



CRITICAL ISSUES

SECTION 2.1 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The City recognizes that public participation is a key component of effective planning. It is essential that the community has a voice in how the City plans its future, so the engagement of stakeholders and receiving input and feedback from the public was a central component of the process to updating the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The public engagement process completed in updating the Comprehensive Plan can be characterized by three principles: outreach, engage, and sustain. Stakeholders were identified to provide broader perspectives of current issues and the future of growth and develop in Arnold. The public was invited to attend three (3) planning workshops and complete a community survey to share their input on a number of issues and opportunities in Arnold. Both stakeholders and the public were provided notice of opportunities to engage in the planning process. Throughout the process participants were informed on how their input would be used and next steps in the process. Most importantly, participants were provided the opportunity to share and listen to ideas and feedback in a welcoming environment. Throughout the completion of the public engagement process, Staff and the Planning Commission sustained relations with participants by providing updates and responding to inquiries on the planning process.

The following is a summary of the issues raised during workshops, stakeholder interviews, citizen survey responses, and meetings with the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission served as the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and directed the development of the Plan. The Planning Commission meetings were open to the public and took place throughout the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan.

SECTION 2.2 PLANNING WORKSHOP

Comprehensive Planning Workshops were held on June 26 and June 28, 2023 at the Arnold Recreation Center. An additional workshop was held at the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting on July 11, 2023. The workshops were attended by 33 participants including City Officials, business owners, and concerned citizens. During the Workshops, participants discussed several prepared



Figure 1: Comprehensive Planning Workshop attendees discussing provided materials on June 26, 2023.



topics relating to the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the City of Arnold. Staff recorded notes throughout the workshop to be included in this summary. The summarized results of the Comprehensive Planning Workshops are included in the following sections.

SECTION 2.3 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The public engagement process included inviting vital community stakeholders, as identified by the Planning Commission, to interviews with staff. Stakeholders ranged from individuals knowledgeable of the community to entire organizations based in Arnold. Stakeholder organizations choosing to participate included all individual City Council members, all City departments, Arnold’s County Council representatives, the Arnold Police Department, the Fox C-6 School District, Jefferson College, Jefferson County 911, Rock Community Fire District, Rock Township Ambulance District, Missouri Department of Transportation, Economic Development Corporation of Jefferson County, Arnold Chamber of Commerce, Arnold Historical Society & Museum, Metal Container Corporation, Spire Gas, Public Water District 1, VFW Post 2593, First Baptist Church of Arnold, Immaculate Conception Church, and St. John’s Lutheran Church. The summarized results of the Stakeholder Interviews are included in the following sections.

Community Survey

- 630 Responses**
- 29 Questions**
- 15 Average minutes to complete**
- 10 Months open**
- 2 Convenient ways to respond**

SECTION 2.4 COMMUNITY SURVEY

A community survey was developed to be responded to online and/or by written response. *Notice of the survey was mailed directly to every household and business in Arnold.* Additional notification occurred through print (i.e. The Leader), social media (i.e. Facebook), and the City’s website. The survey was also available at several pick-up/drop-off points throughout the City - Arnold City Hall, the Arnold Recreation Center, the Jefferson County Library - Arnold Branch, and the Jefferson County Health Department – Arnold Office.

The intent of the planning process was to be “Community-Driven”. The community survey provided the vehicle necessary to make that possible. The community survey empowered Arnold’s residents and businesses to rank various planning elements and articulate their personal recommendations, wishes and worries for the future of Arnold. The city received 630 completed surveys, many of which were representative of the points of view of entire households as well as individuals. As a result, the estimated number of individuals participating in the public engagement portion of the Comprehensive Plan update is just under 3% of the total population. Utilizing standard sample size



calculations, this participation rate would have a 95% level of confidence with 4% margin of error based on a population of 20,858.

Survey questions were developed with the intent of identifying community-defined values and critical issues as they relate to the overall quality of life in Arnold. Responses from the community survey were analyzed and used to complete the following sections, including the S.W.O.T. analysis identifying Arnold's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. A full report of question response summaries from the community survey can be found in Appendix A.

