



## **Diversity and Inclusion Commission Agenda**

Monday, February 28, 2022 5:30 PM

City Hall Board Room

The Diversity & Inclusion Committee will be meeting in person as well as via telephone or video conference. Members of the public interested in this meeting are encouraged to join the meeting via the following link -

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81121299227?pwd=NTJjK1RsdkU2UEJxVitoWGFLek9aQT09> or call (312) 626-6799 , Webinar ID: 811 2129 9227, Passcode: 799964 - rather than appear at City Hall (note: occupancy will be limited).

### **1. Call to Order**

### **2. Action Items**

- A. Approve the minutes for the January 10, 2022 meeting
- B. Establish Proactive Goals of the Diversity & Inclusion Commission

### **3. Non-Action Items**

- A. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) plans from other communities - DISCUSSION

### **4. Unfinished Business (continued from prior meetings)**

- A. Historical Marker Discussion - Continuation

### **5. Other Business**

- A. Next Meeting Date - April 11, 2022 @ 5:30 PM

### **6. Adjourn**

Posted      February 25,      By: Jeffery Rhodes  
Date &      2022 @ 3:00 PM  
Time:



## **Diversity and Inclusion Commission Agenda**

Monday, January 10, 2022 5:30 PM

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### **Minutes**

#### **1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 05:32 PM on January 10, 2022.

The meeting took place in the Parkville City Hall Board room with all members in attendance

- Rondale Dunn (virtual)
- Dr. Vincent Carlisle
- Mahnaz Shabbie
- Amy Barr
- Rhonda Weimer (virtual)

Brian Whitley was present as the Board liaison. Jeffery Rhodes was present as a staff member and note taker. Joe Parente was present (virtually) as a staff liaison. Stephen Lachky was present

#### **2. Welcome and Introductions**

#### **3. Action Items**

- A. Approve the minutes for the December 13, 2021 meeting

**ACTION:** It was moved by Chair Rondale Dunn and seconded by Rhonda Weimer to approve the minutes from the December 13, 2021 meeting.

**RESULT:** Motion Passed 5-0.

#### **4. Non-Action Items**

- A. Parkville Demographic Presentation

Stephen Lachky presented a summary of the demographic data for Parkville, related to the City's growth, its position in the metro and nationally. Stephen highlighted various metrics for population, ethnicity, education, income, housing, etc.

Commissioner Shabbir asked a question about how the City breaks down demographics for

Posted Date & Time: January 6, 2022 @ 1:30 PM By: Jeffery Rhodes

the various areas/neighborhoods within the City - how do different neighborhoods measure up in relation to these data?

Comparison of other City's - Kansas City, Lees Summit, Clayton. What are other cities that we should compare ourselves to?

Reviewed the website - Dave's Redistricting Maps - [davesredistricting.org](https://davesredistricting.org)

Rondale pivoted to finalize this discussion and identify next steps/action items:

- Reach out to MARC about other cities that we can connect with and/or compare to
- Shawnee and OPKS have been putting work into DE&I work - any takeaway there?

#### B. Historical Marker Discussion

Joe Parente presented the policy report regarding the historical markers that were removed by the City in 2020. Board liaison, Brian Whitley, presented an overview of the ideas and options that have been discussed and who this commission can approach about the topic.

The commission will discuss the topic this evening and work toward a formal recommendation to present to the BOA at the February/March meeting.

Dr. Carlisle asked about the timing and the source of the first plaque and pointed out the poor language and mixed messaging, perhaps an agenda-driven message. He suggested returning the plaque to the owner - the marker is connected to the Platte County Historical Society.

Commissioner Shabbir suggested developing a sign/monument project to tell some of the history of the City

Rhonda Weimer - suggested connecting to the Banneker School Foundation - they are interested in developing a museum / historical monument

Joe Parente - suggest that the City pursue an approach to presenting its history as part of the broader history of the county, region, and metro

Jeffery Rhodes - shared information about Freedom's Frontier and its connection to Parkville and the Missouri River basin - Lewis & Clark, Westward expansion, Civil War history, etc - [Freedom's Frontier Area Map](#)

Rondale suggested ending the conversation.

#### 5. Unfinished Business (postponed from prior meetings)

Rondale - from December - how do we measure success for the commission?

- More work to do to get to that point
- We've got a good conversation going and list to consider
- How do we promote awareness and provide community guidance on the value of

Posted Date & Time: January 6, 2022 @ 1:30 PM By: Jeffery Rhodes

diversity?

- We need to spend some time framing a proactive approach to these questions and our work here

Shabbir - can we get another City's DE&I plan? talk to MARC about that. Greater KC Chamber of Commerce - Welcome KC - was the co-chair - there is an action plan for this kind of work.

ICMA Equity & Inclusion Resources - <https://icma.org/topics/equity-inclusion>

Roeland Park Racial Equity Committee Resources -

<https://www.roelandpark.net/382/Racial-Equity-Committee>

## 6. Other Business

### A. February Meeting Date

February 14 is the next slated meeting - which is Valentine's Day  
Next meeting is Feb 28, then April 11 to split the difference.

## 7. Adjourn

Chair Dunn adjourned the meeting at 06:42 PM.

Submitted by:

February 28, 2022

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Jeffery Rhodes  
Staff Liaison

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Approval Date



WELCOMING

KC



# LETTER FROM JOE REARDON

*President and CEO, Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce*

Greater Kansas City is a special place. No matter the side of the state line, we are a unique community where our Midwest values and work ethic are combined with natural drive for innovation and collaboration. We've seen successful results of this combination as both small and large businesses have made KC their home and contributed to our community in powerful ways.

But those businesses are experiencing a challenge that began well before COVID-19 disrupted our economy. There is a workforce shortage in Greater Kansas City. That's why the KC Chamber and the members of Welcoming KC are working to make KC a designated welcoming city. We know by using all the assets across our entire community, we can welcome immigrants, refugees, and other newcomers to grow the region's globally competitive workforce.

Immigrants alone have a multi-billion-dollar impact on our local economy every year. But worth even more is the human impact. They start small businesses, bring innovative ideas, and become active and passionate members of our community. New faces become old friends, and we are all better for it.

In this welcoming plan you will find the collective work of Welcoming KC, a group of about 40 organizations that have spent a year and a half putting together coordinated and unified strategies with common goals. This plan will help make our community one of the most welcoming in the country.

We already know that state lines and city boundaries don't define and limit who we are as Greater KC. We must remember that other borders don't define us either.

It takes all of us to make this possible. When we work together and welcome people with open arms, there is nothing KC cannot accomplish. Please join us in achieving our ultimate goal to make Greater Kansas City open and welcoming to all.



President & CEO  
Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce



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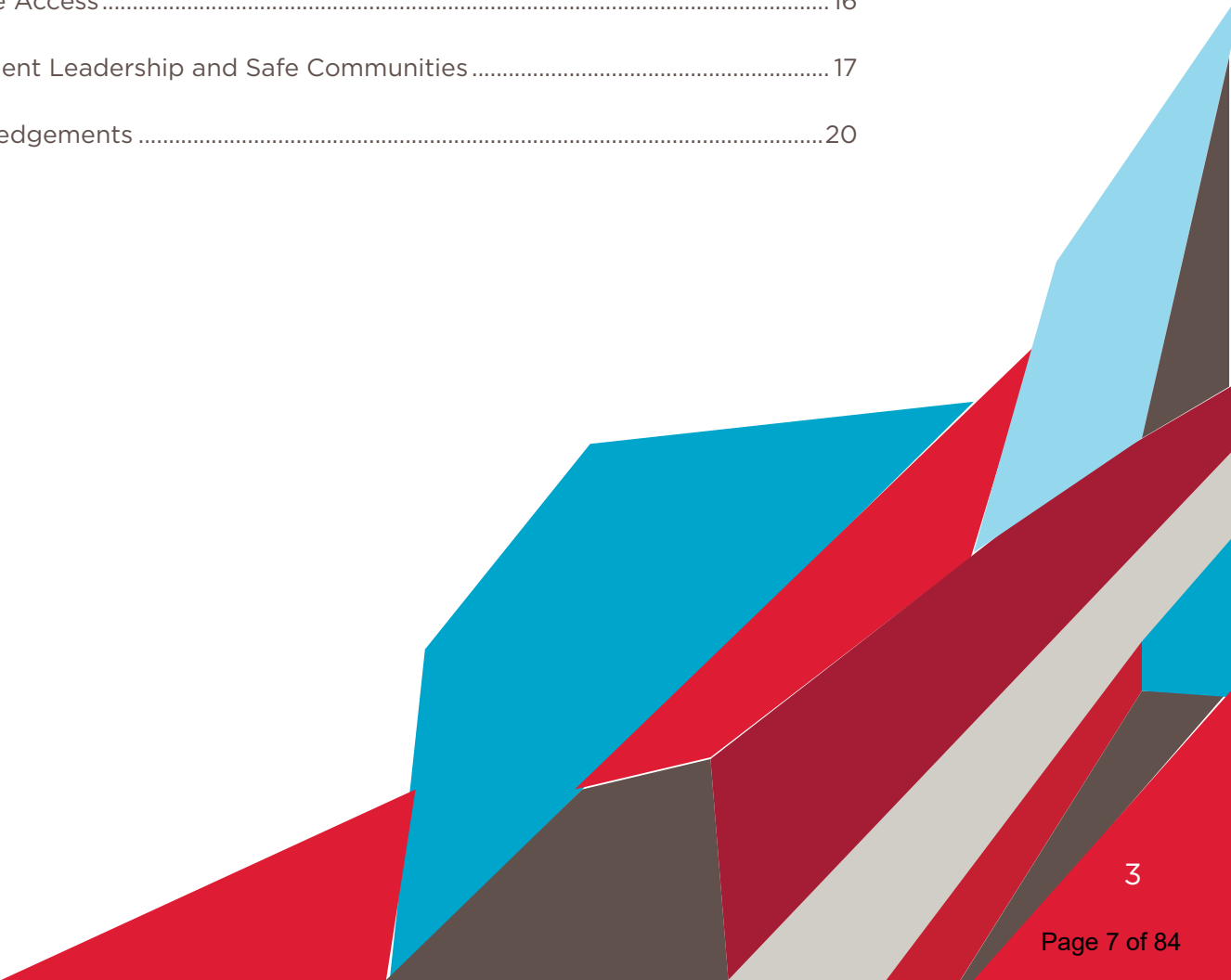
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**The Greater Kansas City region** has experienced a changing demographic over the past quarter-century. Our region has become more diverse; the immigrant population increased from 33,000 in 1990 to more than 150,000 in 2018. Immigrants are an important part of our economic and cultural fabric, working in a variety of industries and establishing strong roots in the community as homeowners and parents of U.S.-born children.

At a time where the general population in the metropolitan area grew by 40 percent, and the immigrant population increased by more than 300 percent, it is imperative that we reflect on our values of welcoming and inclusion to ensure everyone feels as though Greater Kansas City is home. This reflection drove the development of the Greater Kansas City Welcoming Plan.

A welcoming plan is a roadmap that helps identify key priorities. By bringing together the government, business, and nonprofit sectors, we created a roadmap that identifies the programs, policies, and activities needed to accomplish our goals of being an inclusive community.

## WHY A REGIONAL PLAN



Like most Midwestern cities, Kansas City's population remains predominantly white and black. The city lost white residents in the 1990s, but gained residents of other races and ethnicities. Immigrants have contributed to the changing profile of the city and region, with the number of foreign-born residents more than doubling in the 1990s, and twice as many settling in the suburbs over the same period of time. Therefore, including the suburbs and surrounding communities of Greater Kansas City in the planning and implementation of the Welcoming Plan is critical to its success.

We at the KC Chamber want Greater Kansas City to be a welcoming and inclusive place for all. We recognize that our greatest asset is our people, and that no matter what your background or where you are from, Greater Kansas City is stronger when we all have the opportunity to contribute and succeed. The economic and social benefits of being a welcoming community are clear, and it's in that spirit we will keep Greater Kansas City a healthy and vibrant community for everyone.

Through a welcoming plan, we have an opportunity to proactively address our changing community by bringing together key leaders in our region to learn more about current demographics, consider the implications of demographic changes to Greater Kansas City, identify priorities for action, and work together to develop new policies and programs.





Our welcoming plan is based on the following vision and values.

## **VISION: Greater Kansas City is welcoming to all.**

### **VALUE: Resiliency and Growth**

We celebrate our region's many resources, and we see our strength being our people and the different backgrounds and perspectives they bring. We believe in economic growth that leverages our diversity. By capitalizing on all talents, we help our communities withstand crises. We embrace and celebrate the resiliency of individual community members and of our community as a whole. We empower people and provide support systems for them to be full participants in the community. The Greater Kansas City region strives to be a place where all can thrive.

### **VALUE: Racial Equity and Belonging**

We believe the various backgrounds, cultures, and experiences of our region's population make us a more vibrant, connected, and creative community. We also recognize our nation and our region have struggled with a divisive racial history, and that systems have perpetuated discrimination and exclusion for many years. Advancing racial equity and belonging in Greater Kansas City requires a long-term commitment on everyone's part. It's not enough to invite people to the table -- we need to advance inclusion at all levels. We are committed to looking for and recognizing everyone's contributions and investing in all of our people. We want today's generation and future generations to learn what it means to adopt a culture of welcoming and inclusion.

### **VALUE: Opportunity**

In the Greater Kansas City region, we open doors to education, language learning, health, employment, and other opportunities to help everyone achieve their fullest potential. We seek to address and eliminate barriers that impede opportunities for international students, refugees, immigrants, and long-term residents by breaking cycles of poverty and exclusion. We are dedicated to opening up access to networks, programs, and support that allow peoples' skills to be fully utilized and help improve their quality of life. Ensuring the long-term success of all community members is our goal.

### **VALUE: Connection and Cohesion**

We recognize that together, we are stronger. We all want to feel a sense of belonging; we need trusted relationships, support, and resources to feel connected to each other. We are all in the human experience together, and we have more in common, even across our differences. To foster community cohesion, we meet people where they are, create safe spaces to bring us together to develop meaningful relationships, and listen more than we speak. No one succeeds in isolation; together, we can decrease biases and stereotypes, have rich cultural experiences different from our own, and solve tough problems through collaboration and creative problem-solving. We can see each other as good neighbors. We are so much better together.

# THE WELCOMING FRAMEWORK AND PROCESS

A leadership team, composed of key stakeholders from the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, REACH Healthcare Foundation, Communities Concerned for Immigrants and Refugees/Vibrant Health, and Shabbir Advisors has led the welcoming planning process over an 18-month period.

Our process has also been guided by consultants at Welcoming America and the Welcoming Standard. The Welcoming Standard provides a comprehensive roadmap for immigrant inclusion and welcoming in communities. The Standard addresses a range of policies and programs, from language access to hiring practices, that help communities achieve true welcoming status. The Welcoming Standard is organized into seven framework categories, which are also used as the areas for the Greater Kansas City Welcoming Plan:

- ▶ Civic Engagement
- ▶ Connected Communities
- ▶ Economic Development
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Equitable Access
- ▶ Government Leadership and Safe Communities

A steering committee has provided direct feedback and countless hours to shape, draft, and finalize the plan. Additionally, the plan has been informed by input from community leaders, government officials, community members directly impacted by the plan, and the public at large.

