



The City of Gardner Comprehensive Plan sets the course for growth and development for the next 15 to 20 years. This chapter provides the framework for implementing the vision set forth in the Plan. It outlines the next steps to the successful execution and application of the Plan's goals, objectives, and policy recommendations, and identifies potential funding sources to assist in implementation.

This chapter is arranged in subsections that aim to help staff and leaders to prioritize actions that will raise the likelihood of long-term implementation. The subsections include:

- Ongoing tasks
- Short-term tasks (0-3 years)
- Medium-term tasks (3-5 years)
- Long-term tasks (5+ years)

Recommendations have been placed into these categories based on several factors, including anticipated level of effort, capital resources required, coordination or collaboration required, the need for a recommendation to be completed to enable other things to be implemented, and others. While the actual time of implementation may vary depending on available funding, opportunities for improvement or redevelopment, etc., this chapter should be used as a general guide when establishing local priorities.



ONGOING TASKS

Ongoing tasks include those that do not have a set-time frame, but should be implemented on a continuous basis. They are generally low-cost, and administrative in nature. More importantly, they are critical to the sustained advancement of other actions, policies, and strategies within the Comprehensive Plan.

USE THE PLAN DAILY

The Comprehensive Plan should serve as the official policy guide for land use and development, and be used on a day-to-day basis to inform everyday decision making. The Plan should be adopted and hard copies and digital formats should be made available and accessible. It should be referenced by City staff, boards, and City Council to evaluate all proposals and projects. Finally, the Community Development Department should meet with all department heads for a debriefing of the Plan, highlighting the significance of its contents and its application.

REVIEW THE PLAN ON A REGULAR BASIS

Cities are dynamic environments and are constantly changing and evolving. As such, the Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed and updated as needed on a regular basis to reflect the changing needs of the community. While annual updates can provide a base for systematic reviews and are required per Kansas statute (§12-747(d)), the City should initiate a comprehensive review of the Plan every three to five years. Yearly reviews and updates should coincide with the preparation of the Capital Improvement Program. In this manner, recommendations or changes relating to capital improvements or other programs can be considered as part of the commitments for the upcoming fiscal year.

COORDINATE THE PLAN WITH THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Some recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan may require capital investment. To support implementation of these recommendations, the City should coordinate and align the Plan's recommendations with the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Through this process, all projects are reviewed, priorities are assigned, cost estimates are prepared, and potential funding sources are identified. The CIP should consider investments related to complete streets transportation, infrastructure, parks, and public streetscape.

MAINTAIN OPEN COMMUNICATION

The public engagement processes that shaped the Comprehensive Plan should continue well into its implementation. Consistent dialogue with residents and businesses is essential for the successful implementation of the Plan. The City should make copies of the Plan available online and at City Hall as well as provide assistance in explaining the role of the Plan, its policies, and its relationship to public and private development. The community should be kept informed of all planning developments through the City's website, a newsletter, and communication through civic and church leaders.

PROMOTE COOPERATION

For the Comprehensive Plan to be successful, there must be strong leadership from the City of Gardner and firm partnerships between other public agencies, community groups and organizations, the local business community, and the private sector. The City should assume a leadership role to cooperate and coordinate with the Gardner-Edgerton School District, public safety providers, the Johnson County Library, utility providers, and the Kansas Department of Transportation, among others. In addition, the City should actively work with and encourage builders, developers, and the business community to undertake improvements that conform to the Comprehensive Plan and improve the quality and character of Gardner.



SHORT-TERM TASKS (0-3 YEARS)

Short-term tasks set the stage for the advancement of the recommendations within the Gardner Comprehensive Plan. Tasks are primarily administrative, consisting of regulatory changes, policy updates, or strategic partnerships with limited outside funding required. These are actions that require internal staff time, are generally easier to implement, and represent the highest priority tasks. They should be initiated after the adoption of the Plan, and implemented within 1-3 years.

ESTABLISH BOUNDARY AGREEMENTS & ANNEXATION AGREEMENTS

Establishing Gardner's long-term limits through annexation and boundary agreements will assist local officials and staff in prioritizing improvements and formulating appropriate policies. Gardner currently has a boundary agreement with the City of Olathe and City of DeSoto. However, it does not have a boundary agreement with City of Edgerton or City of Spring Hill. This has resulted in the growth of the Edgerton boundary to capture areas around the multi-modal facility. At the same time, there are several pockets of unincorporated areas entirely or nearly surrounded by the City boundary. The City should annex and/or establish annexation agreements with the property owners of these areas in order to manage growth and infrastructure development, and capitalize on property tax revenues generated by future uses.