SECTION 2.5 CRITICAL ISSUES – SUMMARY

The public engagement process helped define how the community envisions Arnold growing and changing by 2035. Most participants agree that Arnold is a great place to live and raise a family, and that the City should continue providing quality municipal services. There are tremendous opportunities for growth and revitalization in residential areas, the City's many parks and open spaces, economic drivers such as commercial and industrial businesses, and the transportation infrastructure that supports it all. The following five major critical issue categories were developed through the engagement and dedication of Arnold's residents, stakeholders, residents, Staff, and community volunteers:

Housing and Community: Affordable housing stock and a strong sense of community provides a solid foundation for Arnold to build from into 2035. There are many options for Arnold's future housing, including attracting a wider variety of housing styles, expanding with new construction, and using regulations to improve existing neighborhoods.

Economy and Development: With Arnold's prime location and highway access, it is poised to continue to be a regional hub for business and industry alike. Residents appreciate the existing businesses but recognize the potential to expand offerings and keep shoppers within the city. While vacant land is limited, redevelopment and revitalization can drive momentum and sustainable growth to ensure Arnold becomes a dynamic destination in the region.

Parks and Recreation: Participants of the public engagement process share a vision for enhancing Arnold's parks, facilities, and activities while being mindful of budget considerations. There is a desire to actualize a more walkable and connected Arnold by expanding pedestrian and bicycle trail networks between neighborhoods, schools, and commercial areas.

Transportation: Stakeholders provided detailed feedback on each of Arnold's major corridors. Each of these areas can be broadly improved with beautification or revitalization of surrounding commercial areas, but there are unique recommendations for each corridor. With a clear vision and coordinated efforts, Arnold is poised to modernize its roadways into attractive and dynamic spaces that benefit everyone.

Public Services: The city's public services are widely appreciated by participants and recognized for their quality and dedication. Arnold Police Department, Rock Community Fire District, and Arnold Public Works Street Department stand out as highly visible and valued contributors to the community.



There are opportunities for improvement by updating Arnold’s website to be more user-friendly and to focus on effective code enforcement.

SECTION 2.6 CRITICAL ISSUES

The remainder of Chapter 2 is a detailed analysis of the five major critical issue categories as summarized in the previous section as well as a framework “SWOT” analysis of public participation feedback (see Section 2.7 for more information). Chapter 3 will include goals, objectives, and implementation strategies developed for each critical issue category.

1. Housing and Community

The needs and concerns of Arnold’s current housing market are classified into three categories: housing price, housing type/style, and general local market conditions needing to be addressed or opportunities for improvement:

Housing Price – Arnold has a balanced stock of homes priced for lower income buyers in the \$100,000 to \$200,000 range, older mid-century homes and single family-to-rental conversions. The existing housing stock in this price range are generally older homes with higher expenses related to repairs and renovations. There is a gap in new construction in the \$150,000 - \$250,000 range as starter homes for new families. Middle-income and executive-level single family homes in the \$250,000 - \$350,000 and \$350,000 - \$500,000 ranges are in need. The existing housing stock within these price ranges are generally of good quality.

Housing Type/Style – A variety housing of types and style characteristics were mentioned that are thought to attract and retain residents and strengthen the local housing market: New construction single-family subdivisions and infill development; Subdivisions with sidewalks and connections to Bike/PED networks; Uniquely designed homes, “non-cookie cutter” subdivisions; Mixed-use developments: apartments and condos in an urban, walkable setting; and High-end luxury apartments in areas suitable for multi-family.

