



**LA CYGNE TOMORROW**

2043 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

**DRAFT COMMUNITY VISION AND GOALS**

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# VISION STATEMENT

**In the year 2043, La Cygne will be a unique and growing community that offers a welcoming atmosphere as a small town destination hub in Southeast Kansas. It will be widely known for:**

- » A thriving local economy;
- » Efficient and complete public infrastructure;
- » Exciting and inviting places for families to live, work, and play;
- » Usable and well-organized land use ordinances, and
- » Equitably shared benefits and burdens of development.

*Where do you  
envision La Cygne in  
the next 10 years?  
In 20 years?\**

*“Revitalized  
Downtown, filled  
storefronts, new housing  
...Higher population,  
people moving farther  
from city.”*

*“My hopes  
are that La  
Cygne will grow  
and attract more  
businesses.”*

*“Small hometown  
community with a  
grocery store that has a  
farmer’s market on the  
weekends along with being  
a tourist destination for  
day visitors.”*

\*Residents were asked to envision La Cygne in the next 10 and 20 years on the Comprehensive Plan Community Survey. The quotes illustrated in text bubbles are from anonymous participants responses to the question.

# GROWTH & LAND USE

## Goal

*The City of La Cygne will strategically plan for and promote sustainable and well-designed growth and development while maintaining a vibrant, walkable, and mixed-use Downtown that serves as the City's image center and core of civic life.*

## Objectives & Actions

### 1. Explore opportunities for expanding the City limits, to capitalize on future local and regional connections.

- a. Promote development in the unincorporated areas in close partnership with Linn County according to the Future Land Use Map and Concept Areas Plan.
- b. Execute a "Future Growth Area" agreement in cooperation with Linn County that includes joint infrastructure standards (for water, sanitary sewer, stormwater, and streets).
- c. Establish a minimum contiguity requirement for any proposed annexation area depending on the physical character of the site. Prohibit "flagpole" annexations.
- d. Require that annexed parcels be zoned in accordance with the adopted comprehensive plan.



#### Pollinator-Friendly Vegetation

Pollinator friendly plants provide bees, butterflies, and other insect pollinators with a food source and habitat. In addition to being helpful to local insects they are low maintenance and cost, prevent erosion, and help with stormwater run-off.



#### What is human scale design?

Human scale design is creating something that is optimal for human use. In Land Use this means designing the places we live to accommodate humans and their needs. Building something at Human Scale promotes connectivity, socialization, health, and general wellbeing.

### 2. Preserve La Cygne's unique small town character in a vibrant Downtown District that attracts people, businesses, and commerce.

- a. Prioritize human-scale design/development for mixed commercial and residential uses as appropriate along Market and Broadway streets.
- b. Support placemaking projects to beautify or increase social interaction and connection to downtown.
- c. Consider creating a one-block pedestrian plaza along Broadway between Market and Walnut that is sensitive to parking and accessibility needs.

### 3. Balance growth with strategic opportunities to integrate greenspace conservation and recreational opportunities into future development.

- a. Ensure that any adopted open space requirements create real benefits, requiring spaces that can be practically used, provide visual relief and/or protect sensitive features.
- b. Inventory municipal land such as parks, rights of ways, municipal facility properties, and drainage ditches to identify existing pollinator-friendly landscapes. Assess their quality for pollinator habitat and identify opportunities for adding new areas of pollinator-friendly landscape. Establish demonstration projects with signage to educate the public.
- c. Work with local land trusts to help secure conservation easements and enact purchase of development rights (PDR) or transfer of development rights (TDR) programs to protect sensitive natural areas and transfer density to designated growth areas.
- d. Enact protective regulations such as development setbacks from rivers, streams, wetlands, etc.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Goal

*Maintain high quality public services and a low cost of living for residents by encouraging private investment that enhances the City's commercial and industrial tax base.*

## Objectives & Actions

### 1. Implement new regulations and ordinances that support small business activity.

a. Revise zoning code to allow non-retail uses such as artisanal manufacturing as well as permit mixed-uses and temporary vendors in all commercial districts.

b. Increase supply of small affordable retail spaces such as business incubators, co-working spaces, pop-up stores, food/fashion trucks, shared kitchens, and temporary vendor spaces.

c. Update the Zoning Ordinance to allow parking flexibility, including shared parking and reserve parking.



