"I want to make an impact. I want to be engaged. I want to contribute."

Community Conversation Participant
A message from the Steering Committee

Dear Fellow Citizens,

ForwardOP!

More than a slogan or a name, “ForwardOP” reflects the attitude exhibited by people in this community since Overland Park was first imagined in 1909 and chartered in 1960. In 2018, OP citizens are once again ready to create our own destiny.

- Always looking ahead, thinking about how we can be better.
- Establishing a legacy that honors and builds on our successful past while embracing a future enabled by technology and powered by creativity, diversity and innovation.
- Strengthening the foundation for continued prosperity, and dreaming of an even better community for future generations.

For the past year, hundreds of people have been imagining tomorrow with us, having community conversations and inspiring action. Together, Overland Park citizens, neighbors, businesses, charities, and people of all backgrounds have worked to establish aspirational yet feasible goals and objectives based on thousands of questions, comments, feedback and information from the community itself.

We have had the great honor and privilege to co-chair the ForwardOP Steering Committee and to observe outstanding collaboration among the sponsoring partners of this endeavor - the City, Chamber of Commerce and Visit OP. We have watched and participated as our consultant, planning NEXT, has provided guidance and insight. And we have witnessed a highly motivated Steering Committee of 28 committed individuals offer their personal time, experience, wisdom and ideas to help define how we approach the future.

What we found is that all of the people involved in this effort love OP as much as we do! This report captures the final recommendations of the Steering Committee. But whether and how those recommendations are implemented depends entirely upon us—all of us. We encourage citizens, community organizations, businesses, advisory committees and elected bodies to use this document as a blueprint for strategic planning at all levels and as a springboard for further conversation on the future of our great city.

On behalf of the entire Steering Committee, we thank you for your investment in our community. ForwardOP!

Brenda Sharp    Greg Musil
Co-chair     Co-chair
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Overland Park Convention Center
Matt Ross Community Center
Overland Park Chamber of Commerce
Shawnee Mission South High School
St. Andrews Golf Course
Johnson County Community College
Culture House, Oak Park Mall
Mazuma Credit Union
Blue Valley Hilltop Conference Center
Tomahawk Ridge Community Center
Johnson County Central Resource Library
Johnson County Arts and Heritage Center

Consultants
Planning NEXT
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- Appendix A: Community Assessment
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"Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there."

Will Rogers
INTRODUCTION

In general, planning represents good stewardship. Overland Park has a well-deserved reputation as a desirable place to live, do business, attract visitors and have fun. This vision plan outlines a path of continued success for the next 20 years and beyond.

Motivation

The Overland Park enjoyed today is the result of deliberate planning and commitment to following through on those plans. Progress is continuous and we must periodically pause to assess our current status and look ahead to ensure that we are pursuing a path of success for today and the future.

What is a Vision?

The Vision is an opportunity for the entire community to pause, take stock, and define as a community what we want Overland Park to be in the future and how we get there. Specifically, the plan outlines a path of continued success for the next 20-25 years. It is based on input from a community that cares about the future of Overland Park as a place to thrive, succeed and prosper. To complement these aspirations, the plan is grounded in an understanding of current conditions and trends. The vision plan aligns all aspects of our community life and identifies goals and specific actions for Overland Park to implement.

History of Visioning

Overland Park's founders were visionary and took bold steps to plan for the future we enjoy today. In the early 1900s, foundational values and a vision were established. In 1960 a vision for the newly incorporated city was created, and then again in the mid-1980s an analysis was done to further define the vision for the community. Good planning over the years has led to top-rated educational institutions, leading healthcare providers, expansive road networks, and extensive infrastructure, service and amenities.

In the early 1960s, when the city was still in its formative years, leaders of the community saw the need for an institute of higher education and imagined a local college. They took bold steps in pursuing this vision, even in the face of opposition from some residents who believed that the costs would outweigh the benefits. After a six year process that included a county-wide needs assessment, a special election, and funding approval, the first classes of Johnson County Community College were held in 1969 in a leased space. Three years later, in the fall of 1972, classes were finally moved onto the JCCC campus that we know today. Thanks to the foresight and imagination of our predecessors in Overland Park, Johnson County Community College is now one of the top five secondary institutions in the state of Kansas. Although this big idea was considered somewhat risky and unpopular at its
inception, today it’s difficult to imagine Overland Park without Johnson County Community College.

Leaders of Overland Park have also been intentional about growth and planned expansion. Because of visionary leadership, big decisions and thoughtful stewardship, Overland Park has grown from 28,085 people in 1960 to over 195,000 people in 2018 and enjoys a strong reputation as a leading place to live and work.

Transportation has been at the heart of Overland Park since its inception. In 1905, William B. Strang Jr. began to lay track between Kansas City, MO and Olathe, KS to construct the 20 mile Missouri and Kansas Interurban line. It began operations in 1906 and ran until 1940, transporting visitors and residents on combination diesel and electric trolley cars. The first public flight in Kansas took place in Overland Park on Christmas day, 1909. Aviator Charles K. Hamilton shipped his plane in six containers and stopped in Overland Park on his way to California to demonstrate this new mode of transportation.