Housing Market – A number of concerns with the current condition of the local housing market as well as some prescriptive opportunities to improve these conditions were identified:

Concerns: Increasing ratio of renter to owner occupied homes; Current housing market is challenged in attracting a diverse population (young families, young professionals, university students, etc.); Older neighborhoods with conditions of blight; An aging housing stock unattractive to new residents due to higher expense associate with maintenance and needed renovations; Subdivisions without sidewalks; Local rental market offers affordably priced units which is attract to the region’s commuter population; Negative perception of local schools dissuades families with school-aged children; Buyers seeking high income homes often look to South County or large lots in unincorporated Jefferson County; Quality of life, business environment and other factors may impede the city’s ability to attract and retain higher income residents; and the current housing market overall is not very attractive to new residents



Opportunities: Develop demand for new housing; Newly constructed subdivisions similar to Richardson Glen and Henley Woods; Encourage and incentivize reinvestment into existing housing stock, single-family rental-to-ownership conversion, and first-time home ownership; Develop housing opportunities for a diversity of incomes and economic demographics; Recognize that home ownership is not always an attainable “American dream” for the current Millennial generation, and determine how attract this market segment; and increased Code Enforcement is a viable way to cleanup derelict properties, encourage better property maintenance, and increase home values.

Community Wayfinding and Aesthetics – Throughout Stakeholder discussion across several topics there was repeated emphasis on the need to improve the visual impression of Arnold in all areas of the city. Developing unified community aesthetics, wayfinding, signage, streetscape amenities, and corridor branding that promotes the character and culture of the community. At every entrance to the city and along every major corridor, citizens should see the community culture reflected in the physical environment.

Community Engagement – Arnold residents and businesses enjoy being informed about the latest happenings. However, the community recognizes that there is a lack of a central “place” to congregate, cohesive message, brand or image of who Arnold is as a community. Correcting the issue is a shared responsibility of the City, residents, businesses, school district, and other local agencies and organization. Continuous community engagement via a variety of media, and improved social pride can make Arnold a more attractive community to prospective residents and businesses; and inform residents and businesses of important information.

2. Economy and Development

Businesses and Amenities – Generally, Arnold residents are satisfied with the existing services, shopping, recreation, entertainment, and dining. However, there are gaps in available options causing some residents to travel to neighboring communities for specific establishments and services:

Dining. Arnold’s location and accessibility along major interstates and highways position it to be a region dining destination. However, much of the public feedback commented on the lack of sit-down “white tablecloth” dining and the oversaturation of fast food options. Arnold would benefit from expanded dining choice: more date night destinations, family-friendly, fast casual, and diverse cuisines.

Sporting Goods. Arnold does not have a dedicated sporting and outdoor goods retailer. Residents and shoppers who would otherwise stay in Arnold must travel outside city limits for their outdoors needs. Academy Sports, Bass Pro Shop, and Dick’s Sporting Goods were named as desirable retailers in this area.

Department Stores. There is a desire within the community for more department store retailers offering clothing, shoes, home furnishing, and other soft goods. TJ Maxx, Marshalls, and Home Goods were named as desirable retailers in this area.



“Downtown” Area. The community would like to see a safe, walkable “downtown” area, akin to Kirkwood Main Street or Old St Charles. There is a desire for more small businesses, unique boutique shops, destination shops, restaurants and entertainment venues, as well as a healthy competitive environment to nurture the growth and development of small businesses. Respondents pointed at the opportunity to revitalize the commercial areas along north Jeffco Blvd for such a purpose.

Entertainment. There is an identified need to offer more “things to do” for residents and visitors alike. The community recognizes the need for varied and diverse entertainment options for all ages, including the following: convention quality hotels, sports complex, activities for kids and teens, and night life entertainment.

Bulk Shopping. Sam’s and Costco were often mentioned as desirable bulk retailers. Currently, the nearest bulk retailers for Arnold residents are located in South County.

Employment – Retail and service-based employment opportunities are abundant, but Arnold needs more high paying, full-time, “bread winner” jobs like those found at large employers like Metal Container Corp or LMC Industries in our industrial districts. Arnold lacks diversity in its workforce and compensation. Several industry gaps have been identified as areas of growth to meet the skills and education of the City’s workforce: Skills-based jobs to employ Fox C-6 and Jefferson College graduates; Medical Industry (Medical Professional Office Campus, Hospital, etc.); Mid-Large Professional Offices and Headquarters Employers; Manufacturing, Warehousing, and Logistics; and the Tech Industry.

