



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2026



Table of Contents

Title Page

1	Introduction & Acknowledgement	▶ P1
2	Collaboration and Implementation	▶ P4
3	Community Assessment	▶ P11
4	Community Survey	▶ P24
5	SWOT Analysis	▶ P36
6	Goals & Objectives	▶ P42

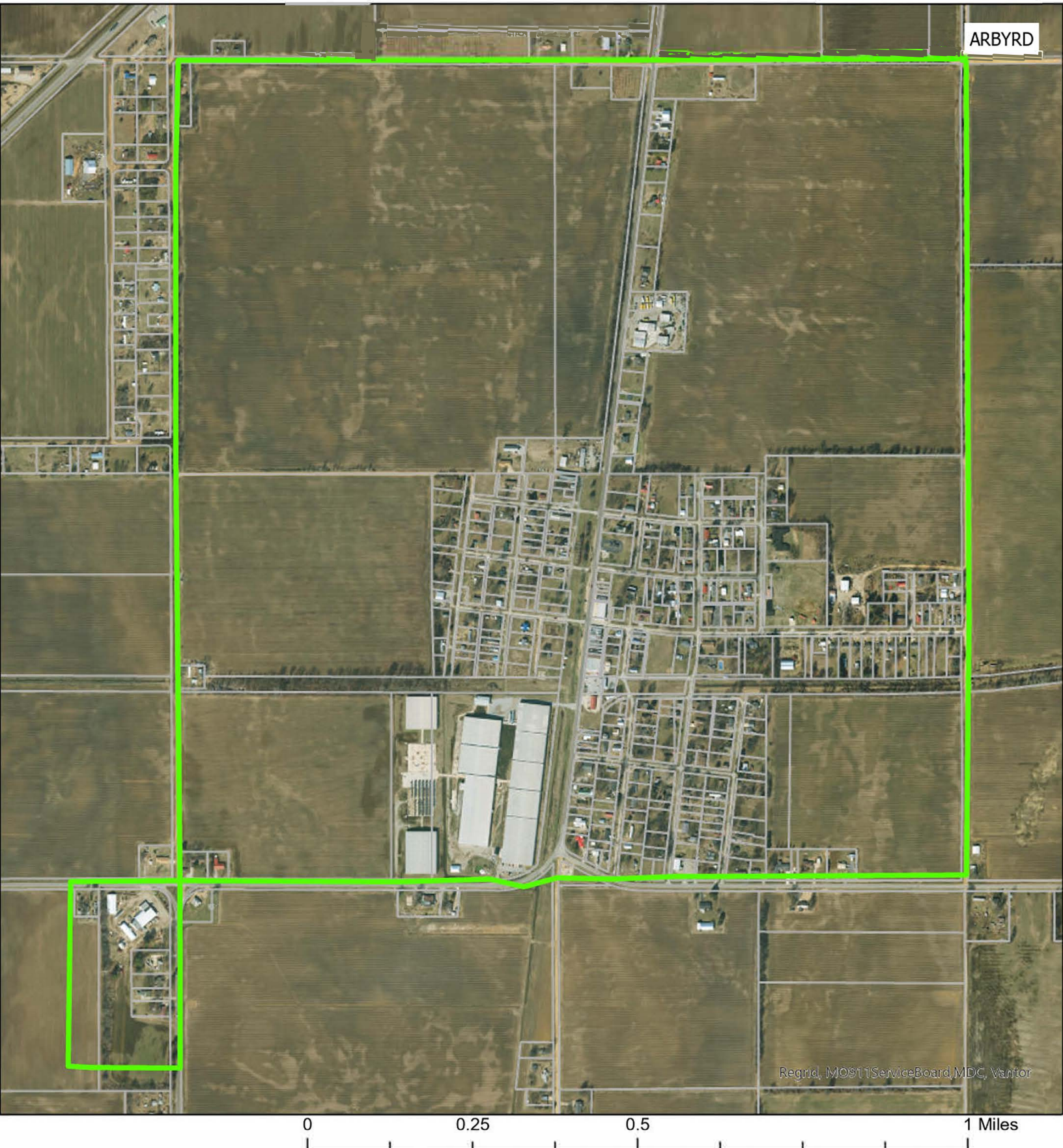


Table of Contents

Table of Figures

Life Cycle of a Cotton Boll	▶ Title Page
Map of Arbyrd	
Arbyrd Welcome Sign	▶ P1
Advisory Committee Flyer	▶ P6
Opening Slide-1st Meeting	▶ P7
BRPC and OFRPC Logos	▶ P8
Public hearing Notice	▶ P10
Aerial Photo, 1950's	▶ P11
Land Use Map	▶ P12
Arbyrd Gin Article c. 1922	▶ P15
Cotton and Frisco Rail Stations	▶ P17
First School Class Article	▶ P17
Population Metrics	▶ P18
Poverty & Unemployment Rates	▶ P19
Employment Opportunities	▶ P20
MHI & PCI Metrics	▶ P20
Housing Metrics	▶ P21
Housing Market Characteristics	▶ P24, 25
Compilation Photo	▶ P26
Old Baptist Church	▶ P26
Community Survey Page	▶ P27
Veteran's Memorial	▶ P33
Field of Cotton Photo	▶ P35
Arbyrd Municipal Building	▶ P36
Arbyrd Veterans' Memorial	▶ P42
Arbyrd City Park	▶ P43

City of Arbyrd 2026



1 | Introduction & Acknowledgements
Plan Purpose
Community Advisory Committee



Arbyrd Welcome Sign



Plan Purpose

A Comprehensive Plan provides a useful description of a community by exploring its available history, socioeconomic factors, and current and future planning goals, no matter how simple or complex. While not a legally binding document, it does serve as a guiding framework for the community and policy makers.

The purpose for creating a Comprehensive Plan is to provide a community-wide understanding of internal and external factors that affect economic growth and success, provide for the welfare of the community, and inform government efficiency. This living document should be used to promote and encourage development that aligns with community goals and quality of life improvements.

This document is designed to be continuously updated, modified, and revised throughout its lifespan. By doing so, the community ensures that it remains adaptable and responsive to changing conditions.

This plan represents a starting or reset point for the City of Arbyrd. While the city has been in existence for over 100 years, it has yet to create a cohesive strategy that will carry on through changing leadership and conditions. Current and future known changes have prompted the city to seek planning assistance from regional resources to help secure their future.



Community Advisory Committee

A call went out to the community of Arbyrd for folks to be part of the Advisory Committee for this plan. A few brave souls managed to take time from their busy lives and bring their local area knowledge, family history, and insights to build and inform this plan. We sincerely thank these hearty folk for their participation.

City Governance:

Flora Smith, City Clerk

Kathy Carver, Alderman

Derrick Higgins, Arbyrd Fire Chief

Citizens-at-Large:

George Carver

Ashley Zolman

Karen Gavis

Dorothy Sisk

Darla Allensworth

Jeff Wilson

Pat Kelly

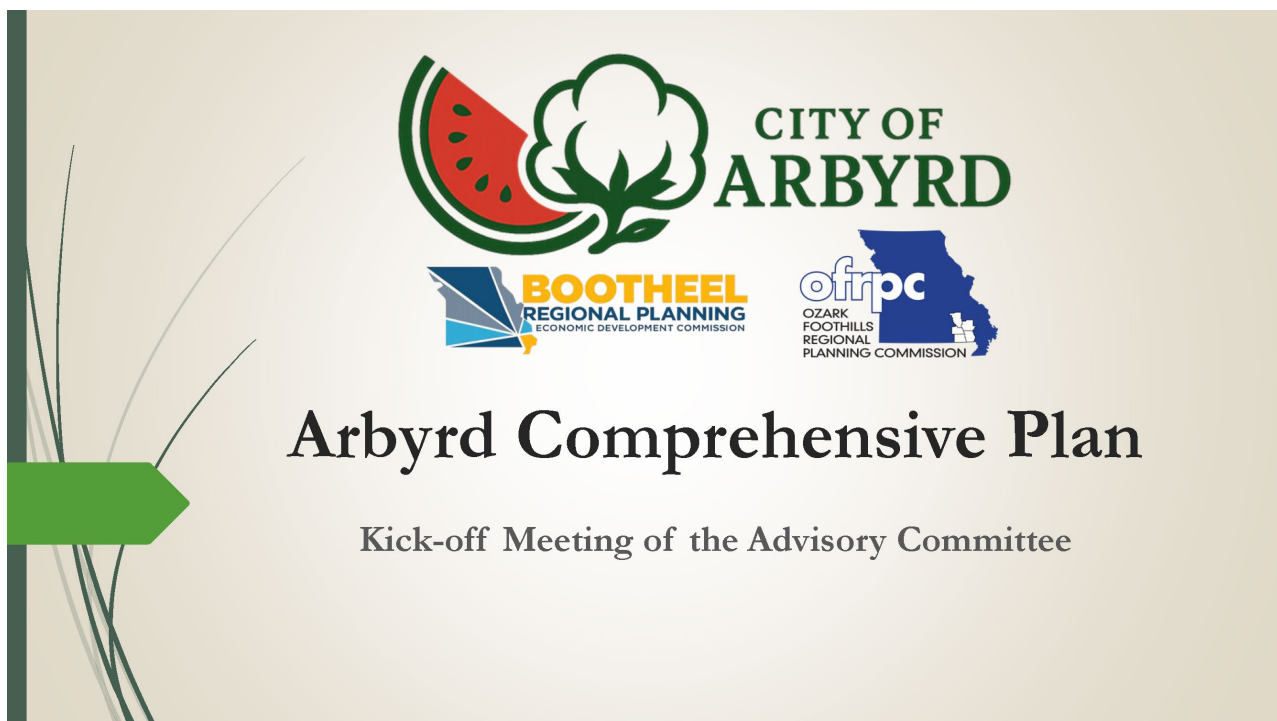
Pete Evans



Advisory Committee Flyer



2 | **Collaboration & Implementation**
Planning Assistance
Public Meetings and Public Hearing
Adopted Resolution per RSMO Chapter
89



First virtual meeting presentation slide.



