

**Lawrence Chamber of Commerce**  
**Vision Questionnaire**

1. Regarding the 3 dimensions and 16 characteristics set forth in the draft Lawrence Vision, how well do you believe the city is currently doing in realizing each? Why? (Indicate your rating in each section by entering poor, fair, good, or excellent **and** explain your rating.)

*Example:*

- z. A centralized meeting place: (poor,fair, good, excellent) why?

*Good.*

I think downtown Lawrence provides a diverse and charming setting for people to meet.

**DISTINCTIVE SPIRIT AND ATMOSPHERE:**

- a. A diverse and engaged citizenry: (poor,fair, good, excellent) why?

Good. Lawrence is a very well-educated community with a high level of civic involvement, but as the Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) recently noted, we could make improvements in the diversity of participation in our public forums.

- b. A forward-looking, positive spirit: (poor,fair, good, excellent) why?

Good. I think we have made some progress toward overcoming the false dichotomy of growth vs. no-growth in our community, but I think there is still a lot of mutual mistrust to overcome. Continuing a community visioning process with the full community will help us make progress toward this goal.

- c. Respect for Lawrence's history: (poor,fair, good, excellent) why?

Excellent. Recent approvals of new historic districts and the achievement of the Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area designation are further evidence of our strong commitment to preserving our heritage.

- d. Aesthetically pleasing community: (poor,fair, good, excellent) why?

Excellent. Our historic preservation efforts, our commitment to public art, and our great Parks and Recreation Department all contribute to Lawrence's

great aesthetic appeal.

**e. Strong neighborhoods: (poor,fair, good, excellent) why?**

Good. With our new development code, we have institutionalized neighborhood participation in planning decisions. With the adoption of a new Traditional Neighborhood Design code after the February PlaceMakers charrette, we will have the tools we need to create great new neighborhoods.

**Overall Rating: Distinctive Spirit and Atmosphere: (poor,fair, good, excellent)**

**Good.**

**SUPERIOR AMENITIES:**

**f. Accessible, high-quality healthcare: (poor,fair, good, excellent) why?**

Good. Our local health care system is excellent, but it could be more accessible. I would like to explore options for helping local small businesses provide affordable health insurance to their employees.

**g. Inclusive, high-quality education: (poor,fair, good, excellent) why?**

Excellent. Lawrence's public schools have consistently been ranked among the best in the nation. KU provides great educational opportunities to a diverse student body and we are very fortunate to be the home of Haskell Indian Nations University, which serves students from dozens of First Nations from all across the United States. One area where we could improve is ensuring funding for good after-school programs for all Lawrence youth.

**h. Affordable housing options: (poor,fair, good, excellent) why?**

Fair. We have a very good local housing authority that provides quality housing to many of our citizens with low incomes, but the Community Housing Assessment Team (CHAT) report identified a large shortage of affordable housing for working families. Although organizations like Tenants to Homeowners, Habitat for Humanity, and the Lawrence

Community Land & Housing Trust have made real strides in providing affordable housing, we have a long way to go to meet our community's needs in this area.

i. Superior recreational opportunities and facilities: (poor,fair, good, excellent) why?

Good. Our Parks and Recreation Department provides a wide range of recreational facility all across the community, but I know there is a need for more practice fields and gymnasium space. I hope that the needs survey commissioned as a result of the PLAY initiative will help clarify our needs in this area.

j. Satisfactory consumer options: (poor,fair, good, excellent) why?

Good. Lawrence has national big-box retailers and unique locally-owned shops, and a local microbrewery with one the best oatmeal stouts around. I would still like to see more convenient grocery options in North Lawrence & East Lawrence, and we need to continue to pay attention to maintaining a good mix of retail options downtown.

k. Opportunities for arts and cultural enrichment: (poor,fair, good, excellent) why?

Excellent. The Lawrence Arts Center provides many classes and hosts many events, KU attracts a wide range of cultural events, and Lawrence is recognized as having one of the best-- if not THE best-- music scenes in the US.

**Overall Rating: Superior** Amenities: (poor,fair, good, excellent) why?

Good.

