

City of Jonesboro, AR  
Comprehensive Planning Advisory Commission

Jonesboro   
**VISION 2030**

*Draft Copy - December 17, 2013*

**Healthy People in a Healthy Community**



## From the Mayor's Desk

### ***Citizens of Jonesboro,***

*As the Mayor of Jonesboro, I am delighted to share with you Vision 2030: "Healthy People in a Healthy Community," as our 20 year plan for this great city. As you know, you have to plan where you're going in order to get there. That is why I convened a 50 member committee to develop a vision for the year 2030 for the City of Jonesboro. Included in this document are the goals and action steps in every area of the quality of life for Jonesboro, including housing, economic development, public safety, transportation, and more. This process of finalizing this vision for our city has been both challenging and rewarding and I am so very proud of the final product. I think you will be pleased with the direction the city is going and will join me in congratulating the committee on this enormous accomplishment. Our main mission at the City of Jonesboro is to serve our citizens and continue to work for you to make Jonesboro the best place to live, work, and play. Please contact my office if you ever need anything from us!*

*Sincerely,*

*Mayor Harold Perrin*



***Healthy People in a Healthy Community***



# Vision 2030 Team



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**MISSION STATEMENT:** The mission of Jonesboro Vision 2030 is to engage the community in envisioning a future for Jonesboro that addresses the needs and desires of our entire citizenry over the next twenty years. It will serve as a guide for decisions related to our built and natural environment that is reflective of the priorities of the community and balances the need to accommodate growth while maintaining or improving our quality of life.







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## Healthy People in a Healthy Community

In 2013, Jonesboro, Arkansas is an ideal place to live and raise a family, with forward thinking, strong, and effective community leaders who challenge each other to reach new heights. Jonesboro's economy is strong, thriving despite the Great Recession that gave a knockout punch to many other communities. Two nationally recognized health care institutions and Arkansas State University form the economic pillars that are the basis for this success. The assets and economic performance of Jonesboro have earned Craighead County the praise of *Business Insider* magazine, which placed it at the top of its 2011 list of 20 micropolitan areas with potential to be the next Silicon Valley. Jonesboro also boasts of its ranking as No. 7 as "*Best Small Cities for Jobs 2013*" by Forbes Magazine. Consistently, professional economic development activities have successfully recruited Fortune 500 companies to Jonesboro the last decade.

The benefits currently enjoyed by those who call Jonesboro home are the result of the vision of earlier leaders. What are the seeds of prosperity we should sow for those who come behind us? That is the question fifty community leaders asked as they embarked on the Vision 2030 process in 2010. The goal of this process was to build on the current framework of success, to create an inviting place for people to live while creating an economy that will thrive in a regional, national and global marketplace.

Participants in the Vision 2030 compiled a wealth of resources about the current state of affairs and detailed a wide range of ideas for the future. The purpose of this document is to condense this information into a guide for future decisions that will benefit the wide variety of area residents. The focus of this report will be on actions the City of Jonesboro can take to enhance critical elements, thereby enhancing the future of Jonesboro residents.





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# Built Environment



With approximately 80.9 sq. miles to manage and a growing population, planning is paramount for Jonesboro. As depicted by the attached map covering a 75-year period, the City of Jonesboro has extended its bounds tremendously and has made great strides in managing rapid growth in an orderly fashion. However, due to historically lax land use controls and standards of construction and development, problems like traffic congestion and flooding have occurred more than they should. The development policies of the next twenty years should promote a more coordinated development of the region. This includes cooperating with Craighead County and other local government officials to provide limited review of large scale developments wishing to locate outside Jonesboro city limits.