We are at another pivotal point in our history. The rate of change happening in the world related to technology, transportation, and preferences for how we live and shop creates challenges and opportunities. It creates some uncertainty as well, but we do know that what we have done for the past 50 years won’t necessarily guarantee success in the next 10, 20 or 50 years. It is time once again to think big about the future of Overland Park. What do we want to be in the future? What bold steps do we take now to ensure we continue to be a high-quality community for future generations?

The ForwardOP Vision outlines a bold vision for the future ensuring that through thoughtful implementation of these actions, the community will continue to thrive and be ready to take on the challenges and opportunities of the next 50 years.
Vision

Overland Park will lead as a forward-thinking, innovative and welcoming community.

**Forward-thinking**
where the community continually plans for the future and is looked to as a leader both regionally and nationally.

**Innovative**
where intentionality and imagination work together to set a high standard for all aspects of community life.

**Welcoming**
where people of all ages and from diverse backgrounds are engaged in the community.

Goals

1. **A welcoming place** where all people have access to high quality education, affordable healthcare, social services, and a safe environment, and where the community works together for the greater good.

2. **An engaged community** offering opportunities for people to interact with each other, local leaders and institutions that provide an array of civic services.

3. **A high quality, sustainable and attractive built environment** offering a variety of choices including neighborhoods that offer the opportunity to live, work, and play and establishes Overland Park as a destination for business development and family fun.

4. **A connected city** offering choices for mobility including well-maintained road networks, public transit, sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails with an emphasis on embracing new infrastructure technologies and future transportation modes.

5. **A strong economy** anchored by a diverse job base and positive city image that is attractive to investment and visitors, allowing for a high quality of life for all people.

In the action agenda chapter you will see the icons of the goals cross referenced to the actions that they most closely support.
"Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world"

Joel A. Barker
Chapter 2: Action Agenda

The Action Agenda contains the programs, policies and projects that the community will implement to achieve the overall vision and supporting goals.

What is an action?
An action, simply stated, is a program, policy or project. The actions are organized by initiative area; each initiative area contains multiple actions. All the actions work in support of the goals and overall vision. Some actions are “big”; they are longer-term and work to stretch the community in current offerings, ideas, policy, etc. Other actions are smaller in nature and can be achieved in a shorter time frame but are still powerful at helping the community realize its goals.

All actions contained within the action agenda are intended to:

1. advance the vision and goals;
2. enhance core services and programs;
3. improve the attractiveness for personal, business and institutional investments;
4. connect to community input directly or indirectly;
5. enhance the image of the community both internally and externally;
6. increase community pride;
7. provide economic benefit.

Who will implement?
Everyone! This community-wide vision is not the work of just the government. While the City will play a critical role in implementation, the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce, Visit OP, and many community partners will need to work together in order to implement the plan.

Where do we start?
Reflecting community input and the recommendations of the Steering Committee, four implementation areas are highlighted for priority attention:

- Creating spaces where people can gather for both special occasions and daily events, promoting a greater sense of community (e.g. Action 1.1);
- Improving physical connectivity to, from and around the city, innovating in the areas of mobility and transportation (e.g. Action 5.1);
- Caring for all people by promoting health and well-being, specifically focusing on mental wellness (e.g. Action 4.1);
- Providing a wider range of housing options, ensuring that residents of diverse incomes, ages, and abilities are able to thrive (e.g. Action 2.1).
Plan Organization

The Action Agenda contains 39 actions and is organized by eight initiative areas.

5 Goals

8 Initiative Areas

Gathering
physical spaces, programs, and events for people
8 actions

Living
housing affordability and housing choice
5 actions

Learning
continue to be a leading education city
3 actions

Well-being
mental and physical wellness in the broadest sense
4 actions

Connecting
modern approaches to transportation and infrastructure
4 actions

Welcoming
cultivate an open and engaging environment for all
5 actions

Innovating
promote an atmosphere of innovation
7 actions

Placemaking
cultivate a greater sense of place in the built environment
4 actions
I. Gathering

This initiative area is focused on programs, policies and projects that bring the community together and invite travelers to visit by developing physical spaces, programs and events.

1.1 Create large, signature gathering spaces.

A large greenspace suitable for hosting festivals and events (including concerts), proximate to dining and other facilities, would provide a location for the community to come together on special occasions and draw regional visitors to experience our city. Additional gathering places in the form of local mixed-use districts, bustling with shops, entertainment venues, restaurants, arts spaces, and other amenities, would complement the greenspace by providing other centralized locations for gathering around daily activities and special events.

1.2 Explore opportunities to integrate smaller-scale gathering and green spaces within existing areas.

Incorporate new green space and gathering areas within existing retail and commercial centers. Explore creative planning and policies to increase development and funding for such improvements throughout the city.

