



CITY OF WESTWOOD
MASTER PLAN



October 2016

GOVERNING BODY
STRATEGIC
ACTION PLAN

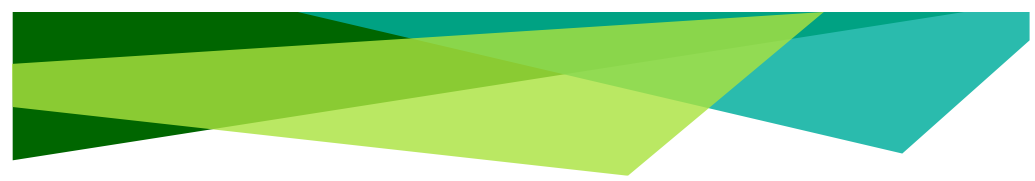


TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1	INTRODUCTION
SECTION 2	PROCESS OVERVIEW
SECTION 3	VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT
SECTION 4	GOAL STATEMENTS
SECTION 5	ACTION PLAN

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

The City of Westwood undertook a Master Planning process. The Master Plan includes a Comprehensive Land Use Plan update and the Strategic Plan. The coordination of these two planning efforts allowed the community to define a long-range vision and establish common goals between the two plans.

The purpose of the Master Planning effort was to:

- Engage the community and stakeholders through dynamic and compelling outreach activities inclusive of the residents and business community;
- Establish a clear vision, shared by the Governing Body and the community's residents and other stakeholders for the future of Westwood; and
- Incorporate a short-term Strategic Plan element to assist the Governing Body in its efforts to allocate city resources. The Strategic Plan will serve as a guide when developing the city's annual budget, considering contracts, capital outlays, staffing levels, debt structuring, and other expenditures.





SECTION 2

PROCESS OVERVIEW

In February 2016, the planning process began with a community survey and public meeting to receive feedback from the community on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the community. The City Council received and reviewed the feedback obtained from the public and considered how to address the items of most importance.

In May 2016, City Council members participated in a facilitated workshop to refine a drafted vision statement and draft goal statements. The goals were then presented and discussed with the public at a public meeting soon after. The public was asked to review the goals and provide feedback on objectives and strategies and identify the responsible parties and timeline for when the objectives and strategies should be complete. The input from the public had a direct influence on the development of the draft goals, objectives and strategies.

In June and August 2016, members of an appointed steering committee helped to refine those objectives and strategies. They provided feedback on the feasibility of some of the items and identified items already underway. The goals, objectives, and strategies were refined once more before the City Council provided their final review of the draft at an additional facilitated workshop in August 2016. At the public meeting in September 2016, participants provided feedback on the Strategic Plan.

SECTION 3 VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT

VISION

Westwood, Kansas is a charming, vibrant place which is safe, walkable, bikeable and comfortable. It is connected to other communities and boasts locally-owned businesses, schools and parks. Citizens strongly identify with and value the unique and welcoming character of the community.



