



City Planning & Development Department
Citywide Planning Division

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Heart of The City Area Plan DRAFT Recommendations February 17, 2010

Vision Statement:

We must build on the areas extensive assets to become a model urban community and reaffirm the central city as the rightful and vibrant **Heart of The City**

The Heart of the City will be a community where investments in people occur along with investments in **desirable urban neighborhoods**; where density supports needed services and amenities; where people and businesses are treated as the customers – and the community is treated as the product; and where jobs are plentiful and accessible.

Primary Plan Objectives: The following objectives support the Vision Statement and are the core components of the plan. These are the most important goals to accomplish the plan Vision and are the guiding framework for the detailed recommendations to follow:

1. **People First** – Focus on human investments, creating residents that are productive, healthy and caring.
2. **Create Jobs** – Increase employment opportunities within the Heart of the City and provide job skills.
3. **Promote Sustainability** – Use sustainable practices to guide policy recommendations and development decisions.
4. **Repopulation** – Increase population and focus on rebuilding desirable urban neighborhoods.

Chapter Goal Statements: These chapter goal statements support the Vision and Primary Objectives and will guide the recommendations of each chapter:

Land Use and Development – Create quality, compatible development which is sensitive to the neighborhood context and that supports neighborhood revitalization, repopulation and job growth goals.

Neighborhood Livability – Develop the services, amenities and education opportunities necessary to support clean, safe, attractive and desirable neighborhoods. Preserve the unique urban character of existing neighborhoods and recreate it in new neighborhoods.

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Infrastructure – Ensure a sustainable and well maintained infrastructure system capable of supporting business and neighborhood development.

Transportation – Create an interconnected multi-modal transportation system that integrates with land use patterns, connects neighborhoods and businesses, reduces automobile dependency and increases transportation choice.

Public Spaces – Create an attractive public realm which enhances area identity, supports a wide variety of activities and reinforces connections between neighborhoods.

Housing– Focus on areas of strength and utilize layered approaches to build desirable urban neighborhoods and repopulate the Heart of the City. Build capacity, focus, target and finish what we’ve started.

Economic Development – Increase employment opportunities within the Heart of the City and provide job skills. Focus on proactive and layered efforts to create an environment which encourages business retention and growth.

Human Investment – Build social and human capital together with physical capital, focusing on human investments which create productive, healthy, caring, informed and empowered citizens.

Plan Recommendations: The following plan recommendations for each chapter are supported by the Vision, Primary Objectives and Chapter Goals:

Land Use and Development –

Big Ideas/Guiding Principles:

- **Focus Commercial Uses to Nodes** – Consolidate commercial uses to mixed use nodes/activity centers. Eliminate strip commercial zoning pattern.
 - Expansion of commercial zoning for new retail should be strongly discouraged.
 - Retail vacancy is high and rents are low. Many areas zoned for commercial have developed with non-commercial uses.
 - Ensure convenient proximity to residential areas. Reinforce mixed use development pattern with commercial uses that area connected to and compatible with adjacent residential areas.



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- FOCUS Kansas City Plan - *Land-use patterns throughout the urban core should shift away from the strip commercial development to nodal development, or mixed-use centers,*
- **Support Development/Revitalization Goals** - Ensure adequate supply and appropriate location of industrial and office land uses to facilitate access to jobs and job growth.
 - Industrial rents and occupancy indicate a relatively strong industrial market. Look for additional opportunities for industrial development.
- **Promote Compatible Development and Prevent Encroachment.**
 - Ensure compatible development, which is sensitive to the character of surrounding neighborhoods.
 - Design, density, massing and scale to adjacent properties.
 - Integrate with existing development and the natural environment.
 - Downzone proposed low density residential areas
 - Explore overlay zoning where appropriate
 - Pedestrian Overlay - Mixed Use/Multi-Modal Centers
 - Historic / Conservation - Use to implement design guidelines
 - Utilize the design guidelines and land use plan in new developments.
- **Promote Sustainability** - Ensure new development is sustainable.
 - Encourage sustainable approaches to storm water management, energy efficiency and alternative energy production, building materials, and air quality. Encourage transit, walking and biking.
 - Future development will emphasize storm water management consistent with the goals of the (***Wet Weather Solutions Program***).
 - Design Guidelines will include more detail.
- **Encourage Urban Development**
 - Incorporate elements and characteristics unique to the urban core:
 - Dense/Compact
 - Preserve historic structures
 - Walk able and Multi-modal
 - Preserve/restore dense street grid.
- **Redevelop vacant/Underutilized Areas**
 - Implement short and long term strategies to manage underutilized blocks
 - Apply proactive, holistic approaches to redeveloping underutilized areas
 - Focus on areas of strength and coordinate efforts. Finish projects before moving to new areas. Avoid creating scattered pockets of new development which are surrounded by blight.

