



**GARDNER**

*Blazing New Trails*

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

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## INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

2013

*Gardner implemented Priority-Based Budgeting in 2013 in order to efficiently align resources with the Governing Body's priorities. The Governing Body established the following four strategic priorities: Promote Economic Development, Improve Quality of Life, Infrastructure and Asset Management, and Fiscal Stewardship.*

2014

*In 2014, the city completed its Comprehensive Plan Update and Economic Development Strategy. These strategic planning documents incorporated input from citizens and local businesses to create a blueprint for establishing the city's 20-year vision. The city also obtains citizen input through the Direction Finder Survey every two or three years. The survey is used to help identify citizens' top priorities and to monitor their satisfaction with public goods and services.*

2015

*In 2015, the city completed assessments of its water treatment plant, water resource recovery facility, electric utility, and the condition of its streets and trails. These assessments provided vital information about existing conditions of the city's infrastructure and will help guide the development of department goals and the prioritization of capital projects.*

2016

*In 2016, the city developed a Growth Management Strategy. This strategy identified short-term, mid-term and long-term growth areas for future annexation and development.*

2017

*In 2017, the city developed a Capital Improvement Element (CIE). The CIE summarizes needed improvements and costs to support projected growth and development. It includes a 5-year and a 10-year project schedule for capital improvements. The Water, Wastewater and Transportation Master Plans were updated in 2017 and incorporated into the CIE.*

2018

*The next step in creating a results-driven government is the development of a citywide strategic plan. The Gardner Strategic Plan provides a comprehensive framework for establishing goals and objectives, identifying strategies and measuring performance. The strategic plan is a culmination of previous planning efforts. It incorporates citizen input from community surveys, the Governing Body's strategic priorities and goals, suggestions from advisory boards, objectives from the city's planning documents, and identified capital projects to form a multi-year road map for achieving results.*

# STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

2017

**FEBRUARY 15**

*The Governing Body had a retreat to discuss how to achieve economic development goals and complete the “Journey to Excellence.” At the retreat, the Governing Body participated in an activity where they prioritized goals derived from the city’s Comprehensive Plan and Economic Development Strategy.*

**APRIL 28**

*Staff leadership had a retreat to strategize ways to achieve the Governing Body’s new top goals. The leadership team aligned projects and initiatives with each goal and identified long-term challenges the community faces.*

**MAY 25**

*Advisory Boards had a retreat to discuss their role in attaining the community’s goals. They participated in an activity to develop additional strategies for achieving results and define what success would look like.*

**SEPTEMBER 18**

**NOVEMBER 13**

**JANUARY 2**

**2018**

*The Gardner Comprehensive Plan was amended to include the Capital Improvement Element (CIE). The CIE identifies capital projects that are necessary to accommodate projected growth and solve long-term capacity issues.*

*The Governing Body held a retreat to review the Strategic Plan and provide additional feedback.*

*The city will launch a new public dashboard to track and report performance. This will serve as a scorecard for how well the city is accomplishing the community's goals and objectives.*

# BLAZING NEW TRAILS

## VISION

*We are recognized as a high-performing, progressive organization setting the bar for excellence in service delivery.*

## MISSION

*To provide exceptional services to benefit and enrich the community.*

## CORE VALUES

**COMMITMENT** *We are passionate about the services we provide. We are loyal to our employees, dedicated to our customers, and steadfast about accomplishing the vision and mission of the organization and community.*

**INTEGRITY** *We are ethical, honest and transparent in our communications and actions.*

**PROFESSIONALISM** *We incorporate industry best practices, achieve desired results and foster respectful relationships.*

**STEWARDSHIP** *We responsibly plan, manage, care for and enhance the community's resources.*

# DEMOGRAPHICS



## Population

*Gardner grew to 21,110 people in 2016, a 10.4% increase from 2010. Prior to 2010, the city grew rapidly, nearly doubling in size every decade. The city anticipates future growth due to the continued build out of the KC Logistics Park.*



## Income

*The estimated median household income in 2015 was \$67,422. The estimated median household income for Kansas was \$52,205.*



## Affordable Housing

*The Gardner estimated median house or condo value in 2015 was \$161,900. The estimated median house or condo value for Kansas was \$132,000. In 2015, Gardner's median rental cost was \$930 per month.*



## Housing Availability

*As of 2015, there were 8,371 housing units available. Homeowner vacancy rate was 3.7% and the rental vacancy rate was 4%.*

# ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

*An Environmental Scan is an analysis and evaluation of internal conditions and external factors that affect the organization. The purpose of this analysis is to identify factors influencing the organization and understand the broader context in which the city is working in. This allows the city to identify challenges and opportunities. The environmental scan includes evaluating political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, environmental and legal factors.*

## STRENGTHS

**Location:** *The community is located next to high-growth areas such as New Century Air Center, the Logistics Park Kansas City Intermodal Facility, and two I-35 interchanges.*