Arnold’s location, convenient interstate access, and abundance of vacant land for develop are some of the City’s greatest assets. Such community characteristics can be attractive to employers in the manufacturing, warehousing and logistics industry. Vacant land and flex space are in limited supply in Arnold, but there are opportunities to redevelop and attract desirable employers.

Redevelopment Opportunities – Although Arnold has lagged behind while peer communities experienced growth spurts due to lack of available vacant land, there are opportunities to develop building momentum through revitalizing older areas of the City. Given cooperation with developers and city stakeholders, Arnold could be more than a “bedroom community” to the greater St. Louis Metropolitan Region.

Annexation – Citizens recognized the strength of Arnold’s location and opportunity for expansion. Potential areas identified were as follows: South along Jeffco (US 61/67) towards Imperial, Northwest along MO-141 towards MO-21, West along Vogel and/or Old Lemay Ferry Rd. However, there were general reservations on growing the size of the city simply for the sake of growth. The top suggestions imply that citizens prefer *strategic, targeted* annexation to collect specific businesses or potential opportunities, to prevent development that is not compatible with existing adjacent development within city limits, and to avoid “*annexation for the sake of annexation*”.



3. Parks and Recreation

There was a strong desire among survey respondents, workshop attendees, and stakeholders to see improvements in Arnold’s park services, facilities and equipment while maintaining a reasonable budget. The public’s suggestions are as follows: Increasing the level community activities and programs; Ensuring parks, facilities, and equipment create a safe environment for park patrons; Marketing and creating awareness about park improvements and activities; General beautification of parks; Consider new parks facilities outside of the floodplain; Expand playground and improve accessibility, Improve aging city parks (Arnold City Park, Ferd B. Lang Park, Pomme Creek Park, and Arnold Recreation Center); Expand and improve existing trails and paths in parks; and Utilize waterfront along Meramec River for a riverwalk or other waterfront public spaces.

Stakeholders also emphasized the desire of residents, businesses, and visitors to have a more walkable community. Expanding pedestrian networks, investing bike/PED infrastructure and amenities enhances the overall quality of life in the community. People desire increased access and safer connections to places. Bike lanes and walking paths should connect residential neighborhoods to schools and commercial areas. Connections to new and existing biking, walking, and hiking trails would complement existing outdoor activities and amenities.

Example Communities: Branson Landing, Branson; Dalton, GA; Downtown Kirkwood; Downtown St. Charles; Downtown Festus; Kimmswick; Streets of St. Charles

4. Transportation

Major Corridors – Arnold’s various corridors each have their own distinct identity, needs, and opportunities for improvement.

North Jeffco Blvd (US 61/67) from Meramec River to MO-141:

- Entrance to Arnold from South County needs beautification, consistent signage/wayfinding, and generally nicer
- Lack of investment by property owners, need increased code enforcement
- Old and dilapidated areas need redevelopment/revitalization
- Too many driveway openings; Consolidate curb cuts
- Infill development is needed, especially “destinations”
- Traffic congestion around Fox Schools campus at Jeffco Blvd/Tenbrook Rd is a major problem
- Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and improvements are needed
- Attract more local businesses
- Speed and design of highway encourages pass-through traffic instead of staying to shop, enjoy parks, etc.

Central Jeffco Blvd (US 61/67) from MO-141 to Richardson Rd:

- Continue consistent signage/wayfinding
- Old and dilapidated areas need redevelopment/revitalization



- Some areas lack investment by property owners, need increased code enforcement
- Jeffco Blvd/Michigan Ave identified as problem area for traffic
- Inconsistent sidewalk access, especially around railroad trestle forcing pedestrians onto highway shoulder
- Trestle and median also creates poor access for Pomme Creek Park off Industrial Dr
- Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and improvements are needed
- Future signalized intersection at St Johns Church Rd/Jeffco Blvd is an opportunity
- Speed and design of highway encourages pass-through traffic instead of staying to shop, enjoy parks, etc.

