



Centerton

Downtown Master Plan
PHASE 1 – DISCOVERY + LISTENING

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CITY OF CENTERTON

Lorene Burns, *Planning Director*
Dianne Morrison Lloyd, AICP, *Senior Planner*
Kayla Knight, *Planner*
Tara Culpepper-Miller, *Planner*
Christian Weber, *Planning Assistant*
Bill Edwards, *Mayor*
Nicola Hoofard, *Assistant to the Mayor*
Alan Craighead, *City Engineer*

STEERING COMMITTEE

Dave and Jenny Marrs, *Property/Business Owners*
Taylor Sizemore, *Property Owner*
Ethan Hunter, *Property Owner*
Michael Lindsey, *Walmart*
Debbie Jones, *Bentonville School District*
Joe Adams, *Fish Hatchery*
Josie Reed, *City Council*
Jeff Seyfarth, *Planning Commission*
Tanner Freeman, *Colliers International*
Allie Verdery, *Engel Volkens*
Jeff Thompson, *Bemco*
City of Centerton Staff and Mayor

ULI NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

Megan Brown, *Director of Operations*
Wes Craiglow, AICP, *Executive Director*
Jessica Lewallen, AIA, *Interim Program Director, Plan Local*

CONSULTANT TEAM

Juliet Richey, AICP, CFM, *Garver*
Courtney Tannehill-McNair, AICP, CFM, *Garver*
Derek Linn, AICP, *Garver*
Beth Sketoe, AICP, *Garver*
Jon Hetzel, *Garver*
Ryan King, AIA, *ISG, Inc*
T.J. Wells, PE, *ISG, Inc*
Gina Cooper, *ISG, Inc*
Mallorie Schubbe, *ISG, Inc*
Amanda Golden, *Designing Local*
Jasmine Metcalf, *Designing Local*

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PROJECT INTRODUCTION



Introduction

In partnership with the Northwest Arkansas chapter of Urban Land Institute, the City of Centerton is undertaking a downtown master plan. This plan focuses on enhancement of the City’s historic Downtown and its connection to an envisioned mixed-use New Town Center south of Centerton Blvd/AR HWY 102.

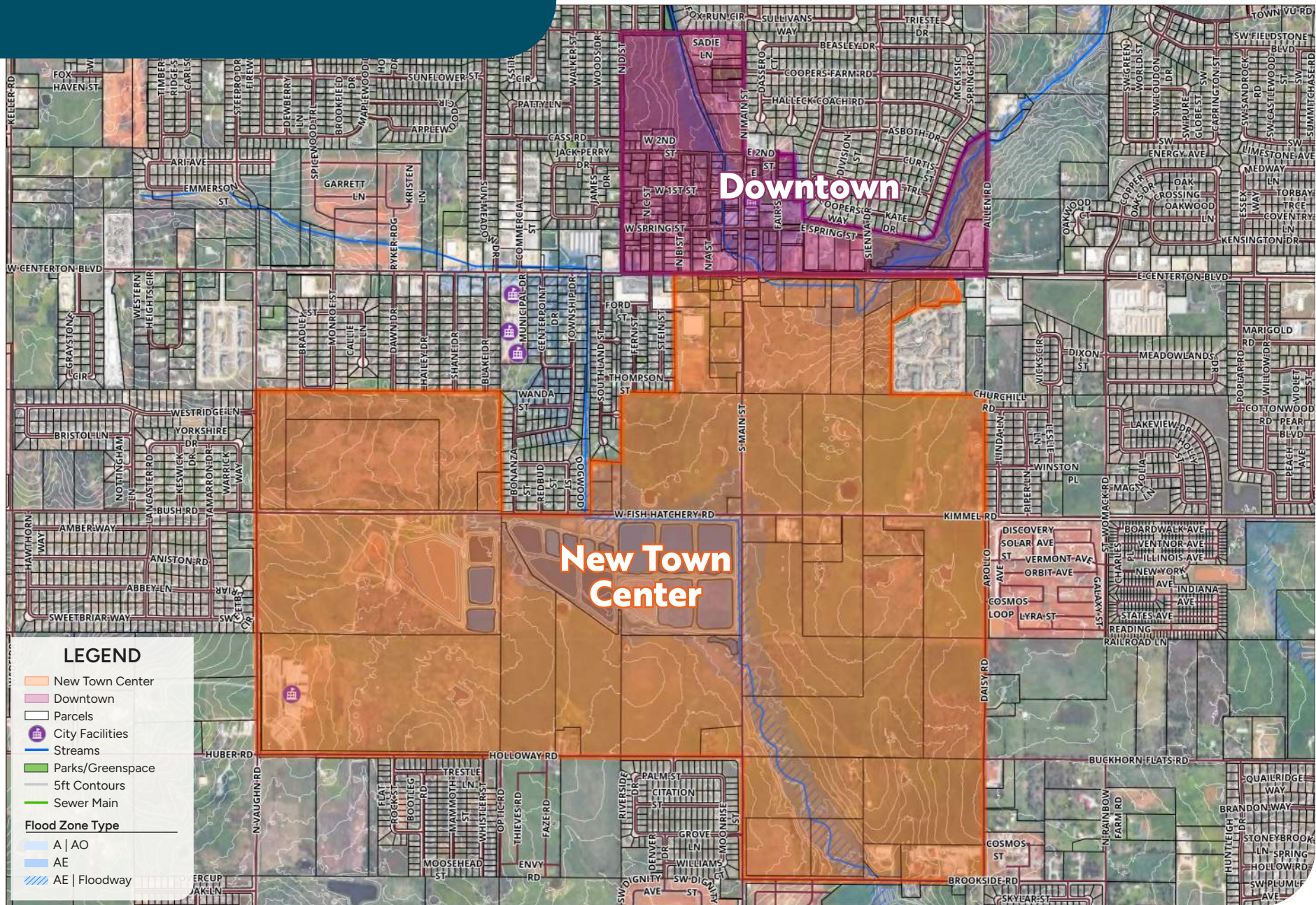
The Downtown Master plan builds on past City comprehensive planning milestones and focuses specifically a study area of approximately 130 acres encompassing the historic downtown as well as a study area of approximately 830 acres south of Centerton Blvd, referred to as the New Town Center. The Plan will be developed through a multi-disciplinary process with stakeholders and community members to determine how these areas will grow and develop in the future. Placemaking, mixed-use development, infrastructure strategy, and ecosystem sensitive design are core elements of the Plan.

This plan will accomplish the following in both the Downtown and New Town Center:

1. Explore existing and future character and land uses
2. Define the geographic boundaries for both areas
3. Identify connectivity between the focus areas
4. Propose options for housing and mixed use elements
5. Explore frameworks for:
 - floodplain management
 - stormwater
 - parking
 - trails/active transportation
 - potential transit
 - future new and infill growth and development
 - placemaking
 - wayfinding
 - other elements

The Plan will be created in three phases.
This document summarizes the
Discovery + Listening
phase of the project





HISTORICAL CONTEXT



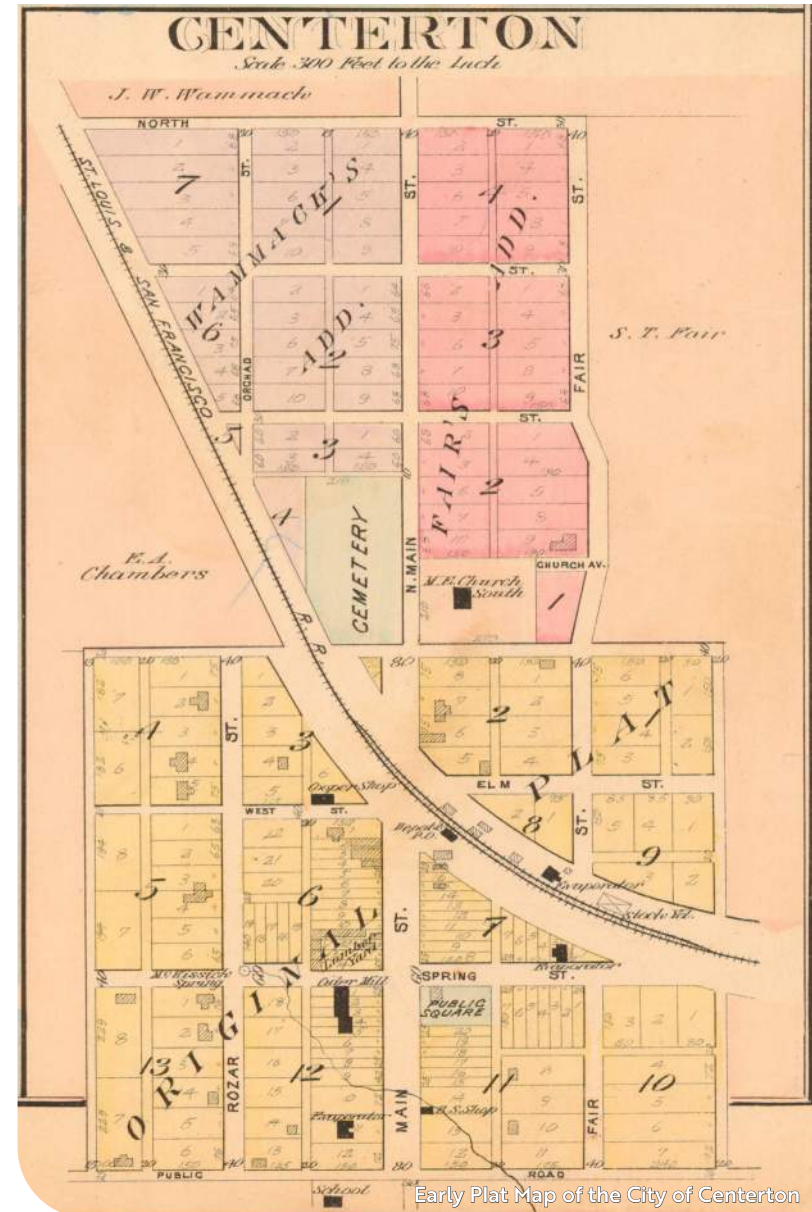
What's In A Name?

Named for its central location in Benton County, Centerton was long known as Center Point prior to its incorporation in 1914. With the community's center established around McKissic Spring, the Arkansas-Oklahoma Railroad Company built a rail line and rail stop near the Spring in 1898, and the first town plat was surveyed in 1900. Following the success of the local apple industry around the turn of the century, the railroad provided passenger service and was primarily utilized to transport local agricultural products to markets beyond Benton County.

