



City of Lawrence
2020
Strategic
Plan



Introduction



In January 2020, the City of Lawrence initiated a process to update its 2016 Strategic Plan, incorporating extensive engagement with community stakeholders, and staff as the City worked to refine its strategic planning framework. This document summarizes each phase of the update process and highlights the City's Commitments and Outcomes for the next several years.

The City's strategic planning update process was designed to ensure the following:

- A shared vision of the City's goals and organizational priorities.
- A mechanism to align organizational resources around commitments and outcomes.
- Acceptance of the direction and urgency of the strategic plan.

THIS DOCUMENT SUMMARIZES EACH PHASE OF THE UPDATE PROCESS AND HIGHLIGHTS THE CITY'S COMMITMENTS AND OUTCOMES FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS.

BUILDING ON THE 2016 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

In 2016, the City of Lawrence developed a Vision, Mission, and Organizational Values statements, and that City Commission identified seven Critical Success Factors. These are the elements that must go right for the community to be successful. Those Critical Success Factors included the following:

- Effective Governance and Professional Administration
- Safe, Healthy, and Welcoming Neighborhoods
- Innovative Infrastructure and Asset Management
- Commitment to Core Services
- Sound Fiscal Stewardship
- Collaborative Solutions
- Economic Growth and Stability

Directional statements for each of these seven Critical Success Factors were developed to describe the desired future state and essentially "define success" for each area. In addition, eight priority initiatives were identified by the City Commission to move forward on in the 2-3 years following adoption.

THE CITY'S 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

To successfully update the 2016 Strategic Framework, the City engaged with stakeholder groups and conducted workshops to incorporate input and identify priorities. Major elements of the process included the following:

- **Meeting with City Commissioners and City Staff.** This helped to determine how the City was using the prior plan and what they looked for in the update. The Vision and initial initiatives provided strategic direction for the organization, but there was a sense that a disconnect existed between the broader framework and community priorities.
- **Stakeholder Outreach Workshop.** This workshop was held for 42 members of the City staff to provide training and a framework for the Lawrence Listens stakeholder engagement initiative.
- **Lawrence Listens Engagement Initiative.** Through this combined approach of consultant facilitated and City facilitated sessions, thousands of residents had the opportunity to "touch" the strategic plan. As the COVID-19 pandemic

settled in, additional check-ins were held to understand how the pandemic and subsequent civil rights protests across the United States were impacting people's expectations of the City government.

- **Final Strategic Planning Retreat.** This retreat was held with the City Commission and City staff to synthesize stakeholder input and finalize the strategic planning framework.

The process was paused briefly during the COVID-19 pandemic, and when it restarted, additional community meetings were held to check in on how and if the pandemic impacted how the community and City would work together to achieve the Vision.

The revised strategic planning framework includes the existing Vision and Values from 2016. At the request of the City Commission, the Mission statement was refined by the City Manager and City staff to better reflect the organization's mission. The revised framework shifts away from the concept of Critical Success Factors and instead includes two new elements: Commitments and Outcomes. The concept of Commitments and Outcomes reflects the belief that the way the City serves the community is as important as what the City does. Commitments define "how" the organization does its work and include the various lenses through which each strategic initiative can be viewed. Outcomes are those strategic program and service delivery areas that support and sustain the vision of the community.



IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE COMMUNITY CHECK-IN SESSIONS, THE CITY HOSTED AN ONLINE COMMUNITY CHECK-IN SURVEY USING ITS LAWRENCE LISTENS ONLINE DISCUSSION PLATFORM.



Community Engagement

LAWRENCE LISTENS

A strategic planning process involves articulating a clear vision for the community, establishing goals, identifying priority strategies, and creating implementation plans. The 2020 Strategic Plan Update was designed to intentionally engage more community members in articulating what was important to the future of Lawrence. Through the “Lawrence Listens” initiative, more than 3,000 stakeholders provided input about what was important to them.

The process of developing a strategic plan explores three specific questions:

1. Where are we? What do we know to be true today?
2. Where do we want to go? What do we hope will be true in the future?
3. How do we get there? What must go well in order to make it so?

Several themes arose from the Lawrence Listens sessions. Participants...

