

MINUTES OF A MEETING

Thursday, June 23, 2011 – 4:30 p.m.

County Administration Building – Room 200

* * *

CALL TO ORDER

The Citizens Visioning Committee met in regular session on the date and time first shown above, and was called to order by Darcie White, Clarion Associates. Serving as secretary for the meeting, Melissa D. McChesney. A roster of those Committee Members in attendance is appended hereto as Exhibit 1.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MAY 26, 2011

MOTION MADE AND SECONDED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING CONDUCTED MAY 26, 2011; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

NEW BUSINESS

I. COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The three components of the community outreach events scheduled throughout July and August included: a speaker's bureau, two community forums, and an online survey on the visioning committee website. The speaker's bureau would include members, in any capacity, speaking with people and groups in the community. The four categories included service organizations, business organizations, community groups, and chambers and rotaries. The two community forums would be a larger meeting for the community at-large and a meeting with the Council of Mayors. The project website would include presentation materials and an online survey.

II. DISCUSSION: COMMITTEE REVIEW DRAFT

The visioning committee reviewed the draft annotated report outline, which is appended hereto as Exhibit 2. The revisions suggested by the committee will be added to the draft report.

III. NEXT STEPS

The coordinating subcommittee would meet, refine the draft according to the suggested changes, and compile the materials for the community outreach events. The visioning committee will present an update to the Board of County Commissioners on Thursday, July 28, 2011.

IV. FUTURE BUSINESS

The next regular meeting of the Citizens Visioning Committee will be Thursday, September 29, 2011, at 4:30 p.m. at the County Administration Building in Room 200 located at 111 S. Cherry Street, Olathe.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to be presented, the meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

* * *

Respectfully submitted,


MELISSA D. McCHESNEY

Citizens Visioning Committee**Attendance Roster****June 23, 2011****4:30 p.m.**

Gary Anderson
Mike Armstrong
Michael Boehm
Harriet Duff
Megan England
Kevin Fern
Robin Lewis
Larry Meeker
Tom Raby

Kurtis Ruf
Carol Sader
Blake Schreck
Lee Urban
Joe Waters
Jack Wagner
Ron Wimmer
Karen Wulfkuhle

**Johnson County 2030: Living Our Vision
Committee Review Draft: June 17, 2011**

Acknowledgements

CITIZENS VISIONING COMMITTEE

Megan England—First District
Gary Anderson—Financial Services Industry
Tom Are—Faith-based Institutions
Mike Armstrong—Utilities
Steve Baru—Sierra Club
Michael Boehm—Council of Mayors
Mike Brown—Third District
Terry Calaway/Dana Grove—Johnson County
Community College
Sara Corless—Homebuilders Association
Ed DeSoignie—Heavy Constructors
Harriet Duff—League of Women Voters
Kevin Fern—Second District
Mark Greene—Persons with Disabilities
Karl Hansen—District Attorney Nominee
Ellen Hanson—Sheriff's Designee
Christopher Iliff—Planning Commission
Charles Jean-Baptiste—Community Diversity
Larry Meeker—Council of Mayors
Larry McClain—Judiciary

Merdad Kalantari—Community Diversity
Robin Lewis—Sixth District
Andrew Nave—Fourth District
Elaine Perilla—Nonprofit/Volunteer Agencies
Tom Raby—Taxpayers Association
Rod Richardson—Unincorporated Areas
Kurtis Ruf—Fifth District
Carol Sader—Older Adults/Senior Citizens
Tom Saul—Commercial Development
Blake Schreck—Chambers of Commerce
Arthur Smith—Homes Association
Mary Tearney—Arts & Humanities
Lee Urban—Youth/Young Citizens
J. Joseph Waters—County Executive
Management Team
Jack Wagner—Hospitals/Healthcare Industry
Ron Wimmer—Education
Esther Valladolid Wolf—Community Diversity
Karen Wulfkuhle—Social Services

COORDINATING SUB-COMMITTEE

Gary Anderson
Mike Armstrong
Harriet Duff
Ellen Hanson
Rod Richardson

Blake Schreck
Lee Urban
Ron Wimmer
Karen Wulfkuhle

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Ed Eilert, Chairman
C. Edward Peterson, District 1
Jim Allen, District 2
David A. Lindstrom, District 3
Jason Osterhaus, District 4
Michael Ashcraft, District 5
Calvin Hayden, District 6

(List of former BOCC members and chair to be added)

COUNTY STAFF

Hannes Zacharias, County Manager
Bernice Duletski, Deputy County Manager
Penny Post-Oak Ferguson, Assistant County Manager
Josie Stramberg, Management and Budget Analyst
Melissa McChesney, Deputy Clerk of the Board

CONSULTANT TEAM

Benjamin Herman
Darcie White
Greg Dale

Contents

- Preface..... 1**
- Introduction..... 3**
 - Purpose of the Visioning Process..... 3
 - Process Overview 3
 - How is This Document Structured?..... 4
 - Challenges and Opportunities 6
- Vision and Themes..... 9**
 - Our Vision 9
 - Themes 10
- Economic Vitality 11**
 - Why is this Important? 11
 - What are the Challenges and Opportunities?..... 11
 - Our Vision 12
 - What Will it Take to Achieve Our Vision in This Area?..... 12
 - Recommended Actions..... 13
 - Possible Indicators to Track Our Progress 13
- Excellence in Education..... 15**
 - Why is this Important? 15
 - What are the Challenges and Opportunities?..... 15
 - Our Vision 16
 - What Will it Take to Achieve Our Vision in This Area?..... 16
 - Recommended Actions..... 17
 - Possible Indicators to Track Our Progress 17
- A Safe, Healthy, and Caring Community..... 19**
 - Why is this Important? 19
 - What are Challenges and Opportunities? 19
 - Our Vision 21
 - What Will it Take to Achieve Our Vision in This Area?..... 21
 - Recommended Actions..... 22
 - Possible Indicators to Track Our Progress 23
- A Sustainable Pattern of Growth..... 25**
 - Why is this Important? 25
 - What are the Challenges and Opportunities?..... 25
 - Our Vision 27
 - What Will it Take to Achieve Our Vision in This Area?..... 27
 - Recommended Actions..... 28
 - Possible Indicators to Track Our Progress 29
- Efficient and Effective Government 31**
 - Why is this important? 31
 - What are the Challenges and Opportunities?..... 31
 - Our Vision 32
 - What Will It Take To Achieve Our Vision In This Area? 32
 - Recommended Actions..... 33
 - Possible Indicators to Track Our Progress 34
- A Culturally Rich and Active Community..... 35**
 - Why is this Important? 35
 - What are the Challenges and Opportunities?..... 35
 - Our Vision 37
 - What Will it Take to Achieve Our Vision in This Area?..... 37

Recommended Actions..... 38
Possible Indicators to Track Our Progress 38
Priority Actions 39
Tracking Our Progress 41
 Actions and Indicators..... 41
Appendix: Background and Trends..... 45

Preface

INTRODUCTION

This report reflects a 20-year vision for Johnson County, prepared by a 37-member Citizens Visioning Committee (CVC) based on input from the community-at-large. In reviewing this document, the reader should keep in mind that Johnson County is part of a larger “community of interests” that includes a collection of municipalities, districts, other governmental and quasi-governmental organizations, along with private businesses and institutions. Each of these entities plays an important role in Johnson County’s quality of life and continued success. In addition, many of the challenges and opportunities Johnson County faces as it looks towards the future—resource constraints, socioeconomic and demographic changes, and many others— affect not just Johnson County government, but each entity that comprises the County’s larger community of interests.

Although this report was commissioned by Johnson County government specifically, it defines a vision for Johnson County that encompasses both Johnson County government and the larger community of interests, but focuses recommended actions on Johnson County government’s role in achieving that vision in cooperation with other entities. In essence, this is a vision for the community that focuses on actions that can be taken by County government; of necessity, it recognizes that it will take efforts by many others to achieve this vision.

HOW THIS DOCUMENT IS INTENDED TO BE USED

This document sets forth a long-term vision for Johnson County, to be used to guide decisions and actions over the next 10-20 years. While it contains recommended actions for each topic area, it is not intended to be a detailed step-by-step blueprint for how to carry out each of these actions. That will be determined by ongoing decisions and investments made by County government, institutions, private businesses and individuals over time. It should be considered as a “touchstone document, with progress reviewed periodically to see if actions taken over time are moving in the right direction toward its vision.