F. (Frank) Ernst Evaporator Building



Courtesy of the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History (S-92-49-45) via CALS Encyclopedia of Arkansas





From Agriculture to Commerce

By 1907, the community experienced rapid growth and included two general stores, two doctors, a bank, drugstore, blacksmith, lumberyard, vinegar plant, four apple evaporators and several apple storage facilities. Additionally, the town added two hotels, a masonic lodge, and a cooperage facility that manufactured wooden barrels for storing and shipping apples. An Antebellum Period log schoolhouse was replaced by a wood-frame school in 1911, which was again replaced by a brick schoolhouse in 1917. Gaining recognition and awards for its local apples at both the 1900 World’s Fair (Paris, France) and the 1904 World’s Fair (St. Louis, MO), Centerton acquired the nickname “Apple Capital of the World”.

Apple tree diseases led to a steep decline in the local apple industry, and then the Great Depression further silenced the once mighty local industry. While the Arkansas State Highway Commission’s 1936 map of Benton County shows the railroad still mapped through Centerton (running east to Bentonville and northwest to Gravette), the railroad ceased operations in the early 1930s.



Centerton circa 1959

Courtesy of the City of Centerton

Local farmers increasingly transitioned into dairy and poultry agriculture over the next decades. Drinking water infrastructure transitioned from wells to public water via Bentonville, especially after the creation of Beaver Lake in the 1960s. Additionally, Centerton’s Fire Department was established as a rural volunteer department in 1959. The people of Centerton persisted through agricultural diversity and small businesses during this time, with the population dipping to under 200 in 1960, before resuming its upward trend.

The school district consolidated into the Bentonville School District in 1962, and business and population increased steadily into the 1990s. By this time, the central business district had essentially transitioned from downtown to along Hwy 102, Centerton Boulevard. From 1990 to 2010, the City’s population grew dramatically, increasing from 491 to 9,515. Next door to Walmart Headquarters and a short drive from other major employers and cultural opportunities, Centerton was reported in 2025 as being the fastest-growing city in Arkansas among cities with at least 20,000 people. With an estimated population of 25,745 in 2024, the City grew by nearly 8,000 residents since its 2020 census.



Courtesy of the City of Centerton



Photo Credit: Mike Davello, Courtesy of Dave & Jenny Marrs



Existing Conditions

DOWNTOWN

Today's existing downtown center is generally perceived to be in the area along N. Main St between Spring St and 1st St. This area is framed by local businesses in historic buildings along the west side of Main St and the Centerton City Park and Centerton Hall building on the east side. This area serves as a meeting place for community functions both outdoors in the Centerton City Park and within Centerton Hall (the former City Hall Building).

The City holds its Farmer's Market in the Centerton City Park weekly while in season. This space is also home to Centerton Day celebrations and other community events as well.



Centerton Farmers' Market

Courtesy of the City of Centerton

Centerton City Park itself is well utilized throughout the year and attracts citizens from across the City. Centerton Hall shares this property with the park and serves as a community meeting space for local senior groups and other local organizations.

Several local businesses, including a bakery and a food truck, serve the core downtown area. Based on the City's original plat, this downtown core area is surrounded by several blocks of supporting residential neighborhoods which hold potential for future infill and redevelopment. The neighborhood to the west also houses the McKissic Spring on a small area of City-owned land. This is an asset that should be leveraged in the future.

The downtown area is loosely connected with the Centerton Lake area and adjacent McKissic Springs Park and Splashpad. A walking trail connects these facilities back to the downtown center with a trail terminating on Fair Street near the Centerton City Park. The area is adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods and subdivisions as well as adjacent to Hwy 102 to the south and its commercial businesses.

The area holds much potential and will be evaluated in Phase 2 for potential infrastructure enhancements, placemaking opportunities, and new land use and development policies that will allow the City to leverage its downtown area for vibrant infill development comprised of a mix of uses.



Hatchery Fishing Derby

Courtesy of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

NEW TOWN CENTER AREA

The existing New Town Center area consists of approximately 830 acres containing multiple properties. A key feature of this area is that there are several property owners who own significant areas of land within the New Town Center footprint. These property owners are engaged and integral to the planning process for this area.

In addition to private property ownership, on the west side of the New Town Center area there are several institutional properties including the Arkansas Game and Fish C.B. “Charlie” Craig State Hatchery and property owned by Bentonville School District currently housing Grimsley Junior High School and area for future expansion. The Fish Hatchery property is open to foot traffic for walking or jogging between dawn and dusk each day, creating a community amenity. Historically, community fishing derbies are also held at the hatchery.

The northern portion of the property also contains the institutional use of the Lifeway Christian School/First Baptist of Centerton. The site of the proposed Walmart Supercenter is also within the northern portion of the New Town Center Study Area.

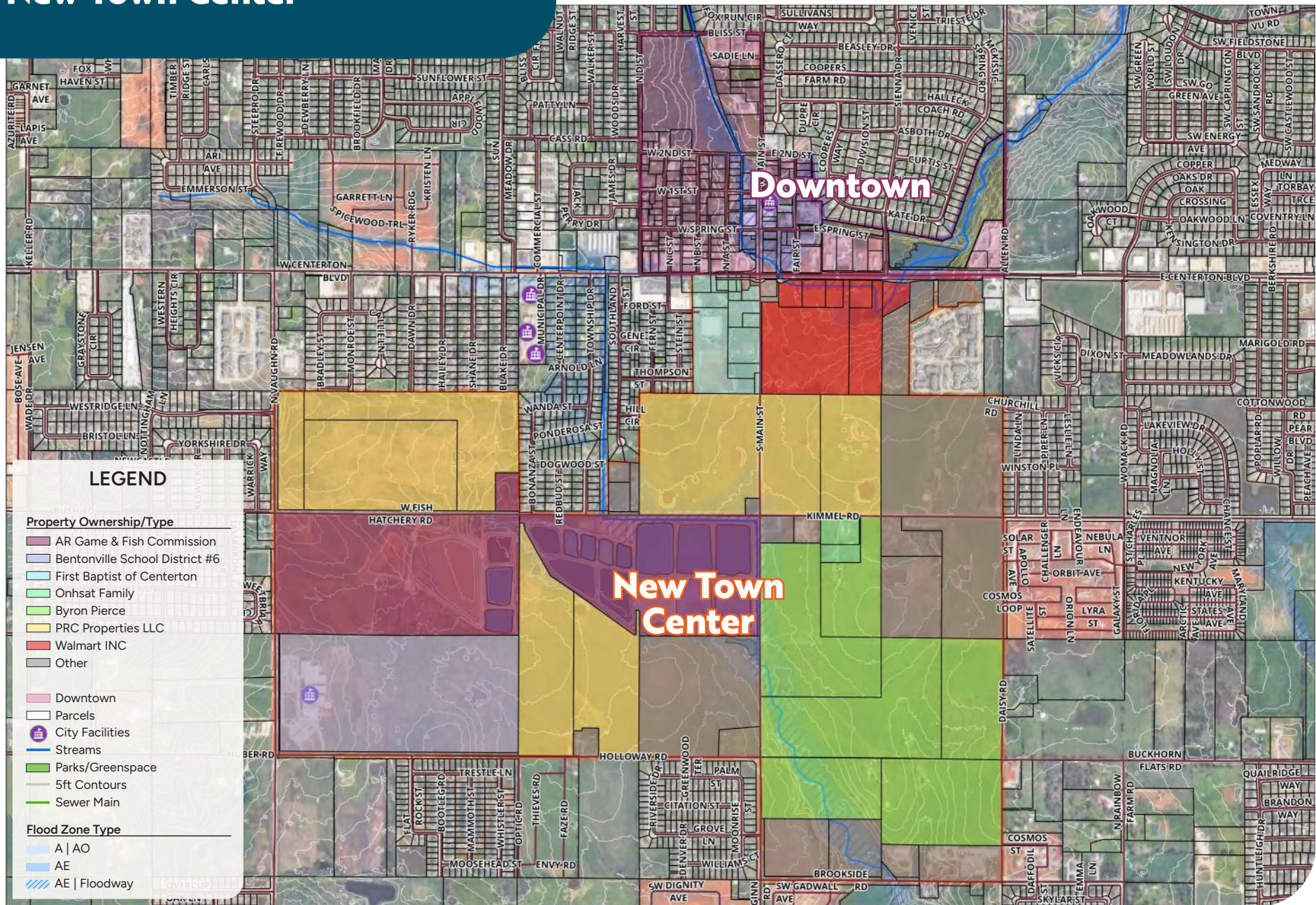
The remaining parcels within the study area are comprised of two additional significant private land holders of over 100+ acres each and other private properties of varying size.

