



# Economic Development Strategic Plan

November 27, 2023

DRAFT



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# Report Snapshot – Context and Highlights

The context for economic planning in Kansas City, Kansas (KCK) is one of challenge and opportunity.

There is a clear need to **elevate and prioritize community prosperity**. Today, significant portions of the city are dealing with the impacts of decades of economic stagnation that can be traced back to the historic redlining and policies that entrenched economic inequality. There is a **strong desire to address these inequalities and build economic vibrancy and prosperity** across the whole community.

**There is also opportunity.** Wyandotte County and KCK have an outstanding array of economic, educational, industrial and place-based assets that can drive future economic development. These assets all have **significant upside potential** and can help deliver neighborhood development and future community prosperity.

As we move forward with implementation of the Economic Development Strategic Plan and PlanKCK, it should be noted that these plans are meant to be flexible and responsive to changing conditions over time. Future area planning will take strategic direction from the Economic Development Strategic Plan and PlanKCK as specific projects are identified and refined. These north star documents are intended to provide the framework for the future as more detailed planning takes place.

**This report lays out the future vision and economic development strategies for KCK. It identifies the key strategic pillars and actions needed to achieve future community prosperity and to enhance the lives of all residents.**



# 1.0 Introduction – Overview of the Planning Process

As part of the PlanKCK comprehensive planning process, stakeholders from across the city, county, and region were invited to explore KCK's economic development ecosystem and how it could evolve in the future. The 9-month visioning process began in February and ended in October 2023. A key focus of this Economic Development Strategic Plan was to incorporate the four lenses of the overarching Comprehensive Plan: **Health, Equity, Access and Regeneration**. This report outlines how the extensive accumulated data has informed the identification of a unified preferred future and key strategic action areas for future economic development in KCK.

**The Economic Development Strategic Plan is one part of the overall PlanKCK 'Year of Visioning' planning process.**



## Unified Government's KCK Economic Development Strategic Plan Development Process

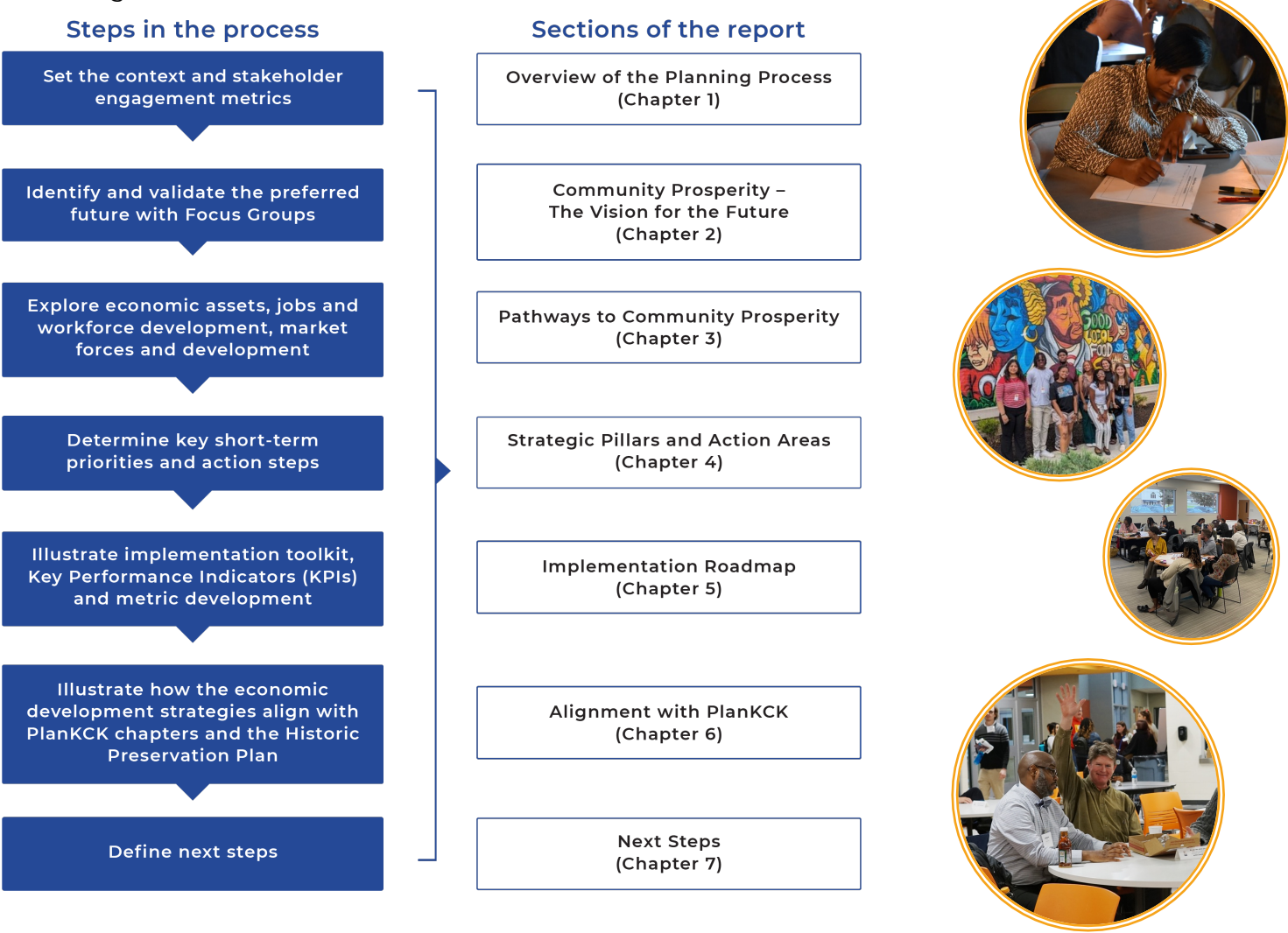




# 1.1 | How to use this report

This report lays out the findings from each key step in the economic development strategic planning process.

The process proceeded from background analysis and exploration, through to identifying key priorities for investments in the future. This work represents intensive ‘future gazing’ and collaboration, where KCK stakeholders considered possible directions and the impacts and consequences of those directions. This process helped to lay the groundwork for figuring out ‘how we get there.’





Significant time has been contributed by PlanKCK stakeholders in the development of the many planning initiatives currently underway during this 'Year of Visioning'. This momentum will be carried forward as the plans are adopted and implemented in the coming years.

## 1.2 | Stakeholder Engagement Metrics

To build a **community-based** economic development strategic plan, **stakeholder input was essential**.

This economic development strategic planning work has focused on gathering significant stakeholder input. This engagement and data-driven methodology was interwoven with the overarching PlanKCK comprehensive planning process to maximize input and outreach to the community.

- The 9-month planning process began in February 2023, ran through October 2023, and included approximately 500 direct stakeholder engagements.
- A key focus of this Economic Development Strategic Plan is to incorporate the four lenses of PlanKCK: **Health, Equity, Access, and Regeneration**.
- The economic development strategic planning process was built on **significant stakeholder input**. This engagement and data-driven methodology included surveys, workshops, interviews and focus groups. It combined in-person and virtual engagement.

### Focus Group Topics

Focus Groups were an important engagement element that allowed more detailed discussions. These Focus Groups explored specific opportunities in geographic areas, and overarching themes and gathered important information to support the development of specific actions. The topics included:

- Downtown Core and Main Street Development
- The Legends and Village West
- Rock Island Bridge, Connectivity, and KCMO Regional Economy
- Quindaro Townsite
- Industrial Revitalization
- Enhancing the Small Business Support Ecosystem
- Fairfax District

### Key Stakeholder Engagement Metrics

- Interviews: 16 Key Stakeholders
- Vision Summit: 120+ Participants
- Vision Summit Survey (online): 52 Responses
- Focus Groups: Seven Meetings; 210 Participants
- Business Survey (online): 35 Responses
- Community Prosperity Roundtable: 80+ Participants
- Neighborhood Summit: 120+ Participants



# 2.0 Community Prosperity – Our Vision for the Future

Throughout the planning process, there has been a core focus on **elevating community prosperity and livability**. This was a central theme in the stakeholder discussions and was a universally supported desired outcome.

In the context of PlanKCK, this includes a **strong neighborhood approach** that builds more connected, livable, and prosperous local communities. The vision included the notion of walkable neighborhoods, where you can access all your needs and wants within a 15-minute walk, bike, transit, or car trip. The planning work has also identified the **critical role that economic development will play** to shape the current and future economic vitality of the city. Wyandotte County and KCK have an outstanding array of economic, educational, industrial and place-based assets that can drive future economic development. These assets all have significant upside potential and can help deliver neighborhood development and community prosperity. It was also identified that **small businesses will play a critical role** in the future economic fabric of the city.

To make the vision a reality, two (2) macro over-arching themes were identified. These are:

- **Community and Workforce Approach.** There is a strong desire for intentional investment in building a strong and equitable community fabric. This includes a desire for a future focus on building new workplace-based models that especially help support working families. This approach would aim to foster new ideas, cultures, and experiences. There is an opportunity for a broad approach to attracting new people that supports an inclusive regional community that values equity and diversity; and
- **Development Trajectory.** Stakeholders have identified a desire for a strong focus on building upon existing infrastructure in creative ways and investing in local scale entrepreneurial activities. There is a recognition of the value of a strong mixed-use approach, with an emphasis on redevelopment and repurposing aimed to maximize existing infrastructure. This is especially the case in the traditional urban core. Both themes require greater transportation options, partnerships with KCKCC, and supporting business sectors that spur innovation and job creation and help build climate resilience.

For additional information on the PlanKCK Vision Summit, please read the *PlanKCK Vision Summit Report* at <https://www.wycokck.org/PlanKCK>. (See also Appendix A)



*“KCK is uniquely positioned to grow its economy from within. If we choose to grow our food, and make products right here, we can keep KCK money (and KCK kids) right here.”*

PlanKCK Vision Summit Survey Respondent

## PlanKCK Vision Summit

**To identify the preferred future for KCK, stakeholders participated in a scenario-planning workshop called a Vision Summit. The PlanKCK Vision Summit was intended to launch the development of a comprehensive vision for the future of KCK that will guide leadership and stakeholders looking out over the next 25 years.**

# 3.0 Pathways to Community Prosperity

The community engagement work has highlighted the desire to elevate community prosperity. The pathways to community prosperity\* include the following main approaches:

- **A Restorative and Regenerative Economy.**
- **Equitable Transit-Oriented Development.**
- **Housing as a Human Right.**
- **Parks and Open Space Equity.**

This economic development strategy report specifically focuses on the Restorative and Regenerative Economy approach. This work has focused on creating the building blocks for a restorative and regenerative economy and finding creative ways to build local community prosperity. There is also a strong focus on enhancing the community fabric and character. This is very important in building civic pride, reconnecting neighborhoods, and strengthening cultural diversity. In this report we have explored strategies that leverage existing local assets and build local systems of support. More broadly, the PlanKCK work covers all the main approaches that create pathways to community prosperity.

## The term restorative economy was coined by Nwamaka Agbo and is:

“Restorative Economics is an invitation for communities to come together and form relationships that allow them to reimagine a new way of being grounded in cooperation instead of competition, inclusion instead of exclusion, and abundance instead of scarcity. With a Restorative Economics approach, neighbors can come out from behind their fences and gather in the streets to make decisions about how to invest in and transform a blighted empty lot or create a climate resilient energy microgrid. Restorative Economics places the wellbeing of the community directly into the hands of the community.”

Nwamaka Agbo [[www.nwamakaagbo.com/restorative-economics](http://www.nwamakaagbo.com/restorative-economics)]



\* Footnote: This approach to Community Prosperity is credited to SPARRCC (The Strong, Prosperous and Resilient Communities Challenge), which is a multiyear initiative investing in and amplifying local efforts in Atlanta, the San Francisco Bay Area, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, and Memphis to ensure that public investments in the built environment reduce racial disparities, build a culture of health, and respond to the climate crisis.



### 3.1 | Leveraging KCK's Economic Assets

Wyandotte County and KCK, have an outstanding array of economic, educational, industrial and place-based assets that can drive future economic development. These assets all have **significant upside potential** and can help deliver neighborhood development and future community prosperity.

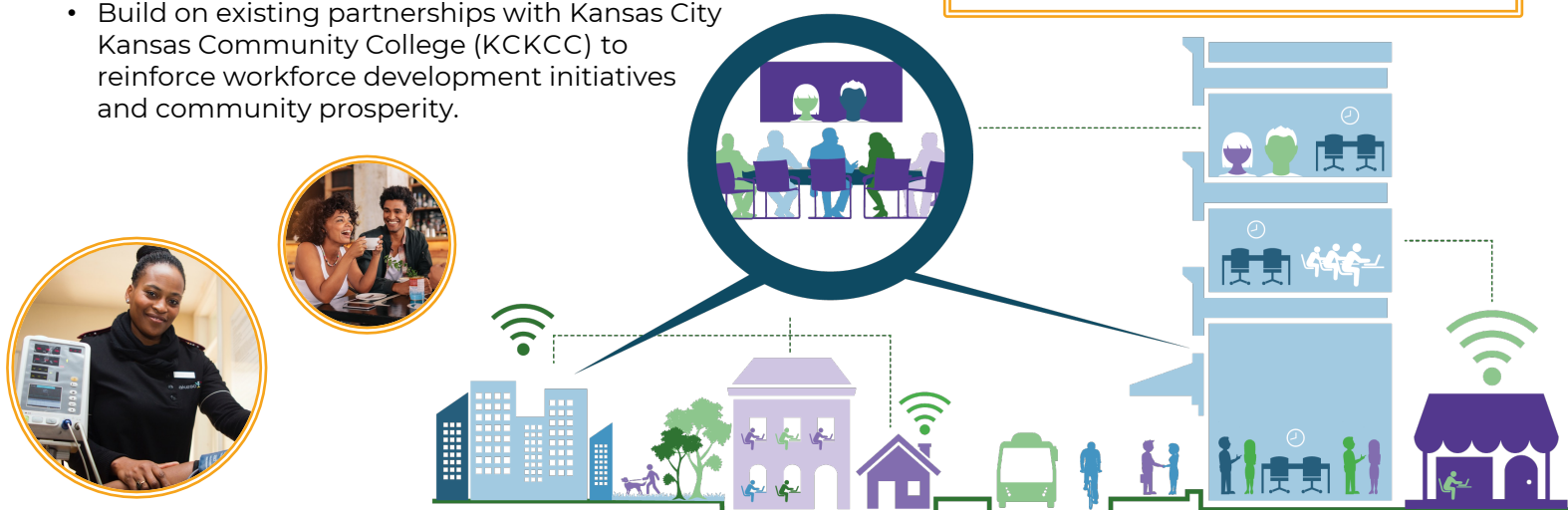
#### PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS:

- Build a strong support system for small and local business development that creates pathways to economic prosperity.
- Find creative ways to better connect growth in Village West with KCK's urban core, and spread the economic impact.
- Focus on Downtown KCK and other 'Main Streets,' as key locations for regeneration of community identity and help build the local economy.
- Foster a 'River City' approach that capitalizes on this unique and under-utilized zone for recreation, connectivity, neighborhoods and new economic growth.
- Build on the high interest in Quindaro Townsite, and its cultural importance and economic potential.
- Capitalize on the strong medical cluster around the University of Kansas Medical Center (KU Med).
- Connect into the larger Kansas City, Missouri downtown area, and leverage this ongoing reinvestment into KCK.
- Build on existing partnerships with Kansas City Kansas Community College (KCKCC) to reinforce workforce development initiatives and community prosperity.

#### Key findings:

- There are over 3,430 businesses in Wyandotte County.
- Key business sectors include retail; professional, scientific and technical services; construction; industrial; and healthcare.
- Wyandotte County features an extensive network of economic development stakeholders and collaborative partners.
- The median household income in KCK is \$50,554, which is significantly lower than the Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical Area's \$75,500.
- Both KCK and the Kansas City MSA are projected to grow economically in the coming years.

*UG-KCK State of the Economy  
Snapshot Report*



## 3.2 | Jobs and Workforce Development

**A key pathway for individual and community prosperity is the ability to find living wage jobs and build future career paths. Wyandotte County and KCK data show mixed results.**

A key feature that defines the employment patterns in Wyandotte County is the relatively large number of workers who commute in and out of the county each day. Those who commute in are earning more than those who commute out. This represents a lost opportunity for local community prosperity.

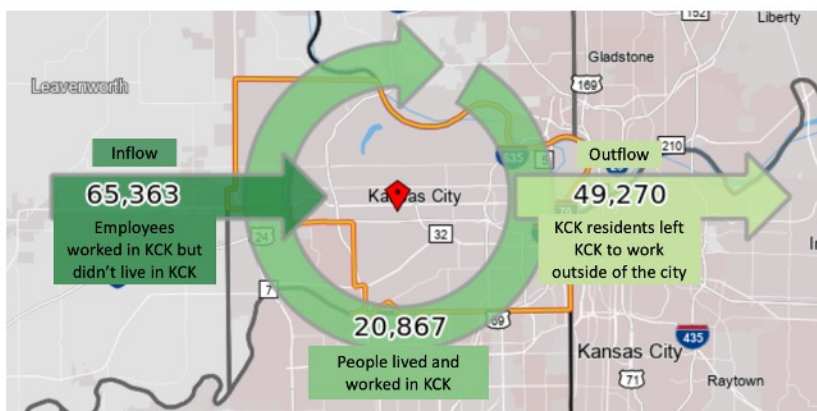
A key approach in the economic development strategy is **building the future connections between the local employment opportunities and the potential local workforce**. This will require a focus on skill development and education, increased connectivity, and an ongoing intentional partnership building approach. An example would be KCKCC and their Downtown KCK Campus as a path toward skill development and urban core revitalization.

### Key findings:

- Wyandotte County is home to over 72,200 private sector jobs. (*UG-KCK State of the Economy Snapshot Report*)
- Wages in Wyandotte County skew higher for employees coming into the county for work compared to county residents. (*UG-KCK State of the Economy Snapshot Report*)
- 44% of Wyandotte County residents cited employment and income as one of the top barriers to health. (*Wyandotte County Community Health Assessment 2022 Full Report*)
- Transportation, skill development, childcare, and needed job search and interview skills are cited by Wyandotte County residents as the most common barriers to employment. (*Wyandotte County Community Health Assessment 2022 Full Report*)
- In FY 2021-2022, KCKCC supported 11,633 regional jobs and had an economic impact of \$764.9 million in income to the KCKCC Service Area economy. (*The Economic Value of Kansas City Community College, Executive Summary, October 2023*)

### Employment Insights - Inflow/Outflow

All cities experience differing balances of workers who come to a place to work and residents who leave their communities for employment. Of the residential workforce of Kansas City, Kansas, about a third (30%) of residents live and work in the city. KCK imports high-wage earners and exports low-wage workers.



This diagram illustrates the inflow and outflow of employees in Kansas City, Kansas, articulated in the adjacent table.  
Note: Data presented above reflect the most recently available data. Jobs reflect total jobs rather than private sector employment, as shown elsewhere in this report. Source: US Census, On the Map

#### 2019 Kansas City, Kansas Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs)

	Count	Share
<b>Employed in KCK</b>	86,230	--
<b>Employed in KCK but Lived Outside</b>	65,363	<b>76%</b>
<b>Employed and Lived in KCK</b>	20,867	<b>24%</b>
<b>Lived in KCK</b>	70,137	--
<b>Lived in KCK but Employed Outside</b>	49,270	<b>70%</b>
<b>Lived and Employed in KCK</b>	20,867	<b>30%</b>





### 3.3 | Development and Market Forces

A key element of the visioning work as part of PlanKCK has identified a desire for a strong focus on building upon existing infrastructure in creative ways and investing in local scale entrepreneurial activities. There is a recognition of the value of a strong mixed-use approach with an emphasis on redevelopment and repurposing aimed to maximize existing infrastructure. This includes a focus on greater transportation options, and supporting business sectors that spur innovation and job creation and help build climate resilience.

#### Key findings:

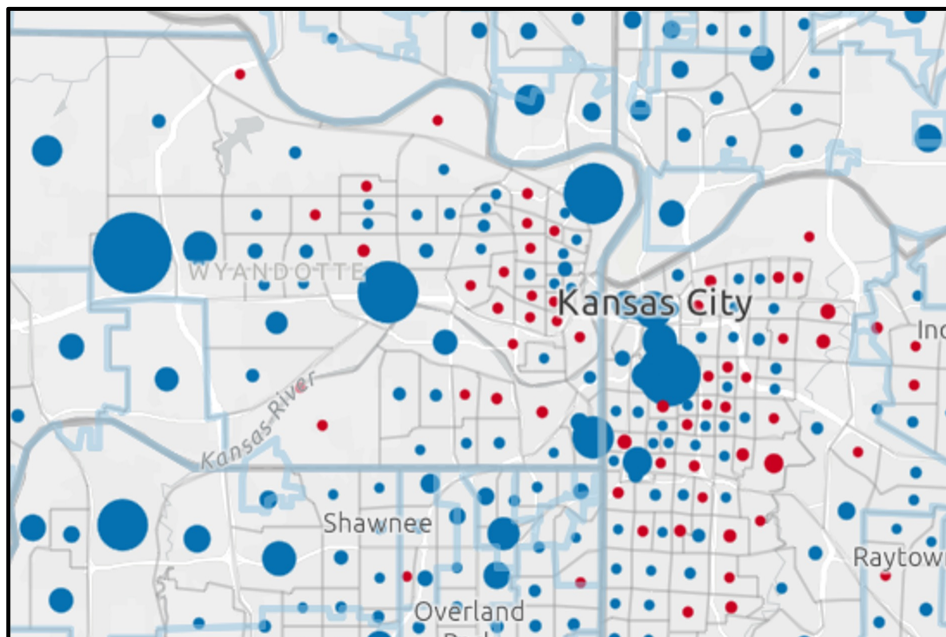
- Wyandotte County's promising growth trends signal opportunity for continued investment.
- Development in recent years has been concentrated in Western Wyandotte, along Turner Diagonal, and adjacent to the Kansas-Missouri boarder.
- Wyandotte County's industrial and multifamily markets are positioned for the most demand in the coming years.
- The county's commercial market has moderate demand for hospitality and retail uses with limited demand for office growth based on the post-pandemic market climate.

