



Economic Development Strategic Plan

November 8, 2023





MAYOR/CEO
Tyrone A. Garner

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David W. Johnston, ICMA-CM

DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & URBAN DESIGN
Gunnar Hand, AICP

LONG RANGE PLANNER
Alyssa Marcy



Report Prepared By:





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Report Snapshot – Context and Highlights

The context for economic planning in Kansas City, Kansas (KCK) is one of challenge and opportunity.

There is a clear need to **elevate and prioritize community prosperity**. Today, significant portions of the city are dealing with the impacts of decades of economic stagnation that can be traced back to the historic redlining and policies that entrenched economic inequality. There is a **strong desire to address these inequalities and build economic vibrancy and prosperity** across the whole community.

There is also opportunity. Wyandotte County and KCK have an outstanding array of economic, educational, industrial and place-based assets that can drive future economic development. These assets all have **significant upside potential** and can help deliver neighborhood development and future community prosperity.

This report lays out the future vision and economic development strategies for KCK. It identifies the key strategic pillars and actions needed to achieve future community prosperity and to enhance the lives of all residents.





1.0

Introduction – Overview of the Planning Process

As part of the PlanKCK comprehensive planning process, stakeholders from across the city, county, and region were invited to explore KCK's economic development ecosystem and how it could evolve in the future. The 9-month visioning process began in February and ended in October 2023. A key focus of this Economic Development Strategic Plan was to incorporate the four lenses of the overarching Comprehensive Plan: **Health, Equity, Access and Regeneration**. This report outlines how the extensive accumulated data has informed the identification of a unified preferred future and key strategic action areas for future economic development in KCK.

The Economic Development Strategic Plan is one part of the overall PlanKCK 'Year of Visioning' planning process.



Unified Government's KCK Economic Development Strategic Plan Development Process





1.1 | How to use this report

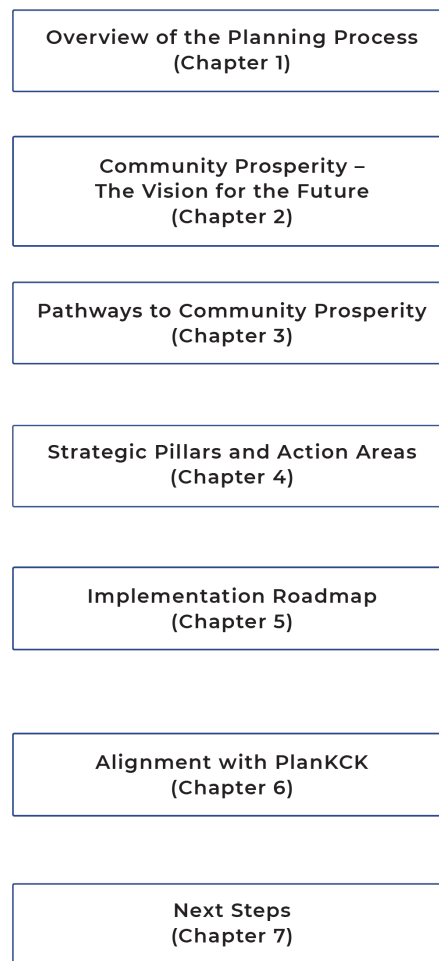
This report lays out the findings from each key step in the economic development strategic planning process.

The process proceeded from background analysis and exploration, through to identifying key priorities for investments in the future. This work represents intensive ‘future gazing’ and collaboration, where KCK stakeholders considered possible directions and the impacts and consequences of those directions. This process helped to lay the groundwork for figuring out ‘how we get there.’

Steps in the process



Sections of the report





Significant time has been contributed by PlanKCK stakeholders in the development of the many planning initiatives currently underway during this 'Year of Visioning'. This momentum will be carried forward as the plans are adopted and implemented in the coming years.

1.2 | Stakeholder Engagement Metrics

To build a **community-based** economic development strategic plan, **stakeholder input was essential**.

This economic development strategic planning work has focused on gathering significant stakeholder input. This engagement and data-driven methodology was interwoven with the overarching PlanKCK comprehensive planning process to maximize input and outreach to the community.

- The 9-month planning process began in February 2023, ran through October 2023, and included approximately 500 direct stakeholder engagements.
- A key focus of this Economic Development Strategic Plan is to incorporate the four lenses of PlanKCK: **Health, Equity, Access, and Regeneration**.
- The economic development strategic planning process was built on **significant stakeholder input**. This engagement and data-driven methodology included surveys, workshops, interviews and focus groups. It combined in-person and virtual engagement.

Focus Group Topics

Focus Groups were an important engagement element that allowed more detailed discussions. These Focus Groups explored specific opportunities in geographic areas, and overarching themes and gathered important information to support the development of specific actions. The topics included:

- Downtown Core and Main Street Development
- The Legends and Village West
- Rock Island Bridge, Connectivity, and KCMO Regional Economy
- Quindaro Townsite
- Industrial Revitalization
- Enhancing the Small Business Support Ecosystem
- Fairfax District

Key Stakeholder Engagement Metrics

- Interviews: 16 Key Stakeholders
- Vision Summit: 120+ Participants
- Vision Summit Survey (online): 52 Responses
- Focus Groups: Seven Meetings; 210 Participants
- Business Survey (online): 35 Responses
- Community Prosperity Roundtable: 80+ Participants
- Neighborhood Summit: 120+ Participants



2.0 Community Prosperity – Our Vision for the Future

Throughout the planning process, there has been a core focus on **elevating community prosperity and livability**. This was a central theme in the stakeholder discussions and was a universally supported desired outcome.

In the context of PlanKCK, this includes a **strong neighborhood approach** that builds more connected, livable, and prosperous local communities. The vision included the notion of walkable neighborhoods, where you can access all your needs and wants within a 15-minute walk, bike, transit, or car trip. The planning work has also identified the **critical role that economic development will play** to shape the current and future economic vitality of the city. Wyandotte County and KCK have an outstanding array of economic, educational, industrial and place-based assets that can drive future economic development. These assets all have significant upside potential and can help deliver neighborhood development and community prosperity. It was also identified that **small businesses will play a critical role** in the future economic fabric of the city.

To make the vision a reality, two (2) macro over-arching themes were identified. These are:

- **Community and Workforce Approach.** There is a strong desire for intentional investment in building a strong and equitable community fabric. This includes a desire for a future focus on building new workplace-based models that especially help support working families. This approach would aim to foster new ideas, cultures, and experiences. There is an opportunity for a broad approach to attracting new people that supports an inclusive regional community that values equity and diversity; and
- **Development Trajectory.** Stakeholders have identified a desire for a strong focus on building upon existing infrastructure in creative ways and investing in local scale entrepreneurial activities. There is a recognition of the value of a strong mixed-use approach, with an emphasis on redevelopment and repurposing aimed to maximize existing infrastructure. This is especially the case in the traditional urban core. Both themes require greater transportation options, partnerships with KCKCC, and supporting business sectors that spur innovation and job creation and help build climate resilience.

For additional information on the PlanKCK Vision Summit, please read the *PlanKCK Vision Summit Report* at <https://www.wycokck.org/PlanKCK>. (See also Appendix A)



“KCK is uniquely positioned to grow its economy from within. If we choose to grow our food, and make products right here, we can keep KCK money (and KCK kids) right here.”

PlanKCK Vision Summit Survey Respondent

PlanKCK Vision Summit

To identify the preferred future for KCK, stakeholders participated in a scenario-planning workshop called a Vision Summit. The PlanKCK Vision Summit was intended to launch the development of a comprehensive vision for the future of KCK that will guide leadership and stakeholders looking out over the next 25 years.

3.0 Pathways to Community Prosperity

The community engagement work has highlighted the desire to elevate community prosperity. The pathways to community prosperity* include the following main approaches:

- **A Restorative and Regenerative Economy.**
- **Housing as a Human Right.**
- **Equitable Transit-Oriented Development.**
- **Parks and Open Space Equity.**

This economic development strategy report specifically focuses on the Restorative and Regenerative Economy approach. This work has focused on creating the building blocks for a restorative and regenerative economy and finding creative ways to build local community prosperity. There is also a strong focus on enhancing the community fabric and character. This is very important in building civic pride, reconnecting neighborhoods, and strengthening cultural diversity. In this report we have explored strategies that leverage existing local assets and build local systems of support. More broadly, the PlanKCK work covers all the main approaches that create pathways to community prosperity.

The term restorative economy was coined by Nwamaka Agbo and is:

“Restorative Economics is an invitation for communities to come together and form relationships that allow them to reimagine a new way of being grounded in cooperation instead of competition, inclusion instead of exclusion, and abundance instead of scarcity. With a Restorative Economics approach, neighbors can come out from behind their fences and gather in the streets to make decisions about how to invest in and transform a blighted empty lot or create a climate resilient energy microgrid. Restorative Economics places the wellbeing of the community directly into the hands of the community.”