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- Explore temporary uses such as urban agriculture or storm water management until redevelopment occurs.
- **Support Transit and Multimodal Transportation**
 - Apply the concepts of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) along transit corridors (Linwood Blvd, Truman Road and Prospect Ave), at mixed use centers and near future transit stations:
 - Focus density and encourage a variety of uses and housing types.
 - Create an environment that is designed for cycling and walking,
 - Reduce parking requirements.
 - Ensure that transit stops are convenient, comfortable and secure.
 - Proactively apply incentives for Transit Oriented Development.
 - Avoid Transit “Adjacent” Development

Infrastructure –

- **Key Issues**
 - Incorporate OCP Goals
 - Focus on Multiple Benefits
 - Apply “green” solutions in new infrastructure projects.
 - Address ongoing maintenance and aging infrastructure.
 - Examine areas without adequate infrastructure (i.e. undersized water mains).
 - Examine implications of combined sewers to redevelopment.
 - Large scale capital improvements for Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs).
 - Coordinate multiple projects (avoid digging same hole twice).
 - Economic Development –
 - Leading public investment (identify key projects)
 - Coordinate improvements with Jobs/Repopulation strategies
 - Review GDAP analysis for additional goals/strategies.
 - Prioritize infrastructure projects

Transportation –

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Big Ideas/Guiding Principles –

- **Provide Choice In Transportation**
- **Create Complete Streets** - Roadways designed and operated to enable safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel for all modes and users of all ages and abilities)
- **Connect Neighborhoods and Activity Centers**
- **Coordinate Land Use Planning with the Transportation System**
- **Maximize Benefits of Regional Roadways**
- **Ensure Adequate Access and capacity to Support Development Goals**

Vehicular Circulation and Access –

- Analyze traffic circulation patterns:
 - Street system mostly built, but some improvements planned (22nd/23rd Street).
 - Identify and prioritize needed improvements and explore ways to implement planned street improvements.
 - Analyze capacity of streets (based on current and future development)
 - Explore implications of shifts in traffic patterns as a result of the opening of Bruce R Watkins Drive.
 - Coordinate with Road Diet/Lane narrowing analysis.
 - Explore strategies to improve street connections and access where needed.
- Major Street Plan – Revisions
 - Identify gaps in major street system and explore ways to implement planned street improvements.
 - Identify streets that should be added or removed to arterial system (Indiana, 35th Street).
 - Designate collector street system.
- Look for road diet opportunities.
 - Traffic Counts/Model.
- Identify strategies which maximize the benefits of regional roadways.
 - Identify potential development opportunities at key highway access points.
 - Implement improvements and enhancements to I-70 (I-70 MIS).

Complete Streets –

- Identify Road Diet/Lane narrowing opportunities.
 - Each will require additional analysis (candidates only).
- Implement Streetscape improvements along key corridors (Image Streets).



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Barriers –

- Address pedestrian barriers created by rivers, major highways and railroad tracks.
 - Analyze condition and pedestrian level of service of crossings.
- Ensure adequate number/frequency of crossings (permeability) when feasible.
 - Ideally 4 crossings per mile.
- Coordinate with trail/bike route planning.