MISSION STATEMENT

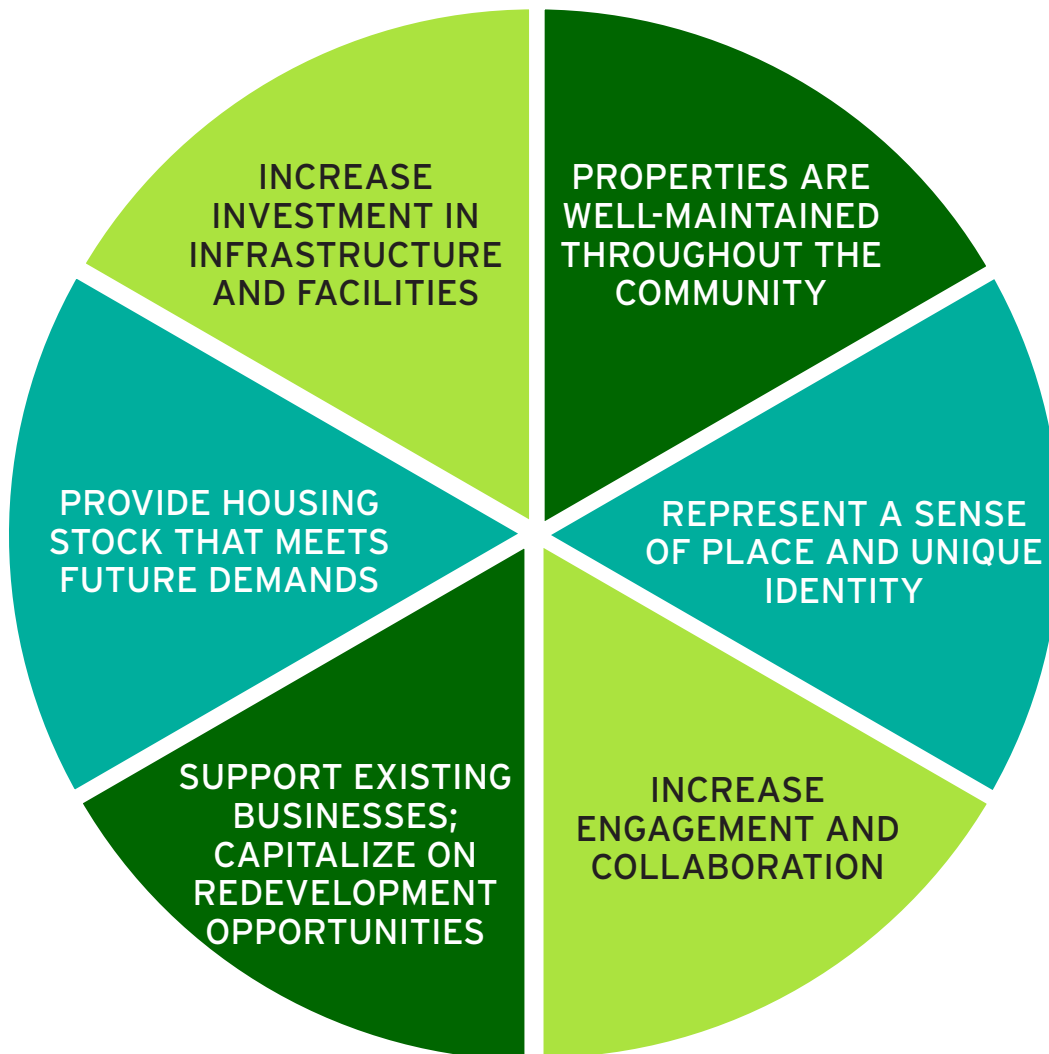
The City of Westwood manages financial and public resources to provide reliable, responsive services aligned with citizens' evolving expectations and future needs.

Our leaders and professional staff are open and accessible, building relationships and trust within our community.

Together, we protect what makes Westwood special and unique.

SECTION 4 GOAL STATEMENTS

Based on feedback received from the public and discussion with the City Council members, the governing body identified six goals they would like to achieve over the next 15 years.



The following is an overview of the goal statements and strategies.

GOAL A: MAKE SURE PROPERTIES ARE WELL-MAINTAINED THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY.

OBJECTIVE A.1: Maintain existing properties while protecting community character and resources.

The appearance of the community is one of the most important outcomes desired. Property maintenance is critical to protecting the character of the community.

The City has property maintenance codes, a code enforcement officer and a rental license program. Codes should be more proactively enforced in a consistent and compassionate way. Performance measure for the code enforcement program should be developed and progress made communicated to the community.

Priorities for enforcement (in order of importance) are:

- Structural Issues
- Weeds/Tall Grass
- Peeling Paint

Education about codes requirements will be enhanced. Information sharing about resources to do the work should be improved. The Westwood Foundation should establish a fund to assist those who can't afford to pay with improvements. Annual work days should be held. A recognition program could encourage residents to make improvements to their property and comply with codes.

GOAL B: REPRESENT A SENSE OF PLACE AND UNIQUE IDENTITY.

