
PLANNING

OFFICE

MEMO

To: Lawrence-Douglas County Planning Commission
From: Michelle Leininger, Area/Neighborhood Planner
Subject: Hierarchy of Plans
Date: June 14, 2006

The Lawrence City Commission, at their strategic goals and priorities setting session for 2005, set a strategic goal for neighborhood quality to improve the quality of all Lawrence neighborhoods. As a key objective for this goal, the Commission wanted to institutionalize area planning. This task was designated to the Planning Commission.

In February 2005, Planning and City Commissioners attended a staff led workshop on Neighborhood Development. Presentations at that workshop introduced commissioners to new urbanism and neo-traditional neighborhood development concepts and the tools used to achieve these concepts [form-based or transect planning] as an integrated perspective for looking at land use and transportation planning.

The April 2005 mid-month meeting was a follow up to the groundwork laid at the Neighborhood Development workshop in February. The overarching goal was to explore and adopt a new way of doing long-range community/neighborhood planning in Lawrence/Douglas County. It was agreed that the term "area plan" was frequently used as a 'catch-all' phrase, when the definition of area plan did not at all communicate the kind of plan needed. It was noted that some definitions were not consistently used even within the city departments. Adopting a hierarchy of plans for long-range planning, describing what the plan includes, when a certain plan is appropriate, and creating a process for each type of plan was discussed at this mid-month meeting. The Commission directed Staff to continue their work on developing the necessary definitions and process steps for each type of plan. Staff was directed to bring the end document back to the Commission for final review and approval.

At the June 2005 mid-month meeting, the Planning Commission reviewed plan definitions and discussed steps to ensure these are used uniformly in land use discussions. The suggested changes were made to the drafts.

At the November 14, 2005 and January 23, 2006 Planning Commission meetings, the plan definitions were presented to the Commission. They discussed changes, directed staff to make revisions and then return it to the PC for further consideration at a later date.

At the January 23, 2006 Planning Commission meeting, it was discussed that each description should include typical components provided in each plan, generally a plan outline. Staff has determined that this would be too much detail based on research on other cities plan descriptions and that two of the same type of plans could contain vastly different information depending on the location and existing conditions. Thus identifying what will be in each specific type of plan may not

be appropriate and could limit the content of the plans short of what is necessary.

Attached is the Hierarchy of Plans, a description of each plan, and a diagram of the hierarchy.

Action Requested: Hold a public hearing on this item and forward the adopted planning hierarchy to the City and County Commissions for their concurrence.