

# ARGENTA Executive Summary

## Introduction

The Argenta District Master Plan is a community-based vision for guiding growth and change in downtown North Little Rock. It calls for doing so in a way that preserves and builds on Argenta's strengths, addresses its weaknesses, and maximizes its potential.

In many ways Argenta is one of the Little Rock region's model neighborhoods. With its mix of housing and businesses, its walkable, human-scaled streets, and a desire to thoughtfully grow, Argenta offers both a glimpse of the region's historic urbanism and a way of community building that can address today's urban challenges.

The study area is approximately 450 acres and includes land west of I-30, north of the river, and south and east of the railroad. It also has three sub-districts: Main/Maple, the Mill Neighborhood, and the Verizon Arena Character Areas.

## Master Plan Goals

Detailed goals were developed to guide the master plan, including to:

- Preserve, extend, and enhance Argenta's historic character.
- Provide a mix of retail, office, employment, cultural, housing, and open spaces.
- Promote multi-cultural and economic diversity.
- Expand housing options for people of different ages, incomes, and backgrounds.
- Establish a balanced transportation system.
- Build and promote a positive identity and brand.
- Create jobs in growth industries including film and urban agriculture.

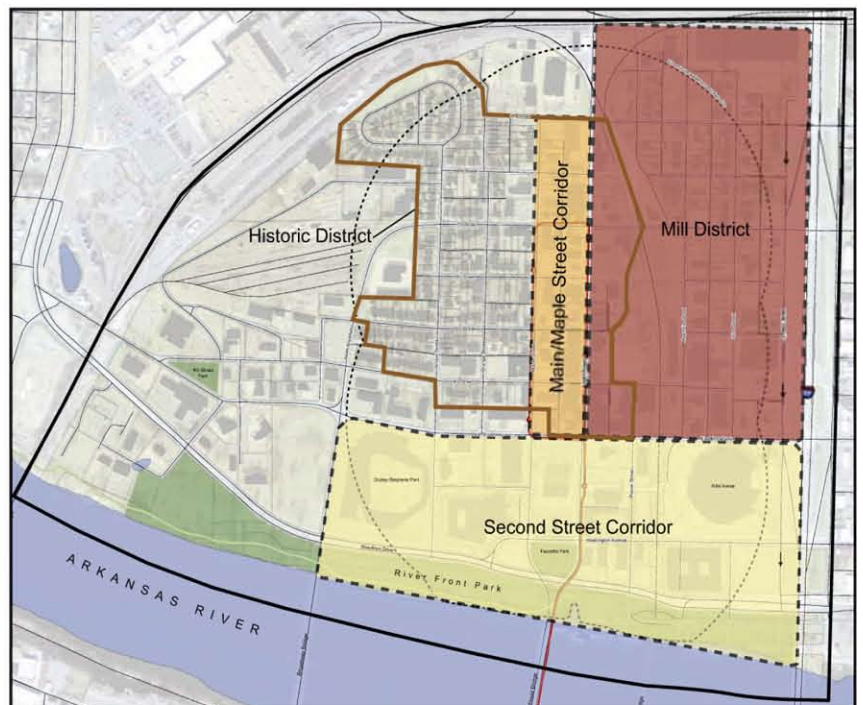


Preserving Argenta's past is a key to its future (Source: North Little Rock History Commission)

## Existing Conditions

The planning process also reviewed existing conditions to identify opportunities and issues. Among key findings are that:

- Argenta is rich with historic resources.
- Historic Argenta was characterized by a human-scaled, architecturally rich, urbanism, but damage was done to this in the twentieth century by urban renewal and auto-oriented development.
- The area suffered retail decline starting in the 1960s/1970s, as suburban growth forced retailers to move out of the area.
- Existing zoning does not support Argenta's historic or walkable urbanism.
- Argenta is served by schools and other facilities, but improvements are needed.
- Riverfront Park is an asset, but improvements and new parks are needed.
- Bus and trolley service exist, but much remains to be done to maximize use.



Study area map showing the three Character Area sub-districts

- Vehicular traffic is well-served by an existing grid of streets, but opportunities exist to create new streets and improve roadway operations.
- High speed cut-through traffic is a problem along Broadway Street and several other streets.
- Walking is supported by compact land uses, but poor sidewalk conditions and pedestrian-unfriendly development discourages it in some areas.
- Bicycle facilities exist, including off-street trails, but opportunities exist to improve biking conditions.

### Guiding Principle: Sustainability

All of the recommendations of this plan will guide Argenta towards becoming a model of sustainable urbanism. The concept of sustainability is broad and difficult to define, since it touches on all aspects of life. An ideal plan for sustainability benefits the environment, improves the lives of humans, and makes money at the same time. As such, sustainability can be distilled into three broad components:

- **Environmental sustainability** to reduce or eliminate humanity’s impacts on the planet’s natural systems, and to remedy previous damage.
- **Social sustainability** to solve serious social problems, create a quality community life for all, and even improve the social quality.
- **Economic sustainability** to provide a decent or improved standard of living for all.

It is upon these that the recommendations of this master plan are based.

