

Bella Vista 2040 Plan Progress Report

A resident focused review of progress priorities and unfinished work

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Prioritizing Our Residents

A Message to Bella Vista Residents

BLUF (Bottom Line Up Front)... Bella Vista is successfully becoming larger. The question is whether we are becoming the kind of larger city the 2040 Plan envisioned. We have made real progress, but growth in homes and population is moving faster than several of the economic, infrastructure, and coordination systems intended to support it.

In 2020, Bella Vista adopted a twenty-year comprehensive plan. It was not simply a forecast of more people and more houses. It described a city with strong neighborhoods, identifiable activity centers, safe connections, productive development, reliable public services, protected natural character, a resilient tax base, and organizations working together.

Six years later, it is fair to ask what has been accomplished, what remains unfinished, and whether the pace of implementation matches the pace of growth. This report is my answer. It gives credit for real progress, identifies gaps without exaggeration, and explains how the plans I have already presented can help move the adopted vision forward.

This is not an argument against growth. It is an argument for prepared growth. I want Bella Vista to plan ten and twenty years ahead so that roads, water, sewer, public safety, services, and revenues are ready before pressure becomes crisis.

The 2040 Plan belongs to the community. It should not sit on a shelf. It should be translated into assignments, funding decisions, timelines, and public measures that residents can follow.

How to Read This Report

Each section begins with a bottom line up front. It then summarizes the original direction, the evidence of progress, the unfinished work, and the part of my governing blueprint that responds to it. Status labels are planning judgments, not political grades.

The Overall Picture

Area	2026 Direction	What Residents Should Know
Population and housing	Rapid growth	Ahead of the pace anticipated for many supporting systems
Trails and recreation	Strong progress	One of the clearest successes
Public safety facilities	Meaningful progress	Staffing apparatus and future coverage remain under pressure
Planning and code modernization	Substantial work underway	Results must be measured by what is built and how well the process works
Activity centers and commercial growth	Partial progress	A major unfinished part of the vision
Roads and transportation	Ongoing progress	Long range maintenance and capacity funding remain critical
Water and wastewater	Fragmented responsibility	A coordinated long range strategy is still essential
Fiscal resilience	Current strength with future risk	Growth costs and revenue productivity need clearer forecasting
City and POA coordination	Some cooperation	Structural fragmentation remains a central barrier

1. Growth and the 2040 Test

BLUF: Bella Vista has grown faster than many residents expected. Population and homebuilding are not failures of the plan, but they raise the standard: every supporting system must now catch up and stay ahead.

The 2020 Census counted 30,104 Bella Vista residents. The Census Bureau estimated 34,518 residents by July 2025, an increase of about 14.7 percent in five years. Regional planning now projects approximately 39,700 residents in 2040 and more than 44,000 by 2050.

The 2040 Plan did not define success as reaching a population number. It described what Bella Vista should look and function like as those residents arrive. That is the correct test.

Progress

- Bella Vista remains an attractive place to live and invest.
- Residential construction has responded strongly to demand.
- Planning and development regulations have been undergoing modernization.

What remains

- Connect annual development decisions to twenty-year forecasts for infrastructure, staffing, and capital costs.
- Publish growth indicators in one place so residents can see whether capacity is keeping pace.
- Measure balanced development, not residential volume alone.

My plan

My governing blueprint requires every growth-sensitive department to maintain a twenty-year planning model, updated annually. My first 100 days would establish a verified baseline covering population, permits, infrastructure condition, staffing, service demand, capital needs, and revenue. Growth should never surprise City Hall.

2. Land Use Activity Centers and Strong Neighborhoods

BLUF: Strong neighborhoods have expanded, but the network of neighborhood centers, village centers, community destinations, and trail-side businesses envisioned in 2040 remains one of the largest unfinished pieces.

The plan organizes Bella Vista around three connected ideas: neighborhoods, activity centers, and natural space and recreation. Residential construction has been robust. The harder work is creating resident-serving places where people can shop, eat, work, gather, and obtain services without leaving Bella Vista.

Activity centers are not just attractive planning concepts. They are part of the financial model. They can shorten trips, create destinations, support entrepreneurs, and capture taxable spending that now leaves the city.

Progress

- The city has pursued zoning and development-code reform.
- The adopted framework identifies different types and scales of activity centers.
- Bella Vista has strong recreation assets around which appropriate commercial opportunities can grow.

