

City of Lawrence, Kansas

Strategic Planning Process

Summary of Community Engagement

March 2020



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Executive Summary

In January 2020, the City of Lawrence engaged The Novak Consulting Group, a part of Raftelis, to facilitate an update to the City’s 2016 Strategic Plan. A strategic planning process involves articulating a clear vision for the community, establishing goals, identifying priority strategies, and creating implementation plans. The process of developing a strategic plan explores three specific questions:

1. **Where are we?** What do we know to be true today?
2. **Where do we want to go?** What do we hope will be true in the future?
3. **How do we get there?** What must go well in order to make it so?

This report is a tool to assist the City of Lawrence in answering these questions. Public engagement is vital to understand the community’s perceptions of the City today as well as their hopes for its future. In February and March 2020, the City of Lawrence engaged more than 3,000 stakeholders as part of its strategic plan development process. These individuals participated in several ways, including **Community Meetings** hosted by The Novak Consulting Group, **Public Meetings** hosted by City of Lawrence staff, **Facilitated Discussions** with community groups, **Tabling Events** at local businesses, **Consultant Led Facilitated Discussions** for government stakeholders, **Employee Groups**, and an **Online Survey**.

Several themes emerged from the outreach process:

- **Participants praise the quality of the City’s Parks and Recreation services.** Participants in the engagement efforts were asked what the City does well. The most common response across all groups was that the City offers excellent Parks and Recreation services. Many respondents also commended the City for keeping its residents safe and praised the City’s resident engagement efforts. The following table illustrates the top three categories of comments on the City’s strengths.

Table 1: Categories of Comments on the City’s Strengths, All Respondents

Response Category	Percentage of Total Comments
Parks and Recreation	12%
Public Safety	8%
Resident Engagement	6%

- **Participants would value an expanded transit system and enhanced street and sidewalk maintenance.** Participants were asked what additional services the City should be providing. The most common response was that the City should expand its transit system, such as by extending its bus service hours, installing more bus shelters, and offering more regional transit opportunities. Many also expressed a desire for the City to enhance its street and sidewalk maintenance by addressing potholes and improving sidewalk quality. The third most common response was the desire for the City to offer more services to address homelessness. The following table illustrates the top three categories of comments on the need for additional services.

Table 2: Categories of Comments on Services the City Should Provide, All Respondents

Response Category	Percentage of Total Comments
Expanded, Affordable Transit System	9%
Enhanced Street and Sidewalk Maintenance	8%
More Services for the Homeless	6%

- **Participants believe that Affordable Housing, Homelessness, and Development are the top three issues facing the community.** Participants were asked to name the top three issues facing the Lawrence community. The most common response was a lack of affordable housing, followed by homelessness. Many also discussed the pace of development and expressed concerns that urban sprawl may contribute to loss of the City's uniqueness or sense of community. The following table illustrates the top three categories of comments on the community's most pressing issues.

Table 3: Categories of Comments on the City's Top Issues, All Respondents

Response Category	Percentage of Total Comments
Affordable Housing	11%
Homelessness	11%
Smart Development	6%

- **Participants want to maintain the City's vibrant downtown into the future.** When asked what is true about Lawrence today that should remain true ten years from now, the most common response was that the City should continue to boast a vibrant, attractive downtown with many local shopping options. Many also discussed a desire for the City to maintain a thriving arts community and for it to continue to offer quality Parks and Recreation services. The following table illustrates the top three categories of comments on what participants hope will stay true in the future.

Table 4: Categories of Comments on What Should Remain True in the Future, All Respondents

Response Category	Percentage of Total Comments
Vibrant Downtown	9%
Vibrant Arts and Culture	6%
Quality Parks and Recreation Services	5%

- **Participants hope that the City will implement more environmental programs in the future.** Participants were also asked what is not true today in the City of Lawrence that they hope will be true in ten years. The most common response was that the City should do more to protect the environment through sustainability programs and by preparing for the effects of climate change. Many also discussed the desire for more services to address homelessness and for more affordable housing. The following table illustrates the top three categories of comments on what is not true today, but participants hope to be true in the future.

Table 5: Categories of Comments on What is Not True Today but Hope to be in the Future, All Respondents

Response Category	Percentage of Total Comments
Enhanced Environmental Stewardship	8%
More Services to Prevent Homelessness	6%
More Affordable Housing	6%

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Background and Methodology

The Novak Consulting Group worked with City staff to facilitate a robust community engagement process that can help the City understand what Lawrence residents and stakeholders know to be true today about their City, as well as to understand their hopes for the future. This public input will inform the City Commission’s strategic planning process moving forward.

The public outreach process consisted of more than 70 community events held throughout the City in February and March 2020. Events were held in a wide variety of locations and targeted a broad range of audiences to gather input from as many viewpoints as possible. Forms of outreach included the following:

- Community Meetings
- Traditional Public Meetings
- Facilitated Discussions with Community Groups
- Tabling Events
- Consultant Led Facilitated Discussions
- Employee Groups
- Online Survey

The questions asked varied depending on the type of engagement. Attachment A lists all questions asked of participants as part of the strategic planning engagement process and compares the questions posed to each group. During the sessions, City of Lawrence and The Novak Consulting Group staff recorded notes on the conversations taking place at each Community Meeting, Public Meeting, Facilitated Discussion, Tabling Event, Consultant Led Facilitated Discussion, and Employee Group meeting. No identifying information was recorded on the commenters. These comments were aggregated by The Novak Consulting Group, along with the responses to the Online Survey. Nearly 9,000 comments were collected across all engagement types.

The Novak Consulting Group staff reviewed each comment and assigned it a primary theme. Categories were chosen to both accurately represent the respondent’s statements and to identify common themes across responses, where they exist. The analysis in this report includes tables illustrating the categories mentioned most often by respondents, along with the number of comments falling into each category and the percentage of total comments represented by each category.

Community Meetings

The Novak Consulting Group facilitated two community meetings, open to the public. To help encourage participation, each City Commissioner was provided ten “golden tickets” to give to people in the community that they personally wanted to invite and ask to participate. A total of 78 members of the community participated in the meetings, which took place in February 2020. The following table lists community meetings held as part of this outreach process.

Table 6: Community Meetings

Meeting Location	Participant Group	Meeting Date	Total Participation
Carnegie Building	Community Members	2/26/2020	37
Carnegie Building	Community Members	2/27/2020	41

Meeting Location	Participant Group	Meeting Date	Total Participation
Total Participation			78

Traditional Public Meetings

The Novak Consulting Group also trained a group of nearly 40 City staff, known as the Lawrence Listens Team, to facilitate smaller public outreach discussions to supplement the larger community meetings. This team of staff facilitated four satellite public meetings in February and March for those interested in participating but unable to attend one of the larger Community Meetings. Most of these satellite meetings were held on weekends to accommodate work schedules. A total of 31 individuals participated in the public meetings. The following table lists the traditional public meetings held as part of this outreach process.

Table 7: Traditional Public Meetings

Meeting Location	Participant Group	Meeting Date	Total Participation
Union Pacific Depot	Community Members	2/15/2020	3
Santa Fe Depot	Community Members	2/16/2020	7
Sports Pavilion Lawrence	Community Members	2/19/2020	2
Lawrence Public Library	Community Members	3/7/2020	19
Total Participation			31

Facilitated Discussions with Community Groups

The City also made efforts to expand outreach beyond traditional public meetings by facilitating discussions with members of a large variety of community groups. Trained Lawrence Listens Team members attended a total of 41 meetings and events to promote the strategic planning process and to facilitate discussion. These meetings ranged from 20 minutes to 90 minutes, depending on how much time the group made available. The groups also varied in size significantly, ranging from seven people to about 60. A total of 699 individuals participated. The following table lists the facilitated discussions held as part of this outreach process.

