



Stakeholder Meetings Summary

Economic Development

Input from Katie Hodges (Branson Bank), Doug Baker (State Farm Insurance), Matt Adkins (Taney County Partnership), Greg Baker (Branson Bank)

Planned Development

- Branson Meadows project
- Herschend-related hotel near Branson West

Desired Changes

- Would like workforce situation to improve
- Improved communication between city officials and developers/businesses
- Increased affordable housing for various income levels, especially lower income
- Increased quality of life projects
- Greater ease of doing business
- Reduction of red tape – Permitting and zoning in Branson are more complex than some nearby cities, delaying construction and loan processing

Ongoing Challenges and Barriers

- Limited broadband/internet options, especially in area around lake
- Infrastructure projects need better timing (avoid peak tourist season)
- Inadequate infrastructure, especially regarding broadband internet access and a desire to move utilities infrastructure underground – utilities' resilience to weather needs to be improved.
- Shortage of housing is a limiting factor
- Workers struggle to find daycare provider
- Lack of full-time and 12-month employment opportunities
- Beautification is needed
- Terrain limits large-scale expansion

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Growth Sectors

- Outdoor recreation (biking, hiking, etc.) holds growth potential
- Healthcare
- Expand quality of place projects (hiking/biking, trails, indoor pool, expanded healthcare) to attract visitors and benefit local population
- Support for remote workers and entrepreneurship
- Focus on attracting medium-sized employers that bring 25+ stable jobs rather than just large-scale and seasonal employers

Development Opportunities

- Branson Meadows project
- Area around ABC Campground off 248
- Infill and redevelopment of buildings on 76 should be priority before pursuing new developments
- Increase walkability of 76
- Infrastructure improvements to ease movement of workers from eastern Taney County into the Branson area and completion of the final loop of the Highroad project



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Housing

Input from Gregg Richards (Branson Planning Commission), Mark Ruda

Planned Development

- Multiple commercial projects
- Housing development at the old high school site
- High-end homes planned in Branson Hills

Desired Changes:

- Improved affordable housing options
- More support from the city with things like water/sewer infrastructure, utilities, and streamlining permitting

Infrastructure Needs and Expansion

- Focus on filling gaps within city limits and expansion toward the lake
- One participant suggested a cost sharing model to fund utility extensions
- Topography creates land use limitations

Housing Demand vs. Reality & City's Role

- Developers would welcome formal agreements with the city outlining shared responsibilities
- Support tools like the "Open for Business" program are helpful, reducing permit fees could add value
- Issues like water pressure and testing requirements hinder development

Areas for Development:

- Residential: Cedar Ridge, Fall Creek (near Country Bluff)
- Mixed-Use: Gretna Road, though market conditions may not support mixed-use without incentives

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- Example of dorm-style housing in The Dells as a model for seasonal worker housing

Impact of Seasonal Economy

- Year-round landlord costs raise rental prices despite seasonal occupancy
- Some report need for converting hotels/motels to full-time housing

Housing Development Challenges

- City lacks control over many cost drivers
- Cooperation issues with the county are a barrier to progress



Stakeholder Meetings Summary

Infrastructure & Environment

Input from Kendall Powell (Branson Utilities), Kurt Jacobsmeyer (Liberty Utilities), Floyd Shook Jr. (Liberty Utilities)

Planned/Ongoing Development

- Liberty is investing in upgrades to improve load capacity and sustainability including an upgrade to 25 kV at Branson Hills
- Sewer/water
 - Current treatment plant is at 55-60% capacity
 - Capacity study to evaluate future sewer needs
 - Planned expansion at Cooper Creek to redistribute load

Infrastructure Investment & Annexation

- Market drives infrastructure development, projects must be financially justified
- Development outside city limits often done to avoid city taxes and regulations
- Reliability of existing network is key concern

Balancing Growth with Environmental Concerns

- Sewer systems help protect lakes from failing private systems
- Responsible development starts with site selection, land near lakes must be preserved

Policy Recommendations and Initiatives

- Building larger capacity up-front can reduce long-term development costs
- Should Branson continue with “developer pays for development” model or start investing to encourage growth?
- Need better buyer education about utility infrastructure before purchase
- Encourage coordination and collaboration, especially on large-scale projects



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Land Use

Input from Bryan Stallings (Elevate Branson), and Cole Currier (Currier & Company)

Planned Development

- Continued development from Silver Dollar City
- Anticipated growth in resort style developments and high-amenity residential communities
- Future phases of Elevate Community to include housing for single-parent and multi-family households
- Rising interest in mixed-income and workforce housing
- Many developments are occurring outside city limits due to fewer regulatory barriers

Desired Changes in the Community

- Improve gateway aesthetics and remove deteriorating buildings.
- Strengthen Branson's live entertainment identity.
- Expand affordable housing.
- Better integrate housing, transportation, workforce, and health services.
- Create a more developer-friendly environment by modernizing policies and streamlining approvals.
- Encourage investment within city limits and revitalize the Strip.

