



FALL FAVORITES

What is the best part of enjoying the Fall season in Lawrence? Walks in South Park or at Clinton Lake to see the trees changing colors? Cheering on the Jayhawks at David Booth Kansas Memorial Stadium? A cup of warm apple cider while browsing options at one of our local pumpkin patches?

Regardless of your preference, we can all agree that Fall is a pretty great time to live in Lawrence. There's always something fun and festive going on!

OUR MISSION

We create a
community where
all enjoy life and
feel at home.

City information is available
at lawrenceks.org and on
cable Channel 25.

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Volunteer to help your neighbors this winter!

The Safe Winter Walkways program is a partnership with the Senior Resource Center of Douglas County wherein we pair able-bodied volunteers with senior residents who need help shoveling their sidewalks after winter storms.

Maintaining safe sidewalks is important in keeping Lawrence a welcoming and desirable place to live. In this community, residents have 48 hours after a snow event to remove snow or ice from any public sidewalk on their property; however, we recognize that not all residents are physically able to remove snow from their sidewalks.

Safe Winter Walkways is an excellent resource for members of our community who are unable to keep their sidewalks clear following snow events. The goal is to create safer and more accessible pedestrian walkways. It's a structured version of what already happens in many neighborhoods – neighbors helping neighbors.

Lawrence residents with a passion for helping others and who enjoy winter weather (and shoveling snow) are needed to volunteer for the program. Volunteers are matched with residents needing assistance, and the program makes every effort to

match volunteers with residents in their neighborhoods.

All volunteers are asked to commit to the entire snow season and be willing to shovel after each winter weather event. Volunteers are not required to provide snow removal for private driveways, sidewalks or walkways, but they may choose to also clear those areas. Volunteering can also be a great activity for teams or organizations who wish to sign up as a group as the shoveling can be spread among multiple people.

Volunteers can go online to sign up at lawrenceks.org/safe-winter-walkways or call Larry Woydziak at the Senior Resource Center: 785-727-7875.

If a resident is interested in signing up as a beneficiary of the program, they should call Larry Woydziak at the Senior Resource Center: 785-727-7875. The deadline to sign-up is Friday, Nov. 17.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Misconceptions about affordable housing

Our goal at the City of Lawrence is that all persons in the community have access to safe, affordable housing and the supportive services necessary to maintain independent living with dignity. To make that happen, we partner with local affordable housing developers to increase affordable housing units, and with providers to serve Lawrence residents.

Every year, we allocate funds to our partners to further affordable housing in our community. Affordable housing takes many forms and it encompasses ongoing work by many different organizations. To learn more about affordable housing and the integral role it plays in a community, we're sharing information contradicting some of the common myths our team has heard about affordable housing.

MYTH: *Affordable housing drives down property values.*

Repeated research shows affordable housing does not have a negative impact on home prices or the sales of neighboring homes. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, 85% of affordable housing meets or exceeds federal quality standards and over 40% of this housing is considered "excellent." That means affordable housing is likely either on-par with its surrounding neighborhood or in even better condition than its neighbors.

MYTH: *Affordable housing looks cheap.*

Builders of affordable housing must comply with the same rules for design and construction standards as market-rate projects. The reality is that affordable housing is affordable because public and private funds go into making it less costly to live in, not because it's lower quality construction. By design, most

affordable housing units are completely indistinguishable from market rate housing.

MYTH: *Affordable housing brings more crime to a neighborhood.*

There are no studies that show affordable housing brings crime to neighborhoods. Homeowners, including those who own affordable homes, add stability to a neighborhood and lower the crime rate. Affordable housing residents often receive supports that help them maintain economic, educational and housing stability, and they are subject to greater standards for maintaining a property in which they can live with dignity.

Residents of affordable housing are in fact the community members that Lawrence relies on for a thriving economy, as well as robust educational, social services, and safety opportunities. Families who live in affordable housing seek the same thing every family does – a safe place to live and the opportunity to enhance the value of what they own.

MYTH: *Affordable housing only benefits low-income people; everyone else pays.*

Households with incomes up to 80% of the area median income are eligible to move into affordable housing. For a 4-person household in Lawrence, this would be a \$75,700 annual household income.

A city that has sufficient affordable housing to support those who live there is better set up for community-wide success. A lack of affordable housing means fewer tax revenues, which can be used to improve roads and schools. It means businesses struggle to retain qualified workers, and it lowers the amount of money available to spend in those businesses.



Protect our stormwater from illicit discharges

Whenever we discuss Lawrence's stormwater system, it's important to talk frankly about illicit discharges, which can change the physical, biological and chemical composition of the receiving water, resulting in an unhealthy environment for aquatic organisms, wildlife, and humans.

What is an illicit discharge?

An illicit discharge is when anything beyond stormwater goes into our storm sewer system. For example, our stormwater system can become polluted when stormwater run-off or melting snow contacts illicit materials as it flows over the land surface and into our storm drains. Some of the more common sources of pollution in our storm drains includes:

- Physical trash
- Used oil or auto fluids
- Soapy water from car washing
- Improperly maintained or overfilled outdoor grease bins
- Pesticide and fertilizer overuse
- Sediment and erosion from construction sites
- Waste from industrial facilities

How do illicit discharges impact us?

These contaminants can change the composition of the receiving water, resulting in impacts such as increased localized flooding and elevated nutrient levels that can harm fish and other aquatic life. Polluted stormwater can also affect drinking water sources, potentially risking human health and increasing the cost of water treatment strategies.

How does the City approach illicit discharges?

When an illicit discharge is discovered, we send a first responder to mitigate or clean any discharges needing immediate attention. Next we focus on remediation efforts, which vary depending on the discharge in question.

Educating residents and the public is another strategy that helps illicit discharge prevention. We've spoken to school age children and church groups, many of whom go on to conduct creek cleanup events.

What should we do if we see someone performing an illicit discharge?

If you see evidence of an illicit discharge, call the Environment, Health, and Science division of the City of Lawrence at 785-832-7800 or email them at stormwater@lawrenceks.org. Make sure to note the date, time and location of the discharge.