

STATE OF KANSAS)
WYANDOTTE COUNTY)) SS
CITY OF KANSAS CITY, KS)

SPECIAL SESSION, THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2023

The Unified Government Commission of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, met in Special Session, Thursday, March 30, 2023, with ten members present: Bynum, Commissioner At-Large First District; Burroughs, Commissioner At-Large Second District; Townsend, Commissioner First District (via phone); Ramirez, Commissioner Third District; Johnson, Commissioner Fourth District; Kane, Commissioner Fifth District; Markley, Commissioner Sixth District; Stites, Commissioner Seventh District; Davis, Commissioner Eighth District; and Garner, Mayor/CEO, presiding. McKiernan, Commissioner Second District; was absent. The following officials were also in attendance: David Johnston, County Administrator; Alan Howze, Assistant County Administrator; Patrick Waters, Deputy Chief Counsel; Brett Deichler, Unified Government Clerk; Gunnar Hand, Director of Planning & Urban Design; Reginald Lindsey, Budget Director; DeWayne Bright, FUSE Fellow Housing Coordinator for the Unified Government; and LaVert Murray, Economic Development Advisor in Mayor's Office.

Mayor Garner said before I call this meeting to order, I want to announce that we have individuals attending remotely as well as on site. All participants joining by phone should mute their phones when not speaking to avoid any background noise. During the meeting, please make sure that you announce yourself by name and title every time you speak so the public that is participating knows exactly who is speaking to them. This is critical given the number of remote participants and is current guidance from the Kansas Attorney General Office. Please make sure you're speaking into the microphone clearly to ensure your comments are being heard in an accurate manner for our records here at the Unified Government.

MAYOR GARNER called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL: Townsend, Ramirez, Johnson, Kane, Markley, Stites, Davis, Bynum, Burroughs, Garner.

NOTICE OF SPECIAL SESSION of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, to be conducted in a hybrid format in the 5th floor conference room of the Municipal Office Building on Thursday, March 30, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. regarding Housing Policies.

CONSENT TO MEETING of the governing body of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, accepting service of the foregoing notice, waiving all and any irregularities in such service and in such notice, and consent and agree that we, the governing body, shall meet at the time and place therein specified and for the purpose therein stated.

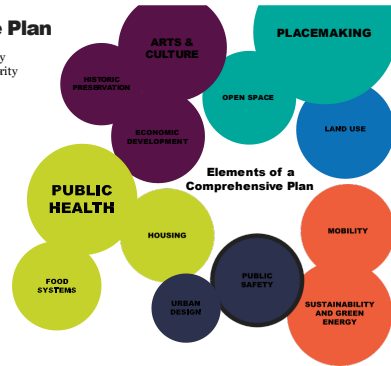
Mayor Garner said tonight we have with us, at our first special meeting, our new permanent County Administrator, David Johnston. Glad to have you here and I know usually when it comes to staff on the lineup sheet, there's a presentation from staff, and I'll let you lead into that as a first order of business.

David Johnston, County Administrator, said well, on day four, my script says I'm turning it over to Gunnar Hand.

Gunnar Hand, Director of Planning & Urban Design, said I want to thank you all for the opportunity to have this Special Session to talk about Housing Policies specifically. Small shoutout to Commissioner Johnson for making the motion at our last P&Z meeting to give us this extra time with you all. We really do appreciate it. We do hope that this is the first potential in a series of policy discussions as we move through the Comprehensive Plan process. That process will include a series of roundtables with the Neighborhood Business Revitalization organizations starting in April as well as a Vision Summit in May and subsequent thereafter.

Citywide Comprehensive Plan

- Establishes a 25-year vision for our community
- Focused on Kansas City, KS as planning authority
- Coordinated countywide



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You all have already seen this presentation at the last P&Z, so we are going to not quickly go through it, but we've abbreviated the presentation accordingly. We've also added a couple of slides to illustrate housing's connection to economic development, but we're really hoping that the next 45 minutes is a facilitated discussion about both.

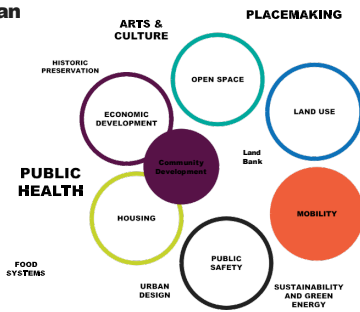
Again, I think it's important if you look at the arc of the planning process. We sort of start at the beginning having conversations about values. We move through time, a discussion about strategies and by the end of it we should talk about specific actions. So, this is a big picture conversation, specifically how housing sits within the Comprehensive Plan. If you all remember these slides, I'll quickly run through them. There are some basic elements that belong in every Comprehensive Plan. This is not a hard fast rule, but these are typically what some of those look like you would expect Economic Development, Housing, Open Space, and of course, Land Use.

If you recall, the goDotte Countywide Mobility Strategy is our transportation element. Now, over the last, let's say, decade plus, the trends in planning best practices have evolved. The trends in how cities develop have evolved and the things that go in a Comprehensive Plan have therefore expanded and evolved, so it's a much larger ecosystem than that core chapters if you will.

Citywide Comprehensive Plan

ADOPTED / IMPLEMENTATION

- goDotte Countywide Mobility Strategy (2022)
- Community Development Consolidated Plan (2022)
- Existing Area and Focused Plans (Various)
- Community Health Improvement Plan



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The good news is, we've been doing this work. We may not have called it the Comprehensive Plan update in the last year plus, but multiple departments have been developing strategies that look way into the future and we can use those to build upon to start this Comprehensive Plan process. So, we're not starting from scratch. We've been doing this work for quite some time. We just haven't tied a bow around all of it and found the commonalities and aligned all the things accordingly.

