



# SHAWNEE COUNTY

2037 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

DRAFT 09-01-2017

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1</b>	
Population and Demographics.....	14
<b>CHAPTER 2</b>	
Natural and Cultural Resources .....	24
<b>CHAPTER 3</b>	
Transportation, Utilities, and Public Services.....	42
<b>CHAPTER 4</b>	
Land Use and Design.....	80
<b>CHAPTER 5</b>	
Housing and Neighborhoods.....	106
<b>CHAPTER 6</b>	
Economic Development .....	126
<b>CHAPTER 7</b>	
Implementation .....	146
<b>APPENDIX .....</b>	<b>164</b>

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PREPARED BY



PREPARED FOR



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## **STEERING COMMITTEE**

John Boyd  
Shelly Buhler  
Debbi Childers  
Dirk Christian  
Bill Fiander  
Neil Fisher  
Justin Glasgow  
Eric Johnson  
James Kaup  
Onis Lemon  
Christi McKenzie  
Judy Moler Tom  
Moses Brett  
Oetting Steve  
Porubsky Kirk  
Romary Greg  
Schwerdt Nancy  
Seitz  
Jay Simecka  
Curtis Sneden  
Alan Stahl  
Randol Walker

## **SHAWNEE COUNTY COMMISSION**

Bob Archer, Chair  
Kevin Cook, Vice Chair  
Shelly Buhler

## **SHAWNEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

Patrick Tryon, Chair  
Jerome Desch, Vice Chair  
Brian Aubert  
Brian Jacques  
Matt McCurry  
Christi McKenzie  
Judy Moler

## **COUNTY STAFF**

Barry Beagle, AICP - Planning Director  
Joelee Charles - Administrative Assistant  
Anna Ortega - Zoning Administrator  
Joni Thadani - Assistant County Counselor  
Lee Allen - GIS Coordinator



# TABLE OF FIGURES

## INTRODUCTION

Figure 0.1: Map of Shawnee County	5
Figure 0.2: What do you believe are Shawnee County's three greatest assets?	10
Figure 0.3: What do you believe are the most important issues facing Shawnee County in the next ten years?	11

## CHAPTER 1: POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Figure 1.1: 1960-2010 Historic City Population	16
Figure 1.2: 1960-2010 Historic Township Populations and Topeka (In Order of Size)	16
Figure 1.3: Shawnee County Townships	17
Figure 1.4: Comparative Historic Regional Population, 1960-2010	18
Figure 1.5: Major Kansas Cities as Proportions of their Counties' Populations	18
Figure 1.6: Age Distribution in Shawnee County, 2000 and 2010	19
Figure 1.7: Population Projections for Shawnee County	20
Figure 1.8: Population Projections for Shawnee County	20
Figure 1.9: Population Projections for Townships and Topeka, "Past Trends" Scenario	21
Figure 1.10: Population Projections for Townships and Topeka, "Topeka Growth" Scenario	22

## CHAPTER 2: NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Figure 2.1: Questionnaire Responses: Natural Resources	26
Figure 2.2: Natural Resources	27
Figure 2.3: Agricultural Land Class by Acreage	28
Figure 2.4: Elevation	29
Figure 2.5: Farmland Class	30
Figure 2.6: Status of Wildlife within Shawnee County	31
Figure 2.7: Parcels Affected by the Flood Plain	32
Figure 2.8: FEMA Floodways and Floodplains	33
Figure 2.9: Parkland and Trails	35
Figure 2.10: Historic Register Sites	37
Figure 2.11: Environmental Constraint Map Conceptualization	38
Figure 2.12: Environmental Constraints	39

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## CHAPTER 3: TRANSPORTATION, UTILITIES, AND PUBLIC SERVICES

Figure 3.1: Questionnaire Responses: Transportation and Infrastructure	45
Figure 3.2: Transportation and Infrastructure	45
Figure 3.3: Mileage and Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled by Functional Classification	46
Figure 3.4: Functional Classification	47
Figure 3.5: Bridge Condition by Responsibility	48
Figure 3.6: Bridge Deficiency by Responsibility	48
Figure 3.7: Road Responsibility	49
Figure 3.8: Automobile Safety in Shawnee County (Excluding Topeka)	50
Figure 3.9: Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety in Shawnee County (Excluding Topeka)	50
Figure 3.10: Existing Active Transportation Infrastructure	51
Figure 3.11: TMTA Transit System Coverage	52
Figure 3.12: Commuters Entering or Exiting Shawnee County	53
Figure 3.13: Active Rail Lines	54
Figure 3.14: Airport Operations Surfaces	55
Figure 3.15: Financially Constrained Expenses and Revenues (\$1,000's)	56
Figure 3.16: MPTO Planning Area	57
Figure 3.17: Water Districts and Infrastructure	59
Figure 3.18: Sewer Lines	61
Figure 3.19: Health Care Statistics	62
Figure 3.20: Crime Statistics	62
Figure 3.21: Fire Protection Statistics	63
Figure 3.22: Fire Districts and Stations	64
Figure 3.23: Fire Response Times	65
Figure 3.24: Broadband Availability	66
Figure 3.25: Cellphone Towers	67
Figure 3.26: 2015-2016 Year Public School Statistics	68
Figure 3.27: Higher Education	68
Figure 3.28: School Districts and Buildings	69
Figure 3.29: Topeka Bikeway Master Plan	71
Figure 3.30: Infrastructure Opportunity Map Conceptualization	72
Figure 3.31: Infrastructure Opportunity Map	73
Figure 3.32: Vacant Platted Lots	75

**CHAPTER 4: LAND USE AND DESIGN**

Figure 4.1: Questionnaire Responses: Land Use	83
Figure 4.2: Land Use and Design	83
Figure 4.3: Rural to Urban Transect	84
Figure 4.4: Development Densities	86
Figure 4.5: Land Uses in Unincorporated Shawnee County, 2016	87
Figure 4.6: Current Land Use	88
Figure 4.7: Parcels and Plats by Year in Unincorporated Shawnee County	89
Figure 4.8: Land Uses in Unincorporated Shawnee County, 2016	89
Figure 4.9: Commercial and Industrial	91
Figure 4.910 Vacant Residential Parcels in Unincorporated Shawnee County	92
Figure 4.11: Vacant Lots	93
Figure 4.12: Topeka ETJ, UGA, and Service Tier Boundaries	95
Figure 4.13: Potential Exurban Area After Plat Exemptions	96
Figure 4.14: Existing Exurban Tracts on SE Berryton Rd	96
Figure 4.15: Sewer Service in Soldier Township	98
Figure 4.16: In-Fill Development Concept Near Seaman High and Middle Schools	99
Figure 4.17: Floodplains and Roadways near Shawnee County's Small Cities	100
Figure 4.18: Future Land Use Map	102

**CHAPTER 5: HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS**

Figure 5.1: Housing	108
Figure 5.2: Questionnaire Responses: Housing	108
Figure 5.3: Total Housing Units, 1970-2010	109
Figure 5.4: Persons Per Household, 1990-2010	109
Figure 5.5: Townships of Shawnee County	110
Figure 5.6: 1970-2010 Historic Township and Topeka Housing Units in Order of Size	111
Figure 5.7: Building Permits, Census 2010-2015	111
Figure 5.8: All Shawnee County Vacancies by Type, 2010	112
Figure 5.9: Vacancy Rate, 1970-2010	112
Figure 5.10: Occupancy and Tenure Summary	113
Figure 5.11: Percentage of Renter-Occupied Homes, 1970-2010	114
Figure 5.12: Value to Income Ratio and Rent Cost	115
Figure 5.13: Rent and House Value vs. Median Year Built	116
Figure 5.14: Home Age and Value	116
Figure 5.15: Percent Paying More than 30% on Housing Costs	117
Figure 5.16: Affordable Housing Analysis	119
Figure 5.17: Projected Housing Development Demand – All Shawnee County	121
Figure 5.18: Projected Housing Development Demand – All Shawnee County	121



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## **CHAPTER 6: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Figure 6.1: Questionnaire Responses: Economic Development	129
Figure 6.2: Economic Development	129
Figure 6.3: Median Household Income (1990-2015)	130
Figure 6.4: Median Household Incomes	131
Figure 6.5: Unemployment Rate and Labor Force	132
Figure 6.6: Population, Employment, and Labor Force (indexed to 2000)	133
Figure 6.7: 2014 Educational Attainment of Residents 25 Years and Older	133
Figure 6.8: All Shawnee County: Jobs by Industry, 2015	134
Figure 6.9: Change in Jobs by Industry, 2005-2015	135
Figure 6.10: Change in Jobs by Industry, 2005-2015	135
Figure 6.11: Economic Impact of Tourism for Shawnee County	136
Figure 6.12: 2015 Shawnee County Visitor Spending by Sector	136
Figure 6.13: Retail Supply and Demand Analysis	137
Figure 6.14: Change in Industry, 2005-2015	138
Figure 6.15: Map of the Native Stone Scenic Byway	143

## **CHAPTER 7: IMPLEMENTATION**

Figure 7.1: Topeka ETJ, UGA, and Service Tier Boundaries	150
Figure 7.2: Future Land Use Map	152

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# FORWARD & VISION STATEMENT

## Forward

Each of us is connected to the shared history of Shawnee County and the stories we bring to it. **We** **The citizens of Shawnee County** are committed to working together to forge a shared future, aware of our connections to each other and respectful of our differences. We are connected to the five cities and the many unincorporated towns in Shawnee County. We are connected to the rural landscapes and the farms and ranches in Shawnee County. These are the places that help define who we are as Shawnee Countians. We take pride in our schools. Our parks are among the best in Kansas.

We recognize that the future of Shawnee County is connected to the natural resources and systems we depend on and enjoy. We understand the local and regional economic relationships that have developed over time and connect us to each other. We envision a future in which our fiscal and environmental health are in balance and we are wise stewards of the future.

Although this plan consists of multiple chapters, it is a single document, representing a coherent vision for Shawnee County's future. Looking forward, we know that Shawnee County will continue to change, and change will present both opportunities and challenges. We have tried to foresee and account for these changes, knowing that Shawnee County will also face situations we could not predict when this plan was written. To help guide us through the future – both known and uncertain – we have tried to create a plan that calls attention to parallels as well as the potential conflicts and trade-offs in the choices that lie ahead.

## Vision Statement

A vision statement describes a community's values and aspirations and a shared image of what they want their community to become over the next 10 to 20 years in the future. The statement should address all aspects that make up a community such as the social, cultural and economic fabric. Statements should be forward thinking and written in a positive, affirmative and inspirational style. The vision statement functions like a captain steers a ship to stay the course on its journey as changes occur. The statement for Shawnee County's Comprehensive Plan is as follows:

### Vision Statement

The Shawnee County Comprehensive Plan will enhance the quality of life for county residents by:

- Preserving the rural character of the county
- Promoting responsible growth and development
- Protecting personal property rights
  - Protecting natural, scenic and historic resources
  - Protecting agricultural lands and agricultural operations
  - Promoting economic development and tourism opportunities
  - Enhancing cooperation between all levels of government





# INTRODUCTION



## INTRODUCTION

Shawnee County, capital county of Kansas, is the third most populous county in the state with a population approaching 178,000. Overall, the county has grown over the past fifty years, driven by the county's strong economic base.

Comprised of 556 square miles, the Shawnee County contains five incorporated communities including Topeka, its largest city and the State Capital, and the four smaller cities of Auburn, Rossville, Silver Lake, and Willard. Beyond those, the county has more than 40 other taxing jurisdictions which provide public services, including 12 townships, school districts, rural water districts, fire districts, drainage districts, and others.

As of 2010, 46,552 residents lived outside the county's five cities, about three and a half times higher than would be expected compared to the Kansas counties that are most similar to Shawnee County including Douglas, Johnson, Riley, and Sedgwick Counties. For context, the **total population living outside of Shawnee County's five cities would be comparable to the tenth largest city in Kansas, Salina, has a population of 47,707.** Most of these residents are not actively engaged in agriculture, which creates a potential conflicts between residents and active farming and mining operations near them. These arise from differing expectations regarding the use and maintenance of property and the types, amount, and costs of public services.

The City exercises authority under Kansas Statutes to approve plats and land subdivision within its 3-mile Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ), but Shawnee County **exercises exercises** other development authority, including zoning and building **permitting permitting**. Topeka's Land Use & Growth Management Plan establishes development tiers outside its city limits to direct future growth, including where city utilities are extended and what areas may be annexed. Shared authority in the ETJ has the potential to create confusion.

Rural Shawnee County's abundant natural resources can also be impacted by continued growth and development in profound and often unanticipated ways. The county is currently considering the value of preserving agricultural lands, how best to permit mineral extraction in the county, and the value of natural landscapes like the Osage Cuestas, Glacial Hills, and Flint Hills and features like the Kansas and Wakarusa Rivers which can be used for tourism and recreation.

It is important to consider how best to support economic development and private property rights, but it is also important to consider how to promote responsible development. Finally, it is important that all of this happen in a manner that makes wise use of tax dollars. The County is currently considering how best to balance these competing desires.

These factors prompted the county to begin its first comprehensive planning process. Communities, like businesses, must analyze their settings and opportunities, choose directions, and use these to their greatest advantage. A plan provides a roadmap intended to guide the continued growth and development of the county over the next 20 years, through 2037. It establishes a compelling vision of what the community of Shawnee County wants to look and feel like in the future, derived from the aspirations of its citizens. To reach that vision, it identifies the necessary steps and recommends priorities and policies. The comprehensive plan can help strike the right balance between many of the issues that Shawnee County is currently experiencing.

As a policy document, the comprehensive plan is intended to guide decisions concerning growth and development in the county. It may recommend changes to land use or division regulations but does not create new regulations. Preparing, adopting, and implementing a comprehensive plan is a chance for the county to discuss its future, identify priorities, and find actions to reach the community's desired vision.

To that end, this comprehensive plan, as the first for unincorporated Shawnee County, will help define the character of the county and recommend policies based on this character and the priorities of its residents over the next 20 years. The document will be produced to be implemented and utilized by the county and its policy makers while managing future demographic, economic, and environmental change.

### COMPREHENSIVE PLANS PERFORM THREE CRITICAL FUNCTIONS:

1. PRACTICAL: ESTABLISHES A **LEGAL BASIS RECOMMENDATION** FOR REGULATING LAND SUBDIVISION & USE.
2. ASPIRATIONAL: CLARIFIES WHAT RESIDENTS AND COUNTY LEADERS WANT FOR THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTY.
3. INSPIRATIONAL: DETERMINES HOW LAND USE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES, TRANSPORTATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE DECISIONS WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE THE FUTURE.



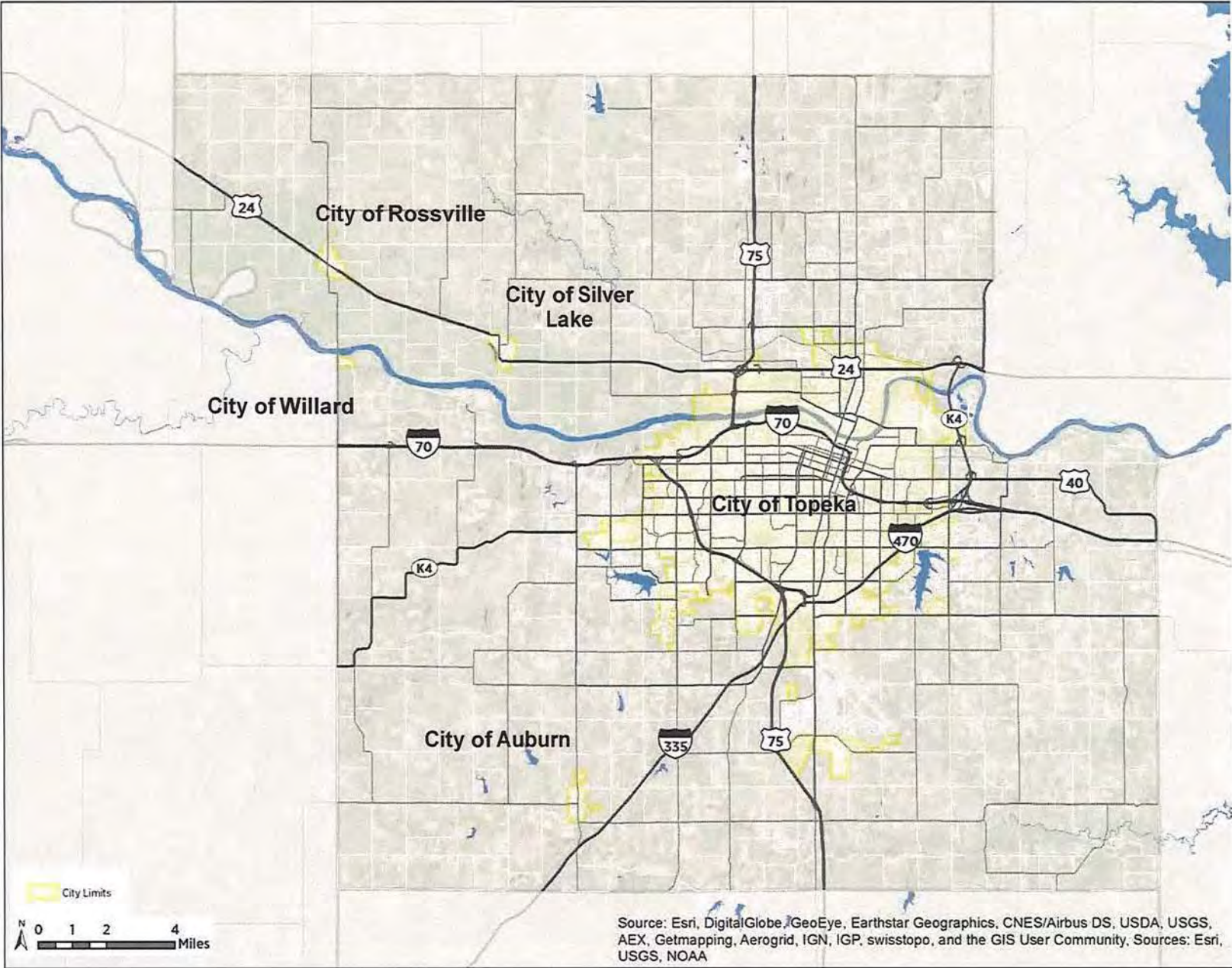


Figure 0.1: Map of Shawnee County



## WHY PLAN?

Shawnee County has never before prepared a comprehensive plan, despite being the third most populous county in Kansas and serving as the host county for the State Capitol.

Planning can improve coordination and collaboration between local governments by providing a unified vision, identifying areas where the county expects to grow, and opening the door to further discussion. In places like Douglas, Johnson, Riley, and Sedgwick Counties, comprehensive plans have led to several benefits. Riley County's plan, for example, helped identify policies to protect farmers and ranchers, while providing for growth in areas that made sense for rural taxpayers. Johnson County's planning process brought together residents, businesses, institutions, and special interests to create a vision for the region's future and to help elected officials make decisions.

These illustrate how the comprehensive planning process for Shawnee County provides an opportunity to evaluate its current position, think ahead, and manage development according to a unified and compelling vision derived from the aspirations of its citizens. The plan also defines specific actions that can help fulfill that vision which allows the County to develop by design rather than default. Shawnee County's comprehensive plan will also fulfill three fundamental roles:

### Practical

Communities prepare and adopt comprehensive plans for practical legal purposes. Kansas State Statutes give counties the ability to adopt zoning and subdivision regulations to promote the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens. Zoning recognizes that people in a community live cooperatively and have responsibilities to one another. Other land use regulations, such as those for subdivisions, are based on the premise that growth should comply with specific standards and occur in an economically efficient, coordinated manner. These ordinances help determine how to develop land.

However, land use decisions need to follow an accepted and reasonable idea of how the county should grow. Therefore, Kansas state law authorizes the adoption of a comprehensive plan to **estaboish establish** the foundation for implementing these regulations.

### Aspirational

A land use plan that provides a basis for zoning and subdivision regulations and addresses capital facility needs helps communities develop efficiently and responsibly. Yet, the greatest value of a comprehensive plan is for Shawnee County to create a vision for the community's future, based on the participation of residents in the planning process. This concept addresses both demographic and economic changes and opportunities. This gives residents a voice in the future of their community while providing more certainty to property-owners about how land can be used and what public services are likely to be provided or required. However, the plan remains a working document that changes according to current situations to ensure Shawnee County can realize its full potential.

### Inspirational

In addition to its practical and aspirational roles, the plan serves an inspirational role to guide County staff, the Planning Commission, the County Commission, and other County boards and commissions as they set policy and make land use decisions. The plan contains useful background information to consider for the county's future and assists county officials with policy discussions with non-county groups.

The plan also guides other taxing jurisdictions such as townships, school districts and rural water districts in making public investments in facilities like county roads, school buildings, and water lines and can lay the foundation for decisions about the types of services that the residents of rural Shawnee County want. Doing so helps other jurisdictions also make wise public investments by informing them of where growth is anticipated and development may occur. This can reduce the cost of public service and limited availability of desired public services.



## AUTHORITY TO PLAN

The Kansas Legislature grants counties the authority to prepare comprehensive plans to guide their future growth and development. The Shawnee County Comprehensive Plan was prepared and adopted pursuant to K.S.A. 19-2958.

As with counties, the Kansas Legislature has granted cities the authority to prepare comprehensive plans to guide their future growth and development. Consistent with that authority, the City of Topeka has created an extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) that extends 3-miles beyond the current Topeka city limits. In 2015, Topeka adopted a Land Use and Growth Management Plan that makes specific recommendations for both how land may be divided inside the ETJ and the circumstances under which the city will allow new development inside the ETJ to connect to city water and city wastewater systems.

## Planning and Private Property Rights

The Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution generally states that private property must not be taken for public use without just compensation. A taking occurs when a public agency either condemns property to build public projects (also referred to as eminent domain) or physically occupies or damages property. A government regulatory action (such as zoning), can also result in a "regulatory taking" which occurs when a regulation interferes with the use of private property to such an extent that it has the same effect as a physical taking.

In most cases, the test of whether an action is a taking is whether the regulation denies an owner all economically viable use of the property. It is important to note that the courts have been very clear on this last issue; a taking does not occur simply because a regulation **impose imposes** limits on the use of property. The

Takings Clause is often misconstrued as a prohibition against any regulation that either decreases property value or prohibits individuals from doing what they want with their land. A loss of perceived or potential market value is not enough to trigger a takings claim.

## Issues of County-Wide Concern

Some issues cannot be addressed by individual property owners. In preparation of this plan, Shawnee County identified and carefully considered several issues of county-wide concern that can only be addressed by the community as a whole through its locally elected units of government, including:

- **Loss of Agricultural Lands.** The loss of nearly 30,000 acres (45.7 square miles) of agricultural lands to very low-density residential development since 1960 has undoubtedly reduced the economic output of this important industry in Shawnee County. There is a community interest in protecting the remaining agricultural lands for future generations. Roughly 8% of the total land area of Shawnee County has been converted from productive agricultural lands to low-density residential tracts. This exurban development costs county taxpayers more to provide public services than this development generates in tax revenues needed to provide the public services.
- **Disruption of Agricultural Operations.** As more families that are not engaged in agriculture continue to move into unincorporated areas in Shawnee County, the potential for conflicts between agricultural operations and the new residential property-owners increase. This includes the introduction of commuter traffic onto roads designed for agricultural land uses. It also includes a noticeable increase in noxious weeds as homeowners not familiar with rural property maintenance standards move into the area.
- **Unrealistic Expectations for Public Services.** As families move from the cities into the unincorporated areas in Shawnee County, they bring with them an unrealistic set of expectations about the types of services and the service levels Shawnee County should provide for their new

homes. Counties are not cities, and just are not equipped to provide the same types of public services at the same service standards as cities. As more residential development occurs in unincorporated Shawnee County, public agency budgets are strained.

- **Responsible Development.** Growth continues to occur in the undeveloped area. Rural lifestyles are attractive to many people. Because of this, more families will move in to unincorporated areas of Shawnee County. Steps need to be taken to ensure that new residential development occurs in a responsible manner. This means that development not occur in environmentally fragile areas (i.e., floodplains, wetlands and steep slopes) or on the most productive agricultural lands. Finally, it means that appropriate public services at appropriate service levels be in place before development occurs.
- **Economic Development In Shawnee County.** In Shawnee County, businesses employing the most people are public administration, health care/social assistance, and retail trade, collectively providing 43 percent of jobs (Chapter 6, Figure 6.8). However, in rural Shawnee County, workers are more likely to work in the manufacturing, educational services, and construction sectors. Economic development is primarily carried out by GO Topeka, a partnership between Shawnee County, the City of Topeka, and the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce, with economic development policy from the Joint Economic Development Organization (JEDO).

## Future Policy Discussions

The City of Topeka currently regulates the division of land while Shawnee County retains zoning and building permit authority inside the Topeka ETJ. The Comprehensive Plan provides Shawnee County officials with a reasonable basis to conduct policy level discussions with Topeka officials regarding how best to manage land use and development inside the Topeka ETJ. To achieve the future goals of the comprehensive plan, it will be necessary for Shawnee County to work cooperatively with Topeka.

Shawnee County does not provide all public services needed to support development within the unincorporated area. Townships, Rural Water Districts, Rural Fire Districts, and others provide many of the public services that support development. For some public services, cities are providing public services outside their corporate boundaries. The Comprehensive Plan provides Shawnee County officials with a reasonable basis to conduct policy level discussions with officials from these other units of local government regarding how best to provide public services in the unincorporated area.



## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The planning process was conducted by the Shawnee County Planning Department and RDG Planning & Design, in collaboration with CSF Engineers. In June 2016, county commissioners identified economic development, land use, natural resources, transportation & infrastructure, and intergovernmental coordination as key priorities for the plan. However, public participation was a critical element in engaging citizens and stakeholders to inform decisions and ensure that the plan outcomes are meaningful, appropriate, and achievable. Keeping officials, agencies, local governments, the public, and interested parties informed of the planning effort further promoted opportunities for input into the plan. The public was engaged through the following steps:

### Steering Committee

A 22-member Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, representing a broad spectrum of community interests was convened to offer primary guidance to the plan. Committee members met monthly to assist in identifying emerging issues, refining vision statements and objectives, and prioritizing the community's goals. As the plan developed, they also reviewed it through the development process.

### Community Questionnaire

To begin the planning process, a community questionnaire was made available to all interested residents and stakeholders. The questionnaire focused on the relative importance of various community services and facilities. Over 320 responses were received. These responses helped frame the important issues and goals as seen through the eyes of the community and were used to set the agenda for focus group meetings and the visioning process undertaken by the Steering Committee.

### Stakeholder Groups

Targeted stakeholder group meetings were held over two days in September 2016. In total, 62 residents, business and property owners, employers, and public officials participated in round-table discussions on several issues. These discussions provided a forum for community members and representatives to expand and refine the information from the questionnaire and to have in-depth discussion of their broader opinions of the community and its future. Additional meetings were held with representatives from the Cities of Auburn, Silver Lake, Rossville, and Willard and the Citizen Band of the Pottawatomie Tribe in October and November.

### Public Open Houses

Two public open houses were held the evenings of October 27, 2016 and November 1, 2016 at Seaman and Washburn Rural High Schools. The general community was invited to share their ideas for Shawnee County and work alongside the planning team to help create the comprehensive plan. The format began with a brief presentation introducing attendees to the planning process, followed by an open house. Attendees investigated boards with information collected thus far and shared their ideas, issues, and concerns with the planning team for incorporation into the development of the plan document. 36 people participated in these events with 9 at the first meeting and 27 at the second, excluding the planning team.





## Public Design Workshops

Two public design workshops were held the evenings of February 1, 2017 and February 2, 2017 at Washburn Rural High School and Northern Hills Elementary School. Using projections of residential, commercial, and industrial growth through 2040 and accounting for residents' goals and objectives, the team shared future scenarios. About 30 members of the public attended and helped fine-tune these ideas, in addition to sharing their own. It also provided an opportunity for the public to think critically about how Shawnee County may look in the future and add their voices to the plan. The future land use map was especially shaped by these workshops, in addition to area concepts.

## Big Ideas Series

To actively involve the public in the process of developing the Plan, the team produced a series of ten "Big Ideas" summaries to cover the plan's major topics in partnership with the Topeka Capital Journal. Each introduced a topic and explained relevant considerations, plan goals, and recommendations. This provided another opportunity to engage and inform as much of the public as possible and provided an opportunity for the public to understand the plan's recommendations in order to shape them.

## Final Public Open House

The final public open house was held June 15 at the Big Gage Shelter House at Gage Park. This provided a public forum for attendees to come and voice their comments, questions, and concerns of the plan's goals and recommendations. In total, 22 participants attended.

## Project Website

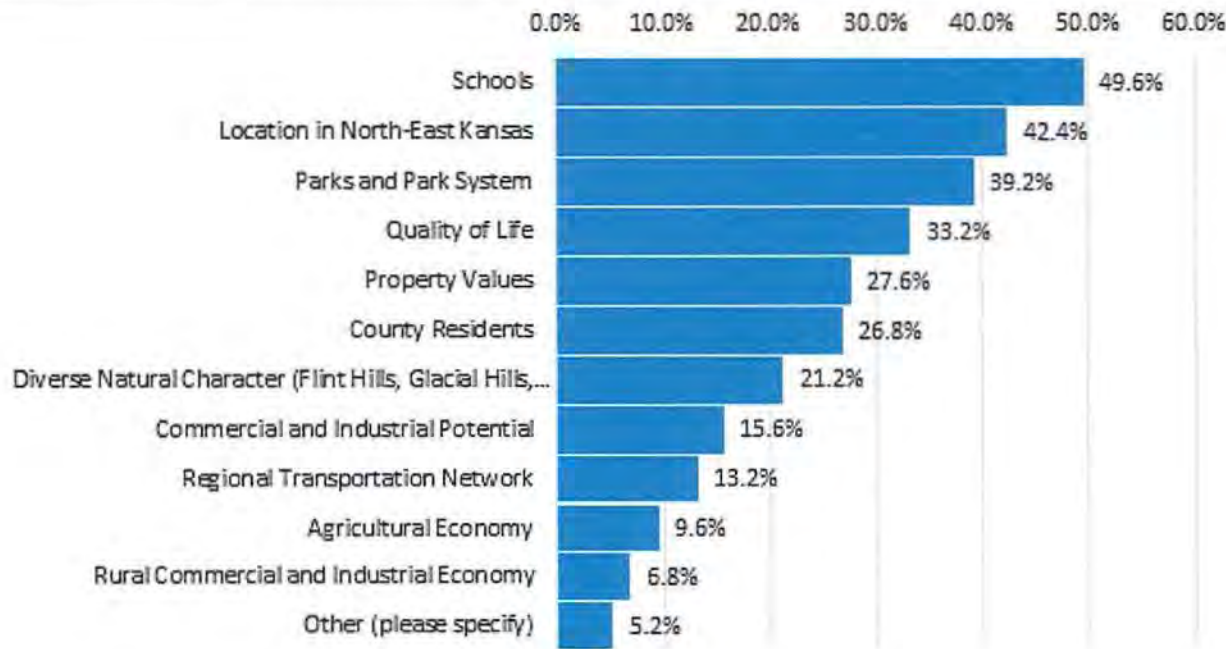
A project website was created and routinely updated with new information on the project as it evolved. This served as a resource through which interested citizens could stay involved and engaged with the project. Documents, including the Big Ideas summaries, were also posted to the website in addition to the completed plan.

## Commission Involvement

The planning and county commissions were especially involved in the planning process. The planning commission attended the final steering committee meetings in order to voice their ideas about the plan's goals and recommendations and also provided comments about the completed chapters. The county commission stayed active as the plan was adopted, with a workshop on June 12, a public hearing with the planning commission on August 14, and a final adoption hearing held \_\_\_\_.



**Figure 0.2:** What do you believe are Shawnee County's three greatest assets?



Source: RDG Community Questionnaire

## ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

During the initial stages of the planning process, the county commission, steering committee, stakeholder groups, public questionnaire, and public open houses allowed residents of Shawnee County to express their thoughts about the county's services, facilities, strengths, weaknesses, and future direction. Responses helped measure public perceptions of the county and suggested potential future priorities and general actions.

### Questionnaire Responses

Questionnaire respondents identified the following as the primary perceived strengths of Shawnee County:

- Schools
- Location in northeast Kansas
- Park system
- Quality of life
- Property values

Questionnaire respondents identified the following as important issues facing the county:

- Ability to retain young people
- Attracting new industries and businesses
- Public finances and taxes
- Recruiting higher paying industries
- Having a vision for the future

These opportunities and threats reappear throughout the plan. Other survey results are included at the beginning of relevant sections, informing many of the policies and discussions.

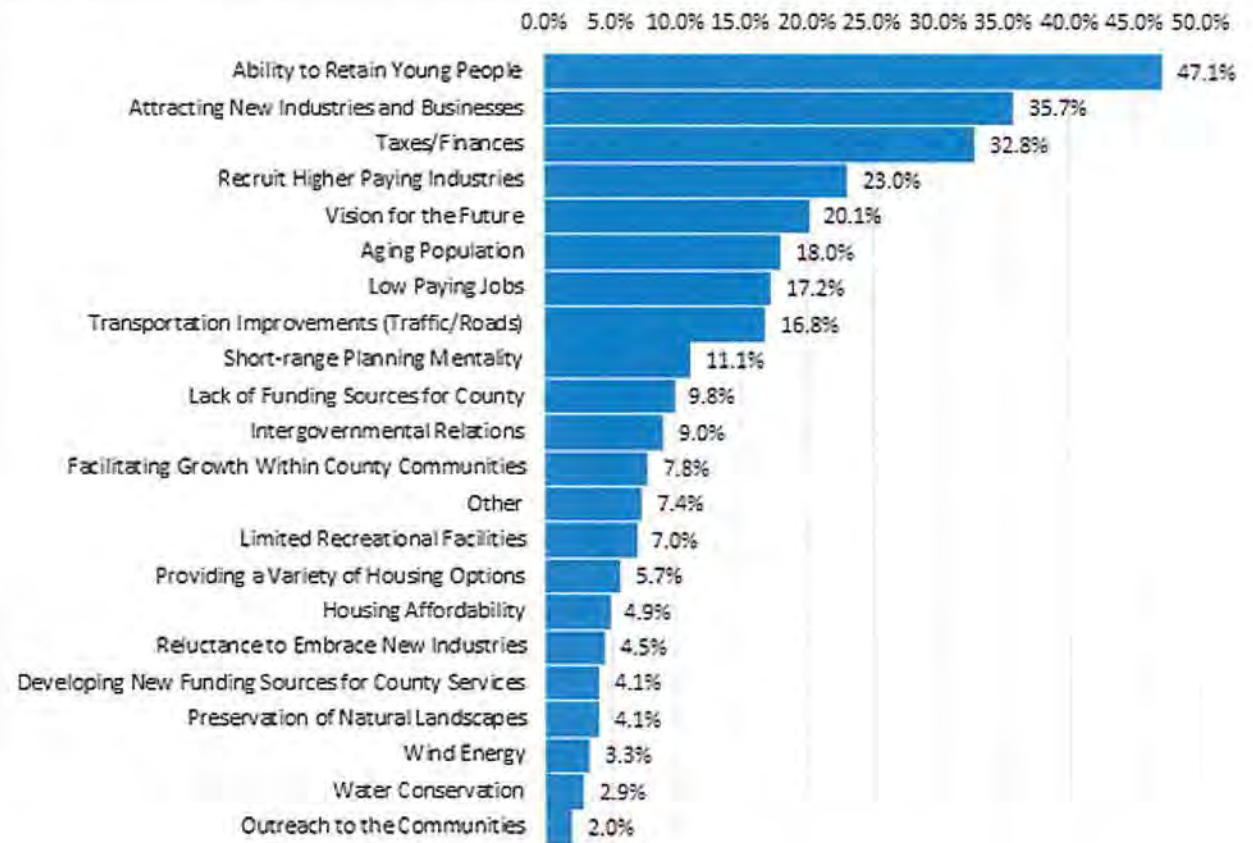
### Recurring Themes

Several themes emerged during discussion with groups, including:



- **Natural Resources.** Shawnee County contains a variety of environmental resources and features that should be recognized and preserved and the land's carrying capacity should not be exceeded.
- **Transportation & Infrastructure.** The county will strive to provide services in an efficient and cost-effective manner by encouraging careful development and expansion, accounting for future needs and desires, and coordinating with related groups and agencies.
- **Land Use & Development.** Land use policy should direct urban development to minimize conflicts between land uses, take advantage of existing infrastructure, protect the character of the county, and clarify expectations for development.
- **Economic Development.** Planning efforts should promote job creation and opportunities for entrepreneurship, recognize the importance of agriculture, mineral extraction, and homebased businesses to the vitality of the county's economy, and provide easy access to commercial areas.
- **Housing.** Shawnee County should have a variety of housing types. Existing housing in historic development areas should be preserved and improved, and new housing should be provided in a manner consistent with its surroundings.
- **Intergovernmental Cooperation.** The county and its townships, utility providers, and other taxing jurisdictions should actively communicate and involve each other and the area's residents and businesses to decrease costs and maintain orderly development.
- **Quality of Life.** Planning should enhance the county's quality of life through well-maintained infrastructure, numerous recreational activities and facilities, and safety, in addition to increasing residents pride in the county and its small and unincorporated towns.
- **Avoid Burdensome Regulation.** Planning should not create regulation that would decrease land values, provide an undue burden, or does not enhance the public's health, safety, or welfare.

Figure 0.3: What do you believe are the most important issues facing Shawnee County in the next ten years?



Source: RDG Community Questionnaire



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## APPROACH AND FORMAT

The Shawnee County 2037 Comprehensive Plan is organized into several chapters. Each topically explores the existing conditions, findings, goals, and recommendations. The final chapter synthesizes this information to implement the plan and identifies ways to accomplish these recommendations. The chapters are organized as follows:

### 1. Demographics

Presents a demographic snapshot of the county, analyzing its historic population, comparing it to comparable communities, reviewing demographic considerations, and projecting its potential future growth.

### 2. Natural Resources

Explores Shawnee County's natural resources, including environmental resources and features that should be recognized, preserved, or used such as floodplains, wetlands, landscapes, farmlands, and cultural or historic resources like the Oregon Trail and Native Stone Scenic Byway, among others.

### 3. Transportation & Infrastructure

Discusses the development and support of an efficient county road network to serve future circulation and access needs, in addition to the provision of other services to residents such as utilities and services like cell phone coverage, schools, internet, and rural water and sewer.

### 4. Land Use

Identifies land use policies for future growth and development, including the direction of urban and suburban development, current policies for land use, and how existing infrastructure and natural resources affect it. It also explores the interaction of land use with agriculture, and rural lifestyles.

### 5. Housing

Discusses historical housing development in the county, including the affordability of housing in unincorporated areas, homes for families engaged in agriculture, homes on suburban estates, and other housing options such as manufactured homes or small apartments.

### 6. Economic Development

Explains Shawnee County's current economy and workforce, anticipated industry growth and change, changes in the nation's economy, and other considerations for economic development in the county including home occupations, agri- and historic tourism, and the effects of quality of life.

### 7. Implementation

Synthesizes information from the previous chapters and presents how the county can accomplish these recommendations on a reasonable time schedule given the county's fiscal capacity, current policy, and need to work with other jurisdictions and its residents.



## CHAPTER ONE

# Population and Demographics

Shawnee County is one of the largest and most dynamic counties in Kansas. This chapter presents a demographic snapshot of the county, analyzing its historic population, comparing it to comparable communities, reviewing demographic considerations, and projecting its potential future growth.



## HISTORIC POPULATION GROWTH

For 50 years, Shawnee County has had steady growth, especially in unincorporated areas. The population of the County grew by 36,600 people between 1960 and 2010, averaging more than 5 percent each decade, despite a decrease in the 1970s. In 2010, the county reached nearly 178,000 residents. Topeka also experienced steady albeit slower growth over that same period.

Of the growth occurring in the county, Topeka grew by 8,000, the county's small cities grew by 2,600, while Shawnee County's unincorporated area grew by more than 26,000. Because of the growth in unincorporated areas, it now comprises over a quarter of the county's 2010 population, compared to comprising less than 15 percent in 1960.

Of the county's four smaller cities, most grew. Auburn developed during the 1960's to more than 1,200 people by 2010. Rossville expanded almost 14 percent to a population just over 1,100. Silver Lake more than tripled its population, reaching nearly 1,500 residents. However, Willard grew through the 1980's, but stabilized near its 1960's population due to home buy-outs following flooding. In total, these small cities comprise 2.2 percent of the county's population.

Not all areas of Shawnee County have grown equally. Soldier and Mission Townships grew the most since 1960, each by more than 8,000 residents. These are followed by Auburn, Monmouth, and Tecumseh with more than 2,000 new residents each. Soldier, Mission, and Tecumseh all border the City of Topeka.

Topeka Township is the only one to lose population, due mostly to annexations by the City of Topeka. Topeka annexed land from Mission, Soldier, Menoken, and Tecumseh Townships as well. Other townships gained between 300 and 1,400 residents since 1960. Note that Auburn, Dover, Rossville, and Silver Lake Townships contain the Cities of Auburn, Willard, Rossville, and Silver Lake respectively.

FIGURE 1.1: 1960-2010 Historic City Population

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2000-2010 % CHANGE	1960-2010 % CHANGE
Topeka	119,484	125,011	115,266	119,883	122,377	127,473	4.2%	6.7%
Auburn	-	261	890	908	1,121	1,227	9.5%	NA
Rossville	797	934	1,045	1,052	1,014	1,151	13.5%	44.4%
Silver Lake	392	811	1,350	1,390	1,358	1,439	6.0%	267.1%
Willard	94	124	128	110	86	92	7.0%	-2.1%
Unincorporated	20,519	28,181	36,237	37,633	43,915	46,552	6.0%	126.9%
Shawnee County	141,286	155,322	154,916	160,976	169,871	177,934	4.7%	25.9%

Source: US Census Bureau

FIGURE 1.2: 1960-2010 Historic Township Populations and Topeka (In Order of Size)

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2000-2010 % CHANGE	1960-2010 % CHANGE
Topeka city	119,484	125,011	115,266	119,883	122,377	127,473	4.2%	6.7%
Soldier TWP	5,592	7,225	11,017	11,491	12,867	14,732	14.5%	163.4%
Mission TWP	1,319	2,473	5,082	7,370	9,070	9,365	3.3%	610.0%
Tecumseh TWP	1,857	3,829	6,314	7,185	7,822	7,593	-2.9%	308.9%
Williamsport TWP	3,627	7,812	1,924	3,829	4,023	4,000	-0.6%	10.3%
Auburn TWP	825	1,066	1,885	2,157	2,787	3,147	12.9%	281.5%
Monmouth TWP	960	1,113	1,645	1,912	2,786	3,021	8.4%	214.7%
Silver Lake TWP	626	1,140	1,828	1,882	1,949	2,024	3.8%	223.3%
Rossville TWP	1280	1,376	1,596	1,581	1,681	1,907	13.4%	49.0%
Menoken TWP	800	912	987	1,203	1,371	1,535	12.0%	91.9%
Dover TWP	765	976	1,124	1,220	1,734	1,524	-12.1%	99.2%
Topeka TWP	3,949	2,199	6,034	991	931	917	-1.5%	-76.8%
Grove TWP	202	190	214	272	473	696	47.1%	244.6%
Shawnee County	141,286	155,322	154,916	160,976	169,871	177,934	4.7%	25.9%

Source: US Census Bureau

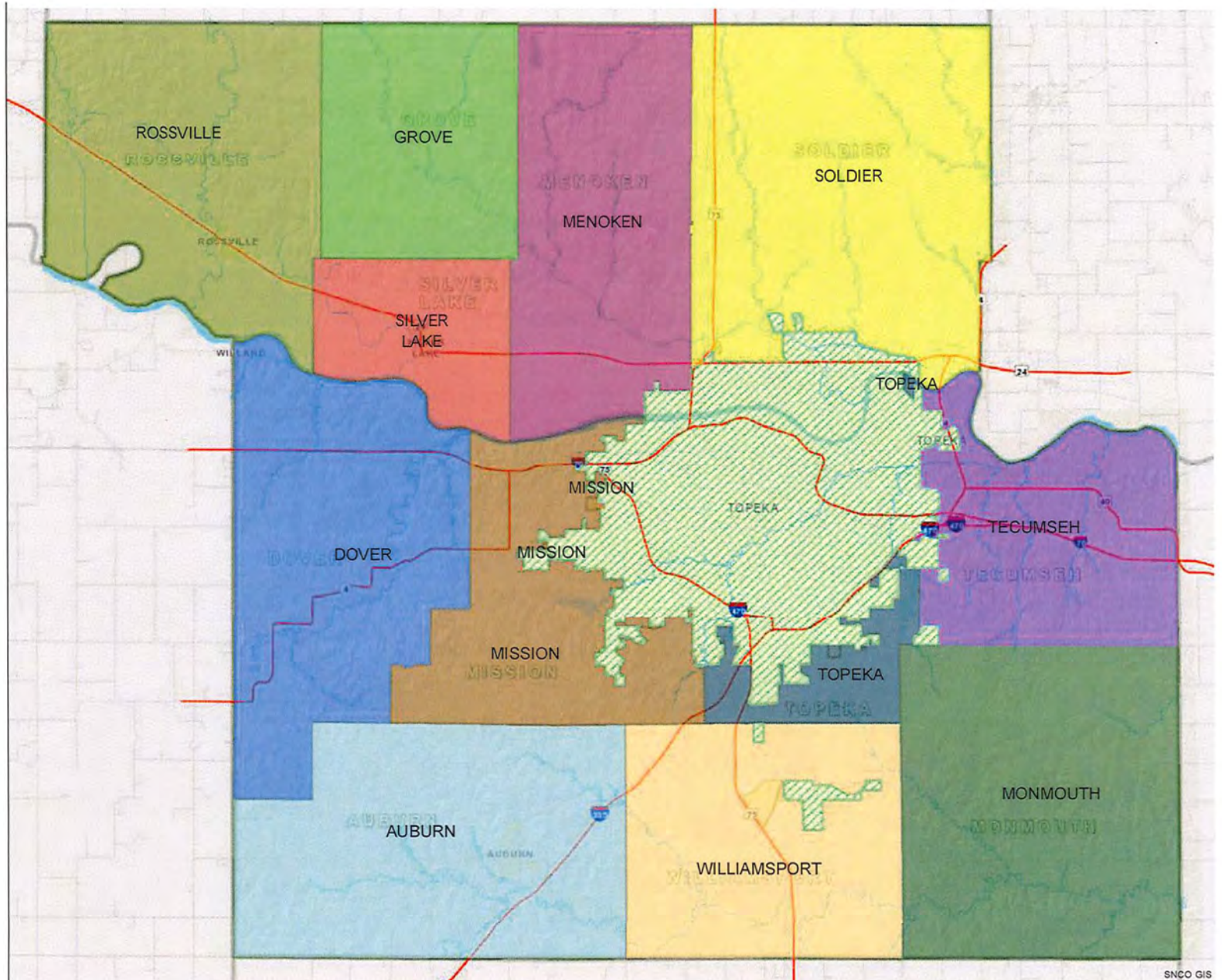
Definition of EXURBAN: A semi-rural area beyond the suburbs of a city; characterized by large lots and ranchettes that typically lack some or all urban services.



Shawnee County  
Comprehensive Plan

Townships

-  City of Topeka
-  AUBURN
-  DOVER
-  GROVE
-  MENOKEN
-  MISSION
-  MONMOUTH
-  ROSSVILLE
-  SILVER LAKE
-  SOLDIER
-  TECUMSEH
-  TOPEKA
-  WILLIAMSPORT



SNCO GIS

Figure 1.3: Shawnee County Townships



## Regional Context

Shawnee County is surrounded by Douglas, Jackson, Jefferson, Osage, Pottawatomie and Wabaunsee Counties. Examining these counties provides regional context. The Topeka Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is comprised of five of these: Jackson, Jefferson, Osage, Wabaunsee, and Shawnee.

Notably, all counties surrounding Shawnee County experienced long term population growth over the past 50 years. Douglas County grew the most, largely due to the continued expansion of Lawrence, its largest city. The other counties also had their populations steadily increase, though Osage County lost population in the 2000's. Over that same period, the Topeka MSA also grew, though at a slower rate than Shawnee County alone. Thus, even while the City of Topeka's population growth slowed, the MSA and County both have performed well in terms of growth.

## Comparative Context

Select urban counties provide an even broader context. While Shawnee County and the Topeka MSA experienced population growth, other highly-urbanized counties in northeast Kansas tended to grow at a faster rate. In addition, most growth in Kansas counties with large cities occurred in their major cities.

- Manhattan comprised an ever-increasing portion of Riley County's population, from 55 to nearly 75 percent, along with Fort Riley which makes up a major population in the county.
- Douglas County, in addition to its tremendous population growth, has seen Lawrence grow from 75 percent to 80 percent of its population, which roughly stayed there for the last 20 years.
- Wichita slightly increased as a proportion of Sedgwick County's population from 74 to 77 percent. However, most of the county's growth has occurred in its smaller incorporated cities.

Topeka is unique in losing its share of its county's total population. Between 1960 and 2010, Topeka decreased from 85 to 72 percent of the County's

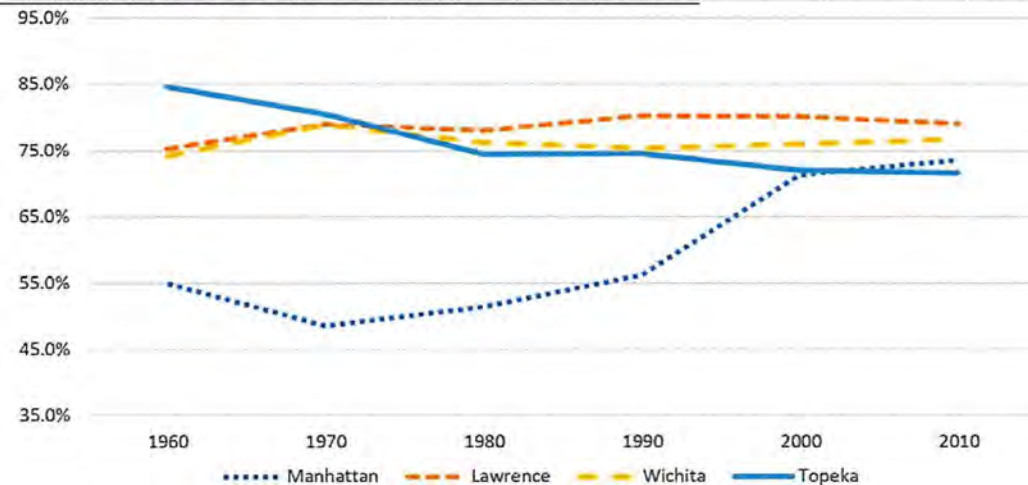
population. This contrasts most major cities in urbanized counties which remained relatively stable or increased as a proportion of the population.

**FIGURE 1.4: Comparative Historic Regional Population, 1960-2010**

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2000-2010 % CHANGE	1960-2010 % CHANGE
Douglas	43,720	57,932	67,640	81,798	99,965	110,886	10.9%	153.6%
Jackson*	10,309	10,342	11,644	11,525	12,657	13,462	6.4%	30.6%
Jefferson*	11,252	11,945	15,207	15,905	18,426	19,126	3.8%	70.0%
Osage*	12,886	13,352	15,319	15,249	16,712	16,295	-2.5%	26.5%
Pottawatomie	11,957	11,755	14,792	16,128	18,209	21,604	18.6%	80.7%
Wabaunsee*	6,648	6,397	6,867	6,603	6,885	7,053	2.4%	6.1%
Shawnee County*	141,286	13,462	154,916	160,976	169,871	177,934	4.7%	25.9%
Topeka MSA	182,381	197,358	203,953	210,258	224,551	233,870	4.2%	28.2%
Shawnee County / MSA	77.5%	78.7%	76.0%	76.6%	75.6%	76.1%	0.7%	-1.8%

\* Part of the Topeka MSA  
Source: US Census Bureau

**Figure 1.5: Major Kansas Cities as Proportions of their Counties' Populations**



Source: US Census Bureau

Definition of METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA: County or counties associated with at least one urbanized area of at least 50,000 population and having a high degree of social and economic integration with the core city.



## AGE COMPOSITION

Examining the age distribution or cohorts of Shawnee County explains many demographic trends and ties into future population growth or decline in the county.

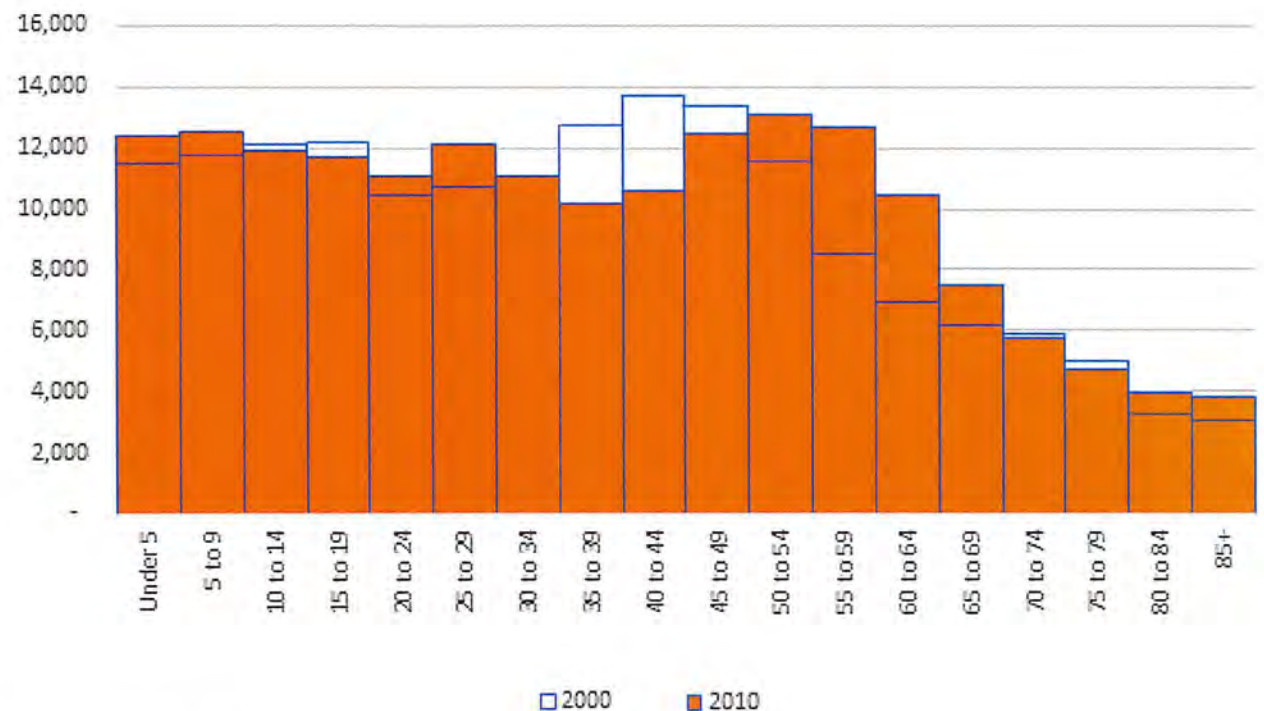
Over the last 20 years, Shawnee County's population aged like much of the nation. In 2000, the Baby Boomer generation was ages 35 to 49, beginning their high-skill years in the workforce and just passing their prime child-bearing years. By 2010, Boomers were 45 to 59, reaching the peak of their careers and becoming empty nesters. As of 2015, Boomers began reaching retirement age.

Because of these factors, the median age of Shawnee County increased from 37.1 in 2000 to 38.6 in 2010. The aging of the population holds true through almost every township in Shawnee County over the past couple decades, with each having their share of the population under age 18 decline and share of residents age 65 and more increase. This is also evident in age distribution graphs as seen in Figure 1.6. In the past decade, the share of those age 65 and more increased from 13.7 to 14.4 percent of the population. Estimates for 2015 indicate that this pattern is accelerating, with about 16.5 percent at that time estimated age 65 and older.

The effect of the aging Boomers will be significant in the labor market over the coming years as they continue to retire and downsize, in addition to dramatic impacts on the types of services needed in the county. Birth rates can be expected to decrease and the higher number of seniors will affect the transportation system as people are no longer able to drive safely. Furthermore, additional repercussions will be felt in the healthcare system, residential market, schools, economy, and tax base. Looking at attracting younger populations to replace retirees and to form families will be an important consideration moving forward for the county, as it will be across much of the country.

Aging trends also differ in Topeka and rural Shawnee County. Topeka's percentage of working age population was below that of the County's in 2000, but the county's population aged more rapidly. As a result, more of Topeka's population is now in prime working years compared to the county. This suggests that the impacts of an aging population will be felt more in the county.

Figure 1.6: Age Distribution in Shawnee County, 2000 and 2010



Source: US Census Bureau



## FUTURE POPULATION ESTIMATES

There are several ways to estimate future populations. Population projections are the simplest way to estimate the future by assuming past trends will continue. Another method is forecasting using a cohort-component model. This method uses natural population change and immigration, that is, the balance of births and deaths by age cohort and the balance of domestic and international in- and out-migrants. When there are more births than deaths, this is called natural population increase, while natural decrease is when there are more deaths than births, often seen in older communities. Natural increase and decrease and migration do not necessarily align, so areas with natural increase can still lose population overall through out-migration.

For Shawnee County, four population projections were used to estimate the county's future population in 2040, including two simple projections and two cohort-component models. All models use 2010 as their base year and previous Census counts for additional information. The following models were considered, in order of the final population numbers:

- 0.2 Percent Annual Growth Rate.** The low population estimate uses simple 0.2 percent annual growth rate model, chosen for being below historic growth trends, but above a flat population. This number acts as a low estimate for population growth in the County; it is also closest to the US Census's 2015 population estimate.
- Wichita State Cohort-Component.** This model was completed by Wichita State University's Center for Economic Development and Business Research. This cohort-component model was used to estimate populations for all counties in Kansas. Notably, this model shows Shawnee County's population rising through 2035, after which it slightly declines. However, it generally indicates population increase from 2015 to 2040.

- RDG Cohort-Component.** This model was completed by RDG Planning & Design using a cohort-component model. The model assumes a higher than average birth rate based on Shawnee County's historic birth rates, resulting in a natural increase for the County. However, it also assumes a one percent annual out-migration, similar to that from IRS records and Census migration estimates.
- 50-Year Decline Annual Growth Rate.** The final projection uses Shawnee County's 50-year historic growth rate, reflecting a steady decline. The model starts at 0.47 percent annual growth,

decreasing to 0.26 percent growth by 2040. This outcome acts as a high estimate for the county. This model's 2040 population estimate is similar to that estimated by RDG's cohort-component model if the effects of out-migration are excluded.

These four models provide a range of possible future outcomes. However, the RDG model is used for the remainder of the Comprehensive Plan as the primary population estimate, suggesting a population of 192,533 by 2040. This is an increase of approximately 14,599 or 8.2 percent.

Figure 1.7: Population Projections for Shawnee County

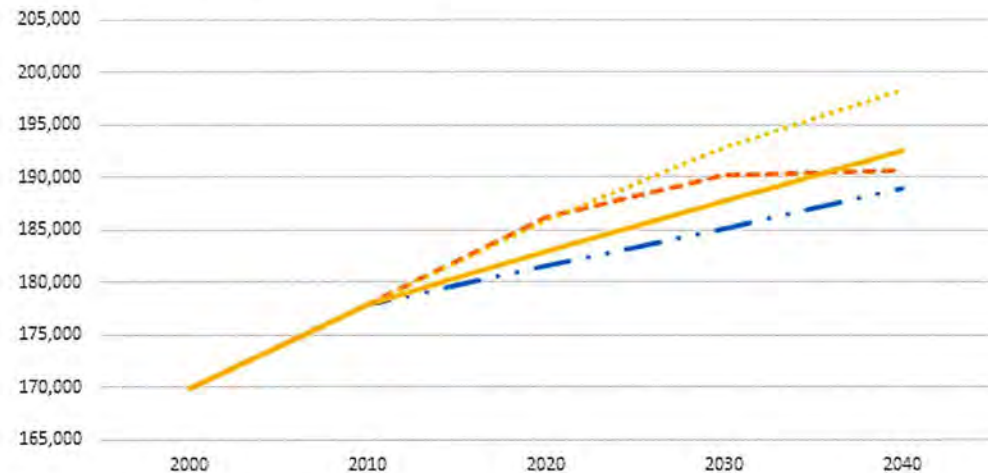


FIGURE 1.8: Population Projections for Shawnee County

	2010	2020	2030	2040	2010-2040 CHANGE	2010-2040 % CHANGE
0.2% Annual Growth	177,934	181,525	185,188	188,926	10,992	6.2%
Wichita State Estimate	177,934	186,148	190,211	190,626	12,692	7.1%
RDG Estimate	177,934	182,945	187,703	192,533	14,599	8.2%
50-Year Annual Growth	177,934	185,972	192,830	198,353	20,419	11.5%

Source: RDG Planning & Design, Wichita State Center for Economic Development and Business Research

## Scenario 1: Historic Trend

Using RDG's county-wide population projections, additional projections were prepared for different areas of Shawnee County and Topeka. These estimates are based on 50-year proportional population trends, that is, how each area increased or decreased as a proportion of the county. The six areas in this scenario are:

1. Northwest: Rossville, Silver Lake, and Grove Townships
2. North: Soldier and Menoken Townships
3. Topeka: City of Topeka
4. Southwest: Auburn and Dover Townships
5. South: Mission, Williamsport, and Topeka Townships
6. Southeast: Tecumseh and Monmouth Townships

The results of this model indicate slight growth for Topeka even as it still declines as a proportion of the county's population. Most areas of the county see growth in this model, with most of accumulating to the north and south due to continued expected growth in Soldier and Mission Townships. Smaller gains would be expected to the southeast, southwest, or northwest. In this scenario, much of the population growth in Shawnee County would likely occur along section roads in unincorporated areas.

However, Topeka's current land use policy, guided by the Land Use and Growth Management Plan 2040, will likely prevent the same pattern of development as new regulations guide development to infill locations and to Topeka's Urban Growth Area (UGA). A new estimate accounting for Topeka's desired population growth of 11,000 new residents was also generated.

**FIGURE 1.9: Population Projections for Townships and Topeka, "Past Trends" Scenario**

	PROJECTION				PERCENT OF COUNTY			
	2010	2020	2030	2040	2010	2020	2030	2040
Northwest	4,627	4,873	5,122	5,376	2.6%	2.7%	2.8%	2.8%
North	16,267	17,440	18,630	19,856	9.2%	9.5%	9.9%	10.3%
Topeka	127,473	128,381	129,118	129,807	71.6%	70.2%	68.8%	67.4%
Southwest	4,671	5,179	5,698	6,234	2.7%	2.8%	3.0%	3.3%
South	14,282	15,743	17,081	18,458	8.0%	8.6%	9.1%	9.6%
Southeast	10,614	11,330	12,055	12,801	6.0%	6.2%	6.4%	6.7%
Shawnee County	177,934	182,945	187,703	192,533	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: RDG Planning & Design



## Scenario 2: 11,000 Residents to Topeka

Based on the assumption that Topeka will grow by the 11,000 new residents as their Land Use plan assumes, a different picture emerges. In this scenario, Topeka begins capturing a larger portion of the County's population, reaching more than 138,000 residents and 71.9 percent of the county's population by 2040.

However, as Topeka absorbs more of the county's new population, many of the outlying areas see much lower amounts of population growth. In this scenario, all areas still grow, but at a much slower pace due to shifts in where the population lives. Notably, the northwest area begins to lose population from 2030 to 2040, though it remains at a similar level as it was in 2010.

Alternatively, if Topeka increases its population by enticing in-commuters, a large portion of the city's workforce, to relocate to Topeka, this could boost its population without slowing growth in other areas of the county. Likely, such a scenario would result in higher levels of population growth than projected because it would break sharply with historic trends. Regardless, factors such as these should be taken into account as Shawnee County continues to grow and change and policy is made and negotiated.

**FIGURE 1.10:** Population Projections for Townships and Topeka, "Topeka Growth" Scenario

	PROJECTION				PERCENT OF COUNTY			
	2010	2020	2030	2040	2010	2020	2030	2040
Northwest	4,627	4,694	4,747	4,629	2.6%	2.6%	2.5%	2.4%
North	16,267	16,515	16,785	17,028	9.1%	9.0%	8.9%	8.8%
Topeka	127,473	131,140	134,806	138,473	71.6%	71.7%	71.8%	71.9%
Southwest	4,671	4,868	5,086	5,456	2.6%	2.7%	2.7%	2.8%
South	14,282	14,951	15,428	15,871	8.0%	8.2%	8.2%	8.2%
Southeast	10,614	10,778	10,851	11,077	6.0%	5.9%	5.8%	5.8%
Shawnee County	177,934	182,945	187,703	192,533	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: RDG Planning & Design

## Discussion

Unincorporated Shawnee County grew by 127 percent from 1960 to 2010. Topeka grew by only 7 percent during the same time. After comparing four different future population scenarios, the County's population is expected to grow by 14,599 by the year 2040. The Topeka Land Use and Growth Management Plan anticipates that Topeka will grow by 11,000 people through 2040 through infill development, redevelopment, and annexation of the Urban Growth Areas (UGA). If successful, this means that Topeka would capture 72 percent of the county's total anticipated population at that time. The balance of Shawnee County would then be expected to capture 28 percent of the county's total population in 2040, which is 3,600 people. This is a reversal of the historic trend.

In addition, the population is aging, with aging occurring more rapidly in unincorporated areas. This indicates that the impacts of an aging population will likely affect the county more than the City.

Because much of the county's growth is expected to be annexed by the City of Topeka, coordinating with the City and other taxing jurisdictions will help reach the best outcomes for that growth. For that reason, it will be important to use this document as a policy statement to begin discussions with Topeka regarding the future of areas outside of its UGA but within its 3-mile jurisdiction. This process should result in set joint policy goals for the city which will delineate development approval responsibilities and minimize administrative burden for the City, County, and developers.



## CHAPTER TWO

# Natural and Cultural Resources

Natural and cultural resources form the base of everything in Shawnee County. Not only does agriculture play a significant role in the area's economy, but the landscape also creates opportunities and constraints to development. This comprehensive plan brings together water management, conservation, land use planning, and industries like agriculture and mining to identify the best ways to continue a high quality of life. It also demonstrates how people rely on the health and productivity of the landscape and how land stewardship is critical in maintaining its health and productivity. Wisely managing these resources allows the County to build for present and future generations and mitigate natural hazards which saves lives, property, and money.

## PERCEPTIONS

Survey participants completed a "report card" questionnaire in which they were asked to rank various natural and cultural resources issues and opportunities on a one-to-five scale, with five representing "excellent" and one representing "poor." Attributes with average scores of 3.0 or above are perceived strengths and those with scores below 2.5 represent areas of perceived weaknesses. These results were then better understood through stakeholder meetings. The following highlights important strengths and weaknesses regarding natural resources.

Lake Shawnee was undisputedly the most positive response regarding natural resources. Other strengths included the Clinton Wildlife Refuge, regional parks and recreation areas, Preservation of Natural Features (Flint Hills, Glacial Hills, and Osage Cuestas), and the overall quality of the environment. Nothing scored below a 2.5 rating, but many residents saw the preservation of prime farmland, small town character, and historic features, access and use of the rivers, and agricultural tourism as relatively weak.

Focus groups and public meetings also reinforced resident's positive attitudes towards the park system, though a need toward evaluating future growth and park areas was mentioned, especially by utilizing areas of beauty or areas that may be hard to develop, like along waterways, where feasible. Stakeholders also liked the idea of preserving natural and historic resources to try and promote tourism, economic development, and recreational opportunities. Finally, the economic potential of areas of Shawnee County was noted as an important component of protecting natural resources, including agricultural areas and mineral resources.

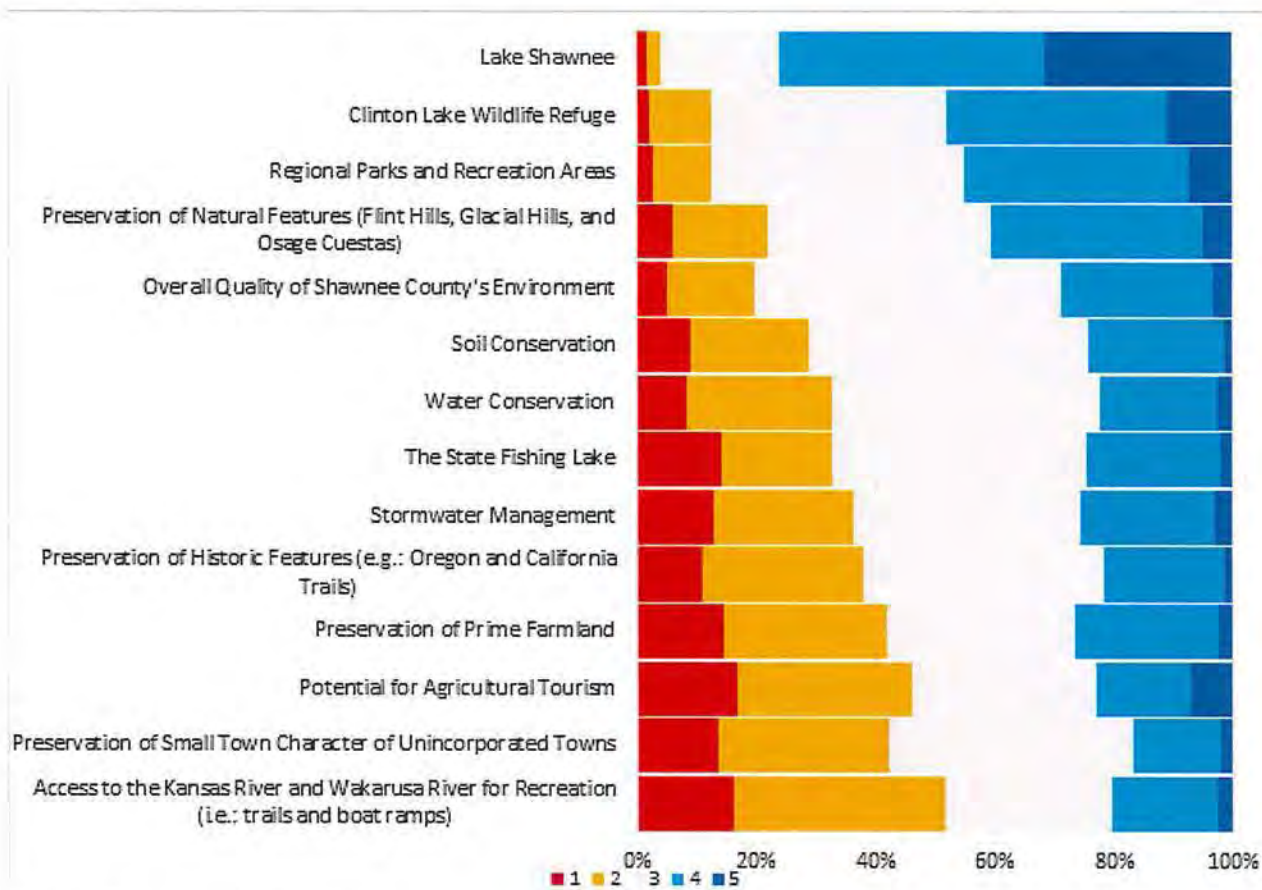
**FIGURE 2.1:** Questionnaire Responses: Natural Resources (1 being Poor and 5 being Excellent)

SURVEY RESPONSE RATINGS	AVERAGE RATING
Lake Shawnee	4.01
Clinton Lake Wildlife Refuge	3.44
Regional Parks and Recreation Areas	3.37
Preservation of Natural Features (Flint Hills, Glacial Hills, and Osage Cuestas)	3.17
Overall Quality of Shawnee County's Environment	3.07
Soil Conservation	2.88
Water Conservation	2.84
Stormwater Management	2.79
The State Fishing Lake	2.79
Preservation of Historic Features (e.g.: Oregon and California Trails)	2.74
Preservation of Prime Farmland	2.73
Potential for Agricultural Tourism	2.67
Preservation of Small Town Character of Unincorporated Towns	2.63
Access to the Kansas River and Wakarusa River for Recreation (i.e.: trails and boat ramps)	2.55

Source: RDG Community Questionnaire



Figure 2.2: Natural Resources (1 being poor and 5 being excellent)



Source: RDG Community Questionnaire

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

Shawnee County has a diversity of natural resources, including its landscapes, topography, soil, waterways, and wildlife. These resources also affect the county's cultural landscape, partially started by settlers' reactions to the natural landscape. Environmental resources guide the future pattern of land development by creating or curtailing opportunities, and as such, are considered first in the plan.

### Landscape

The northern part of the County, including much of Topeka, is in the glaciated region of Kansas while the southern half is in the Osage Cuestas, characterized by east facing ridges to gently rolling plains. Moving west, one begins to enter the rolling prairie of the Flint Hills. Notable elevations like Burnett's Mound provide overlooks for much of the area.

Shawnee County, along with much of northeast Kansas, is in the 10,500-square mile Kansas-Lower Republican Basin. Two drainage sub-basins exist within the county

1. **Middle Kansas Watershed:** drains north- and central-Shawnee County to the Kansas River
2. **Lower Kansas Watershed:** drains south Shawnee County to the Wakarusa River

The Kansas River roughly divides the county in half, flowing southeast with Rossville, Silver Lake and Soldier on the north and Dover, Mission, Topeka and Tecumseh on the south. Its larger tributaries include Cross Creek by Rossville; Soldier Creek, the largest stream on the north side; Indian Creek, 1.5 miles below the mouth of Soldier Creek; Shunganunga Creek; and Mission Creek. The Wakarusa River begins near Auburn and flows east, joining the Kansas River in Douglas County. Overall, the tributary system covers much of the county, which can lead to flooding. Drainage issues can also occur in the bottomlands where water can not always drain.

Natural growth timber - including elm, cottonwood, black walnut, oak, sycamore, box elder, hickory, and ash - occurs primarily along the bottoms of the Kansas River and its tributaries. They are sustained by the rich loamy soil, ranging from 15 feet in the bottoms to the one-foot surface covering the upland prairies. Limestone suited for building and yielding lime comprises the underlying rock formation. Clay beds are also distributed throughout and coal can also be found some 15 feet below the surface in irregular beds. Occasionally it has been mined in Topeka, Soldier and Menoken.

### Soil and Agriculture

Given its wealth of fertile and arable land, it is not surprising that agriculture plays a significant role in Shawnee County, shaping the county's economy and making up one of its most valuable natural resources. Approximately 55 percent of Shawnee County is designated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as prime farmland, and farmland with the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce economically sustained high yields of crops and an adequate and a favorable temperature and growing season, are not excessively erodible or saturated with water for a long period of time. Another 23 percent is designated as farmland of statewide importance. The remaining 22 percent is not considered prime farmland due to soil type, slopes, or water content. A wide swath of the prime farmland is found in the Kansas River bottoms, though it's also scattered throughout the county. Land that is not prime for farming is often located along the higher altitudes and on steep slopes; much of it is used for grazing.

Per USDA's most recent agricultural census of Shawnee County in 2012, there were 826 farms comprising some 194,274 acres of land, down 59 farms (-6.7 percent) and 11,969 acres (-5.8 percent) from five years earlier. The average farm size increased from 233 acres to 235 acres and the market value of goods sold from 2007 to 2012 increased from \$43,930,720 (adjusted to 2012 dollars) to \$50,257,000, a \$6,326,280 or 14.4 percent real increase. Most value is derived from crop sales, which comprises 83 percent of the county's value in agricultural product. This primarily includes soybeans and corn. The remaining 17 percent of value comes from livestock sales, primarily cattle and calves. Agriculture also feeds into Shawnee County's industrial sector including a large food manufacturing subsector. This is discussed more in the chapter on economic development.

