

Livable Plains Community Listening Conversations

June 17 and June 22, 2011

DRAFT

Notes from June 22, 2011 Italicized

1. What's important to you in creating healthy, livable, sustainable communities in our area?

Transportation

- Transportation options (viable and attractive)
- Walkability
- Accessible mobility
- Easier biking, electric golf carts and scooter routes
- Bike lanes and sidewalks on main streets
- *Transportation for daily needs*
- *Accessibility to services -- transportation options/local foods*
- *Transportation into town if I live out in country*
- *Walkable, bikeable*
- *Mass transit to entire region*

Sense of Community

- Citizenship -- creating a sense of place/community
- Value everybody; need to involve all ages
- Connect interests
- Connect the generations
- Pulling people together (faith base, social)
- Attraction of young people to sustain the community as we leave it
- Attitudes of citizens toward the environment and citizenship
- Positive contributions. Sense of place, community, willingness to volunteer
- Coordinated effort of services that focus on retaining neighborhoods/community
- *Social interaction*
- *Entertainment options -- especially those for multiple generations*
- *Inclusive of all ages and abilities*
- *Understand diverse needs within boomer and young professional age segments*
- *Ways to volunteer -- everybody is welcome and invited to get involved*
- *Public education and communication to all generations -- use social media and traditional media*
- *Keeping neighborhoods clean and safe, diverse population of old and young*
- *Venues to interact*
- *Social engagement (front porches)*
- *Civic engagement*

Housing

- Housing -- universal design/choices
- Education about new design options
- Adaptability -- design options
- Affordability/balance
- Universal Design Homes
- Universal design homes will cost less to build than it would to make them universal later
- Ability to age in place
- *Visitability in homes*
- *Home maintenance and modifications -- universal design standards*
- *Help builders understand the market potential*

Parks, recreation, and green spaces

- Green spaces
- Access to arts and recreation
- Easy access to the arts, recreation, home, theatre
- Maintaining/creating green spaces
- *Increased recreation activities and more open space*

Community Wellness

- Focus on resources -- good healthcare and social services
- Resources/education
- Available services and assistance
- Quality of human habitat – where we live, work play
- Good jobs, schools, parks and places to walk
- Reasonably priced health care
- Quality of human habitat, both residential and commercial
- *Local food sources*
- *State of the art medical services*
- *Clean, good orderly places*
- *Social services attract families with special needs -- help maintain those services*
- *Support the growing interest in environmentally sustainable products*
- *Physical fitness options for every level*

Safety and security

- Safety and security
- *Safety -- facilities and infrastructure*
- *Safety*

Educate to look forward – future thinking planning

- Coordinated efforts
- Balance the need for good jobs, schools and recreation

- Help existing neighborhoods develop – resist sprawl
- Improved infrastructure
- Image campaign that redefines retirement
- Sustainability and desirability
- Viable downtown
- Sustainability
- Smart growth = infill, storm water protection, trees, walkable communities, transportation choices, complete streets
- *Thinking and behaving regionally*
- *Stop migration away from region -- boomers want to be closer to their children and grandchildren*
- *Mixed-use zoning*
- *Create jobs attractive to young professionals*
- *Affordable taxes*
- *Universities are key features for both age groups*
- *Good government*
- *Sustainable building and economic sustainability*
- *Look at long-term costs of developing infrastructure in green fields*
- *Great collaboration between businesses, governments and nonprofits is needed*
- *Mind set of integrated planning*
- *Thinking and behaving regionally*

2. What do we need to change?

Transportation

- Mass transit to downtown and arena with the local bus system.
- Include Northern Alliance in the state passenger train effort
- Transportation funding! Not highways but “road diets”, Northern flier, sidewalks on primary and secondary streets, smaller and quicker busses.
- Transportation – Better and more means of public transportation.
- Encouraging intergenerational communities, more funding for transportation, creatively utilize existing structure to make communities walkable and small vehicle utilization possible.

