

# Comprehensive Plan Update



## Issue Action Report



City of Lawrence  
Douglas County  
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES



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# Executive Summary

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## Overview

A comprehensive plan is a document for the community, which states the vision, goals, and policies for the future growth and development of Douglas County and Lawrence. Since 1998, *Horizon 2020* has been the guiding document for the City of Lawrence and unincorporated Douglas County. While there have been many physical, economic, and environmental changes that have occurred during this time, the plan has continued to evolve and adapt with the changing aspects of our community.

While *Horizon 2020* is relevant today, an update is necessary to ensure that the plan remains current with the changing environment of the community and the needs and desires of its citizens. The Comprehensive Plan Update/*Horizon 2020* Steering Committee (Steering Committee) was created by the Douglas County Commission and Lawrence City Commission with the primary focus to guide the process for amending *Horizon 2020*, the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Lawrence and unincorporated Douglas County.

The Steering Committee is charged with overseeing and guiding the process, including public education and issue identification, prioritization of issues to submit to the Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Commission and the Governing Bodies of the City and County for review, and for reviewing the draft and final plan product. This report is the Steering Committee's prioritization of the principal issues that the community has identified to be addressed in the plan update.

## Process

The effort to identify and prioritize these issues began in the spring of 2014, with the commissioning of a county-wide, statistically valid survey by ETC. This was then followed by a county-wide series of nine Open House meetings, which also included a survey component to help refine the issues and priorities of those identified in the ETC survey. Two Public Forums were also held by the Steering Committee in November 2014 to ask residents what they felt should be the strongest priorities of all issues raised through the earlier input processes.

Through those public input processes, additional presentations, correspondence, discussion, and research, the Steering Committee has determined these principal priorities that need addressing for the comprehensive plan to continue to guide growth and development as the residents of Douglas County and Lawrence desire.

The Steering Committee has also developed purpose and vision statements by which to guide development of the plan as follows:

## Purpose / Vision Statement

### Purpose of the Plan

THRIVE is a comprehensive guide that empowers our citizens to make our community vision a reality. It sets the foundation for the type of welcoming and sustainable community we truly want to be. THRIVE reflects resiliency in an ever-changing world (changes that are short term and multi-generational in nature), and recommends goals to promote a high quality of life in both urban and rural settings. It establishes policies that guide our future growth while carefully managing our natural resources, improve public health and safety, and bolster our economic vitality. This plan is a product of substantial community input. It is intentionally flexible through the public amendment process to accommodate future development ideas and innovations that would help achieve the community vision. THRIVE directs growth in a manner that preserves and enhances the heritage and spirit of our community and creates unique places to live, work, learn and play.

### Our Community Vision

The City of Lawrence and rural Douglas County is one of the most desirable places in the United States to call home. A well-educated community with a unique free state spirit, we are diverse, publically engaged, and boldly innovative. We are prosperous, with full employment and a broad tax base. Our development is human-scale and our vibrant and liveable neighborhoods allow people to age in place. We have ample choices for safe, efficient transportation including bicycling, walking and transit. The City's lively and historic downtown attracts residents and visitors for commerce and cultural arts. Our citizens value preserving and enhancing the natural environment for our enjoyment and for future generations. The proximity of rural and agricultural land to the city provides beauty and respite, and we enjoy the economic and health benefits of a robust local food system. We make Lawrence and rural Douglas County a place where creativity thrives, sustainability is a way of life, and community pride is contagious.

<u>We Value</u>
Affordability
Creativity
Education
Health
Innovation
Jobs
Livability
Quality Design
Sustainability

## Our Vision Will Create and Maintain:

### **Live:**

- Places and neighborhoods that encourage healthy living for all ages.
- Neighborhoods that are compact, walkable, diverse, and connected, providing for all ages and incomes.
- A convenient and efficient multi-modal transportation system that provides for choice and flexibility and reduces automobile reliance.
- Growth in a fiscally and environmentally responsible manner with the goal of using existing infrastructure and in-fill opportunities before opening new areas for development.
- Preservation and celebration of our rich history, along with new places with unique character.

### **Work:**

- Investment in a growing population with diverse economic opportunities, including local businesses, new primary employers, and thriving creative arts and entrepreneurial communities.
- A robust agricultural sector valued for its economic, health, and cultural contribution, including the emerging local and regional food system.
- Integrated communications networking technology that supports local business, education and entrepreneurship, providing the opportunity to compete globally.

### **Learn:**

- World-class universities that are integrated into the cultural fabric of the local community.
- Strong network of public and private schools that strive for excellence in education and attract new residents to the community.
- Dedication and access to high-quality lifelong learning.
- Investment in alternative vocational and training opportunities, such as The Dwayne Peaslee Technical Training Center and the Lawrence College and Career Center.