Planning Assistance

The City of Arbyrd falls within the dedicated Economic Development District of the Bootheel Regional Planning Commission of Missouri. Established in 1967 by the State of Missouri to maintain Hazard Mitigation Planning compliance, the BRPC now also serves to assist covered communities with other planning, grant writing, and grant administrative services.

In 2025, the Bootheel Regional Planning Commission received a Small Town Planning Initiative grant through the State of Missouri to assist in the creation and updating of area Comprehensive Plans. The City of Arbyrd in Dunklin County, MO was selected as a candidate for this project by the BRPC staff based on recent initiatives taken by the community to improve itself, past participation with BRPC, quality of elected leaders and city staff, and the availability of “local champions” and partners to support planning efforts and provide a foundation for implementation.

In late 2025, early 2026, BRPC partnered with the Ozark Foothills Regional Planning Commission (OFRPC) to coordinate the process and write the plan. Together they effectively guided a quality process that will result in a stronger community. Staff from the BRPC will continue to guide and encourage partnership with the City of Arbyrd, including implementation, adaptation, and future revisions.



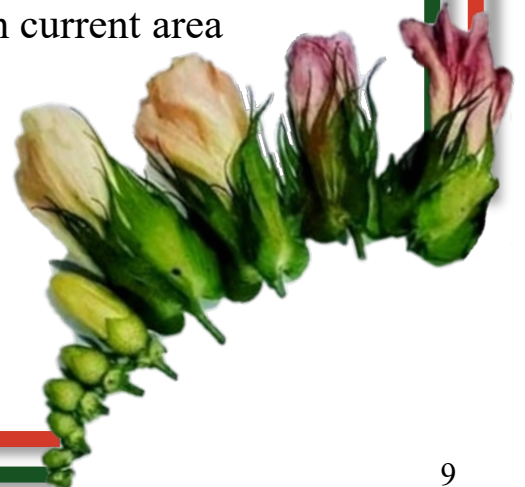
Public Meetings & Public Hearing

The time frame for this plan was greatly shortened from what is normally required to produce a full and complete comprehensive planning instrument. The City of Arbyrd recognizes this detriment and will strive to continue working with the Bootheel Regional Planning Commission to revise and enhance this planning document in the years to come.

The first public meeting was held virtually on April 9th, 2026. This meeting set the meeting and project timelines and task lists for the Advisory Committee and regional planning commissions. It was attended by six people of varying relation with the City of Arbyrd. Four are current and previous city officials, one was a former resident and current property owner, and one is a relation of a former city official. An explanation of the SWOT analysis was provided and homework was handed out to the participants.

The second meeting was in-person on April 14th. Of the original six participants, four returned and brought five more with them for a total of eleven. A lively discussion was had regarding the SWOT process and analysis, and they were sent home with more homework involving fact checking and ideas for projects.

The third meeting was in-person on May 14th. The SWOT was officially completed and presented to the Committee for review along with the Community Survey results. The discussion revolved around Arbyrd project needs based on current area knowledge and the survey results.



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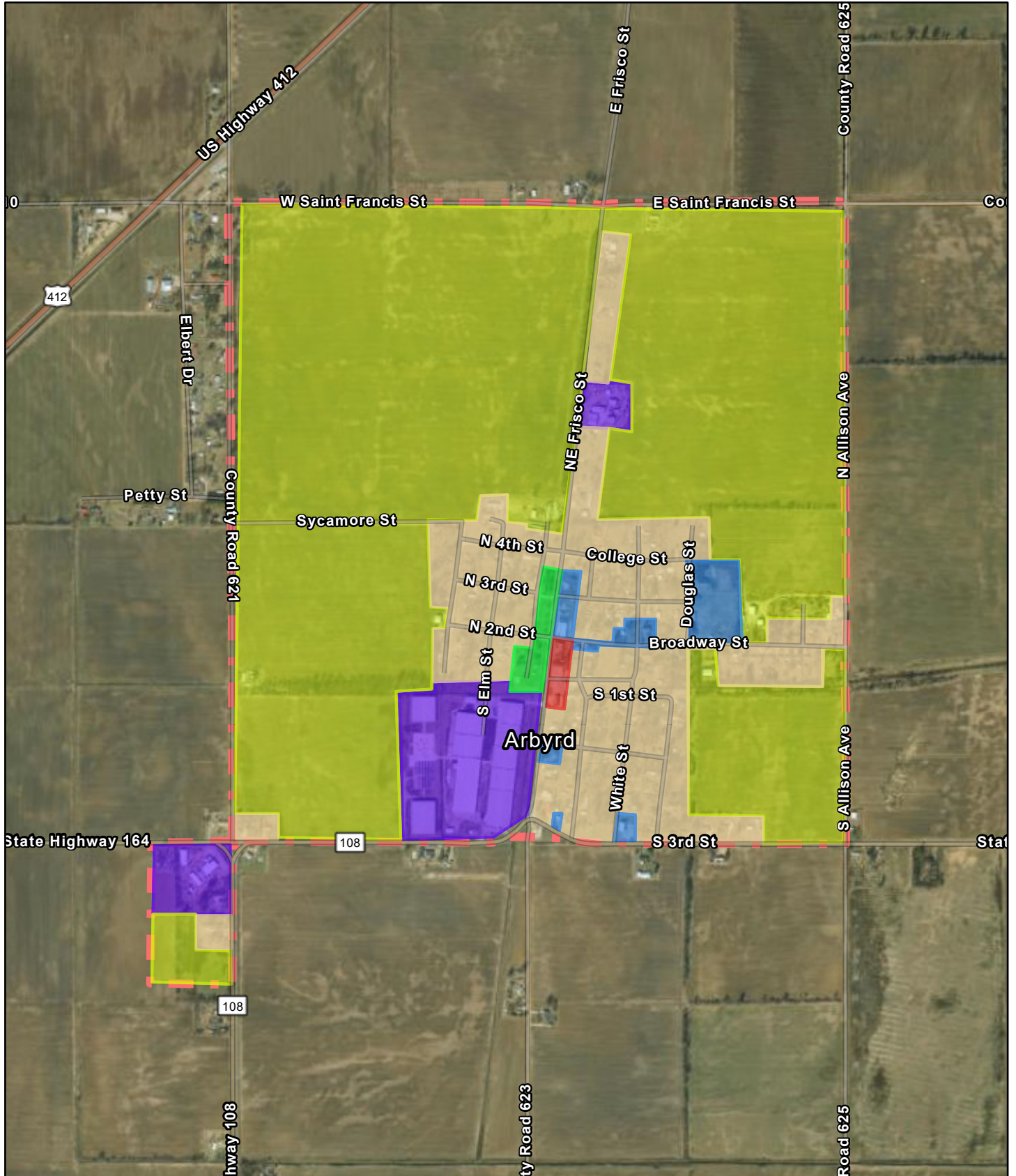
3 | **Community Assessment**
History
Socioeconomic Analysis
Population
Employment & Income
Housing



Aerial photo of Arbyrd, circa late 1950's.

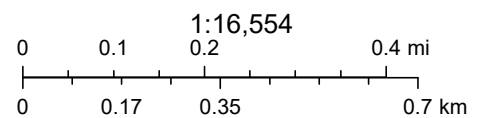


Arbyrd Land Use Map



6/11/2026

- | | |
|--|--|
| Arbyrd Established Green Space | Arbyrd Farmland |
| Arbyrd Commercial Land | Arbyrd Industrial Land |
| Arbyrd Institutional and Public Spaces | Arbyrd City Limits |
| Arbyrd Residential Land | |

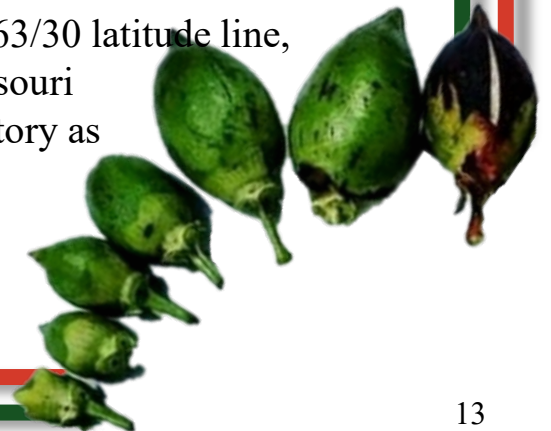


Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, MO911ServiceBoard, MDC, Vantor

Arbyrd Area History

The regional area in which the City of Arbyrd lay is called the Bootheel of Missouri. In the early 1800's, during the time of Missouri becoming a state, this area was originally to be a part of the Arkansas Territory.