Nwamaka Agbo [www.nwamakaagbo.com/restorative-economics]



* Footnote: This approach to Community Prosperity is credited to SPARRCC (The Strong, Prosperous and Resilient Communities Challenge), which is a multiyear initiative investing in and amplifying local efforts in Atlanta, the San Francisco Bay Area, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, and Memphis to ensure that public investments in the built environment reduce racial disparities, build a culture of health, and respond to the climate crisis.



3.1 | Leveraging KCK's Economic Assets

Wyandotte County and KCK, have an outstanding array of economic, educational, industrial and place-based assets that can drive future economic development. These assets all have **significant upside potential** and can help deliver neighborhood development and future community prosperity.

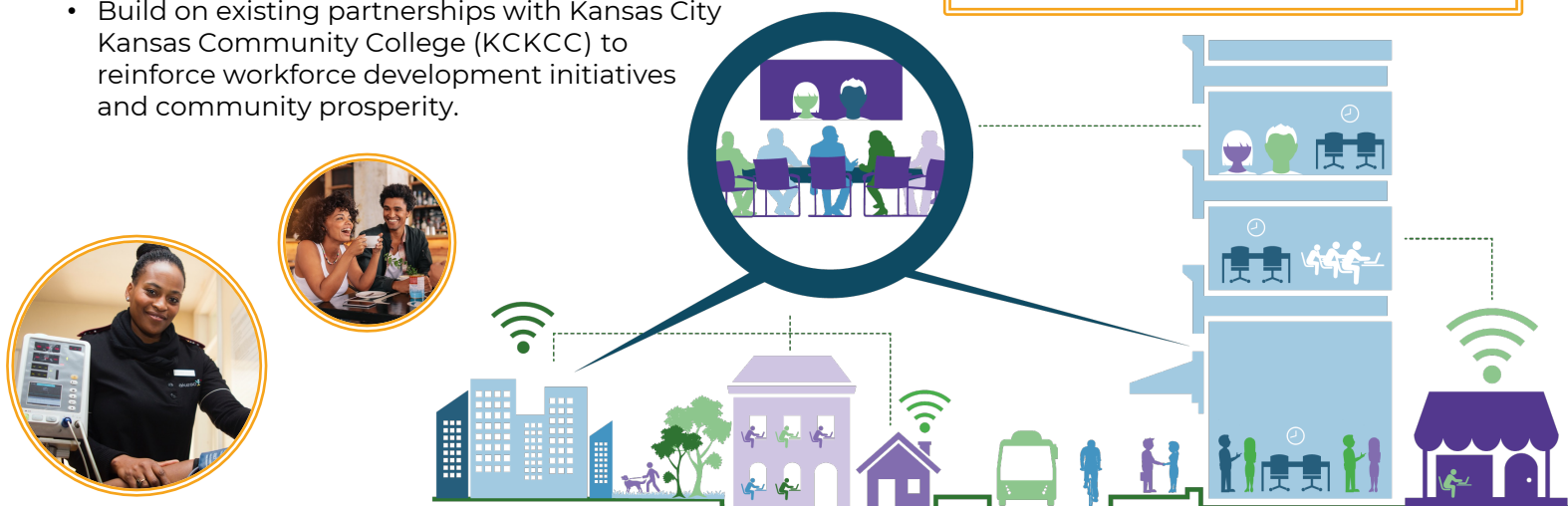
PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS:

- Build a strong support system for small and local business development that creates pathways to economic prosperity.
- Find creative ways to better connect growth in Village West with KCK's urban core, and spread the economic impact.
- Focus on Downtown KCK and other 'Main Streets,' as key locations for regeneration of community identity and help build the local economy.
- Foster a 'River City' approach that capitalizes on this unique and under-utilized zone for recreation, connectivity, neighborhoods and new economic growth.
- Build on the high interest in Quindaro Townsite, and its cultural importance and economic potential.
- Capitalize on the strong medical cluster around the University of Kansas Medical Center (KU Med).
- Connect into the larger Kansas City, Missouri downtown area, and leverage this ongoing reinvestment into KCK.
- Build on existing partnerships with Kansas City Kansas Community College (KCKCC) to reinforce workforce development initiatives and community prosperity.

Key findings:

- There are over 3,430 businesses in Wyandotte County.
- Key business sectors include retail; professional, scientific and technical services; construction; industrial; and healthcare.
- Wyandotte County features an extensive network of economic development stakeholders and collaborative partners.
- The median household income in KCK is \$50,554, which is significantly lower than the Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical Area's \$75,500.
- Both KCK and the Kansas City MSA are projected to grow economically in the coming years.

*UG-KCK State of the Economy
Snapshot Report*



3.2 | Jobs and Workforce Development

A key pathway for individual and community prosperity is the ability to find living wage jobs and build future career paths. Wyandotte County and KCK data show mixed results.

A key feature that defines the employment patterns in Wyandotte County is the relatively large number of workers who commute in and out of the county each day. Those who commute in are earning more than those who commute out. This represents a lost opportunity for local community prosperity.

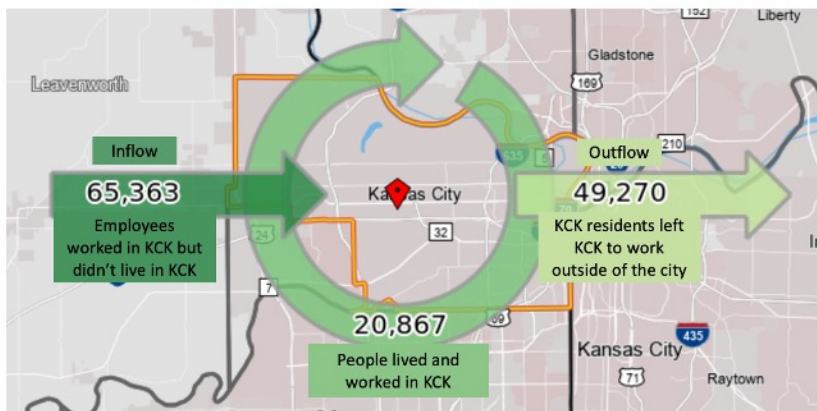
A key approach in the economic development strategy is **building the future connections between the local employment opportunities and the potential local workforce**. This will require a focus on skill development, increased connectivity, and an ongoing intentional partnership building approach. An example would be KCKCC and their Downtown KCK Campus as a path toward skill development and urban core revitalization.

Key findings:

- Wyandotte County is home to over 72,200 private sector jobs. (*UG-KCK State of the Economy Snapshot Report*)
- Wages in Wyandotte County skew higher for employees coming into the county for work compared to county residents. (*UG-KCK State of the Economy Snapshot Report*)
- 44% of Wyandotte County residents cited employment and income as one of the top barriers to health. (*Wyandotte County Community Health Assessment 2022 Full Report*)
- Transportation, skill development, childcare, and needed job search and interview skills are cited by Wyandotte County residents as the most common barriers to employment. (*Wyandotte County Community Health Assessment 2022 Full Report*)
- In FY 2021-2022, KCKCC supported 11,633 regional jobs and had an economic impact of \$764.9 million in income to the KCKCC Service Area economy. (*The Economic Value of Kansas City Community College, Executive Summary, October 2023*)

Employment Insights - Inflow/Outflow

All cities experience differing balances of workers who come to a place to work and residents who leave their communities for employment. Of the residential workforce of Kansas City, Kansas, about a third (30%) of residents live and work in the city. KCK imports high-wage earners and exports low-wage workers.



This diagram illustrates the inflow and outflow of employees in Kansas City, Kansas, articulated in the adjacent table. Note: Data presented above reflect the most recently available data. Jobs reflect total jobs rather than private sector employment, as shown elsewhere in this report. Source: US Census, On the Map

2019 Kansas City, Kansas
Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs)

	Count	Share
Employed in KCK	86,230	--
Employed in KCK but Lived Outside	65,363	76%
Employed and Lived in KCK	20,867	24%
Lived in KCK	70,137	--
Lived in KCK but Employed Outside	49,270	70%
Lived and Employed in KCK	20,867	30%





3.3 | Development and Market Forces

A key element of the visioning work as part of PlanKCK has identified a desire for a strong focus on building upon existing infrastructure in creative ways and investing in local scale entrepreneurial activities. There is a recognition of the value of a strong mixed-use approach with an emphasis on redevelopment and repurposing aimed to maximize existing infrastructure. This includes a focus on greater transportation options, and supporting business sectors that spur innovation and job creation and help build climate resilience.