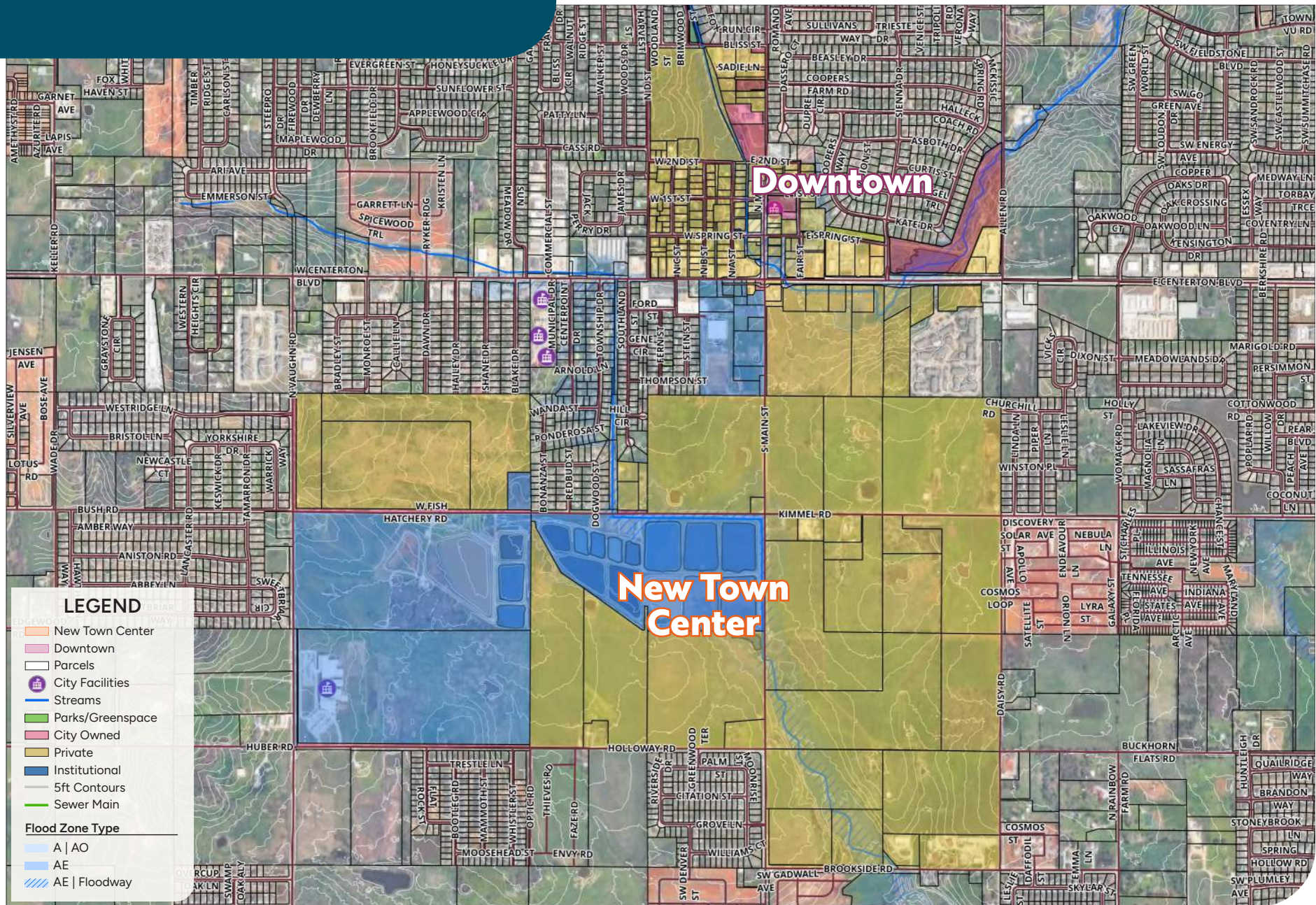


Centerton City Hall

Photo Credit: Timothy Hursley, Zine Media, and modus studio

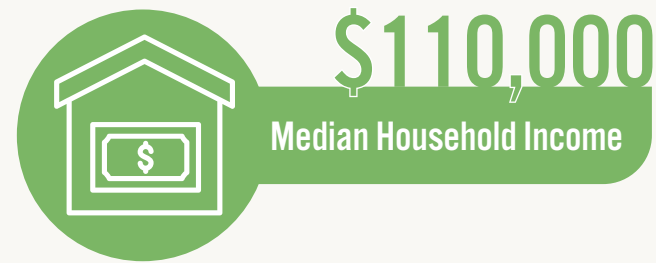
Significant Property Owners: New Town Center





Community Snapshot

The average age of Centerton residents is 32.4 years which is approximately 7% lower than that of the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area where the average resident age is 34.7 years, and is approximately 17% lower than Arkansans overall which is 38.5 years.



COUNTY AND CITY POPULATION COMPARISON PERCENT CHANGE

Jurisdiction	2010 Census	2020 Census	2024 ACS	Percent Change 2010 to 2020	Percent Change 2020 to 2024
Benton County	221,339	284,333	321,566	28.5%	13.1%
Centerton	9,515	17,792	25,745	87.0%	44.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2024). American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Centerton, AR <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US0512820-centerton-ar/>



Employment Commute

AVERAGE TRAVEL TIME

The 23.7-minute average travel time to work for residents of Centerton is approximately 10% longer than that of the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area at 21.6 minutes and about 5% longer than that of Arkansans as a whole at 22.5 minutes.

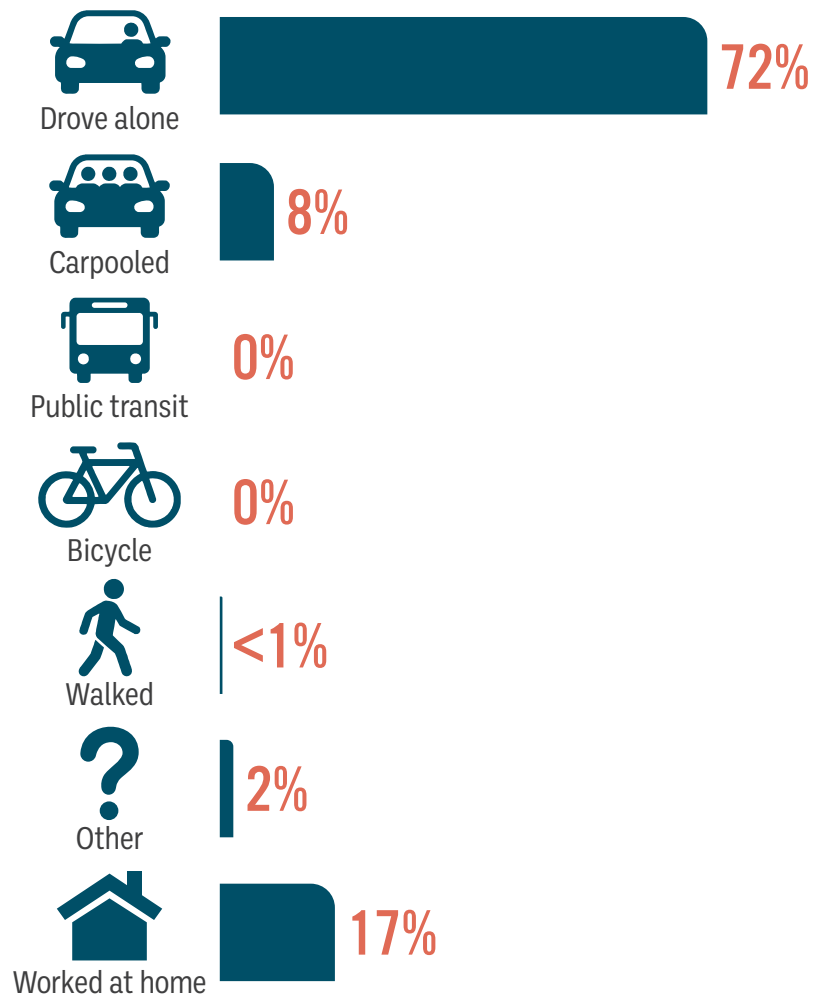


Average Travel Time to Work
(minutes)

23.7

MODE OF TRANSPORTATION

The means of transportation to work for employees 16 years of age and over is largely by single-driver automobile.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2024). American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Centerton, AR <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US0512820-centerton-ar/>; Margin of error is at least 10% of the total value.



Education

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The high school graduation rate of Centerton residents is 95.9%, approximately 7% higher than that of the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area at 89.2% and even greater than that of Arkansas as a whole which is 88.7%.

Nearly half [42.2%] of all Centerton residents have earned a bachelor’s degree or higher education level. This rate is approximately 16% higher than that of the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area at 35.9% and more than 1.5 times that of Arkansans as a whole at 25.7%.



High School Graduate or higher

95.9%

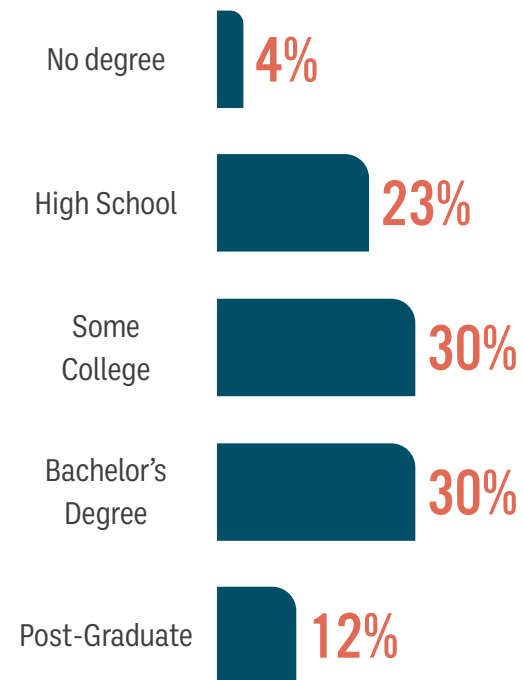


Bachelor’s Degree or higher

42.2%

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Approximately 95% of Centerton residents complete high school with about 75% of those going on to complete some level of college, earn a bachelor’s degree, or pursue post-graduate education.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2024). American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Centerton, AR <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US0512820-centerton-ar/>; Margin of error is at least 10% of the total value.



Purpose

This analysis evaluates current and future housing demand, aimed at the 1- and 2-mile radius around the downtown focus area.

The analysis includes the following to determine how well supply meets demand:

- Existing housing
- Recent development
- Demographics
- Economic conditions

Housing types, pricing, and availability data will guide downtown revitalization, residential development decisions, and long term planning for sustainable growth.

Insight For Decision-Makers

HOUSING

- Increase and diversify supply to include duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, row townhouses, condominiums, and apartments
- Offer a variety of price points

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Address routes, roads, and walkability to increase density, improve quality of life, and access to downtown amenities
- Sewer improvements will increase capacity for a larger population
- Install stormwater strategies, including wetlands downtown

COMMUNITY CHARACTER + IMPACT

Challenge

Unplanned growth, reduced rural lands, and a lack of investment in places that create a sense of community and add ongoing value

Solution

Guide investments to:

- Focus on high-return areas
- Safeguard rural and natural lands
- Increase tree canopy
- Create incentives to improve main streets, public spaces, quality of life, and financial stability



Centerton Within The Northwest Arkansas Region

LOCATION

The City rapidly expanded over the past decade, growing from about 9,515 residents in 2010 to about 25,745 in 2024. This surge reflects strong suburban growth tied to northwest Arkansas job centers like Bentonville.

The community remains relatively young, with a median age of about 32, increasingly diverse, and has a high median household income with low poverty rates, highlighting its strong economic position.

ROLE

The City has emerged as a key residential growth community in northwest Arkansas, offering affordable housing near major job centers in adjacent communities.