FIGURE 2.3: Agricultural Land Class by Acreage

	ACRES	PERCENT
Prime Farmland	206,288	54.8%
Farmland of Statewide Importance	85,994	22.9%
Not Prime Farmland	83,937	22.3%
Total	376,218	100%

Source: Shawnee County Parcel Data





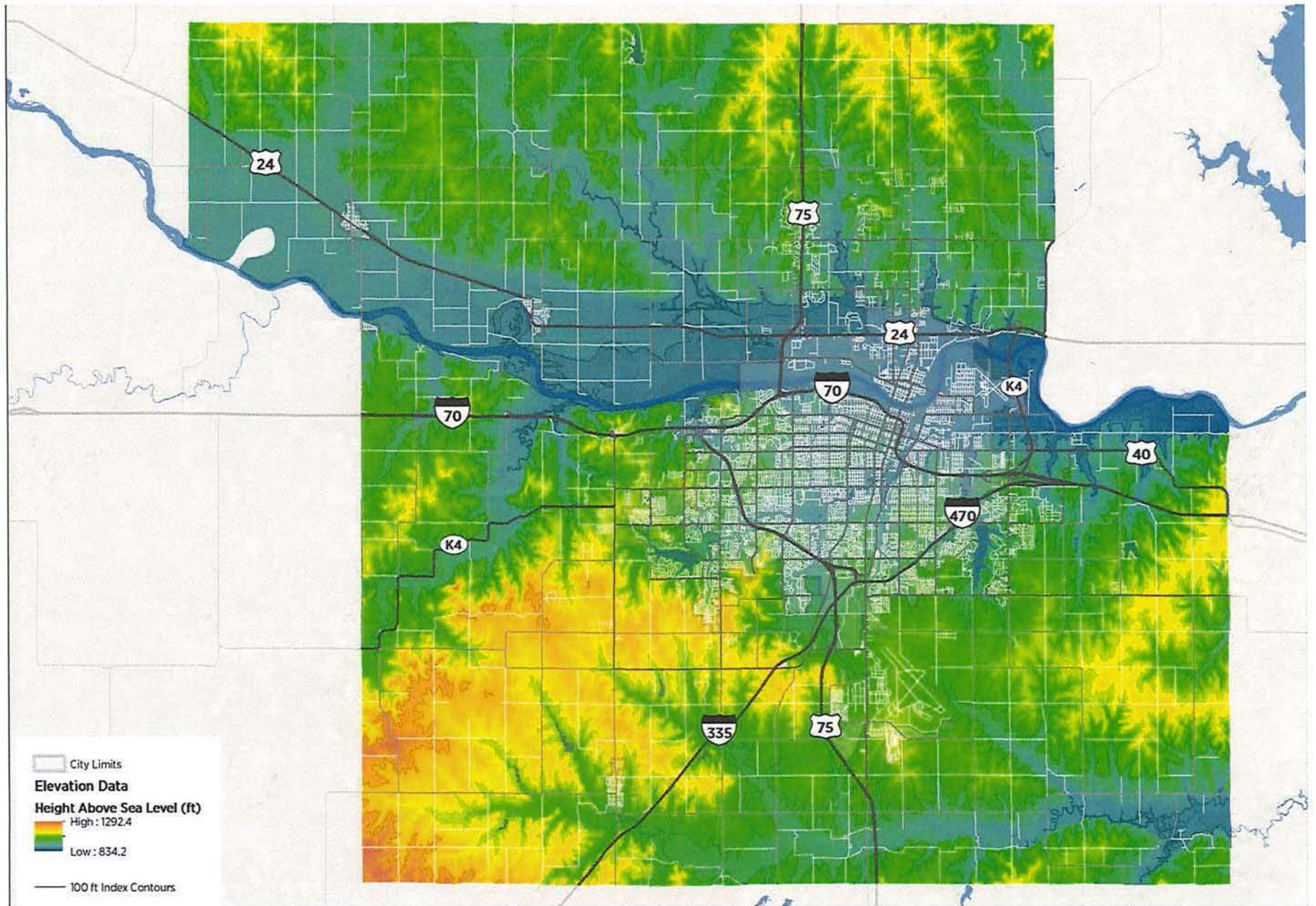
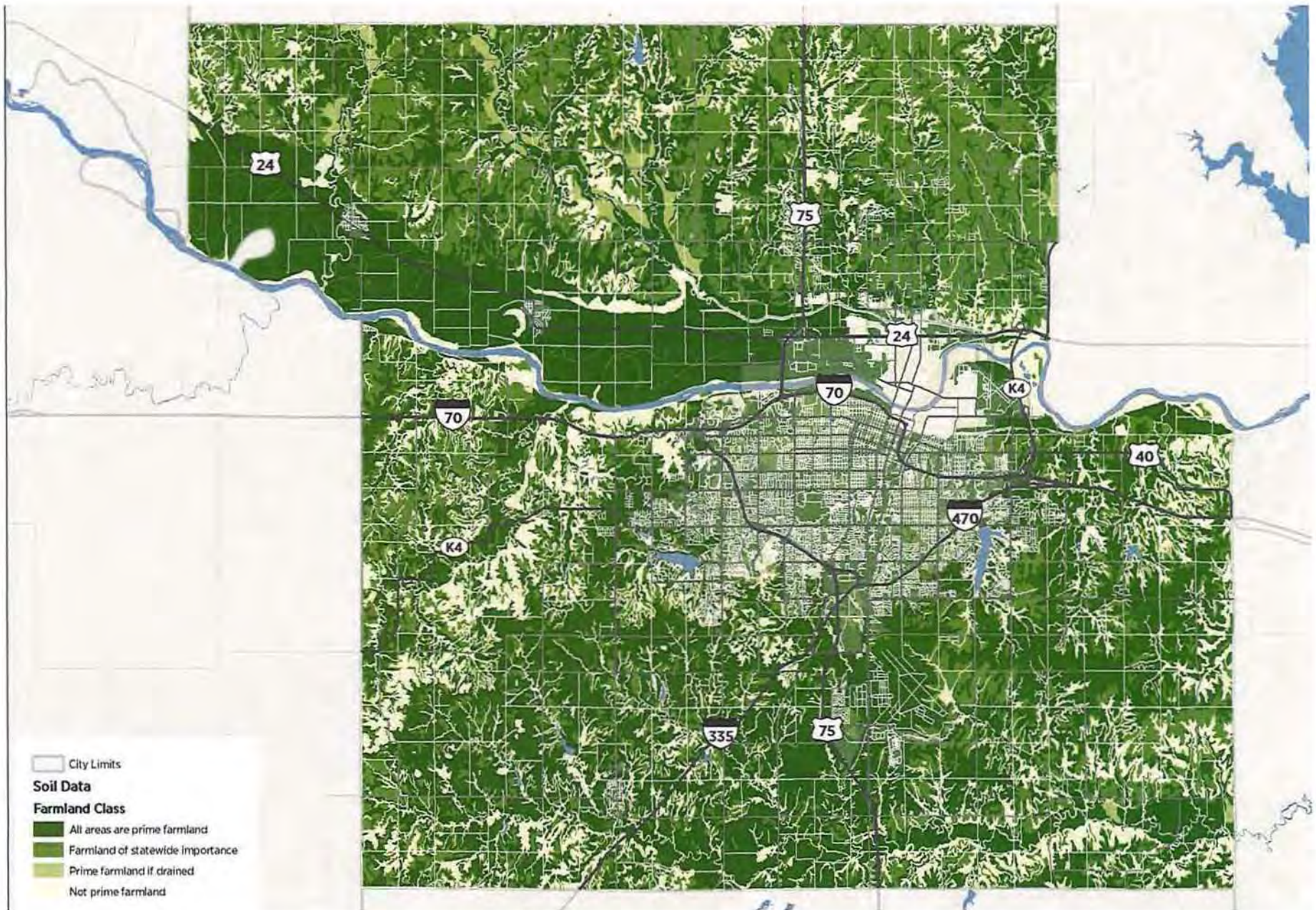


Figure 2.4: Elevation

Source: US Geological Survey





**Figure 2.5: Farmland Class**

Source: US Department of Agriculture



## Wildlife Habitat

State and federally-listed species are protected by the Kansas Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act of 1975. The act makes the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) responsible for identifying and conserving listed species, and overseeing activities affecting threatened and endangered species. Endangered species are wildlife whose existence as a viable part of the state's wild fauna is determined to be in jeopardy. Threatened species are wildlife which appear likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future. This includes protecting critical habitat which essential for self-sustaining populations of threatened or endangered species.

KDWPT protects these species by reviewing the environmental impact of certain activities, and ordering special conditions to offset negative effects to listed species and critical habitats if necessary. Animals protected by KDWPT require proposed eligible projects impacting the species' preferred habitats to get advice regarding their protection. KDWPT also tracks Species in Need of Conservation, nongame species deemed to require conservation measures in attempt to keep the species from becoming a threatened or endangered species.

**FIGURE 2.6: Status of Wildlife within Shawnee County**

FEDERAL	STATE	NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	SNCO CRITICAL HABITAT
Endangered	Endangered	Least Tern	<i>Sterna antillarum</i>	Yes
		Whooping Crane	<i>Grus americana</i>	No
		American Burying Beetle	<i>Nicrophorus americanus</i>	No
Threatened	Threatened	Topeka Shiner	<i>Notropis topeka</i>	Yes
	Threatened	Piping Plover	<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	Yes
Candidate	Threatened	Sturgeon Chub	<i>Macrhybopsis geiida</i>	Yes
		Shoal Chub	<i>Macrhybopsis hyostoma</i>	Yes
		Plains Minnow	<i>Hybognathus placitus</i>	Yes
		Silver Chub	<i>Macrhybopsis storeriana</i>	Yes
		Snowy Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	No
		Eastern Spotted Skunk	<i>Spilogale putorius</i>	No
		River Shiner	<i>Notropis blenniuis</i>	No
		Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>	No
		Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	No
		Ferruginous Hawk	<i>Buteo regalis</i>	No
		Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	No
		Timber Rattlesnake	<i>Crotalus horridus</i>	No
		Southern Flying Squirrel	<i>Glaucomys volans</i>	No
		Tadpole Madtom	<i>Norturus gyrinus</i>	No
		Blue Sucker	<i>Cycleptus elongatus</i>	No
None	State Species in Need of Conservation	Creeper Mussel	<i>Strophitus undulatus</i>	No
		Fawnsfoot Mussel	<i>Truncilla donaciformis</i>	No
		Common Shiner	<i>Luxilus cornutus</i>	No
		Johnny Darter	<i>Etheostoma nigrum</i>	No
		Bobolink	<i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i>	No
		Henslow's Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus henslowii</i>	No
		Smooth Earth Snake	<i>Virginia valeriae</i>	No
		Yellow-throated Warbler	<i>Setophaga dominica</i>	No
		Cerulean Warbler	<i>Setophaga cerulean</i>	No
		Eastern Whip-poor-will	<i>Antrostomas vociferus</i>	No
		Fatmucket Mussel	<i>Lampsilis siliquoidea</i>	No

Source: Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism

## Wetlands, Waterbodies, and Flooding

Risk for flooding is described by the chance of being flooded. If the chance of flooding is 1 percent or a flood is expected every 100 years, it is considered to have a high flood risk. If the chance of flooding is 0.2 percent or once every 500 years, it is considered to have a medium flood risk. Floodways, the part of a river or stream that is required to efficiently carry flood water, should not **having have** structures within them. Typically, planning for the 100-year floodplain is adequate, but building outside the 500-year floodplain is wise for important public and private facilities.

In Shawnee County, the 100-year floodplains are near the Kansas and Wakarusa Rivers and their tributaries. The lowlands along the Kansas River and its tributaries generally have lower elevations and a higher risk of flooding. These floodplains cover much of northwest Shawnee County, including the land around Rossville, Silver Lake, and Willard. While unsuitable for most development, their flat topography and access to water make them excellent for farming. Most existing development has avoided these high-risk areas. The southern portion of the County near the Wakarusa River, while not as developed, also must take floodplains into account, though they do not intrude as significantly.

Of the more than 23,000 parcels in unincorporated Shawnee County, less than 16 percent touch the 100-year floodplain. Within incorporated cities, floodplains affect another 4,926 parcels, including much of Rossville and Willard, and parts of Silver Lake, Auburn, and Topeka. Most affected unincorporated parcels are agricultural, vacant, or parks uses, suitable for floodplains. Another 38 percent contain semi-suitable uses such as single family residences. Many of these were on large enough lots to have flexibility in home placement. The remaining parcels in the floodplain include mobile homes, and other industrial, commercial, and civic uses.

Critical public functions and utilities should not be developed in the floodplain because of their importance. Currently, 25 parcels used for public facilities and utilities touch the floodplain, potentially leading to issues related to the maintenance of adequate services during flooding. Heavy material that accumulated in some floodway areas should also be addressed.

Shawnee County has other water features as well, including approximately 4,210 ponds with nearly 3,000 acres. It also contains 1,256 acres of lakes, the largest of which include Lake Sherwood, Lake Shawnee, State Lake, Lake Jivaro, and Silver Lake. These Lakes provide recreational, stormwater storage, and scenic and wildlife benefits. Riverine areas and other wetlands comprise an additional 3,300 acres, including 1,625 acres of are freshwater wetlands. Most are found in floodplains, though many are scattered across the county in cow ponds.

The majority of Shawnee County's wetlands are found on agricultural, vacant, and park lands. Another quarter **are is** found on single family residential lots, while the remaining 15 percent are on other land uses. Wetlands provide important ecosystem services such as stormwater and streamflow control, water purification, groundwater recharge, and flood protection. Occasionally, issues with stormwater drainage between neighbors arises, which can be an important consideration. Often these are dealt with through subdivision regulations, but these issues can be missed during plat exemption processes.

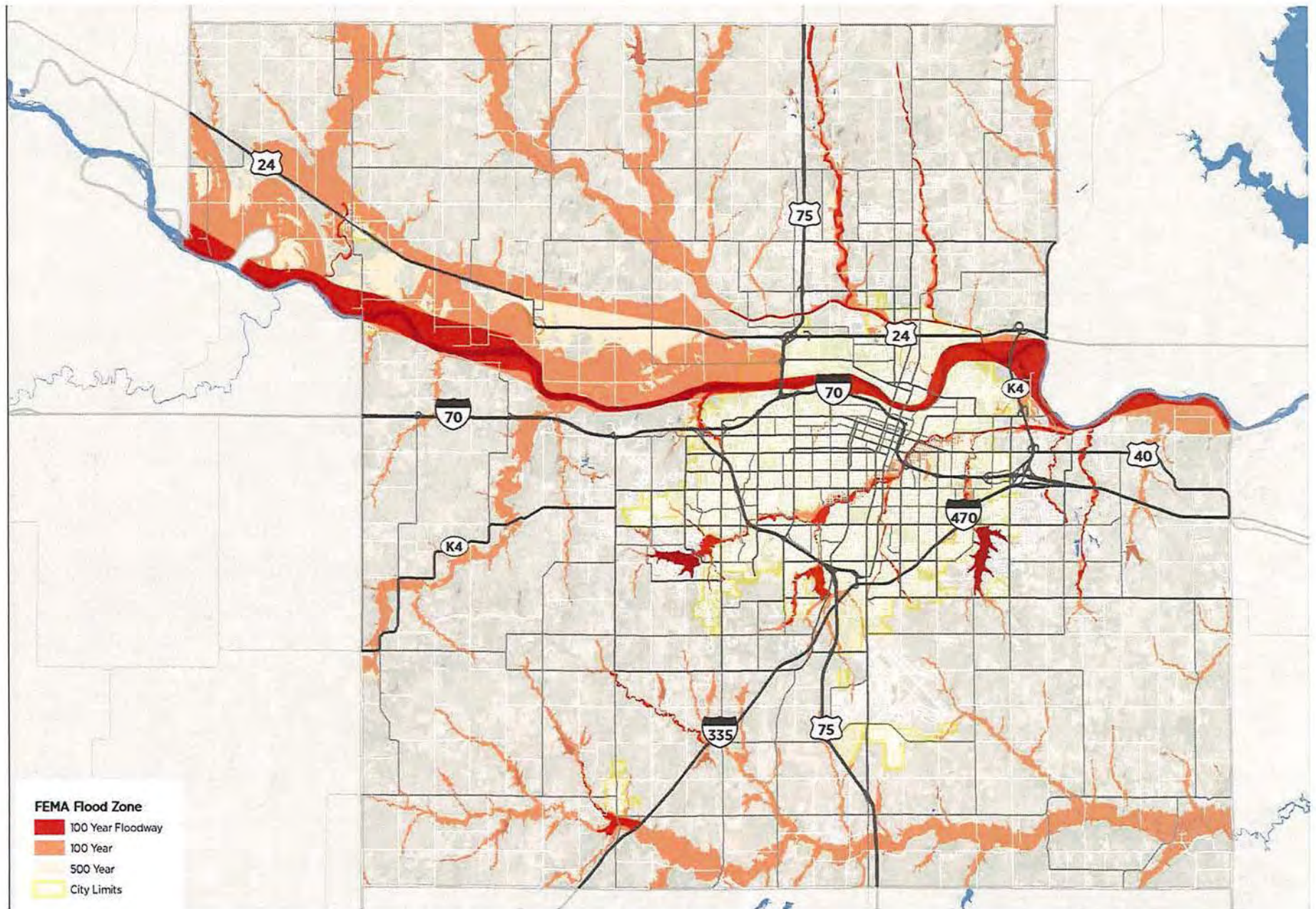


FIGURE 2.7: Parcels Affected by the Flood Plain

	PARCELS	PERCENT
Suitable (Ag., Parks, Vacant)	2,135	58.3%
Semi-Suitable (Single Family Res.)	1,381	37.7%
Unsuitable (Other Land Uses)	145	4.0%
<b>Total Floodplain-Affected Parcels</b>	<b>3,661</b>	<b>15.8%</b>

Source: Shawnee County Parcel Data





**Figure 2.8:** FEMA Floodways and Floodplains

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency





Lake Shawnee



## Parks and Recreation

Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Department maintains much of the County's parks, trails, and recreational facilities. This includes managing 132 parks and greenways comprising 2,646 acres, some 97.4 percent of which is developed. Shawnee County also manages nearly 176,600 square feet of recreation and aquatic centers with more than 68,401 square feet of water. Many of these city and county parks and recreational facilities are found within the City of Topeka. The development of new parks, trails, and recreational facilities is guided by the 2014 Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

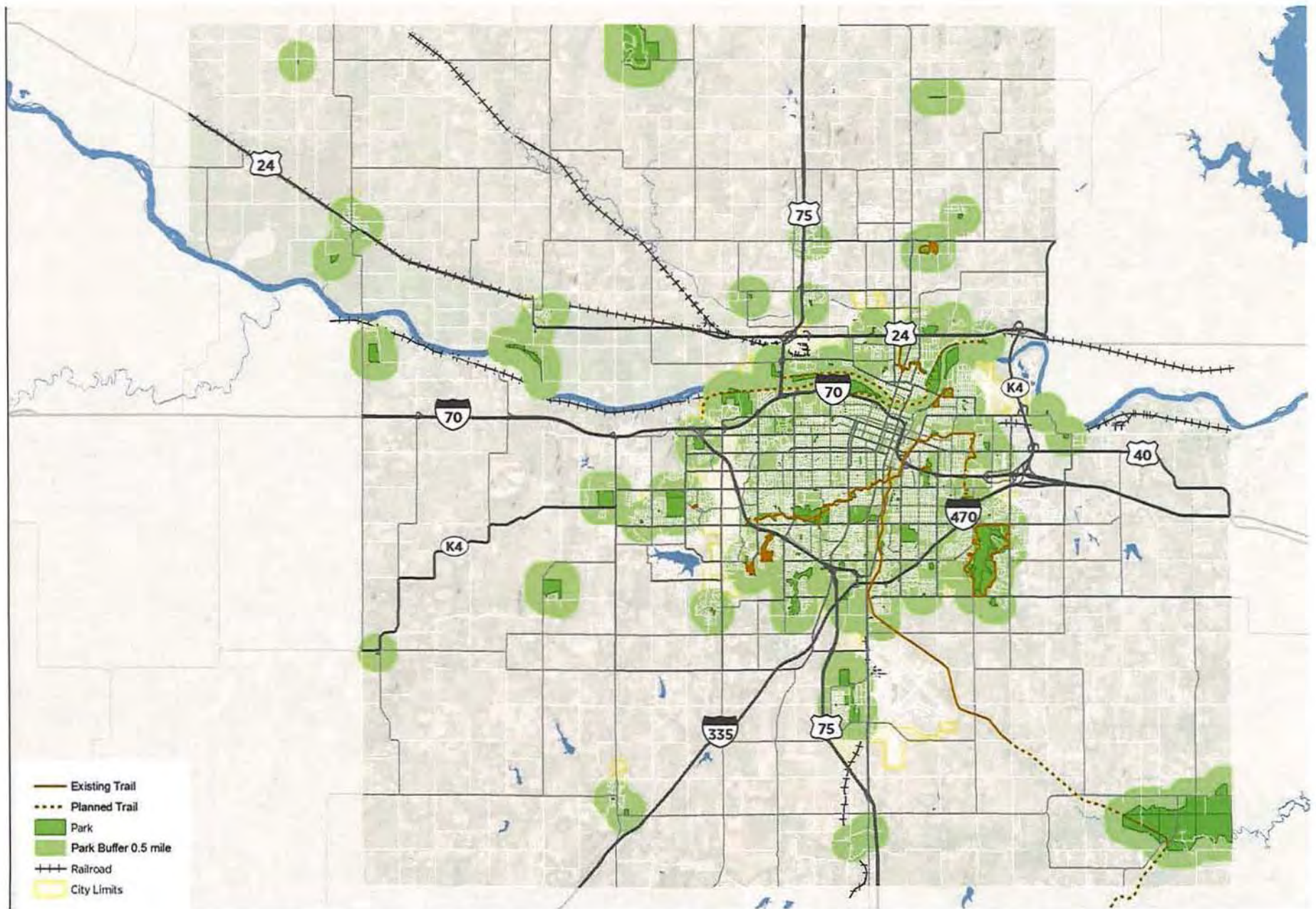
The State of Kansas also owns and manages parkland within the region. The Kaw River State Park presently consists of 76 acres of land on the south bank of the Kansas River in Topeka, adjacent to MacLennan Park and the Kansas Governor's residence. The State also manages the 135-acre Shawnee State Fishing Lake in the north, and two other fishing lakes elsewhere in the county: Lake Shawnee and Shawnee Junior. The State also oversees four fishing lakes in Topeka. Finally, the State manages the Clinton Reservoir and Wildlife Area to the southeast, comprising 1,930 acres along the Wakarusa River.

Additional parks and recreational opportunities are provided by the Cities of Auburn, Rossville, and Silver Lake, and other groups, such as Montara. Notable among them is the Landon Trail which extends southeast from Topeka and planned for expansion all the way to the Flint Hills Nature Trail. Most other trails are found in Topeka, but those in the county tend to be limited to loops on existing parkland such as that around Lake Shawnee. Topeka also boasts a zoo and several other wildlife areas.

There are several opportunities to expand the parks system. For one, the County could coordinate with the State of Kansas and US Army Corps of Engineers to develop additional parks adjacent along the Wakarusa River near or in the Clinton Wildlife Area. The 2,500-strong Citizen Potawatomi are also interested in a parks presence near the Willard Bridge, and the State Fishing Lake and Kansas River are natural features in Shawnee County could be further developed.







**Figure 2.9: Parkland and Trails**

Source: Shawnee County Parcel Data





## Cultural and Historical Resources

Shawnee County has a thriving arts and culture scene which has received national attention through media and the chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. While most resources are located in Topeka, the State Capitol, downtown Topeka, and Washburn University, a variety of cultural and historical venues can be found and potentially be expanded in the unincorporated county.

A variety of performing arts venues and events can be found primarily in Topeka. The Topeka Civic Theatre and Academy, the nation's oldest continually operating community dinner theater, puts on musicals and plays. The Helen Hocker Center in Gage Park holds family events while the Ad Astra Theatre Ensemble provides entertainment for adult audiences. The Topeka Symphony Orchestra, the Topeka Performing Arts Center, and the Kansas Expocentre, provide other entertainment options.

Beyond the performing arts, Shawnee County has numerous museums and galleries with sculptures, painting, photography, mixed-media, and other fine arts. SouthWind Art Gallery features contemporary paintings, photography, and sculptures by Kansas and Midwest artists. The Mulvane Art Museum, one of the oldest accredited art museums west of the Mississippi, hosts a mix of guest and in-house collections and contains ArtLab, a free hands-on art activity center. The NOTO Art District, located in a two-block stretch along North Kansas Avenue, features historic buildings which contain visual and performing artists studios, boutiques, antique stores, restaurants, and a Community Arts Center. NOTO is especially lively during the First Friday Artwalk each month when shops and galleries stay open late, offer refreshments, music, and special events. Festivities can expand throughout the city.



Furthermore, Shawnee County has more than 75 entries on the National Register of Historic Places, in addition to several State Historic Sites and numerous historical buildings not on the register. Its most notable sites include the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site, Constitution Hall, and the Kansas State Capitol. While Topeka contains most landmarks, Auburn, Berryton, Dover, Silver Lake, Tecumseh, Wakarusa, Willard, and unincorporated areas also feature historic sites. Topeka also boasts other museums like the Kansas Museum of History, the Combat Air Museum, and Museum of the Kansas National Guard. Native American cultural sites are also scattered around the County.

Opportunities exist to expand historic entertainment and awareness along both the Oregon and California Trail systems, providing tourism potential. Improvements made near the Flint Hills, the premier physiographic region in Kansas, are also an option, especially as Shawnee County acts as the eastern gateway to the Flint Hills. Finally, the Native Stone Scenic Byway also runs through the County, providing an off-the-beaten-path way to tie Shawnee County to Kansas and to encourage visitors to explore the county.





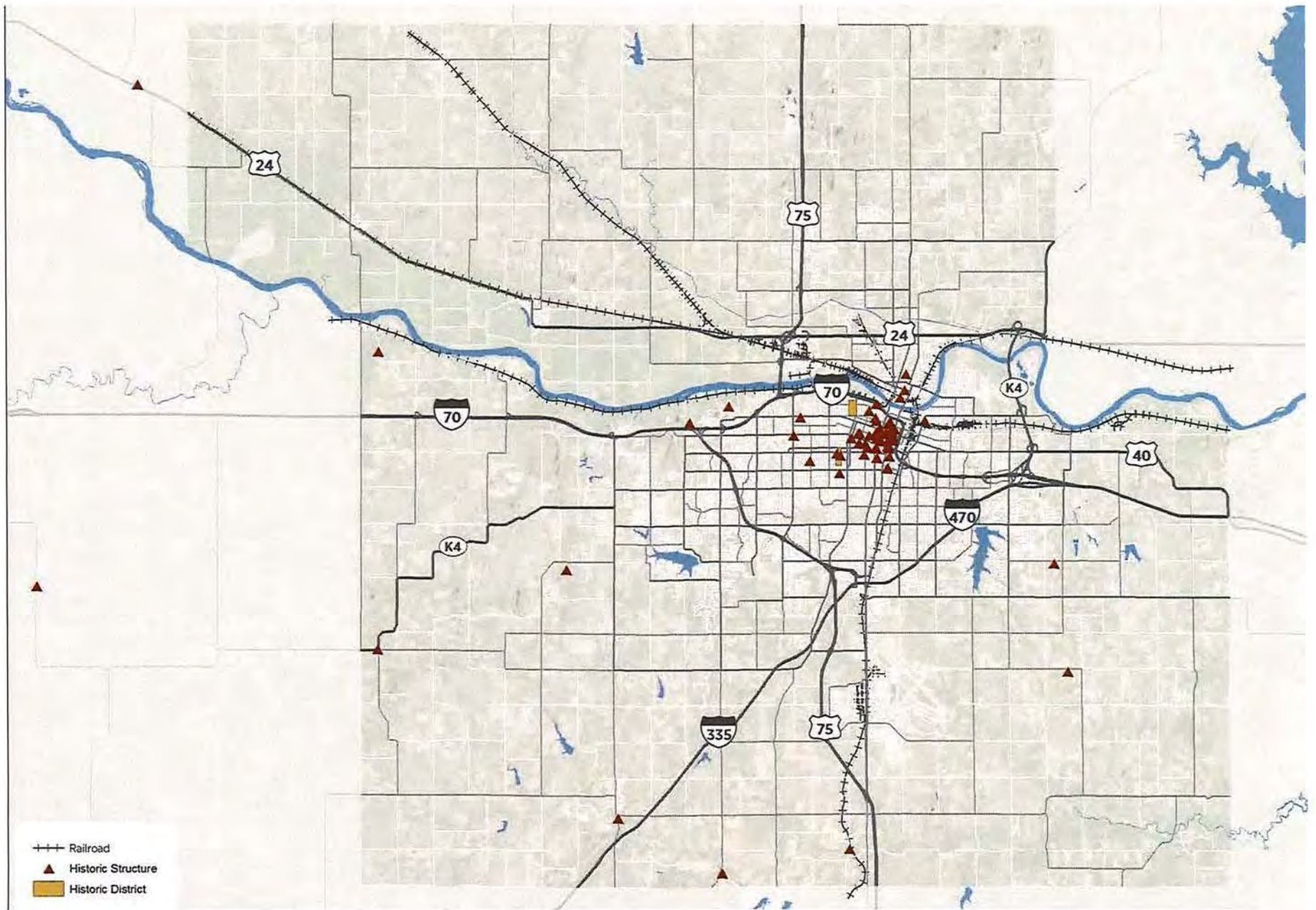


Figure 2.10: Historic Register Sites

Source: Kansas State Historical Society



## DEVELOPMENT SUITABILITY: ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

Shawnee County's natural environment can be a great asset for future growth, but only if development is sensitive to key environmental features such as floodplains, wetlands, prime farmland, and steep slopes. Preserving natural areas can increase property values for adjacent development, enhance and connect the park system, protect plant and animal habitats, reduce flood risk, and by providing natural stormwater drainage.

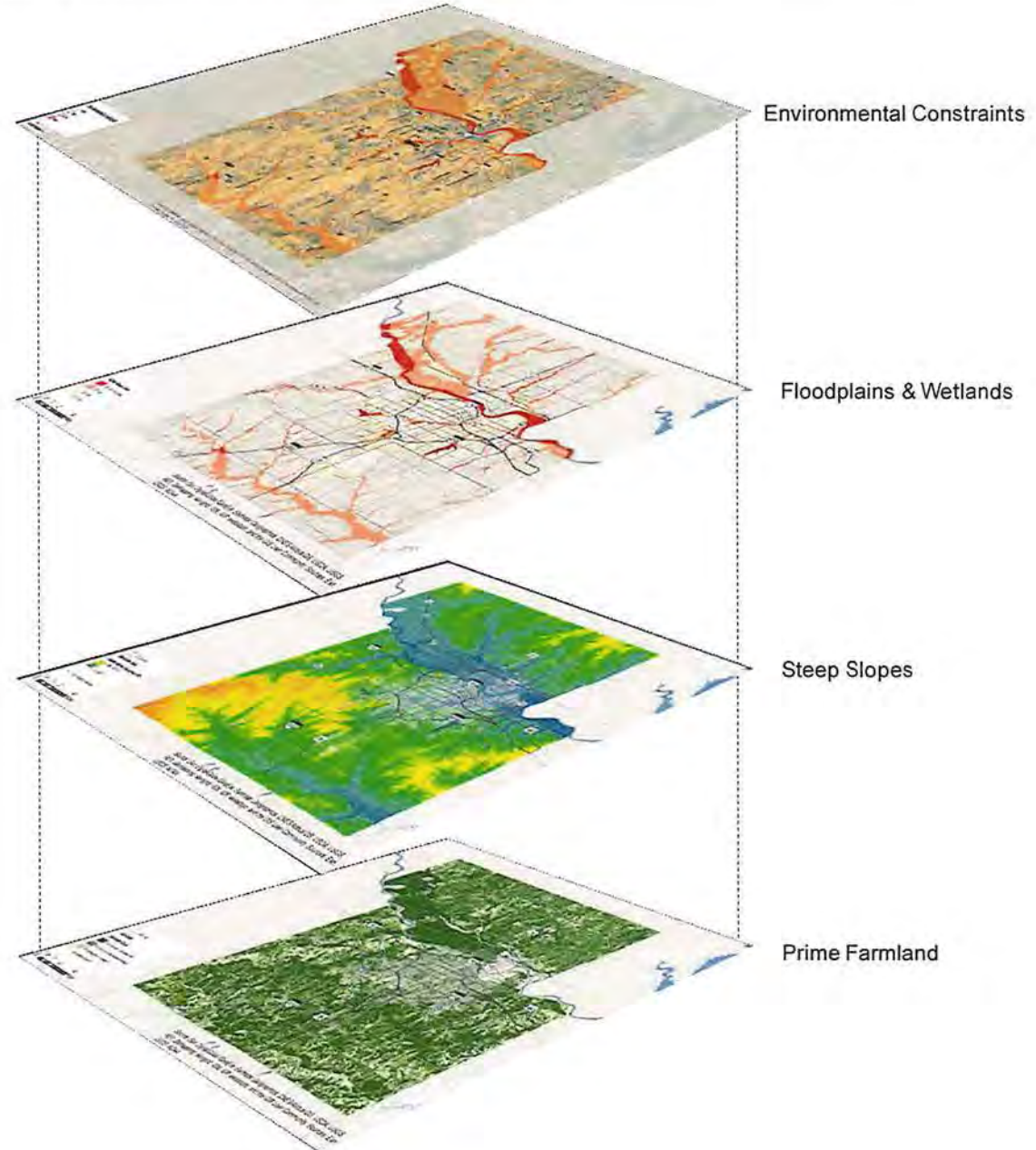
Figure 2.12 identifies areas that should be preserved or receive special consideration during development. The map was created by weighing the significance of various environmental features, and creating an aggregate rating for the level of environmental consideration. Factors considered for this map include:

- Floodplains
- Proximity to Wetlands
- Steepness of Slopes
- Quality of Farmland

Developers, the Planning Commission, County staff, and the County Commission should use the development suitability map and definitions to determine if proposed developments adequately protect and preserve sensitive environmental features. While the suitability map gives a general overview of environmental conditions, each site is unique and each development proposal should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine how to address environmental concerns.

Proximity to infrastructure is also integral to development. It is examined in the Transportation & Infrastructure Chapter.

Figure 2.11: Environmental Constraint Map Conceptualization





## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINT RATINGS

### Major Considerations (Dark Orange)

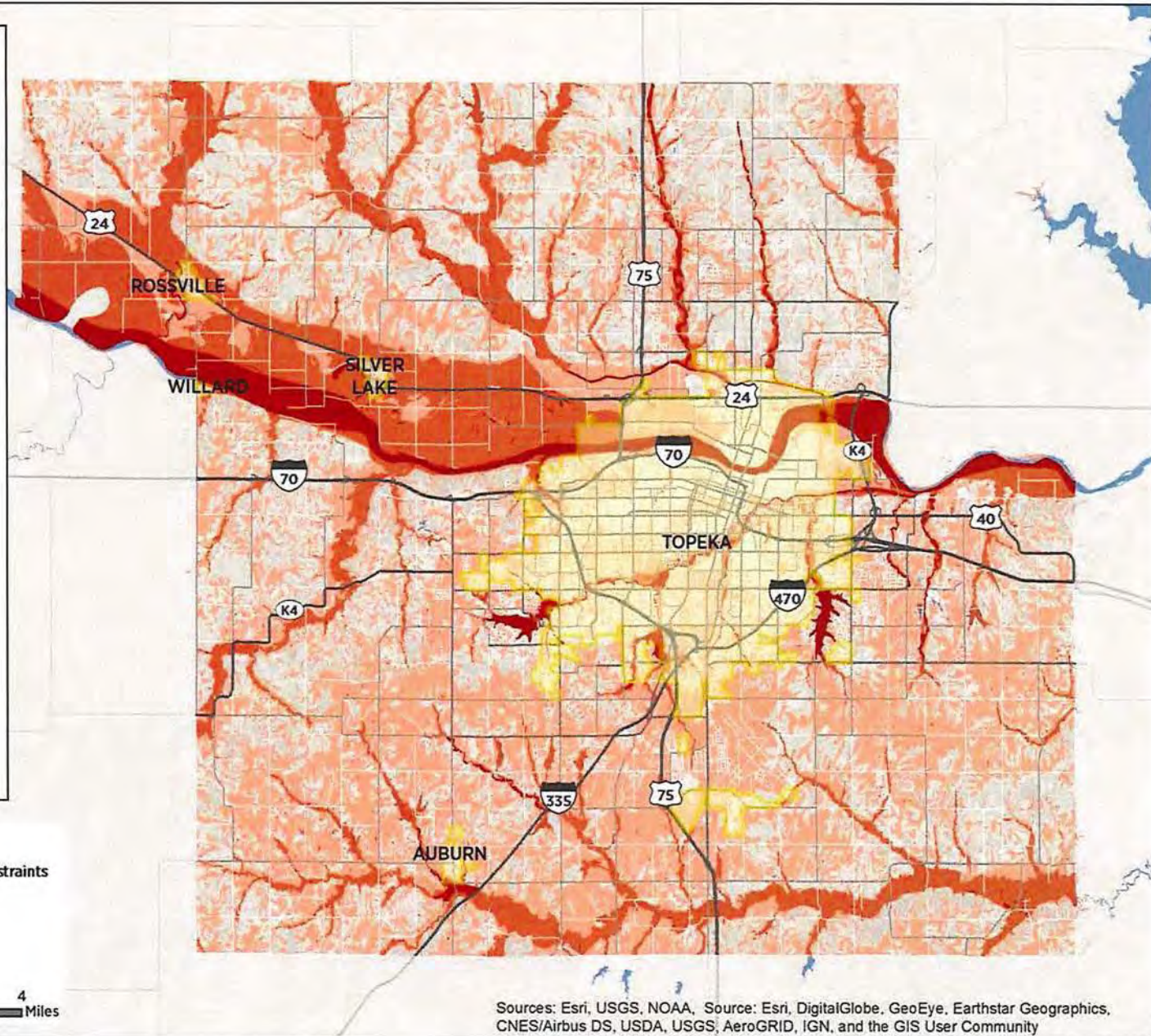
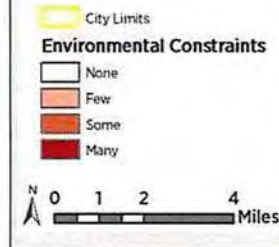
Should be preserved from development – includes floodways, and several severe overlapping considerations, such as the 100-Year Floodplain and Prime Farmland.

### Higher Considerations (Orange)

Should ideally be preserved, but could potentially allow low impact development – includes some moderate overlapping considerations.

### Minor Considerations (Tan)

Can be developed, but developers should be attuned to any environmental issues – includes a minor consideration, likely minimized overlap of issues.



Sources: Esri, USGS, NOAA, Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Figure 2.12: Environmental Constraints



## DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Environmental features affect where development should occur. Fragile lands and natural hazards like floodplains constrain development, all of which are not necessarily addressed during review processes. Environmental features also provide positive opportunities, including mineral resources, parks, or areas of historical significance. Preserving these can improve quality of life and provide opportunities for tourism and recreation. Other natural resources have the potential to be put to economically productive uses including mineral resources and agricultural land. Sometimes, these additional values are overlooked during the development process. Finally, environmental side effects, specifically water retention and drainage, are not coordinated with certain development patterns.

### Discussion

Steep slopes, floodplains, and wetlands cross the county, along with other features that make development more difficult. Topography can create water retention and drainage issues. While subdivisions require drainage plans, often land is exempt from platting and therefore does not formally consider retention and drainage, or even fragile areas. This can lead to problems where abutting properties have not considered these issues or other environmental constraints. Taking these into account is integral to guiding the development process. Preventing development of fragile lands preserves resources for future generations, including native prairie, wetlands, and the landscapes of the Flint Hills, Osage Cuestas, and Glacial Hills.

Natural, scenic, and historical features often provide benefits that are not always considered in the development process. These features throughout the county can be used for parks and recreation,

especially those near natural areas like native prairie, scenic overlooks, wildlife areas, or undevelopable watersheds. The Shawnee County Parks Master Plan recommends a goal of 150 miles of trails to connect parks and form recreational loops. Cultural and historic sites also provide opportunities in the region in addition to the history of the Oregon and California Trails. Maintaining these connects Shawnee County to both nature and its past, showcasing the area's unique history and providing opportunities for fishing, hunting, agritourism, and historical tourism. Other natural resources such as limestone provide opportunities for economic development.

The County, with more than 200,000 acres of prime farmland, is partially defined by its rural character. The County may have an interest preserving these from encroaching development in rural areas. Protecting these resources provides economic benefits, especially in areas not already protected by the floodplain, and helps maintain the rural feeling of the county. Preserving rural landscapes can be done by encouraging development near existing development clusters. This may include growth around rural unincorporated towns consistent with its surroundings and discouraging growth in predominantly agricultural areas. Protecting these resources provides economic benefits, especially in areas not already protected by the floodplain and helps maintain the rural appeal of the county.



*Rural Shawnee County*





## Goals and Recommendations

These considerations are important can be beneficial to help Shawnee County thrive while ensuring and help ensure that the county respects the land's capacity to be developed. It also promotes the better long-term viability of the county and ensures its resources will be available for future generations. Based on these factors, the following goals were developed:

NR-1: Discourage development on fragile lands (steep slopes, wetlands, and floodplains).

1. Ensure Evaluate the need for a level of review either by developers or planning department staff to prevent development from encroaching on steep slopes, wetlands, or floodplains. This could also potentially apply to native prairie. Review could be a strict prohibition, a discouraged activity, or a points-based system which evaluates overall impact.
2. Utilize the Environmental Constraints map throughout the development process and work through any necessary mitigation on a case-by-case basis.
3. Evaluate the need to update the County policy regarding rezoning, subdivision, and environmental regulations.

NR-2: Encourage the protection of lands with positive environmental features to preserve opportunities to utilize it.

1. Identify types of lands suitable for park development, in accordance with the Shawnee County Park Master Plan; balance parks throughout the county, utilize watersheds, expand existing parks, or add parks in natural/wildlife hotspots such as native prairies.
2. Utilize scenic linear areas such as rivers and floodplains for trail development. The Parks Master Plan sets a goal of 150 miles of trails, including a north/south trail across I-70 and the Kansas River.
3. Look to history, regional trails, and agritourism to find areas which need to be protected for future opportunities; encourage the use of incentives preserving and enhancing those resources.
4. Work with mineral extraction companies to protect suitable areas from development; as sand pits and similar businesses exhaust their resources, convert them into recreation and wildlife areas.
5. Utilize the Environmental Constraints map (Fig. 2.12) that was developed as part of the comprehensive plan.

NR-3: Focus growth away from predominantly agricultural areas.

1. Identify valuable farm and ranch land and discourage non-agricultural uses in these areas.
2. Preserve the rural landscapes by focusing development near existing development clusters. This should include clustering the development of rural unincorporated villages in a consistent manner.
3. Evaluate the need for the county to update its zoning and subdivision regulations and other requirements.

NR-4: Better coordinate potential environmental effects to enhance positive and prevent negative outcomes .

1. Require Evaluate the need for coordination of water retention and drainage where multiple dwelling units are within a certain distance of each other.
2. Work with other jurisdictions and with other branches of Shawnee County including the Shawnee County Health Agency and Shawnee County Parks & Recreation to evaluate how planning and planning regulations can help improve their missions.

## CHAPTER THREE

# Transportation, Utilities, and Public Services

This chapter begins by examining all modes of surface transportation that are currently provided in Shawnee County. Next, it investigates individual utilities, including: water, wastewater, storm water management, solid waste, and information technology. The chapter concludes by looking into other public services as well, such as fire protection and public schools.



## INTRODUCTION

### Transportation

A balanced transportation network that accommodates the needs of all users is key to a high quality of life, economic development, and social equity within any community. A balanced transportation network includes trails, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, public transit, and roadways that are designed for the safety and comfort of the people using those facilities.

### Utilities

The provision of basic services, such as water, wastewater, storm water, solid waste and telecommunications, are necessary for land development at urban densities or near urban densities. The need to plan for the extension of these services to new growth areas is one of the primary reasons for comprehensive planning.

### Other Public Facilities

High quality public schools and fire protection are needed to support any community. The location of the facilities that provide these services in the unincorporated area can significantly impact land use decisions.

### Key Challenges

- There are 51 taxing jurisdictions that provide transportation, utilities and public facilities in Shawnee County. Coordination of services offered by these jurisdictions is critical for Shawnee County to accomplish its long-range goals.
- Topeka and Shawnee County share responsibilities for development inside the 3-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) surrounding the City of Topeka. It is important for there to be political alignment in how best to approach future

growth and development in the ETJ. This includes alignment in utilities provided in whole or in part by the City of Topeka such as water and wastewater.

- There is a lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the unincorporated area. However, Shawnee County recently adopted a complete streets policy for county roads. Plus, a portion of the countywide half cent sales tax has been dedicated to complete street projects and the trail system.
- Topeka Metro Transit Authority bus routes do not extend into unincorporated Shawnee County. County residents could benefit from specific routes being extended to connect with major employers.

## PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS

Survey participants completed a “report card” questionnaire in which they were asked to rank various transportation and infrastructure issues and opportunities on a one-to-five scale, with five representing “excellent” and one representing “poor.” Attributes with average scores of 3.0 or above are perceived strengths and those with scores below 2.5 represent areas of perceived weaknesses. These results were then explored through stakeholder meetings. The following highlights important strengths and weaknesses regarding transportation and infrastructure.

Most services in the county are viewed as strengths. These include rural water and electric distribution, public safety systems, access to highways, and the condition of state, county, and township maintained roads. Mobile phone service also received a positive rating. Only two types of transportation scored below a 2.5 rating: bicycle and pedestrian facilities and mobility in the county. Residents also saw services for seniors, high speed internet services, and general road maintenance to be relatively weaker, though not necessarily as negative.

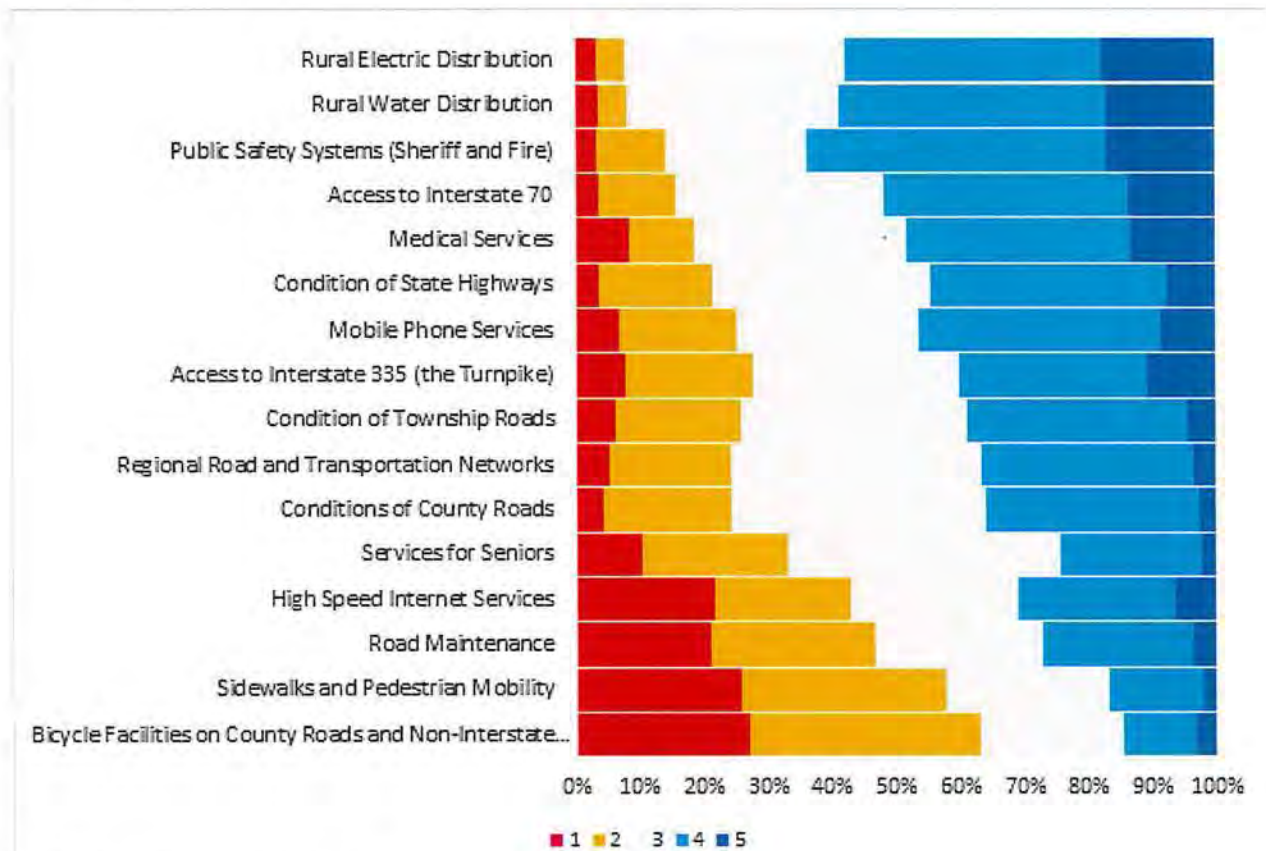
Focus groups and public meetings reinforced resident's positive attitudes towards most county services, especially roads and the new work being done on bridges. However, attendees noted that service providers needed better communication, transparency, and coordination. Planning infrastructure like roads, sewer, gas, water, and internet; encouraging discussions between service providers; and adequate site planning were mentioned as ways to provide certainty to developers, to allow more cost-effective service provision, and to improve service quality. Ensuring quality through building codes was also noted for preventing issues such as incorrectly installed sewer systems or water retention and drainage issues as are seen at South Point Bay. Similarly, school districts were discussed as potential county partners by working to identify expected development and growth areas and how that may impact districts. On the consumer side, educating new rural residents on **what** services they could expect was also mentioned as important to create expectation for services, development, **and** costs.

**FIGURE 3.1: Questionnaire Responses: Transportation and Infrastructure (1 being Poor and 5 being Excellent)**

SURVEY RESPONSE RATINGS	AVERAGE RATING
Rural Water Distribution	3.64
Rural Electric Distribution	3.64
Public Safety Systems (Sheriff and Fire)	3.63
Access to Interstate 70	3.46
Medical Services	3.35
Condition of State Highways	3.27
Mobile Phone Services	3.23
Access to Interstate 335 (The Turnpike)	3.15
Condition of Township Roads	3.11
Regional Road and Transportation Networks	3.10
Conditions of County Roads	3.09
Services for Seniors	2.83
High Speed Internet Services	2.73
Road Maintenance	2.62
Sidewalks and Pedestrian Mobility	2.35
Bicycle Facilities on County Roads And Non-Interstate Highways	2.28

Source: RDG Community Questionnaire

**Figure 3.2: Transportation and Infrastructure (1 being poor and 5 being excellent)**



Source: RDG Community Questionnaire



## EXISTING CONDITIONS

Shawnee County maintains the major roads throughout the county that are not state highways. Typically, these roads cross through more than one township and connect to facilities owned by other jurisdictions including the City of Topeka. Because Shawnee County cooperates with all 12 townships and the five cities in the County, it plays a central role in planning for transportation.

In addition to transportation facilities, Shawnee County oversees construction and regulates on-site wastewater systems. The County also owns the Sherwood wastewater treatment plant and its collection system, though it is managed by the City of Topeka. In both cases, wastewater collection and treatment have a major cost and affect the density of development. Also, environmental effects from wastewater treatment are countywide, extending beyond property lines or the nearest stream. Though the County doesn't provide water service, water supply impacts the county, including fire service.

This section explores these aspects of Shawnee County and evaluates its transportation facilities along with other existing conditions for infrastructure and public services.

### Roads and Bridges

Shawnee County has a well-connected network of primary roads encompassing 556 square miles. For the most part, the road network is laid out on the original surveyor's grid, with roads spaced at 1-mile intervals, though there are gaps in the network due to the county's topography and hydrology. Roads on the grid are named with numbers for east-west routes and otherwise for north-south routes. The county's transportation infrastructure, for all jurisdictions, consists of 554 bridges and about 1,970 miles of road.

## ROADWAYS

Roads in Shawnee County are grouped by federal functional classification for system design and planning, as characterized by speed of travel and access to adjacent properties as depicted in Figure 3.4:

- **Interstates and Freeways.** These roads connect cities and allow travel at high speeds with limited access and separated lanes. In Shawnee County, I-70 travels east-west with I-470 forming a southern beltway around Topeka. I-335 cuts southwest from I-470 as part of the Kansas Turnpike, a self-supporting toll road owned and maintained by the Kansas Turnpike Authority (KTA). I-70 has 18 exits in Shawnee County (6 in unincorporated areas and 12 in Topeka). I-470 has 10 exits (all in Topeka). I-335 has two toll plazas at I-70/I-470 and I-470/US-75 (in east and south Topeka).
- **Arterials.** These roads connect major activity centers and allow long distance travel at high speeds with minimal interference. US Highway 24 crosses east-west across Shawnee County north of the river. US Highway 75 crosses Shawnee County north-south. US Highway 40 crosses east-west, following Kansas Highway 4 (K-4), formerly the Oregon Trail, south to I-70 on the eastern edge of Topeka (K-4 continues east-west across the county). Topeka Boulevard, the only non-highway principal arterial, is north-south through Topeka.
- **Collectors.** These roads connect major arterials to allow travel between parts the county for trips of moderate length. They include frequently travelled roads linking rural communities and residential subdivisions to arterials and Topeka, though they have lower traffic volumes. Sometimes, they provide access to agricultural areas, farmsteads, and individual developed areas. They frequently aggregate traffic along section lines, topography permitting, and route it toward centers of activity and circulation.
- **Local Roads.** These roads provide access to individual properties and sites in the county and typically experience the lowest traffic volumes. Two townships, Soldier and Mission, have predominantly paved roads while most others are gravel.

FIGURE 3.3: Mileage and Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled by Functional Classification

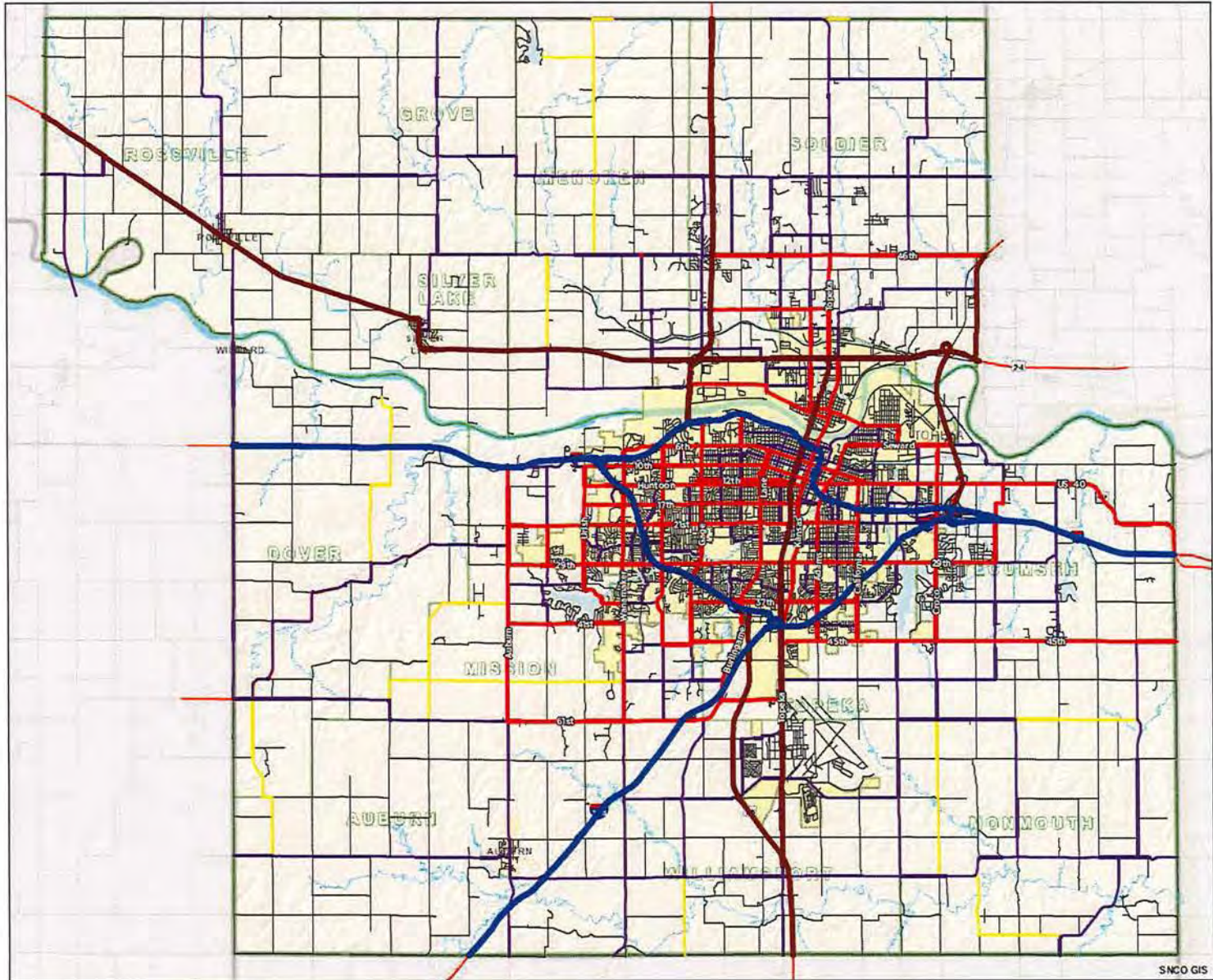
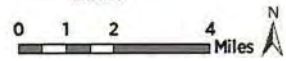
	RURAL		URBAN		TOTAL	
	MILEAGE	DVMT	MILEAGE	DVMT	MILEAGE	DVMT
Interstates & Freeways	24.8	449,342	58.6	1,451,611	83.4	1,900,953
Arterials	25.4	114,241	176.3	1,495,190	201.7	1,609,431
Collectors	203.5	156,014	156.4	335,999	359.9	492,013
Local Roads	508.4	59,443	816.1	403,976	1,324.5	463,419
Total	762.1	779,040	1207.4	3,686,776	1,969.5	4,465,816

Source: Kansas Department of Transportation



**Shawnee County  
Comprehensive Plan  
Functional Classification**

- Interstate Highway
- Highway
- Arterial
- Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local



**Figure 3.4:** Functional Classification



## MAINTENANCE

Approximately 59 percent of roads in Shawnee County are in unincorporated areas, built to a mix of both urban and rural standards. The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) and Kansas Turnpike Authority (KTA) together maintain the 83 miles of state highways and interstate. The County is responsible for 341 miles of primarily arterial and collector streets, most of which are paved. Townships and the Sherwood Improvement District are responsible for another 810 miles, some of which are considered "urban" in nature. Notably, some townships, like Grove and Monmouth, contract out maintenance to the county. Most township roads remain unpaved with exceptions in Soldier and Mission Townships where the high amount of development supports paved roads.

For the most part, roads in unincorporated county are maintained at an acceptable level with townships responsible for most roadway mileage. For county roads, the county periodically surveys roads and when a road segment falls below a good rating, an action is programmed. Roads more heavily traveled and in more populated areas tend to have more paved roads. Roads in less populated areas, especially in the west, have more gravel roads. Roadway infrastructure can deteriorate rapidly if not properly maintained. Replacement and major rehabilitation costs are significant budget items for the Townships and County. Primarily non-local roads are eligible for federal funds; other roads rely exclusively on the local tax base.

## BRIDGES

Shawnee County is responsible for maintaining 254 bridges. They are regularly inspected for maintenance needs, capacity and load capability, and capital improvement budgeting. Based on this evaluation, bridges are assigned condition and sufficiency ratings. Sufficiency is defined as follows:

- **Structurally Deficient:** Elements of the bridge need to be monitored and/or repaired. Being

called "structurally deficient" does not imply that the bridge is likely to collapse or is unsafe. A "deficient" bridge typically requires maintenance or repair and eventual rehabilitation or replacement to address deficiencies.

- **Functionally Obsolete:** A bridge was built to standards not used today. That includes bridges which do not meet current standards for lane widths, shoulder widths, or vertical clearances to serve traffic demand, or those that may be occasionally flooded. These bridges are not automatically rated as structurally deficient, nor are they inherently unsafe.
- **Not Deficient:** Means that a bridge meets current safety standards.

According to Futures 2040, the Topeka metro's regional transportation plan, 6.3 percent of county-maintained bridges are in poor condition. This is a higher percentage of bridges in poor condition compared to those maintained by Topeka, KDOT, and KTA.

In addition, 11.8 percent are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. This is better than other bridge-maintaining jurisdictions in the county. This is likely due to the County actively improving deficient bridges. This is important as bridges in Shawnee County need to be able to carry farming equipment, trucks, and school buses.

Figure 3.5: Bridge Condition by Responsibility

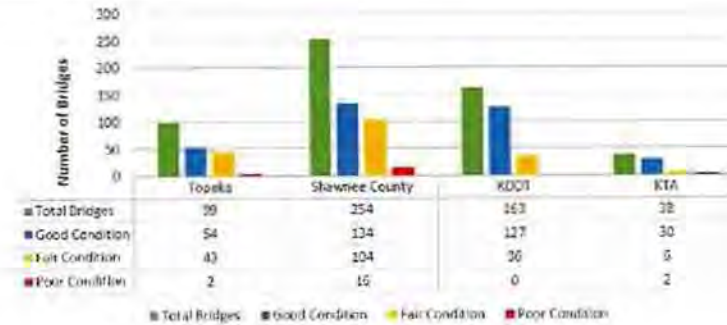
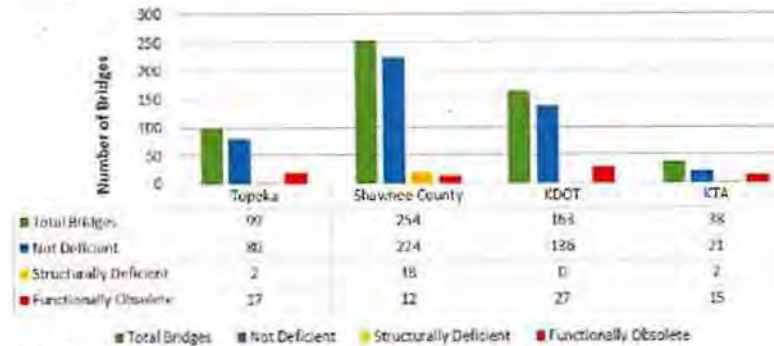


Figure 3.6: Bridge Deficiency by Responsibility



Source: Kansas Department of Transportation



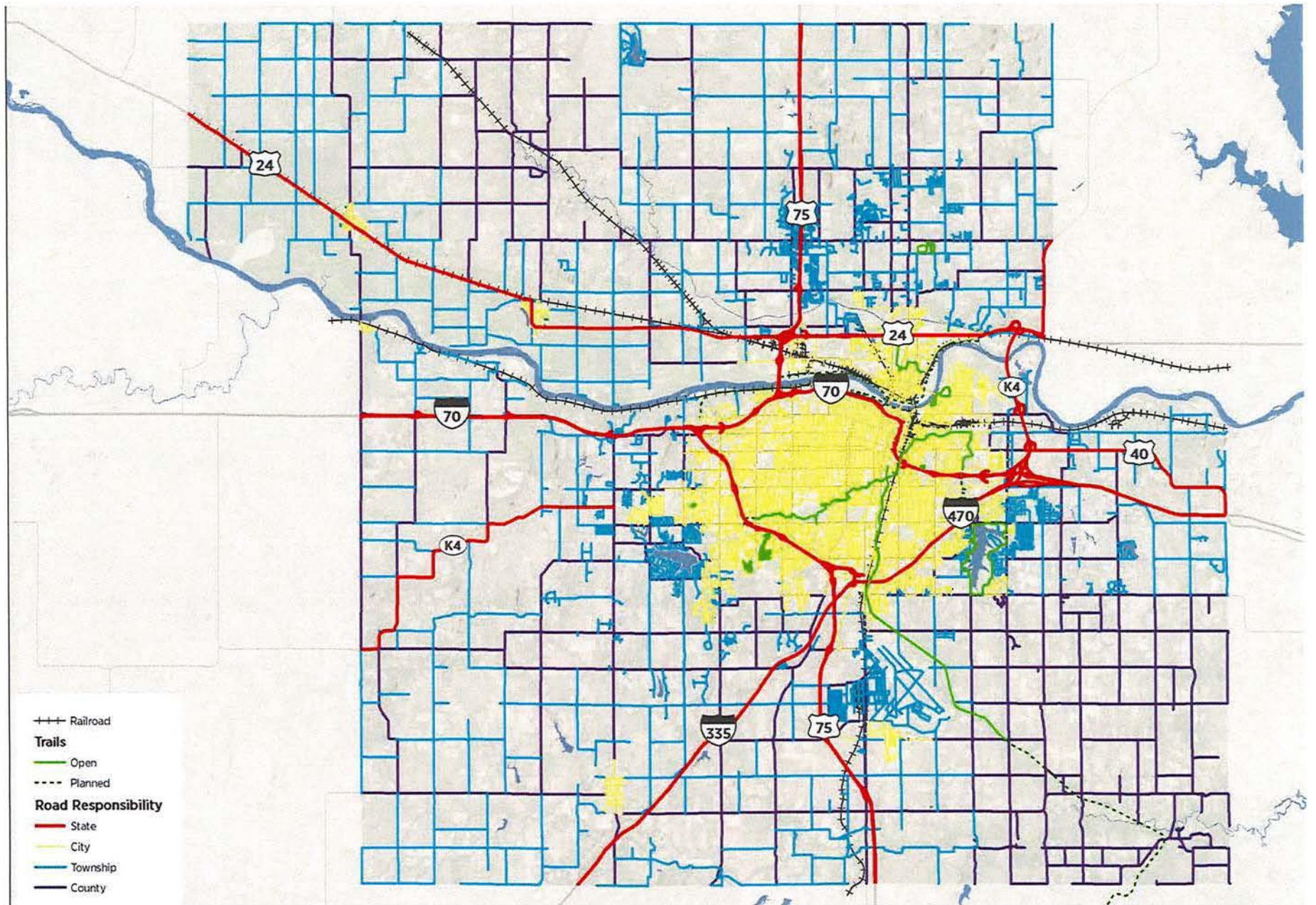


Figure 3.7: Road Responsibility



## ROADWAY CONGESTION

Traffic in unincorporated Shawnee County moves smoothly. Most of the focus on the roadways system centers near Topeka where there has been greater development interest. However, most improvements currently scheduled maximize safety and flow by adding turn lanes, rather than adding capacity.

## SAFETY

There is much importance placed on the need to continually improve roadway safety. Potential safety enhancements often include vehicle mechanical and technological improvements, roadway geometric improvements, intersection control improvements, reduction in motorist distractions, and efforts to increase driver awareness to reduce the number of motor vehicle related crashes and related deaths.

From 2006 to 2015, Shawnee County, excluding Topeka, has seen the number of crashes, injuries, and serious injuries fall. The number of fatalities shows a slight average increase, though the numbers are still low. Bicycle and Pedestrian crashes appear to be increasing, though they also remain very low.

## Active Transportation

Shawnee County has several nice trail facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists to use. The Landon Nature Trail extends southeast from Topeka across more than 8 miles of the County. There are also trails in several parks in the County, including one around Lake Shawnee.

Few areas in unincorporated Shawnee County have sidewalks. Most are scattered in platted subdivisions near Topeka. But, some major roads also have side paths and sufficient sidewalks to allow safe bicycling and walking. For example, Urish has sidewalks from 29th to 33rd and Wanamaker has sidewalks extending from Topeka to Washburn Rural High School. These arterial sidewalks are currently part of a cohesive sidewalk network unlike those in subdivisions.

Shawnee County supports active transportation through efforts like their Complete Streets policy and with a portion of the countywide half cent sales tax. Shawnee County encourages roads to be designed for all users, including motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Shawnee County Code also requires sidewalks in new subdivisions, so as those are built, additional sidewalks will also be constructed. However, this process will still require significant time for the network to become well-connected and it does not address areas that were built without sidewalks. Overall, the County is making progress, but many pedestrians are underserved, even in denser areas of the county such as Soldier Township, Lake Sherwood, or Lake Shawnee.

Because unincorporated Shawnee County is more developed than most counties, efforts should be made to connect activity generators including densely developed areas, schools, and employment centers through sidewalks, side paths, or trails. While not every area needs sidewalks, circulation for pedestrians and bicyclists should be considered as recreational amenities and as alternative forms of transportation. It would also allow more children to walk to rural school districts when they live nearby. There is also strong potential for a future regional trail network to connect the county to Topeka while taking advantage of the county's river and historic trails. Improvement can also be made by adding sidewalks as roads are upgraded to higher standards.

FIGURE 3.8: Automobile Safety in Shawnee County (Excluding Topeka)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Crashes	922	1,094	909	915	820	822	758	815	883	809
Injuries	247	220	178	189	168	165	154	147	191	165
Serious Injuries	22	32	15	27	32	21	22	16	26	18
Fatalities	8	4	8	8	10	4	9	7	9	6

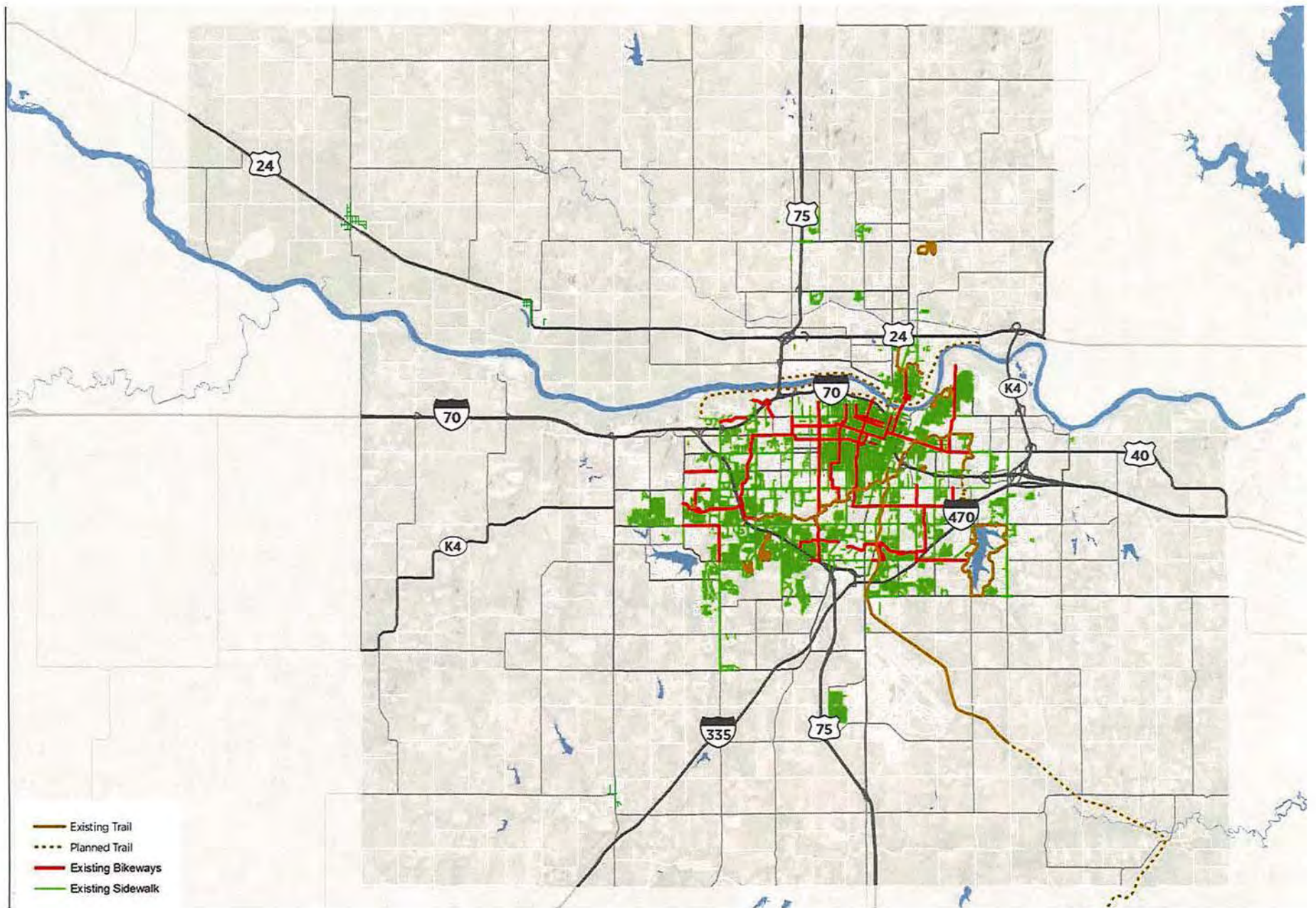
Source: Kansas Department of Transportation

FIGURE 3.9: Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety in Shawnee County (Excluding Topeka)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Ped. Injuries	1	4	1	1	3	2	0	1	3	4
Bike Injuries	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	2
Ped. Fatalities	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Bike Fatalities	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Kansas Department of Transportation





**Figure 3.10: Existing Active Transportation Infrastructure**

Source: Topeka Metropolitan Planning Organization



## Transit

Currently, the Topeka Metro Transit Authority (TMTA) provides transit service within the city limits of Topeka. However, several key employment centers are just outside Topeka. TMTA has considered extending transit to these employment centers, or to neighborhoods like Montara. TMTA is currently exploring options for funding services to these areas.

TMTA has also discussed establishing new routes to connect Topeka to other regional cities such as Lawrence, Manhattan, or Emporia. If a regional route was established connecting Topeka with Manhattan, it might be possible to have stops in Silver Lake and Rossville. These efforts provide an opportunity for Shawnee County to join the conversation and determine the feasibility of working with employers and TMTA to get employees to work.

Figure 3.11: TMTA Transit System Coverage



Source: Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority

## Commuting

Commuting patterns indicate how people travel to jobs. The following graphic shows the number of commuters between Topeka, Shawnee County, and areas outside of Shawnee County. Arrows indicate general flows but not direction. 23,186 workers reside in Shawnee County but outside Topeka. Two thirds (15,145) of them work within Topeka City limits, and another fifth (4,921) commute outside Shawnee County. Only 13 percent (3,120) work within the county outside Topeka.

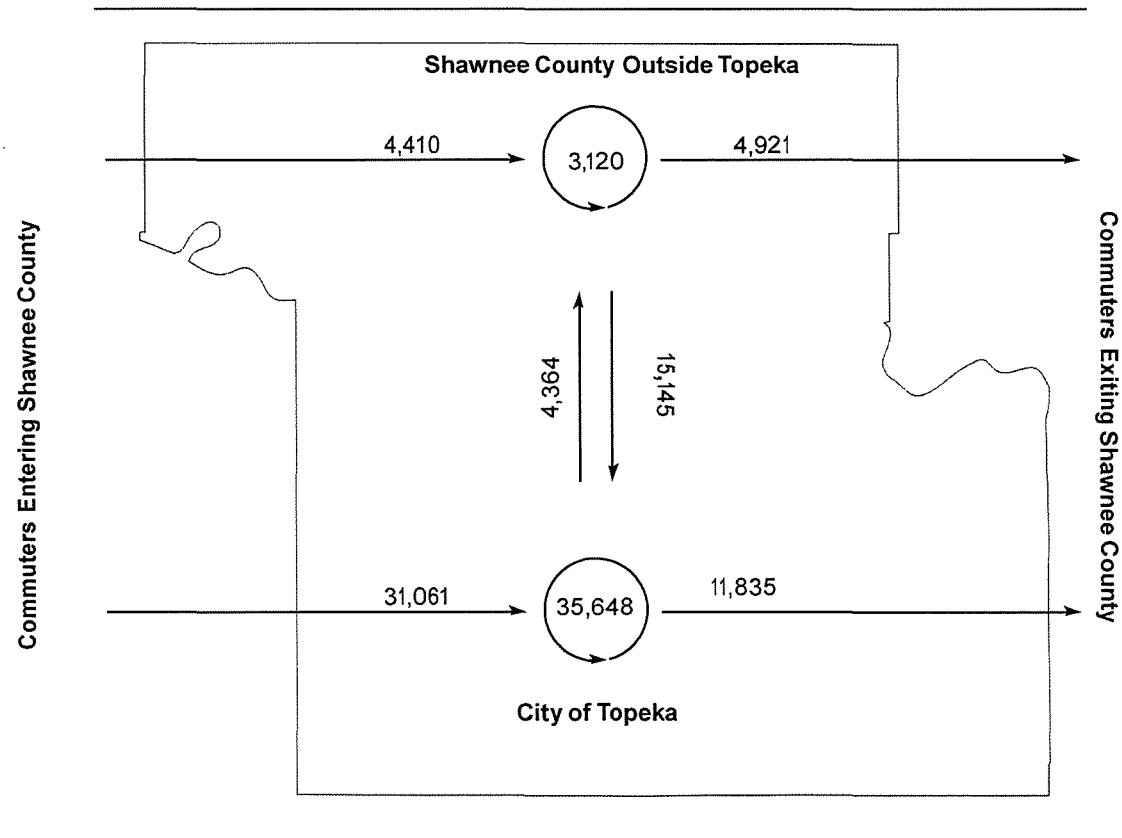
As for Topeka residents, 4,364 work in the county and another 11,835 work outside Shawnee County. However, most Topekans (35,648) work in Topeka, but they fill less than 44 percent of all jobs in the City. Rather, many jobs are filled by the 31,061 workers who commute into the county to work.