CREATE AN IMPLEMENTATION ACTION AGENDA

The Comprehensive Plan provides more than 200 policy and program recommendations. In order to address the myriad of strategies presented within the plan, the City should prepare an "Action Agenda," to highlight the projects and activities to be undertaken within the next few years. The action agenda should be developed in conjunction with the City's CIP, and should involve all relevant City departments. To remain current, the action agenda should be updated once a year. The action agenda may consist of:

- A detailed description of the projects and activities to be undertaken;
- The priority of each project or activity;
- An indication of the public and private sector responsibilities for initiating and participating in each activity; and
- Potential funding sources and assistance programs that might be available for implementing each project or activity.



DEVELOP SPECIFIC PLANS FOR PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS

The Comprehensive Plan provides several recommendations for the creation of more specific and detailed plans throughout Gardner. The City should initiate the process to further study and create plans for the following areas:

- Downtown
- Johnson County Fairgrounds
- I-35 Interchange Areas
- 191st Street Corridor
- Main Street Corridor
- Southeast Quadrant Market-Determined Area

UPDATE THE ZONING ORDINANCE

The Comprehensive Plan sets forth policies regarding the location and uses of land within Gardner and establishes guidelines for the quality, character, and intensity of new development in the years ahead. As such, the City's zoning, subdivision regulations, property maintenance, and other related codes and ordinances, should be reviewed and updated to ensure that all are consistent with and complementary to the Comprehensive Plan.

DEVELOP BENCHMARKS & INDICATORS

Benchmarks and indicators can provide the City with methods to measure the successful implementation and overall effectiveness of the Comprehensive Plan. Identified below are data that can be tracked and benchmarked to serve as indicators to gauge trends and change within the City. Many of those identified use existing data available to City staff, however some may require voluntary cooperation, data collection, and monitoring from other entities and taxing bodies, including the Chamber of Commerce, and individual businesses.

After adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, a baseline should be established for all indicators and benchmarks desired to ensure consistent tracking of progress. Each of the following benchmarks should be evaluated on an annual basis.

Building Permits. Tracking the number and location of building permits (by type) issued within the City and Johnson County will provide an indicator of new development, including permit activity for new residential, new commercial, tenant space build-out and remodeling, new construction projects, and more. Within Downtown, tracking building permit applications also provides detailed information on proposed modifications to buildings.

Variations. Tracking requests for variances within Downtown and other areas of the City may provide an indication as to the effectiveness and appropriateness of the Gardner Zoning Ordinance. A trend of increasing number of variances may serve as an indication that zoning regulations are becoming inadequate or antiquated, and may need to be amended.

Certificates of Occupancy and Tenant Change. Tracking the number of Certificates of Occupancy will assist in tracking business openings, closings, and relocations.

Code Violations. Tracking the number, location, and type of maintenance code violations, prosecution summary, and corrective action taken will provide an indication of how well individual properties are being maintained.

Tree Survey. Maintaining up-to-date tree data provides quantitative information on the type, size, number and location of mature trees which contribute greatly to the distinctive character of Gardner.



MEDIUM-TERM TASKS (3-5 YEARS)

Medium-term tasks are important actions that may require outside consulting services assistance or relatively minor investments in infrastructure or project development. They have some level of significant cost and should be implemented within 3-5 years after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

PRIORITIZE INFILL DEVELOPMENT AREAS

The Comprehensive Plan provides the framework for the City's growth and development, ensuring that future development and annexation is well-managed and occurs incrementally. As growth occurs, the City should prioritize infill development, ensuring that residential subdivisions are completed and have the necessary infrastructure and services, and vacant residential and commercial parcels are built out. Keeping with the core themes of the Plan, near-term development should occur in areas that are already served by City services and infrastructure, with a focus on building out the New Growth Areas as identified in the Residential Land Use Plan.

UPDATE & IMPLEMENT MASTER PLANS

The Comprehensive Plan references several City and regional plans, including the 2009 Transportation Master Plan, 2009 Park System Master Plan, and Wastewater Master Plan, among others. These plans provide detailed recommendations regarding roadways, parks, and infrastructure. As such, they should be updated to reflect the Comprehensive Plan. Recommendations and action items within the plans should be integrated as part of the Comprehensive Plan action agenda to prioritize needs and identify potential areas for projects and actions that can be implemented in conjunction with one another.

