



To: Horizon 2020 Steering Committee
From: Sustainability Advisory Board of the City of Lawrence
Re: Suggested revisions to Horizon 2020

The City of Lawrence Sustainability Advisory Board (SAB) is a 10-member Board whose mission is to promote environmental protection, and advocate for policies which support sustainability (including environmental protection, waste reduction, recycling, energy conservation and natural resource conservation) in the City of Lawrence.

Over the course of several months in early 2014, the Sustainability Advisory Board reviewed the City's comprehensive plan, Horizon 2020, to identify opportunities for improvement. We reviewed key chapters that pertain directly to sustainability, and are offering some suggested areas for improvement:

Chapter 9: Parks, Recreation, Open Space Areas and Facilities

9-2 (Intro paragraphs)	The introductory paragraphs of this section should be strengthened by directly referencing the health benefits of parks and open spaces.
9-2 (8 th bullet)	"Develop regional parks that create a strong sense of community pride and livability <i>connected by trails and bikeways that encourage connectivity between parks.</i> "
9-4 (Mini-Parks)	Consider adding the concept of "pocket parks" to this section. SAB encourages infill in park development, and looking for ways to utilize previously-vacant lots for open space/park amenities.
9-7 (Level-of –Service)	SAB recommends that Douglas County should establish an inventory of natural open space and establish an appropriate level-of-service for County residents.
9-9 (Sales Tax)	SAB recommends strengthening subdivision regulations and impact fees language that would require open space and parks during the development of residential areas and subdivisions. Payment in lieu of land dedication is acceptable.
9-13 (policy 1.3.e)	Strengthen the language from "investigate feasibility" to " <i>utilize</i> impact or development fees for financing land..."
9-14 (policy 2.2.d)	Consider adding "Conduct regular surveys or studies to assess level-of-service and quality of life improvements from parks."
9-14 (policy 2.2)	Consider adding language about the Parks & Rec department's pesticide-free parks program and reduced chemical usage policies in this section about how parks should be maintained: https://www.lawrenceks.org/lprd/parks/ipm
9-15 (policy 2.3)	Add to "Incorporate the use of native plant materials, naturalistic landscaping, and edible landscaping to promote educational awareness of ecological diversity, water conservation, and food security."

9-17 (policy 3.2)	SAB would like to see this section about ensuring adequate access to parks address the fact that parks should be developed in neighborhoods that don't currently have access to parks. One example comprehensive plan we found provides good model language: "Prioritize park acquisition and development in areas where service level deficiencies exist (defined by Portland Plan as where households are more than 1/2 mile from a developed park or natural area. Strive to have a full service community center within 3 miles of every household." SAB would like to support the acquisition of park land in low-income neighborhoods and/or areas of the city where citizens have fewer parks available to them.
9-19 (Goal 4)	SAB recommends adding language from our Complete Streets policy for streets here – that makes them accessible to users of all abilities. Connectivity and linkages between the parks should be accessible to pedestrians, cyclists, and those with disabilities. Statement could be: "Reduce barriers to participation so that Lawrence Parks and Recreation services and programs are available to all"
9-20 (policy 4.4.b)	Consider adding a section about providing habitat for pollinators (i.e. native flowers).
9-23 (policy 6.1.c)	To section c add: "Incorporate wildlife habitat.... For the community's wildlife populations, migratory wildlife, and pollinators."

Chapter 10: Community Facilities

10-4 (KU section 2)	Update to reflect the Oread Parking Study funded by the EPA in Spring 2013.
10-5 (municipal buildings)	Update the Municipal Building section to reflect the energy and environment goals stated in the Climate Protection Plan: "The City and County should undertake a comprehensive energy use assessment of all facilities to determine opportunities for reducing energy use, reducing operating costs, and improving environmental quality."
10-11 (stormwater)	Add "green infrastructure" to the section on the nonstructural approach to stormwater management. Include bioswales, rain gardens, stormwater planters, and green roofs.
10-18 (policy 3.8)	This should be expanded beyond bicycle access to reference all Complete Streets policies (and encourage school district's Safe Routes to Schools efforts).

Chapter 16: Environment

SAB is very supportive of the existing Chapter 16 of Horizon 2020. We believe it lays out a vision for ensuring the sustainability of both the natural and built environments. Our comments for this chapter are more general in nature, and are some suggested themes and issues we'd like to see the Steering Committee and staff incorporate into a revised chapter. These are the key themes the SAB would like to see reflected in Chapter 16:

- Alternative transportation,
- Water conservation,
- Energy conservation,
- Sustainable agriculture practices,
- "Green" building practices,
- Community design that decreases sprawl and preserves rural character,
- Outdoor recreation,
- Decreasing air pollution,
- Preventing water pollution,
- Encouraging renewable energy,
- Encouraging infill and smart growth, and
- Protecting and restoring ecosystems.

Also, several initiatives and issues have arisen since the chapter was initially drafted. Therefore, we think the following issues should be added to an updated chapter:

In 2009, the Climate Protection Task Force presented their recommendations to the City Commission, which included a target GHG reduction goal of 80% by 2050. We think this goal should be incorporated into policy 3.5.

In 2010, the City and County hired a Sustainability Coordinator staff position. We think the City and County should continue to exhibit this leadership by having paid staff to work on sustainability initiatives. We also think the plan should encourage continued expansion of this department to better meet the needs of the community to be educated on sustainability and environment topics.

In the fall of 2014, the City will be rolling out a curbside recycling program. We think the chapter should reflect the desire to maintain this operation and consider expansion to food waste composting.

As regional climate change models suggest, this region will likely see hotter summers and more intense heat waves. Therefore, we would like to see more language in the "built environment" section that addresses reducing the urban heat island effect (i.e. more green space, green roofs, etc.).

Our state and region has also recently seen a boom in natural gas and oil development with new hydraulic fracturing extraction techniques. We think that Chapter 16 should address this technology and encourage coordination with the Kansas Geological Survey and Kansas Corporation Commission to determine appropriate uses of this technology, and to protect sites that would not be appropriate.