

Chapter One: Introduction

Purpose

As provided in Kansas State Statutes (K.S.A. 12-747), the purpose of a comprehensive plan is: "to provide the basis or guide for public action to ensure a coordinated and harmonious development or redevelopment which will best provide the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare as well as wise and efficient expenditure of public funds." The Comprehensive Plan provides a foundation for all land use regulations by the City and establishes a context within which individual development proposals can be evaluated.

This document is known as the Shawnee Comprehensive Plan, specifically referred to as the Shawnee Comprehensive Plan, 2006 edition as amended. This plan replaced the 2005 Comprehensive Plan which was a revision of past planning documents. Whenever in this document the term "plan" is used, it shall be considered to mean the Shawnee Comprehensive Plan, 2006 edition, as amended.

Over the past few decades, the City of Shawnee has experienced high levels of growth. Existing trends and conditions predict continuing high levels of growth in the Shawnee area for many years to come. Foremost among the reasons underlying this growth potential are two related factors:

1. The natural expansion and suburbanization of the Kansas City metropolitan region; and
2. Improvements to the regional and local highway system which provide Shawnee with an extremely favorable position with respect to highway access on both an intra and inter-regional basis.

The sheer number of development proposals in Shawnee provides testimony to the City's growth expectations and need for a current and viable Comprehensive Plan.

Context of the Plan

By necessity any comprehensive plan is a conceptual document. Because the plan is futuristic in orientation, it must be generalized. Thus, the Shawnee Comprehensive Plan is not a blueprint of the City's future; rather, it is a guide to direct, coordinate and evaluate its development and progress.

The intent of the plan is to provide a framework for planning and working toward a desirable future for Shawnee. It is to imagine a destiny for our City and to provide a narrative of our vision. The principal components of this framework are the narrative, the Land Use

Guide, and the statement of community goals, objectives and policies. The discussion of these components is based primarily upon an analysis of data relating to general trends in the area's growth and development, and on information concerning the needs and desires of the community.

By assessing the best available data regarding trends in the use of land and changes in population characteristics, a quantitative element is injected into the planning process. The projection of such trends helps to establish tentative parameters for future growth and changes.

Through the articulation of community goals and objectives, a qualitative component is added to City planning. While various projections and data analyses establish a context for the expected volume of future growth and development, goal statements are the first step in providing a basis for controlling or governing the nature of such changes. Goals and objectives are expressions of the community's highest aspirations, thereby adding idealism to the planning process. They are statements of where the City wants to go. Policies then direct specific actions which will aid in goal attainment. Goals, objectives, and policies provide the basis for well-informed judgments consistent with the long-term aspirations of Shawnee's citizens.

Use of the Plan

To be effective, a comprehensive plan must be understood and used. Toward this end, every effort has been made to keep the plan concise. In addition, an effective plan must be continuously monitored and kept current. An annual review, as required by State Statute will be conducted.

Public officials and decision makers will utilize the plan as a means by which to evaluate various development proposals. Such proposals will be assessed relative to their conformance with the stated land use recommendations and the applicable goals, objectives, and policies. For potential developers, it offers information which can assist in designing projects consistent with the City's objectives. Although projects not in strict conformance with the plan are expected to be proposed, approval should be granted only when substantial justification is provided, consistent with the planning concepts stated in the plan. We shall try to remove the emotion from our decisions, while remaining emotional about our future.