Table 8: Facilitated Discussions with Community Groups

Meeting Location	Participant Group	Meeting Date	Total Participation
First United Methodist Church	Men's Fellowship Coffee Group	2/10/2020	11
Watkins Museum of History	Lawrence Cultural Arts Roundtable	2/12/2020	20
Lawrence Preservation Alliance	Lawrence Preservation Alliance Members	2/17/2020	8
Free State High	Free State High Students	2/18/2020	100
Lawrence Arts Center	Lawrence Arts Center Employees	2/18/2020	24
Family Promise Headquarters	Family Promise Board and Staff	2/19/2020	11
Lawrence Public Library	Lawrence Association of Neighborhoods Board Meeting	2/19/2020	16
Central United Methodist Church	Lawrence Interfaith Alliance	2/19/2020	12

Meeting Location	Participant Group	Meeting Date	Total Participation
Watkins Museum of History	Lawrence Arts Stakeholders	2/21/2020	10
The Dwayne Peaslee Technical Training Center	Peaslee Tech Staff and Students	2/21/2020	8
Lawrence Community Shelter	Lawrence Community Shelter Board	2/24/2020	7
Plymouth Congregational Church	Plymouth Congregational	2/24/2020	13
First Presbyterian Church	Sustainability Action Network, Sierra Club, Sunrise Movement, Lawrence Ecological Teams United in Sustainability	2/24/2020	15
USD 497	USD 497 Students and Superintendent	2/24/2020	11
Ballard Center	Ballard Center Staff	2/25/2020	10
Boys and Girls Club	Boys and Girls Club Leadership Team	2/25/2020	8
Downtown Lawrence Inc.	Downtown Lawrence Inc.	2/25/2020	35
Lawrence Arts Center	Lawrence Arts Center Board of Directors	2/25/2020	16
Bioscience & Technology Business Center	Bioscience & Technology Business Center Stakeholders	2/26/2020	10
Family Promise Day House	Family Promise Board and Graduates	2/26/2020	10
Gould Evans	Gould Evans Staff	2/26/2020	10
Haskell University	Haskell University Executive Staff	2/26/2020	7
USD 497 College & Career Center	USD 497 Students	2/26/2020	39
USD 497 College & Career Center	USD 497 Students	2/26/2020	60
City of Lawrence	KU Arts Education Class	2/27/2020	7
Watkins Museum	New Generation Society Members	2/27/2020	50
Lawrence Chamber of Commerce	Chamber Members	2/28/2020	17
eExplore Lawrence	eExplore Lawrence Stakeholders	2/28/2020	12
Drop-In and Rest Center (DARE)	DARE Board and Clients	3/2/2020	17
University of Kansas	KU School of Public Affairs & Administration	3/2/2020	7
Lawrence Community Shelter	Lawrence Community Shelter Clients	3/2/2020	5
Brandon Woods Smith Center	Lawrence Landlords Coalition	3/2/2020	6
Sunrise Project	Sunrise Project Members	3/2/2020	7
Lawrence Chamber of Commerce	Chamber Members	3/3/2020	13
DARE	DARE Volunteers	3/3/2020	13
Senior Resource Center of Douglas County	Senior Resource Center of Douglas County Board and Staff	3/3/2020	9
Lawrence Board of Realtors	Lawrence Board of Realtors	3/4/2020	20

Meeting Location	Participant Group	Meeting Date	Total Participation
Lawrence Public Library	NAACP Board Members	3/4/2020	3
City of Lawrence	Rotary Members	3/4/2020	6
United School District (USD) 497	Superintendent's Executive Cabinet	3/5/2020	7
United Way of Lawrence/Douglas County	United Way of Lawrence/Douglas County	3/5/2020	29
Total Participation			699

Tabling Events

Another strategy employed by the City to engage stakeholders beyond traditional public meetings was to solicit input from the public at various locations throughout the City, such as popular businesses and public gathering spaces. Lawrence Listens Team members set up tables at these locations and invited public feedback. Staff also utilized established email lists and put up fliers to encourage participation. The Lawrence Listens Team conducted 17 tabling events over four weeks. The following table lists the tabling events held as part of this outreach process.

Table 9: Tabling Events

Meeting Location	Participant Group	Meeting Date	Total Participation ¹
University of Kansas	KU Architecture & Design Students	2/14/2020	39
Lawrence Public Library	Community Members	2/15/2020	29
Signs of Life Coffee Shop	Customers	2/18/2020	5
University of Kansas	KU Engineering Students	2/19/2020	80
J&S Coffee	Customers	2/21/2020	20
Pet World	Customers	2/21/2020	100
Fire Medical Station No. 1	Open House Attendees	2/22/2020	5
Lawrence Public Library	Community Members	2/22/2020	30
Lawrence Public Library	Community Members	2/23/2020	25
Lawrence Public Library	Community Members	2/25/2020	8
Pet World	Customers	2/28/2020	15
The Merc Co-Op	Community Members	2/28/2020	35
Lawrence Public Library	Community Members	2/29/2020	20
The Merc Co-Op	Customers	3/1/2020	25
Lawrence Chamber of Commerce	Chamber Members	3/4/2020	40
Pet World	Customers	3/6/2020	50
The Merc Co-Op	Community Members	3/6/2020	6
Total Participation			532

Consultant Led Facilitated Discussions

¹ Totals reflect the best estimate of participation by City staff present at each meeting.

The Novak Consulting Group facilitated discussions with chairs and vice chairs of the City's various advisory boards. The City has approximately 25 advisory boards/commissions that were invited to attend one of two meetings held in February 2020. A total of 18 advisory board members participated.

The Novak Consulting Group also held a discussion with partner governmental institutions. The City often works closely with these other agencies and therefore wanted to be sure they had an opportunity to participate in the process as well. A total of seven stakeholders participated in the meeting. The following table lists the consultant led facilitated discussions held as part of this outreach process.

Table 10: Consultant Led Facilitated Discussions

Meeting Location	Participant Group	Meeting Date	Total Participation
City of Lawrence	Advisory Board Members	2/26/2020	14
City of Lawrence	Advisory Board Members	2/26/2020	4
City of Lawrence	Government Stakeholders	2/26/2020	7
Total Participation			25

Employee Groups

The City also solicited input from its employees to get their perspective on the City's current state and where it should go in the future. A total of 45 employees participated in a series of three meetings held in late February 2020. Two of the meetings were open to all employees, and one meeting was specifically for members of the City's Employee Relations Council (ERC), a group of employees chosen to represent their respective divisions and to advise the City on employee relations matters. The following table lists the employee meetings held as part of this outreach process.

Table 11: Employee Groups

Meeting Location	Participant Group	Meeting Date	Total Participation
City of Lawrence	City Employees	2/27/2020	19
City of Lawrence	City Employees	2/27/2020	12
Fire Station No. 5	ERC Members	2/19/2020	14
Total Participation			45

Online Survey

The City hosted an online survey on its website in February and March 2020 and invited all residents to provide their input. The survey used a subset of questions from the facilitated discussion question set. A total of 287 residents participated.

Other Engagement

The City also reached out to several other organizations to encourage participation in the outreach process. Lawrence Listens Team staff spoke about the process at meetings of the following groups:

- Brook Creek Neighborhood Association
- East Lawrence Neighborhood Association
- Jayhawk Rotary Club
- Kiwanis Club

- Lawrence Breakfast Optimist Club
- Lawrence Central Rotary
- Lawrence Homebuilders Association
- Lawrence Lions Club
- Lawrence Rotary Club
- Nerd Nite Lawrence
- Willow Domestic Violence Center

When City staff were unable to present on the strategic plan in person, they sent information about the project and encouraged participation via the other means. Other groups that received strategic plan information included the following:

- Brook Creek Neighborhood Association
- Centennial Neighborhood Association
- Chamber of Commerce Young Professionals Group
- First Baptist Congregation
- Kansas Women's Environmental Network
- Kansas Works Job Center
- Plymouth Congregational Church Congregation

Finally, City staff also dropped off fliers for customers at several local businesses and organizations to encourage attendance at community meetings and participation in the online survey. Organizations that received fliers included the following:

- 1900 Barker Bakery
- Aimee's Coffee House
- Amyx Barber Shop
- Amyx Barber Shop North
- Dan's Barbershop
- Fuzzy's Taco Shop
- Phoenix Gallery
- S&S Coffee
- University of Kansas Student Housing Association
- Wonder Fair Shop
- Z's Divine Espresso

Community Engagement Responses

The following sections summarize themes from the City’s strategic planning outreach efforts. Responses are summarized by the discussion topic and meeting type.

Community Meetings

A total of 78 individuals participated in the two community meetings hosted by The Novak Consulting Group. Participants were asked about the City government, the current state of the community, the future of the City, and what makes them choose to continue to live and work in Lawrence. The following sections summarize response categories by questions; categories with three or more comments are reported.

City Government

Meeting participants were asked what services they depend on the City to provide. Participants offered a total of 56 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top eight categories of response by topic.

