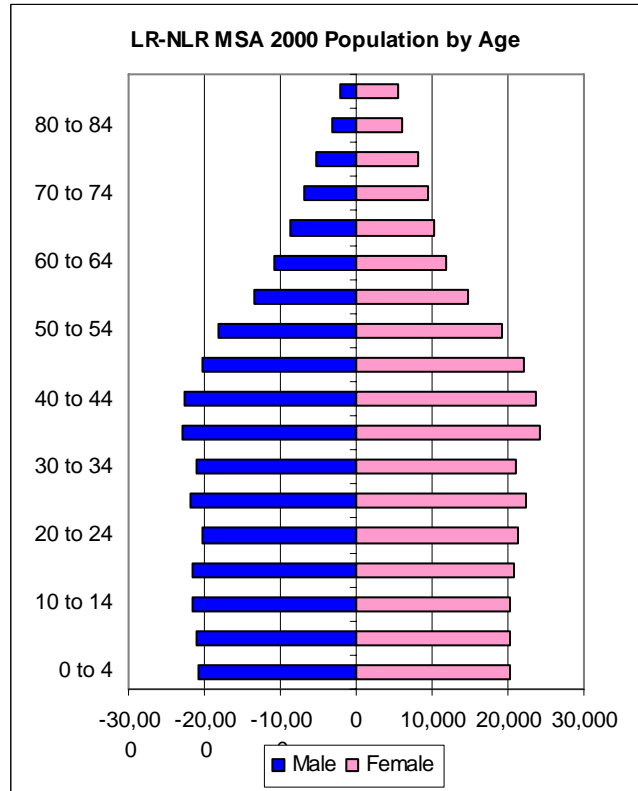


Chart No. 7



Source: 2000 Decennial Census

The two population pyramids, Charts 6 and 7, show that Benton has a higher proportion of population in age groups 55 and above than the four-county metropolitan statistical area (MSA).<sup>9</sup> Population in the youngest age groups, through age 14, is just marginally below the regional average, but in most of the groups age 15 to 54, representation is clearly below the regional average. In the 20 to 24 age cohort, Benton has only 87% of the regional average population. This suggests that many Benton residents in young adulthood move away to attend college, join the military or take jobs elsewhere.

<sup>9</sup> Following the 2000 Decennial Census, the 4-county MSA that included Faulkner, Lonoke, Pulaski and Saline counties was enlarged to 6 counties with the addition of Grant and Perry counties. Following a special census conducted in November 2005 that established that Conway had exceeded the 50,000 population threshold to be regarded as a "central city" by the Census Bureau, OMB Bulletin 07-01 was issued officially changing the MSA name to the "Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway Metropolitan Statistical Area".

## 2.5 Population Projections

According to Metroplan projections, Benton will continue to gain population through 2030. As Table 2 shows, the Benton Planning Area had a population of over 36,000 in 2000 and is projected to grow to between 59,000 and 64,000 by 2030 depending on the development scenario.<sup>10</sup> The distribution of projected population growth is shown in Maps 3 and 4. Population growth will run between 64% and 81%. Average household size is projected to decline from 2.55 to about 2.4 persons per household.

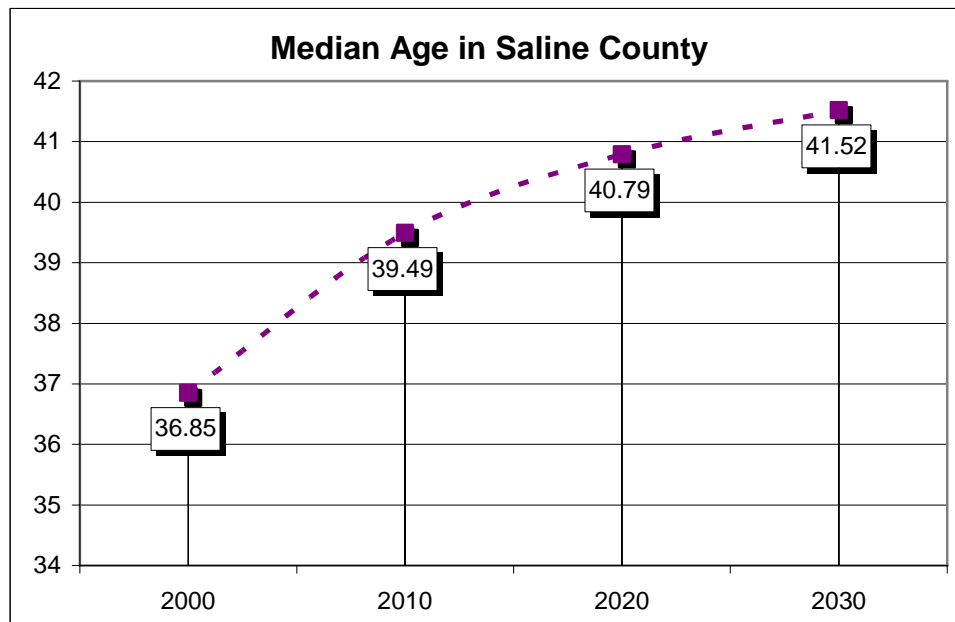
Table No. 2  
Population and Employment Projections  
Benton Planning Area

| TAZ Data           | 2000   | 2010   | 2030 (Trend) | 2030 (Vision) |
|--------------------|--------|--------|--------------|---------------|
| Population         | 36,131 | 42,769 | 58,934       | 64,021        |
| Households         | 14,002 | 17,094 | 23,946       | 26,314        |
| Group Quarters Pop | 438    | 661    | 1,100        | 771           |
| Avg Household Size | 2.55   | 2.46   | 2.42         | 2.40          |
| Total Employment   | 12,543 | 16,491 | 20,839       | 21,175        |

Sources: Decennial Census & Metroplan employment estimates for 2000, *METRO 2030* data for 2030.

The median age in Saline County is projected to increase as shown in Chart 8, reflecting growth in the older age groups.<sup>11</sup>

Chart No. 8



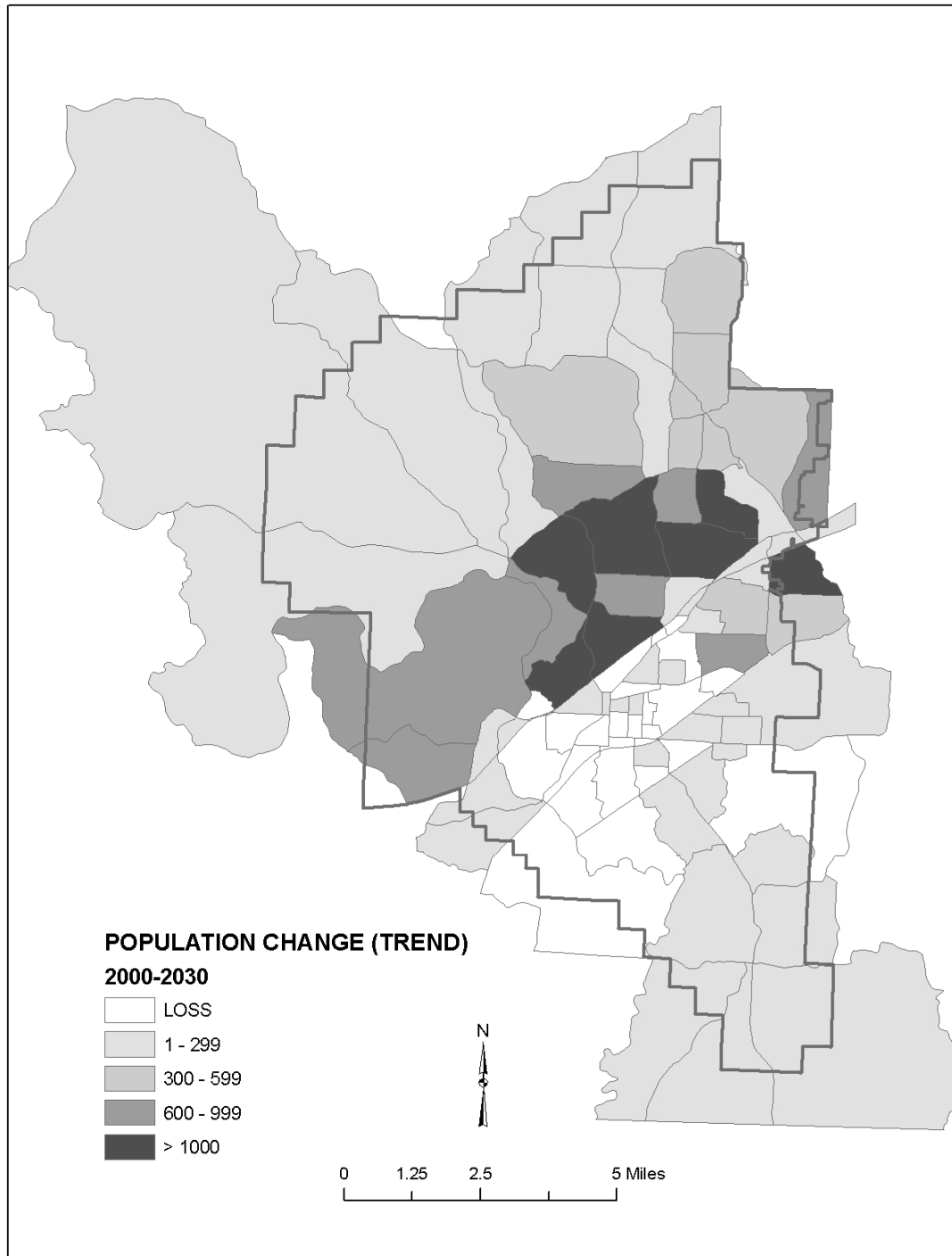
Sources: 2000 Decennial Census and Metroplan estimates

<sup>10</sup> The population figures are for an area defined by Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs) that extend beyond the official boundaries of the Benton Planning Area (refer to Maps 3 and 4). METRO 2030's preferred growth concept (Vision) assumes a modestly more compact region than current trends would yield.

<sup>11</sup> Median age is not available for the Benton Planning Area, so age data for Saline County are provided.

Map 3 shows the distribution of population growth by TAZ between 2000 and 2030 assuming a continuation of current development trends.

Map No. 3

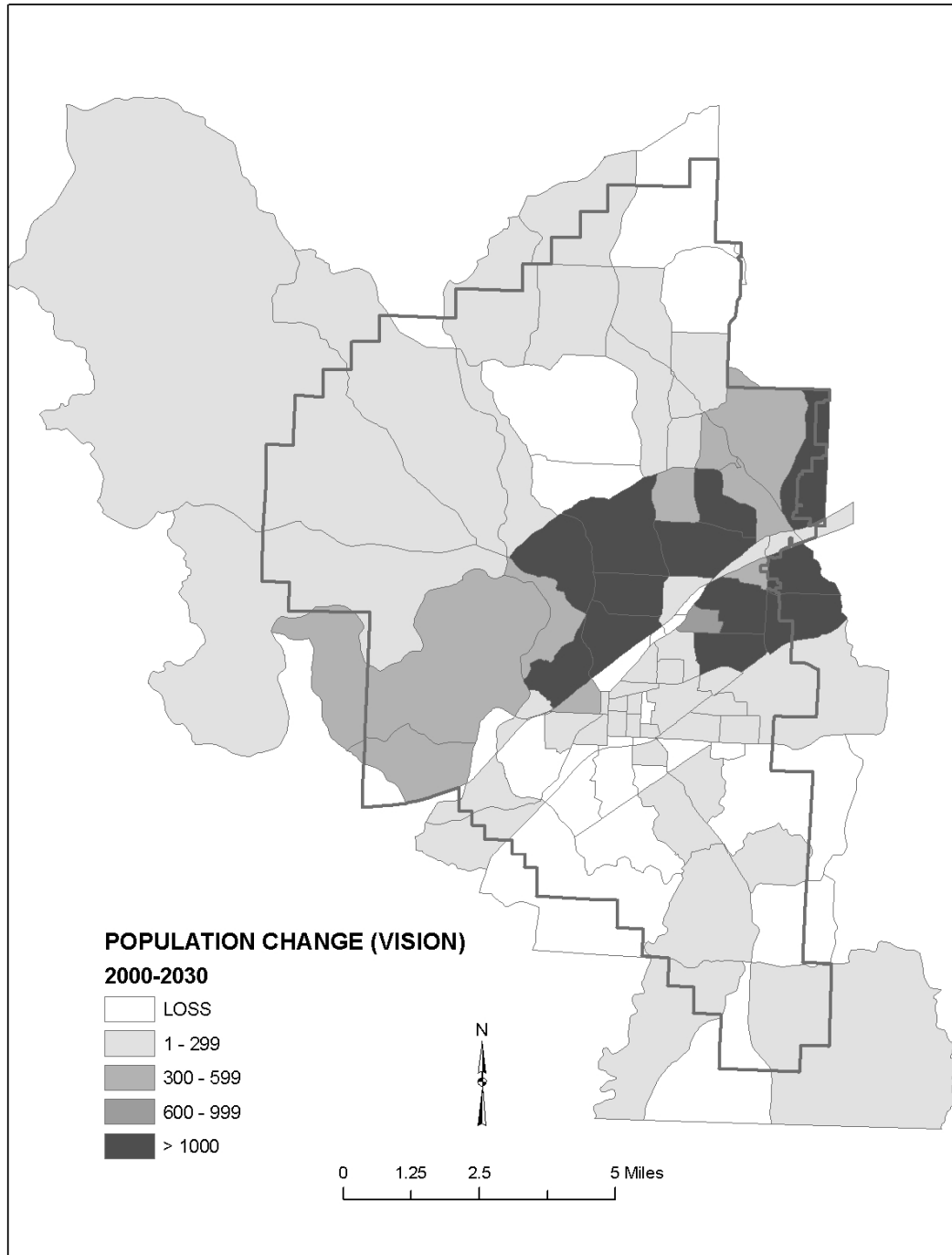


Source: *METRO 2030 "Trends" scenario planning data*<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Data mapped by Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ).

Map 4 shows the distribution of population growth between 2000 and 2030 assuming a modestly more compact region than current development trends would yield.

Map No. 4



Source: METRO 2030's preferred growth concept (B1-B2) planning data<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Data mapped by Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ).

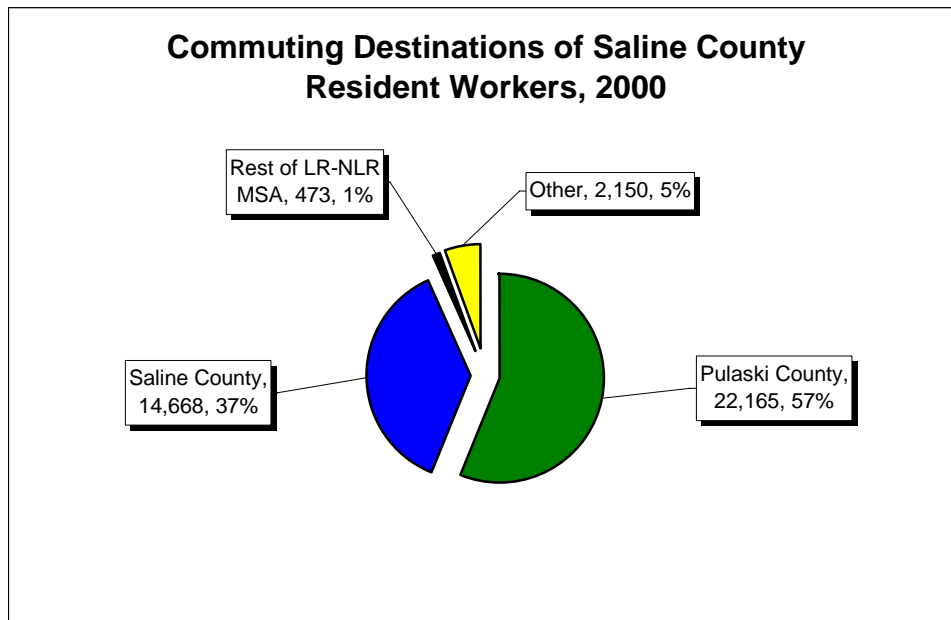
### 2.6 Implications of Population Growth

The planning challenge will be to meet the service needs of a growing population, while also striving to protect and enhance the local quality of life. With an older population on average, the needs and limitations of elderly persons are likely to become increasingly important. Continued growth of Hispanic and Asian populations may also become important, especially for public schools where English language education is the norm. Although most population growth will occur north of the freeway, the condition of the core area will matter too. If the core is vibrant with strong business and residential characteristics, the quality of life in the surrounding area will be higher as well. The choice between continuing auto-dependent development patterns and planning for modestly more compact development, as embodied by *METRO 2030's* preferred growth concept (Vision), is a local decision.<sup>14</sup>

### 2.7 Employment

Increasingly, Benton's economy has been based on workers commuting to jobs located in Pulaski County, especially Little Rock. In this respect, Chart 9 shows that Saline County is primarily a bedroom county which sends more commuters into Pulaski County than any other in the metropolitan area. Although Benton has a slight net outflow of jobs, it is also an employment center in its own right. According to 2000 Census commuting data, 51% (or 10,160) of all (19,731) jobs within Saline County were located inside the Benton City Limits. As the economic hub of Saline County, Benton draws in workers from outside Saline County as well as the surrounding area.

Chart No. 9



Source: 2000 Decennial Census

<sup>14</sup> The *METRO 2030* Vision concept was developed to enhance the quality of life by reducing over reliance on the automobile. The land use scenario would help create conditions where walking, bicycling and public transit could become viable alternatives to the auto for certain travel market segments.

As the population grows, Metroplan projects employment within the Benton Planning Area to grow from 12,543 in 2000 to between 20,839 and 21,175 in 2030 depending on the development scenario (refer to Table 3).<sup>15</sup> This represents an increase in employment of between 66% and 69% in thirty years.

Saline County has seen low rates of unemployment in recent years. In 2005, unemployment averaged 4.0 percent, compared with 4.4 percent for the four-county metropolitan area and 5.1 percent for the United States as a whole.<sup>16</sup> Separate statistics for Benton are not available.

## 2.8 Income

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Table 3 compares household and individual income statistics in 2000. Benton's median household income runs above the regional average and nearly as high as the national average, while its mean per capita income runs below both. This apparent paradox is explained by the county's income structure.

Table No. 3  
2000 Incomes Compared

| Area          | Median Household Income | Compared with U.S. | Per Capita Income | Compared with U.S. |
|---------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Benton        | \$41,503                | 98.8%              | \$19,797          | 91.7%              |
| Saline Co.    | \$42,569                | 101.4%             | \$19,214          | 89.0%              |
| LR-NLR MSA    | \$39,145                | 93.2%              | \$20,263          | 93.9%              |
| Arkansas      | \$32,182                | 76.6%              | \$16,904          | 78.3%              |
| United States | \$41,994                | 100.0%             | \$21,587          | 100.0%             |

Source: 2000 Decennial Census, SF-3.

Chart 10 shows that although the distribution of Benton's population by income group was similar to the income distribution within the four-county metropolitan statistical area, Benton had comparatively fewer households in the lowest income category (less than \$10,000) and more households in the upper-middle income categories (\$50,000- \$99,999).<sup>17</sup>

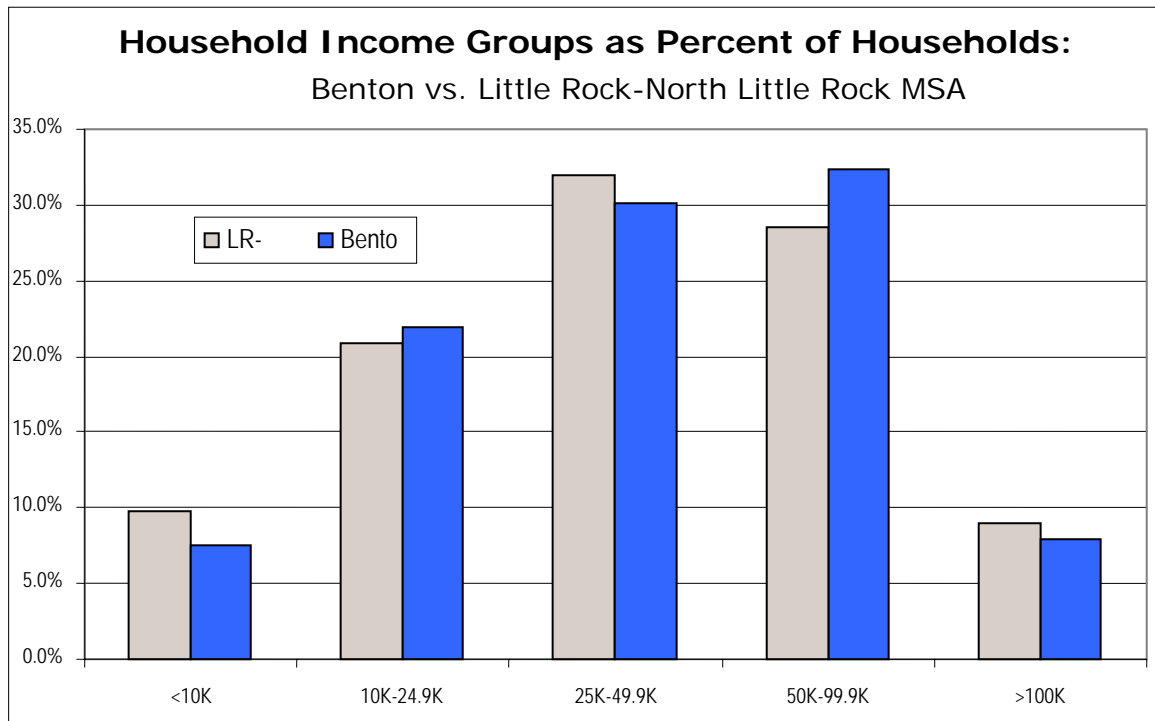
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<sup>15</sup> The employment figures are for an area defined by Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs), some of which extend beyond the boundaries of the Benton Planning Area (refer to Map 3).

<sup>16</sup> Arkansas Department of Workforce Services Revised Labor Force Statistics, accessed December 2006.

<sup>17</sup> The per capita income figures from the 2000 Census represent a mean, or an average of the total. Household income is measured as a median, or the middle value among households (the value at which half of households are poorer and half are richer). Benton's lower percentage of low-income households helps to push up its median household income.

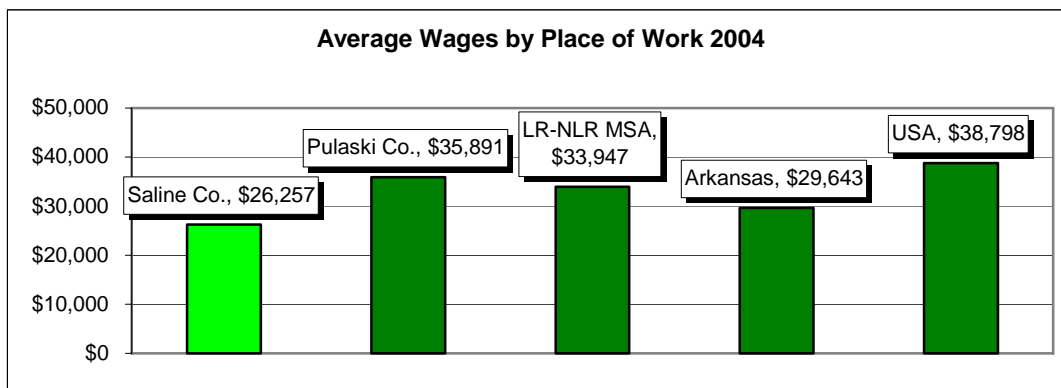
Chart No. 10



Source: 2000 Decennial Census

Where do Benton's incomes come from? Much comes from local residents who commute to jobs in Pulaski County. Chart 11 compares average wages in 2004 by place-of-work (i.e., Saline County vs. Pulaski County, metropolitan area, state and nation). As the data show, Pulaski County jobs offer average wages over \$9,000 higher than jobs in Saline County. Wages within Saline County also run below state and regional averages, and pay less than 70% the U.S. average. The sharp difference between average wages in Saline and Pulaski counties helps to explain the size of the commuting flow, and also demonstrates how Saline County residents can maintain household incomes above the regional average despite the comparatively low wages found in Saline County jobs.

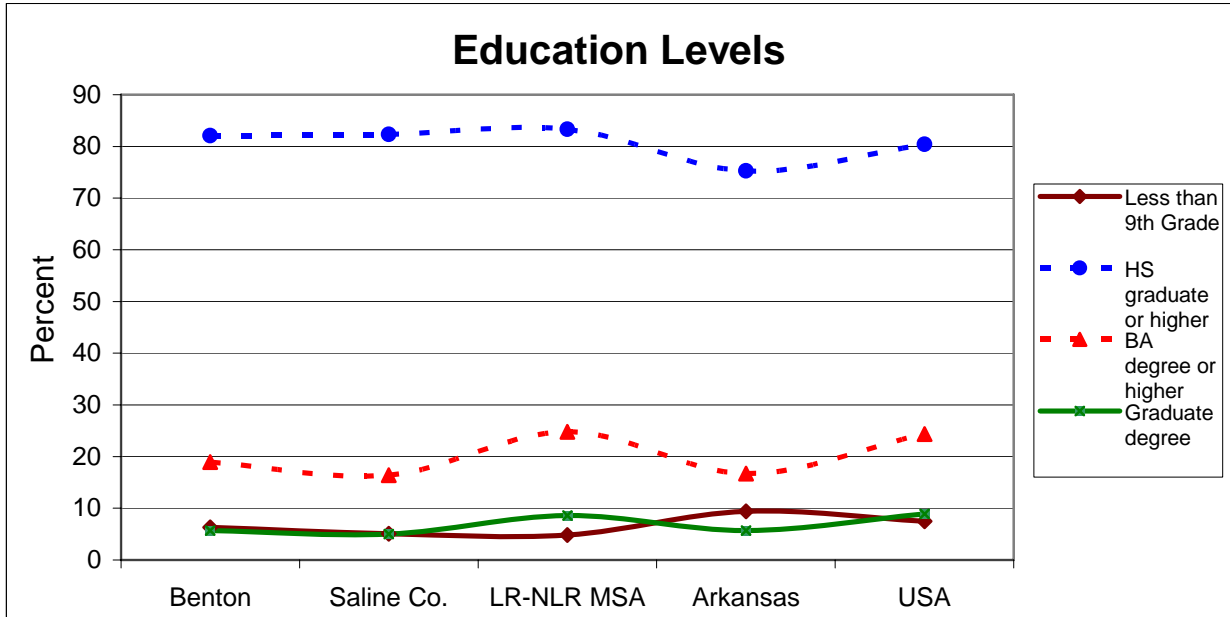
Chart No. 11



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Chart 12 and the companion table compare Benton and Saline County education levels with regional, state and U.S. averages. The data indicates that Benton resembles regional averages in the proportion of persons with high school diplomas and less than nine years of education. In BA and graduate degrees, Benton runs slightly above Saline County and state averages, but below regional and U.S. averages.

Chart No. 12



| Education Level       | Benton | Saline Co. | LR-NLR MSA | Arkansas | USA  |
|-----------------------|--------|------------|------------|----------|------|
| Less than 9th Grade   | 6.3    | 5.1        | 4.8        | 9.4      | 7.5  |
| HS graduate or higher | 82.1   | 82.3       | 83.3       | 75.3     | 80.4 |
| BA degree or higher   | 18.9   | 16.4       | 24.8       | 16.7     | 24.4 |
| Graduate degree       | 5.7    | 5          | 8.6        | 5.7      | 8.9  |

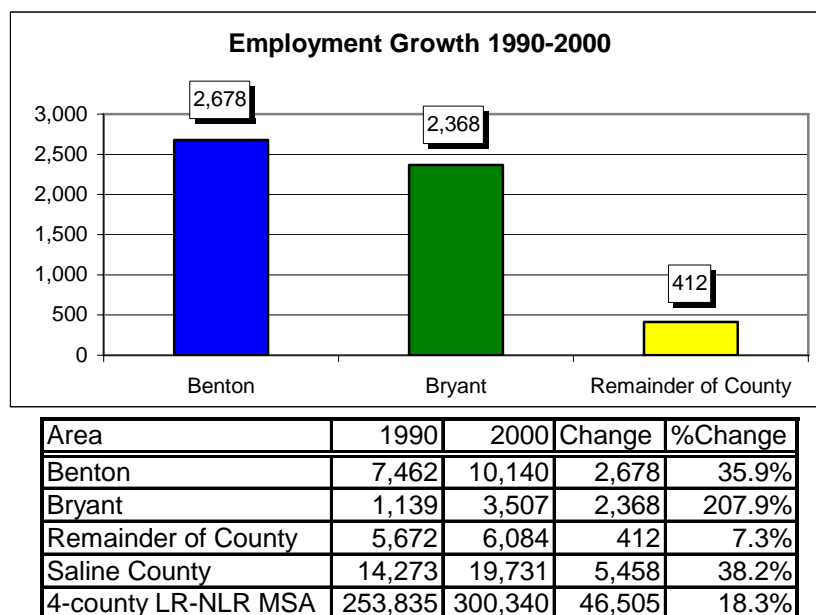
Source: 2000 Decennial Census, SF-3 (sample-based) data.

## 2.9 Economic Structure

The economy of Benton is primarily service-oriented. This means the majority of jobs in the city serve the needs of the large and growing resident population of Benton and its surrounding area. The rapid population growth of recent years has boosted the regional economy. The table below depicts the growth in jobs by place of work for Benton, Bryant, and Saline County in comparison with the Little Rock region.

As Chart 13 and the companion table show, the rate of job growth in Benton was nearly double the regional average from 1990 to 2000. Even faster job growth occurred in nearby Bryant, where the workforce more than doubled. Little job growth occurred in the remainder of county, which dropped from 40% to 31% of total county jobs during the decade.

Chart No. 13



Source: Census Transportation Planning Package, 1990 and 2000

An important measure of a local economy is the size of its export sector. Jobs in manufacturing, information and high-end services are usually oriented to export, while jobs in sectors like retail trade, health, and public administration generally serve local needs. A critical measure is the area's *location quotient*. This is a measure of the portion of local jobs in each economic sector compared with the average portion of jobs in a larger area. Table 4 compares Benton with the larger Little Rock-North Little Rock MSA (defined in 2000 as Faulkner, Lonoke, Pulaski and Saline Counties).

Table No. 4  
Benton Employment by Industry 2000 with Location Quotient Analysis

| Industry Sector           | Benton Employment | % of Total Benton Employment | LR-NLR MSA Employment | % of Total MSA Employment | Benton Location Quotient of MSA Employment |
|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Agr/Forest/Fish           | 70                | 0.7%                         | 2,630                 | 0.9%                      | 0.79                                       |
| Construction              | 705               | 6.9%                         | 21,335                | 7.1%                      | 0.98                                       |
| Manufacturing             | 1,040             | 10.2%                        | 32,730                | 10.9%                     | 0.94                                       |
| Wholesale Trade           | 230               | 2.3%                         | 11,725                | 3.9%                      | 0.58                                       |
| <b>Retail Trade</b>       | 1,885             | 18.6%                        | 36,255                | 12.1%                     | <b>1.54</b>                                |
| Transport/Utilities       | 440               | 4.3%                         | 19,865                | 6.6%                      | 0.65                                       |
| Information               | 150               | 1.5%                         | 12,970                | 4.3%                      | 0.34                                       |
| <b>Fin/Insur/Real Est</b> | 705               | 6.9%                         | 19,625                | 6.5%                      | <b>1.06</b>                                |
| Prof/Sci/Admin            | 535               | 5.3%                         | 22,370                | 7.4%                      | 0.71                                       |
| <b>Ed/Health/Soc</b>      | 2,280             | 22.4%                        | 62,630                | 20.9%                     | <b>1.08</b>                                |
| <b>Entertain/Rec</b>      | 960               | 9.4%                         | 18,560                | 6.2%                      | <b>1.53</b>                                |
| <b>Other Services</b>     | 670               | 6.6%                         | 15,930                | 5.3%                      | <b>1.24</b>                                |
| Public Admin              | 480               | 4.7%                         | 18,705                | 6.2%                      | 0.76                                       |
| Armed Forces              | 20                | 0.2%                         | 5,005                 | 1.7%                      | 0.12                                       |
| Total Employment          | 10,160            | 100.0%                       | 300,340               | 100.0%                    |  |

Source: Census Transportation Planning Package 2000

Location quotient analysis demonstrates that Benton has a smaller-than-average export sector. The city's industry mix demonstrates that the majority of economic activity is oriented to serving the needs of local residents. Any location quotient above 1.0 signifies a larger-than-average number of jobs in a given sector. Benton's highest rankings are in Retail Trade, Entertainment and Recreation, and Other Services.

Benton is a major retail center. Retailing is the city's second-largest industry sector, with 1,885 jobs (nearly 19% of all jobs). The most prominent retailers are the Wal-Mart Super Center and other retailers along Military Road, and the sizeable Landers car dealerships on I-30. Benton's retailing market area includes most of Saline County and probably extends into adjacent counties, especially Grant, Hot Spring, and Garland Counties to the south. The car dealerships also play a major role in serving the large and prosperous Pulaski County market. Benton's role in retail trade should be seen as a source of economic strength, with opportunities for the future. However, the low wages common in the retail sector and other non-exporting service industries help to explain the county's lower-than-average wage rates.

Benton also shows a slightly higher-than-average location quotient in the Finance, Insurance and Real Estate sector. Presumably the fast-paced residential housing growth in Saline County plays a role in the prominence of finance and related fields in Benton.

The largest share of Benton's total employment (22.4%) is in the health, education and social services sector. With a location quotient of 1.08, this sector ranks slightly above average in size. Given Saline County's role as a bedroom community and Benton's role as county seat, most of the activity in this sector probably serves local residents in Benton and Saline County.

Benton's construction sector is smaller than expected for a county with higher-than-average housing construction activity. The LQ of 0.98 might signify that a major share of construction in Saline County is performed by firms located nearby in Pulaski and Faulkner Counties.

Manufacturing is the third largest sector of Benton's economy, with 1,040 workers. The city's location quotient in manufacturing ranks below average for the region, at 0.94. Even this figure may overstate the importance of manufacturing in Benton, since the comparison region (LR-NLR MSA) also ranks below the national average in manufacturing. Compared with the state of Arkansas, Benton's location quotient is just 0.51 in manufacturing.

Table 5 lists the manufacturing firms in Benton. Manufacturing in Benton consists primarily of small firms, typically with fewer than 50 employees each. In 2004, only four firms were larger. The largest, CoorsTek, had 200 to 299 employees. The next three largest firms were Parker Hannifin (100 to 199 employees), Arkansas Face Veneer (50 to 99), and WLS Sawmill (50 to 99). Benton manufacturing appears to be concentrated in three main activities. The largest is machine tools and parts, with at least four firms and an estimated total of 560 workers. The second concentration was in wood products, with about 210 workers. The third largest is steel and steel products, with about 120 workers. Given the tendency of firms to cluster, it is probable that the presence of several steel and steel products firms is related to the even larger concentration in machine tools employment.

Benton has unusually low location quotients in two fairly important sectors: information (0.34) and professional, scientific, and administrative services (0.71). In a post-industrial U.S. economy, these sectors pay comparatively high wages and offer better prospects for job growth than does manufacturing. Benton's share of jobs in the Information sector is just one-third the average for the metropolitan area. True, the metropolitan area ranks moderately higher than the U.S. average in this sector. However, Benton's location quotient score in Information is only 0.69 compared with the state of Arkansas. This is notable because Arkansas ranks well below the U.S. average in this sector. Weakness in the Information sector suggests a lack of technology awareness in Benton and Saline County. Benton could be missing opportunities in one of the most promising sectors of the U.S. economy.

Table No. 5  
Benton Manufacturers 2006

| Name  | Number of Workers | Product Description                               |
|---|-------------------|---|
| Alright Printing  | A                 | Printing  |
| Amenda Candle   | A                 | Candles   |
| Arkansas Face Veneer  | C                 | Wood veneers and veneer faces                     |
| B & B Machine   | A                 | Screw machine parts, CNC turning/milling machines |
| Beco  | B                 | Steel plate and sheet metal fabrication           |
| Chair-Tech Manufacturing  | B                 | Office chairs and tables                          |
| CoorsTek  | F                 | Ceramic seal faces and wear products              |
| Grant Lariat Rope   | A                 | Nylon and polyfiber lariat ropes                  |
| Hilbilt Manufacturing   | B                 | Dump vehicle bodies and trailers                  |
| Horizon Arkansas (Benton Courier)   | B                 | Newspaper printing                                |
| Jonner Steel Southwest  | B                 | Steel service center                              |
| Newbasis  | B                 | Concrete products                                 |
| North American Marine Jet   | B                 | Machine shop, steel, aluminum fabrication         |
| Parker Hannifin   | D                 | Hydraulic cylinders                               |
| Renco   | A                 | Robotic machinery, pneumatic/electric controls    |
| Ruffin Mold & Machine   | A                 | Custom plastic injection molding                  |
| Sunrise Arkansas  | B                 | Corrugated pallets, paper void fillers            |
| WLS Sawmill   | C                 | Crates and pallets                                |
| Woodlast Products   | B                 | Hardwood and softwood face veneer                 |
| Employment Code: A=1-10, B=11-49, C=50-99, D=100-199, E=200-299, F=300-499, G=500-999 |                   |   |

Source: Central Arkansas Manufacturers Directory 2006. Arkansas Business Publishing Group

## 2.10 Risk and Opportunity

While Benton continues to see job growth, its economy lacks diversity and the income levels of local jobs rank well below the metropolitan average. At the same time, the city faces the prospect of virtually guaranteed economic growth so long as population growth continues in Saline County.

### 2.10.1 Economic Risks – Looking to the future, Benton faces a variety of economic risks as outlined below:

1. Loss of role as county retail center – While Benton remains the largest center for retailing in the region, Bryant's retail base has grown faster in recent years. From 1990 to 2000, Bryant doubled its work-based employment, and much of this was in retailing. Another challenge is the changing structure of

retailing, which is moving in new directions today. Internet sales have grown steadily in recent years. From tiny beginnings, e-commerce has grabbed over two percent of retailing in just four years (1999-2003). Meanwhile, the traditional "big-box" retailing sector, once the fastest-growing segment of the market, has slowed its growth in recent years. The emphasis in retailing seems to be shifting toward high-end specialty shops, which often serve as showrooms and "footprints" for Internet retailing. Such retailing is often located in revitalized downtowns and open-air suburban lifestyle centers.

2. Incomes could remain lower than the metropolitan average - This risk is higher if Benton remains primarily a service center economy for the rest of Saline County. To find higher incomes, local residents will have no alternative but to commute to higher-paying jobs in Pulaski County, unless similar high-paying jobs are created in Benton.
3. Lack of technology focus - Today, every industry, including diverse fields like manufacturing, retailing, public administration, and finance, depends on know-how in information technologies. Benton's substandard performance in the Information sector suggests a local lack of technological awareness. This problem could be impeding economic growth of all kinds.
4. Loss of manufacturing jobs - While the local economy has a below-average emphasis in this sector, manufacturing is still the city's third-largest source of jobs. The U.S. manufacturing sector has been declining as a source of employment since about 1980, and the downward trend is expected to continue over the long term. While Benton should do all it can to retain existing firms and possibly attract new ones, the city should avoid the all-too-common mistake of putting an excess of its development efforts in the manufacturing sector.

2.10.2 Economic Opportunities – The key to economic development is to build on existing strengths, like retailing, while also diversifying into areas of promise. The following list gives a few recommendations for strategies that might build opportunities for the future:

1. Build on Benton's existing role as a retail center - If Benton wants to continue its important role in local retailing, the city must be prepared to cater to a changing market. Increasing emphasis on technology education and awareness, outlined below, could be a key strategy to facilitating the local retail industry. Another strategy might be to identify and plan land areas to host modern "lifestyle centers," open-air malls that are becoming dominant in the retail industry. Zoning and transportation access are critical elements the city could develop that might encourage investors to take interest in Benton's promising retail market. Another retailing opportunity might lie in downtown revitalization, described below.
2. Downtown revitalization - Benton's downtown is currently endowed with a historic courthouse square and several blocks of visually attractive tree-lined streets. At present only a minor retailing and service center, downtown could become a New Urbanist district featuring housing, offices, and specialty retail. The first steps have already been taken to improve the streetscape and appearance of the commercial core. Following development of a master

plan, additional transportation, infrastructure and landscaping improvements could be undertaken throughout a defined area that would extend beyond the commercial core. Once a plan is in place, strategic public investments could be made. The city might develop amenities like a fitness center, a public events center, or other structures that could serve as catalysts to attract private investors to the district.

3. Improving technology awareness - Benton has under-performed in information technologies in recent years, but the city could reverse this trend. The goal would not be to turn Benton into an information technology center, but rather to enhance the city's competitiveness in other crucial sectors like manufacturing, retailing, and finance. Efforts could be made in local schools and the Benton campus of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to improve technology education. Workforce education might be a promising direction, since knowledge transfer is strongest when the learner can apply new skills directly to regular work tasks. The key here is to identify the technology skills that would benefit specific jobs, then tailor education and training programs to fill the need.

The continuing population growth in Saline County virtually guarantees many years of continuing economic growth for Benton. However, there is a difference between growth and development, or in simplest terms between *quantity* and *quality* of growth. If the city simply wants to continue past trends, little change in policy is needed. If, on the other hand, the city seeks economic development, defined by rising local incomes and improving quality of life, it must formulate a development strategy. The costs and effort would be greater, but payoffs would almost certainly be greater too.

## Section 3 Land Use Plan

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### 3.1 Land Use Plan Authority

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A.C.A. §14-56-414(b) states –

*The [municipal] planning commission may prepare and adopt a land use plan which may include, but shall not be limited to:*

- (A) The reservation of open spaces;*
- (B) The preservation of natural and historical features, sites and monuments;*
- (C) The existing uses to be retained without change;*
- (D) The existing uses proposed for change; and*
- (E) The areas proposed for new development.*

*...The plan may include areas proposed for redevelopment, rehabilitation, renewal, and similar programs*

### 3.2 Existing Land Use

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The central part of Benton was laid out in blocks and lots in 1836. As the city grew over the next 100 years it retained a rectangular grid street system. Within Benton's corporate limits the arrangement of land uses has developed a pattern that is highly influenced by highways and railroads.