Commuters who enter and leave Shawnee County each work day come from all directions. Most commuters that work in Shawnee County but live elsewhere travel from Douglas and Johnson Counties to the east, Jackson and Jefferson Counties to the north and northeast, and Osage County to the south.

In addition, some 16,756 workers reside in Shawnee County but work in a different county. Of those, most travel east toward Douglas, Johnson, and Wyandotte Counties in Kansas and also to Jackson County, MO. Two lesser patterns include workers traveling northwest to jobs in Pottawatomie and Riley Counties and north/northeast to Jackson and Jefferson Counties.

The amount of people who live in unincorporated Shawnee County but commute into Topeka demonstrates the inherent and important tie between the City and the County. However, one third of jobs in the county are filled by people who live outside the county. This represents a large pool of potential Shawnee County residents.

Figure 3.12: Commuters Entering or Exiting Shawnee County



Source: US Census Bureau



## Freight, Rail, and Air Service

### TRUCK FLOWS

I-70 is the major freight highway in Shawnee County. It connects ten states over 2,153 miles from Cove Fort, Utah to Baltimore, Maryland. I-70 passes through major cities including Denver, CO; Topeka, KS; Kansas City and St. Louis, MO; Indianapolis, IN; Dayton and Columbus, OH; Wheeling, WV; and Hagerstown and Frederick, MD. The western half of I-70, including Topeka, is overwhelmingly rural excluding Denver. As a result, it enjoys relatively high average truck speeds and does not experience many of traffic problems that slow trucks between Denver and Kansas City, including Topeka.

I-70 plays a major role in moving freight across the country. However, truck traffic volumes on I-70 are significantly lower compared to parallel interstate facilities in Nebraska (I-80) and Oklahoma (I-40). Freight projections through 2040 anticipate growth in the I-80 and I-40 corridors while I-70 is projected to slightly lower growth. I-70 west of Topeka is also not anticipated to see as significant an increase in truck traffic as most of the growth in east-west freight movement is accommodated in the I-80 corridor.

Within Topeka and Shawnee County, I-70 carries the heaviest truck volumes. The highest truck volumes occur between I-470 and US-75 with over 6,200 heavy commercial vehicles per day. Through downtown Topeka, over 4,400 trucks per day travel I-70; similar truck volumes are seen on I-70 east and west of Topeka. The Kansas Turnpike (I-335) south of Topeka carries 1,570 commercial vehicles per day while 1,720 trucks per day travel US-75 north of Topeka.

### RAIL SERVICE

Shawnee County has long been a railroad center and at one time had four different railroad stations (Union Pacific, Santa Fe, Missouri-Pacific, and Rock Island). Currently, the region has mainline track belonging to Union Pacific (UP) and Burlington Northern-Santa Fe (BNSF), comprising about 94 miles of rail. UP operates a transcontinental corridor through the northeastern corner of the state with as many as 60 trains per day between Topeka and Kansas City. Shawnee County also has an Amtrak line with a stop in Topeka.

In the county, UP generally serves north of the river with two tracks: one through Topeka, Valencia, and Willard and another through Topeka and Menoken, splitting to serve Grove towards Maryville and Silver Lake and Rossville towards Manhattan. The BNSF is south of the river, serving the southern industrial park, Pauline, and Wakarusa towards Emporia. The UP rail yard is in North Topeka while the BNSF rail yard is next to the passenger station. Rails serve most industrial sites in the area including the grain elevators in North Topeka and the industrial sites near Topeka Regional Airport. Active lines can be seen in Figure 3.13.



Figure 3.13: Active Rail Lines

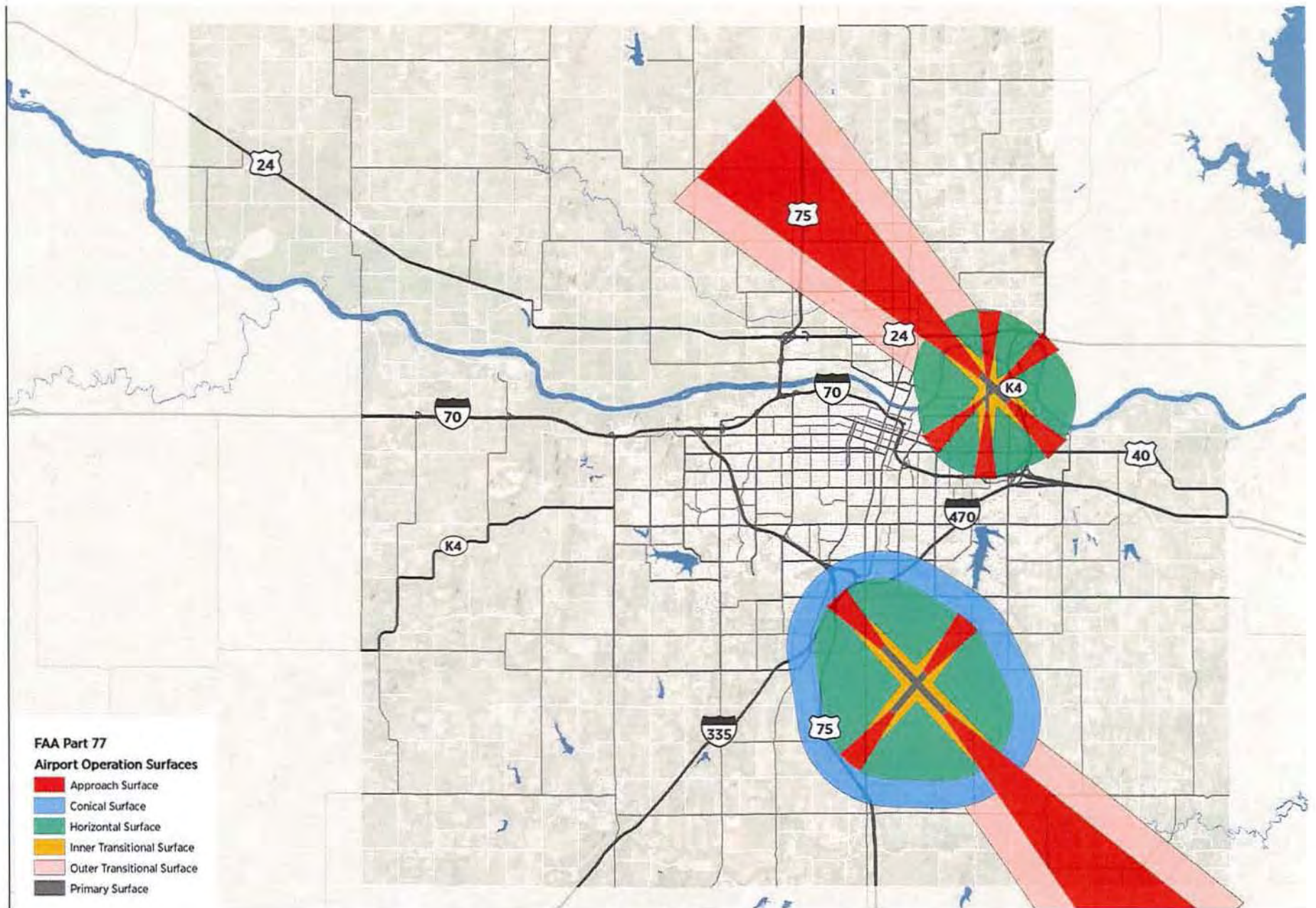
### AIR SERVICE

Shawnee County is served by two public airports, Topeka Regional Airport (formerly Forbes Field) and Phillip Billard Municipal Airport, five private airports, and at least three heliports. Shawnee County currently does not have commercial air service, though they are attempting to reestablish it at the Topeka Regional Airport. The largest airport nearby is the Kansas City International Airport approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes away.

Topeka Regional Airport is located south of Topeka and east of Topeka Boulevard. The airport has two runways: Runway 13-31 which is 12,802 feet in length and the crosswind runway, which is 7,000 feet in length. The main runway can accommodate virtually any U.S. military or civilian aircraft. A full range of Fixed Base Operator and other services including fuel, maintenance, charter, flight instruction, air ambulance, and freight services are available at Topeka Regional Airport.

Ground transportation to and from Topeka Regional Airport is provided by way of South Topeka Boulevard and the nearby Kansas Turnpike and US-75. Topeka Boulevard is the road that provides direct access to the airport. Near the airport, Topeka Boulevard is a four-lane divided and is classified as a principle arterial street. It provides access to the terminal, civilian aviation areas, and the industrial areas via the airport's local street network. Currently, there is no transit service to the station. Should passenger service be provided, transit connections should be determined.





**Figure 3.14: Airport Operations Surfaces**

Source: Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority



## Regional Transportation Planning

The Metropolitan Topeka Planning Organization (MTPO) is required under federal law to prepare and adopt a regional transportation plan every five years. Much of Shawnee County is within the metropolitan planning area (Figure 3.15) for the MTPO. The regional transportation plan includes all modes of surface transportation (i.e., walking, biking, riding transit and driving cars/trucks). All projects proposed for federal funding or are regionally significant regardless of funding source must be included in the plan.

Futures2040 identifies approximately \$1.9 billion in transportation revenues and expenditures through 2040. Figure 3.14 summarizes the amounts covered by that plan. More about Futures2040 may be found on the MTPO website at: [www.Topekampo.org](http://www.Topekampo.org).

The most recent regional transportation plan, Futures2040, was adopted in 2017. Futures2040 makes several key policy recommendations.

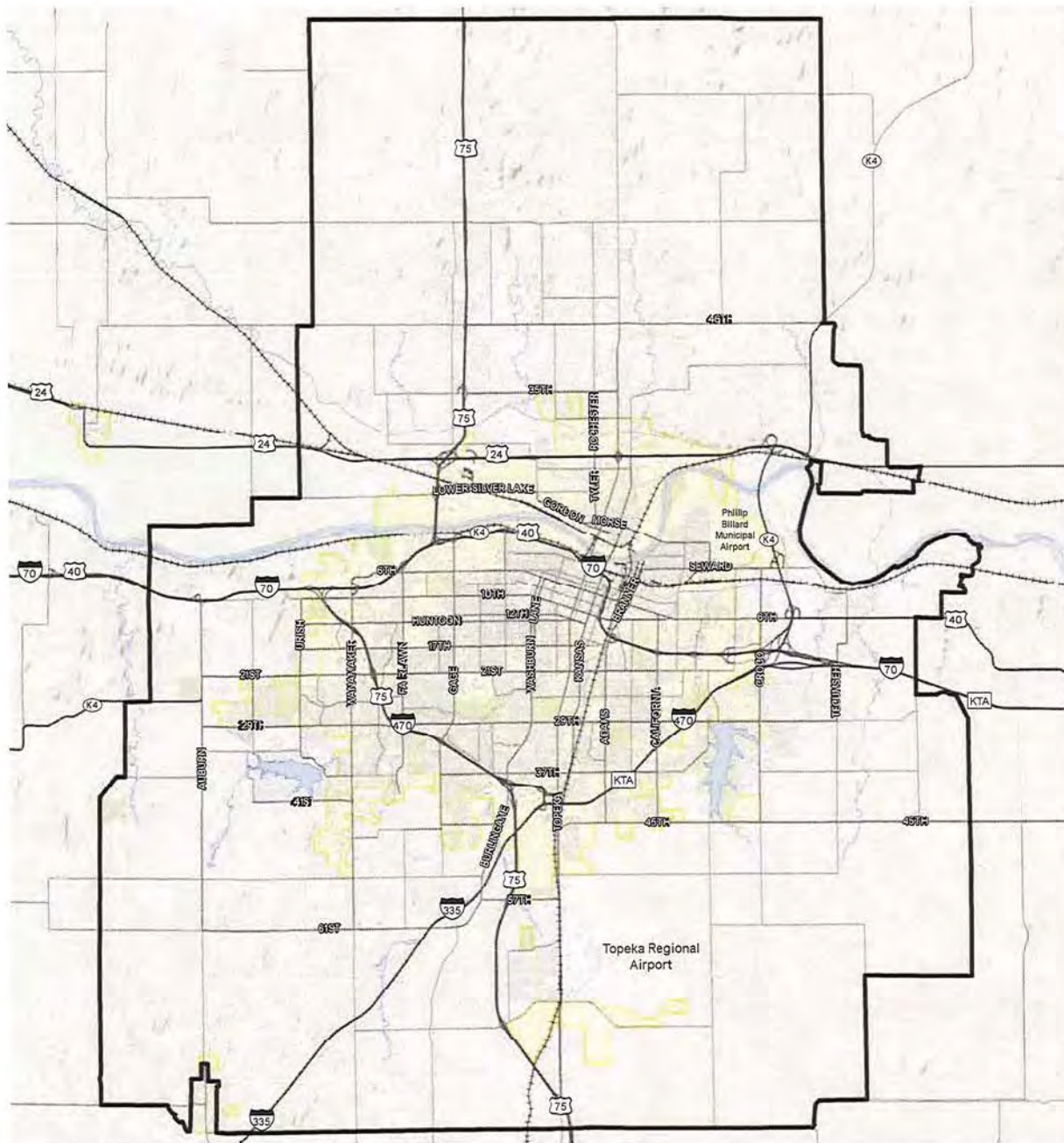
1. Expand the MPA boundary to include all Shawnee County.
2. Preserve the existing roadway network.
3. Emphasize active modes of transportation.

**FIGURE 3.15: Financially Constrained Expenses and Revenues (\$1,000's)**

	2017-2020	2021-2025	2026-2030	2031-2035	2036-2040	TOTAL
<b>GRAND TOTAL REVENUES</b>	\$300,484	\$360,827	\$464,575	\$365,565	\$384,416	\$1,875,867
<b>+ PREVIOUS PERIOD DIFFERENCE</b>		\$79,244	\$17,388	\$31,240	\$21,740	
<b>GRAND TOTAL PROPOSED EXPENDITURES</b>	\$221,240	\$422,684	\$450,722	\$375,066	\$391,672	\$1,861,383
<b>DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REVENUES &amp; EXPENDITURES</b>	\$79,244	\$17,388	\$31,240	\$21,740	\$14,484	\$14,484

Source: Futures2040 Regional Transportation Plan

Figure 3.16: MPTO Planning Area



-  Plan Boundary
-  Railroad Lines
-  Water Bodies
-  Parks
-  City Limits

Source: Futures2040 Regional Transportation Plan



## Water

Drinking water in the county is supplied by the Cities of Topeka, Silver Lake, and Rossville, along with eleven rural water districts (RWD), many of which purchase water from the City of Topeka. Those that purchase their water from Topeka are required to follow rules for development in accordance with City policy. The following water districts all have service areas that expand into Shawnee County:

- Consolidated RWD #1
- Consolidated RWD #2
- Consolidated RWD #3
- Consolidated RWD #4
- Shawnee County RWD #8
- Jefferson County RWD #1
- Jackson County RWD #1
- Douglas County RWD #3
- Pottawatomie County RWD #4
- Osage County RWD #5
- Osage County RWD #8

Many businesses and households also obtain water from individual wells. According to county appraiser's CAMA data, at least 1,073 parcels have wells, serving some 1,934 residences. The City of Topeka also has extended water supply to parts of the County independent from the RWD. Typically, these are to areas that may be annexed in the future.

## Storm Water Drainage

The Storm drainage system is a network of structures, channels and underground pipes that carry storm water (rain water) to ponds, lakes, streams and rivers. The network consists of both public and private systems, and is designed to control the quantity, quality, timing and distribution of storm runoff. But, Shawnee County does not have a dedicated storm water management program, and assumes no responsibility for storm water drainage systems on private property. All storm water in the county eventually flows to the Wakarusa and Kansas Rivers. In counties, storm drainage tends to be of greater concern in exurban areas with open ditches and driveway pipes that are not maintained by the property owner. Occasionally, properties that did not go through the standard subdivision and platting process do not adequately handle storm water.

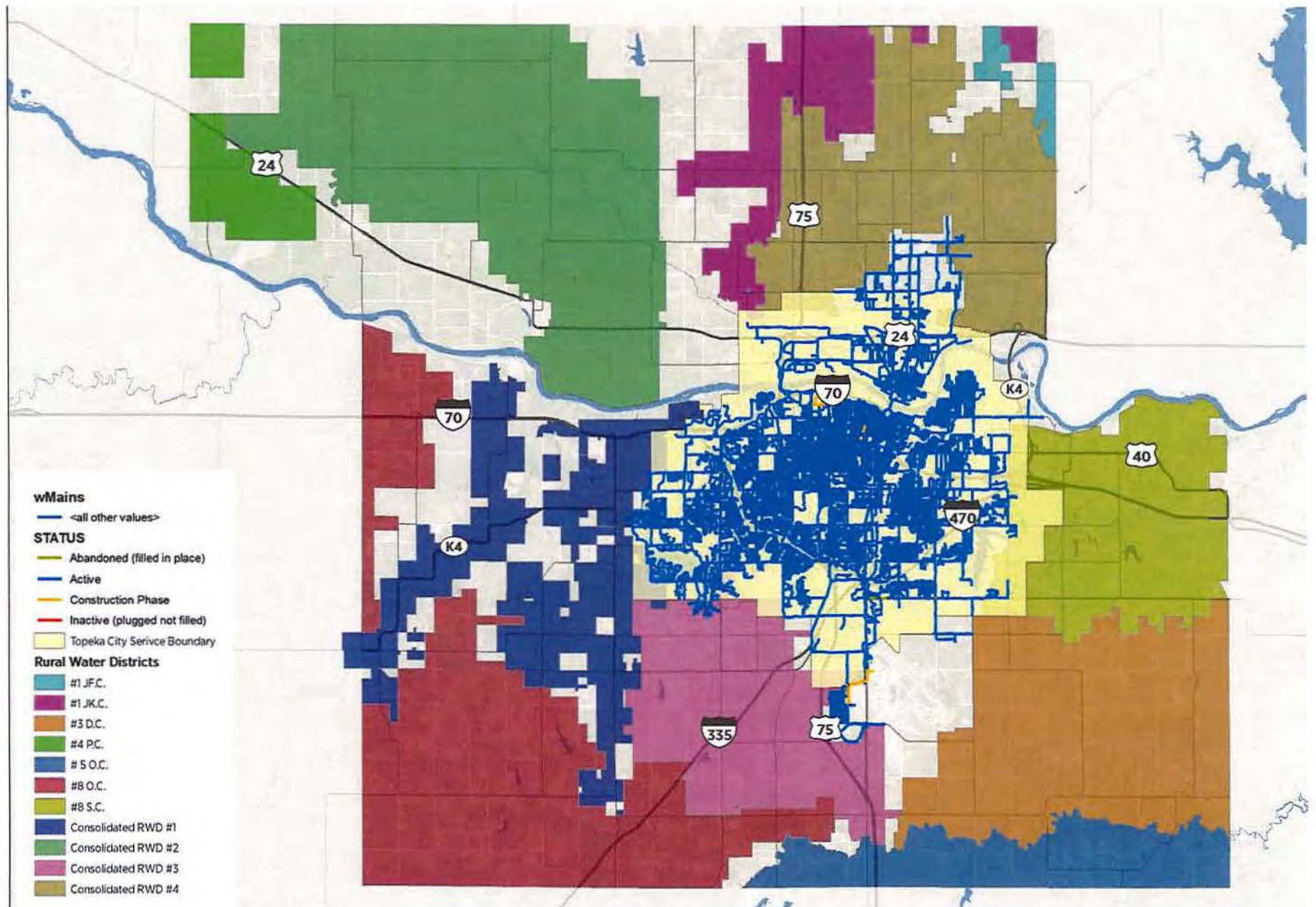


Figure 3.17: Water Districts and Infrastructure

Source: Shawnee County GIS Data



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## Wastewater

Wastewater in the county is collected and treated by cities, individual and joint lagoons, and private septic systems. Most parcels in Shawnee County have sewer publicly supplied, especially within incorporated City boundaries. In unincorporated Shawnee County, public sewers are supplied through main line extensions from the City when they are present. Major extensions near Topeka include an underutilized line to the north in Soldier Township called the Half Day Creek interceptor sewer, one southwest to Washburn Rural High School, and one that extends west. While Topeka operates much of the sewer infrastructure, some of it is owned by the county. Lake Sherwood is also a separate sewer district.

According to the Shawnee County Appraiser's Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) data, there are at least 10,871 parcels with septic systems. There are also 229 parcels serviced by lagoons, though new individual lagoons are not encouraged. In addition, 75 entities have NPDES permits. The City of Topeka contains the largest NPDES permitted facilities, and several school systems also operate on NPDES permits. In total, septic systems account for about 18 percent of the entire county's wastewater supply.

The county currently inspects and monitors septic systems ensuring minimum lot sizes that adequately provide efficient septic fields. Sites must be at least 3-acres to support an area without a percolation test, though smaller lots are allowed as percolation improves. In denser subdivisions (lots of less than 3 acres), the county has allowed rural residential neighborhood development with community wastewater systems as opposed to individual septic systems.

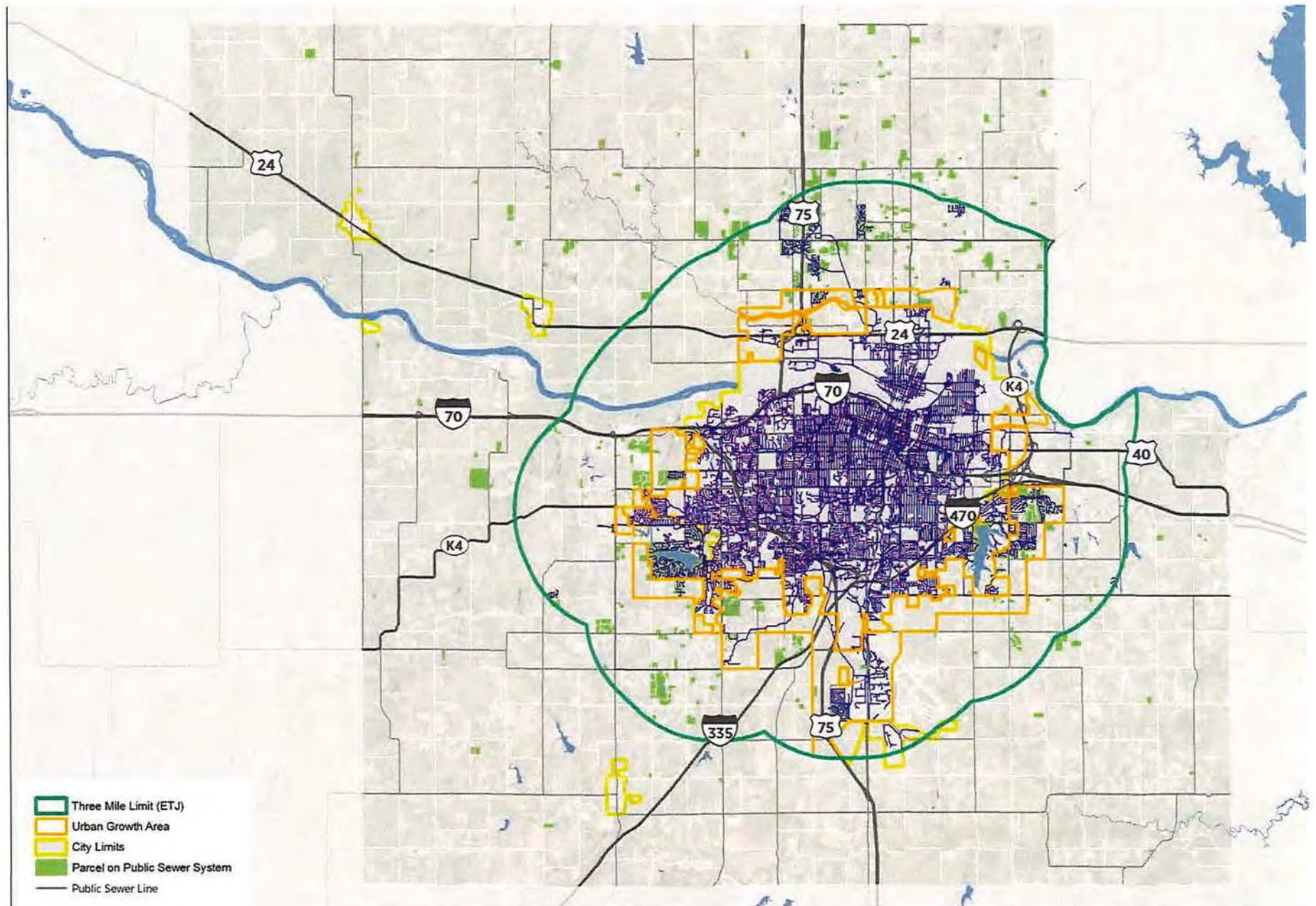
## Electricity and Gas

Electricity in Shawnee County is provided cooperatively by Westar Energy, the Kaw Valley Electric Cooperative, and the Leavenworth-Jefferson Electric cooperative. Starting in 2017, Kaw Valley and Leavenworth Jefferson consolidated to create the FreeState Electric Cooperative. Gas in Shawnee County is provided primarily by the Kansas Gas Service with the City of Auburn serving a small area purchased from National Public Gas Agency. Gas is available near Topeka and around the Silver Lake and Rossville areas. However, it requires a critical mass of potential users to be extended.

## Solid Waste

The Shawnee County Solid Waste department provides 43,000 residents and 1,100 businesses across the county with solid waste and recycling services. The department hauls more than 150 tons of refuse and 40 tons of recyclables per day, in addition to handling more than 100 tons of hazardous material per year at the Household Hazardous Waste Facility. The solid waste fleet consists of 19 refuse and 11 recycling trucks to handle both residential and commercial solid waste. Within the County, Rolling Meadows Landfill is not expected to be filled within the planning horizon of this document.





**Figure 3.18: Sewer Lines**

Source: Shawnee County GIS Data



## Emergency Services

The Shawnee County Consolidated Emergency Communications Center answers calls for and dispatches for five law enforcement and eight fire agencies. They operate 24 hours per day, seven days a week and answer more than 100,000 calls to 911 and more than 250,000 dispatch calls annually. They are staffed by 45 dispatchers and six supervisors. Shawnee County also has an emergency management agency. This office oversees the emergency management plans and is authorized to receive state and federal funds. Other services, such as fire, police, and health services, are enumerated as follows:

## HEALTH SERVICES

Several health care facilities are present in Topeka. Hospitals include St. Francis Health Center, Stormont Vail HealthCare, and Veterans Administration Medical Clinic, in addition to numerous clinics, specialists, and the Community Health Center. Overall, Shawnee County is well-served by medical facilities. In addition, the Shawnee County Health Department recently conducted a Community Health Needs Assessment for Shawnee County. This process has provided a roadmap for future improvements for the public health of Shawnee County, and it has begun a continued process of improvement.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law enforcement within the County is provided by four city police departments, Kansas Highway Patrol, and the Shawnee County Sheriff. The Topeka Police Department is the largest with around 300 sworn police officers. The Shawnee County Sheriff is the next largest department, including patrol, traffic, animal control and criminal investigative duties with a staff of about 100 sworn officers. Meanwhile, the City police departments are smaller with Silver Lake, Rossville, and Auburn employing an additional nine sworn officers. Other law enforcement agencies include two public security agencies, two school police forces, and the Shawnee County Lake patrol.

**FIGURE 3.19: Health Care Statistics**

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Hospital Beds	1,465	1,206	1,245	1,261	1,269	1,258	1,253	1,112
Adult Care Beds	1,461	1,470	1,465	1,454	1,499	1,524	1,538	1,538
Assisted Living Beds	805	780	767	777	732	805	824	824

Source: University of Kansas Institute for Policy & Social Research, Kansas County Profiles 2014

**FIGURE 3.20: Crime Statistics**

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Crimes	11,996	11,187	10,299	9,906	8,914	8,770	9,648	8,728	8,125	7,854	8,285
Crimes per 1,000	70.4	65.0	60.3	57.3	50.0	49.6	54.3	48.9	45.4	43.9	46.5
Violent	774	773	833	764	823	800	772	870	722	738	746
% Violent	6.5%	6.9%	8.1%	7.7%	9.2%	9.1%	8.0%	10.0%	8.9%	9.4%	9.0%

Source: Kansas Bureau of Investigation

Overall, the rate of crime has decreased in Shawnee County. Over the past ten years, the crime rate has decreased from 70.4 crimes per 1,000 residents to 46.5 per 1,000 residents. The number of violent crimes did not substantially change. Compared to the State which averages 29.9 crimes per 1,000 people, Shawnee County has higher rates of crime, although the county also has a smaller percentage of violent crimes (12.0 percent of state crimes were violent). Overall, law enforcement in Shawnee County seems adequate, though there are still opportunities to improve service provision.

### FIRE SERVICE

Fire and some EMS protection is provided by rural and city fire districts. The largest is Topeka which serves the City of Topeka and areas in the county within their service area. The remaining fire districts are smaller and are scattered across the county. While fire districts cover the entire county, not all areas of the county are within the standard 8-minute drive time (Figure 3.22). This leaves some gaps in the county where fire protection is limited, even in areas with moderately dense development. Assurance of adequate fire protection is something that should be considered before the issuance of future building permits.

FIGURE 3.21: Fire Protection Statistics

	LOCATION	STATIONS	FIREFIGHTERS	
			PAID	VOLUNTEER
Topeka FD	Topeka	12	240	0
SNCO FD #1	Silver Lake	3	2	23
SNCO FD #2	Auburn	1	31	25
SNCO FD #3	Rossville	1	25	0
SNCO FD #4	Dover	2	0	All
Mission TWP FD	Topeka	1	21	30
Shawnee Heights FD	Tecumseh	2	45	0
Soldier TWP FD	Topeka	1	4	35
MTAA FD	Topeka	1	19	0

Source: Office of the Kansas State Fire Marshal



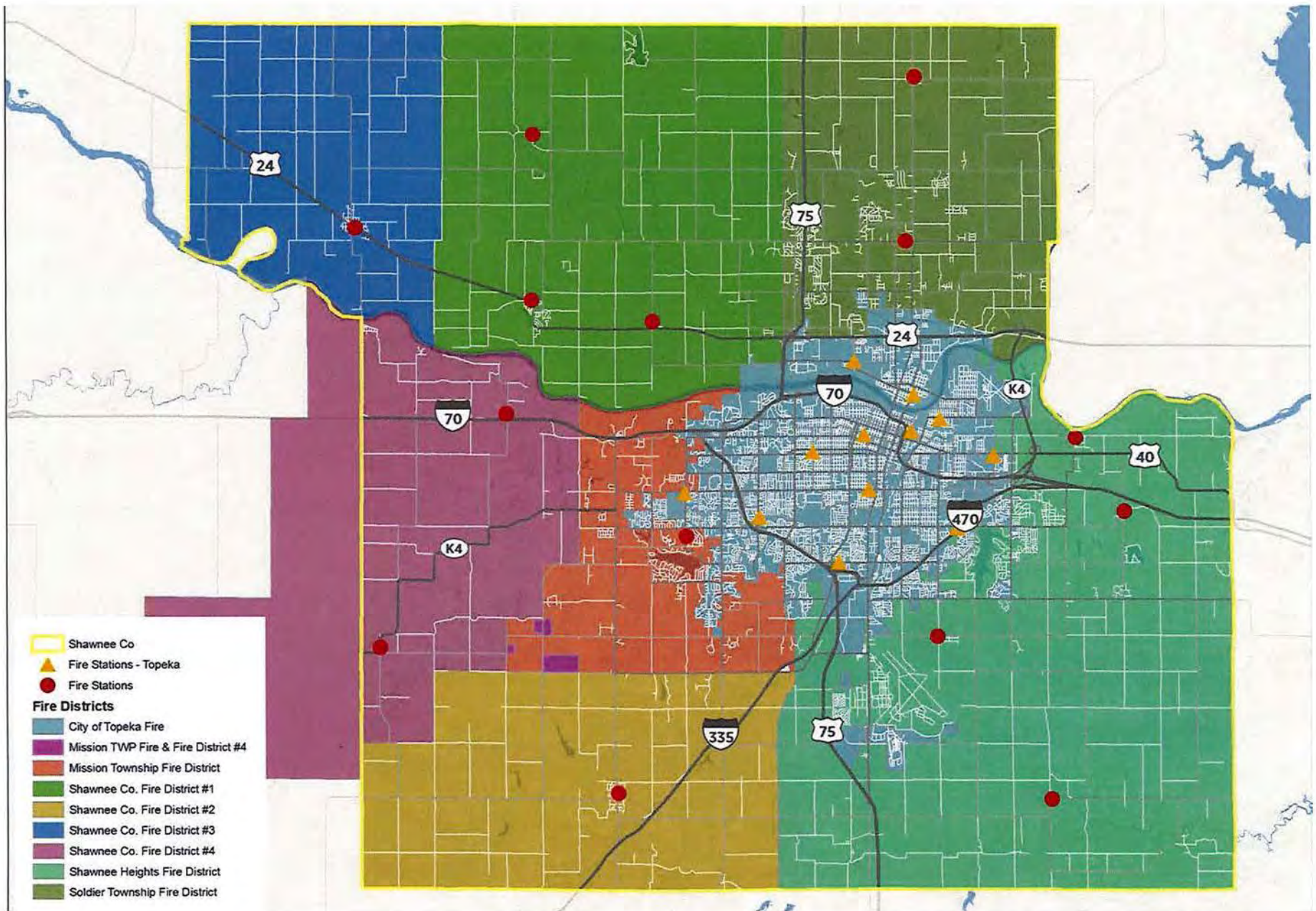


Figure 3.22: Fire Districts and Stations

Source: Shawnee County GIS Data



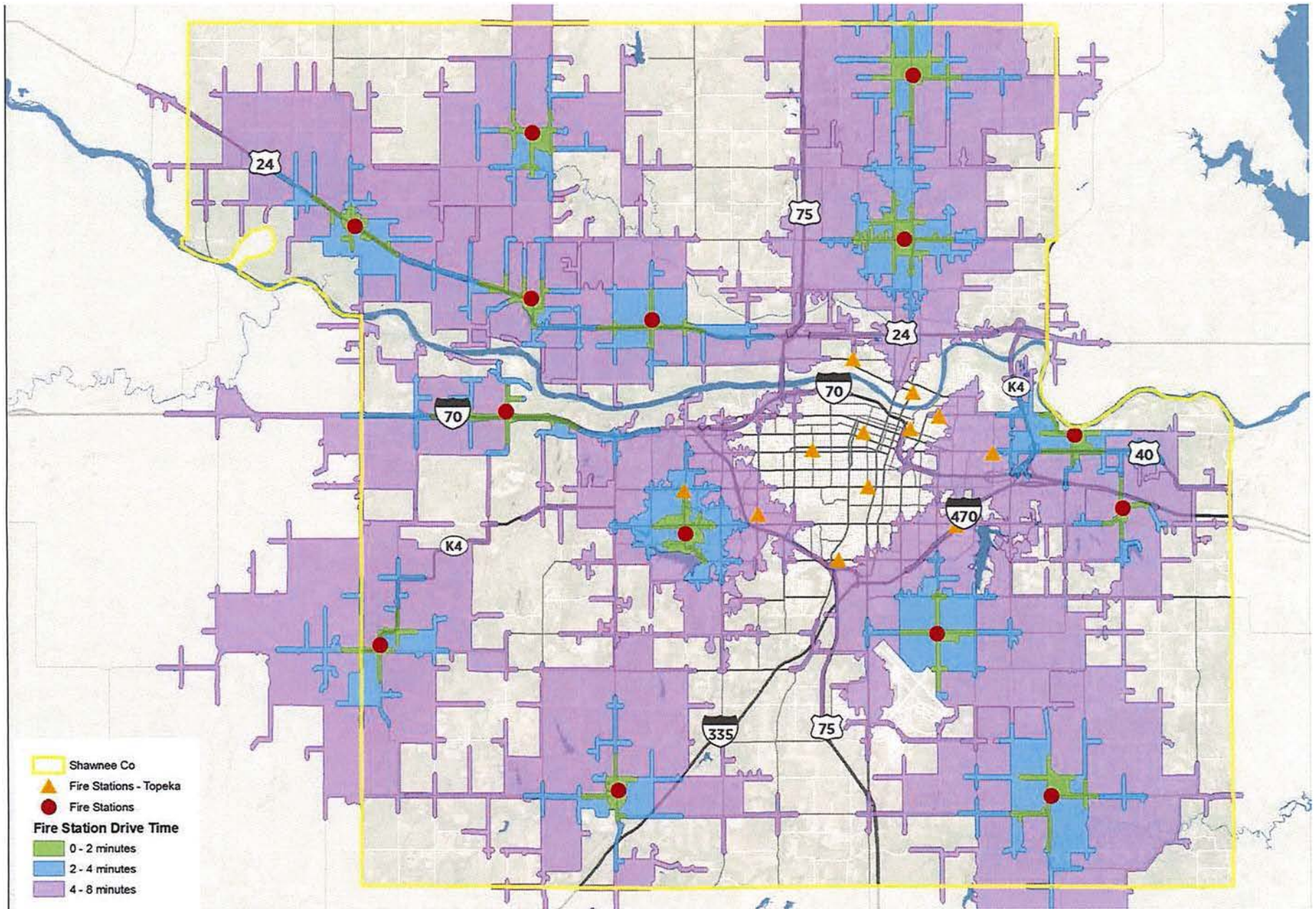


Figure 3.23: Fire Response Times



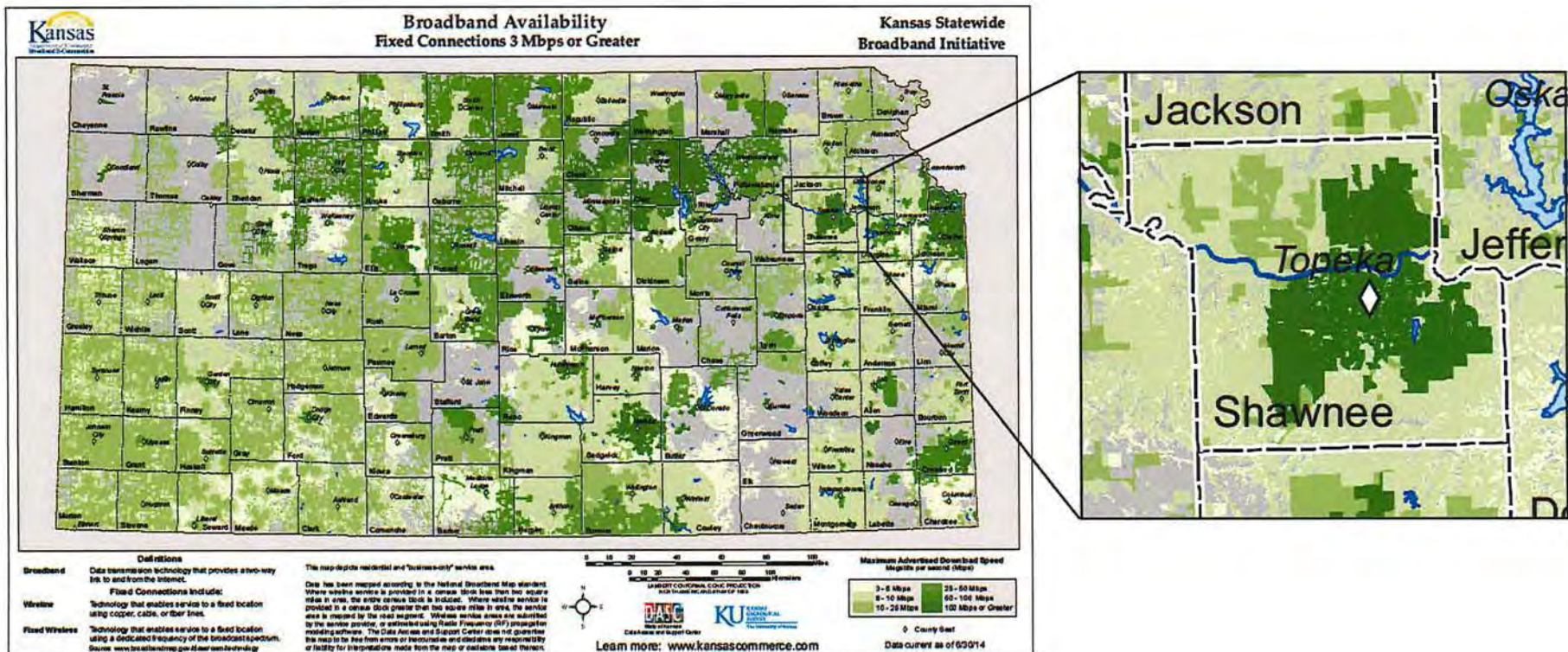
## Communications Service

Communications services, including telephone, cable, and internet, are provided by Cox Communications, AT&T, and Century Link. Most of the county has broadband available but its speed varies across the county. Topeka and its environs have download speeds advertised as exceeding 100 Mbps. Northwest Shawnee County has speeds up to 25 mbps

advertised. Meanwhile, the fringe of the county can only get up to 10 mbps with limited areas receiving a service maximum of 6 mbps. Part of this is probably because they can only receive wireless service, though it is also guided by population density; over 90 percent of the population can obtain download speeds of at least 100 Mbps and more than that can receive DSL. Most homes have download speeds between 2.7 and 16.1 mbps.

To expand service, companies require a critical mass of development. This can be as high as 50 units to attract non-wireless service. Cell coverage also varies across the county (see Figure 3.24). Overall, communications services will likely never be as fast in rural portions of Shawnee County as in urban and suburban portions of the county. Service providers do not have a financial incentive to invest in the infrastructure necessary to support higher download speeds when population density is very low.

Figure 3.24: Broadband Availability



Source: Kansas Department of Commerce



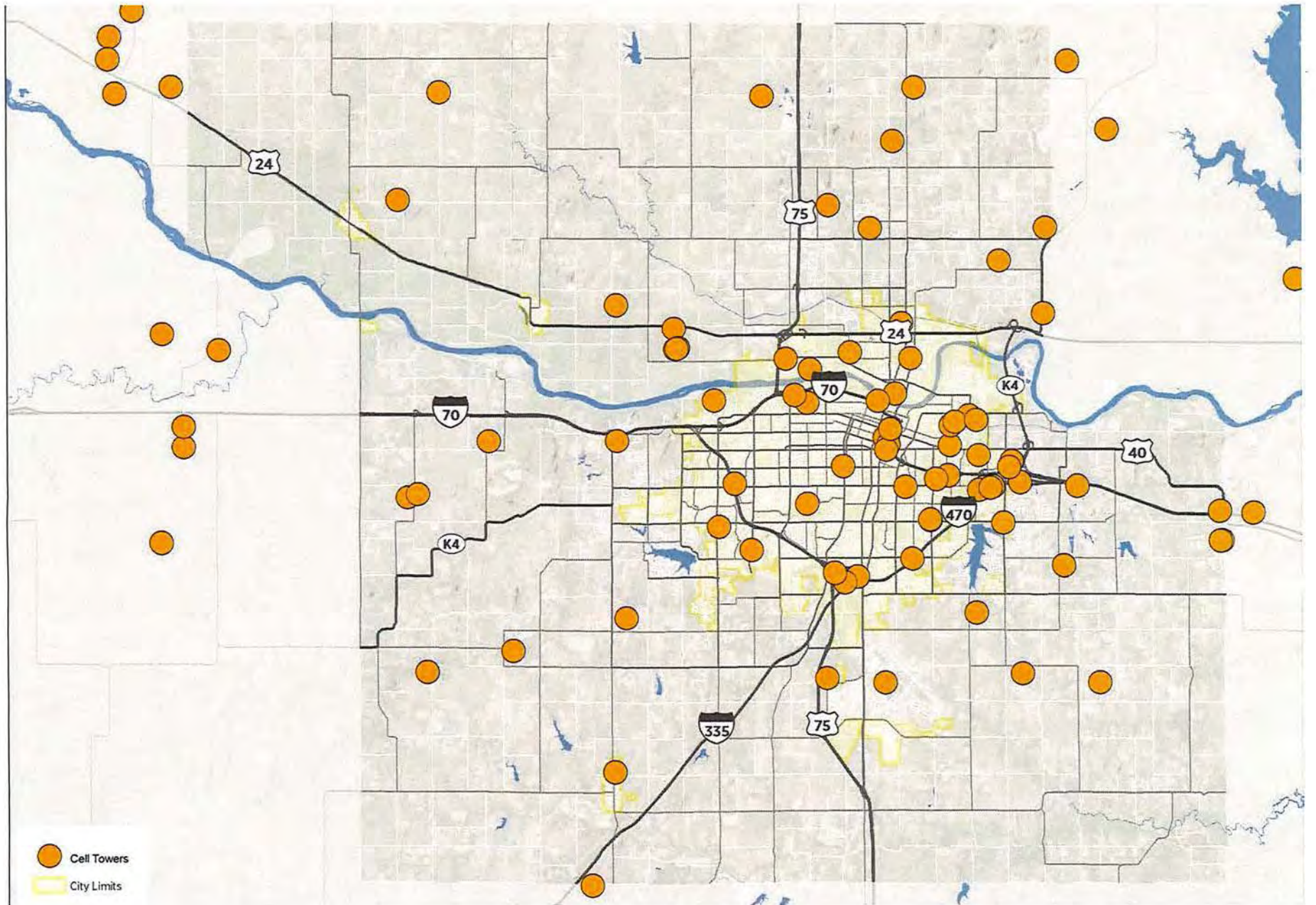


Figure 3.25: Cellphone Towers



## Education

There are nine school districts in Shawnee County. Topeka Public Schools USD (#501), the largest district in the County, is completely within Topeka city limits. As such, it does not serve unincorporated county. The other main six districts include:

- Kaw Valley USD (#321) is in northwest Shawnee County but is based out of Pottawatomie County. With 1,170 enrolled students, the USD has two elementary schools (Rossville and St. Marys), two junior-senior high schools (Rossville and St. Mary's), and a Special Services building.
- Wabunsee Wabaunsee East USD (#329) is in southwest Shawnee County but is based out of Wabunsee Wabaunsee County. With 442 enrolled students, it is the smallest school district serving the county. It has three elementary schools (Alma, Maple Hill, and Paxico Middle School), and two other buildings, Wabaunsee Junior High and Senior High.
- Seaman USD (#345) is the northeastern most district. With 3,821 enrolled students, Seaman has five elementary schools (Elmont, Logan, Northern Hills, North Fairview, and West Indianola), Seaman Middle and High School, and the Mathes Learning Center.
- Silver Lake USD (#372) is in north-central Shawnee County. With an enrollment of 700 students, it is one of the smallest districts primarily located in Shawnee County. This USD has three schools, Silver Lake Elementary, and Silver Lake Junior and Senior High.
- Auburn Washburn (#437) is in south-central Shawnee County. Auburn Washburn is the largest school district in the County aside from Topeka Public Schools and has grown rapidly with 6,275 students. The district has seven elementary schools (Auburn, Farley, Indian hills, Jay Shideler, Pauline Central, Pauline South Intermediate, Wanamaker), Washburn Middle School, and two high schools (Washburn Rural Alternative and Washburn Rural High), in addition to the Pathways Learning Center and Tallgrass Student Learning Center.

- Shawnee Heights (#450) is in southeast Shawnee County. With an enrollment of 3,555 students, Shawnee Heights has four elementary schools (Berryton, Shawnee Heights, Tecumseh North, and Tecumseh South), a Middle School, and a High School.

Jefferson West USD (#340) and Santa Fe Trail USD (#434) also serve very small portions of Shawnee County. According to the Kansas State Department of Education K-12 Statistics page, the County also has four three several private accredited schools including Kennedy Academy, Lutheran Schools, the Southard School, Menningers, and TARC.

Shawnee County also contains several institutions of higher education and further learning, including Washburn University, Washburn Institute of Technology and Rasmussen College, all located in

Topeka. Other private accredited institutions include Baker University and Friends University. Within a 50-mile radius, Topeka has 87,686 enrolled students with more than 15,405 degrees and 2,305 certificates conferred over the 2014-2015 school year. This includes Kansas State University and University of Kansas, providing a large pool of educated labor nearby.

Overall, Shawnee County is well-served by educational institutions that are adequately funded and seem to compare favorably. In the past, school districts have been drivers of development of certain areas of the county. This trend will likely continue. Utilizing schools as assets, ensuring new schools are built near development, and maintain a variety of transportation options near them will help them be more accessible to students of all ages.

FIGURE 3.26: 2015-2016 Year Public School Statistics

	COUNTY	ENROLLMENT	FREE / REDUCED LUNCHES	EXPENDITURES PER PUPIL
Kaw Valley	Pottawatomie	1,170	40.0%	\$14,804
Wabaunsee	Wabaunsee	442	36.0%	\$16,621
Seaman	Shawnee	3,821	36.6%	\$12,538
Silver Lake	Shawnee	700	21.3%	\$14,492
Auburn Washburn	Shawnee	6,275	34.4%	\$11,161
Shawnee Heights	Shawnee	3,555	39.0%	\$11,769
Topeka Public Schools	Shawnee	14,169	76.7%	\$14,660

Source: Kansas Department of Education

FIGURE 3.27: Higher Education

	ENROLLMENT	TOTAL DEGREES	TOTAL CERTIFICATES
Washburn Institute of Technology	1,884	-	1,080
Washburn University	7,848	1,245	529

Source: Topeka-Shawnee County Holistic Economic Development Strategy



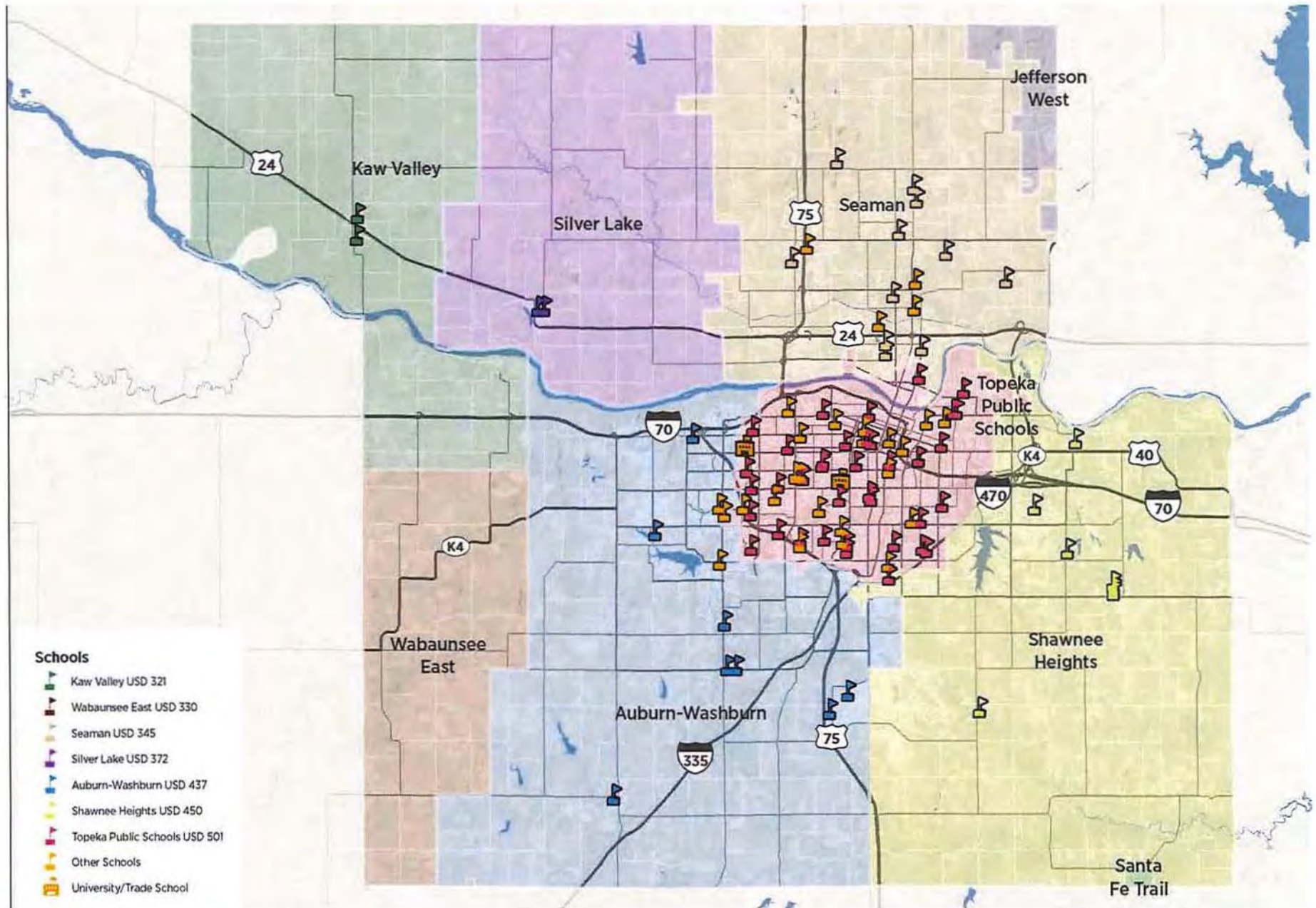


Figure 3.28: School Districts and Buildings

Source: Shawnee County GIS Data



## FUTURE CONDITIONS

The county has recently focused on the maintenance of its facilities first, followed by improving the quality of service provision for the county. This emphasis is largely driven by the public which desires to maintain its already high quality of life, including good roads and high-performing schools.

Currently, there are not many plans to expand general infrastructure. For the most part, expansions are discussed reactively when new residents or developers request expansions. In the past, this has primarily occurred with development near Topeka. In some cases, infrastructure has been expanded in a proactive manner, such as the northern wastewater line. However, proactive infrastructure needs consistent policy decisions to fund its expense. This is addressed further in the discussion and recommendations section.

Transportation infrastructure for much of the county is proactively planned due to federal requirements. This section examines planned future conditions for transportation infrastructure.



K-4 Highway NE of Dover

## Roadways

Futures2040, the Regional Transportation Plan for the Topeka Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), provides a plan for future transportation infrastructure near Topeka. The plan accounts for both probable project costs and expected revenues, ensuring that it is fiscally feasible. However, the plan does not include all Shawnee County, and instead focuses on most of the eastern half. For the most part, projects included but for Shawnee County are maintenance or safety improvements. Major projects of adding turn lanes include:

- NW 46th Street (Button to Rochester)
- NW Rochester (US-24 to NW 50th)
- SE 29th Street Bridge Over Deer Creek
- SE 45th (California to Berryton)
- SE 45th (Berryton to Croco)
- SW 29th St (Indian Hills to Auburn)
- SW Auburn (K-4 to 37th)
- NE 46th St (Topeka to Indian Creek)
- SW Auburn (37th to 45th)
- SW 61st St (Wanamaker to KTA Bridge)
- NE 46th St (Indian Creek to Meriden)
- SW Auburn (45th to 53rd)
- SW Burlingame (57th to KTA Bridge on SW 61st)
- NE 46th St (Meriden to Kincaid)
- SW Auburn (53rd to 61st)

## Active Transportation

Active transportation is emphasized in Futures2040, supported by efforts like Shawnee County's complete streets and subdivision policies. As a result of these policies, sidewalks will be constructed along with any new subdivisions in Shawnee County. Meanwhile, as the road projects occur above, efforts should be made to incorporate sidewalks or side paths into them

to provide a spine for the county pedestrian network. This can be supplemented by trail development.

Meanwhile, side paths constructed during road reconstruction can also provide routes for bicyclists in the county. In addition, Topeka is implementing its Bikeway Master Plan which will extend into unincorporated areas (Figure 3.29). The plan was completed in 2012 and should be finished before the planning horizon of Futures 2040. These bicycle facilities would facilitate travel to urbanized unincorporated areas and should be encouraged and supported by the County.

Outside of those specific routes, other routes in the county could include:

- Recreational trail along the Kansas River from Douglas County to Wabaunsee County.
- Recreational trail along the abandoned railroad right-of-way near Half Day Creek from the Goodyear Tire plant north toward Hoyt, KS in Jackson County. This rail line may not have been rail banked. But, it may be possible to dedicate right-of-way as future suburban development occurs.
- Recreational trail along the abandoned railroad right-of-way near Soldier Creek from the intersection of NE Grantville Road and NE Goldwater Road north toward Meriden, KS in Jefferson County. This rail line may have been rail banked as far north as NE 46th Street.
- Recreational trail along the Wakarusa River from the Landon Trail east toward Clinton Reservoir in Douglas County. Much of the land needed for this trail is already owned by the US Army Corps of Engineers.
- Adding paved shoulders with rumble strips along US-40 Highway from K-4 Highway east to Douglas County line. US-40 Highway follows the historic Oregon Trail and California Trail Routes. This is a potential Scenic Byway Route.



- Adding paved shoulders with rumble strips along SE 45th Street from East Edge Road east to Douglas County. This route would connect Lake Shawnee with Clinton Reservoir in Douglas County. Many segments of this road already have paved shoulders.
- Adding paved shoulders with rumble strips along K-4 Highway from Dover east to Auburn Road. K-4 Highway has been designated as the Native Stone Scenic Byway from Dover east to Auburn Road in Shawnee County.

Each of these potential bicycle routes should be studied in more detail before moving into the project development phase.

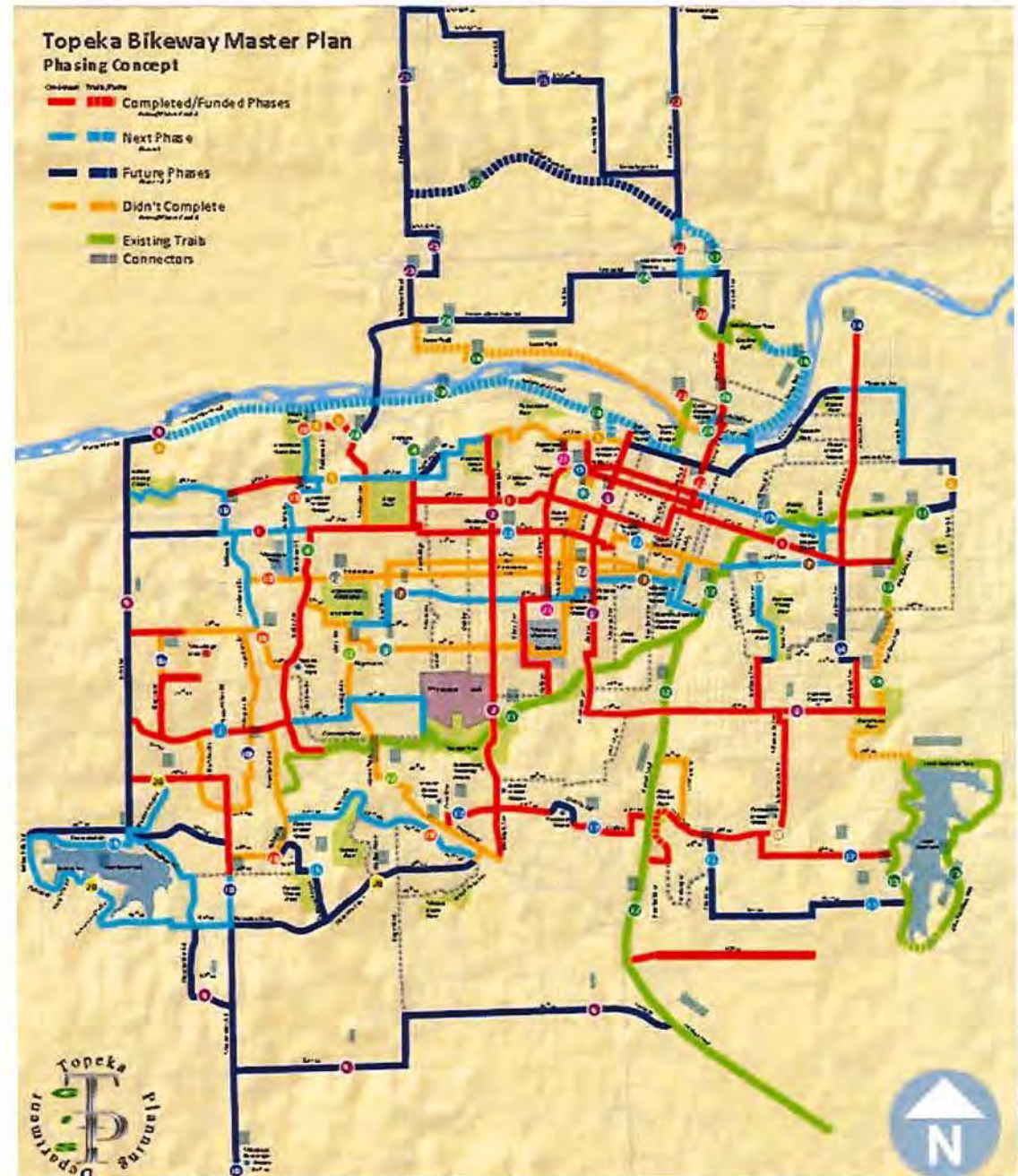


US-40 near SE Shadden Road



Kansas River

Figure 3.29: Topeka Bikeway Master Plan





## DEVELOPMENT SUITABILITY: INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Proximity to infrastructure is integral to development. Shawnee County's infrastructure allows future growth to occur in an efficient and fiscally responsible manner. As such, development should be encouraged where infrastructure such as sewer, water, and paved roads are available, in addition to paying attention to fire response times, schools, and airport zones.

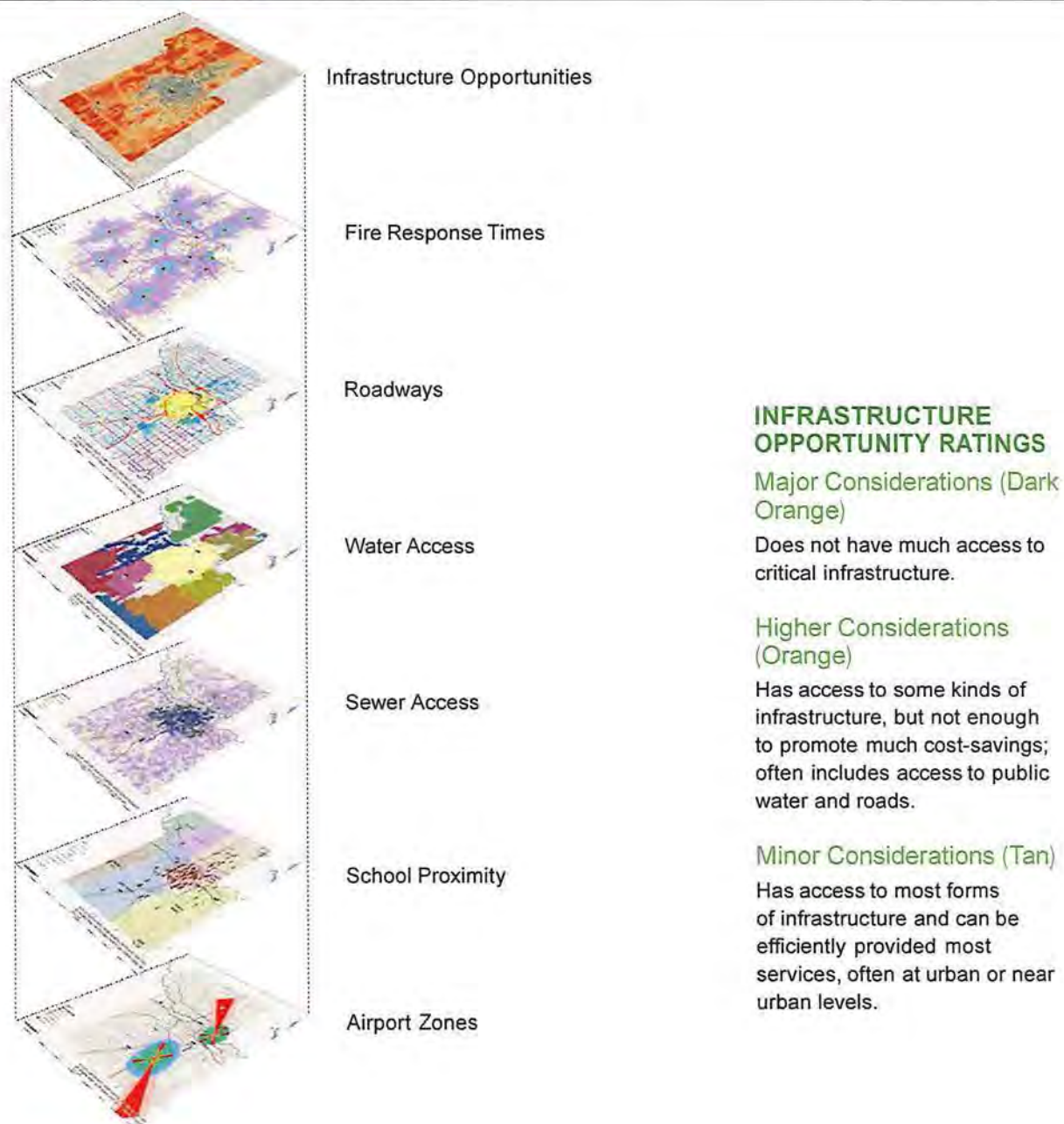
The following map identifies areas that should be prioritized for new development. The map was created by weighing proximity to existing infrastructure, generating an aggregated rating for general access to infrastructure. Factors considered for this map include:

- Proximity to Sewer Lines
- Public Water Availability
- Paved Roads
- Fire Response Times
- Proximity to Schools
- Airport Approach Zones

Developers, County staff, the Planning Commission, and the County Commission should use the infrastructure opportunity map, definitions on this page, and examples in Figure 3.31 to determine if proposed developments adequately utilize existing infrastructure.

While the suitability map gives a general overview of access to critical infrastructure, each site is unique and each development proposal should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine how to best promote efficient use of resources.

Figure 3.30: Infrastructure Opportunity Map Conceptualization





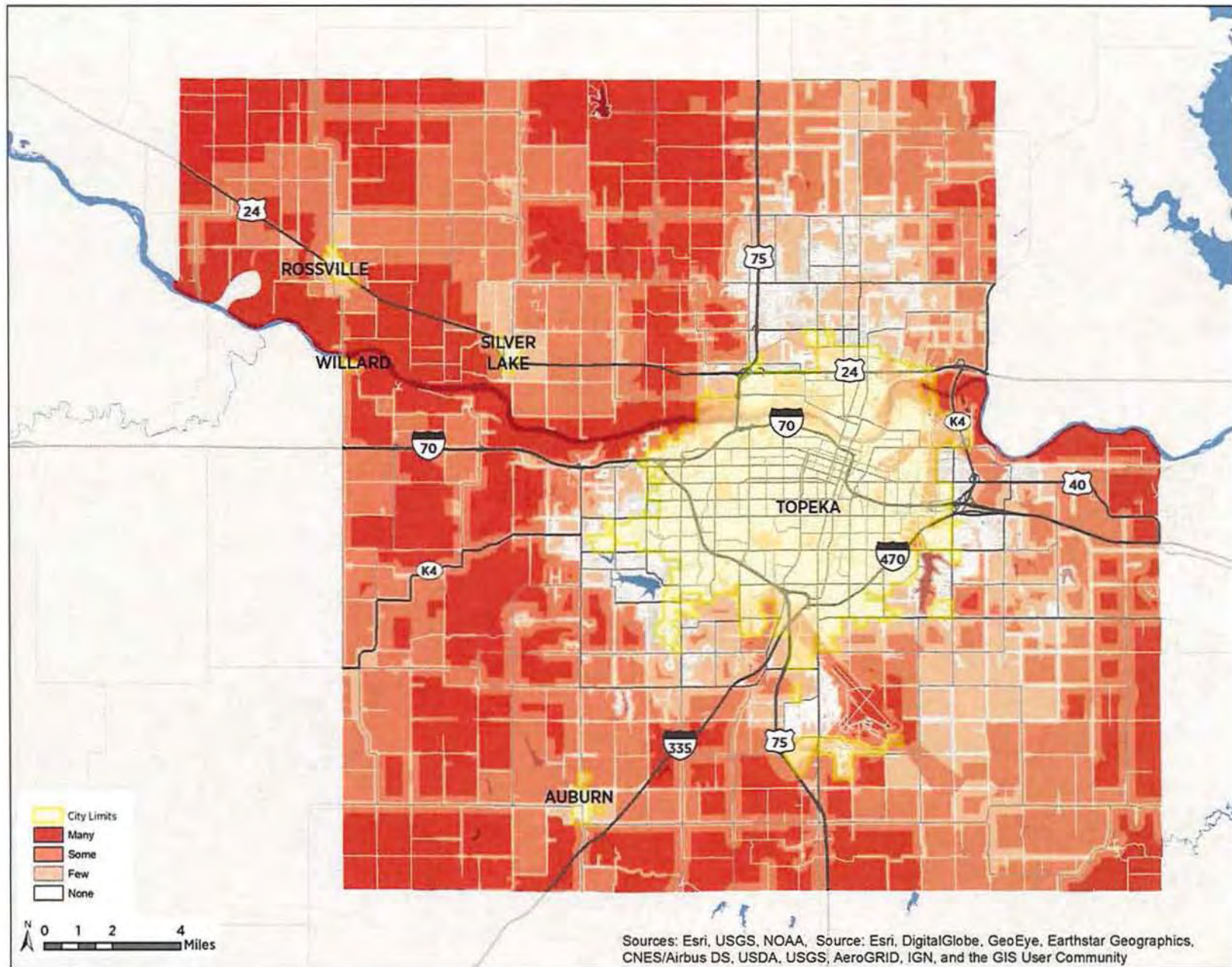


FIGURE 3.31: Infrastructure Opportunity Map



## DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Roads and bridges in the county are generally well-maintained, serve agricultural needs well, and provide good connections to other counties. Congestion levels are low on county and township roads. Occasionally, heavier vehicles, such as tractors and trucks, have issues on some roads, bridges, and round-a-bouts, but for the most part, they are adequately served.

Other public services in the county are also considered to be adequate. As a result, county residents are more concerned about maintaining roadways, utilities and public services, continuing to improve services and quality of life, and making the best use of taxpayer dollars. To do this, the costs of providing infrastructure needs to be considered, for both reactive and proactive infrastructure development.



## Expansion, Maintenance, and Replacement Costs Discussion

Expectations about the road surfaces in unincorporated Shawnee County have changed as more people move outside of the cities of Auburn, Rossville, Silver Lake, Topeka and Willard. It is important to consider the cost of paving or reconstructing a road as an area transitions from rural to exurban or suburban uses. Assuming it is not necessary to acquire additional right-of-way or relocate utilities, it typically costs \$1 million per lane per mile to pave a road. As all roads need at least 2 lanes, paving a 1-mile road can be expected to cost at least \$2 million per mile.

Development patterns complicate this issue. Exurban residential development encroached on rural areas during the last 50-years. The plat exemption process made it easy for people to build homes on 3-acre tracts along existing public roads. Many section-line roads have had homes built along them while the interior portions of the sections remain undeveloped. This results in conflicting land uses and also in conflicting transportation needs as slow-moving agricultural equipment use the same roads as fast-moving commuters eager to get to and from work or to and from school. Similarly, the relatively low density of development per square mile results in an inability to widen roads and bridges as traffic volumes and speeds increase. This is largely the result of the cost of roadway improvements.

These factors also make it important to consider whether county taxpayers or homeowners benefitting directly from the project should pay the costs of paving or improving the road, especially since the road now mostly fulfills local functions. Road impact fees could support future roadway improvements as areas transition from rural to exurban in such a way as to have those who benefit pay the costs.

## Roadway Construction Costs Per Home

The per home costs of road improvement are a function of density.

- In exurban areas, between 34 and 52 homes can be built on 3-acre tracts along a 1-mile road, assuming construction on both sides of the road. Historically, only 200 feet of frontage was required. Topeka now requires 300 feet within the ETJ. Thus, the per home cost of paving a road in exurban areas would range from \$40,000 to \$60,000.
- In areas where additional homes on 3-acre lots are also built on interiors, as many as 102 homes can split the cost of paving a road, costing \$20,000 per home.
- In areas with 1/2 acre lots, 352 lots can split the cost of paving a road, thus costing only \$5,700.

Similar issues arise regarding the sanitary sewer lines in unincorporated Shawnee County. Shawnee County requires all new development within 200 feet of any sanitary sewer line to connect to the line as a condition of development. Given the public investment made in these systems, the public health benefits, and the greater likelihood of ongoing maintenance of the facilities, this policy is reasonable.

However, Shawnee County invested \$2.1 million to build the Half Day Creek Sewer Interceptor Line in 1993, or about \$3.5 million in today's dollars. This allows denser development to the north, following then-current development patterns. To recover its investment, the county charges property owners a sewer connection fees of \$4,078.90 per acre as development occurs and looks for enhanced property



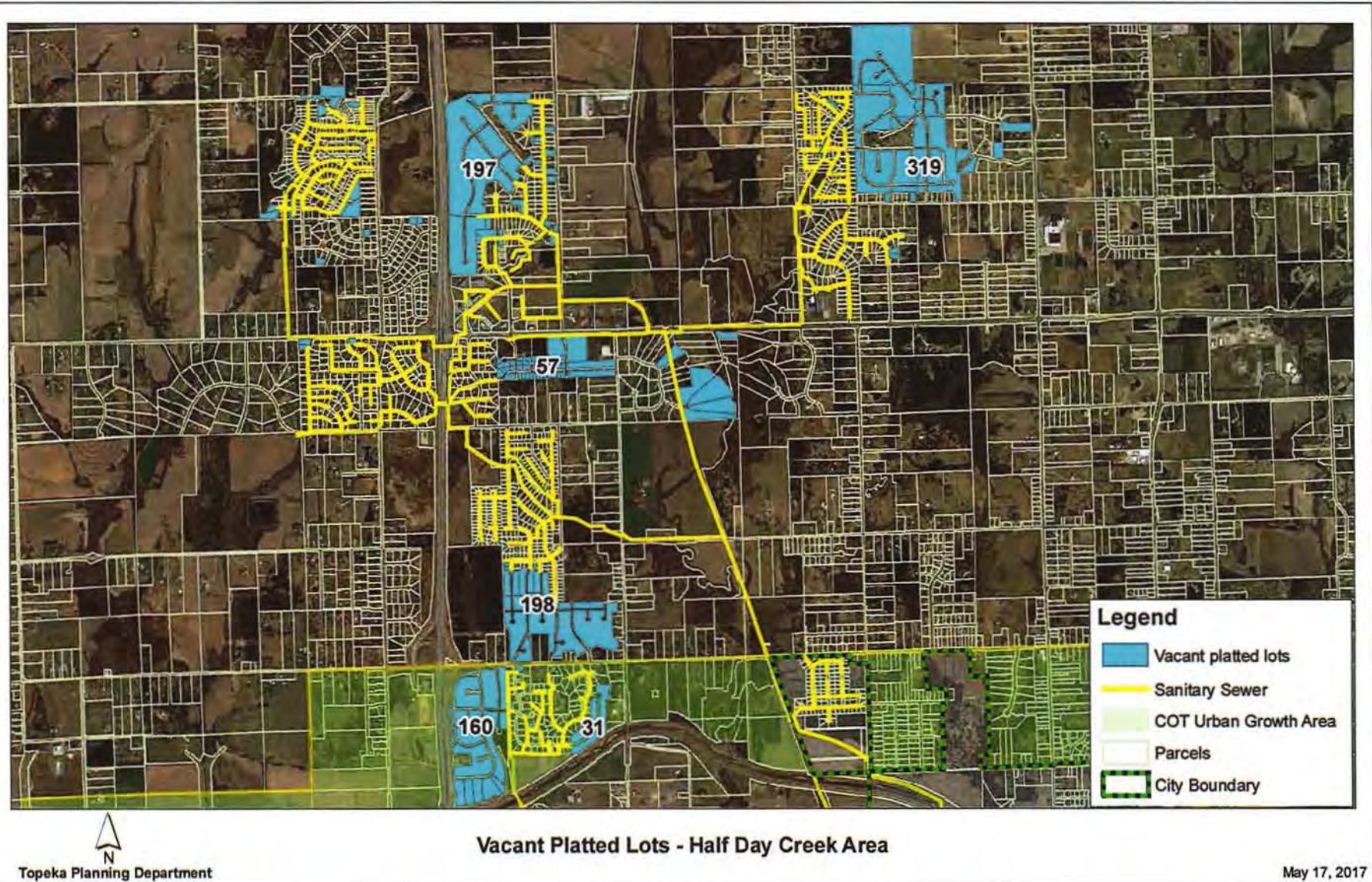


Figure 3.32: Vacant Platted Lots



However, Shawnee County invested \$2.1 million to build the Half Day Creek Sewer Interceptor Line in 1993, or about \$3.5 million in today's dollars. This allows denser development to the north, following then-current development patterns. To recover its investment, the county charges property owners a sewer connection fees fee of \$4,078.90 per acre as development occurs and looks for enhanced property values. Like road construction, this means that as density increases, the cost per unit decreases: a 5-acre lot costs \$20,394.50 to connect whereas a ½ acre lot would cost \$2,039.45. Where the land along the line not connected, county tax payers would be required to subsidize the difference.