What remains

- Identify which centers are actually moving from a map to construction.
- Resolve access, ownership, infrastructure, and development barriers site by site.
- Use measurable targets for commercial square footage, local services, jobs, and tax productivity.

My plan

I will direct a site-specific Activity Center Readiness Program. For each priority location, the city should identify ownership, access, utility capacity, road needs, approvals, market fit, and the responsible negotiating partners. As Mayor, I will serve as Bella Vista's Chief Negotiator to bring the city, POA, property owners, utilities, developers, and regional partners to the same table.

3. Economic Development and the Tax Base

BLUF: Bella Vista has created demand, but it still needs to capture more of the spending generated by residents and visitors. Residential growth alone is not the resilient tax base described in the plan.

The 2040 Plan directly warns that limited goods and services send resident spending to surrounding communities. Census data reported about \$116.4 million in 2022 retail sales, or roughly \$3,671 per resident. That figure does not by itself measure leakage, but it reinforces the need for a formal market and revenue analysis.

Bella Vista has succeeded in attracting visitors through trails and outdoor recreation. The next step is converting more of that activity into city revenue through dining, lodging, retail, services, events, and appropriate trail-oriented development.

Progress

- Bella Vista has built strong resident and visitor demand.
- Trails and outdoor recreation have created a recognizable regional destination.
- Planning reforms can support more varied commercial and mixed-use opportunities.

What remains

- Measure how much residents and visitor spending leaves Bella Vista.
- Turn identified activity centers into market-ready commercial locations.
- Connect economic recruitment to infrastructure capacity, community character, and net city revenue.

My plan

- Create a targeted business-recruitment strategy based on what residents currently purchase elsewhere.
- Build trail-side and destination business opportunities that fit Bella Vista's character.
- Evaluate projects for long-term tax productivity and cost to serve.
- Refocus tourism spending toward investments that help visitors spend money inside Bella Vista, subject to legal authority and Council action.
- Pursue a stronger recurring revenue base before asking residents for higher tax rates.

4. Roads Transportation and Connectivity

BLUF: Bella Vista is working on roads, but residents still need a funded long-range answer for maintaining more than 550 miles of paved roadway while growth adds traffic and service demands.

The 2040 Plan calls for safe connections, context-appropriate streets, and improved residential safety. The Street Department has completed meaningful resurfacing and work orders. The remaining management question is whether annual preservation, reconstruction, and capacity investment are sufficient to prevent a widening backlog.

A balanced annual budget does not automatically mean the road network is fully funded. Roads are long-life public assets. Their condition and future cost should be measured, forecast, and published.

Progress

- The Street Department has completed substantial resurfacing and maintenance work.
- Regional transportation planning now evaluates future demand through 2050.
- Major outside funding has helped deliver important transportation connections.

What remains

- Establish a verified condition baseline for the entire road and bridge network.
- Determine the annual funding needed to prevent the maintenance backlog from growing.
- Plan capacity, safety, drainage, and emergency access around expected population and development.

My plan

- Complete a citywide pavement and bridge condition inventory.
- Build a public ten-year preservation and reconstruction schedule.
- Establish an annual funding target based on condition and lifecycle cost.
- Coordinate traffic, drainage, utilities, emergency access, and development decisions.
- Evaluate dedicating a portion of unrestricted growth revenue to growth infrastructure.
- Publish a road dashboard showing condition, projects, funding, and results.

My standard is simple: measure the road, calculate the need, fund the plan, and publish the results. Preserve before we are forced to rebuild.

5. Water Supply and Fire Protection

BLUF: Water is essential infrastructure, yet the city does not independently control the system that must support future development and fire protection. Bella Vista needs a verified twenty-year water strategy and an honest evaluation of future governance options.

The 2040 vision depends on infrastructure-supported development. Bella Vista's unusual structure means land-use decisions, water service, and long-range supply are not controlled by one organization. That makes cooperation and negotiation indispensable.

My proposal is not for the city to simply take an asset from the POA. It is to determine whether Bella Vista's most essential infrastructure should evolve with Bella Vista, and whether city ownership, control, partnership, or another structure offers residents the strongest long-term protection.

Progress

- Bella Vista has an established water system serving current residents and development.
- Water approval is already incorporated into the development process.
- The importance of coordination between land use, utilities, and fire protection is increasingly clear.