Throughout this report, references to “Johnson County government” or “the County” are intended to refer to Johnson County government specifically. References to “Johnson County” or “the community” are intended to refer to the larger community of interests which includes local governments, districts, other governmental and quasi-governmental organizations, and the private sector.

Introduction

This document is one of the final steps in a more than yearlong effort to develop an updated vision for Johnson County. In the nearly fifteen years since the previous visioning effort was completed, Johnson County has experienced significant growth and changes as a community. Additionally, Johnson County government has implemented a number of the ideas developed by the original committee. As a result, a new Citizen Visioning Committee (CVC) was appointed in September 2009 and tasked with the development of an updated twenty-year vision for Johnson County; a process entitled Johnson County Vision 2030.

PURPOSE OF THE VISIONING PROCESS

The purpose of this visioning process is to determine what type of place the community would like Johnson County to be in the future, to chart a path to help get there, and to help establish a framework to monitor and track the implementation of the vision over time. This document reflects the community's 20-year vision for Johnson County, based on input from the 37-member Citizens Visioning Committee (CVC) and the community-at-large, and recommends specific actions for achieving that vision.

This document is not intended to be comprehensive in nature—i.e., it does not supersede the many plans already in place for the numerous departments within Johnson County government, districts, local governments, and other entities that play a role in the community. While this document contains recommended actions for each topic area, it is not intended to be a detailed step-by-step blueprint for how to achieve this vision. That will be determined by ongoing decisions, actions, and investments made by County government, institutions, private businesses and individuals over time. It should be considered as a “touchstone document, with progress reviewed periodically to see if actions taken over time are moving in the right direction toward its vision.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

CITIZENS VISIONING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The CVC was appointed by the Board of County Commissioners in September 2009 to develop a vision for Johnson County through 2030. Committee members represent a broad cross-section of interests in the community. During the course of the process, the CVC met X times to review and discuss background materials and presentations and develop the recommendations provided in this report.

COORDINATION SUB-COMMITTEE

In February 2011, a smaller sub-set of the CVC, the nine-member Coordination Sub-Committee, was established to work with the consultant team between CVC meetings on interim drafts and the outreach process. The Sub-Committee met X times during the course of the process.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

Throughout the process, CVC members sought input from a wide range of County stakeholders and the community-at-large both formally and informally. Key elements of the outreach process completed to date include:

- **Dedicated Project Website**—a dedicated project website (www.jocovision2030.com) was launched in June 2010 as a way for the community-at-large to learn more about the visioning process, download

interim materials, find upcoming events, attend Online Community Workshops, provide written input, and sign up for project updates.

- **Online Community Workshop #1**—an Online Community Workshop was conducted in August 2010 to solicit input from the community on key issues to be addressed as part of the process.
- **Panel Presentations**—CVC members hosted panel-presentations by local and regional experts in eleven topic areas: economic development; financing and taxation; social, health, and human services; criminal justice and public safety; education; culture, arts, and humanities; parks and recreation; land use; transportation; other infrastructure; and natural resources and environment to help inform their discussions and recommendations.
- **Youth Forum**—In April 2011, members of the CVC hosted a forum for area youth to seek input on their vision for Johnson County in the future. Attendees participated in an on-line questionnaire, a key pad polling exercise, and small-group discussions with CVC members designed to provide the Committee with a youth perspective on a range of topics and a desired future for Johnson County. (Photo to be added)
- **Community Survey**—Johnson County’s biannual Community Survey was conducted in April 2011 and included a series of questions related specifically to the CVC’s work to help inform the process. The same questions were used as part of a polling exercise conducted during the annual State of the County address in March 2011.

During August and September 2011, members of the CVC and the project team will host a series of events intended to provide an opportunity for Johnson County residents and other project stakeholders to review draft materials and have provide input on the CVC’s preliminary recommendations. These events will include:

- **Speaker’s Bureau**—members of the CVC will conduct a series of meetings with a variety of local community and stakeholder groups throughout Johnson County to present the CVC’s preliminary recommendations and seek input from a range of interest groups.
- **Community Forums**—the CVC will host two Community Forums targeted towards key stakeholder and community groups. (Detail about which groups to be added as they become available)
- **Online Community Workshop**—an Online Community Workshop targeted towards the community-at-large will be hosted on the project website for several weeks during the outreach period. Materials for the workshop will mirror those presented as part of the Speaker’s Bureau events and the Community Forums to allow for cross-tabulation of results.

HOW IS THIS DOCUMENT STRUCTURED?

In addition to this introductory section, this document is comprised of the following sections:

VISION AND THEMES

This section establishes an overarching vision for Johnson County to be built from a strong focus on six themes: Economic Vitality; Excellence in Education; A Safe, Healthy, and Caring Community; A Sustainable Pattern of Growth; Efficient and Effective Government; and A Culturally Rich and Active Community.

SIX SECTIONS, ORGANIZED BY THEME:

- Economic Vitality
- Excellence in Education
- A Safe, Healthy, and Caring Community
- A Sustainable Pattern of Growth
- Efficient and Effective Government
- A Culturally Rich and Active Community

WHAT EACH SECTION CONTAINS

Each of the six theme-based sections contains the following:

- **Why this is Important?**—this section provides a brief explanation of why each theme is critical to the future success of the County and its residents. It also conveys the specific topics that are addressed within each theme.
- **What are the Challenges and Opportunities?**—this section contains a brief summary of major trends and key issues that inform and influence recommendations related to each theme. A more detailed discussion of trends and key issues related to eleven different topics: economic development; financing and taxation; social, health, and human services; criminal justice and public safety; education; culture, arts, and humanities; parks and recreation; land use; transportation; other infrastructure; and natural resources and environment, is provided in the Appendix.
- **Our Vision**—the vision statements in this document are intended to be a broad statement of the desired future condition and character of Johnson County within the context of each of the five themes. Each vision statement addresses a desired future that encompasses both Johnson County government and its larger community of interests.
- **What Will It Take To Achieve Our Vision?**—this section contains a series of guiding principles—or statements of core values—that can be used to guide the decisions and actions to be taken to accomplish the desired vision.
- **Recommended Actions**—this section describes recommended actions that define what Johnson County government can do to help achieve this vision. Recommended actions recognize that there are certain actions whose outcomes rely primarily on Johnson County government, and many others that involve the larger community of interests, with whom the County must participate in achieving desired outcomes.
- **Possible Indicators to Track our Progress**—this section identifies possible indicators—either quantitative or qualitative—that provide a simple and reliable means to measure achievement over time. Indicators provided can be used as a reference or as a standard for comparison. Data points reflected in the indicators are currently being tracked by Johnson County government or others in the community to ensure they may be readily updated over time.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

This section recommends a series of priority actions—or actions that should be undertaken within the first year of the plan’s completion. (Note: This section to be added following the upcoming community outreach process.)

TRACKING OUR PROGRESS

This section contains a summary of recommended actions by theme along with possible indicators associated with each topic. Indicators will continue to be refined over the coming months as this document is finalized.

APPENDIX: BACKGROUND AND TRENDS

This section contains detailed background and trends evaluated as a foundation for the Committee’s discussions. Information is organized according to eleven topics: economic development; financing and taxation; social, health, and human services; criminal justice and public safety; education; culture, arts, and humanities; parks and recreation; land use; transportation; other infrastructure; and natural resources and environment.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Prior to setting goals and strategies for the future, it is important to understand the context for our vision. Johnson County faces many challenges and opportunities, and a clear picture is needed of the overlapping factors influencing the County in order to properly consider the future. While each of the challenges and opportunities identified is grounded in recent trends and in some cases current conditions, their relevance is not limited to today's world. Fiscal, demographic, and population projections all indicate that Johnson County will continue to be faced with similar challenges and trends for the duration of the planning horizon. The opportunity lies in the long-term view that this vision document provides—e.g., what changes can we make today that will help us not just weather temporary setbacks, but also help us become stronger and more resilient as a community over the next ten to twenty years.