## Existing Trends and Conditions

- ◆ Jonesboro has developed in a wide open fashion because of its rural, agriculture-based tradition where land uses are spread out. This has been beneficial for the development of the region, because the City has had large tracts of land available for manufacturing and industrial uses. Today over 750 acres are still vacant, with utilities readily available for development and expansion of manufacturing and other uses. The industrial district has direct access to US 63/Future Hwy. I-555 and rail service.
- ◆ For many years Jonesboro has served as the region's retail hub, a position only enhanced with the recent addition of the Turtle Creek Mall.
- ◆ Land uses within the Jonesboro area are changing rapidly. For example, the location of the new NEA Baptist Hospital on Johnson Avenue has drastically altered plans for that area. It is important to give strong consideration to what should happen in this area and other growth spots in the community.
- ◆ Redeveloping some areas of Jonesboro will be as important as promoting orderly new development. In the identified redevelopment areas, the basic attributes (public safety, street maintenance, clean streets, timely infrastructure improvements, trash collection, brush collection, well maintained buildings, vacant lots that

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are regularly mowed and kept free of debris, etc.) must be addressed so that those who live there feel part of the community.

- ◆ Until recently, flooding problems were common due to the primarily flat terrain. Great strides have been taken to improve in stormwater management, but as the city grows, there are pressures to locate new developments in flood prone areas.
- ◆ Jonesboro is fortunate to have abundant landfill space, so that disposal of solid waste is not problematic. Currently, 310 acres are permitted for landfill use at the Craighead County Regional Solid Waste Management District “Legacy Landfill,” with only 65 acres being utilized. The City of Jonesboro operates a yard waste incinerator on Lacey Drive.

## Goals/Action Plans

### Goal 1: Enhance community image and physical attributes.

- Action 1: Establish a Design Review Committee to develop a uniform code of policies to minimize visual pollution and clutter.
- Action 2: Improve the major gateways into town with appropriate trees, signage, lighting, public spaces, and benches.
- Action 3: Promote development of large tracts of land in a manner that is sensitive to the topography and natural slopes and vegetation.

### Goal 2: Develop in a fiscally responsible way.

- Action 1: Encourage infill development and redevelopment in areas where city services currently exist.
- Action 2: Adopt land use and zoning regulations that encourage more compact development.

(Cont. on Pg. 11)





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Action 3: Integrate City planning with that of Craighead County, City Water and Light, and Arkansas State University to assure an efficient and compatible development pattern.

**Goal 3: Create livable hometown neighborhoods.**

Action 1: Establish more compact and integrated living/activity areas where daily living requirements and amenities are provided in a readily identifiable and accessible area.

Action 2: Create living/activities with greater emphasis on pedestrian scale and opportunities for social interaction.

Action 3: Connect new suburban living/activity areas through closer proximity of residential uses and supporting commercial uses and community amenities such as parks and schools.

**Goal 4: Foster vital employment and activity centers.**

Action 1: Provide a variety of convenient transportation choices for moving both people and goods.

Action 2: Promote light industrial and /or office development in areas that have the necessary amenities for success.

Action 3: Encourage office and mixed use development.

Action 4: Maintain road safety and capacity, and mitigate traffic problems by limiting the number of curb cuts and encouraging internal circulation between parcels.

Action 5: Concentrate moderate intensity mixed uses (neighborhood retail, multi-family, mixed office/residence) in proximity with higher intensity uses, as well as easy access to thoroughfares.





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## Housing and Neighborhood Development

Land use decisions play a critical role in determining the availability of housing that is affordable to Jonesboro area working families. By strengthening the coordination of land use, housing, and transportation policies, Jonesboro can create, preserve, and expand communities that are environmentally sustainable and affordable to Jonesboro households.

### Existing Conditions and Trends

- ◆ Older housing stock and housing that may need maintenance are mainly in the central portions of the City, while the newest housing stock is in the southern and eastern portions of the city. This disparity in the concentration of older housing in lower income concentrated areas, coupled with the location of new construction being primarily in other areas, is an issue facing Jonesboro.
- ◆ Over 70 percent of the total housing stock in Jonesboro between 2005 and 2009 was single-family. This number includes owner-occupied and rental units.
- ◆ The home ownership rate is 56 percent. This is below the national average.
- ◆ Home ownership rates among African Americans (18 percent) and Hispanics (32 percent) are substantially lower than the city, state and national averages.
- ◆ Jonesboro currently has a complaint-driven code enforcement, which as a result, leaves out some areas of need.