Trails/Bike Routes –

- Plan for a coordinated system of on and off street bike routes and multi-use trails.
 - Connect to Trails KC System (Van Brunt, Blue River and Emanuel Cleaver II Blvd). Identify “neighborhood connectors”.
 - Designate east-west bike routes.
 - Integrate with trails system with parks system and large City-owned tracts.
 - Integrate bike routes with trails. Reduce redundancy and overlap.
 - Coordinate with Road Diet/Lane Narrowing candidates

Walkability –

- Identify priority areas:
 - “High need” areas.
 - Safe Routes to School opportunities.
 - Pedestrian Zones (Linwood/31st and Prospect Ave).
- Identify potential pedestrian zones.
- LOS Analysis (area plan level).
- Address pedestrian barriers (frequency and level of service).
- Provide list of improvements (priority areas).

Transit –

- KCATA Bus Routes - Examine existing bus service and new bus rapid transit service.
 - What impacts of recent cuts? What routes need to be restored (priority)?
 - Access to regional shopping/employment.
 - Bus Rapid Transit - Identify potential corridors.
 - Prospect Avenue.
 - Other (Urban Service or Fixed Routes in Smart Moves)?
- Implement Smart Moves regional transit plan.
 - How will implementation of Smart Moves impact HOTC.
 - Coordinate with Land Use Plan –
 - Densify major transit corridors and designate TOD areas.

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- Light Rail? – Linwood?

Remaining Issues –

Need to coordinate transportation system with other recommendations (overlay)

Public Spaces –

Big Ideas/Guiding Principles:

- **Connect Neighborhoods and Activity Centers**
 - Create Great Streets and revitalize boulevards. Identify and designate key “Image Streets (Great Streets):
 - Diversity and density of activity
 - Safety for pedestrians
 - Attractive streetscape amenities such as lighting, benches, signage, trees, etc.
 - Access to desirable goods and services
 - Focus streetscape enhancements and infill development along key image corridors that connect activity centers and gateways.
 - Primary Image Streets (Great Streets):
 - Truman Road
 - Prospect Avenue
 - Linwood Boulevard
 - Other Image/Great Streets:
 - All boulevards (The Paseo, Benton Blvd, Emanuel Cleaver II Blvd, Van Brunt Blvd),
 - 18th Street
 - 23rd Street
 - 27th Street
 - 31st Street
 - 39th Street
- **Activate the Public Realm**
 - Design and program public spaces to accommodate a variety of activities and users.
 - Encourage public spaces in new development, particularly in mixed use centers.
 - Create a new generation of urban amenities
 - Recognize culture as commerce
 - Program parks to meet neighborhood needs.
- **Reinforce and Enhance Area Appearance and Identity**
 - Focus on improving appearance of key “Image” streets.
 - Implement streetscape improvements along key image streets.

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- Encourage development which enhances these corridors and discourage uses which may detract from the appearance or character of the corridor.
- Ensure continued maintenance of enhancements on Bruce R. Watkins Drive and Brush Creek.
- Create a hierarchy of gateways to provide a visual “point of reference” or “announcement” as well as a visual transition from one area to another.
 - **Major Gateways** - are major focal points generally located at the edge of the Plan Area, major interchanges or at the intersections of primary image streets. Examples include I-70 and Van Brunt Blvd; and 31st Street/Linwood Blvd and Bruce R Watkins Drive.
 - **Minor Gateways** - are smaller than Major Gateways and are generally located within the Plan Area, highlighting particular districts, corridors of distinction and neighborhoods.
- Create a visually contiguous roadway system through design that respects surrounding land uses.
- Remove and/or reduce visual clutter.
- Enhance the individual character of area districts and neighborhoods.
 - Identify existing unique districts. Create new unique districts as redevelopment occurs.
 - Construct district/neighborhood markers
 - Explore additional historic districts and overlay zoning tools.
 - Identify individual landmarks and features and preserve/enhance them.
- Look for opportunities to soften “edges”
 - Urban forestry in highway right of way
 - Riparian restoration along Blue River
 - Continue enhancements along Brush Creek and Bruce R Watkins Drive
- Coordinate improvements with revitalization efforts

Housing–

Big Ideas/Guiding Principles:

