

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The recommendations of this plan are intended to provide a potential long-term program for historic preservation and community enhancement for the City, stakeholders and organizations, and residents. No recommendations in this plan are mandatory. Some recommendations may be implemented, and some may not. Some may be changed, adapted, or refined. Most recommendations build upon existing programs and endeavors and are not intended to require extraordinary expenditures of resources. All of the recommendations selected for implementation may be phased-in as time and financial resources become available.

The City of Joplin has prepared a Historic Preservation Plan that replaces a previous preservation plan prepared in 1990 and builds on significant recent developments in city-wide planning and the implementation of new projects. The May 2011 tornado in Joplin was a major event in the City's history and led to recovery efforts that have reshaped the community. We are now marking the tornado's five-year anniversary. It is time to recommit the City of Joplin and community stakeholders to continued revitalization and recovery. This preservation plan builds on recovery efforts and offers a vision and program for the next five years and beyond, merging efforts within the tornado zone with revitalization of Joplin's historic core.

This Historic Preservation Plan strengthens Joplin's historic preservation program by recognizing its accomplishments over the past thirty years and identifying strategies and actions to consolidate its focus for the future. Most importantly, the plan emphasizes that Joplin's historic character is central to its identity and

should be strengthened and enhanced through a wide variety of programmatic initiatives that go beyond the traditional realms of historic preservation.

With that perspective and building upon Joplin's 2012 Comprehensive Plan, the preservation plan embraces new and ongoing strategies for downtown revitalization, neighborhood revitalization, the enhancement of commercial corridors, and community engagement.

1.1 THE PLANNING PROCESS

Preparation of this Historic Preservation Plan was undertaken with funding provided by the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office through its Certified Local Government Program. Joplin has been a beneficiary of multiple grants to undertake historic preservation projects since it qualified as a Certified Local Government in 1986. Additional funding and staff support was provided by the City. The project was organized and managed by Joplin's Department of Planning, Development and Neighborhood Services. The Historic Preservation Commission worked closely with city staff in the planning process.

The city's planning consultant, Heritage Strategies, LLC, was introduced to Joplin during an initial visit in August, 2015, prior to the beginning of work on the project. The consultants were given a tour of the city, explored its neighborhoods, and were introduced to a number of interested stakeholders.

Work on the preservation plan began in October, 2015, after approval by City Council. Heritage Strategies reviewed background material on Joplin's history, historical development, city programs, economy, and demographics. In late October, the consultants undertook an extensive visual survey of the city, becoming familiar with its neighborhoods and assessing the condition of its historic resources. The consultants met with city staff, the Historic Preservation Commission, and stakeholders.

Following a period of background review and assessment, in January 2016, a series of focus groups convened to review issues around three key areas of interest: (1) Joplin's economy with a special focus on downtown revitalization, (2) Joplin's historic neighborhoods, and (3) history, arts and culture within the city. Representatives of stakeholders involved in these three areas discussed existing conditions, issues, and potential directions for future action to which the preservation plan could contribute.

One-on-one meetings were held with other key stakeholders as well. Heritage Strategies presented an overview of its assessment of Joplin's historical development and historic preservation issues at a public workshop held in Joplin's new high school.

In March 2016, the focus groups were reconvened to review and discuss Heritage Strategies' preliminary recommendations for the plan. Recommendations were organized into the topical chapters:

- Joplin's Historic Preservation Program;
- Downtown Joplin;
- Joplin's Historic Neighborhoods;

- Commercial Corridors; and
- Joplin's Stories – Interpretation and Engagement.

Additional stakeholder meetings were held to discuss strategies and roles, and a second public workshop was conducted with facilitated discussion about the plan. Further discussions were held with representatives of the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office, Missouri Main Street, and others.

The full draft Historic Preservation Plan was completed in June and July 2016 and finalized in August. Throughout the planning process the goal has been to build upon recent preservation initiatives and accomplishments. The plan has emphasized engaging stakeholders throughout the city in different areas of interest and organizing their activities in preserving and enhancing Joplin's historic character.

1.2 FOUNDATION OF THE PLAN

The foundation for this Historic Preservation Plan rests upon Joplin's recent history of growth and development, its economic base for future prosperity, and the role that historic character plays in quality of life for Joplin's residents. Joplin's position as a regional economic and commercial center is a direct consequence of its historic role as a center of the Tri-State Mining Area of Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma. This position is the underpinning of its current economy and prospect for future growth and prosperity.

Significant strategies and actions have been developed and undertaken to strengthen Joplin's economic future, and the city's quality of life and ability to attract businesses, institutions, visitors, and residents is central to those strategies. Joplin's historic character is an important asset that contributes to local quality of life. This preservation plan embraces the city's economic strategies and demonstrates how to make the best use of Joplin's historic assets in their realization.