The complexity of issues associated with housing and neighborhood development means that a multi-faceted and systematic approach must be taken. The following goals were developed by the housing team:

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safety, street maintenance, clean streets, timely infrastructure improvements, trash, brush collection, and maintenance of vacant lots.

**Goal 2:** Minimize the effects of concentrations of poverty by utilizing neighborhood networks.

**Goal 3:** Create zoning and development regulations to encourage a mix of housing types affordable to persons with diverse incomes and needs.

Action 1: Encourage development of in-fill housing on scattered vacant or underutilized lots in established neighborhoods or previously undeveloped areas.

Action 2: Encourage mixed use developments

**Goal 4:** Improve housing stock and overall conditions in key neighborhoods.

Action 1: Support rehabilitation and reconstruction of existing housing inventory.

Action 2: Improve neighborhood identity by promoting area planning through neighborhood associations.

Action 3: Continue recent efforts toward more proactive code enforcement.

Action 4: Implement program findings of the Jonesboro Housing Study as recommended by the Housing Moratorium Committee.

Action 5: Develop a land bank to acquire, assemble, and market abandoned properties for sale to developers.

**Goal 5:** Increase homeownership.

Action 1: Continue using CDBG funds to match other sources of down-payment funding.

*(Cont. on Pg. 17)*





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Action 2: Continue to partner with sponsoring organizations that conduct financial literacy classes that focus on the preparedness of potential homebuyers to acquire mortgage financing.

Action 3: Allow construction of cost-effective modular housing or similar products.

**Goal 6: Encourage the development of downtown housing through appropriate land use designations, zoning, and other regulations.**

**Goal 7: Encourage higher quality, affordable multi-family housing.**

Action 1: Strengthen multi-family development requirements to include desirable quality and amenities.

Action 2: Regulate energy efficiency of multi-family developments.

**Goal 8: Develop more senior and special needs housing.**

Action 1: Work with developers to build more senior housing in Downtown Jonesboro.

Action 2: Develop cottage housing for elderly homebuyers.

Action 3: Change zoning requirements and other regulations to allow for intergenerational and shared housing for the elderly.





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## Downtown Jonesboro

Downtown Jonesboro is a critical part of the city's urban core. Downtowns are important because they give a sense of pride to the community, represent quality of life, and tell the story of the area. Successful downtowns can become a major employer, as well as a great incubator for small independent businesses. With activities concentrated in one area, downtowns also deter urban sprawl. Downtown Jonesboro is no exception, providing all these benefits to the community.

After the heyday of Jonesboro's Downtown in the 1970s, though, the area began to deteriorate. The City commissioned a study by HyettPalma in 1999 that provided an action agenda widely embraced by the community. As a result of the study, over \$35 million in private investments have been made to revitalize the area. The City repurposed an old bank building as the \$7.3 million Jonesboro Municipal Center and invested \$1.25m in parking and other infrastructure improvements. Eighty loft apartments were created, restaurants opened and Downtown became a destination once again, with the following benefits:

- ◆ Greater activity, more pedestrians, Downtown is alive at night
- ◆ A nice variety of restaurants
- ◆ "The best food in Jonesboro is in Downtown"
- ◆ More loft apartments
- ◆ Investment in "our authentic architecture"
- ◆ Diversity – "blending of people who usually don't blend"
- ◆ City government "has an amazing new home"
- ◆ Downtown is a "getaway from the same stuff on Caraway"

One Jonesboro resident recently voiced the feelings of many: "We saved the heart of our town and our history."

*(Cont. on Pg. 21)*





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- Action 2: Account for the life-cycle costs of transportation improvements and maintenance in developing long-range plans.
- Action 3: Develop additional local revenue streams.
- Action 4: Prioritize preventive maintenance to reduce life-cycle costs.

**Goal 3: Manage traffic congestion through technology and regulatory means.**

Traffic congestion occurs when demand for the use of a roadway exceeds the capacity of that roadway. Persistent congestion results not only in frustrating delay, but also lost productivity, wasted fuel and unnecessary vehicle emissions, vehicle wear and rear-end collisions from stop-and-go driving, delay of emergency services, and spillover use of neighborhood streets by motorists attempting to avoid congested streets.