Population increases are the result of regional job growth and new residents moving in, which have positioned the City to serve as a housing destination for home buyers seeking an alternative to higher costs in neighboring cities.

While growth has been dominated by suburban single-family development, strain on the housing supply highlights the need for a more diverse housing mix.

The opportunity to address the unmet demand, support workforce housing, and strengthen a walkable, mixed use core that contributes to long term economic and community vitality, can be addressed with strategic downtown and infill development.



POPULATION SIZE + GROWTH TRENDS

The 2024 estimated population of 25,745 residents is projected to nearly double to 49,272 by 2050. This further aligns with broader northwest Arkansas projected growth, where regional plans anticipate the population approaching 1 million by 2050.

Trends will continue to shape Centerton's demographics, housing demand, and infrastructure as it evolves into a more diverse and dynamic City.



HOUSEHOLD DEMOGRAPHICS

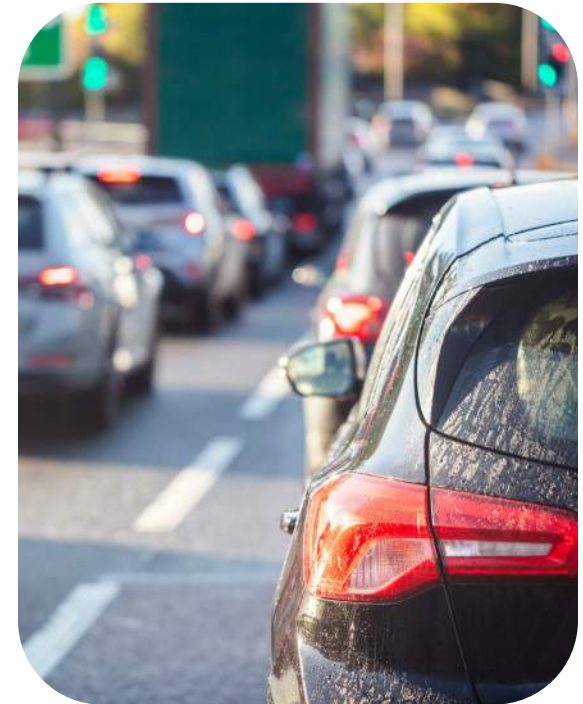
As a largely residential commuter community, housing demand is shaped by affordability, access to major corridors, and proximity to job hubs, reinforcing the need for housing and land use strategies that align with regional job growth and shifting commuter patterns.



EMPLOYMENT BASE + COMMUTING PATTERNS

The City's workforce is aligned with the regional economy, with most residents commuting to Bentonville, Rogers, and Fayetteville. Major regional employers draw much of its workforce, while local jobs center on education, city services, retail, and small businesses.

As a largely residential commuter community, housing demand is shaped by affordability, transportation access, and proximity to job hubs, highlighting the need for housing and land use strategies that align with regional job growth and commuter trends.



MARKET CONDITIONS

- **Housing**
There is a large demand for housing options. Vacancy rates have plummeted, and based on the current housing stock, is estimated to be down to 2% by 2030. The City must support a large increase in housing supply, types, and price points to meet demand. A housing increase will benefit the tax base and increase downtown sales for retailers.
- **Business**

MAJOR TRENDS

- **Growth**
Population increases are generating the housing demand.
- **Pricing**
Home pricing ranges and types are limiting options for potential buyers.
- **Supply + Demand**
A continually depleted supply provides an opportunity to create a boom in the local house construction market.

CHALLENGES

- **Transportation**
With an increased population, roads and water and sewer systems are stretched. In addition, the landscape changes, resulting in higher runoff rates and larger pollutant loading on stream systems.
- **Sewer**
- **Stormwater + Wetlands**

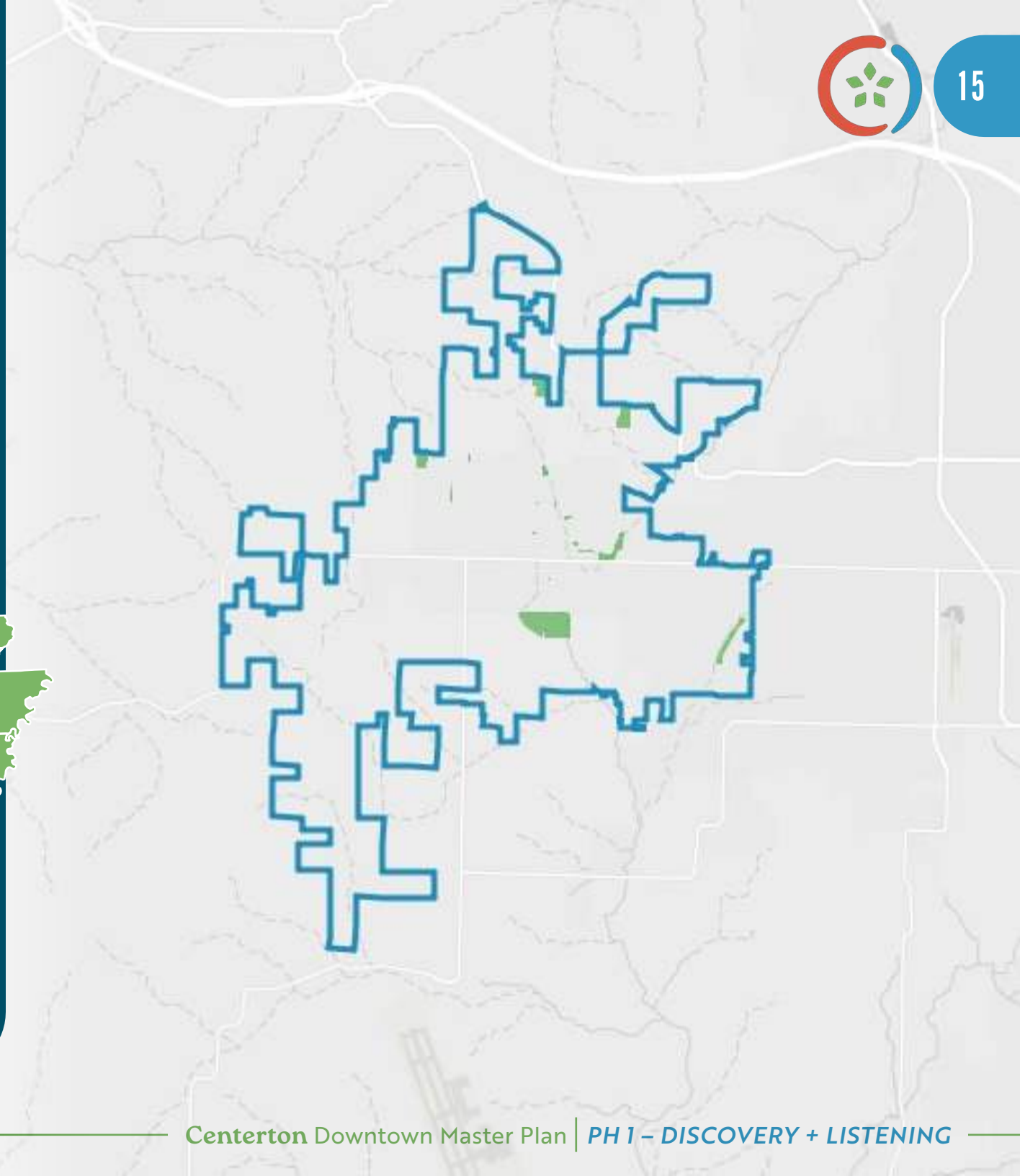
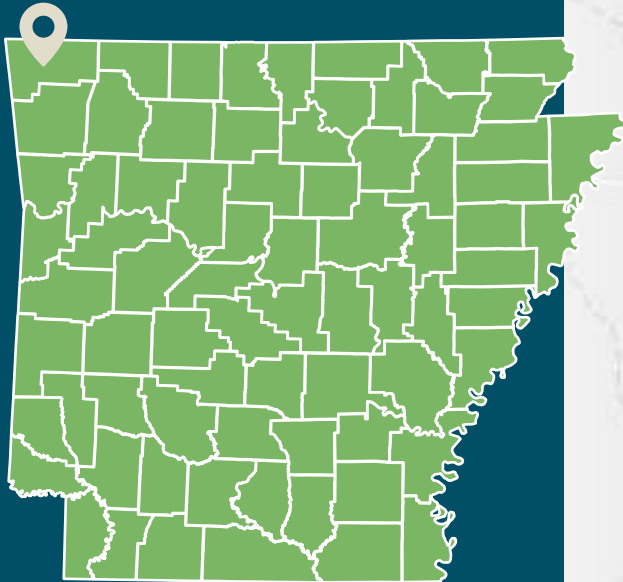
Centerton Market

Mid-Sized + Core-Adjacent

OVERVIEW

The City is a mid-sized community spanning 13.6 square miles, located near major employment centers and experiencing steady population growth.

However, limited housing density and a low vacancy rate, driven by a relatively new but insufficient housing supply, have contributed to outward growth patterns, with most residents commuting outside the City for work.

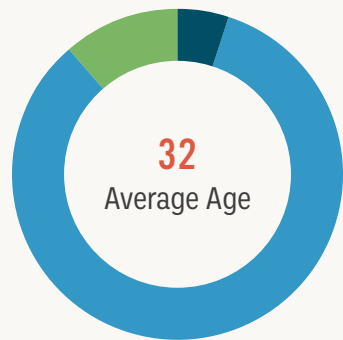




Current Housing Conditions

The City is adjacent to major employment centers, with a significant increase in new residents moving in.

- Most residents commute outside of the City.
- With a relatively new housing stock that is not keeping up with growth, the vacancy rate continues to drop.
- Rural sprawl is indicative of only 1.35 homes per acre, as a result, most of the community is not densely populated.



LIFE STAGE DISTRIBUTION

- Empty Nesters + Retirees
5.7%
- Families
82.9%
- Young Couples + Singles
11.4%

Source: An Analysis of Residential Market Potential for The Northwest Arkansas Region, May 2025 by Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc.

