

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT
Regular Agenda – Public Hearing Item

PC Staff Report
08/23/10

**ITEM NO. 4: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT; H2020; CHP 16;
ENVIRONMENT (AAM/MKM)**

CPA-2008-7: Consider adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment to Horizon 2020 to include Chapter 16 – Environment.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of this comprehensive plan amendment adding Chapter 16: Environment to *Horizon 2020* and recommends forwarding this comprehensive plan amendment to the Lawrence City Commission and the Douglas County Board of County Commissioners with a recommendation for approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: If appropriate, approve and sign Planning Commission Resolution 8-6-10.

SUMMARY/BACKGROUND

The Comprehensive Plans Committee (CPC), in conjunction with Planning Staff, have been working since April 2008 to draft a new chapter in Horizon 2020 concerning environmental issues. This chapter was initiated in April 2008 and the CPC and staff started meeting in September 2008 regarding timeline, process, and the development of a draft overview, strategies, and outline. The draft outline, strategies, and overview were then presented to the Planning Commission in November 2008 to not only get input from the public, but also the Planning Commission. A series of educational meetings were held from December through March 2009 on various sub-topics of the chapter. Community organizations, researchers, and other experts in their fields were invited to give brief presentations to the group in order to help educate staff and the CPC on certain issues.

Staff and the CPC worked over the next year to develop the "April 2010 Draft". The "April 2010 Draft" was posted to the website in early April and comments were received from both the public and Planning Commissioners at the April 28th, 2010 meeting. Staff then worked with the CPC to revise the draft document based on those comments. The "August 2010 Draft" is reflective of those revisions.

A website has been setup to act as a central hub for information regarding the drafting of this chapter (<http://www.lawrenceks.org/pds/H2020-Env>) and the "August 2010 Draft" is posted to this site. In addition, an email distribution list has been created to keep people informed about the chapter as it moves through the process. Members of the public can sign up to be a part of this email distribution list by visiting the City's subscription page (<http://www.lawrenceks.org/subscriptions>) and signing up for the "Horizon 2020 Chapter 16: Environment" list under the Public Meetings heading.

STAFF REVIEW

Chapter 16: Environment is a new chapter to be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan, Horizon 2020. The CPC adopted the following mission statement in reference to their work on the creation of the new chapter:

"Identify environmental resources present in Douglas County, and draft goals, policies and strategies to support protection, conservation, and management of these resources in the context of development activity, planning, and government operations, to achieve a livable, vibrant, and healthy community."

The chapter covers a wide range of topics, including water resources, land resources, air resources, marketable natural resources, waste management, and the human and built environments. These topics are discussed in terms of how they relate to land use.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT REVIEW

A. Does the proposed amendment result from changed circumstances or unforeseen conditions not understood or addressed at the time the Plan was adopted?

The proposed amendment is a result of the changing circumstances that have occurred since the comprehensive plan was first written. At the time *Horizon 2020* was written, there was no chapter specifically devoted to environmental issues, but instead some chapters contained a few policies relating to environmental issues. This is a new chapter, devoted entirely to the environment in the context of land use.

B. Does the proposed amendment advance a clear public purpose and is it consistent with the long-range goals and policies of the plan?

The proposed amendment is an advancement of a clear public purpose and is consistent with the long-range planning goals and policies of the community. The proposed amendment helps further one of the main strategies in *Horizon 2020* regarding Sustainability: *"We will strive to ensure the sustainability of our physical environment, both natural and built, the health of our economy and the efficient and effective functioning of our community."* (page 1-3)

C. Is the proposed amendment a result of a clear change in public policy?

Over time, environmental issues have come more to the forefront in planning policy. The creation of this chapter represents changes in public policy over time.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of this comprehensive plan amendment adding Chapter 16: Environment to *Horizon 2020* and recommends forwarding this comprehensive plan amendment to the Lawrence City Commission and the Douglas County Board of County Commissioners with a recommendation for approval.