*2023 Countywide Market Analysis*

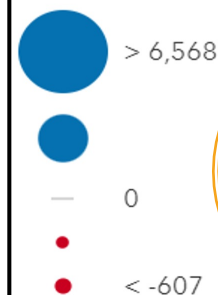
This desire runs against existing prevailing market forces, which are tending to drive development into greenfield and new industrial sites to the west. The Regional employment forecast projections anticipate significant employment increases in 3 key areas of KCK. These 3 areas include north of Edwardsville near the Kansas Speedway (+43%), the Fairfax Industrial District (31%), and around the industrial areas along the Kansas River (+75%) as illustrated in the map below.

The challenge in the PlanKCK process and the economic development strategic plan is to create approaches that **help bring economic and small business development into the urban core and its neighborhoods**, and to help create more LOCAL employment.

"A rule of thumb by site-selection advisory professionals is that approximately 85% of all project searches start with a company looking for an existing building."  
- *Economic Development is Still not for Amateurs!*, Jay Garner & Ross Patten, 2022



**Regional  
Projected  
Employment  
Change  
2020 to 2050**



# 4.0 Economic Development Strategic Pillars

The 7 strategic pillars of the Kansas City, Kansas Economic Development Strategic Plan feature core opportunities for enhancing community prosperity and livability in KCK and Wyandotte County.



## Equity

Increasing pathways to local job opportunities, inclusively prioritizing educational attainment, workforce development solutions, and growing the entrepreneurial and small business ecosystem of KCK and Wyandotte County contribute to alleviating disparity amongst local residents and planning for a future economy for all.



## Regeneration

Building a regenerative economy includes diversifying the economy for a resilient future. From business and industry attraction that prioritizes green initiatives to concentrating new development to alleviate burdens on infrastructure to renovating existing building stock helps ensure a regenerative future for KCK and Wyandotte County, a regenerative future that intertwines with economic factors.



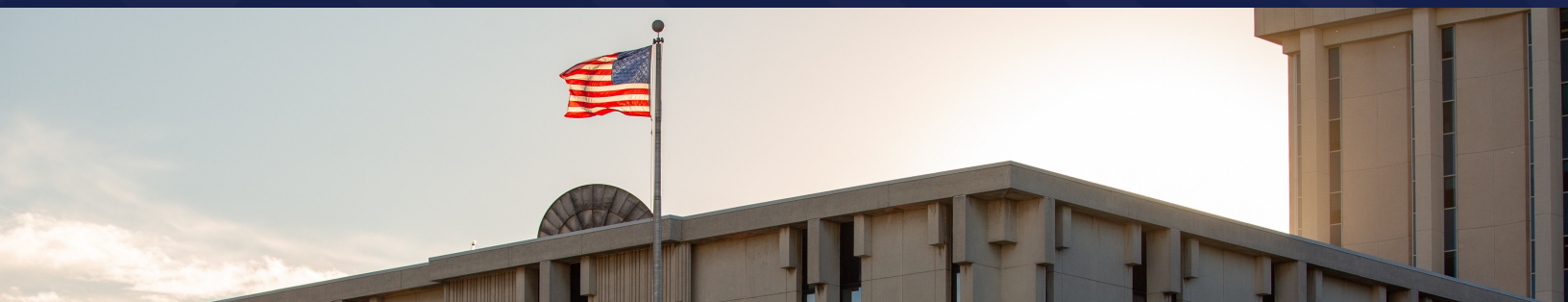
## Access

Concentrating economic development areas throughout KCK at key clusters increases access to education and job opportunities for KCK and Wyandotte County residents. Ensuring that residents and workers have both transportation access and skill development for the city, county, and region's industries leads to higher employment rates and upward economic mobility.



## Health

Improving community health improves local economies. Raising median household incomes can help reduce the financial burdens of healthcare costs. Increasing and bettering local employment opportunities provides residents access to enhanced healthcare coverage.





## 4.1 | Strategic Pillar Framework





## 4.2 STRATEGIC PILLAR 1:

### Downtown Core & Main Street Development

**Improve the economic success of KCK's downtown core and Main Street business corridors.**

Downtown KCK and its urban neighborhoods are a vital asset for the future economic growth of the city. Downtown is home to civic institutions, community services and amenities, and a neighboring residential fabric with opportunities to intentionally concentrate investment for a more robust local economy.

Development and redevelopment efforts that leverage existing infrastructure investment and the strength of the rich community network in the area can contribute to a sense of place unparalleled in the region. Orienting strategic actions towards bolstering opportunities for enhanced attraction through placemaking, branding, and pathways for economic and community prosperity can improve the area's vibrancy, business growth, and experience of KCK.

#### Key Economic Development Partners

- WYEDC
- KCK Chamber
- Downtown Shareholders
- Visit Kanas City Kansas
- Wyandotte Nation
- KCKCC Downtown Campus
- El Centro, Inc.
- BPU
- *and more!*

### Resource Spotlight: **Main Street America™**

#### Main Street: A Proven Framework for Community Revitalization

*"The Main Street movement grew out of a recognition that a community is only as strong as its core...Main Street empowers communities to set their own destinies. While revitalization is challenging work, the Main Street program offers a road-map for locally-owned, locally-driven prosperity."*

- Main Street America

Blending economic development, community development, and historic preservation, Main Street™ is a nationally acclaimed model for revitalizing commercial corridors and downtowns. Main Street Kansas provides an implementable framework for technical assistance and capacity building for local economic development. From façade improvements and beautification efforts to business support to activation and marketing, Designated Main Streets authentically celebrate and enhance commercial cores.

For more information, please visit: [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org) and [www.kansascommerce.gov/program/community-programs/main-street](http://www.kansascommerce.gov/program/community-programs/main-street)



## Key Strategic Action Areas

1. **Create a collaborative and holistic approach for the downtown core that represents the cultures, community, and history of KCK while revitalizing and leveraging the existing built form for investment, business, and storefront opportunities.** Downtown KCK reflects a mix of diverse voices, experiences, and perspectives that can be celebrated as unique characteristics of the downtown fabric.
2. **Activate Downtown KCK through experiences, events, education, and businesses.** New and enhanced reasons to visit Downtown KCK will bolster the local customer base of the area, spark community gathering and activity, improve social infrastructure, and demonstrate investment in the community. The new Kansas City Kansas Community College Downtown Campus will draw students and new jobs to the downtown that will generate new revenue and opportunities for KCK business growth strategies could range from reducing storefront vacancies with new businesses to encouraging vendors and mobile-based businesses to help activate the urban core.
3. **Identify and work to remove barriers for a thriving business mix in Downtown KCK.** Local stakeholders cited regulatory challenges that have limited development and business activity that would generate positive economic impacts in the area. For example, parking regulations tied to liquor laws make it challenging for eating and drinking establishments to open downtown. Restaurants and bars add to the vibrancy and experiences of downtown cores and can be beneficial additions to Downtown KCK. Identifying and supporting partners that help businesses navigate regulatory and code enforcement hurdles can alleviate pain points for local business growth.
4. **Establish a KCK Main Street Program in commercial corridors best suited for the Main Street approach.** In collaboration with local businesses and community groups, a KCK Main Street Program in dedicated commercial corridors across the city provides a holistic framework and a proven model for community-based economic development, bridging historic preservation, economic development, and community development through a well-tested approach that transforms commercial districts.



### Near-Term Implementation Steps

- Establish a Downtown KCK Commercial Historic District.
- Update the Downtown Area Plan.
- Establish a KCK Main Street Program in partnership with Kansas Main Street and Downtown Shareholders.
- Leverage the UG's Land Bank to support a mix of urban infill uses.
- Conduct a downtown regulatory audit to identify barriers to business attraction, redevelopment efforts, and economic growth.
- Activate vacant storefronts with community arts programs by linking property owners to local artists, such as those found at the Third Friday Art Walks on 6<sup>th</sup> Street.





## 4.3 STRATEGIC PILLAR 2:

### Village West and Western Wyandotte

Continue the economic success of the area around Village West and western Wyandotte through strategic infill development.

Western Wyandotte County features a cluster of economic activity spurred by the Kansas Speedway with its inaugural NASCAR races in 2001. Major retail and hospitality developments, including The Legends Outlets Kansas City and Hollywood Casino at Kansas Speedway, catalyzed additional development in western Wyandotte County. Today, Village West and the western Wyandotte County area remain a hub for sporting and tourism for the region.

Over the past decade, an uptick in development around Village West brought continued hospitality growth, multifamily residential development, commercial office space, and new retail centers to the area. Industrial and flex uses, including the \$403 million Urban Outfitters' Distribution Center, have formed on the area's periphery. These recent investments continue to cluster and concentrate employment in the area, and strategic investments that continue to create a more walkable, transit-oriented development (TOD) district will further support reinvestment and access across Wyandotte County while optimizing existing infrastructure investments.

#### Key Economic Development Partners

- WYEDC
- City of Bonner Springs
- City of Edwardsville
- Visit Kansas City Kansas
- Kansas Speedway
- Legends Outlets Kansas City
- Kansas City Monarchs
- Sporting Kansas City
- American Royal
- Homefield
- Urban Outfitters
- Turner Community Connection, Inc.
- *and more!*

### Best Practice: **A Collaborative Opportunity**

Creating Synergies with Bonner Springs and Edwardsville Economic Development Approaches

*"The playbook for improving economic opportunity is not only multidimensional but also multi-jurisdictional."*

- Brookings Institute

Working collectively with Bonner Springs and Edwardsville on economic development approaches in western Wyandotte can yield stronger successes as this area within KCK abuts both municipalities. Continuing to create an ecosystem of economic collaboration rather than competition embodies the spirit of the Unified Government and can progress socioeconomic and market factors that span regionally.

Liu, A., Joseph Parilla, B. M., Ray, R., Timothy J. Bartik, M. M., & Teryn Zmuda, L. B. (2022, March 9). *A modern case for regional collaboration*. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/a-modern-case-for-regional-collaboration/>



## Key Strategic Action Areas

- 1. Collaborate with Bonner Springs and Edwardsville on shared economic development goals, particularly in western Wyandotte.** Regional economic benefits and impacts extend beyond jurisdictional lines, and KCK, Bonner Springs, and Edwardsville all work to position Wyandotte County for economic growth and prosperity. Incorporating key economic development leaders in Bonner Springs and Edwardsville in planning for western Wyandotte's future land uses ensures a collaborative approach towards shared goals.
- 2. Strategically diversify the economic activity in Village West and Wyandotte County for continued resiliency and economic growth.** Strengthening the mix of uses in Village West and nearby areas to increase housing and employment options positions the area for balanced opportunities for living, working, and access to amenities. Optimally mixing hospitality, residential, retail, office, and industrial uses in a more clustered, walkable and transit-oriented district can generate a more robust and equitable economic base that builds upon existing investments.
- 3. Work to ensure that Village West is positioned for year-round tourism and attraction.** As a major area in the regional tourism market, western Wyandotte offers visitor assets that bring outside spending to Wyandotte County. Protect the existing assets at and near The Legends while also attracting additional investment for 365-day tourism.
- 4. Connect investment and economic benefits in western Wyandotte with other areas of the county, including the urban core.** Prioritize workforce solutions, including connection and transportation for KCK and UG residents for improved access to jobs and amenities in Village West. Assess mechanisms and opportunities for equity development that connect western Wyandotte's investment and economic activity with other areas of Wyandotte County. Increasing transportation options and connectivity to Village West can improve access to employment opportunities across the city and county.



### Near-Term Implementation

- Update the Prairie-Delaware Piper Area Plan to establish an updated economic and land use vision for the area.
- Continue a collaborative relationship between KCK; Bonner Springs; and Edwardsville to achieve economic prosperity in western Wyandotte.
- Plan for and strengthen the economic benefits that will arise with the 2026 World Cup. Coordinate an interjurisdictional advocacy and marketing campaign for increased visitor consumer spending during the event throughout Wyandotte County and its local and small businesses.
- Upgrade to fast and frequent transit service between Village West and Downtown KCK along State Avenue and support land use changes that build new transit-oriented communities along the County's primary commercial corridors.





## 4.4 STRATEGIC PILLAR 3:

### Riverfront Development

Enhance the local economy by leveraging the Rock Island Bridge, improved connectivity, and access to the broader KCMO region.

Cities across the country are reimagining their industrial riverfronts as economic, environmental, and recreational assets. The riverfront development trend in urban planning recognizes the value generated by transforming often industrial and forgotten sites into hubs of economic activity and redevelopment.

With the Rock Island Bridge transforming as the country's "First Destination Landmark Bridge" and "America's First Entertainment District Over a River," the reimagining of the Kansas River is already underway in KCK. This catalytic project can spark investment and reimagining the riverfront for the whole county and region. As a spine threading KCK, Edwardsville, and Bonner Springs, establishing a bold vision for development, recreation, and connectivity can generate significant reinvestment in the community.

#### Key Economic Development Partners

- Rock Island Bridge /Flying Truss
- Friends of the Kaw
- Armourdale Renewal Association
- Historic West Bottoms Association
- Port KC
- Bonner Springs/Edwardsville Chamber of Commerce
- Kaw Valley Drainage District
- Visit Kansas City Kansas
- *and more!*

#### Case Study Spotlight:

#### Redevelopment of "The Bottoms" in Franklinton



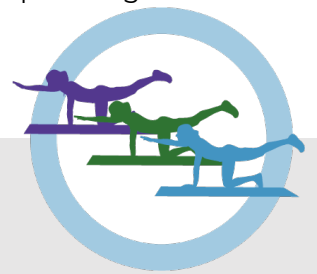
The Scioto River Peninsula and Franklinton neighborhood in downtown Columbus, Ohio, has historically been prone to devastating flooding, causing disinvestment and limited growth over the years. After capital investment to address floodplain issues and creating optimal conditions for redevelopment, Franklinton emerged as a hotspot for redevelopment, bringing premiere office users, residents, hospitality operators, and retailers to the now Franklinton Arts District and generating economic and fiscal benefits for the city.

Image Courtesy of Kaufman Development; For more information, please review the Franklinton Target Area Plan - [https://www.columbus.gov/uploadedFiles/Columbus/Departments/Development/Housing\\_Division/20.4.6-TAP\\_digital2.pdf](https://www.columbus.gov/uploadedFiles/Columbus/Departments/Development/Housing_Division/20.4.6-TAP_digital2.pdf).



## Key Strategic Action Areas

- 1. Foster a “River City” approach to the Kansas River waterfront through redevelopment, recreation, and connectivity.** KCK’s riverfront represents an opportunity to make a statement of the aspirational future vision of the Kansas River as an economic engine and cultural destination for KCK. Cities in the US have taken bold steps to reimagine riverfronts beyond just recreational park space, but as economic drivers to their city. Models such as Franklinton in Columbus, Ohio’s capital investment to alleviate floodplain issues and Pittsburgh’s Guide to Riverfront Development highlight strategic implementation precedents and case studies. Establish a bold vision for how riverfront redevelopment can reimagine underutilized areas. Explore themes of connectivity for visitors, residents, and workers. Recognize and plan for the Kansas River as a recreational hub for Wyandotte County and the larger region. Explore public-private partnership opportunities to implement catalytic projects.
- 2. Leverage the Rock Island Bridge investment to develop the area as a destination for enhanced tourism.** Rock Island Bridge stakeholders have developed intentional public, private, and nonprofit partnerships to ensure the project’s success. Providing a macro lens to the broader visitor experience can help connect this investment with other key areas of KCK, including Downtown KCK, the urban core, and at key commercial corridors such as 7th Street and Kansas Avenue. Consider gateways, redevelopment, and business opportunities in the Armourdale neighborhood that enhance visitorship to the Rock Island Bridge and the broader experience for users while sharing the benefits of such investment with existing riverfront neighborhoods.
- 3. Balance redevelopment and community development efforts for the revitalization of the Kansas River riverfront.** Encourage and ensure redevelopment balances community needs, such as affordable housing and quality employment opportunities. Proactively work to ensure equitable economic development outcomes, looking to best practices and tools that reduce gentrification concerns and both residential and commercial displacement as changes to the broader neighborhood occur. Community engagement and participation in future planning efforts will be paramount to balance these factors.



### Near-Term Implementation

- Support and help alleviate barriers to ensure the success of the Rock Island Bridge redevelopment.
- Establish a River City Vision and Master Plan for redevelopment, recreation, and connectivity opportunities along the Kansas River and Missouri Rivers..
- Identify gateway, wayfinding, and connectivity opportunities to improve the Rock Island Bridge’s broader visitor and user experience, helping to bring people to the bridge, employees to jobs, and customers to local KCK businesses.



## 4.5 STRATEGIC PILLAR 4:

### Quindaro Townsite

Establish cultural heritage tourism centered around the Quindaro Townsite.

The Quindaro Townsite National Commemorative Site is a symbol of the legacy and history of the Wyandotte Nation and Abolitionists in KCK. With its name interpreted as “in union there is strength,” Quindaro Townsite connects historic preservation, crucial storytelling, cultural significance, the populations that lived in Quindaro, and generations of their descendants.

The divide between historic preservation and economic development is closing as more recognize the vital link between cultural heritage tourism, vibrant local economies, and sustainable preservation efforts. Shifting recognition of the Quindaro Townsite beyond archaeological and historic preservation efforts toward a catalyst for economic and community prosperity builds upon decades of conversations for continued actionable momentum.

#### Key Economic Development Partners

- Groundwork Northeast Revitalization Group
- Wyandotte Nation (NRG)
- Western University Association of the A.M.E. Church, Inc.
- Vernon Multipurpose Center
- Old Quindaro Museum
- *and more!*

#### Best Practice:

### Community Building Approach to Cultural Heritage Tourism

Taking a Community-First Approach to Cultural Heritage Tourism Development

*“Cultural heritage tourism is based on the mosaic of places, traditions, art forms, celebrations and experiences that portray this nation and its people, reflecting the diversity and character of the United States.”*

- National Association of State Arts Agencies

Empowering communities at the onset of developing cultural heritage tourism approaches creates a more inclusive process, fundamental as cultural heritage intersects with a community’s identity and pride – an approach already taken by stakeholders. Economic benefits, more sustainable outcomes, stronger appeal to funders, broadening community involvement and support, and a more equitable approach are just some of the benefits when prioritizing the community through all stages of cultural heritage tourism planning and implementation.

Partners for Livable Communities, and Americans for the Arts. (2014). Cultural Heritage Tourism. <https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/culturalheritagetourism.pdf>

Kansas City, Kansas Public Library. Quindaro History. <https://www.kckpl.org/kansas/quindaro.html>

FROM THIS OVERLOOK, SOME OF THE RUINS FROM THE OLD QUINDARO TOWNSHIP CAN BE VIEWED, AND AS PRESERVED, REMINDS US THAT QUINDARO MUST LIVE ON IN OUR HEARTS FOREVER. THE AREA, ONCE MIGHTY, ALSO SERVES AS A REMINDER OF MAN'S MORTALITY, AND OF OUR QUEST FOR FREEDOM, DIGNITY AND ABOVE ALL, HUMANITY. AS THE FREEDMEN AND THE EXODUSERS PASSED THROUGH THIS PLACE, THERE RANG A COMMONALITY THROUGH THEIR VOICES: THAT NO MAN SHALL BE SUBJECTED TO SLAVERY, AND THAT ALL MEN ARE FREE!

DEDICATED TO THE PEOPLE OF QUINDARO AND THE FREE STATE OF KANSAS  
LAVERT A. MURRAY

## Key Strategic Action Areas

- 1. Advocate and support the enhancement of historic preservation efforts and sharing the story of the Quindaro Townsite.** Communicate the relationship between historic preservation, cultural heritage tourism, and economic development.
- 2. Continue momentum with the Quindaro Townsite Task Force to combine voices, increase partnership, and provide improved pathways for collaboration.** The Mayor's Quindaro Townsite Task Force provides a space for all stakeholders to participate and guide the future of the Quindaro Townsite historic preservation and cultural heritage tourism efforts. Collaboration and partnership amongst the varied voices of the Quindaro Townsite is fundamental to a successful future and should continue to be prioritized across all stages of the process.
- 3. Link and connect the Quindaro Townsite with other key cultural heritage sites across KCK, Wyandotte County, and other regional anchors leveraging the Northeast KCK Heritage Trail Plan.** The Northeast KCK Heritage Trail Plan is a community-led initiative that provides a plan and framework for a Heritage Trail throughout the Northeast KCK community. Adopted in 2022, The NE KCK Heritage Trail Plan identifies a route connecting the Quindaro Townsite, Downtown KCK and Kaw Point via a myriad of cultural assets. With economic development identified as one of four pillars in the plan, economic development stakeholders should advocate and support the plan's implementation. The plan's framework provides tangible actions outlined to achieve this vision developed by the community.
- 4. Balance the cultural heritage tourism opportunity of the Quindaro Townsite, tell the authentic story of the area's history, and improve local business opportunities in the nearby area.** Cultural heritage tourism brings outside spending dollars to the local community, building business viability and investment in the area. Importantly, tourism and economic development efforts must intentionally balance economic growth and locally-based equitable reinvestment, a priority highlighted in the NE KCK Heritage Trail Plan.