### Vacant Structures Program

Adopting a Vacant Structures Program is a proactive approach to reducing the number of vacant properties. It can assist with the adaptive reuse of buildings and establish responsibility for property owners.

These programs have been utilized in many cities around the country and have proven to be successful.

### 2. Support building renovation tools and revitalizing under utilized, vacant, or dilapidated downtown properties to bring buildings back into productive use.

a. Launch a "Vacant Structures Program" to identify, register and monitor vacant structures, and set forth the responsibility for all people owning vacant structures, to speed the rehabilitation and re-occupancy of said vacant structures.

b. Develop a "Speculative Building Program" that provides a tax abatement to developers who are willing to construct facilities on a speculative basis, without leases in place. The program provides an incentive to provide large industrial/warehouse, flex and office space.

c. Promote existing grant opportunities and financial incentives to encourage property owners to invest in capital improvements and improve commercial building exteriors, such as the Kansas Downtown Redevelopment Tax Rebate, CDBG Commercial Rehabilitation, and HEAL Program.

d. Explore the potential of creating a Community Improvement District (CID) to help fund storefront renovations, façade improvements, streetscape beautification, and marketing/promotion of the district.



### HEAL Grant Opportunity

The HEAL program, aka Historic Economic Asset Lifeline is a grant offered by the Kansas Dept. Of Commerce. It is designed to bring downtown buildings back to a productive use. Productive uses include new and expanding businesses, housing, childcare, entrepreneurship, civic engagement, and arts & culture.

The city or another local organization is required to apply for grant funds on behalf of the building owner.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Objectives & Actions

### 3. Diversify the City's tax base by focusing on industry sectors that attract high-paying jobs and increase municipal income tax revenues.

a. Prioritize the expansion of the Linn County Industrial Park and pursue emerging market trends such as light manufacturing and solar energy.

b. Establish a broad-based economic development committee with representation from existing city employers, residents and other interested parties to develop a comprehensive and proactive strategy for attracting and/or expanding desirable businesses in La Cygne.

c. Promote tech-based economic development and investment in local startups to support innovation, entrepreneurship, workforce development, and tech job creation in La Cygne.

### 4. Collaborate with regional partners and neighboring communities to ensure La Cygne maximizes its competitive advantages in the Southeast Kansas marketplace.

a. Utilize Linn County's E-Communities status to apply to the NetWork Kansas grant fund towards implementing programs in La Cygne such as Destination BootCamp, Growing Rural Businesses, Ice House Entrepreneurship Mindset, Economic Gardening Network, etc.

b. Engage with Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission and take advantage of existing programs such as CDBG grant application and administration assistance as well as revolving loan funds.

c. Market qualifying sites online in conjunction with regional and state agency partners. Promote the Rural Opportunity Zone to attract new residents.

d. Explore rural crowd-funding options such as The Local Crowd cooperative model to support community-led campaigns.



### E-Community NetWork Kansas Board Certified Programs

Because of Linn County's designation as an E-Community, La Cygne can take advantage of NetWork Kansas' Board Certified Programs that assist with a variety of entrepreneurial community efforts.

» **Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge Series (YEC)** - An opportunity for students in grade 7-12 to participate in entrepreneurship competitions that culminate into a state championship.

» **The Kansas Ice House Program** - A certificate program that helps individuals hone their entrepreneurial skills like critical thinking and problem solving.

» **Entrepreneur Business Basics** - 12-week entrepreneurship training course that is open to entrepreneurs. Provides workshops, training sessions, and resources facilitated by successful entrepreneurs.