The City of Joplin

Joplin is the second largest city in southwest Missouri and the largest city within the historic Tri-State Mining Area. Joplin's economic reach includes the corner of southwest Missouri as well as areas of adjacent southeast Kansas, northeast Oklahoma, and northwest Arkansas. The City of Joplin has a resident population of approximately 51,000 people. However, Joplin's daytime population grows to about 250,000 because of the city's role as a regional commercial center. Many people living over a broad regional area outside of the city commute to Joplin to work, shop, and access services.

Joplin's population has grown slowly over the last century following the city's initial boom in the early mining era and has remained stable in the face of economic change. This history is in contrast to that of many other mining and industrial centers across the country. The strength of Joplin's manufacturing and its diversification over the years as a regional commercial center have enabled the city to maintain a relatively stable economy. Joplin has been fortunate in being able to use the prosperity derived from the mining era to build its urban

infrastructure and develop other sectors of its economy in order to accomplish a successful economic transition.

Today Joplin's leading economic sectors are manufacturing (12.2%), retail (14.1%), health care (18.0%), and visitor services (accommodations and food service – 10.0%). These are closely followed by educational (8.0%) and transportation/warehousing (5.7%) (Novogradac 2012:14). The city's overall economic condition is good; its unemployment rate in December 2015 was an impressive 3.3%, significantly below the state-wide average of 4.4%, which is below the national unemployment rate of 5.0% (US BLS 2016).[1]

The three pillars of Joplin's economy are viewed as small manufacturing, regional retail (including accommodations and food service), and health care (including related services). Higher education is an area of growth and importance and has received particular attention in recent years. The quality of Joplin's health care sector is spurring growth in higher education.

Joplin is a solidly middle class community, in part because of the strength of its manufacturing-based economy that developed in support of the mining industry over the past hundred years. Despite Joplin's role as the mining industry's commercial and transportation center, Carthage, as the legal and political center of Jasper County, historically attracted many of the mining region's higher income and professional services residents. Joplin has a strong faith community – there are many different types and sizes of churches, most Protestant, some non-traditional, and a number evangelical. Churches are everywhere. Volunteerism and community support services are high.

In 2010, Joplin's population was 88% white and 12% minority, including 4.5% Hispanic, 3.2% African American, 1.8% Native American, and 1.5% Asian. The city's age distribution is relatively even, without the concentration of older residents seen in many older industrial communities (Novogradac 2012:Addendum C).

Joplin's median household income between 2009 and 2013 was $37,912, which is lower than the state average of $47,380. The percentage of persons living below the poverty level was 19%, higher than the statewide average of 15.5% (US Census 2015). In part, these figures may be affected by a lower cost of living within the region than the cost of living in other more populated areas of the state.

Quality of life is an important factor in Joplin's economic strategy. With four times as many people visiting Joplin each day as live here, there is opportunity to attract new residents. The character and quality of Joplin's urban infrastructure and community life are important in attracting the doctors, medical professionals, students, faculty, and support personnel that populate its health care and educational sectors. The quality and diversity of Joplin's retail stores and restaurants and the overall quality of the experience of shopping along Joplin's commercial corridors are important in attracting shoppers from the larger region,

[1] Note: Between December 2015 and March 2016, Joplin's unemployment rate rose to 4.3%, while the national unemployment rate remained at 5.0%

especially as competing commercial areas develop in other communities. Thoughtful, far-reaching planning and implementation strategies that reinforce and enhance community character over time are important to Joplin's economic success.



Overview of Conditions 1990 to 2010

During the two decades prior to the 2011 tornado, the City of Joplin had solidified a pattern of slow but stable economic growth. Following the end of the mining era after World War II, there was great concern that the city's economy would be in decline. However, buoyed by its diverse manufacturing base and strengthened by its longstanding role as a regional commercial center (both direct consequences of the mining era), Joplin's population and economy remained steady. During the two decades from 1990 to 2010, the city began to slowly grow again as these two pillars of its economy matured. The third pillar, healthcare, developed dramatically and, along with education, has become a critical component of the city's economic base.

During this period, the physical growth that took place in Joplin was located primarily around the city's edges, in developing commercial corridors and suburban neighborhoods. Downtown Joplin and surrounding older, inner-city neighborhoods became somewhat neglected and increasingly challenged.

However, momentum was building aimed at the revitalization of Downtown Joplin. During the period of urban renewal from the late 1950s into the early 1970s, a great deal of urban fabric was lost to demolition. Many downtown commercial and business uses relocated to the surrounding commercial corridors. New projects were unable to fill the gap. Concern about building loss

and the future of Downtown Joplin came to a head in 1978 with the demolition of the historic Connor Hotel, a downtown landmark.

In 1986, Joplin adopted a historic preservation ordinance and became a Certified Local Government, a federal historic preservation program managed by the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office. In 1988, a comprehensive architectural survey was completed of Downtown Joplin. A city-wide historic preservation plan was prepared in 1990, and several important buildings were listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

During the early 2000s, Joplin began an ambitious downtown revitalization initiative. Downtown Joplin Revitalization Plan (discussed further in Chapter 5) was prepared in 2002. In 2004, Joplin's zoning code was updated, a downtown design review district was created, and a program of extensive streetscape improvements was begun. The City of Joplin itself made a significant investment by rehabilitating the historic Newman Brothers Building in the center of downtown as the new City Hall.