Table 12: Categories of Comments on the City’s Core Services, Community Meetings

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Stewardship of Public Resources	6	11%
Public Safety	5	9%
Resident Engagement	4	7%
Basic Services	3	5%
Waste Collection	3	5%
Equity	3	5%
Environmental Stewardship	3	5%
Infrastructure Maintenance	3	5%

The most common response among attendees was that they depend on the City to use tax dollars responsibly and to effectively manage public resources. Many comments also discussed the City’s responsibility to safeguard the public and to engage with the public as part of its decision-making and in future planning processes.

After being asked about the City’s core services, participants discussed what the City does well, based on their own experiences. They offered a total of 52 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top six responses by topic.

Table 13: Categories of Comments on the City’s Strengths, Community Meetings

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Parks and Recreation	7	13%
Waste Collection	6	12%
Public Safety	5	10%
Community Events	4	8%

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Resident Engagement	4	8%
Community Appearance	4	8%

The most common response was that the City offers excellent Parks and Recreation services. Many also praised the City's waste collection services, with four out of the six comments specifically commending the City's recycling collections program. Several participants also commended the City's ability to safeguard the public.

Meeting attendees were then asked if there are any services the City does not currently provide that they would like to see it provide in the future. They offered a total of 69 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top 11 responses by topic.

Table 14: Categories of Comments on Services the City Should Provide, Community Meetings

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
More Affordable Housing	8	12%
More Services for the Homeless	5	7%
Comprehensive Social Services	4	6%
Enhanced Street and Sidewalk Maintenance	4	6%
Expanded, Affordable Transit System	4	6%
Smart Development	4	6%
Zoning and Ordinance Reform	4	6%
More Communication to Residents	3	4%
Comprehensive, Affordable Health Care	3	4%
Equity	3	4%
Enhanced Parks and Recreation Services	3	4%

The most common response was that the City should be doing more regarding affordable housing in the community, with three commenters specifically discussing the need for more affordable rental housing. Many also felt that the City should be providing more services to address homelessness in the community.

Our Community

Participants in the meeting then offered their input on the community as a whole. They were first asked what major challenges the community faces. Attendees offered a total of 33 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top six responses by topic.

Table 15: Categories of Comments on the City's Challenges, Community Meetings

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Affordable Housing	4	12%
Reliable Infrastructure	3	9%
Homelessness	3	9%
Vibrant Downtown	3	9%

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Economic Development	3	9%
Health Care	3	9%

The most commonly discussed challenge was a lack of affordable housing. Other issues that were mentioned in more than two comments included reliable infrastructure, homelessness, maintaining a vibrant downtown, economic development, and availability of affordable health care.

Participants were also asked to identify the top three issues facing the community. They offered a total of 42 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top five responses by topic.

Table 16: Categories of Comments on the City’s Top Issues, Community Meetings

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Smart Development	5	12%
Economic Development	5	12%
Homelessness	5	12%
Support for Businesses	3	7%
Health Care	3	7%

Several comments identified smart development as one of the top issues facing the community, with two commenters specifically noting that they feel that the City is growing and developing too quickly. Attendees also identified economic development and homelessness as other top issues.

Finally, participants were asked if they see any opportunities in the future that the City should be poised to seize. They offered a total of 38 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top three responses by topic.

Table 17: Categories of Comments on Future Opportunities, Community Meetings

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Environmental Stewardship	3	8%
Transit	3	8%
Homelessness	3	8%

Several attendees discussed the City’s opportunity to safeguard the environment by encouraging sustainable practices and through other initiatives. Several also saw opportunities to expand the City’s transit system and to address the issue of homelessness in the community.

The Future

The community members next provided thoughts on the appropriate direction for the City’s future. Meeting participants were first asked to discuss what is true today in the City of Lawrence that they hope will still be true in ten years. They offered a total of 71 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top nine responses by topic.

Table 18: Categories of Comments on What Should Stay True in the Future, Community Meetings

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Vibrant Arts and Culture	5	7%
City Heritage is Preserved	5	7%
Support for Businesses	4	6%
Inclusive Community	4	6%
Many Community Events	3	4%
Quality Social Services	3	4%
Quality School System	3	4%
Vibrant Downtown	3	4%
Small-Town Feel	3	4%

Commenters deeply valued the City’s unique history and culture; the top responses were that the City should continue to cultivate a vibrant arts scene and continue to preserve its unique heritage. Several comments also indicated that the City should continue to support the development of local businesses and continue to be a welcoming, inclusive community.

Participants were then asked what is not true today in the City of Lawrence that they hope will be true in ten years. They offered a total of 74 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top 12 responses by topic.

Table 19: Categories of Comments on What is Not True Today but Hope to be in the Future, Community Meetings

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Expanded Transit Services	9	12%
Enhanced Environmental Stewardship	8	11%
More Affordable Housing	6	8%
Smart Development	4	5%
High-Quality Streets and Sidewalks	4	5%
Greater Equity in the Community	4	5%
More Support for Businesses	4	5%
More Activities Available	3	4%
Greater Walkability and Bikeability	3	4%
Enhanced Parks and Green Spaces	3	4%
More Services to Prevent Homelessness	3	4%
Expanded Health Care System	3	4%

The most common response was transit service; many commenters felt that there is an opportunity to enhance the transit options in the community, including expanding hours for buses, constructing more bus shelters, and offering more regional transit options. Many also felt that the City should be doing more to safeguard the environment, such as encouraging more environmentally sustainable practices. Several also commented that the City should be doing more to ensure the availability of affordable housing.

Finally, attendees were asked what would keep them living or working in Lawrence in the future. They offered a total of 63 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top 16 responses by topic.

Table 20: Categories of Comments on Reasons to Stay in Lawrence, Community Meetings

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Affordable Housing	7	11%
Parks and Recreation Services	4	6%
Services for Seniors	4	6%
Vibrant Arts and Culture	4	6%
Employment Opportunities	3	5%
Low Taxes	3	5%
Social Services	3	5%
Vibrant Downtown	3	5%
Quality School System	3	5%
Living Wages	3	5%

The most common response was that participants will continue to live in Lawrence if housing remains affordable. Several others stated that they would stay if Parks and Recreation services remained high-quality, if there were services available for seniors, and if the City maintained a vibrant arts and culture scene.

Why Lawrence

The final topic of discussion was why participants choose to live or work in Lawrence and what would make them consider leaving. Participants were first asked what makes them choose to live or work in Lawrence. They provided a total of 93 comments, and the top 12 categories of comments are summarized in the table below.

Table 21: Categories of Comments on Why Participants Choose to Live/Work in Lawrence, Community Meetings

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Locally Grown Food	6	6%
Vibrant Arts and Culture	5	5%
University Community	5	5%
Parks and Recreation Services	5	5%
Sense of Community	5	5%
A Place to Raise a Family	5	5%
Good People	4	4%
Convenient Location	4	4%
Vibrant Community	4	4%
Attractive Community	3	3%
Resident Engagement	3	3%
Shopping Options	3	3%

The most common response was that participants value the availability of locally grown food in the area, grown on nearby farms and sold at farmers' markets and other community establishments. Many also discussed the vibrant arts and culture scene, the community created by the University of Kansas and other learning institutions, and the City's Parks and Recreation services. Finally, many praised the City's sense of community and identified it as a good place to raise a family.

Meeting participants were then asked what would make them consider leaving the City of Lawrence in the future. They offered a total of 70 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top nine responses by topic.

Table 22: Categories of Comments on Reasons to Leave Lawrence, Community Meetings

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Housing Costs	7	10%
Lack of Employment Opportunities	6	9%
Safety Concerns	5	7%
Stagnant Economy	4	6%
Lack of Services for Seniors	3	4%
Too Much Growth and Development	3	4%
Lack of Support for Businesses	3	4%
High Taxes	3	4%
Lack of Environmental Stewardship	3	4%

The most common response was that attendees would consider leaving if housing became unaffordable. Many also said they would consider leaving if there was a lack of employment opportunities in the area, or if the area became unsafe.

Finally, attendees were asked in what ways the City is the "best" place they have ever lived or worked. They offered a total of 76 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top eight responses by topic.

Table 23: Categories of Comments on What Makes Lawrence the Best Place to Live or Work, Community Meetings

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Sense of Community	8	11%
Accessibility of Services and Amenities	6	8%
Public Safety	4	5%
Parks and Recreation Services	4	5%
Community Heritage	3	4%
Quality School System	3	4%
Vibrant Arts and Culture	3	4%
Vibrant Downtown	3	4%

Many commenters praised the City’s strong sense of community, as well as the accessibility of services and amenities. Furthermore, several commended the City’s public safety and its high-quality Parks and Recreation services.