- **Rebuild and Market Desirable Neighborhoods**

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- Preserve and enhance Neighborhood Character through design guidelines, down zoning, code enforcement and public improvements.
- Design new houses to be consistent with the urban character of the area.
- Improve code enforcement. Coordinate with resources for maintenance/repairs.
- Launch a marketing and branding effort for area neighborhoods. Highlight and publicize success stories. Work with area realtors.
- **Promote Density in Key Areas – Support Economic Development and Transportation Goals**
 - Preserve low density areas and prevent encroachment of higher density or non-residential uses.
 - Develop higher density in appropriate areas (along transit corridors, in Mixed Use nodes, along major thoroughfares)
 - Maintain traditionally higher “urban” densities throughout.
- **Provide Diverse Housing Options**
 - Ensure diverse housing types for a variety of ages and income levels
 - Increase amount of market rate housing. Avoid concentrating low income housing.
- **Build Capacity (ability to implement)**
 - Ensure City staff has adequate resources and support to implement housing initiatives.
 - Increase capacity of area Community Development Corporations to carry out Human Investment and Housing goals.
- **Coordinate Housing and Economic Development Efforts**
 - Pursue a Jobs/Housing Balance
- **Target redevelopment to areas of strength and finish what we start –**
 - Lead with targeted public investments to support private investment.
 - Identify Housing Opportunity Areas. Identify areas of strength, with the greatest potential for long term, sustained success.
 - Start small, think big. Focus on individual blocks within areas of strength. Avoid isolating new developments. Focus on removing blight (new infill, rehab, code enforcement) in surrounding blocks.
 - Create “critical mass”. Focus on building neighborhoods, not houses.

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- Finish an area before moving to adjacent areas.
- **Ensure that development/revitalization programs and tools are addressing needs and plan goals**
 - Ensure that tools/incentives are working in unison to achieve plan goals
 - Integrate New Tools
 - Are existing tools and programs enough to attract investment (to cover the gap)? Are they directing investment to the right areas (targeted areas)?
 - What's Working, What's Not and What's Needed?
 - New construction vs. rehab (do tools favor one over the other?)
 - Track performance of tools. Evaluate against plan goals.
- **Manage Vacant Lots**
 - Apply interim and long term strategies
 - Interim approaches might include urban gardening and opportunities for green storm water mitigation
 - Explore "right sizing" strategies until redevelopment can occur.
 - Long term strategy should be redevelopment
- **Be proactive, holistic and targeted.**
 - Clearly communicate the City's role and interest in working with the developer community to pursue residential projects
 - Layer resources together
 - Focus on areas of strength
 - Monitor neighborhood "health" (tie to metric below)
 - Focus on measurable outcomes
 - Pursue funding sources other than traditional HUD funds.
 - Lead with public infrastructure
 - Apply development tools strategically, proactively and in layers
- **Improve Neighborhood Livability and Stability**
 - Basic infrastructure and service delivery
 - Apply Stabilization and Prevention Measures (Regulatory):
 - Down zonings/overlay zoning
 - Design guidelines for historic preservation/neighborhood character
 - Rental licensing
 - Code Enforcement and Property Management
 - Prevention and assistance
 - Promote legal and moral responsibilities of property ownership
 - Vacant property registration
 - Address Foreclosures -



- Proactively and aggressively apply homebuyer/mortgage counseling/education, post foreclosure counseling/assistance.
- Focus on preventing predatory practices through education and services.
- **Create a Comprehensive Housing Strategy**
 - Coordinate with economic development strategies
 - Include capacity building.
 - Identify leading public improvements
 - Basic infrastructure, upgrades, maintenance
 - Aesthetic improvements
 - Explore “Right Sizing” Strategies –
 - Explore other communities (Detroit, Buffalo) and investigate whether application in HOTC is appropriate.
 - Address access to capital
 - Micro loans
 - Identify tools and economic incentives necessary to accomplish goals and where to apply them strategically.
 - New construction and rehabilitation – coordinate
 - Education – Schools
 - Marketing – successes and positive aspect of neighborhoods
- **Pursue Regional Approaches**
 - Explore growth management.
 - Since 1980, the region’s residential land area has increased three times faster than population.
 - “Inner Core” has lost population since 1940.
 - When land use expands faster than population some previously developed areas of the region experience population decline, even as new areas grow.
 - Explore development opportunities near regional roadways.
 - Coordinate access improvements to regional roadways with development planning.
- **Track progress in housing**
 - Population/Households
 - Vacant lots
 - Number of Schools Open/Closed (by type)
 - Housing Type – Affordable/Subsidized vs. market rate
 - Housing vacancy and status (not on market)
 - Homeownership
 - Housing Conditions
 - Percentage of residents who indicate their next move will be in the area
 - Also track reason for move and type of housing sought.