South Jeffco Blvd (US 61/67) from Richardson Rd to Telegraph Rd (MO-231):

- Continue consistent signage/wayfinding
- Old and dilapidated areas need redevelopment/revitalization
- Lack of investment by property owners, need increased code enforcement
- Beautify and improve entrance to Arnold from unincorporated Jefferson County to the south

MO-141

- I-55 interchange has poor entryway aesthetics (large expanses of grass, trailer lots, broken signage)
- Dangerous for pedestrians to traverse I-55 interchange despite being closest connection between many residential areas and schools, shopping, services, etc.
- Congestion at major lights (MO-141/Old Lemay Ferry, MO-141/I-55, MO-141/Jeffco)
- Speed and design of highway encourages pass-through traffic instead of staying to shop, enjoy parks, etc.

Telegraph Rd (MO-231) from Jeffco Blvd (US 61/67) to Meramec River:

- Old and dilapidated areas need redevelopment/revitalization (Old Flamm City)
- Lack of investment by property owners, need increased code enforcement
- Entryway from South County needs aesthetic improvement and consistent signage/wayfinding
- Consider increased police presence to help residents and business owners feel safer and more confident. Survey respondents praised Arnold for seeing officers out and about in shopping areas like Walmart and Home Depot.

Richardson Rd (Non-Residential Portions) and Vogel Rd:

- I-55 interchange has poor entryway aesthetics and lacks aesthetically pleasing city signage/wayfinding
- Intersection at Richardson/Vogel/I-55 is incredibly congested, confusing, and accident-prone
- South I-55 exit from Richardson needs expansion/improvement
- Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and improvements are needed

City-wide:



- Overall aesthetics and visual impression are poor
- Aesthetics attract people to commercial districts
- City welcome sign entrances need some enhancement
- Arnold is not pedestrian- or bicycle-friendly. This need has also been recognized in the Arnold Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan adopted in 2022. Specific suggestions include adding sidewalks to all neighborhoods, safe connections to and along major roadways, and a community network of paths/trails to allow bike/ped access between homes, employment, schools, and shopping.
- Consistent and unified streetscape, wayfinding and signage

Railroads – The BNSF railroad that passes through Arnold creates a physical barrier and presents major safety, mobility, accessibility, traffic, supply-chain, and economic risks throughout Arnold. The City is studying the five existing crossings within city limits, including three at-grade crossings and two grade-separated crossings. The study aims to identify feasible alternatives for closing all three at-grade crossings and improving safety and mobility at the two grade-separated crossings. The anticipated outcome of this project will be to have a feasible plan and preferred alternatives selected to enable Arnold to seamlessly transition into the project development stages for preliminary engineering, construction cost estimating, and NEPA clearances.

5. Public Services

Public services provided by the City received positive and productive feedback. The public identified opportunities for the City to build the capacity of physical and human capital in order to expand public services and meet the needs of the growing community. The Police, Fire, and Street Departments are the most visible service and each received great recognition and appreciation for the services which they provide to the community. While the community recognizes the City's dedication to providing quality services to the community, there are opportunities to enhance the City's public image in order to attract new residents, businesses, and visitors.

Police Department: The leadership of the Police Department is reflected among the men and women who serve to protect and keep the community safe. There is a need to increase the visibility of patrol officers throughout the city. Increased community policing in both residential subdivisions and commercial spaces is a desired improvement to public services. Community policing is the system of allocating police officers to particular areas so that they become familiar with the local inhabitants, and promotes the use of partnerships, development of community ties, and proactive problem solving to develop solutions to immediate public safety concerns. These improvements may require increased staffing in the Police Department.

Public Works: Public Works includes the Street and Stormwater Divisions which work to achieve a high quality of life for the community through planning, building, operating and maintaining the City's infrastructure networks. The Street Division is recognized for the stellar job they do in constructing and maintaining the City's streets, sidewalks, and streetscape amenities. However, the community is



also aware of the staffing needs within the department. Increased staffing in the Street Department would increase the number of projects crews are able to complete and reduce time to completion for each project.

Infrastructure improvements are also viewed as a means to support residential and commercial growth.