The following section outlines six framework areas with goals, recommendations, and strategies for creating a more welcoming Greater Kansas City. Many of these are already undergoing active planning or implementation, while others are new or just beginning development with timelines yet to be determined.



# **GREATER KANSAS CITY** WELCOMING PLAN GOALS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGIES

# CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Welcoming communities actively ensure that residents, including newcomers, fully participate in civic life by increasing access to leadership and democratic spaces.

**GOAL:** GREATER KANSAS CITY WORKS TO EMPOWER RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE RESIDENTS WITH EDUCATION AND ACCESS TO CIVIC LIFE.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Local community organizations and institutions are accessible and processes for engagement are clear.



IMMIGRANTS ELIGIBLE TO  
VOTE IN GREATER KANSAS CITY

**63,537**

Source: <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/city/kansas-city/>

**RECOMMENDATION:** Neighborhood groups and associations increase inclusion, equity, and belonging.

## STRATEGY:

- Review and adjust civic education programs, including neighborhood groups/associations, to intentionally reach new residents and ensure programming is accessible.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Barriers to voting are addressed and removed.

## STRATEGIES:

- Increase access to voter registration.
- Expand voter access.

## STRATEGIES:

- Identify and provide immigrant and refugee education programming that includes information on the responsibilities of local government.
- Identify organizations or individuals with experience and expertise on anti-racism, immigration systems, and equity and inclusion and connect them with local governments to provide professional development opportunities for civil servants.
- Review requirements to serve on local boards and commissions to ensure they are accessible and enable active recruitment of racially and ethnically diverse residents, including immigrants and refugees.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Naturalization programs are supported and accessible.

## STRATEGIES:

- Increase access to citizenship opportunities.
- Promote and celebrate public naturalization ceremonies.

- Assist immigrants and refugees who are U.S. citizens with understanding their eligibility to vote, the voting process, and voter guides.



# CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Welcoming communities build connections between newcomers and longer-term residents by strengthening relationships and communicating shared values.

**GOAL:** GREATER KANSAS CITY WILL BE A PLACE THAT PURPOSEFULLY CREATES, SUPPORTS, AND PROMOTES OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL RESIDENTS TO BUILD TRUSTED RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OTHER.

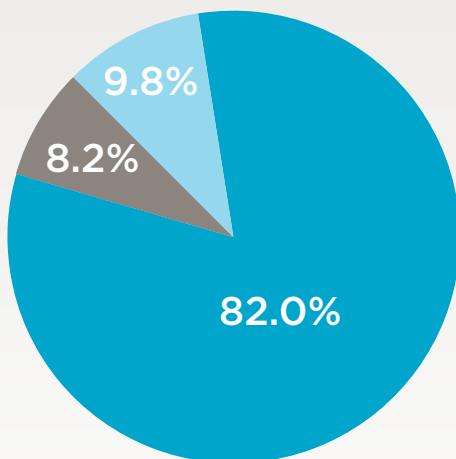
**RECOMMENDATION:** Organizations are supported in their efforts and commitment to racial equity, inclusion, and belonging.

## STRATEGIES:

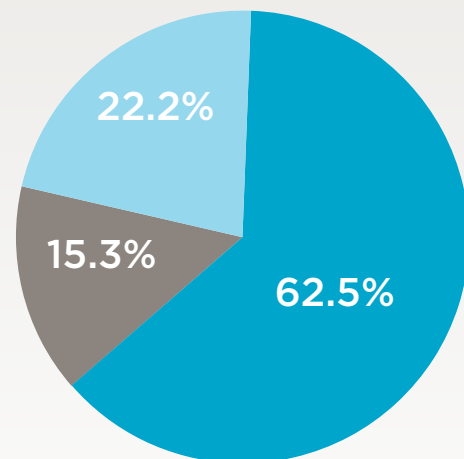
- Community leaders and organizations that work with immigrants and refugees provide education and information on the history of race and racism in the United States to address anti-Blackness, power, privilege, and oppression, as well as the ways in which all residents are impacted by racism.
- Invite community leaders from racially and ethnically diverse communities, including those from immigrant and refugee communities, to discuss and identify opportunities for cross-racial solidarity.
- Create a resource hub for organizations to access training information and resources for continued education on racial equity, inclusion, and belonging.

## DEMOGRAPHICS BY AGE GROUP

Foreign-Born Population Share



U.S.-Born Population Share



■ Age Group 0-15   ■ Age Group 16-64   ■ Age Group 65+

*In the United States, immigrants are more likely to be working-age than their U.S.-born counterparts. This is true as well for every metro area featured in Map the Impact. This means immigrants are more likely to be active in the labor force, allowing them to contribute to the economy not only as consumers but also as taxpayers, helping fund social services and programs like Medicare and Social Security.*

Source: <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/city/kansas-city/>

**RECOMMENDATION:** A “connected communities group/program” composed of members from diverse sectors develops and promotes opportunities for all residents to learn about and from each other.

## STRATEGIES:

- Develop a steering committee from diverse sectors to regularly plan, host, and promote events.
- Identify issues of common interest and concern for all residents, ensuring racially and ethnically residents are included, to work on together.
- Develop and host new, smaller-scale culturally enriching events in spaces that will reach and engage all residents.
- Use partnerships and personal relationships to engage racially and ethnically diverse residents to proactively market events on diverse platforms.
- Host events to invite residents into spaces they are not familiar with (e.g. places of worship may host an open house once a quarter for other community members to tour and learn about different faiths).
- Create opportunities for mainstream arts and culture organizations to partner with racially and ethnically diverse residents.
- Promote and recognize existing large-scale cultural and faith-based events throughout the Greater Kansas City area.

## Top 10 Birth Countries of Immigrants in the Kansas City Region (2010-14)

| Top Countries of Birth | Kansas City Region (Number) | Johnson County (%) | Wyandotte County (%) | Clay County (%) | Jackson County (%) | Platte County (%) |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| <b>All Countries</b>   | <b>126,000</b>              | <b>37</b>          | <b>18</b>            | <b>8</b>        | <b>32</b>          | <b>5</b>          |
| Mexico                 | 42,000                      | 27                 | <b>35</b>            | 4               | 33                 | 1                 |
| India                  | 8,000                       | <b>73</b>          | 1                    | 5               | 19                 | 2                 |
| China                  | 6,000                       | 43                 | 7                    | 7               | 35                 | 8                 |
| Vietnam                | 5,000                       | 30                 | 2                    | <b>17</b>       | 39                 | <b>12</b>         |
| El Salvador            | 4,000                       | 15                 | <b>29</b>            | 3               | <b>53</b>          | 1                 |
| Philippines            | 4,000                       | 35                 | 6                    | 11              | 39                 | 9                 |
| Korea                  | 3,000                       | <b>52</b>          | 5                    | 14              | 18                 | <b>11</b>         |
| Guatemala              | 3,000                       | 35                 | 13                   | 3               | <b>48</b>          | 0                 |
| Kenya                  | 3,000                       | <b>51</b>          | 16                   | 2               | 32                 | 0                 |
| Honduras               | 2,000                       | 28                 | <b>39</b>            | 0               | 30                 | 2                 |

Source: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/immigration-heartland-profile-immigrants-kansas-city-region>

**RECOMMENDATION:** Greater Kansas City will engage minority-owned business assistance offices to promote immigrant and refugee-owned restaurants.

**STRATEGIES:**

- Hold a “restaurant week” to uplift immigrant and refugee-owned restaurants.
- Create a map or app to promote immigrant and refugee-owned restaurants.
- Partner with a tour group(s) and incorporate immigrant and refugee-owned restaurants and community spaces into the tour.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Greater Kansas City is recognized as a welcoming and inclusive community.

**STRATEGIES:**

- Use diverse platforms and media outlets to lift up cultural and faith-based events.
- Create or participate in a communications campaign that promotes shared values and recognizes the strength in unity.
- Participate in Welcoming Week and other welcoming activities.
- Sign a welcoming proclamation or resolution.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Welcoming communities harness the full potential of all residents. Immigrants have the skills and assets to thrive, and economic development systems are prepared to leverage new and existing talent.

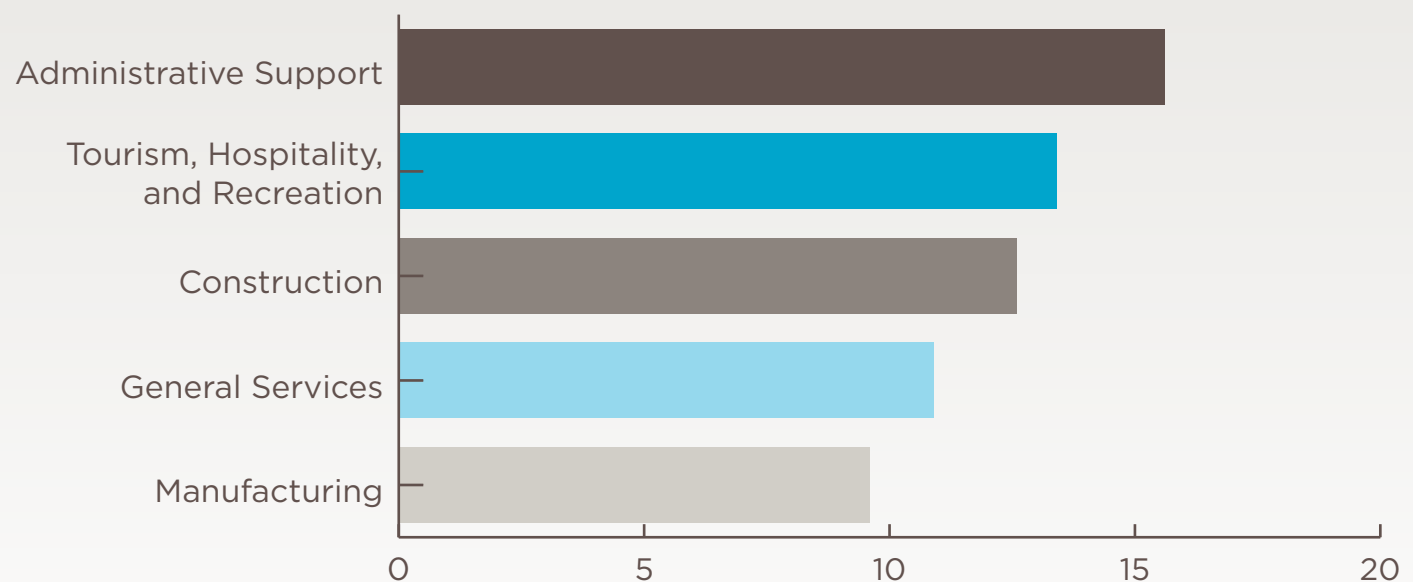
**GOAL:** GREATER KANSAS CITY RESIDENTS ARE FULLY ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ECONOMY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS ARE PREPARED TO LEVERAGE NEW AND EXISTING TALENT.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Workforce systems and initiatives support and sustain career pathways for racially and ethnically diverse residents.

## STRATEGIES:

- Engage local employers, chambers of commerce, and other employer networks in equity and immigrant inclusion work.
- Support access to career and credentialing opportunities.
- Support licensing and re-credentialing for immigrants and refugees who have professional credentials from outside of the United States.

## TOP INDUSTRIES WITH HIGHEST SHARE OF FOREIGN-BORN WORKERS



Source: <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/city/kansas-city/>

**RECOMMENDATION:** An entrepreneurial ecosystem supports immigrant, refugee, and minority-owned businesses for new business development and growth.

**STRATEGIES:**

- Increase contract opportunities for immigrant, refugee, and minority-owned businesses.
- Promote innovative programs for immigrant, refugee, and minority entrepreneurs.
- Ensure that small business development centers meet the needs of immigrant, refugee, and minority entrepreneurs eligible to receive federal support.
- Increase entrepreneurship among immigrants and refugees by offering multi-lingual training, microfinance, and business incubation support services.

**GOAL:** GREATER KANSAS CITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS COLLABORATE TO CREATE EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR THE REGION.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Regional economic development plans and efforts identify and address immigrant and refugee engagement.

**STRATEGIES:**

- Workforce development systems and programs are accessible and promoted to immigrants and refugees.
- Regional economic development services collaborate to address barriers for immigrant and refugee entrepreneurs.

**GOAL:** GREATER KANSAS CITY CREATES A WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Employers, immigrants, refugees, and racially and ethnically diverse residents work together to improve workplace conditions and culture.

**STRATEGIES:**

- Provide culturally and linguistically appropriate education to immigrants and refugees on workers' rights and workplace safety.
- Support local businesses to diversify their workforce, including support to ensure compliance with visa requirements and re-credentialing.
- Businesses offer racial equity, inclusion, and belonging training to employees.
- Businesses incorporate a racial justice lens in hiring, retention, and promotion policies and practices, including addressing implicit bias.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

There are **9,067** immigrant entrepreneurs in the Kansas City Region. Immigrant residents are **24.7%** more likely to be entrepreneurs than U.S.-born residents.

Source: <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/city/kansas-city/>



# EDUCATION

Welcoming communities strive for an educational system that ensures all students have the support they need to succeed in school and the education they need to succeed in the workforce.

**GOAL:** GREATER KANSAS CITY COMMITS TO PREPARE AND SUPPORT ALL STUDENTS, INCLUDING IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES — REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS -- FOR THE WORKFORCE THROUGH ALL AREAS OF EDUCATION.

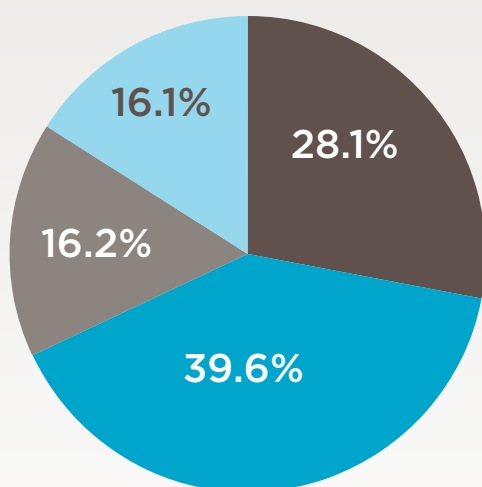
**RECOMMENDATION:** Education opportunities are expanded for young adults, regardless of immigration status, and include those who have aged out of secondary education.

## STRATEGIES:

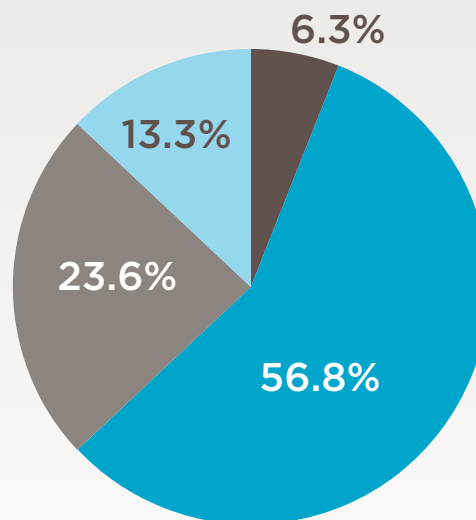
- Create twilight schools in the community.
- Provide GED/HiSet and trade/vocational classes at no cost.
- Ensure paid internships are accessible to racially and ethnically diverse students, including immigrants and refugees.
- Ensure scholarships and financial aid programs are accessible to racially and ethnically diverse students, including immigrants and refugees.

