

FOREWORD

Preparing for Change: The *Wichita-Sedgwick* County Comprehensive Plan has been developed by the Metropolitan Area Planning Department (MAPD), with assistance from several citizen technical and advisory committees for Sedgwick County, the City of Wichita, the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC) and the residents of Sedgwick County and Wichita. Preparing for Change provides a rational basis and legal foundation for governing land use activities, in order to protect the public's health, safety and welfare and promote the efficient expenditure of public funds. However, since it is impossible to completely foresee the future, the plan's recommendations are intended to be flexible; used as a guide, rather than a script, to decision-making. Appropriate text and map amendments should be made as conditions change to keep the plan relevant.

THE LEGAL AUTHORITY FOR COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

The City of Wichita and Sedgwick County, Kansas, through the governing bodies and the MAPC, are authorized under Kansas Statutes Annotated (K.S.A.) 12-747(a) " . . . to make or cause to be made a comprehensive plan for the development of such city and any unincorporated territory lying outside the city but within the same county . . ." Within the context of this authority, the preparation of the comprehensive plan shall include the development of " . . . comprehensive surveys and studies of past and present conditions and trends relating to land use, population and building intensity, public facilities, transportation and transportation facilities, economic conditions, natural resources and may include any other element deemed necessary to the comprehensive plan."

Also, K.S.A. 12-747(b) states that the comprehensive plan shall show recommendations regarding the future development or redevelopment of the territory within its jurisdiction, including but not limited to the " . . . general location, extent and relationship of the use of land for agriculture, residence, business, industry, recreation, education, public buildings and other community facilities, major utility facilities both public and private . . . population and building intensity standards and restrictions . . . public facilities including transportation facilities of all types . . . public improvement programming based upon a determination of relative urgency . . . major sources and expenditure of public revenue . . . utilization and conservation of natural resources . . ." Such a comprehensive plan, after proper public notice, must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate governing body in accordance with the procedures outlined in K.S.A. 12-747(b)(1-3). In this case, adoption is necessary by the Sedgwick County Board of County Commissioners and the Wichita City Council.

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The development and use of a comprehensive plan to guide community growth is not new to Wichita or Sedgwick County. The first comprehensive plan for Wichita was adopted in **1923**, with succeeding plans in **1946, 1961, 1965** and **1978**. The last three plans were metropolitan in nature and addressed issues for Wichita and Sedgwick County. These five previous comprehensive plan efforts recognized long-range planning as an important aspect of effective community enhancement.

Preparing for Change is meant to continue the tradition of implementing long-range planning into daily activities by guiding Wichita's and Sedgwick County's policy decisions regarding growth and change through the year **2010**.

In order to effectively interject long-range thinking into day-to-day actions, the comprehensive plan:

- * Should have a long-range time frame. Long-range has always meant that the plan should be forward looking and that it should attempt to provide for the future needs of the community insofar as it is possible to make reasonable projections and judgments.
- * Should be general and remain general. The term "general" means that the plan should not involve questions of great detail, but should attempt to define the main outlines of desirable future development by showing the general location, character and extent of physical development and the relationship of those elements.
- * Should be comprehensive in scope. "Comprehensive" means that the plan should encompass the significant physical elements of the community. Social and economic factors affecting future development must be a part of the plan's analysis and recommendations.
- * Should focus on the physical development issues of the City and County. Physical development issues are those involving the coordination of basic building blocks of the built and natural environment — infrastructure, streets, land use, public facilities, topography, habitat, etc.
- * Should clearly relate identified issues to proposed goals and policies. A plan can exhibit all of the characteristics listed above, but it will not be useful to anyone if the recommended actions contained in the plan do not directly address community concerns and issues. The goals and policies recommended in the plan are intended first and foremost to serve as a guide to decision-making and provide continuity in addressing issues.

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

During the past three years the land use planning staff has followed a logical sequence of steps to develop the comprehensive plan document. Theoretically, the comprehensive planning process is made up of six to ten steps and is continuous in nature. These steps include issues identification, data gathering, data analysis, formulation of goals and objec-

tives, implementation and feedback evaluation. Such a process relies not only on the expertise of planning staff, but also on the input of experts from other fields, members of elected and appointed boards and commissions, representatives of various community interest groups and community residents at large.

Aiding planning staff on a continual basis were four citizen committees. The Steering Committee, a group of **42** citizens appointed by the MAPC, has been responsible for overseeing the development of the comprehensive plan. The Technical Resource Group (19 members) made up of professional experts in areas such as engineering, statistics, and economic development, provided staff with outside technical review and comments on the **22** technical reports which served as the foundation for the comprehensive plan. Also, two citizen groups, the Wichita Citizens Advisory Committee (**46** residents of Wichita) and the Sedgwick County Citizens Advisory Committee (31 representatives from outside of Wichita) provided a diverse set of general comments as they reviewed various technical reports. As part of the data gathering process, issues were identified by the staff, the committees cited above and the Citizen Participation Organization (CPO). From the comments made by these groups and the findings of the technical data analysis, future planning considerations were formulated and presented in the *Preparing for Change* newspaper insert. The newspaper insert, published on July **28**, 1991, provided a summary of 19 of the **22** technical reports and their findings (a condensation of approximately 675 pages of technical report information on existing conditions, current trends and future projections).