What remains

- Verify long-range supply, storage, pressure, fire-flow, and replacement needs.
- Clarify how water investment will be coordinated with the city's growth and land-use decisions.
- Evaluate future governance options with full financial and legal due diligence.

My plan

- Launch an independent Phase 1 feasibility and due-diligence study.
- Verify assets, liabilities, capacity, water sources, rates, capital needs, easements, debt, and legal authority.
- Model demand and fire-flow needs through at least 2040 and 2050.
- Negotiate transparently with the POA and other water partners.
- Protect residents with rate, service, debt, and governance safeguards before any transaction.
- Publish findings before asking decision-makers or residents to support a final structure.

6. Wastewater and Productive Development

BLUF: Wastewater availability remains fragmented and geographically limited. Without a coordinated expansion strategy, the city cannot fully deliver the concentrated and productive development envisioned in 2040.

Some properties connect to wastewater service while others rely on onsite systems and state approval. That patchwork affects density, commercial feasibility, environmental protection, and where activity centers can realistically develop.

Progress

- Existing wastewater service supports portions of Bella Vista.
- Current development requirements identify wastewater or onsite-system approvals.
- The 2040 productivity strategy recognizes that development must be supported by infrastructure.

What Remains

- Create a complete public picture of service areas, capacity, condition, and expansion constraints.
- Align wastewater planning with activity centers and other priority growth areas.
- Identify a financially responsible path for expansion, partnership, or acquisition.

My Plan

- Map existing service, remaining capacity, unserved priority areas, and projected demand.
- Identify which activity centers and corridors depend on wastewater expansion.
- Complete engineering, legal, operational, and financial due diligence on expansion and potential acquisition options.
- Create a phased capital plan tied to growth and economic value.
- Seek grants, developer participation, and partnerships before placing the full burden on current residents.

7. Fire EMS and Police

BLUF: Bella Vista has made substantial public-safety facility investments, but rising population and call volume require the city to plan staffing, apparatus, stations, and coverage years before gaps become emergencies.

The Glasgow Road fire station, Public Safety Facility, and Fire Training Tower are significant accomplishments. The 2024 State of the City reported 4,339 fire and EMS calls in 2023, an eight percent increase from the prior year. Facilities matter, but they do not answer every future staffing and equipment question.

Progress

- Bella Vista completed major police and fire facility investments.
- The Glasgow Road fire station and Fire Training Tower strengthened operational capacity.
- Public-safety employees continue serving a rapidly growing population and rising call volume.

What Remains

- Match staffing and apparatus replacement to workload and population forecasts.
- Determine future station locations and timing before coverage gaps grow.
- Show residents the long-range funding plan for personnel, equipment, fleet, and facilities.

My plan

- Adopt five-year staffing models based on workload, geography, response time, and population.
- Publish apparatus age, replacement windows, reserve capacity, and funding plans.
- Use response-time and coverage analysis to determine station timing and land needs.
- Include police, fire, EMS, dispatch, training, fleet, and facilities in the twenty-year capital plan.
- Protect public safety from reactive budgeting and deferred replacement.

The Bella Vista Firefighters Union endorsed my candidacy after reviewing my preparedness and public-safety priorities. I consider that support both an honor and a responsibility to deliver a serious, measurable plan.

8. Trails Recreation and Visitor Economy

BLUF: Trails and recreation are among the strongest areas of alignment with the 2040 Plan. The next challenge is protecting that success while capturing more economic benefit for residents and city services.

Bella Vista has built a powerful outdoor identity and benefited from major trail investment and regional connectivity. That is a genuine success. But attracting visitors and capturing visitor spending are different outcomes.

Progress

- Trail construction and connectivity closely match the adopted 2040 vision.
- Outside grants and partnerships have leveraged substantial investment.
- Bella Vista has developed a strong outdoor-recreation identity.

What Remains

- Measure how much visitor activity becomes local taxable spending.
- Develop appropriate dining, lodging, retail, and trail-side opportunities.
- Protect neighborhoods, natural character, and public-safety access as visitation grows.

My plan

- Protect trail quality, natural character, neighborhood compatibility, and emergency access.
- Measure visitor spending, lodging, dining, retail activity, and city revenue instead of marketing reach alone.
- Pursue trail-oriented businesses and carefully selected community destinations.
- Reinvest tourism-related revenue into assets and experiences that generate recurring local economic activity..