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT BY NATIVITY, AGE 25+

Foreign-Born Population Share



U.S.-Born Population Share



■ Less Than High School ■ High School & Some College ■ Bachelor's Degree ■ Graduate Degree

*The growth in the immigrant population has helped to strengthen America's labor force. As baby boomers retire, younger immigrants are filling critical gaps in the market. Nationally, immigrants are more likely to hold an advanced degree than the U.S.-born. They are also more likely to have less than a high school education. In many cities across the country, their unique educational profile allows immigrants to fill labor shortages at both ends of the skill spectrum, from high-tech fields to more manual sectors like construction or food service.*

Source: <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/city/kansas-city/>

**GOAL:** GREATER KANSAS CITY COMMITS TO IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION AND ECONOMIC MOBILITY THROUGH EDUCATION.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Educational opportunities at various literacy and education levels are accessible for working adults.

**STRATEGIES:**

- Prepare immigrants and refugees to enter certification programs through trade/vocational classes by offering them at a variety of times and locations.
- Hold on-site English learning classes at employment locations.
- Expand the Kansas City Public Library RISE program to ensure the services it provides are accessible throughout Greater Kansas City.
- Continually assess educational programming and its accessibility based on community feedback.

**GOAL:** GREATER KANSAS CITY COMMITS TO CREATING EQUITABLE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Support racially and ethnically diverse families, including families who do not speak English at home, to actively participate and succeed in the education system.

**STRATEGIES:**

- Identify, promote, and incorporate proven family engagement strategies that focus on the unique needs of racially and ethnically diverse students, including immigrants and refugees.
- Ensure early childhood education is accessible.
- Create a seal of biliteracy certification program to recognize multilingual students.

# EQUITABLE ACCESS

Welcoming places work to ensure community services and opportunities are available to all residents, including immigrants.

**GOAL:** GREATER KANSAS CITY ENSURES EQUITABLE ACCESS FOR IMMIGRANTS, REFUGEES, AND MINORITY RESIDENTS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES, INCLUDING HEALTHCARE, TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING, LEGAL ASSISTANCE, PLACES OF WORSHIP, AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Processes for Safe Space designation are developed and adopted.

## STRATEGIES:

- Immigrants and refugees will be involved in the process to identify barriers to Safe Spaces and address solutions.
- Identify organizations that represent the range of necessary access points.
- Create a checklist of criteria for Safe Space designation.
- Identify a committee to administer Safe Space designation.
- Provide education to community members to increase awareness of designation.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Policies and programs are in place that protect racially and ethnically diverse residents from discrimination and predatory practices.

## STRATEGIES:

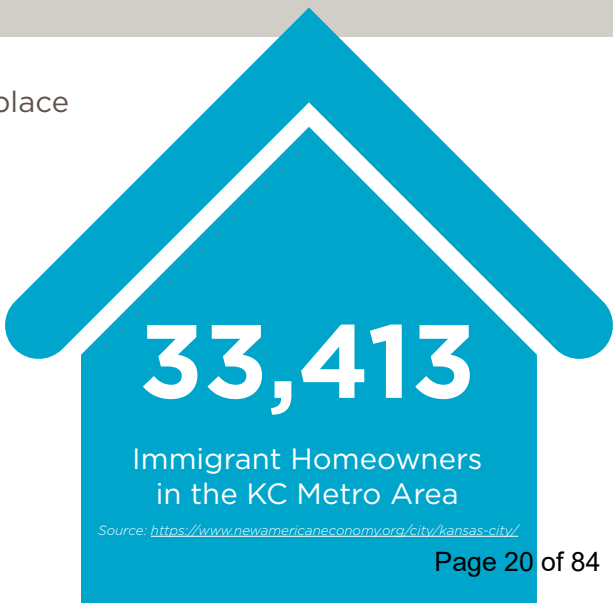
- Community-based organizations provide information about fraudulent services and scams.
- Community-based organizations provide referrals and information to reputable service providers, including but not limited to: housing, legal and justice services, healthcare, and financial services.

**GOAL:** GREATER KANSAS CITY, INCLUDING ALL LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, PROVIDES MEANINGFUL LANGUAGE ACCESS.

**RECOMMENDATION:** A language access program is in place across government agencies, with the goal of expanding to programs, services, and activities.

## STRATEGIES:

- Audit government services for language access compliance.
- Provide training to government employees on when and how to access and work with interpretation and translation services.
- Include emergency services and response plans in all language access programs.



33,413

Immigrant Homeowners  
in the KC Metro Area

Source: <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/city/kansas-city/>

# GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP AND SAFE COMMUNITIES

In welcoming places, the local government implements systems and programs that strengthen community efforts and embed inclusion within government agencies. Welcoming communities foster trust and build relationships between residents, including newcomers, and local law enforcement and safety agencies.

**GOAL:** GREATER KANSAS CITY WILL WORK TO ADVANCE RACIAL JUSTICE, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION SO THAT EVERYONE - INCLUDING RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE RESIDENTS, IMMIGRANTS, AND REFUGEES - FEELS SAFE AND WELCOME.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Locally elected officials and government leaders commit to racial equity, inclusion, and belonging.

## STRATEGIES:

- Local governments adopt the Greater Kansas City Welcoming Plan.
- Locally elected officials and government leaders support community events that are hosted by racially and ethnically diverse residents, including immigrants and refugees.
- Locally elected officials and government leaders make public statements about the importance and strength of being a welcoming and inclusive community.
- Local governments ensure information about government services and resources, English classes, and naturalization is accessible through digital and non-digital means, as well as in multiple languages.

**GOAL:** LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN GREATER KANSAS CITY ADOPT POLICIES AND PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE SAFE, INCLUSIVE, AND WELCOMING COMMUNITIES.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Local governments review policies and services to ensure they do not have a disparate impact on or exclude racially and ethnically diverse residents, including immigrants and refugees.

## STRATEGIES:

- Transparent and open opportunities are available for residents to provide feedback on existing and new policies.
- Ensure immigration status is not a barrier to accessing government services.
- Policies are adopted to ensure immigration status is not a barrier to accessing non-federal government services or shared publicly.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Greater Kansas City works to build trust and strengthen relationships between law enforcement and racially and ethnically diverse residents, including immigrants and refugees.

**STRATEGIES:**

- Local law enforcement agencies receive regular training on working with racially and ethnically diverse residents, including immigrants and refugees.
- Partner with community leaders to enhance engagement and proactive interactions with racially and ethnically diverse residents, including immigrants and refugees.
- Foster positive youth engagement.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Greater Kansas City works to enhance accountability, transparency, and communication within its law enforcement agencies.

**STRATEGIES:**

- Greater Kansas City invests in relationships and communication between racially and ethnically diverse residents, and law enforcement to better serve and protect the community.
- Partner with community-based organizations to provide Know Your Rights education sessions.
- Educate and promote the process to file law enforcement complaints with an impartial point of contact and ensure complaint processes are available in multiple languages for English learners.
- Publicly share data by race, ethnicity, gender, and geography on law enforcement policies, arrest, jail population, use of deadly force, and resident complaint statistics.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Greater Kansas City protects residents from deportation.

**STRATEGIES:**

- Track and assess how ICE is operating immigration enforcement in the Greater Kansas City region.
- Local governments and other agencies establish policies and procedures to create “safe spaces” for immigrants by prohibiting participation or assistance with civil immigration enforcement.
- Identify and support a local agency in efforts to provide universal representation to individuals facing deportation.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Code enforcement agencies adopt equitable practices.

**STRATEGIES:**

- Review and adopt policies to strengthen relationships and promote regular communication with racially and ethnically diverse residents, including immigrants and refugees.
- Partner with community-based organizations to provide education to racially and ethnically diverse residents, including immigrants and refugees on code enforcement policies.
- Code enforcement staff receive regular training on working with racially and ethnically diverse residents, including immigrants and refugees.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Greater Kansas City is prepared for natural disasters and emergencies with strategies to support resilience in racially and ethnically diverse communities.

### STRATEGIES:

- Local governments have inclusive emergency management plans.
- Provide meaningful language access throughout emergencies and disaster relief.
- Ensure racially and ethnically diverse residents are involved in the emergency planning and response process and part of the Emergency Operations Center.

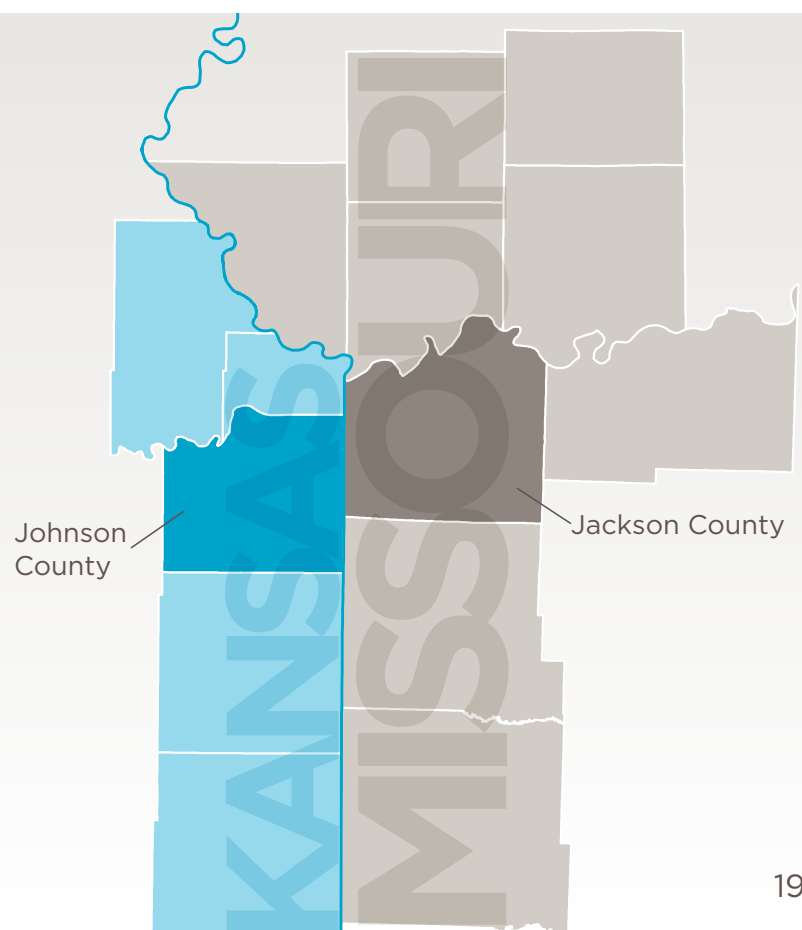
**GOAL:** GREATER KANSAS CITY CREATES A WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE CLIMATE ATTRACTIVE TO RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE RESIDENTS.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Identify best practices for local governments to adopt policies that ensure all residents feel welcome.

### STRATEGIES:

- Promote the arts and cultures of racially and ethnically diverse residents
- Arts and cultural programs and services are accessible to and celebrate the contributions of immigrants, refugees and, racially and ethnically diverse residents..
- Government communication materials reflect and celebrate the diversity of the community.
- Recreational services evaluate and ensure their programs are accessible and engaging to racially and ethnically diverse residents.
- Local governments adopt welcoming resolutions.

The majority of immigrant population is concentrated in the areas two most populous counties. **70%** of immigrants in region lived in **Jackson and Johnson**; **18%** resided in **Wyandotte County**; and **12%** lived north of Missouri River in **Clay** or **Platte** counties.





# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*The dedicated partners of the Greater Kansas City Welcoming Planning Team and Steering Committee provided perspective, guidance, and insight throughout the plan's development. We deeply appreciate the organizations and individuals for their participation in the process and contributions to the plan.*

*We are also grateful for the numerous community members who shared their stories and ideas. We especially thank the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce and Welcoming America. Their expertise, encouragement, and support have sparked a movement in our community.*

*Many thanks to REACH Healthcare Foundation for valuing the importance of building a more welcoming community, as well as the generous financial support of this planning process and implementation of the plan in our region.*

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Co-Chair: Andrew Weisberg, KC Chamber

### **Connected Communities**

Chair: Hilary Singer, JVS

### **Economic Development**

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### **Education**

Chair: Julie Robinson, Kansas City Public Library

### **Equitable Access**

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### **Government Leadership**

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WELCOMING

KC



# **Forward** **P**

Imagine Tomorrow ▶ Inspire Action

# **Vision**

November 2018



*"I want to make an impact. I want to be engaged.  
I want to contribute."*

---

Community Conversation Participant





# A message from the Steering Committee

Dear Fellow Citizens,

ForwardOP!

More than a slogan or a name, "ForwardOP" reflects the attitude exhibited by people in this community since Overland Park was first imagined in 1909 and chartered in 1960. In 2018, OP citizens are once again ready to create our own destiny.

- Always looking ahead, thinking about how we can be better.
- Establishing a legacy that honors and builds on our successful past while embracing a future enabled by technology and powered by creativity, diversity and innovation.
- Strengthening the foundation for continued prosperity, and dreaming of an even better community for future generations.

For the past year, hundreds of people have been imagining tomorrow with us, having community conversations and inspiring action. Together, Overland Park citizens, neighbors, businesses, charities, and people of all backgrounds have worked to establish aspirational yet feasible goals and objectives based on thousands of questions, comments, feedback and information from the community itself.

We have had the great honor and privilege to co-chair the ForwardOP Steering Committee and to observe outstanding collaboration among the sponsoring partners of this endeavor - the City, Chamber of Commerce and Visit OP. We have watched and participated as our consultant, planning NEXT, has provided guidance and insight. And we have witnessed a highly motivated Steering Committee of 28 committed individuals offer their personal time, experience, wisdom and ideas to help define how we approach the future.

What we found is that all of the people involved in this effort love OP as much as we do!

This report captures the final recommendations of the Steering Committee. But whether and how those recommendations are implemented depends entirely upon us—all of us. We encourage citizens, community organizations, businesses, advisory committees and elected bodies to use this document as a blueprint for strategic planning at all levels and as a springboard for further conversation on the future of our great city.

On behalf of the entire Steering Committee, we thank you for your investment in our community. ForwardOP!