The traditional Central Business District (CBD) was from 1836 traversed by the principal highway. Commercial businesses catering to the traveling public chose locations along the highway leading into and out of the CBD (i.e., Military Road, Main Street, River Street and later West South Street). That pattern of commercial development persists today and continues to grow along Military Road which has recently been reconnected to State Highway 5 (North). However, since the U.S. Highway 67/70 route was moved in the early 1940s, commercial development has gradually drifted away from the route through downtown to sites near U.S. 67/70 which later became the northern frontage road of Interstate 30 (I-30). The result has been a decrease in retail business activity in downtown Benton, although the CBD has retained its importance as a center of government and professional service employment. During recent years public improvements in the CBD like the Saline County Courthouse rehabilitation and streetscape improvements have made downtown Benton more appealing and may help to revitalize business activity in the area.

The industrial areas of Benton have traditionally located south of the CBD where railroad access has long been provided. Industrial uses extend from the railroad west and then north to either side of the old Saline County Airport, where ready access to I-30 is available.

In general, each quadrant of the city, with the CBD at the center, developed residential neighborhoods that contain the complementary parks, schools, churches and fire stations. The most common type of housing, historically, has been detached single-family dwellings. Complexes of apartments are a more recent addition to the housing stock. However, no large concentrations of rental housing currently exist anywhere within the Benton city limits. Instead, small and medium sized apartment

complexes and trailer parks have been developed in a widely dispersed pattern. Older residential neighborhoods served by the grid street system are more densely populated than most of the newer suburban style subdivisions which have been built north of I-30 and on the east side of town. While today the city is racially integrated, the majority of the African-Americans still live in a single neighborhood located south the railroad. In some areas outside the city limits a significant amount of residential development has taken place on large lots served by individual septic systems (refer to Section 3.3).

Public and semi-public land uses are distributed around the city mostly in the older neighborhoods and/or near I-30. Undeveloped vacant land, timberland and various agricultural uses are located in the Saline River flood plain, on the southeast side of town in the vicinity of State Highway 35 (South), on the south and west sides of the Saline River, and in scattered parcels both inside and outside the city limits.

The generalized locations of existing land uses within the Benton Planning Area are shown in Map 5. These uses are defined as follows.

- Commercial – Land used for retail or wholesale trade, professional services, commercial recreation, and private office buildings.
- Industrial – That portion of the city with designated land use characterized by production, manufacturing, distribution, or fabrication activities. Railroad right-of-way is included because of the fundamental tie with industry.
- Residential – Land that has been developed or subdivided in order to accommodate families or individuals with housing structures whether built or vacant at this time (Lot size less than 5 acres).
- Public/Semi-public – Land owned by a public/government agency or otherwise offered for appropriate public activity; including schools, streets, parks, and uses of a public nature such as clubs, hospitals, churches, and cemeteries.
- Vacant – Land that is not given over to any urban use even though it may be potentially available for development. Agricultural land in the city is considered vacant land, as are open bodies of water and undeveloped flood plains.

### 3.3 Development Constraints

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Land development within the planning area, both public and private, may be constrained by a variety of factors, including but not limited to the following:

#### 3.3.1 Population demographics and economic growth – (refer to Section 2)

#### 3.3.2 Development regulations, policies and administration –

- Adopted city and county plans
- Building and use codes, and associated permit requirements and fees
- Capital improvement plans and any associated fees or taxes
- Control of access and building setback regulations
- Development impact and utility connection fees
- Endangered species\* and wetlands preservation regulations

- Environmental impact and air quality control regulations<sup>18</sup>
- Federal flood insurance and floodplain<sup>19</sup> management program
- Local historic district regulations
- Lot size and County Sanitarian approval of septic sewage systems
- Land development and subdivision regulations
- Storm water discharge regulations
- Wastewater discharge regulations
- Zoning regulations or the lack of zoning regulations

### 3.3.3 Environmentally sensitive areas –

- Archeological and historical sites\*
- Cemeteries\*
- Flood plains\* and floodways
- Lakes and streams\*, including Extraordinary Resource Waters<sup>20</sup>
- Nature preserves\*
- Parks\*
- Protected forestland and farmland
- Soil types<sup>21</sup>
- Steep slopes\*
- Un-reclaimed pit mines\*

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<sup>18</sup> The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires federal agencies and those receiving federal financial assistance to adequately quantify, consider and document the environmental consequences of proposed actions that may significantly affect the environment. In accordance with the federal Clean Air Act, the Benton Planning Area could be included in a federally designated “non-attainment area” if the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for ozone and/or fine particulate matter are exceeded based on air quality monitoring in Pulaski County. Potential adverse consequences of NAAQS non-attainment include “new source review” requirements for any new or expanded major point source of NOx.

<sup>19</sup> A regulatory floodway is the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height.

<sup>20</sup> ERW designation applies to the entire Saline River including the North, Alum, Middle and South Forks. ADEQ regulations provide that – *No significant physical alterations of in-stream habitat are allowed, including channelization of a significant portion of the stream bed or construction of a major impoundment. No commercial gravel mining is allowed below the ordinary high water mark. All point-source (pipe) discharges must meet “advanced treatment” technology... The highest level of pollution prevention is required for new road and bridge construction, major pipeline construction, and solid waste disposal sites. Streams and watersheds receive higher priority to receive technical and financial assistance for voluntary watershed and water protection projects.*

<sup>21</sup> Soil Survey of Saline County, Arkansas, USDA, Soil Conservation Service, April 1979, and online at [www.cast.uark.edu/cast/geostar](http://www.cast.uark.edu/cast/geostar).

- Water supply sources
- Wetlands
- Wildlife habitat of sensitive species, including “sensitive streams”\*

3.3.4 Existing development patterns –

- Condition, use, and value of existing real property
- Development density and size of residential lots
- Form and appearance of the built environment
- Location, quantity and ownership of undeveloped parcels
- Location of existing and planned public use facilities (refer to Section 4)
- Location of public easements and rights of way
- Neighborhood characteristics

3.3.5 Proximity to incompatible land use(s) –

- Airfields, railroads\*, freeways\*, truck routes, freight terminals, some industrial facilities and other land uses that can generate excessive noise
- Land uses that generate a large amount of traffic
- Facilities that store, handle and/or process hazardous materials
- Land uses that produce noxious fumes, smoke and/or other pollutants, including wastewater treatment facilities\* and solid waste landfills
- Large apartment complexes, trailer parks, other renter occupied dwellings
- Unightly land uses and/or poorly maintained buildings and structures

3.3.6 Inadequate community facilities or services<sup>22</sup> –

- Availability and/or cost of broadband Internet service
- Availability and/or cost of digital television service
- Availability and/or cost of natural gas service
- Availability and/or cost of sanitary sewer service<sup>23</sup>\*
- Availability and/or cost of solid waste collection service
- Availability and/or quality of access for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Availability and/or quality of higher education and continuing education
- Availability and/or quality of road access and roadway network
- Availability, cost and/or quality of potable water supply
- Availability, capacity, condition and cost of public transportation service(s)

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<sup>22</sup> Refer to Section 4, Community Facilities Plan.

<sup>23</sup> Wastewater collection is a controlling factor with respect to lot size and development density. In this regard the Benton Public Utility Commission has established a boundary for the provision of municipal wastewater collection facilities as shown in Map 6.

- Proximity to medical emergency facilities, hospitals and outpatient clinics
- Quality of fire and police protection, and other emergency services
- Quality of municipal or county services and/or associated fees and taxes
- Quality of public schools, distance to public schools and/or associated property tax burden

Map 6 identifies some of the foregoing constraints on development in the Benton Planning Area (marked with \*) that were identified and considered during the process of updating the comprehensive development plan.

### 3.4 Future Land Use

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The Future Land Use map (refer to Map 7) was developed through the process described in Section 1, and indicates where the following land use categories should be located. The map generalizes the location of planned land uses and is intended as a guide to the development and application of implementing regulations, which must be more detailed and precise than the land use plan.

3.4.1 Open Space/Public – This category includes land reserved as open space or for public use and includes nearly all areas within 100 year flood plains, riparian buffers along the Saline River and other “sensitive streams”, nature preserves, and existing and planned public use facilities consistent with the Community Facilities Plan (refer to Section 4). Agricultural uses are generally appropriate in flood plains, provided that habitat of sensitive species are not adversely affected (refer to Section 3.3.3). While some public use facilities may be located in flood plains (e.g., trails, soccer fields, etc.), permanent obstructions that could catch debris and/or impede water flow should not be built in floodways except for properly engineered bridge supports and other necessary structures.

3.4.2 Residential – Two residential area types based on density are included in the Future Land Use Map (Map 7) and summarized below. Three other residential types are also identified below, but are not included in the Future Land Use Map.

3.4.2.1 Urban Density includes both older and newer residential neighborhoods mostly composed of detached single family dwellings, where the provision of municipal wastewater collection allows the average residential lot to be less than one-half acre per housing unit.

3.4.2.2 Undefined Density includes rural and suburban areas where municipal wastewater collection is not available or planned by the Benton Public Utilities Commission, and hence where rural and large lot development is prevalent (i.e., areas where mean residential density is one-half acre per housing unit or greater, except where higher residential densities are facilitated by the private provision of communal wastewater services).

3.4.2.3 Multi-family includes apartments, condominiums, and duplexes built in accordance with the zoning regulations and map, and where municipal wastewater service and fire protection were available. Multi-family areas are not shown on the Future Land Use Map (Map 7), because this land use plan seeks a dispersed pattern of rental housing (refer to Section 1.9.2 - Objective

- 4.14). All new multi-family developments shall be permitted as planned unit developments subject to the PUD regulations (refer to Section 3.4.6).
- 3.4.2.4 Group Housing or group quarters is excluded from the Future Land Use Map (Map 7) and could include a variety of residential uses such as bed and breakfasts, boarding houses, residence hotels, group homes, retirement homes, assisted living centers, nursing homes, correctional facilities, etc. Group housing may be allowed where appropriate, in accordance with the zoning regulations and map or alternatively may be permitted as planned unit developments subject to the PUD regulations (refer to Section 3.4.6).
- 3.4.2.5 Manufactured Housing – The Future Land Use Map (Map 7) does not show where factory built housing should or should not be allowed. However, mobile home parks or trailer parks with dwelling units that do not meet current building codes shall not be developed or expanded (in accordance with Section 1.9.2 Objectives 4.1, 4.8, 4.13 and 4.14). Other types of manufactured housing may be allowed where appropriate, in accordance with the zoning regulations and map.
- 3.4.3 Multiple-Use/Central Business District – Selected urban neighborhoods in and near downtown Benton are included in a multiple-use district, where both residential and appropriate commercial uses shall be allowed. New residential and commercial uses in the multiple-use district shall be as defined by ordinance.
- 3.4.3.1 A Local Historic District for downtown Benton is recommended. Development of a local historic district includes the appointment of a Historic District Commission, an inventory of historic structures, selection of historic district boundaries, and adoption of a local historic district ordinance. Local historic districts may be established consistent with requirements for inclusion of structures and districts in the National Registry of Historic Places.
- 3.4.4 Commercial – Four types of commercial areas are included in this category and shall be included in the zoning ordinance and map.<sup>24</sup>
- 3.4.4.1 Commercial Nodes include mostly retail land uses located at key intersections or adjacent to arterial roadways. There are three types of commercial nodes differentiated mainly by their scale and market area:
- 3.4.4.1.1 Convenience Shopping – This is the smallest commercial node and is typified by gas station/convenience stores and fast food restaurants.
- 3.4.4.1.2 Neighborhood Shopping – This intermediate sized commercial node is typified by the neighborhood shopping center anchored by a grocery store/supermarket.
- 3.4.4.1.3 Community/Regional Shopping – This is the largest commercial node and is typified by enclosed and open air shopping malls and big box retailing serving the entire community and beyond.

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<sup>24</sup> The land use map does not identify the location of each commercial category and type.

- 3.4.4.2 Commercial Service includes a variety of commercial uses servicing equipment, materials and products. Commercial service uses are best located near light industrial areas.
- 3.4.4.3 Corridor Commercial includes a variety of commercial uses designed primarily for automobile access along specified arterial roadways. Corridor commercial may include “open display” uses (e.g., auto dealerships).
- 3.4.4.4 Office/Commercial includes a mix of quiet low-intensity office and other commercial uses that can function as a buffer between residential neighborhoods and higher intensity commercial areas.
- 3.4.5 Industrial – Two types of industrial areas are included in this category and shall be included in the zoning ordinance and map.
  - 3.4.5.1 Light Industrial includes less intensive industries that are clean, quiet, safe and compatible with nearby commercial, residential or agricultural areas.
  - 3.4.5.2 Heavy Industrial includes more intensive industries usually involved in fabrication or extraction that should be separated from commercial, residential or agricultural areas due to noise, dirt, odors and/or safety issues.
- 3.4.6 Planned Unit Developments may be created wherever they are appropriate within the city limits in conformance with a PUD Overlay District ordinance.
- 3.4.7 Traditional Neighborhood Development Districts may be created for selected areas that are proposed for development or redevelopment within the city limits in conformance with a TND Overlay District ordinance.

### 3.5 Land Use Plan Implementation

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The Benton Land Use Plan shall be implemented in conformance with Arkansas’ municipal planning statutes which states –

- (a) (1) *Following adoption and filing of the land use plan, the [planning] commission may prepare for submission to the legislative body a recommended zoning ordinance for the entire area of the municipality.*
- (2) *The ordinance shall consist of both a map and a text.*
- (3) (A) *The ordinance may regulate the location, height, bulk, number of stories, and size of buildings; open space; lot coverage; density and distribution of population; and the uses of land, buildings and structures.*
- (B) *The ordinance may require off-street parking and loading.*
- (C) *The ordinance may provide for districts, of compatible uses, for large scale unified development, for elimination of uses not in conformance with provisions of the ordinance, and for such other matters as are necessary to the health, safety, and general welfare of the municipality.*
- (D) *The ordinance shall include provisions for administration and enforcement.*

- (E) (i) *The ordinance shall designate districts or zones of such shape, or characteristics as deemed advisable.*
- (ii) *The regulations imposed within each district or zone shall be uniform throughout the district or zone.*
- (b) (1) *The ordinance shall provide for a board of zoning adjustment...*
- (c) *The ordinance shall be observed through denial of the issuance of building permits and use permits.<sup>25</sup>*

Other municipal ordinances and regulations may also be used to implement the land use plan in accordance with Arkansas' municipal planning statutes –

*Following the adoption and filing of any plan, the planning commission may transmit to the legislative body, for enactment, recommended ordinances and regulations which will carry out or protect the various elements of the plan.<sup>26</sup>*

In portions of the planning area outside the Benton City Limits, the land use plan may be implemented, in part, through the administration of municipal regulations controlling the development of land (e.g., subdivision regulations), and through planning coordination with Saline County, which has the statutory authority to enact a zoning ordinance for all or part of the unincorporated area of the county, as provided in Arkansas' county planning statutes –

*...The determination of zones shall be consistent with any officially adopted plans for the area to be zoned. In the development of zoning districts and their boundaries, due consideration shall be given [by the county planning board] to the adopted plans of municipal planning commissions for extraterritorial planning areas. ...The zoning ordinance shall be observed through denial of the issuance of building permits and use permits.<sup>27</sup>*

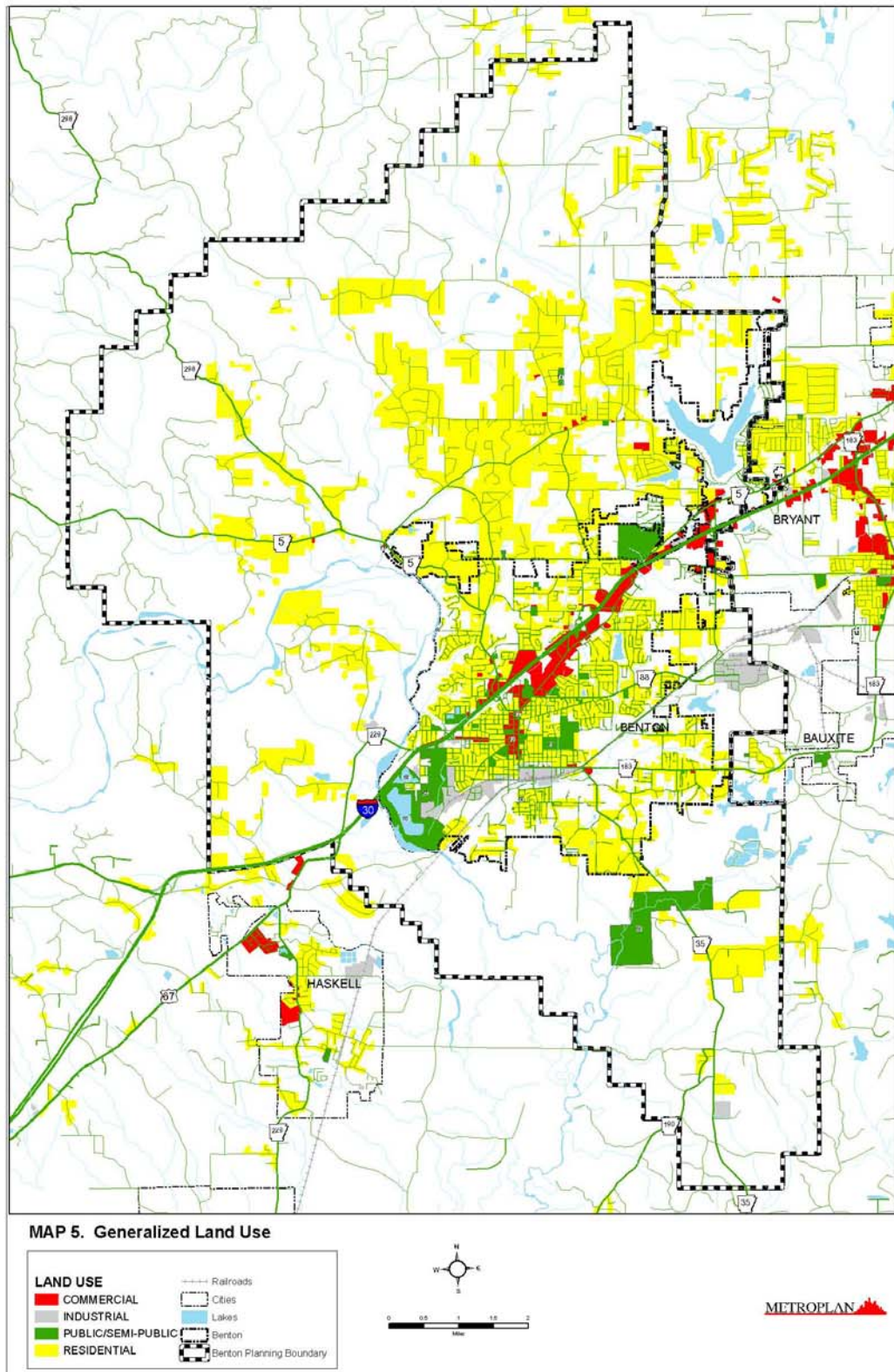
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<sup>25</sup> A.C.A. §14-56-416.

<sup>26</sup> A.C.A. §14-56-415.

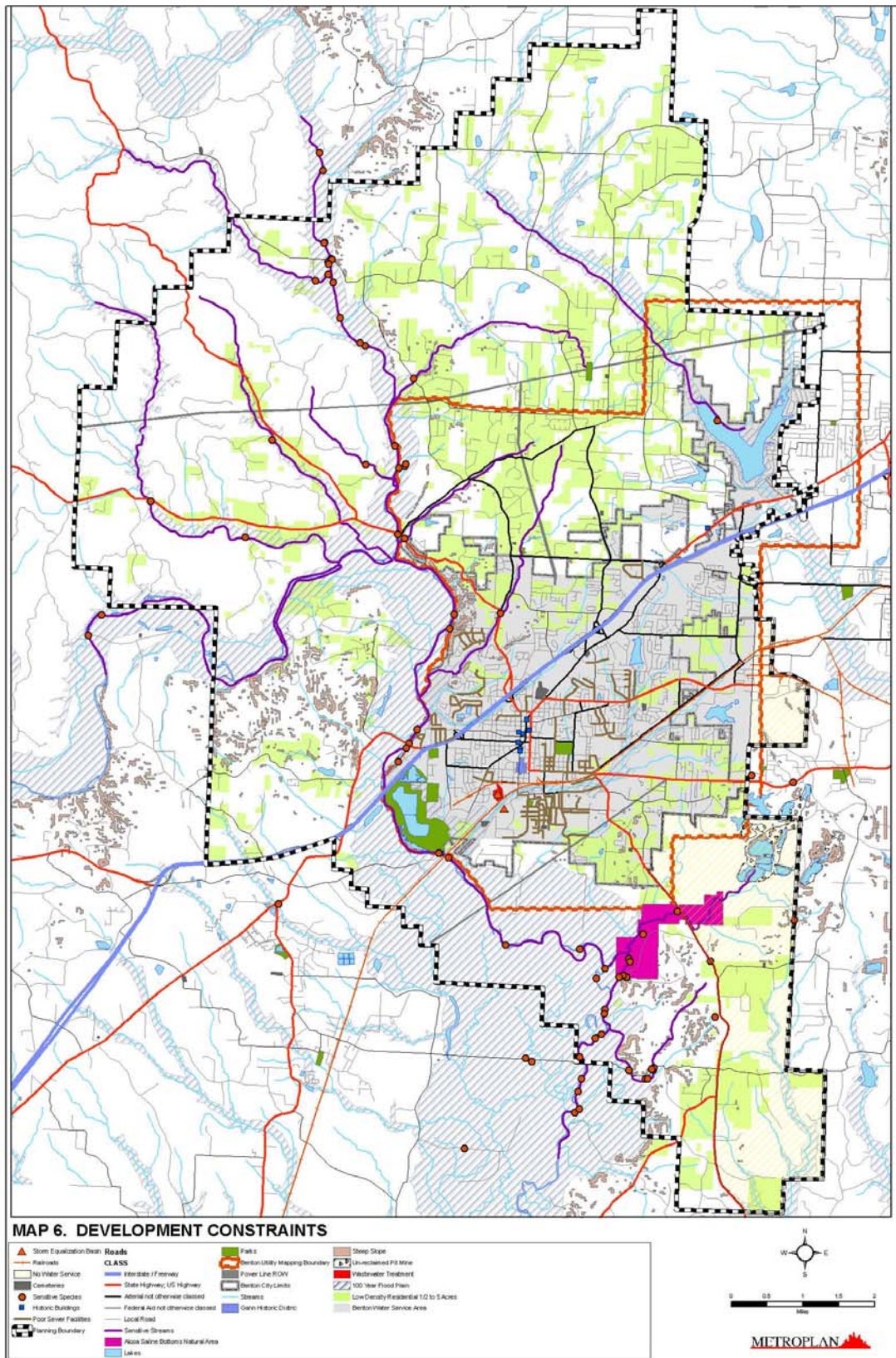
<sup>27</sup> A.C.A. §14-17-209.

Existing Land Use

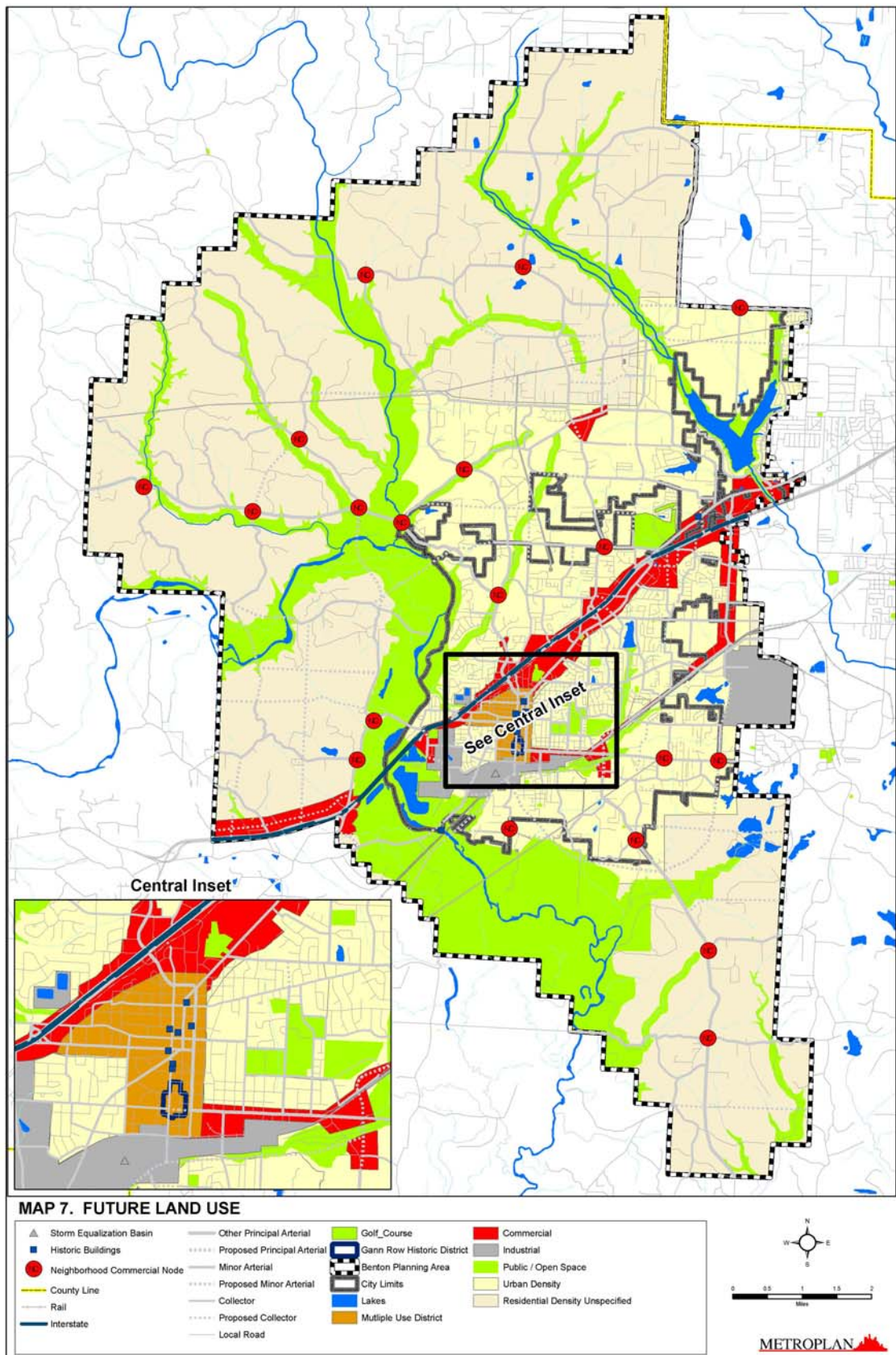




Development Constraints









## Section 4 Community Facilities Plan

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### 4.1 Community Facilities Plan Authority

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A.C.A. §14-56-414(c) states –

- (1) *The [municipal] planning commission may prepare and adopt a community facilities plan indicating the general location and extent of the service areas of, and the future requirements of:*
  - (A) *Community facilities such as schools, playgrounds, recreational areas, hospitals, special education facilities, and cultural facilities;*
  - (B) *Government buildings and areas;*
  - (C) *Public and private utility terminals and lines; and*
  - (D) *Transportation terminals and lines.*
- (2) *The plan may indicate areas to be reserved for future public acquisition.*

### 4.2 Jurisdictional and Service Area Authorities

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The provision of public services and facilities can be carried out through general purpose local government (i.e., cities and counties), special purpose service districts, public utilities whether publicly or privately owned, and private non-profit agencies. Most if not all areas are served by a variety of overlapping jurisdictions and service areas. School districts, counties, and improvement districts for fire, water, sewer and streets, all have boundaries that, in addition to municipal boundaries and public utility service areas, can affect how and where people live and their quality of life.

4.2.1 Federal and State Owned Facilities – Both federal and state owned facilities are located in Benton. Federal facilities include the United States Post Office and the Arkansas Army National Guard Training Center (Benton Armory). State owned facilities include the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, Saline County Health Unit and District Court of Saline County, all located on Edison Avenue. The State also owns the right-of-way, roadways, bridges, traffic signals and other facilities along the numbered routes of the state highway system, including facilities in the right of way of Interstate and U.S. highway routes (refer to Section 5, Benton Master Street Plan).

4.2.2 County Facilities and Services – Although counties are units of local government, they exist primarily as administrative subdivisions of the state for the purpose of administering state policy decided by the general assembly. The traditional county functions include: the administration of elections; law enforcement; maintenance of county jail and juvenile court; judicial administration; poor relief, and aid to the blind and those with other infirmities; public health services; and the recording of deeds, marriage licenses, certain vital statistics and other records. In addition to the county functions required by state law... *A county government, acting through the quorum court, may provide through ordinance for the establishment of any service or performance of any*

*function not expressly prohibited by the Arkansas Constitution or by law.*<sup>28</sup> The Saline County Courthouse (including the Sheriff Department and Judicial Circuit Court), the Saline County Complex, County Prosecutor, Office of Emergency Services, and various other county offices are located in downtown Benton. The new Saline County Jail is located south of downtown. The County Road Department is based near I-30 and the old Saline County Airport. Independent boards oversee the Saline County Library System and the Saline County Regional Solid Waste Management District.

**4.2.3 Municipal Facilities and Services** – Within the Benton City Limits, the City currently provides fire protection, police protection, water service, wastewater collection and treatment, drainage facilities, electricity service, public parks and recreation facilities, street maintenance, traffic control, and various other services. The bulk of City owned real property is in the form of streets and associated right-of-way, and most other city-owned facilities are located south of I-30. For example, three of the four fire stations are south of I-30; the Benton Municipal Complex is on the eastern edge of downtown; further east is Tyndall Park; north of downtown and Tyndall Park are three water towers; located south of downtown near the railroad are the street department, animal control and wastewater treatment plant; and located in the vicinity of I-30, near the south end of the old county airport are the electric department, Bernard Holland Park, Sunset Park and the Chenault Reservoir. Located on the north side of I-30 is a weir, behind which the City pumps water from the Saline River, the water treatment plant, three water towers, Lyle Park, and one fire station.

As the City annexes and expands its corporate boundary, it is obliged under Arkansas Statute to provide the newly annexed inhabitants the same “rights and privileges” enjoyed by other city inhabitants. However, there is no statutory requirement stipulating how soon municipal services must be provided. Although state laws allow city-owned utilities to serve users in unincorporated areas and neighboring municipalities up to five miles beyond the city limits, Benton has a policy of not providing city-owned utilities outside its corporate boundary, unless a pre-annexation agreement has been approved by the City Council.

**4.2.4 Special Districts** – The growing demand for services, which are not provided in a given locality by general purpose local governments, has led to the creation of numerous special purpose districts and other public authorities. For the most part, these districts and authorities are single-purpose in character as distinguished from multi-functional units of local government such as cities and counties. Most special-purpose districts and authorities are administrative rather than legislative in character, acting by resolution rather than ordinance. Among the special districts and authorities serving the Benton Planning Area are seven fire protection districts (not counting the four municipal fire districts which may also serve rural areas), three water service districts (not counting Benton), and the Benton Housing Authority.

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<sup>28</sup> A.C.A. §14-14-802(b)(1).

4.2.4.1 Improvement Districts – Special assessments are a form of development-related financing levied on specific property owners for increased property values generated by a public improvement. Public improvements offering specific benefits to property owners in the district are usually financed with bonds backed by special property tax assessments on those properties. In Arkansas, improvement districts are created by city or county ordinance, and may be multipurpose or for a single purpose. Although state statutes provide for the establishment of various types of improvement districts, property owners' improvement districts are the most common type of district in the Benton Planning Area. Property owners and developers often rely on improvement districts to finance essential public improvements associated with a new subdivision development. Some property owner improvement districts created by Saline County may also secure pre-annexation agreements in order to connect to a municipal water or wastewater system. Table 6 provides information about the active improvement districts in the Benton Planning Area (not including water and fire districts), and Map 8 shows where these districts are located.

4.2.4.2 School Districts – In a sense, the public school district falls under the classification of single-purpose special districts. However, in Arkansas the school district differs from most other special districts in that it serves as the basic unit of the state for providing financial support and administrative supervision of the K-12 elementary and secondary schools. The autonomous school district is organized outside of the structure of the units of general-purpose government, and city and county governments are prohibited from exercising authority in the affairs of public school districts. Benton's planning area is mostly served by the Benton School District, but together three other school districts (i.e., Bryant, Bauxite and Harmony Grove) also serve significant portions of the planning area (refer to Section 4.5).

4.2.5 Privately Owned and Operated Facilities – Within the Benton Planning Area various privately owned public utilities use public rights-of-way and private easements to offer electronic communications (i.e., telephone, cable television, fiber optic cable), natural gas, or electric power services to their customers for a profit. In contrast, most if not all religious, cultural, business league, public transportation and social service organizations are operated as private non-profit agencies. Some of these non-profits receive public funding and function as quasi-governmental agencies, although for tax purposes they are still classified as private non-profits.<sup>29</sup> While a majority of healthcare services are provided by private for-profit businesses, some healthcare providers are operated as non-profits and both kinds of health care organizations may receive payments from Medicaid and Medicare as well as private insurance companies.

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<sup>29</sup> Refer to U.S. Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. §501(c)).

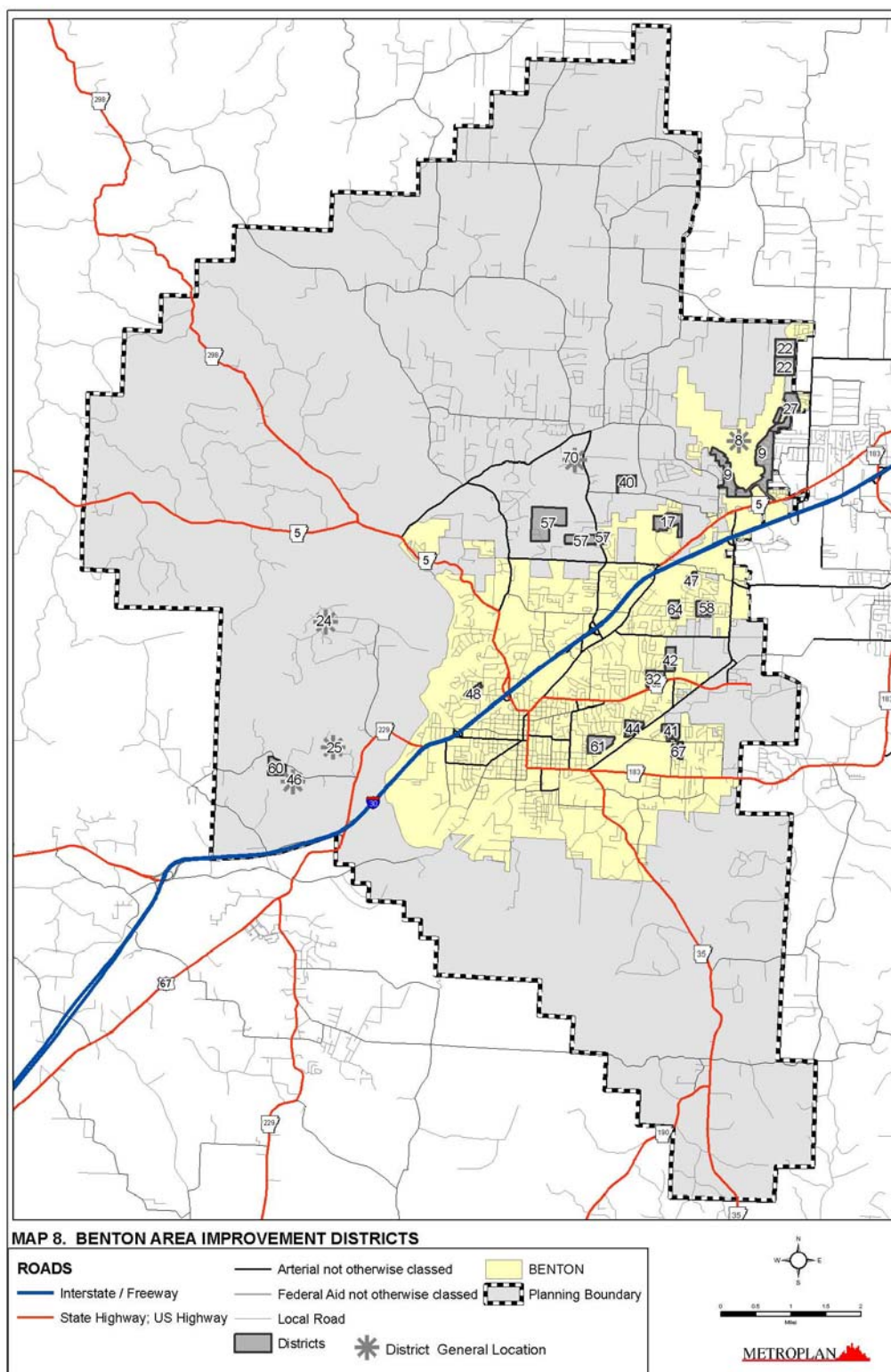
Table No. 6  
Benton Area Improvement Districts \*

| No. | Created In    | Type of District                       | Subdivision                     | Yr Created | Authorized Improvement(s)   | Commissioners  |
|-----|---------------|--|---------------------------------|------------|---|--|
| 8   |               | Property Owners Multipurpose           | Hurricane Lake Master           | 1998       | Waterworks, drainage, gas pipes, underground trenches, electric and phone systems, sewers, streets, and sidewalks             | Michael Rogers, Serena Rogers, and Janis Nelson      |
| 9   |               | Property Owners Multipurpose           | Hurricane Lake Phase 1 & 2      | 1998       | Waterworks, drainage, gas pipes, underground trenches, electric and phone systems, sewers, streets, and sidewalks             | Michael Rogers, Serena Rogers, and Janis Nelson      |
| 17  | Benton        | Municipal Property Owners Multipurpose | Longhills Village               |            |   |  |
| 22  | Bryant        | Municipal Property Owners Multipurpose | Calais Court Meadowlake Phase 3 | 2000       | Waterworks, recreation, drainage, gas pipelines, underground electric & telephone, sanitary sewers, streets and sidewalks     |  |
| 24  | Saline County | Property Owners                        | River Ranch                     |            |   |  |
| 25  | Saline County | Property Owners                        | River Bend Mountain Valley      |            |   |  |
| 27  | Benton        | Municipal Property Owners Multipurpose | Hurricane Lake Phase 3          | 2001       | Waterworks, recreation, drainage, gas pipes, underground trenches, electric and phone systems, sewers, streets, and sidewalks | Michael Rogers, Serena Rogers, and Janis Nelson      |
| 32  | Benton        | Municipal Property Owners Multipurpose | Valley Crest                    | 2002       | Waterworks; sewers; recreation; gas pipes; grading, draining, paving, curbing and guttering streets; and sidewalks            | Curtis Ferguson, Roy Bishop, and Martha Hilson       |
| 40  | Saline County | Municipal Property Owners Multipurpose | The Oaks                        | 2003       | Waterworks, drainage, gas pipes, underground trenches, electric and phone systems, sewers, streets, and sidewalks             | Donald Spears, Aaron Jones, and Martha Gilbert       |
| 41  | Benton        | Municipal Property Owners Multipurpose | Hidden Meadows                  | 2003       | Waterworks, recreation, drainage, gas pipes, underground trenches, electric and phone systems, sewers, streets, and sidewalks | Dan Moudy, Mike Duke, and Tom Baxley                 |
| 42  | Benton        | Municipal Property Owners Multipurpose | St. Andrews Place               | 2003       | Waterworks, recreation, drainage, gas pipes, underground trenches, electric and phone systems, sewers, streets, and sidewalks | Don Spears, Aaron Jones, and Mike Duke               |
| 44  | Benton        | Municipal Property Owners Multipurpose | Pleasant Forest                 | 2004       | Waterworks, recreation, drainage, gas pipes, underground trenches, electric and phone systems, sewers, streets, and sidewalks | Don Spears, Aaron Jones, and Mike Duke               |
| 46  | Saline County | Municipal Property Owners Multipurpose | Reunion                         | 2004       | Waterworks, sewers, gas pipelines, streets and sidewalks  | Don Spears, Aaron Jones, and Mike Duke               |
| 47  | Benton        | Municipal Property Owners Multipurpose | The Oaks at Heritage Farms      | 2004       | Recreation and drainage   | Bob Sanders, Tim Martin, and Jeannie Martin          |
| 48  | Benton        | Municipal Property Owners Multipurpose | Oak Tree Place                  | 2004       | Waterworks, recreation, drainage, gas pipes, underground trenches, electric and phone systems, sewers, streets, and sidewalks | Aaron Jones, Donald Spears, and Martha Gilbert       |
| 49  | Saline County | Property Owners Multipurpose           | Quail Valley                    | 2005       | Water; sewer; gas pipes; grading, paving, curbing and guttering streets; and sidewalks  |  |
| 57  | Saline County | Municipal Property Owners Multipurpose | Woodland                        |            |   |  |
| 58  | Saline County | Municipal Property Owners Multipurpose | Hickory Heights                 | 2005       | Waterworks, sewers, gas pipelines, streets and sidewalks  | Michele Stephens-Baker, Darren Baker, and Peggy Reid |
| 60  | Saline County | Municipal Property Owners Multipurpose | Centennial Valley               | 2006       | Waterworks, sewers, gas pipelines, streets and sidewalks  |  |
| 61  | Benton        | Municipal Property Owners Multipurpose | Pleasant Valley                 | 2006       | Waterworks, recreation, drainage, gas pipes, underground trenches, electric and phone systems, sewers, streets, and sidewalks | Clint Wilson, Andrew Adkins, and Daniels Bynam       |
| 64  | Benton        | Municipal Property Owners Multipurpose | Briarstone                      | 2006       | Waterworks, recreation, drainage, gas pipes, underground trenches, electric and phone systems, sewers, streets, and sidewalks | Ken Young, JoAnn Young, Chris Young                  |
| 67  | Benton        | Municipal Property Owners Multipurpose | Shady Lane Estates              | 2006       | Waterworks, recreation, drainage, gas pipes, underground trenches, electric and phone systems, sewers, streets, and sidewalks | Jerry Whitley, Dena Whitley, and Richard Brent       |
| 70  | Saline County | Property Owners Multipurpose           | The Orchard at Avilla           | 2006       | Waterworks, recreational facilities, gas pipelines, sewers, streets and sidewalks, rural fire department, etc.                |  |

Sources: City of Benton, Saline County Assessor, and 22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Circuit Clerk.