- The construction and repair of sidewalks within residential neighborhoods, as well as connecting residential neighborhoods to parks and commercial areas throughout the City
- A regular, free yard waste pick-up service would keep residents from burning yard waste and enhance the overall quality of life for residents.

Community Development: The Community Development Department is dedicated to ensuring the health, safety and well-being of the community through the establishment and enforcement of the City’s code of ordinances related to building construction, land use, zoning, and development in general. Code Enforcement has been linked to quality of life and property values within the community. Stakeholders identify a general need for improved code enforcement. Increased staffing as well as public awareness of the City’s code of ordinances and the appropriate channels through which to report code violations can enhance code enforcement services. Residential code enforcement was directly linked to the local housing market through its ability to encourage property maintenance. Proper code enforcement will improve the quality of life for residents; attract new and retain existing residents; and encourage private investment and reinvestment in the community. Poor property maintenance affects property values and gives the community a poor image which decreases the city’s ability to attract and retain residents.

Administration: A new City website and more technology friendly communications were the most common service-related improvements recommended for City Administration. The City’s website is described as being outdated and hard to navigate when searching for relevant and specific information. A complete website update taking examples from communities with more modern and navigable websites is a desired public service improvement. Arnold residents and businesses enjoy being informed about the latest happenings. Today’s media landscape can make outreach difficult between varying technology platforms and generational preferences, but it is Arnold’s responsibility to explore new methods to share important announcements, community alerts, events and activities is desired.

SECTION 2.7 CRITICAL ISSUES EVALUATION FRAMEWORK (SWOT)

The discussion topics used throughout the public engagement process were developed with the intent of identifying citizen-defined values and critical issues as they relate to the quality of life in Arnold. These responses, more specifically, helped identify Arnold’s **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats in the “**SWOT**” Analysis in Sections 2.8 through 2.11. Please note that some of these citizen-defined values will appear in multiple categories, as the same topic can be considered a strength, weakness, opportunity, or threat depending upon the point of view.



SECTION 2.8 STRENGTHS

Arnold's internal strengths are related to what it does well and to its assets, both physical and intangible.

- 1. Schools.** Arnold's schools, all of which are in the Fox C-6 District, received the highest ranking (4.5 out of 5) based on their value in making Arnold a great place to live, work, do business, and create a desirable quality of life. Residents of Arnold recognize the excellent job in providing quality learning opportunities despite the many hardships faced by the Fox District. *Go Warriors!*
- 2. Parks and recreational offerings.** The numerous parks, recreational facilities, and program offerings that the City provides to residents is a top-rated strength and provide multifaceted benefits. These spaces are used for leisure activities, social and community gatherings, and foster community and individual well-being. Many of Arnold's parks contribute to environmental stability by allowing floodplain to remain floodplain and preserving greenspace. Moreover, Arnold's parks and recreational offerings attract visitors from nearby communities and enhance property values in surrounding areas.
- 3. Services.** Arnold's municipal services, such as police, streets, parks, etc., receive high marks, as does Rock Community Fire, Rock Township Ambulance, and various other entities providing community services.
- 4. Location.** "Highway access & visibility" and "variety of commercial and retail establishments" were among the top-rated strengths of Arnold. Citizens value the "small town feel with big city amenities" that are available to residents and visitors alike. *"Arnold has the best of both worlds – Access to commercial developments is excellent AND you can still enjoy peace & quiet, the outdoors, safer places to enjoy a motorcycle ride, etc."*
- 5. Community.** Arnold's sense of community enables businesses and residents alike to collaborate for effective growth and development, and to support each other during floods and other times of crisis.