The City of Topeka has adopted a Land Use and Growth Management Plan that discourages some development in the ETJ to support infill and redevelopment in Topeka. Topeka staff are therefore reluctant to allow new subdivisions to connect to their sanitary sewer system directly or to sewer systems that feed into their treatment facilities. The City of Topeka have has grandfathered existing approved subdivisions to connect. At present, there are approximately 1,000 platted but yet undeveloped lots in the ETJ and UGA. However, this policy can make it difficult for the county to recoup its investment on the Half Day Creek Sewer Inceptor which is still underutilized.

## Coordinating Infrastructure

In addition to lower densities created by the frequent use of the plat exemption process over several decades, the process also makes it difficult for advance consideration of the cumulative impacts of scattered development on the provision of public services, including how to plan for and efficiently deliver those services. This is because service delivery issues are not discovered until the building permit stage or later, and it does not encourage development in places with infrastructure, nor does it provide for the extension of infrastructure where it does not exist. Continued use of the plat exemption process is problematic because infrastructure construction, maintenance, and replacement costs are significant and low density linear development raises those costs.

One option is to designate "county growth areas" where land use and infrastructure can be planned together in advance. This allows more strategic and efficient use of public funds and infrastructure. In the process, the County should consider the construction, maintenance, and expansion costs of infrastructure. In addition, planning should guide development to areas with underutilized infrastructure and act as a starting point to coordinate with municipalities, rural water districts, and other taxing jurisdictions. This allows quality, seamless, and unified service while reducing additional and redundant costs for public and semi-public improvements and development.

For example, controlling access to arterials provides better service and safety to the roadway by reducing sporadic turning activity. As a result, joint access points should be determined prior to development in an area. Coordination also reduces costs by sharing common work, such as utilities trenches, and ensures that water, wastewater, water retention, water drainage, and proper rights-of-way and easements are accessible and complete at a proper timing and location.

## Promoting Development with Infrastructure

Although transportation and infrastructure improvements typically follow development, planning for improvements can encourage and guide development. Planning for infrastructure provides certainty and assurance that the county is actively interested in its growth, development, and quality of life. Level of Service standards may be necessary to ensure that infrastructure extensions are purposeful and that emergency service providers, school districts, and other services can adequately serve an area. In effect, planning for infrastructure improvements can boost the economy, provide a strategy for industrial, commercial, and residential growth, and ensure a high quality of service provision.

In addition, investments to infrastructure supporting a high quality of life bolster development. Promoting pedestrian and bicycle-friendly infrastructure can allow more active forms of transportation and provide a desirable recreational amenity. This includes new trails and sidewalks that extend to existing activity centers. For example, it would allow children to walk to schools in a safe manner. These also support actions the county has taken to encourage the development of Complete Streets. High levels of telecommunications services, including both high speed internet and mobile phone service, are integral to the new economy. Ensuring adequate levels of service will help attract and retain businesses and residents to the county, even if they will never reach the levels seen in urban areas.



## Great Roadways in Shawnee County

The American Planning Association has developed a list of the characteristics of Great Streets. The "Twelve Characteristics of Great Streets" is an excellent guide for Shawnee County, the twelve townships, and the Kansas Department of Transportation to consider during project development for projects in unincorporated Shawnee County.

There are several factors that should be considered in designing Great Streets in unincorporated Shawnee County. These include considering design elements that can either enhance or detract from the roadway.

Streetscape features, such as street lights, trees and landscaping, and street furniture can contribute to the unique character of key corridors. Additionally, streetscapes calm traffic and encourage bicycle and pedestrian traffic by creating safe spaces. Enhancements to the streetscape such as special paving treatments and street furnishings can contribute to the experience for pedestrians and help define neighborhood character. Well-designed streetscapes can support activities, though streetscape elements are not appropriate for every public roadway in unincorporated areas. Areas where they are most appropriate include:

- Suburban locations near the City of Topeka.
- Locations near schools and parks
- Major intersections
- Community gateways, including both the five incorporated cities and the many unincorporated towns.

Another feature important to Shawnee County **are is** Complete Streets, already adopted by the county. Over time, this policy will make the county safer and more enjoyable by all roadway users, particularly pedestrians and cyclists. Specific routes recommended for complete streets:

- K-4 Highway from I-70 to Dover
- US-40 Highway from K-4 Highway to Douglas County
- SE 45th Street from East Edge Road to Douglas County.
- Routes from the Topeka Bikeways Master Plan

Other routes, particularly those near schools and parks should be considered as well to develop Safe Routes to Schools and Safe Routes to Parks.

Finally, it is possible to plant native grasses and wildflowers in rural locations that require substantially less maintenance such as mowing. In exurban locations, open drainage ditches may be used. In suburban locations, neighborhood amenities can be required such as street trees and decorative landscaping at key intersections.

## 12 Characteristics of Great Streets

1. Provides orientation to its users, and connects well to the larger pattern of ways.
2. Balances the competing needs of the street — driving, transit, walking, cycling, servicing, parking, drop-offs, etc.
3. Fits the topography and capitalizes on natural features.
4. Is lined with a variety of interesting activities and uses that create a varied streetscape.
5. Has urban design or architectural features that are exemplary in design.
6. Relates well to its bordering uses — allows for continuous activity, doesn't displace pedestrians to provide access to bordering uses.
7. Encourages human contact and social activities.
8. Employs hardscape and/or landscape to great effect.
9. Promotes safety of pedestrians and vehicles and promotes use over the 24-hour day.
10. Promotes sustainability through minimizing runoff, reusing water, ensuring groundwater quality, minimizing heat islands, and responding to climatic demands.
11. Is well maintained, and capable of being maintained without excessive costs.
12. Has a memorable character.

List courtesy of the American Planning Association



## Goals and Recommendations

Taken together, the costs of expanding infrastructure, the coordination of infrastructure, and the use of infrastructure to guide and promote development have all led to support transportation and infrastructure goals and recommendations.

### TI-1: Prioritize the maintenance of existing infrastructure.

1. Ensure that all facilities owned or managed by the county have at the minimum adequate maintenance to prevent the deterioration of services. Ideally, the county should be a leader in the maintenance and management of its properties.
2. Prevent the overutilization of infrastructure that is used for purposes other than was intended when they were created (moving from a farm-to-table road to a local residential commuter road). This will prevent unforeseen wear and tear on properties.

### TI-2: Ensure fiscally responsible administration of infrastructure investments.

1. Consider the lifecycle costs to the public of infrastructure such as its initial construction, maintenance and replacement costs. Plan and review developments accordingly and regularly budget for major maintenance and replacement costs.
2. Utilize existing infrastructure to its full potential. This includes filling in spotty and partially developed areas, hooking new development into existing infrastructure to reduce the burden on taxpayers, and generally focusing development to available infrastructure with adequate capacity. Special attention should be paid to areas with existing underutilized infrastructure.
3. Grow incrementally based on ability to provide infrastructure and in places where infrastructure is already expanded, promote development; do not construct new infrastructure to service leapfrog development.
4. Plan and coordinate transportation facilities, infrastructure improvements, and development with municipalities to provide seamless and unified service. This includes working with other taxing jurisdictions to identify locations where development will likely happen and how to most efficiently provide them service. Ensure that other decision-making bodies are also planning and considering their direct and indirect impacts.
5. Consider adopting a full Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), approved by Planning Commission, to address issues of certainty when developers are trying to coordinate service providers.

### TI-3: Improve mobility and access throughout the county for all modes of transportation.

1. Follow the recommendations of the Topeka Regional Transportation Plan.
2. Promote the development of an active transportation system of trails and sidewalks to improve the mobility of groups that do not drive, including children and the elderly, to improve safety, and to provide desirable amenities for residents.
3. Consider the role of transit in unincorporated Shawnee County, both within the county and to surrounding communities.
4. ~~A new interchange has been discussed in the county near Auburn on I 335 (i.e., the Kansas Turnpike). However, Auburn Road must be upgraded to handle the traffic first for this project to advance, and the exit must generate new traffic per KTA's policy. The cost of constructing the interchange is likely to exceed \$15 million in 2017 dollars. The cost of reconstructing Auburn Road is likely to be \$1 million per lane per mile. These costs make an additional interchange in this area seem unlikely through at least 2031 when the county half cent sales tax will be reconsidered.~~

TI-4: Coordinate planning and service provision.

1. Require land development to have adequately provided infrastructure.
2. Coordinate with other taxing jurisdictions to encourage the fullest use of existing transportation infrastructure.
3. Ensure cooperation between cities and Shawnee County to support planned infrastructure improvements long term. This would prevent frictions between jurisdictions, create certainty for developers, and prevent the underutilization of infrastructure.
4. Encourage the MPTO to expand its boundaries to again include all of Shawnee County to improve the planning and coordination of transportation investments.
5. Consider creating development service tiers in the county to address issues of certainty for developers and to allow residents to have realistic expectations of service provision.

TI-5: Use infrastructure investments to enhance the quality of life, develop the economy, and increase safety.

1. Infrastructure is essential for businesses. Look at ways to support business development through infrastructure investment, including telecommunications infrastructure.
2. Work with Shawnee County Parks and Recreation to develop a county-wide system of trails that connects into regional trail systems including the Flint Hills Nature Trail. This provides both mobility and recreational benefits.
3. Increase safety by exploring new ways to help law enforcement effectively patrol the county.
4. Develop a roadway system that can help reduce accidents on the roads for motorists, including turn lanes on highly traveled roadways.
5. Consider transportation, utility and public service requirements in any future updates to Shawnee County's development regulations (i.e., zoning and subdivision)



## CHAPTER FOUR

# Land Use and Design

Land use is typically the central element of a comprehensive plan because it establishes the overall physical configuration of the county - the mix and location of uses and the nature of community system that support them. **Because** The land use plan is a statement of policy, public and private decision makers depend on it to guide individual actions such as land purchases, project design, and the review and approval process. This chapter reviews existing patterns of development, potential market needs, and the regulations that guide them, including the Future Land Use map.



## INTRODUCTION

As this is the first comprehensive plan developed for the unincorporated area of Shawnee County, great thought and care has been given to land use and land development issues that have emerged in the unincorporated areas in the county over the last several decades.

There are five incorporated cities in Shawnee County. These are Auburn, Rossville, Silver Lake, Topeka and Willard. Shawnee County is very interested in working cooperatively with all five cities as they pursue their own future land use and land development goals. Shawnee County recognizes that for the county to be successful, each of its cities **need needs** to be successful too.

### Topeka

The City of Topeka adopted the Land Use and Growth Management Plan (LUGMP) in 2015, resulting in significant changes in policy direction. The overall priority of the LUGMP is to direct future urban growth to existing areas within Topeka, either through infill development, redevelopment, or rehabilitation. Land within the Topeka UGA is encouraged, through 2040, to be annexed into Topeka when ready for urban development. Established by State law, Topeka has land division authority over the 3-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) which includes the UGA.

Topeka has extended water and sewer infrastructure beyond the city limits into the ETJ/UGA. As such, there are annexation rules regarding connecting to city water and sewer service. Within the UGA, annexation is required to connect to city water and sewer service. Outside the UGA, but within the ETJ, annexation is required for water service, and only consent to annexation is required for sewer service.

In addition, the existing 2040 LUGMP policy promotes a 20-acre minimum lot size for rural development within the Topeka UGA.

### Auburn, Rossville, Silver Lake and Willard

Auburn, Rossville, Silver Lake and Willard all require annexation as a condition of extension of city-owned utilities outside of their current city limits. The one exception is that Auburn provides natural gas distribution services to an area much larger than their city limits. None of these cities have chosen to exercise an Extraterritorial Jurisdiction outside their city limits. Shawnee County has executed an interlocal agreement with the City of Silver Lake to assist that city with their land use planning and development regulation (i.e., zoning/subdivision) issues. Currently, none of these cities have a comprehensive plan.



*Small Town Neighborhoods - Silver Lake*



*Small Town Businesses - Rossville*

## PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS

Survey participants completed a "report card" questionnaire in which they were asked to rank various land use and design issues and opportunities on a one-to-five scale, with five representing "excellent" and one representing "poor." Additional general questions about Shawnee County government were also asked. Attributes with average scores of 3.0 or above are perceived strengths and those with scores below 2.5 represent areas of perceived weaknesses. These results were then explored further through stakeholder meetings. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 highlight important strengths and weaknesses regarding land use and design.

The only strength in this section was the overall quality of life in Shawnee County. This mirrors and summarizes public perceptions seen earlier including positive attitudes towards the county's strong service provision. The public was less enthusiastic about the quality of development in the county, though it was not viewed negatively. Topics viewed negatively include the effectiveness of the zoning code and efficient use of tax revenues. Efficient use of tax revenues strengthens the idea of fiscal responsibility for infrastructure explored in the last chapter. The effectiveness of the zoning and subdivision code is explored throughout this chapter.

In addition to the public survey, five focus group meetings and four public meetings have been held.

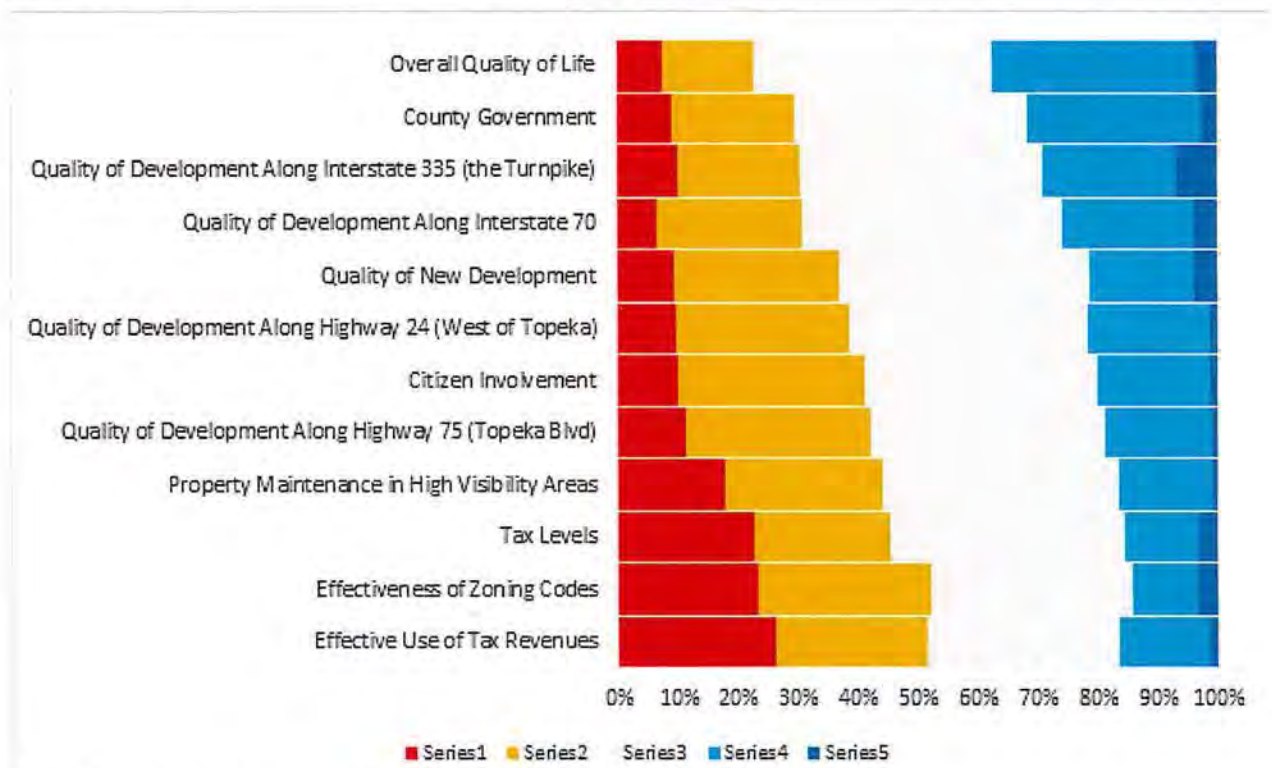


**FIGURE 4.1:** Questionnaire Responses: Land Use (1 being Poor and 5 being Excellent)

SURVEY RESPONSE RATINGS	AVERAGE RATING
Overall Quality of Life	3.11
County Government	2.96
Quality of Development Along Interstate 335 (the Turnpike)	2.95
Quality of Development Along Interstate 70	2.92
Quality of New Development	2.79
Quality of Development Along Highway 24 (West of Topeka)	2.75
Citizen Involvement	2.70
Quality of Development Along Highway 75 (Topeka Blvd)	2.66
Property Maintenance in High Visibility Areas	2.55
Tax Levels	2.51
Effectiveness of Zoning Codes	2.42
Effective Use of Tax Revenues	2.40

Source: RDG Community Questionnaire

**Figure 4.2:** Land Use and Design (1 being poor and 5 being excellent)



Source: RDG Community Questionnaire

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Concepts: Urban to Rural Transect

The intensity of land use varies widely throughout Shawnee County. A transect is a cut through the land that shows the range of different types of development. Figure 4.3 depicts a conceptual rural to urban transect to help visualize unincorporated Shawnee County. Each can be described in terms of how land is used, the available public services, the typical size of lots and tracts, and the pattern of development. Examples of rural, exurban and suburban areas in unincorporated Shawnee County are depicted as follows:



Rural Area - SE 85th Street

**Rural:** Primarily natural landscapes and lands actively used for agricultural production. Homes are usually occupied by farmers and ranchers. Businesses usually support the agricultural industry or the rural population. Unique unincorporated towns also exist that enrich rural lifestyles. There are far fewer public services available and those that are provided are usually at lower service levels due to the



Rural Area - K-4 Highway

low population density. Wastewater is almost always treated by privately owned septic systems. High speed internet and mobile phone coverage may be limited or non-existent. Most parcels are large enough to support agricultural operations. Land division is rare. There may be many “legacy farms” owned by one family for multiple generations.

Figure 4.3: Rural to Urban Transect







*Exurban Area - Tecumseh Township*



*Suburban Area - Sterling Chase Subdivision*



*Urban Area - SW College Avenue in Topeka*

**Exurban:** Located outside of cities, these are transitioning rural areas near a city. Homes are typically built piecemeal along existing roads and agricultural operations often continue to the rear of the residential lots, creating a high potential for conflict. Roads may be paved or unpaved but are still used for agricultural operations; some emerge as commuter corridors. Water may be from private wells or from rural service providers, but usually at pressures too low for fire suppression. Wastewater disposal is typically provided by privately owned septic systems, which can be expensive when they fail. High speed internet and mobile phone coverage may be limited. Residential lot sizes are typically 3-5 acres to allow for septic fields, but if these lots are not maintained, it can result in noxious weeds and red cedar trees that interfere with agriculture. Most of these parcels are created by plat exemptions with no formal review by local officials until the building permit stage. Exurban development that occurs too close to a city can limit future growth opportunities.

**Suburban.** May be located either inside or outside cities. If outside but close to a city, annexation may be required as a condition of development or an agreement to consent to future annexation as a condition of connecting to urban services may be required. While most residential lots front along streets constructed specifically for the subdivision, the streets can either be relatively long cul-de-sacs or part of a curvilinear network. Agricultural operations may occur near the subdivision, but few lots will back onto the farm or ranch. Lot sizes may range from less than 1/4 acre to several acres. Most public services are readily available and connection may be required. Most land divisions are through a formal subdivision and platting process that are approved by elected officials after review by both professional staff and appointed planning commissioners.

**Urban:** Nearly always located in cities. The pattern of development is characterized by an interconnected rectilinear street grid that maximizes travel route options and travel mode (i.e., walking, biking, transit, driving) options while minimizing travel distances between destinations. Virtually all residential lots are smaller than 1-acre. All desired public services are provided though some areas may have better service levels. Land divisions are through a formal subdivision and platting process and approved by elected officials after review by professional staff and appointed planning commissioners.



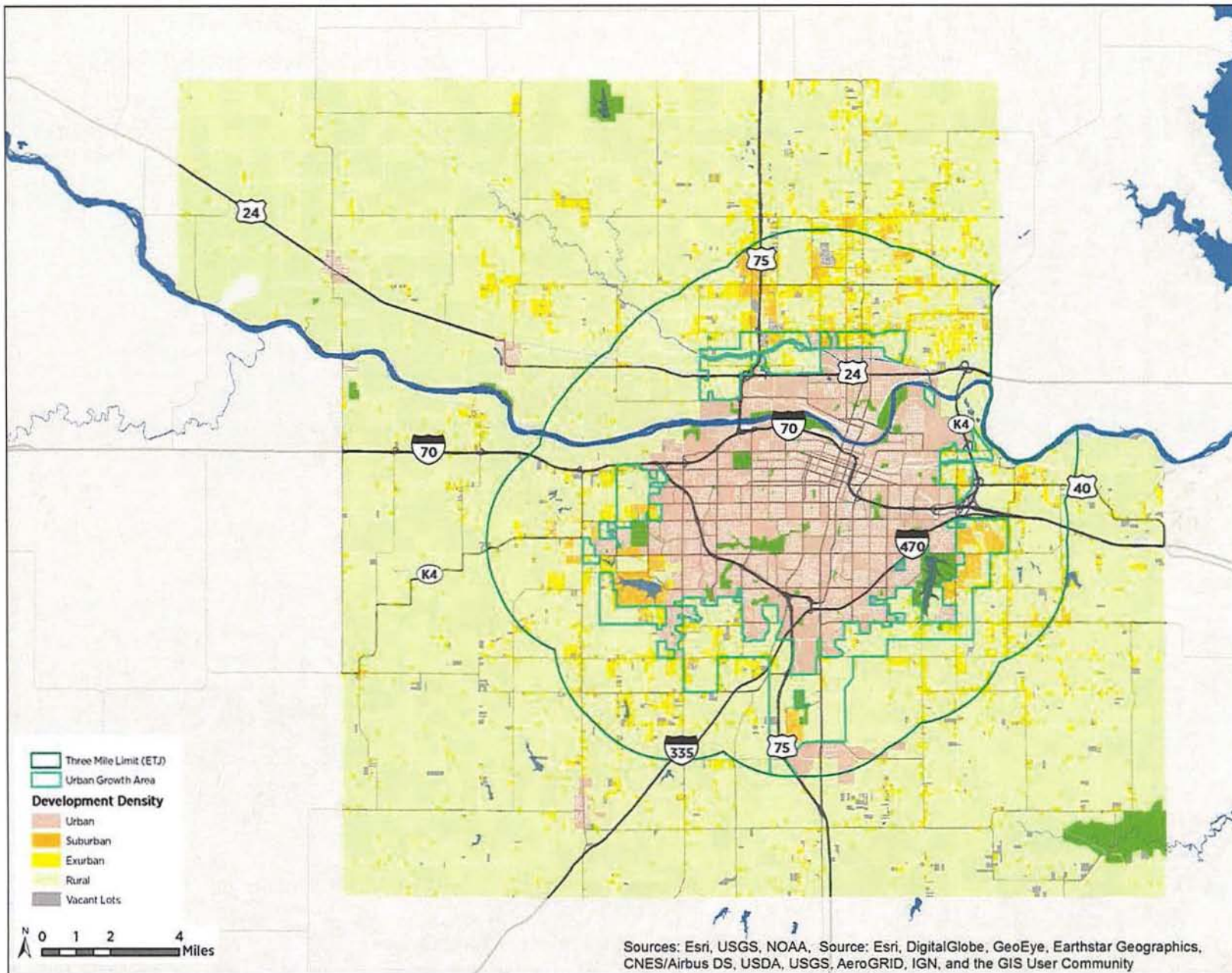


FIGURE 4.4: Development Densities

Source: Shawnee County Parcel Data



## Development Pattern

Homes are built on individual 3-acre un-platted tracts at scattered locations throughout unincorporated Shawnee County. There are also platted subdivisions at somewhat higher densities, but these are scattered and typically lack neighborhood amenities. Figure 4.4 depicts this pattern of development throughout the county which is predominantly along county roads. Providing public services is more expensive when densities are low or very-low and when developments are not contiguous.

## Current Land Use

The change in the distribution of land uses in Shawnee County over time tells an interesting story. Though the county is still largely agricultural, it contains many residential uses in an exurban setting. Overall, the county encompasses 556 square miles or nearly 356,000 acres. Auburn, Rossville, Silver Lake, Topeka and Willard together comprise 41,000 acres or about 64 square miles in the county.

As indicated in Figure 4.5, unincorporated Shawnee County is divided into various land uses as follows:

- Agricultural: 231,467 acres or 361 square miles
- Residential: 42,753 acres or 67 square miles
- Commercial: 726 acres or about 1 square mile
- Industrial: 2,560 acres or 4 square miles
- Civic/Parks/ROW: 29,185 acres or 46 square miles
- Vacant: 7,710 acres or 12 square miles

Topeka has a population of 127,704. The four small cities together have a population of 3,909. Unincorporated Shawnee County has a population of 46,552. Thus, the cities have almost three times as many people living in about the same amount of space as is being consumed by residents of the unincorporated area. The unincorporated area of Shawnee County would be the 11th largest city in Kansas, if it were a city. This is an inefficient use of valuable land resources in the unincorporated area, and makes the provision of public services much more

expensive. It is worth noting that the City of Salina is the 10th largest city in Kansas and has a population of 47,707. Thus, the unincorporated area of Shawnee County would be the 11th largest city in Kansas if it was a city.

## AGRICULTURE

As would be expected, agriculture is the dominant land use in unincorporated Shawnee County, by total land area. Agricultural uses comprise 231,467 acres or 80 percent of developed land in the unincorporated

area. Within the county, agricultural uses dominate areas to the west and northwest. Areas closer to Topeka are more likely to have additional land uses interspersed with the agricultural parcels, primarily single family homes. In economic terms, Shawnee County has 826 farms and ranches with an average size of 235 acres. The market value of crops and livestock sold in 2016 was \$50,257,000 with 83% of the total representing crops sold and 17% representing livestock. These figures demonstrate that the agricultural industry remains very important for the continued economic health of Shawnee County.

**FIGURE 4.5: Land Uses in Unincorporated Shawnee County, 2016**

	NUMBER OF PARCELS	ACREAGE	% DEVELOPED LAND BY ACREAGE
Agriculture	4,591	231,467	79.7%
Parks and Rec	90	5,363	1.8%
Single Family Residential	15,264	41,772	14.4%
Medium Density Residential	875	185	0.1%
Multifamily Residential	10	60	0.0%
Manufactured Homes	132	736	0.3%
Office Commercial	24	302	0.1%
Service Commercial	32	80	0.0%
General Commercial	45	344	0.1%
Civic	259	7,559	2.6%
Warehousing/Light Industrial	111	1,039	0.4%
General Industrial	37	1,521	0.5%
Developed Land (Uninc.)	21,470	290,428	100.0%
Developed Land (Uninc.)	21,470	290,428	81.7%
Vacant	1,687	7,710	2.2%
ROW		16,263	4.6%
Cities		41,240	11.6%
Total		355,641	100.0%

Source: Shawnee County Parcel Data



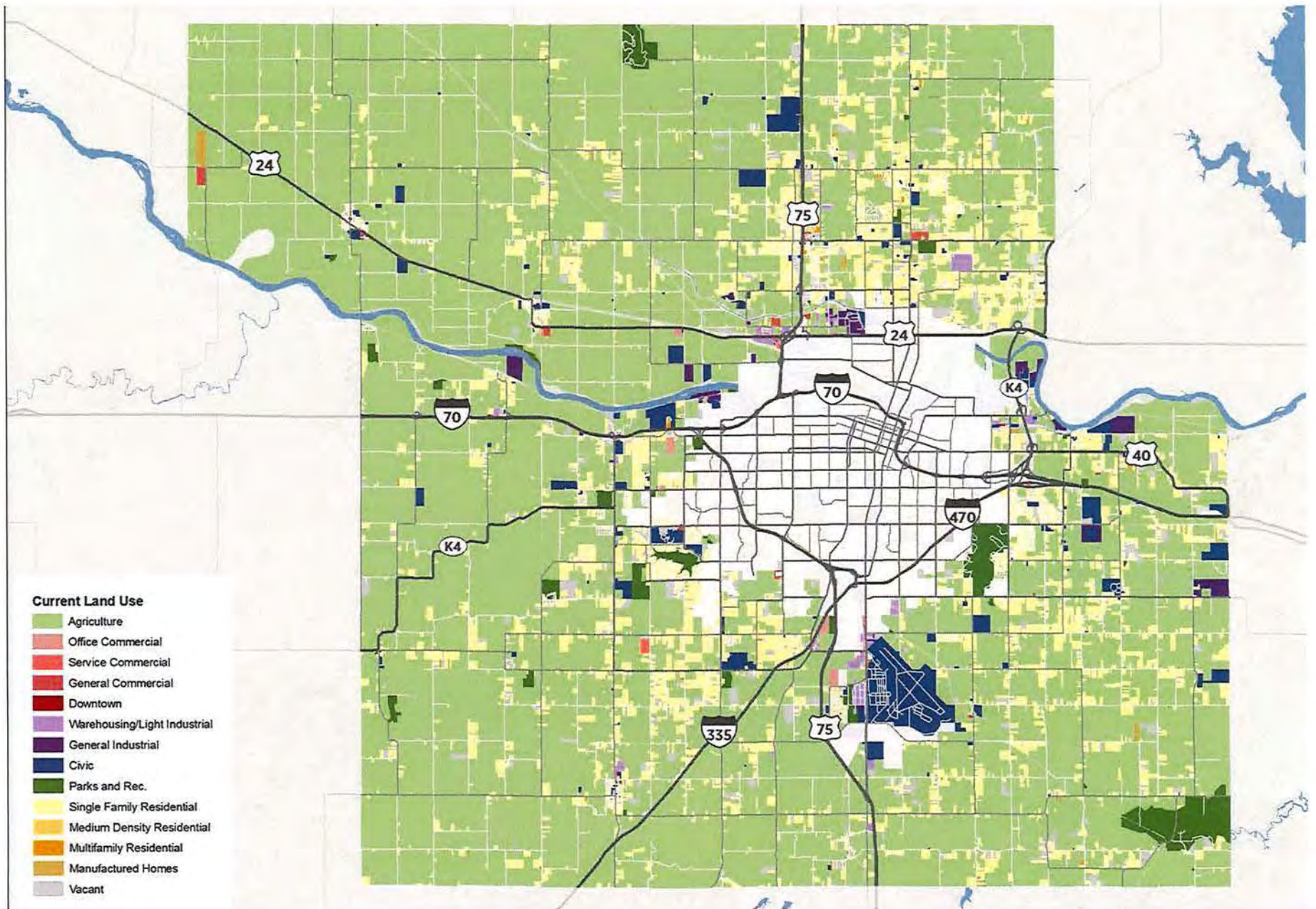


FIGURE 4.6: Current Land Use

Source: Shawnee County Parcel Data



## RESIDENTIAL

Residential development is the second largest land use in terms of land area in the unincorporated area. Comprising more than 42,000 acres, residential properties make up nearly 15 percent of the county's developed planning jurisdiction; this is not typical for a county of this size. About 98 percent of residential areas are single family homes. The remaining 2 percent is medium density residential, multifamily, and manufactured homes. The average size of single family residential parcels in the unincorporated area is 2.7 acres, with most residential development to the northeast (Soldier), east (Tecumseh), and west (Mission) of Topeka. These areas are typically exurban in character, adjacent to Topeka but not annexed.

There are approximately 16,300 residential parcels in the unincorporated area including both platted lots and un-platted tracts; this is not typical. Most residential parcels are in Soldier, Mission, and Tecumseh Townships. As indicated in Figure 4.7, more individual residential parcels were created during the 1960's and 1970's, but more platted subdivisions were created during the 1990's. More recently, the number of rural residential subdivisions and subdivided parcels has declined, even as the unincorporated portions of the county continue growing as a proportion of the county's population, indicating a shift away from planned subdivisions and toward plat exemptions.

Meanwhile, the almost 6,800 parcels that are un-platted are scattered throughout the County, primarily though not exclusively along section-line roads. As indicated in Figure 4.8, many unplatted tracts are larger than 3.0 acres with the median parcel being 3.08 acres, often due to the use of the plat exemption process. Meanwhile, more than half of platted lots are smaller than 0.5 acres.

Figure 4.7: Parcels and Plats by Year in Unincorporated Shawnee County

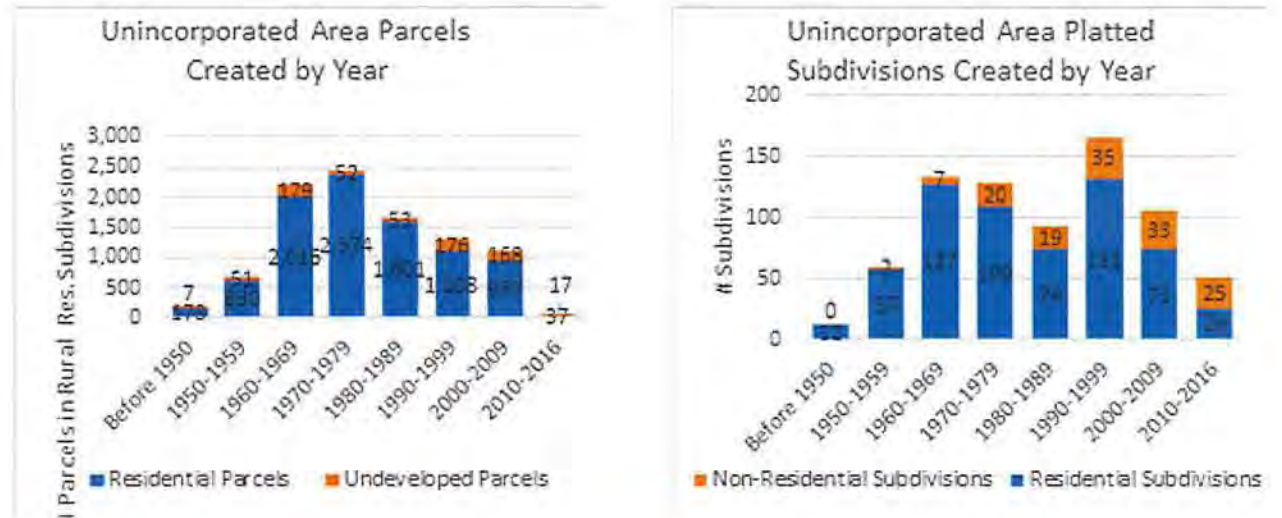


FIGURE 4.8: Land Uses in Unincorporated Shawnee County, 2016

	UNPLATTED TRACTS		PLATTED LOTS	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
<0.25 Acres	18	0.3%	1,610	16.9%
0.25-0.49 Acres	170	2.5%	3,462	36.4%
0.5-0.9 Acres	684	10.1%	2,669	28.1%
1.0-1.9 Acres	532	7.9%	793	8.3%
2.0-2.9 Acres	1,731	25.5%	313	3.3%
3.0-3.9 Acres	996	14.7%	391	4.1%
4.0-4.9 Acres	605	8.9%	116	1.2%
5.0-7.49 Acres	737	10.9%	80	0.8%
7.5-9.9 Acres	612	9.0%	29	0.3%
10.0+ Acres	692	10.2%	41	0.4%
Total	6,777	100.0%	9,504	100.0%

Source: Shawnee County Parcel Data





Medium Density Residential Units - NW Fielding Road

Residential land uses do not make a sustained contribution to the County's economy, but they place demands for public services such as police, fire, water, sewage disposal, and roads. As a result, the conversion of former farm and ranch land to residential land costs the taxpayers more to support than the taxes generated from the property. An issue of county wide concern is the loss of 30,000 acres of agricultural land since 1960. The provision of public services over time is more expensive to provide in exurban areas than in suburban and urban areas.

### CIVIC, RIGHT-OF-WAY, PARKS, AND RECREATION

Civic uses are those land uses that are owned by the local, state, or federal government, or by non-profit organizations like churches or private schools. In Shawnee County, these land uses comprise the next largest portion of the County with nearly 7,600 acres. A significant amount of land in the county is held in public or non-taxable ownership. The Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority, covering more than 2,450 acres is the largest single area of public land. Utility providers, including the multiple Rural Water Districts, also cover a significant portion of the county, as do healthcare-related uses, schools, and religious uses. Right-of-way also constitutes another nearly 16,300 acres.

Another common land use is parks and recreation, comprising another 5,400 acres. Much of the County's parkland is owned by the County Board of Commissioners (1,180 acres), including Lake Shawnee. However, the 598-acre State Fishing Lake, the US Corps of Engineers-owned Clinton Wildlife Area in Shawnee County (1,930 acres), and other semi-public recreational uses such as golf courses also make up significant amounts of the county's recreational amenities. Parks and recreation is further discussed in the natural resources section of the plan report.

### COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL

Figure 4.9 on page 91 depicts employment and retail centers. Most industrial uses in Shawnee County are located within incorporated areas or adjacent to the Interstate, US and State Highways, and railroads. Undeveloped land intended for future industrial use are not counted in the following numbers.

In total, light industrial/warehousing comprise 1,039 acres and general industrial land another 1,521 acres, which occur in three primary industrial areas:

1. **South:** anchored by Topeka Regional Airport and the Mars Plant
2. **North:** anchored by the Goodyear Plant north of Topeka.
3. **Northeast:** anchored by Phillip Billard Airport.

The northeast employment area is not as developed, despite the construction of the Oakland Expressway (K-4 Highway). Other than these areas, some industrial uses are also found adjacent to the river, including sand mining operations, and in the unincorporated town of Tecumseh where Westar Energy has its power plant and Futamura Chemicals has its cellophane plant.

Commercial areas cover only 726 acres in the County, including office, service, and general commercial uses. Most commercial land uses in the unincorporated area are retail uses. These are scattered throughout the county, though they are typically near incorporated cities and unincorporated towns, such as Dover. Office commercial comprises another major portion of the County's commercial land, mostly near Topeka. Other small commercial establishments are scattered across the County. One significant commercial development is located at US-75 and NW 46th Street.



Civic Uses - NW 46th Street



Commercial Uses - NW 46th Street



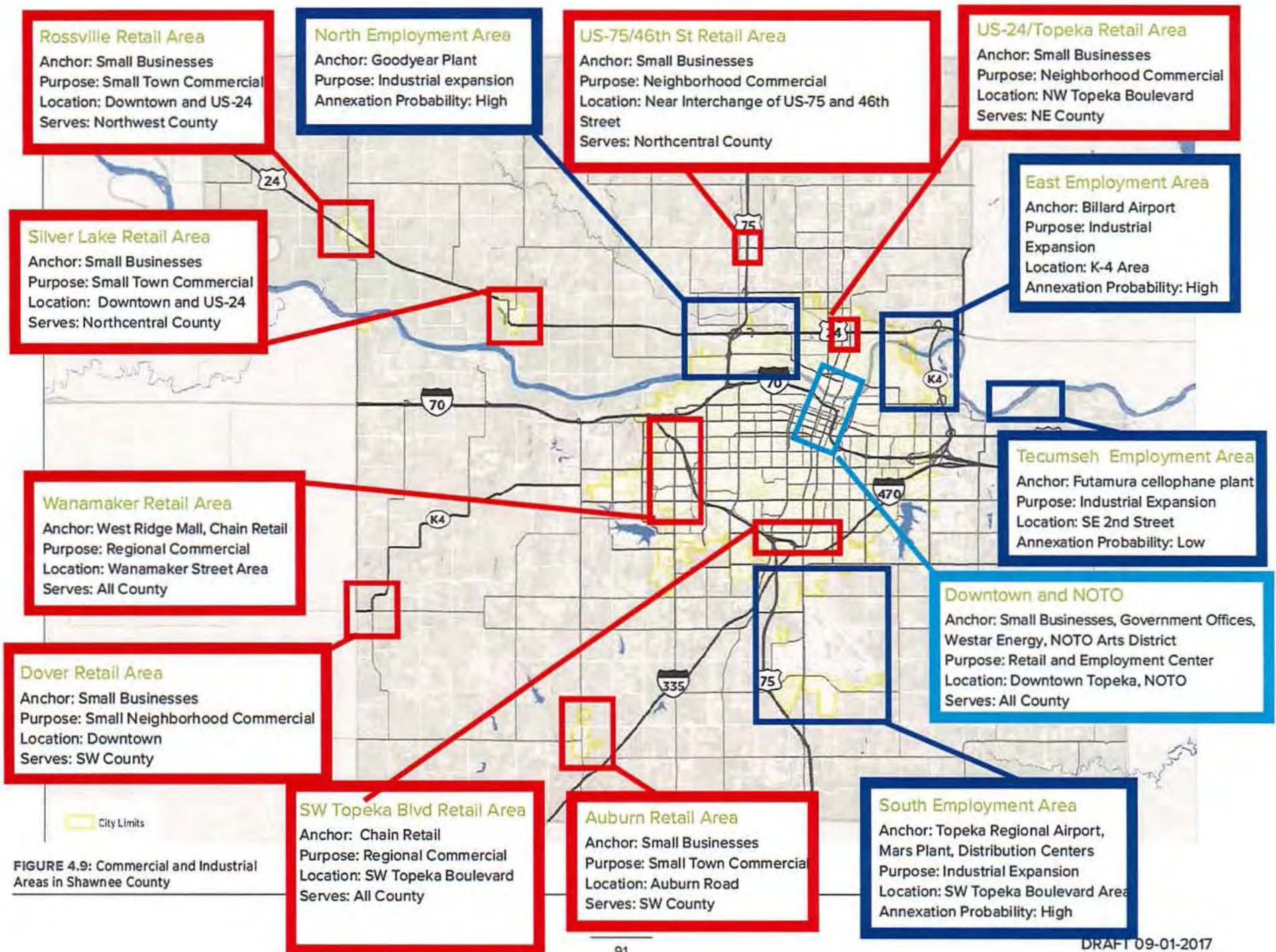


FIGURE 4.9: Commercial and Industrial Areas in Shawnee County



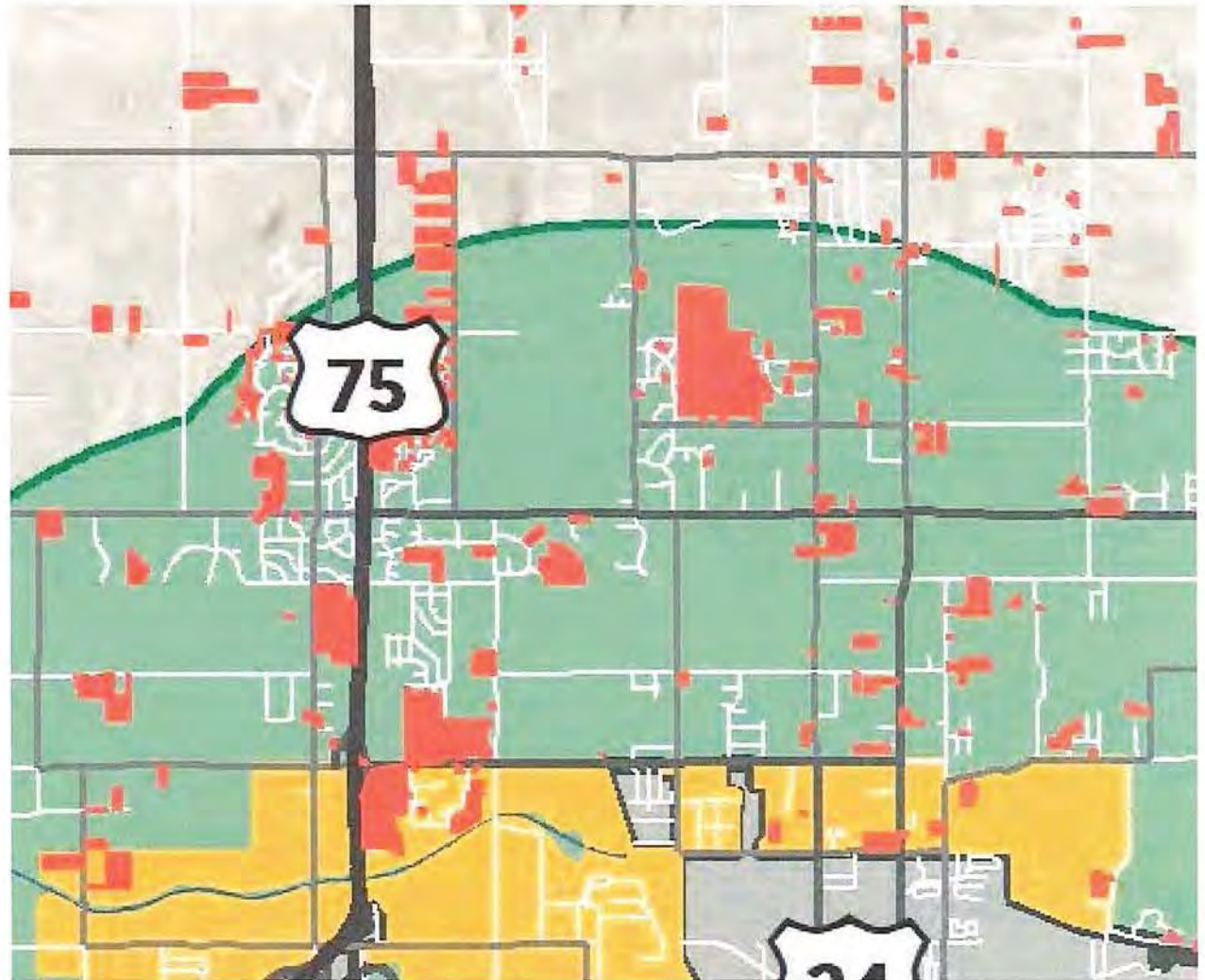
## VACANT RESIDENTIAL PARCELS

As depicted on Figure 4.11B on page 93, there are 2,228 parcels in the unincorporated area of Shawnee County that remain undeveloped. It is worth considering whether new residential parcels should be created before these existing parcels are developed. It is likely that some are not ready to be developed if the needed infrastructure is not currently in place. However, where public agencies have already made significant investments in infrastructure, it would be worth considering how to capture the value of that investment. A good example of existing but underutilized infrastructure is the Half Day Creek Sewer Interceptor line. Undeveloped land located in the Half Day Creek Sewer District should be encouraged to develop at suburban densities over time so Shawnee County can recover the substantial investment it made in 1993. However, it will be very important to work closely with the City of Topeka. A consent to future annexation should be required as a condition of subdivision or connection to utilities.

**FIGURE 4.10:** Vacant Residential Parcels in Unincorporated Shawnee County

	TOTAL PARCELS
UGA	479
ETJ	1,286
Non-ETJ	61
Total	2,228

Source: Shawnee County Parcel Data



**FIGURE 4.11A:** Vacant Lots: Half Day Creek Area



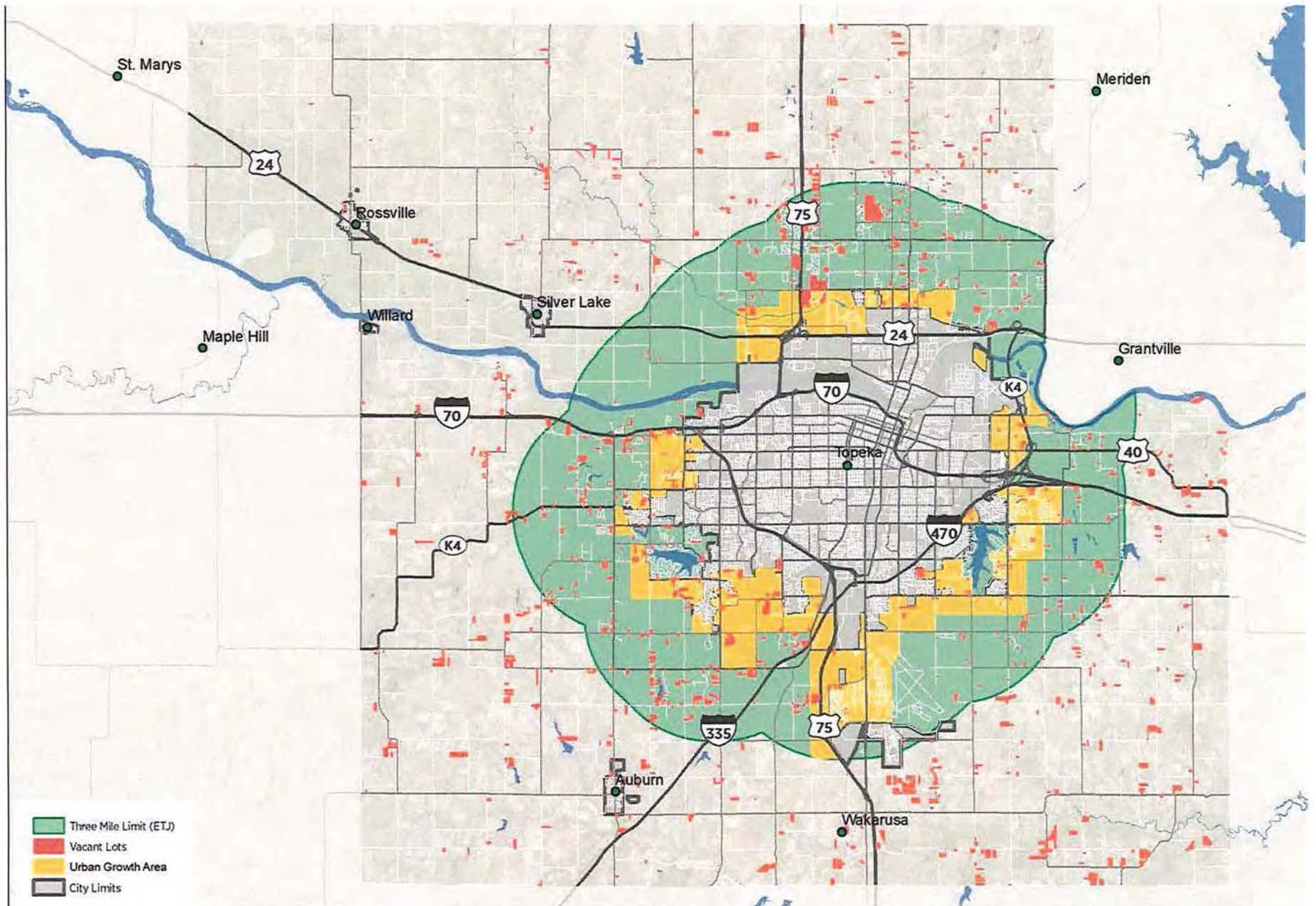


FIGURE 4.11B: Vacant Lots

Source: Shawnee County Parcel Data



## Land Use Policy

### TOPEKA LAND USE POLICY

Topeka is the only city in Shawnee County to exercise its state-authorized extraterritorial planning jurisdiction to date. This includes land division and plat approval authority within the 3-mile Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). It also includes authority to vacate existing plats. Historically, Topeka expanded outward, especially to the west and north, causing new areas of the county to feel development pressure. In March 2015, Topeka adopted its 2040 Land Use & Growth Management Plan (LUGMP). The LUGMP defines an Urban Growth Area (UGA) outside of the current city limits with "service tiers" that show areas where future growth is expected with its first tier being Topeka City limits. Topeka defines the balance of its ETJ as "non-urban growth area." Figure 4.12 depicts the current city limits, ETJ, and the service tier boundaries of the UGA.

The LUGMP directs development to where infrastructure and services are already located inside and near the city while de-emphasizing annexation. Topeka will extend city utilities and consider annexation in the defined UGA only when all 5 urban services are affordable to extend (i.e., police, fire, streets, sewer, water). Development within the Non-UGA Area shall consent to future annexation if connecting to Topeka water or sewer service either directly or indirectly through a rural service provider. The LUGMP does not support any future extensions of Topeka water or sewer outside the city without annexation, but does have variance criteria for any infill lots outside the city if the lines are already in place.

The LUGMP establishes that development in the UGA's service tiers 2 & 3 outside the current city limits are secondary to the primary growth area inside the city limits. The UGA represents the City's potential 25-year growth area and has specific subdivision standards to plan for eventual urban growth, including required access to all urban services (fire & police protection, urban streets, and city sewer and water) prior to consideration for new development. Tiers 1–3 are primarily residential neighborhood areas. The employment area is expected to develop for employment-related uses which are primarily industrial in nature.

### COUNTY SUBDIVISION AND PLAT POLICY

There are many platted subdivisions in unincorporated Shawnee County, most of which are inside Topeka's ETJ. Subdivision platting is the process of dividing or combining lots for an existing land parcel. A plat is an official, surveyed document that creates lots for residential, commercial or industrial developments. The purpose of the subdivision process is for Shawnee County outside the ETJ and Topeka inside the ETJ to determine that the plat document meets proper legal requirements to be recorded. The city and county also ensure that the plat complies with the appropriate zoning ordinance, meets lot and block standards, addresses traffic and environmental impacts, and that land is dedicated for road right-of-way and utilities. One of the major benefits of platted subdivisions is that local government agencies and other service providers can review land divisions before they occur and advise the property owners and developers about known issues. Formal subdivision and platting is the normal process for dividing land for development purposes. Nearly all non-agricultural land divisions should occur through the subdivision and platting process. for Non-Agricultural land use.

For decades, Shawnee County allowed plat exemptions for the division of land for parcels that are at least 3-acres with at least 200 feet of frontage on a public roadway. With plat exemptions, it is possible to divide as many as 90 parcels around a section's perimeter without any public review of the impact of development or resulting demand for services. Figure 4.13 shows the maximum extent of development along existing section-line roads. Because Topeka has increased the required frontage to 300-feet, inside the non-UGA portion of the ETJ, it will now only be possible to divide somewhere in the range of 66 to 90 parcels around the perimeter of a section of land in the future. Unanticipated consequences include:

1. Plat exemptions do not require utility easement dedication or rights-of-way dedication for future improvements.
2. Many public services, including roads, sidewalks, parks, fire and police protection cannot be supported at exurban density cannot be supported at this density.
3. Drainage issues are often not identified until the building permit stage.
4. Existing roads and bridges may not be suited for higher traffic volumes from residential development.
5. Perimeter development may limit access to the interior tract hindering current agricultural operations and future development.

Land divisions through plat exemptions are currently allowed inside the Topeka ETJ if they are outside the UGA. Within the UGA, there are stricter requirements, including a 20-acre minimum size to prevent development that may not be possible to annex in the future. Plat exemptions should be the "exception to the rule" and not the preferred method of land division.



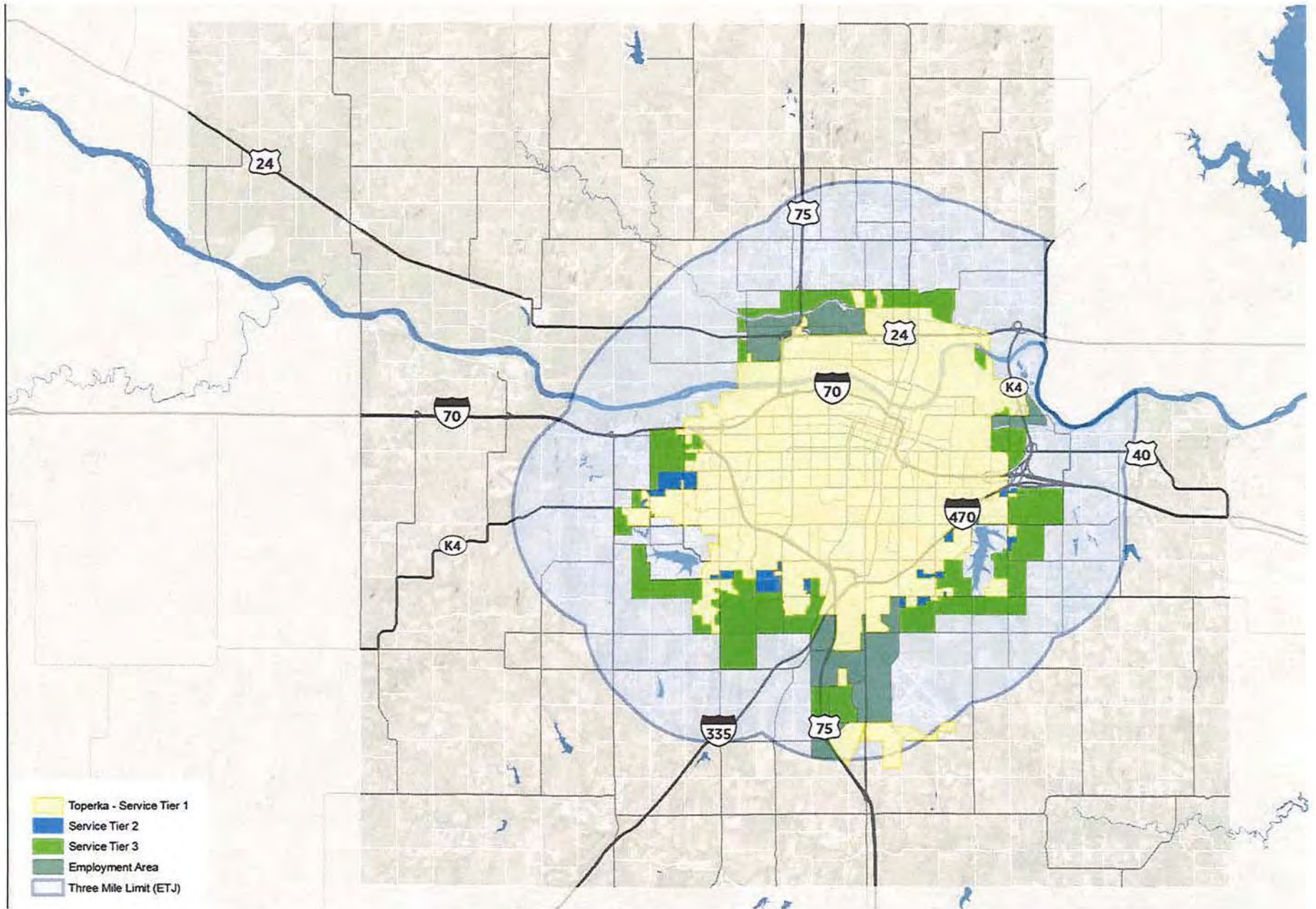


FIGURE 4.12: Topeka ETJ, UGA, and Service Tier Boundaries

Source: Shawnee County GIS Data

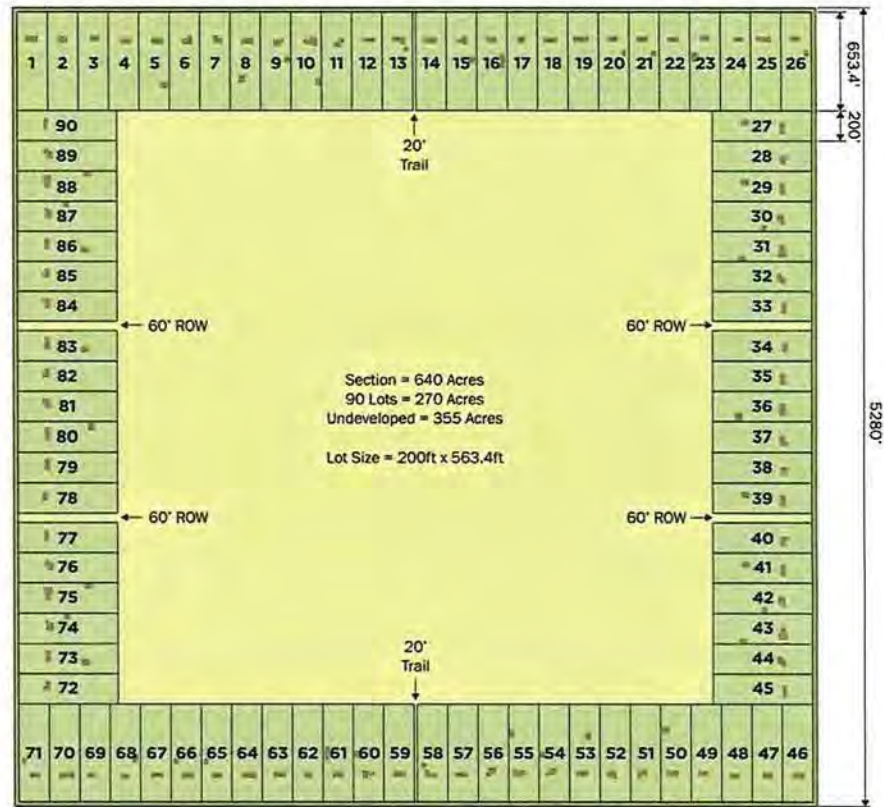


Figure 4.14 depicts 41 exurban lots and tracts along both sides of a 1-mile section of SE Berryton Rd between SE 53rd St and SE 61st St. Homes have been built along most public roads in Shawnee County with nearly 60% of all parcels in unincorporated Shawnee County 3-acres or smaller. While 90 homes have not been built around the perimeter of any single section of land in Shawnee County this is still allowable under current rules. Residential development at this density is best characterized as “exurban.”

There is some concern about the impact of regulations on private property rights. The county should take care to adopt regulations that implement the expressed desires of county residents. Nearly all feedback from public meetings has expressed a desire to keep the rural areas in Shawnee County rural, and to protect rural lifestyles while allowing continued rural residential growth. There are currently 1,897 vacant lots in the part of Shawnee County that is expected to remain unincorporated (outside of the UGA). There are 2.39 people per household on average throughout Shawnee County, meaning there are enough existing vacant residential lots and tracts to absorb more than 4,500 people without creating any new residential lots or tracts.

New residential lots and tracts created should occur in or near established communities, including the five cities and the nine unincorporated towns. New land divisions should only occur if adequate public services are already in place or will be constructed at the time of development.

Figure 4.13: Potential Exurban Area After Plat Exemptions



Source: RDG Planning & Design

Figure 4.14: Existing Exurban Tracts on SE Berryton Rd



Source: Google Maps



## FUTURE CONDITIONS

Shawnee County, including the five cities, is projected to grow by 14,600 people by 2040 and Topeka's LUGMP anticipates Topeka will grow by 11,000 people through infill development and redevelopment inside current city limits and through land annexations and new development in the UGA. If Topeka does grow by 11,000 people, the rest of Shawnee County will grow by 3,600 people, which could be housed in approximately 1,500 new homes. If unincorporated Shawnee County were to grow as it has in the past, there would be an additional 10,500 people or 4,400 new homes in the unincorporated area.

### GUIDELINES

All development should be expected to follow the principles for good development. **These are:**

1. Use public services efficiently.
2. Promote infill development.
3. Preserve open spaces & natural resource areas.
4. Promote diverse housing options.
5. Plan for public amenities such as parks & schools.
6. Provide multi-modal & connected transportation networks.
7. Enhance public safety and minimize risks from natural hazards.
8. Encourage balanced and connected neighborhoods.
9. Strategically use public investments to support private developments.
10. Make decisions in a transparent & collaborative manner.

Projected growth in Shawnee County could easily fit in Topeka and the ETJ with most in Topeka and the UGA. Based on the feedback received so far, there is strong support to keep the rural areas rural and direct future growth toward Topeka and the UGA. There is also support for suburban infill development in the exurban portion of the ETJ when public services can be provided at desired service levels.

Rossville, Silver Lake and Willard are surrounded almost entirely by floodplains and legacy farms. This reduces the likelihood of population growth as the result of new development inside or immediately adjacent to those three cities.

Auburn recently invested significantly in a sewage treatment plant expansion project making it possible for that city to grow. Due to Auburn's investment and the desire of many people to live in small towns, it might be reasonable to assume that Auburn could average a 1% annual growth rate. Such growth would provide for 100 additional homes to be built and 240 additional people by 2040.

There are nine unincorporated towns located in Shawnee County. Pauline and Montara are located inside the UGA. Shawnee County could encourage new development in the seven unincorporated towns outside the UGA: Berryton, Dover, Elmont, Kiro, Tecumseh, Wakarusa, and Watson. Perhaps an average of 10 homes could be built in each of the unincorporated towns, resulting in a growth of roughly 170 people in the unincorporated towns.

Because Shawnee County invested in the construction of the Half Day Creek Sewer Interceptor line in 1993 at the cost of \$2.1 million, there is an opportunity to reconsider how land will develop. This sewer interceptor line is located inside the Topeka ETJ but outside the UGA and is depicted on the map on Figure 4.15.

Figure 4.16 depicts a concept demonstrating how land potentially could be developed on the interior of sections of land in the Topeka ETJ. The concept was developed at the Design Workshops held during the plan development process and were discussed by members of the public that attended these public meetings. There was strong support for the concept at both Design Workshops. There are some clear advantages to using this approach to development. First, as discussed in the prior chapter on Transportation, Utilities and Public Facilities, the cost of providing public services is much lower at suburban densities. Second, much less agricultural land is consumed with few conflicts between incompatible land uses. Third, public review of issues associated with development occurs prior to land division through the plat approval process rather than waiting until the building permit stage. Fourth, the development of planned subdivisions allows for the consideration of desired neighborhood amenities and needed public improvements.



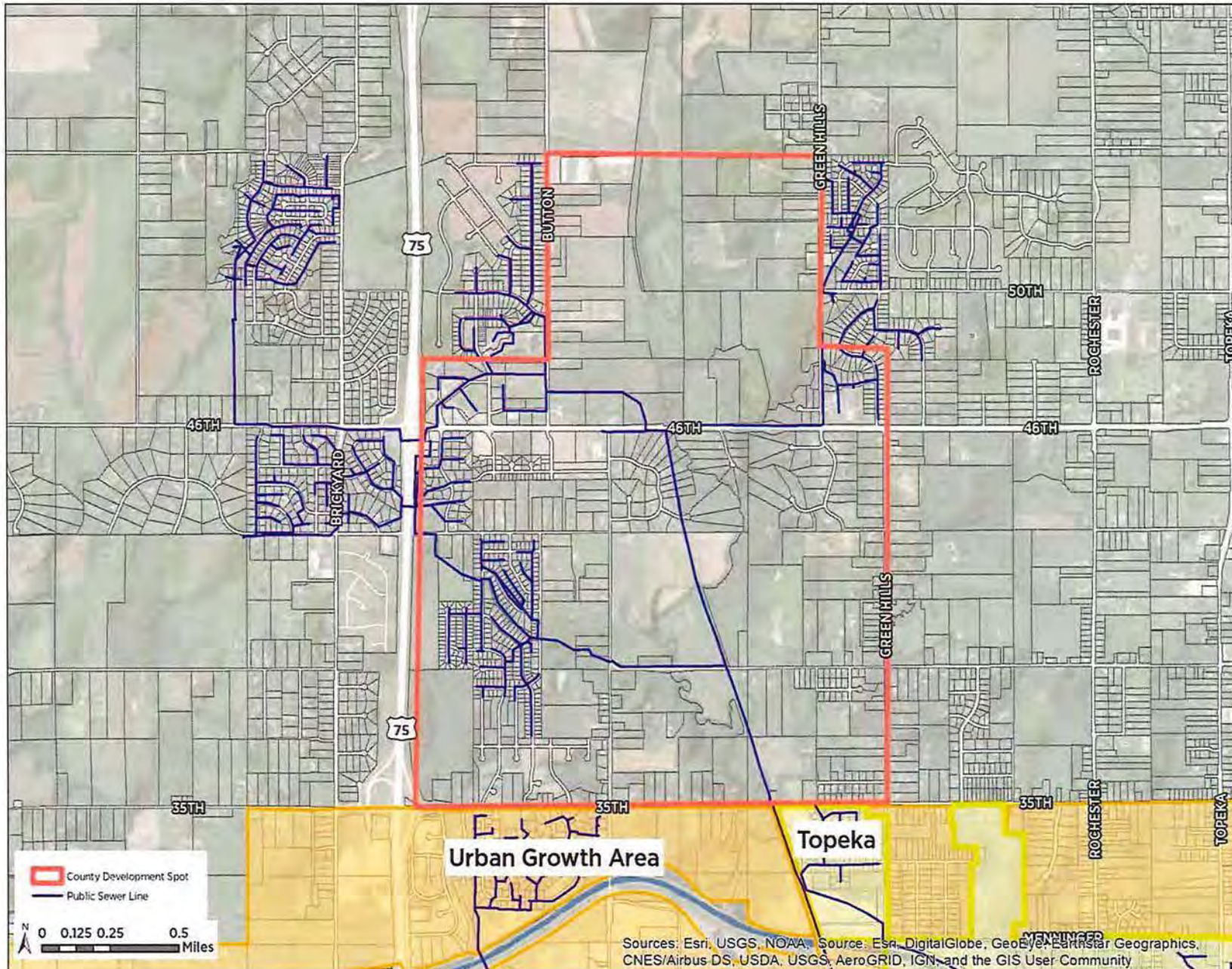
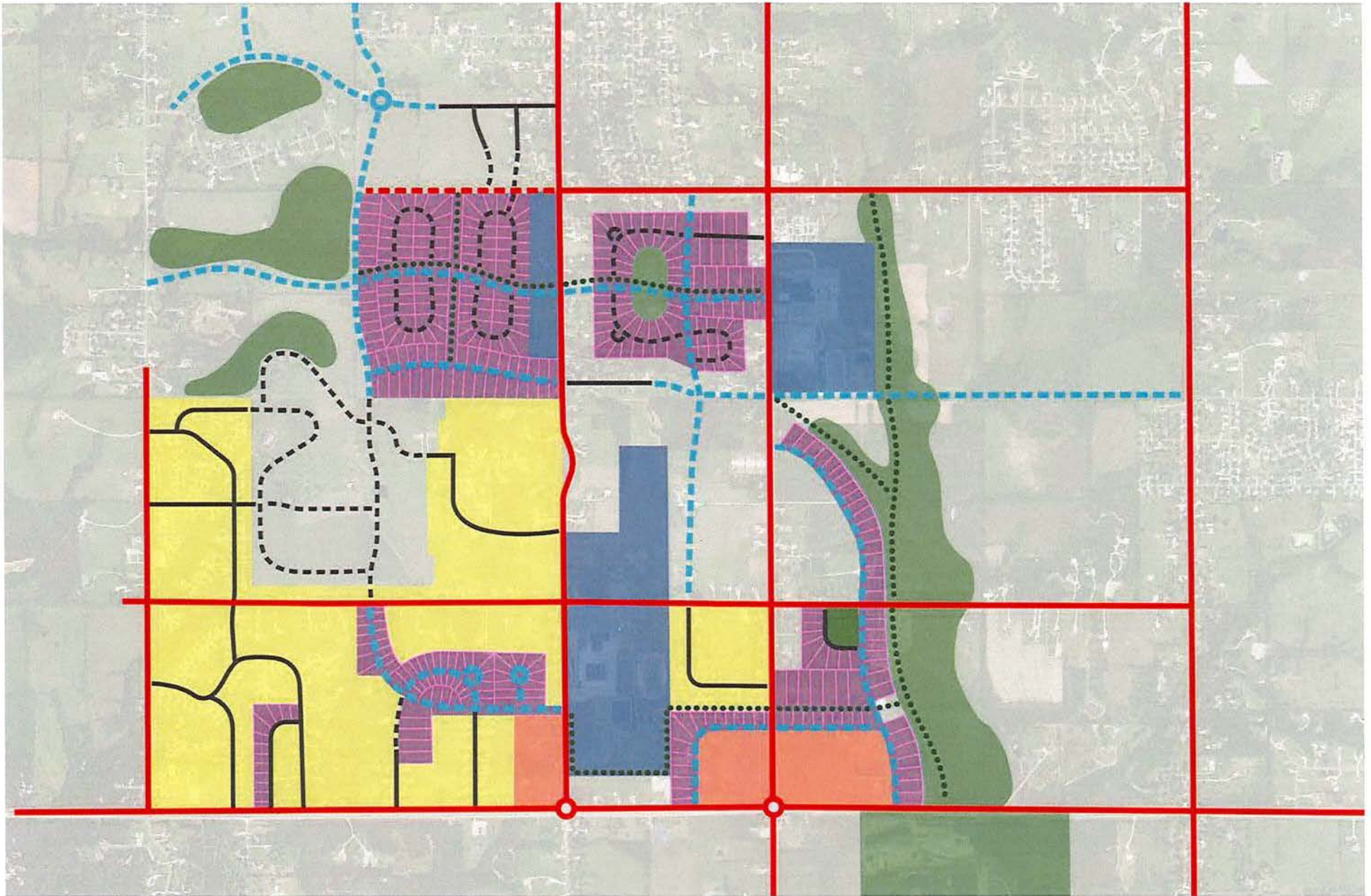


Figure 4.15: Sewer Service in Soldier Township

Source: RDG Planning & Design





**Figure 4.16:** In-Fill Development Concept Near Seaman High and Middle Schools

Source: RDG Planning & Design



## Smaller City Growth

Rossville, Silver Lake and Willard are located along the Kansas River and are surrounded by floodplains. Figure 4.17 depicts the boundaries of the flood hazard areas that restrict growth opportunities within the current limits of these cities. Any new development would need to be on land outside the flood zone to which urban services can be affordably extended. There also are many legacy farms located along the Kansas River whose owners are not currently interested in urban encroachment.

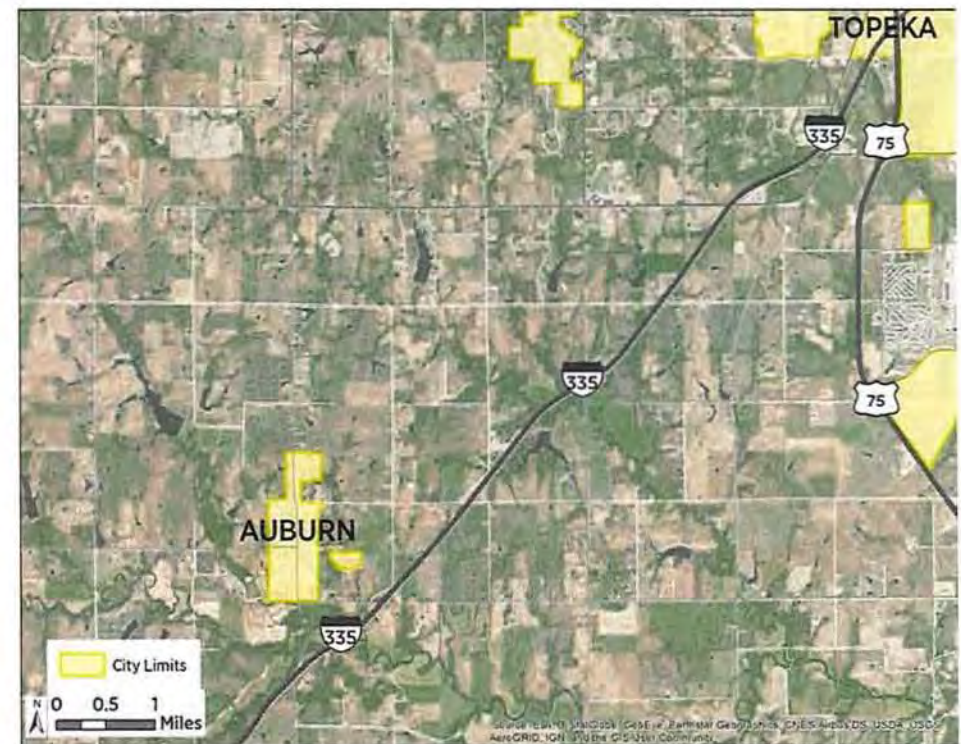
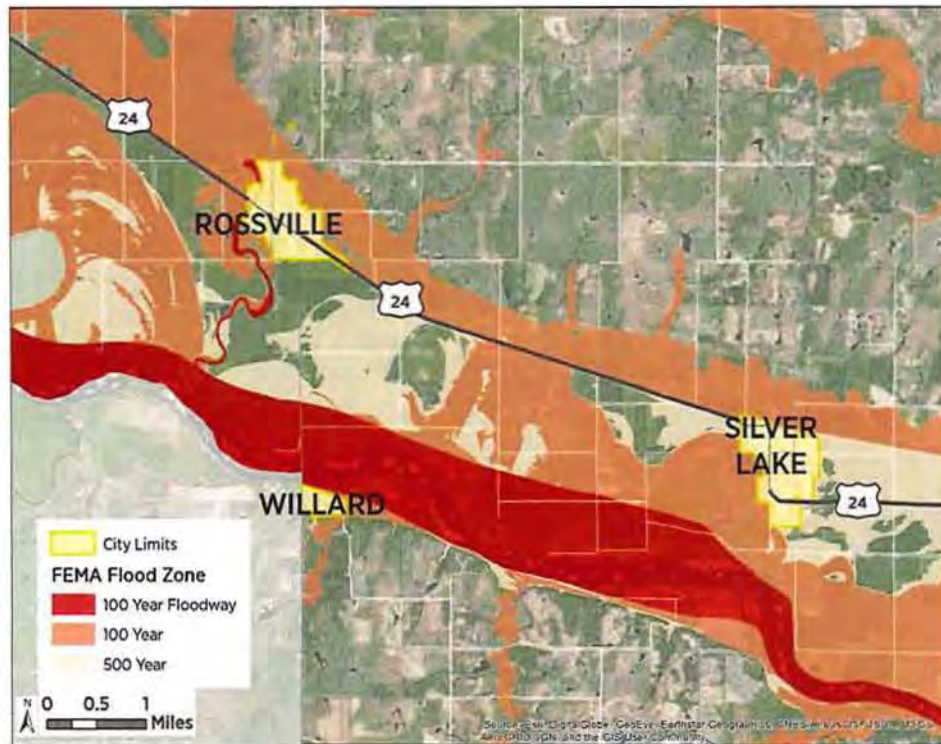
Auburn is located near Interstate 335 (Kansas Turnpike), but lacks convenient access to it which in turn limits the city's growth potential. Figure 4.18 depicts the city's proximity to I-335. But, the city recently constructed new sewage treatment facilities which could support growth primarily to the east and north of the city.