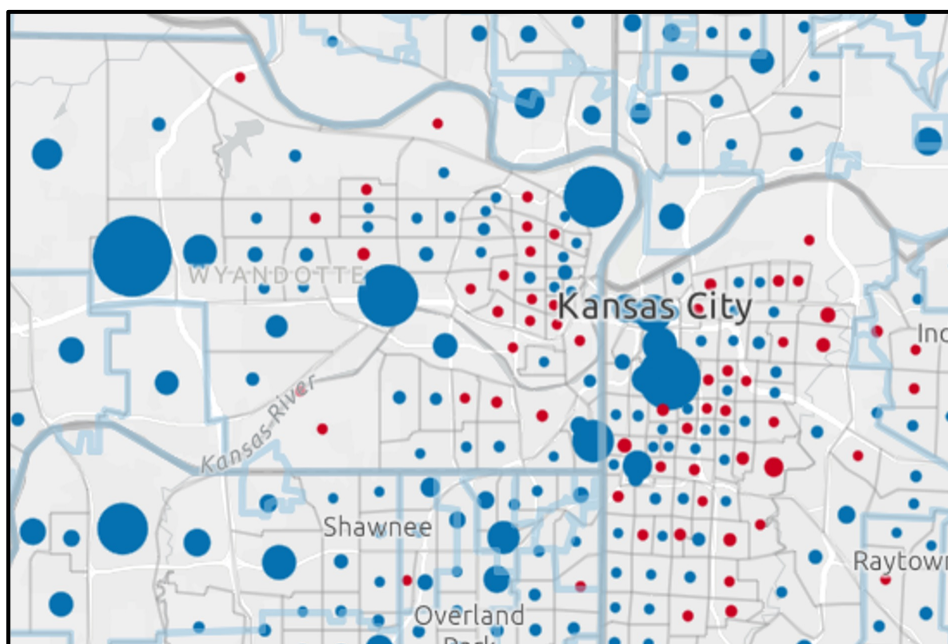
Key findings:

- Wyandotte County’s promising growth trends signal opportunity for continued investment.
- Development in recent years has been concentrated in Western Wyandotte, along Turner Diagonal, and adjacent to the Kansas-Missouri boarder.
- Wyandotte County’s industrial and multifamily markets are positioned for the most demand in the coming years.
- The county’s commercial market has moderate demand for hospitality and retail uses with limited demand for office growth based on the post-pandemic market climate.

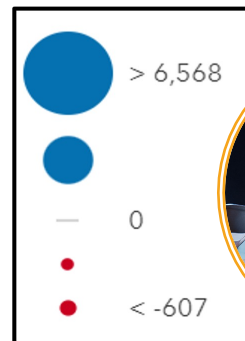
2023 Countywide Market Analysis

This desire runs against existing prevailing market forces, which are tending to drive development into greenfield and new industrial sites to the west. The Regional employment forecast projections anticipate significant employment increases in 3 key areas of KCK. These 3 areas include north of Edwardsville near the Kansas Speedway (+43%), the Fairfax Industrial District (31%), and around the industrial areas along the Kansas River (+75%) as illustrated in the map below.

The challenge in the PlanKCK process and the economic development strategic plan is to create approaches that **help bring economic and small business development into the urban core and its neighborhoods**, and to help create more LOCAL employment.



Regional Projected Employment Change 2020 to 2050



4.0 Economic Development Strategic Pillars

The 7 strategic pillars of the Kansas City, Kansas Economic Development Strategic Plan feature core opportunities for enhancing community prosperity and livability in KCK and Wyandotte County.



Equity

Increasing pathways to local job opportunities, inclusively prioritizing educational attainment, workforce development solutions, and growing the entrepreneurial and small business ecosystem of KCK and Wyandotte County contribute to alleviating disparity amongst local residents and planning for a future economy for all.



Regeneration

Building a regenerative economy includes diversifying the economy for a resilient future. From business and industry attraction that prioritizes green initiatives to concentrating new development to alleviate burdens on infrastructure to renovating existing building stock helps ensure a regenerative future for KCK and Wyandotte County, a regenerative future that intertwines with economic factors.



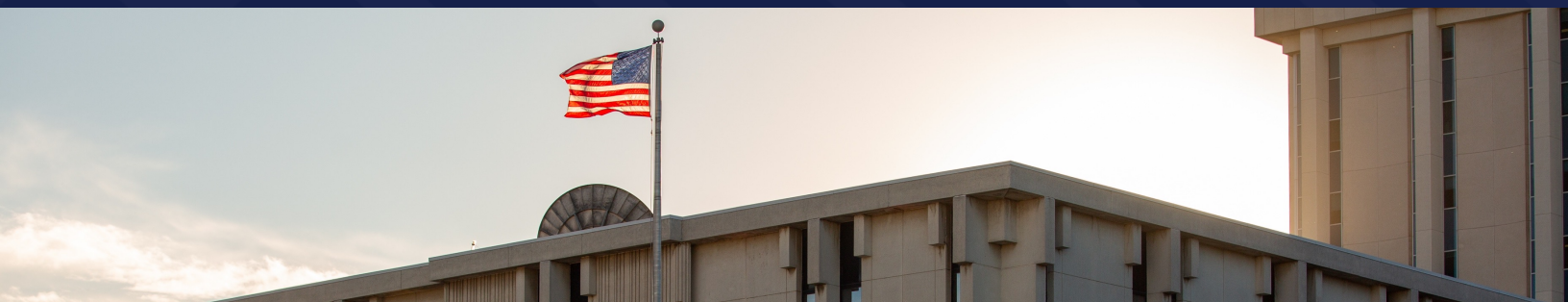
Access

Concentrating economic development areas throughout KCK at key clusters increases access to education and job opportunities for KCK and Wyandotte County residents. Ensuring that residents and workers have both transportation access and skill development for the city, county, and region's industries leads to higher employment rates and upward economic mobility.



Health

Improving community health improves local economies. Raising median household incomes can help reduce the financial burdens of healthcare costs. Increasing and bettering local employment opportunities provides residents access to enhanced healthcare coverage.





4.1 | Strategic Pillar Framework





4.2 STRATEGIC PILLAR 1:

Downtown Core & Main Street Development

Improve the economic success of KCK's downtown core and Main Street business corridors.

Downtown KCK and its urban neighborhoods are a vital asset for the future economic growth of the city. Downtown is home to civic institutions, community services and amenities, and a neighboring residential fabric with opportunities to intentionally concentrate investment for a more robust local economy.

Development and redevelopment efforts that leverage existing infrastructure investment and the strength of the rich community network in the area can contribute to a sense of place unparalleled in the region. Orienting strategic actions towards bolstering opportunities for enhanced attraction through placemaking, branding, and pathways for economic and community prosperity can improve the area's vibrancy, business growth, and experience of KCK.

Key Economic Development Partners

- WYEDC
- KCK Chamber
- Downtown Shareholders
- Visit Kansas City Kansas
- Wyandotte Nation
- KCKCC Downtown Campus
- El Centro, Inc.
- BPU
- *and more!*

Resource Spotlight: **Main Street America™**

Main Street: A Proven Framework for Community Revitalization

"The Main Street movement grew out of a recognition that a community is only as strong as its core...Main Street empowers communities to set their own destinies. While revitalization is challenging work, the Main Street program offers a road-map for locally-owned, locally-driven prosperity."

- Main Street America

Blending economic development, community development, and historic preservation, Main Street™ is a nationally acclaimed model for revitalizing commercial corridors and downtowns. Main Street Kansas provides an implementable framework for technical assistance and capacity building for local economic development. From façade improvements and beautification efforts to business support to activation and marketing, Designated Main Streets authentically celebrate and enhance commercial cores.

For more information, please visit: www.mainstreet.org and www.kansascommerce.gov/program/community-programs/main-street



Key Strategic Action Areas

- 1. Create a collaborative and holistic approach for the downtown core that represents the cultures, community, and history of KCK while revitalizing and leveraging the existing built form for investment, business, and storefront opportunities.** Downtown KCK reflects a mix of diverse voices, experiences, and perspectives that can be celebrated as unique characteristics of the downtown fabric.
- 2. Activate Downtown KCK through experiences, events, education, and businesses.** New and enhanced reasons to visit Downtown KCK will bolster the local customer base of the area, spark community gathering and activity, improve social infrastructure, and demonstrate investment in the community. The new Kansas City Kansas Community College Downtown Campus will draw students and new jobs to the downtown that will generate new revenue and opportunities for KCK business growth strategies could range from reducing storefront vacancies with new businesses to encouraging vendors and mobile-based businesses to help activate the urban core.
- 3. Identify and work to remove barriers for a thriving business mix in Downtown KCK.** Local stakeholders cited regulatory challenges that have limited development and business activity that would generate positive economic impacts in the area. For example, parking regulations tied to liquor laws make it challenging for eating and drinking establishments to open downtown. Restaurants and bars add to the vibrancy and experiences of downtown cores and can be beneficial additions to Downtown KCK. Identifying and supporting partners that help businesses navigate regulatory and code enforcement hurdles can alleviate pain points for local business growth.
- 4. Establish a KCK Main Street Program in commercial corridors best suited for the Main Street approach.** In collaboration with local businesses and community groups, a KCK Main Street Program in dedicated commercial corridors across the city provides a holistic framework and a proven model for community-based economic development, bridging historic preservation, economic development, and community development through a well-tested approach that transforms commercial districts.