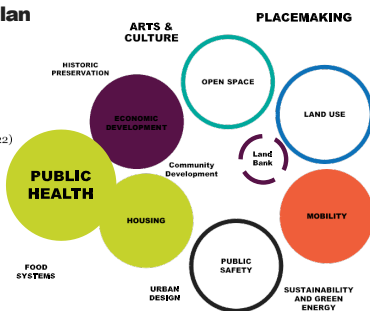
Citywide Comprehensive Plan

ADOPTED / IMPLEMENTATION

- goDotte Countywide Mobility Strategy (2022)
- Community Development Consolidated Plan (2022)
- Existing Area and Focused Plans (Various)
- Community Health Improvement Plan

UNDERWAY

- Housing Strategy
- Economic Development Strategic Plan
- Land Bank Policy Review

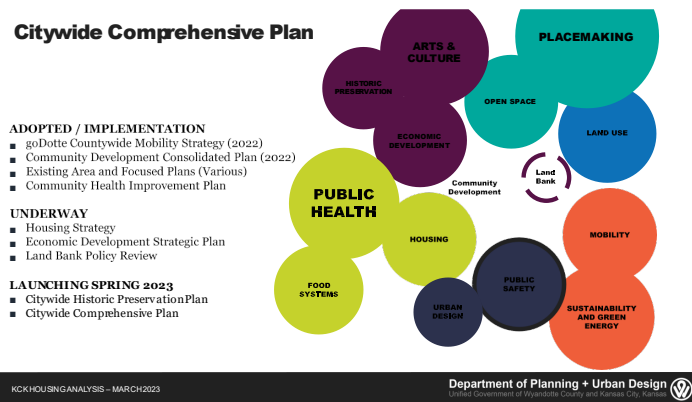


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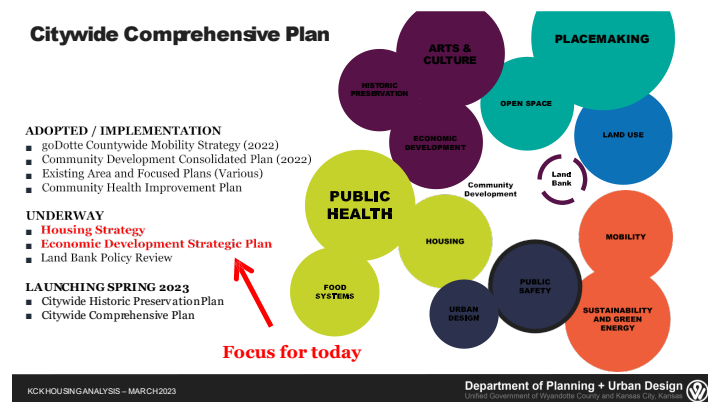
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We are currently underway with the Housing Strategy. We're currently underway with the Economic Development Strategic Plan, but we're also doing things like the Land Bank Policy Update. I'm a big proponent of implementation starting on day one and so just because we're doing something that would probably characterize as an implementation action and comp plan, that doesn't mean that action can't inform our comp plan.

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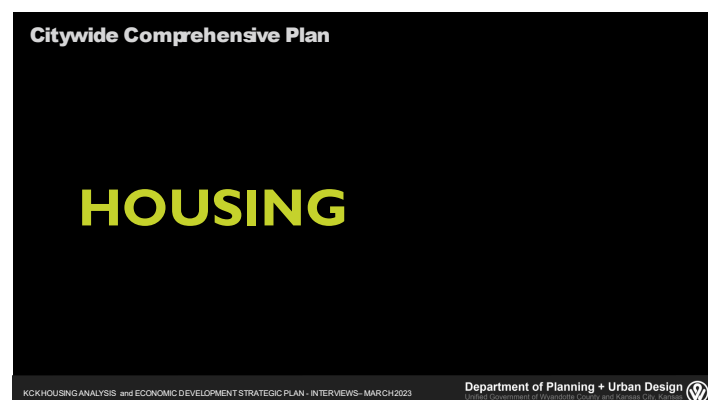


In the future we're still in the process of standing up both the Historic Preservation Plan as well as the actual consultant for the Citywide Comprehensive Plan.



In the interim we keep moving forward and today we really wanted to focus on our Housing Strategy and our Housing Development, excuse me, Economic Development Strategy Plan.

With that, I will pass the mic.



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Housing | Recap

DeWayne W. Bright, Sr.
FUSE Fellow Housing Coordinator

dbright@wycokck.org | 913-573-5749

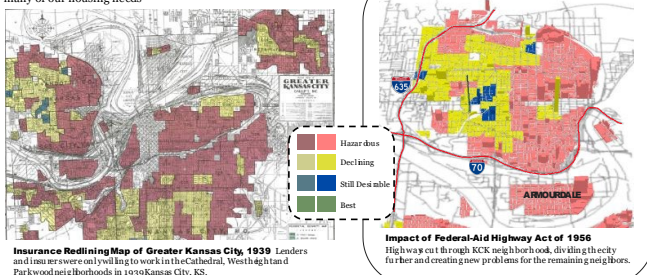


KCK HOUSING ANALYSIS – MARCH 2023

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Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas

Housing | Historical Context

- Generations of systematic discrimination have shaped many of our housing needs



KCK HOUSING ANALYSIS and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN - INTERVIEWS - MARCH 2023

Department of Planning + Urban Design
Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas

DeWayne Bright, FUSE Fellow Housing Coordinator for the Unified Government, said just kind of a brief recap on our previous discussion. In our previous presentation we had a detailed discussion about Redlining and the Federal Housing Act of 1956 and how it drastically impacted the city of Kansas City, Kansas. I feel that I may have been a bit remiss in that presentation because what I failed to mention was that prior to both the Federal Aid Housing, excuse me, the Federal Highway Act and the redlining map of 1939 there had been discriminatory policies that were put in place many, many years ahead of that. That's how we came to have these segregated communities.