Auburn, Rossville, Silver Lake and Willard all currently require annexation as a condition of extending city utilities beyond the current city limits. Near Auburn, it is unlikely that a new interchange will be constructed on Interstate 335 (Kansas Turnpike) to improve access

due to its high cost, possibly \$35 million or more. However, Auburn has adequate sewage treatment facilities to support additional growth to the east and north of the existing cities limits.

There are five unincorporated towns in Shawnee County outside the Topeka ETJ: Berryton, Dover, Elmont, Wakarusa, and Watson. These are established communities that could be the focus for additional growth and development in unincorporated Shawnee County.

Figure 4.17: Floodplains and Roadways near Shawnee County's Small Cities



Source: RDG Planning & Design



## Future Land Use Map

Figure 4.18 on page 102 is the Future Land Use Map. There are several distinct areas depicted on this map. These **as are** described more fully below.

### TOPEKA URBAN GROWTH AREA

The Topeka Urban Growth Area (UGA) reflects the planned future city limits for the City of Topeka through the year 2040. Currently, Topeka regulates land divisions in the area and the availability of urban infrastructure and services. This plan recommends most industrial and heavy commercial uses occur in the employment service tier of the UGA. Topeka should annex commercial and industrial developments as they occur. This plan recommends that Shawnee County support Topeka's plans and development regulations for the UGA.

### AUBURN RESIDENTIAL GROWTH AREA

The purpose of the Auburn Residential Growth Area is to encourage residential development adjacent to this small city within Shawnee County. Auburn recently expanded its wastewater treatment facilities and can generally accommodate residential development to the east and north of its current city limits. New residential development occurring in this area should be required to use city utilities and should be annexed into the city as a condition of development.

### SMALL TOWN RESIDENTIAL GROWTH AREAS

The purpose of the Small Town Residential Growth Areas is to "cluster" new residential development into the important unincorporated towns of Berryton, Dover, Elmont, Kiro, Tecumseh, Wakarusa, and Watson. Clustering new residential development in these unincorporated towns will minimize the amount of agricultural lands lost to exurban development elsewhere in the unincorporated area. Plus, these communities already have a sense of place and many offer critical rural services. For these areas to develop,

it will be necessary to consider how to provide wastewater treatment. This plan recommends establishing these areas as urban reserves to be developed after needed public facilities and services are in place, particularly wastewater treatment. Residential and commercial development should be required to be compatible with the existing pattern and scale of development

### HALF DAY CREEK RESIDENTIAL GROWTH AREA

The purpose of the Half Day Creek Residential Growth Area is to encourage residential development at suburban densities in an area with existing public services. This area has excellent freeway access by way of US-75 highway with grade-separated interchanges at NW 35th Street and NW 46th Street. This area also is served by the Half Day Creek Sewer Interceptor which was constructed nearly 20-years ago. By requiring residential development to occur at suburban densities in this area, less agricultural land will be converted to residential development elsewhere in the unincorporated area. Residential development is anticipated to continue in this area, so it is critical that Shawnee County and Topeka work closely together to ensure that development occurs in a responsible manner. This plan makes the following recommendations:

- Land divisions should follow the formal subdivision and platting process. Plat exemptions should be reserved for agricultural divisions only,
- Residential development should only **be** approved at suburban densities.
- Existing platted subdivisions should not be vacated.
- This area should be established as an urban reserve to be developed after the UGA.

### OTHER AREAS

There are several areas where residential

development is likely to occur, but should not be the predominant land use. These are described more fully below.

### URBAN-RURAL TRANSITION AREA

The purpose of the Transition Area is to provide for a transitional area between urban development in and around the City of Topeka and the more rural areas of Shawnee County. While this area has agricultural lands, more than 40% has already been converted from agricultural to residential uses. Because residential development is expected to continue in this area, it is critical that Shawnee County and Topeka work closely together to ensure that development occurs in a responsible manner. This plan recommends that the development standards in the UGA also apply in this area.

### AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION AREA

The purpose of the Agricultural Conservation Area is to offer some protections for agricultural lands that remain near Topeka, but also recognize that that significant exurban and some suburban development may have already occurred. This plan recommends discouraging residential development in this area but recognizes that some continued exurban development may occur. This plan recommends that residential development in this area occur on vacant residential parcels of record established prior to plan adoption. There **is are a substantial** number of vacant residential parcels of record in this area; this plan recommends that homes be built on these parcels before new parcels are created through the plat exemption process.



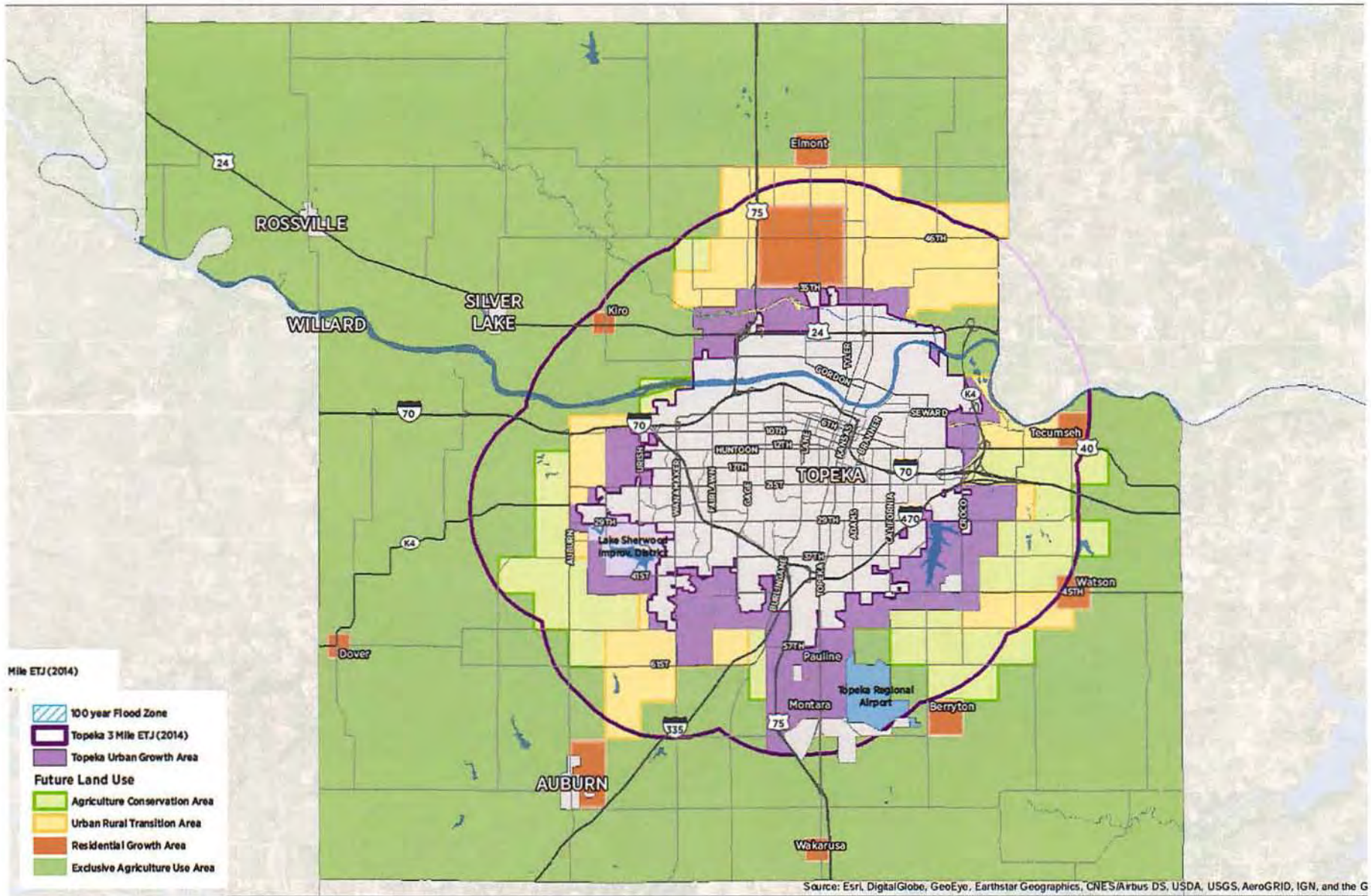


FIGURE 4.18: Future Land Use Map



## EXCLUSIVE AGRICULTURAL USE AREA

The purpose of the Exclusive Agricultural Use Area is to offer significant protection for agricultural lands and rural lifestyles. This area has the largest percentage of contiguous and intact agricultural lands in Shawnee County. If farming and ranching are to remain viable economic activities in Shawnee County, it is critical that agricultural lands in this area be protected.

This plan recommends limiting but not prohibiting residential development in this area. There **is are a substantial** number of vacant residential parcels of record in this area; this plan recommends that homes be built on these parcels before new parcels are created through the plat exemption process. In addition, this plan recommends that every farm and ranch in the agricultural use areas should be able to have two residential structures (a primary residence and an accessory residence for a family member or employee). Plus, each farm or ranch should be allowed one residential land division through the plat exemption process.

### Unincorporated Population for Select Counties

• Douglas County:	11,907
• Johnson County:	11,885
• Riley County:	7,435
• Sedgwick County:	23,006
 Average:	 13,559
 Shawnee County:	 46,552
(more than 3x higher)	

## DISCUSSION

The unincorporated area of Shawnee County has grown at a much faster pace than similar counties in Kansas. This has resulted in conflict between agricultural operations and homeowners, the perceived loss of area's rural character, and has contributed to the "parcelization" of the county, limiting options for future development, agricultural production, and economic development.

Opportunities for coordination between land development and capital programming has been limited prior to the issuance of building permits due to the frequent use of plat exemptions. As such, many homeowners have needed to provide their own water with private wells and/or their own wastewater with septic systems. Financing new infrastructure, the cost of maintenance, and transportation needs to be carefully considered and development patterns need to occur at densities able to support these expected services. Providing public services to uncoordinated developments, including road maintenance and public safety, creates these expected services. Providing public services to uncoordinated developments, including road maintenance and public safety, creates additional costs for the county. Planning for and ensuring minimum standards can prevent this and help guide development to areas best able to provide desired public services.

Some are concerned that the comprehensive planning process will lead to burdensome regulations or decreased land values. If the community through its comprehensive plan has determined how it wishes to grow and develop to meet future expectations, the adoption of land use regulations designed to meet those expectations would not in and of itself be considered burdensome. It is only if such regulations impose restrictions or standards that bare no relation to the adopted plan that allegations of burdensome regulations could be made. As long as there is a nexus between a community's plan for its future and the regulations that are designed to move the community forward based on the long-term prescriptions of the plan, it would avoid the appearance of which would to avoid a disconnect between long range plan and regulations. Expectations about the continuance of current regulations, including farmers who rely on plat exemptions to pay for retirement, are worried about these changing and the elimination of flexibility. County codes geared toward public safety, including septic system regulations and buildings codes, were not typically viewed as burdensome, but these concerns must be considered during plan implementation.



Little Free Library, Wakarusa

Concern has been expressed by long time rural residents that recent arrivals do not know about or care about rural lifestyles. Kansas State University has produced a publication titled *Living in the Country* that helps people not familiar with life in the country to understand what to expect before making a decision to move to the country. The Shawnee County Conservation District website provides access to the document to give the general public much needed information to "promote a harmonious environment for all." Several stakeholders have cited examples of new exurban residents often expecting city amenities such as paved roads and high speed internet, lacking education about caring for animals and acreages, and consequently generating friction with surrounding agricultural uses. These issues could be addressed through educating new residents about rural life or by clearly delineating urban, suburban, exurban, and rural areas.

The rural economy and agriculture is changing. Consideration needs to be given to how the county will address home occupations in the unincorporated part of the county. Also, agritourism can potentially overburden infrastructure, particularly roads. Finding a way to balance emerging economic development opportunities with quality of life will be important. Both commercial development and agritourism are important aspects of the future of Shawnee County.

The comprehensive plan for unincorporated Shawnee County, provides an opportunity to coordinate with Topeka the appropriate development standards and public services levels that should be anticipated inside the ETJ, particularly outside the UGA.



## Goals and Recommendations

### LU-1: Limit Encourage industrial development to the most suitable locations.

1. Most industrial development, except for mineral extraction and solid waste disposal, should be directed to the cities or the employment tier of the Topeka UGA.
2. Industrial development could be considered elsewhere in the unincorporated area when proposed on sites adjacent to established industrial areas. The new development should be compatible with the intensity and scale of existing industry on adjacent industrial sites.
3. Mineral extraction and solid waste disposal should be allowed in the unincorporated area upon review.
4. All industrial development in the unincorporated area should be subject to site development and performance standards established in the county's development regulations, including lighting, screening, building and parking lot orientation. Traffic, noise, dust and vibration impacts should be considered as well.

### LU-2: Encourage responsible rural commercial development.

1. Home occupations should be allowed in the unincorporated area.
  - When traffic and other impacts are minimal, home occupations should be allowed by right. Examples include businesses that are conducted entirely inside the primary residence and have few customers or employees traveling to the site.
  - When traffic and other impacts are more extensive, home occupations should be allowed only upon review. Examples include businesses that are conducted outside the primary residence and have many customers or employees visiting the site.
- Agricultural buildings should not be converted

for use by commercial businesses without complying with the county's development regulations, including zoning, building codes and other requirements.

2. Commercial development that supports the agricultural industry should be allowed in the unincorporated area. Agribusinesses in the unincorporated area should be directed to the five cities and to the Small-Town Growth Areas.
  - New development in the Small-Town Growth Areas should be compatible with and complement the historic pattern of development.
  - When large lots are required for agribusinesses such as farm implement dealerships, the development should occur on the edge of the city or Small-Town Growth Area.
  - Some agribusinesses such as anhydrous ammonia fertilizer distribution facilities may not be compatible with development in the cities or Small-Town Growth Areas and should be permitted upon review at sites outside of these areas.
3. Neighborhood commercial development that supports the rural population should be allowed in the unincorporated area. These uses should be encouraged to locate in the Small-Town Residential Growth Areas and the existing commercial development at Hunter's Ridge located at US-75 and NW 46th Street.
  - New development in the Small-Town Growth Areas should be compatible with and complement the historic pattern of development.
  - ~~New development at Hunter's Ridge should be limited to highway-oriented retail (i.e., gas stations, convenience stores, hotels, fast food restaurants, etc.) and neighborhood commercial retail (i.e., pharmacies, dry cleaners, family style restaurants, bars & pubs, grocery store, etc.).~~

4. Heavy commercial development (i.e., big box stores, regional shopping centers, etc.) should be directed to the cities and the employment tier of the Topeka UGA.
  - Investigate the possibility possibility of Highway-Oriented Retail along the I-70 Corridor, like a truck stop.
5. All commercial development in the unincorporated area should be subject to site development and performance standards established in the county's development regulations, including traffic management, lighting, screening, building and parking lot orientation, including lighting, screening, building and parking lot orientation.

### LU-3: Encourage responsible residential development.

1. There are 2,228 vacant residential parcels in the unincorporated area of Shawnee County. The county should encourage new residential development to occur on these existing parcels of record before supporting new land divisions. There are enough vacant residential parcels to accommodate more than 5,300 people.
  - Shawnee County should not support the vacation of platted subdivisions, particularly when water and wastewater infrastructure is already available.
  - Shawnee County should issue building permits for existing parcels of record without further requirements.
2. New residential development in the Auburn Growth Area should be annexed into the city as a condition of development. Auburn does not exercise extraterritorial jurisdiction.
  - The county should consider executing an agreement with Auburn that specifies development expectations and approval roles and responsibilities in this area.
  - The county should prohibit plat exemptions in this area.
  - New residential development in this area should



- be subject to Auburn's zoning, subdivision and platting and site development standards.
3. New residential development in the Small-Town Growth Areas should be compatible with and complement existing development.
    - For those Small-Town Growth Areas located entirely or partially within the Topeka ETJ, the county should consider executing an agreement with Topeka that specifies development expectations and approval roles and responsibilities in this area.
    - The county should prohibit plat exemptions in these area areas, and the regular subdivision and platting process should be followed in these areas.
  4. New residential development in the Urban-Rural Transition Area should be compatible with existing development in its vicinity. It is anticipated that new development will be at exurban densities due to the lack of public wastewater service in these areas.
    - For that portion of the Urban-Rural Transition Area located inside the Topeka ETJ, the county should consider executing an agreement with Topeka that specifies development expectations and approval roles and responsibilities in this area.
    - Plat exemptions: 3-acre minimum; 300-foot of frontage minimum on a public roadway with; Maximum depth to width ratio of 2:1.
  5. The Half-Day Creek Growth Area is established as an urban reserve for future suburban development after the Topeka UGA is substantially developed. Due to the investment in the Half-Day Creek sewer interceptor line, this area should be reserved for future residential development at suburban densities.
    - The county should consider executing an agreement with Topeka that specifies development expectations and approval roles and responsibilities in this area.
    - Existing platted subdivisions should not be vacated in this area.
  - Plat exemptions should be prohibited in this area.
  - Minor plats: 20-acre minimum; residential lots clustered on 20% of the acreage in a way that preserves future suburban development; the remaining 80% reserved for future suburban development; 300-foot of contiguous roadway frontage; driveways separated by at least 300-feet.
  6. Shawnee County should support the goals established by Topeka for the UGA because these are the areas most likely to be annexed by Topeka. Generally, this requires:
    - Plat exemptions: 20-acre minimum; 300-foot of frontage minimum on a public roadway with; Maximum depth to width ratio of 2:1.
    - Minor plats: 20-acre minimum; residential lots clustered on 20% of the acreage in a way that preserves future urban development; the remaining 80% reserved for future urban development; 300-foot of contiguous roadway frontage; driveways separated by at least 300-feet.
  7. New residential development should be discouraged in the Exclusive Agricultural Use Area and the Agricultural Conservation Area, except as follows:
    - There are 826 farms and ranches in the unincorporated area of Shawnee County. The U.S. Agriculture Department (USDA) defines farm as "any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the year." Each farm or ranch should be allowed to have both a primary residential structure and an accessory residential structure for a family member or employee. No division of land should be required. If every farm or ranch were to add one residential structure, that would be enough to accommodate almost 2,000 people.
    - There are 611 existing vacant residential parcels located outside the Topeka ETJ. This is enough to accommodate more than 1,400 people. Shawnee County should allow development to occur on these existing parcels without further requirements.

#### LU-4: Protect the farms, ranches, and rural scenic landscapes for future generations.

1. Residential development should be limited in Exclusive Agricultural Areas and Agricultural Conservation Areas to what is necessary to support the agricultural industry.
2. Agritourism should be allowed only after public review in Exclusive Agricultural Areas and Agricultural Conservation Areas. Agritourism should be subject to site development and performance standards established in the county's development regulations. Primary consideration should be given to traffic impacts and noise impacts.
3. Mineral extraction should be allowed only after public review in Exclusive Agricultural Areas and Agricultural Conservation Areas.



## CHAPTER FIVE

# Housing and Neighborhoods

Housing is integral to quality of life. Not only are people emotionally attached to their homes, but shelter also fulfills an important psychological need for security. To serve all segments of the county's population, adequate housing at the proper price points **are is** necessary. This chapter examines Shawnee County's housing market, including resident perceptions, existing conditions, and future conditions. In

the process, occupancy trends, housing affordability, and vacancy are all examined. It concludes with several goals and recommendations based on public input generated throughout the process.



## PERCEPTIONS

Survey participants completed a “report card” questionnaire in which they were asked to rank various housing issues and opportunities on a one-to-five scale, with five representing “excellent” and one representing “poor.” Attributes with average scores of 3.0 or above are perceived strengths and those below 2.5 represent areas of perceived weaknesses. These results were then better understood through stakeholder meetings. The following highlights important strengths and weaknesses regarding housing.

Housing availability, the cost of housing compared to income, and housing quality were all rated as strengths of Shawnee County’s housing market. However, nothing received a majority positive response because many responded neutrally. On the other hand, nothing was viewed too poor either, with Housing for senior and for young families receiving relatively neutral reviews as well, though they were the lowest rated categories. In focus groups and public meetings, housing was infrequently discussed. Most mentions of housing were with a focus on neighborhoods and ensuring that amenities like sidewalks were available. Continuing to provide good neighborhoods was suggested as helping attract workers and businesses to Shawnee County.

Figure 5.1: Housing (1 being poor and 5 being excellent)

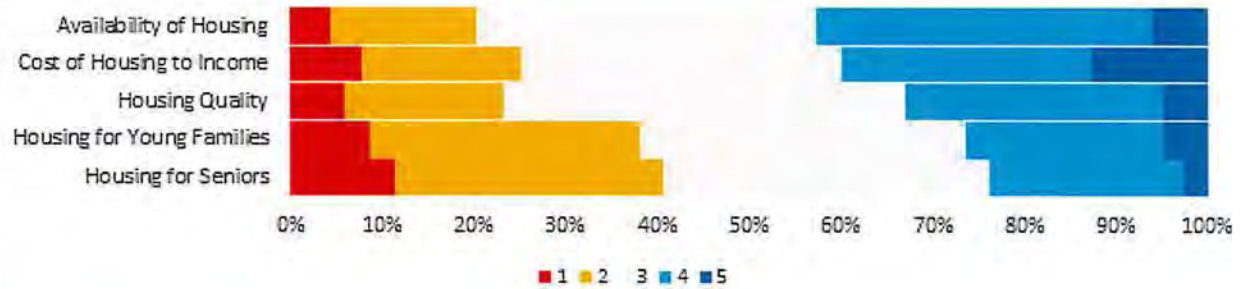


FIGURE 5.2: Questionnaire Responses: Housing (1 being Poor and 5 being Excellent)

SURVEY RESPONSE RATINGS	AVERAGE RATING
Housing for Seniors	2.75
Housing for Young Families	2.84
Housing Quality	3.08
Cost of Housing to Income	3.20
Availability of Housing	3.24

Source: RDG Community Questionnaire



## EXISTING CONDITIONS

Examining Shawnee County's housing market – its population growth, occupancy and tenure, affordability, and conditions – enable the County to understand current challenges, to forecast future needs, and to articulate a program to improve Shawnee County's housing market.

### Historic Development Patterns

Figure 5.3 shows that Shawnee County had 79,140 housing units in its housing stock in 2010. Since 1970, Shawnee County has experienced significant growth, adding 27,200 dwelling units at a rate of over 150 percent. At the same time, population only grew by 115 percent, signifying a decreasing household size (Figure 5.4).

Like many markets, housing construction can be cyclical with years of significant construction followed by quieter periods. Nearly half of the county's housing development occurred during a boom in the 1970s

when more than 12,500 new units were constructed. Development declined in the 1980s but has steadily increased since, though never at previous levels of development. Development has occurred consistently across the county, though Williamsport and Topeka townships have lost units (Figure 5.6). Parts of both Topeka and Williamsport townships have been annexed by the City of Topeka, likely contributing to this.

Topeka absorbed 58 percent of the county's housing development, decreasing as a proportion of the county's housing stock from 84 percent in 1970 to 75 percent in 2010. Meanwhile, Mission, Soldier, and Tecumseh Townships absorbed another 30 percent of housing development. Notably, much of Mission Township's growth occurred within the Sherwood Improvement District, which oversees much of the public infrastructure and services for homes in the area, providing urban-levels of services for development in an unincorporated area. The remaining growth occurred in the county's other Townships and Cities. Topeka tends to have smaller household sizes than the county as a whole.

More recently, Shawnee County's construction industry has continued to steadily produce new housing units (Figure 5.7). Between 2010 and 2015, housing construction has slowed to a more gradual pace. Some 1,382 new housing units were constructed in the county at an average rate of 230 new units per year. Just over half were constructed outside of Topeka. These rates of development are slower than prior to the housing crash. 2005, Shawnee County's peak year of housing production in the recent past, alone added more than 850 units.

The past few years, the production rate of single family units in rural areas experienced the largest growth with an average annual production of 114 units, compared to duplex, townhome, and multi-family which averaged 4 units annually. In Topeka, single family homes are developed at an annual rate of 96 units, with another 16 units of multifamily produced per year. This has resulted in a split of 91% single-family and 9% multi-family. However, rental occupancy has increased over this same time, meaning that single family homes are either rented out or converted in new multifamily units to make up the lagging construction of new multifamily units. Most multifamily is being constructed in Topeka.

**FIGURE 5.3: Total Housing Units, 1970-2010**

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	1970-2010 CHANGE	1970-2010 ANNUAL AVERAGE % CHANGE
City of Topeka	43,700	50,371	54,664	56,435	59,582	+15,882	0.9%
Tecumseh, Soldier, and Mission TWPs	3,906	7,280	8,924	10,793	12,190	+8,284	5.3%
Other TWPs	4,334	6,795	5,403	6,540	7,368	+3,034	1.8%
All Shawnee County	51,940	64,446	68,991	73,768	79,140	+27,200	1.3%
Change	+12,506	+4,545	+4,777	+5,372			

Source: US Census Bureau

**FIGURE 5.4: Persons Per Household, 1990-2010**

	1990	2000	2010
All Shawnee County	2.46	2.39	2.39
Topeka	2.33	2.27	2.29

Source: US Census Bureau

1. A housing unit, also called a dwelling unit, is a house, apartment, mobile home, group of rooms, or single room intended to be separate living quarters.



**Shawnee County  
Comprehensive Plan**

**Townships**

-  City of Topeka
-  AUBURN
-  DOVER
-  GROVE
-  MENOKEN
-  MISSION
-  MONMOUTH
-  ROSSVILLE
-  SILVER LAKE
-  SOLDIER
-  TECUMSEH
-  TOPEKA
-  WILLIAMSPORT

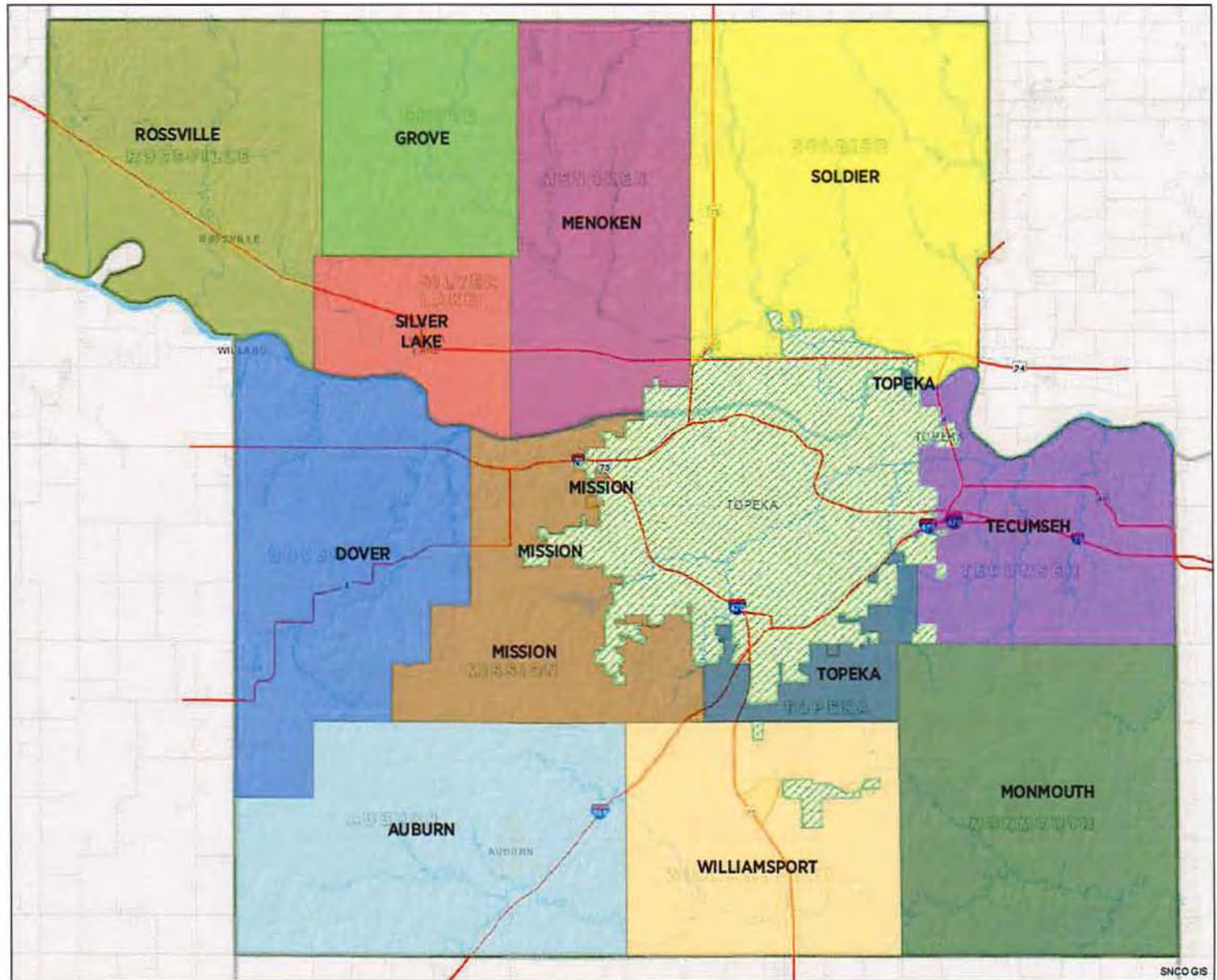


FIGURE 5.5: Townships of Shawnee County



**FIGURE 5.6: 1970-2010 Historic Township and Topeka Housing Units in Order of Size**

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2000-2010 ANNUAL % CHANGE	1970-2010 ANNUAL % CHANGE
City of Topeka	43,700	50,371	54,664	56,435	59,582	0.6%	0.9%
Soldier TWP	2,066	3,518	3,940	4,777	5,644	1.8%	4.3%
Mission TWP	723	1,788	2,570	3,120	3,592	1.5%	9.9%
Tecumseh TWP	1,117	1,974	2,414	2,896	2,954	0.2%	4.1%
Williamsport TWP	1,456	1,505	1,303	1,457	1,494	0.3%	0.1%
Auburn TWP	327	626	763	1,006	1,247	2.4%	7.0%
Monmouth TWP	344	546	680	1,016	1,203	1.8%	6.2%
Silver Lake TWP	364	616	677	774	820	0.6%	3.1%
Rossville TWP	452	552	580	630	694	1.0%	1.3%
Dover TWP	323	392	472	549	651	1.9%	2.5%
Menoken TWP	292	352	419	515	588	1.4%	2.5%
Topeka TWP	713	2,131	414	425	433	0.2%	-1.0%
Grove TWP	63	75	95	168	238	4.2%	6.9%
Shawnee County	51,940	64,446	68,991	73,768	79,140	0.7%	1.3%

Source: US Census Bureau

**Figure 5.7: Building Permits, Census 2010-2015**



\*Excludes City of Topeka  
Source: US Census Bureau



## Occupancy Trends

The way that people live in Shawnee County matters. By examining the characteristics of housing in Shawnee County, it is possible to understand the way that current and future residents will interact with the housing market. The vacancy rate, in combination with the relative share of owner-occupied versus renter-occupied dwellings, impacts the way people first enter the housing market and then move within the market during their time in the County.

### VACANCY

Vacancy is often viewed as a negative trait, but a healthy vacancy rate of between five and six percent helps ensure homebuyers and renters can find housing when needed while also serving as a filter to remove and replace the lowest quality housing from the market.

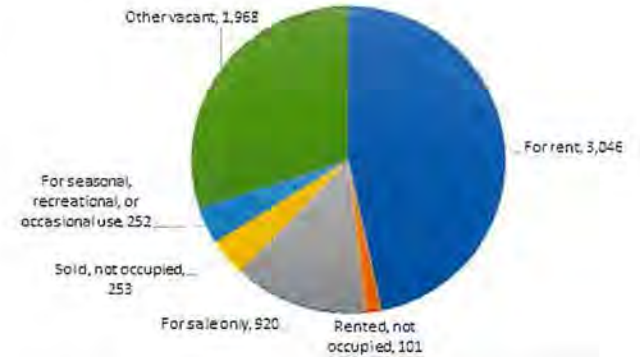
In Shawnee County, the vacancy rate increased as new housing developed faster than population growth (Figure 5.9). In 1970, the county's vacancy rate was 3.8 percent. After the housing boom, vacancy increased to 8.7 percent, after which it declined through 2000. The recession caused it to jump again to 8.3 percent in 2010. Topeka with a vacancy of 9.5 percent largely seems to drive the vacancy rate up as it contains much of the housing stock.

Other areas with high vacancy rates include Dover (9.2 percent), Williamsport (8.3 percent), and Topeka (11.3 percent) Townships. Rossville and Silver Lake townships also have vacancies above 5 percent, while the rest have maintained vacancies below the 5 percent mark. Overall, the remainder of the county outside Topeka had a combined 2010 vacancy of 4.6 percent.

However, for Shawnee County, the actual number of units available on the market is lower than the vacancy rate suggests (Figure 5.8). Of the 6,540 units that were

vacant in 2010, 354 were already sold or rented but not yet occupied, 252 were for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, and another 1,968 were vacant for other reasons. Another 3,046 vacant units were for rent and 920 vacant units were for sale. As a result, the homeowner vacancy rate was lower at 1.9 percent, similar to national rates. However, the rental vacancy rate was higher at 10.9 percent, a few percentage points above the vacancy rate nationally. The higher rental vacancy may be caused by lower quality of units that are not meeting renter's needs.

Figure 5.8: All Shawnee County Vacancies by Type, 2010



Source: US Census Bureau

FIGURE 5.9: Vacancy Rate, 1970-2010

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Auburn TWP	8.0%	5.6%	2.6%	3.2%	4.4%
Dover TWP	6.8%	6.9%	10.0%	7.8%	9.2%
Grove TWP	7.9%	6.7%	4.2%	3.6%	4.2%
Menoken TWP	4.5%	6.8%	2.4%	4.5%	4.8%
Mission TWP	1.7%	10.2%	4.1%	2.1%	4.4%
Monmouth TWP	3.5%	6.0%	2.5%	2.7%	3.6%
Rossville TWP	3.3%	4.2%	4.5%	4.6%	6.6%
Silver Lake TWP	4.4%	5.5%	4.1%	5.0%	5.9%
Soldier TWP	3.0%	2.4%	1.8%	3.0%	3.3%
Tecumseh TWP	2.8%	2.9%	1.9%	1.8%	3.1%
City of Topeka	3.9%	8.2%	8.6%	7.5%	9.5%
Topeka TWP	2.4%	4.1%	8.2%	9.4%	11.3%
Williamsport TWP	1.0%	60.2%	6.8%	6.9%	8.2%
Shawnee County	3.8%	8.7%	7.6%	6.6%	8.3%

Source: US Census Bureau



Figure 5.10: Occupancy and Tenure Tenure Summary

ALL SHAWNEE COUNTY								
	2000		2010		CHANGE 2000-2010	2015		CHANGE 2000-2015
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT		NUMBER	PERCENT	
Total Occupied	68,920	93.4%	72,600	91.7%	3,680	71,368	89.9%	2,448
<i>Owner-Occupied</i>	46,483	67.4%	47,715	65.7%	1,232	45,873	64.3%	-610
<i>Renter-Occupied</i>	22,437	32.6%	24,885	34.3%	2,448	25,495	35.7%	3,058
Total Vacant	4,848	6.6%	6,540	8.3%	1,692	8,057	10.1%	3,209
Total Units	73,768	100.0%	79,140	100.0%	5,372	79,425	100.0%	5,657

CITY OF TOPEKA								
	2000		2010		CHANGE 2000-2010	2015		CHANGE 2000-2015
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT		NUMBER	PERCENT	
Total Occupied	52,190	92.5%	53,943	90.5%	1,753	52,711	88.4%	521
<i>Owner-Occupied</i>	31,685	60.7%	31,430	58.3%	-255	29,713	56.4%	-1,972
<i>Renter-Occupied</i>	20,505	39.3%	22,513	41.7%	2,008	22,998	43.6%	2,493
Total Vacant	4,245	7.5%	5,639	9.5%	1,394	6,885	11.6%	2,640
Total Units	56,435	100.0%	59,582	100.0%	3,147	59,596	100.0%	3,161

REMAINDER OF SHAWNEE COUNTY								
	2000		2010		CHANGE 2000-2010	2015		CHANGE 2000-2015
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT		NUMBER	PERCENT	
Total Occupied	16,730	96.5%	18,657	95.4%	+1,927	18,657	94.1%	+1,927
<i>Owner-Occupied</i>	14,798	88.5%	16,285	87.3%	+1,487	16,160	86.6%	+1,362
<i>Renter-Occupied</i>	1,932	11.5%	2,372	12.7%	+440	2,497	13.4%	+565
Total Vacant	603	3.5%	901	4.6%	+298	1,172	5.9%	+569
Total Units	17,333	100.0%	19,558	100.0%	+2,225	19,829	100.0%	+2,496

Source: US Census Bureau



## TENURE

While slightly more owner-occupied units have been constructed since the 1970's, the proportion of owner- to renter-occupied units has remained near a 2:1 ratio, meaning that around one third of units are renter-occupied (Figure 5.11). However, the proportion of rental units increased from 2000 to 2010, a trend estimated to continue through 2015 (Figure 5.10). While the market has remained relatively balanced between owner and renter units, Figure 5.10 does not illustrate disparities in price-points, addressed in the housing affordability section.

The percentage of owner and renter-occupied units is roughly balanced across the county, but rates vary significantly. The City of Topeka and Williamsport Township have the highest rates of renter occupancy, both exceeding the county average. Secondary areas for rentals include Townships with Cities, including Silver Lake, Rossville, and Auburn. From 1970 to 2010, eleven townships saw the proportion of renter-occupied households decline. This was counteracted by Topeka generating new rental units, moving from 37 percent renter-occupied in 1970 to 42 percent in 2010. As a result, Topeka was the driving force behind maintaining the 2:1 ratio because it comprises a majority of the County's housing stock.

Strong neighborhoods and communities include a variety of housing types that allow residents to transition from entry-level housing, through their family homes, and to their downsizing phase without needing to leave their neighborhood or community at any step of the process. This requires available housing stock as showed by vacancy, in addition to an adequate number of both renter and ownership opportunities.

FIGURE 5.11: Percentage of Renter-Occupied Homes, 1970-2010

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Auburn TWP	13.3%	11.7%	11.4%	8.5%	16.0%
Dover TWP	22.3%	12.1%	9.4%	8.7%	8.3%
Grove TWP	20.7%	20.0%	6.6%	8.0%	3.9%
Menoken TWP	21.5%	17.7%	14.7%	10.0%	9.1%
Mission TWP	11.3%	7.0%	10.0%	6.7%	11.2%
Monmouth TWP	19.3%	9.9%	7.2%	5.0%	3.9%
Rossville TWP	23.6%	18.9%	22.2%	19.8%	23.0%
Silver Lake TWP	36.2%	23.4%	25.3%	25.4%	26.7%
Soldier TWP	11.8%	10.5%	5.9%	5.8%	8.9%
Tecumseh TWP	11.2%	5.4%	4.4%	7.9%	4.7%
City of Topeka	37.1%	37.8%	39.2%	39.3%	41.7%
Topeka TWP	28.0%	14.6%	21.1%	14.8%	15.1%
Williamsport TWP	81.4%	43.8%	45.1%	46.6%	44.5%
Shawnee County	35.7%	32.4%	33.4%	32.6%	34.3%

Source: US Census Bureau



## Housing Affordability

Many factors contribute to the overall affordability of a housing market including whether supply and demand are in balance, whether new units adjust values throughout the market, and whether there is sufficient vacancy to allow owners and renters to move within the market while also allowing the lowest quality units to be removed from the market. In addition, housing filtration, that is the movement of housing stock from higher to lower values as the property ages and deteriorates, can also create affordable housing. Some changes in housing value from filtering can also be attributed to neighborhood factors, including crime, and some housing stock never filters to become more affordable. Each of these principles requires time to allow the market to react before it balances at an equilibrium.

For example, if an additional 50 rental units were constructed at a much-needed price-point, it may take several years for the full impact of these units to balance into the market; first, those units would fill-up leaving the lower quality units at a similar price-point under-occupied, eventually forcing the lowest quality units to be removed from the market, be upgraded, or rents adjusted to be in line with their quality and condition.

The following sections explore dimensions of housing affordability relative to peer communities: major affordability metrics, home age and value, and the percent of households who face a financial burden because of their rent and utilities or mortgage costs. The section concludes with an analysis that pairs households with affordable price-points to understand gaps in the housing market.

## VALUE TO INCOME RATIO AND RENT COST

A traditional metric to evaluating whether a home is affordable to a homebuyer is by comparing their household income to the value of the home. This metric can be adapted to evaluate the affordability of housing markets in different cities. An affordable, self-sustaining housing market, with adequate value and revenues to support market-rate new construction, typically exhibits a value to income ratio between 2.0 to 3.0. Ratios above 3.0 present significant affordability issues while ratios below 2.0 are significantly undervalued relative to income.

Shawnee County, including Topeka, has a median household income at \$50,378, while its median home value is \$122,200. This results in a value to income ratio of 2.43 as seen in Figure 5.12. Based on this indicator, Shawnee County's housing market is healthy and self-sustaining but is lower than peer communities. Producing some higher cost units may alleviate affordability issues in the market by allowing more filtering in the housing market.

Compared to other more urbanized communities, Shawnee County has a middle-of the road income. However, if college students were taken out of Riley and Douglas Counties, this likely would not hold. Comparing home values, Shawnee County tends to be slightly lower. As a result, it is more affordable generally. However, its median rents also tend to be lower with the exception of Sedgwick County, which has a similar median contract rent.

The value to income ratio indicates that the housing market is not significantly out of sync with the population but may still present availability issues in certain segments of the population. It is important to note that rising debt due to student loan and other living expenses is stretching the traditional definitions of affordability and while lower interest rates have allowed buyers to finance more, debt burden is a counter balance.

FIGURE 5.12: Value to Income Ratio and Rent Cost

County City	MEDIAN HH INCOME	MEDIAN HOUSE VALUE	VALUE / INCOME RATIO	MEDIAN CONTRACT RENT	MEDIAN RENT / MEDIAN INCOME
<b>All Shawnee County</b>	<b>\$50,378</b>	<b>\$122,200</b>	<b>2.43</b>	<b>\$565</b>	<b>13.5%</b>
Topeka	\$42,250	\$96,500	2.28	\$543	15.4%
<b>All Riley County</b>	<b>\$44,437</b>	<b>\$181,200</b>	<b>4.08</b>	<b>\$748</b>	<b>20.2%</b>
Manhattan	\$43,104	\$187,200	4.34	\$729	20.3%
<b>All Douglas County</b>	<b>\$50,939</b>	<b>\$179,800</b>	<b>3.53</b>	<b>\$695</b>	<b>16.4%</b>
Lawrence	\$46,406	\$176,300	3.80	\$696	18.0%
<b>All Sedgwick County</b>	<b>\$50,657</b>	<b>\$126,500</b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>\$561</b>	<b>13.3%</b>
Wichita	\$45,947	\$119,700	2.61	\$547	14.3%
State of Kansas	\$52,205	\$132,000	2.53	\$579	13.3%

Source: US Census Bureau



### HOME AGE AND VALUE

As discussed in the previous section, many of those seeking housing in Shawnee County compare home values and rent costs to regional or similar communities. While it is rational to look to nearby communities to establish an idea of fair market value, it is also important to factor in variables such as: are the homes the same size, same age, or do they have similar amenities? Compared to peer communities (Figure 5.13), Shawnee County has lower rents and values, but it also has older homes. Note that value includes all owner-occupied units including single family homes and multi-family owner-occupied properties, while rents include all rental units, including apartments, single-family homes converted into multiple units, and single-family homes rented out to tenants.

Figure 5.13: Rent and House Value vs. Median Year Built

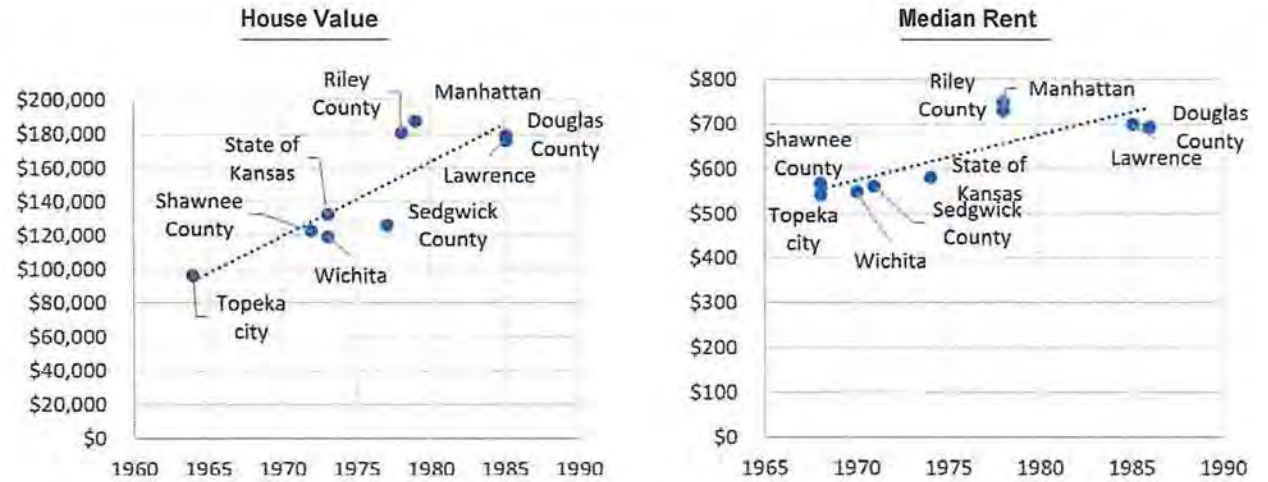


FIGURE 5.14: Home Age and Value

County City	MEDIAN YEAR BUILT OWNER	MEDIAN VALUE	MEDIAN YEAR BUILT RENTER	MEDIAN RENT
All Shawnee County	1972	\$122,200	1968	\$565
Topeka	1964	\$96,500	1968	\$543
All Riley County	1978	\$181,200	1978	\$748
Manhattan	1979	\$187,200	1978	\$729
All Douglas County	1985	\$179,800	1986	\$695
Lawrence	1985	\$176,300	1985	\$696
All Sedgwick County	1977	\$126,500	1971	\$561
Wichita	1973	\$119,700	1970	\$547
State of Kansas	1973	\$132,000	1974	\$579

Source: US Census Bureau



## HOUSING COST-BURDENED RESIDENTS

Another important metric in housing affordability is the percent of income that residents spend on their housing needs. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “families who pay more than 30% of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.” Housing costs include mortgage, taxes, rent, insurance, and utilities. Figure 5.15 illustrates the percent of owners and renters who spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs.

In all of Shawnee County, approximately 22 percent of homeowners with a mortgage and 11 percent of those without a mortgage spend more than 30% of their household’s annual income on their house. This is the lowest of comparable counties and communities. This is driven up by the City of Topeka which has higher percentages of cost-burdened individuals. While not an acute issue in Shawnee County, this share of the population is burdened by their home and is therefore less financially resilient to other changes that may occur including job loss, rising fuel costs or large car repairs, and medical expenses.

Approximately half of renters in Shawnee County spend more than 30% of their household’s annual income on their rent plus utilities. Often these households are single-income, working in the service industry jobs. The affordability of the rental housing market is important for people new to the community. Higher rental vacancy rates should make the housing market more affordable, but most large Kansas cities also struggle with the affordability of rentals.

**FIGURE 5.15: Percent Paying More than 30% on Housing Costs**

County City	OWNER - MORTGAGE	OWNER - NO MORTGAGE	RENTER	OVERALL
<b>All Shawnee County</b>	21.5%	11.1%	49.2%	28.6%
Topeka	23.1%	12.7%	49.7%	32.1%
<b>All Riley County</b>	24.1%	12.7%	54.9%	39.2%
Manhattan	22.7%	10.3%	54.8%	40.0%
<b>All Douglas County</b>	25.9%	12.3%	53.6%	36.7%
Lawrence	25.6%	10.1%	54.6%	39.0%
<b>All Sedgwick County</b>	23.9%	11.1%	45.7%	28.5%
Wichita	25.2%	11.4%	47.0%	30.6%
State of Kansas	23.8%	11.9%	44.8%	27.3%

Source: US Census Bureau



## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND SUPPLY

By comparing the distribution of household incomes with housing costs, a general picture of supply and demand emerges across Shawnee County's housing market. Figure 5.16 illustrates these comparisons and should be read from left to right across household income ranges. Use the Income Range \$0-24,999 in Shawnee County for an example. Reading across the table left-to-right, there are 16,522 households in Shawnee County within this income range. An affordable home for purchase would cost a maximum of \$49,999 and there are 5,186 owner-occupied units in this value range. An affordable rental unit should cost no more than \$400 per month and there are 4,819 rental units in this price range. Combined, that means 10,005 total units should be affordable for households earning less than \$24,999 per year. By subtracting the supply of affordable units (10,005) from the number of households in this income range (16,522), one can see a shortfall of 6,517 affordable units.

The analysis reveals a shortage of homes for the lowest income households in Shawnee County. In fact, that number is 6,500 less than is necessary given the county's income characteristics. This is common because the private market cannot support the creation of new housing units within these price-points without incentives. The best source of affordable housing for this market are rental units, and often subsidized rental, rather than trying to produce new units. The analysis also reveals a surplus of housing for households with incomes between \$25,000 and \$74,999. For these households, affordable homes for purchase would go as high as \$149,999 and rental units would go as high as \$1,250. With a shortfall of housing for the income brackets above \$75,000, it appears that these upper income households are likely outcompeting lower income households for the same housing products. As a result, higher income individuals are often living in housing under what they could afford, often staying in rentals longer than

generations previously. It should be noted that this analysis does not account for age or quality; some residents choose other markets because housing does not meet their quality and amenity expectations.

Topeka seems to drive the high demand for lower income housing, but Shawnee County outside Topeka still shows deficits for those making less than \$50,000 or over \$100,000. However, the County's housing stock better matches the income of its residents. These characteristics suggest opportunity for the County to develop some affordable housing options near Topeka, likely in areas to be annexed, to better provide public services such as transit. Meanwhile, the county should also encourage the development of homes valued over \$200,000 to allow household movement and a filtration of the housing stock.

Recently, homebuyers are becoming less interested in moving-up to larger and more expensive homes than previous generations (low mobility). Traditionally, the production of higher-end homes would sufficiently incentivize homeowners to move-up within the housing stock, thereby, opening lower cost housing for others to move-up into. While a degree of the traditional move-up model still exists, many established residents will remain in their current housing until they downsize or until significantly better opportunities become available including high quality amenities, but not necessarily square footage.

### Figure 5.16 Note:

This figure compares the number households within an income-bracket with the number of housing units that would be affordable to that income range in 2015. A positive balance indicates a surplus of housing within the affordability range of each respective income group, while a negative balance indicates a shortage. This analysis is meant to illustrate larger trends and not exact demand in certain price ranges. It does not take into consideration housing quality or mortgage status.



Figure 5.16: Affordable Housing Analysis

ALL SHAWNEE COUNTY								
Income Range	# HH	% HH	AFFORDABLE OWNER RANGE	# OWNER UNITS	AFFORDABLE RENTAL RANGE	# RENTER UNITS	TOTAL AFFORDABLE UNITS	BALANCE
\$0-25K	16,522	23.2%	\$0-50K	5,186	\$0-400	4,819	10,005	-6,517
\$25K-49K	18,884	26.5%	\$50K-99K	12,679	\$400-800	16,194	28,873	+9,989
\$50K-74K	13,772	19.3%	\$100K-149K	11,056	\$800-1,250	3,044	14,100	+328
\$75K-99K	9,061	12.7%	\$150K-199K	7,978	\$1,250-1,500	411	8,389	-672
\$100K-150K	8,916	12.5%	\$200K-\$300K	6,173	\$1,500-2,000	518	6,691	-2,225
\$150K +	4,213	5.9%	\$300K+	2,801	\$2,000+	509	3,310	-903
	71,368	100.0%		45,873		25,495	71,368	0

CITY OF TOPEKA								
Income Range	# HH	% HH	AFFORDABLE OWNER RANGE	# OWNER UNITS	AFFORDABLE RENTAL RANGE	# RENTER UNITS	TOTAL AFFORDABLE UNITS	BALANCE
\$0-25K	14,826	28.1%	\$0-50K	4,639	\$0-400	4,568	9,207	-5,619
\$25K-49K	15,345	29.1%	\$50K-99K	10,952	\$400-800	14,792	25,744	+10,399
\$50K-74K	9,704	18.4%	\$100K-149K	6,788	\$800-1,250	2,602	9,390	-314
\$75K-99K	5,867	11.1%	\$150K-199K	3,675	\$1,250-1,500	307	3,982	-1,885
\$100K-150K	4,844	9.2%	\$200K-\$300K	2,584	\$1,500-2,000	302	2,886	-1,958
\$150K +	2,125	4.0%	\$300K+	1,075	\$2,000+	427	1,502	-623
	52,711	100.0%		29,713		22,998	52,711	0

REMAINDER OF SHAWNEE COUNTY								
Income Range	# HH	% HH	AFFORDABLE OWNER RANGE	# OWNER UNITS	AFFORDABLE RENTAL RANGE	# RENTER UNITS	TOTAL AFFORDABLE UNITS	BALANCE
\$0-25K	1,696	9.1%	\$0-50K	547	\$0-400	251	798	-898
\$25K-49K	3,539	19.0%	\$50K-99K	1,727	\$400-800	1,402	3,129	-410
\$50K-74K	4,068	21.8%	\$100K-149K	4,268	\$800-1,250	442	4,710	+642
\$75K-99K	3,194	17.1%	\$150K-199K	4,303	\$1,250-1,500	104	4,407	+1,213
\$100K-150K	4,072	21.8%	\$200K-\$300K	3,589	\$1,500-2,000	216	3,805	-267
\$150K +	2,088	11.2%	\$300K+	1,726	\$2,000+	82	1,808	-280
	18,657	100.0%		16,160		2,497	18,657	0

Source: US Census Bureau



## FUTURE CONDITIONS

Shawnee County is expected to reach a population of more than 192,500 by 2040, an increase of 14,599 residents. This will require about 5,700 new units or about 240 units per year to accommodate this growth, slightly above the current rate of construction in Shawnee County. Figure 5.17 calculates the overall demand for housing from 2017-2040 by considering:

- Projected population
- Household population and size from the U.S. Census Bureau, decreasing at the conservative rate of Topeka over the past 20 years (Shawnee County's rate of decrease was higher)
- Household demand, generated by households today and by the new growth of households
- A vacancy rate that will decrease over time to a healthier rate that provides variety in the market, avoids over-pricing, and ensure ensures a quality housing stock.
- An annual replacement need of approximately 17 units that are lost to demolition or elimination

The City of Topeka exercises extraterritorial planning jurisdiction, including land division and plat approval authority, within the 3-mile Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). Area in the ETJ follows policy Topeka's 2040 Land Use & Growth Management Plan (LUGMP) which defines an Urban Growth Area (UGA) of "service tiers" where future growth is expected through 2040. The first tier is Topeka City limits. Service tiers 2 and 3 are outside current city limits, but are secondary to tier 1. The balance of its ETJ outside the UGA are is the "non-urban growth area." For more discussion, see Chapter 4.

Topeka's LUGMP anticipates Topeka will grow by 11,000 people through infill development and redevelopment inside current city limits and through land annexations in the UGA (Figure 5.18 Guided Growth Scenario). If Topeka grows by 11,000 people, the rest of Shawnee County will grow by 3,600

people. This would translate into roughly 1,200 new dwelling units in Topeka at urban densities, 3,100 new units expected in the Urban Growth Area (UGA) at suburban densities, and the remaining 1,400 occurring in the rest of the county at a range of densities.

If unincorporated Shawnee County were to grow as it has over the past 50 years, there would be an additional 11,900 people in the unincorporated area (Figure 5.18 Past Trends). This would translate to approximately 4,700 new units in unincorporated Shawnee County and 130 new units would be built in the incorporated small towns, while only 920 new units would be constructed in Topeka. However, trends since 2010 suggest that a guided growth scenario is more accurate with more than 83 percent of recent growth occurring in Topeka city limits or the UGA.

For the most part, guided growth is used as the basis for land use decisions in this document. There are several clear advantages to using the guided growth approach, including less cost for providing public services, less consumption of agricultural land, issues associated with development are identified prior to land division, and the development of planned subdivisions allows for the consideration of desired neighborhood amenities and needed public improvements. In addition, working with Topeka within their ETJ promotes collaboration between the City and County instead of confrontation.

As a result, most development in unincorporated areas is expected to occur near Topeka where developments with more urban services are capable of being supported. This could be as high as 70 percent of the unincorporated development.

Neighborhoods can occur around focal points like schools, and commercial uses should be within reasonable distances. In the north, this includes areas around US-75 or near Seaman High School denser

development could be closer to amenities. Other comparable sites include near Washburn Rural High School, where new homes could blend with existing ones to create new neighborhoods.

Meanwhile, more exurban homes could be developed in areas no longer suited for agriculture, while other clusters of homes could be added to unincorporated communities. Finally, rural homesteads would be produced in areas to support the agricultural economy of Shawnee County. Developing in this way produces more regular expectations as to the densities, locations, and type of growth anticipated for areas of the county. It would also create reasonable predictability to infrastructure expansion and the availabilities of different levels of service. However, areas unsuitable for development should be preserved as open space.

Regardless, it is important for a variety of different types and price-points to be offered. As many factors can change over 20 years, the housing market should be studied for major changes on a regular basis.





Suburban Development in Unincorporated Shawnee County



Rural Development in Unincorporated Shawnee County

**FIGURE 5.17: Projected Housing Development Demand – All Shawnee County**

	2017-2020	2021-2030	2031-2040	TOTAL
Population*	182,945	187,703	192,533	
Household Population*	178,424	183,064	187,775	
Average People/Household	2.38	2.36	2.34	
Household Demand*	74,984	77,619	80,331	
Projected Vacancy Rate	7.9%	7.1%	6.0%	
Unit Needs*	81,404	83,580	85,459	
Replacement Need	73	170	170	413
Cumulative Need	1,110	2,466	2,169	5,745
Needed Ave. Annual Construction	278	247	217	239

\* At the end of the period  
Source: RDG Planning & Design

**FIGURE 5.18: Projected Housing Development Demand – All Shawnee County Guided Growth Scenario**

	PAST TRENDS		GUIDED GROWTH	
	PROJECTED POPULATION	PROJECTED UNITS	PROJECTED POPULATION	PROJECTED UNITS
Topeka	+2,332	+918	+11,000	+4,329
Small Towns	+341	+134	+240	+94
Unincorporated	+11,926	+4,693	+3,359	+1,322
Shawnee County	+14,599	+5,745	+14,599	+5,745

\* At the end of the period  
Source: RDG Planning & Design



## DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since 1970, Shawnee County has added 27,200 new dwelling units. The rate of growth outpaced the growth rate of the population, signaling declining household sizes. Over the past 50 years, housing development outside of Topeka has occurred at a rate faster than occurred within Topeka, causing it to lose its share of the county's housing stock. Most housing development outside Topeka happened in Mission, Soldier, and Tecumseh Townships near Topeka. Since 2010, development has slowed, with most new homes being single family. Growth since 2010 has largely mirrored a guided growth scenario with most development occurring in the City of Topeka or the UGA.

Within the County, the ratio of owner-occupied to renter-occupied units has remained close to a 2:1 ratio since 1970, a healthy ratio. Since 2000, the percentage of rentals have has increased. However, a disproportionate number of the county's rentals are in Topeka. Vacancy rates increased since 1970 with nearly 6,540 vacant homes as of 2010. Comparing 2010 vacancy rates, Topeka stands at 9.5 percent compared to the balance of the county at 4.6 percent, indicating a stronger market outside of Topeka.

### Housing Market and Development

Shawnee County's housing market is generally appropriate given its income. Its median value to income ratio is lower than that of the State. Topeka's lower home values tend to drive down the ratio for the County. Given the county's income distribution, there is a deficit in affordable housing, though the county also lacks enough higher income units. These gaps are filled by a surplus of homes affordable to households making between \$25,000-50,000 which causes low income individuals to live in unaffordable housing and higher income individuals to compete

against middle income individuals for units. Outside of Topeka, the county has enough housing for households making \$50,000 to \$100,000, but is lacking homes above and below that. Generally, the following factors apply to different parts of the housing market:

- **Low Income Housing Demand.** The lowest income households should be served primarily by the rental market. Several state and federal programs exist to support the development of low income rental opportunities. Housing developers should be encouraged to enter this market and the city should coordinate with the developer on location and site design for the best outcome.
- **Low Income Ownership Demand.** Often the best source of affordable housing is the existing housing stock in older neighborhoods. Many higher income households compete for the same housing stock as lower income households. The low-income ownership market demand can be met, in part, by providing opportunities for moderate income households to move-up in the market.
- **Moderate Income Demand.** The private market should be able to achieve sufficient profits to support development in this market. However, it may be necessary to highlight the successes of projects serving this market. These types of projects may also require financial or logistical support from the County and its partners.
- **Market and High End.** The private market has been successful in producing market rate housing with a focus on high-end products. The development community should be encouraged to continue its work in market-rate housing development. These developments should be encouraged to employ innovative practices to create high-quality neighborhoods.

Shawnee County must produce additional housing options across all price-points to enable movement in the market. New units and neighborhoods must offer amenities commensurate with the asking price to entice residents to 'move-up' within the market. Further, additional variety should be provided across price-points to allow residents to transition through desirable housing options as they age. For example, households may begin with an affordable rental, move to an entry level home, then to a larger 'family home', and then to a down-size option that may be either a rental or owner-occupied residence.

In Shawnee County, this means focusing on affordable options while letting the market produce higher end homes. The following principles should also be applied as new housing is developed:

- Production should be guided to generate a gradual shift that incrementally overcomes the needs of the current market while seeking to meet the needs of Shawnee County over the next 20 years.
- The lowest income market often requires intervention from the public and not-for-profit sectors. Production of middle income housing may require support or leadership through a demonstration project. The highest income housing options should be guided through public policy related to street configurations, open space requirements, and public facilities and trail development.
- Production should create availability and movement in the housing market to enable residents to enter Shawnee County's housing market, move-up to appropriate options through their life-cycle, and then down-size when desired.



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## Quality Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods offer quality amenities, places to build connections and community, while allowing residents to contribute to the fabric and character of the place in which they live. These are some of the same foundational elements that create strong communities.

Shawnee County should expect 5,700 new units by 2040. This requires 240 new homes per year. 75 percent of these homes are expected to be constructed in Topeka or within Topeka's growth area in cooperation with the City. This results in about 1,400 units for the remainder of the county. Most development is expected to occur near Topeka. Areas expected to support higher density development are those with access to better infrastructure, including in Soldier and Mission Townships. The rest of the development will include exurban, village, and rural development.

As new residential areas are constructed, it is important to understand how to build them with a sense of place that creates a high quality of life. Neighborhoods are geographically and socially connected communities with a definable sense of boundary. Each neighborhood has its own characteristics: demographic composition; location; density; street layout and connectivity; economic, social, and ethnic diversity; and functionality/mix of land uses.

Generally, several characteristics work together to create great neighborhoods. The American Planning Association notes the following:

1. Fulfilling a variety of functional attributes that contribute to a resident's day-to-day living;
2. Accommodating multi-modal transportation;
3. Possessing design and architectural features that are visually interesting;
4. Encouraging human contact and social activities;
5. Promoting community involvement and maintains a secure environment;
6. Encouraging sustainability; and
7. Having a memorable character.

These characteristics should be kept in mind to ensure the highest quality of life in Shawnee County as new development occurs. However, it must be applied differently to the distinct areas in Shawnee County, including suburban to exurban to rural neighborhoods. Randall Arendt's Rural by Design also largely follows the characteristics for great neighborhoods, making it an excellent resource for these kinds of places.



## Goals and Recommendations

H-1: Encourage adequate development to allow for the growth of Shawnee County.

1. Work with developers to identify ways to streamline administrative process for development while maintaining adequate oversight of the development process by both Shawnee County and the City of Topeka.
2. Educate landowners about how their land can be used or developed and streamline processes to do so.
3. Promote the development of a variety of housing types, both in terms of tenure and in terms of price-point.

H-2: Ensure adequate methods of construction and development to protect the health, safety, and welfare of county residents.

1. Adopt a building code program with sufficient enforcement to protect the health, safety, and welfare of county residents.
2. Encourage a high standard of development through fire and other necessary inspections.

H-3: Guide development to areas suitable for that style of development with appropriate densities to support public services, including urban, suburban, exurban, rural, and village development types.

1. Update the zoning code to better reflect the current development pattern of the county and to guide urban, suburban, exurban, rural, and village development to appropriate locations.
2. Update the zoning code to preserve areas unsuitable for residential development, including prime farmland, floodplains, and other natural areas.
3. Set expectations for new residents to understand what service levels they may expect moving to different areas of the county.
4. Work with the City of Topeka to identify suitable areas within Topeka's ETJ that could still allow future development.

H-4: Develop a range of housing options, especially those that are affordable for low income and those that cater to higher income households.

1. Work with developers to identify barriers to housing development in price ranges that are currently lacking in the county and determine methods that can help overcome those barriers.
2. Identify grant or partnership opportunities for housing development that would help fill needs within Shawnee County.
3. Encourage the continued development of market rate units by private developers.
4. Explore how accessory dwelling units could fit into Shawnee County's broader housing market.

H-5: Create quality neighborhoods to facilitate a high standard of living for homes in urban, suburban, exurban, and rural areas, including unincorporated towns.

1. Try to facilitate the construction of neighborhoods through the development process. Update the development code (zoning and subdivision ordinances) to encourage neighborhood-oriented development.
2. Use existing focal points such as employment centers, schools, parks, or commercial areas to create neighborhoods with amenities that will promote a high quality of life.
3. Update the development code (zoning and subdivision ordinances) to encourage neighborhood-oriented development in suburban areas, possibly through density incentives to help offset those costs.

H-6: Identify and preserve areas for development of parks and open space.

1. Work with residential developers and the Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Department to create trails, parks and other amenities for the benefit of neighborhoods and the Shawnee County Public.
2. Preserve the rural landscapes by focusing development near existing development clusters. This should include clustering the development of rural unincorporated villages in a consistent manner.







## CHAPTER SIX

# Economic Development

This section examines key facts about Shawnee County's economy. It addresses such issues as income distribution, labor force characteristics, employment makeup, and retail sales. The county's housing market, which is also a vital component of its overall economy, is also considered.



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## PERCEPTIONS

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Survey participants completed a “report card” questionnaire in which they were asked to rank various issues and opportunities related to economic development on a one-to-five scale, with five representing “excellent” and one representing “poor.” Attributes with average scores of 3.0 or above are perceived strengths and those with scores below 2.5 represent areas of perceived weaknesses. These results were then better understood through stakeholder meetings. The following highlights important strengths and weaknesses regarding economic development.

The only strengths in Shawnee County were the strength of the Cities of Silver Lake and Rossville, though the strength of the rural farm economy also came close. Just behind those, the City of Auburn and rural commerce and industry were also considered to be doing ok. However, the rest of the picture was rather pessimistic. Among the lowest were ability to retain young people, support services for new farmers, and job creation and growth. Other weaknesses include diverse job opportunities, support for renewable energy, prospects for future growth, and other minor forms of economic development including those for agricultural tourism, historic sites, and scenic byways. Finally, the Cities of Topeka and Willard were also seen to be weaker.

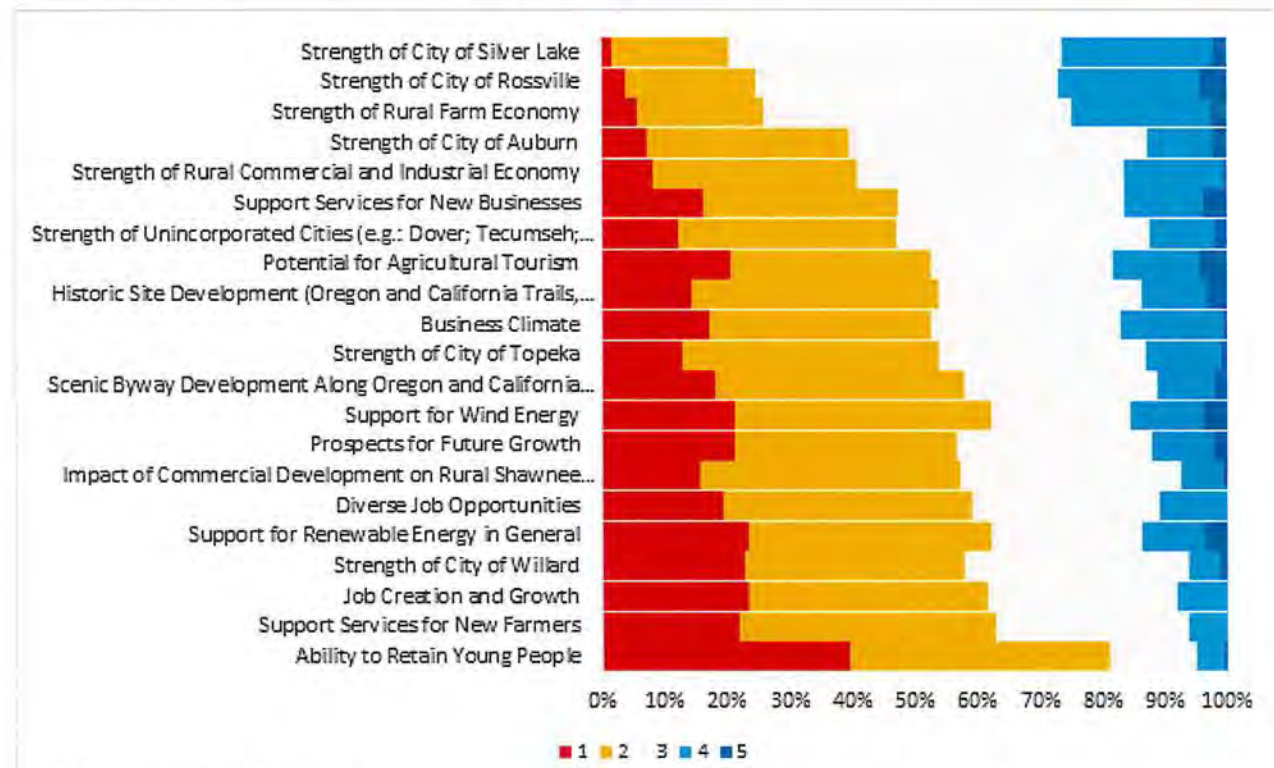
Those at focus groups and public meetings were more optimistic about Shawnee County's economy, looking to ways that Shawnee County could improve its economy. Counteracting a perceived inability to retain young people, the county wanted to focus on improving the quality of life of the area. This would be done by adding amenities to Shawnee County and ensuring high levels of public services, in addition to desirable neighborhoods and commercial areas. This would bolster business and make it easier to attract and retain workers. Some of this includes a requirement to improve resident's view of the area by fostering more pride. In addition, focus groups noted a need to focus on improving the skills of those already here through more workforce training. Marketing areas throughout the county that are unique or special, and coordinating that marketing could also help, as could a focus on tourism through historic or agricultural resources.



**FIGURE 6.1: Questionnaire Responses: Economic Development**  
(1 being Poor and 5 being Excellent)

SURVEY RESPONSE RATINGS	AVERAGE RATING
Strength of City of Silver Lake	3.06
Strength of City of Rossville	3.02
Strength of Rural Farm Economy	2.96
Strength of Rural Commerce and Industry	2.68
Strength of City of Auburn	2.68
Support Services for New Businesses	2.56
Strength of Unincorporated Cities	2.55
Potential for Agricultural Tourism	2.49
Historic Site Development	2.48
Strength of City of Topeka	2.47
Business Climate	2.47
Prospects for Future Growth	2.36
Support for Wind Energy	2.36
Scenic Byway Development Along US-40/ US-24	2.36
Commercial Development's rural impact	2.35
Diverse Job Opportunities	2.32
Support for Renewable Energy in General	2.31
Strength of City of Willard	2.27
Job Creation and Growth	2.23
Support Services for New Farmers	2.21
Ability to Retain Young People	1.85

**Figure 6.2: Economic Development** (1 being poor and 5 being excellent)



Source: RDG Community Questionnaire

Source: RDG Community Questionnaire



## EXISTING CONDITIONS

Existing conditions for Shawnee County include can be analyzed by investigating its income, labor force, educational attainment, and jobs and industry. These are important components of understanding how Shawnee County's economy is structured and how that affects its workers.

### Income Distribution

Shawnee County's income distribution is depicted in Figure 6.4. In general, Shawnee County has lower household incomes compared to Kansas at large. The median income in Shawnee County in 2015 was \$50,378, compared to \$52,205 for Kansas. Within Shawnee County, most lower income residents reside in the City of Topeka, including more than 90 percent of those households making less than \$15,000 and more than 85 percent of those making less than \$30,000. Meanwhile, higher income individuals tend to live outside of Topeka, most of which make over \$75,000. This can partially be explained by the higher educational attainment of those living in the county, explored in more depth under labor force characteristics.

Figure 6.3 shows how Shawnee County's median household income has fluctuated over time. The 1990 Census placed it at \$29,879 (\$50,728 when adjusted to 2010 dollars), higher than all surrounding counties and the State of Kansas. By 2000, it had increased to \$40,988 (\$53,634 in 2010 dollars), still higher than the State of Kansas and most surrounding counties. Wabaunsee and Jefferson Counties both surpassed it that decade. This increase also was higher than the rate of inflation.

However, the recession saw Shawnee County's median income change to \$47,464, a decrease when accounting for inflation. While most of the surrounding counties and the state also witnessed decreasing real incomes, all but Douglas County had become higher than Shawnee County's median income. During that decade, most counties also had increases under the rate of inflation.

More recent estimates from 2010 to 2015 show a higher increase in Shawnee County than in most of the surrounding counties. However, incomes are still generally lower than most surrounding counties and they increased slower than the rate of inflation.

