

PRIORITY BUSINESS ISSUES - Protect and enhance the viability of Neighborhood Businesses by addressing their most serious concerns

A discussion of the East Lawrence neighborhood would be incomplete without a close look at the neighborhood's active and diverse business community. In an effort to accommodate the time constraints of small businesses wishing to participate in planning efforts, the consultant team met with neighborhood representatives on two occasions during the lunch hour. Some business representatives chose to attend the evening workshops as well, which added their perspective to general neighborhood discussions.

The first business session was designed to examine which issues affect business development, such as existing neighborhood assets, public infrastructure condition (good and bad), parking, traffic and pedestrian flow, zoning, relationships with city, county, and state, and future plans for expansion of neighborhood businesses. Participants identified the following issues, which fall into the four general categories of Public Facilities, Public Services, Land Use and Regulatory Concerns and Economic Development:

- **Public Facilities**
 1. Storm Drainage
 2. Water Quality
 3. Retain and expand brick streets
- **Public Services**
 1. Trash Collection
 2. Snow Removal
 3. Increased Code Enforcement specifically related to trash and debris
- **Land Use and Regulatory Issues**
 1. City Composting Operation
 2. Driveway widths
 3. Revise Zoning/Development Standards
 4. Code and Plan Review Process Concerns
 5. Protect Residential Zoning
 6. Enforce/establish truck routes and control vehicle speeds
- **Economic Development**
 1. Provide incentives for Small Business
 2. Provide incentives for Existing Business
 3. Encourage more artist studio development within East Lawrence

At the second session, after a review of the information the group prioritized the Issues List. A member of the City Commission attended the session and shared progress on a number of the issues identified. The group selected the following six issues as being of top priority:

- Correction of identified Storm Drainage problems.
- Development and implementation of Trash Collection alternatives.
- Revision of Construction and Planning Standards to more clearly reflect the unique character of the East Lawrence neighborhood. The neighborhood workshops also identified this issue as a priority for residential properties. Areas of specific concern are:
 1. Parking lot design standards currently reflect designs desirable in suburban development, not what fits in East Lawrence
 2. Internal landscaping requirements for parking lots are excessive in urban areas, especially on small neighborhood business sites.
 3. Building codes for rehabilitation are desirable and should respect the historic character of the buildings as well as construction within urbanized areas.
 4. Setback requirements do not respect older, East Lawrence development patterns.
 5. Standards should be revised to provide incentives for rehabilitation of older buildings.

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- **Protect Residential Zoning**, especially single family.
- **Create incentives for Small Business.** Currently, all the advantages are given to large, new businesses. Consideration should be extended to small business as well.
- **Create incentives for Existing Business.** It is perceived that existing businesses are penalized for expansion under present codes and taxing practices. This serves as a disincentive to the rehabilitation of older properties

NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS IMPELMENTATION STRATEGIES

For each of the priority issues identified above the consultants worked with the Steering Committee and City staff to develop implementation strategies and assign responsibilities for implementation as specifically as possible. The issues of neighborhood businesses relate primarily to three City Departments: Public Works and Planning. The consultants suggest the formation of three Business Task Forces to work with the City in finding solutions. Also the business community must continue to lobby their City Commission members to ensure that East Lawrence priorities remain on the community agenda.