The original border between Missouri and Arkansas lies along a latitude line at 36 degrees and 30 minutes north. This line is significant for two reasons: due to the Missouri Compromise that separated the country by north and south where slavery was to be allowed west of the original states (it declared Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a non-slave state in order to keep the balance and has since been declared unconstitutional and repealed in 1854); it also signified the congressional shift from using primarily natural boundaries for district lines to using uniform square shapes for ease of design and land management. So, when in 1818 the boundary of Missouri was proposed, the major landowners in the Bootheel area petitioned local and national lawmakers to be included in Missouri. Leading this process was local landowner John Hardiman Walker who, along with other forward-thinking landowners, greatly increased his land holdings after the massive earthquakes in the New Madrid seismic zone in 1811 that caused many landowners to sell their land and flee the area. The push to be a part of Missouri was thought to be primarily influenced by the established economy of the Missouri area and along the Mississippi River vice the Arkansas territory still being largely unpopulated and “uncivilized” at the time. When congress redrew the district maps in 1820, the “Bootheel”, the approximate 627,000 acres (980 square miles) of land between the St. Francis and Mississippi Rivers and to 35 miles south of the 36/30 latitude line, was included within Missouri as part of the Missouri Enabling Act that established the Missouri Territory as eligible to become a State and granted the congressional powers of self-sufficiency.¹



Within the Bootheel area of Missouri, in a remote area of Clay Township, almost 100 years later, the original town plat for Arbyrd was recorded with Dunklin County in 1897 by A. R. & Sallie Byrd and lay along the Kennett & Osceola Railroad line where a small depot had already been erected in a place called “Byrds”. This was originally a termination point for that rail line. *“Then one or two years later, when the road was extending on south to Leachville, Mr. Byrd became interested in the town site where this line crosses the Paragould and Southeastern a few miles south of the original Arbyrd [Station] and it was decided to name the town at the junction of the railroads Arbyrd, which left Arbyrd [Station] without a name. . . . Mr. Byrd soon sensed that a more important location was going to be where the Kennett railroad crosses with the Paragould railroad just south of Byrds, he suggested to Mr. Houck that the Arbyrd name be applied to that railroad crossing station. Thus the need to rename the Arbyrd Station at Byrds.”*²

The previous plat site for Arbyrd was renamed Bucoda and became an integral part of life in the area for many years. While most of that original community is now gone, there were generations of Arbyrd natives that went to school, shopped, and worked there.

The current City of Arbyrd began its official life as a community in 1911 with the establishment of the local post office. The town plat was recorded on April 1st, 1918 and the city officially incorporated on May 5th, 1919. In the early years the town was a transport site for timber production. Mr. Byrd had set to harvesting the thousands of acres of timber land in the area, using Arbyrd as a hub due to access to both the Kennett & Osceola rail line (later the St. Louis-San Francisco) that ran north-south and the Paragould (later the St. Louis Southwestern/ Cotton Belt) rail lines.





(Fifth of Series)

It was a busy cotton season when this picture was taken at the Arbyrd gin back in 1922. Seven wagonloads of cotton are in the foreground waiting their turn at the gin.

Piled near the gin in the background are at least a hundred bales of cotton.

This picture was furnished The Democrat for the "Yesteryears in

Dunklin County" Series by Mrs. Zola Thorn Bishop of Route 1, Box 160, of Trumann, Ark.

Some of the men she can identify in the picture are W. H. Stovall of Arbyrd, S. C. Rose of Arbyrd and W. W. (Wink) Watson, whose address she does not know.

Perhaps some Democrat readers can identify others in the picture.

Mrs. Bishop says that her brother, Arthur Thorn, was work-

ing at the gin at the time this picture was taken in 1922. He later was killed by a train.

This picture, like the others in the "Yesteryears" series will be published sometime in the future in a picture history of Dunklin county.

The Democrat is interested in seeing old pictures of local historical interest for possible use in this series.

Arbyrd Gin Article c. 1922



Once the timber ran out, most of the immediate area switched to growing and harvesting cotton and setting up local cotton gins for processing then transport on the rail lines. By the late 1950's neither rail line functioned for more than light passenger transport, but cotton was such a staple grown in the area and the lifeblood of the community, that the city incorporated a cotton bowl and a watermelon slice into their logo. Farmers in the immediate area still base their livelihood on staple crops like watermelon. Even today approximately 65% of the square mile that comprises the city boundary is dedicated to agriculture. While there is still major agriculture in and around Arbyrd, including Black Gold Potato Farms and local farmers, the addition of manufacturing and industrial business was necessary to retain local jobs and population. The Baker Truck & Implement Company, an agricultural equipment manufacturer and dealer, opened a branch in Arbyrd in 1948 and remains to this day. Arbyrd is situated approximately 3 miles north of the Arkansas border and is platted along Missouri Route 108 with the southern border along Missouri Route 164. Even though the railroad is gone, the city is still strategically located along major trade routes in the geographical area.

Citations:

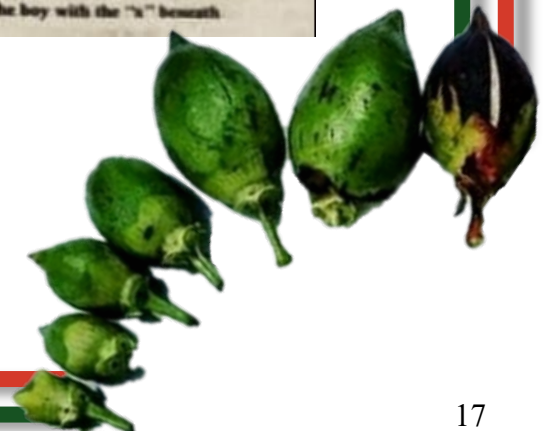
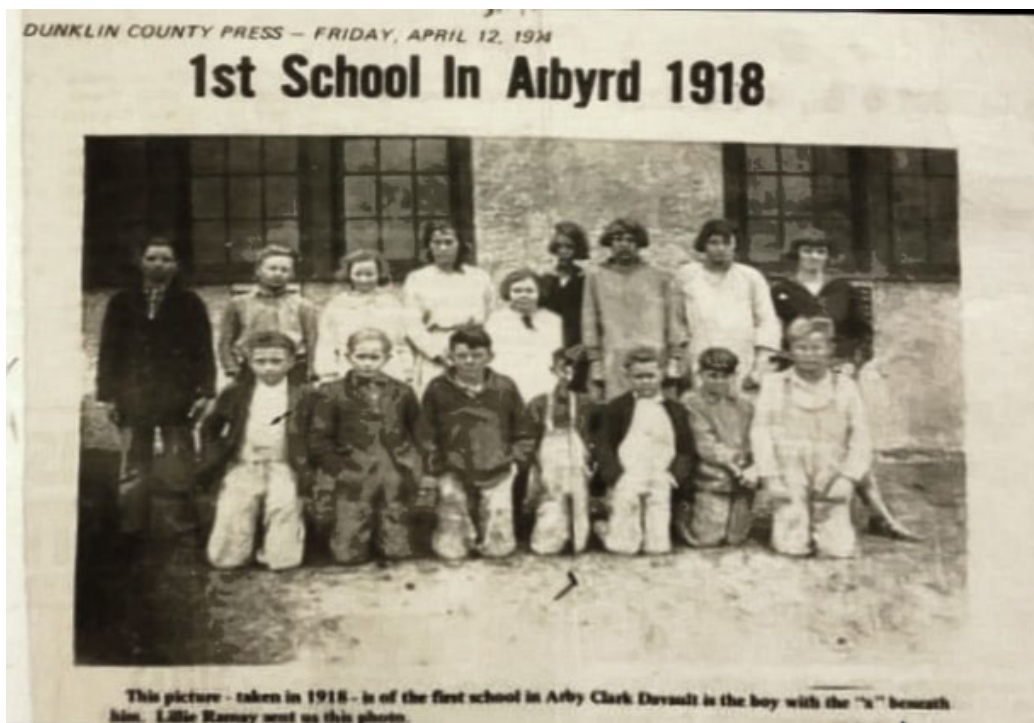
1 (Sources: Houck, Louis. *History of Missouri: From the Earliest Explorations and Settlements Until the Admission of the State into the Union. Volume I.* Chicago: R.R. Donnelley and Sons Company, 1908. March, David. *History of Missouri. Volume I.* New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1967. *Missouri: Day by Day. Volume I.* Edited by Floyd C. Shoemaker. Columbia [Mo.]: State Historical Society of Missouri, 1942.)