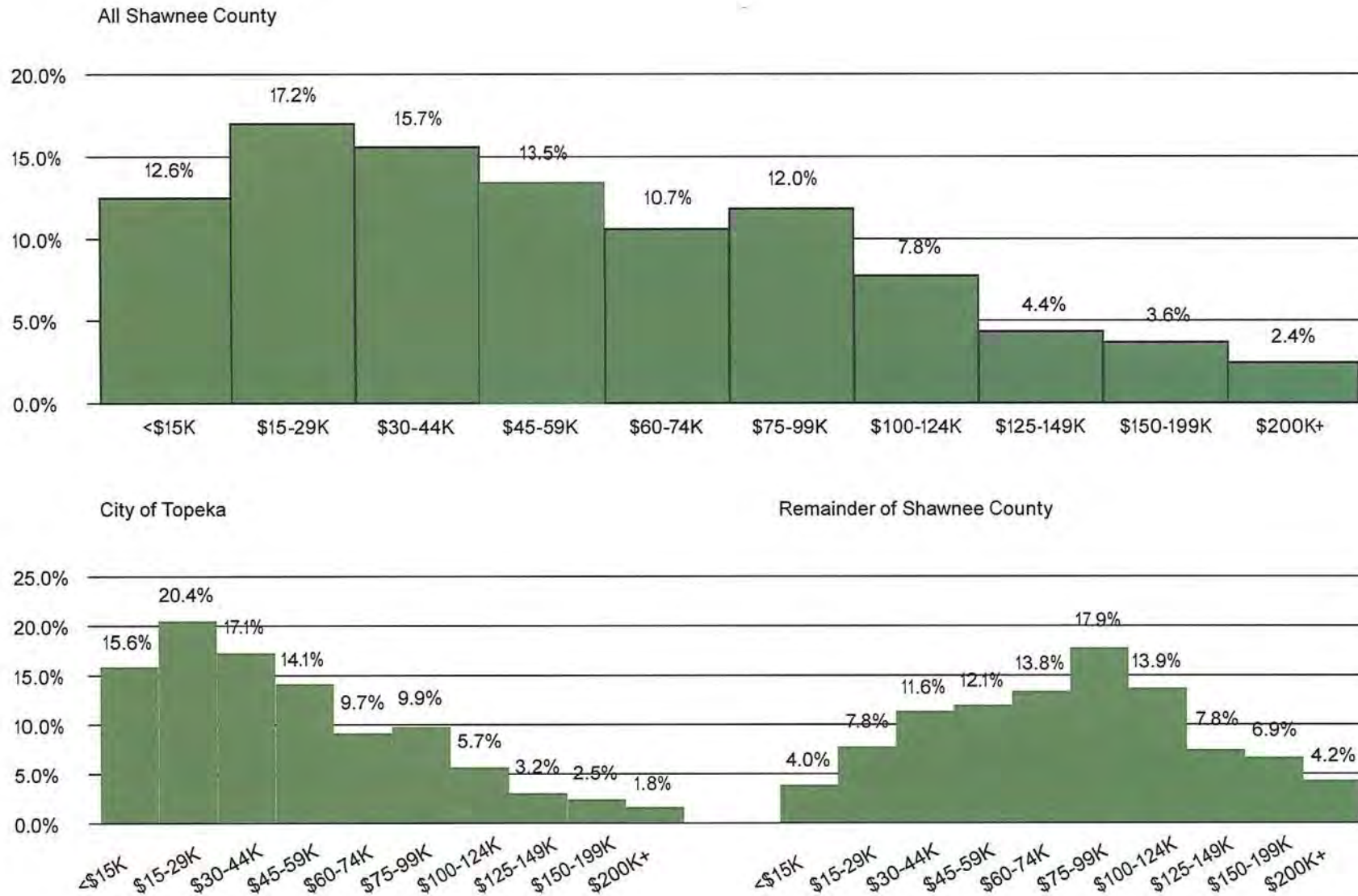
**FIGURE 6.3: Median Household Income (1990-2015)**

	1990	2000	2010	2015	'90-'00	'00-'10	'10-'15
Douglas Co	\$25,244	\$37,547	\$45,831	\$50,939	48.7%	22.1%	11.1%
Jackson Co	\$25,398	\$40,451	\$51,759	\$54,077	59.3%	28.0%	4.5%
Jefferson Co	\$29,048	\$45,535	\$56,886	\$57,236	56.8%	24.9%	0.6%
Osage Co	\$24,867	\$37,928	\$48,594	\$49,915	52.5%	28.1%	2.7%
Pottawatomie Co	\$25,305	\$40,176	\$53,430	\$60,216	58.8%	33.0%	12.7%
Shawnee Co	\$29,879	\$40,988	\$47,464	\$50,378	37.2%	15.8%	6.1%
Wabaunsee Co	\$27,727	\$41,710	\$52,133	\$54,688	50.4%	25.0%	4.9%
State of Kansas	\$27,291	\$40,624	\$49,424	\$52,205	48.9%	21.7%	5.6%
Rate of Inflation	-	-	-	-	31.8%	26.6%	7.9%

Source: US Census Bureau



Figure 6.4: Median Household Incomes



Source: US Census Bureau



## Labor Force Characteristics

Understanding the labor force and its dynamics is important to understanding how many workers are in the county, whether they are looking for work, and what kind of work they can accomplish. Several definitions are important to understanding these ideas, including:

- **Labor Force:** The population employed (with a job) plus unemployed (jobless, looking for a job, and available for work)
- **Job:** Full or Part Time Employment
- **Unemployment Rate:** The number of unemployed as a percentage of the labor force
- **Labor Participation Rate:** Labor force as a percentage of the population

Figure 6.5 shows how Shawnee County's unemployment rate and labor force has changed from 2000 to 2015. In 2015, Shawnee County's labor force was estimated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to be 91,600 workers, similar to what it was in 2000 but lower than its peaks prior to the recession. Two peaks were seen in the labor force over that period, reaching over 94,800 workers in 2004

Generally, an unemployment rate around 5 percent is considered ideal because it permits movement of workers to better opportunities, while providing a large enough pool of labor for employers to find replacements. The unemployment rate demonstrates a similar two-humped pattern with peaks in 2004 and 2010 at 6.0 and 7.0 percent respectively, and troughs in 2000, 2007, and 2015 at 3.9 percent, 4.6 percent, and 4.3 percent respectively. Shawnee County's unemployment rate tends to be comparable to that of the State of Kansas, though at times it is slightly higher. It also tends to be near or above those of its surrounding counties.

Comparing relative changes in the labor force to changes in population and the number of jobs from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), a more complicated picture emerges (Figure 6.6). In 2000, there were more than 122,000 jobs in the County. This number decreased to a trough in 2006, and then increased again. It was only in 2015 that the number of jobs surpassed the number in 2000. However, population grew steadily over that same time, stabilizing in 2010. This number is expected to resume growth as jobs continue to rebound in Shawnee County.

As noted previously, the labor force, that is those employed or looking for a job, fluctuated depending on the surrounding economy. Times of job **loses** **losses** often lead people to leave the labor pool, either "retiring" and no longer seeking work, or by physically leaving the county. Reactions in the labor force to changes

to the number of jobs often lag by a few years. The fact that the population continued to grow/remain stable over this period suggests that people stopped looking for work rather than leaving the community. This seems especially likely given Shawnee County's relatively older age; more people are of retirement age. As a result, Shawnee County's labor participation rate has also decreased steadily since 2004 from 55.4 percent to 51.3 percent. Effort needs to be made to attract new workers to the area to support recent job growth.

Figure 6.5: Unemployment Rate and Labor Force



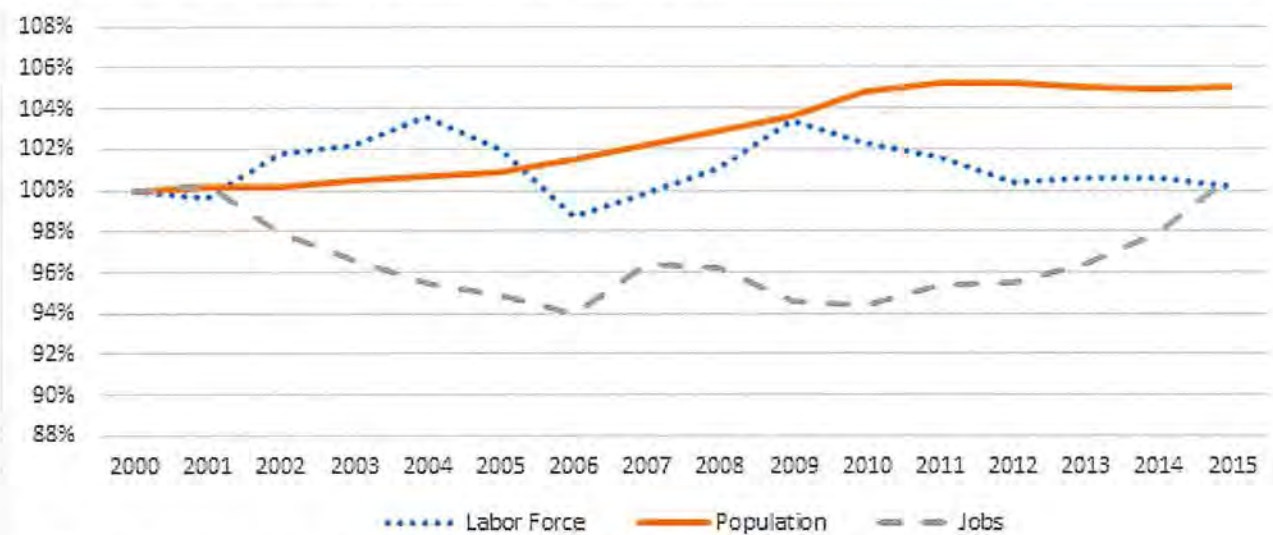
Source: US Department of Labor



## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Educational attainment plays an influential role in informing the kinds of jobs that the labor force can support (Figure 6.7). In 2014, 9.4 percent of Shawnee County's population had less than a high school degree, compared to 10 percent for the State of Kansas. Meanwhile, 28.9 percent of Shawnee County residents had a Bachelor's degree or higher, lower than the state at 30.7 percent. This likely explains some of the discrepancy in median incomes comparing Shawnee County and Kansas. Meanwhile, Topeka tends to be less educated than the County, supporting this theory. Topeka has a larger proportion of their population with less than high school and a smaller proportion of their population with college degrees. In the County outside of Topeka, small rural cities are also relatively well-educated, with over 70 percent having a high school or some college education.

Figure 6.6: Population, Employment, and Labor Force (indexed to 2000)



Source: US Department of Labor, US Bureau of Economic Analysis

## Businesses and Employment

The composition of economics can be measured in several distinct ways. The primary method includes identifying the number of employees in specific job sectors. The data presented in these tables were gathered for Shawnee County from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, one of the best sources of employment data.

In Shawnee County, businesses employing the most people are public administration, health care / social assistance, and retail trade, collectively providing 43 percent of jobs (Figure 6.8). In addition, Finance and Administration are also large employers, suggesting that much of Shawnee County's workforce is employed in white collar and service sector positions. However, in rural Shawnee County, workers are more likely to work in the manufacturing, educational services, and construction sectors. In addition, areas in Shawnee County outside Topeka have more jobs in the manufacturing, construction, and education industries.

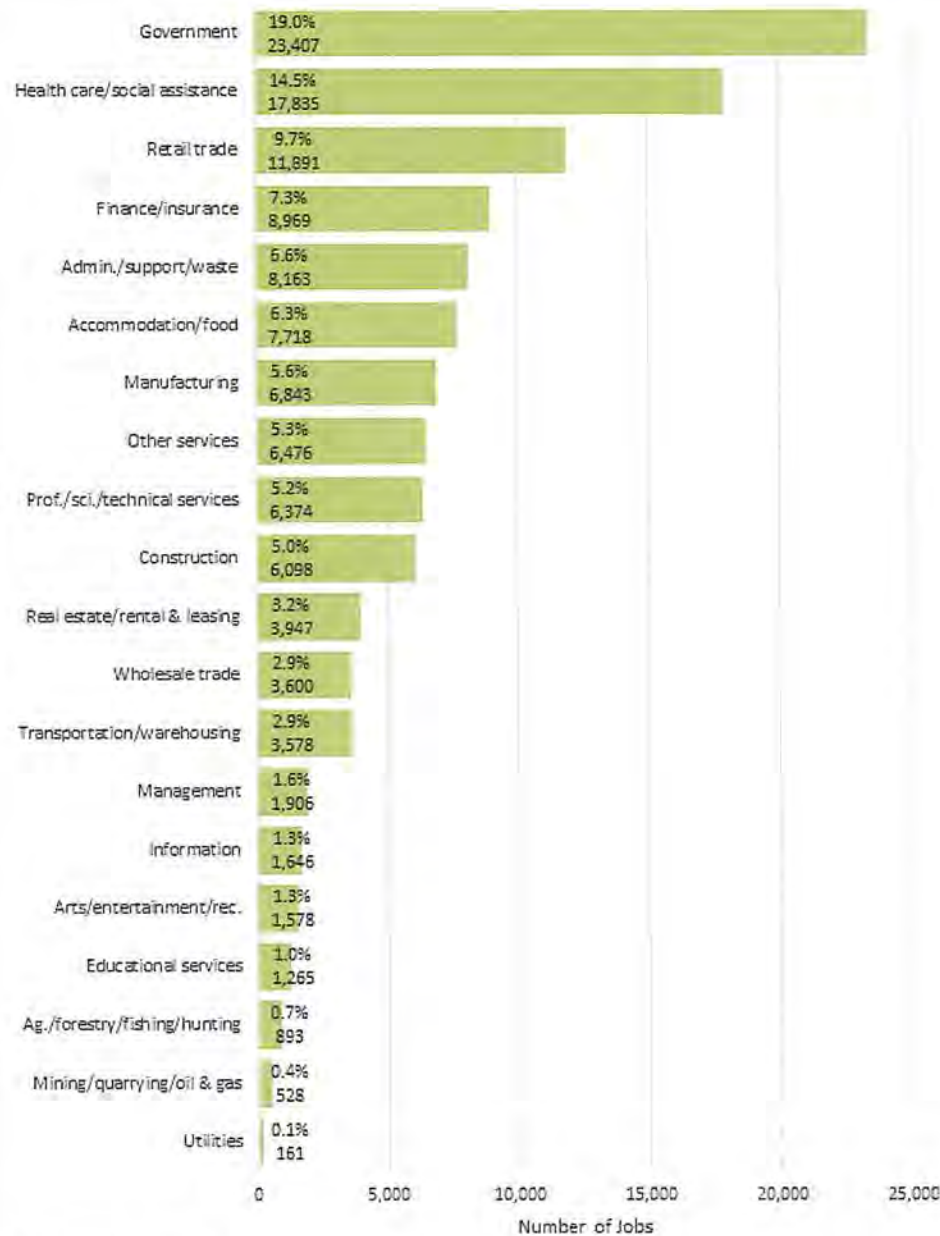
FIGURE 6.7: 2014 Educational Attainment of Residents 25 Years and Older

	TOPEKA	RURAL CITIES	UNINC. COUNTY	SHAWNEE COUNTY	STATE OF KANSAS
Less Than High School	11.3%	6.4%	4.6%	9.4%	10.0%
High School Graduate	31.6%	35.7%	30.2%	31.3%	27.2%
Some college	29.6%	34.8%	32.1%	30.4%	32.1%
Bachelor's Degree	17.2%	19.0%	22.6%	18.7%	19.9%
Master's/Professional Degree	9.2%	3.8%	9.5%	9.2%	9.7%
Doctorate Degree	1.1%	0.3%	1.0%	1.1%	1.1%

Source: US Census Bureau



**Figure 6.8:** All Shawnee County: Jobs by Industry, 2015



Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis

in the manufacturing, construction, and education industries.

Altogether, these factors affect the income of workers in the region. It also affects the opportunities for attracting businesses based on the qualifications of the workforce and available support of other industries. Given Shawnee County's geographic location, major employers, and employee base, potential sectors for expansion include advanced systems technology, food manufacturing, logistics and distribution, and professional and financial services.

About 18 percent of the county's businesses are outside Topeka, indicating that many businesses tend to be clustered in Topeka. Businesses that are more likely to be in rural areas include agriculture, utilities, and construction. Companies less prevalent in rural areas include management, health care, public administration, and accommodation/food services. These results are not surprising, and make sense as to where businesses locate because of business needs. In terms of number of employees, agriculture is not as significant a factor in the economy as many expect, though this is just one estimate of agricultural workers. However, in terms of economic value and in supporting the rest of the economy, including the manufacturing, wholesale trade, and transportation and warehousing industries, agriculture provides an economic engine for much of the County's GDP. This is explored more in the 'Agriculture' section of this chapter.

From 2005 to 2015, Shawnee County added 4,712 jobs, a 4 percent growth, as seen in Figure 6.9. Much of this was driven by the finance and administrative industries, though health care, accommodations/ food service and management also increased significantly. In total, these five sectors added nearly 8,800 jobs. Sectors other than this that grew by 10 percent or more also included professional, scientific, and technical services, educational service, and mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction.



Industries with major job losses included retail trade and information, each of which decreased by over 1,000 jobs. Transportation and warehousing is also estimated to have had a large loss in jobs from 2005 to 2015. Other relatively large job losses other than those mentioned include in agriculture and in utilities, both estimated to lose more than 14 percent of their total jobs. This continues a trend towards less workers in agriculture in Shawnee County. However, **Government government** as an entire sector did not decrease substantially these years (which includes local, state, and federal governments).

Figure 6.10 shows the branches of government. Federal civilian jobs have had a large increase over the past decade, while local government grew modestly. More noticeably, more than 1,000 **job jobs** were lost in state government, which has a larger impact on Shawnee County as the State Capitol. Military jobs in Shawnee County also decreased, though at a more modest level. Even with the large drop in state government employment, it remains a major sector of the economy. Overall, the gains in federal civilian and local government jobs offset the loss in State government and military jobs.

**FIGURE 6.9: Change in Jobs by Industry, 2005-2015**

	2005	2010	2015	'05-'15 CHANGE	'05-'15 %CHANGE
Government	23,476	25,265	23,407	-69	-0.3%
Health care & social assistance	16,486	17,360	17,835	1,349	8.2%
Retail trade	13,057	11,392	11,891	-1,166	-8.9%
Finance and insurance	7,354	8,043	8,969	1,615	22.0%
Admin., support, & waste management	4,695	5,313	8,163	3,468	73.9%
Accommodation and food services	6,444	7,773	7,718	1,274	19.8%
Manufacturing	7,295	6,488	6,843	-452	-6.2%
Other services	7,088	6,535	6,476	-612	-8.6%
Prof., sci., and technical services	5,608	6,170	6,374	766	13.7%
Construction	6,233	5,475	6,098	-135	-2.2%
Real estate, rental, & leasing	3,849	3,780	3,947	98	2.5%
Wholesale trade	3,818	3,435	3,600	-218	-5.7%
Transportation and warehousing	4,807*	4,097*	3,578	-1,229*	-25.6%*
Management of companies	844	1,000	1,906	1,062	125.8%
Information	2,935	2,016	1,646	-1,289	-43.9%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	1,614	1,699	1,578	-36	-2.2%
Educational services	1,104	1,016	1,265	161	14.6%
Agriculture & Related Activities	1,049*	951*	893	-156*	-14.9%*
Mining, quarrying, & oil/gas	191	389	528	337	176.4%
Utilities	217*	185*	161	-56*	-25.8%*
Total employment (Number of Jobs)	118,164	118,382	122,876	4,712	4.0%

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

**FIGURE 6.10: Change in Jobs by Industry, 2005-2015**

	2005	2010	2015	'05-'15 CHANGE	'05-'15 %CHANGE
Federal, Civilian	2,632	3,675	3,437	805	30.6%
Federal, Military	1,116	1,045	802	-314	-28.1%
State government	9,359	9,208	8,330	-1,029	-11.0%
Local government	10,369	11,337	10,838	469	4.5%
Government	23,476	25,265	23,407	-69	-0.3%

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis



## Tourism

The travel sector is an integral part of Shawnee County's economy, contributing nearly \$324 million in expenditures and sustaining nearly 4,700 jobs (Figure 6.11). Tourism Economics an Oxford Economics Company, conducted an economic impact study of tourism in Kansas using the most current data from 2015. This report enables us to quantify, track and compare the travel and tourism's importance for Kansas' vitality.

From 2011-2015, the amount of expenditures by travelers has fluctuated. However, 2015 marks its

lowest year of the five at \$324 million compared to \$342 million the year before. As a result, the number of jobs related to tourism has similarly decreased, as has the total wages paid to tourism workers. However, on an average per-job basis, wages have increased for tourism workers.

Most spending for tourism pays for food and beverages, followed by transportation, including local and air transportation (Figure 6.12). Together, these costs are more than half of visitor expenditures in the county. Other expenses supporting Shawnee County's economy include retail (19 percent), and lodging (16 percent)

FIGURE 6.11: Economic Impact of Tourism for Shawnee County

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2011-2015 % CHANGE	% OF STATE
Annual Spent (\$1,000s)	\$334,686	\$327,320	\$328,466	\$341,618	\$323,607	-3.3%	5.0%
Employment	4,879	4,811	4,885	4,967	4,683	-4.0%	5.5%
Total Wages (\$1,000s)	\$127,769	\$127,807	\$130,202	\$135,216	\$129,204	1.1%	5.2%
Ave. \$/Job	\$26,188	\$26,566	\$26,653	\$27,223	\$27,590	5.4%	

Source: Kansas Department of Commerce

FIGURE 6.12: 2015 Shawnee County Visitor Spending by Sector

	NUMBER (\$1,000S)	PERCENT
Lodging*	\$52,435	16.2%
Food & Beverages	\$89,454	27.6%
Retail	\$60,605	18.7%
Recreation**	\$36,256	11.2%
Transportation***	\$84,857	26.2%
Total	\$323,607	100.0%

\* Lodging includes 2nd home valuation

\*\* Recreation includes casino wagering

\*\*\* Transport includes local and air transportation

Source: Kansas Department of Commerce



## Agriculture

Agriculture, agribusiness and agritourism is important to Shawnee County. Foremost, it shapes the county economy and provides one of its most valuable natural resources. Though farm acreage is decreasing, the market value increased from \$43.9 million in 2007 (2012 dollars) to \$50.3 million in 2012, a 14.4 percent increase. Agriculture doesn't directly employ a large workforce, but its economic impact, including the food and food processing industries, is estimated to support \$2 billion and 4,577 jobs according to a recent Kansas Department of Agriculture analysis. These sectors, directly and indirectly, direct, indirect, and induced effects contribute roughly 29 percent of the county's economy.

Meanwhile, agritourism, combining traditional agriculture and tourism, is also becoming important. Agritourism encourages tourists to visit Kansas farms, ranches, and wineries and participate in the rural lifestyle. In the process, these activities provide lifelong memories for tourists and extra revenue for Kansas farmers. Activities might include outdoor recreation, activities, educational experiences or opportunities to shop, dine or stay in Kansas. This helps sustain the rural way of life and supports local producers. 86th Street Orchard is a perfect example of agritourism in Shawnee County. This provides an opportunity to expand tourism in Shawnee County through agritourism opportunities.

For these reasons, in addition to a desire by many residents to protect their rural lifestyles, efforts should be made to foster the compatible growth of rural and unincorporated cities while protecting prime farmland. This new growth needs to consider lifecycle housing opportunities, allowing people to remain in communities throughout the cycle of aging, so one can continue contributing to the community if one desires and is not forced to move away for a certain type of housing. This would provide an option for young families and retirees, among others, to live in unincorporated towns in addition to choices in cities or rural farms and ranches.



## Retail Sales

Shawnee County, and Topeka in particular, are a major retail center as seen in Figure 6.13. In 2016, the total retail sales of the County were estimated at more than \$2.53 billion, of which over 90 percent is comprised of general retail sales and the remaining is comprised of food and drink sales. Given Shawnee County's demographic characteristics, this exceeds the expected \$2.44 billion in sales for the County by some \$93.6 million dollars or 3.8 percent. The fact that the supply (actual retail sales) exceeds demand (potential retail sales) likely indicates that Shawnee County's retail is attracting additional spending from outside of the County. This is called a retail surplus.

However, Shawnee County also appears to be losing some food and drink spending to outside of the County, i.e. its supply (actual food and drink sales) is about \$11.8 million or 5 percent lower than its demand (expected food and drink sales). This is known as a retail leakage and likely indicates residents are traveling to other places for those purchases which indicates the potential for new businesses.

Most of this retail power is focused in the City of Topeka as would be expected. More than 87 percent of businesses and 90 percent of the County's \$2.53 billion in sales are found in Topeka, with sales in Topeka topping \$719.6 million, which is 46 percent higher than expected. This large retail surplus occurs because most rural residents travel to Topeka for their shopping needs.

Shopping within Topeka primarily occurs along the Wanamaker corridor. Downtown Topeka also has commercial catering to downtown employees. Numerous small commercial areas are also scattered throughout Topeka that primarily serve residents living nearby.

**FIGURE 6.13: Retail Supply and Demand Analysis**

ESRI, 2016 ESTIMATES	DEMAND (RETAIL POTENTIAL)	SUPPLY (RETAIL SALES)	RETAIL GAP	LEAKAGE/ SURPLUS INDEX
<b>Shawnee County</b>				
Total	\$2,441,032,513	\$2,534,616,893	\$(93,584,380)	103.8
Retail Trade, NAICS 44-45	\$2,205,443,946	\$2,310,826,938	\$(105,382,992)	104.8
Food & Drink, NAICS 722	\$235,588,567	\$223,789,955	\$11,798,612	95.0
<b>City of Topeka</b>				
Total	\$1,580,339,893	\$ 2,299,952,386	\$(719,612,493)	146
Retail Trade, NAICS 44-45	\$1,428,026,412	\$2,088,974,866	\$(660,948,454)	146
Food & Drink, NAICS 722	\$152,313,481	\$210,977,520	\$(58,664,039)	139
<b>Remainder of Shawnee County</b>				
Total	\$860,692,620	\$ 234,664,507	\$(626,028,113)	27
Retail Trade, NAICS 44-45	\$777,417,534	\$221,852,072	\$(555,565,462)	29
Food & Drink, NAICS 722	\$83,275,086	\$12,812,435	\$(70,462,651)	15

Source: ESRI



*Retail Strip Development along Wanamaker in Topeka*



*Sommerset Cafe in Unincorporated Dover*



Despite Topeka's dominance of retail in Shawnee County, the remainder of the County still generates some \$234.7 million in sales. This includes small commercial centers in Rossville, Silver Lake, and Auburn, in addition to small retail areas such as that north of Topeka on US-75 and in unincorporated town centers such as Dover. However, given its population composition, it could be expected to generate some \$860.7 million, meaning it is leaking more than 72 percent of its potential sales. Most of this is probably from rural residents shopping in Topeka, but it also indicates an opportunity to develop and support rural retail above the existing businesses.

Figure 6.14 shows sales by specific industries within Shawnee County. The county's highest leakage comes from non-store retailers, including electronic shopping, vending machine operators, and direct selling establishments, for which the County generates only 57 percent of the expected sales. However, it is not surprising that Shawnee County does not have many retailers given the remote nature of that industry group. Other industry groups with leakages exceeding 20 percent include furniture and home furnishing stores, and gasoline stations, indicating the potential for additional businesses. Industry groups in Shawnee County that have retail surpluses above 20 percent of expected include miscellaneous store retailers, building materials, garden equipment, and supply stores, and sporting goods, hobby, book, and music stores.

**FIGURE 6.14:** Change in Industry, 2005-2015

ESRI, 2016 ESTIMATES	DEMAND (RETAIL POTENTIAL)	SUPPLY (RETAIL SALES)	RETAIL GAP	LEAKAGE/ SURPLUS INDEX
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers, NAICS 441	\$547,423,096	\$515,034,443	\$32,388,653	94.1
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores, NAICS 442	\$62,935,133	\$45,101,621	\$17,833,512	71.7
Electronics & Appliance Stores, NAICS 443	\$92,631,207	\$103,631,910	\$(11,000,703)	111.9
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores, NAICS 444	\$101,989,416	\$150,852,702	\$(48,863,286)	147.9
Food & Beverage Stores, NAICS 445	\$391,785,534	\$343,723,331	\$48,062,203	87.7
Health & Personal Care Stores, NAICS 446	\$109,901,385	\$116,813,092	\$(6,911,707)	106.3
Gasoline Stations, NAICS 447	\$164,097,957	\$125,160,916	\$38,937,041	76.3
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores, NAICS 448	\$71,184,055	\$76,301,463	\$(5,117,408)	107.2
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores, NAICS 451	\$53,215,413	\$72,602,456	\$(19,387,043)	136.4
General Merchandise Stores, NAICS 452	\$479,419,896	\$567,470,558	\$(88,050,662)	118.4
Miscellaneous Store Retailers, NAICS 453	\$91,750,262	\$171,902,156	\$(80,151,894)	187.4
Nonstore Retailers, NAICS 454	\$39,110,592	\$22,232,290	\$16,878,302	56.8
Food Services & Drinking Places, NAICS 722	\$235,588,567	\$223,789,955	\$11,798,612	95.0

Source: ESRI



## CURRENT POLICY

Currently, As of 2018, economic development in Shawnee County is primarily carried out by GO Topeka a partner of Shawnee County, Topeka, the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce, in addition to other organizations in the county. This is helped by efforts such as Heartland Visioning which promotes planning throughout the community, including creating positive attitudes about economic development.

### JEDO and GO Topeka

The primary actors in the current economic development policy are the Joint Economic Development Organization (JEDO), established between Shawnee County and the City of Topeka in 2001. JEDO is funded through the half cent county wide retailers sales tax to be used for economic development.

GO Topeka is a private not-for-profit organization dedicated to enhancing economic development in Topeka and Shawnee County. GO Topeka is governed by business professionals who serve on its board of directors. GO Topeka currently administers JEDO funds for economic development.

GO Topeka seeks to create exceptional opportunities for growth, prosperity, innovation, and economic diversity and vibrancy that positively impact current and future citizens of Topeka and Shawnee County by attracting world-class companies, providing existing companies with the knowledge and resources to reach their highest potential, and cultivating entrepreneurial development and growth. Since 2002, it has generated 11,000 new and retained jobs and \$1.3 billion in capital investments as of February 2015.

GO Topeka offers programs for local businesses, including economic incentives as well as educational programs designed to enhance business success facilitated through Entrepreneurial & Minority Business Development and retention and expansion efforts.

Some initiatives may include:

- GO Topeka partnerships with Washburn University and Washburn Tech to promote workforce development
- Business retention activities that remove barriers and provide opportunities for growth
- Breakfast Buzz quarterly workshops
- Small Bbusiness Aawards
- Small business courses to support entrepreneurs
- Educational sessions to match companies with vendor opportunities

To attract businesses, GO Topeka markets Shawnee County to site selectors, corporate realtors, and companies interested in relocating or expanding. Guided by a targeted marketing plan for key industries, staff cultivates awareness and builds local, regional, national, and international relationships. It also uses traditional marketing tools such as print and digital advertising to promote the area. It also promotes economic development incentives and explains how incentives may be related to your project.

It also created the KANZA Kanza Fire Commerce Park by selecting the location that encompassed the most desirable development characteristics (i.e., topography, soil composition, transportation, utilities, etc.). Kanza Fire's acreage, highway and rail access, and easy development attributes give Topeka and Shawnee County a competitive advantage for relocation and expansion projects.

## Incentives

The half-cent sales tax for economic development activities enables Shawnee County to provide incentives for site acquisition, infrastructure, equipment purchases, training, and other related activities. This focuses financial resources on projects that substantially impact the economy. Local and state incentives are also available, depending on the project.

### LOCAL INCENTIVES

GO Topeka has flexible incentives to. Local incentives are flexible to assist companies and the community. For the most part, they are performance-based and paid as the company meets committed benchmarks like number of new jobs, average hourly wages, and capital investment. Funds are available throughout Shawnee County. Possible incentives include:

- Cash grants for jobs, training, or capital investment
- Free or reduced land
- Assistance with infrastructure
- Neighborhood Revitalization programs
- Downtown Redevelopment Grant

Kansas also offers financial incentives for rural communities and businesses looking to locate or expand in Kansas. Programs include retention of withholding taxes, investment tax credits, sales tax project exemptions, and revolving loan funds for local infrastructure projects, or loans/grants to assist rural communities in improving infrastructure, housing, and urgent needs.



## TOPEKA / SHAWNEE COUNTY FIRST OPPORTUNITY FUND FINANCING PRODUCTS AND FINANCING ACTIVITY

Entrepreneurship is also encouraged through the First Opportunity Fund (FOF), especially low-income entrepreneurs or other business owners who do not have access to conventional financing. FOF offers the financing products and is operated as a not-for-profit organization run as part of GO Topeka Entrepreneurial Minority and Business Development. It helps business owners qualify for a loan of up to \$100,000. It also offers business consultation and counseling in addition to mentoring, education, and training. Finally it provides access to networking opportunities, connecting to other business resources, and provides a credit score assessment.

Services are confidential, professional, and guidance only without losing control of business decisions. FOF helps the community grow by helping local businesses create jobs and increase production. To qualify, a Shawnee County business must:

- Be owned by a low-income person (an annual income less than 80% of median family income);
- Be in an economically distressed area; or
- Employ (or will employ) low-income individuals.

## TARGETED BUSINESS SECTORS INCENTIVES

Several business sectors are targeted for incentives, including food processing, advanced systems technology, professional and financial services, and logistics and distribution. These industries are attracted by specific marketing which showcases Shawnee County's advantages for those fields, including nearby educational and research opportunities, international peer employers, and other locational advantages. Often, these business sectors are pointed towards local and state incentives, and helped throughout the process of business attraction and retention, including:

- Up to a ten-year property tax exemption on real property
- Available public-owned shovel-ready sites
- Additional local incentives based on jobs, average hourly wage and capital investment
- Workforce training funds
- Infrastructure assistance or industrial revenue bond financing
- State income tax credits and Sales Tax Incentive for construction
- No property taxes on machinery/equipment acquired or placed into service in Kansas after 2006
- High Performance Incentive Program

## SMALL BUSINESS INCENTIVE

The Topeka/Shawnee County Small Business Incentive is a matching program that offers small businesses assistance in the areas of employee skills upgrades, equipment purchases and facility construction and renovation. Four incentives are offered:

1. Small Business Employee Training Grant: Up to \$750 per employee for small independent businesses to enhance employee skillset through training, skills enhancement or certifications.
2. Small Business 50/50 Equipment Purchase Reimbursement: Up to \$5,000 match for the purchase of new or used equipment needed for daily operations of the small business.
3. Matching Small Business 50/50 Construction and Renovation Reimbursement: Up to \$5,000 match for enhancing an existing business or constructing a new property.
4. Marketing Incentive: Up to \$750 to develop or enhance marketing programs for small businesses, including for website update or building, newspaper, magazine, radio or television ads, banners, signage, or promotional materials.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EXEMPTION

The economic development exemption enables companies in manufacturing, research & development, or distribution for real and personal property tax exemption for up to 10 years. This exemption can be up to 100% from ad valorem taxation of the appraised valuation of buildings, land and tangible personal property that qualifies. The exemption is only available for the constructing or expanding certain types of manufacturing, research and development, and distribution facilities, if it results in new employment.

## INDUSTRIAL REVENUE BONDS

Tax abatements through Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRB) can finance up to 100% of a company's investment in facilities. IRBs are usually purchased by a bank in lieu of a bank loan, triggering a potential property tax abatement. Shawnee County may issue IRBs and allow companies to finance the cost of land, buildings and equipment, and related costs of development and financing. Qualifying businesses in Topeka may receive ad valorem exemptions based on the number of new jobs created (1% for each job) up to 70 new jobs (70%), and upon average hourly wages up to a 30% additional exemption. Payments in lieu of taxes are still required for property for which an ad valorem tax exemption has been granted. Additional exemptions may be granted based on substantial capital investment and its value. The total exemption based on jobs and wages shall generally not exceed 80% of new taxes assessed. Property tax abatements are limited to a maximum of 10 years at up to 100% of property taxes due.



## Topeka/Shawnee County Holistic Economic Development Strategy

In 2016, GO Topeka spearheaded a Holistic Economic Development Strategy for Shawnee County to guide economic development. It seeks to improve the community by addressing the full range of factors influencing the community's competitiveness, including talent, education and training, infrastructure, business climate, and quality of life and place. After conducting community engagement and providing an assessment of current factors, the following five goals were developed to lead implementation:

- **Develop Homegrown Talent.** Shawnee County draws residents from small communities and rural areas, while losing more residents to other metro competitors. Additionally, many higher paying jobs in the County are held by those living outside of the community while educational attainment rates are rising slower in the County than the state. To address this, the plan focuses on cultivating homegrown talent to make the workforce more competitive. First, it seeks to align a talent pipeline to use local talent to drive economic growth. Efforts include ensuring childhood education programs are effective, preparing students for college and careers, and expanding continuing education opportunities for adults.
- **Create Vibrant and Attractive Places.** Shawnee County is affordable, easy to travel, and has excellent recreational and educational opportunities, but lacks social offerings and walkable mixed-use districts, key factors in recruiting employees. To improve aesthetics, infrastructure, and entertainment opportunities, the strategy seeks to optimize programs improving quality of place, to strengthen the existing regional core, and to invest in infrastructure that promotes quality of place.
- **Grow a Diverse Economy.** The County's key economic drivers are government, health care, and other corporate and service-based sectors like finance and insurance, while GO Topeka focuses on attracting advanced systems

technology, food manufacturing, logistics and distribution and professional and financial services. However, there is room to foster a stronger entrepreneurial culture. As such, the strategy recommends enhancing the region's entrepreneurial ecosystem, maintaining best practices for economic development programs, and creating policies that support general economic development.

- **Promote a Positive Image.** Community pride was noted as low in their survey, and a pessimism regarding the region seemed common, reaffirming the findings of the Comprehensive Plan survey. To counteract these feelings, the strategy seeks to promote a positive image through a unified marketing effort and project the positive changes that are occurring in the county to residents and outside talent that may not be familiar with recent improvements.
- **Collaborate for a Strong Community.** The report notes that real per capita income increased, but that wage growth has not kept pace with inflation. In addition, poverty is down but many residents are still below the poverty line. To ensure that the economic benefits of growth are realized by all residents and workers in the county, the strategy seeks to promote inclusive economic growth and strengthen the community with a focus on health, safety, and engagement by all people and neighborhoods.

To carry out these efforts, the strategy focuses on aligning the diverse organizations already improving the community and economy, and by organizing networks and staff capable of fulfilling these goals. Largely, these findings and goals correspond to those in this plan. As such, this plan should work in conjuncture with the efforts of GO Topeka and the County's Holistic Economic Development Strategy, especially as it is implemented.



## DISCUSSION

Shawnee County's labor force has been decreasing since 2009 despite an increase in the number of jobs over that period. This runs counter to population trends as well, which has generally increased. These factors and the County's low unemployment rate may lead to a shortage of qualified workers in the future. In addition, people are aging out of the workforce, so the county should actively attract younger workers. Lower rates of education in Topeka bring Shawnee County's educational attainment rates lower than the state. As a result, median incomes tend to be lower. Shawnee County's median household income has also grown slower than inflation.

Shawnee County's key economic drivers include government, health care, and corporate and service based sectors including retail, finance, insurance, and administration. However, unincorporated Shawnee County tends to have businesses that are tied to agricultural and blue collar activities. Businesses that Shawnee County is well positioned to attract include advanced systems technology, food manufacturing, logistics and distribution, and professional and financial services due to several unique benefits, including the county's location. Some of Shawnee County's largest sectors have declined the past decade, including state government. That growth has been made up for by growth in other professional sectors. Agriculture is not a large employer of those in the county, but it has a wide-ranging impact on other related services, including the food and food processing sectors.

Shawnee County attracts \$2.53 billion in retail sales, some of which comes from surrounding counties. Sales for food & drink establishments, furnishing stores and gasoline stations are lower than expected, signifying the possibility of business opportunities. Retail power is concentrated in Topeka, but much of the purchasing power is found outside of the City. This

suggests there is an opportunity to bring additional retail sales into the rest of the County. Much of this activity is bolstered by tourism in the area.

Shawnee County has been actively promoting economic development over the past 15 years. Through JEDO, GO Topeka, and Heartland Visioning, Shawnee County has developed a suite of incentives and provides technical assistance to using those. Ensuring that businesses know about these incentives, especially small businesses that are looking to expand within the county, will be crucial to grow businesses with a strong stake in the County. As the Topeka/Shawnee County Holistic Economic Development Strategy reaches the implementation stage, support should be provided as possible.

Several other trends in Shawnee County have raised several economic development policy questions to be addressed:

**Cooperation between the five cities and the county.** Working cooperatively with the five cities is integral to the success of the county. This includes coordinating marketing efforts and helping cities maintain good relationship between them, businesses, industry, and residents. Doing so allows the entire area to thrive and to provide a variety of different living and economic advantages to businesses.

**Protect economically beneficial resources.** Shawnee County contains some excellent natural resources that provide economic opportunities including limestone and sand. These materials also benefit the region by making construction materials more affordable for everyone. Beyond that, agricultural land is important to the region's economy. Protecting these resources can help benefit the region in the long run.

**Promote job opportunities for the entire community.** The county's role in economic development should be to provide good infrastructure, a high quality of life for residents, and by producing qualified workers. The county currently has relatively good infrastructure and also good programs to help businesses plug into it. However, care must be taken to ensure businesses are not over-incentivized to come to the area. Community pride, safety, good schools, affordable housing, and amenities are all part of providing a high quality of life and attracting workers. As for workers, it can be hard to fill jobs with reliable skilled labor but by promoting education and partnerships between businesses and educational institutions, the county can take a role in improving the situation.

**Recognize changes in the economy.** The economy has changed rapidly, and helping communities react is important. First, internet is more important than ever and ways to ensure access helps with the attraction of businesses. Second, changing shopping trends has resulted in several small business closures; helping small businesses react to the changing economy is important, especially in the smaller retail markets of Rossville, Silver Lake, Dover, and Auburn. Simplifying incentives may help small businesses take advantage of those opportunities. For the most part, the goals and recommendations of this plan help address these issues, though as new potential problems arise, this plan should be revisited to ensure that it remains current.



### Scenic & Historic Byways

Because of tourism’s importance to Shawnee County, additional opportunities should be identified to promote tourism. One specific program that may be valuable is the Kansas Scenic Byways Program which identifies and designates scenic and historic roadways for the enjoyment of visitors, residents, and local communities in Kansas, while promoting tourism and educating the public about the state’s environment, history and culture. Shawnee County currently has one Scenic Byway, but there is a potential for additional byways to be designated as it is a grassroots process.

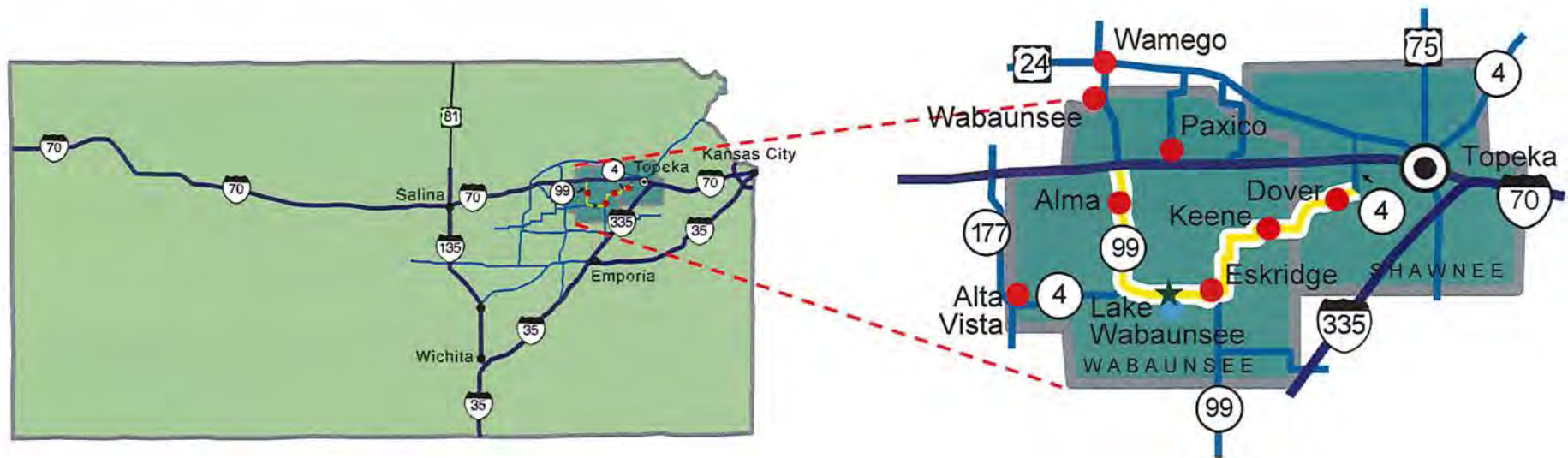
### NATIVE STONE SCENIC BYWAY

The Native Stone Scenic Byway runs on K-4 and K-99 highways along the Mission and Mill Creek valleys in Shawnee and Wabaunsee counties. It is an area of immense beauty and fascinating history, known for its native limestone buildings and the Flint Hills. There are also many historical and cultural sites along the way, and plenty of places and towns to visit, including Dover in Shawnee County.

### THE OREGON & CALIFORNIA TRAILS

Shawnee County has another opportunity for a scenic byway designation. The Oregon and California Trails traversed Shawnee County from east-to-west-to-east, roughly along the alignment of US-40 Highway east of Topeka and US-24 Highway west of Topeka. There were was at least four ferry's ferries crossing the Kansas River in Shawnee County, with the Pappan's Ferry in Topeka's heart being a crossing of major importance. It could also tie into the potential park development proposed for Topeka's riverfront.

Figure 6.15: Map of the Native Stone Scenic Byway



Source: Kansas Scenic Byways, Native Stone Brochure



## Goals and Recommendations

### ED-1: Train and educate a highly-qualified workforce for new and existing jobs within the county.

1. Cultivate homegrown talent to continually enhance the workforce by connecting individuals in the community to training and employment opportunities for in-demand positions.
2. Encourage partnerships between educational institutions and businesses to help fill in the cradle-to-career pipeline that groups like JEDO and GO Topeka have begun to create.
3. Attract new workers to live in Shawnee County through unified positive marketing of the county and its sub-areas.

### ED-2: Encourage entrepreneurship and the development and growth of small businesses.

1. Strengthen support for entrepreneurs and small businesses, helping increase their likelihood of success and nurturing business development from the ground up.
2. Promote available incentives to small businesses that may not be aware of existing opportunities.
3. Support businesses that are maturing to ensure that they have access to the workforce and capital needed to expand within Shawnee County.
4. Evaluate current regulations regarding home-based occupations in unincorporated county to balance the compatibility of land uses, carrying capacity of infrastructure, and economic growth.

### ED-3: Build on the economic strengths of the County using available opportunities.

1. Market existing incentives for unincorporated areas in Shawnee County that build on the county's strengths, ensuring that funds provided align with benefits.
2. Encourage the attraction of jobs related to Shawnee County's strengths, including advanced systems technology, food manufacturing, logistics and distribution, and professional and financial services. Focus on well-paying jobs that can improve the quality of life for Shawnee County residents.
3. Foster and support a local food movement. Encourage/support development of community-based food systems to help support Shawnee County's agricultural industry, increase access to locally produced fruits and vegetables, and encourage residents to keep their food dollars here in the county.

### ED-4: Promote tourism using natural, historic, and cultural characteristics and protect resources like sand and limestone for mineral extraction.

1. Support the development of agricultural tourism by providing for uses which help promote and maintain local farming operations and rural heritage and character.
2. Market natural, historic, and cultural resources as opportunities to develop viable businesses, including focuses on the history of trails, Kansas statehood, civil rights, and environment. This should complement efforts by the Native Stone Scenic Byway and the Oregon Trail Park.
3. Protect rural scenic landscapes, particularly those that support tourism and recreation opportunities.
4. Explore the feasibility of designating an Oregon and California Trail Scenic Byway capitalizing on the area's rich history. Utilize the new park that is being constructed on Topeka's Riverfront to further this project.

### ED-5: Constantly improve quality of life to attract and retain businesses and workers, including adequate retail activity to serve residents throughout the county.

1. Find ways to attract employees within Shawnee County to live within the County.
2. Focus on improving quality of life, including schools, quality of development, commercial and cultural offers, and other such factors that help attract and retain businesses and workers.
3. Encourage the development of neighborhood commercial establishments near residents in the county that are not adequately served.
4. Ensure that the impacts of businesses on their neighbors are considered, including the parking and noise effects of semi-trucks.

### ED-6: Coordinate economic development between all jurisdictions and areas of the county.

1. Work with JEDO, GO Topeka, and other economic development stakeholders to provide a consistent marketing to those living inside and outside of the county.
2. Ensure that organizations involved in transportation, infrastructure, and services for the county are aligned with regards to their plans for enhancement, maintenance, and replacement of infrastructure.
3. Support the implementation of the Topeka-Shawnee County Holistic Economic Development Strategy, especially those organizations that help to implement the plan.







## CHAPTER SEVEN

# Implementation

This chapter provides a road map of necessary steps to implement the provisions outlined in the Shawnee County Comprehensive Plan.



## IMPLEMENTATION

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is just the beginning. It is absolutely necessary to examine the tools available to implement the comprehensive plan once it has been adopted. Traditionally, there are three tools available to do this, including:

- Land Division Regulations, including plat exemptions and subdivision and platting,
- Zoning Regulations, and
- Capital Improvements Programming

Given the large number of political and taxing jurisdictions within Shawnee County, the plan also recommends strengthening Intergovernmental Cooperation efforts. In some instances, it may be advantageous to execute interlocal agreements to clarify expectations and roles and responsibilities.

Finally, plans need champions. County officials need to use the plan as a reference tool when making decisions.

A plan implementation matrix has been developed to help guide initial plan implementation steps.

## GENERAL LAND USE REGULATIONS

One of the primary purposes of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide recommendations for regulations to guide future land use decisions in the unincorporated areas of Shawnee County. Some of the land use recommendations proposed in this plan document diverge from the regulations currently in effect in Shawnee County. Following approval of the Comprehensive Plan, Shawnee County should undertake a formal review of its zoning and subdivision regulations and make changes as necessary to assist with plan implementation.

As mentioned in previous chapters, 46,552 people currently live in unincorporated Shawnee County. This is 3 ½ times more than is expected based on comparisons with similar Kansas counties (i.e. Douglas, Johnson, Riley, and Sedgwick Counties). This large population has had dramatic impacts:

- **Loss of Agricultural Lands.** The loss of nearly 30,000 acres (45.7 square miles) of agricultural lands to very low-density residential development since 1960 has undoubtedly reduced the economic output of this important industry in Shawnee County. There is a community interest in protecting the remaining agricultural lands for future generations. Roughly 8% of the total land area of Shawnee County has been converted from productive agricultural lands to very low-density residential development. This exurban development costs county taxpayers more to provide public services.
- **Disruption of Agricultural Operations.** As more families that are not engaged in agriculture continue to move into unincorporated areas in Shawnee County, the potential for conflicts between agricultural operations and new residential property-owners increases. This includes the introduction of commuter traffic onto roads designed for agricultural land uses. It also

includes a noticeable increase in noxious weeds as homeowners are typically less familiar with rural property maintenance standards.

- **Unrealistic Expectations for Public Services.** As families move from cities into the unincorporated areas in Shawnee County, they bring with them an unrealistic set of expectations about the types and levels of services Shawnee County should provide for their new homes. Counties are not cities and are not equipped to provide the same types of public services at the same service standards as cities. As more residential development occurs in unincorporated Shawnee County, public agency budgets are strained.

Rural lifestyles are attractive to many people. Because of this, more families will move in to unincorporated areas of Shawnee County. Steps need to be taken to ensure that new residential development occurs in a responsible manner. This means that development not occur in environmentally fragile areas (i.e., floodplains, wetlands and steep slopes) or on the most productive agricultural lands. Finally, it means that appropriate public services at appropriate service levels be in place before development occurs. For this reason, Shawnee County should carefully consider the best approach for strengthening land use regulations throughout the entire unincorporated area.



## Topeka ETJ and UGA

Currently, The City of Topeka has sole responsibility for land division approvals in the entire Topeka Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ), including the Urban Growth Area (UGA). Figure 7.1 on page 150 shows the UGA and ETJ.

Topeka has recently established relatively strict standards for new land divisions in the UGA. Because the UGA is the area adjacent to the current corporate limits of Topeka and because this is the area that Topeka plans to annex within the next 20 years, Shawnee County should support Topeka's efforts and approach to regulate growth and development inside the UGA. Shawnee County should work closely with Topeka to strengthen the standards for new land divisions in the non-UGA portion of the ETJ as well. There are several approaches that could be used alone or in combination:

- Shawnee County could request the City of Topeka make specific changes to their subdivision ordinance while simultaneously making specific changes to its own zoning ordinance.
- Shawnee County could execute an interlocal agreement with Topeka more carefully delineating land division, land use and land development responsibilities between the city and county. K.S.A. 12-744 and K.S.A. 12-2901 delineate the process for this.
- The Shawnee County Commission could notify the Topeka City Council of its intent to begin exercising land subdivision authority inside the ETJ. This would require the creation of a joint planning commission for the ETJ. K.S.A. 12-750 delineates the process for this.

Regardless of the option chosen, there are several specific land use regulation changes that should be implemented as quickly as practical following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

## Homes on Agricultural Lands

One primary home should be allowed on every farm or ranch in Shawnee County for the use of the farm or ranch operator. An accessory home occupied by a family member or employee should be allowed on every farm or ranch. This presumes the farm or ranch is large enough to support any required septic systems for the homes.

## Existing Parcels of Record

Residential parcels of record recorded with the Shawnee County Register of Deeds prior to adoption of this plan should be allowed to be developed under the development standards that existed at the time the parcel was created. This includes both un-platted tracts created through the "plat exemption process" and platted lots created as part of residential subdivisions through the regular "subdivision and platting process." The only thing that should be required to develop these parcels is a building permit. At this time, 2,228 vacant residential parcels have been identified in the unincorporated area.

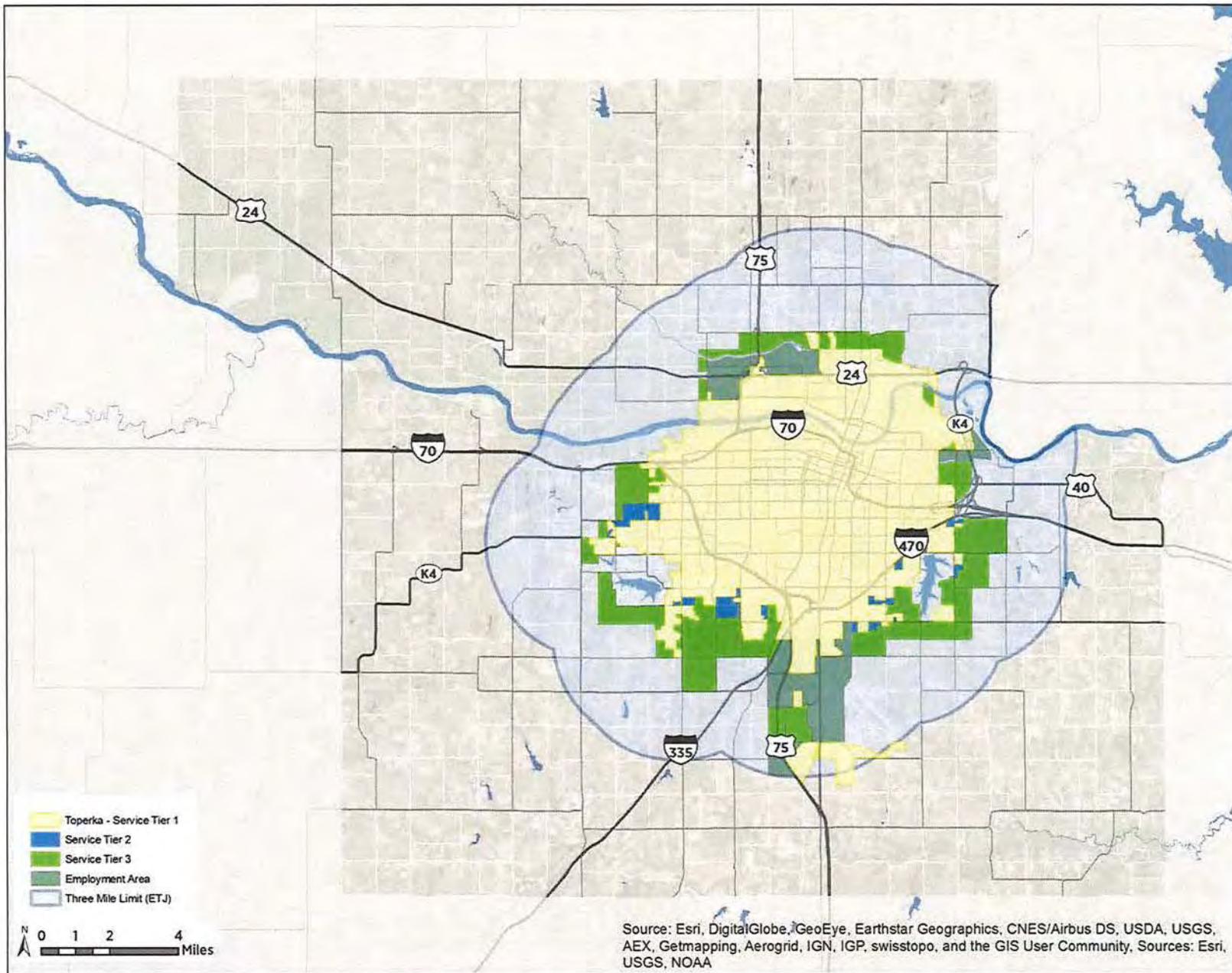
Generally, this means that un-platted residential parcels must have:

- A minimum of 3-acres;
- A minimum of either 200-feet or 300-feet of frontage along a public road depending on when and where the tract was created; and
- If 300-feet of frontage is required, then there is also a maximum depth-to-width ratio of 2:1.

The City of Topeka has also agreed that all homes built on residential lots within platted subdivisions that were approved prior to the adoption of Topeka's Land Use and Growth Management Plan will be allowed to connect to Topeka water and sewer utilities. There are approximately 1,000 such platted residential lots in the Half Day Creek area located east of US-75 Highway and north of NW 35th Street.

Existing undeveloped parcels, created prior to June 1, 1992, and not meeting the minimum acreage and frontage requirement may be "grandfathered in" provided at the time of creation it became an independent stand-alone parcel and not held in common ownership with other contiguous parcels. The only thing that is required to develop these parcels is a building permit.





Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, USGS, NOAA

FIGURE 7.1: Topeka ETJ, UGA, and Service Tier Boundaries

Source: Shawnee County GIS Data



## Plat Exemptions

Plat exemptions have been allowed in Shawnee County for decades, and have resulted in the creation of un-platted tracts of land along most public roadways in and throughout unincorporated Shawnee County. As described in an earlier chapter, the resulting "parcelization" of the unincorporated area is not desirable for many reasons. Plat exemptions should rarely be used for non-agricultural land divisions, Shawnee County should carefully consider the desirability of allowing plat exemptions in certain locations for residential land divisions

Recently, in 2015, the City of Topeka has increased the minimum frontage requirement for plat exemptions to 300-feet and created a tract depth to width ratio of no more than 2:1 in the non-UGA portion of the ETJ.

In all areas, Plat exemptions should be prohibited for the following:

- Commercial and industrial land divisions;
- Environmentally fragile locations, including but not limited to: floodplains, designated wetlands, and areas with steep slopes;
- Locations that are economically valuable for commerce. This would include but not be limited to freeway interchange service areas.

## AGRICULTURAL AREAS

Figure 7.2 shows the Future Land Use map for Shawnee County.

- Plat exemptions should be allowed for all agricultural land divisions and agricultural land assemblies.
- Subsequent proposed changes from agricultural uses to residential, commercial or industrial uses should require platting before either building permits and occupancy permits are issued by Shawnee County.
- Plat exemptions should be limited for residential land divisions in the Exclusive Agricultural Use Area and the Agricultural Conservation Areas. New residential plat exemptions should only be allowed in these areas when the following requirements are met:
  - Each farm or ranch existing prior to adoption of this plan should be allowed to create one new residential tract through the plat exemption process, and these new residential tracts will be at least 3-acres in size.
  - The new residential tract should have adequate facilities and services, including:
    - **Frontage and Access.** New parcels should have 200 feet of frontage along public roads. The required frontage and access may be along section-line roads.
    - **Fire Protection.** No requirements should be established regarding fire response times or proximity to the nearest fire hydrant as measured along public roads.
    - **Drinking Water.** New parcels may use either privately-owned wells or water from a public water supply such as a rural water district. Rural water service is preferred and should be used if available.
    - **Wastewater Collection and Treatment.** Subject to any required soil percolation testing and permitting requirements, new parcels may use privately-owned septic systems.

## URBAN - RURAL TRANSITION AREA

The Urban-Rural Transition Area is located between the City of Topeka and agricultural areas. As a transitional zone, there will be large agricultural parcels and operations in addition to single-family housing development. A key goal for Shawnee County is to preserve agricultural land while Topeka desires to direct urban and suburban development toward Topeka. A shared goal for the city and county is to promote responsible development.

- Plat exemptions should be allowed for all agricultural land divisions and assemblies.
- Each farm or ranch existing prior to the adoption of this plan should be allowed to create one new residential tract through the plat exemption process, and these new residential tracts will be at least 3-acres in size and a maximum depth-to-width ratio of 2:1.
- All proposed changes from agricultural land uses to commercial or industrial land uses should require platting before building and occupancy permits are issued by Shawnee County.
- Plat exemptions for new residential land should only be allowed when the following requirements for adequate facilities and services are met:
  - **Frontage and Access.** New parcels must have 300 feet of frontage along existing public roadways.
  - **Fire Protection.** New parcels should be located within an 8-minute response time from nearest fire station. New parcels should be located within 1,000 feet of the nearest fire hydrant as measured along public roads.
  - **Public Drinking Water Supply.** New parcels must connect to public water suppliers. New parcels will not be allowed to use privately-owned wells for drinking water.
  - **Wastewater Collection and Treatment.** Subject to any required soil percolation testing and permitting requirements, new parcels may use privately-owned septic systems.



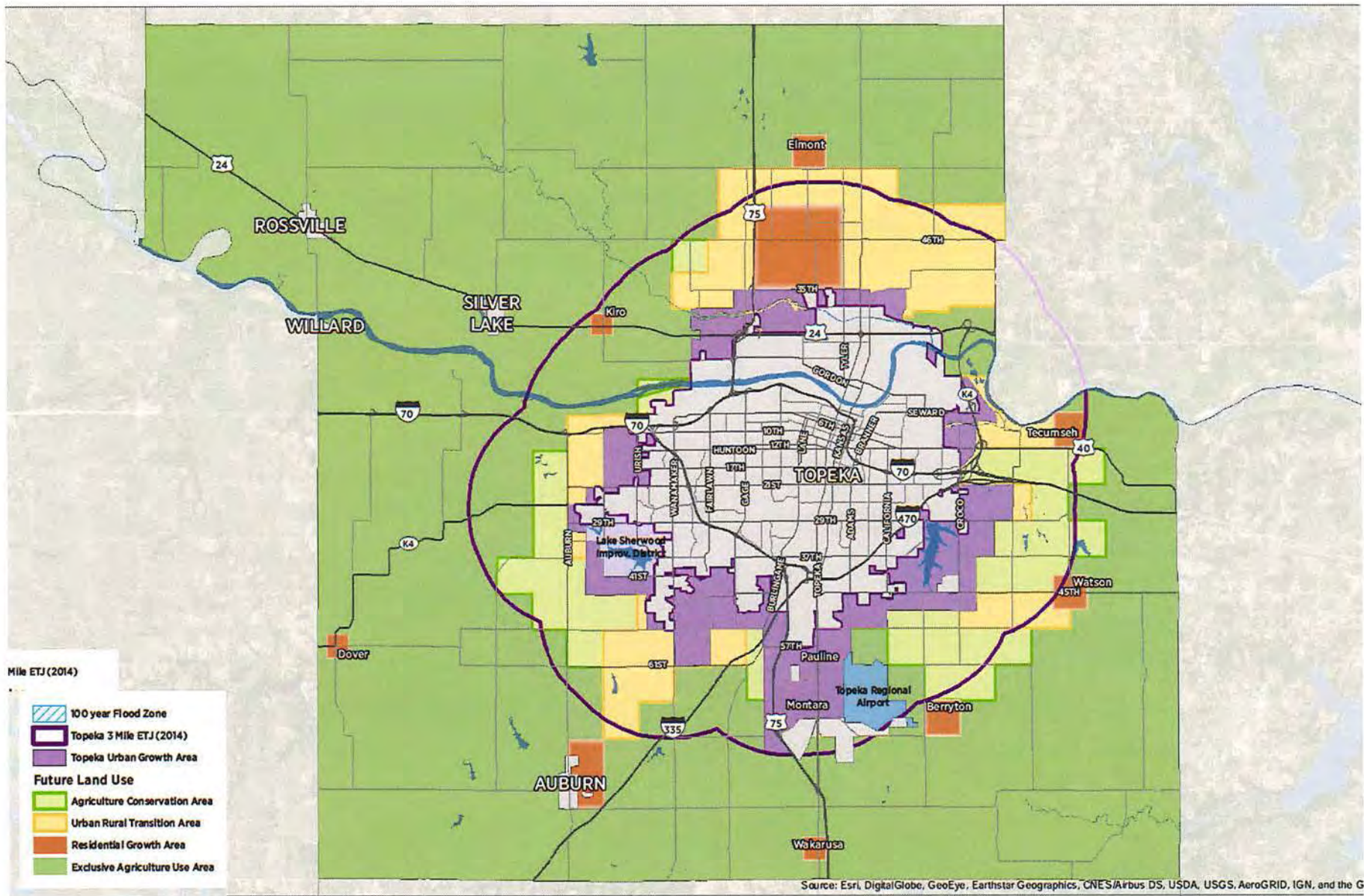


FIGURE 7.2: Future Land Use Map



## Subdivision and Platting

The formal subdivision and platting process should be followed for most non-agricultural land divisions, particularly in the designated growth areas.

### RESIDENTIAL GROWTH AREAS

Shawnee County should encourage new residential and commercial development to locate in designated growth areas, including Auburn, the existing unincorporated towns like Berryton, Dover, Elmont, Kiro, Tecumseh, Wakarusa, and Watson, and the Half Day Creek area. This will help Shawnee County reach its key goals including preserving agricultural land, protecting agricultural operations, and protecting rural lifestyles, while also supporting the goals of the five cities.

- The City of Topeka's subdivision and platting regulations should be followed in the UGA. The City of Auburn's subdivision and platting regulations should be followed in the Auburn Residential Growth Area.
- To protect rural lifestyles and to promote responsible development in rural areas, formal subdivision and platting should be required for developments proposed in all residential growth areas.
- Responsible development includes clustering development in a manner that complements the existing pattern of development in these areas. This is particularly important in the unincorporated towns as each has a unique character.
  - Community facilities, such as schools, churches, post offices, and retail shops are encouraged to locate at the key intersection in the growth areas with the entrance to the facilities facing the street. Setbacks should be minimal. Off-street parking should be located to the rear of the lot when possible.
  - Single-family residential development is encouraged to locate behind the community facilities. Thus, frontage along section-line roads is discouraged, but not prohibited.
- In unincorporated towns, consider the size and layout of lots and blocks, street width and configuration, and other design characteristics compatible with these rural townsites. Consider allowing accessory residential units on the second floor above commercial shops and on single-family lots, but these should be located above detached garages, in detached cottages, or in basements. Accessory residential units should have their own entrance and their own kitchen and bathroom facilities.
- In the Half Day Creek Growth Area, consider how best to develop the interior of sections of land, rather than just along the section line roads.
- Responsible development includes providing adequate public facilities and services.
  - **Frontage and Access.** New parcels must have frontage along and access to public roads.
  - **Fire Protection.** New parcels should be located within an 8-minute response time from nearest fire station. New parcels should be located within 1,000 feet of the nearest fire hydrant as measured along public roads.
  - **Public Drinking Water Supply.** New parcels should be located within the service area of public water suppliers, and should be required to connect to those suppliers. New parcels should not be allowed to use privately-owned wells for drinking water.
  - **Wastewater Collection and Treatment.** As development proposals occur, Shawnee County should work with developers and the existing residents of unincorporated towns to establish publicly-owned and operated packaged treatment sewage lagoons for the treatment of wastewater for the entire unincorporated town. This does not necessarily mean that Shawnee County would own or operate the wastewater lagoon and sanitary sewers; those responsibilities could be taken on by another political jurisdiction or entity.



Unincorporated towns have their own character: Wakarusa (top) and Berryton (bottom)



## Zoning

Farming and ranching should continue to be the most important land use in the unincorporated area of Shawnee County. Given the importance of agricultural income to the local economy, Shawnee County should take steps to protect farms and ranches for future generations. This includes preventing loss of agricultural lands to residential, commercial and industrial development. This also includes preventing the disruption of agricultural operations from incompatible residential, commercial and industrial land uses.

### EXCLUSIVE AGRICULTURAL USE AREAS

To protect the most important agricultural lands from development, Shawnee County should establish the strictest requirements for development in this area.

- Farming and ranching operations should continue to be the dominant land uses in exclusive agricultural use areas. These areas could also include agritourism and limited home occupations. Agritourism and home occupations should be reviewed for traffic and other impacts prior to development.
- Additional land uses should be permitted upon review. This would include businesses that support the agricultural industry, solid waste disposal, and mineral extraction. Truck stops may be considered near freeway interchanges on I-70 west of Topeka. Performance standards should be established in the county's development regulations.

### AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION AREAS

Shawnee County should establish clear expectations as to the desired types of land uses inside Agricultural Conservation Areas.

- Farming and ranching operations should continue to be the primary land uses in these areas. Limited home occupations should be allowed, including agritourism occupations. Agritourism and home

occupations should be reviewed for traffic and other impacts prior to development.

- Because of the proximity of these areas to Topeka, it is likely that exurban development will continue.
- Heavy commercial and industrial land uses should be prohibited. Instead, they should occur inside the Employment Tier portion of the UGA or in the cities

### RESIDENTIAL GROWTH AREAS

To promote responsible growth and development in the unincorporated area, Shawnee County should establish development expectations, particularly regarding the types of public services that need to be in place prior to development.

- Shawnee County should encourage residential development to occur near the well-established and important unincorporated towns of Berryton, Dover, Elmton, Kiro, Tecumseh, Wakarusa, and Watson. The creation of a "village" overlay zoning district would be a logical approach. Zoning for these townsites should allow a reasonable mix of residential, neighborhood commercial, and other community-based land uses. Community-based land uses would also include schools, churches, post offices and community parks.
- Shawnee County should encourage residential development in the Half-Day Creek Residential Growth Area. However, this area should largely be developed after the Topeka UGA. Neighborhood commercial development in this area should be directed to the area east of US-75 along NW 46th Street.
- Heavy commercial and industrial land uses should be prohibited. Instead these should occur inside the Employment Tier of the UGA or in the cities.

### URBAN-RURAL TRANSITION AREAS

To promote responsible growth and development in the unincorporated area, Shawnee County should allow development expectations, particularly regarding the types of public services that need to be in place prior to development.

- Agricultural uses are anticipated to decline in this area over time as exurban residential development continues.
- Residential development on 3-acre un-platted tracts are is anticipated to be the major type of development activity in this area.
- All commercial and industrial land uses should be prohibited in this area.



## Capital Improvements Programming

One of the most critical tools available to counties in implementing their comprehensive plan is the development and use of a multi-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Typically, a CIP is a schedule of projects the county will initiate within 5 or 6 years. The first year of the CIP includes projects that are funded as part of the county's annual capital budget. Projects are typically divided up into several phases, including: preliminary engineering, right-of-way or easement acquisition, utility relocation, and project construction. Small projects may be completed in just one year. Large projects may take more than one year to complete in which case individual project phases may be listed in the CIP.

One of the major challenges for counties is that much of the public infrastructure serving residents of unincorporated areas in counties is not under the direct control of the various county departments. Shawnee County itself is not responsible for providing water, wastewater, storm drainage, fire protection and other public services to its residents. But, there are special purpose units of local government that do provide many of these services in the unincorporated area.

The Shawnee County Public Works Department is responsible for the construction and maintenance of major roadways and bridges in the unincorporated area. The Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the maintenance and operation of all locally owned parks in both Topeka and Shawnee County. Capital expenditures for both major roadways and parks facilities should be included in the county's CIP.

Because Topeka is an urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000 people, federal law requires the region to establish a metropolitan planning organization (MPO). One of the requirements of all MPOs is that a transportation improvement program (TIP) be established that schedules all federally funded surface transportation projects and all regionally significant projects for which funds have been identified. Like a CIP, the TIP includes 5 or 6 years of scheduled projects. Shawnee County should coordinate the development of the county CIP closely with the development of the TIP by the Metropolitan Topeka Planning Organization (MTPO).



## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

There are 51 different governmental jurisdictions located inside Shawnee County. With the exception of the five incorporated cities (i.e., Auburn, Rossville, Silver Lake, Topeka, and Willard) and Shawnee County itself, most of these local jurisdictions provide just one public service to county residents based on well-defined geographic areas. The highly specialized services offered by many of these jurisdictions **makes make** it possible to act independently from one another. But, there are benefits to cooperation. Among these are:

- **Early Identification of Issues.** Sharing information early with other local jurisdictions makes it much easier to identify and resolve issues early.
- **Resolution of Complex Issues.** By communicating actions and working cooperatively with other local jurisdictions, local jurisdictions can address and resolve issues that are more complex than can be addressed by working independently.
- **Cost Savings.** Cooperation can save money by increasing efficiency and avoiding unnecessary duplication of efforts.
- **Consistency and Predictability.** Cooperation can lead to consistency of the goals, objectives, plans, policies, and actions among jurisdictions. Cooperation also can provide greater predictability to residents, developers, businesses, and others.
- **Understanding and Trust.** As local jurisdictions communicate and collaborate on issues of mutual interest, they become aware of each other's needs and priorities. They can better anticipate problems and work to address problems as they arise. Cooperation can lead to positive experiences and results that build trust among jurisdictions.
- **Service to Citizens.** The biggest beneficiaries of intergovernmental cooperation are citizens for

whom the various local government jurisdictions were created. County residents may not understand, or even care, about the intricacies of a particular intergovernmental issue, but all Shawnee County residents appreciate their benefits, such as cost savings, provision of needed services, a healthy environment, and a strong economy.

- **Avoid Expensive and Costly Litigation.** The alternative to interlocal cooperation is to settle differences between jurisdictions in court. This can be both time consuming and costly.
- The simplest way to improve cooperation is for local jurisdictions to regularly communicate with each other. Communication between local jurisdictions can be conducted both formally and informally.

**Informal communications.** One informal opportunity for local jurisdictions to improve lines of communications is by committing to talk to each other on a regular basis about issues that are known to be of concern to both. These informal opportunities should occur frequently. But, conversations need only last long enough to address the issue at hand. Such communications could be over the phone, at a project site, or even over lunch. Each local jurisdiction should commit to making outreach efforts to other local jurisdictions. Because of busy schedules, this is hard to get started, but once it does the benefits become obvious.

**Formal Meetings.** Intergovernmental meetings provide a more formal opportunity to outline the broader community vision and specific mutual interests, issues and concerns. There are two ways to organize formal meetings.

- The first way to organize intergovernmental meetings is to have all local jurisdictions within a given location, such as a quadrant of the county, meet to discuss topics relevant to that portion of Shawnee County.

- The second way to organize intergovernmental meetings is to have a single type of local jurisdiction meet to discuss best practices, sharing of resources, and other topics specific to that type of service provider.

**Interlocal Agreements.** Interlocal agreements offer a framework for enhanced cooperation and joint delivery of services. K.S.A. 12-2904 establishes the legal framework for entering in to such agreements. Basically, any power, privilege or authority an individual public agency exercises or is capable of exercising may be delivered jointly by any two or more public agencies.

Given the complexity of land development regulations within the 3-mile ETJ, it would be particularly beneficial for the City of Topeka and Shawnee County to consider how an interlocal agreement might benefit both jurisdictions.

- Topeka is responsible for land divisions, including both formal platted subdivisions and plat exemptions within the 3-mile ETJ. This includes vacating existing plats.
- Topeka owns, operates and maintains some infrastructure within the 3-mile ETJ. Topeka also sells water to some rural districts providing services within the 3-mile ETJ. Topeka has the ability to establish policies regarding the infrastructure it directly or indirectly controls.
- Shawnee County is responsible for zoning administration and issuing building permits within the 3-mile ETJ.

**Comprehensive Plan.** This comprehensive plan is an invaluable tool that should be used by all local government jurisdictions in Shawnee County. For the goals of this comprehensive plan to be realized, it is critical that all local governmental jurisdictions use the comprehensive plan as a basis for decisions they are making about the services they provide within Shawnee County.



## PLAN MAINTENANCE

This plan is not intended to be a static document. It is a set of guiding principles and policies, based on the current needs of Shawnee County and its residents and reasonable future projections thereof. While the recommendations and policies proposed are based on a 20-year forecast into the future, this plan will be most effective when used as the basis for actions in more nimble, finite increments. Therefore, the county should implement an ongoing planning process that uses this plan to develop more detailed year-to-year improvement schedules. Additionally, as industries, development patterns, economies, and public needs change over time, so too must this plan evolve. As such, a part of the ongoing planning process should include an annual evaluation of the plan as it relates to development and infrastructure events of the past year.

### Annual Plan Evaluation

This process should include an annual evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan policies and procedures. This evaluation should occur at the end of each calendar year. Ideally, this evaluation should culminate in a written report prepared by the County Planning Director that:

- Summarizes key land use developments and decisions of the past year and relates them to the Comprehensive Plan.
- Reviews actions taken by the county to implement plan recommendations during the past year.
- Defines any changes that should be made to the Comprehensive Plan.