1.3 Expand and create community-wide events celebrating quality of life, fun, and cultural diversity and inclusion.

As Overland Park grows more diverse, new ways to celebrate our cultural diversity should be created in the form of community-wide festivals, programming and other events. Existing local and regional events should be promoted and enhanced.

1.4 Explore opportunities for dedicated parks and recreation funding and park land dedication requirements.

A dedicated funding stream for parks and recreation should be explored along with requirements for park land and open space in new developments.

1.5 Build a new city hall in alignment with the city’s growth and needs.

Explore the feasibility of developing a new state of the art city hall building that could also serve as a community asset and gathering space for community events and serve as a demonstration site for new technologies and smart infrastructure.
1.6 **Develop attractions and recreation options along the trail system.**
The trail system is a source of pride for the community and should continue to be upgraded and expanded through added features, new connections, attractions and recreational opportunities.

1.7 **Continue to grow the youth sports culture.**
Overland Park has a strong youth sports culture and should continue to build upon current offerings and look for new opportunities related to the future of youth sports.

1.8 **Create a public/private partnership to help fund and manage neighborhood events.**
Expand the current city support program for neighborhood events to include private sponsors who can provide additional funding, in-kind support or other resources.
2. Living

This initiative area is focused on programs, policies and projects that address housing affordability and housing choice within the community.

2.1 Create more diverse housing options.

While maintaining the aesthetic and social values of Overland Park, housing affordability and choice should be addressed. It is important that housing be made financially accessible to residents of different income levels focused specifically on workforce and young professionals. The initiative should particularly emphasize diversity, workforce, and transportation, facilitating opportunities for employees to live near their jobs. By offering different types of housing and neighborhoods, more employees can live closer to work.

2.2 Create an age-friendly and all-abilities Community Plan.

To help seniors age in place and residents of all abilities to be fully connected to Overland Park, an age-friendly and all-abilities plan should be created to make Overland Park a place where all can live as full a life as possible.

2.3 Strengthen the identity of neighborhoods.

Expand the current neighborhood identity program to focus on beautification, gateway signage and other neighborhood upgrades to help neighborhoods increase their pride in place.

2.4 Establish policies that support the creation of "pocket neighborhoods."

To address housing affordability and increase housing choice, ensure that current zoning and policies related to new developments support the creation of smaller pocket neighborhoods. These new neighborhoods would not only offer a different housing product, but also a lifestyle with increased walkability, mixed use, and infill opportunities near current development areas.

2.5 Convene conferences on the topic of maintaining vibrant suburbs.

As preferences for living, working and housing are changing, suburbs face unique challenges and opportunities. Leaders should be convened from other top suburbs to establish benchmarks and discuss issues facing suburbs in the next 30 years.
3. Learning

This initiative area is focused on programs, policies and projects related to education, ensuring Overland Park continues to be a leading education city.

### 3.1 Establish the Education City Initiative.

Overland Park will be a city where lifelong learning is part of the culture. This initiative would promote and invest in the education of the Overland Park community by exploring and supporting lifelong learning opportunities such as a universal pre-k program, enriching the already thriving K-12 school system, providing counseling/resources for students exploring post-secondary options, offering free or subsidized college tuition to qualified Overland Park residents, providing technical training with a focus on workforce development, and offering general continuing education and enrichment classes. Overland Park will continue to demonstrate a value for high-quality education in the decades to come by providing life-long learning opportunities that foster personal prosperity and cultivate engaged, informed citizens.

### 3.2 Enhance joint school and parks summer youth programming.

Summer programs featuring education, healthy meals, recreation and exercise should be expanded and modified to enhance support for families and youth and to maximize resources.

### 3.3 Expand the current mentorship program between schools and local businesses.

The current mentorship programs between schools and local businesses should be expanded to serve more educators, students, and families and to provide partnerships for more local businesses.

Source: ANU Easters

*Summer youth programming with outdoor education*
4. Well-being

This initiative area is focused on programs, policies and projects related to mental and physical wellness in the broadest sense.

4.1  **Develop a center for wellness.**

There are a variety of agencies and organizations in the community that should work together to increase access to a wide variety of wellness resources with a focus on mental health services. Together they would provide well-rounded care for individuals, as well as promote research, advocacy, and awareness of mental health challenges. Special attention should be paid to youth with emphasis on loneliness, bullying, and suicide prevention to help break down barriers to mental health and increase access to mind/body wellness. Resources and services will be focused to make Overland Park one of the healthiest places in the country for people of all abilities.

4.2  **Evaluate the creation of a center for social entrepreneurship and innovation.**

In partnership with local and regional higher educational institutions, a center for social entrepreneurship should be explored to support innovation focused on social, cultural and environmental issues both locally and nationally. The center would provide the community with tools and insights needed to tackle some of the most pressing issues facing individuals and communities today.

4.3  **Explore increased access to social services.**

In collaboration with Johnson County, inventory and analyze current service offerings and locations and identify potential areas that could better serve Overland Park residents. Services to be studied include food pantries, homeless shelters, wellness of women and children, substance abuse treatment, and other critical social services.