Sense of Community

- Better sense of community and inclusiveness.
- Education to let people know how a community can be. We need buy in from the residents
- More acceptances of all types of people.
- What drives us – less isolation, less “me” centered – our viewpoint of community
- Our opinion as a community. Change our image for ourselves – south Central KS
- *Attitudes about why this is a great place to live*
- *Wichita doesn't necessarily have a bad reputation; it mostly doesn't have a reputation*

Housing

- Educate about housing options
- Styles of homes – contractors & real estate agents have total control. Look beyond the bottom line.
- Building Policy/codes for new construction AND retrofits
- Local city and county building codes and zoning restrictions. Awareness of need.
- Education to let people know what different residential lifestyles options are available.
- Zoning policy

Parks, recreation, and green spaces

- Green space, recreation. No entries

Community Wellness

- Draw connection links of service, transportation and social interaction between the conglomerates of our regions communities
- Mindset that the average person should “retire” at age 65.
- Currently, cities or small towns with a majority of retirees are viewed as decaying, old, dying communities. Must change to see the power/wealth potential of the retirees of the future. (Hanrahan)
- We need a talent inventory

Safety. Security. No entries

Educate to look forward – future thinking planning

- Change perceptions that improvements to the region are for Wichita only
- Change opinions on entitlement to maintaining the status quo. We need to look beyond the next generation to two or three generations in the future. Be environmentally respectful to the future.
- .Stop suburban sprawl. Need more infill, reuse of infrastructure, reuse of existing and historic environment. Maintain diversity and richness of the environment.
- Reality check - Government is turning its back on needy populations: disabled, poor, under represented populations.
- There is currently too much difference between the “haves” and the “have not’s”
- Elect moderate, consensus building leaders: school board, city council, County commissioners, and State legislators. Not far right conservative dictators. Educate the voters
- Economic climate; tax policies
- Collaboration between public and private sectors
- Flex, annual plans for sharing skills
- Embrace energy efficiency and sustainable concepts, climate change
- *Longer term planning horizons for public investments*

3. How do we bring in businesses and other partners?

Education and communication

- Offer more specific priorities
- Celebrate successes -- award programs
- Take the message to small groups, go to their gatherings
- Educate others about benefits
- Redefine retirement. Improve the image of retirement
- Eliminate the term "Over 65"
- Talk about/celebrate the successes
- Provide education, cutting edge technologies Provide business case to change with possible initiatives
- *Highlight the points discussed in today's workshop (many contributions of seniors in this community – discretionary spending, taxes paid, social and volunteer contributions)*
- *Educate others of our strengths/ experienced workers*
- *Good resources available, attributes of Wichita (Cost of living)*
- *Show the economic benefits of a livable community*

Business Involvement

- Support/expand local businesses
- Find out who supports this issue -- ask them to join
- Create and use partnerships/coalitions
- Connect on Facebook
- Tap into talents of older workers -- new work practices
- Tap the talents of retirees.
- Personal invitations with very specific goals
- Attract businesses that serve people we want to attract to our community. Expand that which exists
- Convince them they make a difference
- Support small businesses
- Use naturally occurring gatherings
- "To this group" by creating partnerships and coalitions
- Communicate/celebrate successes, invite people
- Show benefits of joining
- Show a financial incentive and long term pay off for partnering
- New technology – cutting edge business
- Show them it will equal money in their pockets
- Talk to HR reps/business are facing a massive shortfall in human resources. They should see this as a good strategy.
- Have businesses "adopt" support a service/program
- Help them experience the community
- Ask

Review/Change existing activities

- Bring in planners
- Tax incentives
- Labor law (Jim Schwarzenberger)
- Show by doing – putting \$ where the mouth is
- First, stop the exodus of health and finance including banks and stockbrokers out of downtown.
- *Promote tax structure to region*
- *Good business environment, low taxes, community marketing*
- *Improve quality of life*
- *Infrastructure/industrial side w/rail access (inter-modal)*
- *Economic development/incentives, travel/tourism opportunities*
- *Provide avenue for businesses to fill job vacancies with quality people (young and old)*
- *Keep a goal, ongoing – to fruition*
- *Develop incubators, loans and grants for new businesses. Create awards/incentives for sustainability changes, promote businesses who make improvements*