### Annual Action Program

Both the Planning Commission and County Commission should use the comprehensive plan to define the annual work programs of policies, actions, and capital investments. This annual process should be completed before the beginning of each budget year and should include a specific work program for the upcoming year. This program should be specific and relate to the county's projected financial resources. The work program should establish the specific plan recommendations that the county will accomplish during the coming year.



## GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents implementation an implementation matrix for each subject chapter. The matrix presents the goals and actions in an organized way, along with potential stakeholders, the type of activity, the timeframe or timing of the activity, and the tool(s) that should be used to implement this goal.

Below, the general implementation matrix also notes important first steps to begin the process through setting up or calibrating the traditional tools for implementation.

- A list of all major land developments that occurred in the unincorporated area of Shawnee County and relate those developments back to the comprehensive plan;
- A list of all plan implementation steps taken during the previous year; and,
- A list of all changes or modifications to the comprehensive plan that should be made

### GENERAL - IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

GOAL	#	ACTIVITY	TYPE	GROUPS	TIMING	TOOL
PI-1: Shawnee County should update its zoning and subdivision regulations.	1	Shawnee County should update its zoning and subdivision regulations to align them with the policies and priorities established in the comprehensive plan.	Policy	SNCO Planning	Short (By 2020)	Zoning, Sub Regs
	2	Shawnee County should work closely with Topeka to more effectively manage growth and development in the Topeka ETJ. The goal should be to require responsible development while protecting both agricultural lands and fragile areas (i.e., floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, and critical wildlife habitat).	Action	SNCO Planning, COT Planning	Ongoing	Cooperation
PI-2: Shawnee County should create a formal Capital Improvements Program.	1	Shawnee County should review options for creating a more formal capital improvements program to assist with plan implementation.	Policy	SNCO Planning and SNCO PW	Short (By 2020)	CIP
	2	The Shawnee County Planning Commission should begin reviewing capital improvements by all units of governments for consistency with the comprehensive plan as allowed under the provisions of K.S.A. 12-748.	Policy/Action	SNCO Planning, School Districts, Townships, Rural Water Districts, etc.	Medium (By 2025)	CIP, Cooperation
PI-3: Shawnee County should take a lead role in promoting intergovernmental cooperation.	1	Define working relationships with other local jurisdictions that provide infrastructure and other services to determine how best to cooperate with each other, how to establish policy that overlaps from one jurisdiction to another, and how best to coordinate the review of development proposals and projects.	Action	SNCO Planning, School Districts, Townships, Rural Water Districts, etc.	Ongoing	Cooperation
PI-4: Shawnee County should annually review and periodically update the comprehensive plan.	1	The County Planning Director should annually prepare a report for submission to both the County Planning Commission and County Commission.	Action	SNCO Planning	Ongoing	Research



**NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES – IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX**

GOAL	#	ACTIVITY	TYPE	GROUPS	TIMING	TOOL
NR-1: Discourage development on fragile lands	1	Ensure Evaluate the need for a level of review either by developers or planning department staff to prevent development from encroaching on steep slopes, wetlands, or floodplains. This could also potentially apply to native prairie. Review could be a strict prohibition, a discouraged activity, or a points-based system which evaluates overall impact.	Policy	SNCO Planning, Private Sector	Medium (By 2025)	Sub Regs
	2	Utilize the Environmental Constraints map throughout the development process and work through any necessary mitigation on a case-by-case basis.	Action	SNCO Planning	Ongoing	Sub Regs
	3	Evaluate the need to update the County policy regarding rezoning, subdivision, and environmental regulations	Policy	SNCO Planning	Short (By 2020)	Zoning, Sub Regs
NR-2: Encourage the protection of lands with positive environmental features	1	Identify types of lands suitable for park development, in accordance with the Shawnee County Park Master Plan; balance parks throughout the county, utilize watersheds, expand existing parks, or add parks in natural/wildlife hotspots such as native prairies.	Policy	SNCO Planning, SNCO Parks & Rec	Medium (By 2025)	Zoning, Sub Regs, Cooperation
	2	Utilize scenic linear areas such as rivers and floodplains for trail development. The Parks Master Plan sets a goal of 150 miles of trails, including a north/south trail across I-70 and the Kansas River.	Policy/Capital	SNCO Planning, SNCO Parks & Rec	Long (By 2037)	Zoning, Cooperation
	3	Look to history, regional trails, and agritourism to find areas which need to be protected for future opportunities; encourage the use of incentives preserving and enhancing those resources.	Action	SNCO Planning, Historic Preservation, Tourism, Ag Stakeholders	Medium (By 2025)	Cooperation, Incentives
	4	Work with mineral extraction companies to protect suitable areas from development; as sand pits and similar businesses exhaust their resources, convert them into recreation and wildlife areas.	Action	SNCO Planning, Mineral Extraction Stakeholders	Ongoing	Zoning, Cooperation
	5	In the short-term, utilize the Environmental Constraints map that was developed as part of the comprehensive plan.	Policy	SNCO Planning	Ongoing	Zoning, Sub Regs
NR-3: Focus growth away from predominantly agricultural areas	1	Identify valuable farm and ranch land and discourage non-agricultural uses in these areas.	Action/Policy	SNCO Planning, Ag Stakeholders,	Short (By 2020)	Zoning
	2	Preserve the rural landscapes by focusing development near existing development clusters. This should include clustering the development of rural unincorporated towns in a consistent manner.	Policy	SNCO Planning	Ongoing	Zoning, Sub Regs
	3	Evaluate the need for the County to update its zoning and subdivision regulations and other requirements.	Policy	SNCO Planning	Short (By 2020)	Zoning, Sub Regs
NR-4: Better coordinate potential environmental effects	1	Require Evaluate the need for coordination of water retention and drainage where multiple dwelling units are within a certain distance of each other.	Policy	SNCO Planning, SNCO PW	Short (By 2020)	Cooperation, Sub Regs
	2	Work with other jurisdictions and with other branches of Shawnee County including the Shawnee County Health Agency and Shawnee County Parks & Recreation to evaluate how planning and planning regulations can help improve their missions.	Action	SNCO Planning, Cities, SNCO Health, SNCO Parks & Rec	Ongoing	Cooperation



**TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE - IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX**

GOAL	#	ACTIVITY	TYPE	GROUPS	TIMING	TOOL
TI-1: Prioritize the maintenance of existing infrastructure.	1	Ensure that all facilities owned or managed by the county have at the minimum adequate maintenance to prevent the deterioration of services.	Capital	SNCO Planning, SNCO PW	Ongoing	CIP, Cooperation
	2	Prevent the overutilization of infrastructure that is used for purposes other than was intended when they were created (moving from a farm-to-table road to a local residential commuter road). This will prevent unforeseen wear and tear on properties.	Policy	SNCO Planning	Ongoing	Sub Regs, Zoning
	1	Consider the lifecycle costs to the public of infrastructure such as its initial construction, maintenance and replacement costs. Plan and review developments accordingly and regularly budget for major maintenance policy and replacement costs.	Policy	SNCO PW, SNCO Planning	Ongoing	CIP
	2	Utilize existing infrastructure to its full potential. This includes filling in spotty and partially developed areas, hooking new development into existing infrastructure to reduce the burden on taxpayers, and generally focusing development to available infrastructure with adequate capacity. Special attention should be paid to areas with existing underutilized infrastructure.	Policy	SNCO Planning	Long (By 2037)	CIP, Long Range Plans
	3	Grow incrementally based on ability to provide infrastructure and in places where infrastructure is already expanded, promote development; do not construct new infrastructure to service leapfrog development.	Policy/Capital	SNCO Planning, SNCO PW	Ongoing	Sub Regs, Zoning
TI-2: Ensure fiscally responsible administration of infrastructure investments.	4	Plan and coordinate transportation facilities, infrastructure improvements, and development with cities to provide seamless and unified service. This includes working with other taxing jurisdictions to identify locations where development will likely happen and how to most efficiently provide them service. Ensure that other decision-making bodies are also planning and considering their direct and indirect impacts.	Policy	SNCO Planning, SNCO PW	Medium (By 2025)	Cooperation, CIP, Long Range Plans
	5	Consider adopting a full Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), approved by Planning Commission, to address issues of certainty when developers are trying to coordinate service providers.	Policy	SNCO Planning, SNCO PW	Short (By 2020)	CIP
	1	Follow the recommendations of the Topeka Regional Transportation Plan.	Capital	SNCO Planning, MTPO	Long (By 2037)	Cooperation
	2	Promote the development of an active transportation system of trails and sidewalks to improve the mobility of groups that do not drive.	Capital	SNCO Planning, SNCO Parks & Rec	Medium (By 2025)	Cooperation, CIP
	3	Consider the role of transit in unincorporated Shawnee County, both within the county and to surrounding communities.	Capital	TMTA, SNCO	Short (By 2020)	Cooperation
TI-3: Improve mobility and access throughout the county for all modes of transportation.	4	A new interchange has been discussed in the county near Auburn on I-335 (i.e., the Kansas Turnpike). However, Auburn Road must be upgraded to handle the traffic first for this project to advance, and the exit must generate new traffic per KTA's policy and the costs will be extensive. These costs make an additional interchange in this area seem unlikely through at least 2031 when the county half-cent sales tax will be reconsidered.	Capital	SNCO PW, KDOT, KTA	Long (By 2037)	Long Range Plans, CIP
	1	Require land development to have adequately provided infrastructure.	Policy	SNCO Planning	Short (By 2020)	Sub Regs
	2	Coordinate with other taxing jurisdictions to encourage the fullest use of existing transportation infrastructure.	Action	Taxing Jurisdictions	Ongoing	Cooperation
	3	Ensure cooperation between cities and Shawnee County to support planned infrastructure improvements long term.	Action	SNCO and Cities	Ongoing	Cooperation
	4	Encourage the MPTO to expand its boundaries to again include all of Shawnee County.	Policy	SNCO and MPTO	Medium (By 2025)	Cooperation
TI-4: Coordinate planning and service provision.	5	Further discussion between Shawnee County and Topeka is needed regarding utilization of the existing Half Day Creek Sewer Interceptor.	Action	SNCO Commission, COT Council	Short (By 2020)	Cooperation
	1	Look at ways to support business development through infrastructure investment, including telecommunications infrastructure.	Capital	JEDO, COT Chamber	Ongoing	Cooperation, CIP
	2	Work with Shawnee County Parks and Recreation to develop a county-wide system of trails that connects into regional trail systems including the Flint Hills Nature Trail.	Capital	SNCO Planning, SNCO Parks & Rec	Long (By 2037)	Cooperation, CIP
	3	Increase safety by exploring new ways to help law enforcement effectively patrol the county.	Action/Capital	SNCO Sheriff	Medium (By 2025)	Cooperation, CIP
	4	Develop a roadway system that can help reduce accidents on the roads for motorists, including turn lanes on highly traveled roadways.	Capital	SNCO PW	Ongoing	Long Range Plans, CIP
TI-5: Use infrastructure investments to enhance the quality of life, develop the economy, and increase safety.	5	Consider transportation, utility and public service requirements in any future updates to Shawnee County's development regulations (i.e., zoning and subdivision).	Policy	SNCO Planning	Short (By 2020)	Policy



**LAND USE AND DESIGN - IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX**

GOAL	#	ACTIVITY	TYPE	GROUPS	TIMING	TOOL
<b>LU-1: Limit Encourage industrial development to the most suitable locations.</b>	1	Most industrial development, except for mineral extraction and solid waste disposal, should be directed to the cities or the employment tier of the Topeka UGA.	Policy	SNCO Planning, Private Sector	Ongoing	Zoning, Sub Regs
	2	Industrial development could be considered elsewhere in the unincorporated area when proposed on sites adjacent to established industrial areas. The new development should be compatible with the intensity and scale of existing industry on adjacent industrial sites.	Policy	SNCO Planning, Private Sector	Ongoing	Zoning, Sub Regs
	3	Mineral extraction and solid waste disposal should be allowed in the unincorporated area upon review.	Policy	SNCO Planning, Private Sector	Long (By 2037)	Zoning, Sub Regs
	4	All industrial development in the unincorporated area should be subject to site development and performance standards established in the county's development regulations.	Policy	SNCO Planning	Ongoing	Zoning, Sub Regs
<b>LU-2: Encourage responsible rural commercial development.</b>	1	Home occupations should be allowed in the unincorporated area.	Policy	SNCO Planning	Short (By 2020)	Zoning
	2	Commercial development that supports the agricultural industry should be allowed in the unincorporated area. Agribusinesses in the unincorporated area should be directed to the five cities and to the Small-Town Growth Areas.	Policy	SNCO Planning, Private Sector	Ongoing	Zoning, Sub Regs
	3	Neighborhood commercial development that supports the rural population should be allowed in the unincorporated area. These uses should be encouraged to locate in the Small-Town Residential Growth Areas and the existing commercial development at Hunter's Ridge located at US-75 and NW 46th Street.	Action	SNCO Planning, Private Sector	Medium (By 2025)	Zoning, Sub Regs
	4	Heavy commercial development (i.e., big box stores, regional shopping centers, etc.) should be directed to the cities and the employment tier of the Topeka UGA.	Policy	SNCO Planning, COT, Private Sector	Ongoing	Zoning, Sub Regs
	5	All commercial development in the unincorporated area should be subject to site development and performance standards established in the county's development regulations.	Policy	SNCO Planning	Ongoing	Zoning, Sub Regs
<b>LU-3: Encourage responsible residential development.</b>	1	The county should encourage new residential development to occur on these existing parcels of record before supporting new land divisions.	Policy	SNCO Planning, Private Sector	Medium (By 2025)	Policy
	2	New residential development in the Auburn Growth Area should be annexed into the city as a condition of development. Auburn does not exercise extraterritorial jurisdiction.	Policy	City of Auburn, Private Sector, SNCO	Ongoing	Cooperation
	3	New residential development in the Small-Town Growth Areas should be compatible with and complement existing development.	Policy	SNCO Planning, Private Sector	Ongoing	Zoning, Sub Regs
	4	New residential development in the Urban-Rural Transition Area should be compatible with existing development in its vicinity. It is anticipated that new development will be at exurban densities due to the lack of public wastewater service in these areas.	Policy	SNCO Planning, Private Sector	Ongoing	Zoning, Sub Regs
	5	The Half-Day Creek Growth Area is established as an urban reserve for future suburban development after the Topeka UGA is substantially developed. Due to the investment in the Half-Day Creek sewer interceptor line, this area should be reserved for future residential development at suburban densities.	Policy	SNCO Planning, COT, Private Sector	Long (By 2037)	Zoning, Sub Regs
	6	Shawnee County should support the goals established by Topeka for the UGA because these are the areas most likely to be annexed by Topeka.	Policy	SNCO, COT	Long (By 2037)	Cooperation
	7	New residential development should be discouraged in the Exclusive Agricultural Use Area and the Agricultural Conservation Area, with exceptions as laid out in Chapter.	Policy	SNCO Planning	Ongoing	Zoning, Sub Regs
<b>LU-4: Protect the farms, ranches, and rural scenic landscapes for future generations.</b>	1	Residential development should be limited in Exclusive Agricultural Areas and Agricultural Conservation Areas to what is necessary to support the agricultural industry.	Policy	SNCO Planning, Private Sector	Ongoing	Zoning, Sub Regs
	2	Agritourism should be allowed only after public review in Exclusive Agricultural Areas and Agricultural Conservation Areas. Agritourism should be subject to site development and performance standards established in the county's development regulations. Primary consideration should be given to traffic impacts and noise impacts.	Policy	SNCO Planning, Private Sector	Ongoing	Zoning, Sub Regs
	3	Mineral extraction should be allowed only after public review in Exclusive Agricultural Areas and Agricultural Conservation Areas.	Policy	SNCO Planning, Mineral Extraction Stakeholders	Ongoing	Zoning, Sub Regs



**HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD - IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX**

GOAL	#	ACTIVITY	TYPE	GROUPS	TIMING	TOOL
<b>H-1: Encourage adequate development to allow for the growth of Shawnee County.</b>	1	Work with developers to identify ways to streamline administrative process for development while maintaining adequate oversight of the development process by both Shawnee County and the City of Topeka.	Action	SNCO, JEDO, Private Sector	Medium (By 2025)	Cooperation, Zoning, Sub Regs
	2	Educate landowners about how their land can be used or developed and streamline processes to do so.	Action	SNCO, Private Sector	Medium (By 2025)	Outreach
	3	Promote the development of a variety of housing types, both in terms of tenure and in terms of price-point.	Action	SNCO, JEDO, Private Sector	Long (By 2037)	Cooperation, Zoning, Sub Regs
<b>H-2: Ensure adequate methods of construction and development to protect the health, safety, and welfare of county residents.</b>	1	Adopt a building code program with sufficient enforcement to protect the health, safety, and welfare of county residents.	Policy/Capital	SNCO Planning	Short (By 2020)	CIP
	2	Encourage a high standard of development through fire and other necessary inspections.	Policy	SNCO	Ongoing	Building Regs
<b>H-3: Guide development to areas suitable for that style of development with appropriate densities to support public services.</b>	1	Update the zoning code to better reflect the current development pattern of the county and to guide urban, suburban, exurban, rural, and village development to appropriate locations.	Policy	SNCO Planning	Short (By 2020)	Zoning
	2	Update the zoning code to preserve areas unsuitable for residential development, including prime farmland, floodplains, and other natural areas.	Policy	SNCO Planning	Short (By 2020)	Zoning
	3	Set expectations for new residents to understand what service levels they may expect moving to different areas of the county.	Action	SNCO Planning	Short (By 2020)	Outreach
	4	Work with the City of Topeka to identify suitable areas within Topeka's ETJ that could still allow future development.	Policy	SNCO Planning, COT Planning	Medium (By 2025)	Cooperation
<b>H-4: Develop a range of housing options, especially those that are affordable for low income and those that cater to higher income households.</b>	1	Work with developers to identify barriers to housing development in price ranges that are currently lacking in the county, and determine methods that can help overcome those barriers.	Action	COT, Private Sector	Medium (By 2025)	Cooperation, Zoning, Sub Regs
	2	Identify grant or partnership opportunities for housing development that would help fill needs within Shawnee County.	Action	SNCO Planning, JEDO, COT	Ongoing	Cooperation, Research
	3	Encourage the continued development of market rate units by private developers.	Action	SNCO	Ongoing	Cooperation
	4	Explore how accessory dwelling units could fit into Shawnee County's broader housing market.	Action	SNCO Planning	Short (By 2020)	Research
<b>H-5: Create quality neighborhoods to facilitate a high standard of living for homes in urban, suburban, exurban, and rural areas, including unincorporated towns.</b>	1	Try to facilitate the construction of neighborhoods through the development process. Update the development code (zoning and subdivision ordinances) to encourage neighborhood-oriented development.	Policy	SNCO Planning	Short (By 2020)	Zoning, Sub Regs
	2	Use existing focal points such as employment centers, schools, parks, or commercial areas to create neighborhoods with amenities that will promote a high quality of life.	Policy	SNCO Planning, Private Sector	Ongoing	Zoning, Sub Regs
	3	Update the development code (zoning and subdivision ordinances) to encourage neighborhood-oriented development in suburban areas, possibly through density incentives to help offset those costs.	Policy	SNCO Planning	Short (By 2020)	Zoning, Sub Regs
<b>H-6: Identify and preserve areas for development of parks and open space.</b>	1	Work with residential developers and the Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Department to create trails, parks and other amenities for the benefit of neighborhoods and the Shawnee County Public.	Action/Capital	SNCO Planning, SNCO Parks & Rec, Private Sector	Long (By 2037)	Cooperation, CIP
	2	Preserve the rural landscapes by focusing development near existing development clusters. This should include clustering the development of rural unincorporated villages in a consistent manner.	Policy	SNCO Planning	Ongoing	Zoning, Sub Regs



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX**

GOAL	#	ACTIVITY	TYPE	GROUPS	TIMING	TOOL
<b>ED-1: Train and educate a highly-qualified workforce for new and existing jobs within the county.</b>	1	Cultivate homegrown talent to continually enhance the workforce by connecting individuals in the community to training and employment opportunities for in-demand positions.	Action	JEDO, GO Topeka, Chamber, USDs, Higher Ed	Ongoing	Cooperation
	2	Encourage partnerships between educational institutions and businesses to help fill in the cradle-to-career pipeline that groups like JEDO and GO Topeka have begun to create.	Action	JEDO, GO Topeka, SNCO, USDs, Higher Ed	Ongoing	Cooperation
	3	Attract new workers to live in Shawnee County through unified positive marketing of the county and its sub-areas.	Action/Capital	JEDO, GO Topeka, SNCO, COT	Medium (by 2025)	Outreach, Cooperation
<b>ED-2: Encourage entrepreneurship and the development and growth of small businesses.</b>	1	Strengthen support for entrepreneurs and small businesses, helping increase their likelihood of success and nurturing business development from the ground up.	Actuib	JEDO, GO Topeka	Ongoing	Outreach, Cooperation
	2	Promote available incentives to small businesses that may not be aware of existing opportunities.	Action	SNCO, COT	Short (By 2020)	Outreach, CIP
	3	Support businesses that are maturing to ensure that they have access to the workforce and capital needed to expand within Shawnee County.	Action	JEDO, GO Topeka, Chamber	Ongoing	Outreach, Cooperation
	4	Evaluate current regulations regarding home-based occupations in unincorporated county to balance the compatibility of land uses, carrying capacity of infrastructure, and economic growth.	Policy	SNCO Planning	Short (By 2020)	Zoning, Sub Regs
<b>ED-3: Build on the economic strengths of the County using available opportunities.</b>	1	Market existing incentives for unincorporated areas in Shawnee County that build on the county's strengths, ensuring that funds provided align with benefits.	Action	SNCO, COT	Ongoing	Outreach, CIP
	2	Encourage the attraction of jobs related to Shawnee County's strengths, including advanced systems technology, food manufacturing, logistics and distribution, and professional and financial services. Focus on well-paying jobs that can improve the quality of life for Shawnee County residents.	Action/Capital	JEDO, GO Topeka, Chamber	Ongoing	Outreach, CIP
	3	<u>Foster and support a local food movement. Encourage/support development of community-based food systems to help support Shawnee County's agricultural industry, increase access to locally produced fruits and vegetables, and encourage residents to keep their food dollars here in the county.</u>	Action	SNCO Planning, Interest Groups	Ongoing	Cooperation
<b>ED-4: Promote tourism using natural, historic, and cultural characteristics and protect resources like sand and limestone for mineral extraction.</b>	1	Support the development of agricultural tourism by providing for uses which help promote and maintain local farming operations and rural heritage and character.	Action	SNCO Planning, Ag Stakeholders	Ongoing	Cooperation
	2	Market natural, historic, and cultural resources as opportunities to develop viable businesses, including focuses on the history of trails, Kansas statehood, civil rights, and environment. This should complement efforts by the Native Stone Scenic Byway and the Oregon Trail Park.	Action	SNCO, COT, Hist Soc, Arts Stakeholders, KDOT	Ongoing	Outreach, Cooperation
	3	Protect rural scenic landscapes, particularly those that support tourism and recreation opportunities.	Policy	SNCO Planning, Ag Stakeholders	Ongoing	Zoning, Sub Regs
	4	Explore the feasibility of designating an Oregon and California Trail Scenic Byway capitalizing on the area's rich history. Utilize the new park that is being constructed on Topeka's Riverfront to further this project.	Action	SNCO, Cities, Uninc. Towns, KDOT	Medium (By 2025)	Research
<b>ED-5: Constantly improve quality of life to attract and retain businesses and workers, including adequate retail activity to serve residents throughout the county.</b>	1	Find ways to attract employees within Shawnee County to live within the County.	Action	JEDO, GO Topeka, Private Business, SNCO, COT	Ongoing	Research
	2	Focus on improving quality of life, including schools, quality of development, commercial and cultural offers, and other such factors that help attract and retain businesses and workers.	Action/Policy/Capital	SNCO, COT, USDs, Arts Stakeholders, etc.	Long (By 2037)	Cooperation, CIP, Zoning, Sub Regs
	3	Encourage the development of neighborhood commercial establishments near residents in the county that are not adequately served.	Policy	SNCO Planning, Private Business	Ongoing	Zoning, Sub Regs, Cooperation
	4	Ensure that the impacts of businesses on their neighbors are considered, including the parking and noise effects of semi-trucks.	Policy	SNCO Planning	Ongoing	Zoning, Sub Regs
<b>ED-6: Coordinate economic development between all jurisdictions and areas of the county.</b>	1	Work with JEDO, GO Topeka, and other economic development stakeholders to provide a consistent marketing to those living inside and outside of the county.	Action	JEDO, GO Topeka, SNCO	Ongoing	Cooperation, Outreach
	2	Ensure that organizations involved in transportation, infrastructure, and services for the county are aligned with regards to their plans for enhancement, maintenance, and replacement of infrastructure.	Action	SNCO PW, SNCO Planning, Townships, KDOT, RWDs, COT	Medium (By 2025)	Cooperation
	3	Support the implementation of the Topeka-Shawnee County Holistic Economic Development Strategy, especially those organizations that help to implement the plan.	Action	JEDO, GO Topeka, Heartland Visioning, SNCO	Short (By 2020)	Cooperation, CIP



# APPENDIX



## meeting minutes

From: Kirk Lehmann  
 Project No.: 2016.118.00 Project No.: 2016.118.00  
 Date Prepared: September 20, 2016  
 Meeting Date: September 14-15, 2016

Project Name: Shawnee County

Subject: Stakeholder Meetings

Meeting Attendees: Thomas Dow and Kirk Lehmann, RDG; Dan Halloway, CFS Engineers; Barry Beagle, Shawnee County

**Utility Providers, 8:00 am – 9:00 am on September 14**  
 Sarah Jacobsen, Kansas Gas Service; Sabrina Gonzales, Westar Energy; Shawn Easum, AT&T; Sue Stringer, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism

**Mineral Resource Extraction, 9:30 am – 10:30 am**  
 Eric Bettis, Mid-States Materials; Alana Ribelin, Menoken Township

**Economic Development, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm**  
 Jackie Carlson, GO Topeka; Dan Woodward, Kansas Sand and Concrete; Scott Toman, Kansas Sand and Concrete

**Agricultural Interests, 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm**  
 Leroy Russell, K-State Research Extension; Lance Thompson, USDA; Sara Fredrickson, Natural Resource Conservation Service; Karen Weigel, Kansas Farm Bureau; Susan Fangman, K-State Research Extension; Randoll Walker, farmer; Steven Porubsky, farmer

**Environmental, Historical, and Tourism Interests, 2:30 pm – 3:30 pm**  
 David Heineman, Shawnee County Historical Society; Alan Pollom, Nature Conservancy

**Governmental Summit North and South, 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm on Sept. 14 and 15**  
 Mack Smith, Silver Lake; Kerry Lacock, USD 321 Kaw Valley; Howard Parr, TriCo D District; David Stedler, TriCo D District; Steve Noble, USD 345 Seaman; Rily Rees, Shawnee RWD#2; Mike Weishaar, Consolidated RWD#4; Gary Groves, Soldier Township; Cindy Evans, Shawnee County Extension; Jack Mason, Shawnee RWD#8; Greg Drinovsky, Jackson RWD#1; Karl McNorton, Soldier Township Fire Department; Alan McKenzie, Shawnee County Fire District 3; Marty Stressman, USD 450 Shawnee Heights; Christi McKenzie, Rossville City Council; Tony Meier; Bill Clark, USD 330 Mission Valley; Scott McWilliams, USD 437 Auburn Washburn; Mike Dawson, Shawnee RWD#1; Fred Biesemeyer, Shawnee RWD#1; Shad Howbert, Douglass RWD#3; Barry Brown, Auburn Township; Al Ward, Mission Township; Steve Anderson, Monmouth Township; Stephen Hennessey, Tecumseh Township; Bobby Walker, Williamsport Township; Forrest Walter, Mission Township Fire Department; Eric Johnson, MTA; Joe Marney, Builders Choice Aggregate; Leonard Wonnell, Grove Township; Debbie Childers, Steering Committee

Comments, additions, or corrections to this memo should be communicated in writing to RDG Planning & Design within seven (7) days of receipt. If no comments are received within that period, this memo will be assumed accurate and filed as part of the permanent record for this project.

Discussion:

This memorandum summarizes the items discussed during the meetings referenced above.

**1. Development and Land Use**

- Current Trends
  - o Townships do not always feel like commissioners hear them (only occasionally visited)
  - o Not much growth in Shawnee County but development is key to businesses
    - Manhattan and Lawrence are most of AT&T's work in the region
    - Extraction companies work comes from expanding/maintaining infrastructure
  - o Current development pattern of farmers subdividing land without review (3-acres)
    - Low commodity prices or using it for retirement can lead farmers to divide land
    - Market drives this pattern: farmers typically sell pasture land, not prime farmland; sometimes inheritors sell land despite agricultural value
    - Can be regrettable (interior parcels can become land-locked, leads to sprawl)
    - Realtor usually indicates if there are issues with land development
  - o Generational shifts may have an effect soon, people moving back to Topeka
  - o Friction between Topeka and County (annexation and 3-miles control radius)
- Land Use Issues
  - o Agricultural Land: There is constant turnover of land with farmland being lost. Is the County interested in preserving agricultural land? How much value does it place on it?



- o Encourage industrial and commercial development in planned areas
- o Subdivision of land brings revenue but can cause growth problems
  - Tax revenue often does not offset the cost of road upgrading, construction, and maintenance, needs to make sure infrastructure is well-maintained
  - It is a fine line to encourage growth but be fiscally responsible
- o People buy acreages but don't know how to or want to take care of it
  - Can lead to overcrowding of animals on small acreages
  - Everyone wants a pond, but can lead to boundary disputes and erosion
- o Disputes between landowners, especially newer land owners unfamiliar with rural life
  - Conflicts between residents and rural land uses: new residents don't like farming, smoke from burning, smell, dust, noise, etc.
  - Boundary lines are not always respected: fences are cut for deer hunting, ATVs ride on their neighbors acreages
- o Some areas should be revitalized or have a higher standard of property maintenance
- Regulations
  - o Fewer regulations are better; want to keep local control and respect landowners
    - Need to focus on agriculture and development
    - Farmers shouldn't be micro-managed (permit for cross-fencing) or over-fined (tickets for cows out are unfair because often hunters cut the fences)
  - o Regulations can help to guide development and establish minimum standards
    - Building codes are being established right now to be 100% self-supporting
    - Businesses rely on CIP to create business, but land use regulations can restrict it
    - Planning ahead for growth, commercial areas, and access can prevent friction
    - Sometimes overregulation is just lack of awareness or understanding
    - Guidelines for resource use, growth, and infrastructure could be beneficial
    - Commercial areas should blend in with surrounding area
  - o Coordination of permits/planning should improve; maintenance requirements and costs to townships should also be considered prior to new development (water lines, roads)
- Should look at regulations that benefit the community
  - o Amenities in neighborhoods like sidewalks and complete streets can build community
  - o Controlling home acreage sizes may prevent infrastructure/access issues
  - o Incentives to develop – tiered for smaller developments, marketing help
- Comparisons with Other Jurisdictions
  - o Need good comparisons: what other counties have done, what happened in counties with 20+ acre minimum acreages, how did other older comprehensive plans turn out?
  - o FRCO has 20 acre minimum, DGCO and RLCO have concentrated growth into their cities

**2. Economic Development**

- County's Role

- o Quality infrastructure, quality of life, and qualified workforce
- o EcoDev can promote further residential or other development (people follow jobs)
- Programs and Incentives
  - o Many outside companies will look for long-term incentives, but those should close the deal, not be the main cause (you won't take a house that isn't right for free, despite the incentive)
  - o SNCO has good economic programs in place, but tax breaks are often easier for big businesses to use, need to ensure local businesses can use them too
  - o Simplify processes and have comparable fees
  - o Avoid over-incentivizing; can overburden infrastructure (especially if land is annexed by Cities but TWP supply infrastructure), Economic Development should increase tax base
- Attracting Businesses
  - o If you're a new business, you need to be in an area attractive to employees
    - Companies from other countries come here and stay for a reason (Mars Plant)
    - Special opportunities are important to attracting businesses and workers
      - Civic Theatre, NOTO, downtown, areas like Konza Prairie can be drivers
    - Crime rate and visible law enforcement are also important
    - Need communications (cell and internet) service for businesses and residents
  - o Site Assemblage
    - Easier to assemble sites from ag. over residential subdivisions; more owners makes ag. and large scale ED difficult (more resistance); Protecting ag. means fewer owners
    - Topeka GO owns 40 acres by the Mars Plant
  - o Highway 24 is good for development, as is Kanza Fire area
- Workforce
  - o Good economy means workforce is more important
    - Can be hard to fill jobs with reliable, qualified labor, especially skilled operators/positions or CDL drivers; lack of trades training, though starting to turn
    - TWPs can't pay competitively with benefits, people often leave for other jobs
    - Turning to older, part-time, or retired folks to help fill some of the gaps
  - o Schools/business partnerships have successfully developed skills, but could be expanded
    - Workforce training matching employer needs, technical advisory teams for USDs
    - Washburn Tech works with businesses (Goodyear, Caterpillar)
    - Midstates works with heavy diesel school in Bullet and local technical schools
    - Recruiting through schools has had mixed success for extraction firms
  - o Need high quality of life to get skilled workers (trails, amenities, community pride)
    - Need to market the city/county to overcome bad reputation for families
    - Area has opportunities: good schools (especially rural), affordable housing, health care, parks and rec, planned and safe neighborhoods
  - o The County is pretty aesthetic, but the City could benefit from beautification efforts
    - People park in yards, S. Topeka Blvd, dilapidated structures need demolition
    - Overhead powerlines can look junky, locals don't notice it but outsiders do





- Public Relations

- o Concrete plant by the river downtown does beautification but people see it on the Topeka Blvd Bridge; not every business type will be attractive, shouldn't force them out
- o Sand Plant issues in county with trucking and noise has died down now that it trucks 35 loads/day, 25 tons/load, from 8:00-5:00, mostly supplies KS Sand, some Prairie Sand too
  - 30 years of sand extraction remaining, could be up to 50 years,
  - Will be developed as a lake, 18 acre pond right now with lots of wildlife

- Existing Businesses

- o Not too many problems with business succession, but should make regulation easier for small businesses; More businesses or redevelopment in the County would be nice
- o Loss of local retail and mom and pop stores, some people drive 30+ minutes by Auburn to get groceries (how does Horton support new boutiques?)
- o Some large businesses have moved too; vacant big box stores need to be redeveloped

- New Businesses

- o Cannot forget about agriculture as businesses, has a large overall impact
- o Future Opportunities
  - Trans-loading facility: need to be ag-based or serve lots of users (salts or shale?)
  - Utilizing history and tourism: ID what's here, what brings people, and economic impacts; B&Bs in W. SNCO, along Native Stone and CA/OR Trails
  - Agritourism: can conflict with residents and TWP (traffic and maintenance), need to coordinate/balance these issues
  - Retirement/senior housing: could work across the county
  - Recycling: asphalt pavement/shingles is being recycled, but it's hard to justify crushing asphalt into aggregate when there's abundant natural resources
- o Marketing areas of the county as "uniquely special" and coordinating between them
  - Ex. If new resident/business wants x, maybe \_\_\_\_\_ is the perfect spot because of xyz.
  - Using unique local stores or business attractions may be an opportunity

3. Infrastructure and Transportation

- Development, Coordination, and Infrastructure

- o People buy lots without subdividing, build houses, and do not think about their increased traffic or the cost of providing water, sewage, schools, etc.
- o Need communication early in the development process to plan ahead
  - Without subdivision review, there's no coordination with utilities or roads
  - No mass to attract utility extensions in low density areas
  - Planning can provide infrastructure more cheaply (joint trench for internet, etc.)
- o Infrastructure like roads, water, and sewer lines can be used to guide development
- o Consolidating public services can also be considered to help cut costs

- Transportation

o Roads are adequately maintained in most areas, but needs must be prioritized

- Residential development is mostly well-served, highway 24 is an easy commute
- Other uses can have issues due to the requirements of heavier vehicles
  - Accessing extraction sites can be difficult in terms of roads
  - Bridges need to support the weight of farm equipment (Willard bridge)
  - Round-a-bouts need to be big enough for truck traffic
- Bridges are being worked on, have done a good job there

o Many roads are funded by townships

- Menoken/TWPs don't want paved roads, too expensive to maintain with tax income
- Some townships contract with the county for roads (Grove, Monmouth)

o Impact of road/bridge closures on local businesses must be considered (hurts retail)

o KTA interchange on Auburn Rd: first must upgrade road (which is being used as a local street, despite it being an arterial), then must be justified by creating new traffic

o Connections to other counties are good (HWY75 to Holton) but induced demand must be considered (Hwy 24 to Pottawattamie being 4-lanes, 45<sup>th</sup> from Topeka to Lawrence)

- Water/Sewer

o Right of way easements – how to get water to new development, need access to water

- Water distribution and conservation is important: quality and quantity

o People have had issues with lack of regulation regarding water/sewer systems

- Backup in basements from incorrectly installed sewer systems, homes built without sewer extensions (29<sup>th</sup>/Auburn) or in shoddy subdivisions (53<sup>rd</sup>/Wanamaker)
- Simple regulation will prevent this without being onerous

o There have been issues with water retention and drainage when not thought out

- S. Point Bay: built around an issue lake/dam, but owners don't want to pay repair it
- Issues between neighbors when ponds fall on two parcels (managing drainage) and lack of thought about drainage ditches and where it will go

o Montara is rebuilding pump stations

- Internet access is integral

o Need 25-50 unit subdivisions to get AT&T fiber telecommunications lines

- If central Topeka wanted, AT&T would probably do entire area (aerial cables)
- High speed is offered though copper, but it's not as fast; can get low-speed DSL
- Many businesses install high speed internet
- Fiber connects all towns so density doesn't matter

o Most rural places need to use dish

- Natural Gas

o Lack of growth increases natural gas rates; more gas usage means lower rates overall

o Extending gas must be economic

- \$40K allowance per subdivision phase; if no one moves in, they don't get allowance
- Individual infrastructure expansions cost \$4.54/foot after initial 200' free; existing business and homes can get it depending on usage ("Kickback" for KS Gas)





- Schools: Large pop. growth in SW was not planned for by USDs (Washburn Rural and Seamen);
  - o Some schools are 250% larger (from 300 to 850 kids)
  - o Lots of bond issues but not lots of taxable valuation; one house doesn't support two kids
- Landfill: constrained by environmental features but should be functional for the next 30 years
- Fire: protection and access is important, can make insurance really expensive
- Community centers: can be done with partnerships, like RFDs, grants are important
- Local transit: part of expected infrastructure, people need to know where to look

**4. Natural Resources**

- Natural Features can still be preserved in the area
  - o Prairie grasses, prime farmland, Kansas River, Reservoirs, wetlands reserves
  - o Biological survey indicates native prairies and grasslands with native sod still remaining (W. SNCO); sometimes owners don't care and let evergreen/cedars/brush invade them
  - o Natural resource inventory probably exists: NRCS, Water Offices, KGS, etc.
    - Datasets should have carrying capacity and environmental function
  - o Flint hills, Osage Cuestas, Glacial Hills
  - o Wildlife on rural residential property or wildlife corridors may lead to too many deer/nuisances. Could address with season exemptions, longer firearm/bow hunting seasons
  - o Wildlife hunting lodges are an option to help protect resources (must be respectful)
- Economic Resources
  - o SNCO has scarce limestone (to South and East) and good sand deposits sand, lowers construction costs, but the County must carve space for quarries
  - o Many key aggregates and resources are developed over; makes resource mining difficult or impossible at those locations (especially limestone)
  - o Sand Mining
    - River provides opportunities, but lowered the riverbed 2 feet (too much sand); Corps reduced river mining, so it shifted to pits east of town and by Silver Lake Road
  - o Sand pits can be converted into recreation and wildlife areas
    - Bonner Springs has an industrial park near the river, funds economic development, and has created industrial and recreation growth around it (Wichita and DGCO too)
  - o Agricultural Resources (prime farmland) are something the County should care about
    - With sporadic development, the County is losing farm and pasture land
- Historical Resources
  - o Historical inventory and ways to encourage historic building protection is needed
    - Many historic buildings are gone (Sherman's house) but they are important
    - Little treasures (like J-hawk theater, old schools, octagonal barns on Landon Road, Const. Hall, US Courthouse) must be ID'ed and preserved
  - o Archaeological resources and impacts on them also need to be looked at
  - o Native American Culture sites or sites connected with the Pottawattamie Nation

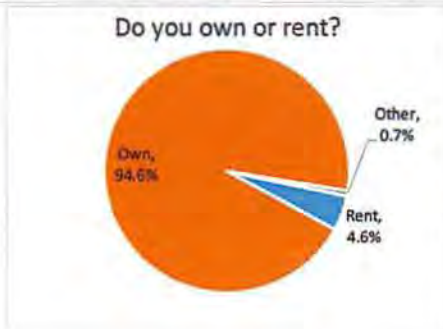
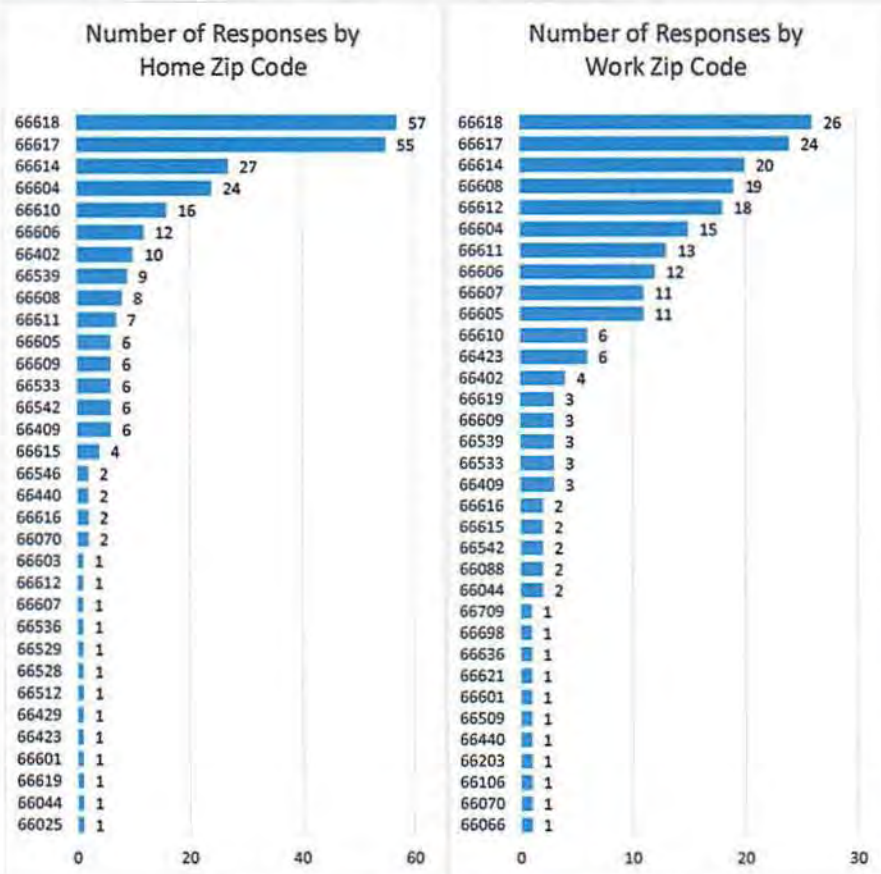
- o "Preservation of key historic features" are could be considered in the Zoning Code
- o Could designate historic markers or observation areas of OR/CA trails
- Tourism
  - o Agritourism is good but can affect neighbors; is not protected like ag. (ex. Glacier's Edge)
  - o Native Stone and California/Oregon trail are assets (byways are established grass roots; require a paved road with 2-way traffic, jurisdictions along the route must restrict billboards)
  - o Areas like Konza Prairie bring in big industry, attractive to bringing in people
  - o Other opportunities include downtown or Freedom's Pathway
- Recreation
  - o Need to think of the future growth and park areas
    - Green spaces, hiking/biking trails, observation points (Burnett's mound)
  - o Kansas River, Shunga Creek, State Lake, Lake Shawnee for recreation and public access (may need to limit access to within the limits of Topeka for emergency access)
  - o Need better maintenance of existing access/parks
- Other Policies
  - o Involving State Representatives may help
  - o Waterways: Lenexa/Johnson Co. prevents building in floodplain/riparian areas
  - o Preserve wetlands through incentives? Need to get people the right information and tax incentives/easement programs to protect riparian area and wildlife resources
  - o What are the principles for good development of these kinds of areas?

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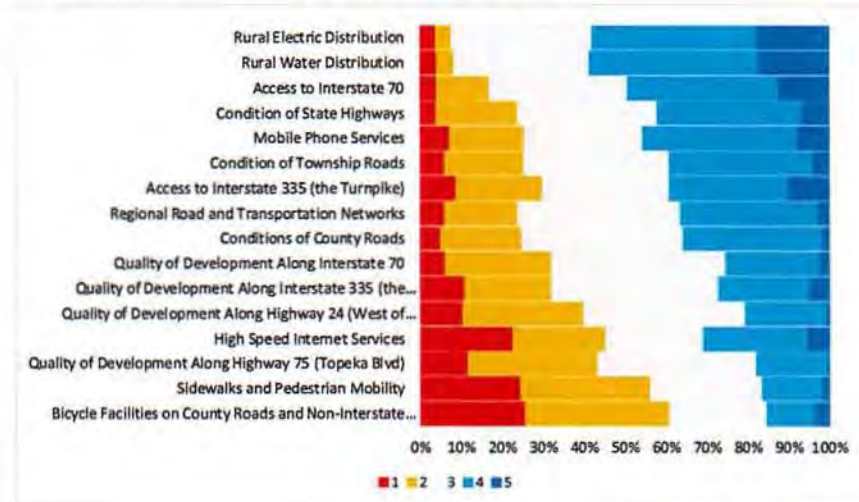
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Preliminary Survey: Final Results, 10/10/16



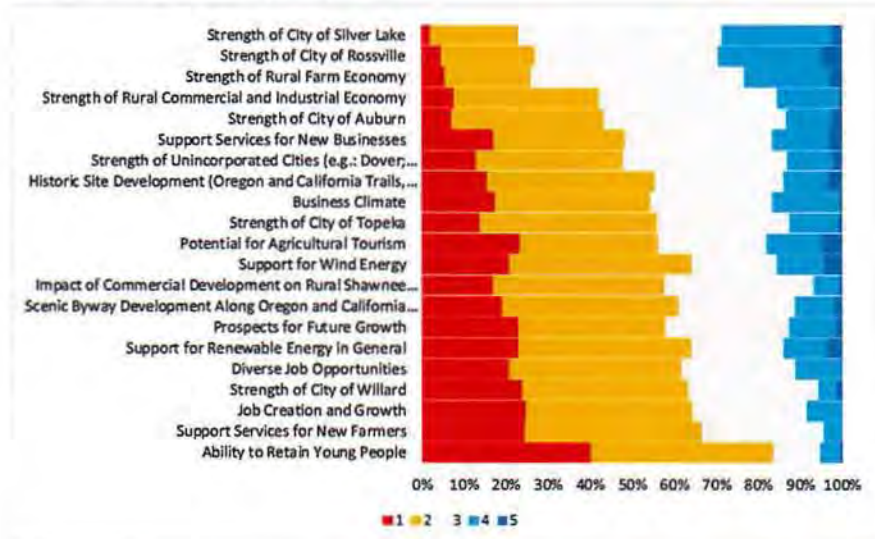
Transportation and Infrastructure: (1 being Poor and 5 being Excellent)



	Negative Response	Neutral Response	Positive Response	Average Rating	Response Count
Bicycle Facilities on County Roads and Non-Interstate Highways	61%	24%	15%	2.33	168
Sidewalks and Pedestrian Mobility	56%	27%	17%	2.38	205
Quality of Development Along Highway 75 (Topeka Blvd)	43%	39%	18%	2.64	206
High Speed Internet Services	45%	24%	31%	2.69	213
Quality of Development Along Highway 24 (West of Topeka)	40%	39%	21%	2.71	203
Quality of Development Along Interstate 335 (the Turnpike)	32%	41%	27%	2.89	184
Quality of Development Along Interstate 70	32%	43%	25%	2.89	209
Conditions of County Roads	25%	39%	36%	3.08	218
Regional Road and Transportation Networks	24%	40%	36%	3.09	214
Access to Interstate 335 (the Turnpike)	30%	31%	39%	3.10	194
Condition of Township Roads	25%	36%	39%	3.12	202
Mobile Phone Services	25%	29%	46%	3.21	221
Condition of State Highways	24%	34%	42%	3.21	223
Access to Interstate 70	17%	34%	49%	3.41	219
Rural Water Distribution	8%	33%	59%	3.63	169
Rural Electric Distribution	8%	34%	58%	3.64	157
				Answered	227
				Skipped	58

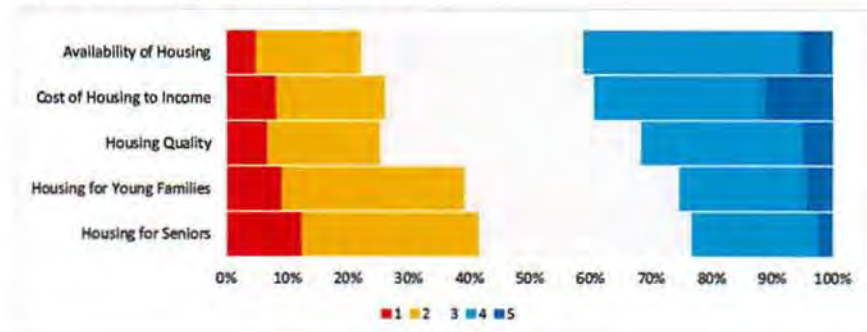


**Economy: (1 being Poor and 5 being Excellent)**



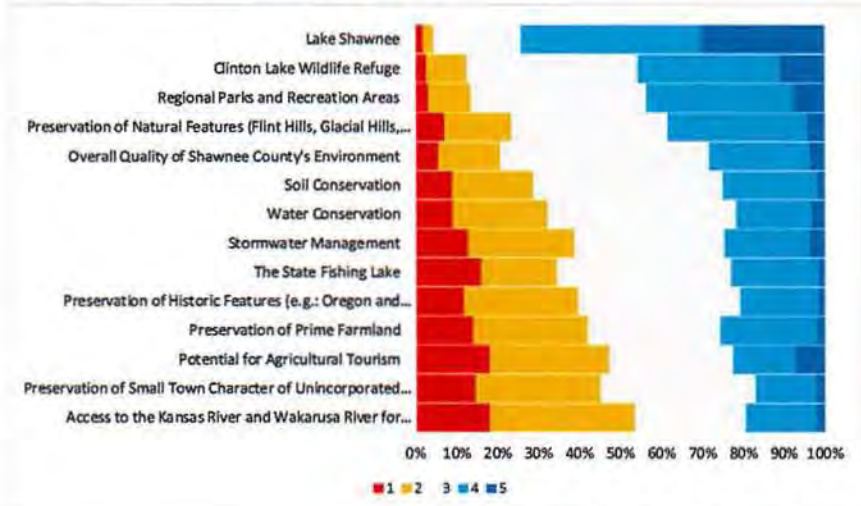
	Negative Response	Neutral Response	Positive Response	Average Rating	Response Count
Ability to Retain Young People	84%	11%	5%	1.82	209
Support Services for New Farmers	67%	29%	4%	2.13	90
Job Creation and Growth	64%	27%	8%	2.19	213
Strength of City of Willard	63%	31%	6%	2.20	71
Diverse Job Opportunities	62%	27%	11%	2.29	207
Support for Renewable Energy in General	64%	22%	14%	2.30	165
Prospects for Future Growth	58%	30%	13%	2.33	183
Scenic Byway Development	61%	28%	11%	2.33	162
Impact of Commercial Development on Rural	58%	35%	7%	2.33	147
Support for Wind Energy	64%	20%	15%	2.35	168
Potential for Agricultural Tourism	56%	26%	18%	2.43	128
Strength of City of Topeka	56%	31%	13%	2.44	216
Business Climate	55%	29%	17%	2.45	200
Historic Site Development	55%	31%	14%	2.46	173
Strength of Unincorporated Cities	48%	39%	13%	2.54	92
Support Services for New Businesses	48%	35%	17%	2.54	157
Strength of City of Auburn	43%	43%	13%	2.65	83
Strength of Rural Commercial/Industrial Economy	42%	42%	15%	2.66	156
Strength of Rural Farm Economy	26%	51%	23%	2.94	142
Strength of City of Rossville	27%	44%	29%	3.02	85
Strength of City of Silver Lake	23%	48%	29%	3.05	91
				Answered	225
				Skipped	60

**Housing: (1 being Poor and 5 being Excellent)**



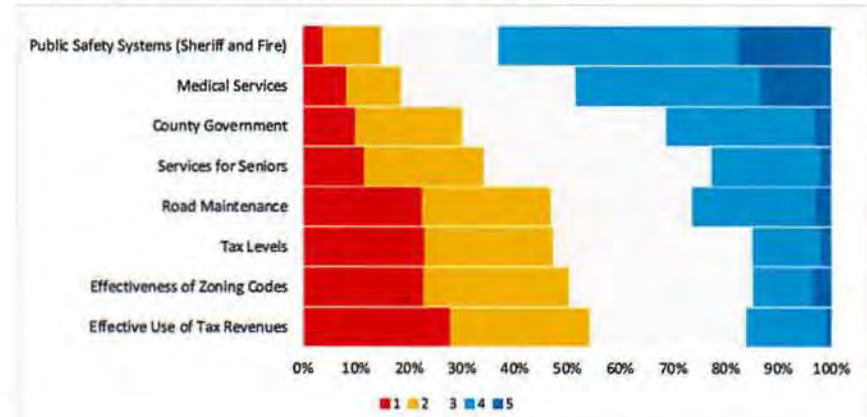
	Negative Response	Neutral Response	Positive Response	Average Rating	Response Count
Housing for Seniors	42%	35%	23%	2.71	168
Housing for Young Families	39%	35%	25%	2.81	186
Housing Quality	25%	43%	32%	3.04	206
Cost of Housing to Income	26%	34%	39%	3.16	206
Availability of Housing	22%	37%	41%	3.19	202
				Answered	215
				Skipped	70

**Natural Resources: (1 being Poor and 5 being Excellent)**



	Negative Response	Neutral Response	Positive Response	Average Rating	Response Count
Access to the Kansas River and Wakarusa River for Recreation (i.e.: trails and boat ramps)	54%	27%	19%	2.49	166
Preservation of Small Town Character of Unincorporated Towns	45%	38%	17%	2.59	137
Potential for Agricultural Tourism	47%	30%	22%	2.64	116
Preservation of Prime Farmland	42%	32%	25%	2.71	114
Preservation of Historic Features (e.g.: Oregon and California Trails)	40%	40%	21%	2.71	136
The State Fishing Lake	35%	43%	23%	2.74	136
Stormwater Management	39%	37%	24%	2.76	139
Water Conservation	32%	46%	22%	2.83	130
Soil Conservation	29%	46%	25%	2.88	121
Overall Quality of Shawnee County's Environment	21%	51%	28%	3.05	192
Preservation of Natural Features (Flint Hills, Glacial Hills, and Osage Cuestas)	23%	38%	38%	3.12	141
Regional Parks and Recreation Areas	14%	43%	43%	3.34	184
Clinton Lake Wildlife Refuge	13%	42%	46%	3.41	112
Lake Shawnee	5%	21%	74%	3.97	197
				Answered	216
				Skipped	69

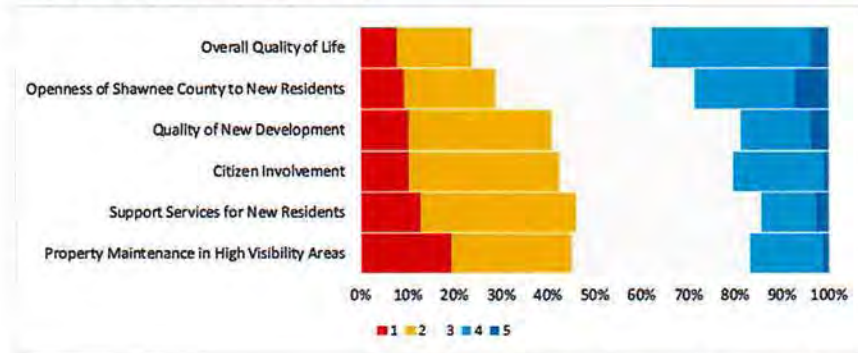
**County Government and Services: (1 being Poor and 5 being Excellent)**



	Negative Response	Neutral Response	Positive Response	Average Rating	Response Count
Effective Use of Tax Revenues	54%	30%	16%	2.35	212
Effectiveness of Zoning Codes	50%	35%	15%	2.45	149
Tax Levels	47%	38%	15%	2.46	209
Road Maintenance	47%	27%	26%	2.60	213
Services for Seniors	34%	43%	23%	2.79	164
County Government	30%	39%	31%	2.94	202
Medical Services	19%	33%	48%	3.35	205
Public Safety Systems (Sheriff and Fire)	15%	22%	63%	3.62	210
				Answered	218
				Skipped	67

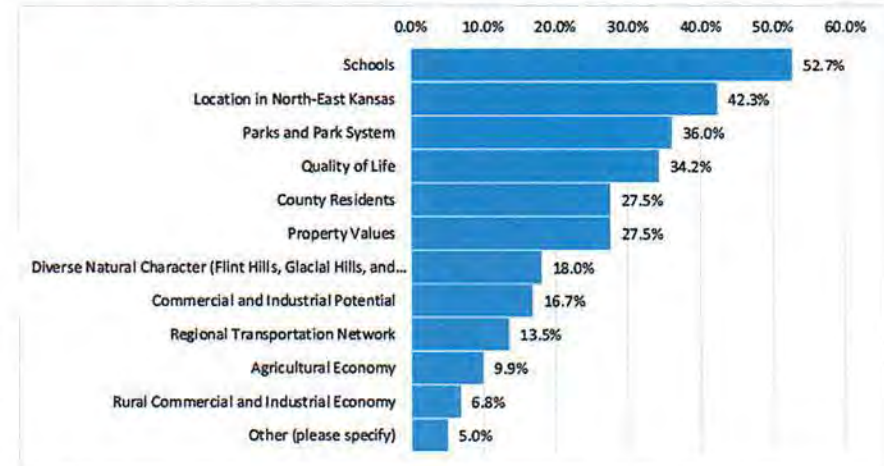


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	Negative Response	Neutral Response	Positive Response	Average Rating	Response Count
Property Maintenance in High Visibility Areas	45%	38%	17%	2.53	186
Support Services for New Residents	46%	40%	14%	2.58	154
Citizen Involvement	43%	37%	20%	2.68	202
Quality of New Development	41%	40%	19%	2.71	193
Openness of Shawnee County to New Residents	29%	43%	28%	2.97	190
Overall Quality of Life	24%	38%	38%	3.09	213
				Answered	216
				Skipped	69

What do you believe are Shawnee County's three greatest assets? (select three)

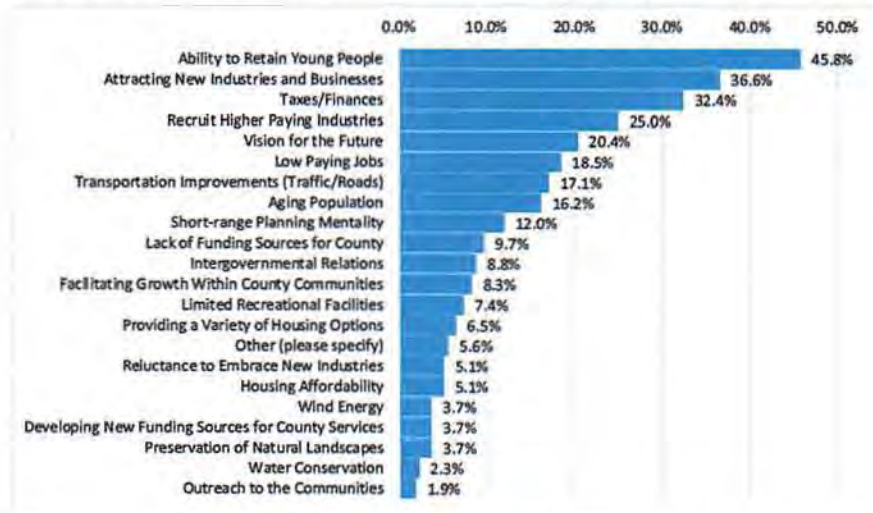


	Response Percent	Response Count
Schools	52.7%	117
Location in North-East Kansas	42.3%	94
Parks and Park System	36.0%	80
Quality of Life	34.2%	76
County Residents	27.5%	61
Property Values	27.5%	61
Diverse Natural Character (Flint Hills, Glacial Hills, and Osage Cuestas)	18.0%	40
Commercial and Industrial Potential	16.7%	37
Regional Transportation Network	13.5%	30
Agricultural Economy	9.9%	22
Rural Commercial and Industrial Economy	6.8%	15
Other (please specify)	5.0%	11
	Answered	222
	Skipped	63

*"Other" Responses*

TAXES ARE TOO D\*\*\* HIGH; NONE; Emergency Management and Public Safety; Not in Western Kansas; Being the Capital City; Used to be schools, but legislature is killing them; jobs; Topeka Zoo and Library; None; Events, huffnpuff, mexican fiesta, st. Patrick parade; Many of my answers have changed since recent state government reductions

What do you believe are the most important issues facing Shawnee County in the next ten years?



**"Other" Responses**  
 Federal Gov't Intrusion and regulations; Merging of Sheriff with Police and having all under Sheriff; Stability - Avoid business that only stay until tax abatement ends; Road condition; We need to get the crime under control. If people really knew what goes on in this county, they would be scared to live here; Lack of support for environmental initiatives (too much mowing, too many pesticides, not enough pollinator gardens); Retirement home on north side of Topeka; Crime; Support of local businesses; Quality of public schools; Spending and allocations of tax income; state government cutbacks to services and programs

	Response Percent	Response Count
Ability to Retain Young People	45.8%	99
Attracting New Industries and Businesses	36.6%	79
Taxes/Finances	32.4%	70
Recruit Higher Paying Industries	25.0%	54
Vision for the Future	20.4%	44
Low Paying Jobs	18.5%	40
Transportation Improvements (Traffic/Roads)	17.1%	37
Aging Population	16.2%	35
Short-range Planning Mentality	12.0%	26
Lack of Funding Sources for County	9.7%	21
Intergovernmental Relations	8.8%	19
Facilitating Growth Within County Communities	8.3%	18
Limited Recreational Facilities	7.4%	16
Providing a Variety of Housing Options	6.5%	14
Other (please specify)	5.6%	12
Reluctance to Embrace New Industries	5.1%	11
Housing Affordability	5.1%	11
Wind Energy	3.7%	8
Developing New Funding Sources for County Services	3.7%	8
Preservation of Natural Landscapes	3.7%	8
Water Conservation	2.3%	5
Outreach to the Communities	1.9%	4
	Answered	216
	Skipped	69



Shawnee County Comprehensive Plan

**Q12 Is there a place of exceptional beauty or uniqueness in the county that should be preserved or capitalized on? (Please do not include your own home).**

Answered: 98 Skipped: 205

Shawnee County Comprehensive Plan

#	Responses	Date
1	Lake Shawnee	10/28/2016 8:37 AM
2	Downtown needs to more community involvement	10/25/2016 8:34 AM
3	Lake shawnee	10/25/2016 8:15 AM
4	Agri-tourism	10/18/2016 4:17 PM
5	Menninger tower building	10/14/2016 6:31 AM
6	Downtown Topeka - everything within 10 miles of the Capitol needs to be cleaned up - rid the trashy looking yards/homes - need to enforce homeowners/landlords/businesses to cleanup and maintain	10/13/2016 10:50 AM
7	Parks	10/11/2016 11:37 AM
8	Burnett's Mound! History, scenic view, potential for a seriously nice fitness center, well maintained trails and maybe an outdoor theater space (similar to Branson or Eureka Springs).	10/11/2016 9:40 AM
9	the Kansas River; Camp Daley Hindman; Echo Cliff; Topeka downtown USPS building;	9/28/2016 3:47 PM
10	Burnetts mound	9/27/2016 5:30 PM
11	The Capital Building	9/27/2016 1:14 PM
12	Lake Shawnee	9/27/2016 12:58 PM
13	Shawnee has a little bit of everything- Kansas River, close to Clinton, edge of flint hills. State Capitol unless brownback moves that to Manhattan	9/26/2016 1:20 PM
14	Kansas River	9/23/2016 12:18 PM
15	Gage Park	9/22/2016 4:54 PM
16	Lake Shawnee	9/22/2016 4:11 AM
17	Kansas River	9/21/2016 4:26 PM
18	Northern and southern parts of the county offer beautiful vistas that are not found in many other areas of the county and city.	9/21/2016 11:42 AM
19	The countryside. Topeka is pushing business and homes further out and we are losing farm land, trees, etc. Flint hills is another that should be maintained. The small towns and townships make great areas to invest in. If they prosper then so do the large towns around them.	9/21/2016 10:54 AM
20	Lake Shawnee and I think the area around Cedar Crest is beautiful	9/21/2016 9:19 AM
21	Preserve Kansas River corridor. Without careful planning and zoning (which includes sometimes saying no) it will look like the Missouri River in KC, an eyesore.	9/21/2016 8:39 AM
22	The Capitol Building	9/20/2016 5:14 PM
23	Burnett's Mound	9/20/2016 3:49 PM
24	South Topeka could really stand some cleaning up from US-75 to 21st street. The condition of the road is horrible. The old junkyards, strip clubs, pallet stacks, anyone going to the Forbes, the airport of the speedway from out of town has to see the way it all looks so sad.	9/20/2016 3:28 PM
25	Wakarusa River	9/19/2016 1:22 PM
26	Lake Shawnee and the surrounding area	9/19/2016 11:12 AM
27	Kaw River	9/19/2016 10:13 AM

28	Shawnee Lake	9/15/2016 4:35 PM
29	Historical sites	9/14/2016 11:32 AM
30	The role citizens played in the CIV War.	9/8/2016 1:30 PM
31	Lake Shawnee is a great asset!	9/5/2016 12:33 PM
32	The Scenic Byway. It is listed in tourism magazines and draws outsiders to travel the rural areas of our County.	8/9/2016 11:34 AM
33	The natural beauty of the Kansas River for recreation activities and its rich history with the Oregon Trail. Working the the Native American tribes to promote their history and how it is woven into the Kansas culture and history.	7/17/2016 5:01 PM
34	NOTO Arts District	7/17/2016 9:20 AM
35	The Flint Hills < west of Topeka.	7/15/2016 9:51 AM
36	Shawnee Lake	7/14/2016 9:47 PM
37	Menninger property.	7/14/2016 8:31 PM
38	no money should go elsewhere	7/14/2016 7:34 PM
39	The Kansas River Frontage should be made into a park system all along both banks of the river.	7/14/2016 7:12 PM
40	Develop Kansas Riverfront in Topeka	7/14/2016 6:23 PM
41	Lake Shawnee	7/14/2016 6:23 PM
42	Flint hills	7/14/2016 5:34 PM
43	No	7/14/2016 5:27 PM
44	Echo Cliffs and the Kansas River	7/14/2016 4:17 PM
45	Public access, availability, low cost and quantity of fireworks during the first week of July	7/14/2016 2:58 PM
46	Ted Eneley Gardens and Shawnee Lake	7/14/2016 2:48 PM
47	Washburn University	7/14/2016 2:44 PM
48	Walking Trails in the County	7/14/2016 1:18 PM
49	Capital Complex....renovate the Docking Bldg.	7/14/2016 12:28 PM
50	Extend bike trails utilizing old railroad routes (tracks), and develop the river areas for canoeing access and a river walk or some other attraction such as a music pavilion or ferry.	7/14/2016 12:10 PM
51	Zoo and Gage Park	7/14/2016 12:08 PM
52	NOTO	7/14/2016 11:00 AM
53	Flint Hills	7/14/2016 10:55 AM
54	Lake Shawnee area and Gage Park.	7/14/2016 10:27 AM
55	Lake Shawnee, Menninger Trails and biking trails	7/14/2016 9:42 AM
56	Grant-Bradbury park is an 80-acre native prairie that is part of the park system. There are NFP groups that hold walks out there, but I don't think that P&R holds any events out there.	7/14/2016 9:40 AM
57	The Kasas River. Please develop a downtown river park.	7/14/2016 8:20 AM
58	Kansas River	7/14/2016 8:18 AM
59	Eneley Gardens	7/14/2016 7:57 AM
60	Gage Park is full of potential. Pullen Park in Raleigh, North Carolina is a beautiful example of what Gage could be for our community.	7/14/2016 7:55 AM
61	Jayhawk Theater	7/14/2016 7:31 AM
62	Kansas river	7/14/2016 7:29 AM
63	Silver Lake	7/14/2016 6:51 AM
64	Lake Shawnee Gardens	7/14/2016 2:20 AM
65	Lake Shawnee	7/14/2016 12:04 AM

Shawnee County Comprehensive Plan

66	Natural, such as glacial and flint hills, Capital building and its lawn.	7/14/2016 12:00 AM
67	Lake area is a awesome, Brown v. Board Historic Site needs better access/advertisement, Historical property preservation, need more green spaces that are well kept.	7/13/2016 11:23 PM
68	None	7/13/2016 10:48 PM
69	Lake Shawnee/Ted Enaley and related gardens, State Capital Building and grounds.	7/13/2016 10:24 PM
70	There is none.	7/13/2016 10:19 PM
71	Kansas River	7/13/2016 10:19 PM
72	Something nice needs to be done with the riverfront. The trees and sandbars need to be removed in the river to make lower water walking bridges and alternate routes. So pedestrians can cross to developments on both sides.	7/13/2016 10:07 PM
73	Kansas river	7/13/2016 10:05 PM
74	Gage and lake shawnee gardens— roses and tulips	7/13/2016 9:57 PM
75	North Topeka	7/13/2016 9:41 PM
76	The hills in northwest Shawnee county gives a beautiful view of Topeka. Developing along the river or north of hwy 24 would be nice. The Kansas river through downtown has potential!	7/13/2016 9:41 PM
77	The State Capitol building should be a pivotal point of soliciting tourists. It is among the greatest in the U.S.	7/13/2016 9:21 PM
78	NOTO And evening capitol area.	7/13/2016 9:14 PM
79	Lake Shawnee	7/13/2016 9:10 PM
80	Kansas river, Downtown, anything besides wanamaker!!	7/13/2016 8:53 PM
81	Shawnee north community center	7/13/2016 8:43 PM
82	State lake, biking and walking trails	7/13/2016 8:21 PM
83	Parks such as lake Shawnee, Shawnee co north, Riff commons, and downtown	7/13/2016 8:09 PM
84	Lake Shawnee, Trails	7/13/2016 7:45 PM
85	Lake shawnee	7/13/2016 7:36 PM
86	Natural environment in general, the "less concrete and more green" mindset should continue to be fostered.	7/13/2016 6:59 PM
87	Downtown riverfront	7/13/2016 6:10 PM
88	NOTO - continue to develop and grow	7/13/2016 4:34 PM
89	Both Lakes	7/13/2016 2:15 PM
90	Riff Commons	7/13/2016 1:59 PM
91	Gage Park and the surrounding grounds (Discovery Center, carousel, blaisdell park, zoo, train, parks, etc)	7/13/2016 1:35 PM
92	I think the downtown project should continue to develop. Things are coming along great and people are starting to see the vision	7/13/2016 1:33 PM
93	Riverfront	7/13/2016 1:24 PM
94	The River	7/13/2016 11:43 AM
95	LakeShawnee	7/13/2016 9:54 AM
96	Burnetts mound	7/13/2016 7:41 AM
97	The Kaw (Kansas) River...near my home.	7/12/2016 9:53 PM
98	Landon Nature Trail	7/12/2016 4:39 PM

Shawnee County Comprehensive Plan

**Q13 Please let us know any additional comments you may have regarding ShawneeCounty or the Comprehensive Plan.**

Answered: 69 Skipped: 243

#	Responses	Date
1	More community integration	10/25/2016 8:34 AM
2	Including funding for pedestrian and bike lanes and paths in every road construction project. The county is too automobile-centric.	10/14/2016 6:33 AM
3	Needs to improve marketing of any/all events that happen county wide and especially in downtown area—too often we hear about something AFTER it occurred WHEREAS IT NEEDS TO PUBLICIZED/MARKETED BEFORE THE EVENT(S). NEED a professional sport team actually in the State of Kansas	10/13/2016 10:52 AM
4	It is obvious that Parks and Recreation has taken a lead and gets great funding. Maintenance of those things are going to be expensive. I am concerned that we will not be able to balance everything. The new water park is nice but we are closing other pools to open that? We have trouble deciding on if a bridge needs repaired? The 911 operators are very low manned that our police wont make a car stop? We should be focusing on public safety and bridges and other things that serve us all more than a pool used only part of the year and takes money to maintain all year. A private company can do a water park... that is the kind of thing that is killing business. Government should be protecting us.	10/11/2016 9:47 AM
5	Would love to see the City / County grow in population; remove eyesores in the community (res. & comm.); make it easier for developers to create new places; civic pride campaign; expedite all road projects so they disrupt businesses & traffic the absolute least number of days.	10/4/2016 2:03 PM
6	I live in Dover and its like the ugly step-child of SNCO. We have poor internet service, no DSL (broadband only w/Mercury Wireless), no parks and rec (but I pay taxes for OTHERS to have this service - taxation without representation?).	9/28/2016 3:56 PM
7	Spend money like a bunch of drunken sailors	9/27/2016 5:31 PM
8	city of Topeka and county have turned a blind eye on things for a long time there is a lot of Dugs around here now it was not like this before I have seen them move drugs on bikes now I have 1 question what has happened to this town no one cares people are looking the other way on every thing	9/27/2016 1:19 PM
9	The attention to downtown Topeka indicates a strong desire, especially by young people, to improve and enhance our community. This is critical to retaining young, educated residents and attracting companies and jobs. The county should participate in this trend.	9/27/2016 1:00 PM
10	Shawnee county- great potential for the diversity of cultural, races, meaning the leaders would have to accept ideas out of their comfort zone, change is not always bad	9/26/2016 1:23 PM
11	I think the county needs to preserve existing resources and assets. The county also needs to pay close attention to staffing shortages in county departments that can have a substantial impact on the quality of life (Example: 911 Center staffing shortages and Law Enforcement staffing shortages)	9/22/2016 4:13 AM
12	Clean up the Polk Quincy Industrial area along I-70. This blight is unattractive to travelers through Shawnee County. Who would want to stop here?	9/21/2016 9:44 PM
13	Need to continue to invest in Emergency Management and Public Safety. Need to merge and have Sheriff take over all LEO for the whole County. Confidence in TPD is extremely low and it can more than be covered with just the Sheriff.	9/21/2016 1:06 PM
14	poorly worded survey. leading, example, LACK of funding for county services rather than funding for county services.	9/21/2016 8:41 AM
15	Beware of restrictions. It sometimes causes a cookie cutter look. Everything looks just like everything around it.	9/20/2016 4:00 PM
16	Thank you for taking the time to gather input from residents.	9/20/2016 3:50 PM
17	I think we should stop starting more projects when we don't have the money to maintain what we have.....the river front project is a waste of time and money.	9/20/2016 12:15 PM
18	The old saying goes "plan the work and work the plan". Its about time the County organize a plan for the future.	9/19/2016 11:13 AM



Shawnee County Comprehensive Plan

19	More focus on downtown/riverfront area, including unique and locally owned shops and restaurants rather than more chains - making an area that is uniquely Kansan.	9/19/2016 10:15 AM
20	North Topeka needs more gas stations and other options on places to eat, IE sit down type rest.	9/19/2016 9:36 AM
21	none	9/8/2016 1:31 PM
22	Many of my lower ratings pertain more to the city of Topeka (where I live) than the County as a whole.	9/5/2016 12:34 PM
23	There needs to be more affordable access for seniors and/or disabled people to use public transportation for shopping/doctor's appt. etc., which could help them stay in their homes. This would be in the City of Topeka and possible a satellite program in the 3rd class cities and unincorporated areas. If the Library can find a place for satellite areas, then there must be a place for a bus stop for this service also.	8/8/2016 11:39 AM
24	I would ask that funds be set aside to compensate individual citizens of Shawnee County that are essentially robbed of their net worth due to the recommendations of the comprehensive plan that "are what is best for the county as a whole" - We all watched the City of Topeka Land Use & Growth Management Plan go through a very similar process as this comprehensive plan. The resulting changes in land use and urban areas designated for future city annexation might create better neighborhoods and population growth in 2040. I hope it does, but currently - the additional regulations and restrictions are costing landowners thousands of dollars and additional headache. The banking community, real estate agents, and individual citizens are now stuck with a solution designed for 2040 projections and honestly, based on historical population growth of Topeka, might be 2060 or 2080 before 75% of these trapped parcels are turned into what this committee envisioned. I have read the 17 page RFP twice now and have very little idea what problem the Shawnee county comprehensive plan is attempting to solve, but would request funds be set aside when steps are taken that cause our citizens an individual loss to their net worth for a project/concept/theory that is designed to be for the good of Shawnee County as a whole.	7/22/2016 4:29 PM
25	I believe in the work of the Comprehensive Plan and that through the work Shawnee County will discover itself through the people who live, work and play here.	7/17/2016 5:02 PM
26	Streets and roads need to be regularly maintained. Commissioners need to reply to there constituents e-mails and concerns to at least show they are interested. At times they appear to be above everybody especially Buhler and Cook.	7/14/2016 8:43 PM
27	These are not the questions or priorities we need to focus on.	7/14/2016 7:35 PM
28	Create integrated park system, building trail systems connecting parks throughout Topeka and Shawnee County.	7/14/2016 7:13 PM
29	Would really like to see focus on preserving the rural beauty of Shawnee County. Not allowing large business after large business to creep in and ruin the uniqueness so Shawnee County. Also just a shout out to the awesome sheriff's department, medical and fire departments. Great medical community.	7/14/2016 6:51 PM
30	I would suggest focusing attention on developing/beautifying areas surrounding I-70 so that the greater Topeka area leaves more of a positive impression on those travelling through from out of state. Use this area to entice out-of-towners to stop and see more of the area. When looked at from an outside perspective, this channel could use some work.	7/14/2016 6:27 PM
31	Need fair income tax structure, so property taxes don't continue to rise, every year!	7/14/2016 12:29 PM
32	Shawnee County does an excellent job with roads and services. Once you get to the City limits of Topeka, it goes downhill quickly in terms of road quality and how properties look in terms of maintenance.	7/14/2016 12:12 PM
33	You represent the whole county, not just outside the city limits of Topeka. Start acting like it and work with the City better.	7/14/2016 12:10 PM
34	Parks and rec services need to improve especially facilities for adult softball and roads in the cit, county and state. All people pay a flat income based tax. No exemptions for anyone!	7/14/2016 10:44 AM
35	In order to provide adequate services, taxes should be increased a little to accomplish this. Our infrastructure is starting to fail us.	7/14/2016 10:28 AM
36	Good luck and don't kill too many trees in producing your report.	7/14/2016 9:43 AM
37	As mentioned in an earlier comment, we need P&R to use more native plants in their landscaping. 70% of our food crops are pollinated by insects and increased herbicide and pesticide use over the past 20 years have led to a decrease in pollinator numbers. Imagine where we'll be in 20 years if we don't have bees to pollinate our pumpkins, squash, apples or peaches.	7/14/2016 9:42 AM
38	We are making significant progress with Complete Streets and Bicycle Plan. Need more focus on walkable communities for young adults and seniors who desire a more urban lifestyle. Continue parks & rec and arts development. How can we continue and capitalize on the growing financial services industry in Topeka? Continue our growth as a regional medical center. Enhance our declining mental health services. Celebrate our growing racial/cultural diversity.	7/14/2016 8:25 AM

Shawnee County Comprehensive Plan

39	We need lower taxes!!! There are no improvements happening and crime is getting worse by the day!	7/14/2016 7:30 AM
40	School and roads	7/14/2016 6:51 AM
41	Wealthy need to pay their fair share of state income taxes. Sales tax too high	7/14/2016 2:21 AM
42	There is a strong need for maintenance free homes in the north county area. Free standing community. Also need some nice restaurants and nice shopping areas along highway 75. Seaman is a great school district but we need some nice commercial business to help support it.	7/14/2016 12:07 AM
43	City and County need to do a better job of communication and collaboration.	7/13/2016 11:23 PM
44	School and teacher support	7/13/2016 10:46 PM
45	I really doubt that Barry Beagle is or should be the correct person for this vision. County Building codes and inspections will slow development and be costly. More gov't intervention is NOT the answer.	7/13/2016 10:27 PM
46	I would like to see our major roadways with more thought towards visual design. 5 lanes of pure asphalt where you don't need a turn lane is awful. You do not see that in JO County or Lawrence.	7/13/2016 10:21 PM
47	Stop giving so much control to the City. And allow established businesses the ability to expand and stop fighting them.	7/13/2016 10:10 PM
48	Is there a comprehensive plan?? Not doing well including the community in the process.	7/13/2016 10:06 PM
49	The county has invested monies for recreation in all communities of Shawnee county except Silver Lake. No supported ball diamonds, swimming pool, parks, trails, etc. disappointing that our community is not represented in the discussions.	7/13/2016 9:43 PM
50	Urban blight and abandoned houses detract from our community.	7/13/2016 9:21 PM
51	We recently moved to the shawnee co area and thought there would be more variety of evening activities. Also when we go searching for them there is no central events page were all events can be posted by gov and private.	7/13/2016 9:16 PM
52	Keep the refuse dept. in tact. Keeps trash bills in check throughout the county no matter who you use.	7/13/2016 8:55 PM
53	Encourage business and franchises to move away from wannamaker (too saturated) and relocate in other parts of city such as downtown. More events such as tap that to retain young people that we lose to Lawrence, KC, and Manhattan	7/13/2016 8:11 PM
54	In order to meet the needs of young people looking for a home after graduation we must provide more than just a job. We MUST support walking and biking infrastructure, mixed use development, and especially our local food economy. Our most talented young people are moving to Lawrence and Kansas City and even Manhattan because we lack this local food support that the other communities have.	7/13/2016 7:03 PM
55	Fund the Sheriff's office more adequately to be able to retain those deputies	7/13/2016 3:16 PM
56	stop closing the streets for these special interest groups as it hurts those of us who are in business at those locations	7/13/2016 2:52 PM
57	Strongly favor consolidation of Topeka/Shawnee Co government.	7/13/2016 1:24 PM
58	The county should also be leading by example to stimulate the local economy through using local vendors when possible	7/13/2016 1:20 PM
59	The lack of zoning options for business in undeveloped Shawnee County is forcing business out of the County or forcing them to operate illegally.	7/12/2016 4:40 PM
60	We need to consolidate the number of different agencies doing the same thing. We have too many taxing authorities in the county, MTAA, Library, etc. if we could focus and make the county better as a whole we could really improve the quality of life.	7/12/2016 4:35 PM

## meeting minutes

From: Kirk Lehmann  
 Project No.: 2016.118.00 File No.(s): 01.3  
 Date Prepared: November 3, 2016  
 Meeting Date(s): October 27 and November 1, 2016

Project Name: Shawnee County Comprehensive Plan  
 Subject: Public Open House Meetings  
 Meeting Attendees: Project Team: Thomas Dow and Kirk Lehmann, RDG; Dan Halloway, CFS Engineers; Barry Beagle, Shawnee County

Your Name  
 Ernest/Deb Kari  
 John Rolly  
 GALEN KOCI  
 Ed's NEEDHAM  
 Chad & Kerli Koci  
 Vera Brinkman  
 WAYNE D. HOFFMANN  
 Dale Linder  
 Onis Jensen  
 CURTIS SWEDEN  
 Randal Walker  
 BOB ARCHER  
 Gina Koch

GARY GROVES  
 Stephen Schieffelbein  
 Shelly Suber  
 Donita Balusek  
 Debbi Ch. Iders  
 Kaye Kabus  
 JOHN KAOUS  
 Peggy Kellerman  
 Judy Boltman  
 David Boltman  
 Cindy Evans  
 Brent & Paule Maxwell  
 Joyce Kneash  
 MICHAEL J. KWENSE  
 Mike Kucenic  
 Leroy Russell

+ 3 additional attendees who did not sign their names

### Overview:

Two public open houses were held the evenings of October 27, 2016 and November 1, 2016 at Seaman and Washburn Rural High Schools. The community at large was invited to share their ideas for Shawnee County and work alongside the planning team to help create the comprehensive plan. The format began with a brief presentation introducing attendees to the planning process. This was followed by an open house during which attendees were invited to investigate boards with information collected thus far and to share their ideas, issues, and concerns with the planning team for incorporation into the development of the plan document.