- Action 1: Develop and implement an overall access management plan.
- Action 2: Develop corridor-specific access management plans for critical arterial roadways.
- Action 3: Develop and implement traffic signal policies.
- Action 4: Conduct regular traffic signal timing reviews and revise as needed.
- Action 5: Use roundabouts in place of traffic signals or four-way stops where warranted.
- Action 6: Utilize Master Street Plan to improve connectivity as future developments occur.
- Action 7: Review off-street parking ordinances for commercial development.

**Goal 4: Improve access for the full range of transportation users.**

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Mobility is the issue of how fast traffic is moving, but recent developments have changed the question to how easily people are reaching places they need or want to go (accessibility). Mobility considers only motor vehicles, while all transportation users are considered when accessibility is the goal. Access to jobs, medical care, and shopping is important for all residents of the community.



- Action 1: Continue to fund JETS at adequate levels.
- Action 2: Consider adoption of a framework for multi-modal transportation.
- Action 3: Identify missing connections in the sidewalk network.
- Action 4: Integrate transit planning in the development review process.
- Action 5: Conduct bicycle-pedestrian safety studies to identify critical areas for improvement.





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# Parks and Recreation



The City of Jonesboro provides a wide variety of quality parks and recreational opportunities. Chief among these are Joe Mack Campbell Park, home to the 2015 Cal Ripken World Series; Southside Softball Sports Complex, future home of the Miracle League field for the special needs community; and Craighead Forest Park, the best example of how vision, leadership and a community coming together have made green space a reality for future generations. The first five miles of a new Greenway is currently under construction. When the 26 mile Greenway is complete, a 12 ft. wide multi-use trail will wind around Jonesboro connecting major destinations including parks, Turtle Creek Mall, Arkansas State University, and downtown.

Activity/Facility	Recommended Facilities per Population	Existing Facilities in Jonesboro	Recommended Facilities for 2010 Population of 67,263	Recommended Facilities for 2030 Population of 110,218
Baseball fields (league)	1 per 5,000	14	13	22
Basketball Courts (outdoor)	1 per 5,000	7	13	22
Football Fields	1 per 20,000	0	3	5
Pavilion/Picnic Shelter	1 per 2,000	10	34	55
Picnic Tables	1 table per 300	150	224	367
Playgrounds	1 area per 1,000	15	67	110
Recreation Center	1 per 20-30,000	3	3	4
Baseball/Football Practice Fields	1.5 per each league facility	6/4	8	14
Soccer Fields (league)	1 per 5,000	19	13	22
Soccer/Softball Practice Fields	1.5 per each league facility	7 softball	8	14
Softball Fields (league)	1 per 5,000	10	13	22
Swimming Pool (outdoor)	1 per 20,000	1	3	5
Tennis Courts	1 court per 2,000	17	34	55
Trails (Hike/Bike)	1/2-1 mile per 10,000	4.5	6	11

Amenities like these are key to quality of life for Jonesboro residents. However, despite the substantial investment the City has already made in recreational opportunities, much needs to be done now to meet the needs of the 2030 population. For one thing, the City provides a wide variety of opportunities and venues for active recreation, but more open space should be provided for passive recreational opportunities. As the City expands and property costs rise, there will be less  
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opportunity to secure both an adequate amount of parkland and sites located in proximity to the areas they are intended to serve. Additionally, areas near the new NEA Baptist Hospital and southwest Jonesboro are already underserved and will need more resources directed their way in the future.

How do we propose to meet the needs?

**Goal 1: Continue the legacy of neighborhood and community parks.**

- Action 1: Provide level of service of 2.5 acres of neighborhood parkland for every 1,000 residents throughout the city.
- Action 2: Provide level of service of 5.8 acres of community parkland for every 1,000 residents throughout the city.
- Action 3: Design parks to provide a balance between active sports fields and self-directed activities, naturalized areas, trees, gardens and other elements with broad community interest.
- Action 4: Continue to provide support for well-loved regional recreational facilities like Craighead Forest Park.
- Action 5: Ensure that recreational demands are met through development of new facilities/services in addition to continual upgrade of existing facilities.
- Action 6: Periodically update park plans and incorporate/coordinate them with subdivision regulations, zoning and other land use and development regulations.