### Near-Term Implementation

- Continue the Quindaro Townsite Task Force with representation across a wide range of stakeholders. Establish a UG Economic Development Staff Member Liaison for the Task Force.
- Develop a Management Plan to preserve the Quindaro Townsite and bolster the local economy through cultural heritage tourism. Leverage the Management Plan to attract funders for implementation.
- Implement the Northeast KCK Heritage Trail that links Quindaro Townsite to Kaw Point through the historic northeast area.





## 4.6 STRATEGIC PILLAR 5:

### Industrial Revitalization

#### Reinvest in the industrial sector of KCK and Wyandotte County.

KCK's economic base features a high concentration of industrial users. In 2023, one out of every three jobs in Wyandotte County were within industries centered around industrial sectors, including manufacturing, warehousing, and transportation. Industrial development has long been part of the KCK identity. The Fairfax Industrial District, renowned as the first planned industrial district in the US, celebrated a century of industrial contribution to the region. Today, the Fairfax District's success stories range from producing 85% of the global supply of Cheez-Its to the only automobile plant manufacturing the Chevrolet Malibu.

Industrial investment continues to grow in Wyandotte County. There is a lot of currently zoned, but underutilized industrial land between the river and the railroads in Turner/Moris preventing its redevelopment due to infrastructure, access, and ownership. The recent development of the Turner Logistics Center symbolizes the continued demand for industrial delivery as the largest industrial delivery in the county over the last decade. The county's 1.3% industrial vacancy rate and projected demand of up to 1.7 million square feet highlight the significant opportunity to continue bolstering industrial intensification in KCK.

#### Key Economic Development Partners

- WYEDC
- Fairfax Industrial Association
- Armourdale Renewal Association
- Groundworks NRG
- Edwardsville/Bonner Springs Chamber of Commerce
- KansasWORKS
- KCKCC
- KCADC
- *and more!*

#### Best Practice: **Industrial Intensification**

An emerging theme of focus in the industrial market landscape is the concept of industrial intensification, a strategy for improving the productivity of industrial sites and areas. When market forces limit the supply of industrial opportunities, yet demand remains high, intensifying the density and efficiency of industrial properties accommodates continued industrial growth. This established global trend, becoming more prevalent in high-market cities in the US, highlights upcoming industrial development conversations. Increasing allowable density, improving flexibility of uses, and quantifying the economic value of production exemplify ways to monitor, measure, and develop the intensification of industrial uses.

Warden, Josie. Integrating Manufacturing in the City. (2019). Cities of Making. <https://citiesofmaking.com/integrating-urban-manufacturing-a-few-trends/>  
Whitehead, Russell; Kuno, Christopher; Wu, Amin. Metro Vancouver Industrial Intensification Analysis. (2021). Metro Vancouver.

## Key Strategic Action Areas

- 1. Increase infrastructure investment in the Fairfax Industrial District and key industrial areas.**  
The Fairfax Industrial District's infrastructure conditions have fallen below competitive standards. Sidewalks, curbs, and intersection enhancement are needed to improve roadway and traffic conditions, a longstanding need identified in the area's 2018 area planning efforts. Increasing walkability and safe pedestrian access from bus stops to businesses helps attract and retain the local employment base. Businesses also cited power and utility shortages as negatively impacting revenues. Limited public transportation for employees has created an overreliance on informal carpool networks, which reduces the reliability and impacts the labor pool for companies in the area. Investment in the public realm in industrial districts signals to corporate owners that the area is positioned for growth and stability and encourages enhanced capital investment and retention.
- 2. Improve messaging, communication, and storytelling of “Industry” in KCK.** Wyandotte County's industrial users embody a dynamic landscape from traditional industry sectors to emerging technological and sustainability-focused businesses. Enhancing storytelling of industry's role in KCK, both historically and in today's economy, can evolve the perception of this critical sector, attract and retain industrial users, and improve regional brand recognition.
- 3. Connect with the community for continued workforce development. Focus on youth workforce development, including high school and post-secondary, and skill pathways.** Focus on youth workforce development, including high school, KCKCC, and post-secondary employment, apprenticeships, and skill pathways. Continued industrial growth in KCK and Wyandotte County offers enhanced local employment opportunities while also contingent upon continuing to develop a skilled workforce for industrial businesses. The industrial sector provides a broad spectrum of the quality of jobs and corresponding wages. Strengthening workforce and skill development within the county's key industry sectors can help local residents improve access to higher-quality jobs.
- 4. Position Wyandotte County to be a leader in the regional industry sector.** Home to 15% of the Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical Area's and (MSA's) industrial space, Wyandotte County is a key industrial hub. With county market performance exceeding regional metrics, Wyandotte County stands to take a stronger leadership role in the regional industrial market through both expansion and intensification.
- 5. Continue to evolve use classifications and zoning districts to proactively increase the availability of industrial/flex land and neighborhood-based employment opportunities.** Modern technology-focused industry and innovation are shifting special needs and desired site locations for prospective industrial tenants. Future use regulations should explore allowing and encouraging non-nuisance industrial uses in non-traditional industrial areas, bringing neighborhood-based employment and offering competitive environments for prospective industrial tenants and businesses.



### Near-Term Implementation

- Increase infrastructure investment in the Fairfax Industrial District.
- Improve and champion messaging, communication, and storytelling of industry in KCK and Wyandotte County with marketing efforts and website development.
- Strengthen ties and increase participation with regional economic development partners to continue to position Wyandotte County and KCK as regional industrial leaders.
- Establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and a tracking system to monitor the availability of industrial/flex parcels.
- Conduct an audit to identify and remove barriers for suitable and forward-thinking industrial/flex opportunities in other non-traditional industrial areas.
- Proactively target industry sector growth in sectors that generate high economic and fiscal impacts. Increase workforce development opportunities in these sectors.





## 4.7 STRATEGIC PILLAR 6:

### KU Med

#### Leverage the healthcare sector for continued economic growth.

The healthcare and social assistance industry is Wyandotte County's largest employment sector, comprising 20% of the total jobs in the county. The University of Kansas Medical Center (KU Med) is an educational campus for 3,000+ medical students, a world-class hospital, and research institutions. KU Med's research enterprise has grown substantially in recent years. In the past six years, federally-funded research nearly doubled at KU Med, whose research portfolio increased to \$180 million in 2023.

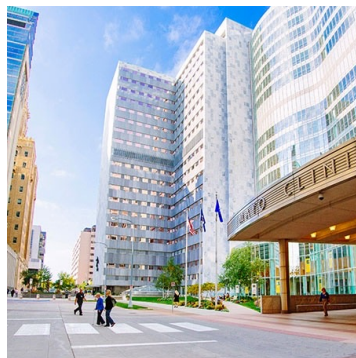
Continuing to foster and grow Wyandotte County's healthcare sector can offer employment opportunities across a wide range of incomes in a highly stabilized industry and serve as a talent attraction to KCK. Improving workforce pathways for local residents in healthcare sector fields and supporting industries bridges employment opportunities and wage increases to residents in the UG.

#### Key Economic Development Partners

- KU Med
- WYEDC
- Rosedale Neighborhood Groups and Associations
- Rosedale Development Association
- Healthcare Providers including Providence Medical Center, and Vibrant, among others.
- *and more!*

### Case Study Spotlight: **Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN**

#### Catalysing Economic Growth Through Healthcare



The renowned Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota catalyzed the city's economic growth with its healthcare sector. Rochester greets medical professionals and patients traveling to the Mayo Clinic with the infrastructure, retail, housing, and hospitality amenities capturing economic and fiscal impacts for the city. The Mayo Clinic's expansion over the years has not only evolved the physical campus and landscape, but also fields of innovation, education, medical specialization, and increased collaboration. Through partnerships within synergistic industry sectors such as technology and biomedical, the Mayo Clinic has catalyzed further industry growth and investment.



## Key Strategic Action Areas

- 1. Implement the Merriam Connected Corridor Plan and create additional corridor plans for the greater KU Med area, prioritizing areas leading to and around the campus. Develop a vision for a medical services cluster around KU Med that enhances the healthcare sector economy in the nearby area. Leverage continuous KU Med Campus redevelopment to support the broader community and maintain affordability.** As KU Med continues to strategically redevelop its campus, investing in the Rosedale neighborhood can benefit local residents economically and help attract talent, workers, and students to KU Med. Prioritizing key corridors and investing in the infrastructure leading to KU Med bridges campus investment with neighborhood investment. The 2023 Rainbow Boulevard Complete Streets Traffic Plan, a partnership with the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and KCK (UG), City of Westwood, and the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), demonstrates one tool and approach towards greater corridor vision and planning. Expanding a medical services agglomeration adjacent to KU Med can strengthen KCK's healthcare sector and benefit KU Med.
- 2. Bolster workforce development efforts to support the healthcare sector in Wyandotte County. Connect residents and workers to healthcare jobs.** With nearly 14,000 jobs in the healthcare and social assistance sector of Wyandotte County, increasing workforce development and readiness opportunities for local residents helps ensure the sector has an adequate and growing pipeline of talent and jobs across a broad spectrum of employment opportunities. Employment in healthcare-related industries is often more stable than other more volatile sectors and reactive to economic swings. Coupled with a sector that offers higher wage jobs, bolstering workforce development initiatives increases the sector's resiliency, provides industry growth pathways, and helps connect local residents to improved quality employment opportunities.
- 3. Strengthen partnerships with KU Med, Providence Medical Center, Vibrant, and other healthcare providers in KCK and Wyandotte County.** Continue collaboration among both established and emerging healthcare providers, private sector businesses, and relevant education institutions by increasing partnership opportunities for a stronger healthcare sector economy in Wyandotte County.



### Near-Term Implementation

- Invest in key corridors connecting to KU Med, including Rainbow Boulevard and 39th Street. Pursue funding to implement the Rainbow Corridor Complete Streets Traffic Study. Consider transportation, land use, and placemaking.
- Establish a medical services cluster synergistic with KU Med and future campus redevelopment and investment.
- Identify workforce development opportunities to ensure Wyandotte County and KCK residents are positioned for healthcare sector employment.
- Establish a healthcare sector liaison within the UG Department of Economic Development tasked with strengthening relationships and partnership efforts with major healthcare entities.





## 4.8 STRATEGIC PILLAR 7:

### Small Business Support Ecosystem

#### Improve support for small businesses in KCK and Wyandotte County.

Business growth is a fundamental aspect of economic development. Small businesses are frequently referred to as the “backbone of the American economy” and play a pivotal role in the KCK local economy. Approximately 80% of KCK’s economic vitality comes from small businesses. A balanced approach to business growth not only explores attracting and retaining businesses, but also requires cultivating an economy that encourages “homegrown” businesses through entrepreneurship and innovative endeavors throughout KCK. Wyandotte County’s network of champions and partners helps support entrepreneurs and small businesses as they launch, grow, and scale.

Small businesses bring many benefits to the local economy. Small businesses gravitate towards commercial corridors and Main Street environments and are even home-based in many sectors, creating a network of neighborhood-based employment and investment in communities. In addition to diversifying the local economy, small businesses are often engrained in their local community and help improve income inequality.

#### Key Economic Development Partners

- WYEDC
- The Toolbox
- KCK Chamber
- U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)
- KansasWORKS
- Small Business and Entrepreneurial Council of Kansas City
- AltCap
- LISC
- Black Chamber of Commerce of Greater Kansas City
- Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Edwardsville/Bonner Springs Chamber of Commerce
- KCKCC
- *and more!*

### Wyandotte County Success: **The Toolbox**

#### Building Community Entrepreneurs

*“We provide free support with planning, registering, funding, operating, and growing your business. We take the intimidating checklist of starting and operating a business and distill it down into the essentials through private, free, one-on-one small business coaching.*

*- The Toolbox*

The Toolbox Small Business Resource Center, <https://www.thetoolboxkc.com>

Recognizing a need for on-the-ground support for entrepreneurs and small businesses in Wyandotte County, The Toolbox addresses and alleviates barriers that entrepreneurs in the community face. From serving as an educational resource and Spanish translations to handholding through licensing regulations, The Toolbox successfully works directly with community members in planning, starting, and growing their Wyandotte County businesses.



## Key Strategic Action Areas

1. **Inject into and amplify what's working, such as The Toolbox, nonprofits, and local institutions that support the small business ecosystem.** KCK and Wyandotte County have a robust ecosystem of champions, supporters, and stakeholders that help small local businesses in the county.
2. **Support small businesses' need for capital by helping to ensure that businesses are loan-ready.** Access to capital is a significant barrier to starting and growing businesses. This difficulty increases with minority and women-owned businesses. In addition to helping connect entrepreneurs and small businesses to capital, it is critical to help ensure that businesses and entrepreneurs meet loan and grant eligibility requirements.
3. **Continue to foster channels that spur networking, partnerships, and relationships among small businesses and within the broader business network.** The nature of entrepreneurship and small business ownership can be isolating, and resources and time can be constrained for business owners. Continue to provide avenues throughout KCK and Wyandotte County and the region to build peer-to-peer and mentor-to-mentee relationships amongst business owners and entrepreneurs, helping owners address challenges and hurdles, including regulatory challenges, business planning, and operations.
4. **Encourage pathways for entrepreneurship, especially within technology and professional services, across all cohorts, including youth and young adults.** Cultivating entrepreneurship in Wyandotte County and KCK can provide residents flexible and adaptable employment and economic mobility. Encouraging entrepreneurship in higher-wage sectors can generate substantial economic impacts and increase prosperity among residents.



### Near-Term Implementation

- Continue and bolster the UG Economic Development Department's Small Business Grant program.
- Re-establish the Small Business Liaison role within the UG Economic Development Department.
- Increase pathways for entrepreneurship and apprenticeships, particularly within technology, professional services, and advanced industries, across all cohorts, including youth and young professionals.
- Conduct an audit of the UG website related to business regulation and licensing to identify ways to improve access to information and forms. Improve links and connection to DotteBiz on the UG website. Optimize business registration, information, and relevant forms for mobile compatibility.
- Reduce the digital divide in KCK by leveraging the Kansas Department of Commerce's Capital Projects Fund Broadband Infrastructure Program.



# 5.0 Implementation Roadmap



## 5.1 IMPLEMENTATION ACTION MATRIX

Near-Term Action Step		Lead	Partner(s)	Timing	Priority
<b>Pillar 1: Downtown Core and Main Street Development</b> Goal: Improve the economic success of KCK’s downtown core and Main Street business corridors.					
D1	Establish a Downtown KCK Commercial Historic District.	UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design	State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Downtown Shareholders	2024	High
D2	Update the Downtown Area Plan.	UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design	Livable Neighborhood Task Force, UG Department of Economic Development, KCKCC, Downtown Shareholders, Downtown Community	Mid-Term (~2028)	High
D4	Establish a KCK Main Street Program beginning with Downtown KCK in partnership with Kansas Main Street and Downtown Shareholders.	Downtown Shareholders, NBRs	UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design, UG Dept. of Economic Development, Kansas Main Street	2024	High
D3	Leverage the UG’s Land Bank to support a mix of urban infill uses.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design	Ongoing	High
D5	Conduct a downtown regulatory audit to identify barriers to business attraction, redevelopment efforts, and economic growth.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design, Neighborhood Resource Center	2025	Moderate
D6	Activate vacant storefronts with community arts programs by linking property owners to local artists, such as those found at the Third Friday Art Walks on 6th Street.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	Local Artists, Arts Related Community Organizations, Property Owners, Dotte Arts	2025	Moderate
<b>Pillar 2: Village West and Western Wyandotte</b> Goal: Continue the economic success of the area around Village West and Western Wyandotte through strategic infill development.					
V1	Update the Prairie-Delaware Piper Area Plan to establish an updated economic and land use vision for the area.	UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design	UG wide	TBD	High
V2	Continue a collaborative relationship between KCK; Bonner Springs; and Edwardsville to achieve economic prosperity in western Wyandotte.	UG-Wide	UG Dept. of Economic Development; UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design	Ongoing	High



## 5.1 IMPLEMENTATION ACTION MATRIX (CONT.)

Near-Term Action Step		Lead	Partner(s)	Timing	Priority
V3	Plan for and strengthen the economic benefits that will arise with the 2026 World Cup. Coordinate an interjurisdictional advocacy and marketing campaign for increased visitor consumer spending during the event throughout Wyandotte County and its local and small businesses.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	Sporting Kansas City; VisitKCK; KCK Main Streets; Sporting, Tourism, and Hospitality Stakeholders; Regional Tourism Entities	2025+	Moderate
V4	Upgrade to fast and frequent transit service between Village West and Downtown KCK along State Avenue.	UG Dept. of Transportation	KCATA	TBD	Moderate
<b>Pillar 3: Riverfront Development</b> Goal: Enhance the local economy by leveraging the Rock Island Bridge, improved connectivity, and access to the broader KCMO region.					
R1	Support and help alleviate barriers to ensure the success of the Rock Island Bridge.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	Rock Island Bridge, Neighborhood Resource Center (NRC), UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design, Other UG Depts.	2024+	High
R2	Establish a River City Vision for redevelopment, recreation, and connectivity opportunities along the Kansas River and Missouri Rivers..	UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design	City of Bonner Springs, City of Edwardsville, Armourdale Renewal Association, Port KC, County Stakeholders	2025+	Moderate
R3	Identify gateway, wayfinding, and connectivity opportunities to improve Rock Island Bridge's broader visitor and user experience, helping to bring people to the bridge, employees to jobs, and customers to local KCK businesses.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design; VisitKCK; Rock Island Bridge; Armourdale Renewal Association Historic West Bottoms Association; Regional Tourism Entities	2024+	Moderate
<b>Pillar 4: Quindaro Townsite</b> Goal: Establish cultural heritage tourism centered around Quindaro Townsite.					
Q1	Continue the Quindaro Townsite Task Force with representation across a wide range of stakeholders. Establish a UG Economic Development Staff Member Liaison for the Task Force.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	Quindaro Townsite Task Force, UG Dept. of Planning and Urban Design	TBD	High
Q2	Develop a Management Plan to preserve Quindaro Townsite and bolster the local economy through cultural heritage tourism. Leverage the Management Plan to attract funders for implementation.	UG Historic Preservation	Quindaro Townsite Task Force, UG Dept. of UG Planning and Urban Design	TBD	Moderate
Q3	Implement the Northeast KCK Heritage Trail that links Quindaro Townsite to Kaw Point through the historic northeast area.	UG Dept. of UG Planning and Urban Design	Groundwork NRG; NE KCK Community, UG Dept. of Economic Development	TBD	High



## 5.1 IMPLEMENTATION ACTION MATRIX (CONT.)

Near-Term Action Step		Lead	Partner(s)	Timing	Priority
<b>Pillar 5: Industrial Revitalization</b> Goal: Reinvest in the industrial sector of KCK and Wyandotte County.					
I1	Increase infrastructure investment in the Fairfax Industrial District.	UG Dept. of Public Works	UG Dept. of Economic Development, UG Dept. of Planning and Urban Design, Dept. of Transportation, BPU	TBD	High
I2	Improve and champion messaging, communication, and storytelling of industry in KCK and Wyandotte County with marketing efforts and website development.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	WYEDC	TBD	High
I3	Strengthen ties with and increase participation with regional economic development partners to continue to position Wyandotte County and KCK as regional industrial leaders.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	WYEDC, MARC, KCADC, City of Bonner Springs, City of Edwardsville, Chambers	TBD	Moderate
I4	Establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and a tracking system to monitor the availability of industrial/flex parcels.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	WYEDC, UG Dept. of Geospatial Services (GSS)	TBD	Moderate
I5	Conduct an audit to identify and remove barriers for suitable and forward-thinking industrial/flex opportunities in other non-traditional industrial areas.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design	TBD	Low
I6	Proactively target industry sector growth in sectors that generate high economic and fiscal impacts. Increase workforce development opportunities in these sectors.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	WYEDC, KCKCC	Ongoing	High
<b>Pillar 6: KU Med</b> Goal: Leverage the healthcare sector for continued economic growth.					
K1	Invest in key corridors connecting to KU Med. Pursue funding to implement the Rainbow Corridor Complete Streets Traffic Study. Consider transportation, land use, and placemaking.	UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design	KC Streetcar, UG Dept. of Transportation, KU Med, Rosedale Development Association, Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA), KDOT	2023+	Moderate
K2	Establish a medical services cluster synergistic with KU Med and its future campus redevelopment and investment.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	WYEDC, KU Med, UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design, Rosedale Development Association	TBD	Moderate
K3	Identify workforce development opportunities to ensure Wyandotte County and KCK residents are positioned for healthcare sector employment.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	WYEDC, Key Healthcare Entities including Businesses, Providers, and Institutions, KCKCC	TBD	High
K4	Establish a healthcare sector liaison within the UG Department of Economic Development tasked with strengthening relationships and partnership efforts with major healthcare entities.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	WYEDC, KU Med, Providence Medical Center, Vibrant, and Other Key Healthcare Entities	2024+	Moderate



## 5.1 IMPLEMENTATION ACTION MATRIX (CONT.)

Near-Term Action Step		Lead	Partner(s)	Timing	Priority
<b>Pillar 7: Small Business Support Ecosystem</b> Goal: Improve support for small businesses in KCK and Wyandotte County.					
S1	Continue and bolster the UG Economic Development Department's Small Business Grant program.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	WYEDC, The Toolbox, KCK Chamber, Small Business Owners	2023+	High
S2	Re-establish the Small Business Liaison role within the UG Economic Development Department.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	WYEDC, Small Business Owners, KCK Chambers	2024+	Moderate
S3	Increase pathways for entrepreneurship, particularly within technology, professional services, and advanced industries, across all cohorts, including youth and young professionals.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	WYEDC, KCKCC, Small Business and Entrepreneurial Council of Kansas City	TBD	Moderate
S4	Conduct an audit of the UG website related to business regulation and licensing to identify ways to improve access to information and forms. Improve links and connection to DotteBiz on the UG website. Optimize business registration, information, and relevant forms for mobile compatibility.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	UG Dept. of Technical Services	2024+	High
S5	Reduce the digital divide in KCK by leveraging the Kansas Department of Commerce's Capital Projects Fund Broadband Infrastructure Program.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	Kansas Department of Commerce	TBD	Moderate





## 5.2 Metrics to Measure Community Prosperity

Establishing metrics or Key Performance Indicators (KPI) relative to this Economic Development Strategic Plan helps monitor progress toward implementation and track changes in the local economy. Tracking quantifiable metrics helps increase transparency and accountability, provides benchmarks over time, measures implementation progress, and leads toward decision-making rooted in data.