BALANCING FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY WITH SERVICE EXPECTATIONS

Johnson County government has long prided itself on its ability to provide high quality services in a fiscally conservative way. In the past, the County has been able to meet high expectations of delivering services while maintaining the lowest tax rates of any county in the state, in part because of a steadily growing economy and in part because of fiscally responsible planning. However, fluctuations in the economy and trends pointing to an aging population, rising poverty, and related economic challenges, mean that it will be increasingly difficult to meet the same high service and low tax expectations that were attainable in an earlier era of prosperity and growth. While Johnson County government retains a position of fiscal health and strength, now is the time to be considering the impacts of the County's fiscal realities on its ability to maintain high quality services over the long-term. Simply stated, implementing this vision will likely result in making choices about how to continue to fund services provided by County government, perhaps leading to decisions about which services to continue to fund and which to decrease or increase, balanced by the community's willingness to pay for current or future services.

ADAPTING TO THE NEEDS OF A CHANGING POPULATION

Johnson County has been fortunate to have a very strong economy and housing market. Decades of prosperity have translated into a relatively affluent and self-supporting population. However, fluctuations in the economy combined with changing demographics, an emerging blend of poverty (and near poverty), aging population, limited housing variety, and few non-automobile transportation choices is creating new challenges the likes of which Johnson County has not had to address before. Social issues that used to seem confined to urban areas are now being felt in Johnson County, and a discussion is needed about how to respond to emerging changes and growing issues—many of which will not fully emerge for a number of years (e.g., the full magnitude of an aging population). At the same time, this vision recognizes that some of these changes may represent new opportunities as our population becomes more diverse over time, leading to a more vibrant, inclusive, and culturally diverse community for people of all ages, abilities, and means.

DEFINING COUNTY GOVERNMENT'S ROLE AS PART OF A LARGER COMMUNITY OF INTERESTS

Johnson County includes many different jurisdictions and agencies that influence its quality of life. Within a myriad pattern of municipalities, school districts, and other governments and quasi-government organizations, Johnson County government is but one entity, albeit the only one with true county-wide jurisdiction. In an era when it will be critical to position the county well to remain competitive within the region and on a national stage, it will also be critical for there to be a common "community of interests" among the various jurisdictions in the county as well as within the larger Kansas City metropolitan region. While coexisting in a complex, two-state region has always been and will continue to be a challenge, Intergovernmental coordination efforts will be increasingly important to our continued success. While county government, the municipalities, the schools, and others all have a responsibility to manage their own affairs in their best interests, so too is there a need to work together for their common interests in a regional and national market. With this in mind, our vision encompasses both Johnson County government and the larger community of interests, but focuses recommended actions on county government's role in achieving that vision in cooperation with other entities.

PLANNING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

One of the key issues identified by the committee early on in the visioning process was sustainability. Although there are many different definitions for sustainability, Johnson County government defines it by focusing on the “triple bottom line” of economy, environment and social equity in each decision that it makes. Sustainability fundamentally is about finding more efficient, less wasteful ways of doing things using a variety of strategies for government, businesses, and individuals. The strategies to attain sustainability for Johnson County government and other public entities seek to reduce the carbon footprint by constructing more energy efficient public buildings, incorporating more fuel efficient vehicles in the County fleet, reducing the amount of solid waste generated, and other targeted strategies. For the private sector it may mean making workplaces more energy efficient and exploring options for more compact, efficient patterns of development. For residents it may mean seeking ways to reduce energy use at home and growing more of your own food in backyard gardens. Sustainability – as a means of seeking a more vibrant future for our community – is an overarching theme that has implications for all aspects of this vision.

This page blank.

Vision and Themes

When asked to describe what they value most about their community, residents of Johnson County most often respond—quality of life. While quality of life means different things to different people—whether access to quality schools and recreational facilities; safe, quiet neighborhoods; a family-oriented community; plentiful jobs or cultural amenities; health care or social services; parks and open space; or something different altogether— a common thread throughout the process of crafting this vision has been the bottom line question of how to maintain and improve quality of life for current and future Johnson County residents.

Within the context of the above question, the Citizens Visioning Committee reviewed trends and key issues and sought input from community stakeholders on eleven different topics: economic development; financing and taxation; social, health, and human services; criminal justice and public safety; education; culture, arts, and humanities; parks and recreation; land use; transportation; other infrastructure; and natural resources and environment.

OUR VISION

At the most basic level, our vision describes the kind of place we would like Johnson County to be over the next twenty years. While the vision and themes described below reflect many of the characteristics for which Johnson County is recognized today—they also reflect a clear consensus among the Citizens Visioning Committee that we must not take for granted that the things we value about Johnson County today will be there for our children and grandchildren tomorrow. Preserving our quality of life and achieving our vision for the future will require deliberate actions, collaboration, innovation, creativity, and—above all—strong leadership on the part of Johnson County government.

Our Vision

Johnson County will be a community of choice—an inclusive, culturally and economically diverse community—nationally recognized for its quality of life, innovation, and exceptional leadership. Our vision will be built from a strong focus on six themes:

- 1. Economic Vitality*
- 2. Excellence in Education*
- 3. A Safe, Healthy, and Caring Community*
- 4. A Sustainable Pattern of Growth*
- 5. Efficient and Effective Government*
- 6. A Culturally Rich and Active Community*

THEMES

Together, the six themes and the desired outcomes described below represent the building blocks of our vision for Johnson County's future. These themes cut across all eleven topics explored by the Citizens Visioning Committee and reinforce the interrelated nature of the issues and opportunities described throughout this document. They represent a need for a more integrated approach to day-to-day decision making at all levels—the need for a clear understanding of how actions in one area of focus affect another and a desire to seek and implement shared solutions. At some levels, this integration and cooperation is already occurring and the themes simply reinforce those linkages and identify new ways to build on what is working. In other cases, the six themes and the recommended actions that accompany them in subsequent sections of this vision document propose new ways to reach beyond what's expected today and to become more effective and successful as a community in the future.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Johnson County will have a healthy and resilient economy that thrives on partnerships with regional and local economic development organizations; an innovative, creative, and entrepreneurial atmosphere; a diverse and nimble workforce; and the County's ability to attract and retain the creative talent and leading edge companies needed for exceptional economic prosperity.

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Johnson County is recognized for its innovative and collaborative approach to education at both the Pre-K-12 and post-secondary levels—an approach that emphasizes 21st century learning skills and fosters new and expanded partnerships between the school districts, County government, businesses, economic development organizations, colleges, and universities to ensure all residents have the opportunity to learn, live, and work in Johnson County.

A SAFE, HEALTHY, AND CARING COMMUNITY

Johnson County will be a safe, secure, and healthy community that offers all residents the opportunity to live productive lives. Increased emphasis on prevention and early intervention with law enforcement, criminal justice, and social, health, and human providers will be a priority and a wide array of services will be available to help people be as self-reliant as their abilities allow. High levels of coordination among all service providers allow the County to maintain a safer, healthier environment for all citizens.

A SUSTAINABLE PATTERN OF GROWTH

Johnson County is recognized for its balanced approach to growth and resource protection—adapting and evolving to meet the community's changing needs with expanded housing and transportation options, while protecting and enhancing the natural and historic resources, family-friendly neighborhoods, and abundant parks and recreational opportunities that make it a unique and desirable place to live.

EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

Johnson County will be a leader among its peers in efficient and effective service delivery—maintaining the high levels of service its residents have come to expect while constantly striving for new and innovative ways to meet the needs of a diverse and dynamic community—whether through the reallocation of existing resources or the identification of new revenue sources.

A CULTURALLY RICH AND ACTIVE COMMUNITY

Johnson County's richness as a community will be defined by its diversity of people and ethnicities and its use of excellent arts and cultural programs, historic resources, libraries, and institutions to enrich the lives of residents. Throughout Johnson County, residents of all abilities and means benefit from opportunities for social interaction, physical activity, and enjoyment of the natural environment afforded by access to parks, trails, and other recreational amenities. Together, these programs and amenities—along with a robust network of volunteer opportunities—promote a community that is active and engaged in its surroundings.

Economic Vitality

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The health of Johnson County's economy is a major contributor to the quality of life of its citizens and the County's ability to provide services and facilities helping to make it attractive to new businesses, workers, and residents.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES?