\* Data for several districts was not readily available. Districts 22 & 49 have not been mapped.

# Benton Area Improvement Districts<sup>30</sup>



<sup>30</sup> Not including fire districts and water districts (Refer to Sections 4.3 and 4.4).  
Sources: City of Benton, Saline County Assessor, and 22nd Judicial Circuit Clerk.



### 4.3 Public Safety Facilities

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Emergency response throughout Saline County is coordinated by the Saline County Office of Emergency Management. Within the Benton City Limits, the Benton Fire and Police Departments are the principal emergency responders. Elsewhere in the Benton Planning Area, the Saline County Sheriff and volunteer fire departments are responsible for providing emergency services. Throughout the planning area, Arkansas State Police and Highway Police exercise jurisdiction, primarily along the numbered routes of the state highway system; and emergency medical transportation is provided by MEDTRAN, although first responders like the Benton Fire Department also provide emergency medical services. Auto wrecker services are provided by private companies, sometimes in coordination with public safety agencies.

4.3.1 911 Services – “911” is the official emergency telephone number in the United States and Canada. Dialing 911 connects a caller with a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) dispatcher who determines the nature of the emergency and either routes the call to the appropriate agency or coordinates the response of emergency medical, fire, and/or law enforcement agencies. In Saline County, all 911 calls are first routed through the PSAP dispatcher at the Saline County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) located on Main Street in downtown Benton. If the emergency call is from Benton or Bryant, the county routes the call to the municipal PSAP dispatchers for police/fire protection. Outside of these two cities, Saline County PSAP dispatches all local emergency responders. The Benton PSAP dispatchers are co-located with the Saline County PSAP dispatchers. PSAP dispatchers are automatically provided with the location of all 911 calls made through the public switched network from both wire line and wireless telephones, which helps to expedite emergency response.

4.3.2 MEDTRAN – The Saline Memorial Hospital’s MEDTRAN ambulance service has five Type III ambulances and keeps two units stationed at the hospital (refer to Section 4.6.15), a single unit at Highway 5 (North) near Alcoa Road and another in Bryant, which leaves a fifth vehicle in reserve. The City of Benton recently awarded an exclusive ambulance service contract to MEDTRAN. All MEDTRAN ambulances are staffed by two registered EMT paramedics. A medical doctor is present at the hospital’s emergency department at all times.

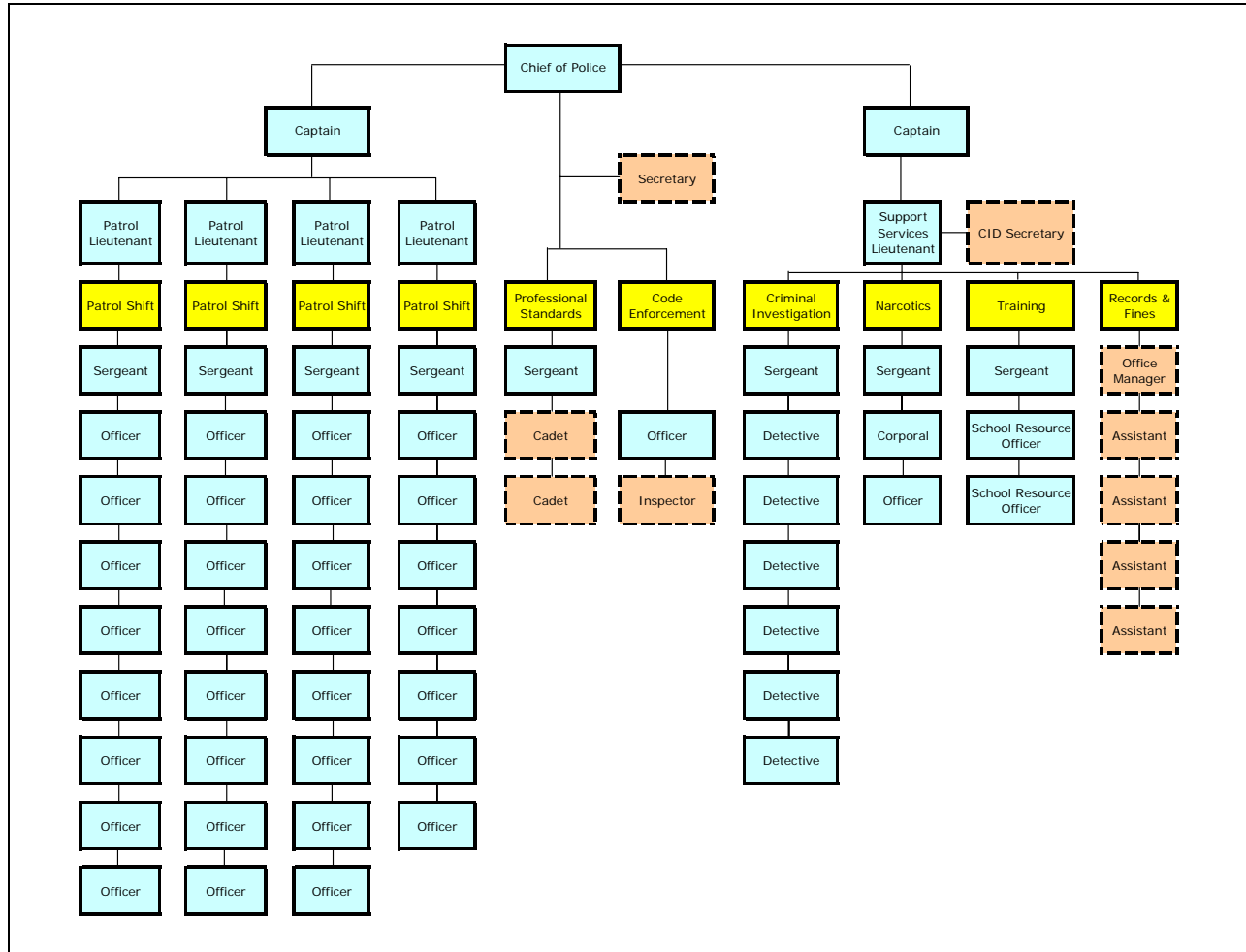
4.3.3 Benton Police Department – On the edge of the traditional downtown, the Police Department is located in the Benton Municipal Complex with its entry facing Pearson Street. The space is modern and well suited for the Department, but space could become critical in the very near future, if the Benton 911 center is brought back from quarters shared with the Saline County 911 center.

The Police Department has authorized positions for 68 employees comprised of 58 sworn officers and 10 civilians. As of January 2007, there were 13 unfilled positions including 5 officers. This is due to military commitments, illness, extended training and vacancies. Chart 14 provides an organization chart.

The department has two major functional areas, patrol and administration. A single code enforcement inspector also reports directly to the Police Chief. The patrol division is divided into four shifts with each shift having nine officers headed by a Patrol Lieutenant. The support division has 17 sworn officers and

eight civilians, is under the supervision of a support captain and includes six sections: warrants, criminal investigation, narcotics, support services, and records and fines.

Chart 14  
Benton Police Department Organization Chart



Source: Benton Police Department, January 2007.

The Police Department has adequate vehicles and modern communication equipment. It performs in-service training as well as using outside training institutions such as the Criminal Justice Institute and the State of Arkansas training facilities. Table 7 compares Benton's crime rates with the crime rates reported for other areas.

A special census established that Benton had 27,717 residents as of October 5, 2006. Although city population has grown by 26.5% since the 2000 census, the police department did not receive an increase in personnel until 2007, when the department received two new police officer positions and the return of one captain position that was eliminated in 2004.

In 2005, the Benton Police Department reported 291 violent crimes and 1,333 property crimes for a total of 1,624 reported crimes. As compared with 2003, there was 1 more violent crime and 129 fewer property crimes in 2005.

Due to an increase in Benton's population during this period, the change in reported crimes represents about a 5% increase in the violent crime rate and about a 2% reduction in the property crime rate (refer to Table 7).

Table No. 7  
Crimes per 100,000 Population<sup>31</sup>

| Crime Categories | Benton  | Bryant  | Jacksonville | Little Rock | Arkansas | USA     |
|------------------|---------|---------|--------------|-------------|----------|---------|
| Violent Crimes   | 425.1   | 71.1    | 721.8        | 1,771.8     | 5,277.1  | 469.2   |
| Property Crimes  | 6,549.6 | 4,319.3 | 6,347.3      | 8,782.1     | 4,057.9  | 3,429.8 |
| All Known Crimes | 6,974.7 | 4,390.4 | 7,069.1      | 10,553.9    | 9,335.0  | 3,898.9 |

**4.3.4 Benton Fire Department** – The Benton Fire Department provides fire protection and other services within the city limits. Some unincorporated areas south of the city near the Saline River and between Benton and Bryant are also the Department's responsibility when requested by Saline County OEM. Benton also has mutual and automatic aid agreements with all the surrounding fire departments and agencies.

The Department keeps pace with technological changes in communication and equipment and with growth and change in the city. In order to maintain and enhance the Department's ability to provide sound and proficient fire protection and emergency medical response, Woodall, the main fire station on Main Street was re-built in 1998 and upgrades were made at the other fire stations. With annexations occurring north of the freeway near Hurricane Lake and construction of an I-30 crossover at Military Road, the City decided to close the Mauldin Fire Station on Military Road and replace it in early 2006 with the new Curtis Fire Station located further north near I-30 on Winchester Drive. In early 2007, the City also closed the Huckaby Fire Station and replaced it with the Ragan Fire Station located further east on Edison Avenue.

All firefighters have been trained in hazardous material response and are registered emergency medical technicians (EMTs). Six are also registered EMT paramedics. The fire department personnel average 12,000 hours of training annually including over 20 rescue specialties (e.g., structure collapse, weapons of mass destruction, swift water, etc.). Training facilities are located on Jefferson and Hazel Streets. The Department is trained and programmed for a three minute response time. In 2005, the Benton F.D. responded to 2,261 requests for assistance, with approximately 70% involving emergency medical assistance.

The department has 51 response personnel and three administrators. The administration includes the fire chief, fire marshal and secretary, all located downtown at Woodall. Response personnel maintain a 56 hour workweek with 24 hours on-duty and 48 hours off-duty, and are assigned to the four stations identified in Table 8, which also shows the equipment located at each station.

<sup>31</sup> *Crime in the United States 2005*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington, D.C.

Table No. 8

**Personnel and Equipment by Fire Station**

| Stations:                | #1 Woodall            | #2 Curtis             | #3 Ragan              | #4 Fikes              |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Personnel:</b>        |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Captain                  | 2                     | 1                     | 1                     | 1                     |
| Apparatus Engineer       | 2                     | 1                     | 1                     | 1                     |
| Firefighter              | 2 to 3                | 1                     | 1                     | 1                     |
| <b>Mobile Apparatus:</b> |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Pumper (quint aerial)    | 2,000 gpm<br>yr. 2000 |                       |                       |                       |
| Pumper                   | 1,000 gpm<br>yr. 1989 | 1,500 gpm<br>yr. 2001 | 1,500 gpm<br>yr. 2000 | 1,250 gpm<br>yr. 1995 |
| Rescue unit              | 1 ton, 1999           |                       |                       |                       |
| Ladder truck             | 1989                  |                       |                       |                       |
| Chief's car              | 1999                  |                       |                       |                       |
| Assistant chief's car    | 1999                  |                       |                       |                       |
| Fire Marshall's van      | 1999                  |                       |                       |                       |

Source: Benton Fire Department, 12/06

Property insurance premiums are in part related to the Insurance Services Office (ISO) Public Protection Classification (PPC™) program which assigns fire protection ratings to over 44,000 fire districts. The ISO assigns PPC ratings of between 1 and 10, with a 10 given to communities without fire protection, a 9 indicating minimum protection, and a 1 for the best protection. More than a third of the fire districts in the United States have a class 9 rating, and more than 62 percent have a class 7 to 10 rating. A community's PPC depends on its fire alarm and communications systems, its water supply system, and the characteristics of its fire department.

Benton has improved its ISO rating due to actions taken by the City during recent years. The modernization and construction of fire stations, station placement, modern apparatus and communication equipment, highly trained personnel of an adequate number, the removal of barriers to travel, an improved water system with adequate water pressure, installation of three way fire hydrants, and attention to other issues has provided Benton with an ISO rating of 3, which indicates among other things that at least 85 percent of the buildable area has adequate fire hydrant placement and is no more than five miles from a fire station. Additional actions could further improve the PPC rating, such as increasing the number of firefighters per unit from three to four (as recommended by the ISO).

As the city expands geographically, new fire stations will be needed in order to maintain three minute response times. Using a 1.5 mile service area radius for each existing fire station, at least 10 new fire stations would be needed to provide an ISO rating of 3 for the entire planning area, assuming replacement of the existing fire stations that are manned by volunteers (refer to Map 9).

**4.3.5 Other Fire Departments** – In addition to the Benton Fire Department, the Benton Planning Area is served by nine neighboring fire departments. The Salem Fire Department actually covers the largest portion of the Benton Planning Area followed by the Benton, Turtle Creek, Shaw, Bauxite, Lake Norrell, Haskell, West Pulaski, Crows, and Springhill Fire Departments (refer to Map 9).

The water pressure maintained by the rural water districts may be inadequate to fight some fires and traditional fire hydrants are generally not available in these areas. However, fire trucks can tap into the rural water lines at widely spaced valves to refill their water tanks. These limitations of rural water providers tend to keep fire risks, ISO ratings and insurance rates all relatively high. Selected characteristics of the volunteer fire departments in the Benton Planning Area are provided in Table 9.

Table No. 9\*  
Characteristics of Benton Planning Area Fire Districts

| Fire District  | ISO Fire Rating(s)                    | Firefighters  | Fire Stations | Service Area (sq.miles) | % in Benton Planning Area | Fire Trucks (Pumpers and Ladder Trucks)   | Other Mobile Apparatus   |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---|--|
| Bauxite        | 7 (within city)<br>7-9 (outside city) | 10 volunteers | 2             | 17.7                    | 25.9%                     | 1954 pumper, 750 gpm<br>1963 pumper, 1250 gpm<br>1986 pumper, 1500 gpm  | 1961 brush truck<br>1976 brush truck<br>1984 rescue/service truck  |
| Benton         | 3                                     | 51 full-time  | 4             | 22.2                    | 99.6%                     | 2000 pumper, 2,000 gpm<br>1989 pumper, 1,000 gpm<br>2001 pumper, 1,500 gpm<br>2000 pumper, 1,500 gpm<br>1995 pumper, 1,250 gpm<br>1989 ladder truck | 1999 rescue unit, 1 ton<br>1999 chief's car<br>1999 assistant chief's car<br>1999 fire marshall's van                          |
| Bryant         | 3                                     | No Response   | 3             | 10.6                    | 0.6%                      | 2000 pumper, 1250 gpm<br>2000 pumper, 1250 gpm<br>1989 pumper, 1500 gpm<br>____ pumper, ____ gpm<br>____ pumper, ____ gpm<br>____ ladder truck      | ____ brush truck<br>____ rescue unit<br>____ rescue unit<br>____ rescue unit<br>____ chief's car                               |
| Crow's Station | 9                                     | 12 volunteers | 1             | 67.7                    | 2.4%                      | 1977 pumper, 1500 gpm<br>1971 pumper, 1000 gpm  | ____ tanker, 2000 gallon<br>____ tanker, 2000 gallon<br>____ brush truck<br>____ rescue/service unit                           |
| Haskell        | 5-7                                   | 17 volunteers | 1             | 20.3                    | 14.43%                    | 1990 pumper, 2000 gpm<br>1984 pumper, 1000 gpm<br>1981 pumper, 1000 gpm   | 1985 brush truck<br>1991 rescue unit   |
| Lake Norrell   | 6                                     | 20 volunteers | 3             | 23.9                    | 14.66%                    | No Response   | No Response  |
| Salem          | 6-9                                   | 16 volunteers | 4             | 63.6                    | 66.4%                     | 2003 pumper, 1250 gpm<br>1999 pumper, 1250 gpm<br>1978 pumper, 1000 gpm<br>1987 pumper, 350 gpm   | 1996 tanker, 2200 gallon<br>1986 brush truck, 250 gpm  |
| Shaw           | 9                                     |               | 1             | 30.0                    | 35.5%                     | No Response   | No Response  |
| Springhill     | 5                                     |               | 2             | 8.4                     | 13.2%                     | 2000 pumper, 1250 gpm<br>1968 pumper, 1500 gpm  | 1994 tanker, 6000 gallon<br>1990 tanker, 3500 gallon<br>1986 brush truck<br>1986 brush truck<br>1996 Type III ambulance        |
| Turtle Creek   | 6-9                                   | 24 volunteers | 3             | 38.3                    | 29.7%                     | 2001 pumper, 1250 gpm<br>1999 pumper, 1250 gpm  | 1984 tanker, 5000 gallon<br>1973 cab, 1000 gpm<br>1986 brush truck, 250 gpm<br>1986 brush truck, 250 gpm<br>2003 service truck |
| West Pulaski   | 9                                     | 16 volunteers | 4             | 141.7                   | 1.7%                      | No Response   | No Response  |

Sources: Saline County Office of Emergency Management, Insurance Services Office, Benton Planning Area Fire Districts and their web sites.

\* Table 9 is incomplete due to no response from 4 fire districts as noted.

#### 4.4 Public Utilities

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4.4.1 Benton Public Utilities Commission – In February 2005, the Benton water, wastewater and electric utilities all came under the administration of a new Benton Public Utilities Commission, which meets twice monthly at the Benton Electric Department located on Dale Street south of the old Saline County Airport. Although state law allows municipalities to extend their utilities as much as five miles outside their city limits, it is City policy that Benton's utilities should only be made available within the city limits or through pre-annexation agreements. Thus, Benton's utilities are extended in concert with municipal annexations as land is developed. The Public Utility Commission has adopted a growth boundary (refer to Section 3, Map 6) and prepared plans for extending water, wastewater and electric service to all areas within that boundary as land is developed and annexed. These plans are also compatible with the extension of Benton's public utilities across the Saline River outside the growth boundary if the City decides to annex in that direction.

4.4.2 Water Systems – The Benton Water Department provides potable water to Benton residents and also sells the treated water wholesale to the City of Bauxite, Salem Water Association and Southwest Water Association. Central Arkansas Water (CAW) also sells potable water wholesale to various water utilities in Saline County.<sup>32</sup> Some areas east and southeast of Benton do not have access to a water service and must rely primarily on private wells. In areas served by the rural water associations there are also numerous private wells. There are even some private wells within Benton's city limits. Water service area boundaries, private water well locations, and various water system facilities are shown in Map 10.

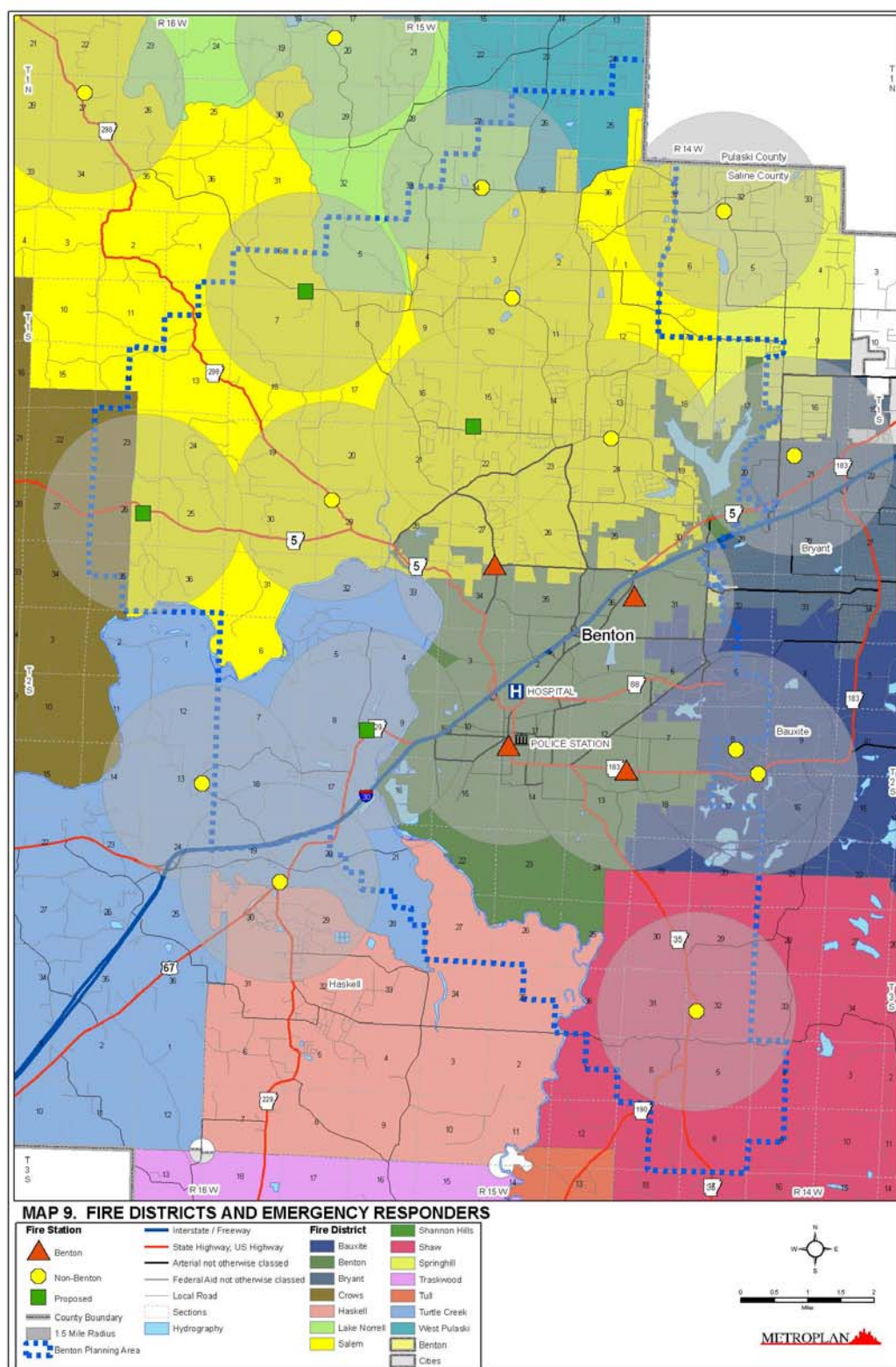
4.4.2.1 Benton Water System – The Benton Water Department was founded in 1915 and the original water plant was completed in 1916. The original plant was on West Walnut Street behind where the Central Arkansas Development Council office is currently housed. At that time, water was pumped from the river to a raw water basin on Jefferson Street where the Saline County Senior Adult Center is currently built. Then it was piped to the plant on West Walnut Street where it was filtered.

In 1953, Lake Norrell was formed when Brush Creek Dam was completed. This City owned lake covers 280 acres with a storage capacity of 2.5 billion gallons. The reservoir releases water directly into the Saline River as needed, which is then pumped from the river downstream where a weir has been built to raise the level of the Saline River. A few years ago, the City constructed a reservoir for side stream storage of "raw" (untreated) river water, located south of I-30 on the east bank the river and downstream from the weir. The Chenault Reservoir holds up to a 120-day supply of raw river water, which is pumped as needed from the reservoir to holding ponds at the water treatment facility located on Venturi Drive north of I-30. The water

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<sup>32</sup> Currently these include Alexander, Bryant, Saline County Water & Sewer (Woodland Hills portion of Alexander), and Shannon Hills. To this list CAW is recruiting East End Water, Salem Water, and Sardis Water.

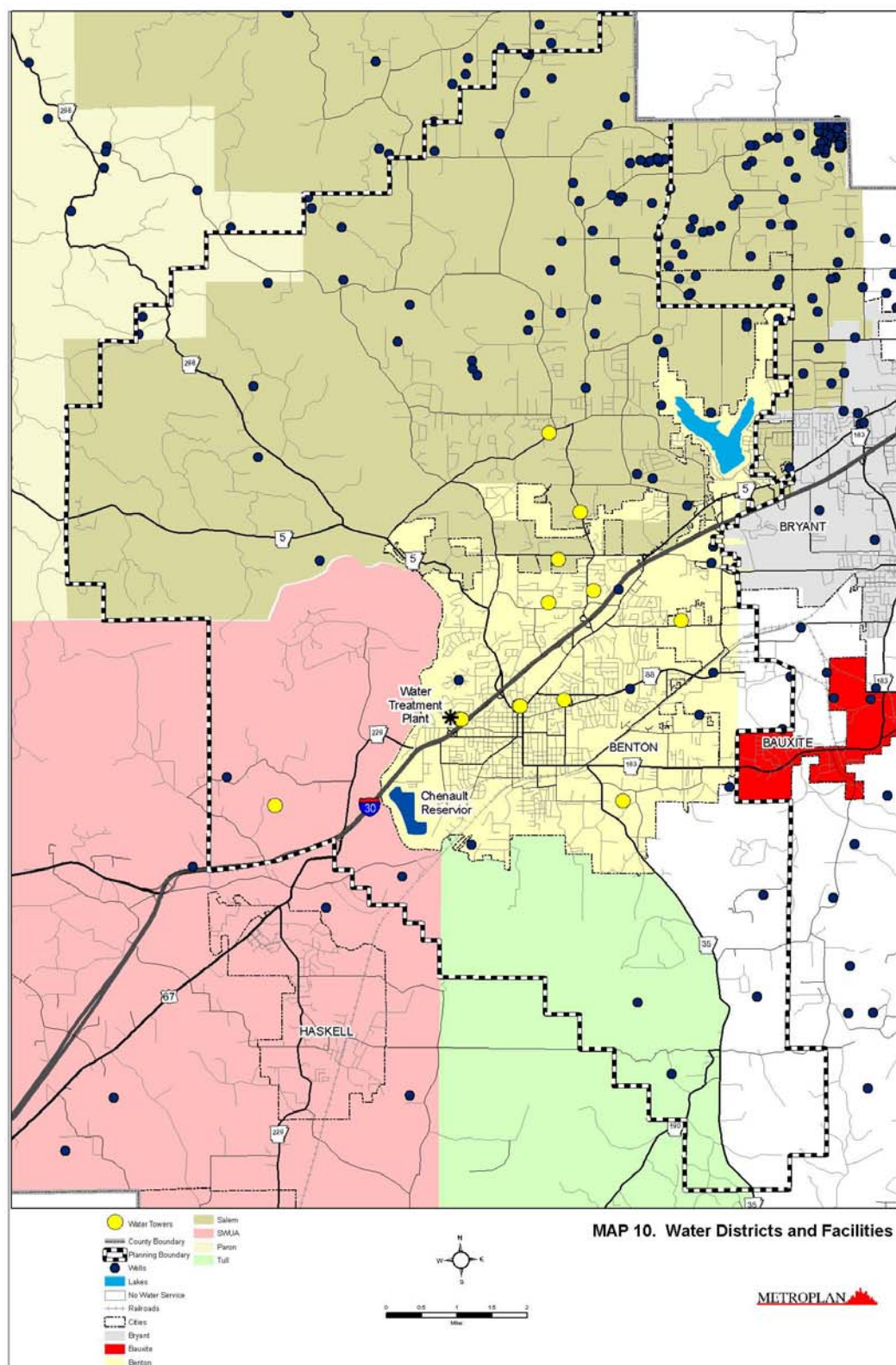
# Fire Districts and Emergency Responders



Source: Saline County Office of Emergency Management.



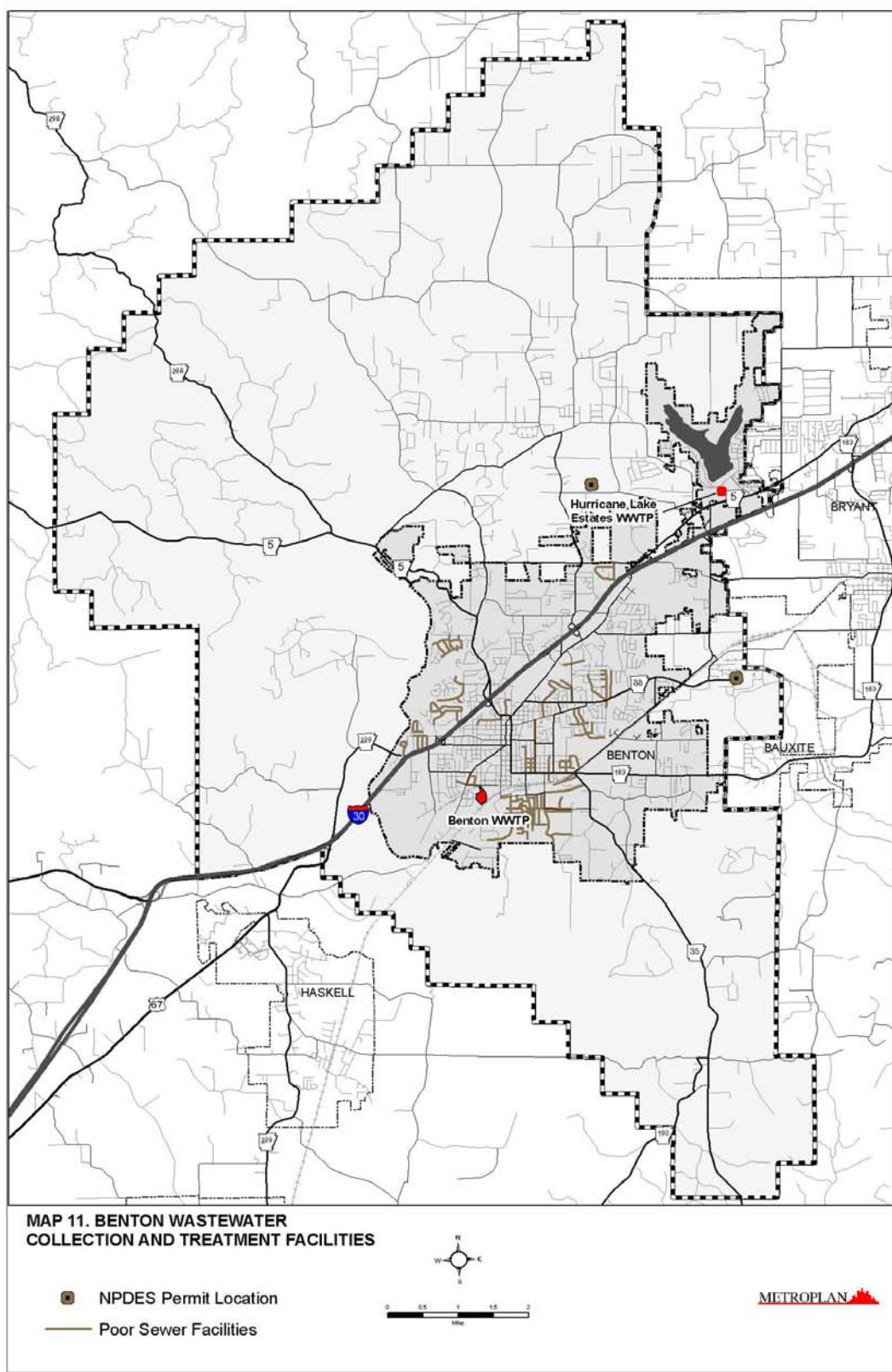
# Water Districts and Facilities



Source: Benton Public Utilities, Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies, and Saline Watershed Alliance.



Wastewater Collection and Treatment Facilities



Sources: Benton Wastewater Utility, ADEQ, and Saline County Assessor.



plant can provide up to 13.3 million gallons per day (mgd) of “finished” (treated) water. The potable water is held temporarily in a 1,750,000 gallon clearwell for subsequent distribution. The distribution system employs large pumps at the water treatment plant and six water towers located around the city to help maintain water pressure.

Since the treatment plant expansion and modernization was completed in 1998, the facilities have been rated at 13.3 mgd of finished water. Water production has never exceeded this amount, but additional modernization may be needed to meet increasingly stringent federal water quality standards. Two water tanks of one million gallons each at Frendall and Silica Heights were constructed in 2004. With the construction of a water main completed in 2004 much of the water system was converted to a higher pressure plane. The water utility, in concert with the fire department, is replacing old style two-nozzle fire hydrants with new three-way hydrants. At present, there are approximately 350 miles of water mains, 12,500 water meters and 850 fire hydrants to maintain.

Table No. 10  
Benton Water System Production  
(millions of gallons per day)

| Year | Raw Water | Finished (Treated) Water |          |
|------|-----------|--------------------------|----------|
|      | Avg. Day  | Avg. Day                 | Max. Day |
| 1990 | 3.81      | 3.59                     | 6.39     |
| 1995 | 4.34      | 4.09                     | 7.32     |
| 2000 | 4.86      | 4.58                     | 8.26     |
| 2004 | 5.90      | 5.50                     | 9.00     |
| 2005 | 6.79      | 6.64                     | 10.28    |
| 2006 | 6.61      | 6.45                     | 9.99     |

Source: Benton Water Department

Table 10 lists selected years of water production since 1990. Historically, water associations nearby have purchased about 40 percent of Benton's treated water.

#### 4.4.2.2 Benton Water System Expansion and Neighboring Water Associations –

All the water providers neighboring Benton currently purchase water from Benton. The City of Bauxite buys water wholesale from Benton. The rural water purveyors in the Benton Planning Area (i.e., Salem, and Southwest Water Associations) also buy water from Benton. The City of Haskell purchases water from the Arkansas Health Center and Southwest Water Association, so a portion of their water comes from Benton. The Salem Water Users Association is currently buying water from CAW as well as from Benton.

In 2002, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock conducted a water study, which resulted in the creation of the Saline Watershed Alliance (SWA), formally established as the Saline Watershed Regional Water Distribution District.<sup>33</sup> SWA's purpose is to procure a long-term water source for the

<sup>33</sup> *Water for Saline County: A Tale of Two Futures*, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, 2002.

region. The water utilities participating in the SWA include the City of Bauxite, City of Benton, City of Bryant, East End Water, City of Haskell, Paron-Owensville Water, Salem Water Users, Saline County Water and Sewer (Woodland Hills), City of Shannon Hills, and Southeast Water Users. Over time, the SWA may help to reduce the variability in the quality and cost of water service in the Saline County area.

A somewhat similar organization serves an eight county region. The purpose of the Mid-Arkansas Water Alliance (MAWA) is to examine long range future water needs and sources for its 27 members. In Saline County, MAWA members include the City of Bauxite, City of Benton, City of Bryant, East End Water, City of Haskell, Hot Springs Village, Paron-Owensville Water, Salem Water Users, Saline County Water and Sewer (Woodland Hills), City of Shannon Hills, and Southwest Water. Outside Saline County, MAWA members include CAW and 15 other water purveyors in Pulaski, Cleburne, Conway, Faulkner, Garland, Lonoke and Perry counties. A consultant study has indicated that existing water sources may be sufficient to supply existing and future needs in Pulaski and Saline counties thru 2050.<sup>34</sup> However, the Alliance is also looking at transporting raw water by pipeline from Lake Quachita to Benton Water Treatment Plant or to Benton via Lake Winona at some future time. From there finished water could be transported through existing and possibly new water lines to the various users south of the Arkansas River. The extent of Benton's participation in the Mid-Arkansas Water Alliance will be assessed over time by the Benton Public Utilities Commission.

**4.4.3 Wastewater Collection and Treatment** – The City of Benton owns a 6.3 million gallon per day (mgd) capacity wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) located south of Hazel Street near the Union Pacific Railroad in Benton. The City of Benton operated the Hurricane Lake Treatment Plant until 2005, at which time the flows to this facility were diverted to the City of Benton's Hurricane Lake Lift Station and pumped to the City of Benton's Wastewater Treatment Plant located south of Hazel Street near the Union Pacific Railroad in Benton. Map 11 shows the location of Benton's existing wastewater collection and treatment facilities.

The City of Benton does not provide wastewater collection service in rural portions of the planning area, nor does Saline County. While a developer may install a wastewater treatment facility to serve a subdivision located in an unincorporated portion of the planning area (refer to Section 4.4.4.1), lot sizes in other areas not served by a municipal wastewater system must be large enough to accommodate an individual septic sewer system. In rural areas where water service is also not available, lot sizes may need to be even larger to accommodate both a septic sewage system and water well.

**4.4.3.1 Benton Wastewater Treatment Plant** – The discharge monitoring report for the Benton sewer plant reveals numerous "total suspended solid" (TSS)

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<sup>34</sup> *Mid-Arkansas Water Resource Study Update*, prepared for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by Garver Engineers, December 2004.

and biological oxygen demand (BOD) violations which are generally caused by wet weather flows. BOD limit violations have occurred but not at a rate that would lead to enforcement action. In 2005 the City of Benton agreed to construct a 57 million gallon equalization basin as the result of being put under a consent administrative order to control these violations. This basin was completed one year ahead of schedule and, as a result, these violations are no longer occurring.

The original plant, a trickling filter type facility built along Depot Creek, was abandoned in 1987. In 1975, the first rotating biological contactor (RBC) plant was built. In 1986, the second RBC plant was added. In 1997, new treatment facilities were added to boost the capacity of the WWTP. The treatment capacity of these two plants is 3 million gallons. In 1987, the original trickling filter plant was torn down and the flow was diverted to the Willow Street Lift Station, where it is pumped to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The 1997 expansion was required because the existing plant could not maintain advanced secondary treatment during wet weather periods. The addition of an activated sludge aeration treatment facility increased plant capacity to 6.3 mgd.

The City applies sludge to six permitted tracts of land totaling 521 acres. In addition, there are 12 sludge drying beds which will be used after the new permit goes into effect in 2008. A belt press and sludge drying facilities have been constructed to facilitate the drying of sludge during periods of wet weather. The dried sludge is given to citizens as a soil conditioner and its safety is monitored by extensive independent laboratory testing. The drying facility is the primary method of sludge disposal with land application utilized as weather permits.

The City has begun the process to expand the WWTP from 6.3 mgd to approximately 8.3 mgd which should be operational by the end of 2009. At the time of operation for this expanded treatment process (which is at this time another activated sludge/oxidation ditch type treatment) the older and less effective 3.0 mgd rotating biological contactor plants will be shut down and mothballed, as it does not produce an effluent that meets current NPDES permit requirements for the facility. At some future date to be determined by capacity of treatment needs, the RBC plant will be removed and a 5 million gallon activation sludge/oxidation ditch type treatment facility will be built. A storm equalization basin covering approximately 12 acres has been constructed near the treatment plant on the opposite side of the U.P. Railroad in order to reduce total solids loadings in the plant effluent during major wet weather conditions. This equalization basin is capable of holding 57 million gallons during peak flows. Then when flows reduce in the wastewater treatment plant, this stored sewage will be returned for treatment in the wastewater plant. Should equipment fail in the wastewater treatment plant or should construction occur that creates a situation where flow needs to be deferred from the plant, this basin will also be utilized.

**4.4.3.2 Benton Wastewater Collection Facilities** – All areas within the Benton City Limits have city sewer service or soon will have. With a 26.5 million

dollar bond the City is in the process of upgrading pump stations and installing new sewer lines to accommodate current and future growth.

The following projects are underway as of January 2008:

- The Thomas Pasture Sewer Line Project consists of replacing existing sewer line and installing sewer line in some areas where sewer did not exist before. Along with the line work, the Thomas Pasture Station will have larger pumps installed. The new pipe sizes range from 15" to 30" in diameter, replacing pipe from 8" to 12" in diameter. Approximately 19,000 linear feet of pipe were installed in this project.
- The Hurricane Lake Force Main and Pump Station Upgrade has been completed. Approximately 14,000 linear feet of 16" diameter force main and upsizing of the existing pumps were necessary due to the growth in the area.
- The Edison Street Utility Relocation was due to the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department's Highway 35 Overpass Project. This relocation began in August 2007 and should be completed in early 2008. Sewer line in the area will range from 8" to 21" in diameter.
- The Interstate 30/Airplane Drive Sewer Line Upgrade consists of replacing approximately 10,000 linear feet of existing 15" diameter sewer line. This project will begin at the existing wastewater treatment plant and end on the north side of Interstate 30 near the Sevier Street overpass.
- The Highway 5/Riverside Pump Station project will consist of new pump stations and force mains for the Highway 5 area past Salt Creek Road. The existing pump stations and force mains in this area are at capacity or in need of upgrade due to age.
- The Interstate 30 West Utility Extension design is scheduled for 2008. The project includes a new pump station, approximately 10,000 linear feet of 12" force main, and approximately 1,500 linear feet of gravity sewer line.
- The City will still continue to pipe burst old lines to eliminate inflow and infiltration to the system.
- The City is in the process of installing lift station monitoring on the major stations in order to respond to overflows, pump failures and intrusions. Currently, the City has approximately 900,000 linear feet of sewer line ranging from 6" to 36" in diameter.

#### 4.4.4 Wastewater Discharge Permits and Non-Municipal Sewage Facilities

4.4.4.1 Developer Built Sewer Systems – Private developments not served by municipal wastewater systems have the option of installing their own sanitary sewer systems. In the Benton area, Central Arkansas Utility Services has a permit to discharge from a small developer built wastewater treatment plant serving the Reunion Subdivision located west of the Saline River near W.

Jackman Trail. The Oaks Subdivision located near Scott-Salem Road also has a state permit pending to discharge from a wastewater treatment plant. Construction of these small wastewater treatment facilities is usually accomplished through improvement district financing (refer to Section 4.2.4).

4.4.4.2 NPDES Permitted Facilities – The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) issues permits to wastewater utilities, some industries, and others to discharge treated wastewater into streams and lakes (refer to Map 11). These permits are issued in accordance with regulations implementing the federal Clean Water Act, and are registered in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). In addition to discharges from developer built wastewater treatment plants (refer to Section 4.4.4.1), the City of Benton has a permit to discharge treated wastewater. Amatis, Alcoa Road Mobile Home Park, Benton Packing Company and Salem Elementary also have wastewater discharge permits. The Benton WWTP also has a NPDES permit to discharge filter backwash.