» **Maker Space Boot Camp** - 2.5 training bootcamp to explore how to create an entrepreneurial mindset and makerspace in their community. Demonstrations of Maker Spaces and how to use them in your community.

» **Growing Rural Businesses** - 8-week certificate program that provides practical, applied information and examples necessary for rural communities. Receive a comprehensive practical approach to conducting business & resources needed to succeed.

» **Destination BootCamp & Destination BootCamp Community Reinvention Program** - 2.5 training for business owners who want to learn how to become a dominant "Destination Business". Community Reinvention program sends a group of business owners from a community to do the same session and includes follow-up consulting and an on-site workshop.

» **Economic Gardening** - Connects companies that are growing and have the capacity to grow with expert consulting services designed to increase revenue and create sustainable job growth.

# HOUSING

## Goal

*Provide a variety of high-quality, affordable housing options that meets the needs for people of all ages, abilities, and socio-economic backgrounds.*

## Objectives & Actions

### 1. Accommodate the increased demand for housing in La Cygne responsibly, prioritizing a mixture of housing types as well as multiple paths to homeownership.

- a. Amend zoning regulations of residential districts (lot size, setbacks, parking requirements, etc.) to encourage the development of smaller homes and courtyard clusters.
- b. Launch a pocket neighborhood pilot program to explore the feasibility of full-scale adoption of unconventional housing types.
- c. Complete the “Housing Assessment Tool (HAT)” and develop housing development strategies in partnership with the Kansas Department of Commerce, Kansas Housing Resource Corporation, USDA-Rural Development and Federal Home Loan Bank.
- d. Coordinate with Linn County to promote existing funding opportunities such as the Rural Housing Incentive District (RHID) and Rural LISC’s Healthy Housing Initiative.
- e. Create a “Short Term Rental” ordinance that requires the registration of properties and ensures the payment of applicable sales and lodging taxes.
- f. Promote home buyer education and support La Cygne residents applying for the Kansas Homeowner Assistance Fund (KHAF) and First Time Home buyers programs.



### Pocket Neighborhood Pilot Program

Pocket neighborhood pilot programs have been used in a variety of municipalities and counties around the United States to test the feasibility of the development and maintenance of smaller homes. Defining what a Pocket Neighborhood looks and feels like gives the city and residents the freedom to experiment with policy and ordinances that ensure smaller homes and their communities are safe and healthy places to live.



# HOUSING

## Objectives & Actions

### 2. Support residential building renovations through code enforcement and redevelopment.

a. Continue code enforcement efforts to prevent further housing deterioration.

b. Identify grants and other funding opportunities for home preservation and weatherization programs that assist homeowners in the upkeep and renovations of their homes.

c. Adopt a “Rental Ready” program to establish that all residential rental properties in the city be licensed and pass a basic health and safety inspection.

### 3. Maintain La Cygne’s small town feel and rural character while encouraging new housing development in well-designed neighborhoods.

a. Update zoning and subdivision regulations to require or incentivize the development of cluster or conservation subdivisions that specify preferred locations for open space such as sensitive natural areas and prime agricultural land.

b. Develop design regulations that require street connectivity with adjacent neighborhoods (rather than isolated subdivisions) and create land use district transitions to adjacent agricultural or undeveloped areas.

c. Recommend minimum densities in areas designated for growth and require that adequate infrastructure be in place when new development is constructed.



### Conservation Subdivisions

Conservation subdivisions are a great alternative to traditional subdivision design. With conservation subdivisions, a community can protect valued natural features and define priority areas. Some priority areas that could be identified include floodplains, wetlands, farmland or even historic sites and structures.

They also require less infrastructure, therefore saving the city and utilities money and ultimately generate more tax revenue because of the smaller footprint of infrastructure by serving more residents. Conservation subdivisions have less impervious surface which aids in stormwater collection and reduces flooding.