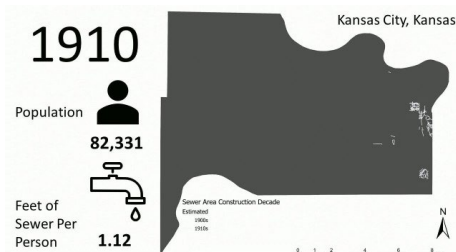
They were only tools that came along later and what they actually did is that they had significantly economically disadvantaged the areas of Kansas City, Kansas inside the 635 Loop and so there are many, many complex factors that has taken place that has brought us to the place that we are today. I did not want to just leave it there. It was simply a matter of redlining in the Federal Highway Act that has brought us to this place. There's been a number of situations. Things and policies such as including zoning, restrictive covenants, private lending practices, and

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racial steering that led to the ongoing patterns of segregation, you know, disinvestment and inequality. I just want to kind of clear that portion up.

Housing | Decades of Sprawl

- Decades of growth in KCK increases demand for infrastructure without growing population density
- Costly to provide services and infrastructure maintenance



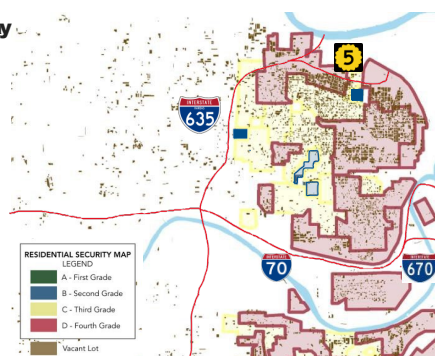
KCK HOUSING ANALYSIS and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN - INTERVIEWS - MARCH 2023

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As we had discussed during that presentation as well, just the rapid growth of Kansas City, Kansas and the expansion of the infrastructure that was needed to support that. It brought us to a place where we were left with a serious debt cycle that we expanded to where there was so much infrastructure and a loss of population that we were not able to afford the infrastructure, construction, and the upkeep.

Housing | Vacancy Today

- 12,043 vacant lots in Wyandotte County
- More than 4,600 properties in UG land bank
- 90% of land bank lots are in the Northeast



KCK HOUSING ANALYSIS and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN - INTERVIEWS - MARCH 2023

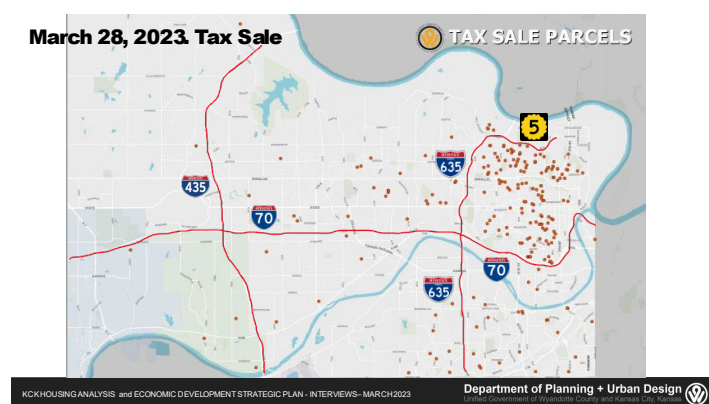
Department of Planning + Urban Design

We had discussed also about the vacancies as a result of the policies that were in place, but according to the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, redlining is related to a number of current characteristics of neighborhoods that were impacted by that. Those were neighborhoods that were impacted by redlining. They have higher instances of housing instability, increased minority presence, higher prevalence of poverty, greater social vulnerability, and they had a heightened risk of morbidity during COVID-19 as well as an increased prevalence of poor mental health and lower life expectancy. These were just simple characteristics no matter what

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community you go to across the United States that experience redlining. These were just simply some of the factors.

Now, with the passing of the Federal Housing Act and the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, the practice of redlining was technically banned and yet policies such as residential zoning laws and the development of the credit score, it continued the inequality in the housing markets. So, therefore, redlining alone should not be viewed as the sole determinant of modern patterns of racial inequality. In fact, there are many factors that are in play that determine how capital is distributed in municipalities today and that has all led to the housing crisis that we're currently in.



This is a map that details the recent tax sale that we had on Tuesday, March 28th. There were over 200 parcels in this month's tax sale. As you can see, the predominance of those parcels were inside that 635 Loop. So, the impact that was experienced from the historical redlining and policies, we can see that they're actually still at play today.

The shortage of housing is across the board and that is from the unhoused all the way to those that are 80% AMI. It is experienced everywhere, but what we're having now is that there's a widening gap between what housing costs and what residents in the UG can actually afford. So, that's a major issue, major issue economically.

There's going to be some data that's going to be shared throughout this presentation that is going to help us to understand that what we're experiencing right now with this housing crisis is about a lot more than just inventory, that we're not going to really be able to build our way out of this. So in thinking about a housing strategy, it cannot be done in isolation. We must have a solid economic development strategy as well because we have to be able to close that gap between

what housing costs and what our residents can afford. We have to figure out what is going to be the best way in order to do that.

So, with that, we have our Economic Consultant from Future iQ, David Beurle.