4.4.4.3 Individual Onsite Wastewater Systems – Onsite wastewater systems (also referred to as individual septic systems) are of particular concern to the subdivision review process, because onsite wastewater system requirements can influence lot size and the viability of proposed developments. In this regard, planning body approval of a proposed subdivision plat may be made contingent upon onsite wastewater system approval by the “environmental health specialist”, when it is established by a licensed “designated representative” that the parcel is large enough and the soil is “suitable” for the onsite wastewater system. Lot sizes needed for a septic sewage system will vary, but tend to be larger if soils retain water close to the surface. Soils in much of the planning area tend to perk slowly due to wetness or the short depth to rock.<sup>35</sup> As a result, rural subdivisions in the planning area may have large size lots. Although it was once thought that groundwater should not be within six feet of the surface, recent soil science has enabled the County Sanitarian to approve onsite wastewater systems in some cases where the perched seasonal water table is much closer to the surface. Where conventional onsite wastewater systems do not work, the County Sanitarian will in some cases approve systems that discharge partially treated and disinfected sewage on the ground surface. This type of septic system typically requires a parcel of greater than three acres which can meet certain setbacks. Some onsite wastewater systems may be required to obtain a NPDES permit from ADEQ, and tests must be conducted every six months to monitor the system’s effectiveness.

4.4.5 Solid Waste Collection and Disposal – At present, refuse collection throughout Saline County is accomplished through subscription with a private for-profit refuse collection service. Prices and services are market driven with minimal regulation by or coordination with local governments. BFI of Little Rock is the largest provider of both residential and commercial service in Benton and elsewhere in Saline County. Waste Management of Little Rock also provides

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<sup>35</sup> Soil Survey of Saline County, Arkansas, USDA, Soil Conservation Service, April 1979, and online at [www.cast.uark.edu/cast/geostar](http://www.cast.uark.edu/cast/geostar).

residential waste collection, primarily in rural areas of Saline County. Terry's Waste is the third major service provider in the Benton area. BFI, Waste Management and Terry's Waste each utilize automated equipment that interface with standardized collection containers provided by these companies to their residential and commercial customers, which is unlike the smaller service providers operating in the area. Property owners are responsible for disposal of any yard waste which is often composted or burned on-site. At present, there are no municipal composting services in Benton. The Benton City Council is currently considering the creation of trash collection zones, for which private haulers would be granted franchises for a fee that could be used to enhance recycling efforts.

The Saline County Landfill is located outside Benton's planning area on the south side of West Sardis Road about 0.8 miles east of State Highway 183. As a non-profit institution, the Saline County Regional Solid Waste Management District (SCRSWMD) is able to charge relatively low rates, which makes the landfill highly competitive. The landfill will accept tree limbs and construction debris, but tries to exclude yard waste. The SCRSWMD has a successful recycling program for paper, newspaper and metal, including electronic equipment. Trailers and other containers to facilitate voluntary recycling are located in the major communities at some public schools.

Table No. 11  
Saline County Landfill Capacity

| Saline County Landfill Section | Permitted Volume (CY) | Used Volume (CY) | Remaining Unused Volume (CY) | Percent Remaining Unused Volume | Current Utilization Rate (CY/Year) | Estimated Remaining Useful Life (Years) |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Total Class I                  | 9,400,000             | 1,839,480        | 7,560,520                    | 80.4%                           | 96,216                             | 78.6                                    |
| Total Class IV                 | 900,000               | 75,915           | 824,085                      | 91.6%                           | 17,124                             | 48.1                                    |
| Total Landfill                 | 10,300,000            | 1,915,395        | 8,384,605                    | 81.4%                           | 113,340                            | 74.0                                    |

Sources: 2005 Annual Engineering Inspection Reports, prepared for Saline County Regional Solid Waste Management District, by Terracon Consultants, Inc., March & June, 2006.

The landfill site consists of 108 permitted acres in a former open pit bauxite mine with a permitted volume of 10.3 million cubic yards. The facility is permitted as both a Class I (household waste) and Class IV (construction debris) landfill. Cell No. 1 was completed and closed in 1996. Waste deposition is ongoing in Cells No. 2 and 3. The most recent annual engineering inspection reports (refer to Table 11) indicate that, at the current rate of utilization, the Class I facility has an estimated remaining useful life of 78 years, while the Class IV facility is estimated to have 48 years remaining before it would be full.

**4.4.6 Electric and Gas Utilities** - The availability and cost of electricity and gas service can influence development decisions and the location choices of households and businesses. Inside the Benton Planning Area, there are three electric power utilities (i.e., Benton Electric, Entergy, and First Electric Cooperative), one natural gas utility (i.e., Centerpoint Energy-Arkla), and at least two propane gas providers (i.e., Ferrellgas, Inc. and Synergy Gas Corp.).

4.4.6.1 Benton Electric Department – Benton's first electric light system was instituted by E. Y. Stinson and other progressive citizens in 1904. The plant was located south of the Missouri Pacific Depot. As there were no electric motors, only night service was given to power electric lights.

In 1910 the plant was sold to a private individual who improved the plant. In 1912 the plant was sold to other private parties, but service declined. Following shut downs on numerous occasions leaving the city in darkness, the plant ceased operation in 1918.

After the closing of the plant, a meeting of citizens was held and it was unanimously voted to purchase the plant and convert it into a municipal system. A committee was appointed to confer with the owners, who ultimately agreed to sell for the amount of the debts against the plant, about \$13,000. The deal was consummated and the City became owner of the plant. For a time, only the business district had lights until midnight only. Residential areas had to use coal oil lamps and candles.

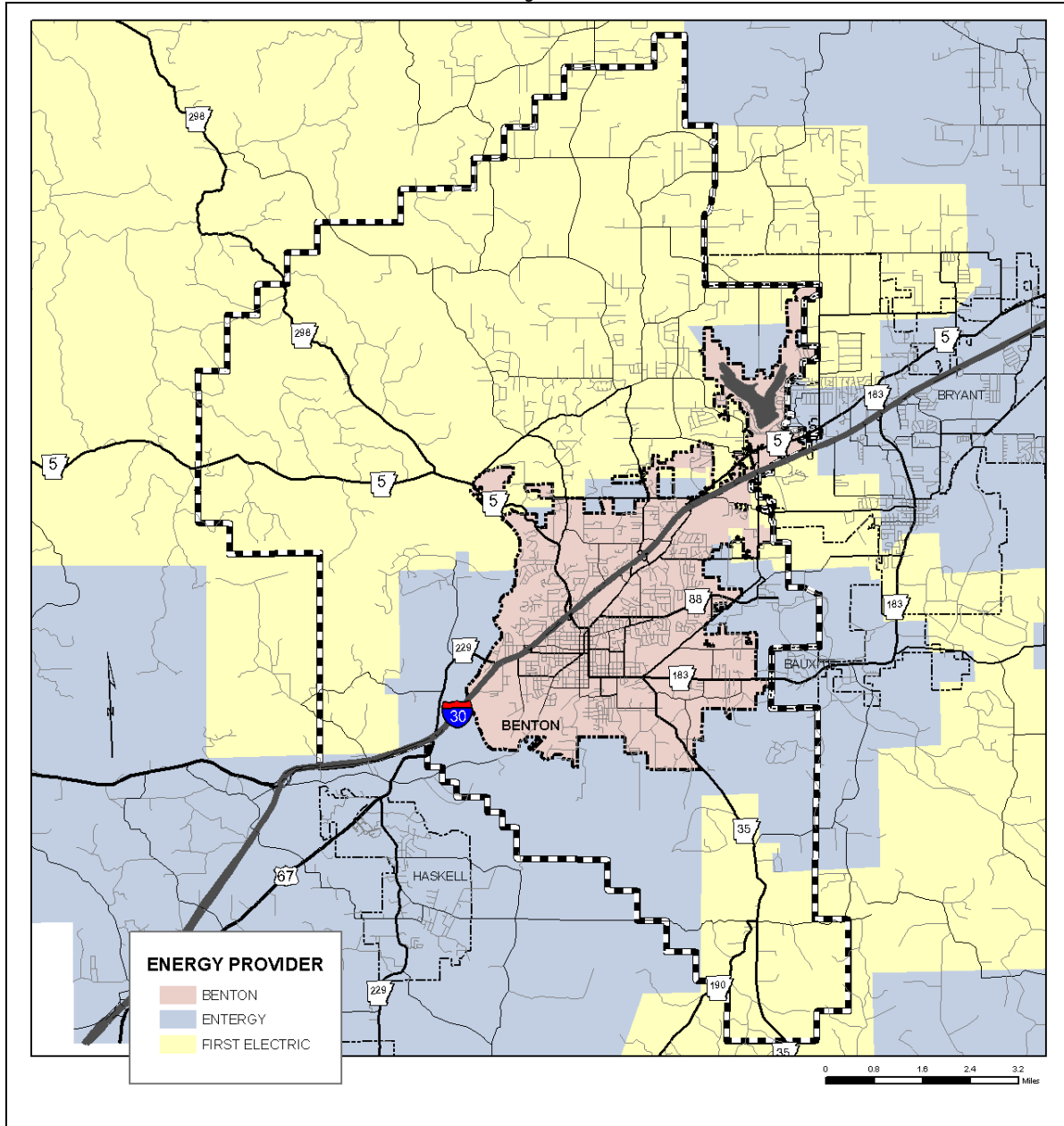
The City was forced to wait until 1921 to finalize the transaction, when the Arkansas General Assembly passed a law giving cities the right to buy electric plants. Three generators served the city until 1952, when the Electric Department contracted with Arkansas Power and Light, which later became Entergy Arkansas, to subsidize the energy supply to electric customers in Benton. This subsidization of electrical supply continued until 1992, when a contract was entered into with Entergy Arkansas to be the sole supplier of wholesale energy to the City of Benton. The old power plant was torn down at that time.

The customers of Benton Electric enjoyed discounted rates until the expiration of contracts with Entergy Arkansas in March 31, 2007. Prior to the contract expiration, Entergy's representatives notified the City that they would not be submitting a proposal to continue serving wholesale power needs upon expiration of the existing contract. After advertising for proposals, Constellation Energy was chosen as the new provider. This energy group presented the only all-inclusive proposal. The agreement with Constellation Energy allowed the Electric Department to keep rates at the competitive level with other energy providers in the area.

The Benton Public Utilities Commission is currently investigating options for securing a long-term economical energy supply for Benton's electric customers. The electric utility has identified two viable options. Option one would be for Benton to build a new 90-megawatt lignite fired fluidized bed power plant. This would be accomplished through joint action agency between Benton, North Little Rock and Conway, and would most probably be located on the far south side of the city as the lignite coal fields are located just south of the city. It should be noted this type of power plant utilizes clean coal technology. The use of best available emission control technology such as electrostatic precipitators, scrubbers, and efficient combustion technologies would insure that emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides would aid in meeting stringent air pollution control parameters. This plant would be considered a zero discharge facility of liquids from the

combustion process, as the technology for the new plant would also include a mercury removal system. The estimated time to construct a facility such as this would be in the 5-6 year range. Option two would be for Benton to buy ownership in an existing or some other new coal-fired power plant.

Map No. 12  
Electric Utility Service Area



Sources: Arkansas Service Commission and First Electric Cooperative

The Benton Electric Department has adjusted its service area (refer to Map 12) to keep pace with the annexation of new territory over the years. Under State statutory authority, when annexations occur the City has the option of acquiring service to customers from the existing supplier (i.e., Entergy or First Electric Cooperative).

The Electric Department is based at a service center located on Dale Avenue in southwest Benton. At this location, there is enclosed area that will accommodate up to 35 vehicles, as well as storage of inventory. The vehicles are trucks of various functions that handle construction and maintenance of the electrical system. The department has 18 employees, although three (including the department head) are administrative employees. The linemen and technicians are classified as hourly employees.

The Department has completed the installation of a computerized SCADA system that will permit control of field operations and distribution changes from the office on a system wide basis.

The following changes are anticipated for the future:

- Completion of installing automated meter reading equipment;
- Construction of a new substation near the Hurricane Lake area;
- Upgrade of the Benton North Substation with a second transformer;
- Employment of more technically prepared personnel to meet the current and future transmission and distribution needs for the electrical system; and
- Continuing the policy of extending electrical service to new areas as the city expands outward.

4.4. 6.2 Other Electric Utilities - First Electric Cooperative Corp. is responsible for providing electric service in much of the rural area north of the city limits and other areas on the west, south and east. Entergy Arkansas serves much of the rural and incorporated area south and east of the city limits and some other areas on the west and north. Map 12 shows the service areas of all three electric utilities serving the Benton Planning Area.

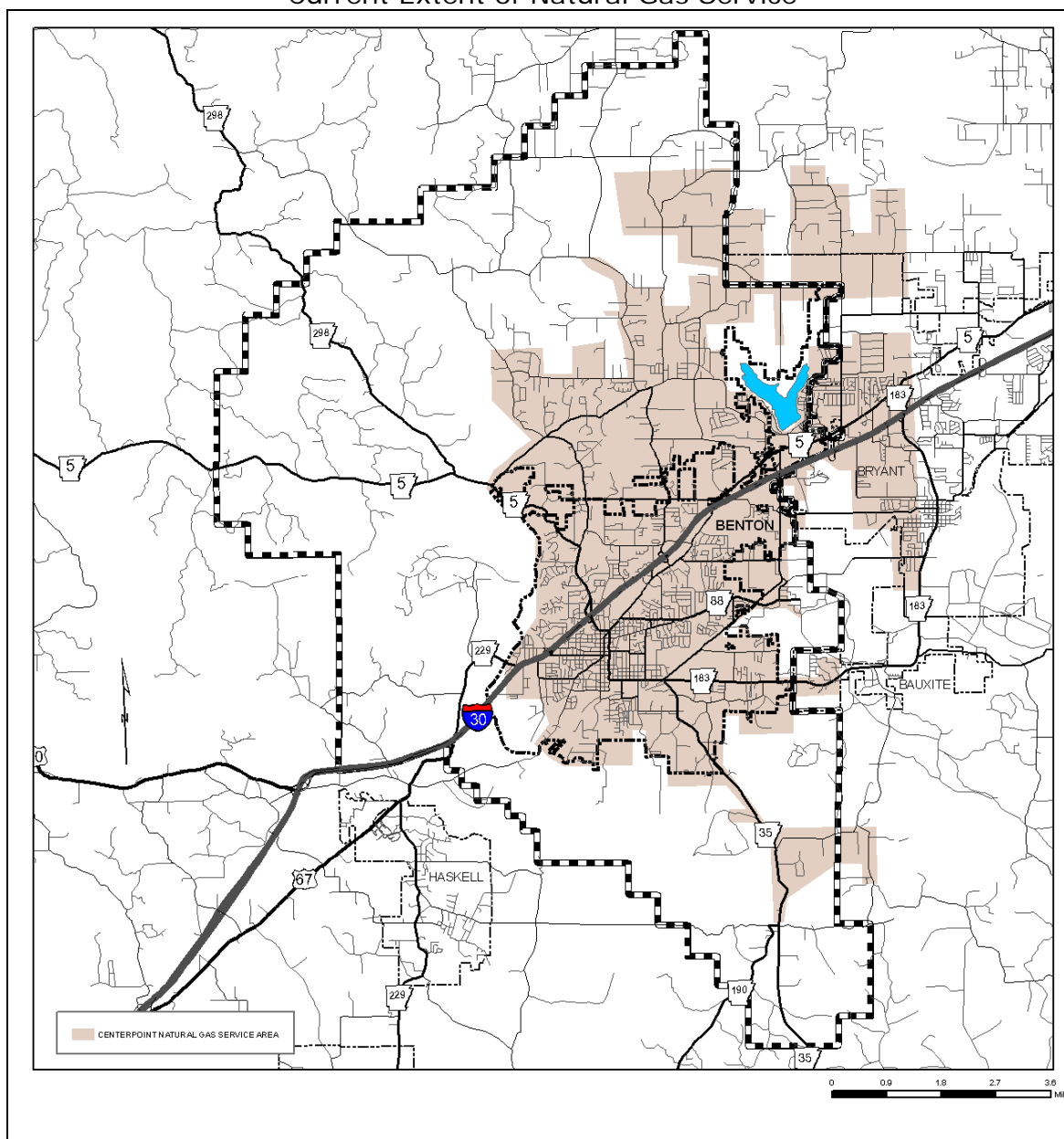
4.4. 6.3 Natural Gas and Propane Services - Although Centerpoint Energy-Arkla is the sole natural gas supplier in Arkansas, their gas lines have not been extended to serve every residence or business. Map 13 shows that natural gas service is not as readily available outside the city limits as it is within the city.<sup>36</sup> The further a location is outside this area, the greater the cost of extending natural gas service. Consequently, locations at some distance from gas mains may not be deemed suitable for subdivision development. Alternatively, some rural subdivisions may be developed with propane or rely solely on electricity.

Propane is an affordable alternative to natural gas, especially in rural areas that are some distance away from a natural gas main. In Saline County, the primary providers of propane gas service are Ferrellgas, Inc. and Synergy Gas Corporation (Cornerstone Propane LP), both of which have offices in Benton.

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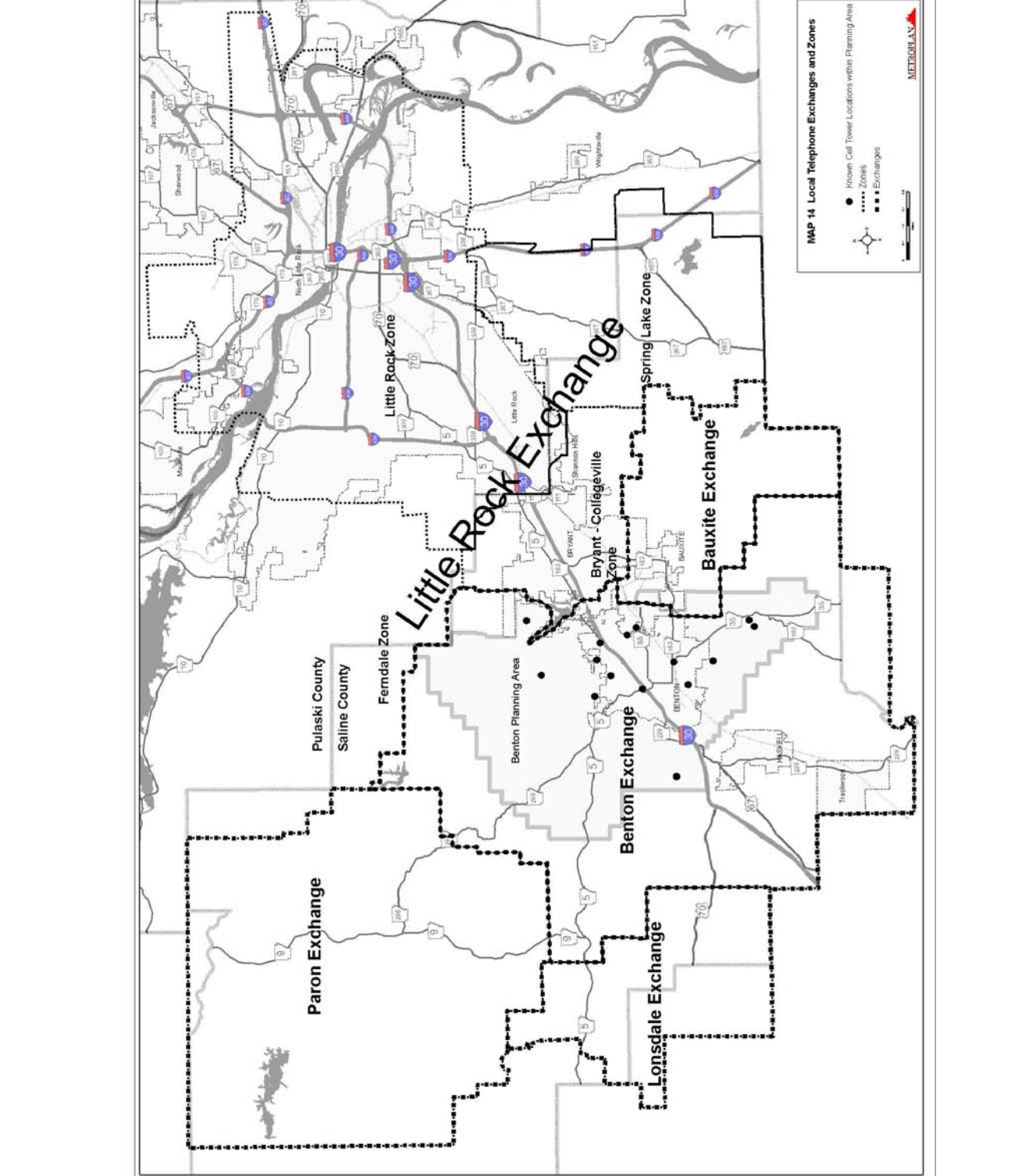
<sup>36</sup> Note: not all areas outside the former Benton planning area with natural gas service are shown on the map.

Map No. 13  
Current Extent of Natural Gas Service



Source: CenterPoint Energy-Arkla (Fall 2005)

**4.4.7 Electronic Communications Facilities and Services** - In recent years, the growth and use of electronic communications and especially digital communications technologies has been remarkable. The long term effects of this communications revolution are not well understood, although it is clearly having significant economic and social effects. Accordingly, it may be important for municipalities to monitor and adapt to changing circumstances brought about by changes in communication technologies and take advantage of emerging opportunities to enhance and protect the local economy and quality of life. This section provides a brief summary of the electronic communications services currently provided in or possibly affecting the Benton Planning Area.

[illegible]



4.4.7.1 Local Wire Line Telephone Service - Although use of wireless mobile phones has become widespread, wire line telephones are still the norm and quite important, especially for business and government because cell phone numbers are not as readily available as wire line phone numbers with a physical address and published in a local telephone directory. The public switched telephone network utilizes public rights-of-way, usually alongside roadways, and sometimes private easements, to locate telephone cables and sometimes fiber optic cables. The telephone companies may use the same portion of the rights-of-way or easement, poles, and other facilities used by the electric power utilities and cable companies. In some areas, telephone cables are buried along with the other utility lines.

Wire line telephones are regulated by the Arkansas Public Service Commission, which approves tariffs and geographical restrictions on local calls. In the Benton area, AT&T Southwest (formerly Southwestern Bell Telephone LP) is the "incumbent" provider of telephone service, although numerous "competing local exchange carriers" (CLECs) are also available.<sup>37</sup> The Benton Exchange, Bauxite Exchange and Bryant-Collegeville Zone of the Little Rock Metropolitan Exchange taken together cover more than the Benton Planning Area. Customers in the Bryant-Collegeville Zone have local dialing service to/from anywhere in the nine zones of the Little Rock Metro Exchange. Customers in the Bauxite and Benton Exchanges have special local exchange rate increments for extended area service between each area. Customers in the Benton Exchange and Lonsdale Exchange (west of Benton) similarly have special local exchange rate increments for extended area service between each area. Customers in the Benton and Bauxite Exchanges may also optionally select "Metroplus" service, whereby for a flat monthly fee calls may be made to/from the Little Rock Metropolitan Exchange without using an area code prefix. The metro exchange includes the Bryant-Collegeville Zone and the Spring Lake Zone (where the East End area of Saline County is located). Map 14 shows the local telephone exchanges and zones in and near the Benton Planning Area.

The net effect of these local tariff rules and rates is that the Benton area has very good local phone service connections with adjacent areas and the Little Rock metropolitan area. The ease with which people can communicate by wire line telephone is beneficial for local households, businesses and government. The existing arrangement helps to integrate the Benton Planning Area into the larger Saline County and metropolitan economy and community.

4.4.7.2 Wireless Telephone Services - Some people have given up wire line telephone service and now rely exclusively on wireless mobile phones due to the convenience of wireless mobile telephones, the ability to make both local and long distance calls without incurring geographic fees, and the cost of having multiple phone numbers. There are many wireless services regulated by the Federal Communications Commission, including:

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<sup>37</sup> State of Arkansas, Public Service Commission.

- 218-219 MHz
- 220 MHz
- 700 MHz Guard Bands
- Advanced Wireless Services (AWS) Spectrum
- Air-Ground
- Amateur
- Aviation
- Basic Exchange Telephone
- Broadband PCS
- Broadband Radio Service (BRS)
- Cellular
- Citizens Band (CB)
- Commercial Operators License Program
- Dedicated Short Range Communications (DSRC)
- Educational Broadband Service (EBS)
- Family Radio Service (FRS)
- General Mobile Radio
- Industrial/Business Radio Pool
- Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)
- Instructional Television Fixed (ITFS)
- Lower 700 MHz
- Low Power Radio Service (LPRS)
- Maritime Mobile
- Medical Implant Communications (MICS)
- Microwave
- Millimeter Wave 70-80-90 GHz
- Multipoint Distribution (MDS/MMDS)
- Multi-Use Radio Service (MURS)
- Narrowband PCS
- Offshore
- Paging
- Personal Locator Beacons (PLB)
- Personal Radio
- Private Land Mobile
- Public Safety
- Radio Control Radio Service (R/C)
- Rural
- Specialized Mobile Radio (SMR)
- Wireless Communications (WCS)
- Wireless Medical Telemetry (WMTS)

Wireless mobile telephones communicate using radio frequency signals via transmitters and receivers located on cell towers. Each cell tower communicates with other cell towers using fiber optic cables or microwave signals. Existing cell tower locations in the Benton Planning Area are shown in Map 14.

In 2002, over 110 million people used wireless phones in the United States.<sup>38</sup> Among the most popular and widely used wireless phone services are Cellular and PCS (Personal Communications Service). Cellular radio telephones (commonly referred to as cell phones) may be either analog or digital, or both. Digital cellular networks may also offer advanced two-way data services. Narrowband PCS is used to provide such services as two-way paging and other text-based services. Broadband PCS services include both voice and advanced two-way data capabilities. Cellular and broadband PCS are comparatively similar in quality, price, value added services, and coverage. Broadband PCS is all digital (although analog is not excluded), while Cellular maintains analog service in addition to providing digital service.

Although not as widely used as cellular and PCS, Specialized Mobile Radio (SMR) is a third type of wireless phone first introduced in 1979 that at first provided mobile communications primarily between dispatchers and vehicle operators. However, when a SMR mobile radio is in interconnected mode it functions as a mobile telephone. Although primarily developed for voice communications, the new digital SMRs allow for data transmission and such services as faxing, two-way paging, inventory tracking, credit card authorization, automatic vehicle location, fleet management, remote database access, and voicemail.

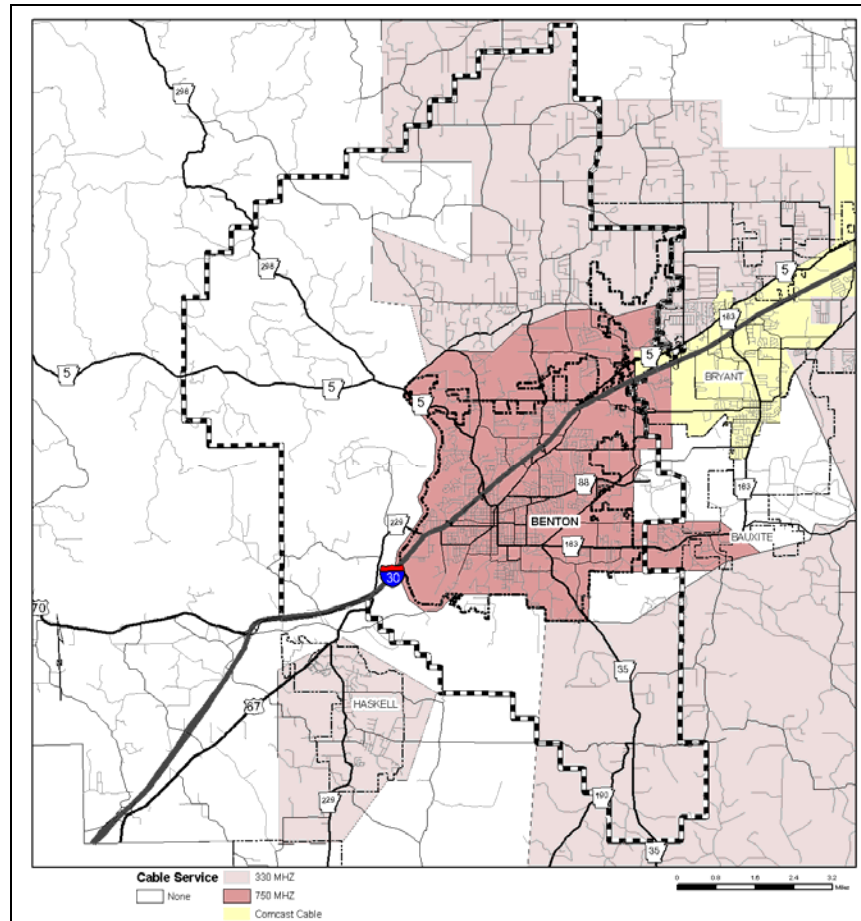
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<sup>38</sup> *Wireless Phone Use in U.S. Government Vehicles*, FMR Bulletin B-2 Motor Vehicle Management, US General Services Administration, March 1, 2002, from <http://www.gsa.gov>.

Paging is a commercial mobile radio service (CMRS) which is interconnected to the public switched telephone network. Traditional commercial paging provides one-way data communications. Commercial paging services began after the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) allocated spectrum in 1949. The long history of regulation since then has resulted in paging services that are geographically licensed based on either Economic Area (EA) or Market Economic Area (MEA) designations. Today, commercial paging has to some extent been supplanted by digital mobile phone handsets that include a paging component or Caller ID, and Narrowband PCS that offers more advanced two-way paging type services.

**4.4.7.3 Subscription Television Services** - Cable and satellite TV are generally affordable, highly competitive and comparable services. Telephone companies may also offer Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) where they also provide broadband Internet service (refer to Section 4.4.6.4).

Map No. 15  
Cable Television Service Areas



Source: Charter Communications, Inc.

Charter Communications, Inc. currently provides cable television in and near the City of Benton. However, their non-exclusive franchise agreement with the City expired on October 13, 2006, and was not renewed. Comcast Cablevision also serves a small portion of the Benton Planning Area near I-30

and Alcoa Road. Map 15 shows the areas where cable TV service is currently available. Customers can choose from various service and price options, with digital service where it is available providing the most complete assortment of channels and highest quality video and audio output. High definition television (HDT) programming is not available through Charter Communications in the Benton area, but could be offered at some future date. A digital video recorder (DVR) could also be made available to those with HDT service. Channel 12 on the cable TV system is reserved for community access and is used by the City to convey news and other information. The Benton Municipal Complex is connected to the cable television system via a fiber optic cable, which is used for Channel 12 and may be used for high-speed Internet access in the future.

Two major satellite television services are readily available in the planning area, namely DIRECTV and DISH Network. Both of these satellite alternatives include local broadcast television channels in the basic service package. DIRECTV and DISH Network are also increasingly providing HDT programming and DVRs.

4.4.7.4 Broadband Internet Services - It was not very long ago that digital facsimile transmissions were a novelty. Fairly soon thereafter fax machines became a nearly universal office device. Today, fax machines are still present, but broadband Internet services are rapidly replacing many of the functions of the fax machine, as well as making many new services possible. The City of Benton has not selected a preferred broadband Internet access technology for the community. In the absence of a municipal preference, private providers of broadband communications services are in competition offering Internet users a variety of high speed Internet access options.

AT&T (formerly SBC) provides digital subscriber line (DSL) Internet service to local telephone customers in Benton. A DSL connection provides users with a high speed Internet connection. This is done over an existing copper wire phone line connection and allows for simultaneous two-way voice access and digital transmission. In order to get DSL service subscribers must be within a cable loop extending up to 14,000 feet from an AT&T wire center. Even then, approximately 20% of AT&T customers within the cable loop cannot get DSL due to problems with the copper wire, fiber optic connections and other impediments. The City of Benton recently signed a non-exclusive franchise agreement with AT&T Arkansas to provide Internet Protocol TV to selected DSL service areas.

In general, DSL download speeds are comparable to downloads using a cable Internet connection. In some cases a cable connection may be slightly faster than DSL. Equipment costs and monthly fees are also comparable between DSL and cable Internet services. However, Charter Communications has not yet introduced cable Internet service as previously planned for those areas with a 750 MHz cable connection (refer to Map 15).<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Refer to *Broadband Internet Services, Chapter 7, Community Services and Facilities, Benton Planning Studies Report*, prepared by Metroplan for the City of Benton, January 10, 2005.

AT&T will also provide dedicated digital transmission lines, such as ISDN and T1 lines that can transmit more data faster than DSL can, but these Internet connections are also more costly than DSL and are usually the choice of major Internet users, such as information based businesses and academic institutions. Fiber optic cable connections are currently in place to the Benton Municipal Complex, City water towers, UALR Benton Center, Saline County Courthouse, Saline County Complex, Saline Memorial Hospital and the offices of a downtown attorney.

Areas without DSL or cable Internet access can obtain a high speed Internet connection through a two-way satellite Internet service. HughesNet (formerly DIRECWAY) is the most common provider of satellite Internet service, although WildBlue, Starband, Skycasters and others provide similar satellite Internet services. While satellite service download transmission speeds are several times that of dial-up access, uploading is significantly slower than downloading. Monthly fees may be comparable to DSL or cable Internet, but equipment costs can in some instances be significantly greater.

Wi-Fi (or Wireless Fidelity) and WiMAX (for Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access) wireless communications standards can provide high speed Internet access for last-mile and "hot zone" coverages. There are at least five Wi-Fi locations in Benton, including the public library, two hotels, a restaurant, and another retailer. In comparison to Wi-Fi, WiMAX –

- does not require line of sight between users and base station,
- allows higher speed downloads,
- serves a larger area (about 30 mile radius),
- provides enough bandwidth to simultaneously support hundreds of businesses and homes with a single base station, and
- can be deployed without the expense of a wired network to backhaul data, unlike Wi-Fi.

Currently, WiMAX would appear to have advantages over Wi-Fi in community wide applications, but the next generation of Wi-Fi may be more like WiMAX.

Many of the U.S. municipalities that have deployed municipal wireless have focused on serving the needs of emergency responders. Small municipalities have often been motivated by a desire to bring inexpensive broadband to communities that are underserved by the incumbent phone carrier. Philadelphia, PA and other cities have hired private Internet service providers to build, finance and operate their municipal wireless systems.

At least two private enterprises are currently installing broadband wireless infrastructure in the Benton area. Arkansas Digital Systems based in Bryant ([www.ardigitalsystems.com](http://www.ardigitalsystems.com)) has placed their transmitter/receiver equipment on water towers, while Hope Engineering ([www.horizonbroadband.net](http://www.horizonbroadband.net)) based in Benton is using cell towers and other locations for their transmitters and receivers. Both firms are offering somewhat similar Internet services to residential and business customers using Motorola's Canopy wireless broadband solutions, which utilize radio frequencies that are unregulated by the FCC. Download speeds using Motorola's Canopy wireless broadband can vary, but reportedly are as fast as DSL, cable and satellite Internet services.

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) allows Internet users to make telephone calls using an existing broadband Internet connection. At present there are over 100 residential VoIP service providers in the U.S. Ordinary satellite VoIP services may suffer from the delay characteristics of satellite data transmission. Telecommunication and cable companies are currently striving to provide enough bandwidth to support residential VoIP services that will be superior to that provided by startup vendors, such as Vonage. Mobile handsets have been marketed that use VoIP and WiFi to access the public switched telephone network.

"Broadband Over Power Line" (BPL) is another communication technology that is in development by electric utilities and technology companies.<sup>40</sup> BPL technology may provide a viable broadband alternative to DSL and cable Internet, if the technical and financial problems can be resolved. The power companies are interested because BPL technology has "triple play" potential, providing customers with video, voice and high speed Internet service through a single near ubiquitous source. It is also hoped that BPL can provide a broadband alternative for rural areas where DSL and Cable service is not available. Technical problems include network interference and routing signals around transformers. Financial problems relate to the need for fiber-optic lines to back haul data and skip disruptive high-voltage lines, as well as the cost of implementation in rural areas with low population density. During the Fall of 2006, Entergy launched a six-month BPL trial program in Little Rock, "to test the technology and its capabilities, validate the economics of deploying BPL and test the ability to use this technology to locate power outages, read electric meters and do remote switching of distribution equipment".<sup>41</sup> All Benton area electric utilities are monitoring progress made in the various BPL pilot projects around the country.

In late 2005, Panasonic began shipping high definition power line communication (HD-PLC) technology. The HD-PLC technology allows the creation of a home network with high-speed transmission of high-definition video, audio, data and voice over pre-existing electrical wiring, and a broadband connection anywhere there is an electric socket. HD-PLC is not affected by interference from short-wave and other radio signals, unlike previous technologies. Suitably equipped household appliances may now be remotely accessed via the Internet using HD-PLC technology.

**4.4.8 Drainage Facilities** - Precipitation that is not absorbed into the ground will runoff surfaces and drain to lower elevations via natural channels and/or manmade drainage facilities. Impermeable surfaces, such as the buildings and paved surfaces that typify urban development, produce more rapid runoff and increase the risk of downstream flooding. Runoff may also contribute to soil erosion and water pollution, especially from automobiles and related facilities, construction sites, contaminated industrial sites, and land exposed to excessive use of pesticides and herbicides. Manmade drainage facilities are designed to channelize runoff away from buildings and paved surfaces, and reduce flooding

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<sup>40</sup> United Power Line Council ([www.uplc.utc.org](http://www.uplc.utc.org)).

<sup>41</sup> Peter Lendrum, Entergy V.P., from United Power Line Council's December 2006 newsletter.

and soil erosion. In the Benton Planning Area, roadway owners (i.e., City of Benton, Saline County, and AHTD), have primary responsibility for constructing and maintaining drainage facilities. Both the City and county are responsible for regulating development so as to reduce water pollution and flooding.

4.4.8.1 Benton Stormwater Facilities - The Benton Street Department is responsible for maintaining city-owned storm drains, which mainly involves keeping the system free from debris and obstruction. Most older parts of Benton have open ditch drainage, although the downtown area and newer subdivisions have enclosed storm sewers with drop inlets. Many improvements to the stormwater system are needed, especially in some older neighborhoods and along roadways that were once county roads.

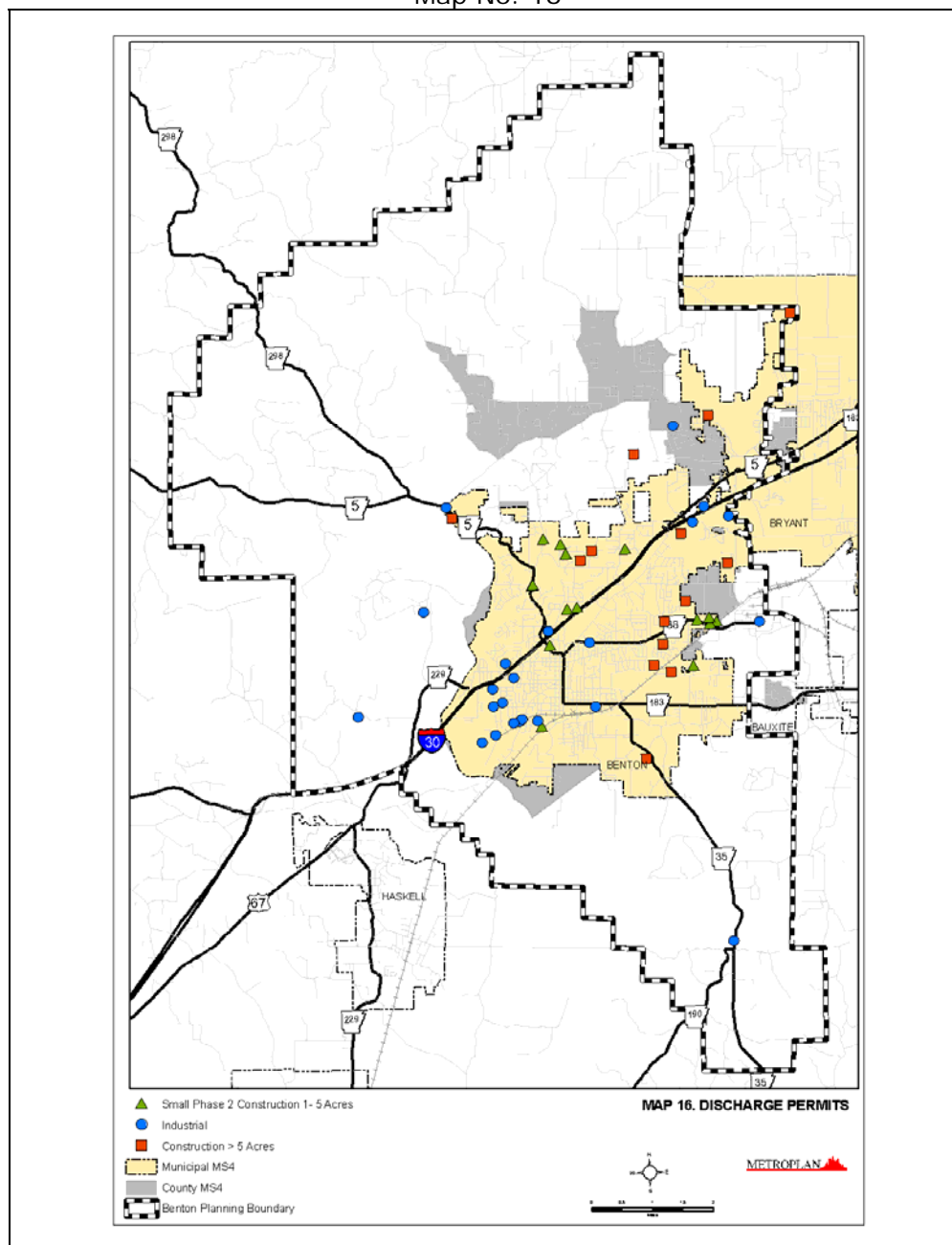
In 2004, the City of Benton was required to obtain a stormwater discharge permit under the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Phase 2 permit program for small municipalities, which is administered by ADEQ. The City has been given a discharge permit and until 2009 to develop a stormwater management plan that addresses – (1) construction runoff, (2) illicit discharge, (3) public education, (4) public involvement, (5) post-construction runoff, and (6) operation of the municipal storm water system.

Federal regulations also require that any construction project disturbing one or more acres must first have a storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) in order to obtain a storm water construction permit from ADEQ. Similarly, some industries must prepare a SWPPP to obtain a storm water permit. At construction sites a permit must be in plain sight with an approved SWPPP in an ADEQ mail box, as well as a rain gauge and devices such as straw bales and mesh netting to reduce the discharge of silt. ADEQ enforcement of storm water discharge regulations at construction sites has increased in recent years, resulting in numerous fines. After 2009, the City will be fined when developer violations are observed by ADEQ inspectors. In February, 2006, Benton adopted a stormwater ordinance that addresses water quality issues, and is currently in the process of seeking public comment on a drainage ordinance that will address potential flooding issues. There are 47 active NPDES storm water discharge permits in the Benton Planning Area as shown in Map 16.