### Rental Ready Program

A rental ready program could be adopted to protect renters’ health and welfare while also maintaining attractive neighborhoods.

The Rental Ready Program would require residential rental units to be registered and inspected on a regular basis to ensure basic health and safety requirements are met.



# QUALITY OF LIFE

## Goal

*Enhance the overall quality of life for La Cygne residents by increasing opportunities for physical activity, connection to nature, access to healthy food, and public health services.*

## Objectives & Actions

### 1. Provide year-round recreational opportunities for both indoor and outdoor activities that promote active lifestyles and meet the needs of all ages and abilities.

- Acquire additional conservation lands and develop them into accessible natural areas available for recreation such as hiking, and fishing.
- Explore creating river walk easements and establish more park and recreation opportunities along the Marais des Cygnes River.
- Identify opportunities to finance additional recreation amenities oriented towards youth and family such as swimming, picknicking, hiking, camping, playgrounds, etc.
- Establish a small working group to make and prioritize specific recommendations on where new trails and paths should be located and how best to finance, develop and maintain these facilities.



### River Trails

River trails bridge existing natural assets and recreation. Access to river and nature for mountain biking, walking, or trail running encourage physical fitness and healthy lifestyles. They can also serve as a way to preserve environmental and historically valuable areas.

### 2. Use land use guidance and regulations to improve local households' proximity to healthy food and support food-related businesses and activities.

- Establish a Food Policy Council, a voluntary committee, to serve as a forum to discuss food issues, coordinate with stakeholders, and implement programs that address food access needs.
- Identify publicly-owned land for use as community gardens and/or demonstration farms. Encourage community gardens to take on outreach and education related to growing healthy food, and to partner with schools, nursing homes, food shelves, local restaurants, and nurseries as outlets for produce.
- Review and update regulations governing backyard gardening, community gardens, and urban farming to foster an expansion of food production in the community.
- Expand options for keeping animals such as bees, chickens, and goats, as appropriate for the size and location of the property, along with the accessory structures they require.



### Food Policy Council

A food policy council (FPC) is a coalition or alliance of parties that are a part of a local food system. This includes citizens and local government officials. The primary purpose and goals of a FPC include:

- » Connecting economic development, food security efforts, preservation and enhancement of agriculture, and environmental concerns.
- » Supporting the development and expansion of locally produced foods.
- » Reviewing proposed legislations and regulations that affect the food system; making recommendations to government bodies.
- » Gathering, synthesizing, and sharing information on community food systems.

Many cities and counties in Kansas have been successful at launching FPCs to address food access needs. There are a variety of resources and organizations in Kansas to assist La Cygne the formation of a FPC.



# QUALITY OF LIFE

## Objectives & Actions

### 3. Play a proactive partnership role with efforts to support small food stores endeavors to increase the amount of healthy and fresh foods available.

- a. Support innovative practices such as mobile food markets and mobile food pantries/food shelves that can bring food closer to under-resourced customers.
- b. Proactively engage with local farmers to launch a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program to increase the supply of locally produced food products.
- c. Prioritize local efforts to create public markets that provide year-round venues for farmers' markets and additional market opportunities for Linn County farmers.

#### Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics

Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC) are an outpatient, integrated care model. CCBHCs provide person and family-centered integrated services. These services include, but are not limited to, screening, assessment, treatment, and care coordination based on the needs of the individual. Support recovery from mental illnesses and/or substance abuse is provided regardless of ability to pay. Funding for CCBHC's is administered through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics are required to utilize best practices and evidence based practices that have proven to be effective in a variety of Kansas communities.

### 4. Enhance the overall health and well-being for all La Cygne residents.

- a. Improve access to physical, mental, and behavioral health services, including expanding telehealth technology, home healthcare, and shared transportation to rural health facilities.
- b. Pursue funding opportunities, in partnership with Linn County, to establish and implement Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) programs and Rural Opioid Technical Assistance (ROTA) Grants to expand access to substance use disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery services.
- c. Encourage partnerships for a cooperative care model for childcare services that meet the unique needs of rural childcare and senior care.



