



City of Conway Arkansas
Planning and Development

2014 Conway Planning and Development Department

YEAR END REPORT

Planning and Development

Planning and Development Staff

Director - Bryan Patrick, AICP

Deputy Director of Planning - Wes Craiglow, AICP

Planning - Christy Sutherland

GIS Coordinator/Planner - Jason Lyon

Planning Technician - Beth Sketoe

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Planning Commission

Planning Department staff provided support for the Planning Commission, including the coordination of monthly meetings. Planning Commission activities and reports were coordinated by Mr. Patrick. Analyses were presented to the Planning Commission concerning:

Rezoning

Month	Zone Change	Acreage	Action
January	R-2 to C-3	0.29	Approved
	R-2 to O-2	0.29	Approved
	R-2 to MF-3	0.19	Approved
February	O-2,O-3, R-1 to C-2	2.03	Denied
	A-1 to R-1	1.67	Approved
	C-4 to O-1	37.5	Approved
March	A-1 to MF-3	0.48	Denied
April	I-3 to C-3	61.51	Approved
May	A-1 to R-1	3.32	Approved
	R-1 to R-2A	0.74	Denied
June	R-1 to PUD	7.48	Denied
July	A-1 to R-1	3.0	Approved
	MF-3 to S-1	2.16	Approved
August	R-2 to O-3	0.42	Approved
	R-2A to O-2	0.52	Approved
	O-1 to RU-1	1.85	Denied
	R-1 to PUD	5.37	Approved
	I-3 to PUD	221.8	Approved
September	C-4 to C-3	8.78	Approved
October	R-1 to O-2	2.0	Approved
November	A-1 to R-1	0.71	Approved
December	C-3 to PUD	6.7	Approved

Conditional Use Permits

Month	Use	Acreage	Action
January	Columbarium	N/A	Approved
	In-home Child Care	0.13	Approved
	MF-1 density in R-2A	0.83	Approved
February	Religious Activities	1.84	Withdrawn by Applicant
	MF-1 density in R-2	0.68	Approved
	MF-1 density in R-2A	0.58	Approved
March	Fuel Pumps	2.03	Withdrawn by Applicant after Rezoning failure
	Religious Activities	0.23	Approved
	Child Care Center	0.48	Approved
April	Adult Day Care	1600 SF	Approved
	Religious Activities; Child Care Center	4.3	Approved
	Restricted Office	0.43	Approved
May	Auto Body Shop	0.39	Approved
July	Transmission Tower	0.13	Approved
	In-home Child Care	0.3	Approved
August	Temporary Banking Facility	0.52	Approved
	Mini Storage and General Retail	1.85	Denied
October	MF-1 density in R-2A	0.35	Approved
November	Clinical Treatment Services	0.44	Approved
	Restricted Retail	0.58	Approved
	Tattoo Studio	0.15	Approved
December	Pet Lodge and Grooming Services	3.0	Approved

Ordinance/Resolution Amendments

Zoning Ordinance Amendments, Sign Ordinance Amendments, Overlay District Amendments, Etc.

January: The Zoning Ordinance amendment notification requirements were changed in respect to notification letters. The USPS mailing notification requirement to abutting property owners within 200 feet was changed from to Certified Mail to a Certificate of Mailing.

January: The Zoning Ordinance was amended to require a conditional use permit for child care in all office zones. Prior to this amendment, child care was allowed by right in the O-2 and O-1 zones.

Subdivision Ordinance Amendments

February: The Subdivision Ordinance was amended to require the dedication of additional right of way for roundabouts at intersections including a street classified as a collector or above.

Master Street Plan Amendment

February: The Master Street Plan text was amended to require the dedication of additional right of way for roundabouts at intersections including a street classified as a collector or above.

The Master Street Plan was also amended in the area of Old Cantrell Field. This revision was necessary to insure proper street rights of way and routes through and around the redeveloping airfield.

Sign Ordinance Amendments

March: The City Council was asked to review an amendment to the City of Conway Sign Ordinance that would prohibit billboards or alternatively, reduce the current cap on billboards from 33 to 32. City Council chose to continue to allow billboards in the Interstate zone but reduce the cap to 32 billboards.

Subdivision/Replat

Subdivision

Thirteen (13) subdivisions were reviewed by the Planning Commission and within the Planning Department. Of these thirteen (13), six (6) were filed in 2014. Seven (7) subdivisions that were submitted in 2012-2013 were also filed in 2014 for a total of thirteen (13) subdivisions filed in 2014. City Planner, Christy Sutherland, completed staff review of these subdivisions.