Between 2008 and 2011, five separate National Register historic districts were created for different portions of downtown as funding became available. These National Register designations made possible the use of federal and state historic preservation tax credits for the rehabilitation of historic buildings. A program modeled on the National Trust's successful Main Street program was created to support and encourage private sector investment. Façade improvements, public events, and other programs were undertaken to activate the downtown district. These initiatives helped attract local entrepreneurs and private sector projects, making significant progress in revitalizing the downtown core.

2011 Tornado and Recovery

On May 22, 2011, a tornado struck Joplin and ripped over a mile-wide swath of devastation through the city south of downtown. The tornado damaged over 7,500 homes, of which approximately 4,000 were destroyed. In addition to homes, 553 businesses were lost. Many of the damaged and destroyed homes and businesses were part of the historic Blendville and South Joplin neighborhoods.

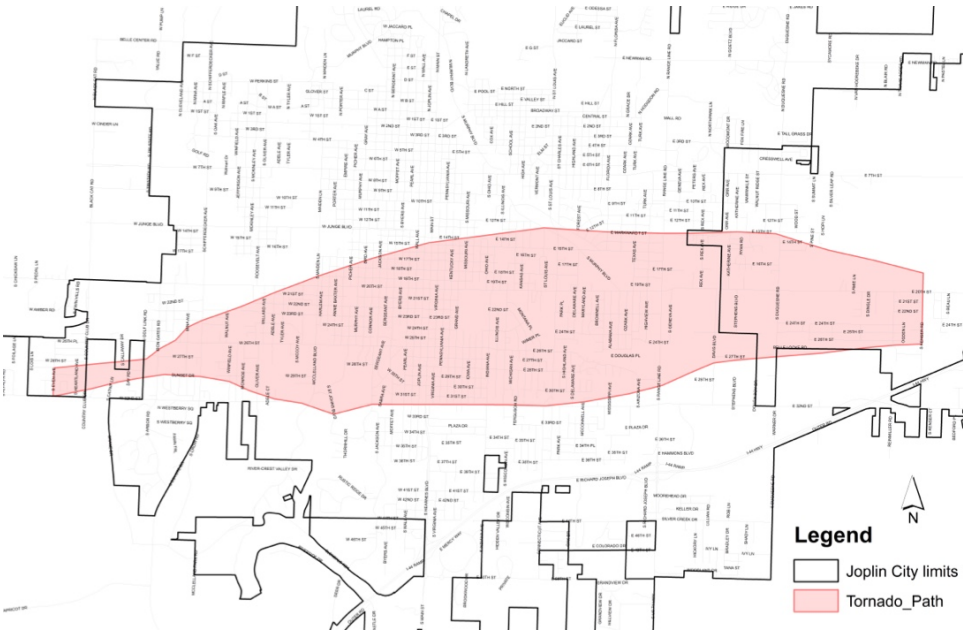
By early August 2011, debris in the areas of most extensive and catastrophic damage had been removed by federal contractors under the direction of the US Army Corps of Engineers. Most of the area of central Joplin between 20th/23rd Streets on the north and 28th Street on the south was left devoid of buildings and trees. Residents, businesses, organizations, and the City then began the long road to recovery. Many volunteers participated. With federal assistance, a citizen-based recovery effort was initiated with establishment of a Citizens Advisory Recovery Team (CART) through which a long-term recovery strategy was developed and is presently being implemented and adjusted on an on-going basis.

A series of recovery plans were prepared and programs were organized to implement various elements of the overall strategy. Over $158 million in federal funds was awarded to the City of Joplin through the US Department of Housing

and Urban Development for recovery projects that will be completed by 2019. Many of the projects, including new schools, infrastructure, parks, housing, and community support projects within the tornado recovery area, have already been completed. (City of Joplin 2015 Fact Sheet; 2014 Recovery & Resiliency Strategy)



Remaining vacant lot within the tornado zone with reconstructed homes behind.



Path of tornado devastation through Joplin's historic Blendville and South Joplin neighborhoods (City of Joplin).

2012 Comprehensive Plan

As part of the recovery effort and in direct response to recommendations of the Citizens Advisory Recovery Team, the City of Joplin updated its Comprehensive Plan in 2012. With community input, the planning process identified long-term goals and strategies for growth and development, especially related to the tornado recovery area. The Comprehensive Plan serves as the City's official policy guide for growth and development as well as the legal framework for its zoning and subdivision regulations. The Comprehensive Plan is the foundation of Joplin's plan for future growth. This Historic Preservation Plan embraces the Comprehensive Plan and builds on its concepts and strategies.

The 2012 Comprehensive Plan includes chapters on communitywide revitalization, transportation systems, future land use, and infrastructure. Its focus is on land use policy and recovery. The plan emphasizes three concepts:

- Mixed-use development corridors – encouraging new development along key streets with higher density mixed residential, commercial, and business uses and tying those corridors to existing adjacent neighborhoods.