- Praised the quality of the City’s Parks and Recreation Services
- Would value an expanded transit system and enhanced street and sidewalk maintenance
- Believe that Affordable Housing, Homelessness, and Development are the top three issues facing the community
- Want to maintain the City’s vibrant downtown into the future
- Hope that the City will implement more environmental programs in the future

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COMMUNITY CHECK-INS

When the COVID-19 pandemic began in the United States in March 2020, the community engagement and strategic planning processes were temporarily halted. In July 2020, two “Community Check-In” sessions were facilitated via the Zoom online meeting platform. The purpose of these sessions was to reengage the community regarding key themes heard through the Lawrence Listens process and the community survey and to understand the relevance of those issues in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and community conversations about racial equity.

Participants were invited to reflect on two discussion prompts posed by facilitators. The first related to identifying the top policy priorities facing the Lawrence community; the second related to action items that the City should attempt in order to address them.

Themes related to the City’s top policy priorities included the following:

- The issues of affordable housing and homelessness are interrelated
- The Lawrence economy needs to be strengthened
- Racial equity should be addressed

Potential action items identified included the following:

- Expanding multimodal and affordable transit
- Promoting economic development strategies to strengthen the Lawrence economy

- Providing services to prevent homelessness and support those who are currently experiencing homelessness
- The City’s funding shortfalls should be addressed in this strategic plan

In conjunction with the Community Check-In sessions, the City hosted an online Community Check-In survey using its Lawrence Listens online discussion platform.

Strategic Planning Framework



Vision

The City of Lawrence—supporting an unmistakably vibrant community with innovative, equitable, transparent, and responsible local government.

Mission

We create a community where all enjoy life and feel at home.

Values

- Character
- Competence
- Courage
- Collaboration
- Commitment

Commitments

The way we do our work is as important as what we do. The community we create is reflected in the decisions we make every day. These are our commitments...



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Listen, share, and engage with our community to drive action and build trust in City government.

We invite and welcome all community members to collaborate and innovate with us. Through strong and equitable engagement with our community, we share and receive information about important city services and community life.



EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE PROCESSES

Intentional and consistent delivery of city services.

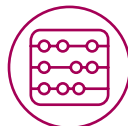
We focus on process improvement by working collaboratively to understand needs, research, adapt and develop successful solutions. Trust-worthy processes are the foundation for the delivery of city services.



EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Fair and impartial delivery of services so that no group is disadvantaged or burdened along with having inclusive representation and participation for all.

Inclusion and racial equity drive the culture of our organization and our community. When we intentionally prioritize race, it can no longer be used to predict life outcomes and outcomes are improved for all. We remove systemic barriers to reconcile historic injustices and their continued presence in our work.



SOUND FISCAL STEWARDSHIP

Efficient use and sustainable management of resources that align with community priorities.

We build and maintain public trust while using our resources to achieve high value. We provide transparent, easy access to relevant, accurate data for budgeting and decision making.



ENGAGED AND EMPOWERED TEAMS

People throughout the organization are trusted, supported, and cared for as we build community.

We invest in and cultivate service to community, individual growth, team development, respect, and trust. Our very best is achieved by a diverse, engaged, collaborative, and innovative organizational culture.



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

A deep respect for our place in relationship with the planet and environment.

We consider the environmental consequences of every decision, big and small, knowing that our actions have impacts beyond our boundaries. We protect and restore our ecosystem to make it healthier and more balanced for future generations.

Outcomes

To realize our Vision for Lawrence, we endeavor to achieve these important strategic outcomes together:



UNMISTAKABLE IDENTITY

Lawrence is a welcoming community, synonymous with arts, diverse culture, fun, and a quintessential downtown. City parks and community events contribute to the vibrancy experienced by all people in Lawrence.



STRONG, WELCOMING NEIGHBORHOODS

All people in Lawrence live in safe, functional, and aesthetically unique neighborhoods that provide opportunities to lead healthy lifestyles with access to safe and affordable housing and essential services that help them thrive.



SAFE AND SECURE

Lawrence is a community where all people feel safe and secure and have access to trusted public and community-based safety resources.



PROSPERITY AND ECONOMIC SECURITY

The City of Lawrence fosters an environment that provides all people and businesses the opportunity for economic security and intentionally acknowledges, removes, and prevents barriers created by systemic and institutional injustice. Our community succeeds because of collective prosperity and a vibrant, sustainable local economy.



INFRASTRUCTURE, ASSET MANAGEMENT, AND CONNECTIVITY

The City of Lawrence has well-maintained, functional, and efficient infrastructure, facilities, and other assets. Connectivity supports accessible, sustainable methods for safely moving people and information throughout the community and the region. Investment in these assets reflects the City's commitment to contribute to the well-being of all people.



Commitments and Outcomes

