



TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 9 - IMPLEMENTATION.....9-1

INTRODUCTION..... 9-1

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION..... 9-1

 Proactive Rezoning 9-2

 Overlay Districts 9-2

 Development Specific Proposals 9-2

 General Development Review Considerations 9-3

 Plan Amendments 9-3

“CREATING QUALITY PLACES” DESIGN PRINCIPLES AS GUIDING PRINCIPLES 9-3

 Homes and Neighborhoods..... 9-4

 Commercial Areas 9-4

 Transportation and Public Places..... 9-5

 Environmental Quality..... 9-5

DOWNTOWN STRATEGIES 9-6

 Promote Downtown Redevelopment Potential 9-6

 Prepare and Adopt a Downtown Master Plan..... 9-7

 Establish Financial Incentives to Encourage Investment in Downtown..... 9-7

 Adopt a Downtown Overlay District 9-8

HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES..... 9-9

 Improve Conditions of Existing Housing 9-9

 City Hall Outreach to Neighborhoods 9-11

 Encourage New High-Quality Residential Development 9-12

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES 9-13

 Eastern De Soto Sub-Area Plan 9-14

 Urban Service Areas 9-14

 Capital Facilities Planning 9-15

 Traffic / Transportation Planning..... 9-16

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS..... 9-16

 Target Business Incentives..... 9-17

 Small Business Improvement Actions 9-18

 Retail Market Expansion Strategies 9-19

PARKS AND RECREATION..... 9-20

 Commitment 9-21

 Parks, Trails and Facilities Needs and Priorities..... 9-23

 Management..... 9-24

 Volunteerism..... 9-24

 Maintenance 9-25

 Parks & Recreation Implementation Plan..... 9-25



OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION 9-26

 Cluster Development Overlay Zone 9-26

 View Shed Overlay Zone..... 9-28

NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT 9-29

 Design Guidelines 9-30

STREAM BUFFERS AND FLOODPLAIN PROTECTION 9-34

 Buffer Zones 9-34

 Buffer Averaging 9-36

 Density Compensation 9-36

 Conservation Easements 9-36

 Variances..... 9-36

GATEWAY STRATEGIES 9-37

 Primary Gateways 9-37

 Secondary Gateways 9-37

 Transition Gateways 9-38

AREAS OF ADDITIONAL STUDY 9-39

 Eastern De Soto Sub-Area Study 9-39

 Traffic / Transportation Study..... 9-39

TABLES

Table 9.1: Recovered Home Improvement Costs 9-10

Table 9.2: Primary De Soto Targeted Industry List..... 9-17

Table 9.3: Sliding Scale of Development Density in the Urban Services Area..... 9-28

Table 9.4: Density Credits – Compensation for Excessive Land Consumption by Buffers 9-36

FIGURES

Figure 9.1: Conventional and Cluster Development Patterns 9-27

Figure 9.2: Conventional and Cluster Development Patterns 9-27

Figure 9.3: Secondary Gateway Signage Feature 9-38

Figure 9.4: Transitional Gateway Signage Feature..... 9-39



CHAPTER 9 - IMPLEMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

Based upon the goals and objectives of the plan, the existing land use patterns within the City, and the future land use issues of the plan, the following recommendations should be followed in implementing the future land use plan, the intent of which is illustrated in **Map 12: Future Land Use Plan**.

The Comprehensive Plan Implementation chapter outlines recommended strategies for implementing the stated goals, objectives and policies of the Plan. In that regard, it must be clear that these recommendations do not constitute a set of regulations or ordinances. Rather, they are guides for future amendments to existing City regulations and ordinances which meanwhile serve as guidelines for evaluation of proposed development. When used as guidelines these recommendation help fill the gap between the goals, objectives, strategies and policies contained in the plan and the limited flexibility of the City's zoning and subdivision regulations which are rigid regulations enforceable as adopted by ordinance.

Because the Plan is a projection of both the near- and long-term development of the City, it is not anticipated that these recommendations will be implemented in their entirety upon adoption of this plan. Rather, the intent of the Comprehensive Plan is to equip the City to accomplish short- and long-term objectives through stated goals, objectives, policies, guidelines and strategies which are intended to be formally implemented as determined by the City of De Soto to be appropriate.

Because of the short- and long-term nature of the plan, conflicts may arise during implementation. In particular those portions of the plan that are deemed as long-term objectives, may conflict with short-term development approvals. Where these conflicts arise, or where provisions of the Plan appear to conflict or are unclear, interpretations should be made. As interpretations are made, the City should document them and make them available to future applicants and the general public in an effort to maintain and promote consistency.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The primary means of implementing the Future Land Use Plan is the zoning ordinance. Over time, the City should seek to achieve consistency between the Zoning District Map and Future Land Use Map and between the Zoning Districts and the Future Land Use Categories. In this Plan, several methods are proposed for accomplishing this:

- Proactive rezonings on the part of the City;
- Creation and adoption of "overlay" district regulations;
- Development-specific proposals including Site Plans, Planned Developments or Special Use proposals; and
- Landowner proposed rezoning.



Proactive Rezoning

During the development of the Comprehensive Plan, inconsistencies between the existing land use, existing zoning and future land were apparent. As discussed in Chapter 4, Existing Conditions, these inconsistencies limit projected development opportunities by unintentionally promoting development opportunities that are potentially inconsistent with the plan and creating a false sense of long-term development intentions. Parcels that are not zoned for projected uses frequently require rezoning, often a sizable obstacle in the development process.