### **Play:**

- A thriving mix of activity centers, schools and parks/trails within walking and biking distance of residential uses.
- Conservation, preservation and measured use of our finite natural resources and open space.
- A historic downtown with diverse uses that is the cultural and commercial heart of the region.
- Creative arts and cultural heritage as integral components of community identity.

## Issues

The existing *Horizon 2020* document provides clear and strong guidance on many of the issues that are priorities to the community today; however, several issues identified through the Steering Committee input process have little to no policy strength, or are in need of reviewing due to the community's changing needs and desires.

The following is a summary matrix of the identified issues of importance to the community along with the existing policy strength within *Horizon 2020*. Detailed analysis of each issue below is continued on the following pages.

	Issue	Horizon 2020 Existing Policy Strength
1	Enhance Readability of Plan	Low
2	Maintain a Strong & Stable Downtown	High
3	Address Quality Housing for All Incomes	Low
4	Protect Natural Resources	High
5	Preserve Historic Buildings & Structures	Medium
6	Create Quality Neighborhoods for All Ages	Low
7	Create Employment Opportunities	High
8	Managing the Future Lawrence Growth	Medium
9	Plan For the Size & Location of Retail Development	Medium
10	Provide Opportunities for Small Neighborhood Retail	Medium
11	Encourage In-Fill Development	Medium
12	Consider Increasing Height/Density in Appropriate Locations	Low
13	Enhance Agricultural Uses & Rural Character in Douglas County	Medium
14	Encourage/Support Local Food System Development	Low
15	Enhance Sidewalks/Trails/Walking Paths	High
16	Plan For and Provide Arts & Cultural Amenities	Low
17	Enhance Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety	High
18	Maintain a Strong System of Parks, Recreation, and Open Space	Medium
19	Enhance the Transportation Network	High

The issues in need of the greatest attention in the plan update, due to low policy strength in the current plan, are listed below. Action steps are included under each issue on the following pages.

1. Create Employment Opportunities
2. Enhance Readability of Plan
3. Address Quality Housing for All Incomes
4. Plan For & Provide Arts & Cultural Amenities
5. Consider Increasing Height/Density in Appropriate Locations
6. Encourage/Support Local Food System Development
7. Create Quality Neighborhoods for All Ages
8. Update the Parks & Recreation Master Plan

## Issue 1: Enhance Readability & Track Performance of the Plan

### **Analysis & Discussion:**

Throughout the public input phase the accessibility of the plan's information and readability of the document itself has been a highly requested change in the future product.

**Steering Committee Summary Position:** Creating a comprehensive plan that is accessible, concise, and clearly written is a goal of both the community and of the Steering Committee. Ensuring the document is readily available in multiple platforms is integral to increasing the accessibility of the plan so that members of the public can locate answers to their questions. Creating a plan that is accessible in both content and delivery are paramount priorities of this revision.

Horizon 2020 Existing Reference: Document-wide

Horizon 2020 Existing Policy Strength: **Low II** While the current document does contain a sizeable amount of information and detail, the depth and scale of the information make the document hard to read for residents, applicants, and for users unfamiliar with the plan. This detail and scale of information also make the document become dated quickly, difficult to reconcile, and confusing for the intermittent reader.

### **Action Steps:**

- 1.1 Work towards the creation of a document that is digitally enabled, graphically interesting, and accessible. (Entity Responsible: Planning, Information Technology)
- 1.2 Create more interactive mapping capabilities. (Entity Responsible: Planning, GIS)
- 1.3 Prioritize readability for all users. (Entity Responsible: Planning)
- 1.4 Update data annually in demographics. (Entity Responsible: Planning)
- 1.5 Track progress on achieving the policies and goals of the final document via measureable performance metrics. (Entity Responsible: Planning)



## Issue 2: Maintain a Strong & Stable Downtown

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### Analysis & Discussion:

Downtown is the cultural center of Lawrence and is thriving. The public placed an emphasis on maintaining Downtown as a strong and stable part of the economy and culture of Lawrence.

**Steering Committee Summary Position: A key point of emphasis even before the adoption of *Horizon 2020*, the stability and resiliency of Downtown Lawrence is vital in both the cultural, social, as well as economic base of our community. Ensuring the continued momentum of Downtown Lawrence is a key issue, while also ensuring its continued progress, is fundamental.**

Horizon 2020 Existing Reference: *Horizon 2020*: Chapter 6: Commercial Land Use, 11: Historic Resources

Horizon 2020 Existing Policy Strength: **High II** For the City of Lawrence and rural residents alike, the Downtown area has been the cultural heart of the community for many decades. The continued return on the decades' worth of investment remains a major priority. This issue was identified throughout *Horizon 2020*, and its continued development and community role is still as vital today. Equally as important is how Downtown Lawrence should change and grow to continue to meet the community's needs and expectations for the future.