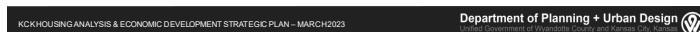


Economic Development Strategic Plan

David Beurle, CEO

Future iQ

david@future-iq.com 612 757 9190



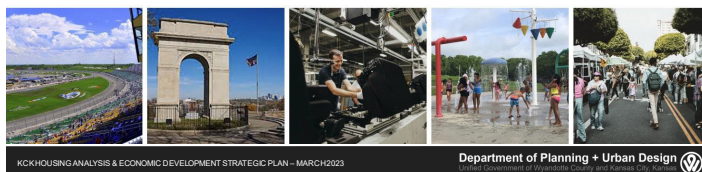
David Beurle, CEO Future iQ, said I'm pleased to be here and really looking forward to the discussion with you tonight. I wanted to sort of just build a little on what Dwayne was saying because obviously the issue around housing and some of those long-term disadvantages are very systemic and they're very historic. So, what I want to move is to start to look a little bit to the future. I know part of tonight is we're really keen to engage with you in a conversation about your thoughts about future direction. A couple of things to set that conversation up.

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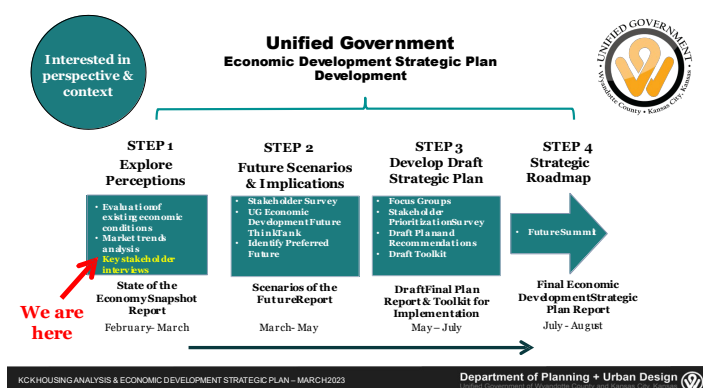
YEAR of VISIONING



Economic Development Strategic Plan



This really is the year of visioning for the UG and you know this whole notion of being able to step back and think about not only where we come from and what shaped us, but where do you want to be looking out 10-20 years into the future. The economic development strategy, which my firm will be leading that part of the work, is a clear part of a visioning and we are working with the Comprehensive Planning Team to kind of figure out how we really get to this sort of conversation about the vision.



In terms of where we're sitting in the Economic Development Strategic Planning process, we're really at the start there which we're exploring perceptions and part of that is interview with key stakeholders. So, essentially tonight, I would like to interview you. I'd like to interview you about your thoughts about future trajectory because I think it's a very important context for the work not only of the Economic Development Strategic Plan, but the Comprehensive Plan, the Housing Policy. All of those things are tools that you have, but we want to get your input so we understand your appetite for change and how much kind of, sort of leverage, or how much drive you want to put behind some of this thinking.

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The Importance of Future Thinking

KCK HOUSING ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN – MARCH 2023

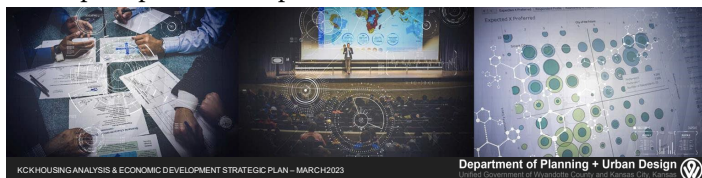
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I do want to hit on future thinking and obviously you're in the midst of it. You've started a big planning process with all sorts of moving pieces. You're in the year of visioning for your community, but many organizations, communities, counties, coming out of the pandemic are thinking about the future perhaps in ways we didn't before.

The key to effective future thinking...

- Explore and anticipate a range of plausible futures
- Consider both **trajectory** (direction of change) and **velocity** (speed of change)

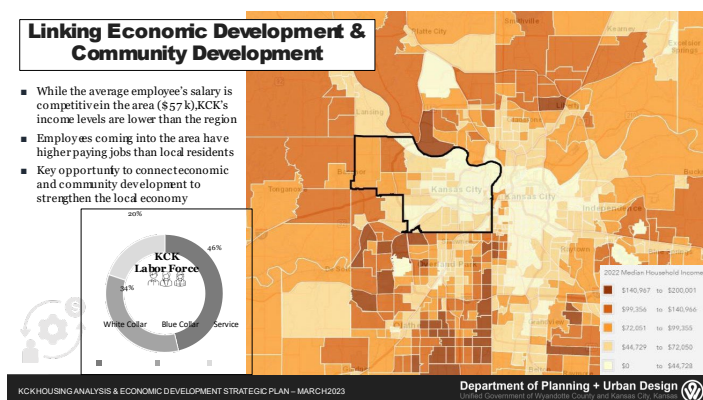
Explore potential 'shape and contours' of the future