SECTION 2.9 WEAKNESSES

A city's weaknesses, such as what it needs to do better and what it lacks, can affect community stability and quality of life. The critical issues relating to the weaknesses of Arnold were identified and defined by the public as follows:

- 1. Prevention and Deterrence of Crime:** Much of the concern related directly to perceptions of there being an increase in crime and drug problems over time and "too much" rental or dense housing in the area. *"Crime, especially break-ins and robberies", "Criminal activity, decrease in housing values if enforcement is not done to keep area nice", "Deterrence of crime of all types. Safety of people and business is the most important factor in a thriving community!", "Crime, violence and drugs are a big problem and we need to start there".*



2. **Attraction and Retention of Quality Shopping, Entertainment & Dining.** *“Developing a coffee shop, walking, shopping café district to help with developing a sense of community”, “This city needs more family/kid friendly attractions”, “Online shopping is hurting local businesses”, “Would like to see more restaurants – not chains and fast food”, “We need a town square or identifiable structure that is more than just a water tower”.*
3. **Quality of Parks & Recreation Facilities.** *“Parks need to be improved. Better pedestrian and bike access, higher quality amenities of parks”, “Expand the Farmers Market and update playground areas”, “need non-floodplain parks”, “Parks and recreational facilities need to be well-maintained to attract new homeowners”.*
4. **Revitalization of the Jeffco Blvd. Commercial Corridor.** Although related to the questions concerning shopping, entertainment, and dining, many recognized a specific need to attract, retain, and redevelop the beating heart of Arnold along Jeffco Blvd. *“Improvements on Jeffco Blvd with street lights, sidewalks, any landscaping if needed, etc.”, “revitalizing the older areas so we can continue to attract families”, “Appearance of businesses at north entrance needs attention”, “Jeffco Blvd is rundown and mismatched”, “We want our main streets to be beautiful, not old decrepit buildings”.*
5. **Condition and Value of Existing Single-Family Housing Stock.** Although neighborhood stability was not included as a category in the survey, a significant number of comments from respondents touched on issues relating to neighborhood stability, property maintenance and the condition and value of existing housing stock. *“Make sure residents keep their homes and property in good shape to help keep property values higher and also this will help entice people to keep moving into Arnold. Problem is too many older original neighborhoods in the city are filled with falling down houses and constant foot tall grass or edge/fence lines that are never cut”, “This city needs affordable single-family housing. Most of the cheaper starter homes flood”, “Need desirable housing, especially [in the older part of Arnold near Starling Airport Rd and Tenbrook Rd]. Ensuring we enforce building and other ordinances throughout the city.”*
6. **Floodplain/Storm Water Management:** *“Arnold needs more resources for floodplain properties”, “I worry that flooding will be more frequent and more damaging to our community”, “Reduce runoff from pavement and streets”, “Flooding could be more of a concern if people upstream keep building higher levees”.*

SECTION 2.10 OPPORTUNITIES

There are trends or qualities of the area that Arnold can take advantage of for improvement, progress, and sustainable growth.

1. **Economic Development:** Respondents overwhelmingly recognized the strength of Arnold’s strategic location along various federal and state highways in close proximity to St. Louis, as well as what that location means for the economic development opportunities. *“Update main corridors into Arnold to be more attractive, turn abandoned commercial buildings into thriving businesses”,*



"A plan for beautification and a vibrant 'downtown', as well as an investment drawing businesses, coffee shops and other local spots would go a long way", "Incentivize redevelopment of older, dilapidated areas along Jeffco Blvd", "I would like to see the development of a more walkable business/living/recreation areas. Forget strip malls. Mixed use retail/living areas would be a great improvement. More real restaurants--not so many chains and fast food", "Be easy (not foolish) and cost competitive to do business in and build or upgrade homes in. Arnold, and the rest of JeffCo, is the best kept secret in our greater region!"