Replat

Twenty-seven (27) replats were reviewed by the Planning Commission and within the Planning Department. Of these twenty-seven (27), twenty (20) were filed in 2014. Six (6) replats submitted in 2013 were filed in 2014 for a total of twenty-six (26) replats filed in 2014. City Planner Christy Sutherland completed staff review of these replats.

Expired Subdivision/Replat

One (1) subdivision and one (1) replat expired in 2014 due to inactivity.

Withdrawn Subdivision/Replat

Two (2) subdivisions and two (2) replats were withdrawn in 2014. One (1) subdivision and one (1) replat were resubmitted in different configurations.

Lot Creation

Including the three (3) new PUDs that were created in 2014, there were a total of ninety-seven (97) new single-family lots created.

Year	Single-Family Lots Created
2004	246
2005	502
2006	266 (+154 County)
2007	483 (+140 County)
2008	80
2009	192
2010	91
2011	41
2012	162
2013	46
2014	97

In addition, seven (7) new office lots, Twelve (12) multi-family lots, Fifteen (15) commercial, Six (6) mixed-use (commercial and residential) lots, one (1) industrial, and one (1) institutional lot were created through the subdivision/replat process.

Annexation/City Limit Square Mileage

2014 saw one (1) annexation action, the Collins Round Mountain Orchard (146.73 acres) which was completed. This annexation increased the square mileage of the city from 45.89 to **46.21** square miles.

Board of Zoning Adjustment

Since 2012, the Planning Commission has acted as the zoning variance review authority as the Board of Zoning Adjustment. Planning Department staff provided support for the Planning Commission/Board of Zoning Adjustment. Board of Zoning Adjustment activities and reports were coordinated by Mr. Patrick. Analyses were presented to the Planning Commission/Board of Zoning Adjustment concerning:

Month	Request	Action
March	Setback variance for El Acapulco Restaurant	Approved
May	Setback (25') and lot depth (92') variance for 1601 Greenwood Circle	Approved (lot depth only)
	Corner lot width and side setback variance for 1721 Prince Street	Approved
June	Lot street frontage variance for 3480 Irby Drive	Approved

Planning Department Reviews for the Mayor and City Council

The Planning Department prepared numerous reports and information for the City Council in 2014 including four street and alley closing requests, four easement closings, impact fee credits, franchise agreements, street name changes, bicycle and pedestrian paths, etc. Notable Council reviews included:

February: Phoenix Recovery, 6 month review. In September, 2013 a condition requiring a 6 month review of the Phoenix Recovery permit conditions was required. In February, the Council examined any outstanding conditions. The Council gave final sign off to the conditional use in May when the Habitat for Humanity residence in the area was acquired by Phoenix Recovery.

July: The Council approved an urban sidewalk landscaping design that will be applied to development projects along Oak and Harkrider Streets in the Old Conway Overlay as the area redevelops. The design includes wide sidewalks, lighting, and tree wells with irrigation to promote traditional pedestrian friendly street frontages. This design was applied to 3 projects; CVS Pharmacy, MedExpress, and Arvest Bank. The Engineering/Street Department is credited with creating the technical documents.

Development Review

2014 marked the seventh full year of development review standards. These standards include requirements for greater trees and landscaping, buffering of adjacent properties, cross access, joint access, reduction of curb cuts, architectural materials, etc. Eighteen (18) development reviews were conducted by Deputy Director of Planning, Wes Craiglow. There were 14 development reviews in 2013.

Type	Number	Acreage	Square Footage	Fees
Institutional	5	44.13	275,930	\$9,801.18
Commercial	10	12.03	103,536	\$7,802.62
Multi-Family	0	00.00	0	\$00,000
Office	3	2.36	9,912	\$1,588.16
TOTAL	18	58.52	389,378	\$19,191.96

Development Review Survey and Proposed Changes

In an effort to move away from antiquated paper document circulation, in 2014, the Planning Department published an RFP for software proposals to implement a much more efficient and accountable digital method. This will result in a higher level of service, productivity, and cost and time savings to both developers and city staff.