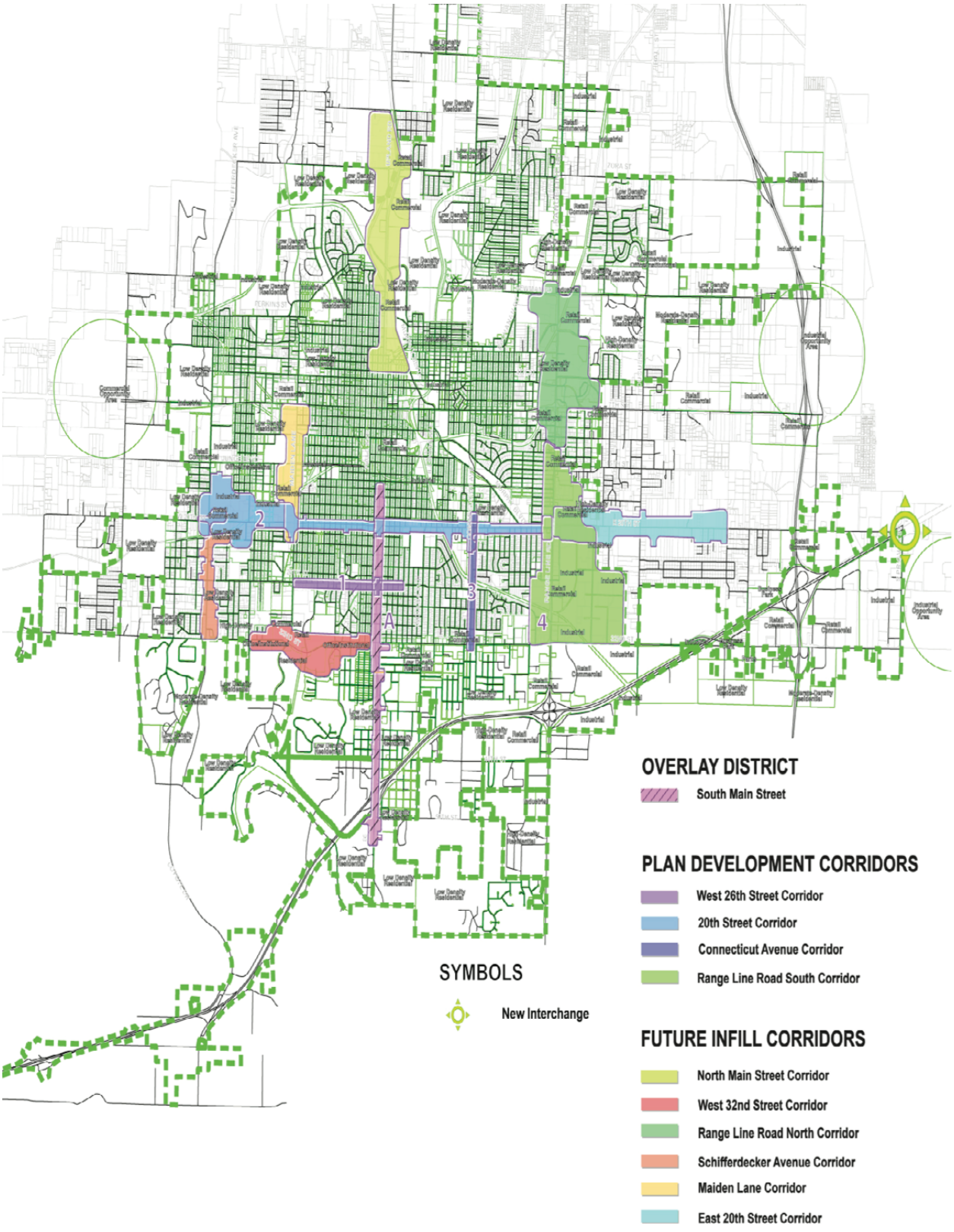
- Connectivity – creating automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle connections between neighborhoods, schools, parks, community facilities, and commercial areas. The plan embraces a 'complete streets' approach to Joplin's city streets.

- Development Standards – using high quality design and development standards for access, circulation, setbacks, and improvements to enhance new development and ensure design and land use compatibility with neighboring areas.

Three types of mixed-use development corridors have been adopted.

Overlay Districts have been identified in the Comprehensive Plan to encourage mixed-use development along primary road corridors. Specifically, a zoning Overlay District has been established along South Main Street in the tornado recovery area from the I-44 interchange north to 15th Street that encourages development projects with mixed retail/commercial, office/institutional, and moderate-density residential uses. These projects will be permitted by-right under the overlay zoning provisions within the zoning ordinance and will not require further rezoning. Site plans for new projects must meet established development standards for site access, circulation, and related site plan improvements. Projects must provide land uses that are compatible with adjacent neighboring uses.