Challenges and Solutions

- Competition from overdevelopment without growing visitors; success tied to smart, targeted marketing.
- Regulatory and cost barriers to affordable housing; success through partnerships and innovation (e.g., tiny homes).
- Inconsistent policy enforcement and rigidity within city limits. Developers succeed more often outside city jurisdiction.



Stakeholder Meetings Summary

Zoning & Land Use Policy

- Current zoning limits the ability to build higher-density or nontraditional housing near jobs and services. Support for policies that encourage mixed-use development, affordable housing incentives and balancing tourism and residential needs.
- Calls for planning that considers visitor experience, like keeping industrial or unsightly uses away from tourists.
- Calls for a shift in mindset from "You can't do that" to "Let's try to make that happen." Zoning is too rigid, and policies are swayed by small vocal opposition rather than community-wide needs.
- Suggests using a "What would Disney do?" standard for zoning decisions.
- Zoning restrictions, infrastructure costs, and limited land are seen as barriers

Tourism-Related Development & Services

- Desires more restaurant variety, but stresses that success depends on growing visitors, not just more businesses.
- Notes the transportation tax hasn't significantly improved key traffic areas.
- Views traffic as a positive sign of economic activity.
- Recommends focusing on making 10 months great, instead of stretching into 12-month mediocrity.
 - Cites the success of past "Hot Winter Fun" branding, which was later dropped

Density & Infill Development

- Branson has aging motels, strip centers, vacant lots, and former attraction sites that could be revitalized for housing and community development.
- Supports infill development on vacant lots, old motels, and defunct attractions to revitalize neglected areas.

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- Infill is a major opportunity if policy supports it. Many commercial corridors could be reimagined as vibrant mixed-use hubs.
- Promote growth through:
 - Smart, compact development
 - Green building standards
 - Environmental zone protection
 - Encourage vertical growth to avoid sprawl.



Stakeholder Meetings Summary

Parks, Open Space & Recreation

Input from Travis Learning (Fritz's Adventure) and Cindy Shook (Branson Park & Recreation)

Desired Community Change

- Continue enhancing Branson as a tourist destination by attracting large sporting events.
- Expand parks and recreation amenities to draw more year-round visitors
- Investment in indoor facilities is seen as key to supporting off-season tourism.

Services/Amenities Missing Compared to Other Communities:

- A dedicated trail coordinator has been hired for the first time.
- Goal: connect with regional trail systems and expand mountain biking opportunities.
- Additional Desirable Amenities:
 - Splash pad
 - Indoor pool
 - Year-round soccer facility (current field is just grass).
 - Strong demand, especially from international (J1) workers.
 - Proposed upgrades include turfing and multi-sport striping for casual use (soccer, lacrosse, football, baseball, softball).
 - Lacrosse and frisbee are growing in popularity but under-supported locally.

Areas Lacking Convenient Access to Parks or Recreation

- Parks are concentrated in east, south, and downtown areas
 - Growing need for Parks and Recreation facilities in underserved areas like southwest Branson/Point Royale area
 - RecPlex is in northern Branson, but growth potential is seen in the north and additional facilities are planned near the RecPlex

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Partnerships Enhancing Recreation Access

- Ongoing initiative with the City of Branson to build a new indoor complex to support:
 - Off-season tourism
 - Sports like basketball, volleyball, and pickleball
- Current partnerships include:
 - Branson Sports Club for basketball tournaments
 - Ballparks of America for tournaments and events
- Collaboration with schools, churches, and Boys and Girls Club to share facilities

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Tourism

Input from Laurie Hayes (Branson Area Lodging Association), Wendy White (Hiltons of Branson), Mike Patrick (Grand Country Music Hall), Chris Meyer (Myer Hospitality), and Brad Thomas (Silver Dollar City)

Anticipated Developments (Next 10–15 Years)

- Branson Landing Marina to be redeveloped as an event venue.
- Potential new hotel downtown (land already purchased).
- Cabins under construction at Branson Hills Golf Club.
- Grand Country expanding lodging capacity.
- Silver Dollar City committing \$500 million investment through 2035, including a \$100M, 260-room resort hotel west of the park to attract regional tourism from major cities.

Desired Community Changes

- Faster development process with fewer local hurdles.
- Expanded warehouse and storage infrastructure.
- More emphasis on tourism promotion, especially in shoulder seasons
- Encourage business investment through simplified codes and friendly city government.
- Develop attainable housing and reduce extended-stay hotel use as long-term housing.