Near-Term Implementation Steps

- Establish a Downtown KCK Commercial Historic District.
- Update the Downtown Area Plan.
- Establish a KCK Main Street Program in partnership with Kansas Main Street and Downtown Shareholders.
- Leverage the UC's Land Bank to support a mix of urban infill uses.
- Conduct a downtown regulatory audit to identify barriers to business attraction, redevelopment efforts, and economic growth.
- Activate vacant storefronts with community arts programs by linking property owners to local artists, such as those found at the Third Friday Art Walks on 6th Street.





4.3 STRATEGIC PILLAR 2:

Village West and Western Wyandotte

Continue the economic success of the area around Village West and western Wyandotte through strategic infill development.

Western Wyandotte County features a cluster of economic activity spurred by the Kansas Speedway with its inaugural NASCAR races in 2001. Major retail and hospitality developments, including The Legends Outlets Kansas City and Hollywood Casino at Kansas Speedway, catalyzed additional development in western Wyandotte County. Today, Village West and the western Wyandotte County area remain a hub for sporting and tourism for the region.

Over the past decade, an uptick in development around Village West brought continued hospitality growth, multifamily residential development, commercial office space, and new retail centers to the area. Industrial and flex uses, including the \$403 million Urban Outfitters' Distribution Center, have formed on the area's periphery. These recent investments continue to cluster and concentrate employment in the area, and strategic investments that continue to create a more walkable, transit-oriented development (TOD) district will further support reinvestment and access across Wyandotte County while optimizing existing infrastructure investments.

Key Economic Development Partners

- WYEDC
- City of Bonner Springs
- City of Edwardsville
- Visit Kansas City Kansas
- Kansas Speedway
- Legends Outlets Kansas City
- Kansas City Monarchs
- Sporting Kansas City
- American Royal
- Homefield
- Urban Outfitters
- *and more!*

Best Practice: **A Collaborative Opportunity**

Creating Synergies with Bonner Springs and Edwardsville Economic Development Approaches

"The playbook for improving economic opportunity is not only multidimensional but also multi-jurisdictional."

- Brookings Institute

Working collectively with Bonner Springs and Edwardsville on economic development approaches in western Wyandotte can yield stronger successes as this area within KCK abuts both municipalities. Continuing to create an ecosystem of economic collaboration rather than competition embodies the spirit of the Unified Government and can progress socioeconomic and market factors that span regionally.

Liu, A., Joseph Parilla, B. M., Ray, R., Timothy J. Bartik, M. M., & Teryn Zmuda, L. B. (2022, March 9). *A modern case for regional collaboration*. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/a-modern-case-for-regional-collaboration/>



Key Strategic Action Areas

- 1. Collaborate with Bonner Springs and Edwardsville on shared economic development goals, particularly in western Wyandotte.** Regional economic benefits and impacts extend beyond jurisdictional lines, and KCK, Bonner Springs, and Edwardsville all work to position Wyandotte County for economic growth and prosperity. Incorporating key economic development leaders in Bonner Springs and Edwardsville in planning for western Wyandotte's future land uses ensures a collaborative approach towards shared goals.
- 2. Strategically diversify the economic activity in Village West and Wyandotte County for continued resiliency and economic growth.** Strengthening the mix of uses in Village West and nearby areas to increase housing and employment options positions the area for balanced opportunities for living, working, and access to amenities. Optimally mixing hospitality, residential, retail, office, and industrial uses in a more clustered, walkable and transit-oriented district can generate a more robust and equitable economic base that builds upon existing investments.
- 3. Work to ensure that Village West is positioned for year-round tourism and attraction.** As a major area in the regional tourism market, western Wyandotte offers visitor assets that bring outside spending to Wyandotte County. Protect the existing assets at and near The Legends while also attracting additional investment for 365-day tourism.
- 4. Connect investment and economic benefits in western Wyandotte with other areas of the county, including the urban core.** Prioritize workforce solutions, including connection and transportation for KCK and UG residents for improved access to jobs and amenities in Village West. Assess mechanisms and opportunities for equity development that connect western Wyandotte's investment and economic activity with other areas of Wyandotte County. Increasing transportation options and connectivity to Village West can improve access to employment opportunities across the city and county.



Near-Term Implementation

- Update the Prairie-Delaware Piper Area Plan to establish an updated economic and land use vision for the area.
- Continue a collaborative relationship between KCK; Bonner Springs; and Edwardsville to achieve economic prosperity in western Wyandotte.
- Plan for and strengthen the economic benefits that will arise with the 2026 World Cup. Coordinate an interjurisdictional advocacy and marketing campaign for increased visitor consumer spending during the event throughout Wyandotte County and its local and small businesses.
- Upgrade to fast and frequent transit service between Village West and Downtown KCK along State Avenue and support land use changes that build new transit-oriented communities along the County's primary commercial corridors.





4.4 STRATEGIC PILLAR 3:

Riverfront Development

Enhance the local economy by leveraging the Rock Island Bridge, improved connectivity, and access to the broader KCMO region.

Cities across the country are reimagining their industrial riverfronts as economic, environmental, and recreational assets. The riverfront development trend in urban planning recognizes the value generated by transforming often industrial and forgotten sites into hubs of economic activity and redevelopment.

With the Rock Island Bridge transforming as the country’s “First Destination Landmark Bridge” and “America’s First Entertainment District Over a River,” the reimagining of the Kansas River is already underway in KCK. This catalytic project can spark investment and reimagining the riverfront for the whole county and region. As a spine threading KCK, Edwardsville, and Bonner Springs, establishing a bold vision for development, recreation, and connectivity can generate significant reinvestment in the community.

Key Economic Development Partners

- Rock Island Bridge /Flying Truss
- Friends of the Kaw
- Armourdale Renewal Association
- Historic West Bottoms Association
- Port KC
- Bonner Springs/Edwardsville Chamber of Commerce
- Kaw Valley Drainage District
- Visit Kansas City Kansas
- *and more!*

Case Study Spotlight: Redevelopment of “The Bottoms” in Franklinton



The Scioto River Peninsula and Franklinton neighborhood in downtown Columbus, Ohio, has historically been prone to devastating flooding, causing disinvestment and limited growth over the years. After capital investment to address floodplain issues and creating optimal conditions for redevelopment, Franklinton emerged as a hotspot for redevelopment, bringing premiere office users, residents, hospitality operators, and retailers to the now Franklinton Arts District and generating economic and fiscal benefits for the city.

Image Courtesy of Kaufman Development; For more information, please review the Franklinton Target Area Plan - https://www.columbus.gov/uploadedFiles/Columbus/Departments/Development/Housing_Division/20.4.6-TAP_digital2.pdf.



Key Strategic Action Areas

- 1. Foster a “River City” approach to the Kansas River waterfront through redevelopment, recreation, and connectivity.** KCK’s riverfront represents an opportunity to make a statement of the aspirational future vision of the Kansas River as an economic engine and cultural destination for KCK. Cities in the US have taken bold steps to reimagine riverfronts beyond just recreational park space, but as economic drivers to their city. Models such as Franklinton in Columbus, Ohio’s capital investment to alleviate floodplain issues and Pittsburgh’s Guide to Riverfront Development highlight strategic implementation precedents and case studies. Establish a bold vision for how riverfront redevelopment can reimagine underutilized areas. Explore themes of connectivity for visitors, residents, and workers. Recognize and plan for the Kansas River as a recreational hub for Wyandotte County and the larger region. Explore public-private partnership opportunities to implement catalytic projects.
- 2. Leverage the Rock Island Bridge investment to develop the area as a destination for enhanced tourism.** Rock Island Bridge stakeholders have developed intentional public, private, and nonprofit partnerships to ensure the project's success. Providing a macro lens to the broader visitor experience can help connect this investment with other key areas of KCK, including Downtown KCK, the urban core, and at key commercial corridors such as 7th Street and Kansas Avenue. Consider gateways, redevelopment, and business opportunities in the Armourdale neighborhood that enhance visitorship to the Rock Island Bridge and the broader experience for users while sharing the benefits of such investment with existing riverfront neighborhoods.
- 3. Balance redevelopment and community development efforts for the revitalization of the Kansas River riverfront.** Encourage and ensure redevelopment balances community needs, such as affordable housing and quality employment opportunities. Proactively work to ensure equitable economic development outcomes, looking to best practices and tools that reduce gentrification concerns and both residential and commercial displacement as changes to the broader neighborhood occur. Community engagement and participation in future planning efforts will be paramount to balance these factors.