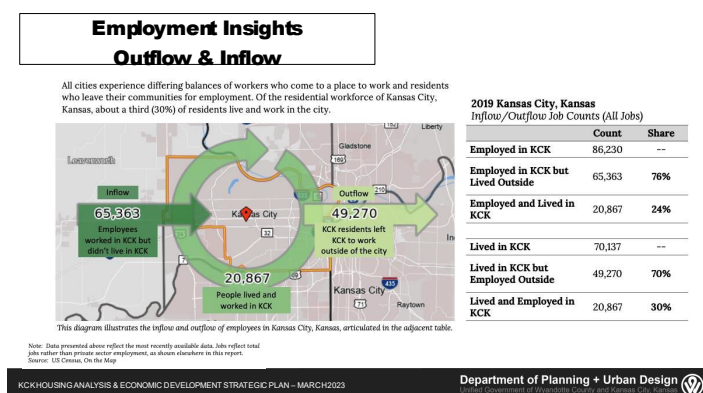
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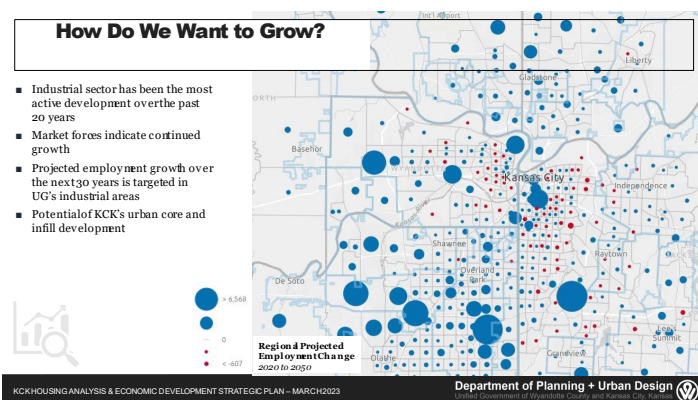
The key to effective future thinking, and our firm specializes in that, there are really two things we have to think about, so one is trajectory, so what direction are we heading or what direction do we want to head. That's part of what I want to talk to you about tonight, where do you want to go, but the other part is velocity, which is how fast do we need to move, how ambitious do we need to be to stay ahead of trends that are occurring around us. You'll hear through the process us talking about trajectory and velocity. Tonight is primarily a conversation about trajectory. Velocity will be what sense of urgency do you feel in terms of this work that we're doing.



A couple of little datasets I want to just add to DeWayne's very insightful work, so linking Housing Policy and Economic Development and Community Development together. This chart here looks at median household income for the broader metropolitan and the lighter the color, the lower the median household income. You can see on that data, there's this sort of consistent overlap of this focus in your urban core of either tax sales or historic disadvantages, but we still have that currently in terms of lower median household income. The lowest area actually is in predominantly the urban core.



The other part too that we've been looking at is sort of economic vitality of dynamics and this looks at commuter patterns. What we're seeing is a large number of people, 65,000 people a day coming into the county working. We have about 50,000 leaving, 20,000 live and work here. What is interesting as a subtext is that the people who are coming in, so the people who are coming to work and then leave each day, on average are earning more than the people who are here or the people who are here are going elsewhere. When we think about economic development and we think about tools to address some of the things DeWayne's been talking about, I think understanding that sort of imbalance becomes really important.



This is really my last slide before we sort of dive into a discussion and this is long-term projections. This projections out to 2050 which is employment change, so the blue is where the forecast is for employment increase and the larger the bubble, the more the number and the red is where there's a forecast for employment decline.

What I find really interesting about this from a county perspective is that you are a slice of the pie and as a county you go from urban core to suburban zones to peri-urban space to rural landscapes. What you can see, at the least the forecast and they're just extrapolations of current trends, but if you think of trajectory where you're heading without intervention is perhaps increased imbalance. So where there's more disadvantage in the already disadvantaged areas, and certainly growth, I mean you can see Overland Park and places forecast to do great, but you have your share of it on the west side, but there are forecasts of—if it keeps going the way it's going.

Interview Question:

The forecasts suggest a continuation of existing growth patterns, and income distribution pattern patterns.

How aggressively should UG intervene in these regional patterns? What pattern would you like to see in 2040?



What I would like to explore with you and we want to use the remaining time literally to interview and have a dialogue with you. The forecasts suggest a continuation of existing growth patterns and income distribution patterns and you can see what they are. I guess the question, and I would love with your indulgence to go around and hear from each of you so I would like, Christian, just

as a heads up, I'll probably start with you and we'll go around the room. From your position as a commissioner or as a Mayor, when you look at that dataset, so taking the past sort of storyline that DeWayne talked about, you look at where we are today, you look at the forecasts of where we're going, you look at this imbalance. There's clearly a big imbalance in economic sort of prosperity and employment areas and sort of, you know, the vitality of your community, your economy and the implications for housing.

I'm interested in your thoughts about that. Does that look okay to you. Do you think the UG through these planning tools, the Comprehensive Plan, the Economic Development Strategy Housing Policy, do you think you should intervene and sort of put your finger on the scale to change some of that trajectory. If you do, how aggressive do you think the thinking should be. I mean is this something that is alarming to you or is it something that you know, okay, we know it's there, but this is going to take time. What are your thoughts and really in the context of how would you like to see that pattern look in 2040. I won't back it up, but you know the data that's there, so I would be very keen to hear your perspective because I think this is an opportunity for you to give guidance and set the context for some very important planning elements that are going ahead. The context is how aggressive do we need to be, how big do we need to be thinking, how ambitious and innovative or you know we don't want to get (inaudible), but we want to really understand your thoughts on this.

So, with your indulgence, Christian, if we could start with you and I'd love to go around the room and hear from each of the commissioners.

Commissioner Ramirez said great to be first. I agree that we as a body and staff, I think it is time to take a part, an aggressive—I do believe we should be aggressive in this area and a lot of areas within our community, county and city have seen, in especially the northeast, the districts that Commissioner Johnson and Commissioner Townsend represent, I've seen year over year over year constant disinvestment. I think it's time that we stop that. It's no more—we're in 2023 now, that needs to stop. Everyone has to have a fair shake, a fair shot at being a part of this community. So, I agree that we should be aggressive. We should do what we can. Again, I know change takes time, but I want us to as a body, as a staff, as a community work collectively together to make that change happen because not one of us—not only one of us can make the change. We all have to work together to get there.

