City of Bel Nor, Missouri

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Meeting Minutes

Meeting Type: Public Session

Meeting Date: September 16th, 2026

Location: 8406 Natural Bridge Road

Starting Time: Approximately 6:00 PM

1. Welcome and Introduction

City Administrator Rachel St. Pierre welcomed participants and introduced the combined third and fourth public sessions of the City's strategic planning process.

St. Pierre reviewed the purpose of the previous sessions, which included identifying community values, priorities, and concerns, as well as providing education regarding municipal government operations, financial resources, and budget preparation.

The combined session was intended to validate previously collected community feedback, establish a shared vision for Bel-Nor's future, identify priorities for municipal services and infrastructure, and begin connecting those priorities to the City's budgeting process.

Participants received worksheets summarizing earlier findings and providing opportunities to identify priorities and offer additional feedback. Previously distributed surveys remained available for participation.

2. Review of Community Values and Existing Conditions

The City Administrator presented seven findings developed from previous public engagement activities. Participants were invited to confirm whether the findings accurately reflected community priorities and to identify necessary additions or revisions.

Finding One: Community Identity

Participants affirmed Bel Nor's identity as a small, quiet, primarily residential community characterized by distinctive architecture, mature trees, and green spaces.

Residents recommended expanding the description to recognize:

- Diversity among residents, including racial, cultural, generational, and household diversity.
- The neighborhood's walkability and frequent pedestrian activity.
- A welcoming and inclusive community atmosphere.

Finding Two: Neighborhood and Housing Preservation

Participants supported preserving existing housing and architectural character while allowing homeowners reasonable flexibility to maintain and improve their properties.

Discussion emphasized balancing property maintenance standards with the practical challenges of homeownership. Residents expressed concern that overly restrictive requirements could discourage individuals and families who wish to purchase and gradually rehabilitate homes.

Suggestions included homeowner education, assistance with routine maintenance, partnerships with financial institutions, and potential home improvement grant opportunities.

Residents also raised concerns regarding vacant and deteriorating properties, including properties along Clearview Drive. The City Administrator discussed ongoing evaluation of the vacant property registry and potential improvements to enforcement timelines and follow-up procedures.

Finding Three: Trees, Green Space, and Community Appearance

Participants reaffirmed the importance of the City's tree canopy, landscaped areas, and overall neighborhood appearance.

Residents emphasized that the City's tree program should prioritize new plantings in addition to replacement of removed trees. Discussion also addressed proactive tree maintenance, watering, and planning for the long-term health of the urban forest.

Finding Four: Streets and Infrastructure

Participants identified streets, sidewalks, street lighting, traffic signs, and pavement markings as essential infrastructure priorities.

Discussion emphasized proactive maintenance and planning rather than responding only after infrastructure failures occur. Residents expressed particular interest in improvements to street lighting.

Finding Five: Community Relationships and Public Safety

Participants supported continued community-building efforts, public events, volunteer involvement, and improvements to public safety partnerships.

Residents discussed traffic calming measures, including concerns that some existing speed humps are excessively abrupt. Participants expressed a preference for smoother, rolling speed humps that encourage consistent reductions in vehicle speed.

Residents also suggested installing permanent signs in areas where children frequently play.

Finding Six: City Government and Municipal Services

Participants affirmed the importance of an organized, accessible, responsive, and consistent municipal government.

The City Administrator explained current staffing arrangements, office hours, and the City's cloud-based telephone system, which allows staff to respond to calls while working remotely.

Residents expressed appreciation for improvements to online forms, electronic permitting, and digital services that reduce the need for in-person visits to City Hall.

Finding Seven: Governance and Decision-Making

Participants supported decision-making guided by community values, transparency, public participation, fiscal responsibility, and long-term planning.

A resident asked whether opportunities for public participation would continue beyond the current strategic planning process.

The City Administrator explained that the budget survey would remain available throughout the year and discussed the possibility of holding shorter annual public workshops or town halls to maintain regular community involvement.

3. Five-Year Community Vision

The City Administrator reviewed the community's previously identified goals for the next five years.