Brenda Sharp  
Co-chair



Greg Musil  
Co-chair

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## **City of Overland Park**

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### **Volunteers and Support**

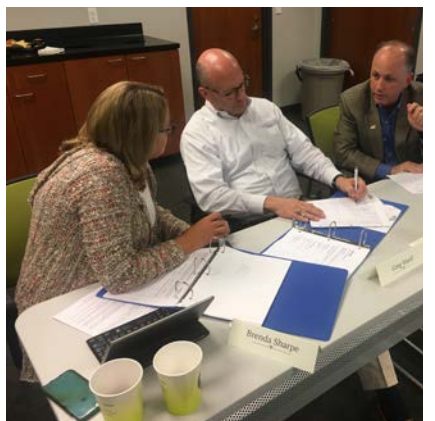
Teen Council  
Community Connectors  
Executive Leadership Team

### **Facilities**

Overland Park Convention Center  
Matt Ross Community Center  
Overland Park Chamber of Commerce  
Shawnee Mission South High School  
St. Andrews Golf Course  
Johnson County Community College  
Culture House, Oak Park Mall  
Mazuma Credit Union  
Blue Valley Hilltop Conference Center  
Tomahawk Ridge Community Center  
Johnson County Central Resource Library  
Johnson County Arts and Heritage Center

### **Consultants**

Planning NEXT





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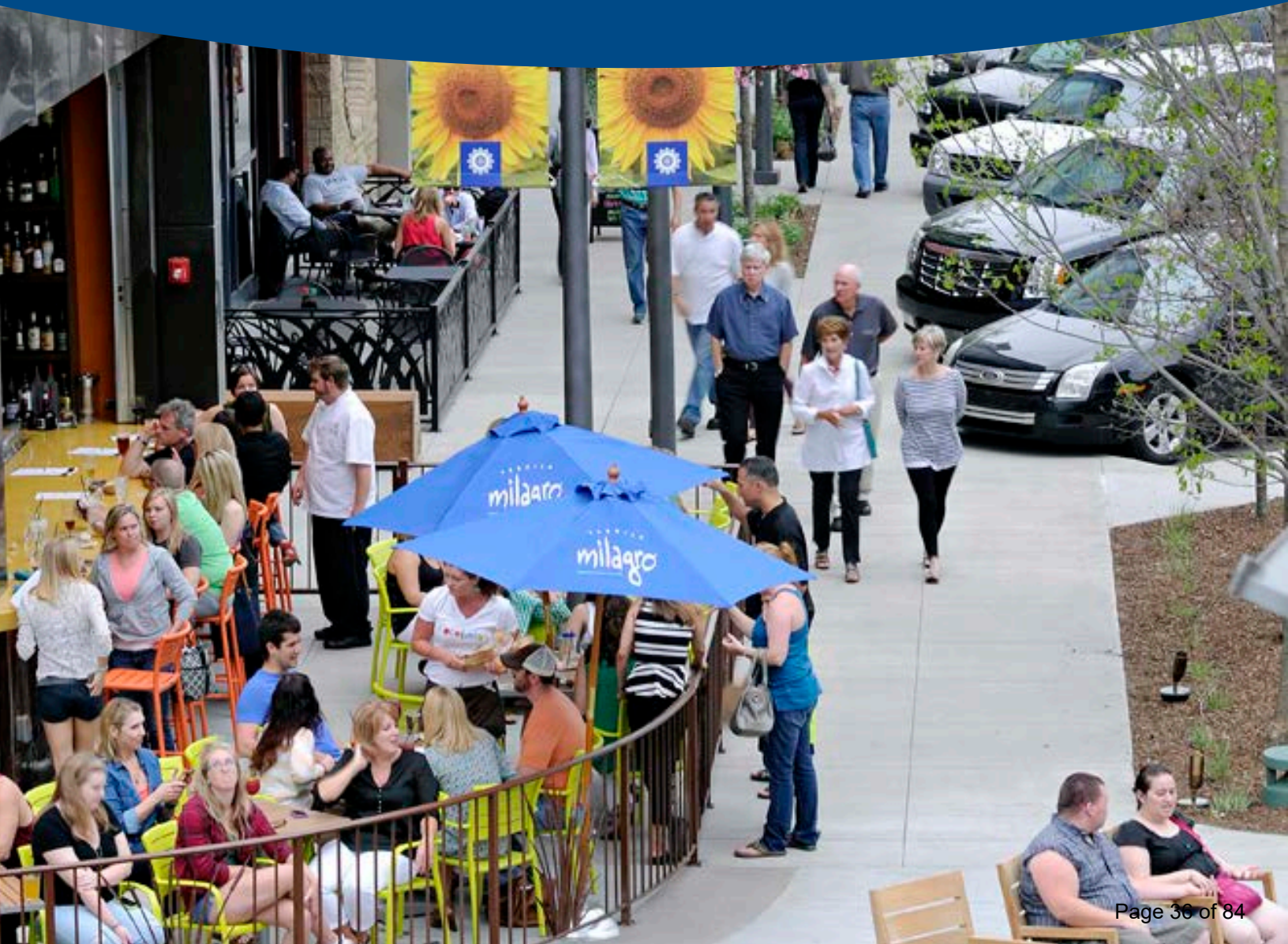
## Appendices

- Appendix A: Community Assessment
- Appendix B: Public Input Summary

***"Even if you're on the right track,  
you'll get run over if you just sit there."***

---

Will Rogers



# 1

# INTRODUCTION

In general, planning represents good stewardship. Overland Park has a well-deserved reputation as a desirable place to live, do business, attract visitors and have fun. This vision plan outlines a path of continued success for the next 20 years and beyond.

## Motivation

The Overland Park enjoyed today is the result of deliberate planning and commitment to following through on those plans. Progress is continuous and we must periodically pause to assess our current status and look ahead to ensure that we are pursuing a path of success for today and the future.

## What is a Vision?

The Vision is an opportunity for the entire community to pause, take stock, and define as a community what we want Overland Park to be in the future and how we get there. Specifically, the plan outlines a path of continued success for the next 20–25 years. It is based on input from a community that cares about the future of Overland Park as a place to thrive, succeed and prosper. To complement these aspirations, the plan is grounded in an understanding of current conditions and trends. The vision plan aligns all aspects of our community life and identifies goals and specific actions for Overland Park to implement.

## History of Visioning

Overland Park's founders were visionary and took bold steps to plan for the future we enjoy today. In the early 1900s, foundational values and a vision were established. In 1960 a vision for the newly incorporated city was created, and then again in the mid-1980s an analysis was done to further define the vision for the community. Good planning over the years has led to top-rated educational institutions, leading healthcare providers, expansive road networks, and extensive infrastructure, service and amenities.

In the early 1960s, when the city was still in its formative years, leaders of the community saw the need for an institute of higher education and imagined a local college. They took bold steps in pursuing this vision, even in the face of opposition from some residents who believed that the costs would outweigh the benefits. After a six year process that included a county-wide needs assessment, a special election, and funding approval, the first classes of Johnson County Community College were held in 1969 in a leased space. Three years later, in the fall of 1972, classes were finally moved onto the JCCC campus that we know today. Thanks to the foresight and imagination of our predecessors in Overland Park, Johnson County Community College is now one of the top five secondary institutions in the state of Kansas. Although this big idea was considered somewhat risky and unpopular at its



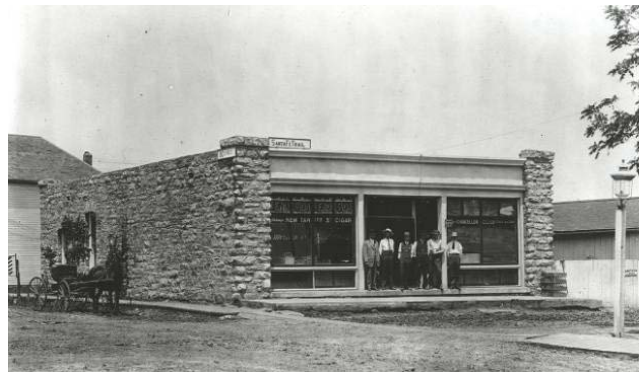
inception, today it's difficult to imagine Overland Park without Johnson County Community College.

Leaders of Overland Park have also been intentional about growth and planned expansion. Because of visionary leadership, big decisions and thoughtful stewardship, Overland Park has grown from 28,085 people in 1960 to over 195,000 people in 2018 and enjoys a strong reputation as a leading place to live and work.

Transportation has been at the heart of Overland Park since its inception. In 1905, William B. Strang Jr. began to lay track between Kansas City, MO and Olathe, KS to construct the 20 mile Missouri and Kansas Interurban line<sup>1</sup>. It began operations in 1906 and ran until 1940, transporting visitors and residents on combination diesel and electric trolley cars. The first public flight in Kansas took place in Overland Park on Christmas day, 1909. Aviator Charles K. Hamilton shipped his plane in six containers and stopped in Overland Park on his way to California to demonstrate this new mode of transportation<sup>2</sup>.

We are at another pivotal point in our history. The rate of change happening in the world related to technology, transportation, and preferences for how we live and shop creates challenges and opportunities. It creates some uncertainty as well, but we do know that what we have done for the past 50 years won't necessarily guarantee success in the next 10, 20 or 50 years. It is time once again to think big about the future of Overland Park. What do we want to be in the future? What bold steps do we take now to ensure we continue to be a high-quality community for future generations?

The ForwardOP Vision outlines a bold vision for the future ensuring that through thoughtful implementation of these actions, the community will continue to thrive and be ready to take on the challenges and opportunities of the next 50 years.



Source: Overland Park Historical Society



Source: Overland Park Historical Society



Source: City of Overland Park



# Vision

The following statement captures the vision for the future of the Overland Park Community and frames the action agenda.

Overland Park will lead as a forward-thinking, innovative and welcoming community.

## Forward-thinking

where the community continually plans for the future and is looked to as a leader both regionally and nationally.

## Innovative

where intentionality and imagination work together to set a high standard for all aspects of community life.

## Welcoming

where people of all ages and from diverse backgrounds are engaged in the community.

# Goals

A goal is a desired outcome expressed in simple terms. These goal statements were derived from public input gathered at the Imagine Tomorrow workshop and were then refined and edited by the Steering Committee. All goal statements tested well with the public at the Community Conversations.

In the action agenda chapter you will see the icons of the goals cross referenced to the actions that they most closely support.

# 1

**A welcoming place** where all people have access to high quality education, affordable healthcare, social services, and a safe environment, and where the community works together for the greater good.



# 2

**An engaged community** offering opportunities for people to interact with each other, local leaders and institutions that provide an array of civic services.



# 3

**A high quality, sustainable and attractive built environment** offering a variety of choices including neighborhoods that offer the opportunity to live, work, and play and establishes Overland Park as a destination for business development and family fun.



# 4

**A connected city** offering choices for mobility including well-maintained road networks, public transit, sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails with an emphasis on embracing new infrastructure technologies and future transportation modes.



# 5

**A strong economy** anchored by a diverse job base and positive city image that is attractive to investment and visitors, allowing for a high quality of life for all people.



***"Vision without action is merely a dream.  
Action without vision just passes the time.  
Vision with action can change the world"***

---

Joel A. Barker



# 2

# ACTION AGENDA

The Action Agenda contains the programs, policies and projects that the community will implement to achieve the overall vision and supporting goals.

## What is an action?

An action, simply stated, is a program, policy or project. The actions are organized by initiative area; each initiative area contains multiple actions. All the actions work in support of the goals and overall vision. Some actions are “big”; they are longer-term and work to stretch the community in current offerings, ideas, policy, etc. Other actions are smaller in nature and can be achieved in a shorter time frame but are still powerful at helping the community realize its goals.

All actions contained within the action agenda are intended to:

1. advance the vision and goals;
2. enhance core services and programs;
3. improve the attractiveness for personal, business and institutional investments;
4. connect to community input directly or indirectly;
5. enhance the image of the community both internally and externally;
6. increase community pride;
7. provide economic benefit.

## Who will implement?

Everyone! This community-wide vision is not the work of just the government. While the City will play a critical role in implementation, the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce, Visit OP, and many community partners will need to work together in order to implement the plan.

## Where do we start?

Reflecting community input and the recommendations of the Steering Committee, four implementation areas are highlighted for priority attention:

- Creating spaces where people can gather for both special occasions and daily events, promoting a greater sense of community (e.g. Action 1.1);
- Improving physical connectivity to, from and around the city, innovating in the areas of mobility and transportation (e.g. Action 5.1);
- Caring for all people by promoting health and well-being, specifically focusing on mental wellness (e.g. Action 4.1);
- Providing a wider range of housing options, ensuring that residents of diverse incomes, ages, and abilities are able to thrive (e.g. Action 2.1).

# Plan Organization

The Action Agenda contains 39 actions and is organized by eight initiative areas.

## Vision

5 Goals

## 8 Initiative Areas



|                                                                                   | # actions |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Gathering</b><br>physical spaces, programs, and events for people              | 8 actions |
| <b>Living</b><br>housing affordability and housing choice                         | 5 actions |
| <b>Learning</b><br>continue to be a leading education city                        | 3 actions |
| <b>Well-being</b><br>mental and physical wellness in the broadest sense           | 4 actions |
| <b>Connecting</b><br>modern approaches to transportation and infrastructure       | 4 actions |
| <b>Welcoming</b><br>cultivate an open and engaging environment for all            | 5 actions |
| <b>Innovating</b><br>promote an atmosphere of innovation                          | 7 actions |
| <b>Placemaking</b><br>cultivate a greater sense of place in the built environment | 4 actions |



# I. Gathering

This initiative area is focused on programs, policies and projects that bring the community together and invite travelers to visit by developing physical spaces, programs and events.

## 1.1 Create large, signature gathering spaces.



A large greenspace suitable for hosting festivals and events (including concerts), proximate to dining and other facilities, would provide a location for the community to come together on special occasions and draw regional visitors to experience our city. Additional gathering places in the form of local mixed-use districts, bustling with shops, entertainment venues, restaurants, arts spaces, and other amenities, would complement the greenspace by providing other centralized locations for gathering around daily activities and special events.



## 1.2 Explore opportunities to integrate smaller-scale gathering and green spaces within existing areas.



Incorporate new green space and gathering areas within existing retail and commercial centers. Explore creative planning and policies to increase development and funding for such improvements throughout the city.

## 1.3 Expand and create community-wide events celebrating quality of life, fun, and cultural diversity and inclusion.



As Overland Park grows more diverse, new ways to celebrate our cultural diversity should be created in the form of community-wide festivals, programming and other events. Existing local and regional events should be promoted and enhanced.

## 1.4 Explore opportunities for dedicated parks and recreation funding and park land dedication requirements.



A dedicated funding stream for parks and recreation should be explored along with requirements for park land and open space in new developments.

## 1.5 Build a new city hall in alignment with the city's growth and needs.



Explore the feasibility of developing a new state of the art city hall building that could also serve as a community asset and gathering space for community events and serve as a demonstration site for new technologies and smart infrastructure.



Source: Inhabitat.com

**Living Air Garden at Reina Sofia Museum, Spain**



Source: City of Overland Park

**More festivals and community events will help to bring the community together.**

## 1.6 Develop attractions and recreation options along the trail system.



The trail system is a source of pride for the community and should continue to be upgraded and expanded through added features, new connections, attractions and recreational opportunities.

## 1.7 Continue to grow the youth sports culture.



Overland Park has a strong youth sports culture and should continue to build upon current offerings and look for new opportunities related to the future of youth sports.

## 1.8 Create a public/private partnership to help fund and manage neighborhood events.



Expand the current city support program for neighborhood events to include private sponsors who can provide additional funding, in-kind support or other resources.



Source: City of Overland Park

*The current youth sports culture not only benefits the residents but also brings visitors to the city.*



Source: SCUP

**Columbus Commons, a gathering space in downtown near various amenities (I.I)**

## 2. Living

This initiative area is focused on programs, policies and projects that address housing affordability and housing choice within the community.