Brownfields Cleanup Grant

The City of Conway successfully acquired the land formerly occupied by Conway Scrap Metals in July of 2014. An EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant Application was completed in December 2014 to assist in funding the environmental cleanup of this site. Results of this grant application is expected to be communicated in March of 2015 by EPA, and if successful, funding is expected to be available in late 2015, after which cleanup activities will be initiated. This project is expected to be the seed project to spur the revitalization of the Markham Street Corridor.

Small Area Planning

No new small area plans were conducted in 2014. However, a collaborative effort, led by Scott Grummer, Program Manager - Community Development, Metroplan, and the Planning Department, in conjunction with Gateway Planners of Dallas continued to study and further define the Markham Street Corridor.

Markham Street Area Plan

The Jump Start Initiative for the Markham Street Corridor, which began in the fall of 2013, was completed in December of 2014. Funded by a \$200,000 grant from HUD, and facilitated by the regional planning agency, Metroplan, this initiative produced designs and updates to the regulating plan for the Markham Street area. The goal of the plan was to design and create implementation strategies to achieve stronger connections between Downtown, Hendrix College and Hendrix Village, leading to revitalization for the area. Designs and Plans were completed and transmitted to the City in late December 2014, and will be reviewed, communicated and hopefully adopted by the community and council in 2015.

Imagine Conway

The Imagine Conway website was successful in 2014 in our Community Outreach efforts for the Jump Start Initiative, and is funded through 2015 in order to continue these outreach efforts with updates to the former Scrap Metals Yard Brownfields Cleanup Project, as well as redevelopment efforts in the Markham Street and Pine Street Neighborhoods, with hopes of extending this outreach to other areas of development around the City.

Sidewalk Master Plan

Beginning in 2013 and continuing through 2014, the Planning Department prepared the foundation for the forthcoming Sidewalk Master Plan by assessing and categorizing the existing conditions of Conway's pedestrian network. We examined data about pedestrian traffic generators and attractors, compiled data about vehicle traffic and land uses, and gathered broad public input through surveys and interviews. The first draft of the Sidewalk Master Plan will be presented to the City Council and public for review.

Metroplan LR/Conway Commuter Bus Study

The Planning and Development Department played a key role in Metroplan's 2013 Little Rock/Conway Express (Commuter) Bus Study. The research included quantitative data in the form of traffic volumes and patterns, land use density, and scheduling. Qualitative data was gathered from public surveys and social media interaction about what commuters would most desire in an express bus line operating at peak demand hours. The report was finalized in the Summer of 2014. The study indicated a small but relevant level of ridership. To move forward, regional funding sources and operational partnerships would need to be identified and an action plan put into play.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board

In 2014, The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board started the year with eleven members, each of whom was appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. The Board met on the third Thursday of each month, excluding December. New last year was an objective setting meeting held in January to outline the focus for the board in 2014. Those objectives included preparing for resubmission of the City of Conway Bicycle Friendly application to the League of American Bicyclists; updating the Bike Master Plan; proposing line item funding for Bike Infrastructure, Sidewalks, & Trails; updating the Trail Network map; formally recommending Streets Projects for the following year to the Streets Department and City Council; and, renewing focus on Safe Routes to School. Significant headway or completion was achieved on each of these objectives prior to the end of the year.

Geographic Information System (GIS)

In 2008, Mr. Jason Lyon became the Conway GIS Coordinator and Addressing Administrator. The city map is now up to date and maintains many layers of information including, street, zoning, and address information. Also in 2014, webmapping was greatly enhanced for the city with many maps now available to the general public including Zoning, CAGIS Monuments, Bicycle Routes (<http://www.cityofconway.org/pages/gis/>) and many maps provided privately to City Departments such as a Sanitation Live Tracking Map (<http://gis.conwayplanning.org/Sanitation/>)

Mr. Lyon continues as a sub-steward for the USGS working on the National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) run under ADEQ. Also, Mr. Lyon continues to be the Census contact for the City and County providing annual updates for new annexations to assist the Census in population calculations for the City and County. Starting in 2015, he will be a part of NAPSG Tornado Work Group, recommended by Shelby Johnson, Director of AGIO.

Mr. Lyon has taken over the GIS functions for the county and provides updates to the Office of Emergency Management and Roads Department as requested. The agreement also allows the City and County continued collaboration while allowing a single GIS Dataset that may be used for the City and County operations. This cooperation provides the City Planning Department more monies to purchase software upgrades and upgrade equipment. In 2012, these monies allowed the Planning Department to purchase a new HP Plotter which has allowed for easier printing of large scale documents and signs for Planning Commission hearings/appeals. The County Contract with the City has continued and the \$14,000 for 2014 was used to upgrade the server as well to include a Microsoft SQL license to allow more in-depth GIS and eventually allow better data access for many department via relational databases. Continued upgrades of web mapping and development skills will continue into 2015.