Discussion reaffirmed the importance of:

- Preserving residential character, architectural diversity, and opportunities for homeownership.
- Maintaining and expanding tree canopy and green spaces.
- Addressing streets, sidewalks, lighting, and other infrastructure needs.
- Continuing improvements to municipal services, communication, and public engagement.
- Maintaining financial stability, emergency reserves, and responsible spending practices.
- Strengthening public safety and regional partnerships.

Residents stressed the importance of maintaining sufficient financial reserves to respond to emergencies and unexpected infrastructure expenses.

Regional Development and Partnerships

Participants discussed the potential benefits and challenges of nearby development, including residential developments, the local golf facility, and surrounding institutions.

Residents expressed interest in identifying ways Bel Nor residents and businesses could benefit from nearby development, including possible recreational opportunities and increased economic activity.

The importance of continued communication and cooperation with neighboring municipalities and regional organizations was also emphasized.

Public Safety and Police Visibility

Residents discussed the City's contracted police services with the City of St. John.

Some participants expressed a preference for increased patrol visibility through marked police vehicles. Others acknowledged the potential benefits of unmarked vehicles for enforcement activities.

Discussion also addressed speeding enforcement, patrol frequency, and the potential value of varying patrol times to address specific neighborhood concerns.

4. Development of a Shared Community Vision

Participants completed an exercise identifying words and characteristics they believed should describe Bel-Nor in the future.

Responses included:

- Safe
- Beautiful
- Diverse
- Welcoming

- Engaged

Participants discussed the importance of diversity across age groups, household types, and backgrounds.

Residents also identified opportunities to improve community engagement and volunteer recruitment.

Discussion focused on the difficulty of reaching individuals who are not already involved in municipal activities. Participants considered expanding outreach through the City's newsletter, signs, direct invitations, and partnerships with neighborhood organizations.

Residents emphasized that community members should feel welcomed and encouraged to participate.

5. Community Priorities and Budget Alignment

The City Administrator introduced a budgeting exercise in which participants assigned priority points to various municipal functions and identified their three highest personal priorities.

Residents discussed the relative importance of infrastructure, public safety, financial stability, housing preservation, and community appearance.

Financial Sustainability

Financial sustainability and long-term planning were identified as important immediate priorities.

Residents emphasized the need for sound financial management, emergency reserves, and greater attention to long-term municipal obligations.

Streets, Sidewalks, and Infrastructure

Participants expressed concern regarding deteriorating streets and uneven sidewalks.

Residents described pedestrian safety concerns, including sidewalk conditions that may require pedestrians to enter the roadway.

Infrastructure improvements were recognized as important but potentially costly projects requiring long-term financial planning.

Trees, Green Space, and Community Appearance

Participants supported maintaining and strengthening existing tree and landscape programs.

Residents acknowledged the contributions of volunteer organizations while identifying opportunities for improved coordination between volunteers, contractors, and City staff.

Specific concerns included overgrown landscaped islands, inconsistent maintenance practices, and uncertainty regarding responsibility for individual gardens.

Participants discussed the benefit of creating defined landscaping and maintenance plans for each City-maintained island.

Property Maintenance and Neighborhood Assistance

Residents discussed the importance of combining code enforcement with education and opportunities for voluntary compliance.

Suggestions included organizing volunteers to assist residents who may have difficulty completing routine property maintenance, particularly older adults and residents experiencing financial or physical limitations.

Potential assistance activities included gutter cleaning, minor exterior painting, yard maintenance, and similar tasks.

The City Administrator discussed efforts to develop a community volunteer network and a process through which residents could request assistance.

Participants expressed support for respectful, assistance-oriented approaches while acknowledging the continuing responsibility of property owners to maintain their properties.

Public Safety and Traffic Enforcement

Participants identified continued police visibility, traffic safety improvements, and appropriate enforcement as ongoing priorities.

Priority Exercise Results

Participants identified individual priorities and proposed timelines for implementation. The discussion did not establish a single collective ranking or formally approve any funding allocations.

6. Review of Existing Municipal Services

Participants reviewed current municipal services and considered whether each service should be maintained, improved, expanded, or evaluated for alternative delivery methods.

Municipal Court

Participants identified the restoration of functional municipal court services as an important need.