### 2.1 Create more diverse housing options.



While maintaining the aesthetic and social values of Overland Park, housing affordability and choice should be addressed. It is important that housing be made financially accessible to residents of different income levels focused specifically on workforce and young professionals. The initiative should particularly emphasize diversity, workforce, and transportation, facilitating opportunities for employees to live near their jobs. By offering different types of housing and neighborhoods, more employees can live closer to work.

### 2.2 Create an age-friendly and all-abilities Community Plan.



To help seniors age in place and residents of all abilities to be fully connected to Overland Park, an age-friendly and all-abilities plan should be created to make Overland Park a place where all can live as full a life as possible.

### 2.3 Strengthen the identity of neighborhoods.



Expand the current neighborhood identity program to focus on beautification, gateway signage and other neighborhood upgrades to help neighborhoods increase their pride in place.

### 2.4 Establish policies that support the creation of "pocket neighborhoods."



To address housing affordability and increase housing choice, ensure that current zoning and policies related to new developments support the creation of smaller pocket neighborhoods. These new neighborhoods would not only offer a different housing product, but also a lifestyle with increased walkability, mixed use, and infill opportunities near current development areas.



*"Pocket Neighborhood" showing smaller scale single family housing*

### 2.5 Convene conferences on the topic of maintaining vibrant suburbs.



As preferences for living, working and housing are changing, suburbs face unique challenges and opportunities. Leaders should be convened from other top suburbs to establish benchmarks and discuss issues facing suburbs in the next 30 years.



## 3. Learning

This initiative area is focused on programs, policies and projects related to education, ensuring Overland Park continues to be a leading education city.

### 3.1 Establish the Education City Initiative.



Overland Park will be a city where lifelong learning is part of the culture. This initiative would promote and invest in the education of the Overland Park community by exploring and supporting lifelong learning opportunities such as a universal pre-k program, enriching the already thriving K-12 school system, providing counseling/resources for students exploring post-secondary options, offering free or subsidized college tuition to qualified Overland Park residents, providing technical training with a focus on workforce development, and offering general continuing education and enrichment classes. Overland Park will continue to demonstrate a value for high-quality education in the decades to come by providing life-long learning opportunities that foster personal prosperity and cultivate engaged, informed citizens.

### 3.2 Enhance joint school and parks summer youth programming.



Summer programs featuring education, healthy meals, recreation and exercise should be expanded and modified to enhance support for families and youth and to maximize resources.

### 3.3 Expand the current mentorship program between schools and local businesses.



The current mentorship programs between schools and local businesses should be expanded to serve more educators, students, and families and to provide partnerships for more local businesses.



Source: ANU Easters

*Summer youth programming with outdoor education*



## 4. Well-being

This initiative area is focused on programs, policies and projects related to mental and physical wellness in the broadest sense.

### 4.1 Develop a center for wellness.



There are a variety of agencies and organizations in the community that should work together to increase access to a wide variety of wellness resources with a focus on mental health services.



Together they would provide well-rounded care for individuals, as well as promote research, advocacy, and awareness of mental health challenges. Special attention should be paid to youth with emphasis on loneliness, bullying, and suicide prevention to help break down barriers to mental health and increase access to mind/body wellness. Resources and services will be focused to make Overland Park one of the healthiest places in the country for people of all abilities.

### 4.2 Evaluate the creation of a center for social entrepreneurship and innovation.



In partnership with local and regional higher educational institutions, a center for social entrepreneurship should be explored to support innovation focused on social, cultural and environmental issues both locally and nationally. The center would provide the community with tools and insights needed to tackle some of the most pressing issues facing individuals and communities today.



### 4.3 Explore increased access to social services.



In collaboration with Johnson County, inventory and analyze current service offerings and locations and identify potential areas that could better serve Overland Park residents. Services to be studied include food pantries, homeless shelters, wellness of women and children, substance abuse treatment, and other critical social services.



### 4.4 Promote mental health awareness and training programs for the business and nonprofit community.



To increase awareness and acceptance of mental health issues, a training program should be provided to teach participants to notice and support individuals who may be experiencing a mental health crisis and connect them with appropriate resources.



Source: National Catholic Reporter

**Nonprofit coffee shop trains and employs refugees through social entrepreneurship program**

## 5. Connecting

This initiative area is focused on programs, policies and projects related to transportation and infrastructure with specific attention focused on transit and anticipation of future mobility modes.

### 5.1 Develop a state-of-the-art mobility\* system.



To complement and expand existing street and highway infrastructure and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) plans, and to provide transportation options, accessibility, and convenience, a state-of-the-art mobility system should be developed. This system would expand current transit options available to Overland Park residents as well as take advantage of technology advancements and future potential transportation modes, such as a streetcar (of the future) connectivity to Kansas City, MO. Studies show that transportation improvements can impact surrounding investment in community development.



Source: Nicole Neri, Lincoln Journal Star  
*Autonomous shuttle in Lincoln, NE*

### 5.2 Conduct an audit to define and cultivate walkability.



Utilize the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines and benchmark city criteria to conduct a walkability audit. Address current access to and design of sidewalks, crosswalks, safety elements, street lighting and aesthetics in currently developed areas. In an effort to better define walkability and what walkability can and should be in Overland Park, a set of walkability guidelines and requirements should be developed for all new developments.

### 5.3 Implement the Overland Park Bicycle Master Plan.



Ongoing implementation and updates to the city's existing Overland Park Bicycle Master Plan should remain a priority.

### 5.4 Explore new transportation funding opportunities.



Overland Park should explore additional sources of funding to match or leverage state and federal resources for transportation infrastructure. Reliable funding would ensure that Overland Park is able to keep pace with changing transportation technologies, population growth and changing resident and workforce demands.

#### **\*Definition: Mobility**

Mobility refers to the movement of people between the places they live, work, and play. It includes all modes of transportation: walking, biking, driving, and riding public transit. As technology advances, preferences for new and different modes of transportation are increasing. Overland Park must continue to accommodate drivers with excellent road and highway infrastructure while also investing in alternative and future modes of transportation.

## 6. Welcoming

This initiative area is focused on programs, policies and projects that cultivate an open and welcoming environment for all.

### 6.1 Develop an international center for cultural understanding.



In a spirit of community building, a center for cultural understanding should be created to promote cultural education and awareness. This center will serve Overland Park residents as the community becomes more diverse, encouraging cross-cultural relationships and embracing differences. The center will facilitate events and discussions to celebrate, educate, and engage residents and visitors from all different backgrounds and ethnicities.

### 6.2 Create and implement a diversity\* inclusion plan for future leaders.



As Overland Park becomes more diverse, it should implement a plan to ensure that future leaders reflect the diversity of the community by providing leadership and engagement opportunities throughout the community.

### 6.3 Create an "Open OP" event.



To promote openness and understanding of cultures and perspectives, Overland Park should create an event that allows residents and visitors to gain access to typically closed off or difficult to access places (i.e. large corporate headquarters, maker spaces, artist studios, large private or historic homes, educational assets, churches or temples).

### 6.4 Create a welcome kit for new community members.



Develop an online welcome portal to introduce new members to the community and a quick facts document for easy reference and convenient printing from home. This idea could be expanded to also include welcome events quarterly, free tickets to area attractions and other resources for HOAs to welcome new neighbors.



Source: Open House New York

**Open House New York, TWA Flight Center**

#### **\*Definition: Diversity**

Diversity is recognizing, embracing, and benefiting from our individual differences, including the dimensions of sex, race, color, ethnic background, religion, age, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

## 7. Innovating

This initiative area is focused on programs, policies and projects which promotes an atmosphere of innovation.

### 7.1 Create a corporate innovation environment.



To best position the city to be attractive to future potential corporate headquarters and to keep current businesses competitive, there must be a continuous focus on innovation. The corporate environment in OP should promote innovation in sustainability, workforce, transit, connectivity, and technology. It should emphasize aspects of both the built environment and the social environment by providing world-class amenities that promote the well-being and satisfaction of employees. "Smart" and connected infrastructure should be installed citywide to ensure that Overland Park can capitalize on imminent technological advances. As a result, the city becomes a more "connected" place where corporations want to be.



### 7.2 Create a citywide "smart" and connected infrastructure plan.



This infrastructure plan would include a focus on citywide Wi-Fi, a camera system, automated intersections, and enhanced solar and wind energy production. The plan should also address the piloting of new sources of renewable energy, the feasibility of developing a solar utility, and explore opportunities to monetize streets and rights-of-way for other uses such as telecom, energy, data, etc.

### 7.3 Create a personal mobile experience that provides guidance and improves event and leisure experiences in the city.



Residents and visitors alike would benefit from access to more information about entertainment, recreation, dining, leisure, and transportation around Overland Park.



#### 7.4 **Expand support for local businesses and entrepreneurs.**



To encourage local and homegrown businesses and enhance opportunities for unique experiences in the marketplace, Overland Park should expand, promote, and collaborate with services offered locally and regionally.

#### 7.5 **Create an innovation council.**



To spearhead progress and ensure that Overland Park is the forefront of innovative thinking in all aspects of community life, a council of community and business innovators should be formed and resources should be dedicated to focus on innovation and progress.

#### 7.6 **Attract new, emerging event and sporting opportunities.**



Partner with businesses, community groups, and existing venues to expand offerings, attracting new and emerging event and sporting opportunities such as e-gaming and reality gaming events and other conferences.

## 8. Placemaking

This initiative area is focused on programs, policies and projects that cultivate a greater sense of place in the built environment\*.

### 8.1 Develop a culinary arts initiative.



Overland Park should capitalize on its existing strengths - Johnson County Community College's accredited chef apprenticeship program and the city's proximity to agriculture resources - to become a culinary destination. Brick and mortar establishments, pop-up restaurants, and mobile vendors would offer local, sustainable, and farm-to-table innovations that distinguish OP as a culinary arts capital. This would set Overland Park apart from others by encouraging local home-grown restaurants and food-based businesses.



### 8.2 Expand the network of community gardens throughout the city.



In support of action 8.1, the creation and promotion of community gardens, vertical gardens, and teaching gardens should be undertaken to build upon the success of the Overland Park Community Garden.

### 8.3 Enhance community beautification efforts.



Increase recognition of businesses, neighborhoods, and streetscapes for beautification efforts, such as through the expansion of the Legacy of Greenery Awards.



### 8.4 Create an iconic piece of art or attraction.



An iconic piece of art representative of Kansas should be created which would be a point of pride for the community. This art should be physically accessible for all visitors to promote our city as a visitor destination for the region and nation.

### 8.5 Create a once a year high profile temporary public art event that would attract visitors from around the state and nation.

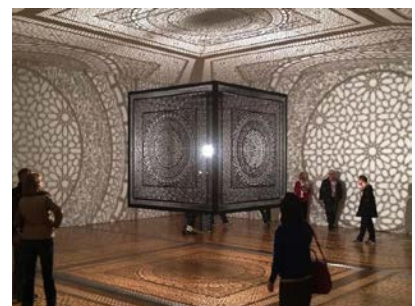


To better showcase local artists and attract artists across the nation, a new temporary public art event should be created which would capitalize on the unique features and opportunities in Overland Park (large amount of right-of-way, office parks, public spaces, parks, and other destinations within the community).

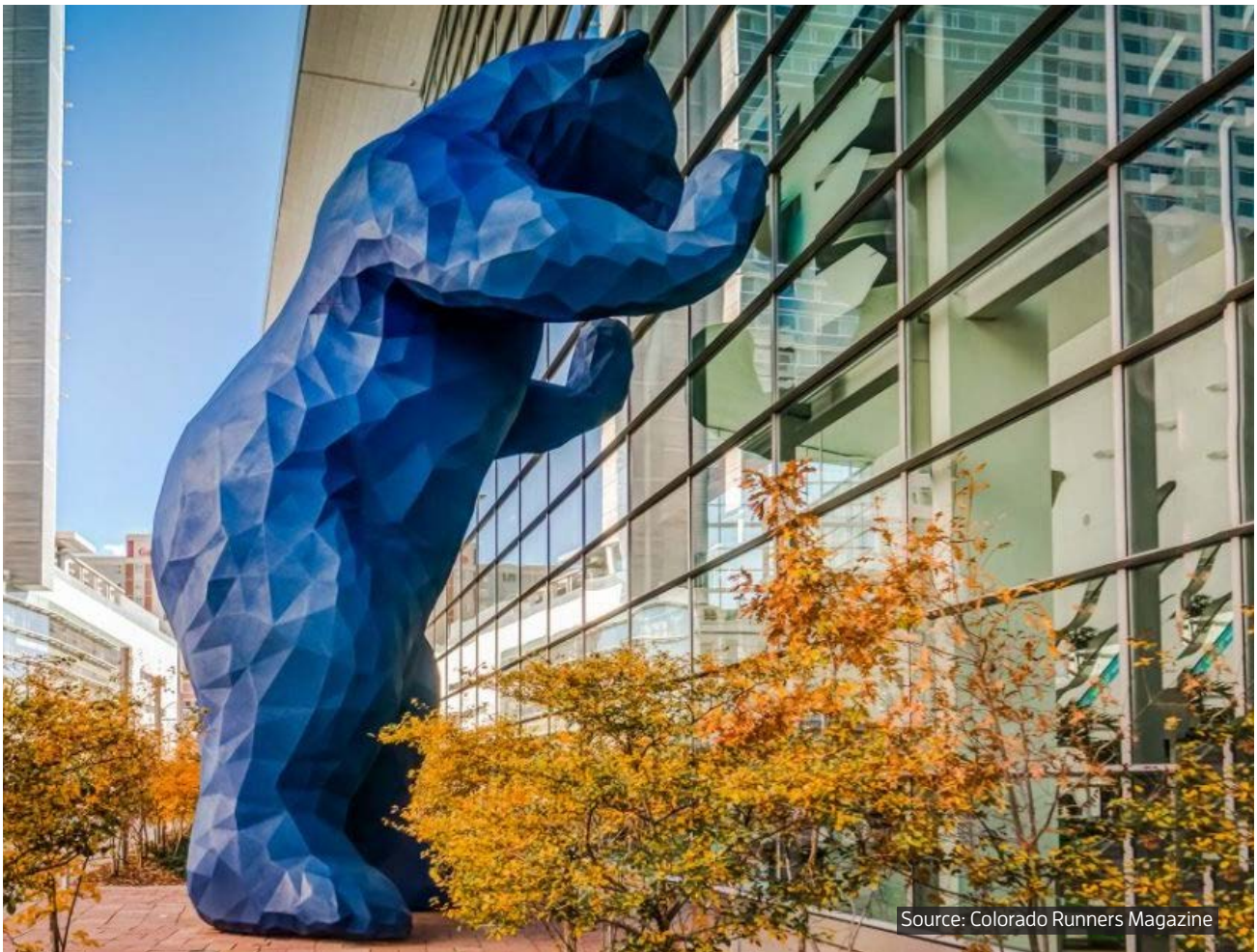
#### \*Definition: Built Environment

The American Planning Association defines the built environment as "the elements of the environment . . . that are generally built or made by people as contrasted with natural processes." Examples include buildings, streetscapes, transportation infrastructure, parks and gardens.