### Action Steps:

- 2.1 Continue the biennial Retail Market Study; possibly expand Downtown's study to include residentially used spaces to determine the households located within the area. (Entity Responsible: Planning, Downtown Lawrence, Inc.)
- 2.2 Involve key Downtown stakeholders in the city's cultural arts plan and other future plans to maintain Downtown Lawrence as the cultural centerpiece of the city. (Entity Responsible: Cultural Arts, Planning)
- 2.3 Encourage public and private investment in appropriate planning and development of the riverfront, especially as it relates to Downtown Lawrence. (Entity Responsible: City of Lawrence, Planning, Downtown Lawrence, Inc.)
- 2.4 Complete an objective study of Downtown Lawrence parking and markets effects. (Entity Responsible: City of Lawrence, Planning, Stakeholders)
- 2.5 Encourage the activation of alleys when possible to provide a safer, more viable place for people and strengthen economic opportunities for businesses. (Entity Responsible: Planning, Public Works, Utilities)

## Issue 3: Address Quality Housing for All Incomes

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### **Analysis & Discussion:**

One of the highest priorities registered in the surveys and throughout the county during the public input phase, the Steering Committee has determined that this is an issue that needs further research and analysis to best determine a future course of action.

**Steering Committee Summary Position:** Housing issues can be very complex, and are not highly addressed within the existing comprehensive plan. As one of the items with the highest amounts of public comment and input, the Steering Committee feels that this is a major issue that must be addressed in a thoughtful and inclusive manner. Options to address this should be based on data and all stakeholders should be invited to participate in finding solutions.

*Horizon 2020 Existing Reference:* Horizon 2020: Chapter 4 (partial): Growth Management, 5 (partial): Residential Land Use

*Horizon 2020 Existing Policy Strength:* **Low II** While *Horizon 2020* does provide guidance on developing and locating residential land use, it does not provide guidance on the economics or cost of housing for residents. With changes seen in both urban development and with the volatile conditions in the economy, there has been a steady increase in the effect housing price has had on personal and the regional economy.

### **Action Steps:**

- 3.1 Study affordable housing needs and develop policies to address the identified needs, including developing a contextually-specific definition of affordable housing for both the City of Lawrence and unincorporated Douglas County. (Entity Responsible: Affordable Housing Advisory Board, Community Development)
- 3.2 Incorporate the findings of the Affordable Housing Advisory Board into the comprehensive plan to provide guidance on this issue. (Entity Responsible: Planning, Planning Commission, City Commission, County Commission, Stakeholders)

## Issue 4: Protect Natural Resources

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### Analysis & Discussion:

With the recent adoption of Chapter 16 – Environment within *Horizon 2020*, the overall opinion is this portion of the document is valid for continued future use and should be reincorporated into the document. With accurate data and recent study of best management practices, the key for the future of this item will be applying the existing action steps that are outlined in the present document.

**Steering Committee Summary Position: With the recent and on-going work involving this issue, the Steering Committee felt it would be best to incorporate the work of the recent Chapter 16 update, while including the County Resources Survey information to help form a complete study of the community's available natural resources. The continued implementation of the existing Environment action items were encouraged at this time.**

Horizon 2020 Existing Reference: *Horizon 2020*: Chapter 16: Environment

Horizon 2020 Existing Policy Strength: **High II** Chapter 16 of *Horizon 2020* was adopted into the existing comprehensive plan in 2011 and is detailed in both study and prescription for the action steps. Implementation of these action steps is viewed as the practical continuation of this chapter for future use.

### Action Steps:

- 4.1 Incorporate the policies of the currently adopted Environment chapter into the new plan and continue to implement the existing action steps and goals outlined within the Environment Chapter. (Entity Responsible: Planning)
- 4.2 Monitor regulatory language for changes that would impact policies and goals of the comprehensive plan. (Entity Responsible: Planning)
- 4.3 Review and bolster existing water conservation policies within the Comprehensive Plan. (Entity Responsible: Planning)
- 4.4 Add policies based upon the adopted Climate Protection Task Force Report. (Entity Responsible: Planning)

## Issue 5: Preserve Historic Buildings & Structures

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### Analysis & Discussion:

Similar to value and sense of community the rural county provides to our community, the buildings and places that span generations also provide a strong sense of place and history for both residents and visitors. The understanding and value of these places to the community is identified in *Horizon 2020*, and vigilant study and conservation of these places provides a multi-faceted benefit to all residents.