Mr. Beurle said yeah, and thank you very much. Some of the subsequent questions, we want to get a little bit more into the sort of detail about that and exactly what does aggressive look like and so on, but thank you very much.

Commissioner Kane asked, can you put up the redlines? I agree that we have some areas that have been—we haven't paid attention to them like we should, but I disagree with the comments about when they put I-70 in because that joined us with Kansas City, Missouri. When they put 635 in, the reason they put 635 in is so the people from Johnson County could get to the airport. The reason they put 5 Highway in, because I worked at General Motors at the time, we had to drive all the way to Riverside and back around to get to work, so they added that. Now, if you take the lines out, I still see the picture that you're trying to show and, yes, do we need to do something, but in my mind I would think we would rely on the commissioners in that area to tell us what the needs are. I would want them to support me in my endeavor, so I want to support them in theirs. I just don't know exactly—like Christian's area is different, Harold's area is different, Gayle's area is different, so I would rely on them to guide us.

Mr. Beurle said yeah, if I could—I'm glad you raised that because I was sort of looking at your county sort of map, you know the seats on the districts that you come from and why I'm really sort of asking about this imbalance is that if you look at the forecast, some of your jurisdictions are forecast to be favored, some are forecast to perhaps suffer increasing sort of challenge and so I think there is some opportunity as a body to think about what's your broader context in terms of guidance, so thanks for raising that.

Commissioner Kane said I have one more comment. I was raised inside the 635 circle. I was raised in a two bedroom, one bathroom house, with my nine brothers and sisters and my mom and dad. In fact, the house is still standing, but barely, and my mother-in-law still lives in there, multiple friends and relatives of mine live in there, but these are the folks that live this every day, so I would rely on them to guide us.

Commissioner Stites said I was on the Edwardsville City Council for six years and we had a study that was done also and this intrigued me and bothered me then, back in Edwardsville, and it bothers me now that of the amount of people that come into our county, that come to work, and then leave at the end of the night and it's illustrated on our example here again. You know I don't know what

the deep dive is, is it housing, I don't know. Is that why so many of them are leaving at the end of the day is because we don't have enough housing, I'm not sure. If you just look at that—and I know that the housing component may play a large role into this, but that bothers me, so many people are leaving our county. Why do we not have people live and work in KCK is only near 21,000.

Mr. Beurle said yeah, and we're diving a little bit deeper into the data too in terms of how much that income differential is and what drives that, but I think you're hitting the nail on the head here, which is this is all interconnected. This plays into Housing Policy and we were actually just talking part of, and I'm sure you'll hear a lot about is, this notion of the missing middle. You get different sorts of housing and increasingly there are certain categories of housing that are missing, how much that correlates to that 65,000 I think is the right question.

Commissioner Stites said but I also think we're not unique in this. I just told you where I was on Edwardsville City Council, a city of 7,000, 6,000, whatever our population was. They saw the same thing. People coming in, coming to work and then heading out. Not that I don't agree with the redlining and the different things that you've shown, but I think this occurs in Bonner Springs, I think it occurs in Edwardsville, so it's larger than just our Kansas City, Kansas.

Commissioner Johnson said I was just trying to get my thoughts together. I think everybody knows that I'm an advocate for economic development as a means of growing our community. The words that came to me when I was looking at the question was, we need to be bold and we need to be calculating. We need to be thinking of a means by which we can bring some type of—whether it will be entertainment, some type of venue that would draw persons in my opinion to eastern Wyandotte County the same way as what we did on the west end and we have to keep that balance on the west end. We need Christian's area on the south end to really buttress up our community also along the Central Avenue corridor as well, so we need to be bold, but we also need to be calculating in terms of how we do that while we still maintain those areas that are still growing.

I'm very concerned about the thing that Chuck was just talking about. Just kind of switching the subjects there. In fact, you know, looking at the fact that people coming into Wyandotte County are not staying in Wyandotte County. They're not paying real estate taxes and particularly for those that work in Fairfax, they're probably not paying anything in sales tax with

the exception of maybe gas and I'm not even sure if they're doing that. So, we have this influx of money going out that is being spent in other communities and then our people are getting jobs that are going out of the community and getting lower paying jobs because they're not—I don't know, there's a lot of different factors. I don't know that I want to kind of categorize as to what that might be, but there are several factors. I'm very, very concerned about that, but I'm also held in tension because the majority of my banking career was done in Kansas City, Missouri and I lived in Wyandotte County, never left, so I do understand that dynamic that is there. It's very troubling to me that we are one of the highest paying wages—highest wage paying counties in the state of Kansas. You know, top three, top four maybe, and we have one of the lower average household income in the state of Kansas. That is troubling.

So, I think we need to be very, very calculating about how we approach this in terms of government putting its—or leaning in on it, but I do think we need to have some input as to what that looks like particularly as we try to draw in more companies, businesses, venues that, in fact, do the things that we're seeing right now cause property taxes to increase. We have to be mindful of those that are elderly, those that are disabled, those that are disenfranchised so that we make sure that we're not creating a model that moves them out because they cannot afford to live in Wyandotte County now and we're right on the precipice of that. We're right on that cusp and so we need to be very, very careful. I think that's all I have for right now.

Mr. Deichler said, excuse me for a moment. Mayor, if I may, Commissioner Townsend has her hand raised if we could recognize her.

