

Crystal City, Missouri

Comprehensive Plan Update & Comprehensive Growth Management Plan

12.0 Public & Intergovernmental Relations



CREATING THE FUTURE

**COMMUNICATING WITH THE PUBLIC & OTHER
GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES AND BODIES**

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12.0 Public & Intergovernmental Relations

12.1 Purpose and Scope of Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to help community leaders formulate policies and formats in which the City can communicate better with the general public and with other governmental agencies and bodies. No plan is workable or acceptable if the public is not informed and planning with other governmental bodies will be advantageous in accomplishing goals for the Area.

12.2 Public Participation

Achieving sufficient public participation in any democratic form of government is often the most envied accomplishment, but seldom achieved by any governmental body. An informed electorate is the most powerful tool a government has in helping to accomplish community goals. If a community understands the needs of the community, where the leaders are headed, and why they are directing the community in that direction the electorate will support needed changes as they develop. The public needs to be involved in planning changes that affect them and the community.

Public hearings are a common and required means of soliciting public input on projects and needs. The problem with public hearings is few attend, unless controversial. Lack of public information in advance of a project is the main reason for controversy. Attendance at regular city council meetings is limited. Newspaper coverage usually hits the highlights of City business and frequently will miss details that are critical to understanding an issue.

The City currently has a City newsletter which is published in the spring and fall. The newsletter does an excellent job of communicating projects, events and activities of the various Departments of the City. The City is to be applauded for this service. The City may wish to consider a shorter version with more financial facts and information published more often.

The City has a web site that provides a significant amount of information. Efforts should be undertaken with the codification company that codifies and host the City Ordinances on their connecting web site to update the codes more often. Currently, the service lags behind in updating ordinances online. This level of service does not provide up-to-date information which will make the online service useful and dependable. Further consideration should be given to creating more online services, such as bill paying, license, fees, and other services. This will create a quality public service to residents, create traffic for the City web site, and should equally save the City in processing cost and time.

In addition to all of the above approaches to improving public participation, leaders should hold more in-depth interviews with the press and more detailed press releases should be prepared. Council members and Department Heads should deliver more public addresses to business and civic groups. A public affairs officer should be considered to manage the public relations and information of the City.

12.3 Intergovernmental Relations

Almost as important as communicating with the public is the need for a city to communicate with other government agencies and bodies. The City is unique in the fact that most actions and plans by other agencies that serve the area also affect the City, likewise, actions and plans of the City affect other government bodies. Several levels of governmental relations exist. They include Jefferson County, Jefferson County Port Authority, the School District, the Ambulance District, and the surrounding cities, consisting of Festus, Herculaneum, and Pevely, all of which share common borders. Intergovernmental relations with the State consist of a vast array of agencies and departments, such as the Department of Transportation, Department of Natural Resources, Economic Development, and many others. The City's relationship with Federal Agencies is much more limited, but the relationship with the Corp of Engineers is critical with its regulation and control over the Mississippi.

The City should consider having regular meetings with other communities and the County to discuss and plan regional issues. Regular meetings with State agencies should be held to keep the agencies abreast of City issues and their planning efforts and for the City to stay abreast of changes in the agencies and their programs. A consistent meeting plan should be adopted and considered a part of marketing and promoting the City. The City has done an outstanding job in its relationship with the public, other cities, and State and Federal agencies. A formal consistent plan will help maintain this practice for the City in the future.