Johnson County is a major contributor to the economy of the Kansas City Metro Area and the State of Kansas and has been the state's largest provider of employment for more than fifteen years. The County's economy is well diversified, yet has more employment concentrated in the high-growth service producing industries than does the nation, state, or metropolitan area. In addition, the many assets that led to Johnson County's growth and prosperity - its educated workforce, strong public schools, infrastructure, and high quality of life - are still in place and will continue to fuel economic growth in the future if they are maintained and enhanced. Trends and key issues that will challenge us as we seek to enhance our economy and our leadership role within the state and region include:

ECONOMIC FLUCTUATIONS

The next twenty years will likely have economic fluctuations that affect Johnson County and the region. Johnson County's ability to weather future economic cycles will hinge upon its ability to attract and retain a diverse array of employment options.

EMERGING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CLUSTERS

Several major initiatives will help fuel economic development in the future. These include:

- Animal Health Cluster, a regional initiative that stretches from Manhattan, Kansas to Columbia, Missouri;
- Bioscience/life science cluster;
- Advanced energy industries, including recent trends in wind and battery storage;
- Logistics and manufacturing focused on the planned BNSF Intermodal Center in Gardner/Edgerton;
- Technology and innovation hub; and (Add additional detail)
- Engineering cluster. (Add additional detail)

ATTRACTING AND RETAINING A STRONG WORKFORCE THROUGH QUALITY OF LIFE FACTORS

Increasingly, employers are choosing to locate in communities that offer a high quality of life for residents and access to a full range of amenities, such as arts and culture, parks and recreation, and others as a means of attracting and retaining a strong workforce.

SKILLS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Many employers require a specialized workforce to support their operations. Partnerships between employers and local colleges and universities will be increasingly important to ensure training in a range of languages, advancing technologies, and other specialized areas are available to promote the development of a diverse and nimble workforce that reflect the changing needs of area employers.

OUR VISION

Johnson County will have a healthy and resilient economy that thrives on partnerships with regional and local economic development organizations; an innovative, creative, and entrepreneurial atmosphere; a diverse and nimble workforce; and the County's ability to attract and retain the creative talent and leading edge companies needed for exceptional economic prosperity.

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION IN THIS AREA?

Our vision for a vibrant and prosperous economy that allows Johnson County citizens and businesses to thrive is based on the following guiding principles:

EV-GP1: BUILD STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

Participate in and support strong partnerships and collaboration with the private sector, Pre-K-12 and higher education institutions, local and regional economic development organizations, and arts and cultural organizations, and others as appropriate.

EV-GP2: CREATE A BUSINESS-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

Create a business-friendly environment through periodic review of regulations and licensing practices to identify and remove potential barriers to business growth and development and the use of incentives to increase the competitiveness of the County.

EV-GP3: SUPPORT THE GROWTH OF THE INNOVATION ECONOMY

Support the growth of the innovation economy—largely driven by the intersection of technological innovation, globalization, and deregulation—to set the stage for business development, job creation, and a thriving entrepreneurial environment.

EV-GP4: FOSTER THE DEVELOPMENT OF A DIVERSE AND NIMBLE WORKFORCE

Foster the development of a diverse and nimble workforce to attract and retain new jobs—focusing on outside recruitment in strategic sectors as well as internal job training, language training, and specialized skills development.

EV-GP5: DEVELOP STABLE AND DIVERSE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Work with local and regional partners to develop stable employment opportunities across a variety of industry sectors and at a range of wage levels.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

EV-A1: CONTINUE TO PLAY A SUPPORTIVE ROLE IN AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

Continue to play a supportive role in efforts led by economic development organizations at the local, regional, and state level.

EC-A2: EXPLORE THE CREATION OF AN ORGANIZATION FOCUSED ON PROMOTING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Explore the creation of a County-led research and development organization—as a “sister” organization of the County Economic Research Institute, Inc. (CERI)—focused on promoting workforce development for Johnson County specifically. Possible roles for this type of organization could include:

- Marketing Johnson County to employers as a unifying entity committed to the collective success of the larger community of interests;
- Recruitment of specialized talent at colleges and universities nationally; and
- Partnerships with Johnson County Community College, KU Research Triangle and others.

EV-A3: ATTRACT AND SUPPORT BUSINESSES THAT REFLECT THE ETHNIC AND GENDER DIVERSITY OF THE COUNTY

Through recruiting outreach and mentorship programs, work with economic development agencies, local governments, and others to attract and support companies and a workforce that reflects the ethnic and gender diversity of the County.

POSSIBLE INDICATORS TO TRACK OUR PROGRESS

In order for this document to be effective, Johnson County government must continually monitor its progress towards achieving the community’s vision. The following are examples of indicators (from CERI Johnson County Indicators Report) that could be used to gauge progress in this area:

- Civilian labor force
- Residents employed
- Index of corporate formation

This page blank.

Excellence in Education

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Education – both Pre-K-12 as well as higher education - has long been recognized as one of the cornerstones of Johnson County’s quality of life attributes and is a source of great pride for the community. Johnson County understands that excellent educational opportunities attract and retain residents and foster the family-oriented lifestyle that existing resident’s treasure and new residents seek.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES?

All six Johnson County school districts consistently perform at or above the Kansas State Department of Education benchmarks for educational attainment. While Kansas schools traditionally score beyond the national average on standardized tests, Johnson County’s school districts consistently exceed Kansas state averages. Trends and key issues that will challenge us as we strive to attain our vision include:

INCREASING ENROLLMENT

Enrollment in Johnson County schools has increased dramatically over the last ten years and is anticipated to continue to increase as district populations continue to grow.

VARIATIONS IN RESOURCES AND TAX BURDENS BY DISTRICT

The six districts that serve the County vary greatly in size, number of schools, and enrollment creating challenges due to varying levels of resources and higher tax burdens for districts with lower levels of assessed valuation.

FLUCTUATIONS IN FUNDING

Funding sources for school districts have fluctuated over the last several years due to a downward shift at the state level in the maximum millage; a recent declining trend in assessed property values; and continued declines in state funding. Projections indicate education funding will be an ongoing issue at the state and local level for the foreseeable future.

UNEVEN PROFICIENCIES IN CORE CURRICULUM AREAS

An increasing concern statewide relates to students entering college without necessary math, reading, or writing skills to succeed. Local school districts and institutions of higher learning are collaborating on pilot programs to administer college placement tests during the sophomore year of high school to identify students needing to improve their proficiencies in core curriculum areas prior to high school graduation.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

Johnson County’s changing population affects governmental services across all levels; however, educational systems face additional challenges with changes in the demographic composition of schools. Special challenges will continue with students from non-English speaking backgrounds from throughout the world.

OUR VISION

Johnson County is recognized for its innovative and collaborative approach to education at both the Pre-K-12 and post-secondary levels—an approach that emphasizes 21st century learning skills and fosters new and expanded partnerships between the school districts, County government, businesses, economic development organizations, colleges, and universities to ensure all residents have the opportunity to learn, live, and work in Johnson County.

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION IN THIS AREA?

The following guiding principles represent critical areas of focus as we strive to achieve our vision for the future:

ED-P1: ENHANCE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL RESIDENTS

County government and education leaders will collaborate to discover new ways to support efforts to maintain and enhance educational opportunities for all residents—helping them to reach maximum potential both academically and socially to be productive and contributing citizens of Johnson County.

ED-P2: BUILD NEW AND EXPANDED PARTNERSHIPS

County government and educational systems will work together to foster and strengthen relationships and partnering opportunities between public schools, businesses, county and local government, social, health, and human services organizations, economic development organizations, as well as local colleges and universities to ensure students are prepared for their future.

ED-P3: EMPHASIZE 21ST CENTURY LEARNING SKILLS

Johnson County public school systems will excel and respond in innovative ways to changing times with an emphasis on 21st century learning skills such as emerging technologies, fluency in multiple languages, and strategic workforce development.

ED-P4: COLLABORATE ON MEANS TO EXPLORE EFFICIENCIES

County government and education entities will collaborate on means to explore efficiencies and maximize educational funding from tax resources to sustain the highest level quality of education for all citizens.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

ED-A1: INITIATE AN EDUCATION SUMMIT

Initiate an Education Summit to discuss opportunities for collaboration between Johnson County government, local governments, and educational entities. Possible opportunities to consider as part of the summit include approaching education at a county level rather than at a district level to maximize available resources and promote consistency in resources and programs available to all students.

