

## **Northeast Sector Plan**

### Issues Grouping

The following issues were gathered from the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) exercise at the kick-off meeting held on September 17, 2009. Planning staff has grouped the issues into common categories. Each category lists the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that specifically or generally fall under that category.

### **Land Use**

#### Strengths (Assets)

- Primary school in the area
- Low population density
- Significant portion not in the city – unincorporated
- Buffer zone to prevent flooding in Lawrence
- Low density of industrial use relative to agriculture use and pollution
- Scenic gateway to town
- Strategic location to multiple metro areas
- Easy access to State Capitol and international airport
- KU Endowment land
- Property values
- Active and involved community

#### Weaknesses (Liabilities)

- Ability to make long-term plans – use property as it is zoned
- Airport flight paths – noise, accidents, jet fuel danger
- Illumination issues from airport

#### Opportunities

- Ag land value for retirement plan – transfer equity
- Residential development for growth (not taxes)
- Within the process of drafting future land use for the Northeast Sector Plan, removal of the Midland Junction and southwest of the Lawrence Municipal Airport "snowflakes" on the Chapter 7 Map titled "Future Industrial" and consolidating them as one "snowflake" that sits on the Lawrence Municipal Airport proper.
- Farmer to farmer programs to transfer farm land and maintain retirement value for farmer

#### Threats

- Impervious surfaces
- Urbanization
- Stormwater draining south to Lawrence
- Large lot residential tracts
- Increase potential for flood issues

- 5-acre residential sprawl
- Restrictive regulations that limit ability to use own property
- Limiting future use of land to farming
- The two "snowflakes" on the Chapter 7 Map titled "Future Industrial" that identify Midland Junction and the area southwest of the Lawrence Municipal Airport.
- Catastrophic flooding – risk of levee breach – development in the flood plain
- Ever changing government regulations
- Unknown expectations
- Aging farmers and absentee farming

## **Environmental Resources**

### Strengths (Assets)

- Irrigation/groundwater for farming and rural water
- High concentration of Class 1 and 2 soils
- Soil absorbs water – for drainage concerns
- Historic floodplain
- Closeness of water table – capability to dry farm
- Shallow water table
- Kansas River for education/recreation
- Supports wildlife
- Higher rainfall – favorable micro climate for agriculture
- No chiggers – chigger free

### Weaknesses (Liabilities)

- Drainage – floodplain
- Atrazine and nitrates in groundwater
- 150 acres of airport runways covering prime soil
- Vulnerability of pollution for groundwater contamination for those that depend on it
- North Lawrence “bath tub” topography – impact of impervious surfaces
- Mosquitoes
- Westar power plant plume

### Opportunities

- Manage flood plain areas to reduce flood risk – no adverse impact

### Threats

- Poor groundwater quality
- Increased climate driven flooding
- Logging on river
- Changing climate
- Limited growing season
- Failure to recognize agriculture land as a finite resource

- Threats to wildlife due to urbanization

## **Economic Development**

### Strengths (Assets)

- Airport
- Access to highway, airport, railroad – convergence of transportation
- Close to urban markets for fresh produce
- Topography of land is attractive to certain industries
- Topography attractive for agriculture
- Educated population

### Weaknesses (Liabilities)

- Unclear business vacancy rates
- Flat land and transportation is attractive for development
- Height restriction near airport for industrial development

### Opportunities

- Establish a sustainable local food program
- Diversified tax base
- Build the Ag Economy – more jobs
- Transportation link for ag economy – rail, highway
- Agri-Tourism, Agri-Education
- Community gardens – local food – healthy living – quality of life for city dwellers
- Jobs – airport, farm-based (CSA's, U-Pick, greenhouses)
- Appropriate economic development for the area – wind generators, alternative energy – low population density helps
- KU Partnerships - outdoor lab education opportunities – aviation
- Partnership with other entities
- Collaboration among many groups – public/private
- Food security

### Threats

- Industrial development
- Developers
- Annexation by Lawrence
- Industrial disaster or UP railroad disaster
- Sand strip mining
- Increased tax base due to urbanization
- Increasing traffic
- Decreased FAA funding because of development around airport

## **Infrastructure**

### Strengths (Assets)

- Corps levee protection/reservoirs

- Minimal sanitary sewer infrastructure

#### Weaknesses (Liabilities)

- Road maintenance – city/county
- Emergency services access – response time

#### Opportunities

- Alternative sewer – on-site modular wetlands

#### Threats

- Lift sewer pump stations subject to failure
- Reservoirs silting in – harder to manage stormwater/flooding

### **Transportation**

#### Strengths (Assets)

- Accessible for multiple transportation options like walking and biking

#### Weaknesses (Liabilities)

- Train delays
- Interstate access through toll booth
- Midland Junction dangerous highway curves
- Excessive traffic speeds near airport entrance
- Constrained access between area north of the river and the city
- Excessive truck traffic

#### Opportunities

- Commuter rail between KC, Lawrence and Topeka
- Green corridor from downtown to Weaver bottoms – multi-modal
- Employment centers close to city – multi-modal

#### Threats

- Widening turnpike – noise and light pollution
- Rising fuel prices