



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

## COMMUNICATION PLAN

JULY 2023



**BELTON, MISSOURI**



## OVERVIEW

### WHAT IS A COMMUNICATION PLAN?

A Communication Plan outlines the strategies, methods, and proposed schedule of outreach and events for the Belton Comprehensive Plan update. Every effort will be made to follow this schedule and plan with the understanding that flexibility may be needed based on new discoveries, events, or conflicts.

### WHY IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SO IMPORTANT?

Comprehensive plans are meant to reflect a shared vision for the future of the community. Public engagement is critical to ensure the vision identified in the plan adequately reflects the actual interests of community members. A series of interactive and fun engagement opportunities are planned for the Belton Comprehensive Plan update including a variety of in-person and online activities to reach as wide an audience as possible.

Community outreach should be equitable and intuitive. Equitable engagement provides opportunities for anyone who wants to be heard in a manner that is accessible for them. Whether the interaction with the public is in-person, online, or out in the community, the planned activities will be easy to use and understand. Some will prefer in-person workshops, others will thrive in an online environment, and some will do best in one-on-one stakeholder interviews. Whatever their preference - there is an engagement opportunity for everyone. While the Communication Plan identifies an overall framework for engagement, the outreach process will also remain flexible and adapt to changes that might arise during the planning process.

### PLANNED ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES FOR BELTON

- Bi-weekly Check-in Meetings with City staff
- Steering Committee Meetings
- Public Visioning Workshop
- Statistically-Valid Survey
- Box City Event /Youth Workshop
- Special Event Booths
- Strategic Opportunities Charette
- Interactive Engagement Website
- Joint Workshops
- Public Open House
- Public Hearings

## PROJECT TEAM

The City of Belton has hired a consultant team to help assist in the creation of the new Comprehensive Plan. Key members of the project team are identified in the organizational chart below.

**Christopher Shires** is the Project Manager and Principal-In-Charge.



**MATT WRIGHT**  
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING + BUILDING

### STAKEHOLDERS

### STEERING COMMITTEE

**CHRISTOPHER SHIRES**  
**CONFLUENCE**  
PROJECT MANAGER +  
PRINCIPAL-IN-CHARGE



**CHRIS ZAHAS**  
**LELAND CONSULTING**  
**GROUP**  
MANAGING PRINCIPAL



**DEANNE WINKELMANN**  
**TRANSYSTEMS**  
SENIOR  
TRANSPORTATION  
PLANNER



**JANE REASONER**  
**CONFLUENCE**  
SENIOR PLANNER



**DAVID FISKE**  
**LELAND CONSULTING**  
**GROUP**  
ASSOCIATE



**ANDREW YOUNG**  
**TRANSYSTEMS**  
TRANSPORTATION  
PLANNER



**ABBIE HEBBERT**  
**CONFLUENCE**  
PLANNER



**ELLEN BINI**  
**LELAND CONSULTING**  
**GROUP**  
ANALYST



## PROJECT TEAM + KEY PERSONNEL

The consultant team hired by the City of Belton to help create a new comprehensive plan is led by Confluence and is supported by Leland Consulting Group and TranSystems.

**CONFLUENCE, INC.**, is a planning, urban design, and landscape architecture firm with over 75 professional planners and landscape architects with offices in Des Moines, Omaha, Kansas City, Cedar Rapids, Sioux Falls, Fargo, Minneapolis, Chicago, and Denver. Founded in 1998, Confluence has been providing design and planning services to a wide variety of public and private sector clients for 25 years.

### KEY PERSONNEL CONTACT INFORMATION:

Christopher Shires | Principal-in-Charge and Project Manager | [CShires@thinkconfluence.com](mailto:CShires@thinkconfluence.com)  
Jane Reasoner | Senior Planner | [JReasoner@thinkconfluence.com](mailto:JReasoner@thinkconfluence.com)  
Abbey Hebbert | Planner | [AHebbert@thinkconfluence.com](mailto:AHebbert@thinkconfluence.com)

**LELAND CONSULTING GROUP**, is a nationally recognized market research and economic development firm from Portland, Oregon, with five employees. They are a frequent collaborative partner with Confluence in the creation of several comprehensive plans, corridor plans, master plans, and land use plans throughout the Midwest.