ED-A2: COLLABORATE ON OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT AND ENHANCE EDUCATIONAL FUNDING

Collaborate with public school systems to explore opportunities for consolidated efforts to maximize financial resources within the County to support and enhance education funding. Possible opportunities to consider include:

- Eliminating duplication in special programs between school districts and allowing students the flexibility needed to share school facilities and access these programs;
- Expanded language programs;
- Expanding the role of Johnson County Community College in providing academic credit access to high school juniors and seniors on campus and at school sites.
- Increasing emphasis on online programs as means of expanding student offerings and reducing staffing needs.

ED-A3: COORDINATE LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

Coordinate legislative initiatives between Johnson County government and education systems to maximize efforts in the state legislature to protect, improve, and maintain state funding in state education.

POSSIBLE INDICATORS TO TRACK OUR PROGRESS

In order for this document to be effective, Johnson County government must continually monitor its progress towards achieving the community's vision. The following are examples of indicators that could be used to gauge progress in this area:

- Funding levels per student
- Enrollment levels
- Student achievement levels
- Kansas Department of Education educational attainment scores

This page blank.

A Safe, Healthy, and Caring Community

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Public safety is a high priority for Johnson County residents. The safety and security of our citizens is a significant contributor to the well-being of our community and the reputation of Johnson County as a place to live and raise children. In addition, the physical and mental health of the citizens of Johnson County and the ability of underserved populations to pay for basic needs is important to our overall well-being and quality of life.

WHAT ARE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES?

Johnson County is experiencing significant growth along with socioeconomic and demographic shifts that include: an aging population, increasing poverty, and increasing diversity. These shifts present both challenges and opportunities:

INCREASING DEMAND FOR SERVICES AND CHANGING TRENDS

The demand for social, health, and human services, law enforcement, and emergency services (EMS) is expected to continue to increase. More emphasis is needed on prevention and early intervention.

- **Social, Health and Human Services**—While there has been an acute increase in the near-term due to the current economic downturn, the increasing demand is part of a larger trend that is projected to play out over the next ten to twenty years. The long term trends of suburban poverty, an aging population, declining health related to obesity and chronic disease, and others have been and will continue to accelerate. Elimination or continued reduction in federal or state funding or services will lead to greater gaps in services.
- **Public Safety**—Crime rates in Johnson County are low compared to some other counties in Kansas and the nation. However, recent trends have presented law enforcement and criminal justice personnel with new challenges, such as increased gang and drug activity, the growing practice of using jails as the default facilities to house the mentally ill and current State legislation that mandates incarceration for certain less serious offenders, and increased challenges in attracting and retaining qualified law enforcement personnel.
- **Emergency Services**—Emergency services call volume has been increasing faster than population growth. This trend is projected to continue, particularly as an increase in demand for EMS services is expected as a result of the County's aging population.

FUNDING LIMITATIONS

Along with increasing demand for services, funding limitations are an increasing challenge for service providers.

- **Public Safety**—Law enforcement officials in Johnson County indicate that maintaining safety at the highest level is their top priority in any economic climate. However, with many departments and agencies facing decreasing budgets and reduced staff, it becomes more of a challenge to meet increasing mandates from both the state and local levels that require additional police work.

- **Social, Health, and Human Services**—With increasing demands for services and flat or declining revenues, the current system of providing social, health, and human services will be difficult to sustain. Elimination or continuing reduction in federal and state funding or services will lead to greater gaps in services and the funding resources to provide these services will be increasingly stressed as part of overall fiscal challenges that the County will likely continue to face.
- **Emergency Services**—The County and its local government partners will need to seek new approaches to meeting emergency service demands as revenues will not likely match increases in demand.

LAW ENFORCEMENT RECRUITING CHALLENGES

Recruiting standards for law enforcement are very high. Increased social acceptance of drug usage and other minor criminal acts reduce the number of plausible candidates. Additionally, many young people do not find the demands and personal limitations of this career desirable. The result is a diminishing pool of acceptable candidates at a time when a large number of existing employees are approaching retirement age. Another challenge is finding the number of minority candidates necessary to reflect the increased diversity of the County population. Without this, cultural and language challenges will continue to grow and segments of the community will experience a disconnect from the entities tasked with keeping them safe.

OUR VISION

Johnson County will be a safe, secure, and healthy community that offers all residents the opportunity to live productive lives. Increased emphasis on prevention and early intervention with law enforcement, criminal justice, and social, health, and human providers will be a priority and a wide array of services will be available to help people be as self-reliant as their abilities allow. High levels of coordination among all service providers allow the County to maintain a safer, healthier environment for all citizens.

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION IN THIS AREA?

The following guiding principles represent critical areas of focus as we look towards the future:

HS-P1: ADAPT TO THE NEEDS OF A CHANGING POPULATION

Innovative strategies and partnerships among federal, state and local governments, nonprofit and for-profit entities are needed to support the expansion and adaptation of services to respond to the community's growth and changing population.

HS-P2: DEVELOP A HOLISTIC APPROACH

Challenges related to the provision of social, health, and human, services and public safety are not problems that Johnson County as a unit of government can “solve” – they involve a complex range of socioeconomic and cultural issues and will require a coordinated, full community strategy. County, local, and regional service providers have a long tradition of interagency cooperation and resource sharing. This approach should be a natural default in an effort to increase effectiveness and efficiency and maximize resources that are challenged. Cross disciplinary efforts such as those between law enforcement and corrections and social, health and human services are important to this effort.

HS-P3: EMPHASIZE PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Prevention and early intervention should be a primary theme of a service delivery strategy for social, health, and human services; criminal justice; mental health; and public safety programs. Prevention and early intervention is not only the most effective way to address issues in these areas, but also represents the most fiscally responsible approach, in that failure to address issues at the early stages results in additional demand for social, health, and human services at later stages. Additionally, prevention and early intervention in mental health care programs can contribute significantly in the reduction of incarcerated persons.

HS-P4: SEEK ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION AND SUSTAINED OFFENDER SUCCESS

Jail and prison space are costly to build, and incarceration is an expensive approach to community safety. Other innovative alternatives should be developed and utilized whenever possible. Community safety is enhanced when those who are incarcerated participate in forward- looking re-entry strategies working toward successful reintegration into the community without reoffending.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

HS-A1: ENHANCE EFFORTS RELATED TO PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

Continue to enhance and expand efforts related to prevention and early intervention as a core component of a service delivery strategy that promotes a safe, healthy, and caring community—building on best practices and evidence-based practices within the region and across the country.

HS-A2: MAINTAIN AN ACTIVE ROLE IN SOCIAL, HEALTH, AND HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS

County government should continue to maintain an active role in social, health, and human services programs when it is demonstrated to be more efficient than having multiple cities deliver programs. However, opportunities to shift discrete responsibilities to the non-profit sector should be evaluated periodically to identify new opportunities for increased efficiency and sharing of resources.

HS-A3: IDENTIFY AND IMPLEMENT BEST PRACTICES

Support investment in advancing technology, implementation of evidence-based programs, and data-driven decision making in the areas of criminal justice, public safety, and social, health, and human services.

HS-A4: PROMOTE HIGH LEVELS OF COORDINATION AMONG SERVICE PROVIDERS

Promote high levels of coordination among local and regional social, health, and human services and public safety providers to achieve efficient utilization of services and effectiveness in service delivery.

HS-A5: ALLOCATE RESOURCES BASED ON EVIDENCE-BASED OUTCOMES

Evaluate opportunities for funding on a case-by-case basis, sustaining programs originally funded by grants if proved to be effective and to provide a high return on investment that is based on evidence-based outcomes.

HS-A6: AGGRESSIVELY PURSUE GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Aggressively pursue grant opportunities to leverage resources available for social, health, and human services programs.

POSSIBLE INDICATORS TO TRACK OUR PROGRESS

In order for this document to be effective, Johnson County government must continually monitor its progress towards achieving the community's vision. The following are examples of indicators that could be used to gauge progress in this area:

SOCIAL, HEALTH, AND HUMAN SERVICES

- Rate of overweight persons and obesity
- Mental health intakes (average/month on an annual basis)
- Total annual dollars allocated to HHS/percent of dollars from grants
- Add others...