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- Sales Data
 - Average Days on Market
 - Number of Homes Sold (including change from previous year).
 - Average Sales Price (including change from previous year).
- Average Rent
- To monitor progress towards its key housing goals, the effort should:
 - Track and compare investments in both the rehabilitation of existing housing stock and new infill housing developments so as to ensure that there is a balance between the two and to monitor effectiveness.
 - Develop annual or biannual metrics to track the change in the area's housing stock, its value, housing projects underway and the need among low and moderate income households
- Number and Value of New Projects

Economic Development –

Big Ideas/Guiding Principles

- **Increase employment opportunities within HOTC**
 - Identify strategies to attract and retain businesses.
 - Improve educational attainment and job preparedness of area residents.
 - Coordinate with transportation strategies to ensure access to employment.
 - Coordinate Housing and Economic Development Efforts.
 - Pursue a Jobs/Housing Balance
- **Implement Sustainable Economic Development** - Create the conditions which foster economic growth, the outcome of which is an improvement in the quality of life.
 - Create quality jobs.
 - Strengthen the economy and build the wealth of Kansas City.
 - Sustain a high quality of life.
 - Promote stewardship of the City's resources.
 - Maintain and develop affordable, quality housing opportunities.
 - Promote comprehensive opportunities for education, skills development and lifelong learning¹

¹ Economic Development and Incentive Task Force, Policy Recommendations, August 2007



- **Target Redevelopment To Areas Of Strength and Finish What We Start –**
 - Identify areas of strength and proactively target resources to cause development
 - Identify areas with the greatest potential for long term, sustained success.
 - Lead with targeted public investments and marketing to support / attract private investment.
 - Start small, think big. Focus on individual blocks within areas of strength. Avoid isolating new developments. Focus on removing blight (new infill, rehab, code enforcement) in surrounding blocks.
 - Create “critical mass”. Focus on building neighborhoods, not houses.
 - Finish an area before moving to adjacent areas.
 - Leverage momentum of recent successes. Complete projects already started.
 - Examine large land owners (City and Land Trust) and develop strategies for development.
- **Use Layered Approaches – More Than Incentives**
 - Capital improvements, City services and amenities, public realm improvements, enhanced public transit, land assembly, job training, incubators, etc...
 - Address access to capital – Credit Union, Micro Loans
 - Develop a marketing/branding program highlighting the advantages of the area.
 - Explore funding and publicity mechanisms:
 - Explore opportunities for public realm improvements in conjunction with major new stormwater infrastructure investments.
 - Black Heritage District Economic Development Plan.
 - Other?
- **Ensure that development tools / revitalization programs and tools are addressing needs and plan goals (H)**
 - Are existing tools and programs enough to attract investment (to cover the gap)? Are they directing investment to the right areas (targeted areas)?
 - Proactively apply tools in priority areas
 - Create new tools which are easier to use and apply them in priority areas.
 - Establish thresholds which reward projects that meet established priorities of the Plan.
 - Integrate New Tools
 - Foster small projects and small businesses (tools too expensive/difficult to use)