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

In addition to the aforementioned actions, the Plan provides recommendations for several medium-term tasks. These include:

- Conduct a sidewalk gap analysis
- Conduct a Gardner Golf Course reuse and study plan
- Adopt a Safe Routes to School Program
- Adopt Complete Streets policy
- Create a Downtown-specific plan that addresses detailed land use, revitalization, and streetscape improvements
- Work with the Johnson County Fair Association to identify potential locations for a new facility within the Gardner community



LONG-TERM TASKS (5+ YEARS)

Long-term implementation tasks include those that may require additional studies and/or funding in order to be fully realized. They often require significant amounts of funding that must be planned for over time. Long-term tasks require intensive planning, engineering, and/or design, and significant investment in infrastructure or project development.

RECONFIGURE MAIN STREET

The redesign and streetscape improvements of Main Street/US-56 to create a pedestrian and business-friendly environment is paramount to the revitalization of Downtown. It will require additional studies and design concepts and the potential transfer of roadway jurisdiction from the Kansas Department of Transportation to the City of Gardner.

ACQUIRE LAND FOR PARKS & TRAILS

The Park System Master Plan recommends increasing the total acreage of parkland within the City to meet current and future population needs. Further, constructing the recommended trails and greenways will provide increased non-motorized transportation and fitness options. Both tasks require land acquisition and/or easements, as well as funding for design and construction.

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

The Plan provides additional recommendations for actions that are dependent upon future population growth and development. These include:

- Improve City roadways, including arterial widening and new roadways
- Expand City infrastructure and services to the north, west, and into the Southeast Market Determined Growth Area



POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Many of the Comprehensive Plan recommendations can be implemented through administrative and policy decisions or traditionally funded programs. However, other projects may require special technical and/or financial assistance. The City should explore a wide range of local, state, and federal programs that may be available for use and regularly identify new opportunities as they become available. The funding sources identified below provide a range of potential sources to implement the Comprehensive Plan, however, they are not inclusive and should be closely scrutinized to understand application deadlines and eligibility requirements.

GENERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SOURCES

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

The purpose of TIF funding is to incentivize and attract desired development within key commercial areas. TIF dollars can typically be used for infrastructure, streetscape, public improvements, land assemblage, and offsetting the cost of development. TIF utilizes future property tax revenues generated within a designated area or district, to pay for improvements and further incentivize further reinvestment. As the assessed value of properties within a TIF District increases, the incremental growth in property tax over the base year that the TIF was established, is reinvested in that area. Cities within Kansas may establish a TIF district, or redevelopment area in areas that are deemed blighted, at risk of blight, are within an enterprise zone, intermodal transportation areas, or major tourism or commercial entertainment area.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

The Community Development Block Grant program is a flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique development needs. The CDBG program provides annual grants on a formula basis to general units of local governments and states. A grantee must develop and follow a detailed plan that provides for, and encourages citizen participation. This process emphasizes participation by persons of low- or moderate- income, particularly residents of low-income and moderate-income neighborhoods, and blighted areas.



Business Improvement District (BID)

Business Improvement Districts can be used to fund improvements and programs within a designated service area. Within the State of Kansas, a city may set up and establish a boundary of a BID by ordinance. It may then assign fees to properties within the identified service area and the revenue received is channeled back into projects and programs benefiting those properties. A BID can be rejected if 51% of the property owners and electors within a designated area object. BID funds can be used for such things as streetscape improvements, district marketing, special services and events.

Foundation & Specialized Grants

The successful implementation of the Plan requires the completion of projects that range in scale and scope. A funding source that becomes increasingly significant when issue-specific projects or programs (tourism, public art, historic preservation, small business assistance, etc.) are considered is the foundation grant. The City should dedicate resources to monitoring and exploring foundation grants as a funding tool.

Other Economic Development Sources

Kansas statutes provide for a variety of funding sources for the retention and attraction of businesses and other economic measures. Sources include Constitutional Tax Abatements, Industrial Revenue Bonds, tax rebates associated with Revitalization and Redevelopment Districts, Special Assessment Districts, Sales Tax and Revenue Bonds (STAR Bonds) for tourism related facilities, Transportation Development Districts, and Community Improvement Districts. The funding sources can provide important incentives to stimulate private investment and can serve as an effective source for public infrastructure projects. Before using these tools, cities may adopt guidelines that address which sources align with City objectives and under what circumstances each of the sources will be most appropriate.



TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Funding for the City's many transportation needs presents several challenges. However, there continue to be opportunities to acquire capital funds through the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), Johnson County, KDOT, and the Federal government. By being prepared with transportation projects that are "shovel ready", Gardner can maximize its share of those limited outside funds. Gardner must also be ready to match local, state and federal funds when they do become available. Partnerships with other local agencies such as the school district or Johnson County Transit present other important opportunities. Finally, it is worthwhile for Gardner to continue to explore other ways of raising funds for transportation – both for maintenance and new construction. This could include funds from private sources, districts, or other means.

MAP-21

In July 2012, the "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century" (MAP-21) bill was signed into law. The goal of the two-year transportation reauthorization bill is to modernize and reform the current transportation system to help create jobs, accelerate economic recovery, and build a foundation for long-term prosperity. The following discussion summarizes grant programs covered under MAP-21 that could be utilized by the City to make enhancements to local transportation infrastructure, including roads, highways, sidewalks, and trails.

Surface Transportation Program

Funds from the Surface Transportation Program (STP) may be used by local governments on a variety of roadway projects on federal-aid highways. Funds are administered through the Kansas (STP)/Bridge Priority Committee and allocated to the local Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC). Local governments may apply for funding through MARC's call for projects.

KDOT Economic Development Program

The objective of the Economic Development Program is to use transportation investments to recruit, retain, and grow businesses. The grant requires a 25% match, and eligible projects may include road, transit, and rail improvements. However, the program is not intended to fund improvements for the sole recruitment of business, rather projects must be shown to support job growth.

KDOT Transportation Economic Development Loan Program

Similar to the Economic Development Program, the Transportation Economic Development Loan Program seeks to create new jobs and encourage capital investment through partnerships with local government and the private sector. The reimbursement loan program uses incremental revenue from private investment that was spurred by the development of transportation infrastructure to pay off the bonds used to finance the transportation project. Only roadway project are eligible for the program and would require a three-party agreement between KDOT, the City of Gardner, and a private sector business.



Transportation Revolving Fund

The Kansas Transportation Revolving Fund (TRF) provides loan funding to local government for eligible transportation projects. Loans may be repaid through innovative transportation funding solutions such as revenues from highway fund allocations or locally raised revenue. The Kansas Department of Transportation accepts applications on an annual basis. Eligible projects include bridge, culvert, road, street, and highway projects.

Transportation Enhancement

Administered by KDOT, the Transportation Enhancement program provides funding for the construction of non-traditional transportation projects. This includes bicycle and pedestrian trails and landscaping and beautification related to streetscape projects. Projects require a minimum 20% local funding match, must be consistent with local plans, and have local support.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

The SRTS program provides funding for the planning, design, and construction of infrastructure related projects that will substantially improve the ability of students to walk and bicycle to school. Administered by the Kansas Department of Transportation using Federal Highway Administration funding, infrastructure projects may include sidewalk improvements, traffic calming and speed reduction improvements, pedestrian and bicycle-crossing improvements, on- and off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools. Eligible programs may also include non-infrastructure-related projects such as public safety and awareness campaigns, traffic education and enforcement, bicycle and pedestrian safety training, and funding for training volunteers and staff.

Additional Programs Through KDOT

In addition to the programs listed above, KDOT provides several other partnership opportunities for local government to help finance transportation-related projects. The programs use state and federal funding through reimbursable grants and local matches. Transportation projects may include roadway resurfacing, intersection improvements, safety projects, corridor management, and public transit.

CARS Program

The County Assistance Road System (CARS) program provides transportation funding through Johnson County. The County provides a 50% match to projects that consist of constructing and maintaining the County's major corridors. To apply for funding, each city must submit a 5-year road improvement plan, which the County scores and allocates funding accordingly.



PARKS & OPEN SPACE FUNDING

Land & Water Conservation Fund Grants

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism administers federal funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for outdoor recreation projects. Funds may be used for the development and/or acquisition of outdoor public recreation facilities. Eligible projects require a 50% match and must meet needs identified in the 2009 Kansas Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. These include shared-use paved trails, playground equipment, upgrades to existing amenities, and additional park acreage, among others.

Recreational Trails Grants

The Recreational Trails Grant, a program through the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism, provides funding for recreational trails and trail-related projects. Funds are distributed using an 80% match. Trail projects may be motorized, non-motorized, or diversified recreation trails or projects. The aim of the grant is to spearhead construction and application of trail projects, rather than fund administration.