6,486
Acres Developed

8,729
Housing Dwellings

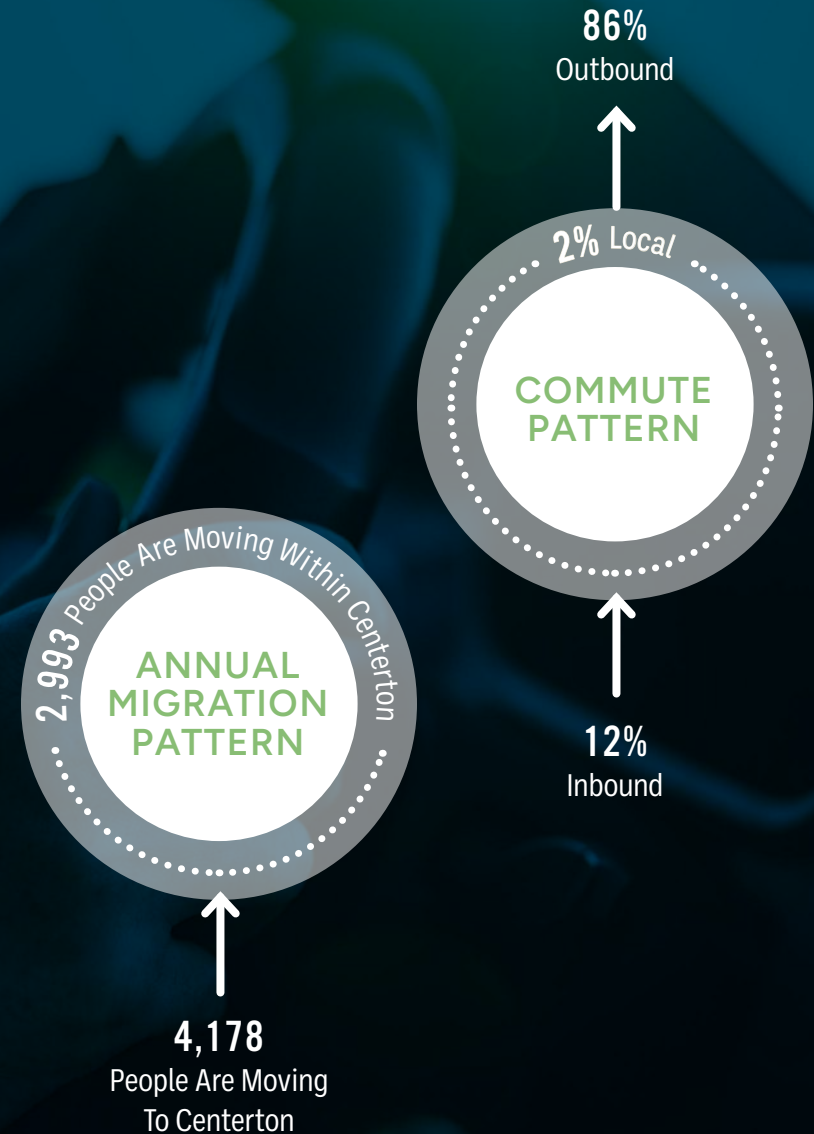
2009
Median Year Housing Built

4.9%
Vacancy Rate

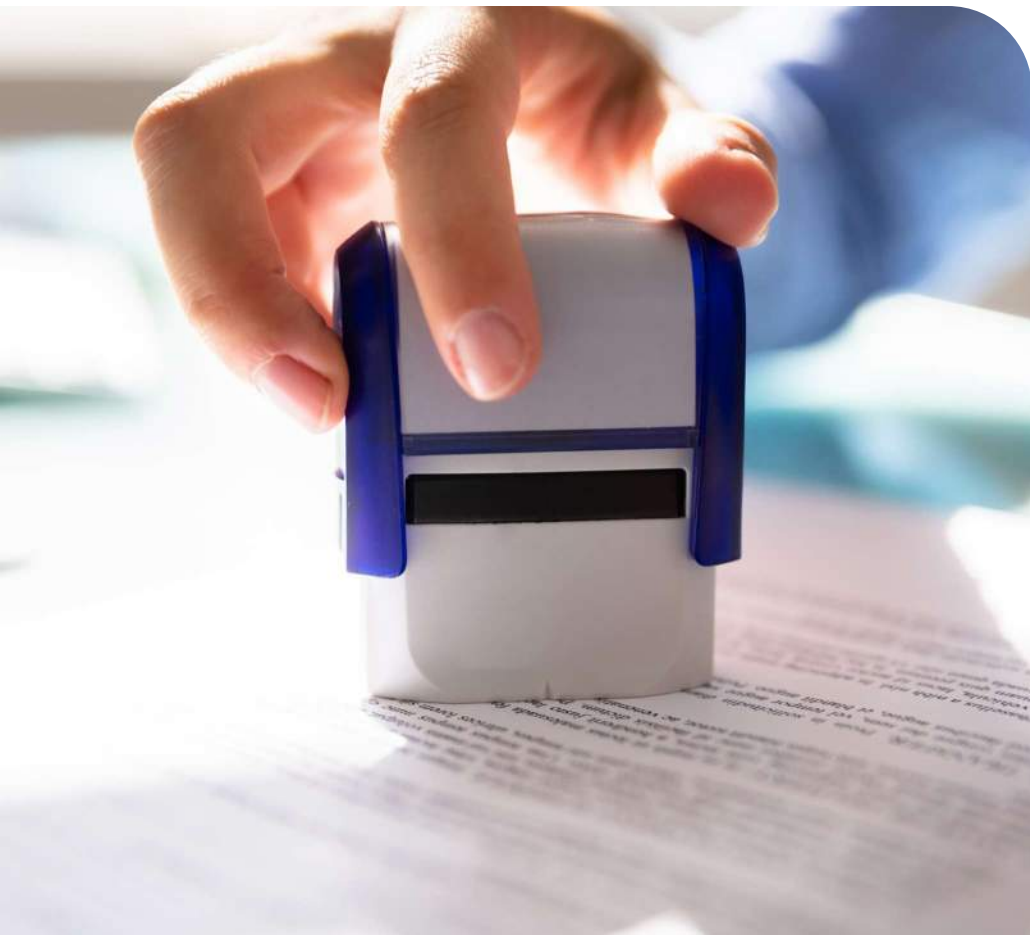
1,633
New Housing Units Since 2020

2
Vehicles Per Household

Source: DPZ CoDesign City Socioeconomics, Regional Growth Strategy For Northwest Arkansas 10/21/25



Source: DPZ CoDesign City Socioeconomics, Regional Growth Strategy For Northwest Arkansas 10/21/25



HOUSING BUILDING PERMITS

243
Building Permits Pulled
July–December 2024

\$372,870 average
In Building Permits Pulled
July–December 2024

Source: Skyline Report

263
Building Permits Pulled
January–June 2025

\$365,331
In Building Permits Pulled
January–June 2025

HOUSEHOLDS

7,871
Households

\$110,000
Median Household Income

47%
1- To 2-Person Households

31.6%
Households With Married
Couples + Children

Source: An Analysis of Residential Market Potential for The Northwest Arkansas Region, May 2025 by Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc.

10.0%
Other Households With Children

6.4%
Households Below \$25,000

71.1%
Households Above \$27,000

HOUSING

8,279
Housing Units

\$373,600
Median Housing Value

64.5%
Owner-Occupied Units

77.0%
Single-Family Detached Units

Source: An Analysis of Residential Market Potential for The Northwest Arkansas Region, May 2025 by Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc.

10.0%
Single-Family Attached Units

8.2%
2- to 19-Unit Buildings

2.6%
20+ Unit Buildings

2.2%
Mobile Homes, Boat, Etc.

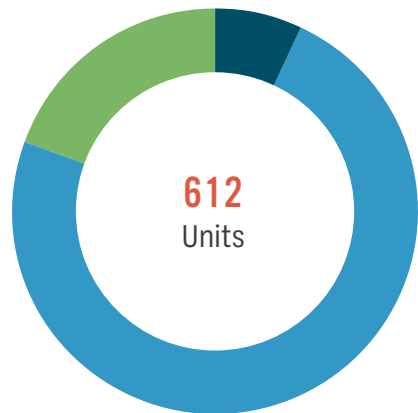


Potential Housing Conditions

Increasing a diverse housing stock will allow home buyers and renters more options to live in a more affordable market, reduce commute times for those who work inside the City, and increase density—positively impacting the tax base.

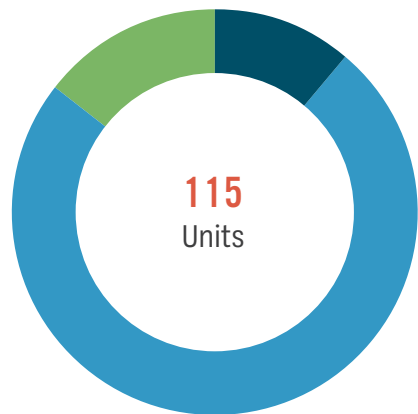
- The annual market potential for rental and sale of new and existing multi-family housing units over the next five years is 727 housing units.
- The annual market potential for attached and detached single-family housing units over the next five years is 658 housing units.

NEW MULTI-FAMILY



For Rent
(lofts/apartments, leaseholder)
\$1,750-\$2,750

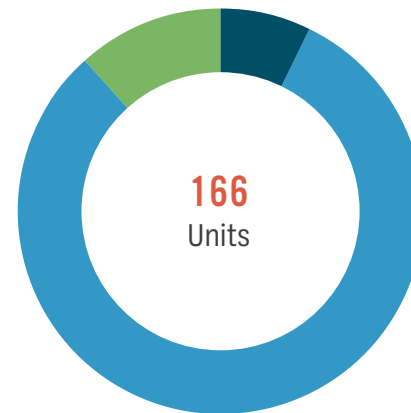
- Empty Nesters + Retirees
43; 7.0%
- Families
452; 73.9%
- Young Couples + Singles
117; 19.1%



For Sale
(lofts/apartments, condo/co-op ownership)
\$250,000-\$450,000

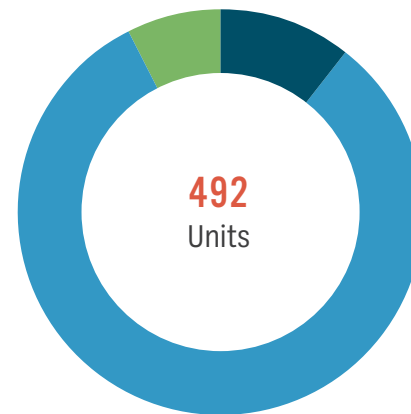
- Empty Nesters and Retirees
13; 11.3%
- Families
84; 73.0%
- Young Couples and Singles
18; 15.7%

NEW SINGLE-FAMILY



Attached For Sale
(townhouse/live-work, fee-simple)
\$250,000-\$450,000

- Empty Nesters + Retirees
12; 7.2%
- Families
135; 81.3%
- Young Couples + Singles
19; 11.5%



Detached For Sale
(houses, fee-simple ownership)
\$250,000+

- Empty Nesters + Retirees
52; 10.6%
- Families
404; 82.1%
- Young Couples + Singles
36; 7.3%

Source: An Analysis of Residential Market Potential for The Northwest Arkansas Region, May 2025 by Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc.