Source: <https://galvestontx.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2265/APA-Planning-Dictionary-2004?bidId=>



Source: Broadmoor Motors  
Public Art Event, ArtPrize, competition in Grand Rapids (8.5)



*Top: Denver's Blue Bear, "I See What You Mean"*  
*Left: Cloud Gate in Chicago*  
*Right: The Kelpies, Scotland*



***"I have ideas to share and OP is listening."***

---

Community Conversations Participant





# 3

# PROCESS

The ForwardOP process consisted of two parts; public engagement and technical analysis.

## Process Overview

Community engagement is an essential and relevant aspect of the visioning process. It was a goal that ForwardOP be open, inclusive and transparent, and to that end a robust community engagement process was implemented. All who cared about the future of Overland Park were invited to participate to ensure that this vision reflects the authentic voice of the community. A thorough technical analysis of the local context and regional and national trends complement the community input to provide additional insight into the planning process. This year-long process was anchored by three main community engagement events, online activities and a working steering committee that met regularly throughout the process.

## Steering Committee

A diverse group of 28 community members was convened to guide the planning process and to ensure that it was built on the values, needs, and aspirations of the community. The Steering Committee worked closely with the leadership team, the planning consultant team, and other community members to bring insight and perspective to the planning process. They helped spread the word about the planning effort to encourage community participation. They also advised on the plan's substance, helping staff and the consultant team to integrate the community's intuition with technical analysis. Committee members acted as spokespersons for the planning effort, served as hosts at public events, and facilitated small group discussions. The Committee met nine times (nearly every month) throughout the process and was considered a working group rather than a "blue ribbon" panel.

## Community Connectors

A group of 100 community leaders named the "Community Connectors" was created to act as ambassadors of the process and to drive people to participate through their own networks and connections. This group along with the Steering Committee was responsible for word of mouth marketing of the process and to get people interested and excited to participate. The Community Connectors were provided an outreach toolkit with a number of different outreach and publicity tools to spread the word about the ForwardOP process.

# Engagement Process

The year-long process was anchored by three main community engagement events: the Imagine Tomorrow workshop in January 2018, Community Conversations in April and the Reveal the Vision Open House in September. Online activities followed each round of engagement.



# Outreach and Publicity

To ensure that anybody who lives, works, plays, learns, or worships in Overland Park knew about the opportunity to get involved in this planning effort, a robust outreach and publicity effort was undertaken.



## Traditional Media

**83,000**

Quarterly newsletters mailed by the city and the Chamber of Commerce

**7,500**

Flyers and posters distributed

## Website and Email

**3,200**

Unique visitors to ForwardOP.org

**5,300**

Email subscribers received 58 email updates

## Social Media

**11,000**

Residents reached through each post on Nextdoor

**1,900**

Average Facebook reach of 79 posts shared

Unique ways to get the word out

**796**

Visitors to the Imagine Tomorrow Workshop event page on OPKansas.org

**282**

Original Tweets using #ForwardOP

**1,100**

Views for 15 YouTube videos



Kiosk at Oak Park Mall

Movie Theater Ads

Newspaper Ads

# Round I: Imagine Tomorrow Workshop

550 members of the community came out to the Imagine Tomorrow Workshop to get energized and share their big ideas for the city's future.

As participants arrived at the beginning of the night, they were asked to share, in one word, what they love most about Overland Park. Some of the top ideas included the schools, parks and green spaces, and safety, represented in the Word Cloud to the right. Then Peter Kageyama got everyone's creative juices flowing with his keynote address, "Love Where You Live", about the connections between emotional attachment and economic vitality in cities.

Participants then wrote what they hoped the headlines would be for Overland Park in 20 years. People dreamed big, imagining everything from being the most livable city in America to hosting the 2038 Olympics to becoming the country's first car-free city. Then, in small groups, participants brainstormed a list of ideas about how to make Overland Park an even better place in the future. All of the input generated, over two thousand pieces, laid the foundation for the vision statement goal and began to frame the action agenda.



## Activities

Participants worked individually and in small groups on the following activities:

1. Write the Headline: "What will the news say about Overland Park in 20 years?"
2. Idea Brainstorming: "What do you imagine for the Future of Overland Park? What's your Big Idea?"

## Participation

**550** people attended the workshop,

**87** participated online,

**2,861** total pieces of unique input were collected,

**454** exit questionnaires were completed and indicated high satisfaction with the event.

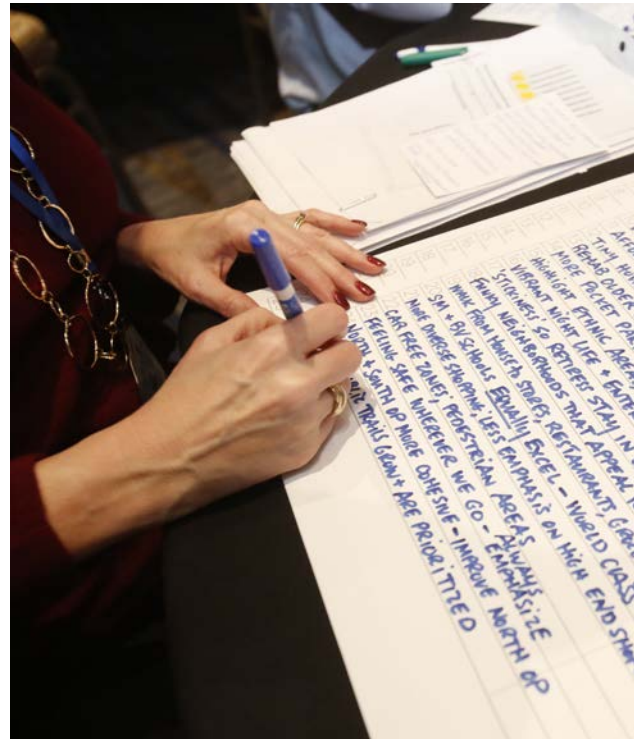


# Focus Groups

In an effort to be as inclusive as possible a series of focus groups were convened as a follow up to the Imagine Tomorrow Workshop.

In order to ensure that the plan included input from a diverse sample of the population, five focus groups were convened after the Imagine Tomorrow Workshop. Although representation at the workshop itself was not significantly different from the actual population of Overland Park, the Steering Committee urged the convening of these groups in an effort to engage an even greater diversity of people. Comparing workshop attendance to population projections from the county and planning NEXT, the Steering Committee identified the Latino community, lower income residents, and younger residents as groups of particular interest. As a result, the following focus groups were organized:

1. Growing Futures;
2. Johnson County Community College;
3. 35 and under;
4. Latino Community;
5. Young Professionals.



## Activities

Participants worked individually and in small groups on the following activities:

1. Write the Headline: "What will the news say about Overland Park in 20 years?"
2. Idea Brainstorming: "What do you imagine for the Future of Overland Park? What's your Big Idea?"

## Participation

- 105** people attended focus groups,
- 370** total pieces of unique input were collected,
- 98** exit questionnaires were completed.

## Round 2: Community Conversations

Between April 24th and 26th, community members came back together to continue the conversation about the future of Overland Park.

People who live, play, shop, learn, and worship in Overland Park participated in a series of ten "community conversations" located throughout the city. The Chamber of Commerce, Visit Overland Park Board, and the Teen Council also convened to offer their input.

At each identical event, participants rated and commented on the draft vision and goals, which were based upon the ideas submitted by the public at the Imagine Tomorrow Workshop.

Then, working in small groups, they reviewed and discussed potential actions in each of the initiative areas, also drawn from the Imagine Tomorrow Workshop input and the Steering Committee's work.

Community members who were unable to attend the sessions were invited to participate in the same activities online.



### Activities

Participants worked individually and in small groups on the following activities:

1. Draft Vision and Goals: "On a scale from 1 to 5, please rate how strongly you support the following statements, with 1 being "not at all" and 5 being "full support"
2. Review Draft Actions and additional actions.

### Participation

**252** people attended the conversations,

**193** participated online,

**2,238** total pieces of unique input were collected,

**419** exit questionnaires were completed.

# Round 3: Reveal the Vision Open House

On September 27th, more than 200 people came together to view and to give feedback on the draft Action Agenda of the Vision.

After brief introductory remarks, attendees browsed ten display boards around the room. The first two boards provided an introduction to the planning process, planning context, and an overview of the action agenda. The remaining boards contained 39 action items, organized by eight initiative areas.

Attendees were invited to prioritize the top five actions that they believe will have the greatest impact on Overland Park. Because ForwardOP is a community plan, participants were also asked to suggest local organizations, institutions, or groups that should be involved in implementing the actions. Finally, everyone who attended the Open House was given the opportunity to share feedback about specific action items and indicate if they wanted to get involved in the implementation of a particular action or initiative area.

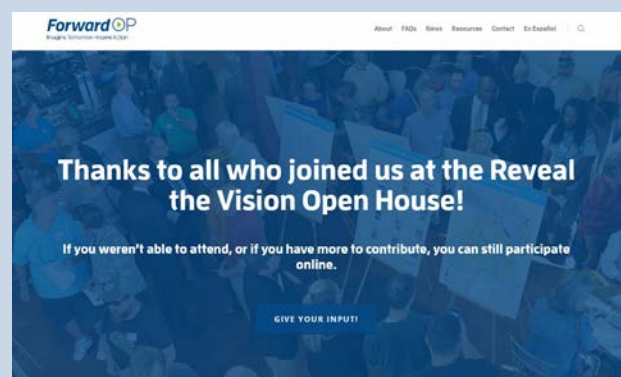


## Participation

- 233** people provided feedback,
- 81** indicated that they want to get involved with implementation,
- 173** unique comments were made about the action agenda.

## Online Engagement

For community members who were unable to attend the public meetings, online activities were made available on the project website for several weeks afterward. Invitations and links on Facebook, Twitter, and email directed participants to activities that asked the same questions as the in-person activities and collected some of the same demographic information as well.



# Planning Context

In addition to the thousands of pieces of public input that helped to craft the vision, existing conditions and trends were analyzed to ensure that the bold ideas in this plan are grounded in the current realities facing Overland Park.

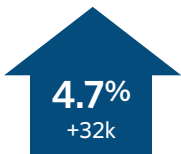
## Overland Park Community Assessment

### PEOPLE

#### POPULATION...

**195,000**

**population**  
(2018 estimate)



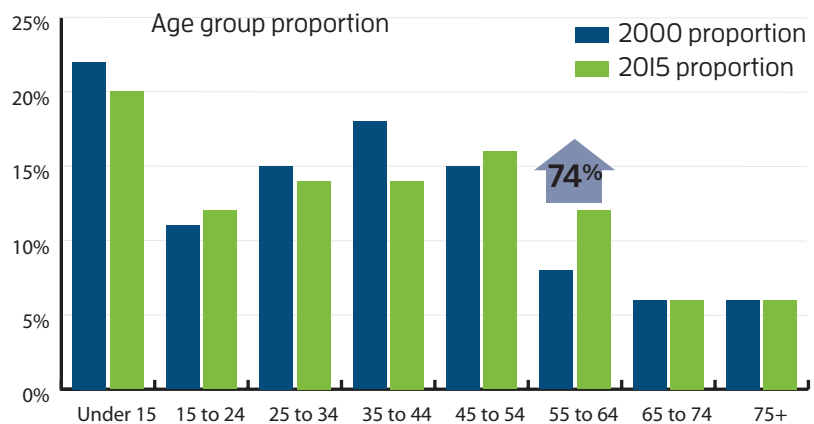
**change in pop.**  
(2000-2015)

**4.5%** Olathe

**2.5%** Lee's Summit

**4.6%** Lenexa

#### is aging...



#### and becoming more diverse.

**16%**  
27,068  
**non-white**  
(2015)

**94%**  
+13K  
**change**  
(2000-2015)

**10.6%**  
14,893  
**foreign born**  
(2015)

**74%**  
+8K  
**change**  
(2000-2015)

#### HOUSEHOLDS...

**74,830**

**households (hh.)**  
(2015 estimate)



**change in hh.**  
(2000-2010)

#### are getting smaller...

**2.41**  
**average hh. size**  
(persons per hh.)  
(2015)

**-2%**  
**change**  
(2000-2015)

#### fewer with children...

**30%**  
**hh. with children under 18**  
(2015)

**-13%**  
**change**  
(2000-2015)

#### and more single-person.

**31%**  
**single-person hh.**  
(2010)

**42%**  
+10K  
**change**  
(2000-2010)



## PROSPERITY

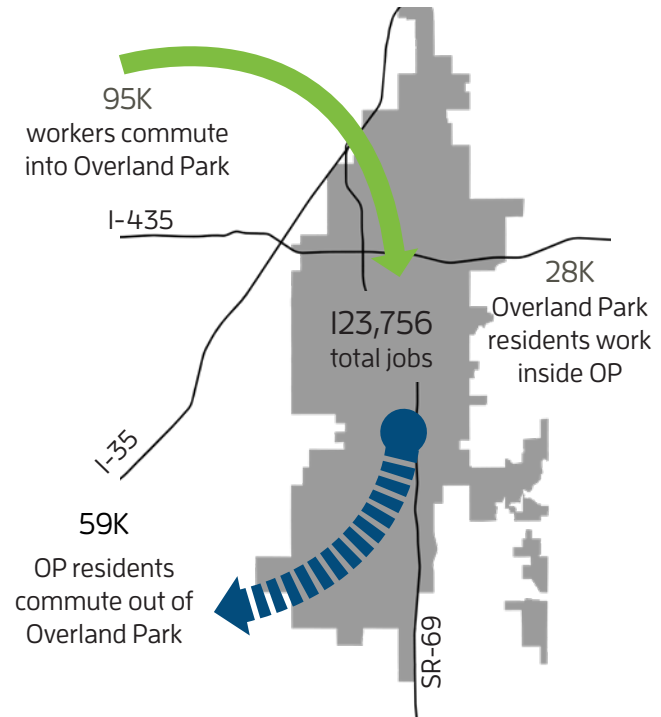
## ECONOMY &amp; EMPLOYMENT

123,756

**total jobs**  
(2015 estimate)

## Top Employers (2015)

| Company                      | Employees |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| Sprint                       | 6,000     |
| Shawnee Mission School Dist. | 3,400     |
| Blue Valley School Dist.     | 3,226     |
| Black & Veatch               | 3,100     |
| Jo. Co. Community College    | 2,400     |



## PERSONAL PROSPERITY

\$72,463

**median household income**  
(2015)

**\$76,113** Johnson Co.  
**\$52,205** Kansas

4.4%

**unemployment rate**  
(2015)

**4.5%** Johnson Co.  
**5.9%** Kansas

5.9%

**people living below the poverty line**  
(2015)

**6.2%** Johnson Co.  
**13.6%** Kansas

58%

**pop. over age 25 with a college degree**  
(2015)

**53%** Johnson Co.  
**31%** Kansas

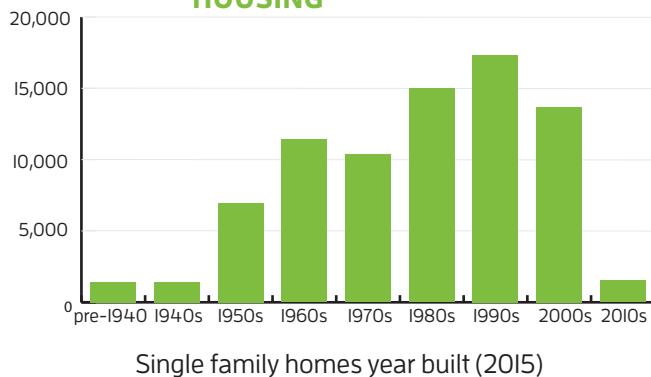
## PLACE

75.6 sq mi

**total city land area**  
(2015)

**66 sq mi** St. Louis, MO  
**48 sq mi** Boston, MA

## HOUSING



## EXISTING LAND USE

| Use           | % of land |
|---------------|-----------|
| Single-family | 32%       |
| Undeveloped   | 20%       |
| Right-of-way  | 15%       |
| Open Space    | 11%       |
| Public        | 4%        |
| Multi-family  | 4%        |
| Commercial    | 4%        |
| Office        | 3%        |

## National and Regional Trends

Beyond the local context, the vision for Overland Park is also based on an understanding of several trends facing the region and nation as a whole.