Traditional Public Meetings

A total of 31 individuals participated in four community meetings hosted by the Lawrence Listens Team. Participants were asked about the City government, the current state of the community, the future of the City, and what makes them choose to continue to live and work in Lawrence. The following sections summarize response categories by questions; categories with three or more comments are reported.

City Government

Community members participating in the meetings were asked to provide their thoughts on City government operations. Participants were first asked what services they depend on the City to provide. They offered a total of 84 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top nine categories of response by topic.

Table 24: Categories of Comments on the City’s Core Services, Public Meetings

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Environmental Stewardship	6	7%
Parks and Recreation	6	7%
Waste Collection	6	7%
Public Safety	5	6%
Transit	5	6%
Street and Sidewalk Maintenance	5	6%
Stewardship of Public Resources	4	5%
Health Care	4	5%
Land Use Planning and Future Planning	3	4%

Many attendees stated that they rely on the City to safeguard the environment; three of the six commenters who discussed environmental stewardship specifically highlighted the City’s responsibility to safeguard the community’s water quality. Several also discussed the City’s responsibility to provide Parks and Recreation services and to collect and manage waste.

Attendees were then asked what the City does well, based on their own experiences. They offered a total of 70 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top nine responses by topic.

Table 25: Categories of Comments on the City’s Strengths, Public Meetings

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Parks and Recreation	11	16%
Resident Engagement	6	9%
Basic Services	3	4%
Public Safety	3	4%

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Community Events	3	4%
Snow Removal	3	4%
Vibrant Downtown	3	4%
Walkability and Bikeability	3	4%
Waste Collection	3	4%

The most common response was that the City provides excellent Parks and Recreation services, with many commenters specifically praising the quality of the City's parks and green spaces. Several also commended the City's efforts to engage with its residents.

Finally, attendees were asked if there are any services the City does not currently provide that they would like to see it provide in the future. Participants offered a total of 54 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top five responses by topic.

Table 26: Categories of Comments on Services the City Should Provide, Public Meetings

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
More Services for the Homeless	6	11%
Enhanced Parks and Recreation Services	3	5%
Composting and Recycling Services	3	5%
Internet Infrastructure	3	5%
More Affordable Housing	3	5%

The most common response was that the City should be doing more to address the issue of homelessness in the community. Several also discussed a desire for enhanced Parks and Recreation services, such as community pools, as well as more composting and recycling services, more robust internet infrastructure, and more affordable housing.

Attendees of some meetings were also asked to provide three to six words to describe Lawrence today. The groups supplied a total of 42 descriptive words and phrases. Of these, 28% were positive descriptions of the City, 33% were negative descriptions, and 38% were neutral descriptions. The following word cloud illustrates the responses.

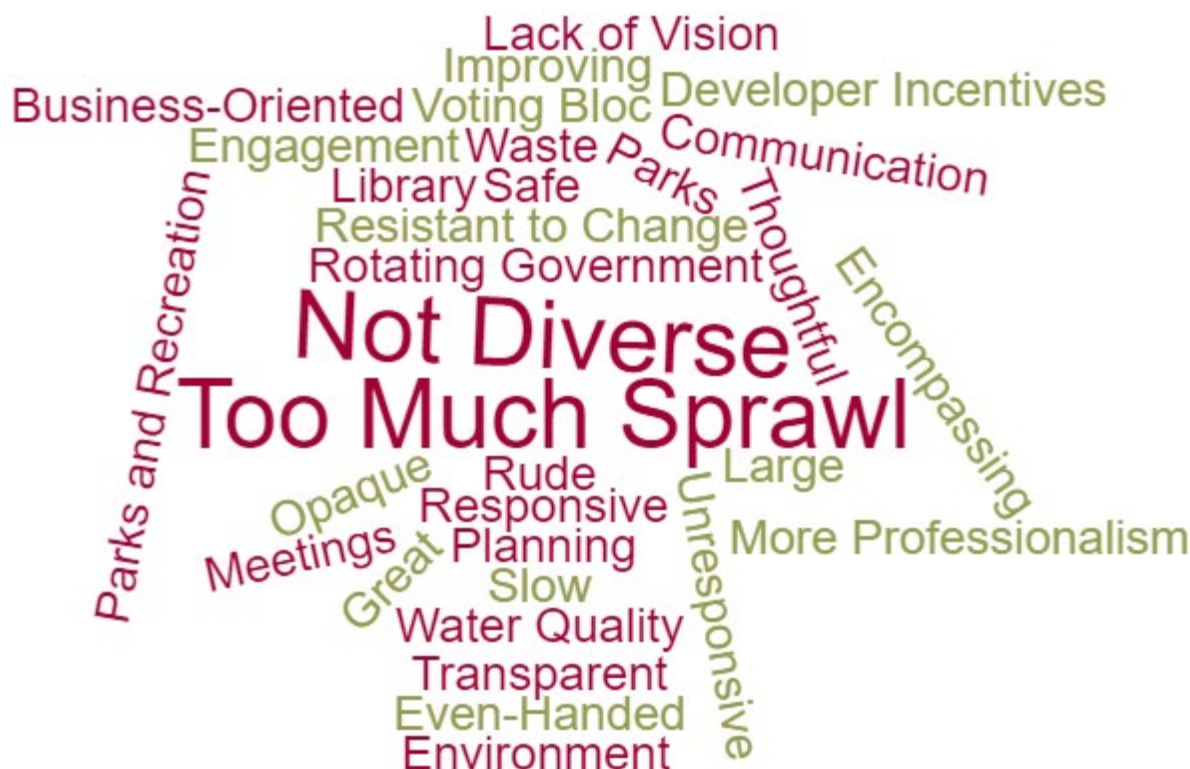


Figure 1: Word Cloud Describing Lawrence Today, Public Meetings

Our Community

Participants then discussed their thoughts on the community as a whole. Attendees were first asked what major challenges the community faces. They offered a total of 13 comments in response. Only one category was mentioned by more than two attendees: four participants cited the City’s streets and sidewalks as a challenge, with two of those individuals specifically commenting on the state of the City’s sidewalks.

Attendees were then asked to name the top three issues faced by the community. They offered a total of 50 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top six responses by topic.

Table 27: Categories of Comments on the City’s Top Issues, Public Meetings

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Affordable Housing	8	16%
Environmental Stewardship	5	10%
Employment Opportunities	4	8%
Health Care	4	8%
Smart Development	3	6%
Equity	3	6%

Many commented on a lack of affordable housing. Several also discussed the need for enhanced environmental stewardship, with three of the comments specifically addressing the need for a response to climate change.

The Future

Participants were asked to provide input on the City's future. Meeting attendees were first asked to discuss what is true today in the City of Lawrence that they hope will still be true in ten years. They offered a total of 42 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top three responses by topic.

Table 28: Categories of Comments on What Should Stay True in the Future, Public Meetings

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Quality Parks and Recreation Services	8	19%
Quality Transit Services	3	7%
Smart Development	3	7%

The most common response was that attendees hope that the City will continue to provide high-quality Parks and Recreation services, with five commenters specifically praising the City's parks and green spaces. Several others discussed the importance of the City continuing to offer transit services and continuing to grow and develop.

Attendees were also asked what is not true today in the City of Lawrence that they hope will be true in ten years. They offered a total of 47 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top four responses by topic.

Table 29: Categories of Comments on What is Not True Today but Hope to be in the Future, Public Meetings

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Enhanced Environmental Stewardship	4	9%
Expanded Transit Services	4	9%
Expanded Health Care System	3	6%
More Services to Prevent Homelessness	3	6%

The most common responses were that the City should do more to encourage sustainable practices and safeguard the environment and that the City should enhance its transit offerings, such as extending hours for bus service, constructing more bus shelters, and offering more regional transit options.

Finally, participants were asked what would keep them living or working in Lawrence in the future. Attendees offered a total of 29 comments in response. Only one category was mentioned by more than two commenters: four participants stated that they would continue to live in Lawrence if housing remained available and affordable.

Why Lawrence

In the final section of the meetings, participants discussed why they choose to live or work in Lawrence and what makes the City unique. Meeting participants were first asked what would make them consider

leaving the City of Lawrence in the future. They offered a total of 33 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top three responses by topic.