### Tracking Metrics

The following metrics can be tracked at various geographic levels through third-party data sources such as US Census, American Community Survey, and Costar. Metric tracking, including the frequency of tracking, data providers, and geographic granularity, should be standardized at the launch of the Economic Development Strategic Plan.

### Metrics to Monitor and Track Progress Toward Community Prosperity

#### *Demographic*

- Median Household Income
- Labor Force Participation Rate, Unemployment, and Overall Employment
- Educational Attainment (*Share of High School Diploma/GED and Above*)
- Property Values (*Across Land Uses*)

#### *Business and Development*

- Inflow/Outflow Job Count and Share
- New Business Growth
- Employment Growth
- Real Estate Market Metrics (*Rent, Vacancy, Absorption, Deliveries, Across Land Uses*)

#### *Economic and Fiscal Base*

- Countywide Fiscal Health
- Increase in Tax Revenue
- Economic and Fiscal Impact of Key Developments and Policies

#### *Economic Resiliency*

- Location Analytics
- Unemployment Rate
- Labor Force Participation Rate



# 6.0 Alignment with PlanKCK



The following table articulates how the Economic Development Strategic Plan implementation action steps align with the Comprehensive Plan and Historic Preservation Plan through PlanKCK.

Near-Term Action Step		PlanKCK		
		Eco Devo	Other Comp Plan Chapters	Historic Pres. Plan
<b>Pillar 1: Downtown Core and Main Street Development</b>				
D1	Establish a Downtown KCK Commercial Historic District.	•	•	•
D2	Update the Downtown Area Plan.	•	•	
D3	Establish a KCK Main Street Program beginning Downtown in partnership with Kansas Main Street and Downtown Shareholders.	•	•	•
D4	Leverage the UG's Land Bank to support a mix of urban infill uses.	•	•	
D5	Conduct a downtown regulatory audit to identify barriers to business attraction, redevelopment efforts, and economic growth.	•	•	
D6	Activate vacant storefronts with community arts programs by linking property owners to local artists, such as those found at the Third Friday Art Walks on 6th Street.	•		
<b>Pillar 2: Village West &amp; Western Wyandotte</b>				
V1	Update the Prairie-Delaware Piper Area Plan to establish an updated economic and land use vision for the area.	•	•	
V2	Continue a collaborative relationship between KCK; Bonner Springs; and Edwardsville to achieve economic prosperity in Western Wyandotte.	•	•	
V3	Plan for and strengthen the economic benefits that will arise with the 2026 World Cup. Advocate for visitor consumer spending during the event throughout Wyandotte County and its local and small businesses.	•		
V4	Upgrade to fast and frequent transit service between Village West and Downtown KCK along State Avenue.	•	•	
<b>Pillar 3: Riverfront Development</b>				
R1	Support and help alleviate barriers to ensure the success of Rock Island Bridge.	•	•	
R2	Establish a River City Vision for redevelopment, recreation, and connectivity opportunities along the Kansas River and Missouri Rivers.	•	•	•
R3	Identify gateway, wayfinding, and connectivity opportunities to improve Rock Island Bridge's broader visitor and user experience, helping to bring people to the bridge, employees to jobs, and customers to local KCK businesses.	•	•	
<b>Pillar 4: Quindaro Townsite</b>				
Q1	Continue the Quindaro Townsite Task Force with representation across a wide range of stakeholders. Establish a UG Economic Development Staff Member Liaison for the Task Force.	•	•	•
Q2	Develop a Management Plan to preserve Quindaro Townsite and bolster the local economy through cultural heritage tourism. Leverage the Management Plan to attract funders for implementation.	•		•
Q3	Implement the Northeast KCK Heritage Trail that links Quindaro Townsite to Kaw Point through the historic northeast area.	•		•



## 6.0 | ALIGNMENT WITH PLANKCK (CONT.)

Action Step		PlanKCK		
		Eco Devo	Other Comp Plan Chapters	Historic Pres. Plan
<b>Pillar 5: Industrial Revitalization</b>				
I1	Increase infrastructure investment in the Fairfax Industrial District.	•	•	
I2	Improve and champion messaging, communication, and storytelling of industry in KCK and Wyandotte County with marketing efforts and website development.	•		•
I3	Strengthen ties with and increase participation with regional economic development partners to continue to position Wyandotte County and KCK as regional industrial leaders.	•		
I4	Establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and a tracking system to monitor the availability of industrial/flex parcels.	•	•	
I5	Conduct an audit to identify and remove barriers for suitable and forward-thinking industrial/flex opportunities in other non-traditional industrial areas.	•	•	
I6	Proactively target industry sector growth in sectors that generate high economic and fiscal impacts. Increase workforce development opportunities in these sectors.	•		
<b>Pillar 6: KU Med</b>				
K1	Invest in key corridors connecting to KU Med. Pursue funding to implement the Rainbow Corridor Complete Streets Traffic Study. Consider transportation, land use, and placemaking.	•	•	
K2	Establish a medical services cluster synergistic with KU Med and its future campus redevelopment and investment.	•		
K3	Identify workforce development opportunities to ensure Wyandotte County and KCK residents are positioned for healthcare sector employment.	•		
K4	Establish a healthcare sector liaison within the UG Department of Economic Development tasked with strengthening relationships and partnership efforts with major healthcare entities.	•		
<b>Pillar 7: Small Business Support Ecosystem</b>				
S1	Continue and bolster the UG Economic Development Department's Small Business Grant program.	•		
S2	Re-establish the Small Business Liaison role within the UG Economic Development Department.	•		
S3	Increase pathways for entrepreneurship, particularly within technology, professional services, and advanced industries, across all cohorts, including youth and young professionals.	•		
S4	Conduct an audit of the UG website related to business regulation and licensing to identify ways to improve access to information and forms. Improve links and connection to DotteBiz on the UG website. Optimize business registration, information, and relevant forms for mobile compatibility.	•		
S5	Reduce the digital divide in KCK by leveraging the Kansas Department of Commerce's Capital Projects Fund Broadband Infrastructure Program.	•	•	

# 7.0 Next Steps

## **PATHWAY TO COMMUNITY PROSPERITY**

KCK stakeholders have embraced this collaborative visioning and planning initiative with enthusiasm and energy. Throughout the process, there has been continued recognition that bold change and leadership are needed to achieve the preferred future. Community prosperity for ALL is the goal, and now is the time.

*"KCK has a resource in the amazing amount of civic pride held by its residents. The people who live here love their city and want to do what they can to ensure it thrives."*

- PlanKCK Vision Summit Survey Respondent

## PlanKCK Contact

### **Unified Government of Wyandotte County**

Kansas City, KS Department of Economic Development  
913-573-5750  
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Please stay connected to the  
economic development strategic  
planning project at  
[wycokck.org/PlanKCK](http://wycokck.org/PlanKCK)



# 8.0 Appendix 1: Vision Summit Report



# PLAN KCK

## VISION SUMMIT REPORT

MAY 2023





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Tyrone A. Garner

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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# SNAPSHOT | REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

*This report lays out the findings from the future-oriented scenario planning work for KCK in May 2023. This work has identified a preferred future and highlighted potential future challenges and opportunities facing the City over the next 25 years. This understanding helps lay the groundwork for figuring out 'how we get there' and informs the concurrent comprehensive planning work.*

## STRONG DESIRE TO INCORPORATE INTENTIONAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION INTO PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORK

Throughout the visioning process, stakeholders consistently expressed a desire to see amenities and services distributed more equitably across KCK. Intentional actions and investment that build more equity within the community and especially in the downtown urban core needs to be part of how KCK reaches the preferred future.

## LEVERAGE KCK'S STRENGTH IN ITS DIVERSITY

KCK's diversity has been cited as one of the City's greatest strengths. There is strong will to invest in neighborhoods and communities to highlight the diversity of cultures that exist in KCK. Additional attractions like the KCK Taco Trail, mobile vending / food trucks, and the Quindaro Townsite should be pursued.

## USE EAST-WEST CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT TO EFFECT SOCIAL CHANGE

Currently, the eastern and western parts of Wyandotte County operate like two ends of a barbell. The western suburbia maintains a much higher standard of living and amenities compared to the eastern downtown area.



Intentional development of the transportation corridor between the two areas is seen as imperative to distributing wealth and bridging the socio economic divide.

## LOCATION. LOCATION. LOCATION.

The location of KCK in the United States makes it a natural hub for transportation (air, water, train, roads) and logistics. Leveraging and building on this central location is a logical economic development opportunity without attracting distribution centers to the area that have very low jobs per square feet.

## HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE ARE KEY

Throughout the visioning process, stakeholders consistently pointed to the basic support systems – housing and infrastructure – as key to creating a vibrant KCK with a strong economy. Addressing blight, poverty, homelessness, and aging infrastructure in the urban core must be incorporated into any plan for KCK.



# 1.0 | HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

*This report lays out the findings from the Vision Summit and each key step in the process. More details about the overall planning process may be viewed on the Unified Government's website at [wycokck.org/PlanKCK](http://wycokck.org/PlanKCK).*

The Vision Summit process built a range of potential directions for KCK. This work represents robust 'future gazing' where stakeholders considered possible directions and the impacts and consequences of those directions. The process, and the report, then drill down deeper into what people saw as the optimal or preferred future. This understanding helps lay the groundwork for figuring out what next steps to take. The draft vision and economic development plan for KCK will be delivered at the Community Prosperity Summit on August 14, 2023, after a series of in-depth focus groups and business stakeholder surveys. This is occurring in collaboration with the broader PlanKCK Comprehensive Plan update process.



Collaboration, equity, trust, and planning for the future is critically important to building resiliency and sustainability for KCK as stakeholders look to the grand challenges ahead.

## Steps in the Process

Gather data from Vision Summit Stakeholder Survey and Interviews.

Introduce the Vision Summit process and its goals.

Identify macro trends shaping the future of KCK.

Create plausible future scenarios for KCK.

Identify Expected, Least Desired, and Preferred Futures for KCK.

Define next steps in the strategic planning process.

## Sections of the Report

Brief Analysis of the Stakeholder Survey  
CHAPTER 3

Vision Summit Workshop  
CHAPTER 4

Forces Shaping the Future  
CHAPTER 5

Creating the Scenario Framework  
CHAPTER 6

Expected, Least Desired, and Preferred Futures  
CHAPTER 7

Next Steps  
CHAPTER 8

PROCESS: CREATING AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2.0 | INTRODUCTION

This scenario-based Vision Summit report summarizes the visioning and planning workshop that took place on May 16, 2023. The Vision Summit was conducted as an initial step in the project to develop an executable plan that will guide KCK for the next 25 years. The components of the planning work to date have been comprised of:

### STATE OF THE ECONOMY BENCHMARK REPORT

The State of the Economy Snapshot for Kansas City, Kansas, is the benchmark report for reference throughout the Unified Government's economic development strategic planning process. This snapshot highlights a broad overview of the existing economic conditions encompassing KCK.

### KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Interviews were held with key stakeholders to gather input and to further understand diverse perspectives on current and future economic development in KCK.

### PLANKCK VISION SUMMIT STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

An extensive survey was completed by 52 Vision Summit participant stakeholders. The survey aimed to understand stakeholder perspectives on current conditions in the City, as well as their aspirations for the future.

### VISION SUMMIT WORKSHOP

The PlanKCK Vision Summit was held on May 16, 2023, for about 120 community members and stakeholders. At this visioning workshop, participants learned about current conditions and macro trends impacting KCK, and participants produced four (4) plausible potential futures for the City.



The PlanKCK Vision Summit workshop allowed stakeholders to take a 'deep-dive' into strategic visioning and future-thinking through a scenario-planning process.

"Where do I start? So much I want to say, but first and most important is our community is diverse and resilient. Our historic community has everything to offer from recreation, shopping, careers, and neighborhoods with large lots with newer homes, to smaller lots with historic homes. Most importantly, we have pride!"

- PlanKCK Vision Summit  
Stakeholder Survey  
Respondent

## 3.0 | SURVEY RESULTS

### 3.1 Highlights and Insights

Prior to the Vision Summit workshop, a survey was distributed to registered attendees to gather insight into the perceptions of the future of KCK. At the time of the Vision Summit, approximately 52 people responded to the survey. The survey numbers were relatively low, and therefore not a truly representative sample of the community. It was, however, a good sample of the Vision Summit participants. Most survey respondents lived in Wyandotte County (85%) with the remaining of the respondents (15%) working, but not living in the community. The stakeholder survey results can be found online at [wycokck.org/PlanKCK](http://wycokck.org/PlanKCK)

#### STRONG SUPPORT FOR A SHARED VISION AND A SHARED PLAN

Survey respondents showed a very high level of interest and support for developing a shared plan, which provided excellent validation of the overall PlanKCK process.

#### DESIRE TO GROW THE ECONOMY AND DISTRIBUTE ECONOMIC BENEFIT

Responses show a desire to both grow the overall size of the Wyandotte County economy and focus on equitably distributing benefit across the community. Addressing historic economic inequity is a key underlying theme across community discussions.

#### HOUSING REDEVELOPMENT AND URBAN REGENERATION IS A PRIORITY

People have placed a high importance on housing development. This issue is important, especially in the

urban core, where there is a priority need to stimulate urban regeneration and infill development.

#### NUTURING THE HOME-GROWN WORKFORCE IS A PRIMARY INTEREST

There is a particular interest in nurturing and expanding the home-grown workforce. Currently there are significant commuter patterns of people leaving for work each day.

#### MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE IS KEY FOCUS

From a planning perspective, there was a high importance placed on improving the movement of people within the city and connections to important outside areas.

#### MIXED VIEWS ABOUT ABILITY AND APPETITE FOR CHANGE

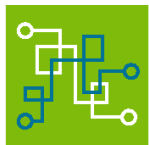
There were views about the ability and appetite to implement real change. While there was interest, there was an underlying concern about the scale of the challenge and the ability for the UG's institutions and people to 'move the needle' in a significant manner.

While the sample size of the survey was small, the respondents were well informed stakeholders and had a solid understanding of the community and its challenges.



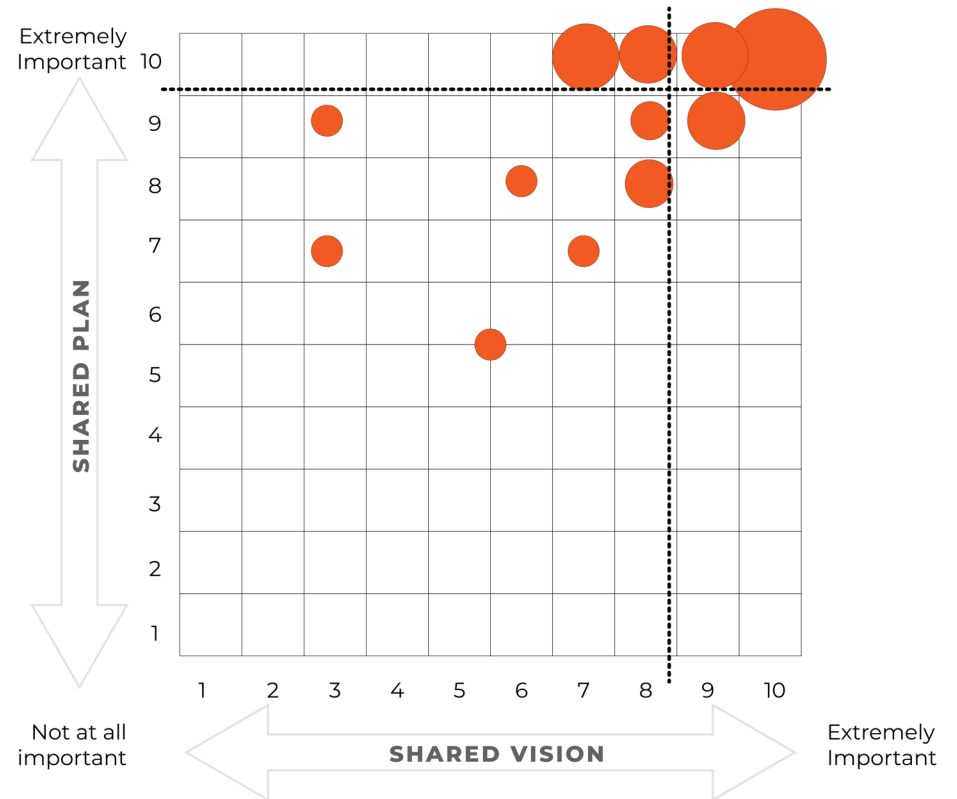
### 3.2 Importance of a Shared Vision and Plan

Survey respondents were asked how important it is to have a shared vision and shared plan for the future of KCK. Respondents were asked the two (2) questions below, which were then combined to produce the following pivot chart.



FutureInsight

- The size of the circle denotes the popularity of the response. This chart shows respondents feel that having a shared vision and a shared plan were important to the future of KCK.
- The dashed line plots the average of responses. On average, it is viewed as extremely important to have a shared plan.



#### How important Is This Work?

*The grid above displays the results of two questions asked of Vision Summit participants: How important do you think it is to have a PLAN for the future of KCK? How important do you think it is to have a SHARED VISION (a vision that is shared countywide) for the future of KCK?*

The data on this page provides strong validation of the comprehensive and multifaceted planning work that is underway in Kansas City throughout 2023.

## 4.0 | VISION SUMMIT WORKSHOP

The PlanKCK Vision Summit Workshop was conducted at the James P. Davis Hall in Wyandotte County Lake Park. The workshop explored how KCK could evolve over the next 25 years and consisted of:

- A review of global trends and the impact of these trends on KCK;
- Assessment of Wyandotte County's strengths and weaknesses;
- Formulation of the different plausible scenario 'spaces' and development of detailed narratives and descriptions of each scenario;
- Examination of the impact and consequences of each scenario on various aspects of community and economic development in KCK; and,
- Identification of the preferred future and potential critical action steps to achieve the preferred future.

The Vision Summit began with presentations on the recently adopted goDotte Countywide Strategic Mobility Plan, which serves as PlanKCK's transportation chapter, a snapshot of current economic conditions in KCK, and an examination of housing in Wyandotte County. This was followed by an in-depth presentation on future trends and global conditions before moving on to conduct scenario planning for KCK.

Future iQ's scenario planning process provides a methodology from which to explore plausible futures and takes into consideration the implications of various forward-looking scenarios. The process aimed to:

- Deepen the understanding of how external events and local conditions could shape decision-making;

- Identify and understand the key influences, trends, and dynamics that will shape KCK looking out over the next 25 years;
- Create and describe four (4) plausible long-term scenarios for KCK; and,
- Begin exploring alignment around a shared vision for KCK's future.

The scenarios developed during this Vision Summit workshop and outlined in this report are important to provide a framework to discuss possible outcomes and implications for the future. Workshop deliberations assisted in identifying strategic actions for the UG and how various groups might best contribute to future developments.

Scenario planning provides a way to explore various plausible futures. This adds a richness and depth to the discussions about a preferred future, and a consideration of the intended and unintended consequences.





In the face of accelerating speed of change, the key to long-term resiliency for KCK is the ability to anticipate change, adapt, and remain agile in response to emerging trends. This includes collaboration and a city-wide approach to change.

## 5.0 | FORCES SHAPING THE FUTURE

Vision Summit participants explored the forces of change shaping the future of KCK, including three (3) key areas of emerging macro trends. Perceptions around the nature of impact of these trends, both in terms of size and timing of impact, were explored to gauge how important participants consider the trends. Participants discussed the emerging trends on global, regional and local scales, and related them directly to KCK in terms of how well prepared they considered the City.

Specifically, the key trend areas included:

- Demographics, population and mass urbanization;
- Energy, food, water and climate change; and,
- Technology and the speed of change.

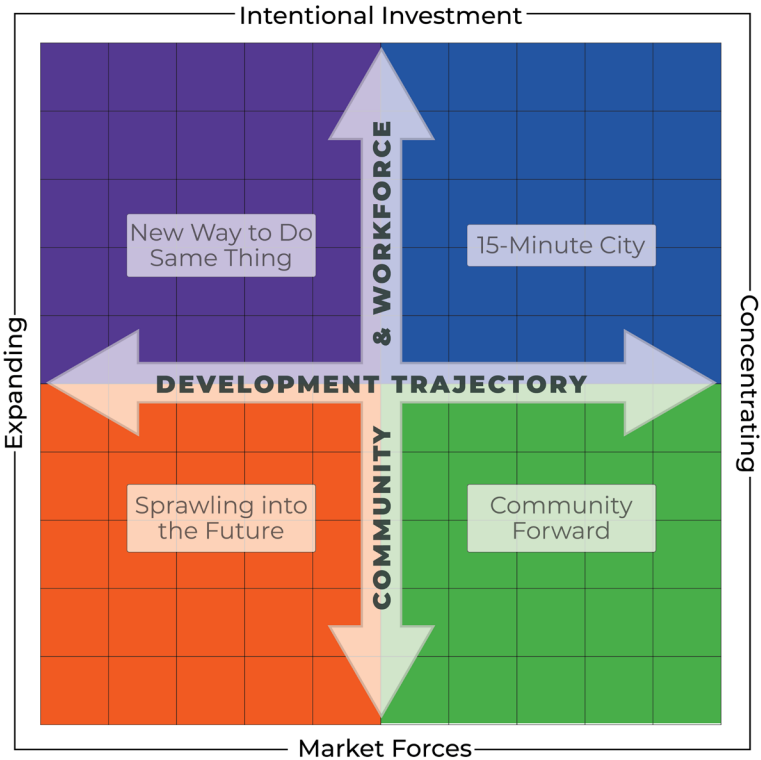
Of relevance to the discussion on trends is the speed and scale of change occurring. Newly developed innovations are being implemented globally and locally at all scales, thereby changing the face of industries and society in a rapid and profound way.

