

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES



Planning and Development Services 2019 Annual Report



City of Lawrence

Planning and Development Services

The department is divided into five divisions: Planning, Building Safety, Code Enforcement, Community Development, and Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Organization. Services include building permitting, code enforcement, community development, affordable housing, contractor licensing, floodplain administration, historic resources, rental licensing, MPO staffing, coordination and administration, and the administration of city land use regulations and professional planning advice to the Lawrence City Commission, the Douglas County Board of County Commissioners, Planning Commission, and various other Boards and Commissions. The department has approximately 37 full-time employees.

Additional information about the department, applications and forms, codes, and various reports can be found on the department's website at www.lawrenceks.org/pds.



NEW LOCATION



In February 2019, Planning and Development Services moved into their new location on the west end of the Riverfront Mall at 1 Riverfront Plaza, Suite 320. This move added conference rooms, multiple collaborative workspaces, and centralized all PDS operations under one roof for the first time.

Although staff was initially working from laptops in the conference rooms, PDS along with Municipal Court eventually hosted a community open-house on April 16, 2019 to allow members of the public to come view the new office spaces.



Building Safety Division

The Building Safety Division is responsible for performing multiple tasks related to construction of new structures and alteration of existing structures such as plan review, contractor licensing, inspections, and the issuance of building permits, demolition permits, and tradeswork permits.

Below is a table which shows comparisons to previous years for important statistics from the Building Safety Division.

	2016 Total	2017 Total	2018 Total	2019 Total
Inspections/Occupancy				
Inspections Performed	10,995	10,127	11,118	11,192
Investigations	98	86	116	104
Certificates of Occupancy Issued (Commercial)	118	145	220	151
Certificates of Occupancy Issued (Residential)	213	187	153	262
Licensing				
Contractor Licenses Issued	723	767	597	152
Trades Work Licenses Issued	432	412	399	116
Fees				
Permit Fees Collected	\$1,311,813	\$1,033,104	\$1,370,576	\$1,010,229
License Fees Collected	\$80,981	\$84,225	\$79,175	\$93,350
Construction Valuation				
Total Valuation	\$220,882,200	\$166,923,864	\$275,974,618	\$213,650,465
Public Project Valuation	\$25,663,895	\$12,343,017	\$9,286,296	\$20,433,586

Total permit valuation for 2019 was \$213,650,465. This **valuation was 3% lower than the rolling 5-year average** valuation of \$221,055,847 (2015 through 2019), and **26% higher than the rolling 10-year average** valuation of \$169,523,770 (2010 through 2019).

The Building Safety Division also produces a Monthly Permit Report which highlights monthly and year-to-date totals for permits issued, permit valuations, and fees collected. Those reports can be found on the PDS website at lawrenceks.org/pds/permit_reports/.

Code Enforcement Division

The Code Enforcement Division (CED) is responsible for managing and obtaining code compliance with many City codes, including: the Long-term and Short-term Rental Licensing and Inspection Ordinances; the Property Maintenance Code; the Weed Code; the Development Code; the Fence Code; the Sign Code; the Sidewalk Dining Ordinance; the Graffiti Ordinance; and the Sidewalk Snow Removal Ordinance. The division also plays a vital role in assisting other city departments with city code inquiries which include the Police Department, Parks & Recreation, Municipal Services & Operations, and the City Clerk's Office.

As the table below identifies, staff opened **1,805 code enforcement cases** in 2019, which is a **26% increase** from the 1,337 cases opened in 2018.

2019 Code Enforcement Division Caseload (Excluding Rental Licensing)			
Code Violation Type	# of Cases Created During 2019	# of Created Cases Closed During 2019	Case Resolution Percentage *
Property Maintenance Code (PMC)	766	707	92%
Weed Code	746	746	100%
Sidewalk Snow Removal	114	114	100%
Sidewalk Dining License	50	50	100%
Right-of-Way Signs	22	22	100%
Tree Code	25	25	95%
Sign Code (Private Property)	22	22	100%
Development Code	32	32	100%
ADA Complaints	1	1	100%
Fence Code	8	6	75%
Graffiti Code	0	0	-
Urban Agriculture	2	2	100%
Occupancy	17	16	94%
Total Enforcement Cases	1,805	1,743	97%
*Since Case Resolution Percentage measures the number of cases closed in 2019 that were created in 2019, it is not practical to reach 100% in some categories, except for seasonal items (sidewalk snow & weeds) because some of the cases, specifically PMC cases created in the later months of the year, would not have had sufficient amount of time to reach compliance.			

NOTEWORTHY CASES

Staff assisted Douglas County Public Works and Zoning & Codes departments with damage assessment as the result of the EF-4 tornado that struck just south of the city limits on May 28th. **Four staff spent one day inspecting properties** throughout the path of travel that suffered varied degrees of structural damage and assigned a placard of habitable, limited entry or unsafe to such structures. With damages of \$22 million to structures and buildings, the tornado was the second largest in Douglas County history.