PUBLIC SAFETY

- To be added.

This page blank.

A Sustainable Pattern of Growth

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

For over fifty years, Johnson County has thrived on steady growth fueled by an abundance of land, robust economy, strong public school system, easily accessible transportation network, and demand for the County's safe, family-oriented lifestyle. With a significant population increase projected over the next twenty years, a sustainable approach to growth is needed—one that balances the needs of a growing and changing population, economic development, and the protection of the County's historic and natural resources.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES?

Growth projections for Johnson County remain strong for the next ten to twenty years. In particular, several significant population and employment centers are emerging or planned in Johnson County over the next ten to twenty years, including: the Kansas City Intermodal Center; Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant Redevelopment; and a major concentration of employment along the K-10 Corridor. A sustainable pattern of growth hinges on clear linkages between land use, transportation, infrastructure, and the environment, as well as on the community that the growth is intended to serve. Trends and key issues that will challenge us as we strive to continue to grow in a more sustainable manner include:

AGING INFRASTRUCTURE

Just as Johnson County's population is getting older, so too is its infrastructure. Roadways, neighborhoods, commercial corridors, and other infrastructure in many older areas of the county are nearing the end of their useful life and will require a certain level of investment to continue to serve the county in the future.

LIMITED HOUSING OPTIONS

Much of the residential development that has occurred in Johnson County over the past fifty years has been oriented towards families living in detached, single-family homes on larger lots. As the County's population changes over time, increased diversity in the type, cost, and location of housing will be needed to meet the community's needs.

SEWER EXPANSION AND COUNTY GROWTH PATTERNS

The Johnson County Rural Comprehensive Plan calls for unincorporated areas to grow slowly and largely remain rural. A key factor in the implementation of this policy is the location of expanded sewer services. Typically sewers have been extended in response to growth pressures both within incorporated areas and in unincorporated areas of the County. As Johnson County continues to grow and as fiscal resources for facilities continue to remain tight, it will be increasingly important to maintain the right balance between expansion and improvements of infrastructure facilities to serve new areas with pressing needs for maintenance and upgrades of existing systems.

LIMITED TRANSPORTATION CHOICES

Limited transit service in Johnson County and the region has further reinforced the need for residents to rely on personal automobiles to meet their daily needs. This presents mobility challenges for residents either physically unable to drive or unable to afford to own a car. Reducing the auto-dependence of Johnson County residents and increasing transportation choices available are key themes identified as part of Johnson County Transit's Strategic Plan. Related challenges include: difficulty in transit routing and frequency to serve a dispersed population; improvements needed to support growth and mobility as new population and employment centers emerge; and funding constraints and competing priorities for transportation improvements.

PROTECTION OF NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

In recent years, the protection of air and water quality, wildlife habitat, historic resources, and natural green space has played an increasingly important role in discussions within Johnson County and the region. Johnson County residents confirmed their support for programs designed to reduce pollution, conserve energy, and protect water resources as part of the Johnson County government's biennial community survey. Key initiatives include MetroGreen, the Mid-America Regional Council's Natural Resource Inventory, and ongoing efforts by the Johnson County Stormwater Management Program to meet updated water quality and non-point source requirements.

OUR VISION

Johnson County is recognized for its balanced approach to growth and resource protection—adapting and evolving to meet the community’s changing needs with expanded housing and transportation options, while protecting and enhancing the natural and historic resources, family-friendly neighborhoods, and abundant parks and recreational opportunities that make it a unique and desirable place to live.

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION IN THIS AREA?

The following guiding principles represent critical areas of focus to promote a sustainable pattern of growth:

SG-GP-1: REINFORCE OUR COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Continue to advance Johnson County government’s sustainability goals through broad community partnerships that encourage an overall shift in the way people live and do business in Johnson County.

SG-GP-2: FOCUS GROWTH IN INCORPORATED AND UNDERUTILIZED AREAS

Encourage compact growth in incorporated and underutilized areas of the community through cooperative efforts with local municipalities. Prioritize growth in and adjacent to emerging population and employment centers to promote the efficient delivery of services.

SG-GP-3: BALANCE NEW INVESTMENT WITH REINVESTMENT

Partner with local governments, service districts, and private sector providers to ensure adequate and efficient infrastructure service (roads, sewer, water)—recognizing the importance of balancing investment in new facilities with reinvestment in existing infrastructure in established areas of the Johnson County.

SG-GP-4: SUPPORT MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION

Foster and strengthen relationships and partnering opportunities between Johnson County government and local municipalities, the Mid-America Regional Council, private investors, and others to support increased access to multi-modal transportation over time as a means of enhancing the region’s quality of life, economic vitality, and desirability as a community.

SG-GP-5: REDUCE SOLID WASTE

Support ongoing efforts by the Johnson County Environmental Department to implement a variety of programs—such as a “pay as you throw” program—to help reduce solid waste within government operations as well as in private businesses and homes.

SG-GP-6: PROMOTE STEWARDSHIP OF OUR LAND AND NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Encourage and promote stewardship of our land and natural and historic resources through environmental advocacy, program support, public education, Johnson County government policies, and day-to-day decision making.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

SG-A-1: ADAPT LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION POLICIES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF A CHANGING POPULATION

Review and adapt land use and transportation policies and priorities to reflect the changing characteristics of Johnson County’s population (aging, fewer families):

- Ensure short-term land use decisions do not preclude future multi-modal opportunities.
- Partner with local and regional home builders, local architects, transportation providers, and social, health, and human service providers to develop innovative and cost effective housing and transportation prototypes to meet the physical, social, and financial needs of existing and future residents.
- Evaluate the effects of annexation on growth and land use patterns in unincorporated areas of Johnson County over time..

SG-A-2: EVALUATE CURRENT SEWER FINANCING STRUCTURE

Evaluate current sewer financing structure to determine if the cost to provide services in certain locations exceeds the revenue generated by associated growth. Explore new service delivery models or financing strategies to balance return on investment.

SG-A-3: INVEST IN MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION

Explore the identification of new funding sources to support the implementation of multi-modal transportation priorities identified in Johnson County Transit’s Strategic Plan.

SG-A-4: EXPLORE THE CREATION OF A LOCAL LAND TRUST

Explore the creation of a local land trust in cooperation with local and regional partners as an alternative to preserving open space or historic resources in Johnson County and the region through outright purchase.

SG-A-5: LEAD BY EXAMPLE WITH REGARDS TO SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Continue to support and expand sustainability initiatives related to County government and the community as a whole, leading by example with regards to energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable building and development codes, and water conservation. Work with the private sector to identify and remove potential barriers to sustainable development practices in development and business permitting processes.

POSSIBLE INDICATORS TO TRACK OUR PROGRESS

In order for this document to be effective, Johnson County government must continually monitor its progress towards achieving the community's vision. The following are examples of indicators that could be used to gauge progress in this area:

POPULATION/HOUSING/DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

- Population (U.S. Census American Community Survey)
- Housing affordability index (the median household income relative to the income needed to purchase a median-priced house)
- Total land (acres) consumed for development
- Average density (households/acre) of developed areas
- Area of county that is unincorporated (acres/percent)

TRANSPORTATION

- Total vehicle miles travelled
- Vehicle miles per capita
- Transit ridership (total # of trips, transit trip capture)

RESOURCE PROTECTION

- Acres of preserved open lands (source?)
- Number of tons of solid waste diverted from landfill

This page blank.

Efficient and Effective Government

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

As Johnson County grows, demands for services are expected to increase and will need to adapt to the needs of a diverse and dynamic population. While some of the solutions to these challenges might be new or enhanced revenue sources, the answer also lies in finding ways to meet service needs through greater efficiency – through partnering with other agencies, looking to the private sector in some instances, and identifying and possibly eliminating redundancies in multiple agencies and/or units of government that are providing the same or similar services.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES?

MULTITUDE OF SERVICE PROVIDERS IMPACTS EFFICIENCY

Johnson County government is only one of the many service providers within the community—numerous districts, local governments, non-profits, and other organizations provide separate, or in some cases, parallel services. This multitude of services providers presents challenges with regard to efficiency due to the potential for duplication of services in overlapping service areas.

RISING DEMAND FOR SERVICES

Demand for services is expected to continue to increase in all program areas and will need to adapt in order to meet the needs of a diverse and dynamic population.