Commissioner Townsend said I hope you will be able to hear me and I won't go into a coughing fit. I wish almost that this presentation was being done next week after Monday's upcoming Economic Development meeting and I encourage everyone within the sound of my voice to attend if they can either in person or virtually because there will be an opportunity to hear and act on a project coming up in the northeast area. I won't say anything more than that and it is, since I've been here, since I've been a commissioner, the first time that someone has come to District 1 with the types of amenities and housing on a multitude of levels that we're talking about now and the need.

One of the things that I heard this evening, the stats again, about the number of people who come into Wyandotte County to work and leave. Alarming was the word I think our presenter used. I found it enlightening in that, as some of my colleagues have already said, we need to be addressing not only in District 1, but other areas to the east and south of 635 of a variety of housing options to make living here more attractive. We need on this end not only the housing, but the shopping options and other attractions that will make people want to stay in this end and so very shortly I believe this whole Commission is going to have the opportunity to weigh in on the project that I'm talking about.

Some of the challenges that are not faced by developers in going west, you have in east. Infrastructure is a challenge. You're not dealing with the new financing, so very soon I believe we're going to be able to look at putting our money where our mouth has been with supporting this and instead of looking at disinvestment, looking at investment. That may require us as a Commission to look at financing is needed in ways we have not thought about before. So, I see that we're going to have to be mind open to get some of these projects going and on a variety of levels and I hope that those who are in the geographic areas that we're talking about will also be receptive and open to people who want to come in and give us what we say we want. Those are just some of my thoughts.

Also, I guess it goes without saying, I don't want to see us develop for only one income level so that we are essentially creating under and lower class locations. We have to pep it up and step it up, and again, it may take on our part as commissioners some things financially that we have not considered before, but could be doable.

Mr. Beurle said thank you very much, very comprehensive comments. We have six more commissioners and Mayor to go in about five minutes.

Commissioner Davis said I will try to go as fast as I can. As far as patterns, I'm just going to throw out ideas and people that should be considered and we can have conversation about it later. Our NBR's, small businesses, I think need to be a part of the conversation. If we are really going to kind of close the gap as far as employment, we need to consider transportation and childcare. Childcare being massive. That can open up opportunities for education which is leading to the fact that a lot of people are not able to get the jobs in Wyandotte County because they need to have the degrees and training. I would also like to see a community benefit ordinance in process within

this strategic plan so that we can use some of the proceeds and the revenue that we get and spread that out. Our state legislative agenda, we can use that process to engage our state legislators as well as our federal folks.

I would also throw in a climate action and sustainability sectors whether it's solar, wind, hydro, what have you. Those are sectors that we can tap into that are looking at middle America. International investment with Panasonic. We saw that happen with Johnson County. We can include them as well. Our staff in the last ED&F meeting came up with a phenomenal slideshow that really showed some potential economic opportunities that we can take advantage of. Lastly, I will point out local banks and non-profits that work with communities particularly for economic development and wealth building. We need to get our banking institutions to the table.

Mr. Beurle said you hit on a number of things there. I mean the challenge is clear to most people, look at the data. It's not that you're without resources or there's a moment in time. I mean there are some tailwinds to address some of these deep systemic issues and resources that you can drag to the table, so I think flagging that is really great.

Commissioner Markley said I don't think the question is whether we intervene because we're already intervening. When we do a development deal and we're requiring that business to have a certain number of jobs that are a certain salary, we're obviously attempting to address this exact problem. That kind of intervention is already happening and the question is how many different facets of this equation can we intervene in and how do we push all of those buttons at once to get a more aggressive result. I think we continue to do those development deals and those sorts of things.

I will say we made some attempts at housing developments in the past before my time, but things like Peregrine Falcon which was not a good taxpayer investment in a project that essentially failed to cashflow. So, if we're going to go that direction, we obviously have to do something differently because every time we've tried that kind of housing development where we've incentivized it as a government, it's been a failure, probably not where we want to go. But, how do we incentivize across the board all of the different things we need to have happen to move the needle more quickly than what we're doing just through the development deals as we're setting them up now.

Commissioner Burroughs said I'll take a little bit different path. I think what we need is to be a little bit more bold. We have more roadways in Wyandotte County than many communities have across the state and that puts a lot of strain on our infrastructure and requirements. We have a lot of antiquated and older communities that we need to address. We need to be strategic in how we go about doing that. We have a lot of needs and we can't be all things for everyone and we specifically as a body should look at what our number one or number two objectives are and get those objectives started. If it's going to be housing—I know I had met with DeWayne on our tour. One of the things I thought would be really important, we've just seen our school district invest in new schools throughout our community. If we want to invest in housing stock, why not start right next to the school with building new sidewalks, new infrastructure, get the homes in so that we have that walkability.

That health aspect that we talk about as a community, why not light up the neighborhood with more energy efficient street lights so that we not only push crime back, but it also gives people the safety feature they're looking for within our urban core. I mean these are little things that can be accomplished, but when you have a quilt that has all these holes in it, it's hard to start patching it up and trying to get it to be complete by just running after every little hole.

I would like to see us, if we're going to be strategic, set aside a certain amount of money. If we want to do housing, then let's set up a fund that we as a Unified Government have to have it as a closure mechanism so those that want to invest in our community, but fall short because of economic hardship or because of economic input due to COVID or whatever it may be, that we could be a partner in allowing that to move forward. Set that target, don't exceed it, learn from it and see what else we can do, but if we divest ourselves of the very people that want to live in this community, we're going to export our wealth. We see it when people come in and want the jobs, but if we had the proper housing stock and we had the proper infrastructure, I believe they would stay.