4.4.8.2 Saline County and AHTD Stormwater Facilities – In addition to the City of Benton, Saline County and the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department have NPDES permits under the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Phase 2 regulations and are required to develop a stormwater management plan that addresses the same six elements that Benton must address as noted above (refer to Section 4.4.7.1). However, only certain portions of Saline County outside of Benton and Bryant are subject to the MS4 stormwater regulations (e.g., Salem area) as shown on Map 16.

4.4.9 Pipelines – Various products are transported long distances via pipelines that are typically located underground in urban areas. Warning signs are routinely posted along natural gas and other hazardous material pipeline easements, which are usually cleared but not allowed to develop. Three natural gas pipelines traverse Benton on the southeast running roughly parallel to I-30.

Map No. 16

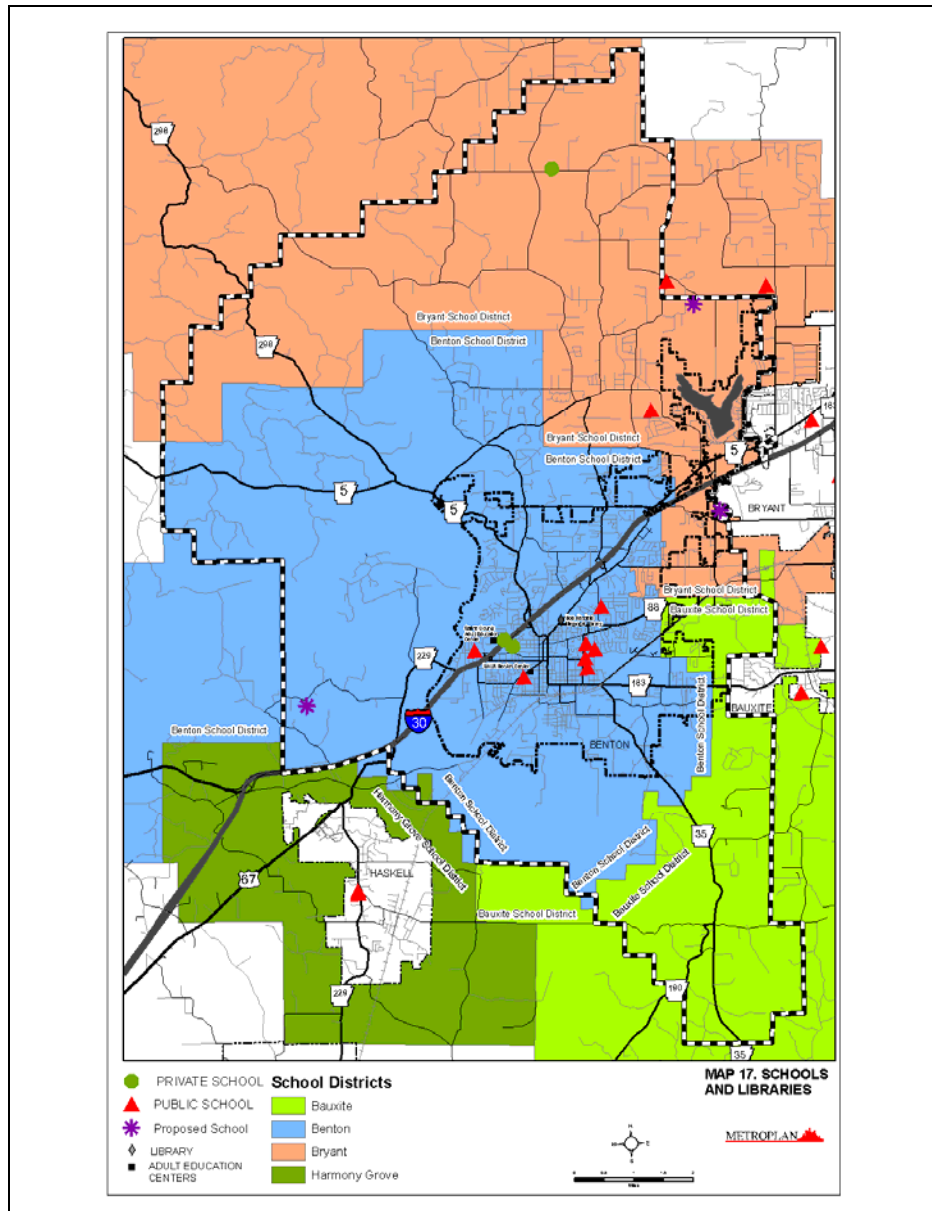


Source: Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality, NPDES Stormwater Program.

#### 4.5 Educational Facilities

The Benton Planning Area is served by four public school districts as illustrated in Map 17. The planning area is also home to a remote campus of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, the main Saline County Library, at least three church sponsored schools, and the Saline County Adult Education Center. In addition, an unknown number of planning area residents attend private pre-school day cares, are home schooled, attend private schools outside the planning area, or are pursuing higher education at facilities outside the planning area or via the Internet.

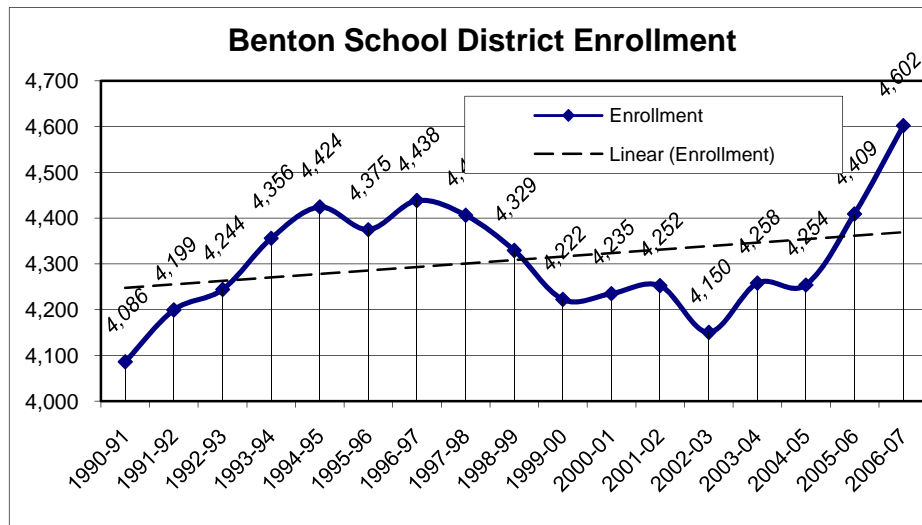
Map No. 17  
Schools and Libraries



Source: Center for Advance Spatial Technologies

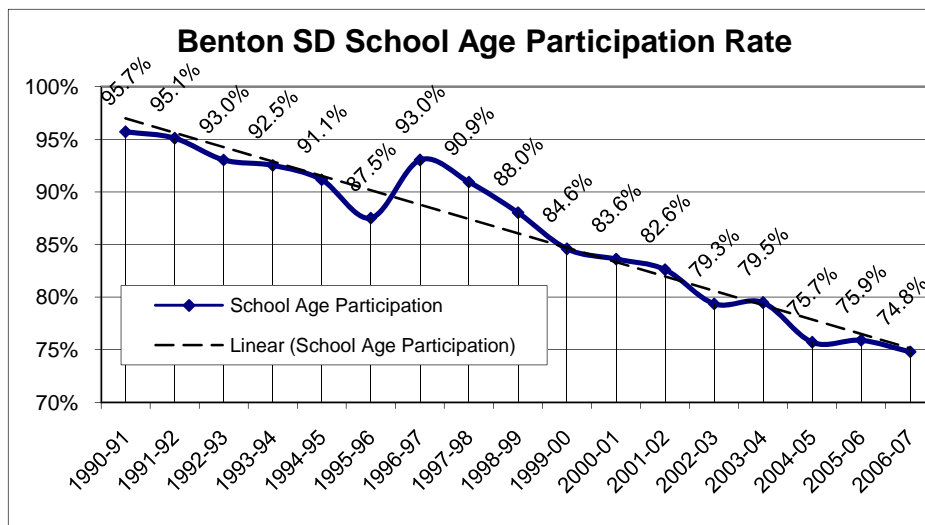
**4.5.1 Benton School District** - The most significant education provider in the planning area is the Benton School District, which as of October 1, 2006 had 4,602 students in four elementary schools, a middle school, a junior high and a senior high school, all located inside the Benton City Limits. Except for a single elementary, all schools are located south of I-30 and four of these schools adjoin each other creating, in effect, one large campus. An Alternative Learning Center and Court Sanction School are also housed at the UALR Benton Center (see Section 4.5.8). The Benton School District extends far to the west of Benton and into Garland County along either side of U.S. 70. Most of the district's service area is, in fact, outside the Benton Planning Area, although the overwhelming majority of its students reside within the Benton City Limits.

Chart No. 15



Sources: Benton School District and Arkansas Department of Education

Chart No. 16



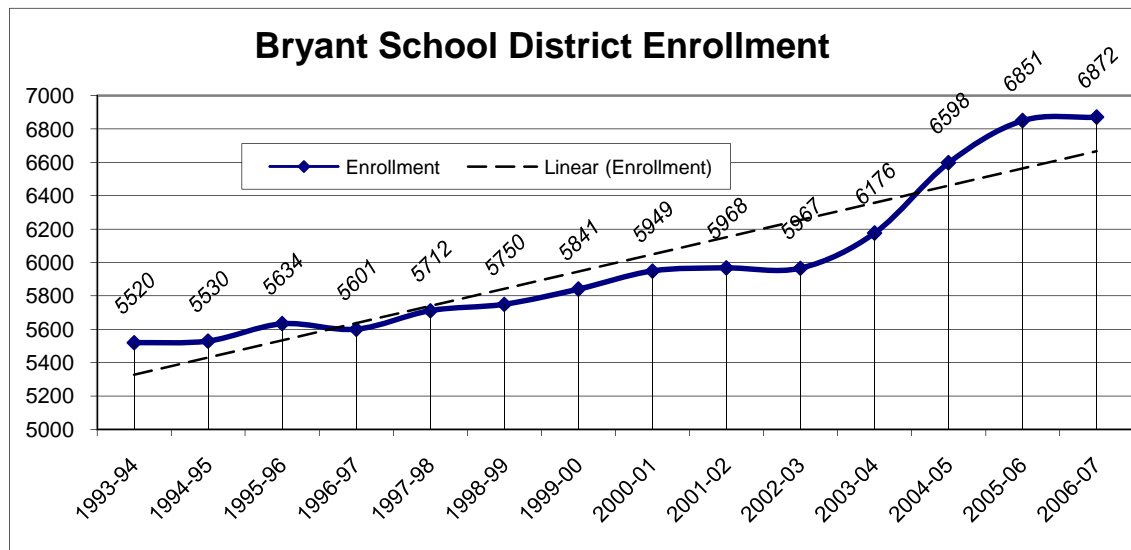
Sources: Decennial Census 1990 and 2000, Metroplan population estimates, Benton School District and Arkansas Department of Education enrollment data

Chart 15 shows that the Benton School District has seen a dramatic upsurge in enrollment since 2002, reversing what had been a decline in enrollment over the previous six to eight years. However, it is not clear whether district enrollment will continue to grow at such a rapid rate in future years. Analysis of district enrollment trends indicates that the public school participation rate among the school age population has been in decline from around 96 percent in 1990 to about 75 percent in 2006 as shown in Chart 16. If this is correct, then the recent growth in enrollment could eventually be replaced by more modest growth or even a decline in enrollment. To-date, the cause of the declining school-age participation rate has not been discerned. The gap between school-age population and enrollment is not explained by reported enrollment data for home schooling nor is it due to enrollment at the accredited private schools in the area. It is possible that enrollment in non-accredited private schools, for

which the state keeps no records, accounts for some of the gap, but this is not verifiable. It is also possible that some children living in the Benton School District are attending private schools outside the area, particularly in nearby Pulaski County. Until the widening gap between enrollment and school age population is resolved, Benton School District enrollment projections should be used with caution.

The Benton School District has been undertaking a construction program due to aging facilities and anticipated enrollment growth, adding and refurbishing space at all seven schools. The District is planning to construct an elementary school at Centennial Valley near W. Jackman Trail. A future property acquisition somewhere north of I-30 between Highway 5 and Congo Road is under consideration. The District has recently purchased 50 acres east of the existing secondary school complex for various types of facilities.

Chart No. 17



Sources: Arkansas Department of Education and Bryant School District

**4.5.2 Bryant School District** - The Bryant School District is the largest in Saline County in both student enrollment and area served, and has grown by over 100 students per year on average over the last 13 years (refer to Chart 17). This growth includes the addition of approximately 250 students when the Paron and Bryant School Districts were consolidated in 2004. Although part of the Bryant School District, Salem Elementary is located well within the Benton Planning Area and just outside the Benton City Limits.

Analysis of Bryant School District enrollment trends indicates that the public school participation rate among the school-age population has fluctuated in recent years between 89 percent and 94 percent.

Due to the growth in student enrollment, the District has undertaken several construction projects including construction of Bethel Middle School located just outside the Benton Planning Area; ongoing construction of a new elementary school on Alcoa Road within the Benton City Limits; and construction of multipurpose buildings at each of the existing elementary schools, including

Salem Elementary. In addition to these new school facilities, District officials have requested that a site suitable for an elementary school be reserved in the Benton Community Facilities Plan adjacent to Wise Road nearby the recently opened Bethel Middle School, which was built with energy efficiency in mind.

4.5.3 Bauxite School District - The Bauxite School District is considerably smaller than both the Bryant and Benton school districts in both student enrollment (e.g., 1,161 in 2005-06) and area served. Although the Bauxite district extends south into Grant County, it has only two schools, an elementary school and a high school, both located within the Bauxite City Limits. The high school was reconstructed following a fire in 2001. District enrollment has been growing by over 40 students per year on average during recent years.

4.5.4 Harmony Grove School District - The Harmony Grove School District has even fewer students than the Bauxite School District (i.e., 848 in 2005-06) and serves a substantially smaller area. The district has three schools, an elementary school, a middle school and a high school, which are all located together at a central campus on Highway 229 in Haskell. District enrollment has fluctuated in recent years, with less than 8 students added per year on average.

4.5.5 Private Schools and Daycares -

4.5.5.1 Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church School in Benton is an accredited parochial school located in an older neighborhood south of I-30. This co-educational elementary and secondary school employs 9.5 teachers for approximately 130 students enrolled in grades K through 8.

4.5.5.2 Calvary Christian Academy located on the frontage road north of I-30 in Benton has been sponsored by the First Pentecostal Church for about 30 years. This co-educational elementary and secondary school employs 4 teachers for about 30 students enrolled in grades 1 through 12.

4.5.5.3 Avilla Christian Academy, located in an unincorporated area north of Benton on Avilla Road east of Ferndale-Congo Road, is sponsored by the Zion Lutheran Church of Avilla. This co-educational preschool and elementary school currently employs 10 teachers for approximately 100 students enrolled in grades PK through 4, but is adding at least one grade each year until grades 5 through 8 are also offered.

4.5.5.4 Daycares - There are at least 10 private preschool daycares in the Benton Planning Area including A Kid's Place, Children's Corner Preschool, Civitan Center, First Baptist Church, First United Methodist Church, Ms. Margaret's Day Care & Preschool, Nonee's World, Rug Rats Preschool, Learning Center Pre-School, and Learning Center Pre-School - Benton South.

4.5.6 Saline County Adult Education Center - Adult education centers were first established in Arkansas during the 1940s to help World War II veterans who never finished high school get a general education diploma (GED). The Saline County Adult Education Center (SCAEC) was established during the 1960s. With the dissolution of county boards of education in 2000, operation of the SCAEC was transferred to Pulaski Technical College and ownership of the SCAEC building was transferred to the Benton School District which is responsible for

facility maintenance. Funding is through the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education, and tuition is free. SCAEC is located on the northern frontage road of I-30 in Benton. In addition to GED preparation and testing, SCAEC provides basic skills, English as a Second Language, and Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE) and computer literacy programs for residents of Saline County and the surrounding area.

As of October 1, 2006, 338 students were enrolled at SCAEC. During the 2005-06 school year, SCAEC served 691 students and 392 of those received 12 or more hours of instruction per week. Each student receives individual instruction and all teachers must be certified. The majority of students receive GEDs, but some students only seek to refresh certain skills (e.g., math) before entering college or technical training (e.g., nursing). No transportation or meals are provided, reducing costs. The majority of students are aged 25 to 40 years. SCAEC will refer students needing housing, jobs and social services to a network of local contacts in the Benton area. Students scoring 600 or more on the GED receive a full tuition scholarship at Pulaski Tech.

4.5.7 Saline County Career Center - Although located outside the Benton Planning Area, the Saline County Career Center (SCCC) was opened by Pulaski Tech in 2002 at the former Alcoa Reynolds campus in Bauxite on Highway 183. The SCCC currently provides secondary career programs for high school students, as well as technical programs for the general population in automotive technology, information technology, cosmetology and medical professions.

4.5.8 UALR Benton Center - The University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) has been providing post-secondary education in Benton since 1975. Initially, UALR provided night classes at Benton High School. In 1995, UALR opened a remote campus at the old Benton High School on River Street after the building was rehabilitated by the Saline County Educational Development Association. Each year since 1975, the UALR Benton Center has had at least 500 students enrolled. Currently, all the required lower-division (freshman and sophomore) courses are offered, as is an Associate Degree in General Studies. Students can also take the first year of courses leading to a Nursing (RN) Degree, and other upper-division courses are also available. In the next few years, new course offerings are expected to increase educational opportunities for both lower- and upper-division students attending the UALR Benton Center.

4.5.9 Saline County Library - The Bob Herzfeld Memorial Library is a new and entirely modern 34,000 square foot library located on Smithers Drive near Military Road in Benton. It is the main library of the Saline County Library System (SCLS), which includes a branch library in Bryant. The two libraries currently have 24 fulltime employees, including four with a Master's Degree in Library Science. SCLS operates under the authority of a five member Board of Trustees appointed by the Saline County Quorum Court. The Bob Herzfeld Memorial Library is one of at least five Wi-Fi locations in Benton (refer to Section 4.4.7.4). Charts 18 and 19 show total patronage and circulation of library materials by year for each of the two Saline County libraries.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Source: Bob Herzfeld Memorial Library

Chart No. 18

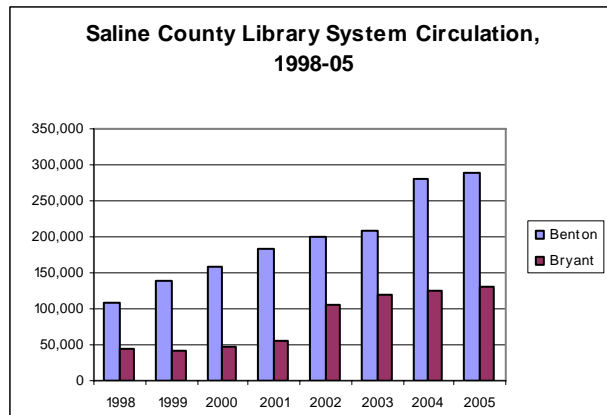
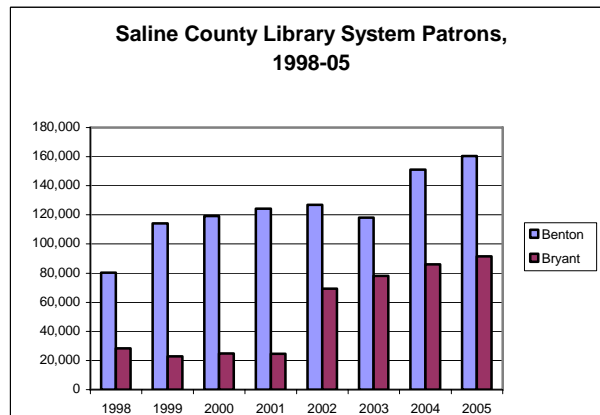


Chart No. 19



## 4.6 Healthcare and Social Service Facilities

The area has many social service providers and a variety of healthcare facilities.

**4.6.1 Abba Adoption** is a limited liability company with an office on Sevier Street that provides adoption services, placement counseling for birthparents, a maternity home, abortion counseling, parenting classes, assistance with accessing community resources, help in choosing an adoptive family, spiritual help and lifetime counseling.

**4.6.2 Arkansas Rehabilitation Services** is part of a federally mandated and funded state program to provide people with disabilities the tools necessary to achieve employment and full integration in society. The Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) Field Program operates statewide out of 20 offices located in key cities, including Benton, and provides counseling, education training and other services to persons with physical, mental, cognitive or sensory disabilities. The Benton ARS Field Office is located on Ferguson Drive near Military Road.

**4.6.3 The Arkansas Workforce Center** is co-located with the CADC's Family Development office on East Street in downtown Benton (see Section 4.6.7). The Arkansas Department of Workforce Services provides labor market information, case management, career counseling, resume development services, job search assistance, and classroom training assistance for low-income patrons.

**4.6.4 The Benton Area Chamber of Commerce** is located north of downtown at the corner of Carpenter and Market Streets. The Chamber is a voluntary association that promotes the business interests of its members and helps develop the local economy by assembling and disseminating factual information about the area.

**4.6.5 The Benton Public Housing Authority (BPHA)** is largely funded through programs administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The BPHA operates the 89 unit Whispering Pines public housing complex for low-income elderly and disabled persons located near the old Saline County Airport. The BPHA also developed the Civitan Apartments which are operated by Civitan Services (see Section 4.6.9), and rents 28 dispersed single-family detached dwellings to low-income families. Through the

Section 32 homeownership program, 13 of these public housing units are being sold to low-income, first time homebuyers. Numerous other low-income households in the area rely on Section 8 subsidized housing assistance. The Section 8 housing vouchers may be used for either mortgage or rental housing payments on behalf of low-income households.

4.6.6 C-JCOHN is located on Elm Street south of downtown, the Churches Joint Council on Human Needs assists persons and families in need with donated food and clothing, assistance in paying for medications and utilities, and referrals to other agencies.

4.6.7 The Central Arkansas Development Council (CADC) was established during the 1960s as a community action agency in the War on Poverty and is based in Benton serving a 12 county area in central and south central Arkansas. CADC currently provides the following services and programs in the Benton area:

- a food distribution program
- community training and technical assistance
- economic literacy training
- family development assistance
- Benton Head Start
- home energy assistance and weatherization
- housing services
- matched savings through individual development accounts

- micro-enterprise development
- nutrition education
- one stop career development center
- senior adult program
- single parent scholarship fund
- summer feeding program
- transportation services through the South Central Arkansas Transit (SCAT) and Greyhound programs (see Section 4.6.11)

The purpose of these CADC programs is to help low income people become more self-sufficient and own a stake in their community. CADC programs in Benton are housed in facilities at five different locations:

4.6.7.1 The CADC Administration office is on Gaunt Street.

4.6.7.2 The Family Development office is on South East Street.

4.6.7.3 The Head Start office is on Dixie Street.

4.6.7.4 The Senior Adult Center is on Southwest Fourth Street.

4.6.7.5 The South Central Arkansas Transit office is on Walnut Street.

4.6.8 The Christian Community Care Clinic is a private "501c3" non-profit charitable health and dental clinic located on South Street. Formed in 1999, the clinic is staffed by volunteers and provides medical and dental care to uninsured area residents two evenings each month. The City of Benton is donating the old Benton City Hall building to the clinic and has allocated nearly \$319,000 for its renovation. The clinic's current location will be kept open to provide dental care.

4.6.9 Civitan Services is a private "501c3" non-profit charitable organization, is separate from the Civitan Club, and operates three facilities in Benton.

4.6.9.1 The Civitan Center is located near the Boys and Girls Club on Cox Street and has provided assistance to people with developmental disabilities since 1970. The center has been enlarged several times. Current services

include a preschool program, adult day services, and community services to support independent living and employment.

4.6.9.2 The Civitan Apartments are on Bird Street near the old Saline County Airport and provides housing for the elderly and persons with disabilities.

4.6.9.3 The Civitan Group Home is located on Hudson Street, and provides HUD subsidized housing and assistance for the developmentally disabled.

4.6.10 Counseling Clinic, Inc. (CCI) is a private "501c3" non-profit community mental health center serving the citizens of Saline County. Founded in 1973, CCI provides a wide range of behavioral healthcare services. Currently, the clinic provides outpatient mental health services, outpatient substance abuse services, youth services, a psycho-social program for mentally ill adults called "Stride House", a comprehensive inpatient treatment program for senior adults called "Generations", and treatment for psychological, psychiatric, substance abuse, emotional and other conditions. CCI is located on Sevier Street at the eastern edge of downtown Benton in two buildings totaling about 14,000 square feet, and is currently adding approximately 7,000 square feet for administrative offices and youth services.

4.6.11 Greyhound Bus Service – Although Benton does not have a bus station, the Greyhound bus currently stops three times each day at the Pilot Travel Center at 7801 Alcoa Road which is between Highway 5 (North) and I-30. The current schedule has the bus departing for Little Rock twice each morning (at 5:05 and 9:00 AM) and arriving from Little Rock once each evening (at 6:15 PM). Tickets may be purchased by phone, online, via a travel agency, or at Greyhound Stations, but are not sold at the Pilot Travel Center. Assistance with paying bus fares is available through the CADC (refer to Section 4.6.7).

4.6.12 Habitat for Humanity of Saline County is a Benton based non-profit, ecumenical Christian organization that works to build and renovate affordable housing for people in need. Houses are sold to "sweat equity" partners with no interest charged. Mortgage payments go into a revolving fund used to build more houses, which are built with donated capital and materials by partner families and other volunteers. During 2006, Habitat for Humanity of Saline County built 5 homes, 4 of which are in Benton.

4.6.13 The New Beginnings Pregnancy Resource Center is located on W. Maple Street and is sponsored by the Central Baptist Association. The center provides free pregnancy tests, maternity and baby clothes, other baby items, parenting classes, and help accessing other available resources in Saline County.

4.6.14 The Parent Center of Benton Public Schools is located on River Street next to the Benton School District Administration Building. The center provides a variety of information and materials to assist parents of K-12 students enrolled in the Benton School District.

4.6.15 Rivendell Behavioral Health Services is a private psychiatric hospital for children located south of Hurricane Lake near Highway 5 (North). The for-profit hospital has a total of 77 beds and provides a full range of mental health services for children and adolescents, including acute psychiatric hospitalization,

adult services, long-term hospital-based residential treatment, partial hospitalization, traditional and school-based outpatient service, and intensive family services. Through its sister company, AltaCare, Rivendell provides educational day treatment for students unable to function in public schools.

4.6.16 Saline Memorial Hospital (SMH) was a county owned and operated facility until 1996, when it became a private "501c3" non-profit with facilities leased from Saline County. A county ordinance prohibits sale of the hospital except by public referendum. The hospital is located north of downtown near I-30. Currently, Saline Memorial has 167 beds and provides a wide range of inpatient and outpatient services utilizing over 150 active and consulting physicians. The hospital campus has nearly 400,000 sq. ft. of inpatient and outpatient facilities including a new state-of-the-art surgery center, breast imaging center, expansions in the ob/nursery areas, new progressive care unit, separate home health and hospice units, and two medical office buildings. Approximately, 20 percent of emergency department patients do not require emergency care and lack the financial means to pay for the health services they receive. Hospital expansion plans include an in-patient hospice facility and an expanded emergency department that will include a new ambulance drop-off point, better patient access and quicker flow-through. In January, 2006, SMH received an exclusive franchise to operate an ambulance service in Benton (see Section 4.8).

4.6.17 The Salvation Army Shelter is located on Main Street in downtown Benton. The Salvation Army provides people in need with temporary shelter, assistance in paying for utilities, miscellaneous household items, and other assistance.

#### 4.7 Cultural, Historical and Recreational Facilities

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The Benton area has numerous cultural, historical and recreational facilities available to the public including public parks and other facilities.

4.7.1 Benton Parks and Recreation - Even though park system facilities in Benton have remained virtually the same in number and location for the past decade there has been a refreshing improvement in their appearance, utility and maintenance. The Benton Parks and Recreation Commission was created in 2004 to operate and manage the City parks and recreation programs. The Parks Department is funded through a 1/4 cent portion of the City's general sales tax. A temporary (6-year) 1.5% sales tax on hotel and restaurant receipts approved in 2005 may also be used for proposed park system improvements, as well as any projects proposed by the newly created Benton Advertising and Promotion Commission.

4.7.1.1 Tyndall Park is at Fourth and Sevier Streets on 24.5 acres. Border Street separates the park from the Benton High School campus. The east side of the park is traversed by landscaped creek banks with an attractive foot bridge and a 500 seat amphitheatre. The Gene Moss Building includes the Parks Department administrative office and an indoor recreation/meeting hall. Additional facilities include:

Athletic:

- Five softball fields, bleachers, scoreboards, and concession stand
- Skate board park
- Four tennis courts
- Four basketball courts
- 3/8 mile walking trail
- Playground equipment

Passive:

- Three picnic pavilions w/cooking facilities
- Three restrooms
- Open space with trees, benches and tables
- Paved parking areas
- Amphitheatre

4.7.1.2 Ralph Bunche Park is south of the railroad between Clark and Reed Streets on 2.41 acres. Due to an elevation change there are upper and lower sections to the park that provide scenic views to the north. Facilities include:

Athletic:

- Four basketball courts
- Play gym
- Softball field

Passive:

- Picnic pavilion
- Paved parking area
- Restrooms

4.7.1.3 Bernard Holland Park is located near I-30 and at the southern end of the old Saline County airport on 24.41 acres with access from the north and east. Facilities include:

Athletic:

- Six baseball/softball fields with scoreboards, bleachers, concession stand and other complimentary facilities

Passive:

- Restrooms
- Large paved parking area
- Facility operation is assisted by the Optimists Club

4.7.1.4 Sunset Lake Park is located between I-30 and Bernard Holland Park with access from Henry Street. The lake covers approximately 50 acres and is stocked by the Arkansas Game and Fish Department. The park provides bank fishing, has an accessible fishing pier, and hosts a "Hooked on Fishing, Not Drugs" program. Elderly participants are brought to the fishing pier from the Senior Center. The park also has a walking trail around the lake.

4.7.1.5 River Front Park is on the bank of the Saline River east of I-30 on approximately 300 acres. The park surrounds the Chenault Reservoir and is undeveloped at this time.

4.7.1.6 Lyle Park is on the bank of the Saline River upstream from I-30 at the west end of Lyledale Road on 4.72 acres. The park has a paved parking area and a picnic pavilion. The site provides a good view of a wide section of the Saline River and has a concrete ramp providing boat access to the Saline River. There is ample parking for vehicles and boat trailers. However, Lyledale Road has a very steep grade which could make it difficult for an overloaded vehicle to exit the park.

4.7.1.7 Lake Norrell is a municipal water reservoir, located outside the Benton Planning Area at the north end of Lake Norrell Road approximately seven miles north of Benton. The lake covers about 154 acres. There is a paved

parking lot with boat ramp access to the lake. The Benton Police Department uses the lake for training in water rescue techniques. The lake affords fishing, water sports and scenic beauty.

4.7.1.8 DeSoto Park is located at the intersection of Carpenter and Military roads on a quarter acre site. The site has a park name sign and landscaping.

4.7.1.9 Bart Owens Memorial Park is located on a downtown corner lot northwest of the intersection Main and South streets. The City is currently negotiating ownership of the park. A local civic group has offered to maintain the park under public ownership.

4.7.1.10 Benton Parks Master Plan - In 2000, Carter Burgess consultants published the *Benton, Arkansas, Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*. The plan provides an assessment of Benton's parks facilities relative to national recreation and park association standards; and incorporates the *...inventory, standards analysis and needs assessment, into an action plan to direct the growth, development, and maintenance of the parks, recreation and open space system in Benton for the next five to ten years...*<sup>43</sup> The plan connects recreational and other facilities with a network of proposed pedestrian (and bikeway) circulation routes. The parks plan has not been updated or expanded outside the city limits, except to include Lake Norrell and a proposed green belt upriver to the lake (refer to Map 18).

The pedestrian circulation routes included in the parks plan led to the development of a proposed multi-use trail system for the planning area linking existing and planned residential neighborhoods, schools, public parks and commercial centers. Where appropriate, multi-use trails would also buffer riparian areas along sensitive streams (refer to Section 3.3.3).

During the first quarter of 2007, the Benton Parks Commission proposed the acquisition of a large park site for a proposed youth athletic complex located on land adjacent to the Saline River, I-30 and Highway 67. A park site development plan was developed by ETC Engineers, Inc. A public referendum to fund development of the proposed park site failed to receive sufficient voter support on April 10, 2007.

#### 4.7.2 Other Public/Community Parks -

4.7.2.1 Riverside Park is located west of Benton on the North Fork of the Saline River at Highway 5 (West). The park was created by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission in partnership with Riverside Grocery which is adjacent to and provides access to the park. This public park has concrete picnic tables and provides river access for small watercraft such as canoes.

4.7.2.2 Wess Grant Community Park is located north of Benton and east of Congo Road on Avilla Heights Road and is operated by the Salem Ballpark Association. The park features baseball and softball fields with bleachers,

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<sup>43</sup> *Benton, Arkansas, Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*, April 2000, Carter Burgess.

restrooms, scoreboards, and other facilities. Also located at the park is the Salem Community Center building and an unpaved parking area.

#### 4.7.3 Other Civic, Cultural and Recreational Facilities -

4.7.3.1 The Benton Future Panthers, Inc. is a private non-profit organization that sponsors a seasonal football and cheerleader program for 4<sup>th</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> grade students. Their well maintained facility is located on Longhills Road east of Salt Creek. The football field includes bleachers and restrooms, and the facility is gated to discourage vandalism when not in use.

4.7.3.2 The Boys & Girls Club of Saline County is located on Cox Street near the Angie Grant Elementary School and Benton High School. The club provides youth with a place to go after school where they can obtain computer instruction and classroom tutoring, as well as participate in group activities such as basketball, soccer and game tables.

4.7.3.3 There are approximately 85 churches in the planning area representing at least 15 Christian denominations. At present, no other religions are known to have established any places of worship in the Benton area.

4.7.3.4 Cinemark Tinseltown USA is a commercial movie theater with 14 screens that was built several years ago near I-30. No other movie theaters are located in the Benton area, although there are numerous locations where videos and DVD movies may be rented.

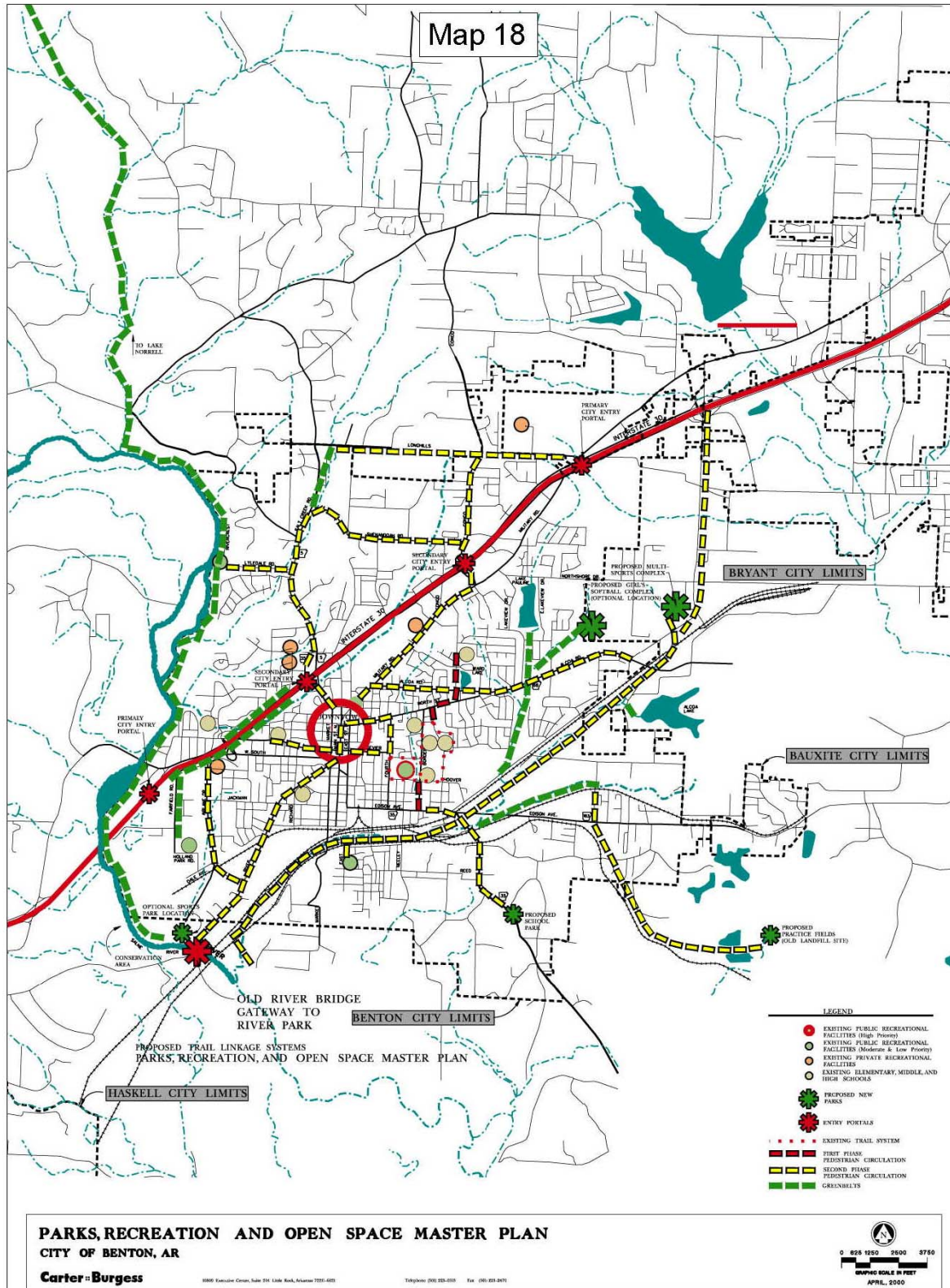
4.7.3.5 Over two dozen Civic Clubs are located in Benton, including:

- Art Guild of Saline County
- Benton Athletic Booster Club
- Benton-Bauxite Rotary Club
- Benton Civitan Club
- Benton Kiwanis Club
- Benton Lions Club
- Benton Lodge #34, F&A Masons
- Benton Optimist Club
- Business & Professional Women Club
- Crestomath Club
- Daughters of the American Revolution
- Dixie Car Club
- Eastern Star
- Golden 'K' Kiwanis Club

- Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Saline Lodge #174
- Junior Auxiliary of Benton
- Junior Fortnightly Club
- Knights of Columbus, Council #9396
- Panther Booster Club
- Razorback Club
- Riverdale Garden Club
- Saline County Boys & Girls Club
- Talisman Club
- Tuesday Club
- Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 2256
- Weight Watchers
- Woodmen of the World, Lodge #168

4.7.3.6 The C. W. Lewis Stadium is located south of the First Baptist Church on the edge of downtown Benton between the UALR Benton Center (former Benton High School) and Market Street. The stadium is owned and operated by the Benton School District, and is used mainly for high school and junior high football games. High School and Junior High basketball, volleyball, baseball, softball, soccer, track and other competitive events are hosted at facilities located at/near Benton High School. Reserved seating and season passes to student athletic events may be purchased by the general public.

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan



Source: Carter & Burgess, Little Rock, Arkansas.



4.7.3.7 The Long Hills Country Club is located outside the city limits on Longhills Road next to Highway 5 (North). The county club opened in 1955 and is still the only golf course located in the Benton Planning Area. The 18-hole, par 72 golf course is semi-private, has a 70.2 rating and is described as "a challenging layout that is still fairly easy to walk". The course has no bunkers and the fairways are tight. At present, there are no publicly owned golf courses anywhere in Saline County.

4.7.3.8 The Market Street Events Center is located in a former storefront in downtown Benton, the Market Street Events Center opened for business in February 2006. This privately owned facility includes a kitchen and restrooms, and may be leased for social events such as civic meetings and wedding receptions.

4.7.3.9 Numerous Private Fitness Facilities are located in the Benton area including the Fitness Unlimited on Highway 35 north of I-30 which covers 6.7 acres and has a 35,000 square foot adult health and fitness facility and an additional 25,000 square foot Kidsports facility. Other private fitness facilities include the Arkansas Martial Arts Academy, Shuri-Te Academy of Martial Arts, Turquoise Tree Yoga Center, Extreme Blendz, Curves For Women, John's Gym, Fredric's Salon, No Limits Fitness Center, and Martial Arts Research Systems. Some area hotels also provide fitness facilities for their guests. At present, there are no similar fitness facilities that are publicly owned and available to the general public.

4.7.3.10 The Saline County Fair is located next to I-30 at the north end of the old Saline County Airport. The fairgrounds host the annual county fair following Labor Day each year. At other times the fairgrounds host local, regional, statewide and even some national events such as horse shows, bull rides, high school rodeos, dog shows, arts and crafts shows, flower and garden shows, and even flea markets. Saline County leases the former site of the Benton Armory of the Arkansas National Guard to the non-profit Saline County Fair Association, which has acquired title to some smaller adjacent parcels. On-site parking is limited and sometimes inadequate. The existing fairgrounds are also reportedly inadequate to accommodate significant new or expanded facilities.

#### 4.7.4 Historic Sites, Buildings and Structures -

4.7.4.1 The Benton Athletic Memorial Museum is located next to Benton High School and is open to the general public at scheduled times. The 2,800 square foot building houses over 475 trophies; a history of the High School; a current history of the Junior High Warriors; histories of band programs, cheerleaders and pep squads; and academic achievements. Panther basketball, football and homecoming films dating back to 1957 may be viewed.

4.7.4.2 Approximately 30 Cemeteries are located in the Benton area, with most being small cemeteries or family burial sites. The largest active cemetery is Rosemont Memorial Park on Military Road near Saline Memorial

Hospital. In addition, there is at least one native Indian mound archeological site in the Benton area at an undisclosed location.