4.4  **Promote mental health awareness and training programs for the business and nonprofit community.**

To increase awareness and acceptance of mental health issues, a training program should be provided to teach participants to notice and support individuals who may be experiencing a mental health crisis and connect them with appropriate resources.
5. Connecting

This initiative area is focused on programs, policies and projects related to transportation and infrastructure with specific attention focused on transit and anticipation of future mobility modes.

5.1 Develop a state-of-the-art mobility* system.

To complement and expand existing street and highway infrastructure and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) plans, and to provide transportation options, accessibility, and convenience, a state-of-the-art mobility system should be developed. This system would expand current transit options available to Overland Park residents as well as take advantage of technology advancements and future potential transportation modes, such as a streetcar (of the future) connectivity to Kansas City, MO. Studies show that transportation improvements can impact surrounding investment in community development.

5.2 Conduct an audit to define and cultivate walkability.

Utilize the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines and benchmark city criteria to conduct a walkability audit. Address current access to and design of sidewalks, crosswalks, safety elements, street lighting and aesthetics in currently developed areas. In an effort to better define walkability and what walkability can and should be in Overland Park, a set of walkability guidelines and requirements should be developed for all new developments.

5.3 Implement the Overland Park Bicycle Master Plan.

Ongoing implementation and updates to the city’s existing Overland Park Bicycle Master Plan should remain a priority.

5.4 Explore new transportation funding opportunities.

Overland Park should explore additional sources of funding to match or leverage state and federal resources for transportation infrastructure. Reliable funding would ensure that Overland Park is able to keep pace with changing transportation technologies, population growth and changing resident and workforce demands.

*Definition: Mobility

Mobility refers to the movement of people between the places they live, work, and play. It includes all modes of transportation: walking, biking, driving, and riding public transit. As technology advances, preferences for new and different modes of transportation are increasing. Overland Park must continue to accommodate drivers with excellent road and highway infrastructure while also investing in alternative and future modes of transportation.
6. Welcoming

This initiative area is focused on programs, policies and projects that cultivate an open and welcoming environment for all.

6.1 Develop an international center for cultural understanding.

In a spirit of community building, a center for cultural understanding should be created to promote cultural education and awareness. This center will serve Overland Park residents as the community becomes more diverse, encouraging cross-cultural relationships and embracing differences. The center will facilitate events and discussions to celebrate, educate, and engage residents and visitors from all different backgrounds and ethnicities.

6.2 Create and implement a diversity* inclusion plan for future leaders.

As Overland Park becomes more diverse, it should implement a plan to ensure that future leaders reflect the diversity of the community by providing leadership and engagement opportunities throughout the community.

6.3 Create an “Open OP” event.

To promote openness and understanding of cultures and perspectives, Overland Park should create an event that allows residents and visitors to gain access to typically closed off or difficult to access places (i.e. large corporate headquarters, maker spaces, artist studios, large private or historic homes, educational assets, churches or temples).

6.4 Create a welcome kit for new community members.

Develop an online welcome portal to introduce new members to the community and a quick facts document for easy reference and convenient printing from home. This idea could be expanded to also include welcome events quarterly, free tickets to area attractions and other resources for HOAs to welcome new neighbors.

*Definition: Diversity

Diversity is recognizing, embracing, and benefiting from our individual differences, including the dimensions of sex, race, color, ethnic background, religion, age, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or disability.
7. Innovating

This initiative area is focused on programs, policies and projects which promotes an atmosphere of innovation.

7.1 Create a corporate innovation environment.

To best position the city to be attractive to future potential corporate headquarters and to keep current businesses competitive, there must be a continuous focus on innovation. The corporate environment in OP should promote innovation in sustainability, workforce, transit, connectivity, and technology. It should emphasize aspects of both the built environment and the social environment by providing world-class amenities that promote the well-being and satisfaction of employees. “Smart” and connected infrastructure should be installed citywide to ensure that Overland Park can capitalize on imminent technological advances. As a result, the city becomes a more “connected” place where corporations want to be.

7.2 Create a citywide “smart” and connected infrastructure plan.

This infrastructure plan would include a focus on citywide Wi-Fi, a camera system, automated intersections, and enhanced solar and wind energy production. The plan should also address the piloting of new sources of renewable energy, the feasibility of developing a solar utility, and explore opportunities to monetize streets and rights-of-way for other uses such as telecom, energy, data, etc.

7.3 Create a personal mobile experience that provides guidance and improves event and leisure experiences in the city.

Residents and visitors alike would benefit from access to more information about entertainment, recreation, dining, leisure, and transportation around Overland Park.
7.4 **Expand support for local businesses and entrepreneurs.**

To encourage local and homegrown businesses and enhance opportunities for unique experiences in the marketplace, Overland Park should expand, promote, and collaborate with services offered locally and regionally.

7.5 **Create an innovation council.**

To spearhead progress and ensure that Overland Park is the forefront of innovative thinking in all aspects of community life, a council of community and business innovators should be formed and resources should be dedicated to focus on innovation and progress.