### KEY PERSONNEL CONTACT INFORMATION:

Chris Zahas | Lead Market Analyst | [CZahas@lelandconsulting.com](mailto:CZahas@lelandconsulting.com)

**TRANSYSTEMS**, is headquartered in Kansas City, with more than 40 other offices throughout the U.S., and perform a broad range of services to all sectors of the transportation marketplace. TranSystems has also been a frequent collaborative partner with Confluence and will aid in the transportation and infrastructure analysis of the Belton Comprehensive Plan.

### KEY PERSONNEL CONTACT INFORMATION:

Andrew Young | Transportation Planner | [aryoung@transystems.com](mailto:aryoung@transystems.com)

# PROPOSED ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE

Below is the tentative project schedule. Dates subject to change. Please check the City or project websites to confirm dates.

	JUNE 2023	JULY 2023	AUG 2023	SEPT 2023	OCT 2023	NOV 2023	DEC 2023	JAN 2024	FEB 2024	MAR 2024
<b>Phase 1 - Research + Analysis</b>										
1.1 Pre-Kick-Off Meeting with City Staff	●	June 20, 2023								
1.2 Communication + Public Outreach Plans	●									
1.3 Kick-Off Meeting with Steering Committee (SC)		●	July 31, 2023							
1.4 Data Gathering and Existing Conditions Analysis		●								
1.5 Project Branding		●								
1.6 Project Website Launch			●							
1.7 Existing Conditions Analysis Review Meeting with SC			●	August 28, 2023						
1.8 Existing Conditions Analysis Review Joint Work with PC & CC			●	August 31, 2023						
1.9 Existing Conditions Assessment Report			●							
<b>Phase 2 - Public &amp; Stakeholder Engagement</b>										
2.1 Stakeholder Interviews + Focus Groups				■						
2.2 Interactive Engagement Activities Launch on Website				●						
2.3 Statistically-Valid Survey				■						
2.4 Pop-Up Event Booths				●	●					
2.5 Box City Event				●						
2.6 Youth Workshop				●						
2.7 Public Visioning Workshop				●						
2.8 Strategic Opportunities Charette					●					
2.9 Public & Stakeholder Engagement Review Meeting w/ SC					●					
<b>Phase 3 - Establishment of Vision &amp; Goals and Key Recommendations</b>										
3.1 Project Goals and Vision Statement					●					
3.2 Key Recommendations Summary Report					●					
3.3 Department Head Key Recommendations Review Meeting					●					
<b>Phase 4 - Draft Plan + Evaluation</b>										
4.1 Draft Plan					■					
4.2 Draft Plan Review Sessions w/ Steering Committee					●	●	●	●		
4.3 Draft Plan Public Open House (Public Meeting #2)								●		
4.4 Draft Plan Joint Workshop with PC & CC								●		
4.5 Public Comment and Review Period								■		
<b>Phase 5 - Final Plan + Adoption</b>										
5.1 Final Draft Plan									■	
5.2 Final Draft Plan Review Meeting with Steering Committee									●	
5.3 Planning Commission Public Hearing									●	
5.4 City Council Public Hearing										●
5.5 Final Plan Deliverables										●

## BI-WEEKLY CHECK-IN MEETINGS

### INTENT

To help keep the planning process on schedule, we plan to participate in virtual bi-weekly check-in meetings over video conference calls with Belton staff and members of the consultant team. A Confluence team member will be present at every meeting. Other consultant team members may attend as needed. The purpose of these meetings will be to review progress on key deliverables, discuss upcoming meeting material and agendas, identify future meeting dates and deadlines, any check-in on the status of the project timeline.

### WHO WILL ATTEND

- Christopher Shires | Confluence
- Jane Reasoner | Confluence
- Abbey Hebbert | Confluence
- Chris Zahas | Leland Consulting Group (as needed)
- Andrew Young | TranSystems (as needed)
- Matt Wright | Director of Planning and Building
- Jenna Fernandez | City Planner
- Other Belton City Staff (as needed)

# STEERING COMMITTEE

## INTENT AND ROLE

The Steering Committee's role is to serve as an advisor to City staff and the consultant team by providing initial feedback on the plan update's direction and priorities, identifying areas of concern and opportunities, and evaluating and considering public input. The Committee will also be asked to review the various drafts of the plan components and to deliver final recommendations for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council as part of their review and adoption of the updated Comprehensive Plan. The Committee further serves the important role of being a community ambassador for the Comprehensive Plan - promoting awareness of public input events, encouraging participation, and ultimately, advocating for the plan's goals and priorities.

## STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Norman Larkey | Mayor
- Chris Richardson | City Council
- Tom MacPherson | Planning Commission
- Diane Huckshorn | Chamber of Commerce
- Gary Mallory | Downtown Belton Main Street
- Andrew Underwood | Belton School District
- Darrin Jones | Local Realtor
- Gaye Rankin | Local Banker
- Sally Smith | Old Town Business Owner
- Jerry Wiedenmann | North Scott Business Owner
- Connie Helus | New Belton Resident
- Elmer Larket | Long-Time Belton Resident
- Chase Nugen | High School Teacher
- Emma Gillispe | High School Student
- Dan Chevalier | Local Developer
- Mike Effertz | Landowner
- Todd Krass | Belton Regional Medical Center
- Alexa Butterfield | Non-Profit/Social Service
- Father Jeff Stephens | Non-Profit/Religious Organization

## KEY STAFF

- Matt Wright | Director of Planning and Building
- Jenna Fernandez | City Planner

## PLANNED MEETINGS

The Steering Committee is anticipated to meet approximately 8 times over the next 10 months. It is our plan to hold these meetings in-person in the evening. Each meeting will last approximately 90-minutes. The consultant team will generally conduct the meetings, make presentations, and provide handouts. The meetings will be interactive with feedback requested from all committee members. The committee members may be asked to review materials and plan drafts prior to the meeting.

## KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS + FOCUS GROUPS

### INTENT

Some of the best input collected during a planning process is through dedicated one-on-one or small group conversations with community members. These conversations often provide candid and detailed information about the biggest issues and opportunities facing Belton. Ideally, these meetings should involve representatives from a wide range of community interest areas and geographies. This often includes:

- Elected Officials
- Commission and Board Members
- School District Representatives
- Youth Sports
- Economic Development Groups
- Local Realtors and Bankers
- Local Development Community
- Civic Organizations
- New and Long-Time Residents
- Local Business owners
- Nearby City Planning Department Heads
- Anyone else identified by City staff or the Steering Committee

### EVENT DETAILS

During Phase 2 - Vision, Input + Direction, the consultant team will conduct key stakeholder interviews and small focus group meetings to incorporate collected input into the planning process. Individual meetings and focus groups will be held virtually over Microsoft Teams or Zoom conference calls.

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

At the Kick-Off Meeting with the Steering Committee, City staff, and Steering Committee Members will help the consultant team identify the names and contact information of individuals and groups they believe should be contacted for a stakeholder interview or focus group meeting. The consultant team will reach out via e-mail to the list of potential stakeholders and offer to schedule a meeting. A follow-up e-mail will be sent one week after the initial outreach to ensure all parties are given ample opportunity to respond and schedule an interview.

### DESIRED OUTCOMES

The consultant team will meet with anyone that signs up for an interview or focus group meeting. During these conversations, detailed notes will be taken based upon feedback received. To protect the privacy of the participants, the name associated with any direct quotes or ideas will not be identified, rather overall themes and key takeaways will be shared. This helps encourage the stakeholders to be more candid during these one-on-one meetings.



## SPECIAL EVENT BOOTHS

### INTENT

To help reach community members that may not show up to traditional in-person public meetings, special event booths will be set up at one or two events in Belton to meet people where they are or spend time. Confluence has a special event tent that can be set-up at outdoor events. Consultant team members will set up informational and/or engagement boards for event attendees to browse and will be available to answer any questions about the planning process. In addition to engagement, these pop-up event booths can create excitement about the planning process, which can help with implementation.

### EVENT DETAILS

Our team will coordinate with City staff to set up a special event booth at two events throughout Phase 2 - Vision, Input + Direction.

### EVENT MARKETING

Confluence will create marketing material to be distributed and released by the City including posters/flyers, social media post graphics and copy, and assistance with creating a press release promoting our presence at the event(s). The City will help promote the event(s) through their city website, social media pages, and contacts with local media.

### DESIRED OUTCOMES

The special event booths are designed to capture input and the attention of residents that may not visit a project website or show up to an in-person meeting at City Hall. The desired outcomes of this interaction are to educate residents about the purpose of the new Comprehensive Plan, answer questions about the planning process, and to garner excitement about the implementation of the plan. A secondary outcome is public participation through any image voting, priority ranking, or mapping activity that may be set up at the event booth. All input will be memorialized.