The Overlay District promotes retail/commercial uses at the street level with higher density residential or office uses on second and third floors. New buildings should be sited directly adjacent to the Main Street sidewalk with on-street parking along Main Street and off-street parking areas behind the buildings. Landscaped buffer areas are to be provided to soften the relationships to adjacent residential neighborhoods.



2012 Comprehensive Plan Focusing on Mixed-Use Development Corridors.

Planned Development Corridors have been created in the recovery area to encourage reinvestment in locations where higher density and enhanced development standards are in the public interest. Within the designated Planned Development Corridors, developers may choose to implement projects under current zoning or may seek rezoning for Planned Development encompassing higher density mixed-use projects. In addition to the corridors themselves, higher density neighborhood residential projects may be proposed adjacent to but behind designated Planned Development Corridors.

The intent of Planned Development Corridors is to promote preferred mixed-use land development patterns and quality buildings along key corridors. Development standards established for the corridors accommodate needed private-market alternatives for developers while applying standards that promote compatible, high quality site planning and building design. The development standards are applied to projects under both current zoning and rezoning for Planned Development.

Planned Development Corridors for mixed residential, commercial, and office/institutional uses have been adopted along West 26th Street, 20th Street, and Connecticut Avenue within the recovery area. A Planned Development Corridor for commercial uses has been adopted along Range Line Road South.

Future Infill Corridors have been identified along designated linear corridors outside of the recovery area where infill development will occur over time in more standard patterns. The purpose of the Future Infill Corridor designation is to promote preferred infill and redevelopment of mixed-use and multi-use land development patterns and high quality building construction in key older, established corridors within the city. Developers may undertake projects under current zoning or may apply for rezoning for higher density Planned Development projects. Rezoning is limited to properties that are at least 180 feet in depth.

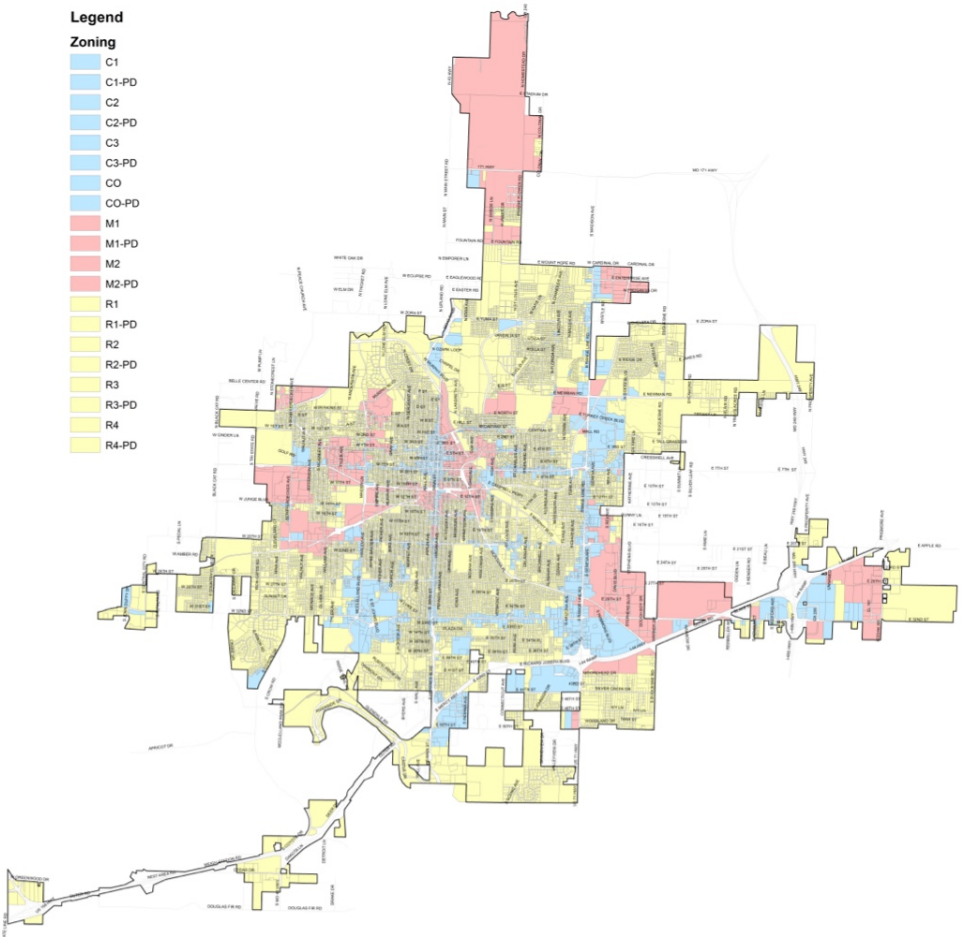
New development standards are applied along the infill corridors to assure higher quality projects. The development standards are intended to accommodate needed private-market alternatives for owners and developers along established and built-up principal streets while applying new standards that promote development compatible with what is already built.