These incompatibilities are typically found with undeveloped parcels. In order to promote projected growth and development the City should consider proactively rezoning property to allow uses projected herein. This approach can also help the City promote economic development within De Soto and minimize conflicts between incompatible uses that arise over time as a result of false impressions or understandings of long-term development intent. This is particularly important in promoting non-residential development opportunities, such as in the area south of K-10 Highway, west of Lexington Avenue.

Overlay Districts

In several areas, the City should consider overlay districts. Most of these areas, including Downtown De Soto and the Lexington Avenue Corridor are in commercial districts where the overlay provisions would address unique use, signage, landscaping, setbacks, buffering, parking and design requirements to preserve and enhance the character of the areas. Once overlays are in place, the higher intensity uses shown in **Map 12** can be proactively implemented with an increased assurance that the Plan's intent can be implemented.

Development Specific Proposals

The plan projects significant land use/zoning changes that would greatly increase the density/intensity of non-residential development in areas such along Lexington Avenue, and near the interchanges with K-10 Highway. Residential development and marginal non-residential development in and around these areas could create or already have created isolated pockets of incompatible uses that limit future development options. An inappropriate conversion of these uses to a higher density/intensity use through poor site design could have an even greater negative impact on the surrounding area. Similarly, development patterns inconsistent with projected residential uses can dictate uses that are not intended and create incompatible land uses that have to be planned around or mitigated.

In most cases, the best means of achieving the projected land uses and minimizing the impact of incompatible land uses is through the development-specific plan review process. During the platting and site planning process, the City evaluates proposed development not only based on the merits of the specific design but also based on conformance with the projections, policies and guidelines of this plan as well as the standards defined in the City's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations. In addition, to the City's basic guidelines and regulations, use of the City's Planned Development District and Special Use Permit process can allow for improved development through the application of standards unique to each development. However, these processes are not required of all development. As such the City will



have to rely more heavily on the Site Plan Review process, Platting process, and the policies and guidelines herein.

General Development Review Considerations

The Future Land Use Plan has been designed for use in evaluating proposed development projects in addition to guiding the general growth and development of the City. Accordingly, future plan amendments, ordinance and regulations should be designed to be consistent with the Plan objectives. In order to further implement the goals and objectives of the plan, the City's ordinances should require that they be part of the criteria for evaluating and deciding all significant development applications, such as zoning map amendments, subdivisions, planned developments and special uses.

In determining consistency, the various portions of this Comprehensive Plan must be considered individually so that the Plan can be interpreted and applied in its totality, including:

- the Goals, and Objectives;
- City Facilities projection and policies;
- the Future Land Use projections and policies;
- the Future Land Use map;
- the Major Thoroughfare projections and objectives; and
- the implementation strategies of this chapter.

However, no one portion of the Plan can be considered in isolation from the rest of the document. As such all users of the Plan including the Planning Commission, City Council, Staff, advisors, developers and property owners are strongly encouraged to become familiar with the entire Plan and incorporate the applicable recommendations and guidelines into their projects.

Plan Amendments

The Planning Commission is vested with the authority to review the Comprehensive Plan annually and, following a public hearing, report to the City Council, recommending proposed changes to the Plan. Although the City is required to review the Plan annually, more frequent reviews and revisions may be necessary to reflect the most current policies and projections of the City. Likewise, as the Plan is implemented the City should also make revisions to reflect approved development patterns and changes in development demands, especially when they differ from the uses projected in the plan. In these cases, the policies should also be checked for relevance and updated as needed.

“CREATING QUALITY PLACES” DESIGN PRINCIPLES AS GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The public input obtained during the public workshops stressed the need for creating and maintaining quality neighborhoods in De Soto. Following is a list of strategies and principles designed to help create and maintain successful neighborhoods. Many of these principles have been well-documented and implemented throughout the Country. Collectively implemented, they could have a significant long lasting positive impact on future De Soto development.



The principles have been divided into four categories:

- Homes and Neighborhoods,
- Commercial Areas,
- Transportation, and;
- Public Places and Environmental Quality.

These principles encourage a variety of uses within an area including the mix of residential, office and commercial uses that compliment each other. This information and design principles were adapted from a program entitled “Creating Quality Places” funded through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and administered by the Mid America Regional Council (MARC), the regional planning agency of the Kansas City, Missouri metropolitan area—including De Soto. The program was facilitated by MARC using four committees representing a broad range of stakeholders including elected and appointed officials, professional planners, engineers, architects, developers, builders, citizen representatives and special interest groups.

Homes and Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods are the building blocks of a community. They are more than subdivisions, and are defined as much by the sense of community they create for their residents as by the structures, streets and amenities within their boundaries. Quality neighborhoods offer choices, provide residents with a sense of identity and connections, and encourage continuous renewal and reinvestment.