Near-Term Implementation

- Support and help alleviate barriers to ensure the success of the Rock Island Bridge redevelopment.
- Establish a River City Vision and Master Plan for redevelopment, recreation, and connectivity opportunities along the Kansas River and Missouri Rivers.
- Identify gateway, wayfinding, and connectivity opportunities to improve the Rock Island Bridge’s broader visitor and user experience, helping to bring people to the bridge, employees to jobs, and customers to local KCK businesses.





4.5 STRATEGIC PILLAR 4:

Quindaro Townsite

Establish cultural heritage tourism centered around the Quindaro Townsite.

The Quindaro Townsite National Commemorative Site is a symbol of the legacy and history of the Wyandotte Nation and Abolitionists in KCK. With its name interpreted as “in union there is strength,” Quindaro Townsite connects historic preservation, crucial storytelling, cultural significance, the populations that lived in Quindaro, and generations of their descendants.

The divide between historic preservation and economic development is closing as more recognize the vital link between cultural heritage tourism, vibrant local economies, and sustainable preservation efforts. Shifting recognition of the Quindaro Townsite beyond archaeological and historic preservation efforts toward a catalyst for economic and community prosperity builds upon decades of conversations for continued actionable momentum.

Key Economic Development Partners

- Groundwork Northeast Revitalization Group
- Wyandotte Nation (NRG)
- Western University Association of the A.M.E. Church, Inc.
- Vernon Multipurpose Center
- Old Quindaro Museum
- *and more!*

Best Practice:

Community Building Approach to Cultural Heritage Tourism

Taking a Community-First Approach to Cultural Heritage Tourism Development

“Cultural heritage tourism is based on the mosaic of places, traditions, art forms, celebrations and experiences that portray this nation and its people, reflecting the diversity and character of the United States.”

- National Association of State Arts Agencies

Empowering communities at the onset of developing cultural heritage tourism approaches creates a more inclusive process, fundamental as cultural heritage intersects with a community’s identity and pride – an approach already taken by stakeholders. Economic benefits, more sustainable outcomes, stronger appeal to funders, broadening community involvement and support, and a more equitable approach are just some of the benefits when prioritizing the community through all stages of cultural heritage tourism planning and implementation.

Partners for Livable Communities, and Americans for the Arts. (2014). Cultural Heritage Tourism. <https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/culturalheritagetourism.pdf>

Kansas City, Kansas Public Library. Quindaro History. <https://www.kckpl.org/kansas/quindaro.html>

FROM THIS OVERLOOK, SOME OF THE RUINS FROM THE OLD QUINDARO TOWNSHIP CAN BE VIEWED, AND AS PRESERVED, REMINDS US THAT QUINDARO MUST LIVE ON IN OUR HEARTS FOREVER. THE AREA, ONCE MIGHTY, ALSO SERVES AS A REMINDER OF MAN'S MORTALITY, AND OF OUR QUEST FOR FREEDOM, DIGNITY AND ABOVE ALL, HUMANITY. AS THE FREEDMEN AND THE EXODUSERS PASSED THROUGH THIS PLACE, THERE RANG A COMMONALITY THROUGH THEIR VOICES: THAT NO MAN SHALL BE SUBJECTED TO SLAVERY, AND THAT ALL MEN ARE FREE!

DEDICATED TO THE PEOPLE OF QUINDARO AND THE FREE STATE OF KANSAS
LAVERT A. MURRAY

Key Strategic Action Areas

- 1. Advocate and support the enhancement of historic preservation efforts and sharing the story of the Quindaro Townsite.** Communicate the relationship between historic preservation, cultural heritage tourism, and economic development.
- 2. Continue momentum with the Quindaro Townsite Task Force to combine voices, increase partnership, and provide improved pathways for collaboration.** The Mayor's Quindaro Townsite Task Force provides a space for all stakeholders to participate and guide the future of the Quindaro Townsite historic preservation and cultural heritage tourism efforts. Collaboration and partnership amongst the varied voices of the Quindaro Townsite is fundamental to a successful future and should continue to be prioritized across all stages of the process.
- 3. Link and connect the Quindaro Townsite with other key cultural heritage sites across KCK, Wyandotte County, and other regional anchors leveraging the Northeast KCK Heritage Trail Plan.** The Northeast KCK Heritage Trail Plan is a community-led initiative that provides a plan and framework for a Heritage Trail throughout the Northeast KCK community. Adopted in 2022, The NE KCK Heritage Trail Plan identifies a route connecting the Quindaro Townsite, Downtown KCK and Kaw Point via a myriad of cultural assets. With economic development identified as one of four pillars in the plan, economic development stakeholders should advocate and support the plan's implementation. The plan's framework provides tangible actions outlined to achieve this vision developed by the community.
- 4. Balance the cultural heritage tourism opportunity of the Quindaro Townsite, tell the authentic story of the area's history, and improve local business opportunities in the nearby area.** Cultural heritage tourism brings outside spending dollars to the local community, building business viability and investment in the area. Importantly, tourism and economic development efforts must intentionally balance economic growth and locally-based equitable reinvestment, a priority highlighted in the NE KCK Heritage Trail Plan.



Near-Term Implementation

- Continue the Quindaro Townsite Task Force with representation across a wide range of stakeholders. Establish a UG Economic Development Staff Member Liaison for the Task Force.
- Develop a Management Plan to preserve the Quindaro Townsite and bolster the local economy through cultural heritage tourism. Leverage the Management Plan to attract funders for implementation.
- Implement the Northeast KCK Heritage Trail that links Quindaro Townsite to Kaw Point through the historic northeast area.



4.6 STRATEGIC PILLAR 5:

Industrial Revitalization

Reinvest in the industrial sector of KCK and Wyandotte County.

KCK's economic base features a high concentration of industrial users. In 2023, one out of every three jobs in Wyandotte County were within industries centered around industrial sectors, including manufacturing, warehousing, and transportation. Industrial development has long been part of the KCK identity. The Fairfax Industrial District, renowned as the first planned industrial district in the US, celebrated a century of industrial contribution to the region. Today, the Fairfax District's success stories range from producing 85% of the global supply of Cheez-Its to the only automobile plant manufacturing the Chevrolet Malibu.

Industrial investment continues to grow in Wyandotte County. The recent development of the Turner Logistics Center symbolizes the continued demand for industrial delivery as the largest industrial delivery in the county over the last decade. The county's 1.3% industrial vacancy rate and projected demand of up to 1.7 million square feet highlight the significant opportunity to continue bolstering industrial intensification in KCK.

Key Economic Development Partners

- WYEDC
- Fairfax Industrial Association
- Armourdale Renewal Association
- Groundworks NRG
- Edwardsville/Bonner Springs Chamber of Commerce
- KansasWORKS
- KCKCC
- KCADC
- *and more!*

Best Practice: **Industrial Intensification**

An emerging theme of focus in the industrial market landscape is the concept of industrial intensification, a strategy for improving the productivity of industrial sites and areas. When market forces limit the supply of industrial opportunities, yet demand remains high, intensifying the density and efficiency of industrial properties accommodates continued industrial growth. This established global trend, becoming more prevalent in high-market cities in the US, highlights upcoming industrial development conversations. Increasing allowable density, improving flexibility of uses, and quantifying the economic value of production exemplify ways to monitor, measure, and develop the intensification of industrial uses.

Warden, Josie. Integrating Manufacturing in the City. (2019). Cities of Making. <https://citiesofmaking.com/integrating-urban-manufacturing-a-few-trends/>
Whitehead, Russell; Kuno, Christopher; Wu, Amin. Metro Vancouver Industrial Intensification Analysis. (2021). Metro Vancouver.

Key Strategic Action Areas

1. Increase infrastructure investment in the Fairfax Industrial District and key industrial areas.

The Fairfax Industrial District's infrastructure conditions have fallen below competitive standards. Sidewalks, curbs, and intersection enhancement are needed to improve roadway and traffic conditions, a longstanding need identified in the area's 2018 area planning efforts. Increasing walkability and safe pedestrian access from bus stops to businesses helps attract and retain the local employment base. Businesses also cited power and utility shortages as negatively impacting revenues. Limited public transportation for employees has created an overreliance on informal carpool networks, which reduces the reliability and impacts the labor pool for companies in the area. Investment in the public realm in industrial districts signals to corporate owners that the area is positioned for growth and stability and encourages enhanced capital investment and retention.