Future Infill Corridors for multi-use residential, commercial, office/institutional projects have been designated along North Main Street and West 32nd Street. Future Infill Corridors for multi-use commercial projects have been designated along Range Line Road North, Schifferdecker Avenue, Maiden Lane, and East 20th Street (east of Range Line Road).

Comprehensive Plan and Additional Planning Documents

Joplin's 2012 Comprehensive Plan provides the foundation upon which this Historic Preservation Plan is based. As outlined in Chapter 3, Preservation Approach, the preservation plan is intended to fill out the Comprehensive Plan by focusing upon the revitalization of older residential neighborhoods, older commercial corridors, and Downtown Joplin within the framework and concepts provided by the Comprehensive Plan.

In addition, a number of other important planning documents developed by the City of Joplin and it stakeholders are important to the preservation plan. These include documents outlining the city's economic strategy, housing issues, neighborhood revitalization approach, heritage tourism program, trails and open space, and historic preservation initiatives, among others. These documents are discussed in the various relevant chapters below.



Commercial (blue), manufacturing (red), and residential (yellow) areas of Joplin (city of Joplin)

1.3 ORGANIZATION AND SUMMARY OF THE PLAN

The following paragraphs summarize the concepts and strategies presented in each chapter of the Historic Preservation Plan and serve as an executive summary of the plan.

Chapter 1 – Introduction and Overview

Chapter 1 provides a background, foundation, and summary of the Historic Preservation Plan. In particular, the chapter summarizes key concepts of Joplin's 2012 Comprehensive Plan upon which the preservation plan is based.

The foundation for this Historic Preservation Plan rests upon Joplin's recent history of growth and development, its economic base for future prosperity, and the role that historic character plays in quality of life for Joplin's residents. Joplin's historic character is an important asset that contributes to local quality of life. This preservation plan embraces the city's economic strategies and demonstrates how to make the best use of Joplin's historic assets in their realization.

The 2012 Comprehensive Plan emphasizes three concepts:

- Mixed-use development corridors;
- Connectivity; and
- Development Standards.

The Comprehensive Plan envisions an integrated and interconnected community with a high quality of life. Walkability, open space, and community character are emphasized. This preservation plan is intended to fill out the Comprehensive Plan by focusing upon the revitalization of older residential neighborhoods, older commercial corridors, and Downtown Joplin within the framework and concepts provided by the Comprehensive Plan.

Chapter 2 – Joplin's Historic Character

Chapter 2 reviews Joplin's history, historic resources, and historic character and how they contribute to life in Joplin today. Joplin is significant as the commercial center of the Tri-State Mining District encompassing portions of southwest Missouri, southeastern Kansas, and northeast Oklahoma. From its founding in the 1870s through World War II, Joplin has served as the marketing, commercial, and transportation hub of the mining district, providing a focus for an area well beyond its borders.

Since World War II, the city has continued to grow and evolve. Today, Joplin retains much of its historic character, particularly in its downtown core and surrounding residential neighborhoods. It is this historic character, its contributing features, and the quality of life that they provide that are the subject of the Historic Preservation Plan.

Chapter 3 – Preservation Approach

Chapter 3 presents a vision statement and nine goals for historic preservation in Joplin around the following topics:

1. Community Identity
2. Historical Research
3. Joplin's Economy and Quality of Life
4. Community Engagement
5. Historic Preservation
6. Downtown Joplin
7. Joplin's Neighborhoods
8. Joplin's Commercial Corridors
9. Community Programs

Historic resources play a prominent role in Joplin's community character and quality of life. Joplin's stable growth since its early boom years has resulted in the

presence of buildings, neighborhoods, and landscape resources surviving from every period of its development – especially in its residential neighborhoods and especially in those neighborhoods from its early periods. Joplin has an interesting story and a high degree of historical integrity. Joplin's strength is in the diversity and variety of its building types, forms, periods, and styles. No one type or style dominates; all are significant and all contribute.

The core idea of the preservation plan is to refocus on Joplin's historic downtown and residential neighborhoods by encouraging private sector interest and investment, especially home ownership. Public policy based upon concepts of the 2012 Comprehensive Plan can continue to encourage downtown projects, strengthen neighborhoods, and draw businesses and homeowners to livable places of great character.

Chapter 3 discusses the principles of historic preservation, especially the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and how they relate to the appropriate treatment of historic buildings and landscapes. These principles should be applied to activities outlined in subsequent chapters of the plan.



Commercial buildings on South Main Street.

Chapter 4 – Joplin's Historic Preservation Program

Chapter 4 of the preservation plan outlines recommendations for strengthening Joplin's historic preservation program through the role of the Historic Preservation Commission. The plan seeks to broaden the city's preservation program by coordinating it with community development activities and applying it in new ways. The role of the Historic Preservation Commission is to monitor and help facilitate the program's use to the benefit of residents and property owners. The Historic Preservation Commission will promote recognition of the large

number of historic resources within the city and how they contribute to Joplin's quality of life.