- Quality neighborhoods offer a choice of well designed and maintained housing types and sizes. This variety of housing choices within a community meets the needs of residents of different economic levels and age groups.
- Quality neighborhoods are linked to surrounding areas and, when possible, share commercial spaces and open space resources.
- Quality neighborhoods encourage actions to preserve, restore and reuse historic sites or structures; to conserve and restore environmental resources; to foster appropriate infill development; and to redevelop “brownfields.”
- Quality neighborhoods have a distinct identity that helps define their boundaries and fosters pride and belonging among residents. The distinct features of a neighborhood include public spaces such as a park, a green or an important street intersection and public buildings such as a school, post office, library, or community center.
- The streets of a quality neighborhood are pedestrian-friendly. They are laid out in an interconnected network and attractively landscaped to encourage walking. Streets give residents, particularly youth and the elderly, choice and control in their mobility and easy access to important destinations from their residences.
- A variety of quality public green spaces are within easy access of residents in a neighborhood. Green spaces range from small playgrounds within easy walking distance from homes, to neighborhood parks, to community parks that can be shared by several neighborhoods.

Commercial Areas

A quality commercial area is achieved through attention to its design, mix of uses, scale, and the ways in which pedestrians, bicycles, and motor vehicles are accommodated.

- Quality places include a variety of uses (e.g. retail stores, residences, civic buildings, and offices) that create multipurpose activity centers in neighborhoods and cities.



- The scale, character and function of a quality development are compatible and integrated with that of its surroundings while remaining flexible to accommodate the densities, mix of uses, and infrastructure that the market demands. Quality places are built to last with quality materials, are designed to allow for changing uses over time, and provide for shifting markets and consumer needs.
- Quality business districts and commercial clusters, small or large, are designed to make the pedestrian feel comfortable and safe by providing wide sidewalks, storefronts that open to the street, shade and shelter and a sense of spatial enclosure. They are designed to facilitate employee and customer access on sidewalks, bicycle trails, and roads.
- Quality business districts and commercial clusters provide a variety of convenient parking choices consistent with the scale of the development and the location and the type of stores. Parking is divided into smaller components to the rear or side of the buildings, and landscaping and sidewalks provide for safe pedestrian movements. A quality place allows flexible parking arrangements such as on-street parking and shared parking to minimize an over-supply of parking.

Transportation and Public Places

Communities have a shared responsibility to design and maintain a quality public realm, including a balanced transportation system and public places. Improved access for residents, employees and customers; reduced congestion on major roadways; choice among modes of travel; and environmental protection are objectives of a balanced transportation system. Public places create identity for an area and foster a sense of community.

- A quality transportation system accommodates automobiles, public safety vehicles, freight, pedestrians and bicycles in a balanced way to maximize access and mobility and minimize congestion throughout the community.
- Quality local streets are an integral part of a larger network of routes designed to provide access to homes, shops and businesses, and to keep local traffic off major arterials and, conversely keep high-speed, through-traffic off local roads.
- The design of a quality local street encourages pedestrian and bicycle use through such features as continuous sidewalks and curbside tree planting as well as various traffic calming measures such as, landscaped medians that reduce apparent street width and street parking that protects pedestrians from moving traffic.
- Quality public spaces are provided in urban and suburban areas to encourage social interaction and to foster a distinct sense of place. These quality public places are memorable and reinforce the character of the community. They include amenities that provide comfort and relaxation in all seasons.

Environmental Quality

Because a clean and healthy environment is a critical element of a quality place, the design of quality places balances environmental, economic and social considerations.

- The design of quality places incorporates features and amenities that minimize environmental impacts on water quality caused by storm water runoff and erosion and on air quality caused by motor vehicle traffic.
- The design of buildings and properties maximizes the efficient use of environmental and economic resources by minimizing energy, water and material use.



- A quality place preserves major natural features in a neighborhood or a community (streams, slopes, wetlands, floodplains and natural habitats) as open space, and links those resources to public places by pedestrian and bike paths.

DOWNTOWN STRATEGIES

The Future Land Use Map identifies a Downtown De Soto as part of a De Soto Downtown District. This is identified as an area of opportunity for reinvestment and revitalization of the core of De Soto. Much of this revitalization effort has previously been envisioned as investments in the commercial blocks along 83rd Street. Investments in street projects including improved street surfacing and parking, placement of benches, and hanging of banners are visible signs of public investment in Downtown.

Reinvestment in residential uses surrounding the commercial uses has taken place on a more limited basis. However, there is pride in having traditional housing options available to De Soto residents. Downtown neighborhoods have a distinct identity in De Soto. To maintain the existing cohesive Downtown neighborhoods, the City must be willing to minimize the intrusion of non-residential land uses, while promoting flexibility and adaptive reuse of land and structures.

In several areas, there existing uses that visual and physically impact the viability of Downtown and weaken the neighborhoods. In order to mitigate these impacts and promote revitalization of the area several the following strategies are recommended.

Promote Downtown Redevelopment Potential

Downtown redevelopment and economic development are most effective when they are pro-active rather than reactive. To be successful, development strategies require the cooperative support, participation and leadership from elected and appointed public officials, along with business and civic organizations.

Potential exists for De Soto to grow economically stronger and downtown De Soto to become more diversified in the future. Downtown De Soto, the city's historic retail district, is experiencing the same changes confronting other cities its size throughout Kansas and the U.S.—a decline in locally owned retail establishments and a shift toward retail franchises and establishments, and changes in traffic patterns have resulted in an increased demand for commercial property in close proximity to major thoroughfares such as K-10 Highway.