7.6 **Attract new, emerging event and sporting opportunities.**

Partner with businesses, community groups, and existing venues to expand offerings, attracting new and emerging event and sporting opportunities such as e-gaming and reality gaming events and other conferences.
8. Placemaking

This initiative area is focused on programs, policies and projects that cultivate a greater sense of place in the built environment*.

8.1 Develop a culinary arts initiative.

Overland Park should capitalize on its existing strengths – Johnson County Community College’s accredited chef apprenticeship program and the city’s proximity to agriculture resources – to become a culinary destination. Brick and mortar establishments, pop-up restaurants, and mobile vendors would offer local, sustainable, and farm-to-table innovations that distinguish OP as a culinary arts capital. This would set Overland Park apart from others by encouraging local home-grown restaurants and food-based businesses.

8.2 Expand the network of community gardens throughout the city.

In support of action 8.1, the creation and promotion of community gardens, vertical gardens, and teaching gardens should be undertaken to build upon the success of the Overland Park Community Garden.

8.3 Enhance community beautification efforts.

Increase recognition of businesses, neighborhoods, and streetscapes for beautification efforts, such as through the expansion of the Legacy of Greenery Awards.

8.4 Create an iconic piece of art or attraction.

An iconic piece of art representative of Kansas should be created which would be a point of pride for the community. This art should be physically accessible for all visitors to promote our city as a visitor destination for the region and nation.

8.5 Create a once a year high profile temporary public art event that would attract visitors from around the state and nation.

To better showcase local artists and attract artists across the nation, a new temporary public art event should be created which would capitalize on the unique features and opportunities in Overland Park (large amount of right-of-way, office parks, public spaces, parks, and other destinations within the community).

*Definition: Built Environment

The American Planning Association defines the built environment as “the elements of the environment . . . that are generally built or made by people as contrasted with natural processes.” Examples include buildings, streetscapes, transportation infrastructure, parks and gardens.


Source: Broadmoor Motors

Public Art Event, ArtPrize, competition in Grand Rapids (8.5)
Chapter 2: Action Agenda

Top: Denver’s Blue Bear, “I See What You Mean”
Left: Cloud Gate in Chicago
Right: The Kelpies, Scotland
"I have ideas to share and OP is listening."

Community Conversations Participant
The ForwardOP process consisted of two parts; public engagement and technical analysis.

**Process Overview**
Community engagement is an essential and relevant aspect of the visioning process. It was a goal that ForwardOP be open, inclusive and transparent, and to that end a robust community engagement process was implemented. All who cared about the future of Overland Park were invited to participate to ensure that this vision reflects the authentic voice of the community. A thorough technical analysis of the local context and regional and national trends complement the community input to provide additional insight into the planning process. This year-long process was anchored by three main community engagement events, online activities and a working steering committee that met regularly throughout the process.

**Steering Committee**
A diverse group of 28 community members was convened to guide the planning process and to ensure that it was built on the values, needs, and aspirations of the community. The Steering Committee worked closely with the leadership team, the planning consultant team, and other community members to bring insight and perspective to the planning process. They helped spread the word about the planning effort to encourage community participation. They also advised on the plan’s substance, helping staff and the consultant team to integrate the community’s intuition with technical analysis. Committee members acted as spokespersons for the planning effort, served as hosts at public events, and facilitated small group discussions. The Committee met nine times (nearly every month) throughout the process and was considered a working group rather than a “blue ribbon” panel.

**Community Connectors**
A group of 100 community leaders named the "Community Connectors" was created to act as ambassadors of the process and to drive people to participate through their own networks and connections. This group along with the Steering Committee was responsible for word of mouth marketing of the process and to get people interested and excited to participate. The Community Connectors were provided an outreach toolkit with a number of different outreach and publicity tools to spread the word about the ForwardOP process.
Engagement Process

The year-long process was anchored by three main community engagement events: the Imagine Tomorrow workshop in January 2018, Community Conversations in April and the Reveal the Vision Open House in September. Online activities followed each round of engagement.
Outreach and Publicity

To ensure that anybody who lives, works, plays, learns, or worships in Overland Park knew about the opportunity to get involved in this planning effort, a robust outreach and publicity effort was undertaken.

**Traditional Media**
- 83,000 Quarterly newsletters mailed by the city and the Chamber of Commerce

**Website and Email**
- 3,200 Unique visitors to ForwardOP.org

**Social Media**
- 11,000 Residents reached through each post on Nextdoor
- 7,500 Flyers and posters distributed
- 5,300 Email subscribers received 58 email updates
- 1,900 Average Facebook reach of 79 posts shared
- 796 Visitors to the Imagine Tomorrow Workshop event page on OPKansas.org
- 282 Original Tweets using #ForwardOP
- 1,100 Views for 15 YouTube videos

Unique ways to get the word out:
- Kiosk at Oak Park Mall
- Movie Theater Ads
- Newspaper Ads
Chapter 3: Process

Round I: Imagine Tomorrow Workshop

550 members of the community came out to the Imagine Tomorrow Workshop to get energized and share their big ideas for the city’s future.