In April 2014 an EF-4 Tornado hit the towns of Vilonia and Mayflower. During response, various maps and data were created and disseminated to the County and other contractors helping with clean-up of debris. Further maps have been produced for other smaller incidents as requested by various departments and entities such as the County Judge, Office of Emergency Management, City of Vilonia Fire, County Roads, City of Mayflower, FEMA, ADEQ, Conway Fire, and others.

County Grant Money received in 2014 was also used to purchase additional upgrades to the GIS Server and Network, allowing other departments to utilize GIS Layers and software outside of the Planning Department. Continued refinement of web maps has made it easier for citizens, Planning Commissioners, and City Council Members follow decisions for land use cases starting at the Staff Level and advancing to City Council (<http://gis.conwayplanning.org/PlanningCommission/>). The Planning Map, created in September, now allows City Council and Planning Commissioners to see preliminary maps and documents related to projects for the upcoming month prior to the official staff report being distributed.

Currently working on updating web maps to allow citizens to see plats, rezoning ordinances, and conditional use permits with a click of the mouse on an area. In 2015, it is anticipated that new imagery will become available in cooperation with the Faulkner County Assessor Office and Conway Corporation.

Planning Workshops and Conferences

Mr. Patrick, Mr. Craiglow attended the Arkansas American Planning Association Spring Conference in Fayetteville in April. Mr. Patrick, Mr. Craiglow, and Ms. Sutherland attended the Arkansas American Planning Association Fall Conference in Little Rock in September. Through an AHPP grant, Mr. Patrick attended the National Trust for Historic Preservation Conference in Savannah, GA in November.

Memberships

Planning Department staff retained membership in the American Planning Association and the Arkansas Chapter of the American Planning Association. Mr. Patrick and Mr. Craiglow retained membership in the American Institute of Certified Planners. Mr. Patrick retained membership in the National Trust for Historic Preservation Forum, National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, and the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas. Mr. Lyon retained membership in URISA (Urban and Regional Information Systems Association).

Internet/Website

In late 2014, the Information Technology department launched a redesigned City of Conway website. The Planning Department coordinated with Edward Briggler, the contract agent retained to build the site, to redevelop the Planning & Development section/child page of the parent site. Work is on-going to further develop and populate this new child-page.

Planning Director, Bryan Patrick, and Planning Technician, Beth Sketoe, maintained the Planning Department's website. These sites provided valuable city information 24/7.

Presentations

Mr. Patrick and Mr. Craiglow presented to the public at the Ward 2 in August. Mr. Patrick spoke with the homeowners of Summerbrook Subdivision on two occasions in July and August. Mr. Patrick presented to the Faulkner County Leadership Institute in May.

Tree Board/Tree City USA

The Planning Department provided assistance to Kami Marsh, City Staff for the Conway Tree Board. The 2014 Arbor Day Celebration, held Saturday, November 1, 2014 at Laurel Park, hosted a crowd estimated at over 600 participants and saw over 500 trees adopted.

Conway Historic District Commission

The Planning Department acted as City staff for the Conway Historic District Commission (HDC). As HDC staff, Mr. Patrick created monthly reports for the HDC. There were 17 Old Conway Design Overlay District and 3 Robinson Historic District reviews. \$6,000 in CLG grant money was awarded to the Conway HDC by the Arkansas State Historic Preservation Program for staff/commission training. An architectural survey to possibly expand the Robinson Historic District was conducted and finished in 2014. Sandra Taylor Smith was hired through the 2013 AHPP grant to conduct the survey. The survey has been submitted to the State for review and approval. Once accepted by the State, a nomination to the National Register can proceed. The Council could then examine this National Register area for inclusion into the Robinson Historic District. Mr. Patrick and several members of the HDC attended preservation workshops and conferences as noted earlier in this report.

Other Activities

Planning staff have also worked with the Conway Public Art Committee in support of the ongoing City Hall arts display and Artsfest. Staff also provided materials for Conway Ecofest.

Interns

There were no internships in the Planning Department in 2014.

Personnel

Lileha Rhea, Planning Technician retired in October. Beth Sketoe became Planning Technician in October.