OBJECTIVE B.1: Create attractive gateways and corridors in the community.

Existing features identify when someone arrives in Westwood such as monument signage at the corner of 47th Street and Mission Road, a highly visible corner. The City also attaches banners to the street lights along Rainbow Boulevard and 47th Street. Rock walls and streetscape features throughout the community help set the community apart from most other suburban communities. Additional signage and monumentation should be installed to welcome people to Westwood.



Design standards for public infrastructure should be developed to enhance this sense of place and provide for welcoming corridors.

Public art should be installed in high profile areas of the community.

OBJECTIVE B.2: Promote unique components of the community.

A unique, new brand or identity should be developed. A brand can go beyond simply developing a new logo - it can include an overall strategy to define the community's identity. What do you want people to know about Westwood? Why should they come to Westwood to shop or live?

GOAL C: INCREASE ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION.

OBJECTIVE C.1: Align resources to coordinate community efforts.

There are many resources and talented people in the community. The City and Westwood Foundation should determine what projects and programs need resources and connecting them to those resources.

OBJECTIVE C.2: Maintain current and develop additional community events and activities to meet the needs of all residents.

Hosting community events and activities connects people to each other and their community. Existing events and activities such as the Movies in the Park and Oktoberfest have good attendance rates. More events and activities that bring all ages together is desired. It is recommended that higher profile events to attract people from outside Westwood be held to connect residents to the region.

OBJECTIVE C.3: Improve communication between citizens, elected officials, and city staff.

During the public outreach process, much discussion took place about the engagement or communication of significant community decisions. Some residents feel that there is a lack of interest or complacency from residents about community issues. Conversely, residents who are interested feel uninformed or left out of the process altogether, often leading to mistrust and misinformation in the local governmental process. Many feel that there is room to grow when it comes to communication from the City to its residents. Improvements can include identifying the ways residents prefer to receive information and outlining a specific plan to communicate with residents. It can also include general public meetings or listening sessions that occur outside of the regular governing body and public hearing meetings.

OBJECTIVE C.4: Keep Westwood View Elementary in Westwood.

Westwood View Elementary is the heart of the community. This school is considered a central and significant piece to the community - it is the glue keeping the community together. Discussions have taken place in the past about closing the school, but when this occurred, Westwood residents successfully came together to lobby for the school to stay open. It will be important for residents to continue to support the school, wherever it may be located, to have a community that supports people of all ages.



GOAL D: SUPPORT EXISTING BUSINESSES AND CAPITALIZE ON REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

OBJECTIVE D.1: Maintain a strong, prosperous economy.

A strong prosperous economy is important to Westwood. The City needs to be ready to make decisions regarding redevelopment as it can bring in new services and housing choices as well as enhance the tax base. The City needs a better understanding of the market forces and an economic development policy to make good decisions. Working with others in the region is key to attracting quality redevelopment opportunities to enhance the economy.

OBJECTIVE D.2: Provide support for local businesses.

Citizens value the many locally-owned businesses in their community. They enjoy the close proximity to restaurants and shops. The City will need to build a stronger partnership with these business owners and consider grant resources for funding exterior enhancements and energy efficiency upgrades. The City will need to meet with these organizations on a regular basis to understand their current and future needs, and how the City can prepare for any changes.

OBJECTIVE D.3: Cluster commercial development into designated commercial areas.

The future land use plan designates commercial areas along the two major corridors: 47th Street and Rainbow Boulevard. As these corridors redevelop, the City will need to be proactive working with landowners and potential developers to get the quality and scale desired.

GOAL E: ENSURE HOUSING STOCK MEETS FUTURE DEMANDS.

OBJECTIVE E.1: Use existing housing stock to meet future demands.

OBJECTIVE E.2: Build new housing stock.

Westwood has quality, unique, single-family detached housing in low density areas. Westwood has single-family detached housing in medium-density neighborhoods with eight (8) units per acre. Higher density condominiums are being built. There is a good deal of housing variety but because of changing market demands, Westwood will likely be faced with making decisions about remodeling and redevelopment of housing in the future.