A concern expressed at the Vision Summit was the perceived ability of the Unified Government to adapt and respond to these changes. Velocity and trajectory are key elements that often create resistance to change and require clear communication and outreach to promote trust around the purpose of change. Vision Summit participants emphasized the need for increased intentional investment in people and infrastructure as well as consistent communication and messaging as the City pursues its preferred future.

# 6.0 | CREATING THE SCENARIO FRAMEWORK

Workshop participants were presented with the scenario matrix, defined by two (2) major axes: 'Development Trajectory' and 'Community & Workforce'. Brief descriptions were also attached to the end points of each driver axes. Participants were randomly divided into four (4) groups to develop a narrative for each scenario. Each group was asked to describe the characteristics of KCK in 25 years under the conditions of the scenario quadrant that they had been given.

After the characteristics were established, Vision Summit participants were asked to devise major events or headlines of how the scenario occurred using the years 2025, 2030 and 2040, then give their scenario a descriptive name. The name is intended to represent the characteristics of the scenario in the form of a short title. Narratives, descriptions, and names of each scenario as developed by the workshop participants are included in the following sections.



**EXPANDING**

- Pursue time-tested, traditional economic and infrastructure development.
- Invest in greenfield industrial park development.
- Grow as a single-family suburban community.
- Rely on cars for transportation.

**INTENTIONAL INVESTMENT**

- Focus on building a strong, equitable community. Bring new ideas to the table.
- Foster workplace models that support working families.
- Attract new people to support an inclusive, regional community that values equity and diversity.

**CONCENTRATING**

- Build on/rebuild/repurpose existing infrastructure in creative ways.
- Invest in local entrepreneurial activities and businesses that spur innovation, job creation.
- Support mixed-use neighborhoods, more transportation choice, and climate resilience.

**MARKET FORCES**

- Market needs and developer drive community development and housing.
- Maintain the existing regional workforce talent pool.
- Support more traditional values with an emphasis on fairness, safety, and education.

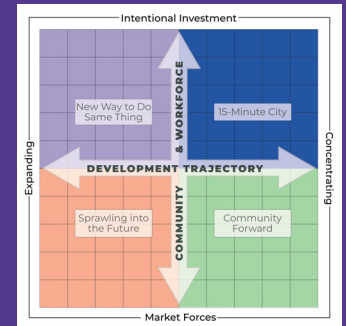
## NEW WAY TO DO THE SAME THING

THIS SCENARIO FORECASTS A FUTURE WHERE ECONOMIC AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CONTINUES TO EXPAND AND ATTRACT PEOPLE TO THE WESTERN AREA OF WYANDOTTE COUNTY (WYCO).

There is intentional investment in supporting working families more equitably throughout KCK and the County. Educational options are expanded to accommodate increased workforce needs as industries grow. Efforts are made to build housing closer to work environments to mitigate the impacts of car traffic on transportation infrastructure. Transit remains primarily car oriented, and this places a burden on low-income workers who must commute. The importance of childcare is recognized and provided by most companies to help working families. The surge in population growth causes housing costs to soar with the increased demand, and many workers are forced out of KCK and the county to live.

### SNAPSHOT

- Community grows and attracts new people
- Industry booms on the western side
- Downtown begins to revitalize
- Sprawl continues westward
- Car culture lives on



### INSIGHTS

- The 'New Way to Do Same Thing' scenario paints a future where intentional efforts to support working families and community support systems are strengthened in the County, yet KCK does not see much change in development patterns and poverty persists.
- In the 'New Way to do Same Thing' scenario, young families are drawn to Wyandotte County and its suburban-style growth. Lack of creative economic development in KCK, however, allows disparities to persist.



#### SOCIAL FABRIC AND COMMUNITY

*The community is growing quickly and attracting new people to WYCO.*

- Intentional investment in the downtown and Northeast KCK begins to revitalize the urban core.
- Educational options are reimagined with new pathways and more technical schools.
- The western part of Wyandotte County continues to develop farmland and open space for single-family subdivisions.
- AI investment provides language translation for workforce and education as well as increased skill in arts and workmanship.



#### LOCAL ECONOMY AND INDUSTRY

*Industrial growth booms in western part of the County, especially with E-commerce.*

- Growing demographics are more culturally competent and welcoming to new people in the work environment.
- Community infrastructure is challenged by growing population demands and sprawling suburbs.
- Agriculture intensifies and competes for space in western areas of the County.
- Incentives for building are provided to support population growth, and transportation remains primarily car oriented.



#### BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE

*Available land is eaten up by development and stormwater management is prioritized.*

- Population growth requires expanded housing options and subsidies for single-family housing to provide for affordability.
- Less land available for parking necessitates a transition to EV infrastructure and autonomous driving.
- Zoning is amended to allow for denser and more affordable single-family housing and mixed land use to allow for agriculture with residential.

2025 HEADLINE  
"Kansas City Legalizes Marijuana"

2030 HEADLINE  
"Arrowhead Moves to KCK"

2035 HEADLINE  
"3D Housing Development Booms"

## 15-MINUTE CITY

THIS SCENARIO FORECASTS A FUTURE WHERE THERE IS PURPOSEFUL INVESTMENT IN BUILDING A STRONG AND EQUITABLE COMMUNITY FABRIC FOR THOSE WHO LIVE AND WORK IN KCK.

The downtown core area is revitalized by building on existing infrastructure in creative ways. Zoning and building codes are amended to allow more intergenerational housing and increased density. There is a focus on investment in what is already there; in the people and buildings that create the KCK's multi-cultural and diverse character. Diversity is celebrated and welcomed, and more languages are spoken in schools. Self-contained neighborhoods are created, and emphasis is placed on creating a '15-minute city' that provides needed quality of life amenities within 15 minutes of residents' homes. Past generations are attracted back to KCK and reinvestment becomes the norm. New economic development tools such as heritage tourism, water resource trade, and 'building our own' modular housing on existing WYCO land provides connectivity and synergy with the rest of the County. Small businesses flourish with new support systems, and workforce development is about upskilling current residents as AI and automation replace workers.

### SNAPSHOT

- Downtown urban core is revitalized
- Focus on historic preservation
- '15-minute city' is a reality
- WYCO is leader in modular housing
- Small businesses flourish in KCK



### INSIGHTS

- The '15-Minute City' scenario paints a future where KCK becomes self-sustaining and severe poverty and neglect are purposefully eliminated. Diversity is nurtured and creative economic development is applied equitably throughout the City.
- In the '15-Minute City' scenario, leadership seeks to address the inequities that have built up over time. The community confronts its challenges and invests the time and money required to attain equitable solutions for KCK.



#### SOCIAL FABRIC AND COMMUNITY

*Focus is on supporting the diverse, multi-cultural population who live and work in KCK.*

- Deep investment in future-proofing education starting very young.
- All families have access to broadband, healthy foods, and healthcare.
- Hubs of learning, arts, and culture celebrate the community's diversity and inclusion.
- Upskilling supports higher paying jobs as AI and automation impact labor force.
- Displacement from reinvestment is curtailed by new programs and expanded services.



#### LOCAL ECONOMY AND INDUSTRY

*Strong economic development approach invests in innovation, mixed-use, redevelopment and repurposing.*

- Area Plans are updated to create self-contained 15-minute neighborhoods.
- Businesses stay in KCK and develop strong networks of support.
- Heritage tourism expands, especially in the Quindaro Ruins and Northeast KCK area.
- Existing infrastructure is strengthened and new transportation modes increase access to opportunity.



#### BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE

*Development concentrates on updating and reimagining existing areas and neighborhoods of KCK.*

- Housing typology expands and zoning changes to include more multi-generational, prefab housing and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU).
- Urban farming expands to provide locally grown healthy foods.
- Social infrastructure - parks, green space and recreational areas are restored; access is expanded.
- Gentrification occurs as more people move back into the inner core neighborhoods of KCK.
- Microgrids are created to build climate resiliency.

2025 HEADLINE  
"Welcome Home Program" launches to incentivize multi-generational housing & entrepreneurship."

2030 HEADLINE  
"Ribbon cutting for multicultural center celebrates 72+ cultures in our community."

2035 HEADLINE  
"KCK earns Gold Standard for equitable urban regeneration."

## COMMUNITY FORWARD

THIS SCENARIO FORECASTS A FUTURE WHERE LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS INTENTIONAL ABOUT CONCENTRATING DEVELOPMENT IN KCK AND INCENTIVIZES RE-DEVELOPMENT AND REPURPOSING OF EXISTING BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

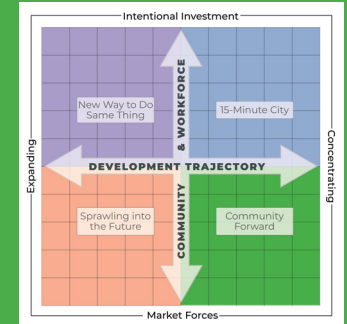
High density and mixed-use buildings are prioritized. Pride runs high in KCK and historic preservation of existing buildings is encouraged and in demand. Market forces dictate development and housing costs rise precipitously as developers do not incorporate low-income or affordable housing options and amenities. New modes of transportation are introduced, and businesses continue to source workers from both inside and outside the County. A regional mass-transit system moves people easily to and from communities outside WYCO. The community evolves and changes based on natural market forces and KCK begins to lose its cultural diversity as people are displaced out of an urban core that becomes too expensive for many to afford.

### SNAPSHOT

- New transportation modes emerge
- KCK buildings are redeveloped and repurposed
- Housing prices soar in KCK
- Developers compete for space in KCK
- Workforce shortages continue

### INSIGHTS

- In the 'Community Forward' scenario, the community moves forward for some, but not for all. Low-income wage earners are left behind and the City loses its unique multi-cultural strength.
- The 'Community Forward' scenario paints a future where there is tremendous investment in the hard infrastructure of KCK and people return to the City to live and work. Market forces increase the cost of living and without more affordable housing, most low-income wage earners are displaced.



#### SOCIAL FABRIC AND COMMUNITY

*Job creation provides more employment opportunities but poverty in KCK persists.*

- Houses are sold to the highest bidder and extreme displacement of low-income wage earners takes place.
- There is continued support from nonprofits and community resources.
- There is pride in the community and grassroots investment increases.
- Government focuses on historic preservation and rehabilitation of existing neighborhoods.



#### LOCAL ECONOMY AND INDUSTRY

*Strong focus on creating density and investing in local scale development.*

- Business sectors spur innovation and job creation and build climate resilience in KCK.
- Current infrastructure is improved and repurposed; tax revenue increases.
- Regional commuter rail is installed.
- Education for upskilling is provided, but jobs continue to be outsourced to those living outside of Wyandotte County.



#### BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE

*Incentivized re-development and repurposing of existing spaces is encouraged in KCK.*

- Form-based code to preserve and enhance historic character and mixed-use building is promoted in KCK.
- Housing is driven by market needs and developer priorities and gentrification occurs.
- Green space in neighborhoods is preserved.
- Neighborhoods are tailored to design criteria with unique zoning.

2025 HEADLINE  
"Celebrating award-winning Rock Island Bridge."

2030 HEADLINE  
"Levee fest features only locally sourced foods and products."

2035 HEADLINE  
"KCK's unique zoning attracts a hub of sustainable developers."

## SPRAWLING INTO THE FUTURE

THIS SCENARIO FORECASTS A FUTURE WHERE NOTHING MUCH CHANGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT TRAJECTORY OF KCK.

Focus is on pursuing traditional approaches to economic, infrastructure and workforce development. Market forces are allowed to play out and there are definite winners and losers in WYCO. The western area of the County continues to thrive and sprawl with single-family home and large industrial development as the mainstay for investment. Additional developments similar to the Legends are built. Competition for housing is fierce as land is developed and affordability concerns rise for both middle and low-income wage earners. Little change in urban core KCK housing development continues to displace people due to safety and affordability issues. Extreme poverty persists and KCK struggles to maintain financial and social stability.

### SNAPSHOT

- Population growth in western part of WYCO
- Market forces spur suburban sprawl
- KCK struggles for investment
- East-West WYCO disparities increase
- Legends II and III are built



### INSIGHTS

- In the 'Sprawling into the Future' scenario, there is a serious danger that East-West WYCO disparities will exacerbate and KCK will see increased poverty and urban decay.
- The 'Sprawling into the Future' scenario paints a future where economic development continues as suburban sprawl in the western part of the County, and KCK struggles to compete for resources and support.



#### SOCIAL FABRIC AND COMMUNITY

*Suburban lifestyle thrives and attracts young families.*

- School-age family population increases in the western portion of the County.
- There is less focus on existing neighborhoods and the history of KCK, and community vitality is lost.
- More investment in suburban amenities; less in the urban core.
- There is less of an inclusive attitude in the County and poverty increases.



#### LOCAL ECONOMY AND INDUSTRY

*Development expansion is focused on the western area of Wyandotte County.*

- Western development exacerbates the East-West disparities in the County.
- Additional resources for the inner-city come from the expansion of the tax base in the western area of the County.
- Expansion occurs in the healthcare industry.
- Taxes and fees are lower because of planned expansion of industry.



#### BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE

*Resources are devoted to single-family home suburban development.*

- Subdivision development with single-family homes and large lots; more Legends inspired retail occurs.
- The County becomes more car-centric and more, larger roads are needed to connect areas.
- Housing affordability decreases significantly.
- Regional parks are developed instead of smaller neighborhood parks.

2025 HEADLINE  
"Save WYCO – Buy Bonds."

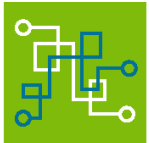
2030 HEADLINE  
"Welcome to Middle Class America."

2035 HEADLINE  
"Hindsight 2020 – Do not try this at home."

## 7.0 | LEAST DESIRED, EXPECTED AND PREFERRED FUTURES

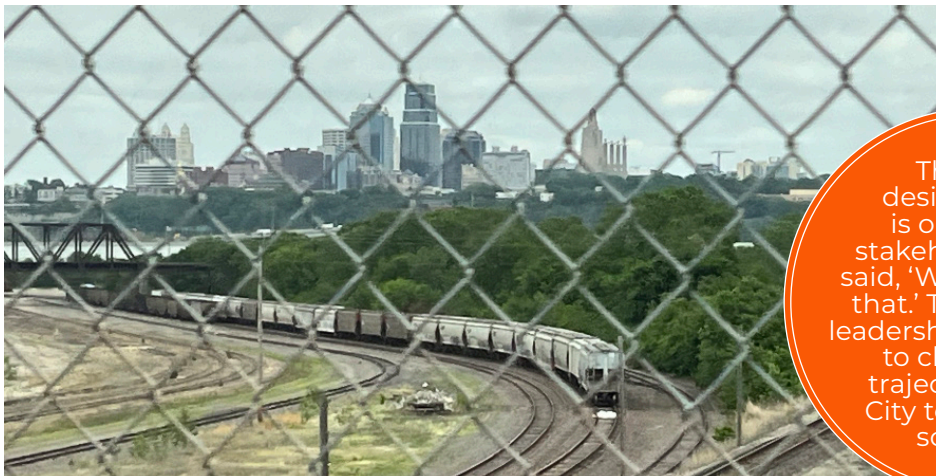
## 7.1 | Lease Desired Future

The Least Desired Future is defined as ‘the future that is considered to be the most undesirable (or least optimal or least desired) for the future of KCK.’ Vision Summit participants most definitely considered Scenario D, ‘Sprawling into the Future’ to be the Least Desired scenario for KCK.

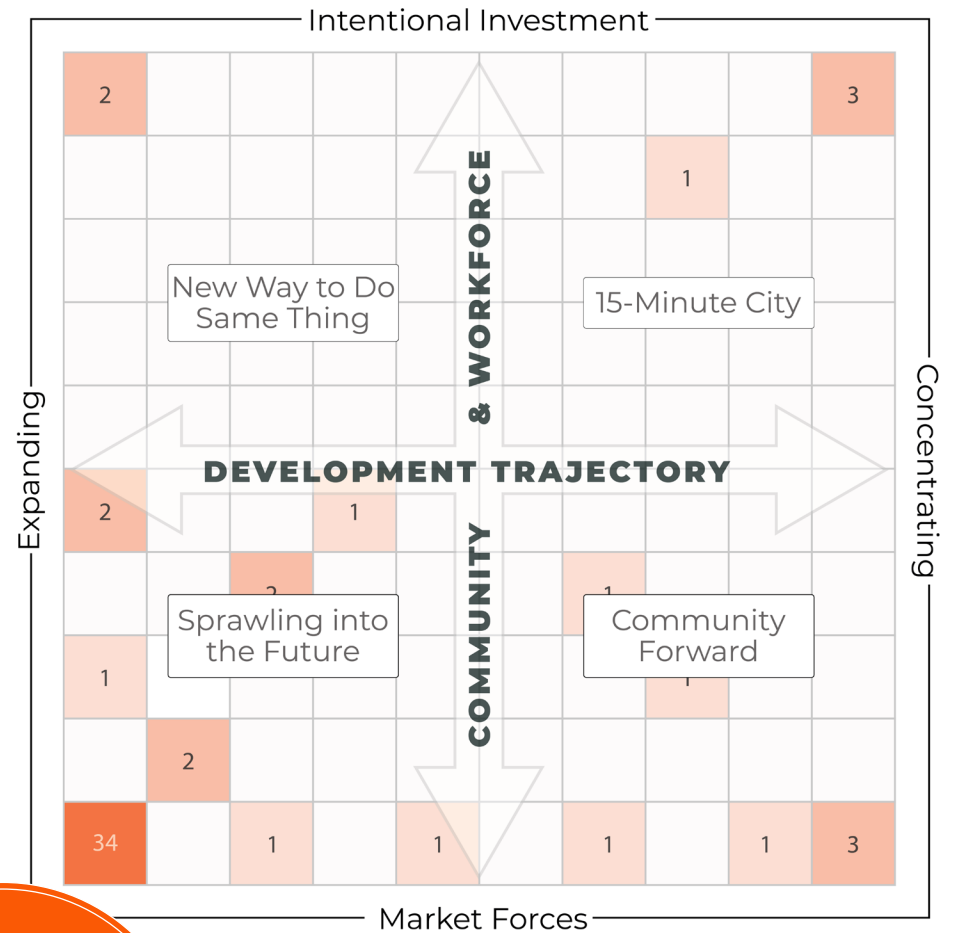


FutureInsight

- The data of the least desired future shows a strong concentration in the bottom corner of the quadrant in Scenario D, 'Sprawling into the Future.' This indicates a strong desire not to head in that direction.
- The least desired future provides a clear sense that Vision Summit participants do not want market forces to prevail, nor do they want uncontrolled sprawl within the County.



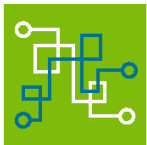
The least desired future is one where stakeholders have said, 'We don't want that.' This provides leadership a mandate to change the trajectory of the City to avoid this scenario.



*This grid displays the plausibility level assigned by the workshop participants. The darker the color, the greater the aggregate weighted plausibility score.*

## 7.2 | Expected Future

The expected future is one deemed most likely to happen if there is no change in the current trajectory of KCK. The majority of Vision Summit participants indicated that scenario D, “Sprawling into the Future”, is the scenario they believed most represented the expected future of KCK looking ahead 25 years.

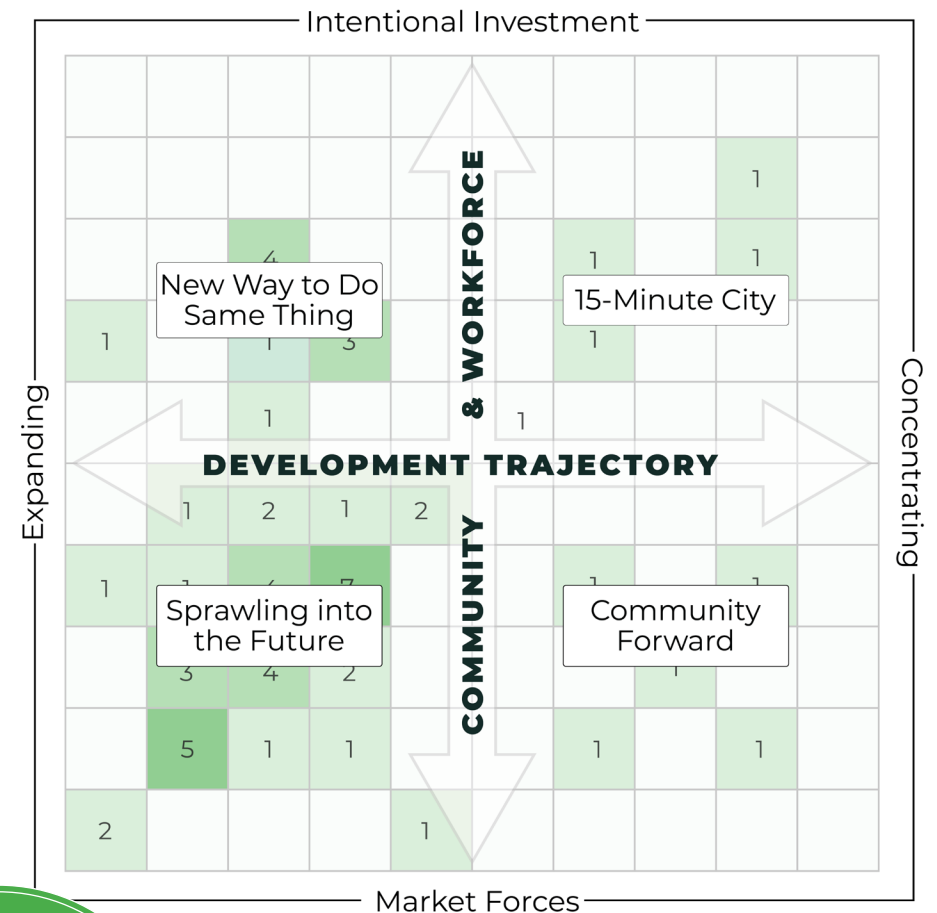


FutureInsight

- The expected future may seem familiar, but Vision Summit participants have shown a clear desire to move away from the status quo to the preferred future.
- The expected future as seen by Vision Summit participants indicates the need to move along both the Community & Workforce and the Development Trajectory axes if KCK is to get to the preferred future.