Chapter 4 focuses on traditional historic preservation programs, tools, and methodologies. Its recommendations are based on six broad strategies:

- Strengthen Joplin's existing historic preservation program by continuing to creatively and effectively implement provisions of the Historic Preservation Ordinance;
- Continue to inventory and document Joplin's historic resources in coordination with neighborhood revitalization strategies;
- Monitor the condition of historic resources city-wide and how they are impacted by public and private activities;
- Provide information and guidance on historic resources and community character to city leaders, boards, commissions, stakeholders, and staff.
- Focus on ways to improve the treatment of historic properties by property owners city-wide; and
- Promote public interest in and appreciation of Joplin's history and historic resources through partnership programs with stakeholders.

Chapter 5 – Downtown Joplin

In the early-2000s, the city undertook an ambitious downtown revitalization initiative that had considerable success. Yet the sheer size of the downtown area has remained challenging. The 2011 tornado shifted the city's priorities to the recovery effort, and the momentum for downtown revitalization stalled. Nonetheless, entrepreneurs continue to invest in downtown buildings and programs.

Chapter 5 of the preservation plan recommends refocusing upon revitalization of Downtown Joplin and its surrounding historic neighborhoods as central components of the city's growth and development efforts. Revitalization should embrace the renewed sense of community that grew during the recovery and apply its energy to community revitalization and enhancement city-wide.

Chapter 5 supports concepts outlined in the 2012 Comprehensive Plan related to promoting mixed-use development, forging physical connections, and encouraging high quality development standards.

The Historic Preservation Plan embraces concepts and strategies outlined in the 2002 Downtown Joplin Revitalization Plan and proposes that they be revisited and refined. Recommendations for Downtown Joplin are organized under four topical headings:

- Planning for downtown – updating the 2002 Downtown Revitalization plan and coordinating various key partners in its implementation;
- Activating downtown Joplin – supporting the Downtown Joplin Alliance in developing and implementing a qualified Main Street program to benefit local businesses;

- Project support – working with stakeholders in implementation of key projects in the downtown area, one by one as resources and capabilities are available; and
- Facilitating adaptive reuse – emphasizing the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings throughout downtown as economic assets.



Home in a historic residential neighborhood.

Chapter 6 – Joplin's Historic Neighborhoods

Joplin's neighborhoods are its strength as a community and desirable place to live. Growing outward from the downtown core, most of Joplin's neighborhoods date from the early twentieth century and have great appeal. They are the city's most significant historic resources.

The most important strategies for neighborhood revitalization are to encourage and support private sector home ownership while helping residents appreciate neighborhood character. Because Joplin's houses tend to be small, charming, and affordable, they have a natural market in young families, couples, singles, and seniors. The neighborhood attributes that attract such markets – walkability, public amenities such as parks and playgrounds, local schools, local churches, local shopping – are consistent with the mixed-use and community concepts of the city's 2012 Comprehensive Plan. These resources do not need to be built – they already exist in Joplin's historic neighborhoods.

This Historic Preservation Plan suggests that a comprehensive approach to neighborhood revitalization is good for Joplin's economy and will be good for historic preservation. Chapter 6 supports the city's Neighborhood Services initiative as a centerpiece of its preservation approach and a means through

which neighborhood revitalization can be achieved. Recommendations for Joplin's neighborhoods are organized under four topical headings:

- Neighborhood organization and engagement – helping local residents organize and implement neighborhood revitalization initiatives through their own grassroots action;
- Neighborhood planning – creating neighborhood plans that identify strengths, assess needs, outline strategies, and coordinate resources for revitalization in support of local goals;
- Targeted neighborhood revitalization – working with specific neighborhoods that demonstrate interest, commitment and capacity for implementation of revitalization programs; and
- Promoting good maintenance – providing the owners of historic homes the information, guidance and support for the appropriate maintenance and treatment of historic buildings and building fabric.



Historic commercial building on South Main Street.

Chapter 7 – Commercial Corridors

Joplin has extensive roadside commercial development that has grown since the beginning of the automobile era in the early twentieth century. Chapter 7 recommends that commercial corridors throughout Joplin be assessed for function and character and that long-term design improvements be planned to improve their character and appeal.

The plan recommends that older commercial and residential portions of the community be revitalized and enhanced as a fundamental strategy for future growth, building on concepts of the 2012 Comprehensive Plan and filling out its

recommendations beyond its focus on the tornado recovery area. The city should focus on strengthening existing commercial corridors and neighborhoods rather than promoting new development and construction around the community's edges.

Recommendations for Joplin's commercial corridors are organized under three topical headings:

- Joplin's commercial corridors – updating the 2012 Comprehensive Plan to include the revitalization of older commercial corridors within the city;
- Survey and preservation – identifying historic resources along the city's commercial corridors and working toward their preservation and rehabilitation; and
- Transportation and corridor enhancement – incorporating community character and historic preservation best practices into planning for transportation corridors.