Furthermore, a community survey was included in the insert and the public was asked to provide the MAPC and planning staff with their thoughts on which issues should be addressed by Wichita and Sedgwick County governments. A total of **343** people responded. The respondents provided the following information through the survey: when asked about land use issues, improvement of the zoning ordinance was seen as most important, with the provision of incentives to encourage rehabilitation and infill second. More funding was believed to be necessary over the next 20 years in the areas of code enforcement, police services, job provision and economic base improvements, highways and streets, and downtown redevelopment. These feelings were reiterated when people were asked to indicate the top priorities for the community in the future. Again, new jobs, police service, highways and streets, and downtown redevelopment ranked high. Other items ranked near the top were environmental concern and utility services.

The Community Survey appendix of this document provides a detailed breakout of the overall response to the survey. Given the small number of respondents and the nonscientific nature of the survey, these responses should not be seen as the opinion of the total community. But nonetheless, a sense of public preference is essential to the overall development and use of the comprehensive plan. As a follow-up to the newspaper insert and survey a series of Town Hall meetings was held. Approximately 100 people provided additional input during this process.

Upon completion of the data gathering, data analysis, and public input efforts, staff began evaluating all findings and comments so as to move from existing conditions to desired goals for the future. Whereas the technical reports provided the foundation for

assessing current conditions and future prospects, the "Area Treatment Classification" element, the "Goals, Objectives and Strategies" element, the "Future Land Use" element, and the "Future Public Facilities" element provide guidance for future actions.

Implementation of the comprehensive plan begins with the adoption of the plan document and should be an ongoing, day-to-day process. The plan, by itself, does not bring about change except by identifying issues, articulating goals and objectives, defining directions, and providing information regarding the future consequences of present actions. Implementation of the plan is directly connected to daily public and private decisions regarding the allocation of public and private resources and the need to coordinate the actions resulting from those decisions.

Through land use ordinances, budgetary activities, and other legal and policy directives, including the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), the primary implementation tools for the plan are put in place. As the community changes and priorities shift, the document and associated planning efforts will need to be adjusted. Thus, the planning process and the comprehensive plan are "living" or dynamic in nature. The intent here is to ensure annual review and minor updates through continual maintenance of databases, monitoring of community issues, and follow-up on decisions made by the MAPC, other city and county departments, and the Wichita and Sedgwick County governing bodies. Major evaluations of the plan should be scheduled on five-year intervals. Such an approach makes the plan a viable instrument which is flexible and adaptable to unanticipated change.

The final component to the continuous comprehensive planning process is the acquisition and use of feedback from the community to evaluate the performance of the plan and refine the recommendations within the plan. Refinement activities, including the development of sector/area plans, the adoption of detailed public facility master plans and the use of community survey techniques, will provide a solid sense of direction for policy/decision-makers in the public and private sectors. The utilization of feedback creates a plan which is responsive to the needs of the community and not stagnant over long periods of time.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

Preparing for Change: The *Wichita-Sedgwick County Comprehensive Plan* consists of several elements, not all of which are contained in this document. The 22 technical reports which provide the basis for this plan are available to the public, but because of their length and technical focus they are not included in this document. Also, other specific facility plans used in this planning process are found under separate covers. The primary intent of this document is to provide a concise summary of existing and projected conditions, and a guide for maintaining and improving the living environment in Wichita and Sedgwick County.

This document is divided into two major sections. The first section is dedicated to existing conditions, current trends, growth projections and planning considerations which provide the context for the plan's recommendations. The "Existing Conditions, Issues, Trends and Projections" section provides an overview of Wichita and Sedgwick County

demographics, land use and physical development, environmental concerns, public facilities and services, community appearance, and other features of the living environment in Wichita and Sedgwick County.

The second major section of the document includes four elements which form the "Policy Guidance" section. The first element is the "Area Treatment Classification" element, which consists of a classification system, tools matrix and treatment map. This element is meant to give general guidance on the appropriate use of public and private resources to meet different needs in different parts of the community. The second element is the "Goals, Objectives, and Strategies" element, which provides a set of implementation actions for accomplishing community development goals. The third element is the "Future Land Use" element, including a set of location guidelines for various land uses and land use guides for the Wichita area and for countywide development, depicting the recommended land use pattern through the year 2010. The final element is the "Future Public Facilities" element, which provides an outline of potential public improvements needed to accommodate the development pattern presented in the "Future Land Use" element.

In short, the fundamental purpose of *Preparing for Change* is to provide a document for guiding public and private decision-making, in regard to the future growth of Wichita-Sedgwick County, through fiscally efficient and equitable means, by interjecting long-range thinking into day-to-day activities. This plan is not much different than previous comprehensive planning efforts in this community. In fact, many of the goals and objectives proposed in this plan (e.g., utilize existing services, preserve prime agricultural land, restrict commercial development to planned centers at major intersections,) are not new, but restate some of the goals and objectives contained in the 1978 plan. But *Preparing for Change* is different, in that the maps and strategies are more detailed in outlining specific implementation techniques, recognizing growth timing issues, and in that land use and facility needs have been studied simultaneously.