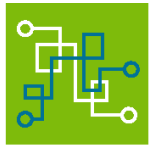
The Expected Future represents the future that is most likely to happen if KCK does nothing to change economic development direction or trajectory.



This grid displays the plausibility level assigned by the workshop participants. The darker the color, the greater the aggregate weighted plausibility score.

### 7.3 | Preferred Future

Vision Summit participants expressed an overwhelming preference for Scenario B, '15-Minute City' as the Preferred Future for KCK in 25 years. Vision Summit participants discussed the consequences of inaction and the need to take decisive action now to redirect the City's trajectory over the next 25 years. This future combines significant intentional investment in community and workforce as well as concentrating economic development in KCK to build on existing infrastructure by re-development, repurposing and increasing density within the City.

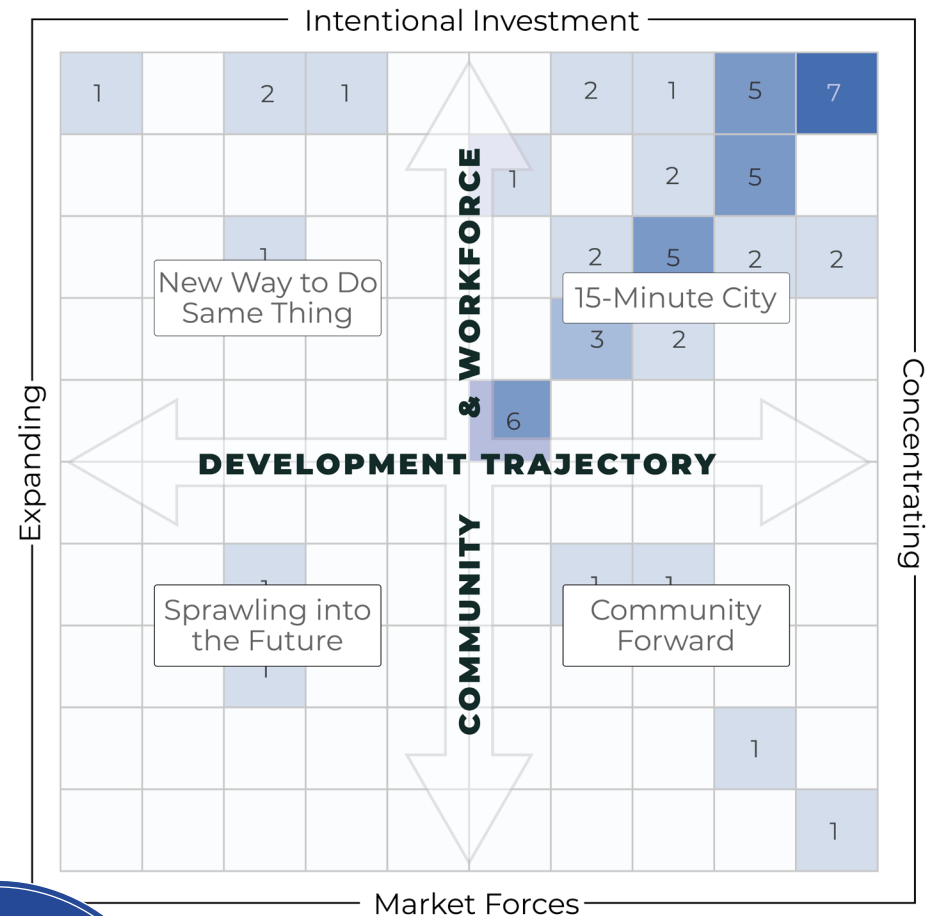


FutureInsight

- The concentration of color, particularly in the far upper right corner in Scenario B, '15-Minute City,' indicates a close alignment of thinking among Vision Summit participants and a clear desire for change.
- The Vision Summit's scenario-planning is a significant step in visioning process to define collectively how KCK will strategically plan to steer toward the preferred future.



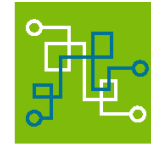
Strong leadership, trust and committed stakeholders are needed to help realize the preferred future.



This grid displays the plausibility level assigned by the workshop participants. The darker the color, the greater the aggregate weighted plausibility score.

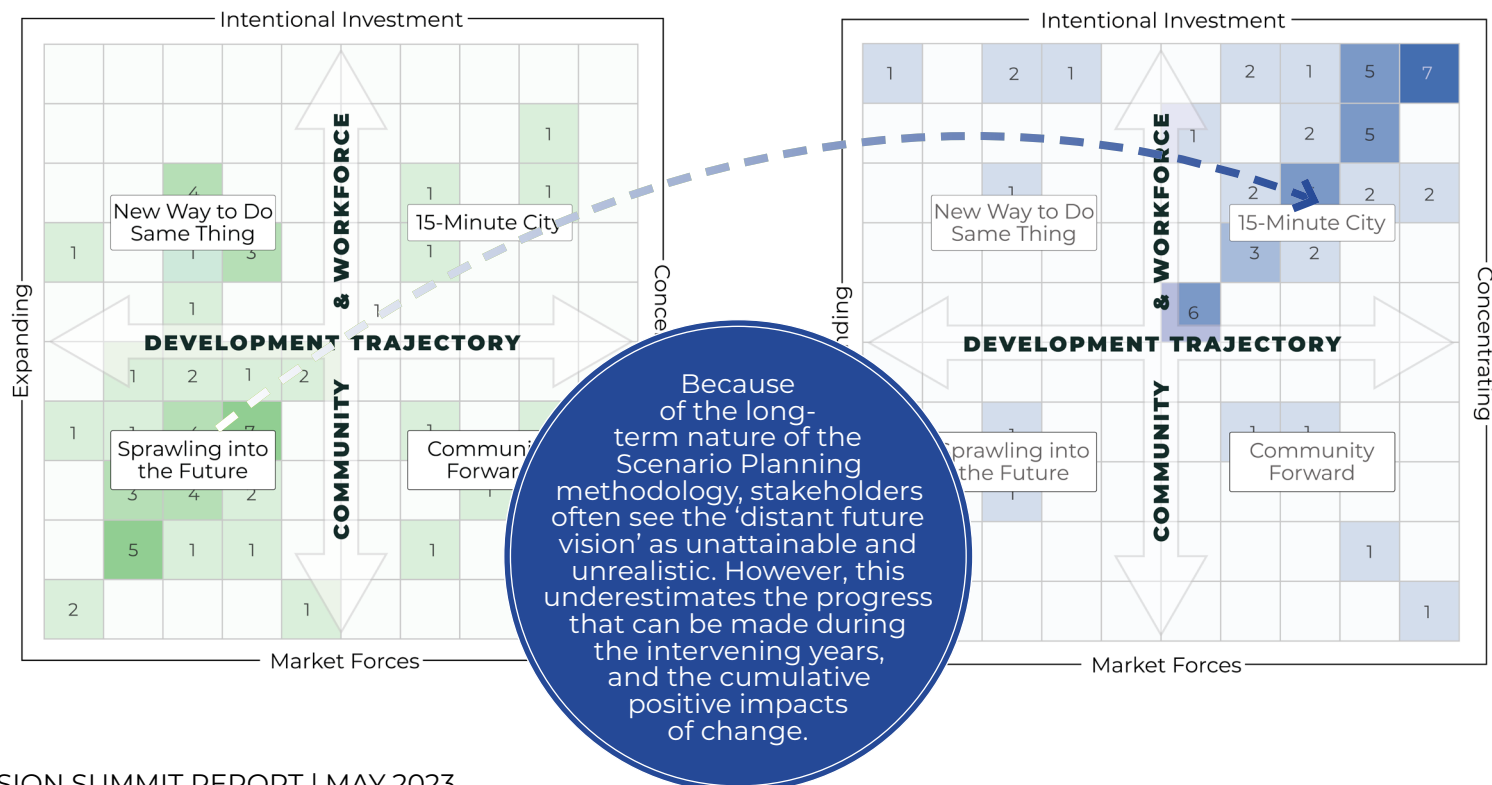
## 7.4 | Getting to the Preferred Future

Vision Summit participants discussed the ramifications and implications of failing to achieve the preferred future. While there was strong alignment among Vision Summit participants that Scenario B, '15-Minute City,' represented the preferred scenario, it was also recognized that changing current trajectory will require a good hard look at the challenges and realities of why KCK is in its current position. Strong leadership, trust building, collaboration, investment, and clear communications will be required to support the current momentum and desire for change in KCK.



FutureInsight

- Arriving at a point of consensus among stakeholders about the preferred future is very important to the visioning process as it provides a sense of cohesion, agreement, and balanced solutions going forward.
- KCK is well-positioned geographically to move towards the preferred future by leveraging its location and water resources to expand regional connectivity in pursuit of new economic development opportunities for the city.



# 8.0 | NEXT STEPS

Following the Vision Summit, the Economic Development planning portion of this work moves into the 'Develop Draft Strategic Plan' phase of the economic development strategic planning process. It should be noted that this planning process is being aligned with PlanKCK, the comprehensive plan that will cover many subjects, including Historic Preservation, Housing, and more.



# 9.0 | PLANKCK CONTACT

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amarcy@wycokck.org | 913-573-5750



[WYCOKCK.ORG/PLANKCK](http://WYCOKCK.ORG/PLANKCK)

# 9.0 Appendix 2: State of the Economy Snapshot Report



Unified Government of  
Wyandotte County and  
Kansas City, Kansas

## **state of the economy**

**Snapshot Report for Kansas City, KS**

March 22, 2023

Unified Government of  
Wyandotte County and  
Kansas City, Kansas

# state of the economy

**Snapshot Report for Kansas City, KS**

March 22, 2023

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# About This Snapshot

The Unified Government of Wyandotte County-Kansas City, Kansas (UG) has embarked on a multi-faceted planning process for Kansas City, Kansas, that includes an Economic Development Strategic Plan, a Citywide Comprehensive Plan, Citywide Historic Preservation Plan, and Countywide Housing Strategy. The Kansas City Economic Development Strategic Planning Process is intended to create an innovative economic development plan to align Kansas City, Kansas, and the cities of Bonner Springs, Edwardsville, to Lake Quivira to collectively reposition Wyandotte County within the broader Kansas City region.

This State of the Economy Snapshot for Kansas City, Kansas, is the benchmark report for reference throughout the Economic Development Strategic Planning Process. This snapshot, developed by Jon Stover & Associates and in partnership with Future iQ, highlights a broad overview of the existing economic conditions encompassing Kansas City, Kansas. Importantly, this snapshot is a tool to leverage while creating the Economic Development Strategic Plan and reflects insights that will be referenced and distilled in the coming months. The analysis leverages leading economic data sources, including the US Census, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, ESRI Community Analyst, and regional economic development partners.

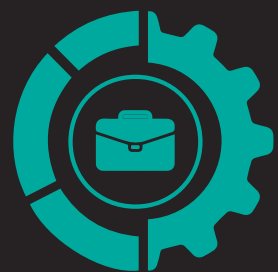


## Purpose of the Report

- *Top-level Benchmark of the Current Economic Conditions to Frame the Context for the Economic Development Strategic Plan*
- *Concise Summary of Wyandotte County's Industry Mix, Employment Base, and Commercial Market Conditions\**
- *Reference Document to Spark Conversations throughout the Economic Development Strategic Planning Process*



\*This snapshot includes data for both Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas, as available from key data sources. Because the overall Economic Development Strategic Plan focuses on Kansas City, Kansas, city-level data is used whenever available.



# INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT



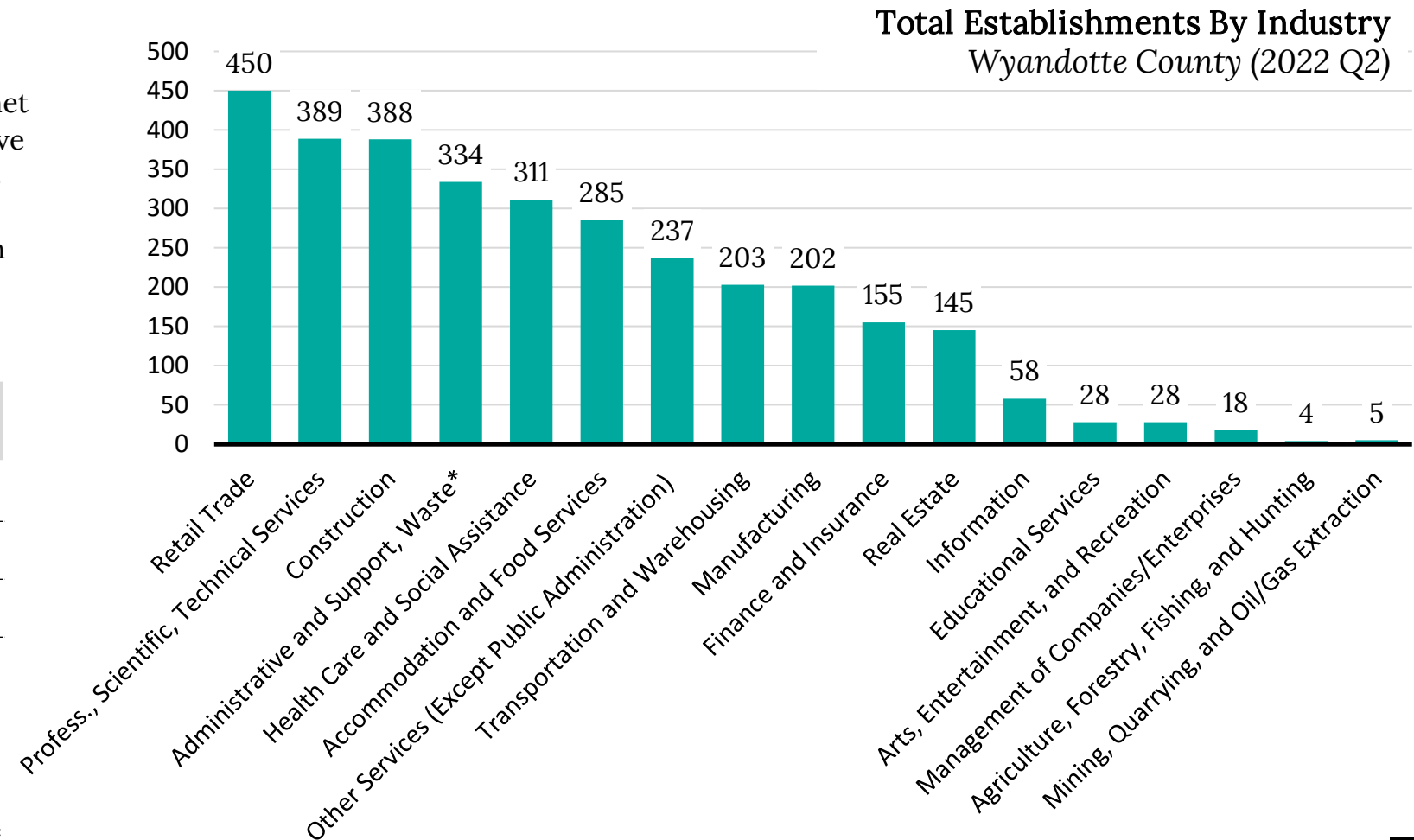
## Industry Snapshot

# Wyandotte County Businesses

In 2021, over 3,430 businesses were located in Wyandotte County. Between 2018 and 2021, Wyandotte County gained approximately 50 net new companies (1.4%), demonstrating collective economic stability. Comparatively, the Kansas City, MO-KS MSA experienced an increase in businesses by 7.3%, signifying there may be an opportunity to capture increased business growth in Kansas City, Kansas.

Total Businesses in Wyandotte County		Annual Change
2018	3,385 Businesses	--
2019	3,364 Businesses	-1%
2020	3,316 Businesses	-1%
2021	3,434 Businesses	4%

\*Administrative and Support, Waste Management, and Remediation Services  
Note: Establishment data through BLS is only available at the county level. The above data reflects all private sector industries of all establishment sizes.  
Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages



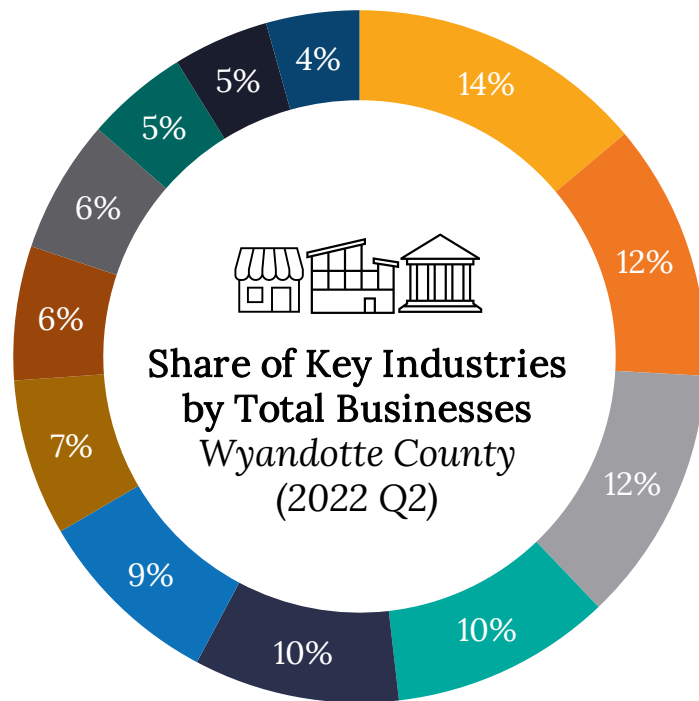


## Industry Insights

# Key Industry Sectors in Wyandotte County



Across all industry sectors, Wyandotte County offers a diverse mix of different business types. The county's top 5 industry sectors equate to 58% of the total businesses in the county.



### Top 5 Industries by Business Count

- Retail Trade (14%)
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (12%)
- Construction (12%)
- Administrative and Support, Waste Management/Remediation Services (10%)
- Health Care and Social Assistance (10%)

### Additional Key Industries by Business Count

- Accommodation and Food Services (9%)
- Other Services (Except Public Administration) (7%)
- Transportation and Warehousing (6%)
- Manufacturing (6%)
- Finance and Insurance (5%)
- Real Estate (5%)
- Other Industry Sectors (4%)

Note: Establishment data through BLS is only available at the county level. The above data reflects all private sector industries of all establishment sizes.

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages



# EMPLOYMENT BASE SNAPSHOT





## Employment Base Snapshot

# Wyandotte County Employment

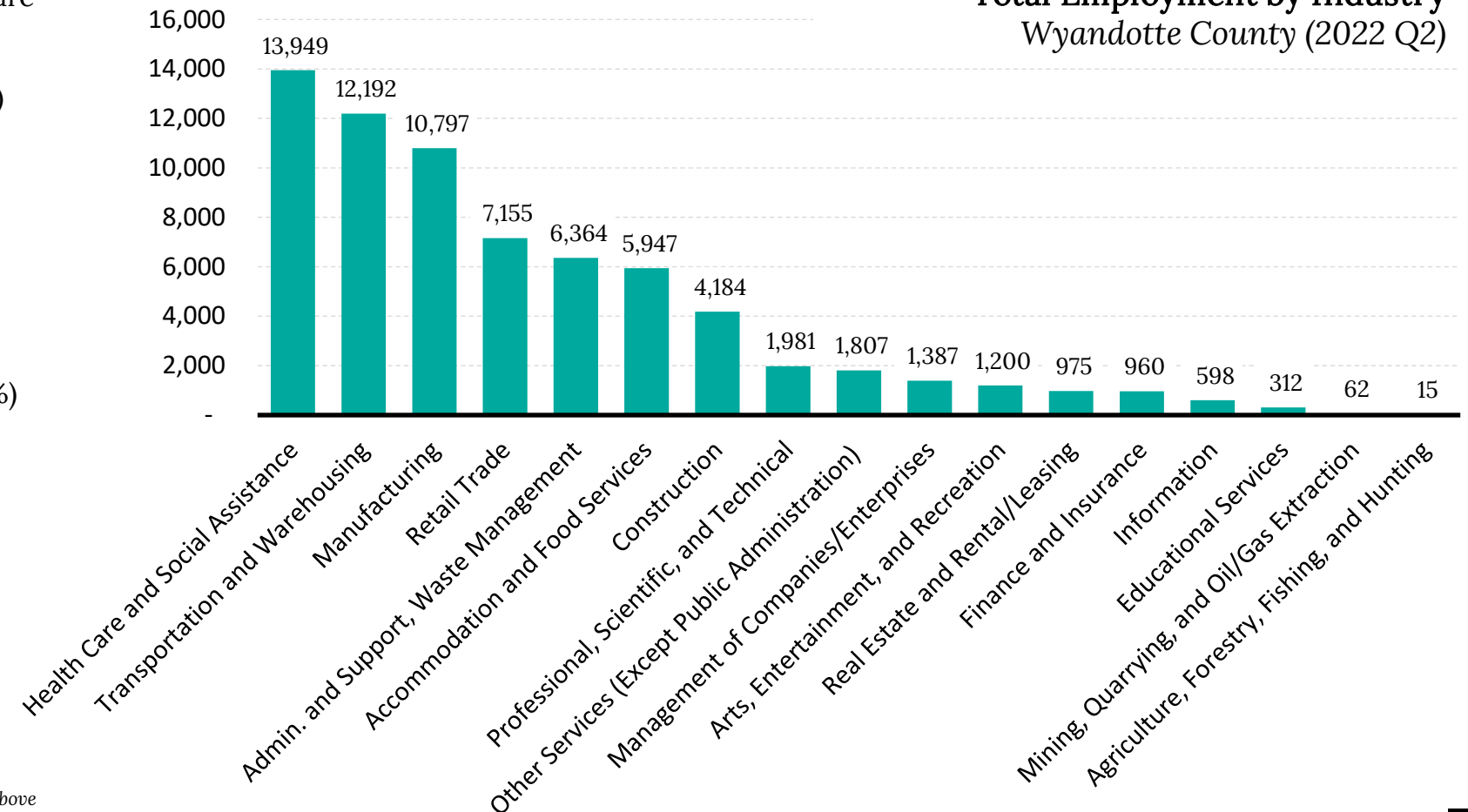
Nearly 3 out of every 4 jobs in the county are in the following industry sectors:

- Health Care and Social Assistance (20%)
- Transportation and Warehousing (17%)
- Manufacturing (15%)
- Retail (10%)
- Administrative and Support, Waste Management/Remediation Services (9%)



1 of every 3 jobs in Wyandotte County is within industries centered around industrial sectors, including manufacturing, warehousing, and transportation.