**Goal 2: Further develop a city-wide greenway/trail system that connects major destinations.**

- Action 1: Protect future trail corridors through acquisition of easements and rights-of-way in advance of development.
- Action 2: Use road rights-of-way for trails only in the absence of other suitable corridors.

*(Cont. on Pg. 35)*







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Action 3: Provide paved and non-paved trails to accommodate a variety of users, striving to provide ADA compliant grades and universal accessibility.

**Goal 3: Provide support for construction of new facilities and maintenance of existing facilities.**

Action 1: Conduct annual assessment of needed maintenance and renovation projects system-wide.

Action 2: Aggressively seek grants and other sources of funding to support facilities

Action 3: Coordinate with other agencies, initiate intergovernmental agreements, and seek partnerships to leverage available funding

Action 4: Explore level of community support for funding parks and recreation projects through use of special district, property tax, sales tax or bond issue.





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# Public Safety



Public safety entities in Jonesboro are primarily Police, Fire and 911 Services, supported by Animal Control and Code Enforcement, now refocused under Quality of Life. The City has experienced tremendous increases in demand for service in each of the aforementioned areas over the last ten year period and there is no expectation that this trend will lessen. As the City continues to experience rapid growth, the number of service calls is expected to increase. It is imperative that the city maintain and/or increase public safety resources to match the growing demands for service in order to enhance and preserve the safety and quality of life for the residents and visitors.

## Existing Trends and Conditions

- ◆ Population has increased 2.5% annually for the last twenty years.
- ◆ The increase in population has caused an increase in traffic; thereby causing an increased need for public safety resources.
- ◆ Demographic changes in age, income levels, educational levels and ethnicity has shifted demands for certain public safety services (i.e. dealing with elderly victims, language barriers etc...).
- ◆ Reductions in federal and state funding cause a challenge to maintain and keep up with public safety resource needs.

## PUBLIC SAFETY GOALS

- Goal 1** Provide necessary resources to maintain Class 3 ISO rating, and when resources allow, increase fire stations and staffing to improve ISO rating to Class 2.
- Goal 2** Increase financial resources for public safety proportionate to the increase in population, traffic, and other demands – using a ratio of 3.0 officers per 1,000 residents – reaching this goal by year 2030.





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# E-Government



The City of Jonesboro believes in customer service and in today's age of technology that equates to reaching citizens "where they are" in the form of email, texting, social media, television, and online services. We no longer live in a society where the average citizen has the time to physically attend town hall meetings, city council meetings, or public hearings. Even the number of people who read the local newspaper in hard-copy form is significantly down, with many reading the paper from their tablet devices. Another change is in banking and bill pay. People pay bills online and rarely write checks or mail payments anymore. The City of Jonesboro is aware of this shift in the type of service that citizens want and is actively pursuing options to accommodate the technology needs of the people.

## Existing Trends and Conditions

- ◆ City Council and Planning Commission meetings and committee sessions are recorded and played on the local city government Channel 24 in a "live" format.
- ◆ Public hearings and other town hall meetings are not televised, nor are they displayed on Channel 24.
- ◆ The City sometimes relies on local media outlets to help disseminate information about meetings and other news events in a timely and accurate fashion.
- ◆ The City of Jonesboro has an award winning website where Customer Service is top priority (Top Government Website, Juggle Awards). The City website also provides social media interaction with Facebook and Twitter.
- ◆ Residents may visit the Municipal Center to reserve a City facilities such as the community center room, picnic table or pavilions at City parks, apply for police presence for local events or request street closures, obtain business licenses, building permits or special approvals, pay bills or fines, submit drawings for a proposed development projects, and many other services.
- ◆ All applications for city services are available online in digital format.
- ◆ The Jonesboro Police Department has several online features including a GIS mapping service of recent crimes in Jonesboro and an anonymous tipping service that goes directly to the Chief of Police's inbox.