Table 30: Categories of Comments on Reasons to Leave Lawrence, Public Meetings

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Lack of Services for Seniors	3	9%
Family Leaving the Area	3	9%
High Taxes	3	9%

Several attendees commented that they would leave Lawrence because of a lack of services available for seniors. Some also discussed the possibility of leaving because their family members leave the area or because high taxes make the area less affordable.

Facilitated Discussions with Community Groups

A total of 699 individuals participated in 41 meetings hosted by the Lawrence Listens Team. Participants were asked about the City government, the current state of the community, the future of the City, and what makes them choose to continue to live and work in Lawrence. The following sections summarize response categories by questions; categories with ten or more comments are reported.

City Government

Participants were asked to provide input on City government operations. Attendees were first asked what services they depend on the City to provide. They offered a total of 539 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top 19 categories of response by topic.

Table 31: Categories of Comments on the City's Core Services, Facilitated Discussions

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Public Safety	52	10%
Environmental Stewardship	30	6%
Resident Engagement	23	4%
Waste Collection	22	4%
Street and Sidewalk Maintenance	21	4%
Stewardship of Public Resources	21	4%
Infrastructure Maintenance	21	4%
Health Care	20	4%
Land Use Planning and Future Planning	19	4%
Social Services	17	3%
Parks and Recreation	16	3%
Transit	15	3%
Public School System	13	2%
Smart Development	12	2%
Economic Development	12	2%
Basic Services	12	2%

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Equity	11	2%
Zoning and Ordinances	11	2%
Partnerships with Other Governments and Organizations	10	2%

The most common response was that attendees rely on the City to keep the public safe. Many also depend on the City to safeguard the environment, to engage with residents during planning and decision-making processes, and to collect and manage waste.

Participants were then asked what the City does well, based on their own experiences. They offered a total of 496 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top 14 responses by topic.

Table 32: Categories of Comments on the City's Strengths, Facilitated Discussions

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Parks and Recreation	58	12%
Public Safety	38	8%
Community Events	25	5%
Community Appearance	25	5%
Waste Collection	24	5%
Health Care	23	5%
Resident Engagement	20	4%
Snow Removal	18	4%
Arts and Culture	17	3%
Vibrant Downtown	15	3%
Street and Sidewalk Maintenance	14	3%
Public School System	13	3%
Transit	13	3%
Library	13	3%

The most common response was that the City offers high-quality Parks and Recreation services. Many also commended the City's ability to keep its residents safe and praised the many community events hosted by the City. Numerous commenters also felt that the City does a good job of keeping the City clean and attractive; eight comments specifically praised the City's holiday light displays.

Finally, participants were asked if there are any services the City does not currently provide that they would like to see it provide in the future. They offered a total of 460 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top 12 responses by topic.

Table 33: Categories of Comments on Services the City Should Provide, Facilitated Discussions

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Expanded, Affordable Transit System	50	11%
Enhanced Street and Sidewalk Maintenance	47	10%

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Comprehensive, Affordable Health Care	29	6%
Comprehensive Social Services	26	6%
More Services for the Homeless	24	5%
More Affordable Housing	24	5%
Enhanced Parks and Recreation Services	22	5%
Greater Walkability and Bikeability	21	5%
Composting and Recycling Services	20	4%
Enhanced Environmental Stewardship	20	4%
Greater Support for Businesses	10	2%
Smart Development	10	2%

The most common response was that the City should expand its transit system offerings, including extending bus service hours, creating more bus shelters, and providing more regional transit options. Many also discussed a desire for enhanced street and sidewalk maintenance, with 17 comments specifically addressing the quality of the City sidewalks. Numerous comments also mentioned a desire for more comprehensive health care services, with 16 commenters specifically discussing a need for more mental health services.

Participants in some meetings were also asked to provide three to six words to describe Lawrence today. The groups provided a total of 284 descriptive words and phrases. Of these, 21% were positive descriptions of the City, 52% were negative descriptions, and 27% were neutral descriptions. The following word cloud illustrates descriptions made by two or more participants.



Figure 2: Word Cloud Describing Lawrence Today, Facilitated Discussions

Our Community

Attendees then discussed their thoughts on the community as a whole. Meeting participants were first asked to name the top three issues facing the community. They offered a total of 587 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top 18 responses by topic.

Table 34: Categories of Comments on the City’s Top Issues, Facilitated Discussions

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Affordable Housing	54	9%
Health Care	36	6%
Public Safety	35	6%
Homelessness	33	6%
Smart Development	28	5%
Environmental Stewardship	24	4%
Social Services	23	4%
Equity	23	4%
Economic Development	23	4%
Employment Opportunities	23	4%
Street and Sidewalk Maintenance	22	4%
Wages	15	3%
Taxes	14	2%
Infrastructure Needs	13	2%
Justice Reform	12	2%
Public Schools	10	2%
Stewardship of Public Resources	10	2%
Cost of Living	10	2%

The issue of affordable housing was raised most frequently by commenters. Many also discussed a need for comprehensive, affordable health care, with 19 commenters specifically addressing a desire for more mental health services and 11 discussing a need for more addiction treatment services. Several comments also expressed concern about public safety in the community.

The Future

Attendees next provided input on their desires and hopes for the City’s future. Meeting participants were first asked to discuss what is true today in the City of Lawrence that they hope will still be true in ten years. They offered a total of 447 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top 16 responses by topic.

Table 35: Categories of Comments on What Should Stay True in the Future, Facilitated Discussions

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Vibrant Arts and Culture	36	8%
Vibrant Downtown	36	8%
Quality Parks and Recreation Services	24	5%
Quality School System	21	5%

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Inclusive Community	17	4%
Safe Community	16	4%
Diverse Community	16	4%
Sense of Community	16	4%
Support for Businesses	14	3%
Progressive Politics	12	3%
Good Restaurant Options	11	2%
Unique Community	11	2%
Quality Library System	11	2%
Smart Development	10	2%
City Heritage is Preserved	10	2%

Many participants want the City to maintain a vibrant arts scene into the future, as well as a dynamic and attractive downtown. Several also expressed a desire that the City continue to provide high-quality Parks and Recreation services, especially parks and green spaces.

Meeting attendees were also asked what is not true today in the City of Lawrence that they hope will be true in ten years. They offered a total of 528 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top 16 responses by topic.

Table 36: Categories of Comments on What is Not True Today but Hope to be in the Future, Facilitated Discussions

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Enhanced Environmental Stewardship	32	6%
Expanded Transit Services	30	6%
High-Quality Streets and Sidewalks	28	5%
More Affordable Housing	27	5%
Smart Development	25	5%
More Services to Prevent Homelessness	22	4%
More Employment Opportunities	21	4%
Enhanced Parks and Recreation Services	19	4%
More Support for Businesses	17	3%
Greater Equity in the Community	17	3%
Greater Walkability and Bikeability	15	3%
Expanded Social Services	15	3%
Improved School System	15	3%
More Diversity in the Community	12	2%
Expanded Health Care System	12	2%
Safer Community	11	2%

Many attendees expressed a desire for the City to enhance its environmental stewardship efforts by promoting sustainability practices and by addressing the impact of climate change. A number also discussed a need for enhanced transit services, such as extended bus service hours, more bus shelters,

and more regional transit. Several also expressed hope that the City work to enhance the quality of its streets and sidewalks.

Finally, participants were asked what would keep them living or working in Lawrence in the future. They offered a total of 287 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top nine responses by topic.

Table 37: Categories of Comments on Reasons to Stay in Lawrence, Facilitated Discussions

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Employment Opportunities	15	5%
Affordable Housing	12	4%
Affordable Cost of Living	12	4%
Vibrant Arts and Culture	11	4%
Vibrant Downtown	11	4%
Quality Health Care	11	4%
Quality School System	10	3%
Services for Seniors	10	3%
Safe Community	10	3%

Many respondents said they would stay in Lawrence if they continue to have employment opportunities. Several also discussed the need for affordable housing and for the cost of living to remain reasonable.

Why Lawrence

Participants were asked what would make them consider leaving the City of Lawrence in the future. They offered a total of 247 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top seven responses by topic.

Table 38: Categories of Comments on Reasons to Leave Lawrence, Facilitated Discussions

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Lack of Employment Opportunities	22	9%
Lack of Quality School System	18	7%
Life Changes	16	6%
Safety Concerns	14	6%
High Cost of Living	13	5%
High Taxes	12	5%
Housing Costs	11	4%

The most common response was that commenters would consider leaving Lawrence due to a lack of employment opportunities in the area. Several also mentioned they would consider leaving if the quality of the local school system declined or due to personal life changes.