This trend coupled with the City's increased dependence on regional shopping in Lawrence, neighboring communities in Johnson County and Kansas City, has greatly reduced the viability of Downtown. As such, the future of Downtown must be carefully considered since the degree of success will be closely connected to the uses attracted and maintained. Therefore, local officials, other residents and business persons must recognize the revised role that the "Central Business District" or Downtown will serve in the future and carefully target the attraction of new businesses and uses.

In any case, it is clear that Downtown De Soto cannot be expected to return to its historic role as the retail center for the community due, in part, to the location of K-10 and the presence of large national retail



opportunities within a short driving distance of the City. Downtown De Soto can, however, continue to play a special role in the life of the community. Recognizing these market forces will enhance the ability of local businesses to pursue the opportunities that these changes have created targeting enhanced activity, improved appearance and rejuvenation of community pride in Downtown.

Citizens showed strong support for the continued improvement and investment in Downtown throughout the planning process. Participants identified positive and negative aspects of downtown and identified opportunities to address issues specific to downtown.

Prepare and Adopt a Downtown Master Plan

Regardless of the ultimate use of Downtown, one thing is clear – Downtown De Soto can not be revitalized except through unified effort. Because of the substantially public investment required to revitalize a downtown, the effort must be lead by the development of a common vision supported by the Community. In order to develop this vision, the City should undertake a master planning process which includes a strong economic development component to determine targeted businesses and improvement funding alternatives. The plan should also identify improvement priorities so that future investments in downtown are coordinated with an overall plan. Lastly, the plan should have a focus well beyond the commercial uses in Downtown. Rather, a master plan must take into account the impact and influence of the surrounding neighborhoods, identifying specific strategies for stabilizing the neighborhoods or targeting redevelopment and new residential opportunities.

Establish Financial Incentives to Encourage Investment in Downtown

De Soto commercial property owners, with the cooperation and assistance of the Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Development Corporation and the City, should pursue alternative investment incentives including Business Improvement Districts and Enterprise Zones.

A Business Improvement District has the power to assess special fees for common purposes in the district. One of the advantages of such a district is to ensure more widespread financial participation for common projects rather than voluntary contributions from those businesses and/or property owners. Furthermore, by establishing a district, the City of De Soto could be encouraged to increase public financial commitment to the area through demonstration of financial participation by downtown property owners.

The BID is a “benefit district” of property owners, in partnership with the city, to assist with determining, planning and financing certain improvements such as:

- streetscape improvements;
- installing and seasonally replacing plant materials and/or light pole displays,
- installing directional signs informing and directing motorists to Downtown De Soto and to public parking areas within downtown; and



- setting aside a portion of the funds generated by the improvement district to provide discounted interest rates on business loans for persons undertaking building renovation (window replacement, awning removal, signage replacement, etc) to enhance their original character.
- In conjunction with funds from other sources such as CDBG funding from the state, improvements made as a result of the BID district can have a significant impact on the stability of Downtown.

The City Council may further induce private improvements in downtown through a municipally designated “Downtown Enterprise Zone.” Within the zone, a policy could be implemented to review and consider the reduction of fees for all city permits, inspections and other development related fees. While this policy would be nominal in lost revenue to the City, it will demonstrate an additional public financial commitment to encourage redevelopment. Further, by packaging this policy with other public incentives, such as the tax increment rebate and possible CDBG or other grant funds, it will demonstrate a clear public policy for strengthening the downtown.

Adopt a Downtown Overlay District

The purpose of an Overlay District is to help implement the common vision for the area and achieve this vision through the consistent application of City’s goals, objectives and policies. The Overlay is further intended to foster appropriate infill development, restrict inappropriate development and foster reuse and redevelopment of underutilized real estate while protecting the historic aspects of Downtown De Soto. It is intended to maintain De Soto’ Downtown neighborhood character through an increased emphasis on compatible design and community appearance, while accommodating sensitive adaptive reuse.

Within the Downtown Overlay District the following objectives should be accomplished through a Master Plan approach to govern unified development and redevelopment.

Ensure that new development/redevelopment is attractive. Encourage the incremental transition of land uses, rather than sharp, incompatible changes in adjoining land uses. Adopt standards to be applied through Site Plan Review that ensure quality development that:

- Is compatible with adjacent uses, and
- Does not create undesirable impacts (e.g., traffic, visual, noise, etc).

Concentrate non-residential uses. Reduce the potential for dispersed commercial uses throughout the neighborhood—identify an “edge” area where transition uses are managed. The “clustering” of commercial and retail uses should be encouraged in limited locations along 83rd Street, primarily between Shawnee and Peoria Streets. Transitional uses should be site-sensitive between the residential and commercial areas, assuring more compatible land uses.

Support a variety of well-designed housing opportunities. Downtown has historically been home to a mix of residential land uses including well-designed single-family and multifamily housing. High-density housing opportunities, such as residences above stores provide opportunities for increased population and activity in downtown.



Gateways into Downtown De Soto should be identified and preserved. Distinguish between commercial and residential gateways to mark these areas as unique, transitional sections of De Soto' Downtown. Make the residential gateway features compatible in scale and design with the residential portions of the neighborhoods. Gateways serve as focal points, and can consist of monument structures, distinctive building designs, or unique landscaping and lighting schemes. New development or redevelopment applications before the City should be reviewed to determine if gateway identification would be appropriate on the project site. When appropriate the design of the gateway should be consistent with other area gateways and the overall theme of Downtown.