Approximately 36 people participated in these events with 9 at the first meeting and 27 at the second, excluding the planning team. Several themes emerged during discussion with the attendees.

### Discussion Themes:

#### *Avoid burdensome regulation.*

Many participants were concerned that the comprehensive planning process would lead to burdensome regulation or decreased land values. Several pointed to expectations about the continuance of current regulations, including farmers who rely on plat exemptions that allow them to subdivide 3-acre parcels to pay for retirement. Many understood that modifying the rule could bring benefits in coordination, but people also did not want to be bound in what they could do. County codes geared towards public safety, including septic system regulations and buildings codes, were not typically viewed as burdensome.

#### *Better integrate new residents.*

Participants noted that many new residents from the county either did not know or care about rural living. Several cited examples of new residents not maintaining hedge trees, the fruit of which can kill cattle, expecting city amenities such as paved roads or high speed internet, lacking education about caring for animals and acreages, and generating friction between new residents and existing agricultural uses. Several participants believed this could be addressed through educating new residents about rural life. Some groups currently try to do this, but additional effort could be expended. However, many people also noted enjoying living in the county for its privacy.

#### *Improve coordination and communication.*

Many participants discussed a need for better coordination between groups. In one case, the county paved a road, but the township was not able to maintain it; it was subsequently returned to gravel as it deteriorated. Private organizations like phone companies also needed to better communicate with residents in advance of working on their property. These and several other issues could have been avoided by clearer communication and coordination between agencies, groups, and individuals. Participants also discussed the benefits of better coordinating the provision of utilities and using that to decrease costs, prevent urban sprawl, and maintain orderly development. The fiscal efficiency in providing these services to urban developments in the county was a definite concern. In addition, improving existing infrastructure was discussed, including adding access to I-335 near Auburn, addressing issues with stormwater and lack of sidewalks in the north where the county is almost at an urban density, and upgrading some roads that have exceeded capacity. However, residents noted a need to balance these improvements with maintaining the rural character of the county.

#### *Improve economic opportunities*



Several participants mentioned a need to promote the creation of jobs and economic opportunities. Encouraging home businesses and small town businesses, including retail, was seen as a way to revitalize the smaller towns and develop the economy. Participants noted the desire not to overregulate businesses in the unincorporated county, though attendees also noted specifically that home businesses led to issues including deteriorated roads and occasionally safety issues around children. Other participants encouraged the continuance of agricultural activities with some fearing the spread of light industrial activity onto farmland and the difficulty of driving farm equipment on heavily trafficked roads. Additional topics that were mentioned as potentially helping with economic development included commercial flights and an additional KTA exit for Shawnee County.

***Maintain and enhance the high quality of life.***

The final topic discussed was a desire to maintain and enhance the county's quality of life. Residents desired to see streets maintained at high levels with most residents happy with current roads. Residents north of the Kansas River were especially happy with recreational offerings in the area, though opportunities to add and improve biking and hiking trails was also discussed as existing both north and south of the river. More specific issues tied to maintaining the quality of life included a desire for stronger animal control and tighter regulation regarding the 'after-hours' shooting of guns. An emphasis was also placed on safety with a desire to see more police/sheriffs to help combat crimes people had experienced. Much of the desire to improve quality of life was bolstered by pride in the county and the small and unincorporated towns in the county.

KL/

Enclosure: Sign In Sheet

cc: Barry Beagle, Thomas Dow, Dan Halloway









# SHAWNEE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan is an official document adopted by a local government to guide policy decisions about the physical development of the community over the next 20 years. The plan provides a vision for what the community wants to become and the steps that need to be taken to reach that vision.

Accordingly, the comprehensive plan addresses and establishes long-range policy for land use planning, transportation, economic development, housing, public facilities, historic, cultural and natural resources, agricultural land preservation, intergovernmental cooperation, budget and capital improvement planning, and other facets of community life deemed important by Shawnee County.

As a "blueprint" for the future of the county, the plan must be based on the desires and vision of the county's residents because the plan is created by, owned by, and championed by the community and its members. This meeting along with other public input methods helps ensure that the plan accurately reflects the desires of the people who live, work, shop and play in Shawnee County.

## How is Shawnee County involving the public in the comprehensive planning process?

- Steering Committee: 22 Members
- Community Survey: 300+ responses
- Focus Group Interviews: 49 participants

## Today: we need to hear from you!

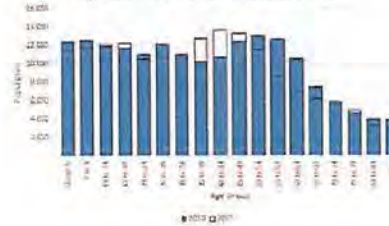
- Community Roundtables

## Future:

- Design Studios
- Open Houses



Age Distribution in Shawnee County, 2002 & 2010



Population Growth in Shawnee County



## HISTORIC AND PROJECTED POPULATION

Population projections are estimates of the population at future dates. There are a number of ways to determine future populations.

- Population projections are a simple way to estimate the future
- Assume past trends will continue
  - Apply trends over time into the future

Cohort-component model is determined by two factors:

- Natural Population Change: balance of births and deaths (births exceeding deaths constituting a natural increase),
- Migration: balance of in-migrants and out-migrants, both domestic and international.

Projections are simple to put together and easily understood. Often, they are sufficient to estimate future change. Cohort-component models are more complex, but allow age dynamics to be studied as the aging of the population will affect growth in future years. Both types of models offer a range of possible scenarios for future population change.

Low Growth Simple Model: 0.2 percent annual growth rate

- Below historic growth trends
- Closest to 2015 population estimate provided by the Census

50 Year Historic Growth Rate Simple Model

- Highest outcome
- 2040 population estimated is similar to natural population increase
- RDG's Model (below) is less due to assumed out-migration

Wichita State University Cohort-Component Model

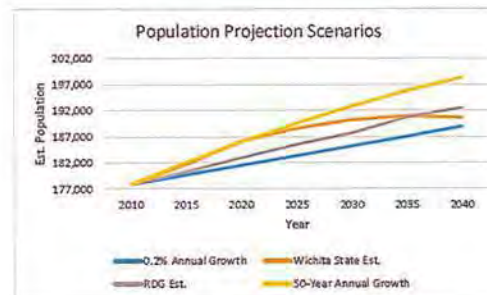
- Developed by the Economic Development and Business Research Center
- Accounts for age and fertility
- Shows population rising through 2035, then declining.

RDG Planning and Design Cohort-Component Model

- Accounts for age and fertility
- Uses 1% out-migration, based on IRS records/Census estimates
- Finds a natural increase for the County over the time period

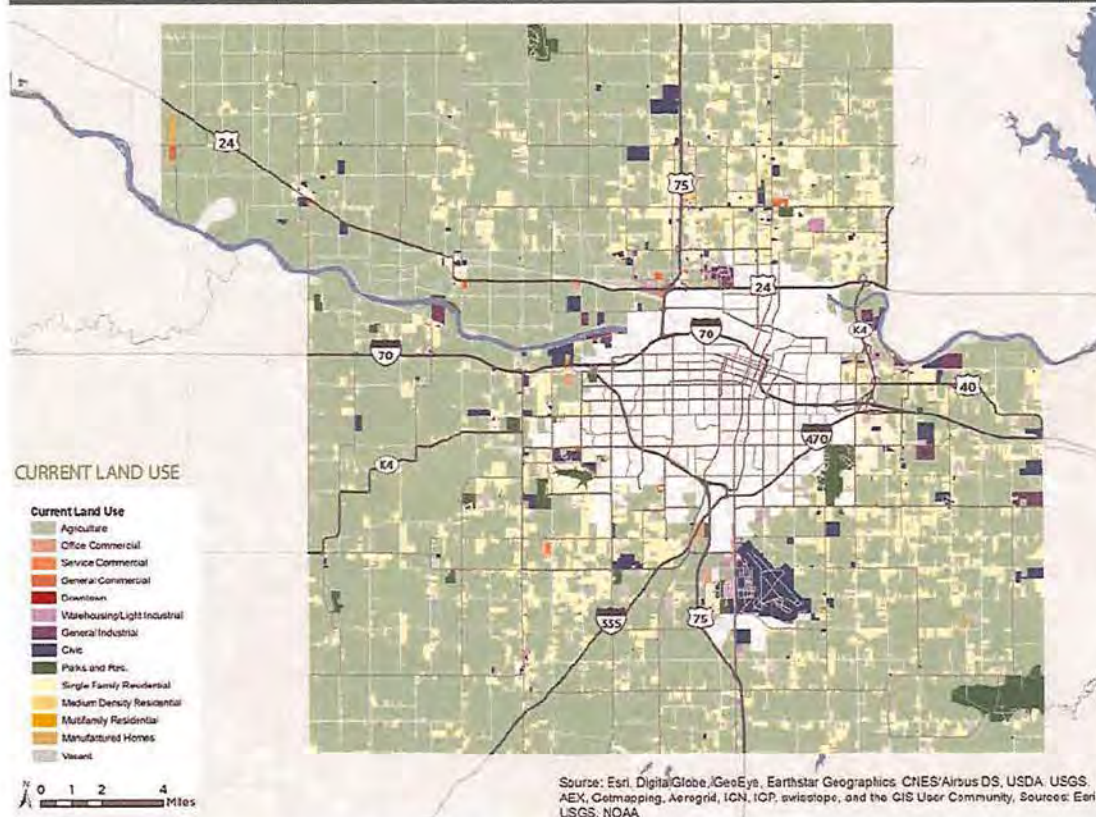


SHAWNEE COUNTY POPULATION PROJECTION SCENARIOS							
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
0.2% Annual Growth	177,934	179,720	181,525	183,347	185,188	187,048	188,926
Wichita State Est.	177,934	181,712	186,148	188,589	190,211	190,957	190,626
RDG Est.	177,934	180,301	182,945	185,496	187,703	190,729	192,533
50-Year Annual Growth	177,934	182,090	185,972	189,559	192,830	195,767	198,353





# LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT



**Tier 1:** Existing vacant or redeveloped property within city limits, expected to absorb 25% of Topeka's population growth through 2040

**Tier 2:** Contiguous land along the city fringes to be developed after extension of urban services, expected to absorb 30% of Topeka's population growth

**Tier 3:** Future land to be developed after extension of urban services, expected to absorb 45% of Topeka's future population growth

**Employment Tier:** Primarily intended for industrial uses to be developed upon development proposals provided property can be served with acceptable levels of urban services

## LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

### PRINCIPLES

- Minimize conflicts between land uses
- Have land development follow infrastructure
- Preserve character of small towns and agricultural economy
- Protect economic value of large parcels for agricultural and industrial use

### WHAT WE'VE HEARD SO FAR...

- Shawnee County is not growing as fast as in the past
- Subdivision of agricultural land often occurs without public review or infrastructure coordination, can result in development at densities unable to support expected services, can also result in disruptive development patterns for agriculture or industry
- Some areas need to be revitalized; some who move to rural areas do not know how to care for the land, allowing issues such as the spread of invasive species
- Planning ahead for and regulating growth can prevent friction, guide development, and establish minimum standards; it can also ensure the development of interior parcels of county sections
- Improving the coordination of planning and permitting would reduce frustration with regulation
- Local control and landowners' rights also need to be respected throughout the process
- Annexation and 3-mile control radius are contentious
- Neighborhood amenities are important

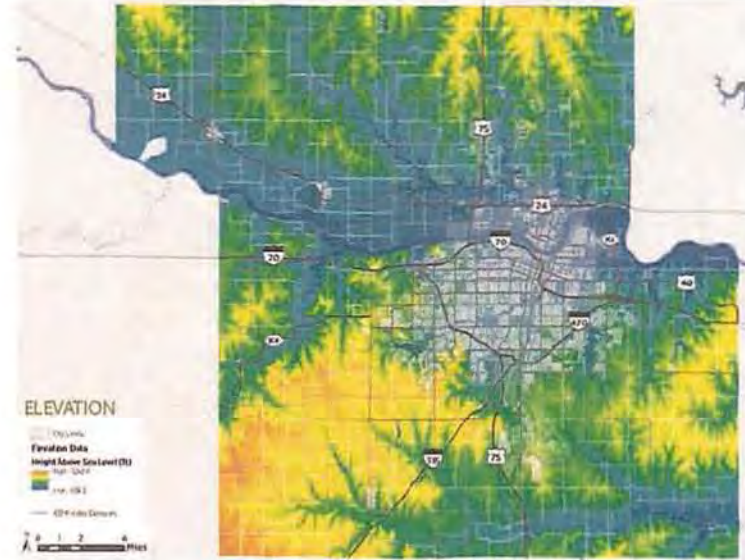
### LAND USE IN UNINCORPORATED SHAWNEE COUNTY, 2016

Use	Parcels	Acreage	% Developed Land by Acreage
Agriculture	4,591	231,467	79.7%
Single Family Residential	15,264	41,772	14.4%
Medium Density Residential	875	185	0.1%
Multifamily Residential	10	60	0.0%
Manufactured Homes	132	736	0.3%
Office Commercial	24	302	0.1%
Service Commercial	32	80	0.0%
General Commercial	45	344	0.1%
Civic	259	7,559	2.6%
Warehouse/Light Industrial	111	1,039	0.4%
General Industrial	37	1,521	0.5%
Parks and Rec	90	5,363	1.8%
Developed Land	21,470	290,428	100.0%
Developed Uninc. Land	21,470	290,428	81.7%
Vacant	1,687	7,710	2.2%
ROW		16,263	4.6%
Cities		41,240	11.6%
Total		355,641	100.0%





# NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES



## PRINCIPLES

- Respect the land's carrying capacity
- Protect areas with high potential for recreation
- Prevent development of fragile lands and promote and utilize environmental features
- Preserve rural landscapes and prime agricultural land

## WHAT WE'VE HEARD SO FAR...

- Shawnee County has natural resources that should be preserved and showcased: native prairie, prime farmland, the Kansas and Wakarusa Rivers, Reservoirs, wetlands reserves, and features of the Flint Hills, Osgood Cuestas, and Glacial Hills
- Protecting historical resources such as buildings and Native American & archaeological sites including the Oregon and California Trails is important
- Agricultural resources, including pasture, is being covered with development, as are economically beneficial mineral resources, including scoria limestone deposits (sand is still abundant)
- Culture and recreation creates economic development opportunities: fishing, hunting, agriculture, and historical tourism
- It is important to plan for quality of life amenities: park updates and future parks, green spaces, trails, scenic overlooks, and water resources



## RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

### Shawnee County Parks and Recreation

- City-County Agency
- Owns and/or manages more than 130 parks and greenways comprising over 2,640 acres
- 5% of this land is developed parkland
- 15 acres per 1,000 people
- Over 176,000 square feet of recreation and aquatic centers

### State of Kansas

- Owns and/or manages several parks and natural areas
- Kaw River State Park: 76 acres
- Shawnee State Fishing Lake: 135 acres
- Clinton Reservoir and Wildlife Area: Approx. 1,900 acres in Shawnee County

Other parks and recreational opportunities are provided by the Cities of Auburn, Rossville, and Silver Lake, area associations including Montana, and a number of other non-profit and for-profit groups.

In total, there are more than 7,500 acres of parks, open space, and recreational facilities scattered across the county, though a sizable number, including most of the trails, are within the City of Topeka.

## HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Shawnee County has more than 75 entries on the National Register of Historic Places, including:

- Kansas State Capitol Building
- Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site
- Constitution Hall
- Several Native American archeological sites

Most are in Topeka, but Auburn, Berryton, Dover, Silver Lake, Tecumseh, Wakarusa, Willard, and other unincorporated areas also feature historic sites.

Museums also offer another opportunity to explore the County's rich history:

- Kansas Museum of History
- Combat Air Museum
- Museum of the Kansas National Guard



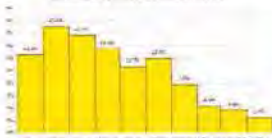


# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

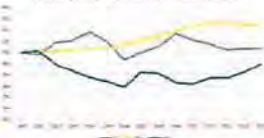
SHAWNEE COUNTY: ESTABLISHMENT AND EMPLOYEE ESTIMATES BY SECTOR

ESRI 2016 Est.	Establishments		Employees	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Public Administration	539	7.0%	20340	18.5%
Health Care & Social Assistance	636	8.3%	16,210	14.8%
Retail Trade	987	12.9%	13,979	12.7%
Other Services (except Public Admin)	1,143	14.9%	7,925	6.9%
Accommodation & Food Services	410	5.3%	7,263	6.6%
Educational Services	178	2.3%	6,399	5.8%
Construction	655	8.5%	5,372	4.9%
Manufacturing	156	2.4%	5,169	4.7%
Wholesale Trade	224	2.9%	4,812	4.4%
Prof. Scientific & Tech Services	630	8.2%	4,853	4.4%
Finance & Insurance	711	9.3%	4,487	4.1%
Information	144	1.9%	3,210	2.9%
Admin., Support, Waste Services	314	4.1%	2,832	2.6%
Transportation & Warehousing	124	1.6%	1,932	1.8%
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	396	5.2%	1,866	1.7%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	113	1.5%	1,554	1.4%
Utilities	15	0.2%	997	0.9%
Management	11	0.1%	659	0.6%
Ag., Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	32	0.4%	133	0.1%
Mining	6	0.1%	27	0.0%
Unclassified Establishments	219	2.9%	50	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,673</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>109,669</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Shawnee County Historical Income Distribution

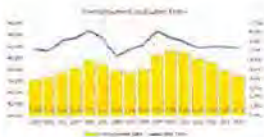


Population, Unemployment, and Labor Force Participation (2000-2014)

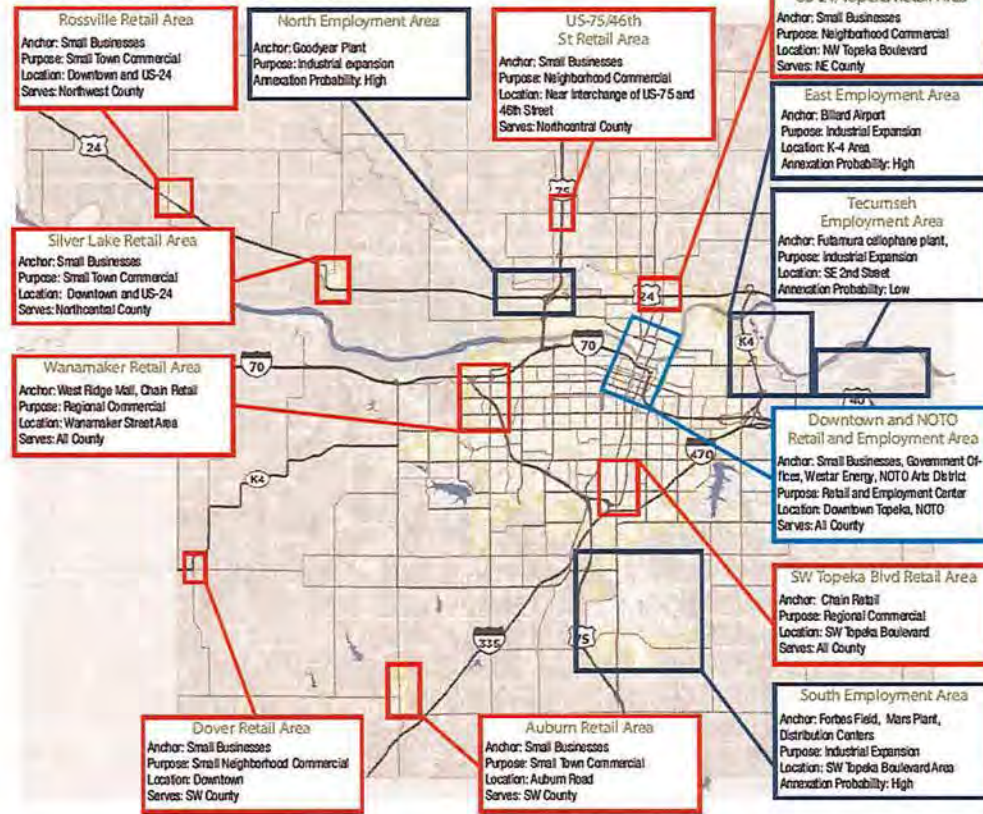


EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 2014

	County	Kansas
Less Than High School	9.4%	10.0%
High School Graduate	31.3%	27.2%
Some college	30.4%	32.1%
Bachelor's Degree	18.7%	19.9%
Master's/Professional Degree	9.2%	9.7%
Doctorate Degree	1.1%	1.1%



## RETAIL AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AREAS



SHAWNEE COUNTY RETAIL ACTIVITY

	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Index (LSI)
Nonstore Retailers	\$39,110,592	\$22,232,290	\$16,878,302	56.8
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	\$62,935,123	\$45,101,821	\$17,833,302	71.7
Grocery Stores	\$164,097,957	\$125,160,916	\$38,937,041	76.3
Food & Beverage Stores	\$391,785,534	\$343,723,331	\$48,062,203	87.7
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	\$647,423,096	\$515,034,443	\$132,388,653	94.1
Food Services & Drinking Places	\$226,588,567	\$223,789,955	\$11,798,612	95
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$109,901,385	\$116,813,092	(\$6,911,707)	106.3
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	\$71,184,055	\$76,301,463	(\$5,117,408)	107.2
Electronics & Appliance Stores	\$92,631,207	\$103,631,910	(\$11,000,703)	111.9
General Merchandise Stores	\$479,419,896	\$567,470,558	(\$88,050,662)	118.4
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	\$53,215,413	\$72,602,456	(\$19,387,043)	136.4
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	\$101,989,416	\$150,852,702	(\$48,863,286)	147.9
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$91,750,282	\$171,902,156	(\$80,151,874)	187.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,441,032,513</b>	<b>\$2,534,616,893</b>	<b>(\$93,584,380)</b>	<b>103.8</b>

## PRINCIPLES

- Cooperate with five cities
- Protect resources like sand and limestone for mineral extraction
- Promote job opportunities for the entire community, especially young adults
- Recognize changes in the economy

## WHAT WE'VE HEARD SO FAR...

- The county should promote development with good infrastructure, high quality of life, and qualified workers
- Community pride, safety, good schools, affordable housing, and amenities attracts workers & businesses
- Could coordinate the marketing of different areas of the county to residents and businesses
- The county has good policies, but simplifying may allow use by small businesses; avoid over-zoning
- Difficult to fill jobs with reliable, skilled labor; school/business partnerships help, but could be expanded
- Small business closings lead to excessive drives
- Maintaining good relationships between business/industry and residents is important
- Fewer owners makes site-assembly easier
- Agriculture is still an important input for the economy
- A trans-loading facility, historical tourism, and agritourism provide opportunities





# TRANSPORTATION

## ROAD NETWORK

**Interstate:** 152 miles of road and ramps  
 - Interstate 70  
 - Interstate 470  
 - Interstate 335

**Expressways and Major Arterials:** 120 miles  
 - US Highway 75  
 - US Highway 24  
 - US Highway 40  
 - Kansas Highway 4 (K-4)  
 - Topeka Boulevard

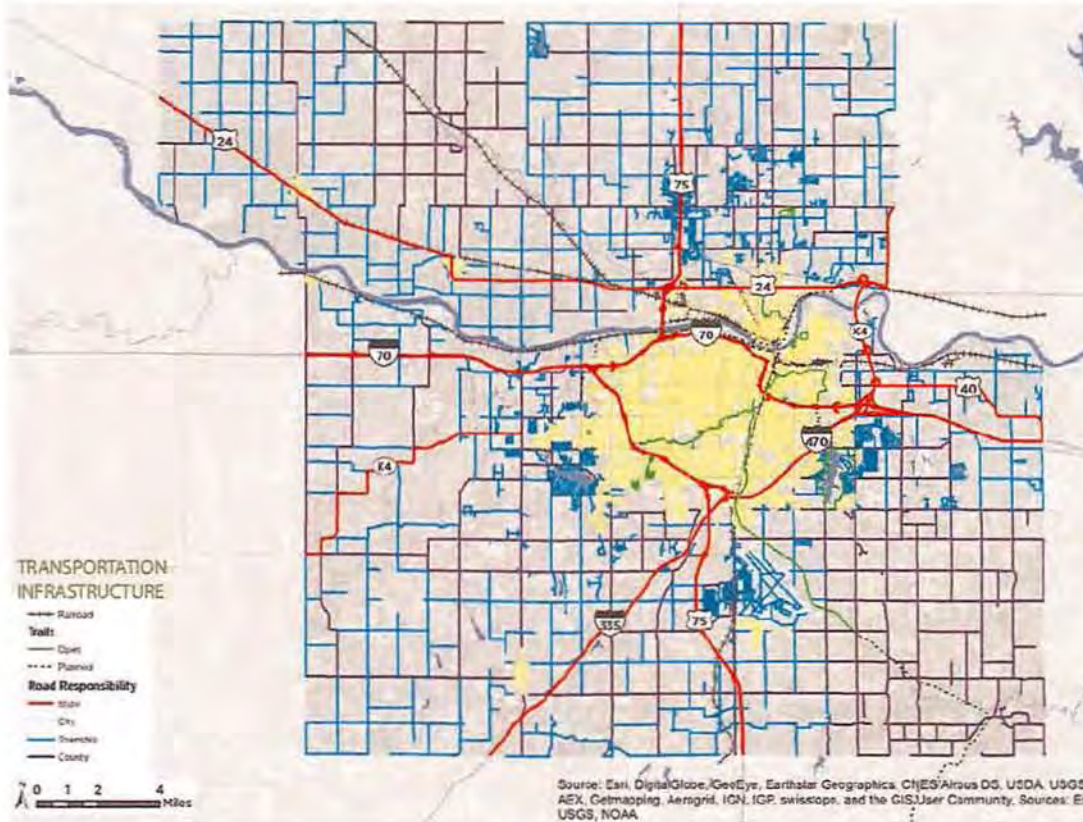
**Minor Arterials:** 164 miles  
 Connect with major arterials to connect cities and rural communities with each other

**Collectors:** 341 miles  
 Provide access to agricultural areas, developed areas, and arterial system.

**Local Roads:** 1,436 miles  
 Provide access to individual properties and sites in the county

## BRIDGES

There are 680 bridges in Shawnee County  
 - 67 (10%) were functionally obsolete  
 - 22 (3%) were structurally deficient.  
 The County is actively improving bridges that are deficient.



## BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

**Sidewalks:**  
 Most sidewalks are found in municipal limits. New developments must add sidewalks. Some major roads near Topeka have sidewalks that can be used for transportation

**Trails:**  
 Most linear trails are in Topeka  
 - Soldier Creek Trail  
 - Deer Creek Trail  
 - Shunga Trail  
 - Part of Landon Trail  
 Shawnee County contains two major trails:  
 - Shawnee Lake Trail (a loop)  
 - Landon Trail (extends into the county)

**Opportunities/Plans:**  
 - Extension of Landon Trail to Flint Hills Nature Trail  
 - Linking Shawnee Lake to the rest of Topeka's trail network  
 - Potential for connecting Topeka to county  
 - Potential to take advantage of the river and other historic trails

## RAIL

Total Miles of Railway: 94

**Union Pacific (UP):**  
 Track 1: east-central through Topeka, Valencia and Wiland  
 Track 2: east-central through Topeka, Manoken and splits with one through Silver Lake and Roseville towards Manhattan and the other through Gove towards Maryville

**Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF):** east-central through Topeka, Pazine, and Wakarusa towards Emporia

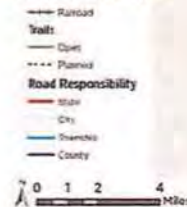
**Amtrak**

## AIR SERVICE

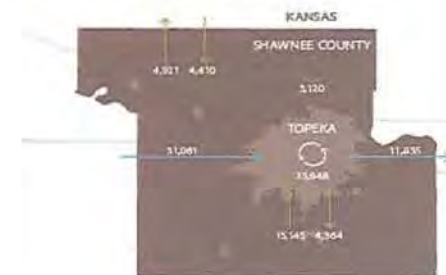
2 public airports  
 - Forbes Field  
 - Philip Blizard Municipal Airport  
 5 private airports  
 3 heliports at hospitals



## TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE



## COMMUTING FLOWS IN SHAWNEE COUNTY



## PRINCIPLES

- Maintain existing roads before adding new capacity
- Encourage Complete Streets and promote active transportation
- Determine role of transit
- Promote coordination between county, townships, cities, KDOT, and KTA

## WHAT WE'VE HEARD SO FAR...

- Road maintenance in the county is generally good and serves residential uses well; the county has also done a good job improving bridges recently
- Good connections to other counties
- Constructing new roads should be used to guide development in planned areas; capacity increases between cities needs to account for induced demand
- Heavier vehicles, such as farm vehicles or trucks, can have issues on some roads, bridges, and roundabouts
- Road condition and type can vary widely by township due to funding sources and mechanisms
- Consider impact of road closures on businesses; the faster improvements are made, the better
- Potential additional KTA interchange: E. 29th Street is preferred but Auburn Road has been suggested
- Trail development should be promoted throughout the County, in addition to bus expansions
- Transit service is often expected, even in the county



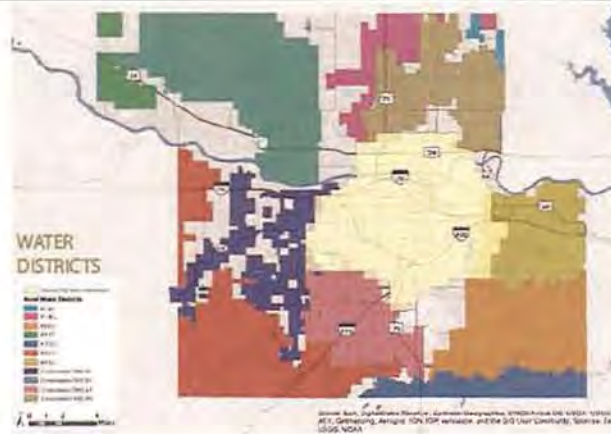
# INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SERVICES

## PRINCIPLES

- Ensure fiscally responsible provision of infrastructure
- Use infrastructure to promote development in designated areas
- Coordinate planning and service provision
- Promote enhancement of telecommunications, including high speed internet and mobile phone service

## WHAT WE'VE HEARD SO FAR...

- Need cost-efficient provision of infrastructure/utilities: coordinate with development, share common work, utilities trenching, and/or consolidate services
- Need to think ahead: provision of water, wastewater, water retention, and water drainage all need some oversight for establishment on rights-of-way and easements; landfill is adequate for the next 30 years
- Access and coverage of emergency services must also be accounted for in new developments
- School districts need to plan for population growth or bonds become necessary to pay for growth
- Expanding semi-public infrastructure, like gas and high speed internet, requires a certain quantity of development (in some cases, more than 25 units)
- Inefficient infrastructure provision means higher expenses for users and taxpayers
- Community centers can bind neighborhoods together



## WATER

- Municipal Water Systems**
- 3 municipal water systems and 1 airport water system
  - Serves approximately 73% of residents

- Rural Water Districts (RWD)**
- 11 serving Shawnee County
  - Serves approximately 24% of residents

- Private Wells**
- More than 1,070 wells
  - Serves approximately 3% of residents



## EDUCATION

- Primary and Secondary Education**
- 5 Unified School Districts (USD) are primarily in the county; 28,500+ enrolled
  - 4 USDs are partially in the county; 1,600+ enrolled
  - Free/Reduced Lunch: from 21% (Silver Lake) to 77% (Topoka)
  - Expenditures per pupil: from \$11,161 (Auburn Washburn) to \$16,621 (Wabaunsee)
  - 4 non-public accredited school districts

- Higher Education**
- Washburn University: 7,800+ enrolled
  - Washburn Institute of Tech: 1,850+ enrolled
  - 3 other Universities have small campus presences
  - Within a 50-mile radius:
    - 87,650+ enrolled students
    - 15,400+ degrees & 2,300+ certificates (2015)



## WASTEWATER

- Permitted Wastewater Systems**
- More than 75 separate NPDES permits
  - City of Topoka is the largest facility
  - Several school systems have facilities
  - Serves approximately 82% of households

- Private Wastewater Systems**
- More than 10,870 septic systems
  - More than 225 lagoons
  - Serves approximately 18% of households

## EMERGENCY SERVICES

- Law Enforcement**
- 4 Municipal Police Departments
  - Shawnee County Sheriff
  - 2 State Law Enforcement Agencies
  - 2 Public Security Agencies
  - 2 School Police Forces

- Emergency Management**
- 2 County Agencies

- Health Services**
- 3 Hospitals

- Fire Protection**
- 1 Municipal Fire Department
  - 7 Rural Fire Districts
  - 1 metro (airport) fire district

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

- Telecommunications Providers**
- AT&T
  - Cox Communications
  - CenturyLink

- Broadband Speeds**
- Around Topeka: More than 100 mbps
  - NW Shawnee County: up to 25 mbps
  - Fringe of Shawnee County: less than 10 mbps
  - 90% of population gets 100+ mbps speed
  - Most homes have download speeds between 2.7 and 16.1 mbps

## ELECTRICITY/GAS

- Electricity Providers**
- Kansas Power and Light Company (formerly Westar Energy)
  - Kaw Valley Electric Cooperative
  - Leavenworth-Jefferson Electric Cooperative

- Gas Providers**
- Kansas Gas Service
  - City of Auburn

## SOLID WASTE

- Shawnee County Solid Waste provides solid waste and recycling
- 150 tons of refuse and 40 tons of recyclables per day
  - 100 tons of hazardous material per year
  - Adequate capacity through 2040
- A number of private solid waste providers also operate within Shawnee County





## record of attendance

**Project Name:** Shawnee County Comprehensive Plan

**Number:** R2016.118.00

**Meeting Date:** February 1-2, 2017

Matthew McCurry

Brian Aubert

Judy Miller

Billy Smith

Brian Jacques

Richard & Tamara Skinn

GARY GROVES

Mike Weishaak

Steve Anderson

Jim Marlette

CURT LEWIS

Dan Sedlak

Jack Steele

Bill Adams

Jay & Kay Ellis

WAYNE D. HUFFALL

Heather Weed

JEROME DESCH

Heroy Russell

BOB ANCHER

Chris Jensen

COREY DEHN

Kirk Lehman

Rich Jones

Jim Marlette

Dan Sedlak

CURTIS SWEDEN

Andy Fry

DAVID ADAMS

+ 1 additional attendee who did not sign a name

### Tabletop Discussion Guide

You and your table colleagues are about to discuss (and later report on) a series of questions and activities related to land use planning for unincorporated Shawnee County. There are no right or wrong answers – we're trying to understand your perspectives and collect your ideas that will help with the development of the final land use plan.

#### Discussion Exercise A – Validating the Course (5 minutes)

At your table, you have a large map which will act as a game board, along with several smaller reference maps, including maps with current land use and development suitability.

1. As a group review the game map and development suitability map:
  - a. Do the game and development suitability map seem accurate?
  - b. Discuss the types of development that may be appropriate for the county.

#### Discussion Exercise B – Setting a Course (60 minutes)

At your table, you have a series of squares that reflect residential, commercial, and industrial land based on the Alternative Trends Scenario. Each of these pieces reflects the expected acres of development based on the scenario. Your table has scissors that can be used to cut these down to make smaller portions.

1. Using the squares that you have:
  - a. Where do you expect new residential land to develop?
  - b. Where do you expect new commercial uses to locate?
  - c. Are there sites that should mix residential and commercial uses within the same block or neighborhood?
  - d. Do you have enough undeveloped land to serve as new parks or to protect environmentally sensitive areas?
  - e. Where do you expect new industrial uses to locate or expand?
  - f. Use markers to identify where new collector streets need to be developed and where arterials should be expanded/improved
2. Once you have laid out your squares in a way you agree with:
  - a. Tape your squares in place
  - b. What obstacles (besides funding) do you see to redevelopment and/or development of new sites?
  - c. What partners will be necessary to address these obstacles?
3. Report out to the full group.



Low Density Residential



Medium Density Residential



High Density Residential



Park or Open Space  
(not to be developed)



Commercial



Industrial

Present Outcomes – 10 minutes





## Land Use Fact Sheet

### PLANNING SHAWNEE COUNTY

The Comprehensive Plan seeks to guide how Shawnee County will grow and develop over the next 20 years based on the vision, goals, and objectives of its residents. It is projected that Shawnee County will gain approximately 14,600 new residents over this time in addition to the homes, commercial services, and employment centers that will be needed to serve this population.

While some of this growth will occur in cities, it also presents an opportunity for unincorporated Shawnee County. Like any smart business, the county must plan for its future. Moving forward, Shawnee County can determine how it will accommodate and balance that growth with the preservation of its rural character and protection of its prime farmland and natural resources. Doing so provides a chance to guide the area's development and to affect how the county will look for future generations.

### 10 PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD DEVELOPMENT

1. USE PUBLIC SERVICES EFFICIENTLY - ENCOURAGE CONTIGUOUS AND FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT
2. PROMOTE INFILL DEVELOPMENT
3. PRESERVE NATURAL OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS
4. PROMOTE DIVERSE HOUSING OPTIONS
5. PLAN FOR COMMUNITY AMENITIES SUCH AS PARKS AND SCHOOLS
6. PROVIDE A MULTI-MODAL AND CONNECTED TRANSPORTATION NETWORK
7. ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY AND MINIMIZE HAZARD RISK
8. ENCOURAGE BALANCED AND CONNECTED NEIGHBORHOODS
9. USE PUBLIC INVESTMENTS TO PROMOTE PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT
10. MAKE DECISIONS IN A TRANSPARENT AND COLLABORATIVE MANNER

### THREE POINTS ABOUT FUTURE LAND USE MAPS

A future land use map is a guide which illustrates land uses for privately-owned properties. The transition of these properties from their current use to the depicted use is expected to occur gradually over time in response to the demands of the market as property owners voluntarily sell, develop, or change the use of their property.

#### 1. PROPERTY OWNERS DECIDE

- The map illustrates land uses of privately-owned properties
- The transition of properties from their current use is expected to occur over time, in response to market conditions as owners decide to sell, develop, or change the use of their property

#### 2. A GENERALIZED MAP

- Land use maps show generalized land use locations and transitions between uses
- Collector and arterial street connections
- Natural resource preservation areas

#### 3. A GUIDE FOR LAND USE DECISIONS

- The map will be used by the Planning and Zoning Commission and the County Commission when considering decisions that will impact land use



Example Future Land Use Map - Douglas County, NE



### LAND USE SCENARIOS

Shawnee County comprises 556 square miles or nearly 356,000 acres, 41,000 of which are in cities. Unincorporated Shawnee County's current land use is approximately as follows:

- Agricultural: 231,500 acres
- Residential: 42,800 acres
- Commercial: 700 acres
- Industrial: 2,600 acres
- Civic/Parks/ROW: 29,200 acres
- Vacant: 7,700 acres

The Comprehensive Plan will help guide how Shawnee County will develop through 2040. At its foundation lies the amount of land needed to accommodate future residents, commerce, and industry. The tables describe projected land uses in unincorporated county.

#### RESIDENTIAL LAND DEMAND

T.1 projects current residential trends continuing through 2040. It assumes that most new development will be single family homes on an average of 2.75 acre lots, the current county average, in addition to a few medium density subdivisions. The 5,745 new units expected to follow this pattern would cover 14,272 acres.

T.2 presents an alternative development pattern whereby new development happens at an average rate of one dwelling unit per acre, in addition to medium and high density developments. This pattern of development would cover 4,698 acres.

#### COMMERCIAL LAND DEMAND

Demand for commercial land is determined by the current ratio of commercial land to the current population. Commercial uses includes retail, office, and commercial recreation uses. By 2040, the county is expected to have nearly 58,500 residents, suggesting a need for 882 acres of commercial land. This development would require about 120 new acres of commercial land.

#### INDUSTRIAL LAND DEMAND

Demand for industrial land is determined by the current ratio of industrial land to the current population. Industrial land includes manufacturing, transportation, warehousing, and industrial business park uses. Assuming the ratio of residents to industrial land remains constant, unincorporated Shawnee County is expected to have 3,110 acres of industrial land by 2040, 424 acres of which is expected to be newly developed.

#### T.1 RESIDENTIAL LAND DEMAND - CURRENT TREND

	% of Demand	Units	Density (dwellings per acre)	Land Required
2015 - 2025				
Low Density	90%	2,004	0.36	5,512
Medium Density	10%	255	4.5	57
High Density	0%	0	8.0	0
		2,260		5,568
2025 - 2040				
Low Density	90%	3,337	0.36	8,626
Medium Density	10%	349	4.5	77
High Density	0%	0	8.0	0
		3,485		8,703
Total (2015-2040)		5,745		14,272

#### T.2 RESIDENTIAL LAND DEMAND - 1-ACRE AVERAGE

	% of Demand	Units	Density (dwellings per acre)	Land Required
2015 - 2025				
Low Density	80%	1,693	1.0	1,693
Medium Density	10%	255	4.5	57
High Density	10%	311	8.0	39
		2,260		1,789
2025 - 2040				
Low Density	80%	2,788	1.0	2,788
Medium Density	10%	349	4.5	77
High Density	10%	349	8.0	44
		3,485		2,909
Total (2015-2040)		5,745		4,698

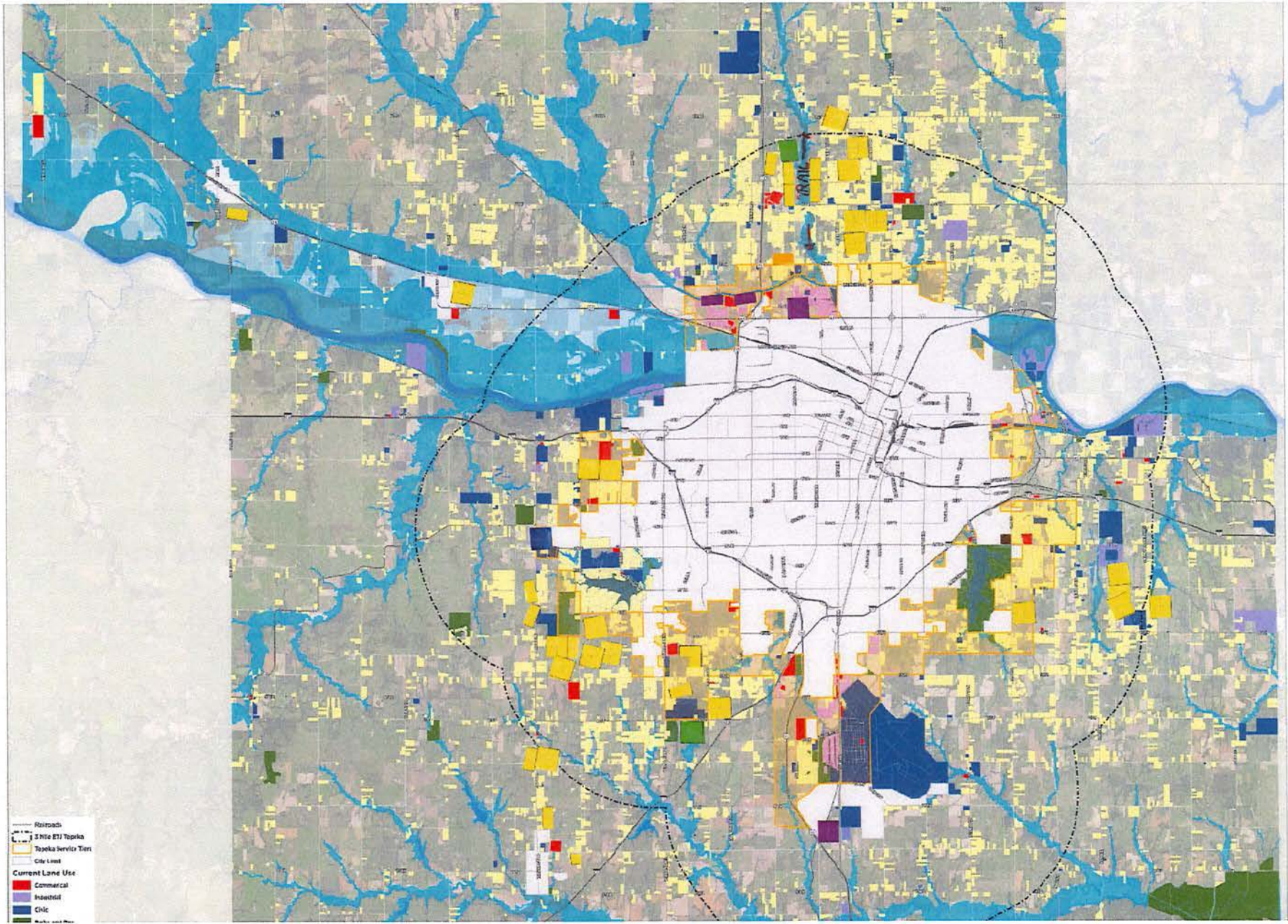
#### T.3 COMMERCIAL LAND DEMAND - UNINCORPORATED

Required Commercial Land	2016-2020	2021-2030	2031-2040	Conversion Need
Projected Population	50,510	54,414	58,478	
Comm Use/100 Residents	1.51	1.51	1.51	
Projected Commercial Use (Acres)	762	821	882	120

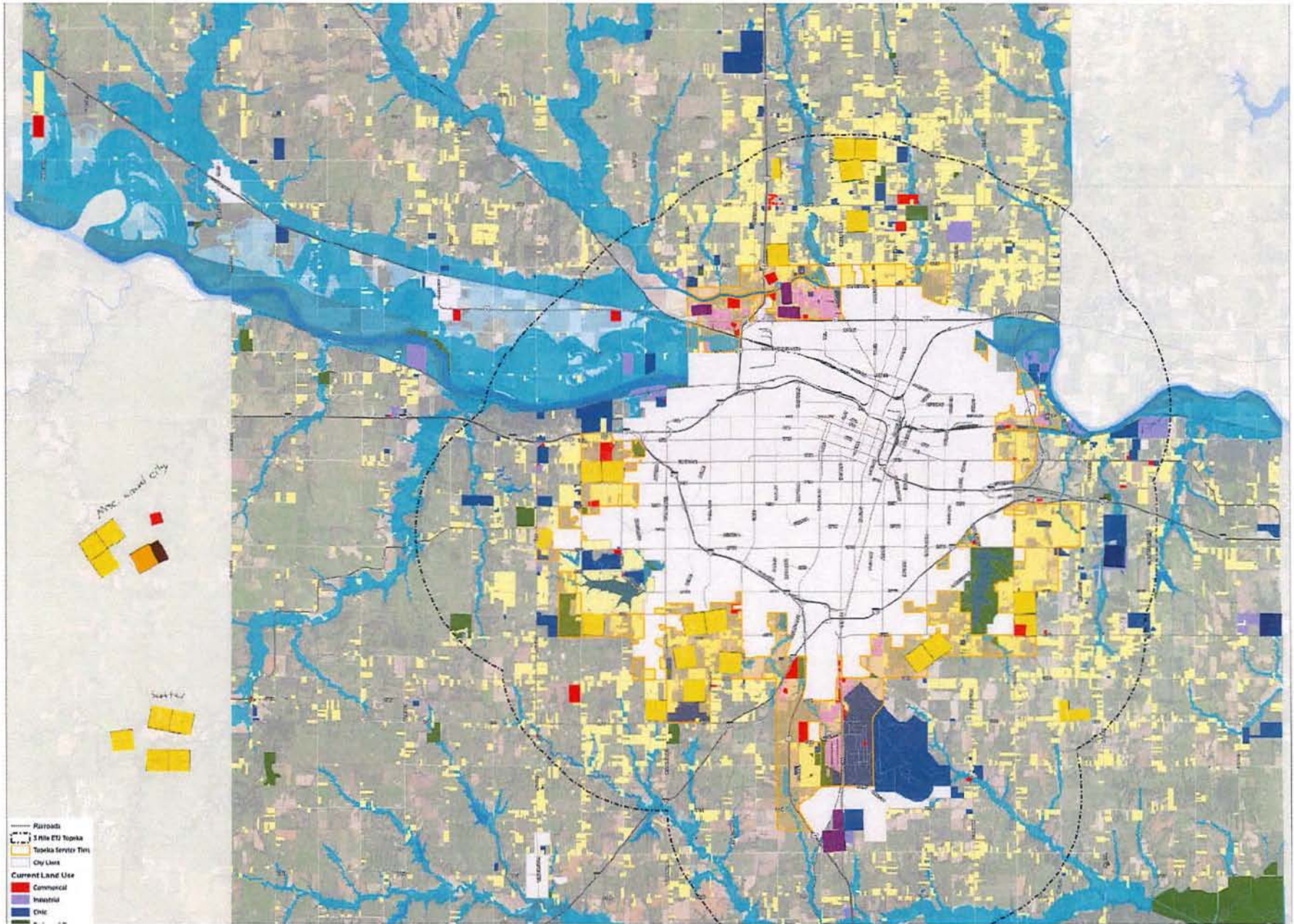
#### T.4 INDUSTRIAL LAND DEMAND - UNINCORPORATED

Required Industrial/Business Park	2016-2020	2021-2030	2031-2040	Conversion Need
Projected Population	50,510	54,414	58,478	
Ind Use/100 Residents	5.32	5.32	5.32	
Projected Industrial Use (Acres)	2,686	2,894	3,110	424

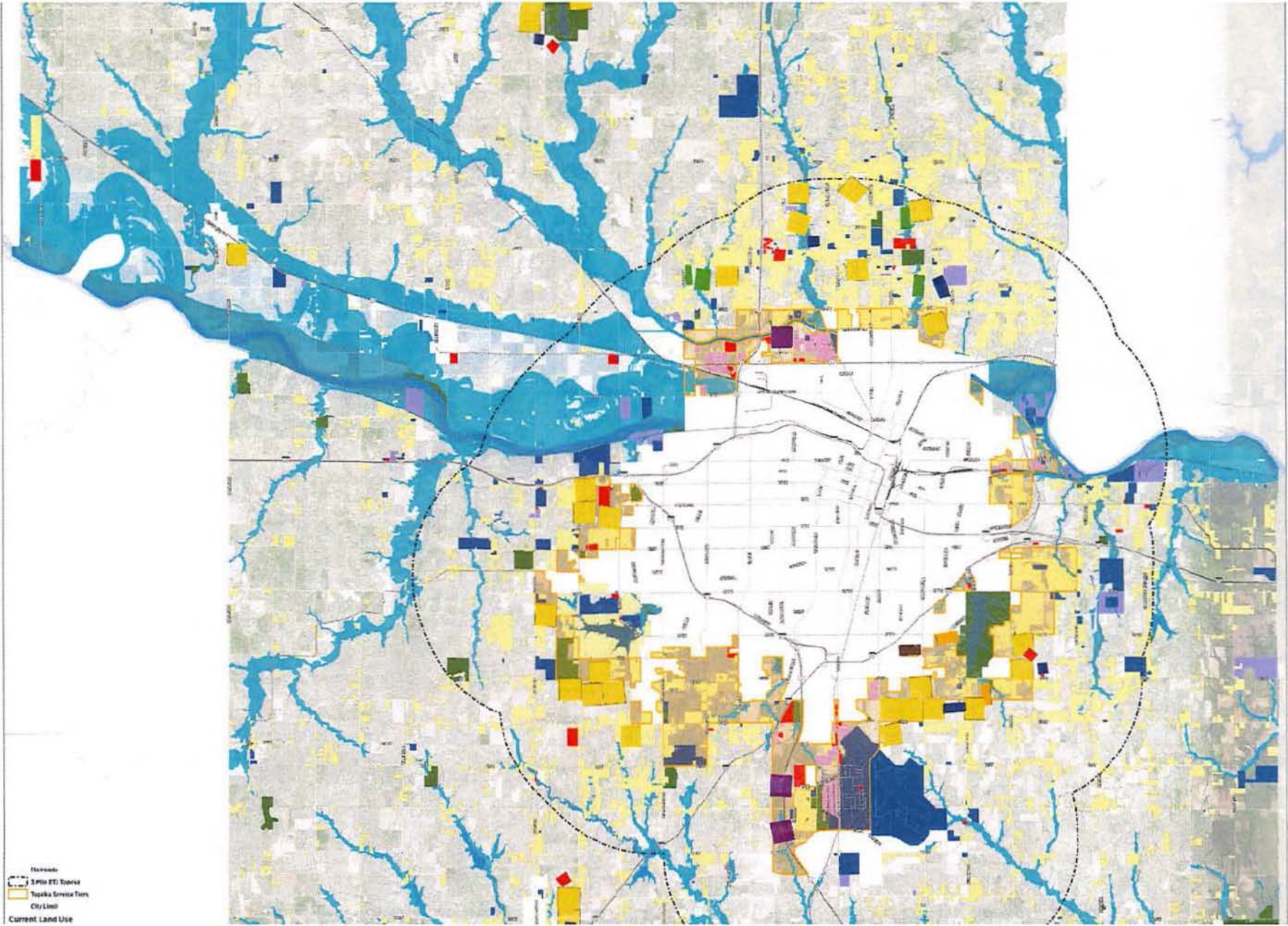




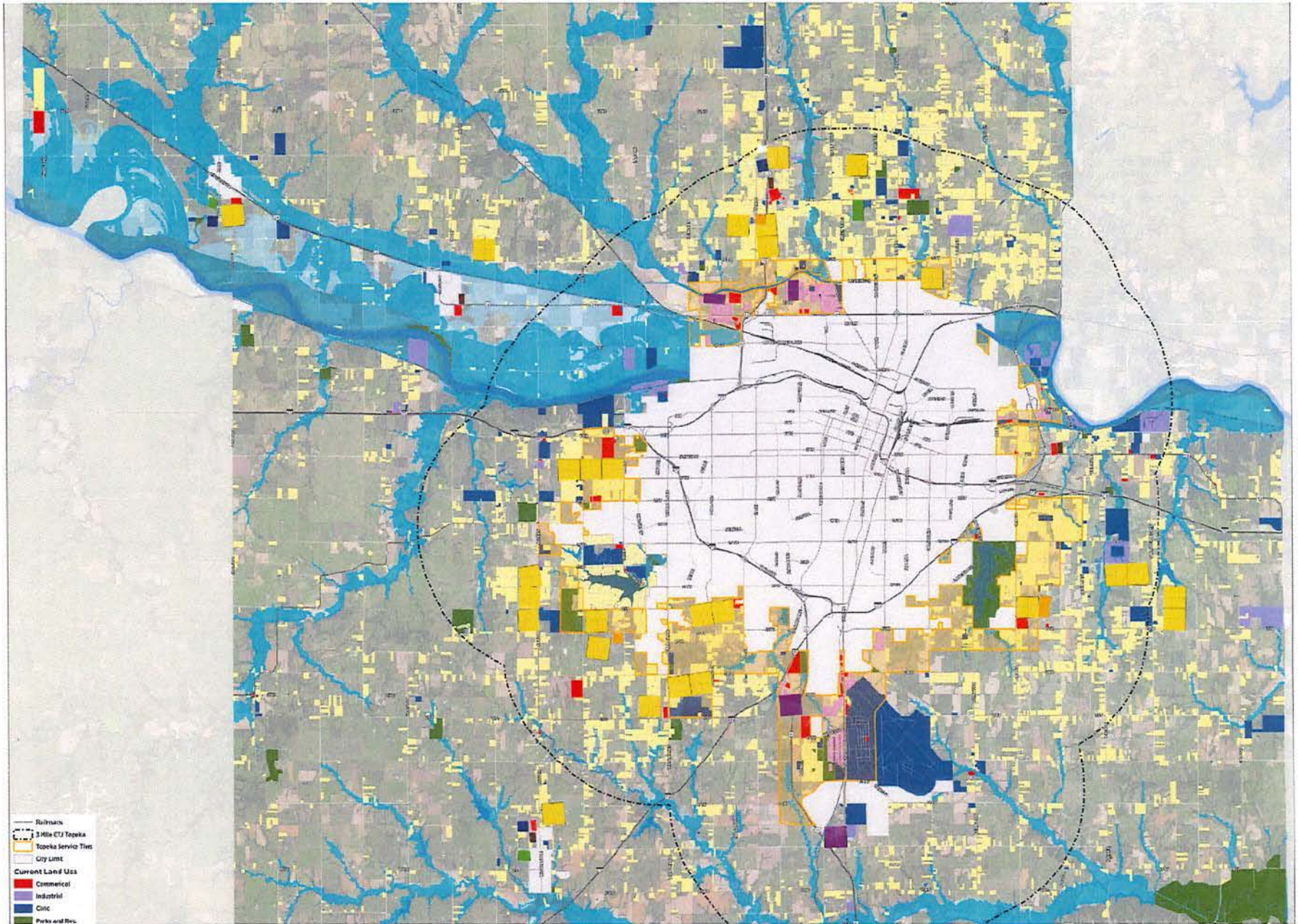




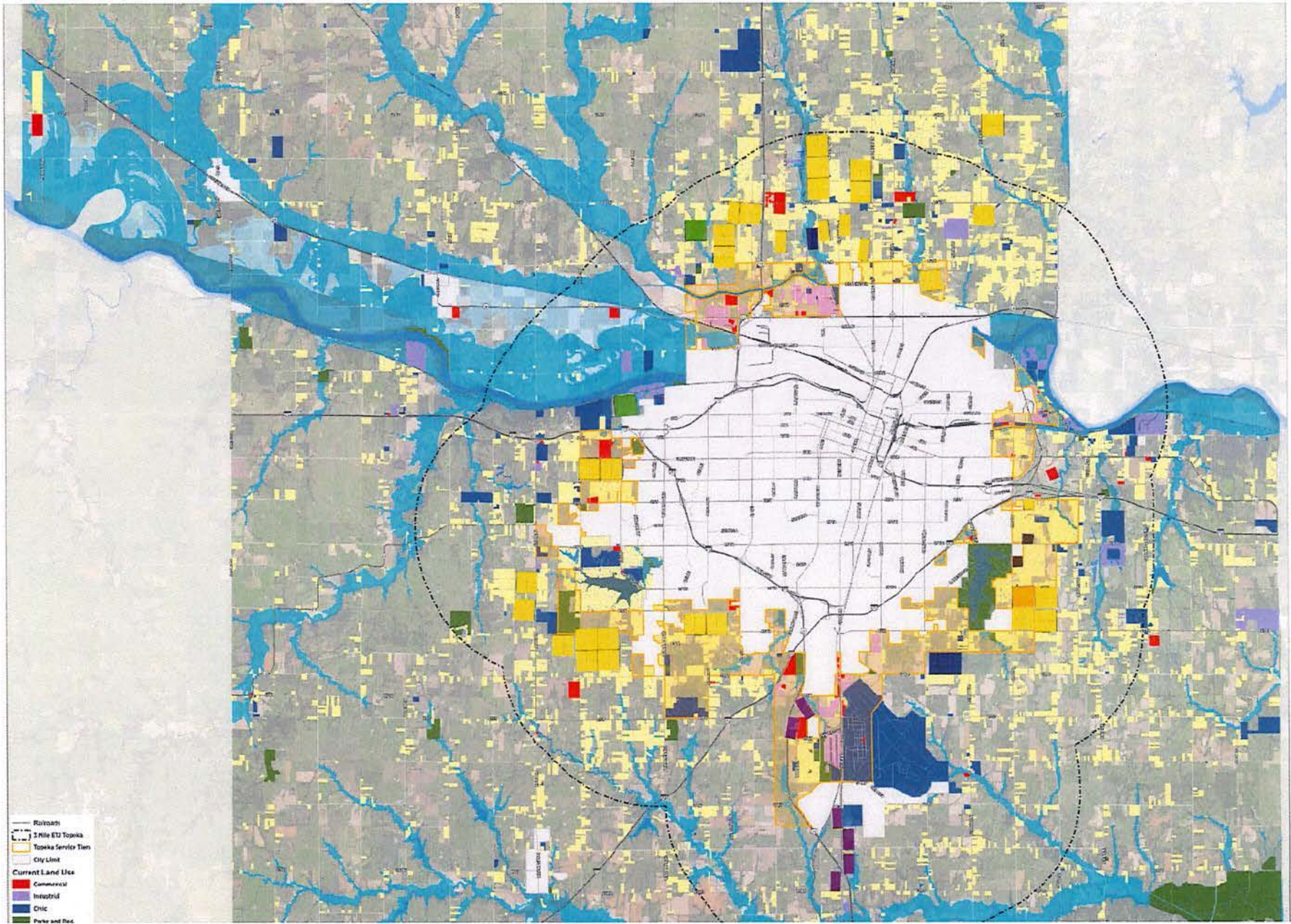




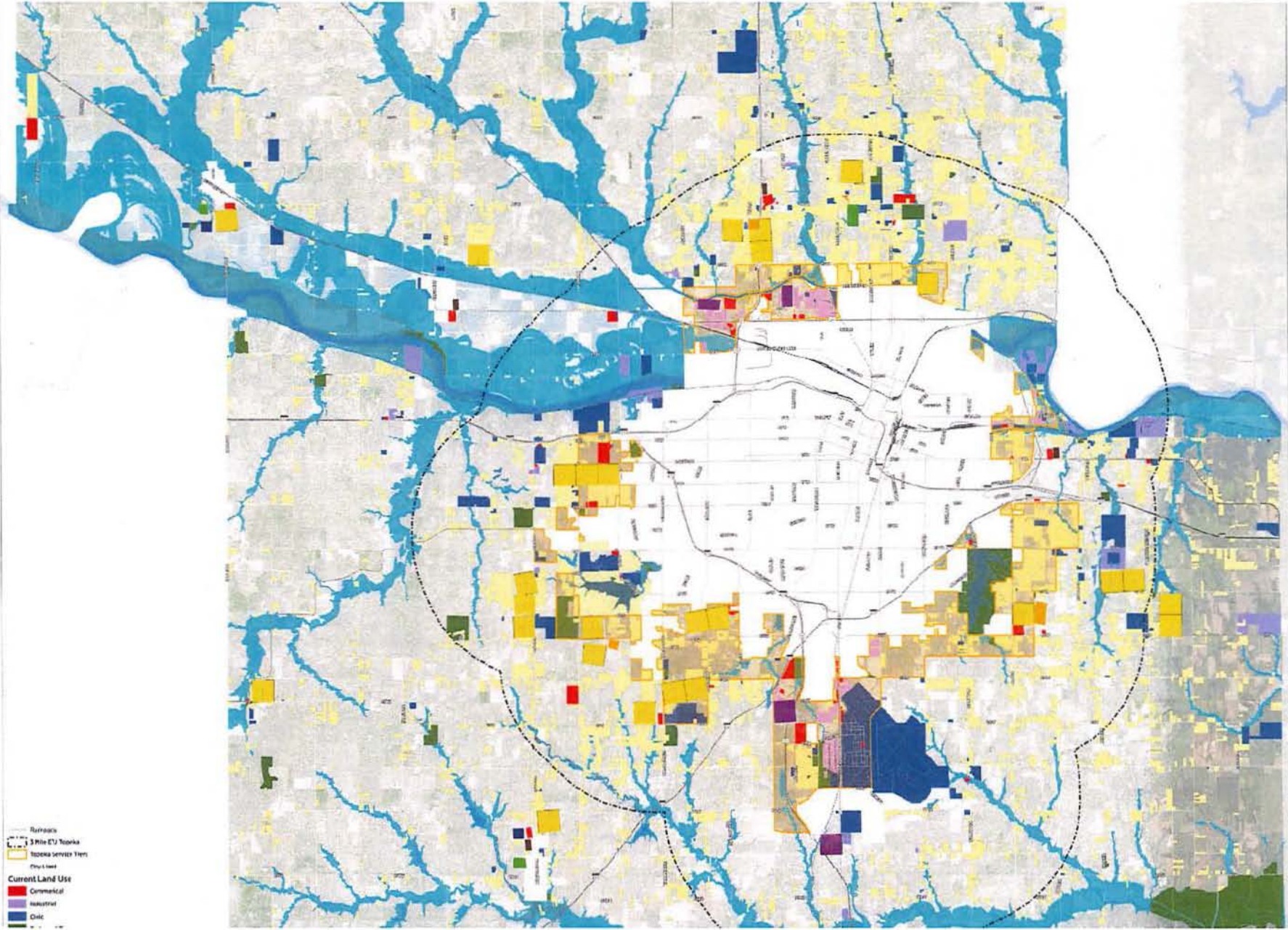












## meeting minutes

**From:** Kirk Lehmann  
**Project No.:** 2016.118.00 **Project No.:** 2016.118.00  
**Meeting Date:** June 15, 2017

**Project Name:** Shawnee County  
**Subject:** Stakeholder Meetings  
**Meeting Attendees:** Ed Kalas; Bradley Tollefson; Alice Landers; Gary Gilbert; Tera Varry; Randol Walker; Carol Burris; John Reilly; Leroy Russell; Kristi Russell; Stephen Schiffelbein; Rex Allen; Barbara Allen; Cindy Evans; Brian Aubert; Carol Marple; Judy Boltman; David Boltman; Dan Warner; Tim Marchand; Joseph Ledbetter; Jared Hitchens  
  
Thomas Dow and Kirk Lehmann, RDG; Dan Holloway, CFS Engineers; Barry Beagle, Shawnee County

Comments, additions, or corrections to this memo should be communicated in writing to RDG Planning & Design within seven (7) days of receipt. If no comments are received within that period, this memo will be assumed accurate and filed as part of the permanent record for this project.

### Discussion:

This memorandum summarizes the items discussed during the meetings referenced above.

#### 1. Protection of farmland and ranchland

- Let the landowners decide; let owners protect their land
  - o They can decide if they want to sell it to a developer;
  - o Farmers understand they cannot control what their neighbors do as long as it's not a toxic waste dump; if neighbors are against what is happening, let them buy the land for control
    - *This plan is trying to identify where the threshold is of protection is, including toxic waste dumps*
    - *Landowners should have a reasonable expectation that they can enjoy their property without purchasing the surrounding property*
  - o There are those who don't believe the county should be involved
- (Farmer) A person can plan all they want, but in the end, I will protect my own land
  - o I don't want any designation that is going to deter from selling to other users, whether commercial, industrial, or residential;
    - *Commercial and industrial development will only occur where infrastructure is readily available. In most of the unincorporated area, it is unrealistic to expect this type of development. The plan tries to create reasonable expectations for both land owners and developers.*
    - *County policy has already affected where residential development has occurred, but it has not considered the impact that has had on public and private expenditures.*
  - o Wants to preserve options
- Need to balance property rights and the mismanagement of neighbors
  - o Often hears farmers complaining of neighbors, can lead to negative impacts on them

- o *Part of the role of government is to balance competing interests of neighbors. The plan seeks to do that by creating a framework for dealing with conflicts between the noises, odors, dust, etc. generated by farms and ranches with homeowners who often do not maintain their 3-acre plots (which causes issues for farmers) and can create a lot of vehicular traffic (which can interfere with farm equipment and overtax roadways).*
- o However, property rights are important and farmers want less regulation
- o Regardless, doing nothing is not an option; there is already regulation, but the trick is ensuring that it reflects what the people want
- Voluntary Agricultural District (Purdue)
  - o Allows farmers to voluntarily sign up to protect land
- What is prime farmland? Who determines that?
  - o *In the Shawnee County Comprehensive Plan, prime farmland is discussed p. 26-28.*
  - o *Prime farmland is classified by the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service as: "land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and that is available for these uses. It has the combination of soil properties, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops in an economic manner if it is treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. In general, prime farmland has an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, an acceptable level of acidity or alkalinity, an acceptable content of salt or sodium, and few or no rocks. Its soils are permeable to water and air. Prime farmland is not excessively eroded or saturated with water for long periods of time, and it either does not flood frequently during the growing season or is protected from flooding."*

#### 2. Development

- Why should people locate in certain parts of the County?
  - o *The plan is trying to outline general policies of more concentrated development where people can get better service provision and more efficiently use public dollars*
  - o *The plan is not dictating where people live, but it is trying to guide development*
  - o *It also can help protect from eminent domain by establishing expectations for where development will occur*
- This plan seems anti-development
  - o *However, the plan accommodates more development than it projects*

#### 3. Intergovernmental Cooperation

- County needs to work with townships
  - o Need to make more on what we have
  - o Not confident that cooperation will occur because of this plan;
  - o County maintains Monmouth and Grove, and Mission Township works well with the County
- Occasionally there are miscommunications or misunderstandings rather than lack of cooperation
  - o Township waiting for the County to remove rock from drainage areas
  - o However, the County does not do storm drainage improvements or clear streams
  - o Stormwater management and its infrastructure often has overlapping jurisdictions, though usually private property owners are responsible for maintenance; need to lay out clear lines of responsibility and communication
- Should the County support Topeka?
  - o You can't force someone to live where they don't want to, and people don't want to live in Topeka
  - o Many people live in the County because there is less crime
  - o Need to cooperate with Topeka on some level because they legally exert land use control in the County

KL