Downtown Core Market

1- and 2-Mile Radius



WORKFORCE

- Services 12%
- Trades + Skilled Labor 19.2%
- Office-Based 68.8%



Business Key Facts

Fewer people visit than live in a one- and two-mile radius from the downtown focus area.

This means residents need amenities and services to stay living in the downtown focus area.

Increasing the downtown experience and improving amenities may draw more visitors.

Sales for employees range from \$284,650 to \$356,321.

1-MILE

109
Businesses

5,731
Population

34.7
Businesses
Per Square Mile

3,896
Daytime
Population

938
Employees

0.68
Daytime Population to
Total Population Ratio

6.9
Average Number
of Employees

\$267 M
Sales

1.2%
Unemployment
Rate

Suburb
Classification

2-MILE

284
Businesses

26,570
Population

22.6
Businesses
Per Square Mile

16,378
Daytime
Population

2,697
Employees

0.62
Daytime Population to
Total Population Ratio

6.9
Average Number
of Employees

\$961 M
Sales

1.7%
Unemployment
Rate

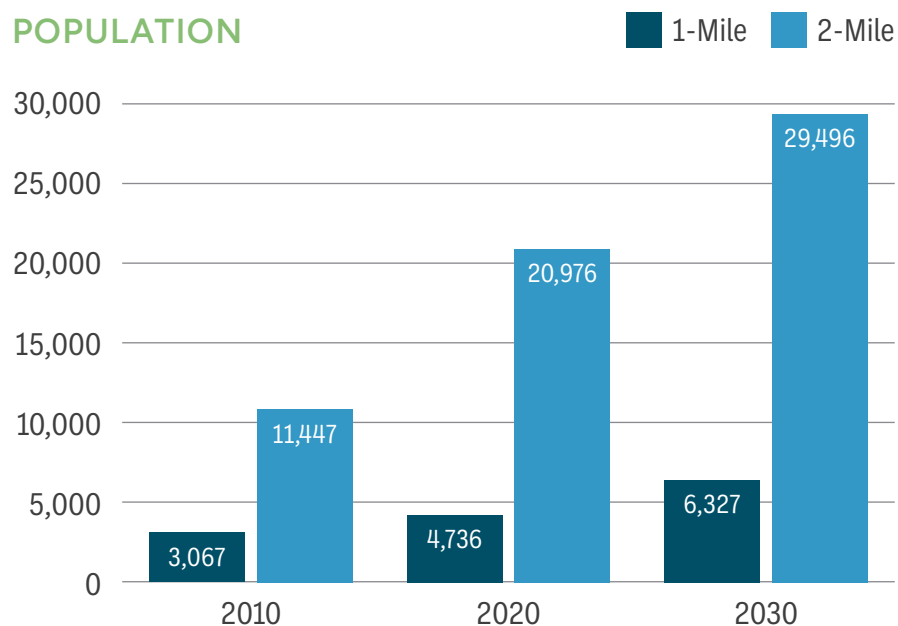
Suburb
Classification



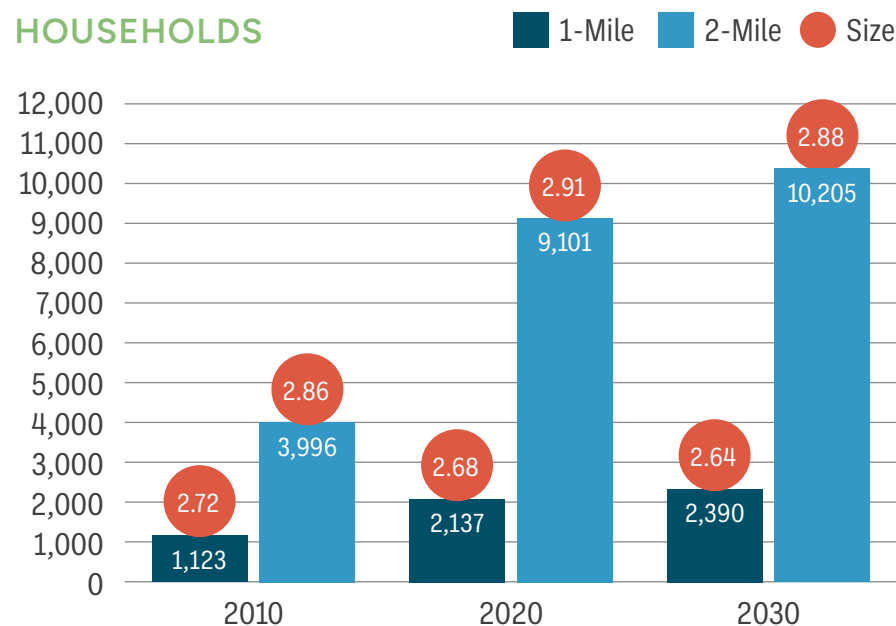
Housing Market Data

Findings show that while population growth rate has slowed since 2020, there is still an anticipated growth rated through 2030, which means the City should create more diverse, dense housing options, such as multifamily housing, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and apartments.

POPULATION



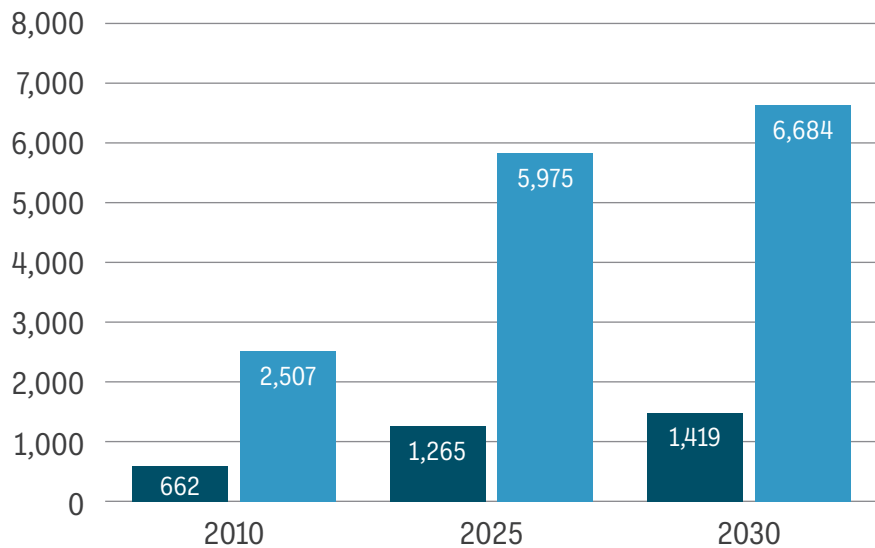
HOUSEHOLDS





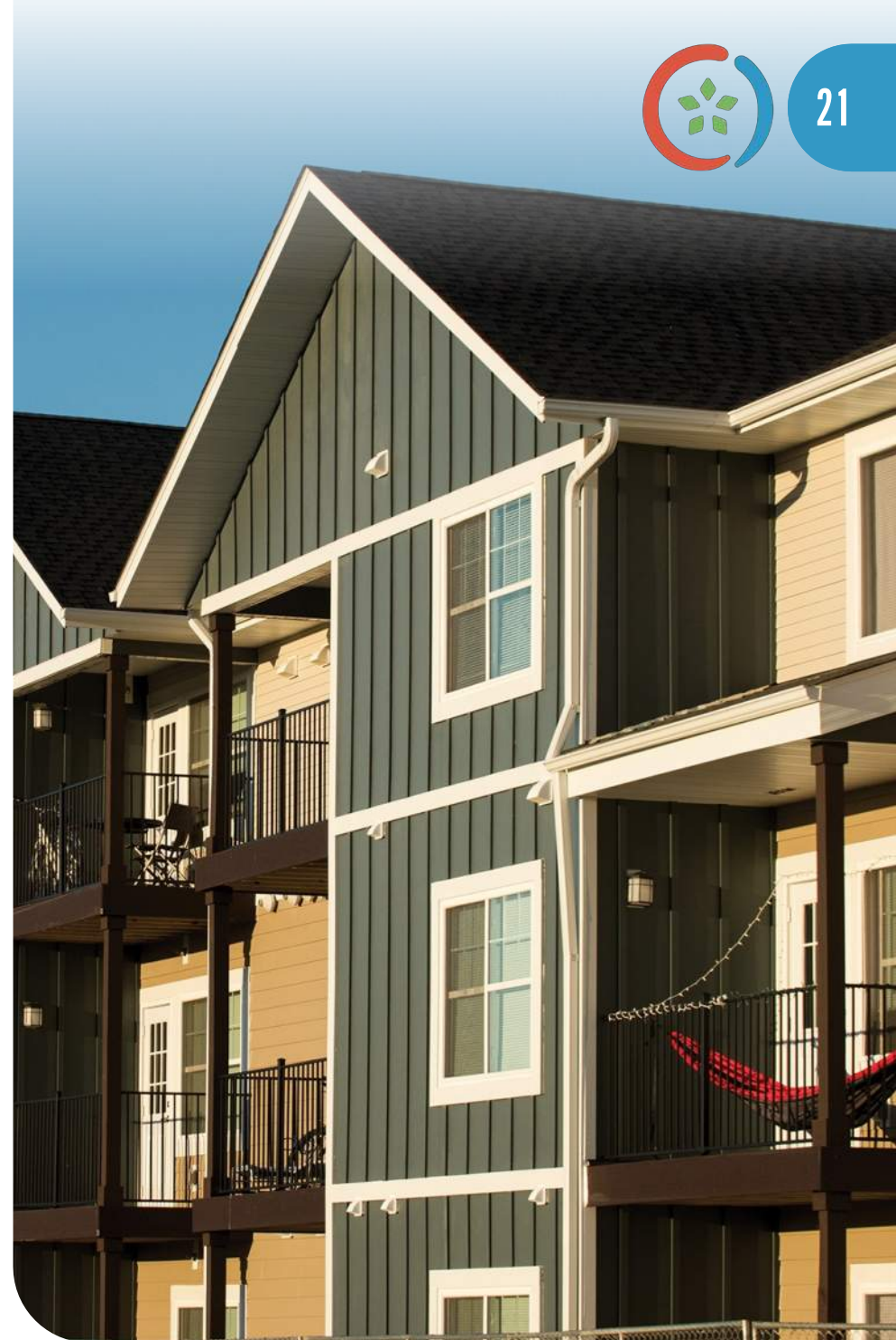
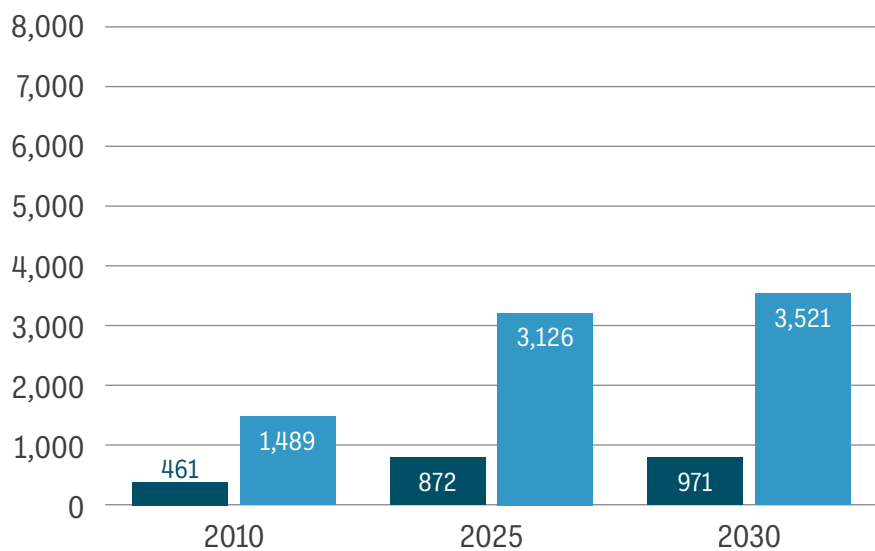
OWNED UNITS