REVENUE FLUCTUATIONS

While demand for government services continues to grow, revenue to fund those services is falling because of a stable tax rate and a temporary decline in property values. A key issue Johnson County government is facing is how to continue to meet a high standard of service in light of future fluctuations in revenues. While the effects of the current recession may be temporary, many believe we have entered a new era of fiscal discipline that is here to stay.

HISTORICALLY MODERATE TAX BURDEN

According to state wide county tax rates the Johnson County property tax rate is the lowest of the 105 counties in Kansas. A moderate tax burden has provided high levels of service while maintaining low property taxes. Any tax incentives in the future will require a demonstrated need to the Johnson County community and that governments are operating very efficiently.

HIGH COUNTY SALES TAX RATE

Additional sales tax increases are unlikely for the foreseeable future due to a high current sales tax rate, two recent sales tax approvals for special projects, and a recent sales tax increase at the State level.

OUR VISION

Johnson County government will be a leader among its peers in efficient and effective government—maintaining the high levels of service residents have come to expect while constantly striving for new and innovative ways to meet the needs of a diverse and dynamic community—whether through the reallocation of existing resources or the identification of new revenue sources.

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION IN THIS AREA?

The following guiding principles represent critical areas of focus to promote efficient and effective government:

GOV-GP1: CONVENE STAKEHOLDERS TO WORK TOGETHER ON ISSUES OF COMMON INTEREST

As the only entity with true county-wide jurisdiction, Johnson County government is best suited to the role of convening the many different jurisdictions within its geographic bounds to work together for their common interests as they relate to efficient service delivery and quality of life.

GOV-GP2: LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Johnson County government will strive to be as efficient and effective as possible in its delivery of high quality services, continually exploring opportunities to maximize available resources through the reallocation of existing County resources, cooperation with partner agencies and other service providers, and other innovative strategies.

GOV-GP3: COLLABORATE ON MEANS TO EXPLORE EFFICIENCIES AND PROMOTE COOPERATION

Johnson County government, partner agencies, and school districts will collaborate on means to explore efficiencies, promote cooperation, share resources, and leverage available funding in all service areas.

GOV-GP4: SUPPORT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT ARE INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE

Support programs and services that promote acceptance, inclusion, and respect for cultural and ethnic diversity. Ensure programs and services are accessible to residents of all abilities and means.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

GOV-A1: CONVENE A PROCESS TO REVIEW CURRENT LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

Johnson County government, in conjunction with its partner agencies and districts, should lead by example—convening a process to review current levels of government and make recommendations about ways to achieve increased efficiency in day-to-day operations that will result in long-term benefits. Possible outcomes from such a process could include:

- A summary of lessons learned provided through Johnson County government and re-evaluated on an annual basis.
- A more formal organization or committee to foster accountability through ongoing discussion and efforts in this area both within Johnson County government and with partner agencies and districts.

GOV-A2: EVALUATE AND IMPLEMENT THE MOST EFFICIENT MEANS OF PROVIDING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES BASED ON EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

Periodically evaluate services and programs with demonstrated support from and benefit to the community based on evidence-based practices. Evaluate services and programs on a case-by-case basis to identify and implement the most efficient means of providing these programs or services through:

- Revenue enhancements;
- Reallocation of existing resources;
- Shifting responsibility to other sectors;
- Variable service model (e.g., use of contract services);
- Consolidation of services; or
- Some combination of the above.

GOV-A3: DEVELOP AND SUPPORT LEADERSHIP THAT REFLECTS THE DIVERSITY OF THE COUNTY

Through recruiting outreach, appointments, and mentorship programs, work with partner agencies and districts to develop and support leadership that reflects the ethnic and gender diversity of the community.

GOV-A4: STRENGTHEN THE VOICE OF JOHNSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND THE COMMUNITY

Strengthen the voice of Johnson County government and the community through an increased emphasis on the role of Public Information Officers and others in conveying the depth of Johnson County living, including business, government, culture, education, and human services.

GOV-A5: ENCOURAGE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Provide a range of opportunities—through committee appointments, volunteer positions, mentorship programs, partnerships with other agencies and districts in Johnson County and the metro region, and other civic engagement activities — for citizens to participate in and learn about Johnson County government.

POSSIBLE INDICATORS TO TRACK OUR PROGRESS

In order for this document to be effective, Johnson County government must continually monitor its progress towards achieving the community's vision. The following are examples of indicators that could be used to gauge progress in this area:

- Sales tax revenues
- Total assessed real and personal property value
- Number of county employees (FTE)
- Minority representation on elected and appointed boards, commissions, and committees.

A Culturally Rich and Active Community

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Providing opportunities for residents of all ages, abilities, and means to access a diverse range of arts and cultural programs, historic resources, libraries, parks and recreation facilities, and volunteer opportunities—both locally and within the region, contributes to the Johnson County’s richness as a community, its health and well-being, and its economic vitality.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES?

This section provides an overview of the challenges and opportunities we face as we seek to foster a culturally rich and active community:

INCREASING DEMAND AND EXPECTATIONS FOR QUALITY OF LIFE AMENITIES

Increasingly, employers and residents are choosing to locate in communities that offer a high quality of life and access to a full range of services and amenities—arts and cultural programs, parks and recreational facilities, and libraries. Additionally, existing residents value and have come to expect exceptional levels of service in these areas or access to them within the region. Continued support for and enhancement of Johnson County’s quality of life amenities are key issues for consideration as the population grows and changes over time.

ENCOURAGING ACTIVE LIFESTYLES

Johnson County’s exceptional parks and recreational facilities contribute significantly to quality of life and community character. In addition, they play an important role in the health and wellness of the community by encouraging regular physical activity and social interaction. Beyond the recreational benefits, physical activity has become increasingly important as obesity and diabetes rates continue to climb and impact our health care system. Balancing resources needed to address the following issues and keep up with a growing population will continue to be a challenge unless new tools and funding sources are identified:

- **Parkland Acquisition**—While the amount of parkland in the County’s has increased dramatically, continued focus on the implementation of targets established by MAP 2020—which identifies future park and recreation needs for Johnson County—is needed to ensure the needs of both existing and future residents can be met.
- **Access to Undeveloped Parkland**—As additional parkland is secured for future generations, access and amenities must also be developed to make these lands available for public use. This is particularly an issue in underserved areas of the community.
- **MetroGreen Implementation**—Johnson County and the Johnson County Parks and Recreation Board were integral players in MetroGreen, a regional plan to develop an interconnected system of public and private natural areas, greenways and trails linking communities throughout the Kansas City metropolitan area. While the plan has strong support, implementation at the local level has been slow due to resource limitations.

ADAPTING TO CHANGE

Changes in technology, the County's population, and the publishing industry have required that the Johnson County Library shift into a more multi-dimensional mode that extends beyond books to online access, business development, and support for students and underserved populations. These changes will translate into changes in facility needs over time.

RECOGNIZING THE PAST WHILE LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

Johnson County's rich history set the stage for the quality of life that residents value today. Promoting an awareness and understanding of the community's history and historic resources plays an important role in planning for the future.

OUR VISION

Johnson County's richness as a community will be defined by its diversity of people and ethnicities and its use of excellent arts and cultural programs, historic resources, libraries, and institutions to enrich the lives of residents. Throughout Johnson County, residents of all abilities and means benefit from opportunities for social interaction, physical activity, and enjoyment of the natural environment afforded by access to parks, trails, and other recreational amenities. Together, these programs and amenities—along with a robust network of volunteer opportunities—promote a community that is active and engaged in its surroundings.

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION IN THIS AREA?

The following guiding principles represent critical areas of focus to promote a culturally rich and active community:

COM-GP1: FOSTER A COLLECTIVE APPROACH TO QUALITY OF LIFE AMENITIES

Support efforts to sustain and enhance local and regional assets—arts and cultural programs, libraries, and parks and recreational facilities— as part of the overall “package” of amenities that contributes to the County’s cultural richness, economic vitality, and quality of life.

COM-GP2: PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL RESIDENTS TO LEAD HEALTHY AND ACTIVE LIFESTYLES

Johnson County government recognizes the value resident’s place on high quality parks and recreational facilities and the important role these facilities play in the health and wellness of the community. Continued expansion of and increased access to these facilities will be a priority, with an emphasis on underserved populations and areas of the community.