#### CHC Of Southeast Kansas

As of March 2023, the Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas is serving Columbus Public Schools USD 493 with an in-house clinic. A medical provider will be available for well child care checks, mental health visits, sick visits, immunizations, chronic care, school nursing services, and more. All children can be seen regardless of their family's ability to pay.

# INFRASTRUCTURE

## Goal

*Ensure the City's transportation network and utility systems are able to safely and efficiently maintain current service levels and provide adequate capacity to support projected future growth.*

## Objectives & Actions

### 1. Proactively budget for long-term infrastructure investments necessary to facilitate desired development.

- a. Coordinate catalytic infrastructure projects through “dig-once” policy that mandate installation of water, sewer, broadband, and power utilities.
- b. Utilize impact fees and monitor / adjust (if necessary) to offset infrastructure costs of future development in the City.
- c. Identify fiscal impact thresholds that a development must meet, such as the maximum increase in bonded indebtedness or amount of remaining water or sewer capacity the community is willing to allocate to one development.
- d. Establish a 3-5 year Capital Improvement Plan that advances the goals of the comprehensive plan.



### 2. Monitor the impacts of proposed regional transportation enhancements (e.g. US 69) and plan for changes in traffic flow along local thoroughfares within the City limits and in extraterritorial jurisdictions.

- a. Pursue grant funding (e.g. KDOT Transportation Alternatives Program) for eligible multi-modal transportation enhancements such as curb extensions, decorative crosswalks, and pedestrian-scaled lighting.
- b. Pair priority sidewalk connection projects with roadway rehabilitation projects and outside grant funding assistance to reduce City's out of pocket expenses.
- c. Explore multi-modal connections along Market Street and 4th Street. Collaborate with Linn County on street improvements along Lincoln Avenue to Robertson Road.



### Rural Streetscapes

Rural streetscapes come in all varieties! The beautification of streets through the use of native plants or pollinator-friendly plants provides visual relief and assists with stormwater run-off and flooding. You may also consider adding trees as they provide shade from the sun and cooling of impervious surfaces. Trees provide a number of other benefits including reducing soil erosion, creating barriers between pedestrians and vehicles, and reducing the overall amount of drainage infrastructure required.

# INFRASTRUCTURE

## Objectives & Actions

### 3. Safely facilitate pedestrian crossings across busy streets at the locations where family usage is high.

- a. Enhance crosswalks through improved signage and pavement markings.
- b. Avoid granting sidewalk requirement waivers, especially on the basis of expected low pedestrian activity. For sites where physical hardships would make sidewalk installation infeasible, allow applicants to provide equal or greater pedestrian circulation through amenities such as off-street trails.
- c. Develop design guidelines to promote “Rural Streetscapes” along existing and new roadways, such as landscaping for stormwater management, wide shoulders or shared travel lanes for pedestrian and bicycle use, and consolidation of road signs.
- d. Encourage and permit rain gardens to slow, filter, and absorb water while making the street greener.

### 4. Monitor technological developments in the field of renewable energy and explore partnership opportunities to deploy solar fields on under-utilized properties in context sensitive locations.

- a. Explore and adopt formal standards and regulations in anticipation of future small-scale investments in solar energy.
- b. Identify appropriate sites for the installation of commercial solar arrays and prioritize vacant and under-utilized land located within the floodplain.
- c. Promote existing incentives for La Cygne residents interested in installing solar panels or other energy efficiency improvements in their homes.



#### SolSmart

SolSmart is a national designation program that provides no-cost technical assistance to designated SolSmart communities. All municipalities, counties, and regional organizations in the U.S. are eligible. SolSmart's goal is to partner and support communities of all sizes address and overcome local barriers to developing residential and commercial solar policies. There are a few local cities that have become SolSmart designees in recent years including Shawnee, KS; Raymore, MO; and Kearney, MO.