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- Ensure that tools/incentives are working in unison to achieve plan goals
- What's Working, What's Not and What's Needed?
- Track performance of tools. Evaluate against plan goals.
- **Revitalize struggling commercial corridors.**
 - Determine areas which may no longer be viable for retail uses
 - Consolidate commercial uses to mixed use nodes/activity centers. (see Land Use)
 - Develop an interactive strategy with population growth objectives.
 - Complete a gap analysis to demonstrate the purchasing power of each neighborhood relative to current services available.
 - Utilize drill down data.
- **Target Key Industries.**
 - Focus on maintaining a diverse mix of businesses with quality jobs
 - Complete an analysis to determine sectors that show promise.
 - Create Synergy - Focus complementary uses strategically together to reinforce existing districts, anchors and activity centers and protect previous City investments.
- **Foster Small Business Development and Small Projects**
 - Create policies and provide the tools, process and structure to foster small business development.
 - Develop tools specifically designed for small projects and small businesses.
- **Develop Area Workforce**
 - Promote entrepreneurship
 - Develop a skilled labor force
 - Prepare people for work
 - Promote universal child care and development
 - Provide sound education and lifelong learning
 - Focus on preventative health care, enhancing city life
- **Ensure Adequate Transportation Access and Infrastructure**
- **Pursue Regional Approaches**
 - Explore growth management.
 - Integrate regional transportation planning into economic development initiatives.
 - Identify strategies which maximize the benefits of regional roadways
 - Improvements and enhancements to I-70
 - Explore shifts in traffic patterns as a result of Bruce R Watkins Drive
 - Support goals of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan Metropolitan Kansas City (Mid America Regional Council, April, 2009)

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1. **Economic competitiveness rooted in innovative capacity.**
Regions specialize in what they do best, creating highly developed clusters of activity where competing firms spur each other to higher levels of performance. University excellence is at the root of most basic innovations.
 2. **High levels and use of human capacity**, which requires universal quality education, strong family support systems, and a culture that embraces diversity as a source of strength, resilience and innovation.
 3. **Inherent attractiveness of place and amenities**, which include vital urban centers, world-class cultural and recreational opportunities, and thriving first suburbs.
 4. **Social cohesion** based on a high level of trust across communities, leading to agreement on actions and policies that serve the common good.
 5. **Strategic decision-making capacity**, which requires effective leadership institutions and an engaged citizenry able to influence policy.
 6. **Efficiency in the use of resources** found in healthy natural environments and strong mobility and accessibility networks.
- **Revitalize HOTC Neighborhoods (H).**
 - Implement Housing /Neighborhood Strategies
 - Economic development projects should improve surrounding neighborhoods
 - Avoid an inward focus within the boundaries of the site
 - **Promote Density in Key Areas – Support Economic Development and Transportation Goals (H)**
 - Preserve low density areas and prevent encroachment.
 - Develop higher density in appropriate areas (along transit corridors, in Mixed Use nodes, along major thoroughfares).
 - Maintain traditionally higher “urban” densities throughout.
 - **Be proactive, holistic and targeted. (H)**
 - Clearly communicate the City’s role and interest in working with the developer community.
 - Layer resources together. Strategically and proactively apply in priority areas.
 - Pursue new funding sources.
 - Lead with public infrastructure.
 - **Create a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy**
 - HOTC Area Plan provides framework
 - Components of a Holistic Economic Development Strategy



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- Proactive, outcome oriented
- Address access to capital
- Leading Public Infrastructure (what are key strategic opportunities)
- Education/Workforce strategies
- Tools
- Capacity Building
- Marketing/Branding
- Develop a strategy to address high retail vacancy rates.
- Identify competitive advantages to be leveraged.
- Identify roles, responsibilities and partnerships in economic development.
- Identify opportunities for high-wage job growth and small business growth.
- Identify industries to target for recruitment, retention, and expansion
- **Establish and Track Benchmarks/Metrics**
 - Retail vacancy
 - Taxable Sales
 - Jobs and Number of Establishments.
 - Unemployment (area residents)
 - Population/Households
 - Industrial vacancy
 - Office vacancy
 - Other?

Human Investment –

Big Ideas/Guiding Principles

- **Promote entrepreneurship**
 - Encourage incentives to entrepreneurs
- **Develop a skilled labor force**
 - Provide vocational training in fields of growth
- **Prepare people for work**
 - Provide technical training for prospective workers
- **Promote universal child care and development**
- **Provide sound education and lifelong learning**
 - Encourage high level relationship between City and Kansas City Missouri School District
 - Promote continuing educations programs
- **Focus on preventative health care, enhancing city life**

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- Coordinate health services
- **Establish and Track Benchmarks/Metrics**
 - Unemployment
 - Poverty rate
 - Vacant housing units
 - Request for services

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