**Steering Committee Summary Position: The expansion of this portion of the comprehensive plan should include the recent and continued study of resources in the unincorporated Douglas County.**

*Horizon 2020 Existing Reference:* *Horizon 2020*: Chapter 5 (partial): Residential Land Use, 6: Commercial Land Use, 11: Historic Resources

*Horizon 2020 Existing Policy Strength:* **Medium II** A dedicated chapter for Historic Resources has been a part of the existing document, and a revision was started. The continued study and revision of this section to meet changes in the state statutes and continued surveying of cultural and architectural assets should be included.

### Action Steps:

- 5.1 Continue updating and cataloging of these resources throughout Douglas County. (Entity Responsible: Planning, Historic Resources Commission, Douglas County Natural and Cultural Heritage Conservation Council)
- 5.2 Study trends and development in both preservation economics and markets to understand how to encourage and develop adaptive reuse of these places. (Entity Responsible: Planning, Historic Resources Commission, Douglas County Natural and Cultural Heritage Conservation Council, Planning)
- 5.3 Include the draft Historic Resources chapter in the adoption process for the new comprehensive plan document. (Entity Responsible: Planning)

## Issue 6: Create Quality Neighborhoods for All Ages

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### Analysis & Discussion:

Widely considered to be one of the fundamental building blocks of the community, the neighborhood's role both in the community's composition and in the comprehensive plan is a vital one. The level of detail and study provided to the neighborhoods within *Horizon 2020* is not as well defined as the community desires at this time.

**Steering Committee Summary Position:** Neighborhoods for all ages are the essential building block of our community and the Steering Committee feels that this unit of the community is important to expand and include within the context of the community's comprehensive plan. Many of the issues identified in this report can be seen throughout the community, but are also present in scale at this integral neighborhood unit.

*Horizon 2020 Existing Reference:* *Horizon 2020:* Chapter 4: Growth Management, 5: Residential Land Use, 6: Commercial Land Use, 8: Transportation, 9 (partial): Park, Recreation, Open Space Areas and Facilities

*Horizon 2020 Existing Policy Strength:* **Low** || Neighborhoods play a fundamental role in the formation of the community, as well as in the function of the community as a whole. As people look more towards their neighborhoods to provide for their daily shopping and activities, focusing on how they can become more universal in their design and their amenities will grow in importance in the coming years.

### Action Steps:

- 6.1 Study and define the aspects and details to best address the longer-term need and desires of neighborhoods in the larger community context. (Entity Responsible: Planning, Community Development)
- 6.2 Incorporate neighborhood planning into the long-term work plan for Area/Sector Plans. (Entity Responsible: Planning)
- 6.3 Study and develop incentives for projects that implement best practices and that follow the neighborhood plans as adopted. (Entity Responsible: Community Development, Planning, Parks & Recreation, MPO)

## Issue 7: Create Employment Opportunities

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### Analysis & Discussion:

Throughout the public input phase and during discussions of the Steering Committee, the makeup and health of the primary and secondary employment markets has been a constant topic that arose at all stages and throughout the various public input events.

**Steering Committee Summary Position:** Creating a diverse range of employment opportunities was one of the foremost issues raised during the public input process. While *Horizon 2020* provides depth and guidance on this item, it is clearly an issue of high concern for the community in all facets that needs addressing moving forward.

Horizon 2020 Existing Reference: *Horizon 2020*: Chapter 7: Industrial and Employment-Related Land Use, 12: Economic Development

Horizon 2020 Existing Policy Strength: **High II** The prominence of Downtown Lawrence as a commercial and cultural commodity is strongly worked into *Horizon 2020* at present, as is the need to grow the community's industrial base. However, *Horizon 2020* needs stronger alignment to other more recent strategic plans, such as the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce that support growing local businesses, as well as a comprehensive review of where large-scale primary employers should locate within the planning period.

### Action Steps:

- 7.1 High tech infrastructures such as fiber, telecoms, etc. are vital to a prosperous economic future. Create policies to support the community's high-tech infrastructure needs. (Entity Responsible: City of Lawrence, Douglas County)
- 7.2 Identify strategies, such as a dedicated economic development funding source, to help attract, develop, and retain employers, including an emphasis on growing green jobs. (Entity Responsible: City Commission, County Commission, Economic Development Corporation, Chamber of Commerce)
- 7.3 Study various potential incentives to help promote Downtown Lawrence as a place of employment. (Entity Responsible: Planning, Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce)
- 7.4 Ensure policies that support and grow local small to medium sized businesses. (Entity Responsible: Small Business Facilitator, Planning)
- 7.5 Evaluate the current inventory of large-acre lots in the region and the needs of large-scale primary employers, and develop a strategy to provide development-ready sites to this sector of employers. (Entity Responsible: Economic Development Corporation, Planning)

## Issue 8: Manage Future Lawrence Growth

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### Analysis & Discussion:

Throughout the community, the concern over managing Lawrence's growth has been seen in numerous ways. From concerns about loss of prime soils to infrastructure development and maintenance costs, ensuring socially and economically responsible growth of the urban areas has been a theme throughout the planning process. The means have varied; but throughout the public input process how Lawrence grows and how that is guided has been a key concern for both city and county residents since the mid-1970s.