9. Building Permits and Development Service

BLUF: The 2040 Plan already called for a clearer process without duplicative applications or functions. Bella Vista should now deliver one resident-facing process even when legal authority remains divided behind the scenes.

Residents, builders, and businesses can encounter city, POA, ACC, utility, and state requirements. Each organization may have a legitimate role, but the applicant should not be expected to become the coordinator among them.

Progress

- The 2040 Plan recognized the need to remove duplication and simplify development.
- The city has added capacity and pursued planning and code modernization.
- City and POA processes already identify many of the approvals applicants must obtain.

What remains

- Create one understandable resident-facing pathway across separate authorities.
- Improve consistency, predictability, status communication, and accountability.
- Measure the experience from initial application through final inspection.

My plan

One Resident. One Application. One Point of Contact. The city and POA can retain their lawful responsibilities while coordinating intake, status, information, and review. The POA can focus on community character and private-covenant matters; the city can focus on health, safety, infrastructure, codes, inspections, and municipal authority.

- **Publish clear checklists, timelines, contacts, and approval dependencies.**
- **Measure review time, rework, inspection consistency, and applicant satisfaction.**
- **Give employees training, authority, and support to deliver elite customer service.**
- **Create predictable interpretations and an escalation path for difficult cases.**
- **Use technology to let applicants see status without chasing multiple offices.**

10. Natural Character and Quality of Life

BLUF: Bella Vista’s natural setting remains one of its defining strengths. Growth should be shaped to protect that character, not treated as an excuse to freeze the city in place.

The plan’s emphasis on natural space, recreation, and context-sensitive development remains visible in Bella Vista’s identity. The challenge is translating that identity into consistent decisions about drainage, slopes, tree cover, neighborhood transitions, trails, road design, and commercial sites.

Progress

- Bella Vista’s natural setting remains central to its identity and appeal.
- Trail and greenway planning reinforces connections to natural and recreational spaces.
- Code modernization creates an opportunity for standards tailored to Bella Vista’s terrain and character.

What remains

- Apply predictable standards consistently as development accelerates.
- Coordinate drainage, slopes, roads, utilities, tree protection, and neighborhood transitions.
- Track whether growth is preserving the qualities residents value most.

My plan

- Use predictable development standards instead of subjective surprises.
- Connect stormwater, road, utility, and land-use review early in the process.
- Concentrate on appropriate development where infrastructure can support it.
- Protect residents from preventable downstream impacts.
- Measure preservation and development outcomes rather than relying on slogans.

11. Fiscal Resilience and Financial Productivity

BLUF: Bella Vista has reported strong current finances, but the 2040 test is whether today's growth produces enough durable revenue to maintain tomorrow's infrastructure and services.

Current balances and annual surpluses matter. So do long-term obligations, deferred maintenance, staffing needs, fleet replacement, and the cost of serving dispersed growth. The city needs a financial operating system that connects the annual budget to a twenty-year future.

Progress

- Bella Vista has reported positive operating results and meaningful reserves.
- The city has successfully used outside funding for major projects.
- Existing budgets, audits, and reports provide a strong foundation for long-range forecasting.

What Remains

- Connect annual budgets to five-year operations and twenty-year capital needs.
- Quantify deferred maintenance and the full future cost of growth.
- Make financial information easier for residents to find, understand, and compare over time.

My plan

- Adopt a rolling five-year operating forecast.
- Maintain a twenty-year capital and infrastructure plan.
- Apply a Growth Pays for Growth fiscal-impact standard.
- Establish purpose-driven reserve and debt policies with annual stress testing.
- Build a professional grant pipeline and use technology to identify funding opportunities.
- Evaluate major projects for lifecycle cost, revenue productivity, and cost of doing nothing.
- Publish an annual State of Bella Vista's Finances.

12. Governance City POA and Regional Coordination

BLUF: The 2040 Plan recognized that Bella Vista cannot reach its goals through City Hall alone. Coordination is not a courtesy here; it is a core operating requirement.

The city, POA, utilities, Benton County, ARDOT, regional agencies, developers, and private owners all influence Bella Vista's future. When those organizations plan separately, residents experience the gaps.