2 Fritz, Joe. "Early History of Bucoda". <https://bucoda.blogspot.com/2013/10/early-history-of-bucoda.html?ref=free.ai>





Cotton Belt and Frisco Rail Stations in Arbyrd.
Retrieved from "Memories of Arbyrd" Facebook Page.



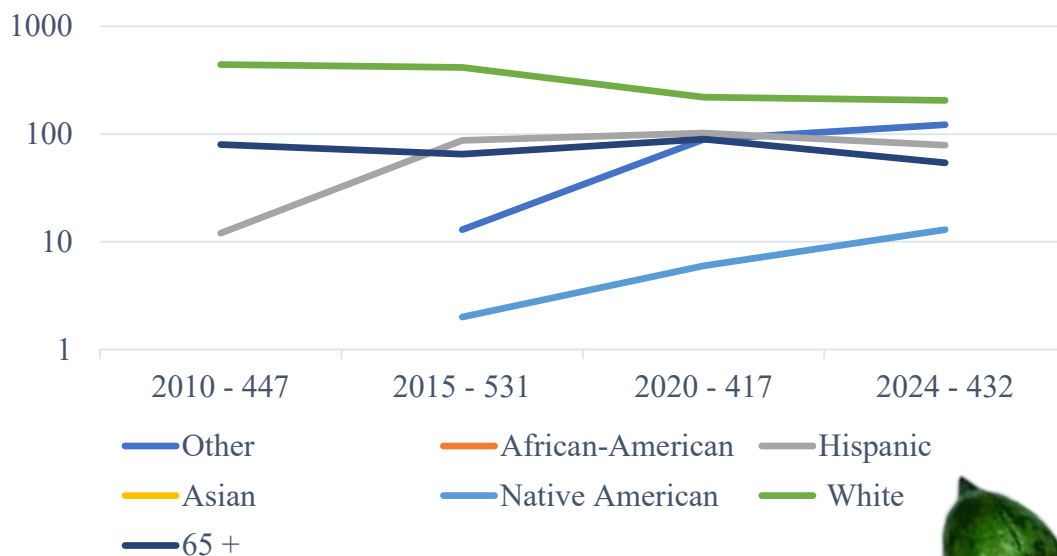
Arbyrd Socioeconomic Analysis

A community runs on the sum of its socioeconomic parts. The following data was compiled using the American Community Survey 5-year census data spans to provide a more accurate overview of economic factors since 2010.

Population

Most rural areas in Southeast Missouri have experienced population losses over the last 20 years, and Arbyrd is no exception. Their current population is more dependent upon a combination of local and regional job availability so Arbyrd can act as a “bedroom community” and the increased retiree population.

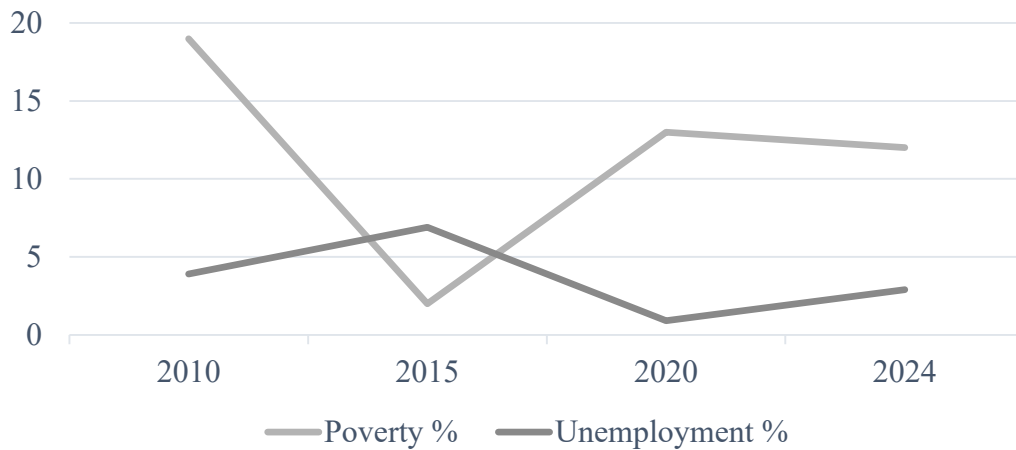
Population Rates – ACS DP05, 5-year estimates, 2010-2024



Employment & Income

Poverty and unemployment levels seem to be tied more directly to population than job availability. This assumption is based on the coordinating variable levels in the majority of the information above. It implies a recent increase in population that are not active participants in the workforce.

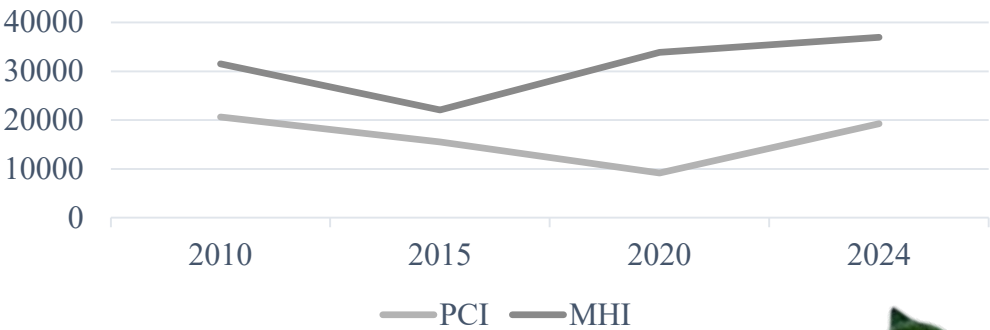
Poverty – ACS S2301 & B17021, Unemployment– ACS DP03



A significant factor in Arbyrd’s sustainability is their benefit of functioning as a bedroom community for larger regional towns and job hubs. Arbyrd is centrally located between larger towns yet offers that preferred small-town setting at affordable rural rates. This is also reflected in the increase in Median Household Income (MHI) and the Per Capita Income (PCI) over the last 15 years. There has also been a notable reduction in cost burdened households (the number of households who are paying more than 30% of their income for housing) from 54 to 33 over the last 15 years.

Regional Employment Opportunities			
Larger Town	Distance	Job Increase %	Live in Dunklin /Arbyrd
Kennett, MO	18 miles	+ 2.7%	127
Paragould, AR	14 miles	+ 5.2%	78
Blytheville, AR	30 miles	+ 16%	44

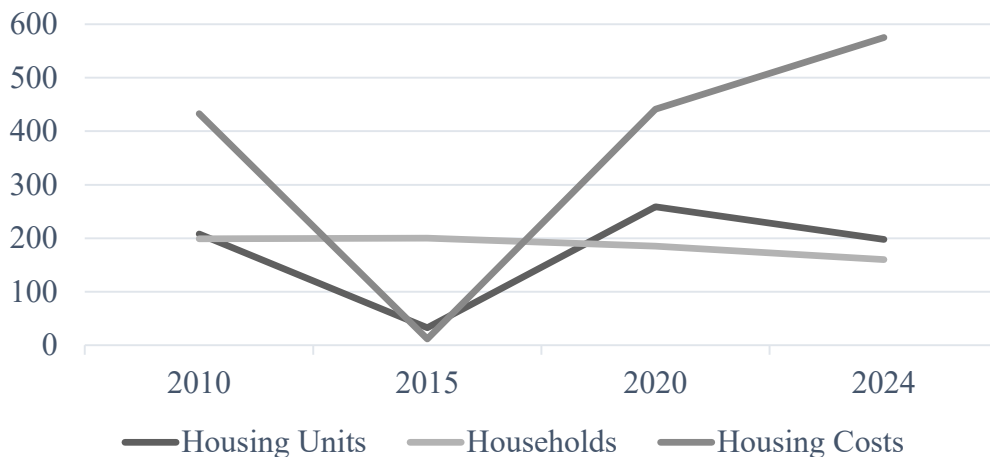
MHI – ACS S1901,
PCI – ACS 1902



Housing

Significant factors that don't help Arbyrd, are the loss of housing units and households, which can contribute to the rise in cost for available housing units.

ACS DP05, ACS S1101, ACS S2503



Housing Market characteristics are comprised largely of home value, household income, mortgage as a percentage of salary, and year the property was built, which all contribute to affordability. The following graphics were pulled from ESRI (2025), ACS (2019-2023) U.S. Census data. In a nutshell, the majority of home values are \$50,000 or less and over 25% of the housing stock was built prior to 1940. An average of 22% of incomes are dedicated to mortgages with the largest percentage of households being 1 or 2 persons. Less than 20% of the available homes in Arbyrd are rentals and there are approximately 44 vacant housing units.



