

Introduction

Plan Intent

A Master Plan is more than a collection of static goals, policies and strategies. Rather, it is a document that reflects the values and needs of the entire community. The underlying purpose of the Master Plan is to identify policies and strategies that improve the quality of life for all residents within that community. As such, it takes collaboration and coordination among everyone who is concerned about the future of his or her community.

The 2008 *Unified Government of Wyandotte County / Kansas City, Kansas City-Wide Master Plan* (Master Plan) is a planning guide designed to achieve the community's vision of a forward looking, environmentally minded city with development that supports healthy neighborhoods and the City's rich and diverse cultural history. As such, the Plan is intended to:

- Serve as a resource for developers, property owners, business owners and residents;
- Serve as a marketing tool for environmentally minded industries and businesses;
- Incorporate sustainable approaches to development and enhance natural areas;
- Revitalize neighborhoods;
- Identify a true "multi-modal" transportation network that balances the needs of motorists, transit, pedestrians and cyclists.
- Recognize, reinforce and enhance established neighborhood identity and sense of place;
- Prioritize public infrastructure investments; and
- Outlines an action plan for implementation.

The Master Plan is prepared in accordance with state statutes that authorize the Unified Government to develop a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the City. All jurisdictions in Kansas must have an adopted plan to regulate the subdivision of land. Although advisory in nature, the Master Plan is the basis for regulatory measures including zoning and subdivision code updates, the development review process and serves as the foundation for future capital improvement programming. The Plan also provides a database of community information which can be used as supporting documentation for pursuing grants, development activities and infrastructure improvements.

The Master Plan should be consulted by public officials, the Board of Commissioners, the City Planning Commission and City staff when considering development proposals, updating land use regulations, working on intergovernmental issues, outlining work programs, preparing annual budgets, and reviewing progress toward meeting identified goals. The Master Plan should be also used to guide residents, land owners, project applicants and other parties concerning land planning and community development objectives.



City-Wide Master Plan



Why do we have a Master Plan?

The Master Plan is a comprehensive document that describes what the community wants its city to be in the future. It is a document that reflects the values and needs of the community. The underlying goal of the Master Plan is to identify policies that improve the quality of life for all residents within the city. As such, it takes collaboration and coordination between everyone who is concerned about the future of his or her community.

What is the Master Plan?

The Master Plan is a policy guide that describes in its text and illustrates in its graphics the city's aims for directing future development and infrastructure needs. The Master Plan has five key elements which are described below:

The **Policy Plan** element provides a general guide for cultural and civic amenities and priorities for public investments for identified districts based on individual area's existing and future needs.

The **Land Use Plan** element is a long-term vision for future development within the city. This element illustrates the city's future land use vision in the Land Use Guide (map) and includes descriptions of recommended uses and densities.

The **Urban Design** element provides a guide for public and private investments targeted to enhance the natural and built environment. These investments include, but are not limited to, landscape, streetscape, signage, lighting, public art, etc.

The **Parks, Open Space and Trails** element provides a guide for identifying opportunities for preservation and enhancement of greenways, open space, riparian corridors and natural areas. This element also describes a long-term vision for a city-wide trail network.

The **Transportation** element identifies a balanced transportation vision for the city that includes recommendations for all modes including vehicles, mass transit, pedestrians and bicycles.

How is the Master Plan used?

The Master Plan serves as “big picture” policy document to guide city decisions that will lead to a desired future. As such, the Master Plan will be consulted by public officials including the Board of Commissioners, the Planning Commission and City staff to coordinate development within the city and with adjacent jurisdictions, evaluate new development proposals, and forecast future infrastructure needs. The Master Plan also serves as a resource for property owners and developers to identify appropriate locations for particular businesses, or in the case of residential development, appropriate housing types, densities and associated amenities. Residents should use the Master Plan to understand what future uses are likely to occur within or adjacent to their neighborhoods.

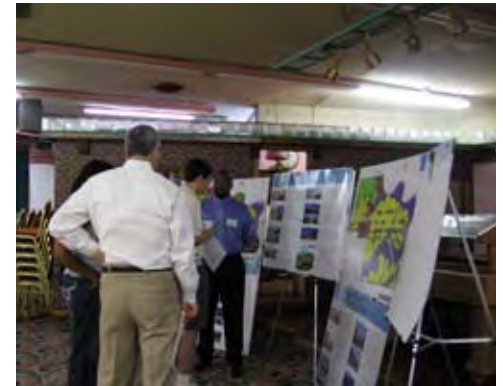
Can the Master Plan be amended?

The Master Plan should be reviewed and revised as specific actions are achieved and new strategies are identified. The goals, objectives and polices should also be reviewed periodically when new circumstances or changing conditions warrant reconsideration. Because the Master Plan represents the ultimate desired future for the city, all amendments should be carefully considered by public officials, city staff and the public-at-large.