4.7.4.3 The Gann Museum was originally used as the medical office of Dr. Dewell Gann, Jr. and is the only known building in the world constructed of bauxite. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. Dr. Gann's house is located next door to the Gann Building and was placed on the National Historic Register in 1976. The Gann Building was donated to the City of Benton in 1946 and was used as a municipal library for 20 years. In 1980 the Gann Museum of Saline County was founded and a Historic Commission was established to oversee its operation. The museum is housed in the Gann Building and sponsors summer activities for children, an oral history program, social and cultural history exhibits, and the acquisition and preservation of significant archival and artifact collections, including a collection of the locally produced Niloak Pottery, made famous for its "mission swirl" and association with the 1930's arts and crafts movement. The Gann Building is located on Market Street in downtown Benton and is open to the public at scheduled times.

4.7.4.4 The Gann Row Historic District is located south of downtown Benton, and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999. This small historic district of Craftsman and folk Victorian-style structures is bounded by Pine, Market, Maple and Main Streets.

4.7.4.5 The Old River Bridge, originally built in 1889, is in disrepair and has been closed for many years. It was built just downstream from a natural ford of the Saline River on the original route of the Old Southwest Trail. That route came to be known as Military Road, and the segment from downtown to the river as River Street. The earliest Benton settlement was established by William Lockhart in 1815 where the trail and river met. The bridge was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1977 and was included in opening credits of the 1996 film *Sling Blade*. Although federal transportation enhancement funds were initially sought to improve the bridge for pedestrian use, those funds were instead used to fund the downtown streetscape project, due in part to the relatively high cost of bridge rehabilitation.

4.7.4.6 The Royal Theater has been in constant operation in downtown Benton since the 1920s. It was initially called the IMP (Independent Motion Pictures) Theater. In 1948 and 1949 the owners acquired the neon sign from the Royal Theater in Little Rock and remodeled the building's facade and roof. In 1996 the building was sold to comedian/actor Jerry Van Dyke who opened an old fashioned Soda Shoppe next door. Movies were shown at the Royal Theater until 2000, when Van Dyke gave the theatre to a community theatre group that took the name Royal Players. The movie screen and projectors have been removed and main auditorium and balcony converted to live theater use. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2003. Additional renovations are ongoing. The Royal Theater is on South Market and the Soda Shoppe is still in operation.

4.7.4.7 Saline County Courthouse was built in 1902, replacing an earlier courthouse building on the same site. Located between Market and Main

Streets in downtown Benton, the Courthouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976. During the 1990s the Courthouse was renovated and enlarged to include a north wing for the Sheriff Department.

4.7.4.8 Saline County History and Heritage Society (SCHHS) was formed in 1986 and operates an Archives and Family Research Center located on Market Street in downtown Benton catering to history enthusiasts, genealogists and other researchers. The SCHHS also publishes a bi-annual periodical, *The Saline*, and operates a bookstore with back issues of *The Saline* and numerous other historical books and records.

4.7.4.9 Shoppach House located at 508 N. Main Street is the oldest house in Benton. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. Most notably, it was used as the headquarters for Union troops garrisoned at Fort Bussy during the Civil War. The fort was located near the intersection of Carpenter and Military Roads where Walgreen's Drug Store now stands.

4.7.4.10 Other buildings on the National Register of Historic Places<sup>44</sup> include:

- The J. W. Clary and Ann Lowe House at 305 N. East Street,
- The Hester-Lenz House at 905 Highway 5 (North), and
- The Dr. James Wyatt Walton House at 301 W. Sevier Street.

## 4.8 Other Government Buildings and Facilities

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Government buildings are often clustered near each other, such as in Benton's central business district, along Edison Avenue and near the old Saline County Airport.

4.8.1 AHTD District 6 Benton Garage is located outside the city limits approximately one-quarter mile south of I-30 on Highway 67.

4.8.2 Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services is located at 1603 Edison Avenue next to the District Court of Saline County (see Section 4.8.8). The ADHHS provides economic and medical services including: children and family services, Medicaid, food stamps, transition employment services, child abuse investigations and foster care.

4.8.3 Benton Animal Shelter is located at the end of Willow Street near the U.P. railroad opposite the wastewater treatment plant. Animal Control enforces the municipal leash law for dogs. Of the animals processed through the shelter annually, approximately 1,100 (80%) are dogs and 275 (20%) are cats. About 20% of the animals are reunited with their owners, 20% are adopted, and the remaining 60% are euthanized. An adoption fee is used to defray the cost of getting pets spayed or neutered. Animal Control is also responsible for collecting and disposing of any animal carcasses found within the city limits. Although there are no leash laws in unincorporated areas of the county, the Humane Society of Saline County also operates a dog and cat adoption program from an animal shelter located in Bauxite that includes a spay/neuter clinic.

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<sup>44</sup> While the National Register may provide some tax incentives and grant possibilities, it is an honorary distinction with no obligation to the owner to maintain the historic structure.

- 4.8.4 Benton Municipal Complex is located at 114 South East Street in downtown Benton and houses the City Council Chambers, City Administration, Community Development Department, Police Department and various other City offices.
- 4.8.5 Benton School District Central Facilities are located near the UALR Benton Center (formerly Benton High School). The Cate Administration Building is located on River Street and houses the Superintendent and other school district administrative offices. The Maintenance Department and Cafeteria Services are located in separate buildings behind the UALR Benton Center near C.W. Lewis Stadium. The Transportation Department office, bus barn and maintenance facility are located southeast of the stadium at the corner of Market and Pine Streets. As of December 2006, the district had a total of 33 school buses.
- 4.8.6 Benton Street Department is based south of downtown on Hazel Street near the railroad, and is responsible for the operation and maintenance of all city-owned streets, bridges and traffic control devices in Benton. The Street Department is also responsible for maintaining the city-owned stormwater drainage system (refer to Section 4.4.8.1).
- 4.8.7 Child Support Enforcement is located at the Saline County Courthouse. The Circuit Court has an office that coordinates child support enforcement and oversees the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). CASA provides community volunteers to work on behalf of abused and neglected children involved in the court system and undertake activities necessary for their health, safety and welfare. CASA is co-located with the Saline County Office of Emergency Management in downtown Benton on South Main Street.
- 4.8.8 Benton Division of the Saline County District Court is located at 1605 Edison Avenue along with the Cooperative Extension Service. District Courts (formerly known as Municipal Courts) have jurisdiction over misdemeanor cases, preliminary felony cases and civil cases in matters of less than \$5,000. Also located at this address are the Saline County Veteran's Office and the University of Arkansas' Cooperative Extension Service (see Section 4.8.14).
- 4.8.9 Saline County Courthouse is located in downtown Benton between Market and Main Streets. The County Judge, Personnel Office, Sheriff, Circuit Clerk, and Public Defender are all based at the courthouse, as well as the 22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Circuit Court which has three judges and utilizes three courtrooms.
- 4.8.10 Saline County Complex is located directly across Main Street from the Courthouse and houses the County Assessor, County Clerk and County Treasurer. The complex also includes a local Arkansas State Revenue Office. Various other buildings nearby are owned by the County and house other County offices.
- 4.8.11 Saline County Jail has moved from the old 2,500 square-foot facility in the Courthouse basement to a new 41,000 square-foot detention facility built southeast of downtown between Edison Avenue the U.P. Railroad next to Neeley Street. The new facility expands jail capacity from 51 to 180 inmates, and is geographically situated between the Circuit Court and District Court.

4.8.12 Saline County Prosecutor and Office of Emergency Management are located on different floors of the same building on South Main Street in downtown Benton. During 2006, the Saline County and City of Benton 911 Communications Centers were consolidated in the lower level of the building.

4.8.13 Saline County Road Department is based at facilities located on "U" Street near the old Saline County Airport and maintains all county owned roads, bridges and drainage facilities. The Department includes a code enforcement officer and a downtown Environmental Office housing the floodplain management program and geographic information system (GIS). The County Judge has jurisdiction over all county roads.

4.8.14 Saline County Cooperative Extension Service (CES) is located at 1605 Edison Avenue along with the District Court. The University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service is an agricultural research and education outreach program to improve the profitability of agricultural business, assist rural families, develop 4-H Club youth leadership, and promote community development.

4.8.15 Saline County Health Unit is located at 1612 Edison Avenue next to the District Court building. The Saline County Health Unit offers a variety of health-related services in the Saline County area including: special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children (WIC); tuberculosis screening, diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up; immunization services; family planning assistance including contraceptive supplies, pregnancy testing, medical care, and counseling; breast and cervical cancer screening; HIV and sexually transmitted disease testing, diagnosis, treatment and referral; in-home nursing services; and environmental health protection services (e.g., food service inspections, rodent control and inspections of individual septic sewage systems).

4.8.16 U.S. Post Office – Benton, Arkansas is located in a shopping center on Military Road where traffic signals have recently been installed to improve access. In addition to the many postal services provided, the post office is where U.S. citizens may apply for a passport and where male 18-24 year olds can register as legally required for selective service. In new multi-family developments and trailer parks, the U.S. Postal Service requires a neighborhood delivery cluster box unit (NDCBU) rather than traditional curbside delivery. In other new developments, developers should coordinate with the Benton Post Office in order to choose between NDCBU and curbside delivery options.

4.8.17 Victim Assistance Program, Domestic Violence Unit is located on W. Sevier Street. The Sheriff's Domestic Violence Unit conducts investigations and assists female victims obtain court orders for protection, shelter and financial assistance. Safe Haven, Inc. provides a shelter outside of Benton for women and children that are in immediate danger of domestic violence.

#### 4.9 Community Facilities Plan Map

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Map 19 illustrates the location of many of the community facilities described above. Although most of the community facilities shown on the map currently exist, the approximate location of proposed public use facilities are also identified, based on the

input of facility providers and information summarized above. Table 12 provides identification numbers to many of the facilities shown on the Community Facilities Plan Map. The Community Facilities Plan and Map of the City of Benton should be updated periodically. With respect to reserving sites for proposed public use facilities, the Plan and Map should be updated annually (or more frequently as the need arises). The Plan and Map should also be updated at least every five years to show the location of existing community facilities (or more frequently as the need arises).

#### 4.10 Community Facilities Plan Implementation

Regarding the powers and duties of the municipal planning commission, A.C.A. §14-56-412 states –

- (f) (1) Referral to Planning Commission. After adoption and filing as provided of a plan, no public way, ground, or open space; public building or structure; publicly or privately owned public utility line or terminal or transportation line or terminal; or public development or redevelopment or renewal project shall be acquired, constructed, or authorized unless such a project, proposal, or development has been submitted to the [municipal planning] commission for review, recommendation, and approval as to its conformity with the plan.*
- (2) The commission's disapproval of a proposal submitted to it may be overruled only by a recorded vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the full membership of the submitting or authorizing body.*
- (3) Failure of the commission to act within sixty (60) days of the submission of the proposal shall be deemed approval unless further time is allowed by the submitting public board, commission, or body.*
- (g) Referral to Bodies Responsible for Land Acquisition. After adoption and filing as provided of a community facilities plan or master street plan, no parcel of land indicated by the plan which lies within the bounds of a proposed public use facility or mapped street shall be privately developed until the public board, commission, or body having jurisdiction or financial responsibility for the reserved area shall have refused to execute a written option or to file suit for condemnation to acquire the area. This refusal shall be given by the public board, commission, or body within one (1) year of the date the action is requested by the property owner. This procedure may be enforced for the specified one (1) year period by the refusal to issue building permits or by other methods. However, it may be enforced only in cases where regulations governing the development and subdivision of land do not apply.*

Regarding municipal regulations to control development of land, A.C.A. §14-56-417 states –

- (4) The regulations shall establish the procedures to be followed to secure plat approval by the commission.*
- (B) (i) The regulations may require the reservation, for future public acquisition of land for community or public facilities indicated in the plan.*
- (ii) This reservation may extend over a period of not more than one (1) year from the time the public body responsible for the acquisition of the reserved land is notified of the developer's intent.*
- (6) When a proposed subdivision does not provide areas for a community or public facility based on the plans in effect, the regulations may provide for reasonable dedication of land for such public or community facilities, or a reasonable equivalent contribution in lieu of dedication of land, such contribution to be used for the acquisition of facilities that serve the subdivision.*

The Community Facilities Plan of the City of Benton, Arkansas shall be implemented in conformance with the aforementioned Arkansas statutes. All public bodies with applicable jurisdiction and all other affected parties should comply with these statutes. The City of Benton should consult and coordinate with those responsible for the proposed public use facilities in order to implement the Community Facilities Plan.

Table No. 12  
Community Facilities Plan Map Identification Numbers<sup>45</sup>

| ID Number | Facility (Sorted by ID No.)                                   | Facility (Sorted by Facility)                                 | ID Number |
|-----------|---|---|-----------|
| 1         | Saline County Fair Grounds                                    | AGFC Riverside Park   | 73        |
| 2         | Longhills Country Club  | AHTD District 6 Benton Garage                                 | 41        |
| 3         | Proposed Public School  | ALCOA Bauxite Natural Area - Saline Bottoms                   | 59        |
| 4         | Proposed Public Park  | Arkansas Army National Guard Training Center                  | 30        |
| 5         | Proposed Historic Park  | Arkansas Department of Human Services                         | 25        |
| 6         | City of Benton Municipal Complex                              | Arkansas Rehabilitation Services                              | 43        |
| 7         | Saline County Courthouse                                      | Bart Owens Memorial Park                                      | 71        |
| 8         | SCLS - Bob Herzfeld Memorial Library                          | Benton Area Chamber of Commerce                               | 49        |
| 9         | Saline County Adult Education Center                          | Benton Athletic Memorial Museum                               | 56        |
| 10        | Saline Memorial Hospital                                      | Benton Future Panthers Athletic Field                         | 68        |
| 11        | Rivendell Behavioral Health Services                          | Benton School District - C.W. Lewis Stadium                   | 55        |
| 12        | Proposed Civic Center   | Benton School District - Cafeteria Services                   | 52        |
| 13        | Saline County District Court - Benton Division                | Benton School District - Cate Administration Bldg.            | 51        |
| 15        | Saline County Complex   | Benton School District - Maintenance Department               | 54        |
| 16        | Saline County GIS/Flood Plain Office                          | Benton School District - Parent Center                        | 17        |
| 17        | Benton School District - Parent Center                        | Benton School District - Transportation Department            | 53        |
| 18        | CADC - Family Development & AR Work Force Center              | BPHA - Whispering Pines Public Housing Complex                | 24        |
| 19        | Counseling Clinic, Inc.                                       | CADC - Adminstration Office                                   | 31        |
| 20        | Saline County Jail  | CADC - Family Development & AR Work Force Center              | 18        |
| 21        | Water Tower   | CADC - Head Start Office                                      | 33        |
| 22        | Saline County Boys and Girls Club                             | CADC - Senior Adult Center                                    | 32        |
| 23        | Civitan Center  | CADC - South Central Arkansas Transit                         | 34        |
| 24        | BPHA - Whispering Pines Public Housing Complex                | City of Benton Animal Control                                 | 38        |
| 25        | Arkansas Department of Human Services                         | City of Benton Municipal Complex                              | 6         |
| 26        | Civitan Group Home  | City of Benton P&R - Bernard Holland Park                     | 62        |
| 27        | Civitan Apartments  | City of Benton P&R - DeSoto Park                              | 72        |
| 28        | City of Benton Utilities - Wastewater Treatment Plant         | City of Benton P&R - Lyle Park                                | 65        |
| 29        | Saline County Road Department                                 | City of Benton P&R - Ralph Bunche Park                        | 64        |
| 30        | Arkansas Army National Guard Training Center                  | City of Benton P&R - River Front Park                         | 70        |
| 31        | CADC - Adminstration Office                                   | City of Benton P&R - Sunset Lake Park                         | 58        |
| 32        | CADC - Senior Adult Center                                    | City of Benton P&R - Tyndall Park                             | 61        |
| 33        | CADC - Head Start Office                                      | City of Benton Street Department                              | 50        |
| 34        | CADC - South Central Arkansas Transit                         | City of Benton Utilities - Electric Department Service Center | 48        |
| 36        | United States Post Office                                     | City of Benton Utilities - Storm Water Equalization Basin     | 40        |
| 37        | Community Care Clinic   | City of Benton Utilities - Wastewater Treatment Plant         | 28        |
| 38        | City of Benton Animal Control                                 | City of Benton Utilities - Water Intake                       | 39        |
| 39        | City of Benton Utilities - Water Intake                       | City of Benton Utilities - Water Treatment Plant              | 42        |
| 40        | City of Benton Utilities - Storm Water Equalization Basin     | Civitan Apartments  | 27        |
| 41        | AHTD District 6 Benton Garage                                 | Civitan Center  | 23        |
| 42        | City of Benton Utilities - Water Treatment Plant              | Civitan Group Home  | 26        |
| 43        | Arkansas Rehabilitation Services                              | Community Care Clinic   | 37        |
| 44        | Saline County Prosecutor/OEM                                  | Counseling Clinic, Inc.                                       | 19        |
| 45        | Saline County Sheriff, Domestic Violence Victim Assistance    | Electric Power Substation                                     | 67        |
| 46        | Saline County Health Unit                                     | Longhills Country Club  | 2         |
| 47        | UALR Benton Center  | Proposed Civic Center   | 12        |
| 48        | City of Benton Utilities - Electric Department Service Center | Proposed Historic Park  | 5         |
| 49        | Benton Area Chamber of Commerce                               | Proposed Public Park  | 4         |
| 50        | City of Benton Street Department                              | Proposed Public School  | 3         |
| 51        | Benton School District - Cate Administration Bldg.            | Rivendell Behavioral Health Services                          | 11        |
| 52        | Benton School District - Cafeteria Services                   | Salem - Wes Grant Community Park                              | 74        |
| 53        | Benton School District - Transportation Department            | Saline County Adult Education Center                          | 9         |
| 54        | Benton School District - Maintenance Department               | Saline County Boys and Girls Club                             | 22        |
| 55        | Benton School District - C.W. Lewis Stadium                   | Saline County Complex   | 15        |
| 56        | Benton Athletic Memorial Museum                               | Saline County Courthouse                                      | 7         |
| 58        | City of Benton P&R - Sunset Lake Park                         | Saline County District Court - Benton Division                | 13        |
| 59        | ALCOA Bauxite Natural Area - Saline Bottoms                   | Saline County Fair Grounds                                    | 1         |
| 61        | City of Benton P&R - Tyndall Park                             | Saline County GIS/Flood Plain Office                          | 16        |
| 62        | City of Benton P&R - Bernard Holland Park                     | Saline County Health Unit                                     | 46        |
| 64        | City of Benton P&R - Ralph Bunche Park                        | Saline County Jail  | 20        |
| 65        | City of Benton P&R - Lyle Park                                | Saline County Prosecutor/OEM                                  | 44        |
| 67        | Electric Power Substation                                     | Saline County Road Department                                 | 29        |
| 68        | Benton Future Panthers Athletic Field                         | Saline County Sheriff, Domestic Violence Victim Assistance    | 45        |
| 70        | City of Benton P&R - River Front Park                         | Saline Memorial Hospital                                      | 10        |
| 71        | Bart Owens Memorial Park                                      | SCLS - Bob Herzfeld Memorial Library                          | 8         |
| 72        | City of Benton P&R - DeSoto Park                              | UALR Benton Center  | 47        |
| 73        | AGFC Riverside Park   | United States Post Office                                     | 36        |
| 74        | Salem - Wes Grant Community Park                              | Water Tower   | 21        |

<sup>45</sup> Community facilities included in the plan and shown in Map 19, but not numbered or listed in Table 12 include Public Schools, Private Schools, Proposed Public Schools, Historic Buildings, Fire Stations (Benton, Non-Benton, and Proposed), Lake Norrell, Chenault Reservoir, Existing and Proposed Pedestrian/Bike Paths, Improvement District Waste Water Treatment Facilities, Power Lines, Existing and Planned Roadways, and the Gann Historic District.

Map No. 19  
Benton Community Facilities Plan Map

[FOLDOUT MAP INCLUDED IN SEPARATE PDF DOCUMENT]



## Section 5 Master Street Plan

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### 5.1 Master Street Plan Authority

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Arkansas municipalities of the first and second class derive their authority to prepare and adopt a master street plan for the municipal planning area from A.C.A. §14-45-414(d), which states –

- (1) *Master Street Plan. The [planning] commission may prepare and adopt a master street plan which shall designate the general location, characteristics, and functions of streets and highways.*
- (2) (A) *The plan shall include the general locations of streets and highways to be reserved for future public acquisition.*  
(B) *The plan may provide for the removal, relocation, widening, narrowing, vacating, abandonment, and change of use or extension of any public ways.*

### 5.2 Street Plan Overview

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The Benton Master Street Plan is the official guide for the Benton Planning Commission and City Council in making decisions relative to land development proposals and street improvements. The Master Street Plan of Benton, Arkansas is composed of two parts, textual material and the plan map entitled, “Master Street Plan, Benton, Arkansas”. The plan establishes the functional classifications to be applied to roadways in the Benton Planning Area. These classifications are symbolized on the master street plan map for existing and proposed highways, roads and streets, in a functional hierarchy of arterials and collectors that generally excludes local roadways. Local streets and roads are normally created when private land is subdivided into lots and blocks and, thus can not be anticipated or shown on the master street plan map. Collector streets, whether shown or not shown on the plan map, may also be created by private land developers. The plan sets forth the minimum right-of-way requirements and design criteria for each of the functional classifications, including the locally classed roadways. The design criteria herein established will be implemented in accordance with the provisions of Benton's subdivision regulations, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) policies, regional policies from the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (*METRO 2030* or subsequent versions), and the policies and regulations of Saline County.

Once established, roadways can become permanent features of the environment, functioning as both the skeleton and circulatory system of the communities they serve. Streets and highways serve three basic functions: providing passageways for the movement of people and goods; providing access to developed and undeveloped land; and providing a location for public utility facilities such as storm water drains, water lines, fire hydrants, wastewater collection lines, electric power lines, natural gas lines, and wireline communication cables.

The primary mode of transportation in the Benton Planning Area is the private automobile operating on public roadways and utilizing private parking facilities. In

addition to serving automobiles and trucks, roadways may be used by other modes of transportation. In rural areas, farm equipment may need to traverse some roadways, the paved shoulders may be used by pedestrians and bicyclists, and people may also travel alongside roads on horseback if only for recreation. As urbanization occurs and the density of land use increases, street rights-of-way may need to accommodate additional travel lanes, auxiliary lanes, and other facilities specifically designed for pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation. A master street plan can lead to the provision of facilities designed to serve multiple modes. Moreover, in order to address the basic mobility needs of the traveling public, the planned street network and roadway design requirements must help to shape the orderly growth and development of the city and its surrounding area.

Existing and planned streets strongly influence land use patterns and urban activities. Conversely, the type and intensity of land developments affect the operational efficiency of the existing streets serving an area and may result in the demand for increased street capacity. For example, the construction of a new street or the widening of an existing street often results in more intensive land use development, which in turn generates increased traffic volumes on that street. This example underscores the interrelatedness of land development and street improvement decisions by the public and private sectors. Consequently, decisions that affect land use and the street system should be guided by the comprehensive development plan of the city. The overall goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan (refer to Section 1.9) may be realized at least partially through implementation of the adopted master street plan, which is accomplished through the administration of municipal regulations controlling the development of land (i.e., subdivision ordinance).

The intended function and design of a roadway strongly affects the amount of access afforded from adjacent land. For example, because they are designed to safely move many vehicles at high speed, Interstate highways and other freeways exclude any direct access to adjacent land. Local streets, on the other hand, are designed to safely carry fewer vehicles at slower speeds in order to primarily serve the land access function. The master street plan incorporates a standard hierarchy of streets and highways by functional classification and includes minimum roadway cross-section design standards for each roadway classification.

### 5.3 Roadway Systems and Functional Classification

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Publicly owned roadways may be grouped into *administrative*, *functionally classified*, and *funding* systems.

5.3.1 Administrative System indicates roadway ownership and responsibility for operation and maintenance. In Arkansas, the four public roadway administrative systems correspond to the four levels of government:

- Federal – Federal lands highways (e.g., national park and forest roads) and roadways in military reservations;
- State – Numbered routes of the State Highway System (i.e., Interstate Highways, U.S. Highways, and State Highways) and roads in state parks and other state-owned facilities;

- County – County roads (i.e., local public roadways outside incorporated areas); and
- City – City streets (i.e., local public roadways within incorporated areas).

Map 20 identifies the different roadway administrative systems in the Benton Planning Area. Table 13 shows the currently estimated centerline miles associated with public roadway administrative systems and private roads.

Table No. 13  
Roadway Mileage in the Benton Planning Area

| Administrative System                    | Miles        | Percent       |
|--|--------------|---------------|
| State Highway System Routes              | 51.2         | 11.1          |
| Other State Owned Roadways <sup>46</sup> | 17.8         | 3.8           |
| County Roads                             | 161.2        | 34.8          |
| City Streets                             | 183.2        | 39.5          |
| Private Roads <sup>47</sup>              | 50.0         | 10.8          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                             | <b>463.4</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

Source: Metroplan Geographic Information System.

Numbered routes of the State Highway System are owned, operated and maintained by the AHTD, although local governments through which these routes pass may also have a role (e.g., in the operation and maintenance of traffic signals located on these routes). Other attributes of the State Highway System are as follows:

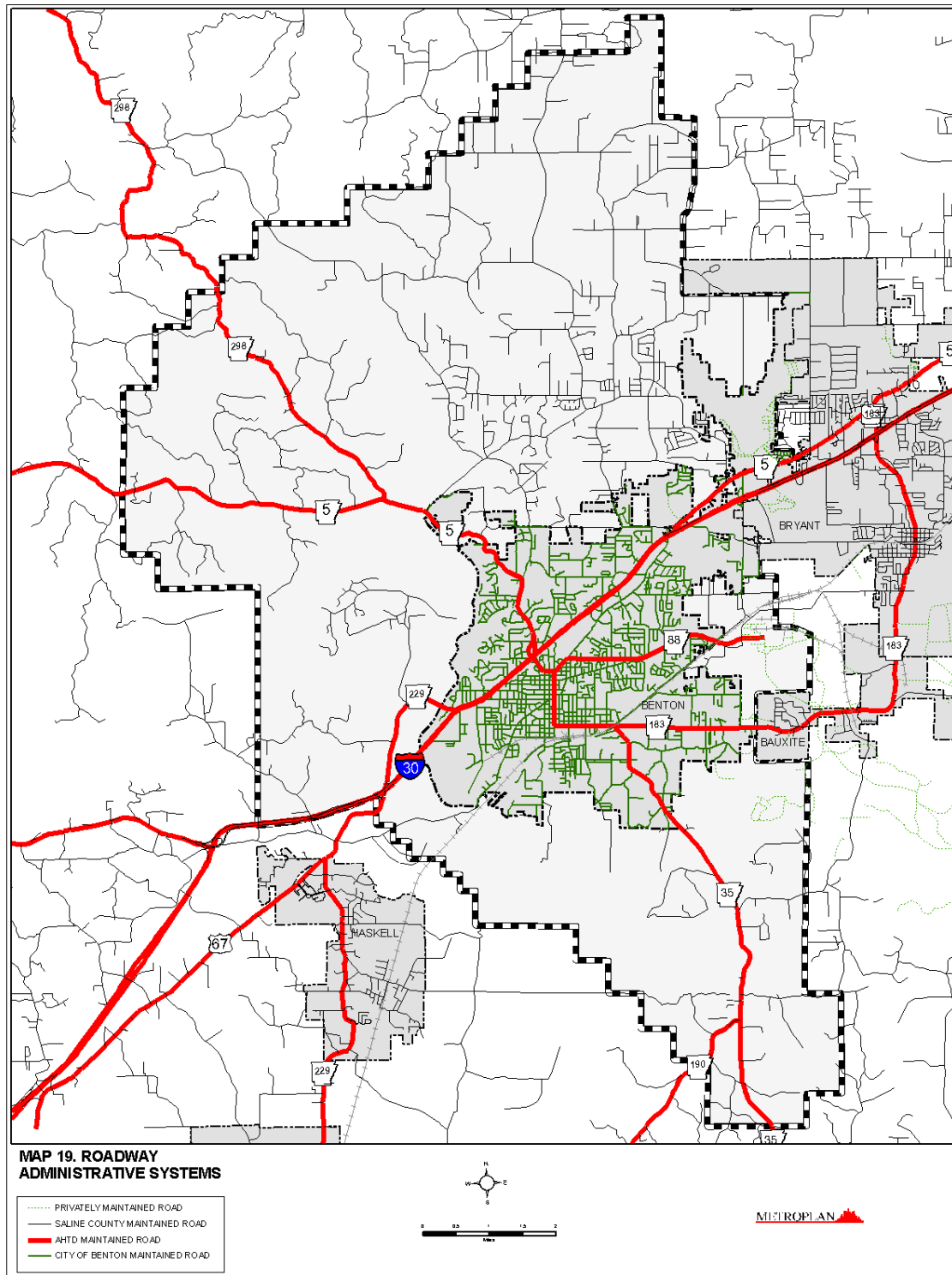
- \* All Interstate highways are freeways, but all freeways are not Interstates.
- \* Most non-Interstate freeways are on U.S. numbered routes.
- \* U.S. highway routes generally serve more than one state; while state highway routes, by definition, do not cross state lines.
- \* Although U.S. highways are more or less continuous (e.g., sometimes merging with other U.S. numbered routes or Interstate highways), it is not uncommon for state highways to have several discontinuous segments, although typically located in the same region.
- \* The State Highway System connects almost all incorporated cities and towns in Arkansas, and provides a framework for municipal street systems and county road systems.

Public roads and streets are typically located in a dedicated public right of way (ROW) or easement. The main difference between a ROW and easement is ownership: private ownership is retained with an easement or forfeited when ROW is dedicated and accepted by a governmental entity. Property taxes may also be applied to some easements, while dedicated ROW is public property and therefore always tax-exempt.

<sup>46</sup> Mainly frontage roads to I-30.

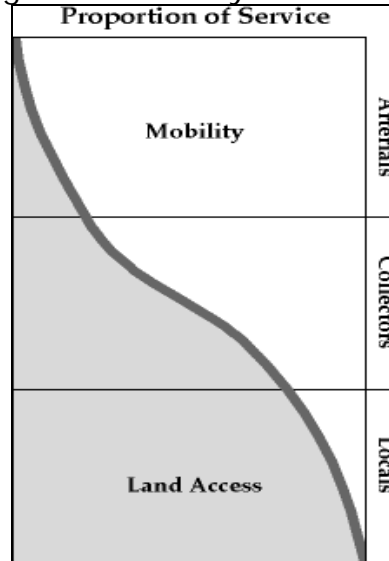
<sup>47</sup> Roads on private property, not maintained by a local government, or otherwise closed to public use.

Map No. 20  
Roadway Administrative Systems



**5.3.2 Functionally Classified System** designates the intended purpose or function of roadways. Roadway segments are classified according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Most roadways fall into three general classifications: arterials, collectors, and locals.

Chart No. 20  
Relationship of Functionally Classified Systems in  
Serving Traffic Mobility and Land Access

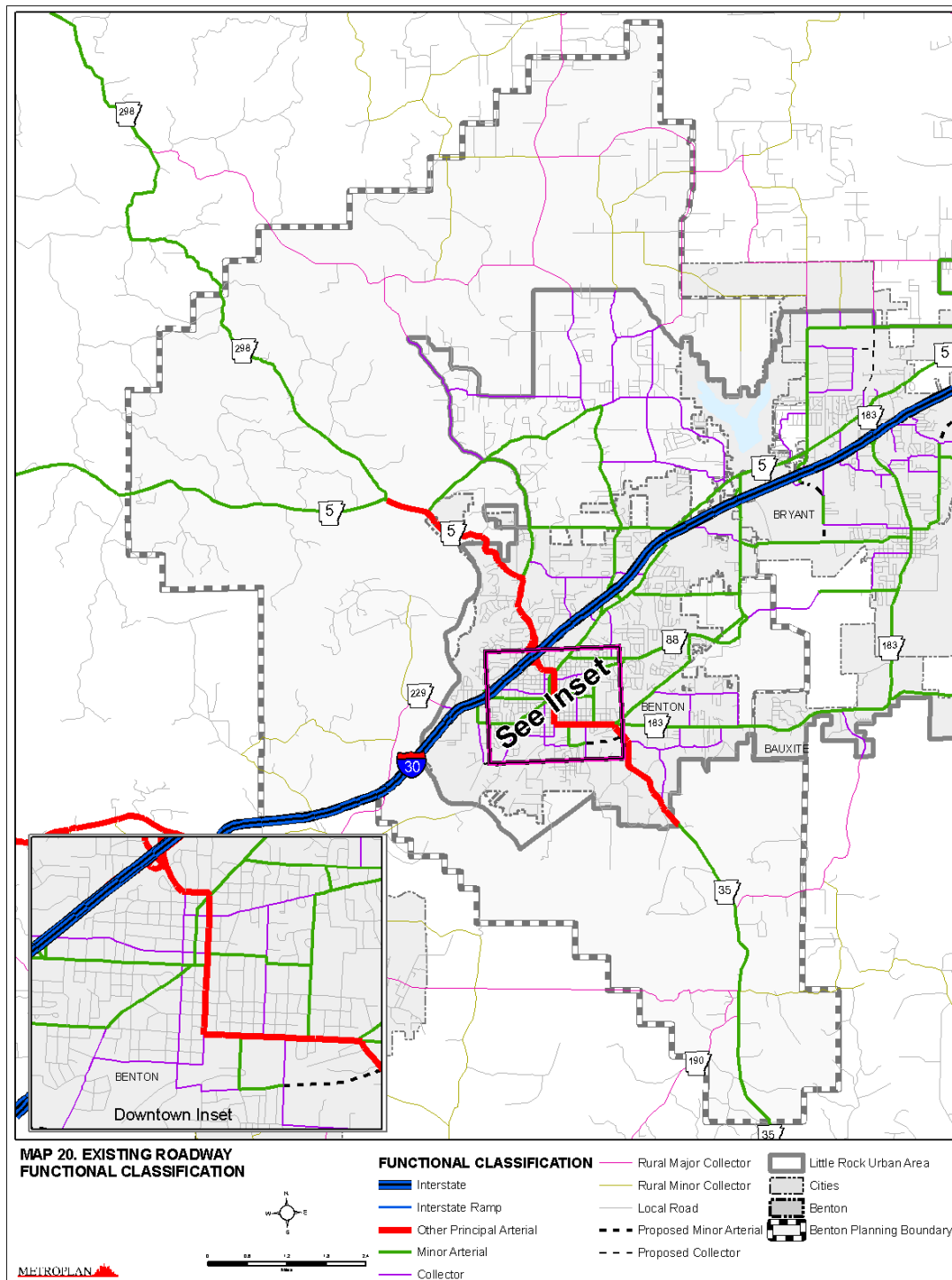


Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, *Highway Functional Classification: Concepts, Criteria and Procedures*, Revised March 1989.

Table No. 14  
Arkansas Functional Classification System (Established by Act 308 of 1973)

| Class No. | Rural Systems                     | Municipal Systems                | Level of Service   |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| I         | Interstate Freeways               | Interstate Freeways              | Provide basic Interstate service, link major cities.   |
| II        | Other Principal Arterial Highways | Other Freeways and Expressways   | Provide high level of interstate and intrastate service, connect major generators of internal city traffic   |
| III       | Minor Arterial Highways           | Other Principal Arterial Streets | Serve trans-state travel to and through principal cities. Provide a system for the major traffic generators within a city.   |
| IV        | Major Collector Roads             | Minor Arterial Streets           | Provide connections to and through the large centers of population within the state.   |
| V         | Minor Collector Roads             | Collector Streets                | Provide inter-county service. Serve the economic and state park areas not serviced by a higher system; collect and distribute traffic to and from major streets; provide intra-county service to and into population centers and other recreational and indust |
| VI        | Local Roads                       | Local Streets                    | Service small rural communities. Provide access to residential areas, sub-divisions and neighborhoods within cities; provide direct access to adjacent properties in rural areas and within cities.  |

Map No. 21  
Existing Functional Classification<sup>48</sup>



<sup>48</sup> These classifications are used by the FHWA to determine federal-aid eligibility and have been officially established in cooperation with the AHTD, Metroplan and local governments.

In a functionally classified network, the dual requirements of mobility and access to land are assigned in differing proportions to each roadway classification. Chart 20 illustrates this concept: freeways provide the highest degree of mobility, but have no direct access to abutting land; while local roads and streets primarily serve the land access function. The higher roadway classifications also tend to provide better connectivity and service for longer distance trips. Thus, a hierarchy of roadways is formed in terms of the relative distances served, the mobility provided for through travel, and the degree to which direct land access is facilitated.

Although roadways are generally classified as arterials, collectors, and locals, more complex classification schemes are often used. For example, Interstate highways, other freeways and expressways, other principal arterials, and minor arterials are all arterials. *Act 308 of 1973* established the Arkansas functional classification system as set forth in Table 14. This functional class system is consistent with federal nomenclature and used by the AHTD, Metroplan, and many local governments, including Saline County and the City of Benton.

Map 21 illustrates the existing functional classified roadway system in the Benton Planning Area. The Little Rock-North Little Rock Urbanized Area boundary is where the different urban and rural classification systems meet.

5.3.3 Funding System denotes the type of funds potentially available for capital projects and/or maintenance/operation. In general, roadways in a system administered by a governmental unit are that government's financial responsibility. Nevertheless, because of the superior taxing authority of the national government, federal funds are made available to state and local governments to help address state and local roadway needs. However, grants-in-aid are rarely sufficient to satisfy state and local needs, and there are almost always conditional requirements attached to federal financial assistance.

The largest amounts of funds transferred between governments for surface transportation are provided by the U. S. Department of Transportation. These funds are provided in accordance with Titles 23 and 49 of the U.S. Code, as well as related federal regulations and funding authorizations, allocations, appropriations and obligation limitations. State departments of transportation, such as the AHTD, administer the disbursement of these federal funds usually as reimbursements to designated recipients, transportation providers and contractors. The most recent federal funding levels were established through the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users* (SAFETEA-LU).

Functional classification is used by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with state and local governments, to determine which roadways are eligible for federal-aid. Under federal statutes, streets and roads functionally classified as local are not usually eligible for federal financial assistance, while all other roadway classes as illustrated in Map 21 are federal-aid eligible. Almost all roadways in the State Highway System are classified such that they are eligible for federal-aid. In addition, many city streets and county roads have classifications making them eligible for federal-aid. However, eligibility for federal-aid in no way assures that federal financial assistance will,

in fact, be provided, especially for roadways off the State Highway System. The AHTD and Metroplan coordinate and assist local governments proposing amendments to the “existing” functional classification of roadways in their jurisdictions. When federal-aid is provided for local transportation projects, there are usually minimum local match requirements, typically 20%. For most types of federal-aid projects on the State Highway System, the state provides the matching funds. However, for some of these AHTD projects, local governments may be required to provide right of way (ROW), relocate utilities, be responsible for sidewalks, and operate and maintain traffic signals. In some cases, the AHTD provides 100% federal and/or state funding.

Eligibility for federal-aid is divided among different funding systems, such as Interstate maintenance (IM), national highway system (NHS), surface transportation program (STP), bridge replacement program (BR), etc. Some of these major-funding systems are further subdivided. For example, whether a classified roadway is located in a metropolitan planning area, urbanized area, small urban area, or rural area can affect the availability of STP funds.

The State Aid Division of the AHTD administers the State Aid County Road Program. The county judge coordinates with the state aid engineer regarding the design, bidding, and funding of state aid construction projects. There are three types of funding for State Aid construction projects, with differing standard matching funds ratios: (1) State Aid (SA) - 90% SA funds and 10% county funds; (2) Federal-State Aid - 80% rural STP funds, 18% SA funds, 2% county funds; and (3) Federal-Aid Bridge Replacement (BR) – 80% BR funds, 18% SA funds, 2% county funds. Actual matching ratios may be different.

The State of Arkansas also collects highway revenues and provides “road turnback” funds to cities and counties based on population, which are dedicated to the municipal street and county road funds. In addition, “general turnback” moneys may be transferred to the street and road funds. These funds are typically used for roadway maintenance and operation, but may also be used as the local match for projects receiving state and/or federal financial assistance.

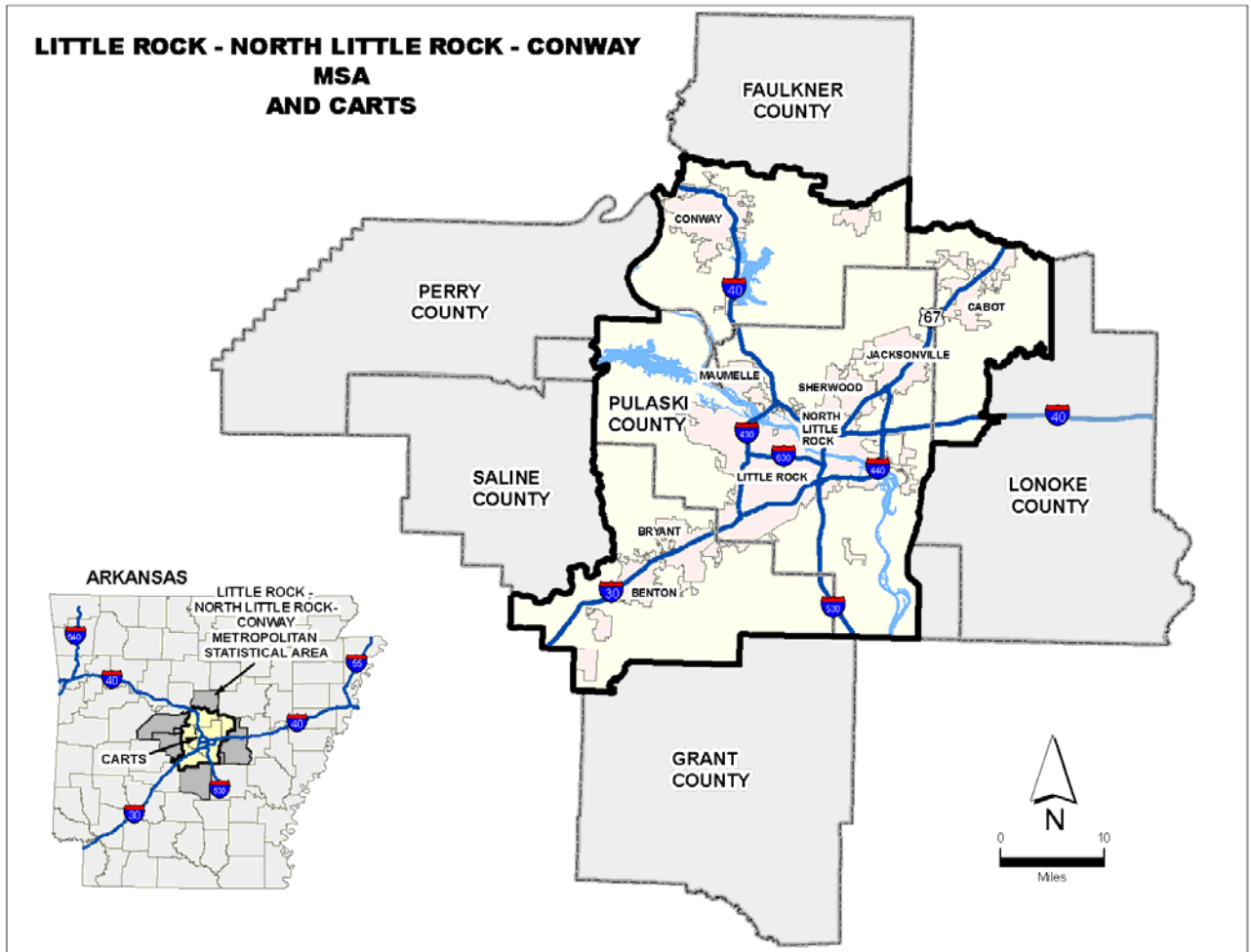
For more than three decades, “urbanized areas”<sup>49</sup> have been required to have a “*continuing, comprehensive* metropolitan planning process carried out *cooperatively* by state and local governments”. This “3-C” planning process has been required as a condition to the receipt of federal highway and transit funds. In order to receive financial assistance from FHWA or the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), all proposed highway and transit projects in a metropolitan planning area must first be included in the area’s long-range transportation plan. Afterwards, such projects may be placed in the short-range transportation improvement program (TIP) by the metropolitan planning organization (MPO). Metropolitan area TIPs and Statewide TIPs are usually updated on an annual basis in order to advance federal-aid transportation projects to implementation.