Housing Market Characteristics

Arbyrd, MO
Geography: Place



\$41,818 ↓

Median Home Value

83.8% lower than Missouri
which is \$257,403



350

Housing Affordability
Index



6.2%

Percent of Income
for Mortgage

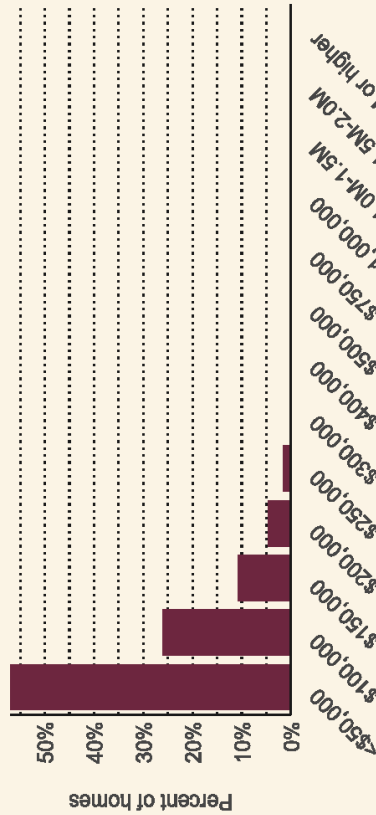


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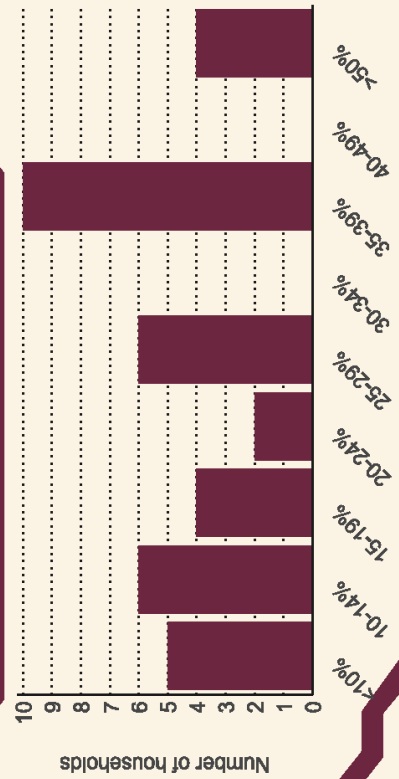
Percent of Income for
Mortgage (Index)

Age <18	81	Age 18-64	230	Age 65+	72	Total Pop	383	Pop Growth	-1.01%	Average HH Size	2.36	Median Net Worth	\$102,693
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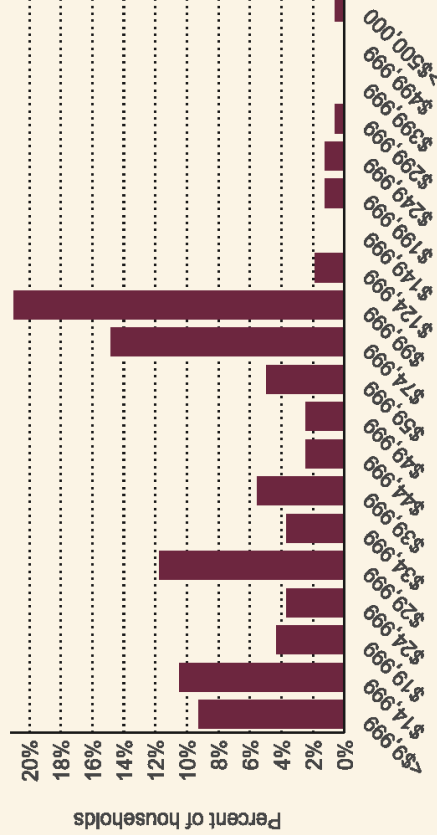
Home Value



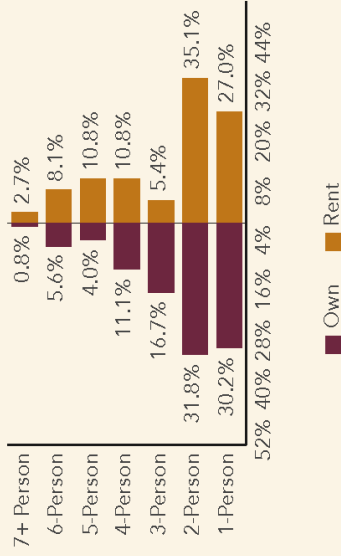
Mortgage as % Salary



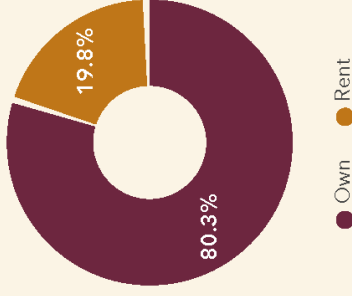
Household Income



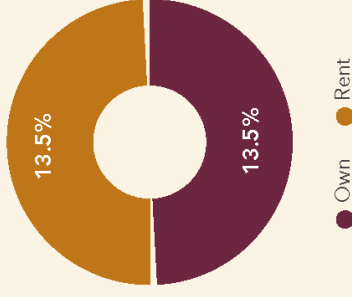
Census Housing by Size



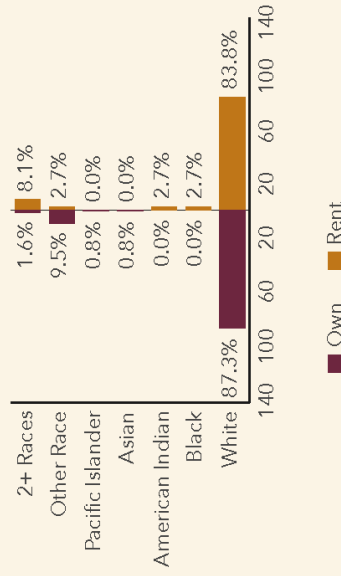
Home Ownership



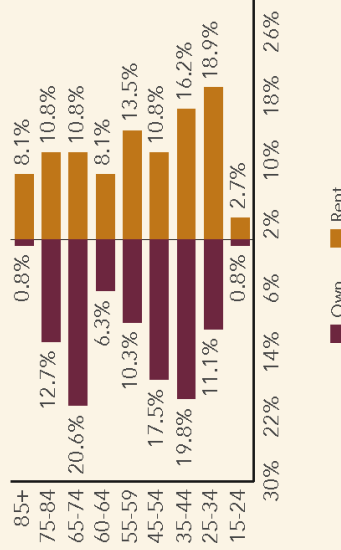
Hispanic Home Ownership



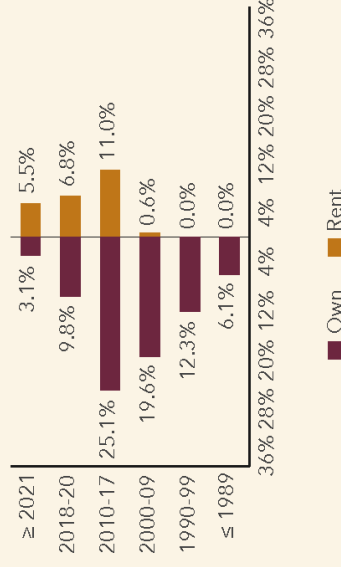
Housing by Race of Householder



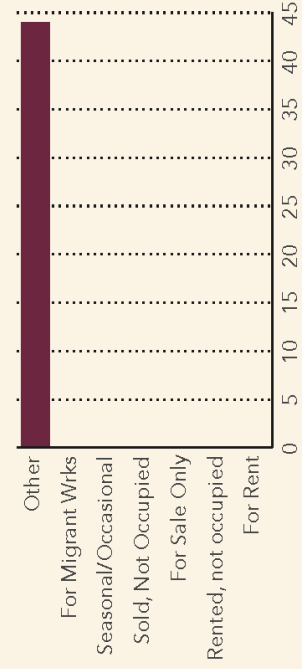
Housing by Age of Householder



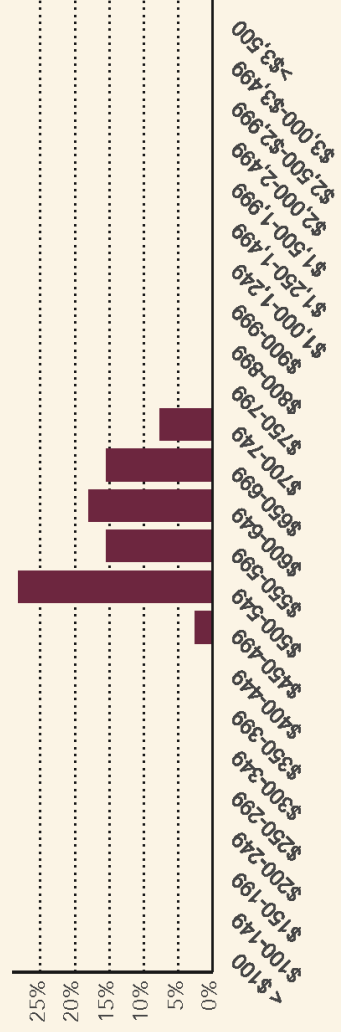
Year Householder Moved In



Vacant Housing Units (Total 44)



Gross Rent



4 | Community Survey What, Why, & How Results



Compilation of photos of area notable places.
Taken from the “Memories of Arbyrd” Facebook page.