At a minimum, the Unified Government will consider potential plan amendments at least once a year. The annual review of the Master Plan also is a requirement of the state planning enabling legislation which states that the city’s Master Plan, or any part thereof, shall be reviewed or reconsidered at least once a year and adopted by the Governing Body.

The Master Plan Amendment Process:

- A. The Planning Commission shall review the Master Plan at least annually, and may propose amendments to the Plan.
- B. Amendments proposed for a given year may be developed from suggestions by the Board of Commissioners, Planning Commission and City staff. Landowners may propose amendments to their property’s land use designation through a formal application.
- C. A workshop will be held by City staff to review and solicit public feedback for all proposed amendments. The meeting date, time and location will be posted in the local paper at least two weeks in advance of the workshop.





- D. Once finalized, the proposed amendments are brought before the Planning Commission for its consideration at a public hearing. Notice for the public hearing will be posted in the local paper at least two weeks in advance of the hearing. Additionally, all property within 200 feet of the boundaries of the parcel proposed for development, and any homeowners association, neighborhood association or merchants association registered with the Department of Urban Planning and Land Use and with boundaries located within 500 feet of the parcel in question will receive written notice of the hearing.
- E. Following the public hearing, the Planning Commission may adopt by resolution the amendments proposed for that year.
- F. Once adopted by the Planning Commission, the amendments are sent to the Board of Commissioners for its consideration.
- G. A certified copy of the amendments along with a written summary of the Planning Commission public hearing shall be submitted to the Board of Commissioners as recommendations for consideration.
- H. The Board of Commissioners may choose to hold one or more public hearing on the amendments prior to taking action on the amendments.
- I. The Board of Commissioners may:
 - Choose to adopt by ordinance the recommendations on the amendments as adopted by the Planning Commission,
 - Override the Planning Commission's recommendations by a 2/3 majority vote, or
 - Return the amendments to the Planning Commission for further consideration, together with a statement specifying the basis for the Board of Commissioner's failure to approve or disapprove the amendments.
- J. If the amendments are returned to the Planning Commission for further consideration, the Planning Commission may adopt its original amendments or adopt revised amendments.
- K. The Planning Commission needs to take action on the amendments at its next regular meeting following the receipt of the Board of Commissioners' report on why it failed to approve or disapprove the amendments. If the Planning Commission takes no further action by this meeting, then it is assumed that the Planning Commission's original action on the amendments will stand.

- L. Upon receiving the returned amendments from the Planning Commission, the Board of Commissioners, by a simple majority, may:
 - Approve by ordinance the amendments as recommended by the Planning Commission,
 - May adopt revised amendments, or
 - May choose to take no further action.
- M. The amendments will not be effective unless they are approved by the Board of Commissioners following the procedures as outlined.
- N. The amendments shall become effective once the adopting ordinance of the Board of Commissioners is published in the local newspaper.
- O. A copy of the adopted amendments shall then be sent to all taxing entities (state and county agencies, school districts, and other special taxing districts) which request a copy of the plan. Copies may also be sent to other affected jurisdictions for their reference in planning development within or adjacent to the city.



Public Participation

The Master Plan is a community-driven plan. Beginning with an enthusiastic kick-off celebration in June of 2006, the Unified Government outlined clear goals about maximizing community participation in the planning and decision-making process. Mayor/CEO Joe Reardon named a dynamic civic Steering Committee of 36 community representatives from all parts of Wyandotte County and all walks of life.

This diverse and dedicated group led the citizen participation process for 18 months through dialogue, debate, and decision-making about the future of the community. It is the Steering Committee's reflections of the community dialogue that form the overall strategic direction, policies, and implementation steps recommended for the Commission's approval.

A wide range of citizen input was gathered through the use of several techniques throughout the process. Each step was tailored to capturing as many ideas as possible and were all open to the public at large. Many participants attended multiple meetings throughout the 18-month process and contributed in different capacities, according to their interest and time commitment.

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Steering Committee

To start the process, the Mayor/CEO appointed a Steering Committee representing the wide-range of interests throughout the City. The Steering Committee provided guidance, input and direction to City staff and the consultant team throughout the process. This Committee represented a mixture of property owners, business owners, public officials, residents and interested citizens. The Steering Committee met numerous times throughout the process, attended Town Hall meetings, spoke with many neighborhood groups and organizations, attended update presentations to the City Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners. In addition, three sub-committees were created to provide specific direction and recommendations for the following areas:

- Public Works Sub-committee
- Crime Sub-committee
- Education-Training Sub-committee