**Steering Committee Summary Position: Ensuring the cohesive and efficient growth of the urbanized portions of the community is important to many other issues identified, such as rural land management, density, infrastructure investment, and transportation considerations.**

Horizon 2020 Existing Reference: *Horizon 2020*: Chapter 4: Growth Management, 5: Residential Land Use, 6: Commercial Land Use, 7: Industrial and Employment-Related Land Use, 8: Transportation, 12: Economic Development

Horizon 2020 Existing Policy Strength: **Medium II** *Horizon 2020* was adopted with a Growth Management chapter that establishes the Urban Growth Area, and the corresponding Service Areas. As Douglas County and Lawrence have grown in the 17 years since their adoption, the expectations on infrastructure, environmental considerations, and farmland needs have changed.

### Action Steps:

- 8.1 Evaluate the existing Urban Growth Areas to align with adopted Sector Plans, growth trends, and expected infrastructure trends in the community. (Entity Responsible: Planning)
- 8.2 Continue further Sector/Area Planning efforts, and work to refine existing Sector/Area Plans to encourage uniformity in document design and mapping symbology. (Entity Responsible: Planning, GIS)
- 8.3 Study tax base implications and economic considerations for growth management strategy. (Entity Responsible: Planning, Utilities)
- 8.4 Evaluate the existing service areas to determine their relevance for future growth. (Entity Responsible: Planning)

## Issue 9: Plan For the Size & Location of Retail Development

### **Analysis & Discussion:**

In many respects, this issue can be taken as a representation of many other items brought forward by the public throughout the input process. Policies requiring the monitoring of the retail sector help to encourage the use of existing commercial/retail areas, thereby utilizing existing infrastructure investment; fostering growth management, and working to keep neighborhood commercial spaces activated.

**Steering Committee Summary Position:** A particular issue that was common throughout both the public input phase, and also the discussion of the Steering Committee, to ensure the overall health of the various markets throughout the community. The Steering Committee determined that incentives should be studied to encourage retail development in locations that best fit the community and utilize the community's existing infrastructure and investments. The Steering Committee believed the current policies and retail market study program were serving the community well as a way to maintain a healthy retail market.

*Horizon 2020 Existing Reference:* *Horizon 2020:* Chapter 4 (partial): Growth Management, 6: Commercial Land Use, 12 (partial): Economic Development

*Horizon 2020 Existing Policy Strength:* **Medium II** Aspects of this issue can be seen throughout the *Horizon 2020* document and it does echo many of the issues that are still being cited today.

### **Action Steps:**

- 9.1 Study incentives that would be desirable to encourage and foster redevelopment in existing commercial/retail areas within the City of Lawrence and unincorporated Douglas County. (Entity Responsible: Planning)



## Issue 10: Provide Opportunities for Small Neighborhood Retail

### **Analysis & Discussion:**

Throughout the recent history of Douglas County & Lawrence, most commercial/retail areas have been developed as part of larger commercial/retail center, locating at major nodes throughout the community. However, there is a desire in the community for some daily provisions and necessities to be available to residents without the need to travel to one of the major commercial centers within our community.

**Steering Committee Summary Position: As part of the discussion regarding density and the changing patterns of housing and ownership seen throughout the greater real estate market, the Steering Committee recognized that the inclusion of commercial/retail spaces within existing and future neighborhoods is a use that many residents see as beneficial to the overall sense of community.**

*Horizon 2020 Existing Reference:* Horizon 2020: Chapter 4 (partial): Growth Management, 6: Commercial Land Use

*Horizon 2020 Existing Policy Strength:* **Medium II** Chapter 6 of Horizon 2020 does note the presence of these commercial locations, but it was envisioned at the time that the concentration of retail/commercial activities would be into auto-centric centers. Retooling portions of the document to better support neighborhood retail activities could strengthen today's preference for this type of use.

### **Action Steps:**

- 10.1 Study design standards and guidelines to help create context-sensitive commercial/retail establishments. (Entity Responsible: Planning)
- 10.2 Work to identify modifications to the City of Lawrence Land Development Code to increase the opportunities for these establishments to develop within the existing development patterns of the community. (Entity Responsible: Planning)
- 10.3 Review and revise adopted Sector Plans as needed to align with new policies adopted with the new code sections. (Entity Responsible: Planning)

## Issue 11: Encourage Infill Development

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### Analysis & Discussion:

Many times, the most efficient resource is the one that is already present. With this in mind, promoting infill development and redevelopment over new greenfield development both encourages revitalization of neighborhoods when appropriate and capitalizes on the existing infrastructure investment of Lawrence & Douglas County.