Establish guidelines that reflect the predominant character of the residential neighborhood, the Downtown, and commercial transitional areas. Develop guidelines to address unique circumstances in downtown residential neighborhoods.

Develop links from the surrounding community to Downtown. Improve pedestrian and vehicular connection to Downtown from the surrounding neighborhoods. Clearly identify routes to Downtown through and improved "way-finding" systems that identifies the non-residential district, and area parking areas.

The existing tree canopy in the District, particularly along 83rd Street and other primary points of access, should be maintained. The scale and appearance of the mature trees enhances the residential, small-town atmosphere of the community. Tree plantings should be required of both private and public entities. Specific corridor landscaping plans should be developed for key areas of the District.

HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Improve Conditions of Existing Housing

During the planning process a desire to improve the quality and living conditions within the City's older neighborhoods, particularly those in close proximity to Downtown was identified. A desire to help meet De Soto's housing needs by promoting renovation of older homes and infill development opportunities was also identified. In order to achieve this objective, a coordinated effort by the City, the development community, and area property owners is required. Specific strategies to address existing housing conditions and ways to stimulate new housing construction include:

Practice Stricter Property Standards Code Enforcement

Several sections of the City have deficiencies in exterior conditions of the City's housing stock and increased corrective measures are needed. These structural deficiencies confront homeowners, landlords and tenants owning or occupying single-family rental housing. Therefore, existing City codes are either inadequate or not adequately enforced to address the structural deficiencies. Stronger routine enforcement with higher fines and/or increased political, legal and staff support will increase compliance.

Because code enforcement is unpopular and often understood as an infringement on private property rights, the City should expand its communication to the public to increase public awareness about property maintenance responsibilities. Once the public has been educated as to the requirements



enforcement should begin with the most critical repairs necessary to ensure that housing is safe and well maintained. In the end, stronger code enforcement will improve both the visual appearance and condition of the City’s housing stock.

Encourage Homeowner Remodeling

Existing homeowners can increase the value and quality of their home through renovation and/or remodeling projects. The benefit of interior remodeling depends on the type of improvement made, the value of their home and location in the City. Remodeling is an investment that routinely returns from 69% to 89% of the homeowner or landlord’s investment. A recent survey by *Remodeling* magazine found that a minor kitchen remodeling project – finishing cabinets, installing new countertops and repainting – provides the highest financial return in homeowners’ investments (see Table 9.1).

Table 9.1: Recovered Home Improvement Costs

Percentage of cost recovered:	Midwest	US
Minor kitchen remodel	89%	81%
Bathroom addition	72%	72%
Major kitchen remodel	72%	70%
Bathroom remodel	71%	71%
Family room addition	69%	71%

Source: *Remodeling* magazine.

By publicizing these benefits, promoting the merits of remodeling can be expected to result in an increased number of existing homeowners upgrading their housing and in turn improving the overall value and marketability. At the same time, the City should promote any required permitting and inspection processes that should be followed.

Public Investment Programs

In order to promote maintenance and improved appearance of structures owned by low-income homeowners, public investment programs should be explored. Programs such as free paint giveaways can provide materials and resources to homeowners that might not otherwise be able to afford basic maintenance or upkeep. These programs should define criteria for participation with the program based on income restrictions such as requiring an income of less than 80 percent of median income to qualify. The program should also set performance criteria for homeowners who use the incentive. For example, the City could provide the exterior paint and primer to homeowners who qualify, requiring them to have their homes painted within 90 days of receiving the paint. These programs can also be implemented as part of community service efforts in coordination with other civic agencies and service groups.

Another similar program would provide assistance for exterior home repairs to homeowners within the City limits of De Soto. Again, this program is intended to assist income eligible homeowners who have been qualified based on predetermined criteria.



City Hall Outreach to Neighborhoods

One of the critical issues to emerge from the goal-setting process was the need to reach out to ethnic groups and other neighborhood-level initiatives. Following are recommendations for beginning and building toward that goal.

Promote and Coordinate with Neighborhood Associations

Utilizing existing neighborhood associations and assisting neighborhoods with creating new ones is beneficial to property maintenance and neighborhood stabilization. Active associations are more likely to pay closer attention to property maintenance issues and take action to resolve problem properties with code or covenant violations. The residents have a stake in what happens to their neighborhood and surrounding properties and are more willing to take the action needed to maintain their property values.

Neighborhood associations can be responsible for a number of activities other than property maintenance compliance. They can be aggressive in addressing actions or issues they deem critical to maintaining their property values. For example, they can initiate a street lighting program to make sure streets and pedestrian-ways are appropriately lighted for safety. They can assist in providing screening for adjacent property that may not be compatible with single-family residential areas. Parking stickers are often useful in identifying residents and non-residents and can assist with crime-watches and prevention. Other interested parties should be included in all activities, such as local businesses, churches, and the police department. It is important to understand that for neighborhood associations to be effective they must be created on a voluntary basis by concerned residents.

Encourage Neighborhood Planning Activities

Neighborhood planning is a neighborhood-specific, resident involvement approach to addressing community issues. Awareness and interest in neighborhood planning is on the rise as public attitudes toward government change and government seeks more efficient service delivery. Further, the desire to establish a sense of community is a strong force behind neighborhood planning. Therefore, the City should encourage neighborhoods to be active in the planning process and develop “neighborhood plans” for areas such as Downtown and in and around identified reinvestment opportunities. Sometimes small, neighborhood projects are the most effective means of improving a community. People are more likely to know each other in neighborhoods and may prefer to work among a small group on a project that will directly affect their quality of life.