# BOX CITY EVENT/YOUTH WORKSHOP

## INTENT

Box City is an event planned for elementary-aged children in Belton to encourage youth and parent participation in the planning process. A blank city scene composed of green mats with a street system, trees, and water features is set up. Fake “building permits” are available along with a wide variety of arts supplies. Boxes of all shapes and sizes, many of which are shaped like houses with gabled roofs, are also available. Members of the consultant team will work with the children to help them think about what they desire to see in their ideal community. We will help them fill out a fake building permit to describe what they want to build and why. The children are then encouraged to creatively use the available art supplies to design their structures. Kids can then place their structure somewhere within the city scene. Parents are encouraged to assist or can scan a QR code to bring up the interactive engagement website and provide participation there.

## EVENT DETAILS

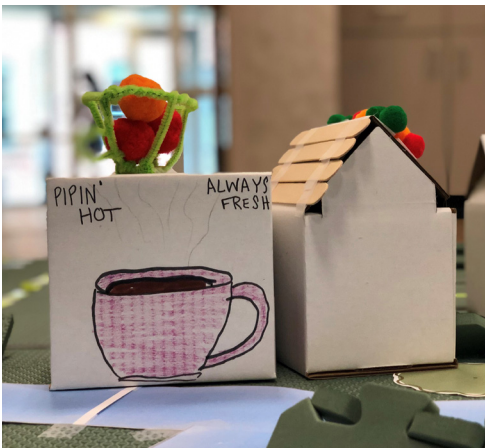
Our team will coordinate with the Belton library to set up a Box City event to be held over several hours during an afternoon in Phase Two - Vision, Input + Direction. The consultant team will supply all of the city scene and craft supplies. Confluence will staff the event with 3 to 4 people and will be responsible for set-up and clean-up after the event. Pictures will be taken of the results and during the event and the type of structures built by the participants will be tallied and memorialized.

## EVENT MARKETING

Confluence will create marketing material to be distributed and released by the City including posters/flyers, social media post graphics and copy, and assistance with creating a press release promoting the event. The City will help promote the event through their website, social media pages, and contacts with local media.

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

The event is designed to get young community members thinking about the type of amenities they want in the future as well and introduce them in a fun way to the city planning process. Participation by busy parents is also a desired outcome - whether it is directly in the Box City event or by visiting the interactive engagement website while their kids participate in the Box City event.



# INTERACTIVE ENGAGEMENT WEBSITE

## INTENT

The ability to offer high-quality online engagement opportunities is more important and expected than ever before. To help facilitate a robust online engagement strategy, our team will set up an interactive engagement website using the Social Pinpoint platform. The website will host information about the planning process and schedule in addition to hosting engagement activities. The website will be user-friendly and include a variety of fun activities to garner input on everything from land use to housing and streetscapes, to name a few topics.

## ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The interactive engagement website will include mapping activities that allow participants to drop comments directly on a map of Belton. An Idea Board will also be included that allows participants to upload images or text describing the type of improvements or amenities desired by the community as well as identify possible areas of improvement within the city today. A community preference survey will be available as well as a budget prioritization tool. Image voting over precedent imagery on different topics (housing, commercial, streetscapes, parks, etc.) will be available.

Confluence will create the website and make edits as desired by City staff. The website will first launch in Phase 1 as an information tool about the plan and then will have engagement activities added in Phase 2. After a full draft of the plan is available, it will be uploaded to the website for review and comment. The website will close after the plan is adopted.

## EVENT MARKETING

Confluence will create marketing material to be distributed and released by the City including posters/flyers, social media post graphics and copy, and assistance with creating a press release promoting the website. The City will help promote the event through their city website, social media pages, and contacts with local media.

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

The desired outcome of the interactive engagement website is to collect input on a wide range of plan topic areas. This will include traditional surveys as well as geo-referenced map comments and idea wall input. All input will be reviewed, and key themes and takeaways will be identified for each activity.





# JOINT WORKSHOPS

## INTENT

We have found the planning process works best when members of the Planning Commission and City Council are involved throughout the planning process. Representatives from each group are on the Steering Committee, which will help with overall project understanding by each group. The Belton Comprehensive Plan engagement schedule has two joint workshops scheduled with the Planning Commission and City Council prior to adoption to provide mid-point updates on key topics.

## PLANNED MEETINGS

The two joint workshops are scheduled for the end of Phase 1 and end of Phase 4. The first joint workshop will cover the existing conditions analysis review. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure the two groups understand the baseline conditions analysis completed by the consultant team. During this meeting, the consultant team will also overview the comprehensive planning process and answer any initial questions.