Staff initiated enforcement actions for vacant dilapidated mobile homes in multiple locations throughout the city. At year's end over **15 mobile homes that were uninhabitable were removed** from these properties. Staff will continue to work on removing additional unsafe mobile homes from these locations in 2020.



Community Development Division

The Community Development Division (CDD) provides neighborhood support and housing assistance programs through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnership Program, Emergency Solutions Grant, and Neighborhood Stabilization Program.

Through these programs, the Community Development Division was able to provide:

- **17** properties with weatherization assistance, totaling \$42,260;
- **8** low-income renters with accessibility modification grants, totaling \$57,907;
- **6** first-time homebuyers with down-payment and closing cost assistance through the First Time Homebuyer Lawrence Community Housing Trust, totaling \$100,357;
- and **16** Emergency and Furnace Loans, totaling \$55,312.

In addition to the achievements above, the CDD partnered with the MSO Department to complete project PW1819 which **constructed 38 ADA curb cuts with ramps** and filled sidewalk gaps along 11th Street, and installed a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon with ramps and pavement markings on Haskell Avenue for **a total of \$186,557**. The CDD also partnered with Community Living Opportunities to complete ADA ramp and barrier removal improvements at their facility for \$34,182.



Through the HOME Investment Partnership Program, **\$10,000 was allocated** to Lawrence Habitat for Humanity to fund construction costs for a home at 217 N 8th Street.

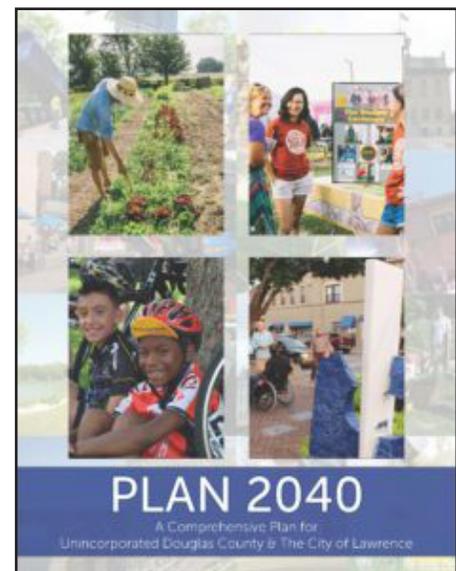
Planning Division

The Planning Division oversees growth and development in the City of Lawrence and Unincorporated Areas of Douglas County with respect to zoning and land use. A great deal of the division's time is spent handling information requests from the development community, other City departments, neighborhood groups, and the general public.

The Planning Division reviewed **a total of 688 applications in 2019**. Many of these items have multiple reviews and can include multiple revisions by applicants or considerations by Boards and Governing Bodies, making it difficult to gain a clear picture of performance by Planning staff.

Site Plan application statistics are tracked and reported because site planning is one of the main procedural tools used to review development projects against development codes. In 2019, the Planning Division reviewed **75 site plan applications** for the City and County combined. Of these, **93%** of City site plan applications received first round reviews within 15 days, and **90%** of County site plans received reviews within 15 days. A full report on Site Plan Processing can be found at lawrenceks.org/pds/reports.

One of the division's most notable achievements during 2019 was gaining final approvals for and publishing the newest version of the Comprehensive Plan, *Plan 2040*. Built on the firm foundation of *Horizon 2020*, this plan recommends goals to promote a high quality of life in both urban and rural settings and directs growth in a manner that preserves and enhances the heritage and spirit of our community to create unique places to live, work, learn, and play.



HISTORIC RESOURCES

In 2019, Historic Resources staff completed the Barker Neighborhood historic resources survey. Surveying is the process of identifying and gathering data on historic resources. It includes recording basic physical and historical information about a property, photographing it, and drawing a site plan. Information gathered during the survey process often provides additional insight into the community's history and patterns of development. Results and recommendations from



Barker Neighborhood Streetscape



**2045 New Hampshire Street,
constructed 1873**

The City of Lawrence is a Certified Local Government (CLG). The City was evaluated for its CLG agreement in April 2019 and met all of the requirements identified by the State of Kansas. Additional information about Certified Local Governments can be found at <https://www.kshs.org/p/certification-requirements/15657>

the survey can be incorporated into the city's historic preservation plan. A survey of local historic resources also serves as an important first step in determining the potential for an area to be listed as a historic district in the National Register of Historic Places or the Register of Historic Kansas Places.