Progress

- The 2040 Plan openly identified shared responsibility across public and private organizations.
- Bella Vista has completed projects requiring outside partners and regional coordination.
- City and POA leaders have established working relationships on multiple community issues.

What remains

- Replace issue-by-issue coordination with a recurring strategic agenda.
- Clarify ownership, deadlines, and public reporting for joint priorities.
- Create a reliable process for resolving institutional barriers before residents bear the consequences.

My plan

- Create a recurring City and POA strategic coordination agenda focused on infrastructure, permitting, land, public safety, and resident service.
- Use written responsibilities, deadlines, and public progress updates for joint initiatives.
- Lead regional negotiations on roads, bridges, utilities, grants, and emergency services.
- Represent residents as the city's Chief Negotiator while respecting each organization's legal authority.

13. Transparency Accountability and Implementation

BLUF: The biggest weakness of many comprehensive plans is not vision; it is execution. Bella Vista needs one public scorecard that converts the 2040 Plan into owners, deadlines, measures, funding, and visible results.

Residents should not need to search budgets, meeting packets, plans, and departmental reports to learn whether a major promise is moving. Information can be technically public and still be difficult to use.

Progress

- Bella Vista publishes budgets, audits, plans, agendas, and departmental information.
- The comprehensive plan provides an adopted framework against which progress can be measured.
- City reporting documents many completed projects and operational results.

What remains

- Organize scattered information around the questions residents actually ask.
- Assign every major 2040 action to an owner, schedule, funding source, and result measure.
- Publish consistent updates so residents can distinguish movement from delay.

My plan

- Create a 2040 implementation dashboard with every major action item.
- Identify the lead organization and supporting partners.
- Show status, next milestone, target date, estimated cost, funding source, and result measure.
- Archive prior updates so residents can see whether deadlines move.
- Separate verified facts, estimates, proposals, and items still requiring investigation.
- Report progress annually in plain language.

14. My First 100 Days

BLUF: The first 100 days should turn the 2040 Plan from a periodic reference document into a working management system without disrupting essential services or prejudging professional findings.

Period	Purpose	Resident visible work
Days 1 to 30	Verify the baseline	Meet department leaders and key partners; inventory active 2040 actions; verify population, permits, finances, staffing, infrastructure, projects, and existing commitments.
Days 31 to 60	Assign and forecast	Identify owners and partners; launch the five-year operating forecast, twenty-year capital process, five-year staffing models, road condition program, utility studies, and activity-center readiness review.
Days 61 to 100	Publish and act	Release the first public scorecard, twelve-month implementation calendar, grant pipeline, priority negotiation agenda, and early service improvements.

15. The 2040 Priorities I Will Carry Forward

BLUF: Bella Vista does not need to start over. It needs to finish the strongest parts of the adopted vision, update assumptions where growth has moved faster than expected, and create the management discipline to deliver results.

Priority	Commitment	Meaning
1	Infrastructure before crisis	Roads, bridges, drainage, water, sewer, facilities, and fleet planned across twenty years.
2	Public safety ahead of demand	Staffing, apparatus, stations, and coverage tied to measurable growth and workload.
3	Productive activity centers	Resident services and destination businesses located where infrastructure and community character support them.
4	A stronger tax base	Capture more resident and visitor spending without defaulting to higher tax rates.
5	One coordinated customer experience	Clear permitting and service pathways across divided responsibilities.
6	Transparent implementation	A public scorecard connecting promises, money, deadlines, and outcomes.
7	City and POA partnership	Consistent negotiation and coordination on systems residents depend upon.
8	Natural character protected	Growth shaped to preserve what makes Bella Vista worth choosing.

Closing Commitment

Bella Vista 2040 gave our community direction. The last six years have shown both what is possible and where execution is difficult. We have built important public-safety facilities, strengthened our trail identity, continued road work, welcomed new residents, and modernized planning. We should acknowledge those accomplishments.

We should also be honest: activity centers, commercial development, coordinated utilities, long-range infrastructure funding, streamlined service, and institutional cooperation are not finished. Residential growth has moved faster than several of those systems.

My commitment is to turn the plan into action residents can see. Plan twenty years ahead. Give employees clear expectations and the tools to succeed. Negotiate across organizational boundaries. Protect taxpayer dollars. Publish the results. Correct course when the evidence requires it. And place residents first in every decision.

Prepared growth is the path to preserving Bella Vista.