The second joint workshop is scheduled for the end of phrase 3 and will provide an overview of the entire draft planning document. Key takeaways and a broad overview of the plan will be presented, and each group will be encouraged to review the entire draft plan prior to the workshop. The goal of the second joint workshop is to identify potential issue areas so that they can be addressed prior to the public hearing process.

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

The big picture desired outcome of the joint workshop is to facilitate a smooth approval process for the new Belton Comprehensive Plan. Buy-in from both groups but especially the City Council is needed to successfully implement the goals, vision, and recommendations identified in the plan. The goal of these sessions are to make sure each group understands the rationale and process behind the plan before the adoption process.



# PUBLIC VISIONING WORKSHOP

## INTENT

The consultant team will facilitate a structured Public Visioning Workshop to identify key issues, priorities, opportunities, and preferences that will guide the direction of the Comprehensive Plan. The workshop will include a presentation that overviews the Comprehensive Plan process and seek input on various aspects of the plan. The workshop will include a project overview session to review the findings of our initial data collection and research. A brief “Comprehensive Planning 101” session will also be provided that addresses why we plan, how it is used, and how it impacts them. Live polling using Mentimeter will be used throughout the presentation to keep the audience actively engaged.

## EVENT DETAILS

Our team will coordinate with City staff to identify a suitable location and time for the Public Visioning Workshop during Phase 2. Additionally, the consultant team will need assistance in obtaining chairs and tables for the event. Confluence will create the presentation, informational boards, interactive engagement activities, sign-in sheets, pens, and any other material needed. The Consultant team will staff the event, but City staff are encouraged to attend and participate.

## EVENT MARKETING

Confluence will create marketing material to be distributed and released by the City including posters/flyers, social media post graphics and copy, and assistance with creating a press release promoting the event. The City will help promote the event through their city website, social media pages, and contacts with local media. If desired by the City, Confluence will design yard signs (double sided, color, 24-inch by 18-inch) to advertise the event. Confluence will have the yard signs delivered and City staff will distribute them to key locations throughout the community.

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

The event is designed to hear from Belton residents directly on their ideas and wishes for the future of their community. The event will help explain the plan’s purpose and process and help to gather momentum for the implementation of the plan. The input received via live polling, engagement boards, and the mapping activity will all be memorialized.



## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

### INTENT

The consultant team will present the draft Comprehensive Plan at a Public Open House to be held over an afternoon and evening. The Public Open House will utilize story boards to explain the different plan elements and chapters. Comment cards will be available to provide feedback on the material. The full draft will also be made available on the interactive engagement website to allow for additional review and comment.

### EVENT DETAILS

Our team will coordinate with City staff to identify a suitable location and time for the Public Open House to be held over an afternoon and early evening. Confluence will prepare story boards and comment cards to be available during the open house. Confluence will need assistance in obtaining chairs and tables for the event. The consultant team will staff the event, but City staff are encouraged to attend and participate.

### EVENT MARKETING

Confluence will create marketing material to be distributed and released by the City including posters/flyers, social media post graphics and copy, and assistance with creating a press release promoting the event. The City will help promote the event through their city website, social media pages, and contacts with local media. If desired by the City, Confluence will design yard signs (double sided, color, 24-inch by 18-inch) to advertise the event. Confluence will have the yard signs delivered and City staff will distribute them to key locations throughout the community.

### DESIRED OUTCOMES

The goal of the Public Open House is to familiarize Belton community members with the goals and recommendations included within the new comprehensive plan. We will collect and address input received during this event and present the key takeaways to the City staff and Steering Committee. The goal is to create widespread community support for the final document.



## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **INTENT**

Confluence will attend and present at all public hearings related to the Belton Comprehensive Plan including the Planning Commission and City Council.

### **EVENT DETAILS**

Confluence will attend and present a summary of the full draft of the new Belton Comprehensive Plan. We will answer any questions asked by commission members or elected officials. If needed, Confluence will provide copies of the draft plan and large prints of key elements such as the Future Land Use Plan to use as exhibits.

### **EVENT MARKETING**

Our team will collaborate with City staff to advertise the public hearing with the Planning Commission. We will create meeting flyers for posting at City facilities, press releases, and graphics for posting on the City's website and social media platforms. We will design and order stickers to update the yard-signs used in Phase 3 to advertise the hearing. City staff will help with placing the signs in strategic locations throughout the City and collecting the signs after the event.

### **DESIRED OUTCOMES**

Our team anticipates a smooth and orderly public hearing process because we will have done the work during earlier phases to familiarize boards and elected officials with the plan and its recommendations.