### Retail

- Online retail continues to thrive and expand as an alternative to traditional, brick-and-mortar retail. Many retailers, however, are seeing growth in their connections between online and physical shopping, asserting that "physical stores are not going away."
- Personalization is a main focus for retailers. The adoption of artificial intelligence will only increase the extent to which retail experiences are tailored to individual shoppers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/veronikasonsev/2018/01/22/retail-technology-and-marketing-trends-on-the-rise-for-2018/#43aa5f8264c0>

### Transportation

- New technology is rapidly advancing transportation systems. The Internet of Things (IOT) allows for cities to be both "connected" and "smart," increasing valuable data and expanding transportation options.
- Autonomous vehicles are no longer visions of a distant future; they are a reality that will be imminently and broadly adopted.
- Alternatives to driving private cars are increasingly desirable in light of traffic and environmental concerns.

### Living Preferences

- Preferences of millennials and seniors across the country are shifting away from suburban style living to more urban style environments.
- Walkability, easy access to dining, entertainment, and recreation, and proximity to public transportation are highly desirable attributes.
- Integrated live, work and play communities are growing in popularity as they provide access to a wide range of amenities.

## Related Local Planning

It is important to note that while this plan works to align the community under one vision, many ongoing and previous planning process are still relevant and will be important to the implementation of this plan.

### Vision Metcalf

The Vision Metcalf plan was adopted in 2008 in an effort to identify a long term approach to the revitalization of the Metcalf Avenue Corridor. This major transportation corridor represents the spine around which Overland Park developed. Areas of decline along the corridor were evident and the community undertook this effort to provide a roadmap for its revitalization.

This plan contained a variety of associated goals and objectives and will remain a central organizing plan for the Metcalf Corridor for years to come. This plan aligns with recommendations being developed in the vision for ForwardOP by identifying the need to enhance walkability, create gathering places, develop a modern mobility system of the future, and build a City Hall. In many ways, these ideas were first identified and uncovered through the planning process of Vision Metcalf.

## College and Metcalf Plan

This plan was completed in 2018 and is essentially an addendum to the Vision Metcalf Plan. The purpose for this plan was to expand the principles of the Vision Metcalf plan into this significant employment corridor and to identify how best to increase entertainment and activity around the convention center and along the corridor. This plan identified a potential redevelopment opportunity that incorporates a mix of uses in a walkable environment in an effort to produce development that attracts new residents and caters to visitors and businesses in the area. A key component of the plan includes rethinking the design of the public streets to create a more walkable and attractive pedestrian environment.

## Comprehensive Park System Master Plan

This plan was completed in 2013 and established a vision for Overland Park's Park System as follows:

"Overland Park's system of well designed and maintained parks, greenways and recreation facilities are central elements to the community's well being, active lifestyles and identity. These places and the experiences they offer provide wide ranging benefits for residents and visitors, while preserving green space and strengthening the local economy. "

Of note, the plan specifically recommended designing and developing a signature park to spur economic development. The plan noted, "A signature park is a community centerpiece and showcase, the "go-to" place for visitors, and a source of pride for residents. This type of park is one-of-a-kind, combining public art with large public gathering spaces and attractions for all ages." Extensive research has shown that well-designed parks, such as a signature park, can spur reinvestment into surrounding neighborhoods and increase the value of surrounding properties (thus increasing property taxes). Parks of this type are suited in areas where denser, more walkable neighborhoods are desired, as they generate more foot traffic and a related demand in retail and commercial space.

## Safe Bicycle Use Outreach Project

The City of Overland Park Safe Bicycle Use Outreach Project was completed in 2015 and is a coordinated and strategic effort to develop a comfortable, safe, and accessible network of bicycle facilities throughout Overland Park. The Project Report builds on existing assets in the city, including an extensive network of paths and trails, a diverse range of bicycle riders, and strong interest from the public in improving bicycle conditions and safety in Overland Park. The Project Report addresses challenges that bicyclists currently face, including the lack of a connected network and safety concerns. The Project Report strives to improve the experience of bicyclists throughout the city, while also addressing issues such as education and awareness, driver behavior, bicycle parking, and maintenance of bicycle facilities.

## Downtown

The redevelopment of Downtown Overland Park is one of the critical actions identified in Vision Metcalf. This node of development already contained many elements recommended for places in the Vision Metcalf Plan. This node is the founding geographic location of Overland Park and its renaissance and ongoing development activity has remained a focus of the City of Overland Park throughout the City's history.

To allow for this change in development patterns, other basic issues were necessary to prepare for this change. Analyses associated with parking, walkability, bicycle use, and a public art plan have been prepared.



***"If you want to go fast, go alone.  
If you want to go far, go together."***

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African Proverb





# 4

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# IMPLEMENTATION

The ForwardOP Vision presents an action agenda for realizing the community's shared vision for the future. The success will not be determined by the quality of this document, but rather by the committed, ongoing implementation of its actions. The all-encompassing nature of the Vision means it can only be achieved through the collaborative efforts of the community.

# Overview

Individuals and organizations have already begun to work together during the preparation of the plan. Nearly 1,200 community members representing a wide range of backgrounds and interests served on committees, volunteered, or attended meetings to guide the process. Thousands more were made aware through the many publicity and outreach efforts. There is widespread awareness of the Vision and ForwardOP is viewed favorably within the community. It is time now to harness that energy to work towards achieving the vision.

## Collaborating

This section of the report describes the suggested approach for carrying out the Vision. The Vision is not intended to be solely implemented by city government. This is a "community" initiative and its implementation will require the coordinated efforts of individuals and organizations representing the public, private, and civic sectors of the community. Even those actions that require public sector involvement need an active citizenry to place them on the agendas of government agencies.

## Managing

The Leadership team is creating a management plan to ensure the successful and ongoing implementation of the Vision. The Vision should be actively managed on a regular basis and monitored for implementation effectiveness and relevancy. This review should happen on a formal basis no less than once per year. A status report should accompany this review and be promoted throughout the community, such as through the continued ForwardOP website. An annual public meeting—perhaps with a noted speaker—could take place to share progress and attract additional participants to move the community forward.

## Updating the Plan

A formal review of the Vision should be considered every 5 years to incorporate new decennial Census data and other relevant changes and planning work going on in the community.

# How to use this plan

This is intended to be a long range planning document, and also to be used on a daily basis as public and private decisions are made concerning the community's future. The following is a summary of how decisions and processes should be institutionalized to align with the vision and actions.

## Annual Work Programs and Budgets

Organizations should be cognizant of the recommendations of the Plan when preparing annual work programs and budgets. This also includes considering the Plan when making important policy and financial decisions that impact the community.

## Community Planning

Community planning efforts, including those of the City and the school districts, should be aligned with the values, goals and recommendations of the Plan.

## Capital Improvement Plan

The city's capital improvement plan (CIP) should be consistent with the Plan's recommendations.

## Private Investment Decisions

Property owners, developers, and other private entities should consider the Plan's recommendations in their planning and investment decisions. Public decision-makers will be using the Plan as a guide in their deliberations about proposals, projects, and funding requests. Property owners and developers should be cognizant of and complement the Plan's recommendations.

## Civic and Social Engagement

All civic and community groups should create opportunities to explore solutions to issues of concern to the community. They should seek alignment with the recommendations of the Plan and collaborate across interests, missions, and constituencies.

## Difference Between a Comprehensive Plan and a Vision Plan

The city's Comprehensive Plan is a long-term policy guide focused on physical aspects of the city, including land use, growth patterns, transportation, environment, and infrastructure. The city's Comprehensive Plan has been in existence since the 1970s, with regular reviews and updates. It serves as the foundation of the city's zoning code, annexation policy, capital improvements plan, and many other specific plans and policies. In contrast, the Vision Plan has a longer and broader perspective, looking into the future and considering potential scenarios. Future updates to the comprehensive plan will align with the vision plan.

### Comprehensive Plan

- Long-term (usually 10-20 year horizon)
- Sets guidelines for policy
- Developed in late 1970s and subjected to annual review, updates, and amendments
- Focuses on physical aspects of the city (land use, growth patterns, transportation, environment, and infrastructure)
- Responsibility of the city

### Vision Plan

- Longer-term (30+ years)
- Overland Park vision considered periodically: early 1900s at its inception, 1960 as a newly incorporated city, and mid-1980s
- Sets direction and aspirations
- Focuses more broadly on the future of the city and all aspects of community life
- Shared responsibility (City, Chamber of Commerce, Visit Overland Park, other community organizations and leaders)

# Leadership and Funding Partners

This vision is a community-based plan at its core. Three partners came together to fund and facilitate the development of a forward-thinking vision for Overland Park. Successful implementation of this Vision will depend on continuing collaboration among the partners and across the entire community. The partners are preparing a management plan to help ensure the ongoing implementation of the Vision.



## City of Overland Park

The City of Overland Park provides a wide array of services to its 195,000 residents. It spans four top school districts, operates fire and police departments, economic development and capital improvement programs, and extensive parks, recreation, and community centers.



## Overland Park Chamber of Commerce

The Overland Park Chamber of Commerce is a business organization working to build a more vibrant community by connecting companies and their representatives, pursuing economic development efforts and representing pro-business interests through public policy and advocacy.



## Visit OP

Visit OP serves as the official marketing organization of Overland Park by promoting the city's visitor experiences to a local, regional and national audience. It is a not for profit corporation that drives new revenue to Overland Park by attracting convention delegates, youth sports competitors, corporate travelers and leisure visitors.



# Action Summary

The following summary includes the 39 actions and a suggested time frame for implementation.

## Timeframe

This is a suggested timeframe for completion of the action. Some actions due to the nature of them will take many years to complete, however smaller sub-steps will provide visible evidence of progress over time. The timeframe suggested is the target for getting the entire action implemented.

| 1. GATHERING |                                                                                                         |                    |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Code         | Key Recommendation                                                                                      | Timeframe          |
| 1.1          | Create large, signature gathering spaces.                                                               | mid-term           |
| 1.2          | Explore opportunities to integrate smaller-scale gathering and green spaces within existing areas.      | ongoing            |
| 1.3          | Expand and create community-wide events celebrating cultural diversity.                                 | short-term         |
| 1.4          | Explore opportunities for dedicated parks and recreation funding and park land dedication requirements. | short-term         |
| 1.5          | Build a new city hall in alignment with the city's growth and needs.                                    | mid-term           |
| 1.6          | Develop attractions and recreation options along the trail system.                                      | short-term         |
| 1.7          | Continue to grow the youth sports culture.                                                              | ongoing            |
| 1.8          | Create a public/private partnership to help fund and manage neighborhood events.                        | short-term         |
| 2. LIVING    |                                                                                                         |                    |
| Code         | Key Recommendation                                                                                      | Timeframe          |
| 2.1          | Create more diverse housing options.                                                                    | long-term, ongoing |
| 2.2          | Create an Age-Friendly and All-Abilities Community Plan.                                                | short-term         |
| 2.3          | Strengthen the identity of neighborhoods.                                                               | short-term         |
| 2.4          | Establish policies that support the creation of "pocket neighborhoods."                                 | mid-term           |
| 2.5          | Convene conferences on the topic of maintaining vibrant suburbs.                                        | short-term         |
| 3. LEARNING  |                                                                                                         |                    |
| Code         | Key Recommendation                                                                                      | Timeframe          |
| 3.1          | Establish the Education City Initiative.                                                                | long-term          |
| 3.2          | Enhance joint school and parks summer youth programming.                                                | short-term         |
| 3.3          | Expand the current mentorship program between schools and local businesses.                             | short-term         |

| 4. WELL-BEING  |                                                                                                                            |                     |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Code           | Key Recommendation                                                                                                         | Timeframe           |
| 4.1            | Develop a center for wellness.                                                                                             | long-term           |
| 4.2            | Evaluate the creation of a center for social entrepreneurship and innovation.                                              | mid-term            |
| 4.3            | Explore increased access to social services.                                                                               | mid-term            |
| 4.4            | Promote mental health awareness and training programs for the business and nonprofit community.                            | short-term          |
| 5. CONNECTING  |                                                                                                                            |                     |
| Code           | Key Recommendation                                                                                                         | Timeframe           |
| 5.1            | Develop a state-of-the-art mobility system.                                                                                | long-term, ongoing  |
| 5.2            | Conduct an audit to define and cultivate walkability.                                                                      | short-term          |
| 5.3            | Implement the Overland Park Bicycle Master Plan.                                                                           | ongoing             |
| 5.4            | Explore new transportation funding opportunities.                                                                          | ongoing             |
| 6. WELCOMING   |                                                                                                                            |                     |
| Code           | Key Recommendation                                                                                                         | Timeframe           |
| 6.1            | Develop an international center for cultural understanding.                                                                | long-term           |
| 6.2            | Create and implement a diversity inclusion plan for future leaders.                                                        | short-term          |
| 6.3            | Create an "Open OP" event.                                                                                                 | short-term          |
| 6.4            | Create a welcome kit for new community members.                                                                            | short-term          |
| 7. INNOVATING  |                                                                                                                            |                     |
| Code           | Key Recommendation                                                                                                         | Timeframe           |
| 7.1            | Create a corporate innovation environment.                                                                                 | long-term           |
| 7.2            | Create a citywide "smart" and connected infrastructure plan.                                                               | long-term           |
| 7.3            | Create a personal mobile experience that provides guidance and improves event and leisure experiences in the city.         | short-term          |
| 7.4            | Expand support for local businesses and entrepreneurs.                                                                     | ongoing             |
| 7.5            | Create an innovation council.                                                                                              | short-term          |
| 7.6            | Attract new, emerging event and sporting opportunities.                                                                    | ongoing             |
| 8. PLACEMAKING |                                                                                                                            |                     |
| Code           | Key Recommendation                                                                                                         | Timeframe           |
| 8.1            | Develop a culinary arts initiative.                                                                                        | long-term           |
| 8.2            | Expand the network of community gardens throughout the city.                                                               | short-term, ongoing |
| 8.3            | Enhance community beautification efforts.                                                                                  | short-term          |
| 8.4            | Create an iconic piece of art or attraction.                                                                               | mid-term            |
| 8.5            | Create a once a year high profile temporary public art event that would attract visitors from around the state and nation. | mid-term            |

## **Guiding Principles - 2020 Clayton Community Equity Commission**

The Clayton Equity Commission was formed by [Bill No. 6759](#). The body provides guidance to the Mayor, Board of Aldermen and the Clayton community on the issues pertaining to diversity, equity and inclusion. In June 2020, the CEC decided to begin its broader equity work by addressing racial equity with the goal of advising elected officials on how to prioritize and enact systemic change to reduce the impact of racism in our community. (see "Why are we leading with race?" below)

The CEC recognizes that racism is ingrained throughout all facets of life in our nation and region, and that racial disparities define Black St. Louisans' quality of life across a range of indicators. Clayton is not immune to these problems, as both data and anecdotal evidence of Black residents' and visitors' experiences in our community makes clear. The CEC seeks to ensure Clayton is a community where St. Louisans of all backgrounds choose to live, work and play. To accomplish that purpose, CEC will focus on identifying policies and practices currently in place that reinforce inequities, and propose solutions to close these gaps.