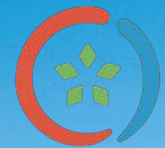
1-Mile 2-Mile



RENTED UNITS

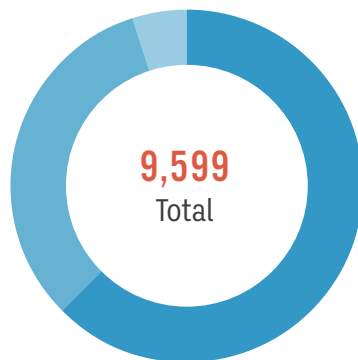
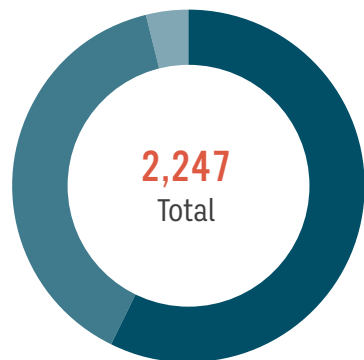
1-Mile 2-Mile





2050 HOUSING UNITS

1-Mile 2-Mile

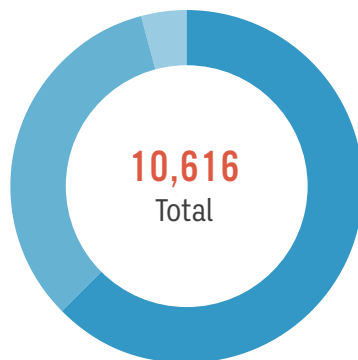
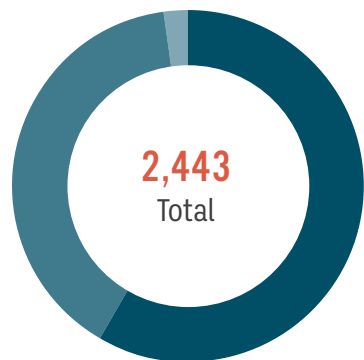


- Owned 59.2%
- Rented 40.8%
- Vacant 4.9%

- Owned 65.7%
- Rented 34.4%
- Vacant 5.2%

2030 HOUSING UNITS

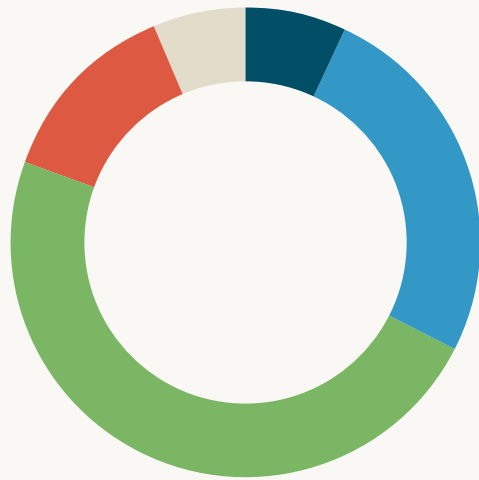
1-Mile 2-Mile



- Owned 58.0%
- Rented 39.8%
- Vacant 2.2%

- Owned 62.9%
- Rented 33.1%
- Vacant 4.0%



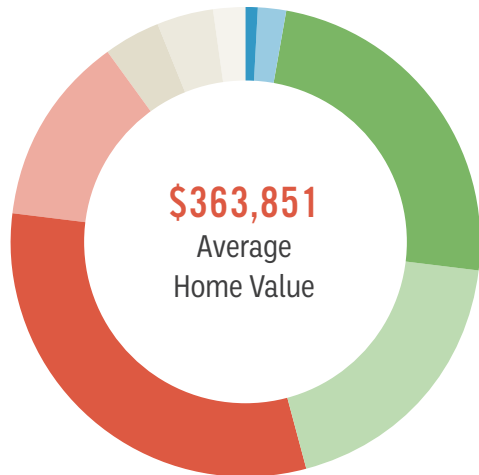


HOUSING UNITS BY YEAR BUILT

1-Mile Radius

- 2020+ 7.2%
- 2010-2019 25.5%
- 2000-2009 47.5%
- 1990-1999 13.6%
- 1989 or Earlier 6.4%

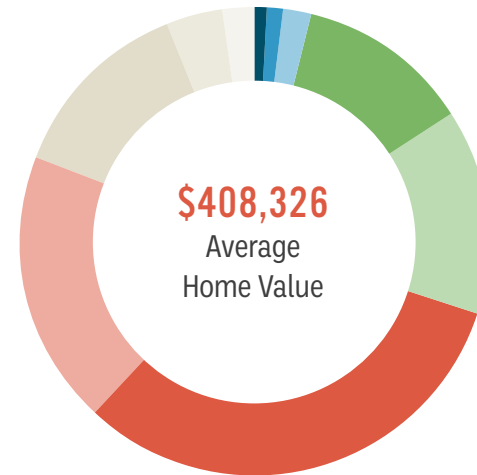
1-MILE RADIUS HOUSING UNITS BY VALUE



\$363,851
Average Home Value

- <\$50,000 0%
- \$50,000-99,999 0%
- \$100,000-149,999 1%
- \$150,000-199,999 2%
- \$200,000-249,999 24%
- \$250,000-299,999 19%
- \$300,000-399,999 31%
- \$400,000-499,999 13%
- \$500,000-749,999 4%
- \$750,000-999,999 4%
- \$1,000,000-1,499,999 2%

2-MILE RADIUS HOUSING UNITS BY VALUE



\$408,326
Average Home Value

- <\$50,000 1%
- \$50,000-99,999 0%
- \$100,000-149,999 1%
- \$150,000-199,999 2%
- \$200,000-249,999 12%
- \$250,000-299,999 14%
- \$300,000-399,999 32%
- \$400,000-499,999 19%
- \$500,000-749,999 13%
- \$750,000-999,999 4%
- \$1,000,000-1,499,999 2%



What We Heard

In the fall of 2025, community members and business owners of Centerton were convened for a discussion of the upcoming Centerton Downtown Master Plan. These community members were invited to discuss various affiliations to gather their unique perspectives, including Centerton History, business owners, the Chamber of Commerce, Senior Community Members, and Property Owners in affected areas. These conversations were guided by the following prompts:

1. What makes Centerton stand out from neighboring communities?
2. What legacy do we want to give the next generation of community members?
3. How do we want to experience more historic areas of the community? How do we want to experience newer areas of the community?
4. What do you believe are the most impactful opportunities available to us today? (Specific sites, projects, or creative interventions)
5. If you had a magic wand to change one thing in your community, what would it be?
6. What do you believe are the biggest challenges to achieving our vision? How can we overcome them?

Based on feedback from meetings with seniors, local business owners, long-term residents, and property owners, the following report captures the main themes regarding the Downtown Centerton Master Plan.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND HERITAGE

Despite rapid growth, there is a shared desire among participants to keep Centerton's "small town feel" and community-oriented mindset. Long-time residents, seniors, and business leaders alike see the city's history, especially its agricultural roots and the culture of neighbors helping neighbors, as a key asset that should be preserved to prevent the community from becoming "sterile" as it grows.

Community members who participated in conversations placed a major emphasis on community-cohesion and social connectedness, particularly intergenerational connection. Whether young students, growing families, or senior community members, spaces to connect and share as a community were of great importance to Centerton.

- Residents recalled the City's past as a major dairy, blueberry, and strawberry farming area, noting that much of the recent development is on former farmland.
- There is a strong wish to maintain the tradition of communal problem-solving, with suggestions to create a "tool library" or spaces where older generations can teach skills to younger ones, such as quilting.
- Business leaders pointed out that families are drawn to the "hometown feel" and community-oriented character. They see it as a residential community that must keep its charm while adding amenities that directly serve residents.