**2005 New Hampshire Street,
constructed 1924**

Metropolitan Planning Organization

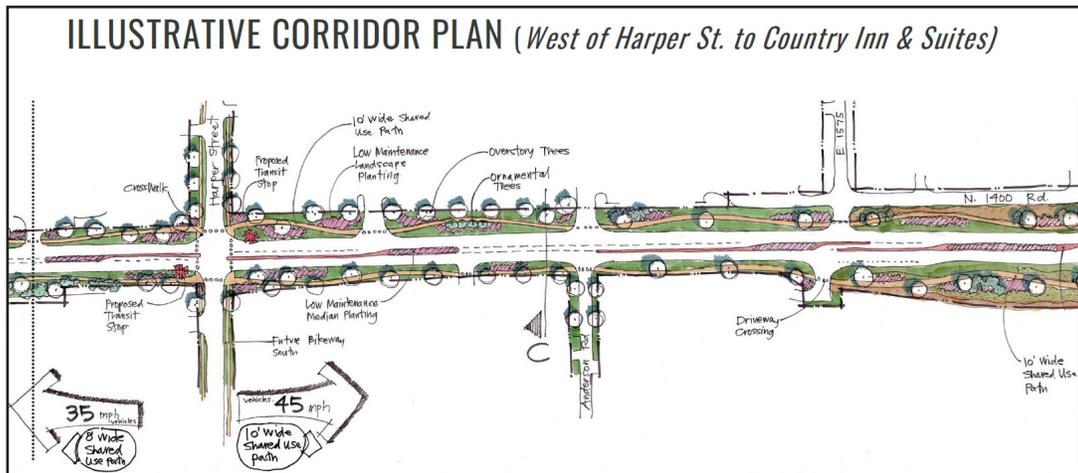
The Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Organization is designed to foster cooperation among local governments in the region to play for and develop a multimodal transportation system. A multimodal transportation system refers to a system that includes a wide range of mobility options such as automobiles, public transit, walking, cycling, ridesharing, and connections between nodes. More information about the MPO can be found online at www.lawrenceks.org/mpo.

Some notable achievements of the MPO are listed below:

- Lawrence was recognized as a **top-performing city** in the 2019 PlacesForBikes City Ratings! The City Ratings are a key component of our PlacesForBikes program, which provides measurement tools, guidance, peer networking, and storytelling to help U.S. cities plan, build and promote great places to ride of all kinds — faster. This year, PlacesForBikes City Ratings scored 510 U.S. cities across five categories that provide a balanced view of bicycling use and safety, infrastructure progress, and accessibility by community members. Lawrence was ranked 6th overall.
- The MPO hosted a Bike and Driver Safety Video Premiere at the Lawrence Public Library to display eight videos which were created with the help of 28 volunteers and city staff. Over fifty people attended the event! Bicycle safety education has historically only focused on teaching bicycle riders how to navigate the roadways safely. These videos offer a new perspective, one to which more people can relate, from the motor vehicle driver perspective. The curriculum aims to educate motorized vehicle drivers about how and why bicycle riders travel the roadways in the ways they do with the objective of developing a shared understanding for all users. The videos can be accessed at <https://lawrenceks.org/share-the-road>.



- A study was conducted to determine the future concept for 23rd Street from Learnard Avenue to the eastern city limits. A three-day visioning and planning charrette was held during the week of June 24. On the first day, the team established a vision for the plan and developed a set of guiding principles to inform the broader planning process and charrette. On days two and three, the team explored potential solutions for achieving the vision through a charrette, utilizing preference exercises, individual and group discussions, and other activities. On the third day, the Steering Committee reviewed the public input, preferred concepts, and ideas to draft a conceptual plan for the 23rd Street corridor. The resulting corridor plan includes preferred bicycle and pedestrian facilities, transit stops, access management, traffic flow, and safety considerations.



The plan was approved by the MPO Policy Board in September 2019 and by the Lawrence City Commission on November 5, 2019. The City of Lawrence will use this plan as engineers move into the design phase for E 23rd from the Haskell Bridge to 600 feet east of Anderson Ave in 2020 with construction in 2021. The plan can be accessed at lawrenceks.org/mpo/23rd-st-corridor-study.

- The MPO, Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department, City, Public Schools, and the Lawrence-Douglas County Sustainability Office began working together to write a citywide safe routes to school plan for Lawrence, Eudora, and Baldwin City. In Lawrence, the SRTS partnership kicked off the 2019-2020 planning process by collecting data, hosting an open house, and attending school meetings. Collecting this public input was prioritized to learn the best way to encourage active travel for Lawrence Public School students.

Staff is in the process of writing a Lawrence Citywide Safe Routes to School Plan, Eudora Citywide Safe Routes to School Plan, and Baldwin City Citywide Safe Routes to School Plan. The plans will be approved in the spring/summer of 2020. Additional information can be found online at lawrenceks.org/safe-routes/.