### **Why are we leading with race in 2020?**

The CEC leads with race, with the recognition that the creation and perpetuation of racial inequities are of urgent priority to our region and the nation at this current moment as protests of racial injustice continue in St. Louis and across the country. We further recognize that racial inequities across all indicators for success are deep and pervasive.

It is also true that inequities exist across other identity factors, including those based on economic status, race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ancestry, marital status, lawful source of income, physical or mental disability, familial status, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Prioritizing racial equity provides the opportunity to introduce a framework, tools, and resources that can also be applied to other areas of marginalization. In our formative meetings, we reviewed recommendations of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity and several case studies of other cities who have used an equity commission to great effect. It became clear that when a local government makes policy and practice changes to reduce racial inequity, it improves the city's functioning for residents and visitors of color, as well as, residents and visitors with other marginalized identities.

### **CEC Values**

Impact, Community, Courage



JANUARY 1, 2021

CLAYTON COMMUNITY EQUITY  
COMMISSION  
2020 ANNUAL REPORT



## **Overview**

The Clayton Community Equity Commission was established by Bill No. 6759 to provide the Mayor and Board of Aldermen with an additional resource as well as special insight and guidance on matters of equity, diversity, and inclusion. CEC held its first meeting (face-to-face) on March 9, 2020 at the Clayton Municipal Court Room, 10, S. Brentwood Blvd, Clayton, MO 63105.

COVID hit but without ceasing CEC went virtual for all other meetings in 2020. Additionally, not letting COVID get in the way of this highly motivated diverse team of committed civil rights advocates met one-on-one and in small groups and in subcommittees getting to know each other and strategizing and developing plans to achieve their duties and responsibilities.

It should be noted that during the CEC forming, there was an ongoing wave of protest because of systemic racism towards black people which was partly facilitated by the nationwide Black Live Matter movement. Then after the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers on May 25, 2020, civil unrest broke out and quickly spread nationwide touching Clayton and the surrounding St Louis areas. These incidents prompted and steered CEC to immediately change course to ensure the Clayton did not have such issues as discrimination in criminal justice, employment, housing, health care and education among other issues. In this **first** annual report, you will find that CEC boldly attacked these issues within the scope of their roles and duties listed below:

1. Promote community awareness and education on the value of diversity to the community;
2. Promote equity on the basis of economic status, race, color, religion, gender national origin, ancestry, marital status, lawful source of income, physical or mental disability familial status, sexual orientation, and gender identity;
3. Evaluate and develop actionable equity recommendations to be used to examine and strengthen policies, practices, services, and

programs, which will establish the Commission as a community resource and regional leader;

4. Promote responsiveness of government to concerns of all minority groups and others that may be subject to bias or discrimination in the community; and
5. Encourage the creation and continuation of community equity, diversity and inclusion awareness efforts, programs, and activities that are available and accessible to all community members.

2020 was a successful year for CEC working on behalf of the Clayton community towards promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion as reflected in this report.

## **Accomplishments**

- **Developed a web presence:** A web presence was essential to: (1) provide transparency, (2) aid in educating and developing culturally intelligent citizens and (3) provide easy access to all CEC information. (Example: 260 views in a 42-day period)
- **Researched and Developed Heritage Calendar:** Researched, developed, and implemented a heritage calendar for the purpose of providing cultural awareness and appreciation and in celebration of people who have struggled for equality and inclusion. This calendar recognizes those month-long observance designated by Presidential proclamation and Executive Order.
- **Implemented Reflection Tradition:** Established a tradition where from time-to-time CEC would have an appropriate reflection to consciously give consideration and appreciation for individuals who greatly contributed to equity and inclusion. These reflections also help keep CEC members to stay motivated and uplifted to take the actions to bring about positive change in equity, diversity, and inclusion. (Example of individuals recognized: John Lewis, CT Vivian, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Herman J. Geiger, and Dr King)

- **Law Enforcement Study Policy and Recommendation:** CEC extensively studied law enforcement areas focusing on inherent bias. The study consisted of eight areas. (Examples: Mutual Aid Agreement, Suspicious Calls, Use of Force, Traffic Stops, Municipal Court, Body Cameras, Fire department and Resource Officers)
- **Suspicious Call Communication Plan:** Purpose to curb unwanted suspicious person calls, building awareness and empathy among the Clayton community. The plan consisted of multiple channels and messaging, with the goal of reducing unwanted suspicious calls over a 12-month period. (Example: The data showed there is consistent racial disparity in the calls with African Americans 50% more likely to be the subject described)
- **Mission Statement Revision Recommendation:** Requested that the words “diverse”, “inclusive” and “equitable” be inserted into the City’s mission statement.
- **Mayor’s Commemorative Landscape Task Force:** CEC is a partner with the task force to address community concerns that some commemorative landscape items glorify racist or oppressive ideals. The work of the task force is pro-active in that there has been many demonstrations and the public backlash has widened for the removal of confederate monuments, institutional symbols, including place names, namesakes, and brands. (Examples of Removals: Robert E. Lee monument in Charlottesville, VA and New Orleans and the Confederate Monument in St Louis)
- **CEC Survey:** Valuing the input of Clayton citizens a survey was developed and posted to accomplish a two-fold goal: (1) To gather in-depth insights on what improvements, if any, can be made to improve equity, diversity, and inclusion for the Clayton community (2) To request input for the revision to Clayton’s mission statement. (Example: 60 responded to Mission Statement changes with 86.67% agree, 6.6% Neutral and 6.67% disagree)

- **Public Comments Assessment:** CEC tracked and assessed public comments to diagnose current thinking of the community while using information in developing future strategic actions coupled with feedback comments from CEC survey. (Example: Over 10-month period 14 public comments were provided and 30 comments in the survey)
- **Neighborhood Indentures Review:** Requested Clayton communities review their indentures and make changes if they have restrictions which violate Missouri housing practices.
- **Hosted Educational Presentations:** Hosted six educational sessions provided by subject matter experts to (1) deepen CEC's and the community cultural self-awareness and (2) increase knowledge and understanding on areas CEC would study related to equity, diversity, and inclusion. (Examples: History of the Region, History of Clayton, Law Enforcement, Best practice of Tacoma and Madison, Basic Diversity terms and Housing)
- **Attended and Participated in local diversity events:** CEC has participated and attended events, celebrations, seminars provided from external organizations. (Example: Webster University, History Museum diversity events)

## **Summary**

As reported by Major Cities Chief Association Report (October 2020), in 2020 there was an unprecedented wave of protests and civil unrest that flowed across the U.S. and Canada. In total, there were 8,700 protests that took place in most major cities between May 25th and July 31st, 2020. While most of these protests were peaceful, a large portion did include non-violent acts of civil disobedience such as the takeover of a roadway or disruption of commerce. Not exempt, civil unrest hit home with St Louis experiencing a significant amount. CEC believes protest will continue as long as there is widespread systemic racism, but CEC has hope that change can and will occur. On January 20, 2021, the U.S. has a new President who has committed to heal the wounded and divided nation.



CEC welcome this new focus and locally will continue to carry out its duties and responsibilities to help make the Clayton community a role model city for equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Note: For additional information related to this report please go to:

[www.claytonmo.gov/government/boards-and-commissions/community-equity-commission](http://www.claytonmo.gov/government/boards-and-commissions/community-equity-commission)

## Review of Goals and Responsibilities for Diversity Commission

### Dec 2021 Meeting

Facilitated Planning Workshop – A discussion about the roles and responsibilities of the Commission; and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

1. Ordinance - included in the packet - was passed this summer to formalize DE&I principles into City business. The Parkville Diversity & Inclusion Commission was created to handle the five charges laid out in the ordinance

#### SECTION 154.040. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The Commission shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen on ways to:

1. Promote community awareness and education on the value of diversity to the community;
2. Promote equity on the basis of economic status, race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ancestry, marital status, physical or mental disability, familial status, sexual orientation, and gender identity;
3. Evaluate and develop actionable equity recommendations to be used to examine and strengthen policies, practices, services and programs;
4. Promote responsiveness of government to concerns of people that may be subject to bias or discrimination in the community;
5. Encourage the creation and continuation of community equity, diversity and inclusion awareness efforts, programs, and activities that are available and accessible to all community members; and
6. Address ad hoc requests related to diversity and inclusion from the Mayor and Board of Aldermen.

#### Community education and awareness

1. Survey - look for benchmarks and outcomes to we can track details over time
2. Demographic information – Done – January Meeting
3. How can we recruit more diverse members of our community to reflect our community
  - a. Police are included in this consideration
  - b. How do we mirror the community? Race, ethnicity, gender - few female officers
4. Aside note - we're discussing the idea of representative bureaucracy - where the civil servants/public officials reflex the makeup of the people they serve
5. Where can find data to explore these issues? – ONGOING
  - a. Census Data / American Community Survey (ACS)
  - b. Park University
  - c. MARC's data and research
  - d. Other regional or local data sources
6. One issue to consider - HOUSING
  - a. Barriers to entry to each subsection to the market
  - b. Where is the multi-family zoning in the City? What are the issues? Concerns?

- i. Creekside, apartments along Bell Rd.
- 7. How do we educate our community?
  - a. Partner with the school district to address the issues there
  - b. What does language diversity look like in our community?
  - c. Do we work to organize an ethnic celebration in the community?
  - i. Some sort of community event? Work with MSPA and/or have the City step up and direct some activities and/or ideas
- 8. Food festival that feature different cuisine
  - a. Sister / Partner City - <http://parkvillemo.gov/city-news/parkville-missouri-welcomes-jesus-maria-jalisco>
  - a. Started in 2008.
- 9. Business ENV
  - a. What does it cost to start a business?
  - b. What does a commercial space cost - is the price to high?
- 10. How does this Commission fit into the strategic plan of the City?
  - a. Directly part of the quality life and quality services charge for the city staff
  - b. This initiative was started after the George Floyd murder and raised by the Mayor and aldermen
- 11. We should try to align ourselves with the strategic plan
  - a. Our goal is to remind the board and community how DEI fits into the city's strategic plan
  - b. It has to start at the top, be shared by all leadership
  - c. It was unanimous by the board and the first new commission for more than 15 years.
- 12. Connect with Marcus Flores at the Parkville Living Center
  - a. Ask the candidates questions about DEI
- 13. Podcast? - Dropping Jewels with Morgan Fleming
- 14. Does Parkville HR have any goals for diversity recruitment?
  - a. Make sure the goals for diversity and inclusion - retention and recruitment - are defined and articulated

## Information from Brian Whitley – Parkville Historical Markers

Historical Marker 1: [Parkville Historical Marker \(hmdb.org\)](https://www.hmdb.org) (Amy Barr has contacted the Platte County Historical Society for more information on the date the sign was erected).

Historical Marker 2: [Attack on the Paw Paw Fort Historical Marker \(hmdb.org\)](http://hmdb.org) - sign was erected in 2009.

### News articles on markers:

Platte County Citizen 1: [Commission considers future of markers — The Platte County Citizen](#)

Platte County Citizen 2: [Parkville monuments may be returned, replaced — The Platte County Citizen](#)

Platte County Landmark 1: [Parkville removes marker - The Platte County Landmark Newspaper](#)

Platte County Landmark 2: [Parkville evaluating public displays of history, other topics - The Platte County Landmark Newspaper](#)

Fox 4 1: [Parkville leaders consider whether 'slavery' belongs on historical markers](#) | FOX 4 Kansas City WDAF-TV | News, Weather, Sports (fox4kc.com)

Fox 4 2: [Parkville weighing historical marker that references slavery – FOX 4 Kansas City WDAF-TV | News, Weather, Sports \(fox4kc.com\)](#)

KCTV 5: [Two historical Parkville markers mentioning slavery removed from park | News | kctv5.com](#)

### Parkville History:

FlarLandKC: [curiousKC](http://curiousKC.com) | [The City Beneath Our Feet](http://TheCityBeneathOurFeet.com) ([flatlandkc.org](http://flatlandkc.org))

Freedom's Frontier: [Stories of Freedom's Frontier in Parkville, Missouri - Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area \(freedomfrontier.org\)](http://freedomfrontier.org)

Lee's Summit Diversity and Inclusion Assessment: [The City of Lee's Summit - File #: TMP-2126 \(legistar.com\)](#)



Please also include Gordon Cook's emailed recommendation from 1/29/22 for disbanding the commission and other concerns.

#### EMAIL FROM GORDON COOK

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**From:** Gordon Cook <[cook@cookconsultingco.com](mailto:cook@cookconsultingco.com)>  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 29, 2022 6:29 AM  
**To:** Brian Whitley  
**Subject:** DEI Committee

Brian, why is it you and others in Parkville want to whitewash history? A better move would be to disband this committee. I read in the paper that Parkville is mostly white, as if that was news. What's next? Forced housing?

*Alderman Whitley said that the Diversity and Inclusion Commission met on January 10 to discuss and gather information about the history behind historical signs.*

Regards,  
Gordon Cook

#### RESPONSE FROM ALDERMAN WHITLEY

**From:** Brian Whitley  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 29, 2022 1:26 PM  
**To:** Gordon Cook <[cook@cookconsultingco.com](mailto:cook@cookconsultingco.com)>

**RE:** DEI Committee

Gordon-

Thank you for the feedback. I will ask that the committee take your perspective into consideration.

Brian

## Jeffery Rhodes

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**From:** Amy Barr <amybkcmo@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 30, 2022 12:33 PM  
**To:** PlatteQ2@gmail.com  
**Cc:** Brian Whitley; Jeffery Rhodes  
**Subject:** Parkville Historical Marker information

Hello,

My name is Amy Barr. I am a member of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee in Parkville MO. I am looking for information regarding the date, maker, and context of the George S Park "Parkville" marker that was placed in the Triangle median in Parkville MO. It is noted on the marker that it was placed by the Platte County Historical Society. That being the case, I suspect that it was placed after 1945. I have attached a link which shows the marker in question below.

Any information that you can supply me would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks so much!

Amy Barr

<https://images.app.goo.gl/Wd87kmgXT2yMBooN8>