As participants arrived at the beginning of the night, they were asked to share, in one word, what they love most about Overland Park. Some of the top ideas included the schools, parks and green spaces, and safety, represented in the Word Cloud to the right. Then Peter Kageyama got everyone’s creative juices flowing with his keynote address, “Love Where You Live”, about the connections between emotional attachment and economic vitality in cities.

Participants then wrote what they hoped the headlines would be for Overland Park in 20 years. People dreamed big, imagining everything from being the most livable city in America to hosting the 2038 Olympics to becoming the country’s first car-free city. Then, in small groups, participants brainstormed a list of ideas about how to make Overland Park an even better place in the future. All of the input generated, over two thousand pieces, laid the foundation for the vision statement goal and began to frame the action agenda.

Activities

Participants worked individually and in small groups on the following activities:

1. Write the Headline: “What will the news say about Overland Park in 20 years?”

Participation

550 people attended the workshop,
87 participated online,
2,861 total pieces of unique input were collected,
454 exit questionnaires were completed and indicated high satisfaction with the event.
Focus Groups

In a effort to be as inclusive as possible a series of focus groups were convened as a follow up to the Imagine Tomorrow Workshop.

In order to ensure that the plan included input from a diverse sample of the population, five focus groups were convened after the Imagine Tomorrow Workshop. Although representation at the workshop itself was not significantly different from the actual population of Overland Park, the Steering Committee urged the convening of these groups in an effort to engage an even greater diversity of people. Comparing workshop attendance to population projections from the county and planning NEXT, the Steering Committee identified the Latino community, lower income residents, and younger residents as groups of particular interest. As a result, the following focus groups were organized:

1. Growing Futures;
2. Johnson County Community College;
3. 35 and under;
4. Latino Community;
5. Young Professionals.

**Activities**

Participants worked individually and in small groups on the following activities:

1. Write the Headline: “What will the news say about Overland Park in 20 years?”

**Participation**

- **105** people attended focus groups,
- **370** total pieces of unique input were collected,
- **98** exit questionnaires were completed.
People who live, play, shop, learn, and worship in Overland Park participated in a series of ten “community conversations” located throughout the city. The Chamber of Commerce, Visit Overland Park Board, and the Teen Council also convened to offer their input. At each identical event, participants rated and commented on the draft vision and goals, which were based upon the ideas submitted by the public at the Imagine Tomorrow Workshop. Then, working in small groups, they reviewed and discussed potential actions in each of the initiative areas, also drawn from the Imagine Tomorrow Workshop input and the Steering Committee’s work. Community members who were unable to attend the sessions were invited to participate in the same activities online.

Activities
Participants worked individually and in small groups on the following activities:

1. Draft Vision and Goals: “On a scale from 1 to 5, please rate how strongly you support the following statements, with 1 being “not at all” and 5 being “full support”

2. Review Draft Actions and additional actions.

Participation

252 people attended the conversations,

193 participated online,

2,238 total pieces of unique input were collected,

419 exit questionnaires were completed.

Between April 24th and 26th, community members came back together to continue the conversation about the future of Overland Park.
Round 3: Reveal the Vision Open House

On September 27th, more than 200 people came together to view and to give feedback on the draft Action Agenda of the Vision.

After brief introductory remarks, attendees browsed ten display boards around the room. The first two boards provided an introduction to the planning process, planning context, and an overview of the action agenda. The remaining boards contained 39 action items, organized by eight initiative areas. Attendees were invited to prioritize the top five actions that they believe will have the greatest impact on Overland Park. Because ForwardOP is a community plan, participants were also asked to suggest local organizations, institutions, or groups that should be involved in implementing the actions. Finally, everyone who attended the Open House was given the opportunity to share feedback about specific action items and indicate if they wanted to get involved in the implementation of a particular action or initiative area.

Participation

233 people provided feedback,

81 indicated that they want to get involved with implementation,

173 unique comments were made about the action agenda.

Online Engagement

For community members who were unable to attend the public meetings, online activities were made available on the project website for several weeks afterward. Invitations and links on Facebook, Twitter, and email directed participants to activities that asked the same questions as the in-person activities and collected some of the same demographic information as well.
Planning Context

In addition to the thousands of pieces of public input that helped to craft the vision, existing conditions and trends were analyzed to ensure that the bold ideas in this plan are grounded in the current realities facing Overland Park.

**Overland Park Community Assessment**

**POPULATION...**

195,000

population (2018 estimate)

4.7% +32k

change in pop. (2000-2015)

4.5% Olathe

2.5% Lee’s Summit

4.6% Lenexa

**PEOPLE**

is aging...

![Age group proportion chart]

and becoming more diverse.