2. Improve messaging, communication, and storytelling of "Industry" in KCK. Wyandotte County's industrial users embody a dynamic landscape from traditional industry sectors to emerging technological and sustainability-focused businesses. Enhancing storytelling of industry's role in KCK, both historically and in today's economy, can evolve the perception of this critical sector, attract and retain industrial users, and improve regional brand recognition.

3. Connect with the community for continued workforce development. Focus on youth workforce development, including high school and post-secondary, and skill pathways. Focus on youth workforce development, including high school, KCKCC, and post-secondary employment and skill pathways. Continued industrial growth in KCK and Wyandotte County offers enhanced local employment opportunities while also contingent upon continuing to develop a skilled workforce for industrial businesses. The industrial sector provides a broad spectrum of the quality of jobs and corresponding wages. Strengthening workforce and skill development within the county's key industry sectors can help local residents improve access to higher-quality jobs.

4. Position Wyandotte County to be a leader in the regional industrial sector. Home to 15% of the Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical Area's and (MSA's) industrial space, Wyandotte County is a key industrial hub. With county market performance exceeding regional metrics, Wyandotte County stands to take a stronger leadership role in the regional industrial market through both expansion and intensification.

5. Continue to evolve use classifications and zoning districts to proactively increase the availability of industrial/flex land and neighborhood-based employment opportunities. Modern technology-focused industry and innovation are shifting special needs and desired site locations for prospective industrial tenants. Future use regulations should explore allowing encouraging non-nuisance industrial uses in non-traditional industrial areas, bringing neighborhood-based employment and offering competitive environments for prospective industrial tenants and businesses.



Near-Term Implementation

- Increase infrastructure investment in the Fairfax Industrial District.
- Improve and champion messaging, communication, and storytelling of industry in KCK and Wyandotte County with marketing efforts and website development.
- Strengthen ties and increase participation with regional economic development partners to continue to position Wyandotte County and KCK as regional industrial leaders.
- Establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and a tracking system to monitor the availability of industrial/flex parcels.
- Conduct an audit to identify and remove barriers for suitable and forward-thinking industrial/flex opportunities in other non-traditional industrial areas.
- Proactively target industry sector growth in sectors that generate high economic and fiscal impacts. Increase workforce development opportunities in these sectors.





4.7 STRATEGIC PILLAR 6:

KU Med

Leverage the healthcare sector for continued economic growth.

The healthcare and social assistance industry is Wyandotte County's largest employment sector, comprising 20% of the total jobs in the county. The University of Kansas Medical Center (KU Med) is an educational campus for 3,000+ medical students, a world-class hospital, and research institutions. KU Med's research enterprise has grown substantially in recent years. In the past six years, federally-funded research nearly doubled at KU Med, whose research portfolio increased to \$180 million in 2023.

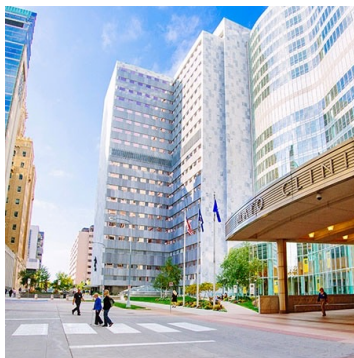
Continuing to foster and grow Wyandotte County's healthcare sector can offer employment opportunities across a wide range of incomes in a highly stabilized industry and serve as a talent attraction to KCK. Improving workforce pathways for local residents in healthcare sector fields and supporting industries bridges employment opportunities and wage increases to residents in the UG.

Key Economic Development Partners

- KU Med
- WYEDC
- Rosedale Neighborhood Groups and Associations
- Rosedale Development Association
- Healthcare Providers including Providence Medical Center, and Vibrant, among others.
- *and more!*

Case Study Spotlight: **Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN**

Catalysing Economic Growth Through Healthcare



The renowned Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota catalyzed the city's economic growth with its healthcare sector. Rochester greets medical professionals and patients traveling to the Mayo Clinic with the infrastructure, retail, housing, and hospitality amenities capturing economic and fiscal impacts for the city. The Mayo Clinic's expansion over the years has not only evolved the physical campus and landscape, but also fields of innovation, education, medical specialization, and increased collaboration. Through partnerships within synergistic industry sectors such as technology and biomedical, the Mayo Clinic has catalyzed further industry growth and investment.



Key Strategic Action Areas

- 1. Implement the Merriam Connected Corridor Plan and create additional corridor plans for the greater KU Med area, prioritizing areas leading to and around the campus. Develop a vision for a medical services cluster around KU Med that enhances the healthcare sector economy in the nearby area. Leverage continuous KU Med Campus redevelopment to support the broader community and maintain affordability.** As KU Med continues to strategically redevelop its campus, investing in the Rosedale neighborhood can benefit local residents economically and help attract talent, workers, and students to KU Med. Prioritizing key corridors and investing in the infrastructure leading to KU Med bridges campus investment with neighborhood investment. The 2023 Rainbow Boulevard Complete Streets Traffic Plan, a partnership with the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and KCK (UG), City of Westwood, and the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), demonstrates one tool and approach towards greater corridor vision and planning. Expanding a medical services agglomeration adjacent to KU Med can strengthen KCK’s healthcare sector and benefit KU Med.
- 2. Bolster workforce development efforts to support the healthcare sector in Wyandotte County. Connect residents and workers to healthcare jobs.** With nearly 14,000 jobs in the healthcare and social assistance sector of Wyandotte County, increasing workforce development and readiness opportunities for local residents helps ensure the sector has an adequate and growing pipeline of talent and jobs across a broad spectrum of employment opportunities. Employment in healthcare-related industries is often more stable than other more volatile sectors and reactive to economic swings. Coupled with a sector that offers higher wage jobs, bolstering workforce development initiatives increases the sector’s resiliency, provides industry growth pathways, and helps connect local residents to improved quality employment opportunities.
- 3. Strengthen partnerships with KU Med, Providence Medical Center, Vibrant, and other healthcare providers in KCK and Wyandotte County.** Continue collaboration among both established and emerging healthcare providers, private sector businesses, and relevant education institutions by increasing partnership opportunities for a stronger healthcare sector economy in Wyandotte County.



Near-Term Implementation

- Invest in key corridors connecting to KU Med, including Rainbow Boulevard and 39th Street. Pursue funding to implement the Rainbow Corridor Complete Streets Traffic Study. Consider transportation, land use, and placemaking.
- Establish a medical services cluster synergistic with KU Med and future campus redevelopment and investment.
- Identify workforce development opportunities to ensure Wyandotte County and KCK residents are positioned for healthcare sector employment.
- Establish a healthcare sector liaison within the UG Department of Economic Development tasked with strengthening relationships and partnership efforts with major healthcare entities.



4.8 STRATEGIC PILLAR 7:

Small Business Support Ecosystem

Improve support for small businesses in KCK and Wyandotte County.

Business growth is a fundamental aspect of economic development. Small businesses are frequently referred to as the “backbone of the American economy” and play a pivotal role in the KCK local economy. Approximately 70% of all business entities in KCK are small businesses. A balanced approach to business growth not only explores attracting and retaining businesses, but also requires cultivating an economy that encourages “homegrown” businesses through entrepreneurship. Wyandotte County’s network of champions and partners helps support entrepreneurs and small businesses as they launch, grow, and scale.

Small businesses bring many benefits to the local economy. Small businesses gravitate towards commercial corridors and Main Street environments and are even home-based in many sectors, creating a network of neighborhood-based employment and investment in communities. In addition to diversifying the local economy, small businesses are often engrained in their local community and help improve income inequality.

Key Economic Development Partners

- WYEDC
- The Toolbox
- KCK Chamber
- U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)
- KansasWORKS
- Small Business and Entrepreneurial Council of Kansas City
- AltCap
- LISC
- Black Chamber of Commerce of Greater Kansas City
- Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Edwardsville/Bonner Springs Chamber of Commerce
- KCKCC
- *and more!*

Wyandotte County Success: **The Toolbox**

Building Community Entrepreneurs

“We provide free support with planning, registering, funding, operating, and growing your business. We take the intimidating checklist of starting and operating a business and distill it down into the essentials through private, free, one-on-one small business coaching.

- The Toolbox

The Toolbox Small Business Resource Center, <https://www.thetoolboxkc.com>

Recognizing a need for on-the-ground support for entrepreneurs and small businesses in Wyandotte County, The Toolbox addresses and alleviates barriers that entrepreneurs in the community face. From serving as an educational resource to handholding through licensing regulations, The Toolbox successfully works directly with community members in planning, starting, and growing their Wyandotte County businesses.