Commissioner Bynum said the answer to the question is yes on both. I think we should continue to be as aggressive as we can possibly tolerate in both of the growth, excuse me, the patterns of housing and income distribution. I think that we're doing a lot of this work and we should identify and use every tool that we can find in the toolbox and my fellow commissioners have mentioned a lot of those.

I would include, obviously, any of the Infrastructure Act tools that are coming our way including HUD dollars, anything in that category. I want us to look at transit oriented community opportunities. I think since we know that transportation is a huge issue, the more transportation oriented community development we can create, the better off those folks are going to be. Again, there are opportunities using specific tools around that concept that are new and available and we should pursue them.

I think we need to look seriously at more mixed-income housing, which I think we are doing and I want to recognize as far as the income patterns, we are fortunately on an upward trajectory and Wyandotte EDC has been at the forefront of that effort for more than a decade. We know that over the last decade we know that our median household income has increased dramatically because of the efforts of us partnering with organizations like Wyandotte EDC to bring these better paying jobs and this bodes well across so many determinants. Just increasing that income just bodes well across the board for the entire community. I'll stop.

Mr. Beurle said thank you, all of you actually, for some great guidance there in terms of appetite context and ideas.

I just want to talk about a couple of things that we want to be digging into as we go, so we're not going to really have time to talk about this, but I do want to show you the topics.

Interview Question:

Housing policy is an important tool for cities and counties. UG has significant assets in the land bank, and established infrastructure.



Should the economic development and housing strategy be aimed at maximizing the utilization of existing infrastructure (concentrating), or building new industrial parks and housing estates (expanding)?

We're really interested actually in—because Wyandotte County has such an interesting kind of cross-section (inaudible), but there is this issue and a number of you touched on this, about that balance between utilizing existing infrastructure so concentrating. We heard a number of people talk to that or building new industrial parks and housing estates and I think that's the calculation

that we have to figure out to get right, that you want to obviously get the tailwinds away. You've got economic growth, but then there's also perhaps a lot of, and Tom you pointed to that, a lot of assets here that could be activated in different ways, so we want to be digging into that as well.

Clearly, the urban core is the weak spot today. I mean that's what the data points to and what do we want that to look like in 2040 and I think specifically housing and how housing can be a tool. You know the middle, the missing middle type of housing, attainable housing, those type of mechanisms, what that mix looks like. I think what we want to be having that conversation in the context of is how do we build the community fabric, how do we build that kind of local economic base and get that housing just right so that you're able to provide both jobs and the opportunity for people to live here.

We're right on time. I just wanted to thank you very much for your guidance and your input. I'll hand it back to Gunnar.

Mr. Hand said we're one minute before you have to leave. I'll leave it to the Mayor if you want to have any closing comments.

Mayor Garner said thank you for that Gunnar and your team. Thank you commissioners. It's really encouraging and I hope that the community that is watching and those that are here are encouraged by what they're hearing from our commissioners. I've said it before that we have to invest in the disinvested. There was a question asked why are people leaving. Well, they're leaving because of high taxes, lack of the infrastructure, lack of amenities, housing. We could go down a list, a myriad list of things that I've talked to and I've gone to all four corners of the community and everything in the middle of why people say that they are frustrated. I've talked to people outside of this community and I asked, please come to our community and they give a tirade. Developers say the bureaucracy of trying to do business here is problematic along with those taxes, our BPU, our fees. We can get anything to polarized politics. The list goes on and on, white flight, infrastructure. I mean it's really disturbing and disgusting when you talk about the historic nature of racism and how that played into redlining that really took away opportunities for Black and Brown people in this community that otherwise could have had an opportunity.

But, it's good, here we are today and we're having a real conversation that the priorities should be focusing on these areas that is the weakest point of Wyandotte County. We're only as

strong as our weakest part of our community. We've got to focus on these areas and we've got to make it easier for developers to do business here. I heard someone say that we need to involve our NBR's and our businesses. There's a plan to do that and get these residents at the table and instead of always asking them to come here. We need to meet our people where they're at, in the community, have these hard conversations, see what the priorities are and really work to making sure that the good service, amenities are there.

I can say just from the RFPs that went out and the RFQs that went out, over 80 developers came back. There is an interest in wanting to do business. We're centrally located in the metro area. We have great highways, land is still cheap, over 4,500 Land Bank properties and growing. There's a lot of opportunity. We've talked to developers. My Economic Development Advisor, Mr. Murray, has talked to a lot of them. There is huge interest in people wanting to do business in Wyandotte County just for those various reasons. Wyandotte County is a jewel of the metro area and the time is now if we work together collectively as a community, as a Unified Government body to really do some great things especially east of 635. I've talked to a lot of developers that have interest, and not all of them are coming wanting a handout, they're just wanting a hand up to say we can do some great things for the people of Wyandotte County and get them the good, the resources and the services that not only they've been asking for, but I've been saying for far too long, they deserve, which would allow us to expand our tax base and over time give these residents the tax relief that they've been begging this Unified Government for, for far too long.

I'm excited. I'm cautiously optimistic and I'm standing here willing to continue to work with our Commission in this community to get the job done because Wyandotte County deserves it and we can be a beacon for success when we talk about a resurgent and resilient community. Not just here in the metro, but a national example of getting things right and so I'm excited.

Mayor Garner entertained a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Markley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ramirez, to adjourn. Roll call was taken and there were nine "Ayes," Townsend, Ramirez, Johnson, Kane, Markley, Stites, Davis, Bynum, Burroughs.

MAYOR GARNER ADJOURNED
THE MEETING AT 5:48 p.m.

Brett Deichler
Unified Government Clerk

dt

March 30, 2023