The following guidelines should be followed to develop a neighborhood plan:

1. Involve all stakeholders from the beginning.
2. Build partnerships between government staff and residents.
3. Establish neighborhood organizations with leadership training, planning classes and community newsletters.
4. Create a Neighborhood Plan that involves all stakeholders, developing a sense of ownership within a neighborhood.
5. Piggyback public investments with private incentives.



The best approaches to neighborhood planning are being flexible and not making assumptions about the neighborhood issues before speaking with residents. Establishing simple and short term projects is a good way to show that something is happening within the neighborhood and promotes community spirit, displays City investment and commitment, and increases citizen trust of the local government. By piggybacking public investment in, say new sidewalks, with private investment in home repairs, the City creates synergy between the two efforts. More impact is seen in the neighborhood.

Offer Home Owner Workshops

Providing periodic home owner workshops for the residents of De Soto can be an effective method to increasing home ownership and property maintenance. This process builds on the public education process empowering residents with an awareness of basic responsibilities and area resources. In many cases, homeowners simply may not have access to information on home improvement and property maintenance. These workshops could be held annually or semi annually to discuss general maintenance and where they can get support and more information. This not only educates the residents, but indirectly can enhance the overall appearance of De Soto.

Encourage New High-Quality Residential Development

Develop regulations and policies which increase the desired mix, supply and affordability of housing

- Undertake a detailed housing needs assessment to identify:
 - The current housing supply strengths;
 - The current housing market parameters; and
 - Recommendations for housing development efforts.
- Create a Housing Development Corporation which will:
 - Acquire and assemble parcels for redevelopment.
 - Provide data on available parcels and financing mechanisms.
 - Pursue an acceptable site for moderate-to high-density housing development.

Minimize the negative impact of medium and high density residential projects on adjacent low-density residential areas

- Encourage multifamily dwellings (including duplexes and townhouses) to locate in areas where they can service as intermediate-intensity buffers between intensive uses and low density residential uses.
- Require high-density multifamily residential projects, including duplex development, to meet minimum site design criteria.
- Require access to multifamily projects to be from a major street and restrict access through single-family areas.
- Promote large public and private open spaces or recreation areas to provide common gathering areas, preserve natural features on site, and serve as buffers to surrounding development when possible.



- Require sufficient off-street parking to eliminate the need for residents to park in public streets.
- Utilize the screening and buffering standards adopted as part of the City's Zoning Regulations.

Design new subdivisions in order to minimize initial and future public and private costs

- Clarify policies and regulations to assure that public improvements are paid for by the private development rather than the city-at-large.
- Identify areas of the urban growth fringe where there are private sector pressures for urban growth, or where growth pressures are projected to occur during the planning period.
- Help ensure the long-term ability to service growth in undeveloped areas around the City and within the City's planning area by implementing the utility extension policies and "Urban Service Areas" policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

Identify desired housing characteristics through the creation and adoption of residential development guidelines for planned residential, two-family and multifamily development

- Identify desired residential development characteristics through a "visual preferencing" process.
- Prepare guidelines to encourage desired design qualities and discourage undesired features and patterns. Guideline should include photos and graphics illustrating the expectations of the City.
- Implement the guidelines through the site plan review and planned development process.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The City must continue encouraging desired growth and development, while at the same time considering the fiscal constraints of the City. The cost of development continues to rise, making it imperative to install improvements in the most economical manner. Policies must reflect these facts. One result is to divide the costs of infrastructure equitably between developers and the City.

Policies must also stress the importance of maintaining construction standards when extending the City sanitary sewer system. Quality construction is critical to the long-term obligation of maintaining the extensions of the utility system.

The City should adopt clear policies for extending sanitary sewer lines to residential, commercial and industrial users. It is recommended that the policy limit sewer extensions to only the tracts of land lying within the corporate limits of the City of De Soto. In other words, sanitary sewer main extensions should be provided only on annexation. As a result, utility planning--as part of the CIP process--should be coordinated with annexation plans. The Comprehensive Plan accomplishes this through the designation of "Urban Service Areas."



Eastern De Soto Sub-Area Plan

During the planning process it became apparent that additional study of eastern De Soto, generally defined as the area east of Kill Creek Road and north of K-10 Highway, is needed. This area should be further studied to determine build out potential in part based on limitations of existing natural and environmental features, existing land uses, projected public utilities, and area influences. It is anticipated that the policy for this area will be greatly influenced by the projected utility expansions, including the conclusions of a Sewer Master Plan. Following conclusion of the sub-area study, the Comprehensive Plan should be updated to reflect revised projections and policies for the area if any.

Urban Service Areas

Given expected growth areas to the west and south, the City needs to plan for future provision of public utilities. As with any capital improvement, the City is challenged to plan such an extension in the most cost-effective way possible. There are two main factors affecting such plans: a) the timing of private sector demand for development, and the commensurate sharing of infrastructure costs, and b) the sizing of utilities and infrastructure to accommodate not only current but future needs as development continues within the area. As such, the Plan should accomplish the following primary objectives:

Ensure that streets are adequately designed to accommodate the demands of current and future anticipated traffic so that traffic congestion is prevented.