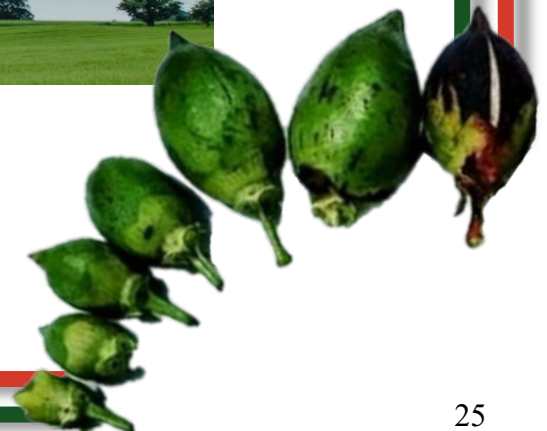
Old Baptist Church



Community Survey

Both a Community Survey and SWOT survey were open contiguously for 6 weeks to allow for as much participation as possible. The digital surveys were made available through a Survey Monkey link and QR code that were included in flyers posted around town and on the City website. Physical surveys were printed and made available to anyone visiting the Arbyrd Municipal Building. No personal information was asked for or recorded during either process and the written comments have been duplicated exactly.

The Community Survey was drafted to be more of a measure of current conditions and opinions on the wellbeing of the community as perceived by those who participated. Normally the questions would be a result of a collaboration with the city, however this version was done quickly to fit in the time allowed for completion of the overall plan.



This survey had 25 respondents. The results are as follows:

Gender:

12 - Male
11 - Female
1 - N/A

Age:

1 - 18-24
2 - 25-34
4 - 35-44
6 - 45-54
4 - 55-64
7 - 65 and older

Occupation:

12 - Retired
3 - Healthcare
1 - Agriculture
1 - Government
1 - Retail
1 - Personal Services
1 - Management
1 - Education
1 - Clerical
1 - Construction
3 - Other: 2 disabled, 1 Mom

Education level:

12 - High School
4 - Some College
5 - Associates
2 - Bachelors'
2 - Masters'

Own or Rent:

19 - Own
3 - Rent

Housing Costs:

3 - Too High
2 - Slightly High
11 - About Right
3 - Slightly Lower
3 - Much Lower

How long have you lived in Arbyrd:

8 - Lifelong
8 - 10 + years
3 - 5-10 years
4 - Less than 5 years

Main Reason you live in Arbyrd:

11 - Family Ties
4 - Love/Like it
2 - Cost of Living
2 - Employment
1 - Schools
1 - Cheap Rent
1 - Spouse's Family

Sense of Pride:

11 - No
8 - No Comment
6 - Yes



Do you own a Business here:

15 - No

2 - Yes

Work in Arbyrd:

15 - No

2 - Yes

For How Long:

1 - 6-10 years

1 - 20+ years

Travel for Work:

1 - Work from Home

4 - 2-10 miles

5 - 11-25 miles

3 - 25+ miles

10 - N/A

Own business property:

2 - Yes

2 - No

One thing that makes this town unique/like the most:

1. Hard working people.
2. I grew up here.
3. Loved seeing kids playing in the streets when we moved here; made it feel safe to raise children.
4. Hometown feel and how everyone knows each other, for the most part.
5. Nothing ever happens here; feels safe for my family.
6. Small town living but close to larger towns for things we don't have here.
7. Friendly people, low crime.
8. The town is normally quiet, especially in the evening.
9. Small population.
10. The people.
11. Housing isn't as crowded as in a bigger city.
12. Quiet.
13. Quiet.
14. It's quiet and most people are friendly.
15. Small.
16. Have family here.
17. It is centrally located, used to be a grocery store and car wash.
18. Friends.
19. Quietness.



Ideal Population in 10 Years:

- 4 - Significantly Higher
- 12 - Slightly Higher
- 6 - Slightly Lower
- 2 - Major Losses

Reason for previous answer:

1. Area needs more population to support schools and business.
2. If the population doesn't grow, the existing won't be able to fund necessary services.
3. I'd love to see Arbyrd grow.
4. Some community elders will pass, but hopefully there will be newcomers.
5. Would like to see the city grow while keeping small town feel.
6. Hoping for growth.
7. Need more housing built for town to grow.
8. No businesses.
9. The area is peaceful and quiet.
10. Nothing here, no businesses.
11. Population has dropped significantly during lifetime indicating no growth and town is dying.
12. Not many people in town anymore.
13. Too many crazies here at the moment.
14. Not enough housing.
15. We have a lot of empty houses and lots.
16. Losing businesses and folks.
17. Town's dying - need more people.
18. I do not see as many people around like I used to, plus the empty houses and lots around Arbyrd that collect dust make it seem emptier than it is.



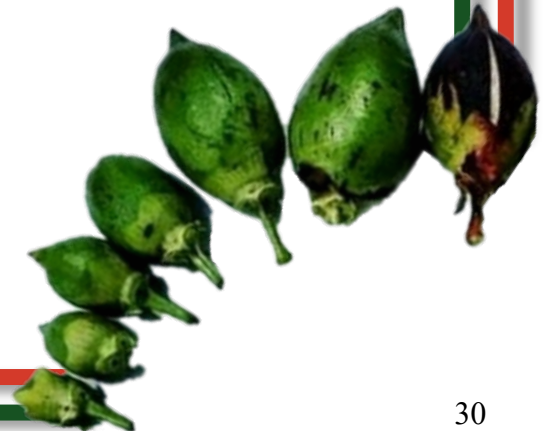
One thing you like the least or is missing from town:

1. Jobs, good revenue.
2. Community support.
3. Places to eat
4. Things for children to do.
5. Not very pretty; needs beautification. Many houses need to be torn down; more housing development like the ones new the park.
Park improvements for kids.
6. Lack of community support.
7. More businesses and housing.
8. Commercial use of 108/164 as shortcut to 412 and ignoring speed limits.
9. Dust bowl, no businesses.
10. School/educational facilities.
11. Having a store and car wash. Town has become rundown due to homeowners not keeping properties clean and maintained. Stray dogs and ones that should be secured in yards. Need a cop and noise curfew. Tear down houses that are falling down.
12. Businesses.
13. We could have less dopers.
14. I dislike the amount of decrepit buildings that either no one lives in or the owner doesn't do proper maintenance. There is never any parades, festivals, or really anything since those apartments got put in.
15. Law enforcement
16. Police.
17. Law enforcement.
18. Police.
19. Store and car wash, city police, and dog pound.
20. Police officer full time, water that does not stink.



Greatest stumbling block(s) faced by Arbyrd:

1. Flood zone; jobs.
2. Space for business growth.
3. Not a good place for children to play. Remodeling downtown would get businesses here and make Arbyrd grow.
4. Not enough funding for town improvements.
5. Financial.
6. people to invest in housing and businesses.
7. Lack of full-time police force to deal with stray dogs and speeders and enforce laws.
8. No businesses, no police, no senior services.
9. Financial due to water and wastewater issues.
10. People not caring enough to do much about making Arbyrd better.
11. Economy and no community pride.
12. The quality of water is bad. Every 2 months I have to change my water filter that's supposed to last at least 6 months because of all the debris, rust, and god knows what else.
13. Need more clean ditching all over town. culverts cleaned out all over town. Water that does not smell.
14. Housing.
15. Income & police.
16. Money
17. Money
18. Low/no enforcement, no/few businesses.
19. Funding.



Concern for current conditions and levels of service (25 respondents)

Crime/Safety/Law

Enforcement:

- 1 - Not at all
- 5 - Slightly
- 2 - Somewhat
- 7 - Moderately
- 10 – Extremely

Code Enforcement/ Prop Maintenance:

- 3 - Not at all
- 3 - Slightly
- 5 - Somewhat
- 3 - Moderately
- 11 – Extremely

Fire Protection:

- 7 - Not at all
- 7 - Slightly
- 3 - Somewhat
- 3 - Moderately
- 5 – Extremely

Natural Hazard protection:

- 6 - Not at all
- 6 - Slightly
- 6 - Somewhat
- 4 - Moderately
- 3 - Extremely

Business Opportunities

- 2 - Not at all
- 1 - Slightly
- 3 - Somewhat
- 3 - Moderately
- 16 - Extremely

Shopping Opportunities:

- 1 - Not at all
- 2 - Slightly
- 3 - Somewhat
- 4 - Moderately
- 15 – Extremely

Downtown:

- 0 - Not at all
- 2 - Slightly
- 6 - Somewhat
- 4 - Moderately
- 12 - Extremely

Employment Availability:

- 3 - Not at all
- 2 - Slightly
- 4 - Somewhat
- 1 - Moderately
- 15 - Extremely



Affordable/Available Housing:

2 - Not at all
2 - Slightly
5 - Somewhat
6 - Moderately
8 - Extremely

Grade School(s):

10 - Not at all
4 - Slightly
3 - Somewhat
4 - Moderately
3 - Extremely

Adult/Vocational Training:

7 - Not at all
2 - Slightly
3 - Somewhat
7 - Moderately
5 - Extremely

Water System/Services:

5 - Not at all
2 - Slightly
4 - Somewhat
4 - Moderately
10 - Extremely

Sewer & Drainage Services:

9 - Not at all
1 - Slightly
5 - Somewhat
3 - Moderately
7 - Extremely

Trash & Recycling Services:

13 - Not at all
5 - Slightly
3 - Somewhat
1 - Moderately
2 - Extremely

Power Services:

14 - Not at all
5 - Slightly
1 - Somewhat
2 - Moderately
3 - Extremely

Communication:

4 - Not at all
4 - Slightly
7 - Somewhat
2 - Moderately
6 - Extremely

Broadband & Internet Availability:

15 - Not at all
4 - Slightly
2 - Somewhat
1 - Moderately
3 - Extremely

Internet Access:

14 - Not at all
3 - Slightly
4 - Somewhat
0 - Moderately
3 - Extremely



Roadway Conditions:

2 - Not at all
2 - Slightly
10 - Somewhat
4 - Moderately
6 - Extremely

**Sidewalks, Pedestrian
& Bike Paths:**

4 - Not at all
6 - Slightly
4 - Somewhat
3 - Moderately
6 - Extremely

Leaders & Leadership:

1 - Not at all
4 - Slightly
5 - Somewhat
5 - Moderately
10 - Extremely

Hazard Mitigation:

6 - Not at all
6 - Slightly
6 - Somewhat
4 - Moderately
3 - Extremely



Level of Importance for Quality of Life Elements (25 respondents)

Quality Schools/Training:

10 - Very Important
4 - High
7 - Average
1 - Low
2 - Not Important

Employment Opportunities:

14 - Very
2 - High
5 - Average
1 - Low
2 - Not Important

Quality Health Care:

14 - Very Important
2 - High
6 - Average
1 - Low
1 - Not Important

Low Cost of Living:

13 - Very Important
6 - High
6 - Average
1 - Low
1 - Not Important

Live Close to Shopping/Services:

10 - Very Important
4 - High
8 - Average
1 - Low
2 - Not Important

Sidewalks & Bike Paths:

6 - Very Important
2 - High
9 - Average
2 - Low
6 - Not Important

Public Transportation:

5 - Very Important
0 - High
9 - Average
4 - Low
7 - Not Important

Affordable Housing:

13 - Very Important
5 - High
5 - Average
0 - Low
2 - Not Important

Safe Neighborhoods:

16 - Very Important
3 - High
3 - Average
0 - Low
1 - Not Important



Smooth Roads & Drainage:

15 - Very Important

4 - High

3 - Average

0 - Low

1 - Not important

Parks & Recreation**Activities:**

13 - Very Important

4 - High

5 - Average

2 - Low

1 - Not Important

**Youth Services & Safe
Playgrounds:**

13 - Very Important

4 - High

6 - Average

1 - Low

1 - Not Important

Senior Services & Programs:

11 - Very Important

6 - High

5 - Average

1 - Low

2 - Not Important



Picture of an Arbyrd cotton field retrieved from the
“Memories of Arbyrd” Facebook page.



5 | **SWOT Survey (Strengths, Weaknesses,
Opportunities, and Threats)**
What, Why, & How
Results



The new Arbyrd Municipal Building and Fire Station with the Water Tower peeking over.



5 | **SWOT Survey (Strengths, Weaknesses,
Opportunities, and Threats)**
What, Why, & How
Results



SWOT Analysis and Survey Results

The information below is compiled from the meeting on March 14th, 2026 and from the online and paper surveys. I've also integrated the Community Survey results and comments as they were applicable to this overall process. All the data is sorted below. The point of these surveys and discussions was two-fold: to get a better feel of what is perceived in your community (there are always surprises), and to plan for future resiliency and economic growth for the City of Arbyrd.

Strengths:

From the meeting and homework:

- City Clerk (Flora Smith) (x2)
- Central location to larger regional towns (Paragould, Kennett)
- New Grocery Store (revenue)
- City Library
- Land Availability
- Wastewater System
- Fire Protection Services/Equipment
- Municipal Building
- Broadband Internet access
- Free internet access through Library
- Ballfield (leased, revenue)
- Daycare
- Home-based businesses

From Survey: (20 Responses Tallied)

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----|--------------------------|---|
| • Low Crime Rate | 12 | • Senior Services | 2 |
| • Regional location | 11 | • Small Business/retail | 2 |
| • Highway Access | 11 | • Clean/code enforcement | 2 |
| • Low Utility Rates /COL | 9 | • Religious Institutions | 2 |
| • People & Values (culture) | 8 | • Job Availability | 1 |
| • Internet/Broadband | 8 | • Good Housing | 1 |
| • Good City Services | 6 | • Lodging | 1 |
| • Sense of Community | 6 | • Access to Healthcare | 1 |
| • Good public Infrastructure | 5 | • Good Hazard Mitigation | 1 |
| • Schools/education/workforce | 4 | | |

Assessment: Infrastructure Strengths are the regional location and highway access followed by a newer Wastewater System, Fire Protection Services, the Municipal Building and City Library, the new Grocery Store, land availability, internet/Broadband availability, and low utility rates.

Economic Strengths are the Grocery Store, location and highway access, updated infrastructure (sewer, fire, gov building), land availability, low crime rates, low cost of living/utility rates, daycare availability, and having a ballfield to lease for revenue. Existential Strengths are the City Clerk, low crime rates, culture and sense of community, and low cost of living.

Summary: The best economic advantages of the city are an updated wastewater system, location/access, newer Municipal Building, City Library, and a few willing people to fill needs and get things done (most notably the City Clerk). Having a low crime rate indicates laws are enforced, but code enforcement was one of the lowest ranked. Low utility rates are always great for the residents and businesses, but how is the city faring without the possible revenue? Considering the low-ranking results of the rest of the infrastructure questions (hazard mitigation, city services, public infrastructure, etc.), it may warrant a Rate Study to see how competitive your rates are and how that potential revenue could impact the city budget. There is city-owned land available, but it is currently let out under lease agreements or set aside for single-family housing projects. The rest of the low-ranking items (lodging, housing, healthcare access, businesses, senior services, and job availability) can be seen as possible Opportunities to focus on for future benefit.

Weaknesses:

From the Meeting and Homework:

- Paving
- Water System
- Drainage
- Finances, Revenues
- Police Dept (staffing, lack of)
- Building Rehab/Demolition
- Park Equipment (Play & Exercise)
- Tornado Shelter
- Viable Business Space
- Affordable Housing & Housing Stock
- Vacant property conversion
- Community Leadership
- Condition of Downtown
- Lack of Lodging, RV sites, Camping
- Lack of new ideas for growth and improvements
- Animal Control (Strays and uncontained)

From the Survey: 23 Responses

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----|---------------------------|----|
| • Tourist Attractions | 21 | • Sense of Community | 13 |
| • Financial resources | 18 | • Emergency Management | 13 |
| • Business Development | 17 | • Adequate Infrastructure | 12 |
| • Recreational Opportunities | 17 | • Industrial Development | 12 |
| • Job Availability | 16 | • Workforce Training | 9 |
| • Youth Services | 16 | • Transportation | 8 |
| • Beautification Efforts | 16 | • Community Facilities | 7 |
| • Public Safety | 15 | • Internet Access | 5 |
| • Appropriate Leadership | 14 | • Recycling & Trash | 4 |
| • Housing Stock | 14 | • Other: Sustainability | 1 |

Assessment: Infrastructure Weaknesses are paving (transportation), drainage and water systems, police department staffing, financial security, business development, beautification/maintenance, adequate infrastructure for growth, emergency management, industrial development, lodging/RV sites/camp sites, and community facilities. Economic Weaknesses are finances, building rehabilitation/demolition, viable business space, housing stock, job availability, appropriate leadership, business development, beautification, youth services, recreational opportunities, park equipment, housing stock, industrial development, and workforce training. Existential Weaknesses include finances, tourist attractions, sense of community, no new ideas, appropriate leadership, and affordable housing.

Summary: The biggest controllable weaknesses of the city revolve mostly around community involvement, infrastructure, and economic instability. Infrastructure in any town is an ongoing maintenance issue that depends on funding, personnel, equipment, and direction. Finding the right balance between the budget and maintenance schedule is one of the hardest things for a city to coordinate and something that most citizens don't have the experience to fully understand. Financial stability can be improved with grant and investment funding for major improvements to lessen the load and cost of repairs and normal activities and allow for saving for emergencies and other needed improvements. Part of the economic infrastructure of Arbyrd that is having the most difficulty is business space and business development, including for lodging, workforce training, healthcare, childcare locations, and youth/senior services. Blighted and dangerous structures should be renovated or removed, and the city could help promote and/or incentivize cleaning, rebuilding and/or making space for new construction. Law and code enforcement require personnel and community support to be effective. Having a lack of a "sense of community" was deemed a community weakness by over 56% of the respondents and implies a need for immediate improvement, perhaps even above all of the others on this list.