**Steering Committee Summary Position: Any policy that is created to help address this issue must be clearly articulated to eliminate discrepancies in relation to this item. The preferred method to help stimulate infill development as a preferred means should be incentive-based and contextually appropriate for the area receiving the development.**

*Horizon 2020 Existing Reference:* *Horizon 2020:* Chapter 4: Growth Management, 5: Residential Land Use, 6: Commercial Land Use, 7: Industrial and Employment-Related Land Use

*Horizon 2020 Existing Policy Strength:* **Medium II** While some policies indirectly address promoting infill development, there are others that encourage the utilization of existing infrastructure and promote the continued use of existing commercial centers and nodes.

### Action Steps:

- 11.1 Study similar examples to identify the optimal policy language to fit our community's needs. (Entity Responsible: Planning)
- 11.2 Study trends and identify policies related to emerging housing alternatives. (Entity Responsible: Planning, Consultant)

## Issue 12: Consider Increasing Height/Density in Appropriate Locations

### **Analysis & Discussion:**

The understanding that growth is going to continue occurring in the community is at the heart of this multi-faceted issue, but one that is crucial to many of the other issues listed in this report. Since 1980, household sizes in Lawrence have decreased 10%, while overall population density decreased 6.5%. During this same time, the acreage of Lawrence has grown by 15%. Seeing the need for changes in the form of development that is typical, both the Steering Committee and Public Input shows there is a concern about continued sprawl development and views increasing height/density in appropriate locations in the community as a method of managing sprawl.

**Steering Committee Summary Position:** The Steering Committee recognizes that that growth will be a continued part of our community and that it will likely change how Lawrence & Douglas County will further grow and develop. The Steering Committee supported pursuing policies that would allow increased height and density in appropriate areas of the community to accommodate a growing population.

*Horizon 2020 Existing Reference:* Horizon 2020: Chapter 4: Growth Management

*Horizon 2020 Existing Policy Strength:* **Low** || The policies of the existing comprehensive plan are mixed in terms of growth management. While sprawl is discouraged, other policies establish low-density and height criteria by which to grow, which can challenge anti-sprawl policies. With recent economic and market changes, the comprehensive plan should include language to adequately consider changes within the existing urban footprint of the City of Lawrence to accommodate denser, taller areas in appropriate locations.

### **Action Steps:**

- 12.1 Determine appropriate locations for increased height and density and develop policies to encourage such development. (Entity Responsible: Planning)

## Issue 13: Enhance Agricultural Uses & Rural Character in Douglas County

### **Analysis & Discussion:**

Farming of the land and the character of unincorporated Douglas County are primary components for our community. The combination of these items into one issue ensures that they both are studied and addressed in tandem, ensuring the studies, policies, and goals work to ensure they stay a vital part of our community's character and heritage.

**Steering Committee Summary Position:** The Steering Committee recognizes that this issue is vital to the current way, and quality, of life that is vibrant in our community. The role that agriculture and rural character play in both our economy, as well as the quality of life is an invaluable part of what defines our community. Policies to preserve and conserve high quality farmland should be maintained in the new comprehensive plan.

*Horizon 2020 Existing Reference:* Horizon 2020: Chapter 4: Growth Management, 7: Industrial and Employment-Related Land Use, 9 (partial): Park, Recreation, Open Space Areas and Facilities, 16: Environment

*Horizon 2020 Existing Policy Strength:* **Medium II** One of the key foundational aspects of our community's heritage and economy, the existing document does identify the value of the resource, and includes protections and measures to help ensure its continued role in our region.

### **Action Steps:**

- 13.1 Incorporate by reference the master plan created by the Food Policy Council when adopted. (Entity Responsible: Planning, Food Policy Council)
- 13.2 Work with the unincorporated County residents to identify resources, development possibilities, and amenities to enhance and strengthen the rural economy. (Entity Responsible: Food Policy Council, Sustainability Coordinator, Planning, Economic Development Corporation)
- 13.3 Continue to foster economic opportunities through NetWork Kansas. (Entity Responsible: Douglas County, BizFuel Partnership)
- 13.4 Study and develop land use options to permit and encourage conservation subdivisions within the Urban Growth Area. (Entity Responsible: Douglas County, Planning)

## Issue 14: Encourage/Support Local Food System Development

### **Analysis & Discussion:**

A section of the community economy that is developing and new, it is also one that is not adequately addressed within the current context of *Horizon 2020*, or within the community given the presence of “food deserts.” With a great potential impact on both the character of the community, but also the regional economy, the local food system has and will be part of our local culture. As a part of the community’s cultural heritage and a role as a vital part of our economy and resiliency, the continued fostering of the local food system is an issue that needs stronger incorporation into the overall vision for the community.