**Total Employment by Industry**  
Wyandotte County (2022 Q2)



Note: Employment data through BLS is only available at the county level. The above data reflects all private sector industries of all establishment sizes.

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages



## Regional Insights

# Employment Insights

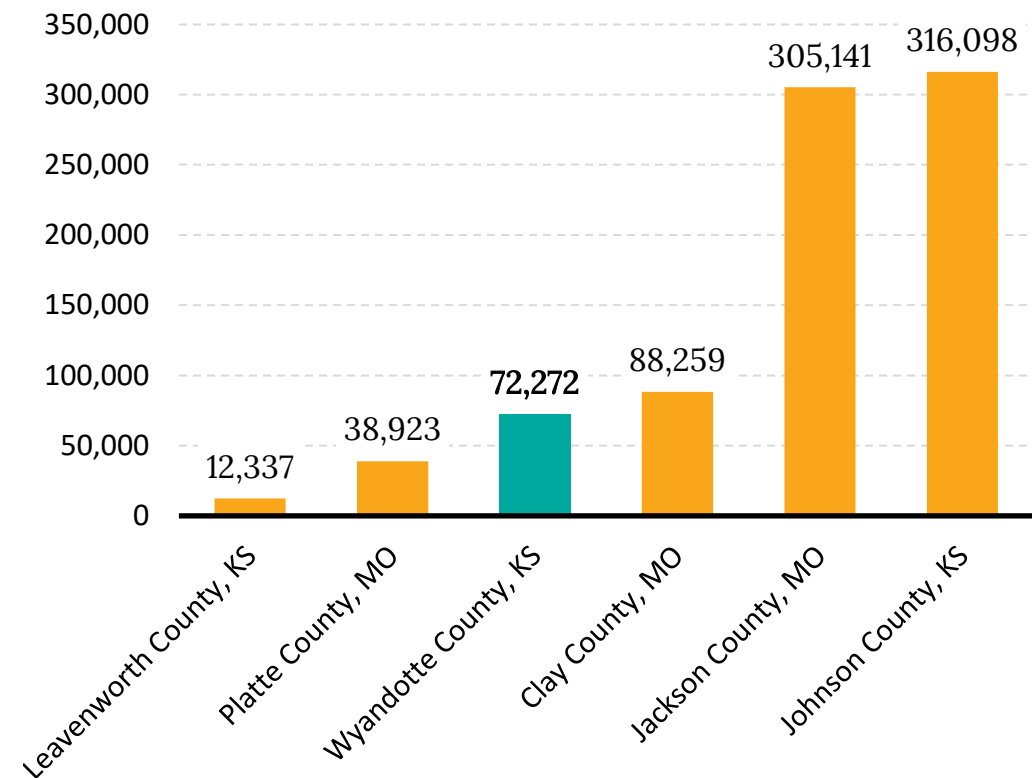


Wyandotte County is home to over 72,200 private sector jobs. Of the 5 adjacent counties, almost 1 out of every 10 private sector jobs is located in Wyandotte County.

Adjacent Jackson and Johnson Counties are considerable employment centers with substantially high levels of jobs for the region. However, Wyandotte County nearly doubles the private sector employment base of Platte County and is only 18% fewer private sector jobs than Clay County.

Wyandotte County captures a 32% share of resident-workers, meaning that about a third of the residential labor force live and work in Wyandotte County. While Jackson County and Johnson County capture a 58% and 63% share, respectively, Wyandotte County is consistent with Clay County (33%) and Leavenworth County, is higher than Platte County (24%), and is just slightly below the region's average of 40%.

## 2021 Total Private Sector Employment



Note: Employment data through BLS is only available at the county level. The above data reflects all private sector industries of all establishment sizes.

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages



## Employment Base Insights

# Employment Growth

Wyandotte County's employment base has remained relatively consistent since 2018, with a slight decrease in annual employment (-3.8%) between 2018 and 2021. This mirrors regional trends, with 4 out of the 5 surrounding counties experiencing a decline in employment base as well as the MSA.

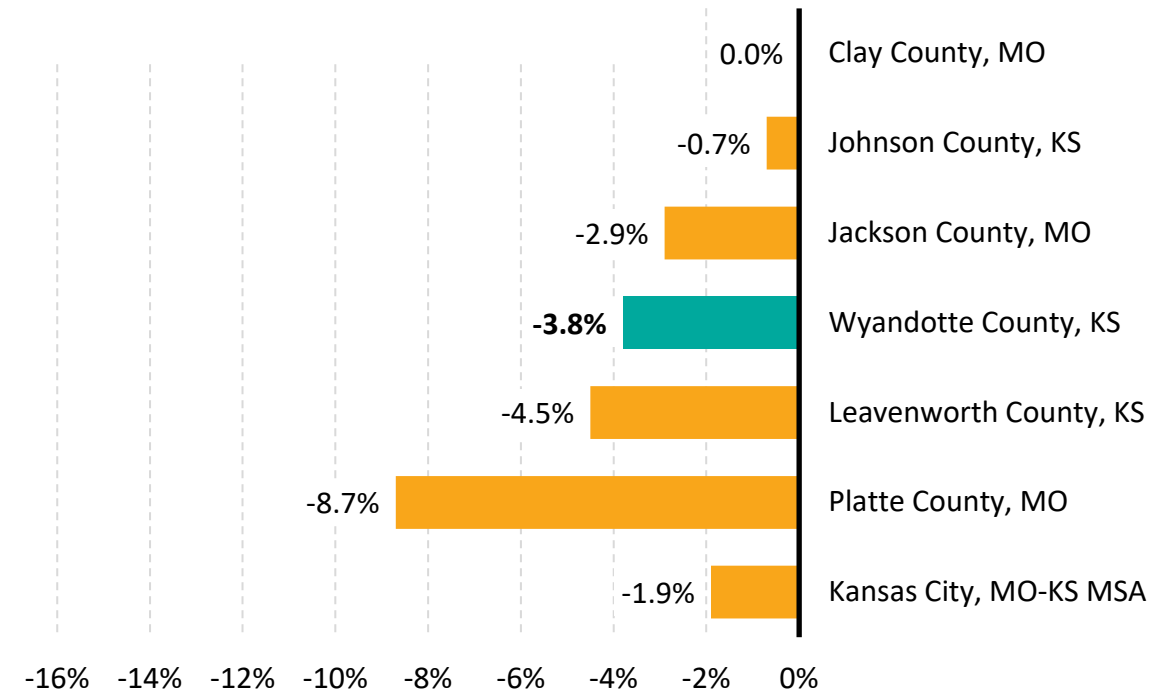


Despite the recent decrease in private sector employment, Wyandotte County's rate of employment remains high. Unemployment rates in the county averaged just 3.6% in 2022, lower than the county's 5-year average unemployment rate of 5%.

### Annual Wyandotte County Employment

2018	75,151 Employees
2019	74,933 Employees
2020	72,450 Employees
2021	72,272 Employees

### Employment Change Percent Change (2018 to 2021)



Note: Employment data through BLS is only available at the county level. The above data reflects all private sector industries of all establishment sizes. Figures reflect average annual employment. Unemployment rate based on MARC available data.

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.



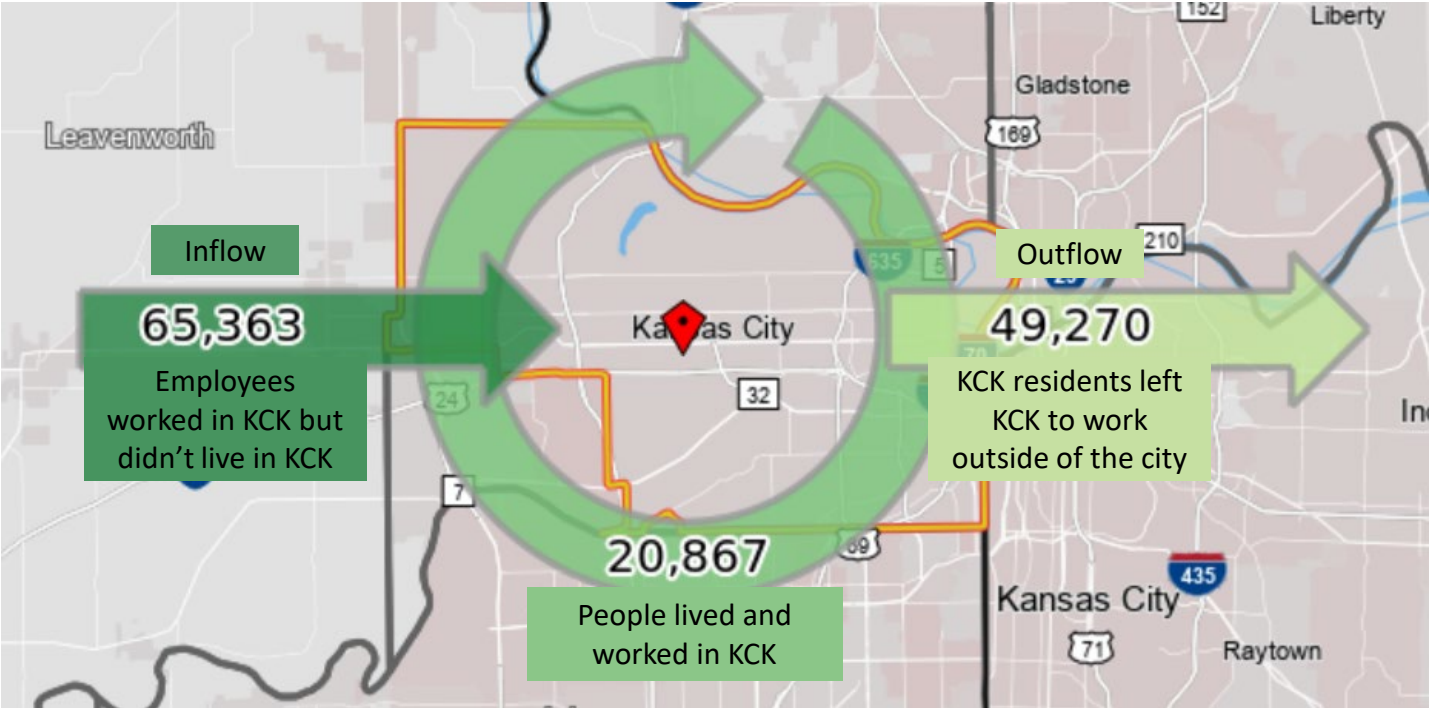
# Employment Insights

## Inflow/Outflow

All cities experience differing balances of workers who come to a place to work and residents who leave their communities for employment. Of the residential workforce of Kansas City, Kansas, about a third (30%) of residents live and work in the city.

2019 Kansas City, Kansas  
Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs)

	Count	Share
Employed in KCK	86,230	--
Employed in KCK but Lived Outside	65,363	76%
Employed and Lived in KCK	20,867	24%
Lived in KCK	70,137	--
Lived in KCK but Employed Outside	49,270	70%
Lived and Employed in KCK	20,867	30%



This diagram illustrates the inflow and outflow of employees in Kansas City, Kansas, articulated in the adjacent table.

Note: Data presented above reflect the most recently available data. Jobs reflect total jobs rather than private sector employment, as shown elsewhere in this report.  
Source: US Census, On the Map



## Regional Insights

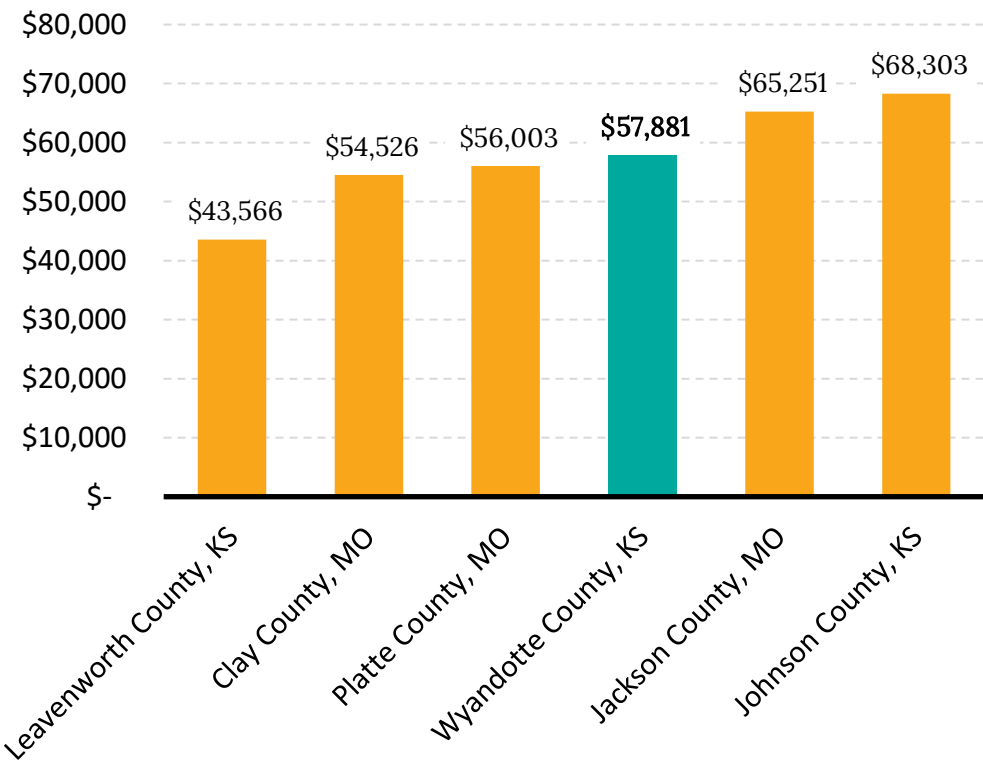
# Salary and Wages

In 2021, the average annual wage for an employee working in Wyandotte County was \$57,881. Average compensation is slightly below the Kansas City, MO-KS MSA average of \$62,707 but exceeds several of the surrounding counties, including Leavenworth, Clay, and Platte County. Notably, wages in Wyandotte County skew higher for employees coming into the county for work than Wyandotte County residents.

Share of Wyandotte County Workers Earning...			
	Less than \$1,250 Monthly	\$1,251 to \$3,333 Monthly	More than \$3,333 Monthly
<b>Inflow Employees</b> (Workers in Wyandotte County but Live Outside)	17%	25%	59%
<b>Outflow Employees</b> (Wyandotte County Residents that Work Outside of the county)	25%	39%	36%
<b>Interior Employees</b> (Wyandotte County Residents that Live and Work in the County)	24%	38%	38%

Note: Employment data through BLS is only available at the county level. The above data reflects all private sector industries of all establishment sizes. Inflow-outflow data reflects all job types and 2019 data.  
Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, US Census, On the Map

**Average Annual Wage per Employee**  
2021 Annual Average

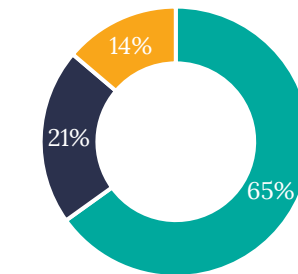
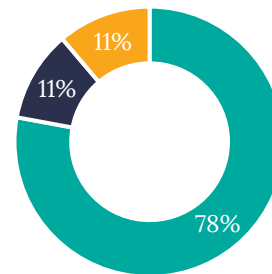
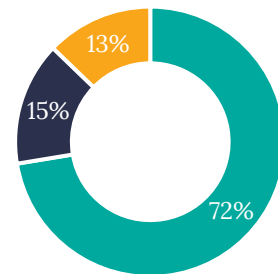
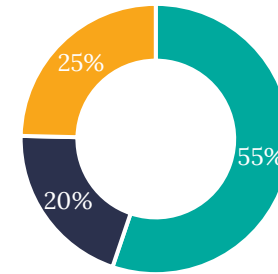
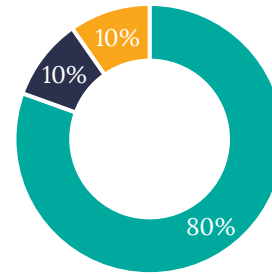
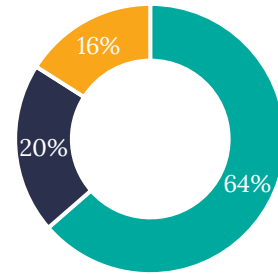
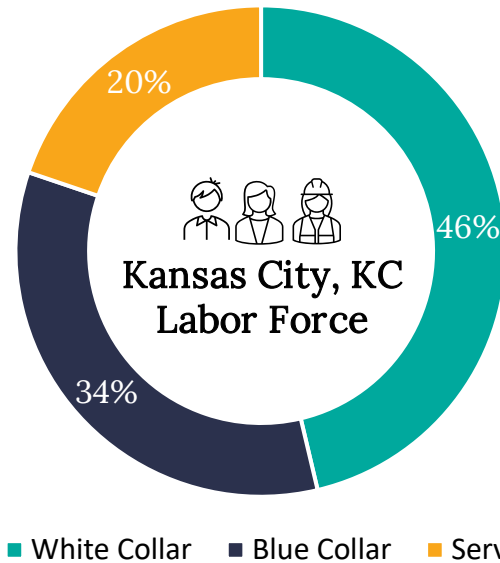




## Regional Insights

# Civilian Labor Force

The labor force of Kansas City, Kansas, includes higher concentrations of blue collar and service-oriented occupations than in other nearby cities. This is consistent with the city's significant volume of industrial uses and employment.



### Occupation Classifications

#### White Collar

- Business, Financial
- Computer, Mathematical
- Architecture, Engineering
- Life, Physical, Social Sciences
- Community, Social Service
- Legal
- Education, Training, Library
- Arts, Design, Entertainment
- Healthcare Practitioner
- Sales
- Office, Administrative Support

#### Blue Collar

- Construction, Extraction
- Installation, Maintenance, Repair
- Production
- Transportation
- Farming, Fishing, Forestry

#### Services

- Healthcare Support
- Protective Service
- Food Preparation, Service
- Building Maintenance
- Personal Care, Service

Note: Occupation classifications and white collar, blue collar, and service types provided by ESRI Labor Force data.  
Source: ESRI Community Analyst (2023)

## Regional Insights

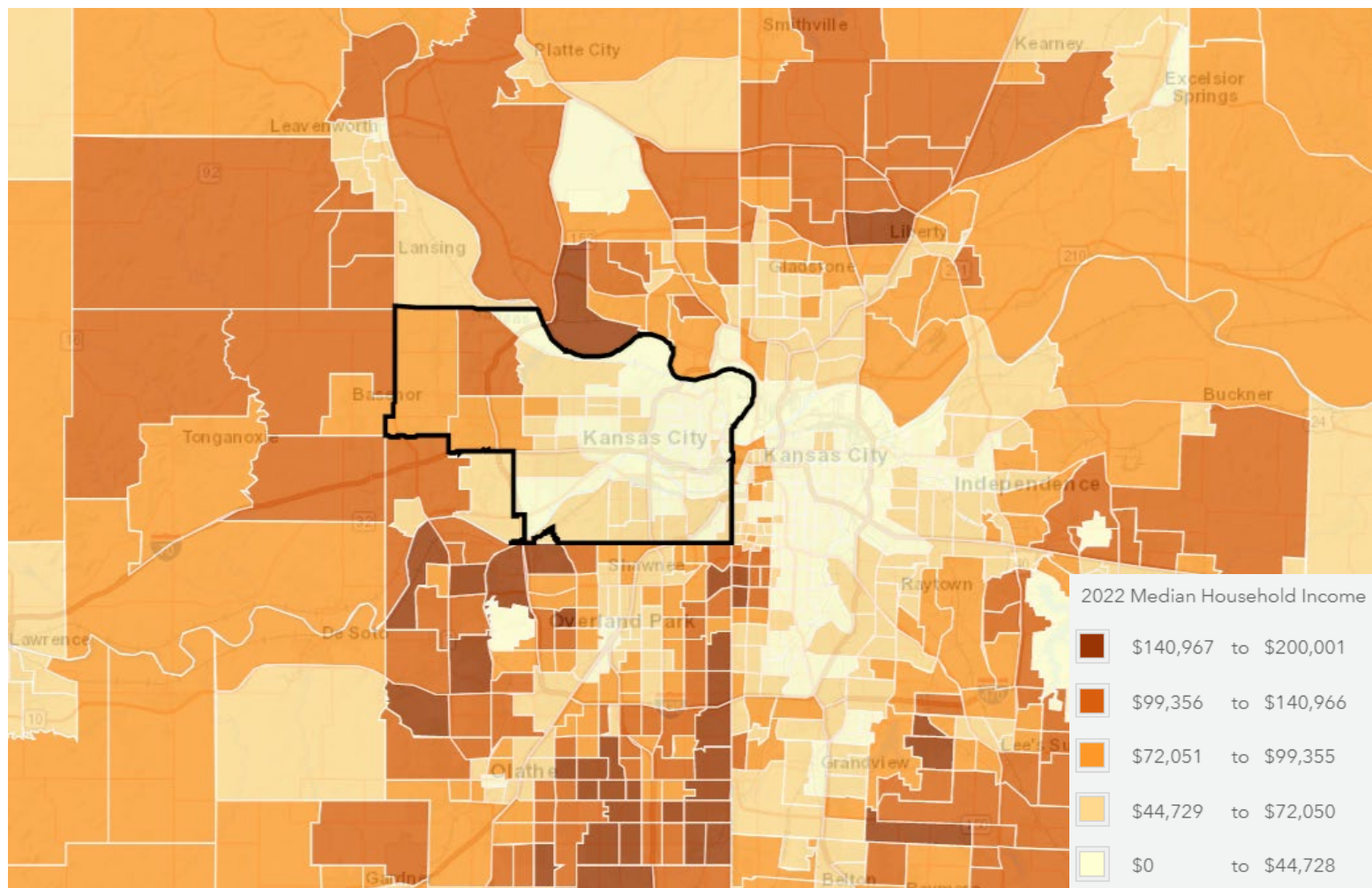
# Median Household Income

While average employee wages are on-par with the surrounding areas, the median household income in Kansas City, Kansas, is \$50,554, in alignment with Wyandotte County's median household income of \$51,770.