16% 27,068

non-white (2015)

94% +13K

change (2000-2015)

10.6% 14,893

foreign born (2015)

74% +8K

change (2000-2015)

**HOUSEHOLDS...**

74,830

households (hh.) (2015 estimate)

26% +15K

change in hh. (2000-2010)

2.41

average hh. size (persons per hh.) (2015)

-2%

change (2000-2015)

30%

hh. with children under 18 (2015)

-13%

change (2000-2015)

and more single-person.

31%

single-person hh. (2010)

42% +10K

change (2000-2010)
ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT

123,756

total jobs
(2015 estimate)

Top Employers (2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sprint</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawnee Mission School Dist.</td>
<td>3,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Valley School Dist.</td>
<td>3,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black &amp; Veatch</td>
<td>3,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jo. Co. Community College</td>
<td>2,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PERSONAL PROSPERITY

$72,463

median household income
(2015)

$76,113 Johnson Co.

$52,205 Kansas

4.4%

unemployment rate
(2015)

4.5% Johnson Co.

5.9% Kansas

5.9%

people living below the poverty line
(2015)

6.2% Johnson Co.

13.6% Kansas

58%

pop. over age 25 with a college degree
(2015)

53% Johnson Co.

31% Kansas

PLACE

75.6 sq mi

total city land area
(2015)

66 sq mi St. Louis, MO

48 sq mi Boston, MA

HOUSING

EXISTING LAND USE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use</th>
<th>% of land</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-family</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undeveloped</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right-of-way</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-family</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
National and Regional Trends

Beyond the local context, the vision for Overland Park is also based on an understanding of several trends facing the region and nation as a whole.

Retail

- Online retail continues to thrive and expand as an alternative to traditional, brick-and-mortar retail. Many retailers, however, are seeing growth in their connections between online and physical shopping, asserting that "physical stores are not going away."
- Personalization is a main focus for retailers. The adoption of artificial intelligence will only increase the extent to which retail experiences are tailored to individual shoppers.¹

Transportation

- New technology is rapidly advancing transportation systems. The Internet of Things (IOT) allows for cities to be both "connected" and "smart," increasing valuable data and expanding transportation options.
- Autonomous vehicles are no longer visions of a distant future; they are a reality that will be imminently and broadly adopted.
- Alternatives to driving private cars are increasingly desirable in light of traffic and environmental concerns.

Living Preferences

- Preferences of millennials and seniors across the country are shifting away from suburban style living to more urban style environments.
- Walkability, easy access to dining, entertainment, and recreation, and proximity to public transportation are highly desirable attributes.
- Integrated live, work and play communities are growing in popularity as they provide access to a wide range of amenities.

Related Local Planning

It is important to note that while this plan works to align the community under one vision, many ongoing and previous planning process are still relevant and will be important to the implementation of this plan.

Vision Metcalf

The Vision Metcalf plan was adopted in 2008 in an effort to identify a long term approach to the revitalization of the Metcalf Avenue Corridor. This major transportation corridor represents the spine around which Overland Park developed. Areas of decline along the corridor were evident and the community undertook this effort to provide a roadmap for its revitalization.

This plan contained a variety of associated goals and objectives and will remain a central organizing plan for the Metcalf Corridor for years to come. This plan aligns with recommendations being developed in the vision for ForwardOP by identifying the need to enhance walkability, create gathering places, develop a modern mobility system of the future, and build a City Hall. In many ways, these ideas were first identified and uncovered through the planning process of Vision Metcalf.

**College and Metcalf Plan**
This plan was completed in 2018 and is essentially an addendum to the Vision Metcalf Plan. The purpose for this plan was to expand the principles of the Vision Metcalf plan into this significant employment corridor and to identify how best to increase entertainment and activity around the convention center and along the corridor. This plan identified a potential redevelopment opportunity that incorporates a mix of uses in a walkable environment in an effort to produce development that attracts new residents and caters to visitors and businesses in the area. A key component of the plan includes rethinking the design of the public streets to create a more walkable and attractive pedestrian environment.

**Comprehensive Park System Master Plan**
This plan was completed in 2013 and established a vision for Overland Park’s Park System as follows:

“Overland Park’s system of well designed and maintained parks, greenways and recreation facilities are central elements to the community’s well being, active lifestyles and identity. These places and the experiences they offer provide wide ranging benefits for residents and visitors, while preserving green space and strengthening the local economy.”

Of note, the plan specifically recommended designing and developing a signature park to spur economic development. The plan noted, “A signature park is a community centerpiece and showcase, the “go-to” place for visitors, and a source of pride for residents. This type of park is one-of-a-kind, combining public art with large public gathering spaces and attractions for all ages.” Extensive research has shown that well-designed parks, such as a signature park, can spur reinvestment into surrounding neighborhoods and increase the value of surrounding properties (thus increasing property taxes). Parks of this type are suited in areas where denser, more walkable neighborhoods are desired, as they generate more foot traffic and a related demand in retail and commercial space.