Westwood would like to offer housing choices that accommodate market demands. In neighborhoods that are currently low density, that means reviewing codes and occupancy standards so that residents can make improvements and enhancements keeping with the character of the community. It also includes people who want to move to Westwood and modify the home to meet their needs.



GOAL F: INCREASE INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES.

OBJECTIVE F.1: Provide public facilities and infrastructure that serve existing and future residents.

Public facilities and infrastructure needs reinvestment to improve the appearance and character of the community and maximize investments and resources. A more proactive, systematic approach and investment level is needed as these facilities age. As improvements are made, the City should consider how they could enhance the community character. Examples include pedestrian-scale lighting and burying power lines along major corridors.

The City should expand parks and open spaces and provide a broad range of recreational activities. Parks and recreational areas connect people to the outdoors and offer space for the physical, social, and mental welfare of the community. Consider how to repurpose the city-owned property at 5050 Rainbow site to connect to the existing park.

City Hall is located on prime real-estate and is an aging facility. The City should conduct a feasibility study when the time comes to do major renovations, rebuild and/or relocate.

In the past, Westwood has used cash to fund infrastructure improvements. Because the cost to issue debt is cost-effective and the improvements are larger than in previous years, debt should be issued.

OBJECTIVE F.2: Enhance walkability and bikeability of the community.

The City should improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Pedestrians and bicyclists are more likely to walk or ride to their destination if there are sidewalks or bike paths available. Closing sidewalk gaps and repairing sidewalks could improve walkability.

Westwood is limited by the type of bicycle facilities that can be installed solely due to the right-of-way available along the built street network. Belinder Avenue could potentially be the north-south bicycle/pedestrian corridor through the community. The City should consider BikeShare stations at high traffic locations in the community and work toward a Bike-Friendly Community designation.

OBJECTIVE F.3: Improve mobility and parking throughout the community.

Residents of Westwood and regional travelers have an interest in a multi-modal transportation system that adequately serves automobile, transit, bicycle and pedestrian needs. On-street parking and bicycle lanes along 47th as well as enhanced transit service along 47th and Rainbow could strengthen the connectivity and mobility of the community.

Connectivity and mobility also includes parking or lack of parking. Review the City's parking policy to determine if the existing strategies are effective particularly in the Westport Annex.

SECTION 5 ACTION PLAN

The following pages list the final objectives that were agreed upon by the City Council. Within the objectives are detailed strategies, responsible parties, and timeline (1-2 years, 3-5 years, six years or more, or on-going). The City Council discussed these items and placed priority on the following four strategies. The top four (4) most important strategies are.

1. Determine what projects, programs and improvements need to be financed and identify funding mechanisms.
2. Continue to participate in school district processes and lobby for the continued inclusion of the school in the community.
3. Develop a strategy to implement updates to parks and open spaces, and potentially adjacent properties, which could include ADA upgrades, park facilities, and park infrastructure.
4. Issue bonds to pay for targeted capital improvements and/or property.

Goal A: Make sure properties are well-maintained throughout the community.

OBJECTIVE 1. MAINTAIN EXISTING PROPERTIES WHILE PROTECTING COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND RESOURCES.

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
1 Proactively enforce codes in a consistent and compassionate way, focusing on the following priority areas in order of importance: 1) Structural issues; 2) Weeds/tall grass; and 3) Peeling paint	City	On-going
2 Encourage the development of a community vendor list to share preferred contractors and vendors, and other volunteer resources.	Block captains, residents	1-2 yrs.
3 Develop and implement education program focused on property maintenance rules and ordinances.	City, Block captains	1-2 yrs.
4 Establish a residential rehabilitation financing or grant program to assist with improvements to declining properties in the community.	Westwood Foundation	3-5 yrs.
5 Conduct annual community work day focused on assisting property owners that are unable to make needed improvements.	City	3-5 yrs.
6 Develop a recognition program for housing improvements made by residents.	Westwood Foundation	3-5 yrs.
7 Develop performance measures to examine effectiveness of property maintenance codes. (e.g., reduce number of code complaints by #)	City	1-2 yrs.