**Visionary Plans and Implementation Tools:** *Gardner has recently completed a Comprehensive Plan update, Economic Development Strategy, Economic Development Incentive Policy, Land Develop Code update, Growth Management Strategy and the Capital Improvement Element. These plans serve as a blueprint for achieving the city's long-term vision and short-term goals.*

**Financial Capacity:** *The city started 2017 with a General Fund balance of over 40% of all General Fund expenditures. The city has strong fund balances in the Electric Fund and Water Fund, which can be used to help maintain infrastructure and extend services to new development.*

**Full Service City:** *Gardner has three municipal utilities that it can leverage to help spur development. The city provides electric, water and wastewater services for the community and is in a unique position to offer utility incentives to developers.*

## WEAKNESSES

**Aging and Obsolete Assets:** *New facilities are needed for the Public Works Operations Division and the Parks Maintenance Division. The city's vehicle fleet and capital equipment are aging and many of the items already qualify for replacement.*

**Transportation Issues:** *The city has several areas in its transportation network that impede development opportunities and cause traffic safety issues. Two major areas that need to be addressed are the I-35 and Gardner Road Interchange and Sante Fe Street from Waverly Road to Main Street. Improvements to these areas can improve safety, accommodate new growth and address flooding issues.*

**Sales Tax Leakage:** *The city is primarily a bedroom community. Gardner has a trade pull factor of 0.67, which means that residents are traveling outside the community to do most of their shopping.*

**Regional Image:** *Gardner is not perceived as cohesive or consistent.*

## OPPORTUNITIES

**Annexation:** The city has the opportunity to annex adjacent land areas that could be developed into commercial and industrial properties that would diversify the tax base.

**Capital Improvement Element:** Implementing the Capital Improvement Element would address long-term infrastructure needs, capacity issues and accommodate new growth.

**Public-Private Partnerships:** In conjunction with the annexation of target land areas, the city has the opportunity to partner with private entities to spur new development. Public-Private Partnerships could provide assistance with capital investment and the development of key infrastructure.

**Partner with Regional Utilities:** Gardner could collaborate with regional utilities to help cover capacity issues and to prevent/delay the need to build new water, sewer and electric plants. The city could also enter into service area agreements to acquire or transfer service areas to benefit all stakeholders.

**Downtown/Main Street Corridor Study:** Implementing the Main Street Corridor Study could revitalize the city's core and help create a unique sense of place for the community. This could improve the quality of life for residents and visitors, enhance the community's regional image and expand the tax base.



## ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN (CONT.)

### THREATS

**State Legislation-Property Tax Lid effective January 1, 2018:** Under the tax lid provisions, increases in property tax revenues levied beyond the rate of inflation, calculated at a five-year rolling average of the Consumer Price Index, will require voter approval. Consequently, the benefit of future increased valuation growth is essentially eliminated with the exception of revenue from new development. However, the tax lid legislation may inhibit the city's ability to facilitate economic development projects, such as providing incentive funding or building infrastructure to prepare an area to be "shovel ready," as development opportunities are typically confidential in nature and require time-sensitive commitments for funding or incentives. This need for a nimble response to development opportunities is contradictory to the process of scheduling an election and providing enough in-depth, accurate information to educate voters and gain their approval for a tax increase quickly enough to facilitate these opportunities, thus making elections for development funding impractical.

**Restricted Property Tax Revenues and Lack of Revenue Diversification:** A challenge for growing cities such as Gardner will be prioritizing funding for competing initiatives and operations with mandated flat property tax revenues. Competing priorities include expenditures expected in a growing city, such as building city facilities, ADA improvements, and continued investment in development, infrastructure, vehicles and equipment, and maintaining a high-performance workforce.

An additional impact is decreased revenue diversification for local governments, and the stagnation or decrease in property tax revenues will cause cities and counties to rely more heavily on volatile sales tax revenues or increasing fees for services.

**Neighboring Jurisdiction's Annexations:** Neighboring jurisdictions are annexing property closer to the city's boundaries. If the city does not annex target land areas quickly, those areas may be annexed by a competing entity.

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND TOP GOALS



Promote Economic Development

**DIVERSIFY THE TAX BASE**



Improve Quality of Life

**STRENGTHEN REGIONAL IMAGE**



Increase Infrastructure and Asset Management

**PROVIDE A SAFE, EFFICIENT,  
WELL-MAINTAINED TRANSPORTATION  
NETWORK**



Fiscal Stewardship

**PROMOTE FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY**



# PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## DIVERSIFY THE TAX BASE

### ANNEX TARGET GROWTH AREAS

- *Work with property owners in target growth areas to request voluntary annexation*
- *Annex property to facilitate commercial growth*
- *Annex land on the east side and south side of I-35 to allow for balanced growth across the interstate*
- *Annex enclaves within the community and encourage infill development*

### EXPAND BUSINESS CLUSTERS

- *Develop marketing materials for target industries*
- *Attract businesses that invest in the community and provide jobs with high wages*
- *Partner with regional stakeholders to attract businesses*
- *Coordinate economic development standards and processes for expedient and efficient customer service*
- *Purchase property to facilitate development*