**Steering Committee Summary Position: While the comprehensive plan can help further overarching policies, the details of a strategic plan should be developed by and maintained with the Local Food Policy Council to tap their expertise and close understanding of the issues, goals, and visions to ensure the master plan is fitting the true needs of the community. The Steering Committee believes that the development of the plan should be conducted by the Local Food Policy Council and incorporated into the comprehensive plan.**

*Horizon 2020 Existing Reference:* *Horizon 2020*: Chapter 16: Environment

*Horizon 2020 Existing Policy Strength:* **Low II** Chapter 16 – Environment of *Horizon 2020* reflects some of the policies related to the local food system, but does not provide a strong policy foundation for this issue.

### **Action Steps:**

- 14.1 Establish policies, goals and objectives to enhance the local food system. (Entity Responsible: Food Policy Council)
- 14.2 Incorporate by reference the master plan created by the Food Policy Council when adopted. (Entity Responsible: Planning)
- 14.3 Work with local food producers to establish a local food hub and adequate farmer’s markets throughout the community. (Entity Responsible: Food Policy Council, Sustainability Coordinator)

## Issue 15: Enhance Sidewalks/Trails/Walking Paths

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### Analysis & Discussion:

While this issue was a high priority for the public in surveys, numerous efforts and advisory committees are working on various aspects of this item; such as filling gaps, creating safe routes to schools, sidewalk maintenance, and recreation paths as examples. The study of these topics at a finer detail by these committees will be weighted by these bodies; therefore, incorporations of their findings and documents into the new comprehensive plan are recommended.

**Steering Committee Summary Position:** The Steering Committee found that this is a topic that nests itself in many other issues that have been included in this report, but singularly important to note because of its ability to change neighborhoods, as well as the community as a whole. Continuing to work and achieve a stronger network of pathways is a goal for many documents throughout the community, and the Steering Committee feels that the comprehensive plan should continue to further this effort.

*Horizon 2020 Existing Reference:* Horizon 2020: Chapter 8: Transportation, 10: Community Facilities, 16 (partial): Environment

*Horizon 2020 Existing Policy Strength:* **High II** Horizon 2020 contains an entire chapter (Chapter 8 – Transportation), which includes bicycle and pedestrian policies, a call for Complete Streets approach to infrastructure development, and taking a long-term analysis of how to ensure the most efficient means of movement for our community.

### Action Steps:

- 15.1 Update the Master Plan for Lawrence Parks & Recreation. (Entity Responsible: Parks & Recreation, Consultant)
- 15.2 Work to further develop recreation paths as transportation corridors and means of movement. (Entity Responsible: MPO, Public Works, Parks & Recreation)
- 15.3 Incorporate by reference the plans and documents that are published by the various advisory boards and committees on bicycle and pedestrian issues, including Transportation 2040 and successive versions. (Entity Responsible: Planning)

## Issue 16: Plan For and Provide Arts & Cultural Amenities

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### Analysis & Discussion:

Cited as one of the key qualities of Lawrence & Douglas County, the arts and culture play a major role in defining the character of our community. Arts & cultural amenities affect the community in numerous ways, including economic impacts, quality of life, and in employment attraction. Ensuring that the comprehensive plan identifies and envisions the expansive role arts & cultural amenities play in our community is integral to a culturally rich community.

**Steering Committee Summary Position:** With a more strategic and focused plan currently being undertaken regarding arts and cultural amenities within the City of Lawrence, the Steering Committee felt that incorporating the forthcoming document would provide a more accurate and encompassing plan than including duplicate work into the comprehensive plan. However, the Steering Committee also determined that including language to further support similar items throughout Douglas County would also be a benefit to the community.

*Horizon 2020 Existing Reference:* Not Available

*Horizon 2020 Existing Policy Strength:* **Low II** With an on-going cultural arts plan, the recommendation for this issue would be to incorporate the findings of the plan by reference into the new comprehensive plan.

### Action Steps:

- 16.1 Complete a Cultural Arts Plan for the City of Lawrence. (Entity Responsible: City of Lawrence, Stakeholders)
- 16.2 Incorporate the Cultural Arts Plan when complete into the comprehensive plan. (Entity Responsible: Planning)
- 16.3 Complete and incorporate the East Ninth Work Plan (9<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Plan) into the comprehensive plan. (Entity Responsible: City of Lawrence, Stakeholders, Planning)

## Issue 17: Enhance Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety

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### Analysis & Discussion:

The economic and planning emphasis towards a more multi-modal community is a priority of the public and local government agencies. Promoting the creation of safe bicycle and pedestrian spaces was highly encouraged throughout the public input, and has been a key item in the community for many years.