- 2. Business Attraction:** As quoted above, many respondents believe that the City should use incentives to attract new businesses to Arnold. This is consistent with results relating to branding, economic development, and attracting quality shopping, entertainment and dining to Arnold. Incentives include the strategic utilization of TIF districts, business districts, and available grants and tax abatement programs.
- 3. Parks and Recreation:** Arnold's public lands are an asset that respondents believe the City has not taken full advantage of. Many recommended that the City enhance existing public spaces, parks, and recreational facilities, as well as further development of walking, hiking, and biking paths. *"Something nice and fun to do along the river such as a park and-or marina, something able to withstand flooding", "Maintain existing parks and not add more. Keep recreation center in good shape. Love Farmers Market", "Arnold Rec Center should be more like the one in Sylvan Springs Park or in Maryland Heights", "Elevated Pedestrian walkways connecting shopping centers across major thoroughfares", "An absolute entanglement with nature and society interconnected Parks bike trails more trails in general maybe even new parks and a focus on protecting waterways creeks streams... Wildlife corridors", "a sportsplex - Look at O'Fallon. Also, a better youth sports program needs to be created. Look at O'Fallon", "Arnold needs to be more pedestrian/bike friendly. Incorporating the park with our rivers Meramec/Mississippi. Feels like a big opportunity, maybe a smaller version of what they did in Owensboro KY", "Improve the parks and make them accessible", "More parks, more walking hiking paths along the river, more recreational facilities."*
- 4. Housing Options:** While 70% of respondents thought there was a sufficient supply of housing options with regard to housing type, affordability and price range to retain and attract a diverse range of residents, individual comments told a more nuanced story. *"My retired sister has been trying to move to Arnold for 5 years but can't find affordable senior living. Need more!", "Stop allowing cookie cutter mass housing. Encourage neighborhood remodeling", "More diverse options, especially for starters and lower income families", "Take the initiative to have residents maintain their homes rather than expect neighbors to report problems and then have nothing done when they are reported. This is not good for existing home owners because the value of our property goes down and that is not fair", "Stop corporate purchases of single-family housing."*
- 5. Public Safety and Law Enforcement:** Arnold's Police Department is both a source of pride for the community as well as an opportunity for future growth and prosperity. Respondents were clear in their desire to support law enforcement services into the future (61% for, 34% against), and voted similarly when Proposition Public Safety was proposed to residents in April 2023 elections.



“Keep funds top priority for our heroes. Police, Fire, EMT, etc. It is awesome to see our police around Arnold at all times.”, “a well-funded police department”, “Safety is a concern, so please continue to support our Arnold police and fire fighters, and pay them well!”, “Keep up the good work at maintaining safety, beautification, and keeping a good balance between retaining our history while looking to the future”, “Have more community involvement and positive interactions from police and officials.”

SECTION 2.11 THREATS

Conversely, there are also trends or qualities of the area that could be detrimental to the City and be an occasion for negative impacts.

- 1. Schools:** *“The most important thing is improving our schools. They are all outdated and run down. We would not be able to support nicer home developments until our district is up to speed with surrounding school districts”, “Rebuild/strengthen our school district to be the top in Jefferson County and a strong contender with St. Louis County/St. Charles County district”, “Invest in our public-school system. Show our children and people looking to live here that we are a strong community that supports education and invests in our students”, “Get better schools. Strong schools mean a strong community.”*
- 2. Economy:** *“We need to see wages of all jobs around Arnold be increased so we can keep middle class families. The cost of living in Arnold has raised to an all-time high”, “More focus on existing structures and bringing in local mom-and-pop businesses. Less on bringing in more chain restaurants and businesses and subdivisions.”*
- 3. Crime:** *“Get tough on crime. Arnold needs to be more like a small community where everyone knows each other and looks out for each other”, “Before we can ‘live, work, and play’, we need to feel safe. Get the criminals and drugs under control.”*
- 4. Blighted/Dilapidated Areas:** *“We need to remove all of the buildings that are abandoned from the main roads, we need to relocate the trailer parks that are on the main roads and redevelop”, “Let’s start code enforcing”, “Too many people have large trailers or boats sitting in yards or unpaved areas or vacant properties sitting and left to the elements. Better enforcement of building codes!!”, “Nothing gets enforced unless someone complains”, “Beautify Jeffco Blvd. This is the main street through our city and parts of it look great, others are terrible. No consistency and it makes us look like a second-class city.”*
- 5. Civic Engagement:** *“No one knows what’s going on in government”, “Encourage getting involved with other people and fostering a greater sense of community”, “We need a downtown or community center. Arnold has no identity or positive reputation. It just feels like a stop off the highway.”*