- Investigate the opportunities and constraints of a major arterial road fee system, or excise tax, whereby all development would contribute to public financing of arterial street improvements.
- Develop designated bike lanes along streets that form a bikeway network throughout the City.
- Plan for development in order to mitigate traffic congestion and traffic hazards.

Encourage orderly development along rural arterial roads in the planning area.

- Establish an agreement with the County to amend land use plans and zoning regulation that limit sell-offs in the unincorporated urban fringe to prevent single lot development accessed from rural arterial roads, such as Edgerton Road, 103rd Street and other arterials in De Soto's growth areas.
- Perform corridor studies for major arterial corridors including Lexington Avenue and 95th Street to determine future improvements that will be necessary and establish road access guidelines and compatible development with existing residences.
- Plan for the timely extension of utilities and services across the Kansas-10 Highway so that they can be easily extended further as development occurs along the arterial road network.



Prepare annexation plans which coordinate with utility planning through the new Capital Improvement Program (CIP) process.

- Prepare plans for annexing tracts within the identified urban growth areas which are a) logically served by extension of services provided by the City, b) in conformance with the growth trends of the De Soto Comprehensive Plan, or c) contiguous to the City limits and expected to be influenced by growth during the planning period.
- Where annexation is considered and public services are not available, plan for the extension of services to such areas based on the policies of the adopted CIP.
- Prepare policies for extending municipal utilities only upon annexation.

Continue to seek the involvement of local community leaders, public officials and other jurisdictions in the planning process.

- Continue to coordinate with Johnson County in addressing urban development issues in De Soto's urban fringe.
- Continue to coordinate with Federal Government, State of Kansas, and Johnson County on the development of the former Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant to ensure that planned improvements are compatible with development patterns and infrastructure within the City.
- Involve citizens/business owners in the development of overlay districts or other area specific plans.
- Continue to educate the public on the planning and development process through articles printed in the City's newsletter, included on the City's webpage, or published in the official De Soto paper, describing the need and the procedures involved in obtaining a building permit and other regulations affecting property owners in the community.

Capital Facilities Planning

Community planning is both process-oriented and production-oriented. The first step is being taken by the update of the Comprehensive Plan, a process which typically involves three entities--the Planning Commission, the public at-large, and the City Council. The second step is to implement the plan. Primary implementation tools include the Capital Improvements Program (CIP).

The Comprehensive Plan establishes community goals and objectives. The capital improvements program begins the process of identifying and establishing priorities for specific improvements in order to help achieve those goals and objectives. The CIP addresses near-term projects to be financed and constructed during the next five years. When implemented and updated in a formalized process, the capital improvements program provides a variety of benefits:

- The Comprehensive Plan becomes more than an exercise, it becomes a tool that plays an important role in the growth and development of the City;



- The community as a whole is given consideration;
- A degree of objectivity is given to the major capital expenditures;
- An understanding of where the community is going provides an opportunity to purchase property in advance of improvements, often resulting in considerable savings;
- A degree of certainty is given to the development process, stimulating growth in the direction of public improvements and providing greater efficiencies to businesses making location decisions;
- Greater lead time can be provided to the funding process, allowing the City to seek alternative sources of revenue for given projects;
- Bond issues can be better planned, reducing the likelihood of major fluctuations in the tax rate;
- Support for local financing options, such as local sales tax, can be strengthened with an on-going CIP process; and
- Intergovernmental cooperation can be enhanced by allowing joint fiscal programming.
- The reasons for capital facilities planning are many. Agreeing on a formal, clear process is important to ultimate success. Such a process includes more formal public involvement, and helps assure fiscal implementation.

Traffic / Transportation Planning

Although the Comprehensive Plan projects a future street network based on desired function and spacing, a more detailed analysis should be prepared as part of a traffic / transportation plan for the City. The plan should assess the condition of the existing network and individual improvements, existing capacities and traffic volumes, regional access and demand, and other existing conditions in order to project and prioritize system improvement needs. The plan should provide a foundation for development of specific traffic and transportation policies and strategies for ensuring the system accommodates needed functions and projected demands in a safe and efficient manner.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Comprehensive Plan update did not include an economic analysis. However, during the plan the City undertook a target industry study. The study identified targeted industries through demographic, economic data, and business climate analysis. From that analysis targeted industries were identified through a community input process by which “undesirables” industry and restricted opportunities were eliminated from a total list of feasible targets. During the process, participants also identified the desire for increased provision of local services and retail options including a hardware store, retail store, an additional grocery store, and additional restaurants, among others.



Although not the conclusion of an analysis of the local market, the following strategies build on the targeted industry study and input from public workshops and have been offered to promote area business development.

Target Business Incentives

As part of the Johnson County market it is anticipated that De Soto can expect to continue well-rounded growth. However, proactive public policies, financial incentives and specific strategies to take advantage of this growth are encouraged. Assistance should target where they will most directly broaden and enhance De Soto's economy. The recent Targeted Industries Study concluded that in order to strengthen and broaden the De Soto economy, the City should target its recruitment efforts and incentive programs on businesses in **Table 9.2**.