However, median household incomes in the 5 counties adjacent to Wyandotte County exceed Kansas City, Kansas levels, ranging from \$62,091 (Jackson County, MO) to \$98,258 (Johnson County, KS). Notably, median household incomes are higher in the western portions of Kansas City, Kansas.



*Increasing access to and capturing stronger local shares of higher paying jobs can help improve local household incomes.*



Median household income based on ESRI's 2022 forecasts.

Note: Income classification bands provided by ESRI are based on natural breaks and 5 classifications.

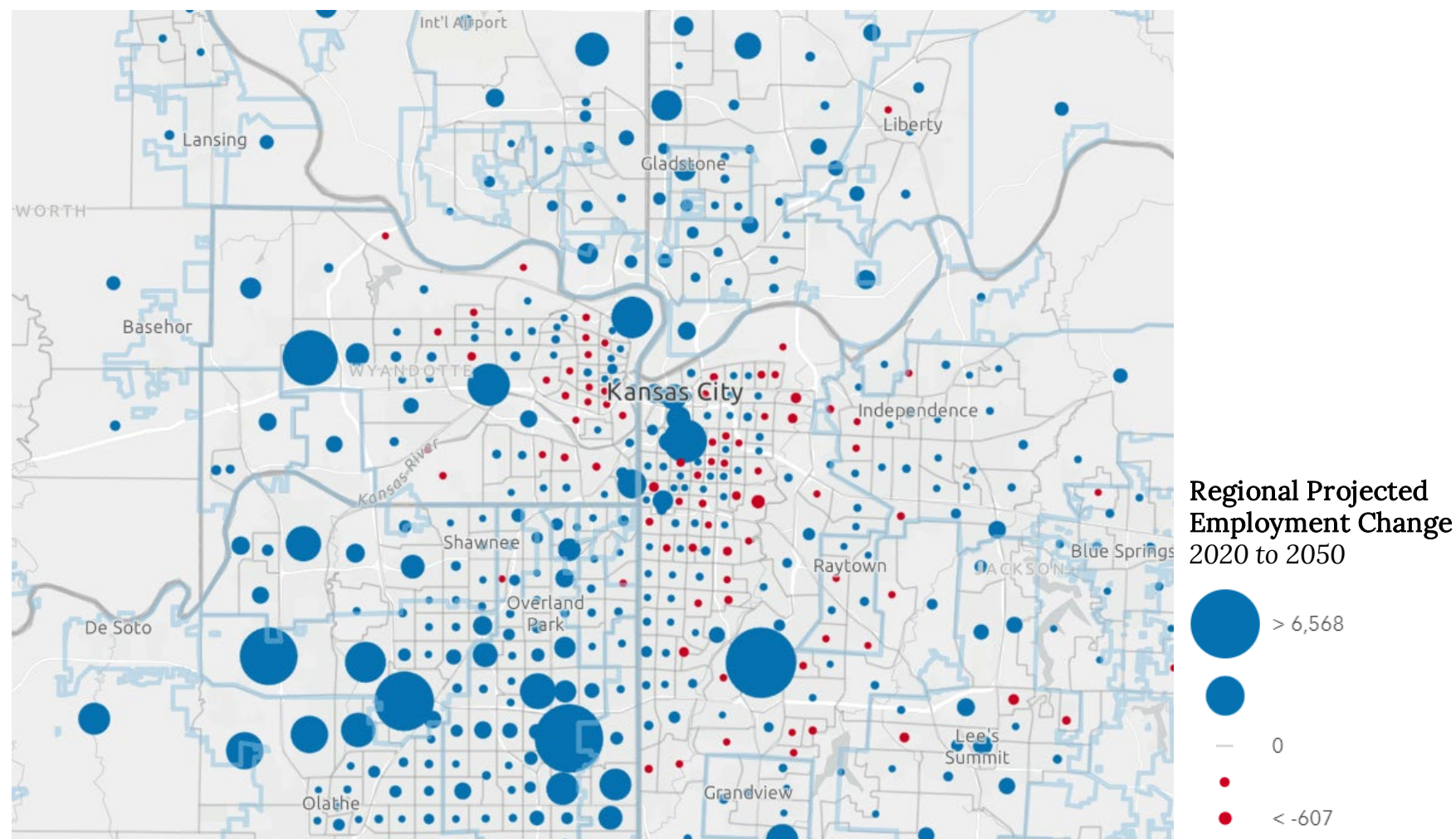
Source: ESRI Community Analyst (2023)

## Regional Insights

# Projected Employment

Regional employment forecast projections anticipate significant employment increases in 3 key areas of Kansas City, Kansas. These 3 areas include north of Edwardsville near the Kansas Speedway (+43%), the Fairfax Industrial District (31%), and around the industrial areas along the Kansas River (+75%).

While these projections may not translate precisely into reality, they offer insights into the areas expected to attract employment based on current economic trends without substantial interventions.





# KANSAS CITY MARKET SNAPSHOT

## Market Snapshot

# The Kansas City, Kansas Market

This market snapshot highlights crucial metrics that help articulate commercial real estate conditions. These metrics include overall supply and inventory, rent trends, vacancy trends, and absorption.

Overall, Kansas City, Kansas, offers more affordable real estate options within the larger region, with lower office, retail, and industrial rents and typically lower vacancy rates. While office and retail development have been limited in recent years, Kansas City, Kansas' industrial market is the most active of the commercial uses, with high levels of absorption over the past 5 years.

### Kansas City, Kansas Commercial Real Estate Supply:



**5.0** million SF  
**Office**



**9.1** million SF  
**Retail**



**43.6** million SF  
**Industrial**



**1,370+** units  
**Multifamily Rental**



# Office Market

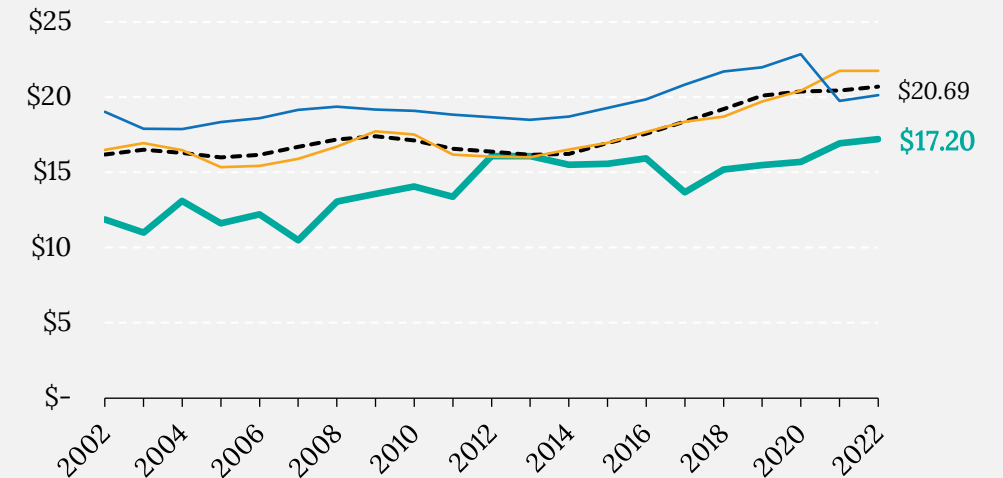
Kansas City, Kansas' office market includes 5 million square feet or approximately 4% of the region's supply. In comparison, the office supplies of Overland Park and Kansas City comprise 20% and 47% of the regional supply, respectively.

Kansas City, Kansas' office market has seen limited new construction since 2017. With a relatively limited share of Class A (high quality or new) office space, Kansas City, Kansas, is significantly more affordable than most other office submarkets in the metro area. Since 2016, office demand has seen a slight trend upwards, pushing rents upwards and pushing the citywide office vacancy rate down to a healthy 5% as of 2022.

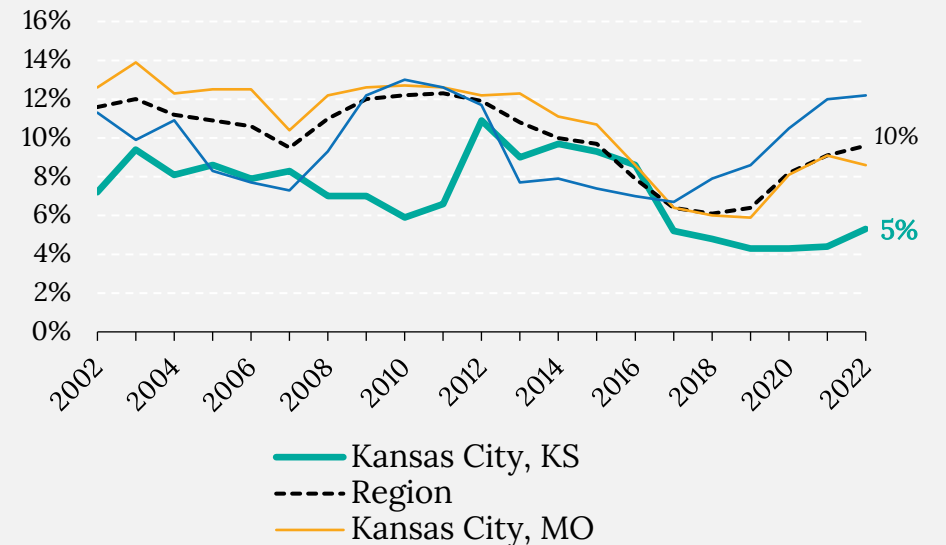
5 Year Net Absorption	5 Year Cumulative	Average Annual
Kansas City, KC	42,842 SF	8,568 SF
Kansas City, MO	-516,453 SF	-103,291 SF
Overland Park, KS	-673,782 SF	-134,756 SF
Region	-1,188,019 SF	-237,604 SF

Note: Office rent data reflects gross rent. Vacancy rate includes both direct and sublet reported data. Data reflects all office classes.  
Source: Costar (2023)

## Office Rent Trends



## Office Vacancy Rate





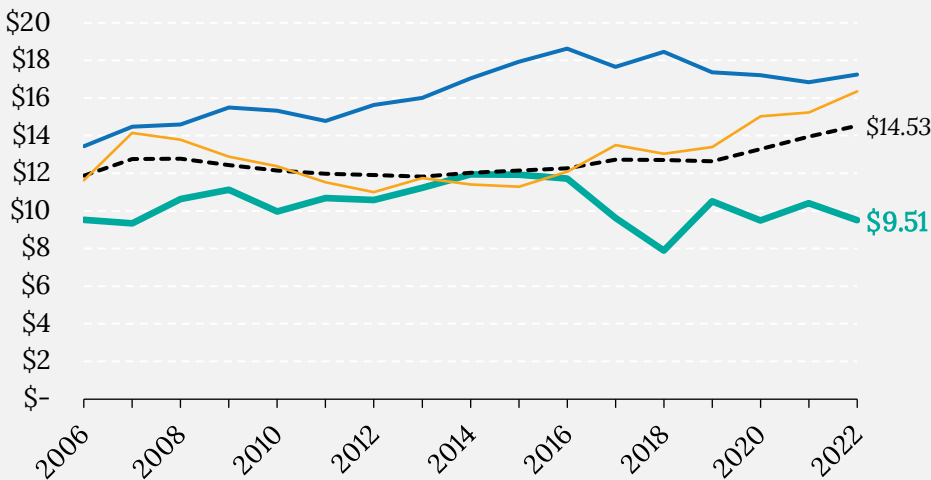
# Retail Market

Kansas City, Kansas’ retail market includes 9 million square feet or approximately 7% of the region’s supply. This supply is nearly double the city’s supply of office space. The city has added 256,000 SF of retail space since 2018, most of which have been free-standing retail buildings in Village West and along State Avenue between College Parkway and N 86<sup>th</sup> Street.

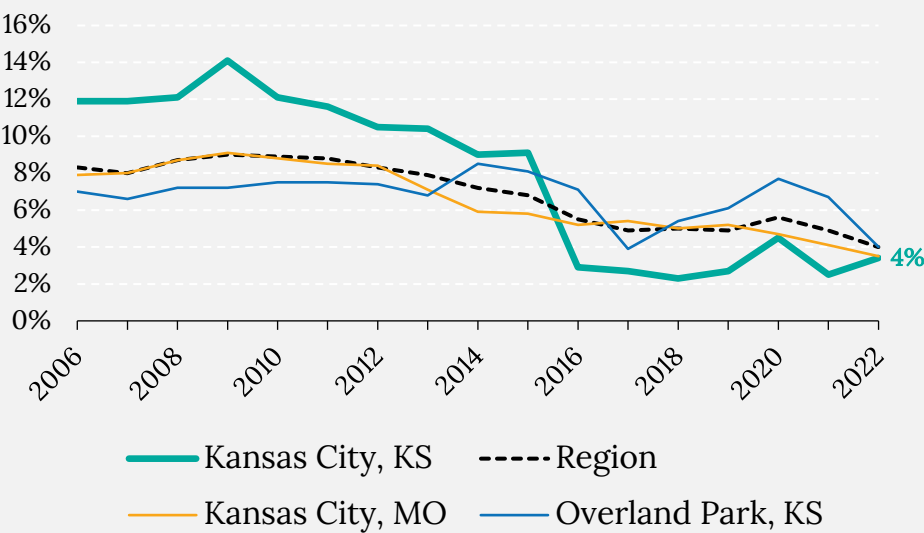
Overall retail vacancy has seen a noticeable decline in recent years, falling from 13% in 2015 to 4% in 2022 – on par with the regional average. Retail space has remained relatively affordable, with retail rents 35% below the regional average. Supply has matched citywide demand over the past 5 years, resulting in stable rental rates.

5 Year Net Absorption	5 Year Cumulative	Average Annual
Kansas City, KC	86,425 SF	17,285 SF
Kansas City, MO	1,149,785 SF	229,957 SF
Overland Park, KS	-271,141 SF	-54,228 SF
Region	3,636,571 SF	727,314 SF

Retail Rent Trends



Retail Vacancy Rate



Note: Retail rent reflects NNN rents including direct and sublet rents. Data reflects both direct and sublet vacancy.  
Source: Costar (2023)



# Industrial Market

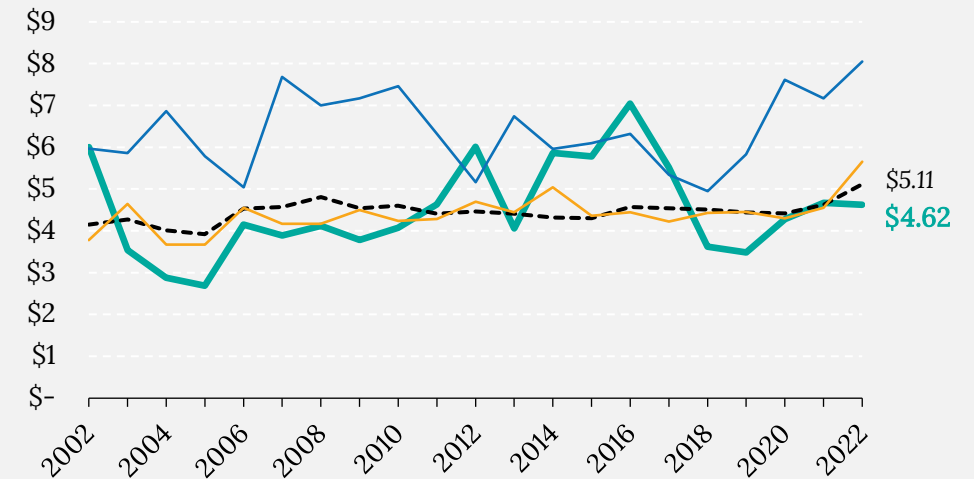
Kansas City, Kansas' industrial market is very active, with significant positive net absorption in recent years. Since 2018, the city has averaged a positive net absorption of 832,000 square feet annually. Despite this strong demand, industrial rents in the city are still affordable relative to the Kansas City region, with an average rent of around \$0.50 less per square foot than the regional average.

Over the last 20 years, Kansas City, Kansas' industrial supply has grown 17%. Despite the city's recent industrial development, this growth rate lags behind the regional industrial growth rate (29%) over the same period. The majority of industrial construction since 2018 has been concentrated near the Turner Diagonal Interchange.

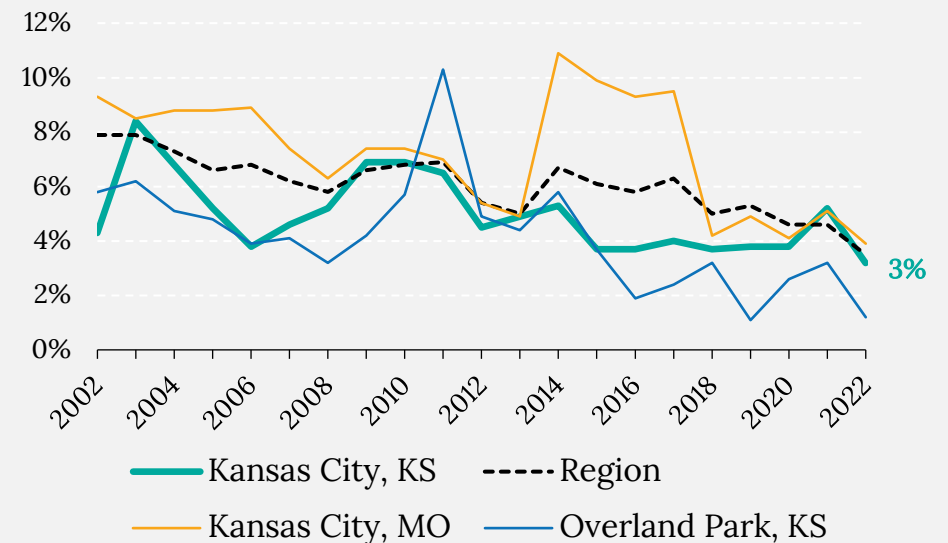
5 Year Net Absorption	5 Year Cumulative	Average Annual
Kansas City, KC	4,158,676 SF	831,735 SF
Kansas City, MO	8,809,509 SF	1,761,902 SF
Overland Park, KS	111,056 SF	22,211 SF
Region	41,675,143 SF	8,335,029 SF

Note: Industrial rent reflects NNN rents including direct and sublet rents. Data reflects both direct and sublet vacancy.  
Source: Costar (2023)

## Industrial Rent Trends



## Industrial Vacancy Rate





# COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES



# Why Kansas City, Kansas

In economic development, competitive advantages refer to the distinct conditions, characteristics, and assets specific to Kansas City, Kansas, and Wyandotte County.

Understanding and further solidifying the area's competitive advantages help inform opportunities to continue strengthening the local economy and highlight Kansas City, Kansas' valuable and unique positioning within the broader regional economy.



*These competitive advantages are just a start at highlighting the many reasons why businesses and employees choose Kansas City, Kansas, and are central to conversation throughout the Economic Development Strategic Planning process.*



**3,430+ Businesses**  
in Wyandotte County



**72,200+ Employees**  
in Wyandotte County



**Competitive in the Region**  
With Key Economic Metrics  
Competitive With Surrounding Areas



**Projected Economic Growth**  
Throughout Kansas City, Kansas, and  
the Broader Region



**Affordable Commercial Market**  
Office, Retail, and Industrial Rents in KCK  
Compared to the Region



**Diverse Community**  
Of Residents, Workers, and  
Business Owners



**Stakeholder Support**  
Network of Economic Development  
Stakeholders and Collaborative Opportunities



**Workforce Development**  
Targeted Initiatives to Strengthen  
Access to Higher Paying Jobs

A large, dark, stylized letter 'K' is positioned on the right side of the slide, serving as a background element. It is composed of several concentric, slightly offset shapes that create a sense of depth and movement.

*For more information about the Kansas City Economic Development Strategic Plan, please visit:*

*<https://lab2.future-iq.com/unified-government-strategic-plan-project/>*