## **ROBUST AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMICS:**

l. A vibrant healthy, diverse downtown: (poor,fair, good, excellent) why?

Good. Visitors routinely tell me that we have the best downtown in the Midwest, but I have concerns about the retail vacancy rate downtown, and I think we need to continue to work to ensure a good mix of retail options downtown.

**m.** A thriving, competitive business environment: (poor, fair, good, excellent) why?

Good. The city, county, and chamber of commerce continue to work together to attract new employers and to encourage job creation by existing businesses. Merging the Planning and Neighborhood Resources Departments and implementing the other recommendations of the city-commissioned Matrix report will help improve the provision of city services to local businesses.

**n.** A sound, balanced tax base: (poor, fair, good, excellent) why?

Fair. Our tax base is too heavily weighted toward residential property and we need to continue our efforts to increase investment and job creation by local employers. I am confident that the efforts of the Lawrence/Douglas County Bioscience Authority (on whose board I serve) and the city/county commitment to acquiring the Farmland site for a future employment center will improve our performance in this area.

**o.** Satisfactory wages and incomes: (poor, fair, good, excellent) why?

Poor. Lawrence wages continue to rank below the state average. The Lawrence living wage ordinance was a step in the right direction, but we need to continue our efforts to create and attract well-paying jobs for citizens of all educational backgrounds.

**p.** A well-developed and maintained infrastructure: (poor, fair, good, excellent) why?

Good. We have done a good job of maintaining and improving our water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure, but we need to do better with street maintenance. The city commission has made this a priority over the last two years, and our increased spending on street maintenance should show positive results this year.

**Overall Rating: Robust and Sustainable Economics (poor,fair, good, excellent) why?**

Fair.

2. Among the 16, what would be your top five priorities (in order) for focused attention and action by the City Commission and School Board during the next term? Why?

- 1) Strong neighborhoods. Everyone who lives in Lawrence lives in a neighborhood, and building strong neighborhoods is one of the most important elements in ensuring a good quality of life for all of our citizens.
- 2) Satisfactory wages and incomes. Satisfactory wages and incomes are necessary to ensure a diverse citizenry and a high quality of life for all of our citizens.
- 3) Affordable housing. I want us to build a city our grandchildren will love--- they won't love this city if they can't afford to live here.
- 4) A sound, balanced tax base. A well-balanced tax base will be necessary for us to afford to reach all of our other goals without placing an unreasonable burden on any individual or business.
- 5) A forward-looking, positive spirit. This will help us achieve all of our other goals.

3. For each of your top 5 priority areas, what specific actions would you favor taking to advance Lawrence toward its full potential? Why?

- a. Priority 1: Strong neighborhoods.
  - i. Continue to require neighborhood input in planning decisions.
  - ii. Adopt a Traditional Neighborhood Development code.
  - iii. Make sure that every child can safely walk to a neighborhood school and a neighborhood park.

- b. Priority 2: Satisfactory wages and incomes.
  - i. Continue efforts of Lawrence/Douglas County Bioscience Authority to attract bioscience companies and to help turn KU research into good local jobs.
  - ii. Acquire Farmland site and develop business/employment center there.
  
- c. Priority 3: Affordable housing.
  - i. Adopt incentive-based inclusionary zoning ordinance, as recommended by the Housing Needs Task Force (HNTF), to encourage inclusion of affordable housing units in every development and/or rehabilitation of housing in older neighborhoods.
  - ii. Identify a long-term source of funding for a local Housing Trust Fund, as recommended by the HNTF.
  - iii. Support the efforts of the Lawrence Community Land & Housing Trust to provide permanent affordable housing.
  
- d. Priority 4: A sound, balanced tax base.
  - i. (see Priority 2)
  
- e. Priority 5: A forward-looking, positive spirit.
  - i. Continue the community visioning started with the SDAT process and the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce by involving citizens from all parts of the community.
  - ii. I will continue to reach out to citizens from all parts of our community to make sure that everyone in Lawrence knows that there is somebody at City Hall who hears and understands their concerns.