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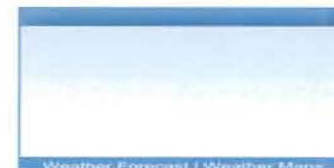
Jonesboro  
People. Pride. Progress

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- Most Requested
- Alerts



Event Calendar

# Headlines



Weather Forecast / Weather Maps

## City of Jonesboro Downtown Action Agenda Update 2013



Recently, consulting firm HyettPalma Inc. revisited Jonesboro to look at what enhancements could be made to the downtown area.

After meeting with citizens and business owners, the group has compiled updated action agenda plan for the city.

The action agenda may be viewed by [clicking here](#).

The City of Jonesboro is seeking public comment on 6 transportation projects that are expected to greatly relieve congestion.



[Click here to review](#).

Join us September 28th for the Downtown Jonesboro

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Jonesboro AR. 72401

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**Goal: Provide a seamless e-government system so that all users can access all services and be fully informed about City activities without having to be physically present.**

- Action 1: Continue to enhance the E-government service for the City of Jonesboro where all citizens are provided with real-time updates in the format they choose (Twitter, Facebook, Text Message, etc.)
- Action 2: Continue to enhance the website where citizens can register and choose their preferred method of information flow, including online application services, online bill pay, online reservation services, and online ticket pay.
- Action 3: Continue to televise all city council meetings and city council committee meetings live with feeds to Channel 24 in real-time.
- Action 4: Continue to enhance recording services of all town hall and public hearing meetings and display on Channel 24 on a predetermined day of every week for consistency purposes.
- Action 5: Continue to update the Face Book page and Twitter accounts regularly.
- Action 6: Continue to update announcements on Channel 24 regularly.
- Action 7: Continue to update the online community calendar housed at the City of Jonesboro's website for all agencies and organizations to post their fundraisers, events, festivals, shows, etc.
- Action 8: Enhance services for an available online resource database for citizens to search for city services and social services in the community.
- Action 9: Create and Implement a process for current and accurate flow of local city government information to other relevant stakeholders, citizens, and other governmental agencies.





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# Economic Development



A talented workforce, affordable utilities, and access to Arkansas State University are just a few of the many reasons why Jonesboro attracts many companies with global reach. Jonesboro must continue to build on these and other assets to retain a strong economy that will take us to the year 2030.

Under the direction of East Arkansas Planning and Development District, in 2011 an additional team composed of many members of the Vision 2030 Team developed an Economic Development Strategic Plan for Jonesboro. A number of strategies were selected by this group, many outside the scope of city government, but others will be nicely supported by the goals and actions articulated in previous sections of this Vision 2030 document. These are:

- ◆ **Attracting Retirees**—Having connected communities, affordable senior housing and access to services provided by public transportation will be a draw for this population.
- ◆ **Downtown Development**—As the action steps of the HyettPalma study are realized, the attractiveness of Downtown Jonesboro will only be enhanced. More people from all walks of life will be drawn to this vital area.
- ◆ **Business Recruitment**—The quality of life offered by having great parks, a great downtown, attractive neighborhoods, affordable housing, and improved transportation options will draw additional businesses to the area.
- ◆ **Local/Regional Tourism**—Already Jonesboro is a regional draw for visitors, with special events in Downtown Jonesboro, Arkansas State University, Craighead Forest Park, and major softball and baseball tournaments at Joe Mack Campbell and Southside Ball Park. As investments and events in these areas are coordinated more, the results will begin to snowball.
- ◆ **Infrastructure Development**—Efforts to develop Jonesboro's economy, coupled with the expected population growth, will make increased demands on the infrastructure. The City will continue to work with City Water and Light to make sure utility demands are met, ensure that road, bridge and drainage needs are met, and to provide an adequate multi-modal transportation for all.

Providing the necessary resources to achieve the goals of Vision 2030 over the next twenty years is vital to the economic health of Jonesboro in the future.



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