Tabling Events

A total of 532 individuals participated in 17 tabling events hosted by Lawrence Listens Team. Participants were asked about the City government, the current state of the community, the future of the City, and what makes them choose to continue to live and work in Lawrence. The following sections summarize response categories by questions; categories with five or more comments are reported.

City Government

Participants in tabling events were asked to comment on the role of the City government in their lives. They were asked what services they depend on the City to provide. Participants offered a total of 286 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top 12 categories of response by topic.

Table 39: Categories of Comments on the City’s Core Services, Tabling Events

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Utilities (e.g., Water, Wastewater)	39	14%
Public Safety	37	13%
Street and Sidewalk Maintenance	29	10%
Waste Collection	23	8%
Transit	21	7%
Basic Services	12	4%
Environmental Stewardship	11	4%
Public School System	11	4%
Infrastructure Maintenance	9	3%
Act in the Best Interests of the Community	6	2%
Equity	6	2%
Social Services	6	2%

The most common response is that commenters depend on the City to provide utilities, such as water and wastewater. Many also rely on the City for public safety and to maintain streets and sidewalks.

Participants were also asked what the City does well, based on their own experiences. They offered a total of 207 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top 11 responses by topic.

Table 40: Categories of Comments on the City’s Strengths, Tabling Events

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Public Safety	17	8%
Street and Sidewalk Maintenance	17	8%
Parks and Recreation	15	7%
Traffic Management	14	7%
Community Appearance	12	6%
Transit	10	5%
Resident Engagement	10	5%
Community Events	9	4%

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Public School System	8	4%
Sense of Community	5	2%
Waste Collection	5	2%

Many commenters discussed the value of the City's public safety efforts, especially the City's Fire Department. A number also praised the City's street and sidewalk maintenance programs, as well as its Parks and Recreation services.

Participants were then asked if there are any services the City does not currently provide that they would like to see it provide in the future. They offered a total of 166 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top 11 responses by topic.

Table 41: Categories of Comments on Services the City Should Provide, Tabling Events

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Enhanced Street and Sidewalk Maintenance	17	10%
Comprehensive, Affordable Health Care	12	7%
Greater Walkability and Bikeability	10	6%
More Services for the Homeless	9	5%
Expanded, Affordable Transit System	9	5%
More Affordable College Education	7	4%
Safer Community	7	4%
Enhanced Parks and Recreation Services	7	4%
More Affordable Housing	6	4%
More Services and Activities for Youth	6	4%
More Activities Available in the Area	6	4%

Although many commenters cited streets and sidewalk maintenance as one of the City's strengths, many also felt there is an opportunity to enhance maintenance of these systems, especially by addressing the issue of potholes in a timely manner. Several also discussed a need for more expansive, affordable health care in the community, with three commenters expressing a desire for more sexual health services. Finally, some saw an opportunity for greater walkability and bikeability in the community through the creation of bike lanes, walking paths, and other infrastructure.

Participants in some events were also asked to provide three to six words to describe Lawrence today. The groups offered a total of 108 descriptive words and phrases. Of these, 34% were positive descriptions of the City, 31% were negative descriptions, and 34% were neutral descriptions. The following word cloud illustrates the responses.



Figure 3: Word Cloud Describing Lawrence Today, Tabling Events

Our Community

Tabling participants were asked to name the top three issues faced by the community. They offered a total of 308 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top 14 responses by topic.

Table 42: Categories of Comments on the City's Top Issues, Tabling Events

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Homelessness	47	15%
Street and Sidewalk Maintenance	43	14%
Affordable Housing	30	10%
Public Safety	20	6%
Smart Development	15	5%
Health Care	15	5%
Equity	11	4%
Justice Reform	11	4%
Traffic	10	3%
Downtown	6	2%
Employment Opportunities	6	2%
School System	5	2%
Social Services	5	2%
Environmental Stewardship	5	2%

The most commonly cited issue was homelessness in the community. Many also discussed the importance of street and sidewalk maintenance, with 19 commenters highlighting the need to address potholes. Numerous commenters also discussed the lack of affordable housing as a pressing issue facing the community.

The Future

Tabling event facilitators also asked participants about their hopes and desires for the community's future. Participants were first asked to discuss what is true today in the City of Lawrence that they hope will still be true in ten years. They offered a total of 261 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top 16 responses by topic.

Table 43: Categories of Comments on What Should Stay True in the Future, Tabling Events

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Vibrant Downtown	25	10%
Inclusive Community	16	6%
Quality Parks and Recreation Services	14	5%
Vibrant Arts and Culture	14	5%
Support for Businesses	12	5%
Sense of Community	12	5%
Safe Community	11	4%
Diverse Community	11	4%
Unique Community	10	4%
Quality Library System	7	3%
Community Appearance	6	2%
Walkability and Bikeability	6	2%
Good Shopping Options	5	2%
Community Events	5	2%
Progressive Politics	5	2%
University Presence	5	2%

Many commenters hoped the City continues to have a vibrant, attractive downtown. Several also discussed the importance of Lawrence remaining an inclusive community with high-quality Parks and Recreation services and a vibrant arts scene.

Participants were also asked what is not true today in the City of Lawrence that they hope will be true in ten years. They offered a total of 168 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top ten responses by topic.

Table 44: Categories of Comments on What is Not True Today but Hope to be in the Future, Tabling Events

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Safer Community	14	8%
More Services to Prevent Homelessness	12	7%
Enhanced Environmental Stewardship	11	7%

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
High-Quality Streets and Sidewalks	11	7%
More Affordable Housing	11	7%
More Support for Businesses	7	4%
More Vibrant Downtown	6	4%
Greater Sense of Community	5	3%
More Employment Opportunities	5	3%
Justice Reform	5	3%

The most common response was the hope that the City becomes a safer community in the future, with six commenters specifically addressing a need for more gun control. Many also expressed a desire for more services to address homelessness and for enhanced environmental stewardship, with five commenters advocating for a ban on plastic bags. A number also discussed the need for enhanced street and sidewalk maintenance and more affordable housing.

Some meeting participants were also asked what would keep them living or working in Lawrence in the future. Participants offered a total of 64 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top three responses by topic.

Table 45: Categories of Comments on Reasons to Stay in Lawrence, Tabling Events

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Employment Opportunities	10	16%
Quality Sidewalks and Streets	9	14%
Family in Community	8	13%

The most common response was that participants would remain in the City if employment opportunities remained available. Several also discussed the importance of well-maintained streets and sidewalks and their family remaining in the area.

Why Lawrence

Some tabling event participants were asked what would make them consider leaving the City of Lawrence in the future. They offered a total of 59 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top six responses by topic.

Table 46: Categories of Comments on Reasons to Leave Lawrence, Tabling Events

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Lack of Activities in the Area	7	12%
General Lack of Opportunity	6	10%
Poor Quality Streets and Sidewalks	6	10%
Life Changes	6	10%
Too Much Growth and Development	5	8%
Lack of Employment Opportunities	5	8%

The most common response was that individuals would consider leaving due to a lack of things to do in the Lawrence area. Many also discussed the possibility of leaving due to a lack of opportunities or due to poor quality streets and sidewalks.

Consultant Led Facilitated Discussions

A total of 25 individuals participated in three discussions hosted by The Novak Consulting Group. Participants were asked about the City government, the current state of the community, the future of the City, and what makes them choose to continue to live and work in Lawrence. The following sections summarize response categories by questions; categories with two or more comments are reported.

City Government

Discussion attendees first discussed the current state of City government operations. Meeting participants were asked what services they depend on the City to provide, and they offered a total of 28 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top six categories of response by topic.

Table 47: Categories of Comments on the City's Core Services, Facilitated Discussions

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Public Safety	5	18%
Partnerships with Other Governments and Organizations	3	11%
Basic Services	3	11%
Health Care	3	11%
Land Use Planning and Future Planning	2	7%
Identify Community Challenges	2	7%

The most common response was that attendees depend on the City to maintain a safe community. Several also discussed relying on the City to partner effectively with other governments and organizations, provide basic services, and provide quality health care.

Meeting participants were also asked what the City does well, based on their own experiences. They offered a total of 26 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top eight responses by topic.

Table 48: Categories of Comments on the City's Strengths, Facilitated Discussions

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Parks and Recreation	5	19%
Public Safety	2	8%
Resident Engagement	2	8%
Amenities	2	8%
Responsiveness	2	8%
Basic Services	2	8%
Waste Collection	2	8%
City Commission	2	8%

The most common response was that the City offers quality Parks and Recreation services, with many also praising the City’s public safety, resident engagement, amenities, responsiveness, waste collection, and the City Commission.