Key Strategic Action Areas

- 1. Inject into and amplify what's working, such as The Toolbox, nonprofits, and local institutions that support the small business ecosystem.** KCK and Wyandotte County have a robust ecosystem of champions, supporters, and stakeholders that help small local businesses in the county.
- 2. Support small businesses' need for capital by helping to ensure that businesses are loan-ready.** Access to capital is a significant barrier to starting and growing businesses. This difficulty increases with minority and women-owned businesses. In addition to helping connect entrepreneurs and small businesses to capital, it is critical to help ensure that businesses and entrepreneurs meet loan and grant eligibility requirements.
- 3. Continue to foster channels that spur networking, partnerships, and relationships among small businesses and within the broader business network.** The nature of entrepreneurship and small business ownership can be isolating, and resources and time can be constrained for business owners. Continue to provide avenues throughout KCK and Wyandotte County and the region to build peer-to-peer and mentor-to-mentee relationships amongst business owners and entrepreneurs, helping owners address challenges and hurdles, including regulatory challenges, business planning, and operations.
- 4. Encourage pathways for entrepreneurship, especially within technology and professional services, across all cohorts, including youth and young adults.** Cultivating entrepreneurship in Wyandotte County and KCK can provide residents flexible and adaptable employment and economic mobility. Encouraging entrepreneurship in higher-wage sectors can generate substantial economic impacts and increase prosperity among residents.



Near-Term Implementation

- Continue and bolster the UG Economic Development Department's Small Business Grant program.
- Re-establish the Small Business Liaison role within the UG Economic Development Department.
- Increase pathways for entrepreneurship, particularly within technology, professional services, and advanced industries, across all cohorts, including youth and young professionals.
- Conduct an audit of the UG website related to business regulation and licensing to identify ways to improve access to information and forms. Improve links and connection to DotteBiz on the UG website. Optimize business registration, information, and relevant forms for mobile compatibility.
- Reduce the digital divide in KCK by leveraging the Kansas Department of Commerce's Capital Projects Fund Broadband Infrastructure Program.



5.0 Implementation Roadmap

5.1 IMPLEMENTATION ACTION MATRIX

Near-Term Action Step		Lead	Partner(s)	Timing	Priority
Pillar 1: Downtown Core and Main Street Development					
Goal: Improve the economic success of KCK's downtown core and Main Street business corridors.					
D1	Establish a Downtown KCK Commercial Historic District.	UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design	State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Downtown Shareholders	2024	High
D2	Update the Downtown Area Plan.	UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design	Livable Neighborhood Task Force, UG Department of Economic Development, KCKCC, Downtown Shareholders, Downtown Community	Mid-Term (~2028)	High
D4	Establish a KCK Main Street Program beginning with Downtown KCK in partnership with Kansas Main Street and Downtown Shareholders.	Downtown Shareholders, NBRs	UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design, UG Dept. of Economic Development, Kansas Main Street	2024	High
D3	Leverage the UG's Land Bank to support a mix of urban infill uses.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design	Ongoing	High
D5	Conduct a downtown regulatory audit to identify barriers to business attraction, redevelopment efforts, and economic growth.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design, Neighborhood Resource Center	2025	Moderate
D6	Activate vacant storefronts with community arts programs by linking property owners to local artists, such as those found at the Third Friday Art Walks on 6th Street.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	Local Artists, Arts Related Community Organizations, Property Owners, Dotte Arts	2025	Moderate
Pillar 2: Village West and Western Wyandotte					
Goal: Continue the economic success of the area around Village West and Western Wyandotte through strategic infill development.					
V1	Update the Prairie-Delaware Piper Area Plan to establish an updated economic and land use vision for the area.	UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design	UG wide	TBD	High
V2	Continue a collaborative relationship between KCK; Bonner Springs; and Edwardsville to achieve economic prosperity in western Wyandotte.	UG-Wide	UG Dept. of Economic Development; UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design	Ongoing	High



5.1 IMPLEMENTATION ACTION MATRIX (CONT.)

Near-Term Action Step		Lead	Partner(s)	Timing	Priority
V3	Plan for and strengthen the economic benefits that will arise with the 2026 World Cup. Coordinate an interjurisdictional advocacy and marketing campaign for increased visitor consumer spending during the event throughout Wyandotte County and its local and small businesses.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	Sporting Kansas City; VisitKCK; KCK Main Streets; Sporting, Tourism, and Hospitality Stakeholders; Regional Tourism Entities	2025+	Moderate
V4	Upgrade to fast and frequent transit service between Village West and Downtown KCK along State Avenue.	UG Dept. of Transportation	KCATA	TBD	Moderate
Pillar 3: Riverfront Development Goal: Enhance the local economy by leveraging the Rock Island Bridge, improved connectivity, and access to the broader KCMO region.					
R1	Support and help alleviate barriers to ensure the success of the Rock Island Bridge.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	Rock Island Bridge, Neighborhood Resource Center (NRC), UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design, Other UG Depts.	2024+	High
R2	Establish a River City Vision for redevelopment, recreation, and connectivity opportunities along the Kansas River and Missouri Rivers..	UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design	City of Bonner Springs, City of Edwardsville, Armourdale Renewal Association, Port KC, County Stakeholders	2025+	Moderate
R3	Identify gateway, wayfinding, and connectivity opportunities to improve Rock Island Bridge's broader visitor and user experience, helping to bring people to the bridge, employees to jobs, and customers to local KCK businesses.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design; VisitKCK; Rock Island Bridge; Armourdale Renewal Association Historic West Bottoms Association; Regional Tourism Entities	2024+	Moderate
Pillar 4: Quindaro Townsite Goal: Establish cultural heritage tourism centered around Quindaro Townsite.					
Q1	Continue the Quindaro Townsite Task Force with representation across a wide range of stakeholders. Establish a UG Economic Development Staff Member Liaison for the Task Force.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	Quindaro Townsite Task Force, UG Dept. of Planning and Urban Design	TBD	High
Q2	Develop a Management Plan to preserve Quindaro Townsite and bolster the local economy through cultural heritage tourism. Leverage the Management Plan to attract funders for implementation.	UG Historic Preservation	Quindaro Townsite Task Force, UG Dept. of UG Planning and Urban Design	TBD	Moderate
Q3	Implement the Northeast KCK Heritage Trail that links Quindaro Townsite to Kaw Point through the historic northeast area.	UG Dept. of UG Planning and Urban Design	Groundwork NRG; NE KCK Community, UG Dept. of Economic Development	TBD	High



5.1 IMPLEMENTATION ACTION MATRIX (CONT.)

Near-Term Action Step		Lead	Partner(s)	Timing	Priority
Pillar 5: Industrial Revitalization					
Goal: Reinvest in the industrial sector of KCK and Wyandotte County.					
I1	Increase infrastructure investment in the Fairfax Industrial District.	UG Dept. of Public Works	UG Dept. of Economic Development, UG Dept. of Planning and Urban Design, Dept. of Transportation, BPU	TBD	High
I2	Improve and champion messaging, communication, and storytelling of industry in KCK and Wyandotte County with marketing efforts and website development.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	WYEDC	TBD	High
I3	Strengthen ties with and increase participation with regional economic development partners to continue to position Wyandotte County and KCK as regional industrial leaders.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	WYEDC, MARC, KCADC, City of Bonner Springs, City of Edwardsville, Chambers	TBD	Moderate
I4	Establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and a tracking system to monitor the availability of industrial/flex parcels.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	WYEDC, UG Dept. of Geospatial Services (GSS)	TBD	Moderate
I5	Conduct an audit to identify and remove barriers for suitable and forward-thinking industrial/flex opportunities in other non-traditional industrial areas.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design	TBD	Low
I6	Proactively target industry sector growth in sectors that generate high economic and fiscal impacts. Increase workforce development opportunities in these sectors.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	WYEDC, KCKCC	Ongoing	High
Pillar 6: KU Med					
Goal: Leverage the healthcare sector for continued economic growth.					
K1	Invest in key corridors connecting to KU Med. Pursue funding to implement the Rainbow Corridor Complete Streets Traffic Study. Consider transportation, land use, and placemaking.	UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design	KC Streetcar, UG Dept. of Transportation, KU Med, Rosedale Development Association, Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA), KDOT	2023+	Moderate
K2	Establish a medical services cluster synergistic with KU Med and its future campus redevelopment and investment.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	WYEDC, KU Med, UG Dept. of Planning & Urban Design, Rosedale Development Association	TBD	Moderate
K3	Identify workforce development opportunities to ensure Wyandotte County and KCK residents are positioned for healthcare sector employment.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	WYEDC, Key Healthcare Entities including Businesses, Providers, and Institutions, KCKCC	TBD	High
K4	Establish a healthcare sector liaison within the UG Department of Economic Development tasked with strengthening relationships and partnership efforts with major healthcare entities.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	WYEDC, KU Med, Providence Medical Center, Vibrant, and Other Key Healthcare Entities	2024+	Moderate