TRAFFIC, MOBILITY, AND CONNECTIVITY

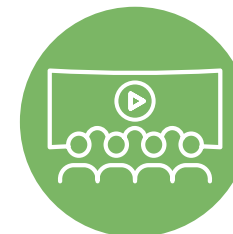
Traffic congestion is the most common concern across all groups, especially during drop-off and pick-up, a common issue in communities that have experienced rapid growth. There is a broad agreement on the need for better infrastructure that focuses not just on car movement but also on active transportation to connect different parts of the City. Community members cited the culture of cycling that exists locally and desire intentional connections to the multimodal infrastructure that spans the region.

- Participants identified specific needs for roundabouts, trails, sidewalks, and potential transit options to ease congestion.
- Seniors mentioned that the current school queuing blocks traffic and disrupts connectivity, while property owners suggested coordinating easements with utilities to set up active transportation networks along utility easements.
- Participants preferred a straight grid system to improve navigation and clearly stated they do not want the confusing wayfinding found in other developments.
- When prompted, community members cited that they would be comfortable parking in the rear of businesses, rather than the front, as long as wayfinding and parking options were adequate.

AMENITIES AND ENTERTAINMENT

There persists a lack of entertainment, dining, recreation, and gathering space options in the community, which forces residents to leave Centerton for leisure activities. Stakeholders envision a lively new downtown that serves as a central gathering place with "big town amenities" suitable for all age groups, from youth to seniors. Community members cited a lack of dedicated community spaces with adequate parking as a major barrier to community gathering and celebration, a form of connection that community members deeply desire.

- Specific requests include a sit-down restaurant, a movie theater, and indoor and outdoor venues for music nights or concert series.
- Seniors pointed out the shortage of parks on the north and west sides of the New Town Center and emphasized the need for spaces that are welcoming to all generations. All stakeholders concluded that new civic spaces in the community should be flexible and capable of accommodating large community gatherings.
- There is interest in expanding the presence of educational facilities that engage young people, such as music conservatory spaces, technical labs, or teaching studios that expand upon the traditional public education available to young people. Programming might include education on emerging technologies, artisan crafts and the trades, and arts-based learning.





STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AND LAND USE

Stakeholders recognize the strong development pressure and see a chance to balance residential growth with commercial and office spaces. There is a focus on creating distinct identities for the "Old" and "New" town centers so they complement each other, paying close attention to housing variety and choice, and floodplain management.

- Property owners see potential for corporate company offices surrounded by mixed-use developments, creating a strong live-work-play environment that makes Centerton an 18-hour destination for new and existing community members.
- There is a desire for a range of housing options, particularly affordable housing and walkable communities for those aged 55 and older.
- Stakeholders suggested using existing assets, such as the historic vinegar plant, the railroad, and the state fish hatchery, to anchor new developments.
- Multimodal connections and expanding the sidewalk and trail network as a key element of new development were mentioned numerous times throughout the conversations.

DESIGN PREFERENCES, PLACEMAKING, AND PUBLIC SPACE

Participants shared their design choices, often using nearby cities as examples of what to avoid or replicate. The community prefers accessible layouts with enough parking and central gathering areas that encourage social interaction while being easy to navigate.

- Stakeholders clearly stated they want new development to place emphasis on an organized street network and wayfinding system that feels intuitive.
- They feel a new downtown gathering space could draw inspiration from Bentonville, though they expressed that lessons may be learned regarding ease of movement and layout, as Centerton will be starting primarily from greenfield development.
- Property owners suggested taking advantage of the land's contours for parking, like underground solutions, to keep green space available for taller buildings.
- When it comes to Public Art and Creative Placemaking, rather than blending into surrounding communities, community members want to see the unique identity of Centerton brought to the forefront. This included emphasis on community-based public art and experiences.



Visioning

Based on the existing conditions and significant feedback obtained within Phase 1 by meeting with members of the community, the Steering Committee, and focused stakeholder groups, common themes began to emerge.

The Steering Committee met on January 12, 2026, to review the information received to-date, and agreed upon the following:

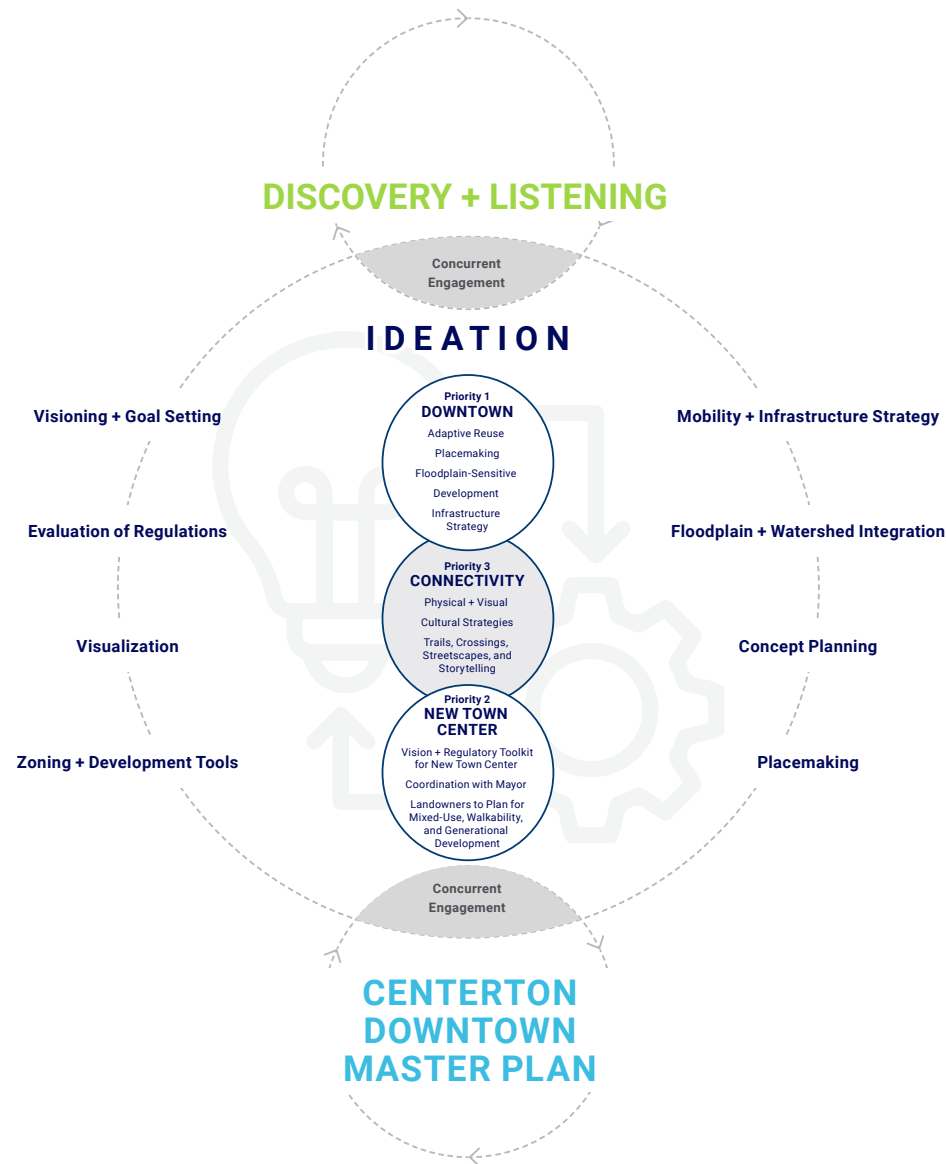
Areas for Goal Setting

- Community Identity and Heritage
- Infrastructure, Traffic, Mobility, and Connectivity
- Amenities and Entertainment
- Strategic Development and Land Use
- Design Preferences, Placemaking, and Public Space



Courtesy of the City of Centerton

A public survey will be conducted in Phase 2 and information from public opinion via that survey will be factored into the creation of the Vision Statement and finalized Goal areas and more granular objectives within those goal areas.





Phase 2, the Ideation Phase, will take the information gathered within Phase 1 and begin to build a Vision and Goals, conceptual plan, and infrastructure and policy frameworks to address the planning needs within the Downtown and New Town Center areas.

Building on the market demand information gathered within Phase 1, the Ideation Phase should concentrate on expanding and diversifying **housing** types while also providing **neighborhood services** within the City’s core to better meet the needs of current and future residents. This can be achieved with a focus on policies and implementation strategies that support a broader mix of housing types and neighborhood services within the City’s existing downtown, the new town sites, and adjacent development areas.

HOUSING

Emphasis on housing should be placed on meeting current and projected demand for workforce housing in order to support local employers and maintain community affordability. Housing types to consider include townhomes, apartments, and other higher-density or missing-middle housing forms. These housing types are essential to providing attainable options for employees who support Centerton’s economy.

BUSINESS

Neighborhood services include everyday close-to-home uses that make neighborhoods more livable and complete. By integrating these services within walkable, mixed-use areas, the city can strengthen its existing downtown, promote efficient land use in new town, and support long-term economic stability and community sustainability.

MIXED-USE

The goal of this mixed-use development pattern in Centerton is to reduce reliance on driving, support local businesses, encourage walkability, and

create a vibrant, economically resilient community. This is achieved by defining areas of higher-density residential and a mix of uses to promote growth of employment and services, strengthening Centerton’s role as a hub of activity.

Integrate development patterns that intentionally combine complementary land uses such as residential, commercial, office, civic, or entertainment within the same building, site, or walkable area. Instead of separating housing from shops and services, mixed-use development integrates them to create more convenient, active, and efficient places.

Allow mixed-use to occur in several forms, including:

- **Vertical mixed-use**, where different uses are stacked within the same building (e.g., ground-floor retail with apartments above).
- **Horizontal mixed-use**, where different uses are located on adjacent properties within the same block or neighborhood.
- **Neighborhood or district-scale** mixed-use, where a broader area blends housing, employment, services, and public spaces in a coordinated, walkable pattern.

SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE

The supporting infrastructure frameworks to support both infill and new development will be developed accordingly within Phase 2 to address the needs of the planned growth and development.

In addition to in-person engagement opportunities for placemaking and plan input, Phase 2 will introduce virtual public facing tools including the project website, a public survey, and interactive public comment map to gain feedback from the public and allow for a landing page to keep the public informed throughout the process.



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Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2024). American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Centerton, AR <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US0512820-centerton-ar/>

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Centerton

Downtown Master Plan
PHASE 1 – DISCOVERY + LISTENING