### Land Use & Zoning Recommendations

#### Policies

- Maintain and encourage a balanced mix of uses.
- Increase the number of residential units.
- Redevelop parking lots and vacant sites.
- Protect and preserve single family areas.
- Promote a variety of housing types.
- Incorporate sustainable development practices.
- Promote job-supporting land uses.
- Support pedestrian-oriented commercial streets.

#### Projects

- Establish a form-based zoning code.
- Redevelop the Main/Maple Neighborhood, Mill Neighborhood, and Verizon/Riverfront areas.
- Build new civic facilities including a library, police station, and fires/public health station.

### Historic Resource & Urban Design Recommendations

#### Policies

- Preserve the historic fabric.
- Ensure appropriate building height.
- Recreate a connected grid of streets.
- Allow architectural variety, but require quality building materials.
- Fill in gaps between buildings, parking lots, and vacant lots with new buildings.
- Provide open spaces to compliment new higher density development.
- Ensure that new buildings have active ground floor uses with doors accessible from the sidewalk.
- Provide pedestrian-scaled signs.
- Protect and restore buildings listed as contributing structures in the Argenta Historic District.
- Use new buildings to create an appropriate scale and reflect Argenta’s character.
- Promote traditional building forms in new buildings within commercial and mixed-use areas.

#### Projects

- Build new streets.
- Construct gateway markers.

### Infrastructure

#### Policies

- Embrace sustainable stormwater management.
- Encourage utility burial or relocations.

#### Projects

- Adopt a sustainable stormwater management ordinance.
- Develop sewer, water, and stormwater plans.
- Study how to best maintain and expand the water and sewer systems.

### Transportation

#### Policies

- Require new developments to upgrade sidewalks.
- Design new buildings to support walking with basic urban design elements.
- Promote mobility of those with disabilities and the elderly.
- Promote on-street parking.
- Limit curb cuts on primary pedestrian streets.

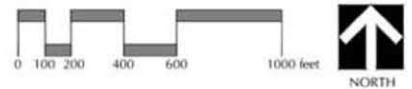
**Legend**

- A Proposed Multimodal Transportation Center, Transit-Oriented Development, Greyhound Bus Station, and Trolley Barn
- B Proposed Trolley Extension
- C Proposed Elementary School
- D Proposed Market Square
- E Proposed Library
- F Proposed Public/Private Parking Deck
- G Proposed 4th Street Realignment
- H Proposed Police Station
- I Proposed Fire Station/Public Health Facility/ Medical Emergency Ambulance Station
- J Proposed Hotel
- K Proposed Botanical Gardens
- L Proposed Boardwalk



**Land Use and Transportation Symbols**

- |               |                                    |
|---------------|------------------------------------|
| Single-Family | Existing Building to Remain        |
| Townhouse     | New Street                         |
| Multifamily   | Road Diet                          |
| Mixed-Use     | Multiuse Trail/Bike Lane           |
| Retail        | Trolley Line                       |
| Office        | Proposed Roundabout                |
| Civic         | Proposed Intersection Improvements |
| Open Space    |                                    |
| Industrial    |                                    |
| Plaza         |                                    |
- \*Option A: Close Cypress Street between 8th Street and Bishop Lindsay to reduce conflicts  
 \*Option B: Extend southbound I-30 exit ramp south to 5th Street



# District Wide Site Plan (Draft)

## ARGENTA DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

Prepared by Tunnell-Spangler-Walsh & Assoc.  
November 30, 2009

**ARGENTA**

- Encourage access management and shared access for new development.
- Reconnect the historic street grid.
- Promote transit ridership with increased density, walkability, and connectivity.
- Make transit a more competitive mode of travel.

### Projects

- Upgrade sidewalks on secondary streets.
- Construct a multi-use trail along Magnolia Street.
- Adopt bicycle parking requirements.
- Add bicycle lanes to 8th Street.
- Implement the Street Framework Plan.
- Upgrade streetscapes on 8th Street.
- Install a 7th Street (Bishop Lindsay) gateway.
- Remove the eastern fork of the Main Street bridge.
- Upgrade 7th Street.
- Realign 4th Street to cross under I-30.
- Upgrade the streetscape on Magnolia Street.
- Implement a “road diet” on Broadway Street.
- Implement a “road diet” on Riverfront Drive.
- Create a multi-modal transportation hub
- Extend the trolley line to the north.
- Improve bus stop amenities.

## Demographic & Market Recommendations

### Policies

- Prevent the involuntary displacement of residents.
- Strive for a community that allows aging in place.
- Encourage a mix of housing price points.
- Strive for a diverse mix of multifamily unit sizes, including three-bedroom units.
- Focus growth into Character Areas.
- Utilize existing local, state, and national incentives and tools to promote growth.
- Strive for housing affordable to teachers, police, firefighters, nurses, and similar professions.
- Target underserved retail markets.
- Support local and regional food production.

