

JOHNSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT  
STATE OF KANSAS

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Annabeth Surbaugh, Chairman of the Johnson County Board of Commissioners, at (913) 715-0500

## Johnson County prepares to form new Citizens Visioning Committee

OLATHE, KS (Johnson County Square) — Creation of a new Citizens Visioning Committee to develop a shared vision of Johnson County in 2030 is now a work in progress.

The proposal was first announced by Chairman Annabeth Surbaugh at her State of the County Address on March 31.

On Thursday, June 18, she asked district members of the Board of County Commissioners to support her plan, and they gave their nod of approval. That assent begins the process to establish a second visioning committee, make appointments, and have it begin work by late summer or early fall.

It will be the second look toward the future of Johnson County in a dozen years. The county's landmark Citizens Visioning Committee was appointed by the Board in January 1996. Over two years, the 23-member panel developed a 20-year shared vision for Johnson County. In 1997, the committee presented its recommendations about what Johnson County could look like by the year 2020.

"I'm very proud to say that we've achieved almost all of the recommendations advanced by the visioning committee ahead of schedule. I believe that now is the time for a new Citizens' Visioning Committee because of the many challenges facing our community," Chairman Surbaugh said.

"As with the first visioning committee, I believe this group is charged with developing a roadmap of sorts for the County Government, extending out through the year 2030. That roadmap would provide the Board with citizen recommendations about priorities for the future of this community."

Her proposal received strong support from city and county participants during the county's 2008 Leadership Summit.

In the decade since the original committee's 2020 report, Chairman Surbaugh said many challenges and new economic opportunities have surfaced in Johnson County, including:

- developing the workforce of the future;
- planning for growth and responding to continued growth, including an increasingly diverse and aging population;
- looking at mobility and public transit needs; and,
- addressing a heightened awareness of environmental impacts and sustainable solutions.

The new visioning committee, like the first, will consist of individuals representing divergent interests in the Johnson County community. The group will include approximately 25 representatives from rural and large cities, youth and senior citizens, residential and commercial development, Chambers of Commerce, utilities, social services, health care, K-12 education and Johnson County Community College, judiciary, and environmental advocacy.

Each of the six district commissioners would appoint one representative to the committee. The other appointments from representative groups would be at-large and made by the chairman. All appointments must be approved by the Board.

Thursday's support by the Board enables county staff to accept applications from Johnson County citizens who are interested in being considered for appointment to the new Citizens Visioning Committee. To be considered for appointment, citizens should submit a cover letter and current resume to the Board at:

Board of County Commissioners  
Attn: Appointments Secretary  
County Administration Building, Suite 3300  
111 South Cherry Street  
Olathe, Kansas 66061-3486

Chairman Surbaugh asked Board members to submit the names of district appointments to her staff by Thursday, July 2, so a resolution to establish the new Citizens Visioning Committee and define its mission and duties could be finalized for Board action by mid-July. She hopes the new committee's first meeting will take place in September. The task is expected to take from a year to 18 months to complete.

An outside facilitator and other professional services may be required by the committee along with staff support from the offices of the Board and County Manager.

Costs for start-up and initial operations will be absorbed by the Board's office, pending development of a more structured budget.

"One of the first items of business for the committee to consider will be the submission of a budget request for approval by the Board of County Commissioners," Chairman Surbaugh said.

There will be no set schedule or deadline for the new Citizens Visioning Committee to fulfill its mission, make its recommendations, and submit its final report.