Goal B: Represent a sense of place and unique identity.

OBJECTIVE 1. CREATE ATTRACTIVE GATEWAYS AND CORRIDORS IN THE COMMUNITY.

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
1 Develop design standards for public infrastructure in commercial corridors that reflect quality development.	Planning Commission/ City, community	1-2 yrs.
2 Develop signage and monumentation along major roadways to welcome people to Westwood.	City	3-5 yrs.
3 Convene volunteer arts committee to discuss how to incorporate public art in high profile areas of the community.	City	1-2 yrs.

OBJECTIVE 2. PROMOTE UNIQUE COMPONENTS OF THE COMMUNITY.

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
4 Develop a brand for the community.	City	1-2 yrs.

Goal C: Increase engagement and collaboration.

OBJECTIVE 1. ALIGN RESOURCES TO COORDINATE COMMUNITY EFFORTS.

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
1 Determine what projects, programs and improvements need to be financed, and identify funding mechanisms.	Westwood Foundation, City	1-2 yrs.
2 Identify examples of existing partnerships that are successful in other communities and use them as models.	City	1-2 yrs.
3 Develop a mentoring committee to educate community members, use them as resources and capitalize on their talents.	City	3-5 yrs.

OBJECTIVE 2. MAINTAIN CURRENT AND DEVELOP ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS.

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
4 Expand activities associated with Joe D. Dennis Park.	City	3-5 yrs.
5 Promote activities to bring neighbors together, including organizing neighborhood watch programs and community block parties.	City	3-5 yrs.

OBJECTIVE 3. IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITIZENS, ELECTED OFFICIALS, AND CITY STAFF.

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
6 Survey residents on their preferred communication needs.	City	3-5 yrs.
7 Develop a communications plan to inform residents about community activities, events, and meetings.	City	1-2 yrs.
8 Conduct annual citizen satisfaction survey to better understand citizens' level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with city services as well as their priorities for improvement.	City	1-2 yrs.
9 Encourage residents to sign-up and use online neighborhood sites as another way to communicate with residents.	Block captains, City	1-2 yrs.
10 Conduct regular City Council listening sessions with residents.	City	1-2 yrs.

OBJECTIVE 4. KEEP WESTWOOD VIEW ELEMENTARY IN WESTWOOD.

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
11 Continue to participate in school district processes and lobby for the continued inclusion of the school in the community.	Parents, PTA, City leadership	On-going

Goal D: Support existing businesses and capitalize on redevelopment opportunities.

OBJECTIVE 1. MAINTAIN A STRONG, PROSPEROUS ECONOMY.

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
1 Review existing economic development policy. • Require any development receiving incentives to complement the character of the surrounding neighborhood. • Create financial packages to incent desirable development.	City	1-2 yrs.
2 Work with economic development agencies and organizations in northeast Johnson County and the Kansas City area to assess and identify development strategies that link Westwood to the metropolitan/regional economy.	City	On-going
3 Actively engage in regional planning process through attending meetings and sharing information.	City	On-going
4 Identify up and coming trends and recruit appropriate businesses to Westwood.	City	3-5 yrs.

OBJECTIVE 2. PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES.

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
5 Enhance partnerships with commercial and non-profit land owners to gain their support and so the City is informed about the status of these properties.	City, Northeast Johnson County Chamber	On-going
6 Research programs and grant opportunities for businesses to fund exterior enhancements and energy efficiency upgrades.	City, Northeast Johnson County Chamber	3-5 yrs.
7 Participate in Northeast Johnson County Chamber and 47th Street Overlay Committee activities.	City	On-going

OBJECTIVE 3. CLUSTER COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT INTO DESIGNATED COMMERCIAL AREAS.

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
8 Build relationships with parties who have development plans and potential developments.	City, Northeast Johnson County Chamber, developers, property owners	On-going

Goal E: Ensure housing stock meets future demands.