Finally, attendees were asked if there are any services the City does not currently provide that they would like to see it provide in the future. Participants offered a total of 22 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top four responses by topic.

Table 49: Categories of Comments on Services the City Should Provide, Facilitated Discussions

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Enhanced Street and Sidewalk Maintenance	3	14%
Internet Infrastructure	3	14%
Composting and Recycling Services	2	9%
Enhanced Environmental Stewardship	2	9%

Several expressed a desire that the City enhance its street and sidewalk maintenance, with two commenters specifically discussing the quality of City sidewalks. Some also highlighted a need for more robust high-speed internet in the area.

Participants in some meetings were also asked to provide three to six words to describe Lawrence today. The groups offered a total of 29 descriptive words and phrases. Of these, 24% were positive descriptions of the City, 24% were negative descriptions, and 52% were neutral descriptions. The following word cloud illustrates the responses.



Figure 4: Word Cloud Describing Lawrence Today, Facilitated Discussions

Our Community

Discussion participants were then asked to name the top three issues faced by the community. They offered a total of 39 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top nine responses by topic.

Table 50: Categories of Comments on the City’s Top Issues, Facilitated Discussions

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Smart Development	4	10%
Land Use Planning and Future Planning	3	8%
Social Services	3	8%
Affordable Housing	3	8%

The most common response was the need to effectively plan for the City’s growth and development. Several also discussed a need for planning in general, as well as a need for comprehensive social services and affordable housing.

The Future

Discussion attendees next provided input on the future direction of the City. Meeting participants were asked to discuss what is true today in the City of Lawrence that they hope will still be true in ten years. They offered a total of 26 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top five responses by topic.

Table 51: Categories of Comments on What Should Stay True in the Future, Facilitated Discussions

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Sense of Community	4	15%
Vibrant Downtown	3	12%
Inclusive Community	3	12%
Locally Grown Food	2	8%
Vibrant Arts and Culture	2	8%

The most common response was that attendees hope the City retains its strong sense of community. Many also value the City’s vibrant downtown and its inclusive atmosphere.

Attendees were also asked what is not true today in the City of Lawrence that they hope will be true in ten years. They offered a total of 29 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top seven responses by topic.

Table 52: Categories of Comments on What is Not True Today but Hope to be in the Future, Facilitated Discussions

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
More Employment Opportunities	3	10%
More Land Use Planning and Future Planning	3	10%

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Food Availability	3	10%
Greater Walkability and Bikeability	2	7%
High-Quality Streets and Sidewalks	2	7%
Enhanced Parks and Recreation Services	2	7%
More Services and Activities for Youth	2	7%

Several respondents expressed a desire for more employment opportunities in the area, as well as more extensive planning for the future. Furthermore, some are concerned about the lack of affordable, healthy food options for residents.

Some meeting participants were also asked what would keep them living or working in Lawrence in the future. Attendees offered a total of 29 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top seven responses by topic.

Table 53: Categories of Comments on Reasons to Stay in Lawrence, Facilitated Discussions

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Sense of Community	6	24%
Small-Town Feel	2	8%
High Quality of Life	2	8%
Diverse Community	2	8%
Continued Involvement in the Community	2	8%
Many Opportunities	2	8%
Accessible Community	2	8%

Several stated that they would stay in Lawrence because of its strong sense of community. Some also discussed the City's small-town feel, high quality of life, diverse community, the level of community involvement by residents, the opportunities available, and the accessibility of the community.

Why Lawrence

Participants were asked what makes the Lawrence community unique. They offered a total of 16 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top three responses by topic.

Table 54: Categories of Comments on What Makes Lawrence the Best Place to Live or Work, Facilitated Discussions

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Vibrant Downtown	2	13%
Amenities	2	13%
Resident Engagement	2	13%

Two commenters praised the City's vibrant downtown area. Some also highlighted the City's amenities and commended the City's efforts to engage residents.

Employee Groups

A total of 45 City employees participated in three meetings hosted by the Lawrence Listens Team. Participants were asked about the City government, the current state of the community, the future of the City, and what makes them choose to continue to live and work in Lawrence. The following sections summarize response categories by questions; categories with two or more comments are reported.

City Government

During the first part of the meeting, employees provided their views on the current state of City government. Meeting participants were asked what services they depend on the City to provide. They offered a total of 34 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top seven categories of response by topic.

Table 55: Categories of Comments on the City’s Core Services, City Employees

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Public Safety	7	21%
Basic Services	3	9%
Land Use Planning and Future Planning	2	6%
Maintain Quality of Life	2	6%
Stewardship of Public Resources	2	6%
Environmental Stewardship	2	6%
Leadership	2	6%

The most common response was that employees depend on the City to keep the community safe. Several also discussed relying on the City to provide basic services such as utilities, as well as infrastructure maintenance and waste collection.

Meeting participants were asked what the City does well, based on their own experiences. They offered a total of 31 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top three responses by topic.

Table 56: Categories of Comments on the City’s Strengths, City Employees

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Parks and Recreation	5	16%
Public Safety	4	13%
Community Appearance	2	6%

The most common response was that the City provides high-quality Parks and Recreation services. Several also praised the City’s public safety departments.

Employees were also asked if there are any services the City does not currently provide that they would like to see it provide in the future. Participants offered a total of 28 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top six responses by topic.

Table 57: Categories of Comments on Services the City Should Provide, City Employees

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
More Meeting Spaces	4	14%
Enhanced Parks and Recreation Services	4	14%
More Training for Employees	3	11%
Greater Use of Technology	3	11%
Greater Walkability and Bikeability	2	7%
More Communication to Residents	2	7%

Many attendees expressed a desire for more meeting spaces in City facilities and enhanced Parks and Recreation services. Several also commented on a need for more training for City employees and greater use of technology in City government.

Participants in some meetings were also asked to provide three to six words to describe Lawrence today. The groups provided a total of 31 descriptive words and phrases. Of these, 16% were positive descriptions of the City, 52% were negative descriptions, and 32% were neutral descriptions. The following word cloud illustrates the responses.



Figure 5: Word Cloud Describing Lawrence Today, City Employees

Our Community

Employees were next asked to name the top three issues faced by the community. They offered a total of 34 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top nine responses by topic.

Table 58: Categories of Comments on the City's Top Issues, City Employees

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Employment Opportunities	4	12%
Smart Development	3	9%
Homelessness	3	9%
Accessibility of Services	2	6%
Availability of Public Resources	2	6%
Infrastructure Needs	2	6%
Downtown	2	6%
Support for Businesses	2	6%
Cost of Living	2	6%

The most common issue discussed by attendees was a lack of employment opportunities in the area. Several also discussed the importance of smart development and the issue of homelessness in the community.

The Future

Participants then discussed their hopes for the community's future. Employees were asked to provide input on what is true today in the City of Lawrence that they hope will still be true in ten years. They offered a total of 32 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top seven responses by topic.

Table 59: Categories of Comments on What Should Stay True in the Future, City Employees

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Quality Government Services	3	9%
Safe Community	2	6%
Quality Parks and Recreation Services	2	6%
Sense of Community	2	6%
Unique Community	2	6%
Good Customer Service	2	6%
Community Events	2	6%

Several employees stated that they hope that the City continues to provide high-quality services in the future. Some also discussed the importance of a safe community, quality Parks and Recreation services, a sense of community, a unique community, good customer service, and community events.

Meeting participants were also asked what is not true today in the City of Lawrence that they hope will be true in ten years. They offered a total of 32 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top five responses by topic.

Table 60: Categories of Comments on What is Not True Today but Hope to be in the Future, City Employees

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Enhanced Parks and Recreation Services	6	19%
High-Quality Streets	5	16%
Smart Development	5	16%
Greater Walkability and Bikeability	3	9%
More Parking	2	6%

Several attendees expressed a desire for enhanced Parks and Recreation services, such as more recreation facilities and more preserved open space. Some also discussed the importance of a well-maintained street system and smart development.

Some meeting participants were also asked what would keep them living or working in Lawrence in the future. They offered a total of 20 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top four responses by topic.

Table 61: Categories of Comments on Reasons to Stay in Lawrence, City Employees

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Affordable Cost of Living	3	15%
Quality School System	3	15%
Safe Community	2	10%
Sense of Community	2	10%

Several attendees stated that they would keep living in Lawrence if the cost of living remained affordable. Some also discussed remaining if the community continues to offer high-quality public schools.