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<sup>49</sup> Areas with at least 50,000 residents as defined by the U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

The Central Arkansas Regional Transportation Study (CARTS) area, as illustrated in Map 22, is the region for which metropolitan transportation planning and programming occurs. In order to implement a federal-aid project in the CARTS area it must be included in the region's long-range transportation plan (*METRO 2030*) and the CARTS TIP, which are approved by the Metroplan Board of Directors. Metroplan is the officially designated MPO for the Little Rock-North Little-Conway Rock metropolitan area. The City of Benton, neighboring municipalities and Saline County are all members of Metroplan. In addition to cities and counties in the six-county metropolitan statistical area (MSA), the AHTD and Central Arkansas Transit Authority (CATA) are members of Metroplan. Under federal statutes and regulations, Metroplan, the AHTD and public transportation providers are responsible for conducting the "3-C" planning process in the CARTS area.

Map No. 22



All federal-aid roadway projects in the CARTS area that are brought forward for funding, including state projects, must be included in *METRO 2030* and be on the “existing” functionally classified system (refer to Map 21) in order to be listed in the CARTS TIP. The “future” roadway functional classification, as illustrated in Map 23, is included in *METRO 2030* to identify what the long-range plan assumes the “existing” functionally classified system will be in 2030.

Federal regulations give Metroplan the responsibility for selecting all projects inside the CARTS area to be funded from the Surface Transportation Program (STP). A portion of the STP funds allocated to Arkansas are sub-allocated to the Little Rock-North Little Rock Urbanized Area (UZA-STP), which the Metroplan Board has decided may be used anywhere within the CARTS area.

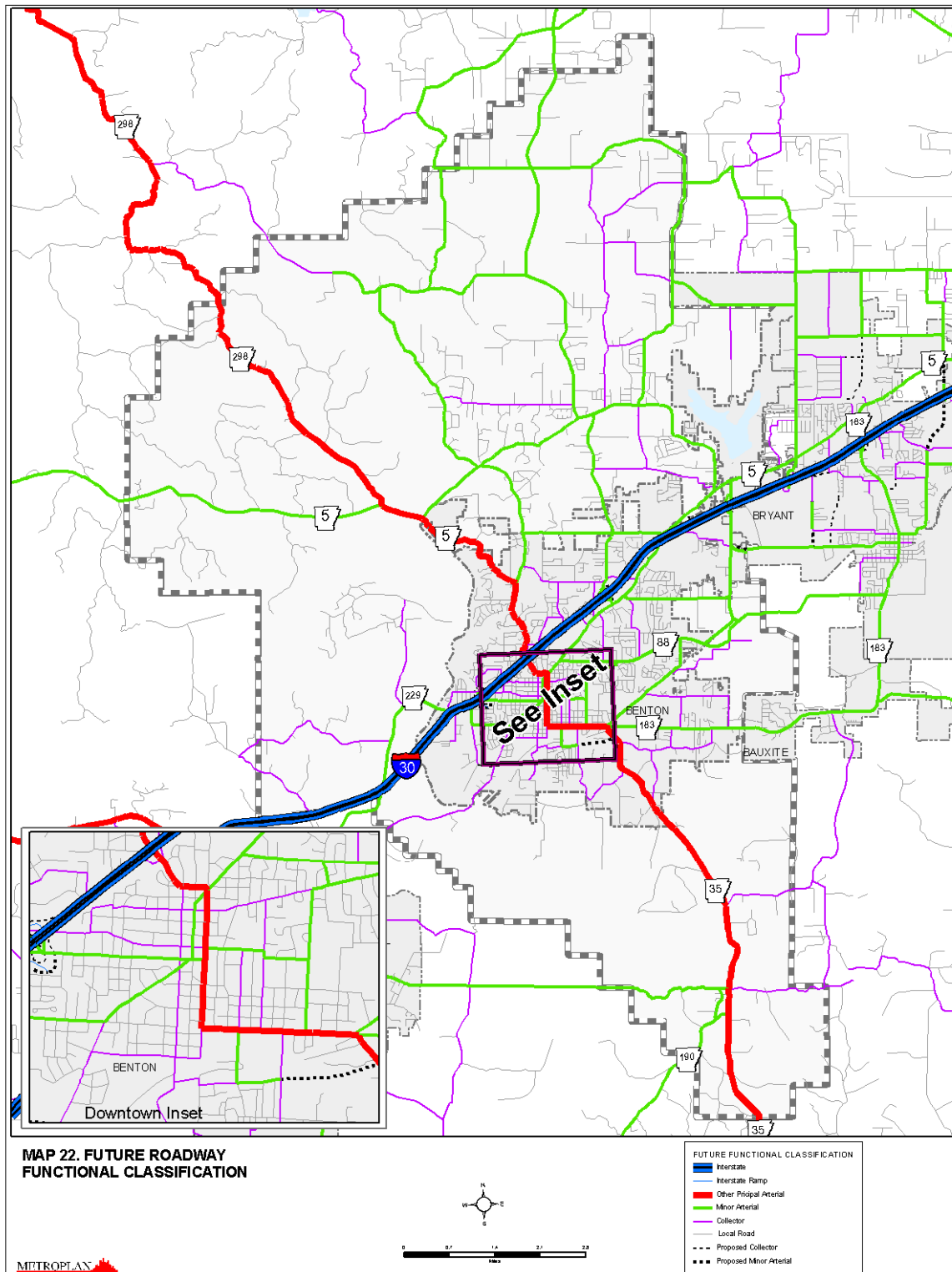
*METRO 2030* reserves 30% of UZA-STP funds for use by local jurisdictions. These Local UZA-STP funds are referred to as LUZA funds in the plan and are distributed to cities and counties on a per-capita basis. LUZA funds may be used for any federal-aid eligible roadway, transit or transportation enhancement project, but the project must be in compliance with CARTS design standards and the local government is responsible for at least 20% of total project costs. With Metroplan approval, local governments may borrow LUZA allotments from other each other in order to assemble enough funds to do a desired project.

*METRO 2030* reserves 70% of UZA-STP funds for use on the Strategic Regional Network, which is composed of the Regional Arterial Network, Regional Bikeways, and Strategic Transit Investments. These Regional UZA-STP funds are referred to as RUZA funds in the plan. Facility owners are typically responsible for providing at least 20% of total project costs, although if on the State Highway System the local jurisdiction may be asked to pay for ROW, utilities, signal maintenance/operation, etc.

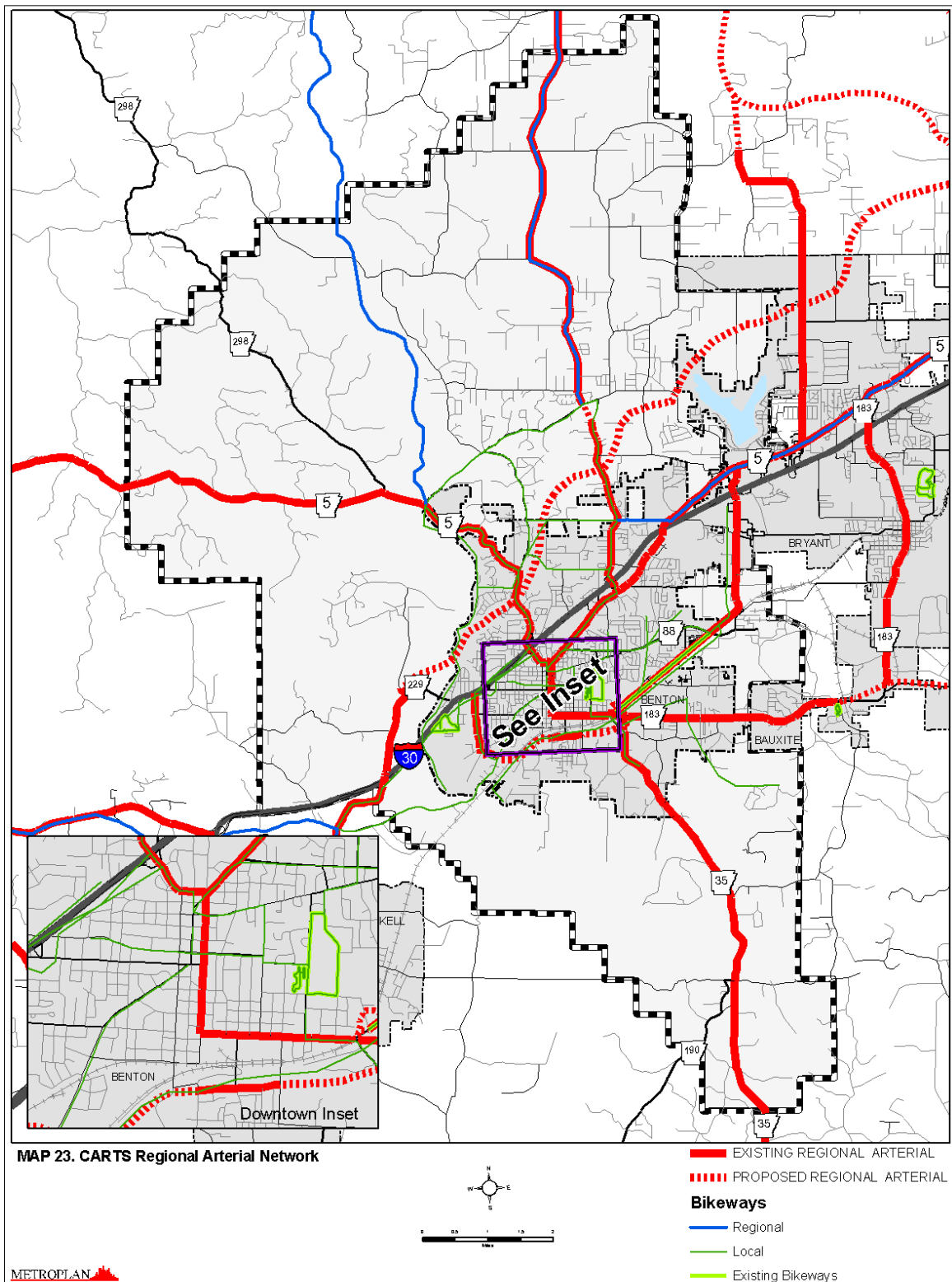
The Regional Arterial Network or RAN is shown on Map 24. RAN routes will remain in a preliminary designation status until improvements are made that allow them to function as regional arterials. Network improvements will be focused on the priority corridors, critical segments and critical bridges. The Regional Bikeway routes as shown on Map 24 include multi-use paths shared by bicyclists and pedestrians. Regional Bikeway routes typically follow RAN corridors and connect with local bikeway routes. Bikeways and shared paths in locally adopted plans that are not part of a designated Regional Bikeway route are also eligible for RUZA funding if the route falls along a RAN route. Strategic Transit Investments using RUZA-STP funds are made at the discretion of the Metroplan Board, but are generally reserved for transit capital improvements on the RAN.

The Benton Planning Studies Report identifies various roadway network capacity improvements that may be needed by the year 2030 in the Benton Planning Area. The report also summarizes the status of Benton area transportation studies and projects planned, programmed, underway or recently completed as of January 2005. The City of Benton should continue to participate in the CARTS planning process in order to identify and implement improvements to the federal-aid eligible roadway system in the Benton area.

Map No. 23  
Future Functional Classification



Map No. 24  
CARTS Regional Arterial Network



## 5.4 Street Plan Objectives

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The Master Street Plan has been prepared utilizing the following five objectives:

- 5.4.1 To functionally classify the street network in the Benton Planning Area in accordance with the nomenclature established and enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas, in Act 308 of 1973 (refer to Table 14).
- 5.4.2 To functionally classify the street network in the Benton Planning Area consistent with the adopted Metropolitan Transportation Plan (METRO 2030 or subsequent version), recognizing that the Benton plan lacks an established horizon year and could take an unspecified number of years to achieve.
- 5.4.3 To coordinate development of the Benton Master Street Plan with the Saline County Master Road Plan and both City and County subdivision regulations.
- 5.4.4 To indicate on the street plan map the approximate location, conceptual alignment or generalized corridor of any proposed new location roadways.
- 5.4.5 To recommend criteria and standards to guide street and roadway improvements and new construction throughout the Benton Planning Area.

## 5.5 Street Plan Implementation

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Regarding municipal regulations to control development of land, A.C.A. §14-56-417 states –

- (a) (1) *Following adoption and filing of a master street plan, the [planning] commission may prepare and shall administer, after approval of the legislative body, regulations controlling the development of land.*
- (2) *The development of land includes, but is not limited to:*
  - (A) *The provision of access to lots and parcels;*
  - (B) *The extension or provision of utilities;*
  - (C) *The subdividing of land into lots and blocks; and*
  - (D) *The parceling of land resulting in the need for access and utilities.*
- (b) (1) *The regulations controlling the development of land may establish or provide for the minimum requirements as to:*
  - (A) *Information to be included on the plat filed for record;*
  - (B) *The design and layout of the subdivision, including standards for lots and blocks, street rights-of-way, street and utility grades, and other similar items; and*
  - (C) *The standards for improvements to be installed by the developer at his own expense such as street grading and paving; curbs, gutters, and sidewalks; storm and sewer mains; street lighting; and other amenities.*
- (2) (A) *The regulations may permit the developer to post a performance bond in lieu of actual installation of required improvements before plat approval.*

- (B) *They may provide for the dedication of all rights-of-way to the public.*
- (5) (A) *The regulations shall require the developer to conform to the plan currently in effect.*

Regarding a municipal setback ordinance, A.C.A. §14-56-418 states –

*...When a master street plan has been adopted and filed as provided, the legislative body of the city, upon recommendation of the [planning] commission, may enact ordinances establishing setback lines on such streets and highways as are designated by the plan and may prohibit the establishment of any new structure or other improvements within the setback lines.*

Regarding control of road entry, A.C.A. §14-56-419 states –

*...Following the adoption and filing of a master street plan as provided, the legislative body, upon recommendation of the [planning] commission, may enact ordinances providing for the control of entry into any of the major streets and highways shown in the plan.*

The Master Street Plan of the City of Benton, Arkansas shall be implemented in conformance with the aforementioned Arkansas statutes. Nearly all roadways classified as local and most collector streets are initially built or upgraded by private developers, usually in conjunction with plats of addition and sub-division approvals. However, master street plan implementation is necessarily accomplished at both the state and local government levels. The AHTD has the responsibility to design, construct and maintain the numbered routes of the state highway system, which include Interstate, U.S. and state highway routes. Cities and counties are responsible for the construction and maintenance of locally owned public roadways. Additionally, cities and counties have the authority to protect and acquire future right-of-way for public roadways, including highways on the State Highway System, and to adopt regulations controlling driveway entry locations along public roadways. Driveway access to a route on the State Highway System also requires a permit from the AHTD. A city or county can acquire right-of-way through dedication, purchase, gift or condemnation. Cities with master street plans may adopt subdivision regulations establishing building setback lines parallel with the street right-of-way. While the city has the authority to approve the platting of streets in unincorporated areas and, may authorize them to be filed for record, Saline County must determine whether to receive the dedication and future maintenance responsibility of roadways outside city limits.

Following adoption and filing of the Master Street Plan, the Benton Planning Commission may transmit to the Benton City Council such ordinances and regulations as are deemed necessary to carry out or protect the intent of the Master Street Plan or parts thereof. Proposed plats of addition must be compatible with the adopted Master Street Plan and implementing ordinance(s) of the City of Benton. The Saline County Planning Board shall be given at least 60 days to comment on all plats in the Benton Planning Area outside the Benton City Limits, in accordance with Arkansas' county planning statutes, specifically A.C.A. §14-17-208(i).

## 5.6 The Form of Streets and Block Creation

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The provision of future Local and Collector streets to serve subdivided private land, when access is needed, is the responsibility of the land developer. It remains the responsibility of the City of Benton to regulate how these streets are constructed in accordance with this Master Street Plan. Outside the Benton City Limits, developer built roadways must be acceptable to Saline County, which is responsible for accepting into the County Road System all roads not on the State Highway System that are dedicated to public use in unincorporated areas.

- 5.6.1 The basic pattern of existing and proposed Collector roadways is shown on the Master Street Plan Map. The developers of land traversed by these Class V roadways are responsible for their improvement or initial construction. The Collectors connect the Locals to the Arterial roadways. The system of Class V streets are laid out to form a grid system by following, wherever practical, the half or quarter section lines of the United States System of Land Survey.

In lieu of providing a proposed Class V Collector street within a residential area as shown on the Master Street Plan Map, a subdivision developer may, with the approval of the Planning Commission, provide multiple Class VI Local roadway routes that disperse vehicular traffic while effectively performing the intended functions that the proposed collector roadway would have provided.

- 5.6.2 Class VI Local streets and roads function mainly to provide direct access to abutting land. Proposed Local roadways are generally not shown on the Benton Master Street Plan because their location is determined when land is subdivided into lots and blocks at the discretion of the private developer, subject to the goals and objectives of the comprehensive development plan and the policies expressed in the master street plan and implementing regulations.

- 5.6.3 The Class VI Local roadways shall form a network within the grid of Class V Collector roadways. Where practical, the interconnecting, less wide, Class VI streets shall be laid out in a grid or modified grid pattern in order to appropriately distribute the flow of traffic, thereby increasing the choice of routes and improving the level of service on any given street. The Class VI Local roadways will be designed to accommodate two-way service on two lane streets with on-street parking where appropriate. Stub outs should be constructed by subdivision developers for connection with adjoining undeveloped land when it is eventually developed.

Creation of a network of Class VI Local roadways requires that each street connect to at least two other streets. Cul-de-sac residential streets may be created where feasible and appropriate, provided that the overall development shall maintain a grid or modified grid pattern of Class VI Local roadways.

- 5.6.4 Wherever the average single family residential lot in a subdivision development is less than one-half acre in size, the developer built roadways shall be designed with curb and gutter and satisfy other minimum design requirements for streets in urban areas (refer to Section 5.9 and Appendix A) in accordance with Section 3.4.2 of the Land Use Plan.

- 5.6.5 Alley ways may be allowed in subdivisions where they shall function as the exclusive vehicle access to residential driveways and garages in accordance with the control of development (subdivision) regulations.

## 5.7 Right of Way and Street Modification Requirements

- 5.7.1 Sub-dividers of land shall be required to dedicate any right-of-way and construct any proposed roadways within the boundaries of the subdivision that are classified as Collector or Local.
- 5.7.2 Sub-dividers of land shall be required to upgrade or otherwise improve any existing substandard roadways within the boundaries of the subdivision that are classified as Collector or Local.
- 5.7.3 Sub-dividers of land shall be required to dedicate additional right-of-way where existing right-of-way width is substandard for the roadway classification.
- 5.7.4 Sub-dividers of land may be required to make a fair share contribution to improving existing roadways adjacent to their subdivision where such improvements are deemed necessary by the City. The fair share contribution may be in the form of actual construction or a reasonable equivalent financial contribution in lieu of making roadway improvements.
- 5.7.5 For large residential, commercial and industrial developments, the City may request that the developer furnish a traffic-impact analysis. The City may condition approval of such a large development on a fair share contribution to the provision of needed roadway system improvements on-site and/or off-site based on the results of a traffic-impact analysis. The fair share contribution may be in the form of actual construction or a reasonable equivalent financial contribution in lieu of making roadway system improvements.

## 5.8 Access Management

### 5.8.1 Control of Entry Authority

Following adoption of a master street plan or county road plan the legislative bodies of cities and counties, respectively, may enact ordinances providing for the control of entry into any of the roadways shown in their plan.<sup>50</sup> In addition, access to numbered routes on the State Highway System is regulated by the Arkansas State Highway Commission and administered by the AHTD.

### 5.8.2 Definition and Purpose

*Access management is the systematic control of the location, spacing, design, and operation of driveways, median openings, interchanges, and street connections to a roadway.*<sup>51</sup> The purpose of access management is to provide vehicular access to land development in a manner that preserves the safety and efficiency of the transportation system.

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<sup>50</sup> A.C.A. §14-56-419 and §14-17-208(k).

<sup>51</sup> *Access Management Manual*, Committee on Access Management, Transportation Research Board, National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D.C., 2003.

### 5.8.3 Access Standards

Through the administration of the subdivision ordinance and other regulations, Benton will implement the following standards for the control of entry to Arterial and Collector roadways, specifically Classifications III, IV, and V, on the Benton Master Street Plan Map. These access standards will preserve roadway safety, assure consideration of each roadway's importance to regional mobility when granting access, maximize roadway capacity, and provide reasonable access to land development. The City of Benton may adopt and implement individual access management plans for arterial roadways in concert with proposed roadway improvements.

The spacing guidelines shown in Table 15 are to be applied to new development abutting functionally classified roadways within the Benton Planning Area that do not have an adopted access management plan. Conformance with these access spacing guidelines shall be routinely reviewed when plats, site plans and building permit applications are submitted.

Table 15  
Access Spacing Guidelines

| Roadway Classification | Speed     | Driveway and Corner Clearance |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| Arterial               | > 45 MPH  | 440 Feet                      |
| Arterial               | <= 45 MPH | 245 Feet                      |
| Collector              |           | 200 Feet*                     |

\*Additional width between driveways is desired in rural areas

The access spacing guidelines shall apply to new development only. When a new driveway is proposed, the spacing guidelines should be used for separation between other driveways and streets. In the event that proper spacing cannot be achieved, a single new driveway may be permitted to provide access to the land development. Methods such as a reduction in the number of required parking spaces to encourage shared parking, and joint access and parking agreements shall be used where appropriate as an alternative to the addition of new driveways on arterial and collector roadways.

### 5.8.4 Platting of Parcels and Subdivisions

During the platting of parcels and subdivisions the standards for driveway spacing and corner clearance shall be followed for all connections to arterials and collectors. No lots which require connections closer than the required spacing shall be permitted unless access is provided from a local street or a joint access agreement is provided between abutting lots. For residential Collector roadways interior to a residential development, direct access to the Collector from adjacent residential lots should be discouraged. Instead, access should be provided from Local streets to lots adjacent to Collectors.

### 5.8.5 Existing Driveways

Existing driveways that do not meet the spacing requirements will be allowed until such time the land is redeveloped. In the event that the roadway is improved before the land is redeveloped, driveways will be replaced unless a demonstrated safety problem is identified.

### 5.8.6 Redevelopment of Land

When a parcel of land is to be redeveloped, the driveway spacing guidelines are to be followed for any modifications to access the redeveloped land. If the spacing guidelines can not be met and there are no other reasonable access alternatives, a single access driveway will be permitted to the parcel which best achieves the spacing requirements.

## 5.9 Design Standards

Benton Master Street Plan design standards provide consistency in the acquisition of right-of-way and easements, and the construction and adequacy of roadways in the Benton Planning Area. Table 16 provides a summary of right-of-way, easement, and pavement width requirements for each roadway classification. Appendix A contains illustrations of the cross-section elements for each functional class and area type. The differing requirements for rural and urban areas shall be applied based on the availability or provision of wastewater collection and mean residential lot size, in accordance with Sections 3.4.2 and 5.6.4 of this Comprehensive Development Plan.

Table No. 16  
Summary of Right-of-Way and Design Standards

| Class                                    | Right-of-Way Rural <sup>2</sup> | Right-of-Way Urban <sup>2</sup> | Easement Width (both sides of roadway) | Minimum Pavement Width (Initial Phase – Rural Option) |                        | Minimum Pavement Width (Final Phase-Urban Option) <sup>4</sup> |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|------------------------|--|
|  |                                 |                                 |  | Lanes   | Shoulders <sup>3</sup> |  |
| I-II – Freeway & Expressway <sup>1</sup> | 200'                            | 200'                            |  |   |                        |  |
| III - Principal Arterial                 | 100'                            | 100'                            | 10'                                    | 2 x 12' lanes   | 2 x 8' shoulders       | 4 x 11' lanes  |
| IV - Minor Arterial                      | 90'                             | 90'                             | 10'                                    | 2 x 11' lanes   | 2 x 8' shoulders       | 4 x 11' lanes  |
| V-Collector                              | 70'                             | 60'                             | 10'                                    | 2 x 11' lanes   | 2 x 6' shoulders       | 37'  |
| VI - Local Commercial                    | 70'                             | 60'                             | 10'                                    |   |                        | 37'  |
| VI - Local Residential                   | 50'                             | 50'                             | 10'                                    | 2 x 10' lanes   | 2 x 4' shoulders       | 28'  |

Notes: 1. AHTD Standards.

2. Class III- intersection approaches will require an extra width of 20' extending 250' from the centerline of intersecting arterials and collectors. Class IV- intersection approaches may require an extra width of 10' extending 150' from the centerline of intersecting arterials and collectors.

3. Paved shoulders shall be required wherever the initial rural cross-section option is applied to roadways classified principal or minor arterial. Paved shoulders shall be optional wherever the initial rural cross-section option is applied to roadways classified collector or local.

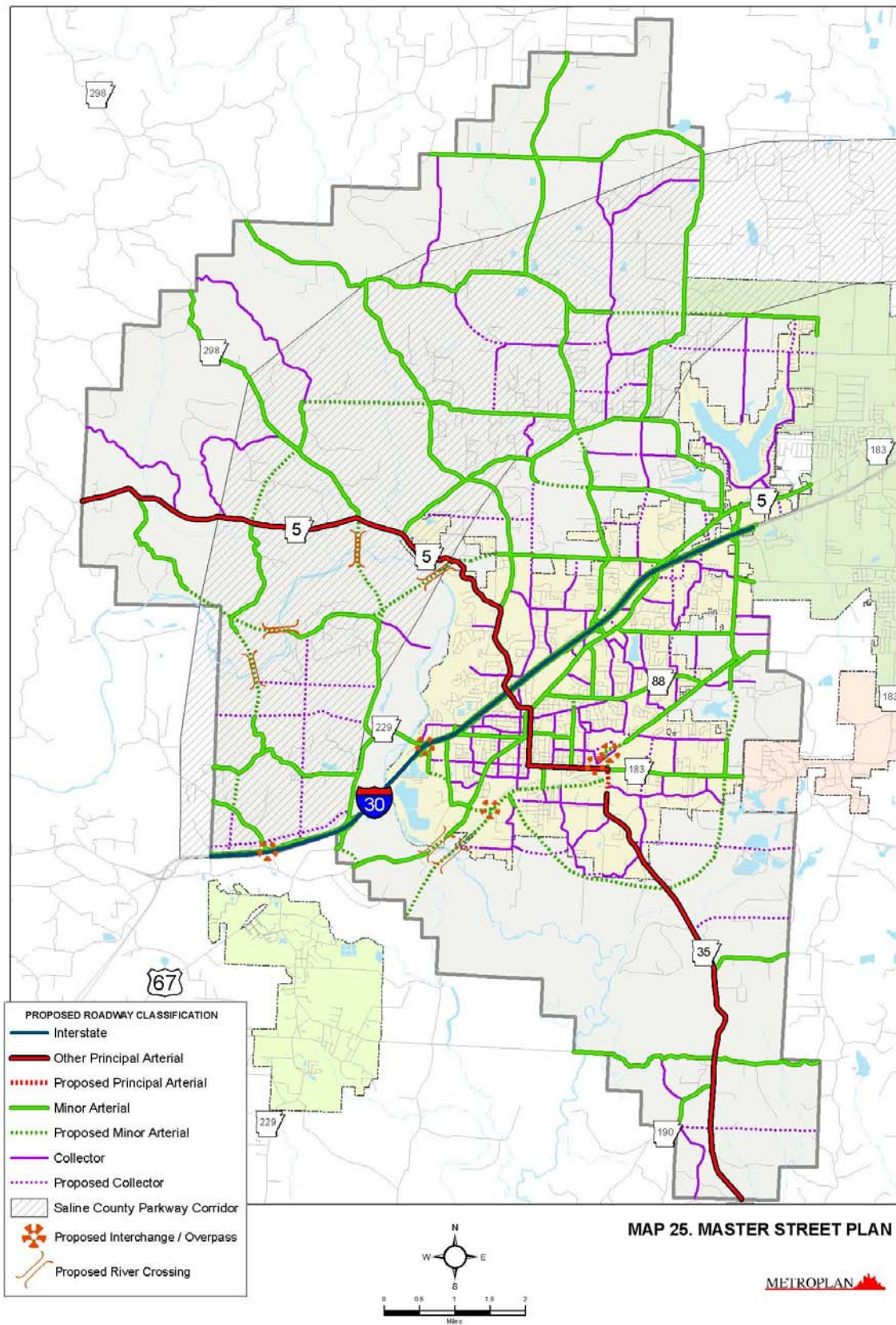
4. Back-of-curb to back-of-curb.

More detailed requirements apply to improvements of existing roadways and construction of new roadways as documented in "Standards for Street Design and Construction, City of Benton," as amended.

## 5.10 Master Street Plan Map

Map 25 is the official Master Street Plan Map of the City of Benton, Arkansas. The map illustrates the general location and functional classification of existing and planned public streets and highways in the Benton Planning Area.

Master Street Plan

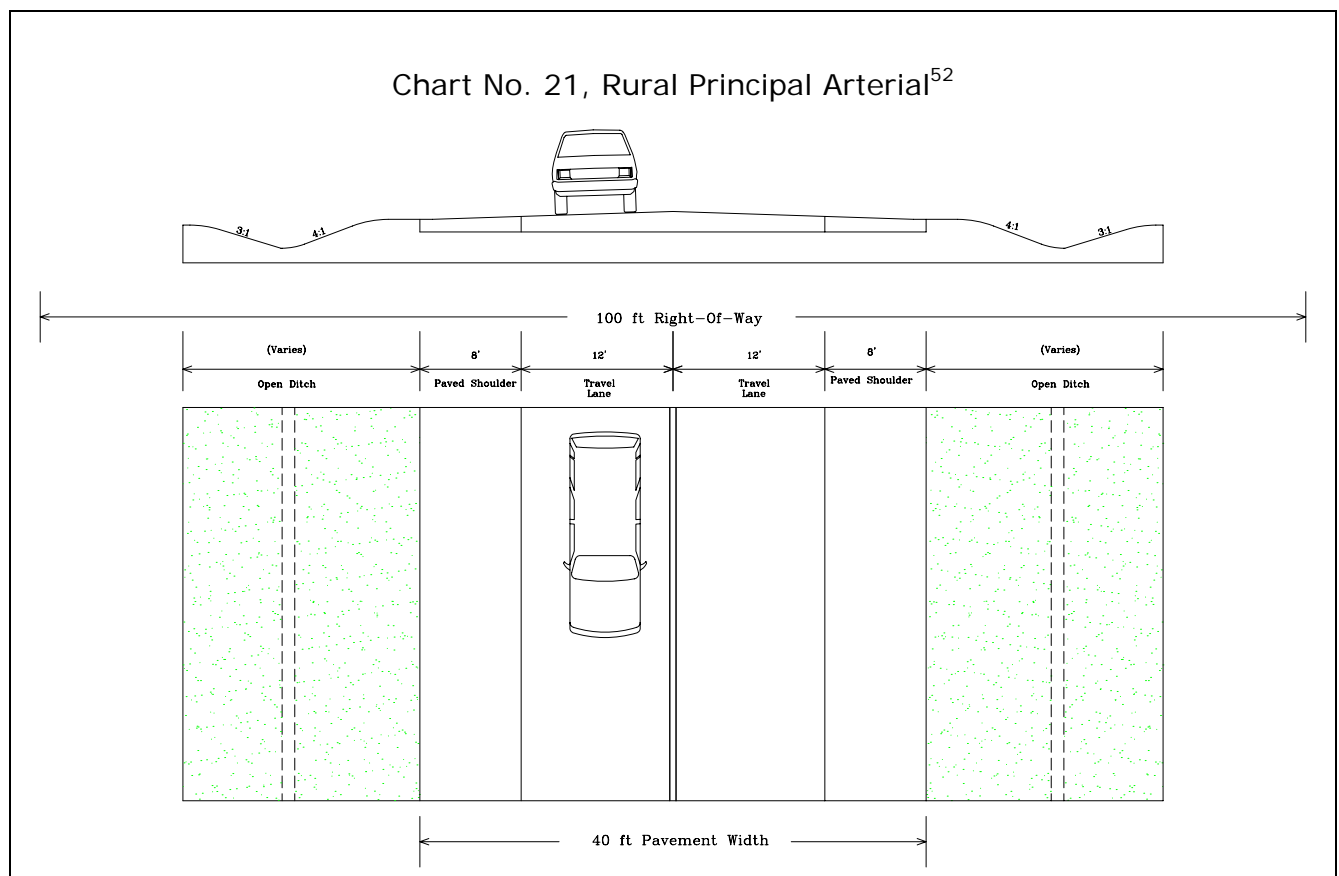




## Appendix A Roadway Cross-Section Design Standards

The City of Benton roadway cross-section design standards provided herein have been developed in consultation with Saline County and are to be applied to all public roadways in the Benton Planning Area based on the functional classification shown in the Master Street Plan Map of the City of Benton (see Map 25) and in accordance with provisions of the Master Street Plan (see Section 5) and implementing ordinances. The rural cross-section design standards provided herein may be applied outside the Benton City Limits on State Highway System routes and on county roads where the provision of wastewater collection and treatment is not available from the City of Benton or another service provider and in all cases where the average residential lot size is larger than one-half acre. Although no cross-section design standards are provided herein for Class I and II roadways, the design of such facilities shall be in accordance with AHTD and/or Metroplan policies. In all other circumstances, the urban cross-section design standards provided herein shall be applied.

### Class III Principal Arterial Roadway



<sup>52</sup> Where construction is done in phases within the Benton City Limits, a rural cross-section may be applied until such time that the roadway is widened to four general-purpose lanes. However, sidewalks (not shown in rural cross-section) may also be required.

Chart No. 22, Urban Divided Principal Arterial with a raised-median

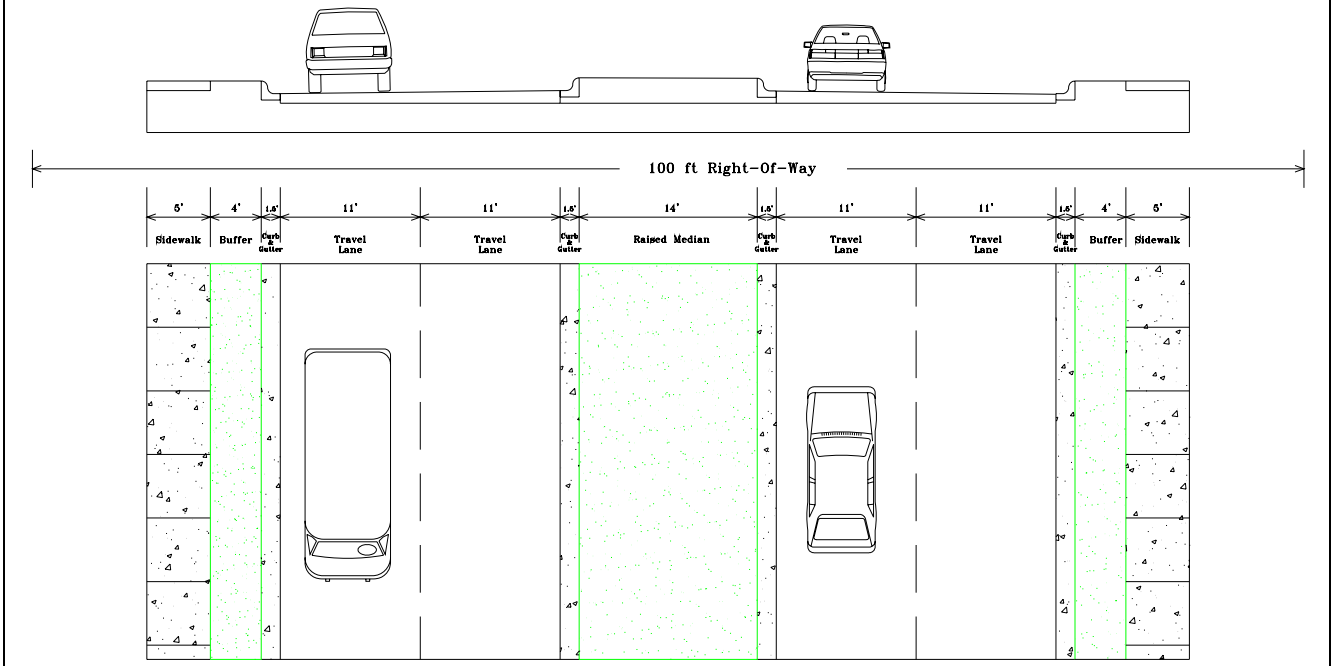


Chart No. 23, Urban Divided Principal Arterial with a two-way center left-turn lane