OBJECTIVE 1. USE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK TO MEET FUTURE DEMANDS.

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
1 Allow for flexibility in the building codes to allow homes to be updated according to the ever-changing home renovation needs and trends.	City	On-going
2 Review housing occupancy standards.	City	1-2 yrs.
3 Identify targeted areas where different housing stock is allowed/ incentivized.	City	1-2 yrs.
4 Explore use of the Kansas Neighborhood Revitalization Act (K.S.A. 12-17,115 - 17,120) in targeted areas to encourage rehabilitation or new construction which may not otherwise have occurred	City	1-2 yrs.
5 Strategically purchase properties when owners voluntarily sell in order to assemble lots for redevelopment in medium-density areas.	Westwood Foundation	3-5 yrs.

OBJECTIVE 2. BUILD NEW HOUSING STOCK.

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
6 Develop a strategy to support aging in place by participating in Mid-America Regional Council's Community for All Ages Program.	City	1-2 yrs.
7 Meet with developers to discuss market demands for new housing and determine if existing codes allow for anticipated changes in needs and trends.	City	On-going

Goal F: Increase investment in infrastructure and facilities.

OBJECTIVE 1. PROVIDE PUBLIC FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE THAT SERVE EXISTING AND FUTURE RESIDENTS.

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
1 Host a recycling station at a municipal location that includes an area for glass.	City, Ripple Glass	1-2 yrs.
2 Develop a strategy to implement updates to parks and open spaces and potentially adjacent properties, which could include ADA upgrades, park facilities, and park infrastructure.	City	3-5 yrs.
3 Hold annual parks clean-up and beautification.	Block captains, residents, local businesses, City	3-5 yrs.
4 Conduct feasibility analysis or request for proposals (RFP) to determine the need and location of community buildings, including a community center and potentially moving the location of City Hall.	City	Coordinate with schedule of school
5 Work with electrical company to bury overhead utilities on a case-by-case basis when feasible.	City, KCP&L	On-going
6 Issue bonds to pay for targeted capital improvements.	City	1-2 yrs.
7 Take a systematic approach to manage infrastructure and facilities, and regularly coordinate with agencies: evaluate condition/costs; set priorities; develop a work order system; and develop financial plan	City (Public Works)	1-2 yrs.
8 Install pedestrian-scale lighting as capital improvement projects are made.	City	On-going

OBJECTIVE 2. ENHANCE WALKABILITY AND BIKEABILITY OF THE COMMUNITY.

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
9 Conduct feasibility analysis or study to determine if Belinder Avenue could include targeted bicycle and pedestrian pathways.	City	3-5 yrs.
10 Construct bike racks and related facilities in the community.	City	3-5 yrs.
11 Repair broken sidewalks and connect gaps throughout the community.	City, property owners	3-5 yrs.
12 Implement Bike Share kiosks in Westwood.	City, BikeWalkKC, Woodside Village developer	1-2 yrs.
13 Become a League of American Bicyclists “Bike-Friendly Community”	City, BikeWalkKC	3-5 yrs.

OBJECTIVE 3. IMPROVE MOBILITY AND PARKING THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY.

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
14 Conduct detailed traffic study to determine if 47th Street can benefit from a lane reduction and the feasibility of on-street parking or bicycle lanes.	City, Kansas City, KS, Roeland Park, 47th Street Overlay Committee	1-2 yrs.
15 Conduct traffic analysis of streets in Westport Annex to determine strategies to allow for on-street parking and reduce speeds (e.g., conversion to one-way)	City	1-2 yrs.
16 Increase the service frequency of transit on 47th Street and Rainbow Blvd. to provide better service in the region.	City, KCATA, Kansas City, Kansas, Roeland Park	1-2 yrs.
17 Enforce speed and parking violations.	City	On-going
18 Review existing parking policy and determine if revisions are necessary, including the addition of shared parking.	City	1-2 yrs.
19 Coordinate with KCATA on changes in transit service.	City	On-going