5.1 IMPLEMENTATION ACTION MATRIX (CONT.)

Near-Term Action Step		Lead	Partner(s)	Timing	Priority
Pillar 7: Small Business Support Ecosystem					
Goal: Improve support for small businesses in KCK and Wyandotte County.					
S1	Continue and bolster the UG Economic Development Department's Small Business Grant program.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	WYEDC, The Toolbox, KCK Chamber, Small Business Owners	2023+	High
S2	Re-establish the Small Business Liaison role within the UG Economic Development Department.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	WYEDC, Small Business Owners, KCK Chambers	2024+	Moderate
S3	Increase pathways for entrepreneurship, particularly within technology, professional services, and advanced industries, across all cohorts, including youth and young professionals.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	WYEDC, KCKCC, Small Business and Entrepreneurial Council of Kansas City	TBD	Moderate
S4	Conduct an audit of the UG website related to business regulation and licensing to identify ways to improve access to information and forms. Improve links and connection to DotteBiz on the UG website. Optimize business registration, information, and relevant forms for mobile compatibility.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	UG Dept. of Technical Services	2024+	High
S5	Reduce the digital divide in KCK by leveraging the Kansas Department of Commerce's Capital Projects Fund Broadband Infrastructure Program.	UG Dept. of Economic Development	Kansas Department of Commerce	TBD	Moderate





5.2 Metrics to Measure Community Prosperity

Establishing metrics or Key Performance Indicators (KPI) relative to this Economic Development Strategic Plan helps monitor progress toward implementation and track changes in the local economy. Tracking quantifiable metrics helps increase transparency and accountability, provides benchmarks over time, measures implementation progress, and leads toward decision-making rooted in data.

Tracking Metrics

The following metrics can be tracked at various geographic levels through third-party data sources such as US Census, American Community Survey, and Costar. Metric tracking, including the frequency of tracking, data providers, and geographic granularity, should be standardized at the launch of the Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Metrics to Monitor and Track Progress Toward Community Prosperity

Demographic

- Median Household Income
- Labor Force Participation Rate, Unemployment, and Overall Employment
- Educational Attainment (*Share of High School Diploma/GED and Above*)
- Property Values (*Across Land Uses*)

Business and Development

- Inflow/Outflow Job Count and Share
- New Business Growth
- Employment Growth
- Real Estate Market Metrics (*Rent, Vacancy, Absorption, Deliveries, Across Land Uses*)

Economic and Fiscal Base

- Countywide Fiscal Health
- Increase in Tax Revenue
- Economic and Fiscal Impact of Key Developments and Policies

Economic Resiliency

- Location Analytics
- Unemployment Rate
- Labor Force Participation Rate



6.0 Alignment with PlanKCK



The following table articulates how the Economic Development Strategic Plan implementation action steps align with the Comprehensive Plan and Historic Preservation Plan through PlanKCK.

Near-Term Action Step		PlanKCK		
		Eco Devo	Other Comp Plan Chapters	Historic Pres. Plan
Pillar 1: Downtown Core and Main Street Development				
D1	Establish a Downtown KCK Commercial Historic District.	•	•	•
D2	Update the Downtown Area Plan.	•	•	
D3	Establish a KCK Main Street Program beginning Downtown in partnership with Kansas Main Street and Downtown Shareholders.	•	•	•
D4	Leverage the UG's Land Bank to support a mix of urban infill uses.	•	•	
D5	Conduct a downtown regulatory audit to identify barriers to business attraction, redevelopment efforts, and economic growth.	•	•	
D6	Activate vacant storefronts with community arts programs by linking property owners to local artists, such as those found at the Third Friday Art Walks on 6th Street.	•		
Pillar 2: Village West & Western Wyandotte				
V1	Update the Prairie-Delaware Piper Area Plan to establish an updated economic and land use vision for the area.	•	•	
V2	Continue a collaborative relationship between KCK; Bonner Springs; and Edwardsville to achieve economic prosperity in Western Wyandotte.	•	•	
V3	Plan for and strengthen the economic benefits that will arise with the 2026 World Cup. Advocate for visitor consumer spending during the event throughout Wyandotte County and its local and small businesses.	•		
V4	Upgrade to fast and frequent transit service between Village West and Downtown KCK along State Avenue.	•	•	
Pillar 3: Riverfront Development				
R1	Support and help alleviate barriers to ensure the success of Rock Island Bridge.	•	•	
R2	Establish a River City Vision for redevelopment, recreation, and connectivity opportunities along the Kansas River and Missouri Rivers.	•	•	•
R3	Identify gateway, wayfinding, and connectivity opportunities to improve Rock Island Bridge's broader visitor and user experience, helping to bring people to the bridge, employees to jobs, and customers to local KCK businesses.	•	•	
Pillar 4: Quindaro Townsite				
Q1	Continue the Quindaro Townsite Task Force with representation across a wide range of stakeholders. Establish a UG Economic Development Staff Member Liaison for the Task Force.	•	•	•
Q2	Develop a Management Plan to preserve Quindaro Townsite and bolster the local economy through cultural heritage tourism. Leverage the Management Plan to attract funders for implementation.	•		•
Q3	Implement the Northeast KCK Heritage Trail that links Quindaro Townsite to Kaw Point through the historic northeast area.	•		•



PlanKCK

6.0 | ALIGNMENT WITH PLANKCK (CONT.)

Eco Devo	Other Comp Plan Chapters	Historic Pres. Plan
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Action Step		Eco Devo	Other Comp Plan Chapters	Historic Pres. Plan
Pillar 5: Industrial Revitalization				
I1	Increase infrastructure investment in the Fairfax Industrial District.	•	•	
I2	Improve and champion messaging, communication, and storytelling of industry in KCK and Wyandotte County with marketing efforts and website development.	•		•
I3	Strengthen ties with and increase participation with regional economic development partners to continue to position Wyandotte County and KCK as regional industrial leaders.	•		
I4	Establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and a tracking system to monitor the availability of industrial/flex parcels.	•	•	
I5	Conduct an audit to identify and remove barriers for suitable and forward-thinking industrial/flex opportunities in other non-traditional industrial areas.	•	•	
I6	Proactively target industry sector growth in sectors that generate high economic and fiscal impacts. Increase workforce development opportunities in these sectors.	•		
Pillar 6: KU Med				
K1	Invest in key corridors connecting to KU Med. Pursue funding to implement the Rainbow Corridor Complete Streets Traffic Study. Consider transportation, land use, and placemaking.	•	•	
K2	Establish a medical services cluster synergistic with KU Med and its future campus redevelopment and investment.	•		
K3	Identify workforce development opportunities to ensure Wyandotte County and KCK residents are positioned for healthcare sector employment.	•		
K4	Establish a healthcare sector liaison within the UG Department of Economic Development tasked with strengthening relationships and partnership efforts with major healthcare entities.	•		
Pillar 7: Small Business Support Ecosystem				
S1	Continue and bolster the UG Economic Development Department’s Small Business Grant program.	•		
S2	Re-establish the Small Business Liaison role within the UG Economic Development Department.	•		
S3	Increase pathways for entrepreneurship, particularly within technology, professional services, and advanced industries, across all cohorts, including youth and young professionals.	•		
S4	Conduct an audit of the UG website related to business regulation and licensing to identify ways to improve access to information and forms. Improve links and connection to DotteBiz on the UG website. Optimize business registration, information, and relevant forms for mobile compatibility.	•		
S5	Reduce the digital divide in KCK by leveraging the Kansas Department of Commerce’s Capital Projects Fund Broadband Infrastructure Program.	•	•	

7.0 Next Steps

PATHWAY TO COMMUNITY PROSPERITY

KCK stakeholders have embraced this collaborative visioning and planning initiative with enthusiasm and energy. Throughout the process, there has been continued recognition that bold change and leadership are needed to achieve the preferred future. Community prosperity for ALL is the goal, and now is the time.

"KCK has a resource in the amazing amount of civic pride held by its residents. The people who live here love their city and want to do what they can to ensure it thrives."

- PlanKCK Vision Summit Survey Respondent

PlanKCK Contact

Unified Government of Wyandotte County

Kansas City, KS Department of Economic Development
913-573-5750
edevelopment@wycokck.org



Please stay connected to the economic development strategic planning project at wycokck.org/PlanKCK