Why Lawrence

Employees then discussed why they choose to work in Lawrence and what makes the City unique. Participants were asked what would make them consider leaving the City of Lawrence in the future. They offered a total of 23 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top four responses by topic.

Table 62: Categories of Comments on Reasons to Leave Lawrence, City Employees

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Life Changes	4	17%
Housing Costs	2	9%
High Cost of Living	2	9%
Safety Concerns	2	9%

The most common reason why participants would consider leaving would be personal life changes. Some also discussed housing costs, the cost of living, and safety concerns as potential reasons they would consider leaving.

Meeting participants were also asked what makes the Lawrence community unique. They offered a total of 35 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top nine responses by topic.

Table 63: Categories of Comments on What Makes Lawrence the Best Place to Live or Work, City Employees

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
The City's Residents	5	14%
Diversity	5	14%
The City's Heritage	3	9%
Caring Community	2	6%
Sports Teams	2	6%
University Presence	2	6%
Vibrant Downtown	2	6%
Good Restaurant Selection	2	6%
Vibrant Arts and Culture	2	6%

Many employees stated that the City's involved, caring residents are what make the City unique. Several also cited the City's diverse community and unique heritage.

Online Survey

A total of 287 City residents participated in an online survey hosted on the City's website in February and March 2020. Survey respondents were asked about the City government, the current state of the community, and the future of the City. The following sections summarize response categories by questions; categories with five or more comments are reported.

City Government

The first section of the survey asked respondents to provide input on the current state of the City government. Respondents were asked what services they depend on the City to provide. They offered a total of 240 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top 12 categories of response by topic.

Table 64: Categories of Comments on the City's Core Services

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Public Safety	59	25%
Basic Services	34	14%
Infrastructure Maintenance	19	8%
Maintain Quality of Life	12	5%
Street and Sidewalk Maintenance	12	5%
Act in the Best Interests of the Community	10	4%
Equity	10	4%
Stewardship of Public Resources	10	4%
Assistance for the Homeless	5	2%
Utilities (e.g., Water, Wastewater)	5	2%

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Waste Collection	5	2%
Inclusivity	5	2%

Many participants rely on the City to safeguard the community. Several also depend on the City for basic services, such as utilities and waste collection. Some also discussed the importance of the City government maintaining public infrastructure.

Participants were also asked what the City does well, in their own experience. They offered a total of 233 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top 12 responses by topic.

Table 65: Categories of Comments on the City’s Strengths

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Parks and Recreation	33	14%
Resident Engagement	21	9%
Public Safety	18	8%
Waste Collection	16	7%
Basic Services	13	6%
Snow Removal	11	5%
Community Appearance	8	3%
Vibrant Downtown	7	3%
Utilities (e.g., Water, Wastewater)	6	3%
Community Events	5	2%
Street and Sidewalk Maintenance	5	2%
Transparency	5	2%

Many respondents praised the City’s Parks and Recreation services, with 13 respondents expressly commenting on the City’s park system. Several also commended the City’s level of engagement with its residents and its commitment to public safety.

Finally, respondents were asked if there are any services the City does not currently provide that they would like to see it provide in the future. They offered a total of 202 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top ten responses by topic.

Table 66: Categories of Comments on Services the City Should Provide

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Expanded, Affordable Transit System	22	11%
Enhanced Parks and Recreation Services	14	7%
Enhanced Sidewalk Maintenance	13	7%
More Services for the Homeless	13	6%
Enhanced Environmental Stewardship	11	5%
More Affordable Housing	9	4%

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Comprehensive, Affordable Health Care	7	3%
Greater Walkability and Bikeability	6	3%
Composting and Recycling Services	5	2%
More Support for Arts and Culture	5	2%

The most common response was that the City should expand its transit offerings, including extended bus service hours, more bus shelters, and more regional transit. Many also expressed a desire for enhanced Parks and Recreation services, with four commenters specifically requesting a public pool. Several respondents also discussed the need for additional sidewalk maintenance and for more services to combat homelessness.

Our Community

In the next section of the survey, participants were asked to name the top three issues faced by the community. They offered a total of 249 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top 14 responses by topic.

Table 67: Categories of Comments on the City’s Top Issues

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Homelessness	54	22%
Affordable Housing	49	20%
Environmental Stewardship	24	10%
Smart Development	14	6%
Equity	11	4%
Taxes	9	4%
Infrastructure Needs	8	3%
Employment Opportunities	8	3%
Public Safety	8	3%
Downtown	8	3%
Economic Development	7	3%
Health Care	7	3%
Social Services	5	2%
Street and Sidewalk Maintenance	5	2%

The most common issue discussed by respondents was the homelessness in the community. Many also expressed concern about the lack of affordable housing and the need to safeguard the environment. A total of 16 respondents specifically discussing their concerns surrounding climate change.

The Future

In the next section of the survey, respondents provided input on the City’s future direction. Participants were asked to discuss what is true today in the City of Lawrence that they hope will still be true in ten years. They offered a total of 239 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top 15 responses by topic.

Table 68: Categories of Comments on What Should Stay True in the Future

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Vibrant Downtown	28	12%
High Quality of Life	19	8%
Inclusive Community	14	6%
Sense of Community	13	5%
Diverse Community	13	5%
Vibrant Arts and Culture	12	5%
Lively Community	11	5%
Small-Town Feel	8	3%
Progressive Politics	7	3%
Current Population Size	6	3%
Environmental Stewardship	6	3%
Safe Community	6	3%
A Good Place to Raise a Family	6	3%
Unique Community	5	2%
Desirable Place to Live	5	2%

The most common response was that participants hope the City retains its vibrant downtown area. Many also expressed the desire that the City continue to maintain a high quality of life for its residents and cultivate an inclusive community.

Respondents were also asked what is not true today in the City of Lawrence that they hope will be true in ten years. They offered a total of 234 comments in response. The following table summarizes the top 13 responses by topic.

Table 69: Categories of Comments on What is Not True Today but Hope to be in the Future

Response Category	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments
Enhanced Environmental Stewardship	30	13%
More Services to Prevent Homelessness	27	12%
More Affordable Housing	18	8%
Smart Development	12	5%
More Employment Opportunities	11	5%
Greater Equity in the Community	10	4%
Enhanced Parks and Recreation Services	8	3%
More Support for Arts and Culture	7	3%
Greater Walkability and Bikeability	6	3%
More Affordable Cost of Living	6	3%
Safer Community	5	2%
More Support for Businesses	5	2%
More Economic Development	5	2%

Many expressed a desire for the City to do more to protect the environment through sustainability programs and initiatives to address climate change. Several respondents also discussed the need for more services to address homelessness and for more affordable housing in the community.

Attachment A: Comparison of Questions by Engagement Type

Several questions were asked to all participants in the community engagement process, including the following:

- I depend on the Lawrence City government to...
- From your experience, what does the City do well?
- Are there services you would like to see the City provide that it does not currently provide?
- What do you believe are the top three issues facing this community?
- What is true about Lawrence that you hope will still be true in ten years?
- What is something about Lawrence that is not true today that you hope will be true in ten years?

Other questions varied by engagement type. The following table lists all questions asked as part of the City's strategic planning process and compares the questions asked by the category of engagement.

Table 70: Questions Asked by Engagement Type

	Community Meetings	Traditional Public Meetings	Discussions with Community Groups	Tabling Events	Consultant Led Facilitated Discussions	Employee Groups	Community Survey
I depend on the Lawrence City government to...	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
From your experience, what does the City do well?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Are there services you would like to see the City provide that it does not currently provide?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Please provide three to six words to describe Lawrence City government.		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
What do you see as the major challenges facing the community?	✓	✓					

	Community Meetings	Traditional Public Meetings	Discussions with Community Groups	Tabling Events	Consultant Led Facilitated Discussions	Employee Groups	Community Survey
Are there opportunities you see in the future that the community needs to be poised to seize?	✓						
What do you believe are the top three issues facing this community?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
What is true about Lawrence that you hope will still be true in ten years?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
What is something about Lawrence that is <u>not</u> true today that you hope will be true in ten years?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
What would keep you and/or your family living (or maintaining your business) in Lawrence in the future?	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Why do you choose to live or work in Lawrence?	✓						
What would make you consider leaving Lawrence?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
In what ways is Lawrence “the best” place you have ever lived/worked?	✓						
What makes this community unique?					✓	✓	