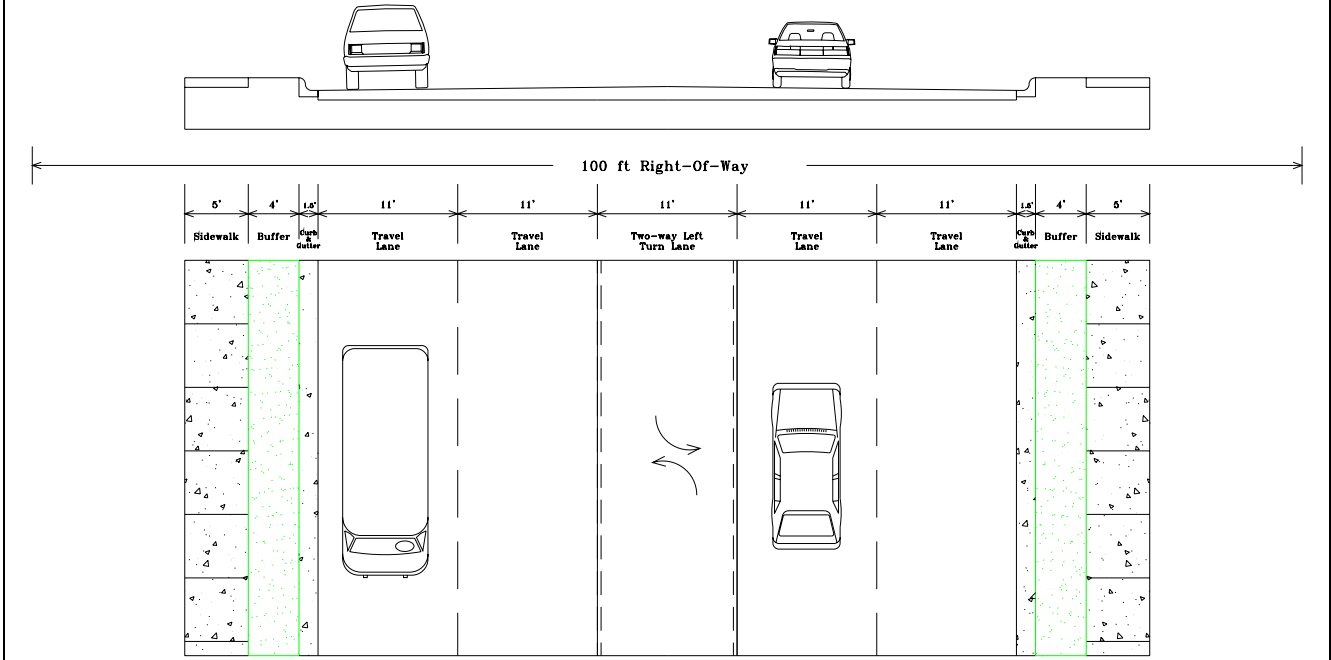
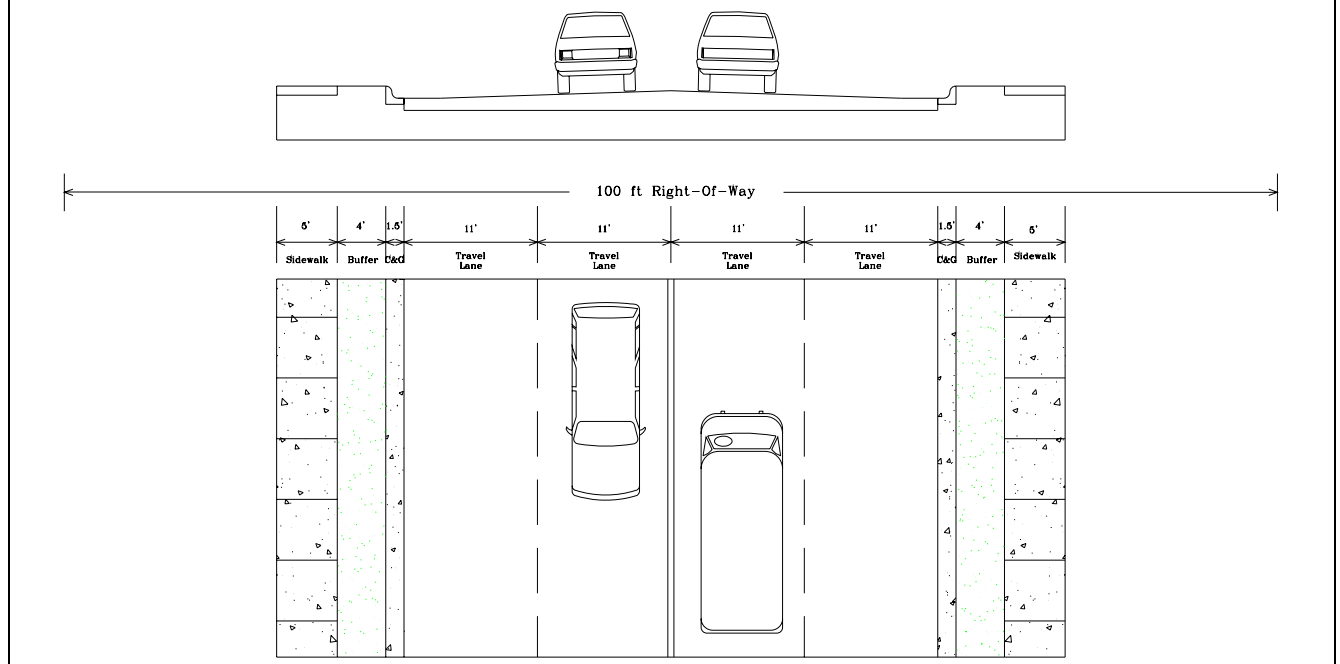
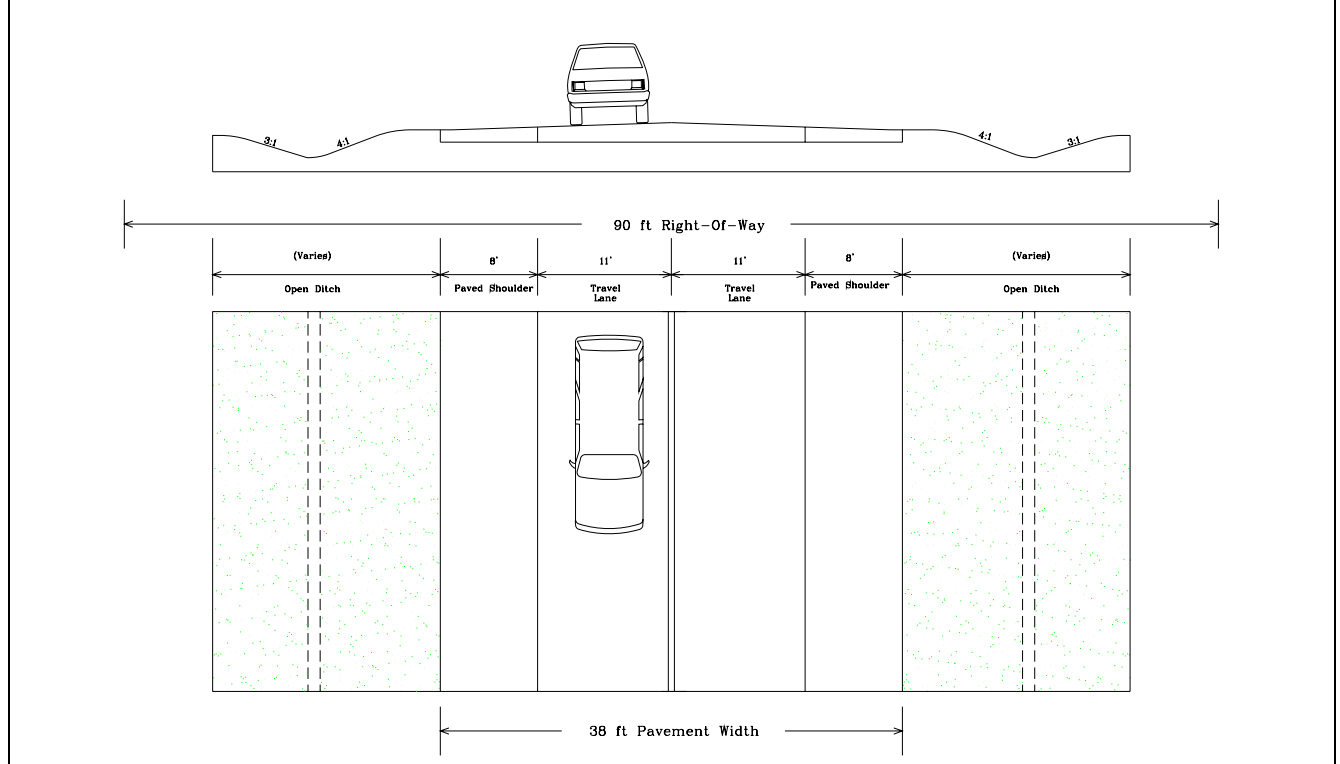


Chart No. 24, Urban Undivided Principal Arterial



#### Class IV Minor Arterial Roadways

Chart No. 25, Rural Minor Arterial<sup>53</sup>



<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

Chart No. 26, Urban Divided Minor Arterial with a raised-median

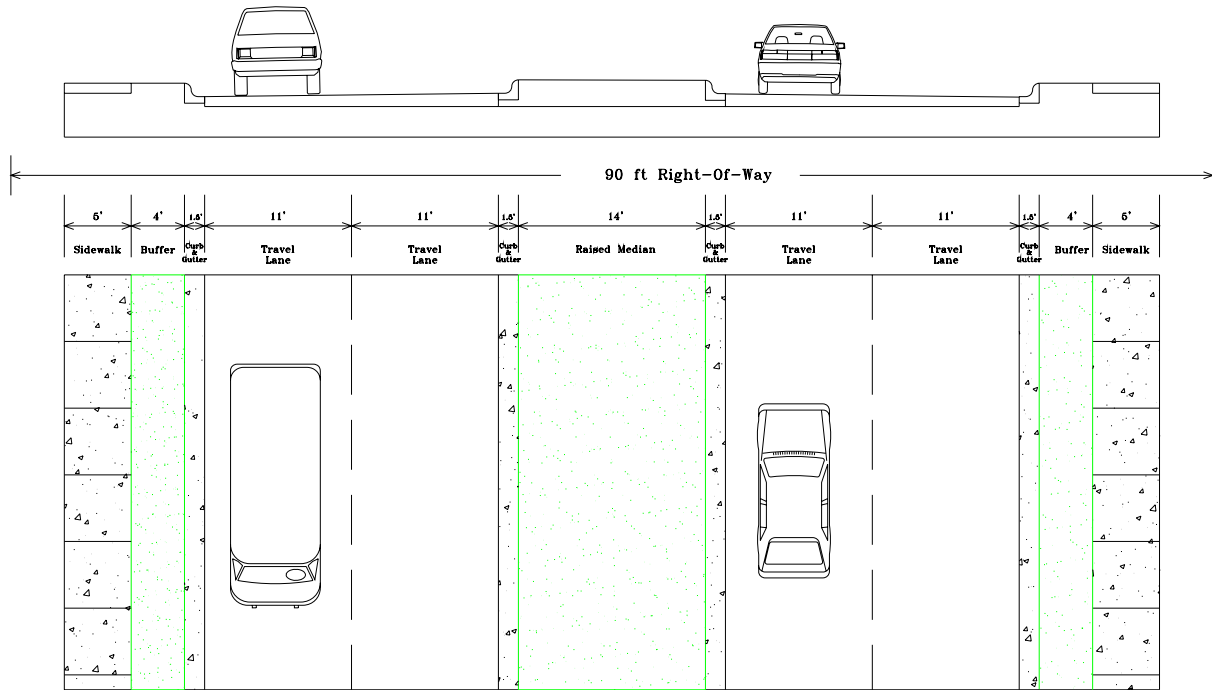


Chart No. 27, Urban Divided Minor Arterial with a two-way center left-turn lane

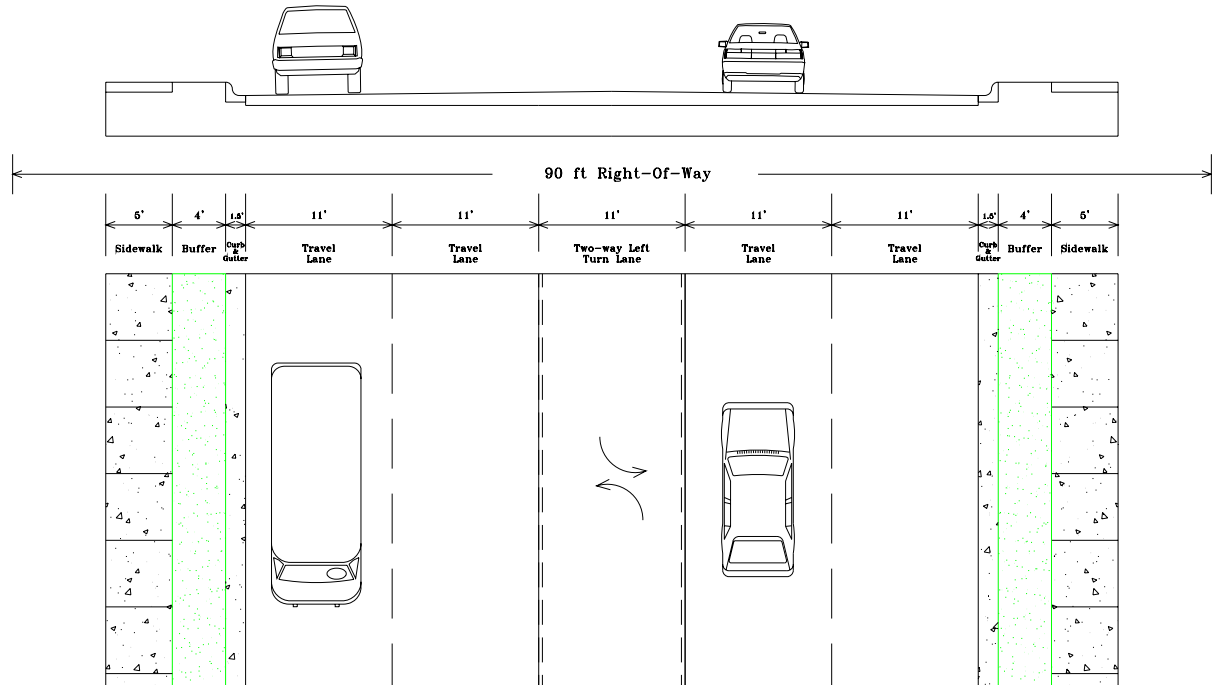
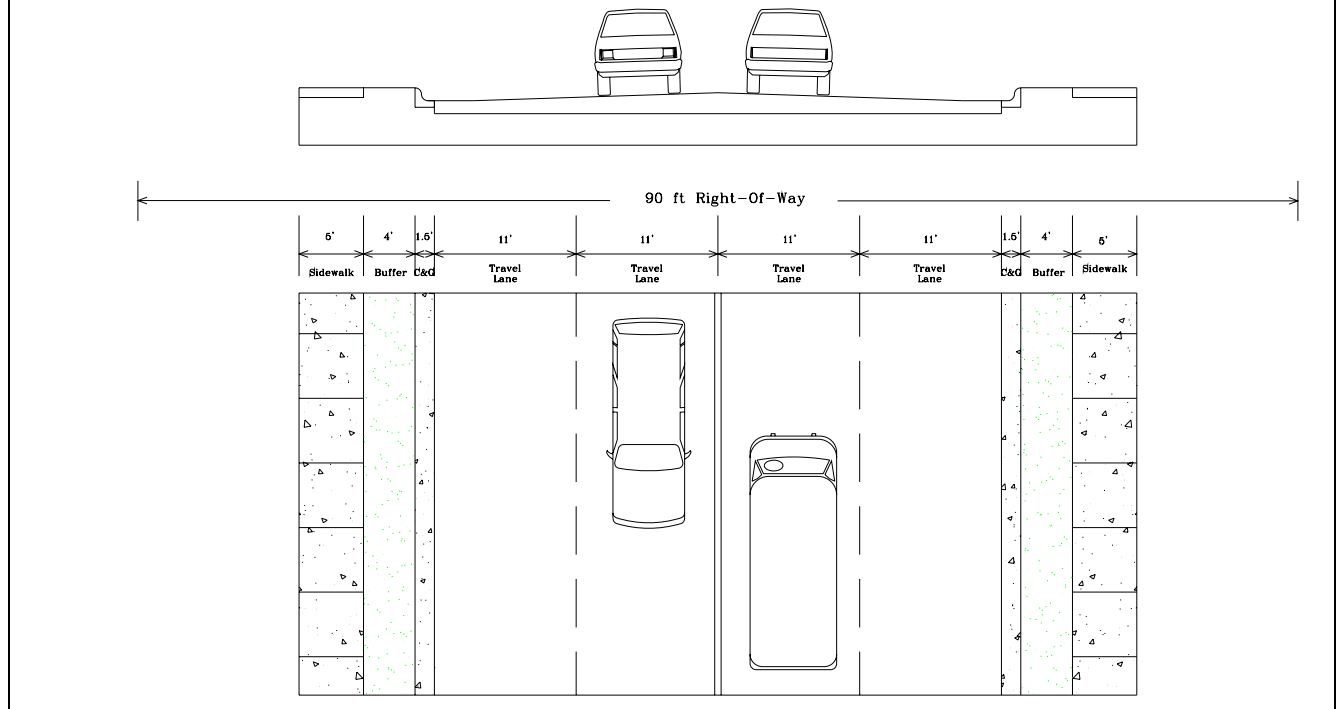
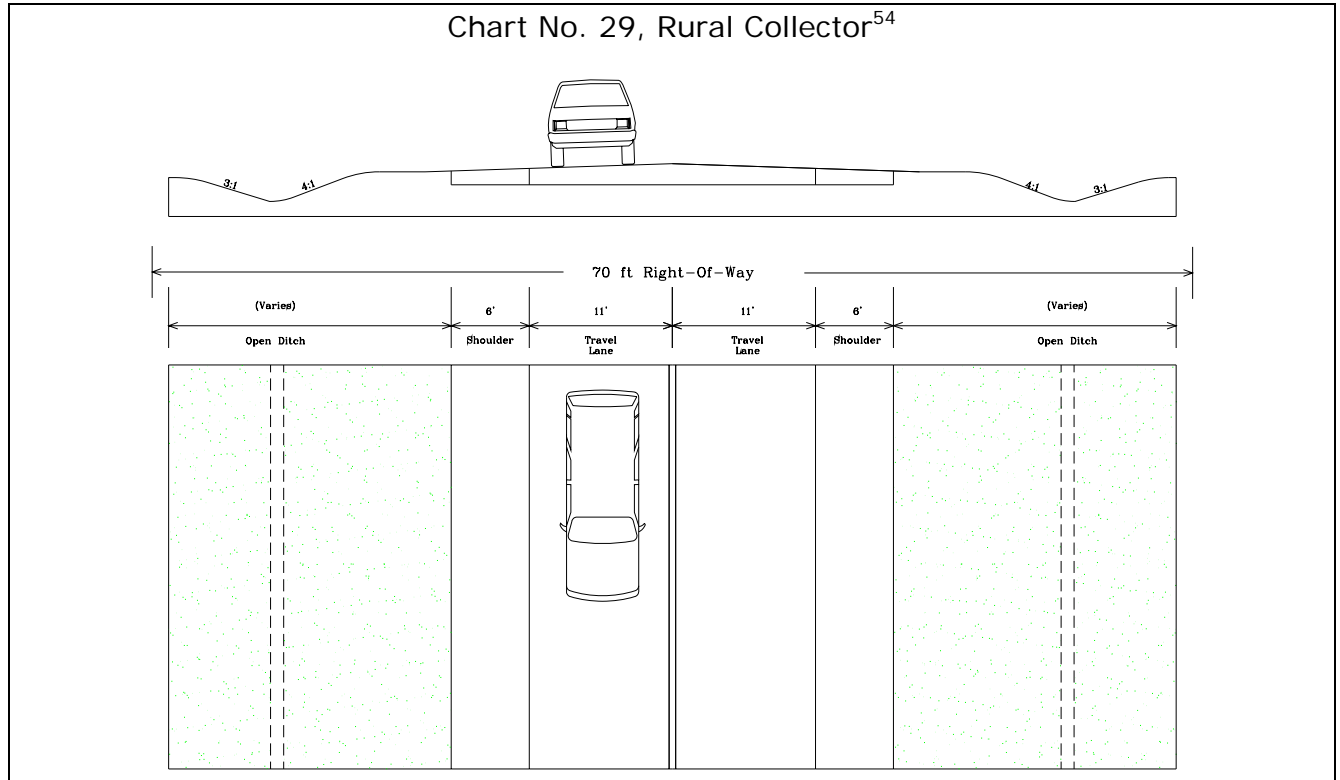


Chart No. 28, Urban Undivided Minor Arterial



Class V Collector Roadways

Chart No. 29, Rural Collector<sup>54</sup>



<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

Chart No. 30, Urban Collector

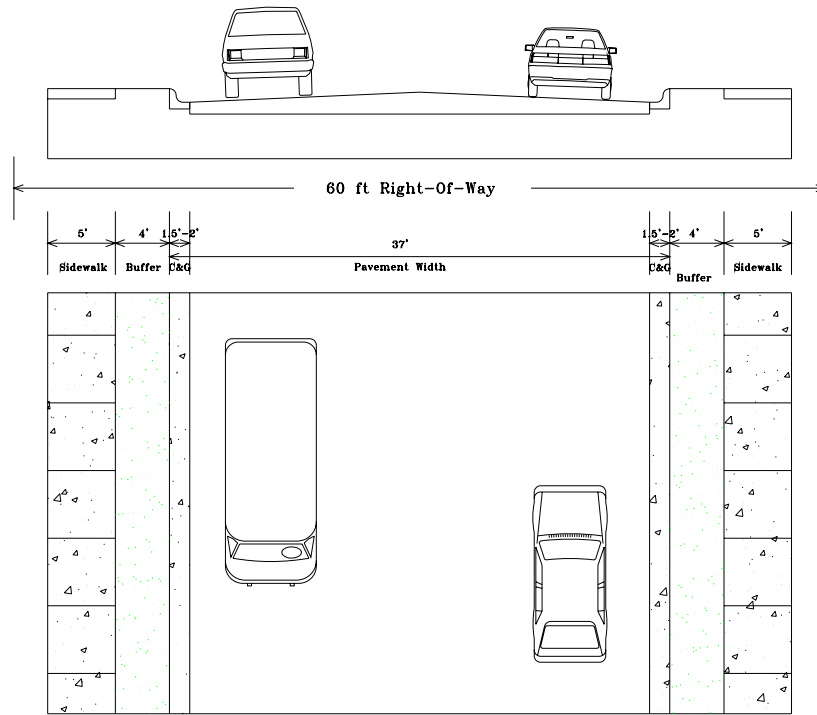
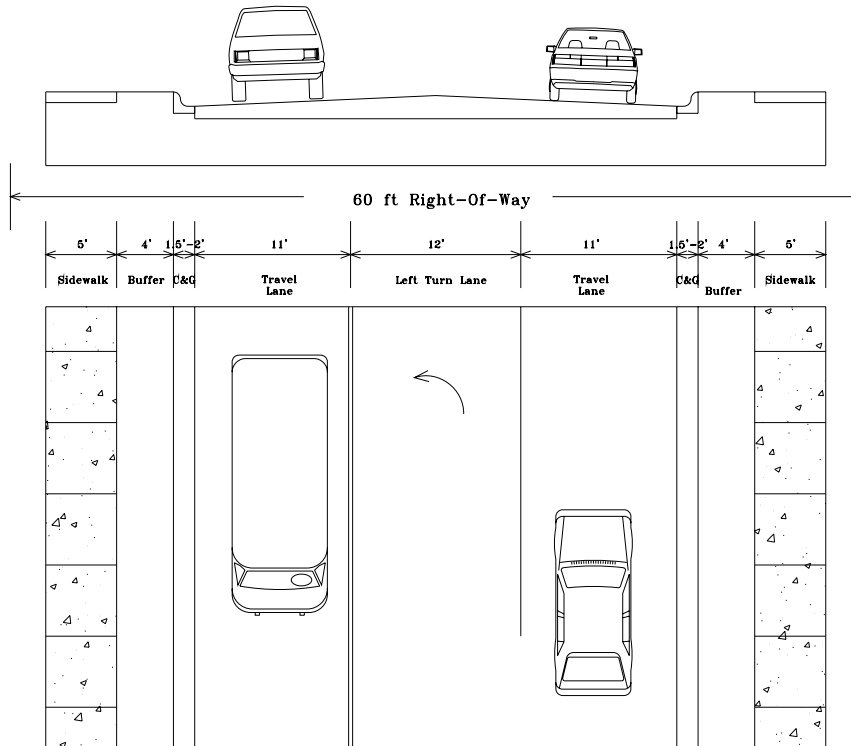
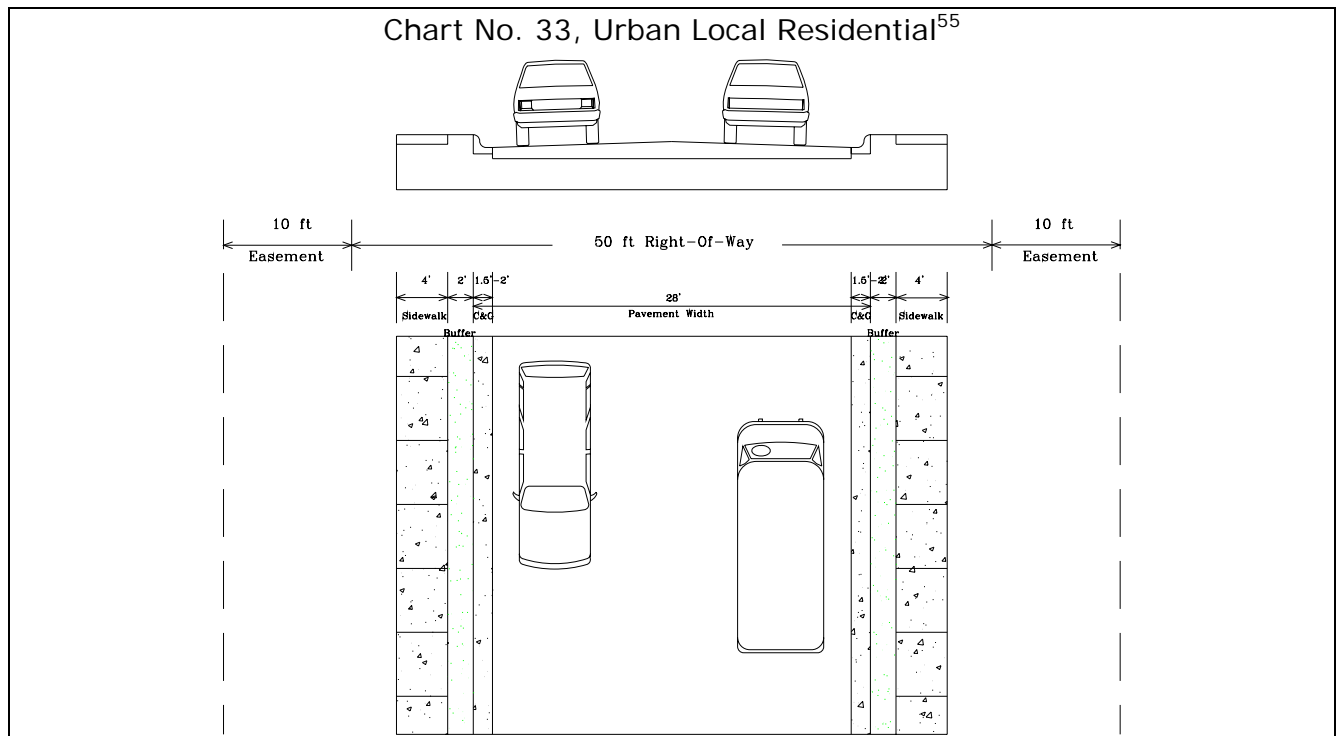
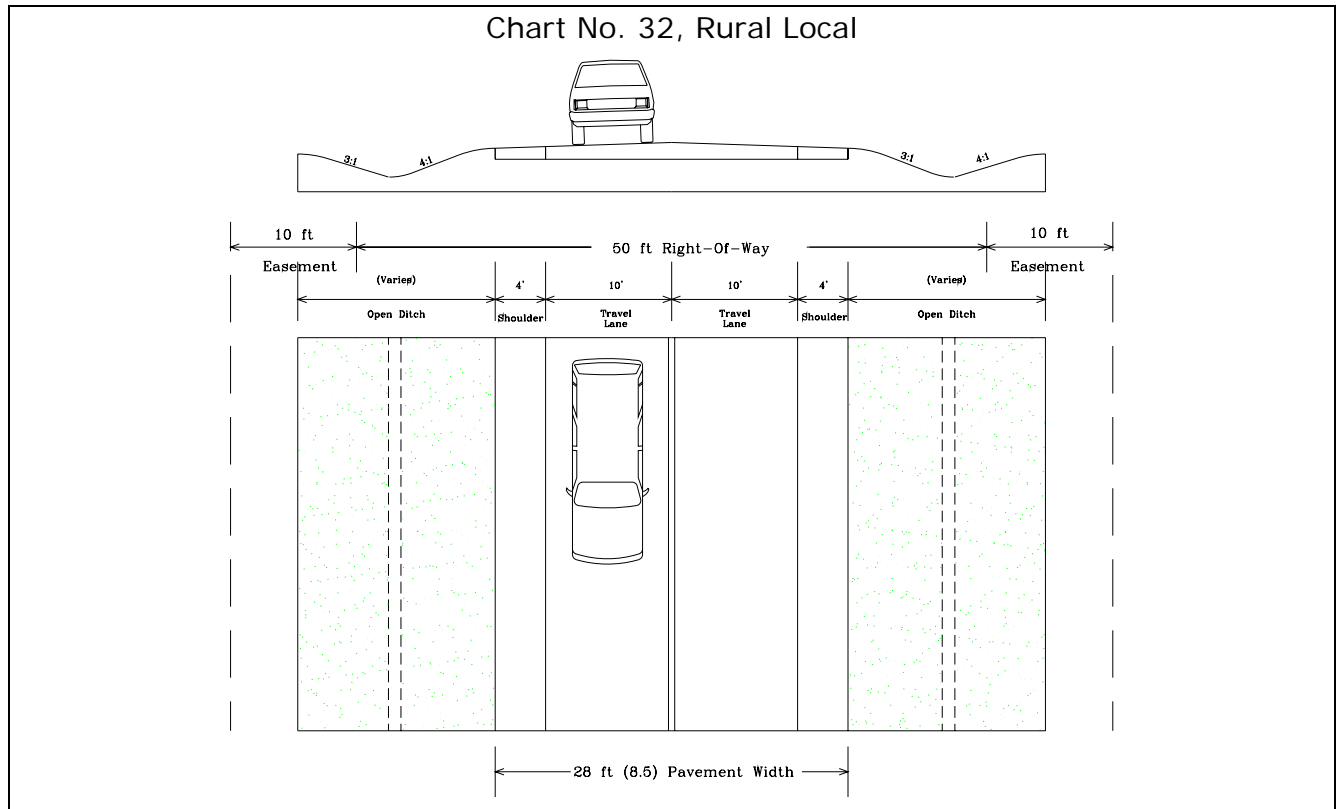


Chart No. 31, Urban Collector with exclusive left-turn lane

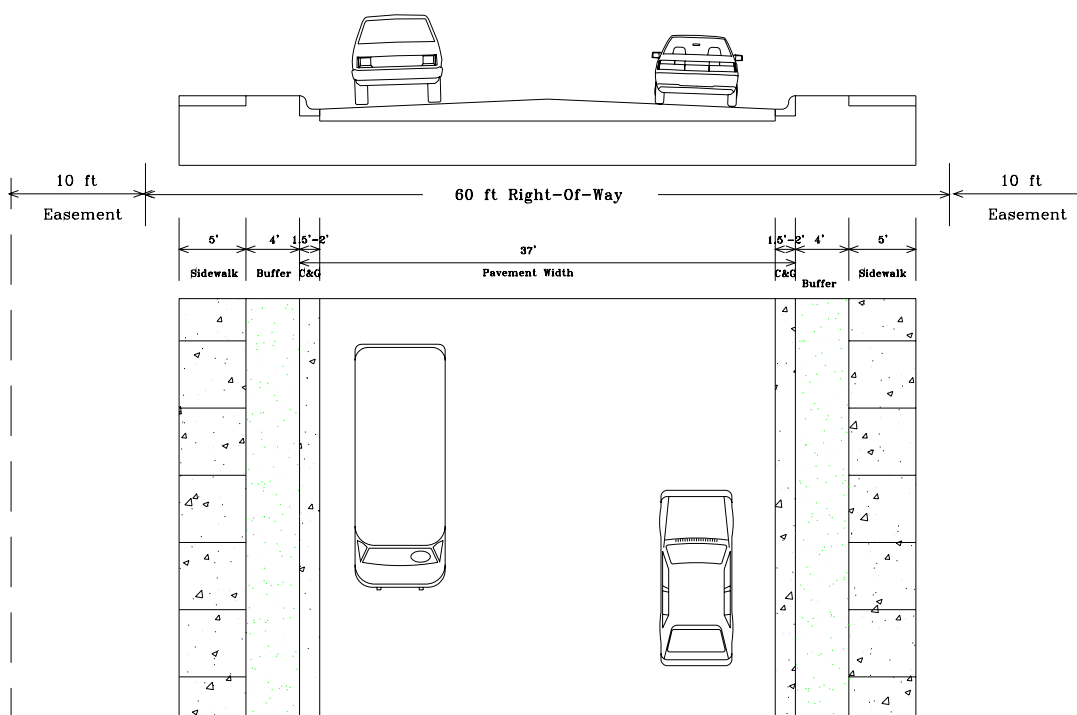


Class VI Local Roadways



<sup>55</sup> Sidewalks shall be required where needed in accordance with the subdivision regulations.

Chart No. 34, Urban Local Commercial<sup>56</sup>



<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

## Appendix B Bikeway Design Standards

The City of Benton bikeway design standards provided herein are taken from the *Central Arkansas Regional Transportation Study Area Roadway Design Standards and Implementation Procedures*, adopted by the Metroplan Board of Directors on August 30, 2006. As a signatory to the CARTS Agreement of Understanding, the City of Benton is obligated to keep its design standards consistent with CARTS design standards.

Bikeways in the Benton Planning Area should be provided consistent with:

- All relevant goals and objectives included in Section 1.9.2
- Existing and proposed pathways as shown on Map 19, Benton Community Facilities Plan
- Bikeway design standards, as provided herein
- Ordinances implementing the Benton Comprehensive Development Plan

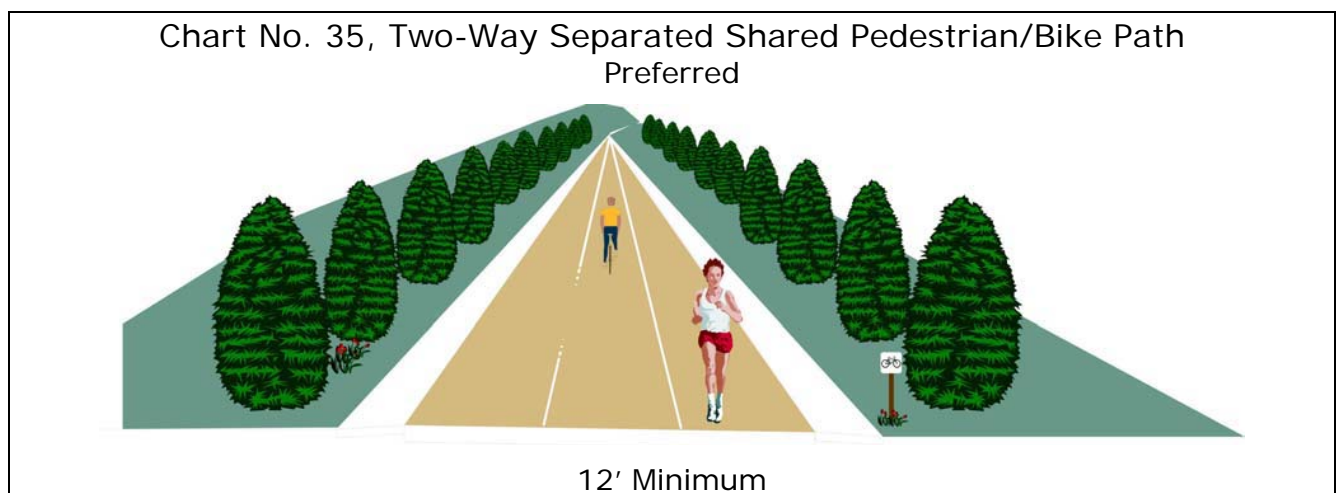
### Types of Bicycle Facilities

Bicycle paths are rated as suitable for three types of cyclists – Adults (Group A), Beginners (Group B) and Children (Group C).

#### Class I: Separate Shared Paths (Groups A, B/C)

Definition - A shared pedestrian/bicycle path that is physically separated from motorized vehicular traffic by an open space or barrier and either within the roadway right-of-way or within an independent right-of-way.

Two-way shared pedestrian/bicycle paths will be a minimum of 12 feet wide.



## Class II: Bike Lanes (Groups A, B/C)

**Definition** – A portion of the roadway that has been designated by striping, signing and pavement markings for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists.

Bike lanes should always be one-way facilities carrying traffic in the same direction as adjacent motor vehicle traffic. To minimize conflicts bike lanes should not be placed between parking spaces and the curb. They shall be a minimum of 4 feet wide, not including the gutter pan.

Chart No. 36, One-Way Bike Lane Next to Curb Preferred

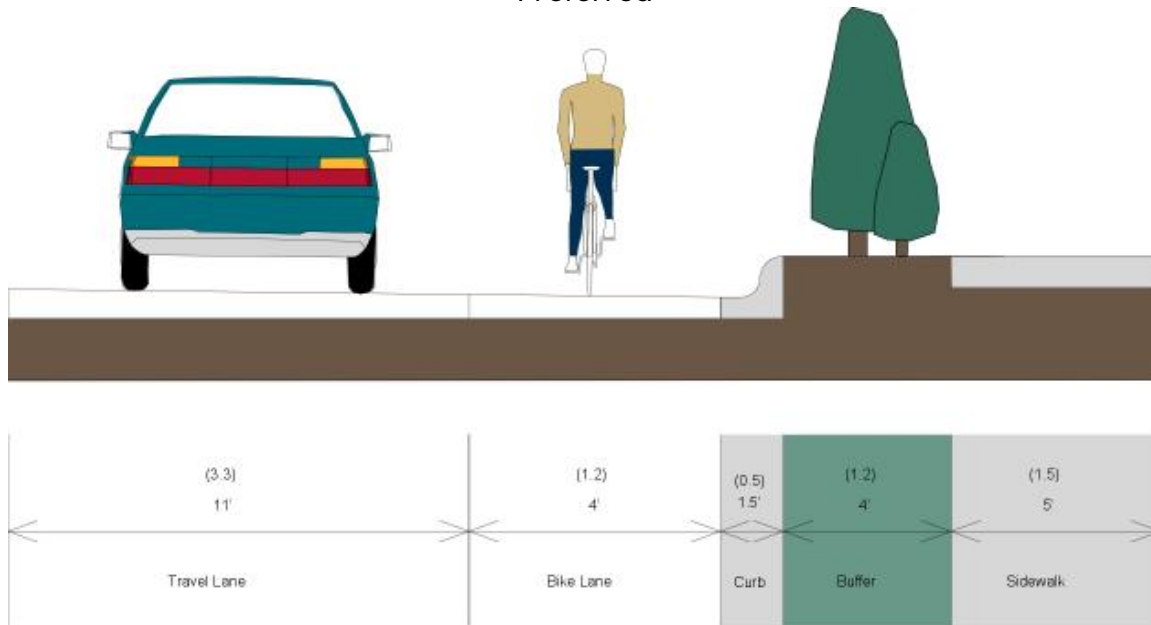
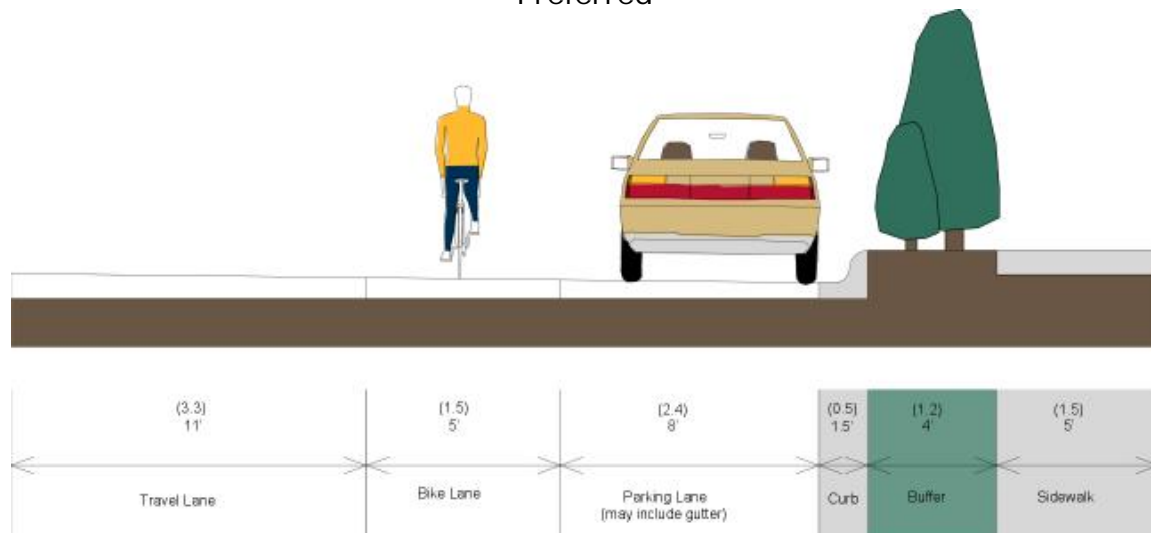


Chart No. 37, One-Way Bike Lane with Parking Lane Preferred

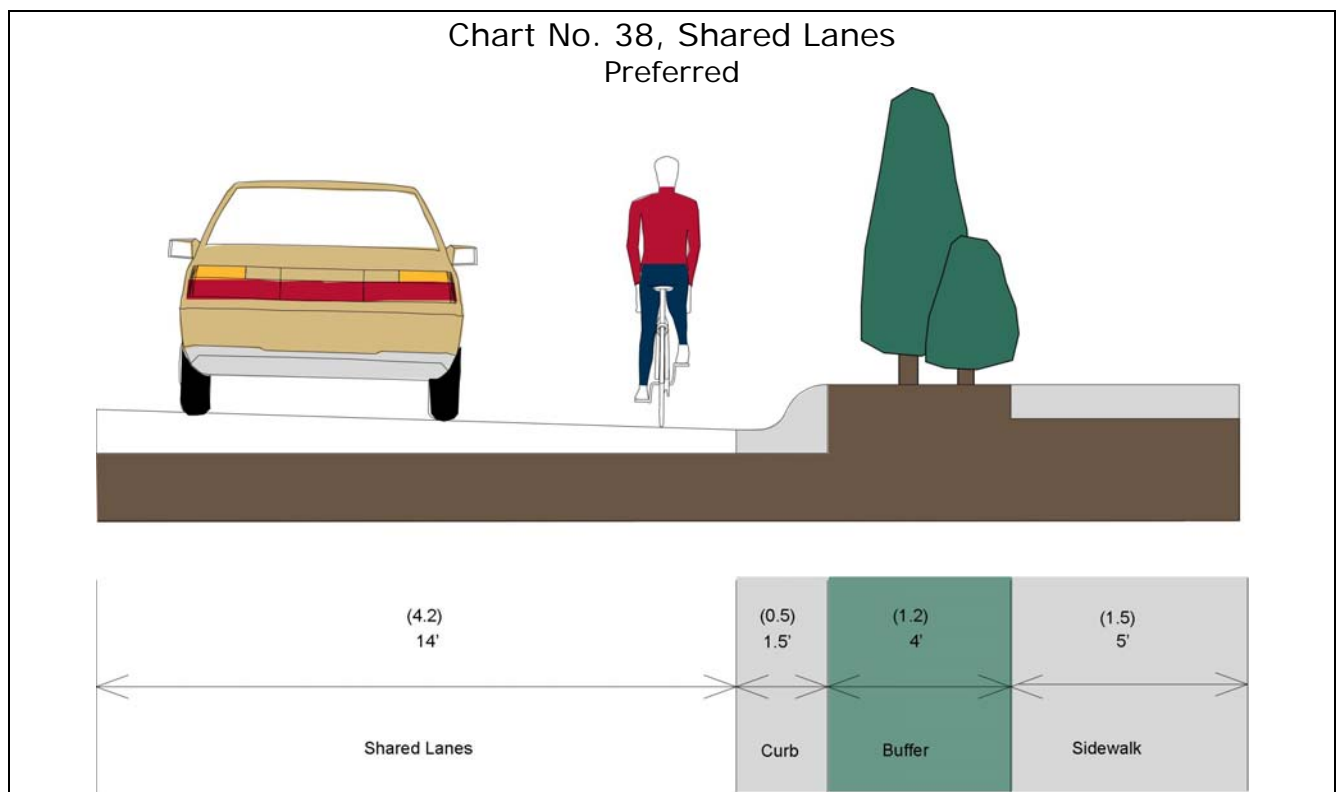


### Class III: Shared Lanes (Group A)

**Definition** – Shared lanes are roadways with no special provision for bicyclists (except for bike route signing). Shared lanes typically feature 12 feet widths or less with no shoulders, allowing cars to safely pass bicyclists only by crossing the centerline or moving into another traffic lane.

### Other Types of Shared Facilities:

**Wide Outside Lane:** An outside lane (right-most through traffic lane) with a width of at least 14 feet.



**Shoulders:** Shoulders must be paved and a minimum of 4 feet wide when they are designed to accommodate bicycle travel. A width of 5 feet or greater is preferable and additional widths are desirable where substantial truck traffic is present, or where motor vehicle speeds exceed 50 mph.

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