The open dialogue during these meetings were critical to the development and refinement of the final plan recommendations. For this reason, these Sub-committees should continue to meet on a regular basis after the adoption of this plan to take an active role in assisting the City to implement the Plan recommendations. To begin the implementation process, citizen leadership committees shall be formed from each Plan sub-committee. For example, the Public Works Sub-committee will form a permanent citizen committee that will work with City staff and elected officials to provide input and direction to the Capital Maintenance Improvement Program (CMIP); the Crime Sub-committee will continue to work with the Police Department on implementation of the Community Policing Program and other strategies; and the Education Sub-committee will work to implement the Best Practices, Strategies and Partnerships concept developed during the Plan process. These Best Practice Strategies and Partnerships include:

- Schools-education improvement in all school districts in Wyandotte County.
- Kansas City Kansas Community College (KCKCC)- USD #500/ATS Merger and improved technical education and training programs.
- Unified Government "Network" Leadership in Area III Workforce Development and the proposed new Education and Training Institute at KCKCC.
- Technology and Education-Training initiatives in the state of Kansas and Wyandotte County, including the following areas related to improving education and training as a high priority for the Unified Government and Wyandotte County and Metropolitan area:
 - County-wide "Wi-Fi" and Laptops for Learning education strategies.
 - Habitat for Humanity and Global One Partnership Support.
 - The proposed Seed Center: Kansas City Technology HUB - Community Information Net.

- *Creative "Quality of Life" Partnerships* between Unified Government offices and programs that have the potential for improving employment, training and family stability for local citizens.
 - Regional Law Enforcement - Police Academy at KCKCC.
 - Workforce Development Institute Partnership with KCKCC, Workforce Investment Board/Chief Elected Officials Board (WIB/CEOB) and Kansas City Kansas Chamber of Commerce (KCK Chamber) - Wyandotte County Economic Development Council (WCEDC).
 - The proposed Seed Center: Kansas City Technology HUB - Community Information Net
 - Unified Government-KCKCC-Eisenhower Park Soccer Field Partnership through Parks and Recreation Unit.
 - Weed and Seed Community Focused Partners - The Seed Center: Kansas City, Roswell Church of Christ/Rehabilitation Outreach Program - Partnership Initiative.



Town Hall Meetings

Three rounds of open Town Hall meetings were scheduled throughout the city to reach as many residents as possible. The goal was to identify key issues and concerns, to review the strategic options that “bubbled up” from those issues, and to review the Steering Committee’s recommended alternative.

The first round of Town Hall meetings in the late summer and early fall of 2006, were held at Memorial Hall, Nefertiti’s, the Wyandotte County Fairgrounds and the Argentine Community Center. A brief history of Wyandotte County, the impact of planning decisions on a community, and current facts, data and trends were shared to provide a context for decision-making about the future. Attendees shared concerns, and identified important issues to be addressed in the plan. Citizens could also send in surveys about key issues and areas of interest about which they would like to receive more information and sign up for topical Work Teams.

The second round of Town Hall meetings followed specific work by the technical team and the Perspective Groups and Work Teams (described below) to review the strategic direction options formulated by the Steering Committee. These spring meetings were held at the Savior Pastoral Center, the Pierson Community Center, the Armourdale Recreation Center and Nefertiti’s.

The final round of Town Hall meetings were completed in September, 2007 and focused on community discussion about the final recommendations in the plan, put forward by the Steering Committee. These meetings were held at the downtown YWCA, Indian Springs Community Meeting Room, the Best Western on Southwest Boulevard and the YMCA on 87th Street.

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Perspective Groups

After the key issues and concerns were identified at the first round of Town Hall meetings, citizens then joined “Perspective Groups” for a two week exercise to discuss and answer 16 specific questions about the future of the city that were compiled from the analysis of the key issues and the demographic data about the city. Participants could join any one of the following groups with a shared perspective, but all answered the same 16 questions. The Perspective Groups included:

- Environmental
- Development/Redevelopment
- African-American
- Latino
- Civic/Not-for-Profit/Community Volunteer
- Labor
- Neighborhoods
- Youth
- Women

This process resulted in numerous creative ideas for the Unified Government to consider as key components of a successful and healthy community in the future.

Work Teams

Work progressed to focusing on the topical issues most identified in the Town Hall meetings and Perspective Groups that would become the framework of the Master Plan. Citizens joined Work Teams of their choice and attended three consecutive workshops on one of the following topics:

- Downtown
- Economic Development
- Infrastructure and Transportation
- Neighborhoods
- Parks, Open Space and Trails
- Urban Design

These workshops were also dispersed throughout the city to encourage attendance. Meeting locations included Turner High School, City Hall, and Kansas City, Kansas Community College. Citizens throughout the city and county consistently demonstrated enthusiasm for the planning process, a clear interest in listening and discussing other people’s points of view, and contributed innovative ideas for solving the community problems today as well as 25 years in the future. Kansas City, Kansas or “Dots” demonstrated a loyalty to their community and a clear commitment to take positive steps to determine their own future. This is their plan.