COM-GP3: DEVELOP MULTI-DIMENSIONAL PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

Foster programs and facilities—arts and cultural, libraries, language training, historic resources, parks and recreation, and others that provide a variety of benefits to the community—cultural enrichment, education, health and wellness, workforce development, and support for underserved populations.

COM-GP5: SUPPORT EFFORTS THAT RAISE THE ARTS/CULTURAL PROFILE OF THE COUNTY AND REGION

Encourage and support expanding existing arts and cultural opportunities in Johnson County and the creation of new venues and opportunities that raise the arts/cultural profile of Johnson County and metropolitan Kansas City and promote economic vitality.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

COM-A1: IDENTIFY NEW FUNDING OPTIONS TO SUPPORT INCREASED ACCESS TO PARKS AND RECREATION

Identify new funding options to support the development of the County’s parks and recreational facilities. Prioritize expansion and increased access to parks and recreational facilities in underserved areas of the community.

COM-A2: ENCOURAGE THE IDENTIFICATION OF BROAD-BASED SUSTAINABLE FUNDING MECHANISMS FOR THE ARTS

Encourage arts and humanities organizations to work collaboratively in identifying and building broad-based sustainable funding mechanisms for the arts and arts-related initiatives in Johnson County.

COM-A3: DEVELOP A FLEXIBLE MODEL FOR LIBRARY SERVICES

Develop a flexible model for the delivery of library services that responds to the changing needs of the community and to changing technologies:

- Concentrate resources on creating multi-dimensional library facilities that meet a variety of community needs—access to literature through a variety of media, workforce training, education, community gathering spaces, and others.
- Identify opportunities to incorporate library “portals” or small-scale facilities as part of other public or private developments in strategic locations rather than relying solely on stand-alone facilities.

COM-A4: IDENTIFY NEW WAYS TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

Coordinate with organizations and groups that engage volunteers and promote community service, philanthropy, and positive change to develop a central clearinghouse for information about volunteer opportunities and to identify new ways to involve the community’s youth, under-represented populations, and others in community service activities.

COM-A5: SUPPORT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT ARE INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE

Support programs and services that promote acceptance, inclusion, and respect for cultural and ethnic diversity. Ensure programs and services are accessible to residents of all abilities and means.

POSSIBLE INDICATORS TO TRACK OUR PROGRESS

In order for this document to be effective, Johnson County government must continually monitor its progress towards achieving the community’s vision. The following are examples of indicators that could be used to gauge progress in this area:

DEMOGRAPHICS

- Age, sex, race (U.S. Census American Community Survey)
- Poverty rates (food stamp enrollment - KS Department of Social Services)

PARKS AND RECREATION

- Acres of improved parkland (total and per capita)

Priority Actions

While the vision and recommended actions on the previous pages are intended to have an immediate and lasting influence on decision making within Johnson County government, not every recommended action can be addressed at once. This section recommends a series of priority actions—or actions that should be undertaken within the first year of the plan’s completion.

This section to be added following the upcoming community outreach process. As part of the outreach process, community members and stakeholders will be asked to identify which of the recommended actions identified by the Citizens Visioning Committee are most important to focus on over the next 1-2 years as a first step towards implementing the vision.

This page blank.

Tracking Our Progress

The concept of monitoring progress towards the desired future is integral to the implementation of this vision. Progress should be monitored regularly—ideally each year—to determine whether implementation is occurring and whether it is achieving the desired results. This section outlines a suggested approach to monitoring both implementation of the vision plan (i.e., are the recommended actions moving forward) and outcomes (i.e., is Johnson County government moving in the right direction, towards the vision). The monitoring process should include periodic opportunities for the Citizens Visioning Committee to meet with Board of County Commissioners to review and discuss implementation of the vision plan as well as opportunities for the community-at-large to track progress through the County’s website.

ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

The table below provides a summary of the recommended actions outlined throughout this report for each of the six themes. Each theme area is accompanied by a series of possible indicators that may be used to track its implementation over time; however, indicators are not listed for every action since some recommended actions may not translate to a quantifiable measure. Possible indicators identified represent data already being tracked by Johnson County government or others to ensure that measurements suggested are readily available.

Note: Possible indicators identified below are preliminary and will be refined over the coming months. Indicators are grouped by topic now and will likely be assigned to specific actions at a later date to provide a more direct linkage between the two.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	POSSIBLE INDICATORS
Economic Vitality	
EV-A1: Continue To Play A Supportive Role In Area Economic Development Efforts	From CERI Johnson County Indicators Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civilian labor force • Residents employed • Index of corporate formation
EC-A2: Explore The Creation Of An Organization Focused On Promoting Workforce Development	
EV-A3: Attract And Support Businesses That Reflect The Ethnic And Gender Diversity Of The County	

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	POSSIBLE INDICATORS
Excellence in Education	
ED-A1: Initiate An Education Summit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding levels per student Enrollment levels Student achievement levels Kansas Department of Education educational attainment scores
ED-A2: Collaborate On Opportunities To Support And Enhance Educational Funding	
ED-A3: Coordinate Legislative Initiatives	
A Safe, Healthy, and Caring Community	
HS-A1: Enhance Efforts Related To Prevention And Early Intervention	<p>Social, Health, and Human Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rate of overweight persons and obesity Mental health intakes (average/month on an annual basis) Total annual dollars allocated to HHS/percent of dollars from grants Add others... <p>Public Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be added.
HS-A2: Maintain An Active Role In Social, Health, And Human Services Programs	
HS-A3: Identify And Implement Best Practices	
HS-A4: Promote High Levels Of Coordination Among Service Providers	
HS-A5: Allocate Resources Based On Evidence-Based Outcomes	
HS-A6: Aggressively Pursue Grant Opportunities	
A Sustainable Pattern of Growth	
SG-A-1: Adapt Land Use And Transportation Policies To Meet The Needs Of A Changing Population	<p>Population/Housing/Development Patterns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population (U.S. Census American Community Survey) Housing affordability index (the median household income relative to the income needed to purchase a median-priced house) Total land (acres) consumed for development Average density (households/acre) of developed areas Area of county that is unincorporated (acres/percent) <p>Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total vehicle miles travelled Vehicle miles per capita Transit ridership (total # of trips, transit trip capture) <p>Resource Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acres of preserved open lands (source?) Number of tons of solid waste diverted from landfill
SG-A-2: Evaluate Current Sewer Financing Structure	
SG-A-3: Invest In Multi-Modal Transportation	
SG-A-4: Explore The Creation Of A Local Land Trust	
SG-A-5: Lead By Example With Regards To Sustainability Initiatives	

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	POSSIBLE INDICATORS
Efficient and Effective Service Government	
GOV-A1: Convene A Process To Review Current Levels Of Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales tax revenues • Total assessed real and personal property value • Number of county employees (FTE) • Minority representation on elected and appointed boards, commissions, and committees.
GOV-A2: Evaluate and Implement the Most Efficient Means of Providing Programs and Services Based on Evidence-Based Practices	
GOV-A3: Develop And Support Leadership That Reflects The Diversity Of The County	
GOV-A4: Strengthen the Voice of Johnson County Government and the Community	
GOV-A5: Encourage Civic Engagement	
A Culturally Rich and Active Community	
COM-A1: Identify New Funding Options to Support Increased Access to Parks and Recreation	<p>Demographics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age, sex, race (U.S. Census American Community Survey) • Poverty rates (food stamp enrollment – KS Department of Social Services) <p>Parks and Recreation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acres of improved parkland (total and per capita)
COM-A2: Encourage The Identification Of Broad-Based Sustainable Funding Mechanisms For The Arts	
COM-A3: Develop A Flexible Model For Library Services	
COM-A4: Identify New Ways To Engage The Community	
COM-A5: Support Programs And Services That Are Inclusive And Accessible	

This page blank.

Appendix: Background and Trends

To be added—detailed background and trends developed for earlier draft to be carried forward.

- Economic Development
- Financing and Taxation
- Social, Health and Human Services
- Criminal Justice and Public Safety
- Education
- Culture, Arts, and Humanities
- Parks and Recreation
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Other Infrastructure
- Natural Resources and Environment