The absence of regular court operations was discussed in connection with code enforcement and the City's ability to resolve violations requiring judicial action.

Code Enforcement

The City Administrator provided an overview of the current code enforcement process, including property observations, courtesy notices, written violation letters, reinspections, and potential municipal summonses.

Residents raised questions regarding consistency, the accuracy of cited violations, and the tone of written notices.

Discussion included:

- Ensuring notices identify specific, factual violations.
- Improving communication regarding corrective actions and compliance deadlines.
- Providing opportunities for residents to explain hardships or request additional time.
- Improving follow-up procedures before pursuing court enforcement.
- Considering a more clearly defined progressive notification process.

The City Administrator discussed ongoing improvements to the City's code enforcement software, notice language, and staff training.

Participants generally supported educational and cooperative efforts before pursuing punitive enforcement when appropriate.

Public Works and Infrastructure

Residents reiterated concerns regarding sidewalk conditions, pavement deterioration, and street lighting.

Participants discussed the importance of professional evaluation, capital planning, and the availability of funding for substantial improvements.

Municipal Communication and Technology

Participants acknowledged recent improvements to City communication and digital services.

Residents suggested maintaining those improvements while developing a more coordinated communication strategy involving City staff, volunteer boards, neighborhood organizations, and community partners.

Additional communication options discussed included:

- Increased promotion of the City's Chimes newsletter.
- Improved signs and event announcements.
- Optional text-message notifications for urgent or time-sensitive information.
- Expanded website and newsletter subscription features.
- Outreach to residents who do not regularly use electronic communication.

The City Administrator discussed potential website platform improvements that could provide additional communication capabilities.

New Resident Orientation

Participants discussed the City's welcome materials for new residents.

Residents supported continuing welcoming, informative materials that explain municipal services, property maintenance expectations, and available community resources.

The City Administrator also discussed efforts to improve outreach through local real estate professionals so prospective homeowners may receive information before purchasing property.

7. Capital Improvements and One-Time Projects

The City Administrator invited participants to identify larger capital improvements or occasional initiatives that should be considered in long-term planning.

Citywide Property Maintenance Initiative

A resident suggested considering another concentrated code enforcement initiative in future years to address deteriorating exterior property conditions.

Discussion included differing perspectives regarding proactive enforcement, property owner responsibilities, and the value of educational or assistance-based approaches.

No specific enforcement initiative was approved or scheduled.

Underground Electric Utilities

Participants discussed the possibility of relocating existing overhead electrical utilities underground.

Residents cited frequent power outages, tree-related electrical interruptions, neighborhood appearance, and long-term infrastructure resilience as reasons to consider the project.

Participants acknowledged that underground utility installation would involve substantial costs and coordination with the electric utility provider.

The City Administrator reported that preliminary conversations regarding utility and tree-related concerns were underway.

Tree Maintenance and Utility Coordination

Residents discussed the relationship between mature trees and utility reliability.

Suggestions included increased coordination with the utility provider regarding trimming and maintenance, improved communication regarding recurring outages, and continued collaboration between the City and Tree Board.

The possibility of group pricing for private tree maintenance was also discussed as a means of reducing costs for participating property owners.

8. Next Steps

The City Administrator explained that subsequent strategic planning activities would place greater emphasis on budget development and translating community priorities into specific goals, projects, and funding considerations.

Information collected during the session would be incorporated into the ongoing strategic planning process and used to inform development of the City's five-year strategic plan and future municipal budgets.

The City Administrator encouraged participants to continue providing feedback through surveys, email, telephone, and additional community conversations.

Participants were also encouraged to share engagement opportunities with neighbors and assist in reaching residents who had not previously participated.

The next public session was tentatively anticipated for October 2026, with the specific date, time, and location to be announced.

9. Closing

The City Administrator thanked attendees for their participation and contributions to the City's strategic planning process.

The workshop concluded following final questions and discussion.

No formal motions, votes, ordinances, or budget appropriations were adopted during this public engagement session.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 19 DAY OF October, 2026.

Anna Vogel, Mayor

ATTEST:

Rachel St.Pierre, City Administrator