Table 9.2: Primary De Soto Targeted Industry List

NO.	Targeted Industry
1	Life Science/Life Science Support Manufacturing
2	Logistic Services/ Wholesale, Packaging and Distribution
3	Food Processing Equipment/Commercial Equipment Merchant Wholesalers
4	Administrative Service Centers/Back Office

Source: De Soto, Kansas Target Industries Study: Summary of Findings, May 2003

De Soto's proximity to the Kansas City metro and numerous competitors in the Johnson County market means De Soto will have to aggressively compete to establish and maintain its competitive position. Therefore, to achieve business growth in the targeted areas and further build on the City's existing business base it is recommended that the City consider implementing targeted business incentives. The following strategies are recommended to assist in attracting and supporting new businesses to De Soto:

1. Financial incentives should be targeted to attract the identified "target industries" as well as those market niches in which the City currently falls short.
2. Tax and other financial incentives for attraction and/or expansion of these businesses should be evaluated on the amount of private investment and the number of new jobs created.
3. The city should directly tie the amount and duration of incentives in manufacturing and professional and technical services to the wage rates in order to maximize the benefit to the City's income figures.
4. To enhance the Downtown, the City should consider establishing special incentive districts to support reinvestment in the Downtown area.

Finally, when considering the use of financial incentives, it is important to widely publicize their availability to the targeted industries. It is also important to keep the public well informed throughout the consideration process of the real cost and projected benefits of each potential project. Financial incentives have become the norm in the world of economic development. The judicious use of incentives will enable De Soto's economy to continue to grow and prosper.



Small Business Improvement Actions

Small business redevelopment and economic development in general are most effective when they are pro-active rather than reactive. To be successful, development strategies require the cooperative support, participation and leadership from elected and appointed public officials, along with business and civic organizations.

Real potential exists for De Soto to grow economically stronger and small businesses to become more diversified in the future. Small businesses in De Soto—the City’s historic retail strength—is experiencing the same changes confronting other cities its size throughout Kansas and the U.S.: a shift in ethnic and locally owned retail establishments and a shift toward small, entrepreneurial retail establishments in close connection to ethnic roots. The attraction of new retail investment in small businesses must be carefully targeted since the degree of success will be closely connected to under-represented components of the retail sector. Therefore, local officials, other residents and business persons must recognize the revised role that the City’s small businesses will serve in the future and carefully target the support of new business.

Citizens showed strong support for investment in small businesses. Following are recommendation for small business support in De Soto.

Target New Retail Uses

De Soto should target the types of businesses in De Soto and Johnson County that are below retail standards on a per capita basis. An economic development study should be undertaken in order to identify and build on specific market strengths, minimize weaknesses, expand opportunities and respond to external threats. Further, the identification of per capita retail opportunities as compared to small businesses today would give the City, EDC and Chamber clear direction regarding businesses to target.

Expand and Enhance Public Improvements

The city should work with property owners to identify consolidation and/or expansion of existing public improvements, such as Lexington Avenue corridor improvements and evaluate the potential to reconfigure parking and other strategies that will increase convenience and safety when accessing area businesses. Parking improvements such as increased screening, landscaping and lighting should also be incorporated into expansion and enhancement projects wherever possible.

Establish a De Soto Business Incubator

Many successful businesses started as small business ventures. The promotion of small businesses in De Soto can lead to long-term economic strength in the community. In order to promote small business opportunities, the City should identify potential business incubator opportunities and partner with the EDC to assist individuals in starting and expanding new businesses. In particular, the reuse of a vacant building in De Soto as a new home for local start-up of small businesses should be pursued. The City could compound the investment by targeting the venture in revitalization areas such as Downtown De Soto or the Lexington Avenue Corridor.



Retail Market Expansion Strategies

To strengthen De Soto's retail base, new or expanded commercial development consider the following criteria:

- Existing space and building availability;
- Site and/or store visibility desired for the particular business;
- Available and/or potential parking; and
- Existing and future vehicle traffic patterns and counts.

Following an economic development study, including detailed analysis of the local market strengths and weaknesses, the City should devise an action plan around the study's findings. The action plan should market targeted business locations (coordinated with projected land uses), provide financial and other incentives, target development areas and encourage new retail business.

At the conclusion of the study De Soto should adopt specific strategies to attract new private investment. In the interim, the following strategies to increase the City's chances for success are provided:

Encourage Mixed-Use Development.

The City should support mixed-use development to allow the broadest choice in response to market demand. This may include public uses, office and residential uses within the projected business park and mixed use commercial districts. Such development may be assured of compatibility through Site Plan Review, Special Use Permit, and Planned Development District processes.

Target Commercial Rezoning.

The City should target expansion and/or new retail districts to development of concentrated commercial centers. This is illustrated on the Future Land Use Map where future commercial centers would be concentrated along K-10 Highway, Lexington Avenue, and Downtown De Soto.

Support Partnership Opportunities.

Increasingly, successful redevelopment and/or in-fill developments have relied on partnerships between the private and public sectors. Such partnerships reflect a myriad of legal arrangements from a public ownership stake to more routine assistance with infrastructure. The City's partnering role may be as simple as flexibility on use of public rights-of-way (such as in the Lexington Avenue corridor) and actual partial City ownership roles. In particular, the City should respond favorably to private initiatives and reinvestment opportunities that can be achieved through partnering opportunities.

Consider Flexible Financial Incentives.

While Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for development is widely used in Kansas, it is only one of several financial incentives for the City to utilize. Other incentives can play a role in encouraging new private investment, new jobs, or increased retail sales, including:

- Business Improvement Districts (BID);
- proactive grant applications to support private initiative; and
- property tax abatement.