Chapter 8 – Joplin's Stories – Interpretation and Engagement

Storytelling is way a to reach out to and engage residents about Joplin's character and special places. Interpretation can tell the stories of Joplin's natural and urban landscapes, bringing the city's places alive. Natural resources and context are an important part of the city's history and experience, especially the geology and natural systems that produced the ores of the mining district. Through interpretation, public awareness of Joplin's historic building and landscape resources can be enhanced and support for historic preservation can be increased.

Chapter 8 outlines a community-wide interpretive program for Joplin to engage residents and re-enforce community identity. Recommendations for interpretation and engagement are organized under three topical headings:

- Joplin's history – encouraging continued historical research and production of a new history of Joplin, telling its story in an engaging manner and bringing that story up to date;
- Community interpretation – implementing a community-wide interpretive program using public spaces and trails using exhibits, artifacts, places, and public art to tell Joplin's stories; and
- Education and events – supporting community-wide partners in organizing events and educational programing about Joplin and its people.

1.4 PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

The following is a summary of priority actions to be undertaken in the short-to-medium timeframe under the various topics as outlined in Chapters 4 through 8. Priority actions are focused on recommendations included in Chapters 5, 6 and 8 related to Downtown Joplin, historic neighborhoods, and community-wide interpretation and engagement.

Priorities for Joplin's Historic Preservation Program

Chapter 4 is focused on the role of the Historic Preservation Commission, the priorities of which should be to make sure they are continuing to perform their **duties and responsibilities** under the city's Historic Preservation Ordinance, outlined in Chapter 4's recommendations. This includes monitoring the status of historic resources throughout the city and providing guidance to City Council, boards, and commissions on policy and actions affecting historic resources.

Specifically with respect to the Historic Preservation Plan, the Historic Preservation Commission should take the lead in working with City Council for the plan's **adoption** as an amendment to the 2012 Comprehensive Plan and should **monitor and participate** in the short-term implementation of recommendations related to downtown revitalization, neighborhood revitalization, and community-wide interpretation and engagement.

Priorities for Downtown Joplin

First steps in the implementation of downtown revitalization strategies involves reconstituting a **Downtown Joplin Task Force** with a mandate for action from City Council as an integral part of the city's economic development strategy (Recommendation 5.1.A). The Task Force should identify short-term actions and initiatives that can be taken over the course of the next year to begin moving the revitalization effort forward. Longer term planning could then be undertaken.

Key among these would be supporting private and non-profit sector **projects** that seem likely to proceed. As the preservation plan was being completed, several private sector redevelopment projects were being discussed along with the Chamber's advanced technology manufacturing initiative and next steps for undertaking development of a Performing Arts Center. Coordinated efforts to support and move these projects would implement Recommendation 5.3.A.

At the core of Joplin's downtown revitalization initiative is working with local businesses and the Downtown Joplin Alliance to create and implement an accredited **Main Street program**. During the course of the project, discussions have been conducted with Missouri Main Street Connection, the state's official Main Street program, through which a grant may be available for training and development of an accredited program. Taking advantage of this opportunity would strengthen retail businesses along Joplin's Main Street corridor. Further discussion of this important step is included in Chapter 5.

Priorities for Joplin's Historic Neighborhoods

First steps in the implementation of a neighborhood revitalization program in Joplin have been underway as the Historic Preservation Plan project has been in progress. The city's Neighborhood Services Division has initiated a neighborhood **health assessment**, reached out to existing and potential **neighborhood groups**, and identified neighborhoods where **initial projects and programming** might be undertaken. These efforts are beginning to implement Recommendation 6.1.A and 6.1.B.

Based upon input from the neighborhood groups, a working process can be formalized that builds neighborhood **capacity**, identifies **needs and desires**, and coordinates **local action** as suggested in Recommendation 6.1.C. These beginnings lay the groundwork for more concerted **planning** efforts that can be undertaken over time, bringing city resources to bear in neighborhood revitalization as outlined in Recommendation 6.2.A and B and Recommendation 6.3.A through C.

Priorities for Commercial Corridors

Actions related to Joplin's commercial corridors as outlined in Chapter 7 are longer term in scope and involve the city's implementation of the 2012 Comprehensive Plan over time. In preparation, the Historic Preservation Commission should undertake the **survey** of historic resources along the city's older commercial corridors so that they can be incorporated into new development plans as they occur.

Priorities for Joplin's Stories – Interpretation and Engagement

Public engagement is an activity that should begin immediately. Many of the city's events and public programs already support recommendations for public programming. Planning should be undertaken for development of a **city-wide interpretive plan** as outlined in Recommendation 8.2.A, and the interpretive planning concept should be incorporated into trail and park planning and implementation projects.

The city and its partners are already experienced in implementing **public art projects**, which should be continued and incorporated into the interpretive panning process. Next steps should be planned as part of the broader concept. As the city's new library is completed, **public engagement programming** by the Post Foundation should be initiated, also coordinated with the broader concept of city-wide interpretation.



The revitalization of Downtown Joplin has been an important city initiative.