### ENCOURAGE TOURISM

- *Conduct commercial recreation and sports tourism study*
- *Attract more visitors to the community through sports tourism and recreation programs*
- *Revise Charter Ordinance No. 18 to expand the use of transient guest tax funds*

## MEASURE OF SUCCESS

- **Percent of target growth areas annexed**
  - **Total city sales tax collections**
    - **Major revenue sources as a percentage of General Fund revenues**
      - **Commercial to residential ratio for property valuation**
        - **Dollars of private investment**
          - **Citizen satisfaction with how well the city is planning for growth**

# IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE



## STRENGTHEN THE CITY'S REGIONAL IMAGE

### DEVELOP A MESSAGING STRATEGY

- *Raise awareness of the fun and exciting events occurring in Gardner using various communication vehicles*
- *Explore opportunities to partner with regional stakeholders*
- *Provide training to staff and elected officials on public/media relations*

### CREATE HIGH-PERFORMING PUBLIC SPACES

- *Provide attractive and functional public facilities and parks*
- *Address police and municipal court capacity issues by constructing a new Justice Center*
- *Provide attractive signage and wayfinding*
- *Maintain existing facilities*

### PROVIDE A SAFE COMMUNITY

- *Improve traffic safety by deploying dedicated traffic officers*
- *Promote public outreach initiatives to improve public engagement*
- *Utilize RMS system to perform comprehensive crime analysis*
- *Provide training to staff to ensure successful interactions between officers and persons with mental illness*

## MEASURE OF SUCCESS

- **Citizen satisfaction with the effectiveness of city communication with the public**
  - **Citizen satisfaction with the overall image of the community**
  - **Citizen satisfaction with customer service received from city employees**
  - **Citizen satisfaction with maintenance of city buildings and parks**
  - **Citizen satisfaction with overall feeling of safety**
    - **Citizen satisfaction with the quality of local police protection**
    - **Traffic collisions per 1,000 residents**
    - **Violent/property crimes per 1,000 residents**

## INCREASE INFRASTRUCTURE & ASSET MANAGEMENT



### PROVIDE A SAFE, EFFICIENT, WELL-MAINTAINED TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

#### INCREASE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION (HIKE, BIKE, ETC.)

- Complete Downtown/Main Street Corridor Study
- Continue to develop and maintain the trail system
- Improve access to public spaces and market centers
- Plan to connect community trails to the national trail system
- Complete identified ADA improvements

#### MAINTAIN INFRASTRUCTURE TO HIGH LEVEL

- Continue to monitor the condition of infrastructure
- Continue to implement and update the pavement management program
- Focus on preventative maintenance programs to reduce costs and prolong asset life

#### DEVELOP LONG-TERM INFRASTRUCTURE

- Implement the Capital Improvement Element
- Provide training to staff and adhere to engineering best practices
- Develop policies for right-of-way use
- Work with regional partners on infrastructure planning and funding
- Develop a Stormwater Master Plan

#### MEASURE OF SUCCESS

- **Citizen satisfaction with walking and biking trails**
  - **Citizen satisfaction with overall flow of traffic in the city**
  - **Citizen satisfaction with maintenance of major city streets**
  - **Citizen satisfaction with maintenance of neighborhood streets**
  - **Citizen satisfaction with quality of snow removal services of major city streets**
  - **Citizen satisfaction with quality of snow removal services of neighborhood streets**
  - **Percent of roads rated as fair or better in the Pavement Management Program**
  - **Percent of neighborhoods connected to the pedestrian/biking trail system**

# FISCAL STEWARDSHIP



## PROMOTE FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

### DEVELOP COST RECOVERY PROGRAMS

- Evaluate programs effectiveness and cost recovery
- Leverage city resources with grants to offset program costs
- Conduct research on other jurisdictions and implement best practices
- Centralize purchasing to realize cost savings

### DEVELOP ASSET REPLACEMENT PLANS

- Implement Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS)
- Develop building replacement strategies
- Continue to implement Vehicle and Equipment Replacement Program (VERP)
- Identify and evaluate IT needs
- Complete a golf course study to determine its future

### ENHANCE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- Implement business intelligence software and process improvement initiatives
- Automate court financial activity to General Ledger
- Maintain a trained workforce
- Implement public dashboards to report performance and goal achievement
- Communicate and celebrate success

### MEASURE OF SUCCESS

- **Fund balance as a percent of total expenditures**
  - **Net debt per capita**
  - **Grant and other intergovernmental revenue**
    - **Percent of vehicles and equipment that exceed replacement criteria**
    - **Citizen satisfaction with quality of services provided by the city**
      - **Citizen satisfaction with value received for city taxes and fees**
      - **Employee turnover rate**
      - **Mill rate comparison and value of a mill**

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

<b>Mayor</b>	Chris Morrow
<b>Council President</b>	Steve Shute
<b>Council Vice President</b>	Todd Winters
<b>Council Member</b>	Kristina Harrison
<b>Council Member</b>	Rich Melton
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Members of Gardner Advisory Boards, Committees and Commissions



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