**Steering Committee Summary Position:** This particular issue has policy support from numerous existing documents and from a variety of organizations and bodies. However, the Steering Committee felt it important to plan beyond the current program and anticipate changes that are likely in a longer-term future.

Horizon 2020 Existing Reference: *Horizon 2020*: Chapter 4 (partial): Growth Management, 8: Transportation, 10: Community Facilities, 16 (partial): Environment

Horizon 2020 Existing Policy Strength: **High II** The strength for this particular issue is principally driven from *Horizon 2020's* incorporation of *Transportation 2040* into the comprehensive plan document. Given the depth and detail at which transportation is reviewed and planned for in that document, the continued linking of these two documents should be continued. However, it could be supplemented with the findings and recommendations from the many advisory boards and committees currently studying this issue.

### Action Steps:

- 17.1 Continue the strong link between *Transportation 2040* and the comprehensive plan to ensure coordinated transportation planning efforts and land use planning efforts. (Entity Responsible: MPO, Planning, Public Works)
- 17.2 Update the Lawrence Parks & Recreation Master Plan. (Entity Responsible: Parks & Recreation)
- 17.3 Incorporate the plans and recommendations from the advisory boards and committees to strengthen support for this issue. (Entity Responsible: MPO, Planning, Public Works, Parks & Recreation)



## Issue 18: Maintain a Strong System of Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

### **Analysis & Discussion:**

Both a valued community amenity and a component of the transportation network, these spaces provide a far greater return to the community than simply being green space. Besides having transportation and recreation value, they also have economic development benefits, and can provide a variety of services including local food production and environmentally-sensitive land conservation.

**Steering Committee Summary Position:** The Steering Committee recognized the intrinsic value that these resources have, not just to residents, but also to visitors and to the economy as a whole. Encouraging further cooperation and development of these spaces provides a key long-term benefit for local users and for the community as a whole. Ensuring this system is maintained adequately, and developed further, is an item that needs a strong vision for the future. The Steering Committee was presented information from the Parks & Recreation Department that the Parks & Recreation Master Plan is in need of a major update and the Steering Committee looks forward to reviewing the outcome of this effort.

*Horizon 2020 Existing Reference:* *Horizon 2020:* Chapter 9: Parks, Recreation, Open Space Areas and Facilities, 10: Community Facilities, 16 (partial): Environment

*Horizon 2020 Existing Policy Strength:* **Medium II** The value of parks and open spaces was recognized throughout the existing document, but the wishes and needs of the community have evolved in the years since its adoption. Updating the master plan for the parks system, and incorporating that document into the comprehensive plan would ensure that a thorough, proactive plan is established for the continued growth of these resources in our community.

### **Action Steps:**

- 18.1 Determine the best method for locating and acquiring future park land in the Urban Growth Area and in unincorporated Douglas County. (Entity Responsible: Parks & Recreation)
- 18.2 Update the Master Plan for Lawrence Parks & Recreation. (Entity Responsible: Parks & Recreation, Consultant)
- 18.3 Include linear parks and other connections into Transportation planning studies and efforts. (Entity Responsible: MPO, Planning)
- 18.4 Identify desired open spaces and a program that funds the protection and/or acquisition of these locations for the future enjoyment of the community. (Entity Responsible: Parks & Recreation, Douglas County, Planning)

## Issue 19: Enhance the Transportation Network

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### Analysis & Discussion:

Numerous regional plans and studies have been incorporated into both the existing comprehensive plan, as well as the regional transportation plan. These plans require that the community take a multi-modal approach to the transportation network.

**Steering Committee Summary Position:** It is the position of the Steering Committee to consider items beyond *Transportation 2040* and consider the ancillary items that can have a direct effect on the overall transportation of the region, not just our community. The Steering Committee understands that many outside influences will have an effect on the transportation network in the coming years, including technology and an ever-evolving shift in transportation mode preference.

Horizon 2020 Existing Reference: Horizon 2020: Chapter 4: Growth Management, 5: Residential Land Use, 6: Commercial Land Use, 7: Industrial and Employment-Related Land Use, 8: Transportation, 12: Economic Development

Horizon 2020 Existing Policy Strength: **High II** The incorporation of *Transportation 2040* and its subsequent revisions into *Horizon 2020*, the comprehensive plan maintains strong connections to the requirements of the regional needs and analysis of the transportation network.

### Action Steps:

- 19.1 Continue to work with local governments to further strengthen and support our regional transportation plan. (Entity Responsible: MPO, Planning)

# Appendix

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ETC Institute: Findings Report for a Statistically Valid Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

Open House Survey Results

Public Input Analysis Report

Public Forum Analysis Report