### Projects

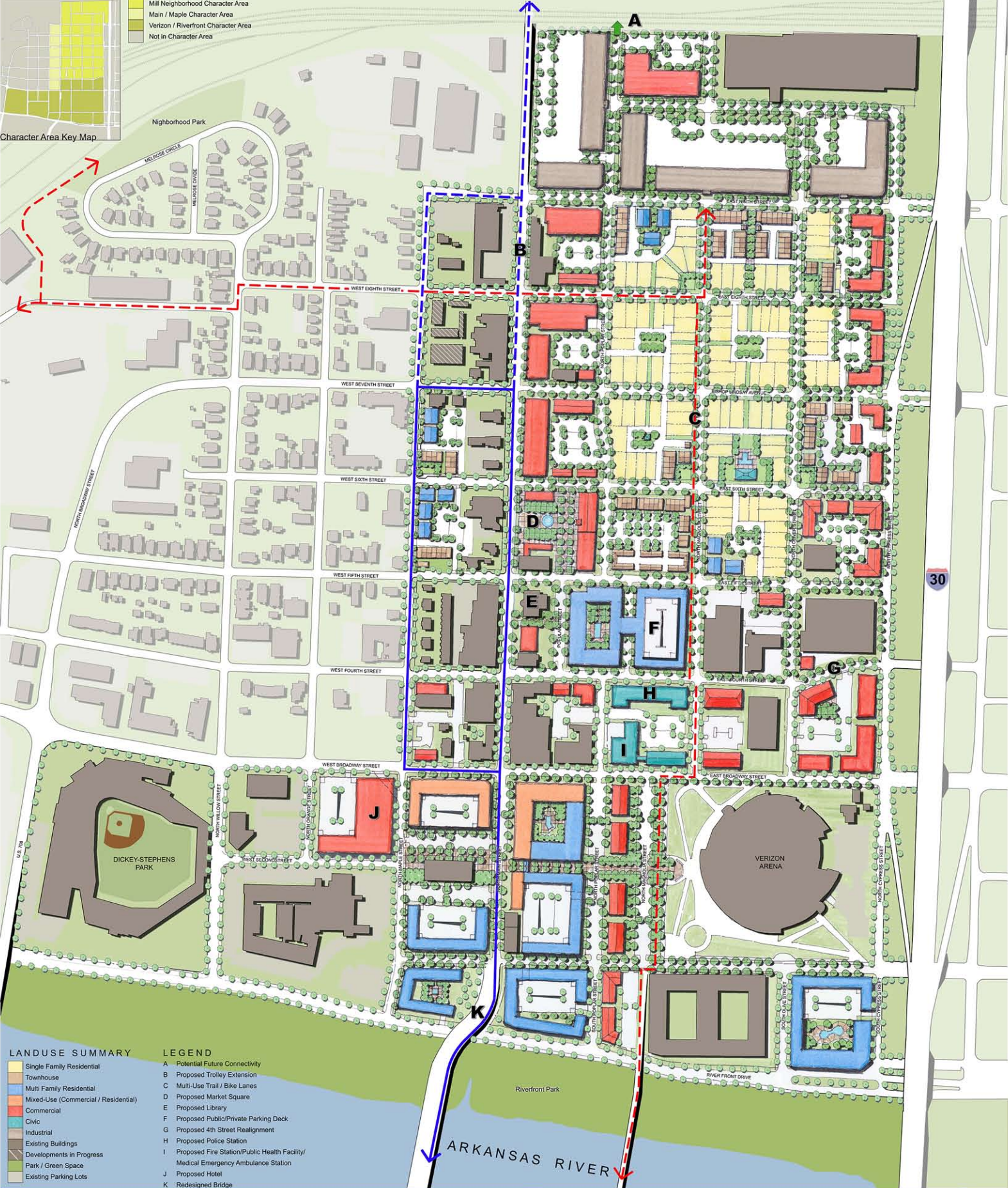
- Construct a second major hotel.
- Implement a branding, business attraction, and customer attraction programs.
- Expand agriculture marketing and culinary initiatives.
- Implement urban agriculture school outreach.
- Promote culinary and agri-tourism.
- Expand the food distribution network.
- Expand urban farming.
- Improve the farmers market.



Artist's rendering of proposed Market Square, a catalytic project along Main Street

- Mill Neighborhood Character Area
- Main / Maple Character Area
- Verizon / Riverfront Character Area
- Not in Character Area

Character Area Key Map



**LANDUSE SUMMARY**

- Single Family Residential
- Townhouse
- Multi Family Residential
- Mixed-Use (Commercial / Residential)
- Commercial
- Civic
- Industrial
- Existing Buildings
- Developments in Progress
- Park / Green Space
- Existing Parking Lots

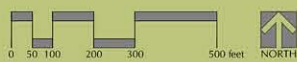
**LEGEND**

- A Potential Future Connectivity
- B Proposed Trolley Extension
- C Multi-Use Trail / Bike Lanes
- D Proposed Market Square
- E Proposed Library
- F Proposed Public/Private Parking Deck
- G Proposed 4th Street Realignment
- H Proposed Police Station
- I Proposed Fire Station/Public Health Facility/ Medical Emergency Ambulance Station
- J Proposed Hotel
- K Redesigned Bridge

# Character Area Plan - Draft

## ARGENTA DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

Prepared by Tunnell-Spangler-Walsh & Assoc.  
February 25, 2010



**ARGENTA**