Opportunities:

From the Meeting and Homework:

- Funding for projects
- Hwy 412 Expansion
- Annexation to Hwy 412
- Storm/Tornado Shelter
- Traffic Control/Speed Bumps
- Urgent Care
- Health Services
- Senior Services
- Using available land
- Park improvements/equipment
- Project planning
- People Involvement (more diverse)
- Vacant property conversion
- Housing renovation/conversion/demolition
- Promotion as a “bedroom community” to larger towns.
- House Sheriff and EMS substations
- HUD Housing
- Historical Museum
- RV and camp sites (clear night sky views)
- Tree planting

From the Survey:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----|---|---|
| • Business Development | 16 | • Childcare Options | 7 |
| • Bolstering Law & Fire | 15 | • Promote events | 5 |
| • More Housing Options | 13 | • Investing for Cap Imp | 5 |
| • Attract More Industry | 13 | • More healthcare options | 4 |
| • Grant Funding | 13 | • Public Transportation Improvements | 3 |
| • Clean up/code enforcement | 12 | | |
| • Promote local industry | 12 | • Tourism | 3 |
| • Public Infra & Security | 10 | • Sustainability | 2 |
| • More Lodging | 9 | • Other: Blight removal/Demolition & more cultural/arts classes | 2 |
| • Attractions | 9 | | |
| • Workforce training | 8 | | |

Assessment: Infrastructure Opportunities include annexation to Hwy 412 and Hwy 412 expansion, storm/tornado shelter, traffic control/speed bumps, using available land for other opportunities, attracting more industry, attraction sites, park improvements, project planning, bolstering law and fire, Sheriff and EMS substations, clean-up/code enforcement, public infrastructure and transportation improvements and security, and blight removal/demolition. Economic Opportunities are annexation to Hwy 412 and Hwy 412 expansion, traffic control, urgent care/healthcare services, senior services (and youth), using available land, planning, business and industrial attraction and development, clean-up/code enforcement, lodging and housing, promotion of events/tourism, workforce training, investments and grant funding, HUD Housing, an historical museum, promotion as “bedroom community” to larger towns, and sustainability options. Existential Opportunities are grant funding and investing, more diverse people involvement, develop and create attractions, tourism, and childcare options.

Summary: The noted opportunities available revolve around community involvement and engagement, bringing in small businesses and keeping shopping local, and finances. Annexation is a great way to expand economic opportunities and tax base, and there should be a plan as to what to do with that land once obtained. Bolstering law enforcement and fire requires funding and community support and participation. Providing business spaces, either via open land to build or renovated structures to buy or lease, is needed for economic and community sustenance and growth. Tourism related activities (events, attractions, outreach), in conjunction with lodging and businesses, are seen as a general need for the community. Based on the lack of participation with the survey and committee, there may be an opportunity for community outreach activities to get more people involved in the success and continuation of the community.

Threats or Challenges:

From the Meeting and Homework:

- Weather/Natural Hazards
- Drivers (speeding/distracted)
- External Economy
- Addiction Rates
- Lack of Funding/Revenue
- Inflation
- Declining Population
- No incentive for migration to Arbyrd
- Revenue security
- Tax rates on commercial/industrial properties
- Capitalization on sellable assets

From the Survey: (Lack of)

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----|--------------------------|---|
| • Lack of Funding | 13 | • Land Availability | 7 |
| • Senior Services | 12 | • Lack of Ownership | 6 |
| • Youth Services | 11 | • Natural Disaster | 6 |
| • Forward Thinking | 10 | • Water/sewer/drainage | 5 |
| • Beautification Efforts | 8 | • Politics | 4 |
| • Business development | 7 | • Too internally focused | 4 |
| • Recognition of weaknesses | 7 | • Outside influences | 4 |
| • Community Cooperation | 7 | • Adverse regulations | 3 |

Assessment: Infrastructure Threats include natural hazards, fluctuations in the global and regional economy, lack of funding or revenue, and inflation. Economic Threats include natural hazards, fluctuations in the global and regional economy, lack of funding or revenue and security of funding sources, lack of forward thinking, lack of capitalization of sellable assets, tax rates on commercial and industrial properties, lack of business development, lack of youth & senior services, inflation, adverse regulations, and politics. Existential Threats include speeding and distracted drivers, addiction rates, declining population, beautification efforts, lack of recognition of weaknesses, community cooperation, lack of ownership/responsibility for good, bad, and community pride, politics, and being too internally focused.

Summary: There was an unknown issue with the online survey that only allowed respondents to pick one option instead of several, so the data is skewed. Eleven people responded with one option each, one person clicked Other and noted one available option, and twelve people used paper surveys. The noted Threats to Arbyrd were a lack of funding and incoming revenue security, natural weather and hazards, external economy, inflation and politics. Additional threats that could be influenced both internally and externally include a loss of population, a perceived lack of forward thinking and lack of ownership/responsibility, recognition of weaknesses, lack of youth and senior services, land available for capitalization, business development, and community cooperation.

6 | **Goals & Objectives**
Process & Focus
Community Character
Public Facilities & City Services
Financial Stability



Process & Focus

During the short curation of this plan, the Citizens' Advisory Committee has determined a few citizen, community, and infrastructure goals for the City of Arbyrd within the following categories. This is not an exclusive list of possible projects to be pursued in the coming years and several projects overlap categories, providing a broader economic improvement advantage.



Community Character

Code Enforcement, Property/Building Maintenance, and Beautification were consensus sticking points with the community members who participated in the surveys and Advisory Committee. A large part of that process will be to encourage improvement, renovation, or demolition of existing business and residential structures. Several options were discussed to encourage community participation in this process vice being the sole responsibility of the city government. Part of the discussion included existing city code, code enforcement, and police efforts.

Potential Projects:

Community clean up days that include transportation and recycling of larger items like appliances and vehicles. This would include communication with the solid waste company that services Arbyrd and a vehicle scrap hauler. Potential benefits of participation included monetary incentives.

Building Demolition or Remodel, of both residential and business structures, would enhance the City's ability to attract more business and population, thus potentially providing economic sustenance through diversity. A lack of business space and housing stock, both single and multifamily dwellings, were noted in the meetings and surveys.



Potential Projects:

Beautification efforts include fresh paint, remodeling, property clean up, new plantings of plants, flowers, and trees, enhancing community spaces, including new park equipment and expanding the number of green spaces in city limits for community use. The city will work with the community to plan improvements that require community participation to achieve success.

Seeking Grant Funding for incentivizing community improvements. Various federal, state, and private entities offer rotational grants to assist in the cost of demolition and renovation of structures for economic and community development. Work with regional and state agencies to confirm notification of available opportunities, then taking advantage of appropriate opportunities.



Public Facilities

While the Fire Department and Sewer system have seen recent improvements, the community was vocal regarding water quality, storm water drainage, ditch maintenance, Police and code enforcement, paving, parks, and recreational opportunities. Some of these areas have had recent improvements and others could benefit from more attention.

Potential Projects:

One process that will assist the city assess potential financial resources is a utility rate study. This free study provided by the Missouri Rural Water Association (MRWA) will look at current and past utility rates enacted by the city and compare with repair and maintenance needs and rates at comparable cities in the region.

A proposed drainage project will increase the health and safety of local residents by converting steep sided drainages along major routes to covered culverts. This would eliminate open standing storm water that encourages mosquitoes and other potential health issues and remove a physical hazard to pedestrians and vehicles.



Potential Projects:

A recommendation made was to host a **Sheriff substation** in town. This could provide for conversion of the local police office to primarily code enforcement, while still provide police services if a county deputy was unavailable. It would also help increase law enforcement visibility which could influence other aspects like speeders on the roads, loose animals, vandalism and littering, etc.

A **Housing Study** would help the city to identify the condition of properties, areas of blight and abandonment, and areas that are ripe for development along with the possibilities of what would be available based on those spaces.

A possible option for review would be to apply certain **ordinance and zoning** measures. Potential zoning options would include lot size requirements, structure and fencing setbacks, dedicated set asides for green and park spaces, and legal compliance measures.



Financial Stability

One of the major concerns of both the Advisory Committee and the survey respondents was funding for projects and overall financial stability. During the committee meetings several possible options were discussed regarding sustainability and grant funding.

Potential Projects:

A concern of the city involved the handling of the Arbyrd Community Development Corporation (ACDC) funds. A possible improvement would be to look to investing funds in the ACDC accounts which would provide a formal dedication separate from regular city funds. A possible investment opportunity would be with the regional Community Foundation. This would allow the ACDC to invest profits made so as to earn more substantial interest vice sitting in a bank. This investment could then be grown and used, as needed, to assist in funding larger community projects.

Grant funding is available through many federal, state, and private sources. Finding the right fit for a proposed project is where the research comes in. The Bootheel Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) was created by state statute to help fill that purpose. Acting as the regional Economic Development District (EDD) and working with all regional entities to provide Hazard Mitigation Plans and economic development planning, they have access to numerous federal and state funding agency notification portals and are available to assist with potential project scoping and applications for funding.