4. What are our greatest opportunities?

Our existing assets

- Cost of living advantage over many places
- Make the most of the recession – get ready for the growth to come so the community returns stronger than before.
- Good parks systems -- need to use and promote more
- New downtown development plan and continued growth of Old Town
- Neighborhoods that are already organized. Visioneering Wichita. WIN
- Diversity
- Midwest – not too crowded. Cost of living – pace of life. Activities available for families, old town.
- Downtown is open. Lots of opportunities with plentiful parking. If new library is built, consider building it east of the river.
- Our parks, Old Town, downtown, neighborhood associations
- Parks and Green spaces have huge potential for tourism and community connectivity in WICHITA. These spaces already exist... just need some TLC and publicity
- Utilize existing Visioneering coalitions such as the economic development coalition, health and wellness coalition, environmental sustainability coalition (Kay Johnson)
- Favorable cost of living
- Economy, existing connections, Downtown
- *The people, nonprofits, volunteers (young and old), local events – Riverfest, Senior Expo, Woman’s Fair, Garden Show...and make these events accessible to people of all abilities (Riverfest was not very accessible this year for anyone with a disability or mobility issues).*
- *Downtown, regional economic development*
- *Affordable housing, can get anywhere in town in 15 minutes, great healthcare*

- *Intergenerational interactions*
- *Build on and support activity that is already going on – Health and Wellness Coalition*
- *Location, location, location – center of the country, easy to be a transportation hub/mecca for travel and tourism, need entertainment options to draw from other areas of the country – sports teams/NBA...*
- *Accessibility into Wichita – transportation, trolley, airfare, buses...*
- *Good place to raise a family, aircraft industry*
- *Our people are our greatest asset*
- *Many are open to changes, they just need the information about it*
- *People, talent expertise, dedicated*
- *Kansas/Midwest values, small community feel*
- *Space, generations of families, hard working*

Growth opportunities

- Current economy creates need to do things differently and together
- Visioneering Wichita coalitions could work together more
- Change. Aging and beginnings. Each enriches the other
- Establish/strengthen natural alliances
- Regionalization and regional planning
- Every aspect can be improved
- Educate citizens, get them informed. Form talk groups like neighborhood watch teams for dialogue.
- Intergenerational cooperation
- Teaching and promoting better options. Set the foundation for the public demanding improvements for the future. (Craig Stranathan)
- *Capitalizing on all of the various sustainability efforts and conversations that are not occurring. Create synergy by integrating efforts*
- *Create a positive “brand” to promote Wichita to people of all ages*
- *Find ways to share news, info opportunities, activities, etc. – news is fractured here*
- *If zoning laws need to change be specific about which ones are bad*
- *Enhancing our transit system*
- *Developing more on street and off street bicycle infrastructure*
- *Showcasing low cost of living, keeping young here with increased opportunities for employment and entertainment*
- *Developing downtown – attract new businesses, restaurants, shopping*
- *Keeping kids of families now here, living here*
- *Market ourselves more effectively*
- *To get the dialogue started*
- *Collaboration, Cooperation and Coordination of community development, response and living healthy*
- *Identifying ways to develop, implement, and carry out comprehensive sustainability and conservation planning that compiles energy use, transportation, local assets and benefits of change*

5. What other ideas do you wish to share?

- Bike lane's that are wide enough for 3-wheeled bicycles that seniors love
- More lanes of highways and roads will not sustain the increased population safely. Local transit and passenger rail need a focus.
- *Trains, too! From TX North to Newton*
- *Look at funding a transportation system, using a sustainable funding source that will allow going to a grid system*

- Not new ideas, just how to do!
- *There are ways to attract both young and old and integrate both of their needs. Creative and new ideas will need to be developed.*
- *This is great to talk about but unless there is a stable backbone organization that is willing to dedicate resources (staff) this is another gathering that didn't follow up with action.*

- Collaboration and education are how it can be done
- Utilize faith based organizations and community organizations to provide local compassionate social services.
- *How does this meld with other initiatives? Next steps?*
- *Creating a livable and healthy community will take time and persistence. Our grandchildren will be working on this in their time.*
- *Make sure everyone can volunteer to do something they enjoy*

- *I do not disagree with those who say we need to think of ways to retain younger adults in the community but attitude was almost "ignoring" of many contributions of older adults: economically (taxes paid, discretionary spending), socially, etc.*
- *Change the negative perception of aging (Pie in the sky idea I know but it is my wish).*

- *Internship for college students*

- *Need to figure out the finances*

- *Citizens here are their own worst enemy; they talk down about the city and area.*

- *Pro sports teams, entertainment, activities that draw all ages, all over state, border states to visit Wichita*

- *Interested in future conversation – Lindsay Frasier*