Consistent Challenges & Solutions

- Regulatory complexity - need for clearer city-wide coordination and communication.
- Staffing shortages remain a major hurdle, despite competitive benefits. J-1 and H2B visa workers have been helpful.
- Need for fairness and consistency in enforcement of policies and zoning.

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- Property taxes present a financial challenge for some large organizations.

Promoting Tourism Development

- Let the DMO lead all tourism marketing; city should avoid micromanaging.
- Tourism board should direct funding to tourism agencies.
- Workforce development is critical
- Collaborate regionally—visitors don't recognize city/county borders.
- Support key retail areas (e.g., Tanger Outlet), which are essential tax generators.

Businesses & Investments That Align with Community Values

- Better transportation access to Springfield and the airport.
- New family-friendly hotels, attractions, and mid-range dining options.
- Encourage developments that draw year-round visitors (crafts, fishing, music, foliage, etc.).

Zoning & Land Use Policy Needs

- Update entertainment zoning and expand it to prioritize tourism visibility.
- Address liquor license inconsistencies (e.g., Hilton vs. convention center).
- Limit “extended stay” conversions that negatively impact tourism districts.

Tourism Development Gaps

- No urgent need for more hotels (occupancy at 55%)—but many hotels appear outdated.
- Need to revitalize older hotels or replace them with modern lodging.
- Support free enterprise in deciding tourism offerings.
- City should consider incentives for:
 - Grand Palace redevelopment
 - Grand Village expansion
 - Pirate-themed attraction by Dolly Parton's group
 - Celebration City property redevelopment by Silver Dollar City

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Transportation Challenges

- Limited public transit, bike infrastructure, and proximity lodging for workers.
- Downtown congestion, especially on Sycamore Street.
- Dual-lane roundabouts are confusing for tourists.
- Need for better directional signage within city limits (but most guests rely on GPS).

Tackling Seasonality & Shoulder Seasons

- March–December is active, but April, August, and early September are weak periods.
- Winter activity is limited, many venues close
- Expand with seasonal events like:
 - Fishing tournaments, craft fairs, music events, fall foliage experiences, holiday festival

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Transportation

Input from Rene Frazier (OATS), Jacob Wimsatt (MODOT), Michael Woods (Branson Engineering & Public Works), and Matt Briand (Branson Engineering & Public Works)

Desired Community Changes

- Completion of the transportation plan (expected winter 2025).
- Overlay major corridors and improve roadway conditions.
- Modernize aging water/sewer infrastructure.
- Redevelop Route 76 to better accommodate both cars and pedestrians.
- Improve traffic congestion on key routes with potential solutions like trolleys and access management.

Persistent Challenges & Solutions

- Public Transit Funding: Federal rural transit funds require 50/50 match; local senior tax currently covers most of it. There's a growing demand and need for diversified local funding.
- MoDOT: Inflation limits new projects; pursuing Design-Build to manage cost and time more efficiently.
- Community Buy-In: Hard to achieve unless residents are directly impacted. More regional collaboration is needed.
- Project Delays: Long planning-to-construction timelines cause shifting priorities.
- Visitor Volume: Managing 10 million+ visitors is a logistical challenge.

Traffic Bottlenecks and Congestion

- Route 76 (especially in tourist season) and Route 248 (notably near Yakov and major curves) are key congestion points.
- Branson Hills Parkway sees backups due to growing development.
- Temporary issues arise from weather damage or peak tourism.
- Some streets are too narrow for buses; alternative vehicles like minivans may help.



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Transportation Investment Priorities

- Pedestrian growth on Route 76 is a concern; phases 4–6 of improvement need funding.
- Forsyth St. needs realignment.
- Branson Landing Blvd and the downtown/Main Street corridor face heavy traffic and curvature issues.
- The roundabout near Cox Hospital may require redesign in 5 years.
- Improvements needed near Silver Dollar City, campgrounds, and off Route 65 due to housing growth.

Development Pressure vs. Mobility Alignment

- Gretna Rd is a key corridor for upcoming development; may require signalized intersections.
- Neighborhoods need better pavement conditions.
- Highroad is underutilized but has potential; MoDOT owns much of the ROW, possible long-term development corridor (10–15 years out).

Role of Public Transportation & Alternative Mobility

- OATS public transit is nearly always booked 2 weeks out, with high demand for essential trips.
- There's limited service to events/convention centers—seen as a gap for both residents and visitors.
- Seniors need better sidewalk access, but topography is challenging.
- Recent ADA-compliant sidewalk improvements made along Route 248.

Freight, Delivery & Service Access Needs

- Limited freight demand in Branson itself; major hubs are in Springfield and Hollister.
- Amazon Distribution is located near Gretna, and there are some warehousing operations in the north, possibly outside city limits.