**Safe Bicycle Use Outreach Project**
The City of Overland Park Safe Bicycle Use Outreach Project was completed in 2015 and is a coordinated and strategic effort to develop a comfortable, safe, and accessible network of bicycle facilities throughout Overland Park. The Project Report builds on existing assets in the city, including an extensive network of paths and trails, a diverse range of bicycle riders, and strong interest from the public in improving bicycle conditions and safety in Overland Park. The Project Report addresses challenges that bicyclists currently face, including the lack of a connected network and safety concerns. The Project Report strives to improve the experience of bicyclists throughout the city, while also addressing issues such as education and awareness, driver behavior, bicycle parking, and maintenance of bicycle facilities.

**Downtown**
The redevelopment of Downtown Overland Park is one of the critical actions identified in Vision Metcalf. This node of development already contained many elements recommended for places in the Vision Metcalf Plan. This node is the founding geographic location of Overland Park and its renaissance and ongoing development activity has remained a focus of the City of Overland Park throughout the City’s history.

To allow for this change in development patterns, other basic issues were necessary to prepare for this change. Analyses associated with parking, walkability, bicycle use, and a public art plan have been prepared.
"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

African Proverb
4
IMPLEMENTATION

The ForwardOP Vision presents an action agenda for realizing the community’s shared vision for the future. The success will not be determined by the quality of this document, but rather by the committed, ongoing implementation of its actions. The all-encompassing nature of the Vision means it can only be achieved through the collaborative efforts of the community.
Overview

Individuals and organizations have already begun to work together during the preparation of the plan. Nearly 1,200 community members representing a wide range of backgrounds and interests served on committees, volunteered, or attended meetings to guide the process. Thousands more were made aware through the many publicity and outreach efforts. There is widespread awareness of the Vision and ForwardOP is viewed favorably within the community. It is time now to harness that energy to work towards achieving the vision.

Collaborating

This section of the report describes the suggested approach for carrying out the Vision. The Vision is not intended to be solely implemented by city government. This is a "community" initiative and its implementation will require the coordinated efforts of individuals and organizations representing the public, private, and civic sectors of the community. Even those actions that require public sector involvement need an active citizenry to place them on the agendas of government agencies.

Managing

The Leadership team is creating a management plan to ensure the successful and ongoing implementation of the Vision. The Vision should be actively managed on a regular basis and monitored for implementation effectiveness and relevancy. This review should happen on a formal basis no less than once per year. A status report should accompany this review and be promoted throughout the community, such as through the continued ForwardOP website. An annual public meeting—perhaps with a noted speaker—could take place to share progress and attract additional participants to move the community forward.

Updating the Plan

A formal review of the Vision should be considered every 5 years to incorporate new decennial Census data and other relevant changes and planning work going on in the community.
How to use this plan

This is intended to be a long range planning document, and also to be used on a daily basis as public and private decisions are made concerning the community's future. The following is a summary of how decisions and processes should be institutionalized to align with the vision and actions.

**Annual Work Programs and Budgets**

Organizations should be cognizant of the recommendations of the Plan when preparing annual work programs and budgets. This also includes considering the Plan when making important policy and financial decisions that impact the community.

**Community Planning**

Community planning efforts, including those of the City and the school districts, should be aligned with the values, goals and recommendations of the Plan.

**Capital Improvement Plan**

The city's capital improvement plan (CIP) should be consistent with the Plan's recommendations.

**Private Investment Decisions**

Property owners, developers, and other private entities should consider the Plan's recommendations in their planning and investment decisions. Public decision-makers will be using the Plan as a guide in their deliberations about proposals, projects, and funding requests. Property owners and developers should be cognizant of and complement the Plan's recommendations.

**Civic and Social Engagement**

All civic and community groups should create opportunities to explore solutions to issues of concern to the community. They should seek alignment with the recommendations of the Plan and collaborate across interests, missions, and constituencies.

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**Difference Between a Comprehensive Plan and a Vision Plan**

The city’s Comprehensive Plan is a long-term policy guide focused on physical aspects of the city, including land use, growth patterns, transportation, environment, and infrastructure. The city’s Comprehensive Plan has been in existence since the 1970s, with regular reviews and updates. It serves as the foundation of the city’s zoning code, annexation policy, capital improvements plan, and many other specific plans and policies. In contrast, the Vision Plan has a longer and broader perspective, looking into the future and considering potential scenarios. Future updates to the comprehensive plan will align with the vision plan.

**Comprehensive Plan**

- Long-term (usually 10–20 year horizon)
- Sets guidelines for policy
- Developed in late 1970s and subjected to annual review, updates, and amendments
- Focuses on physical aspects of the city (land use, growth patterns, transportation, environment, and infrastructure)
- Responsibility of the city

**Vision Plan**

- Longer-term (30+ years)
- Overland Park vision considered periodically: early 1900s at its inception, 1960 as a newly incorporated city, and mid-1980s
- Sets direction and aspirations
- Focuses more broadly on the future of the city and all aspects of community life
- Shared responsibility (City, Chamber of Commerce, Visit Overland Park, other community organizations and leaders)
Leadership and Funding Partners

This vision is a community-based plan at its core. Three partners came together to fund and facilitate the development of a forward-thinking vision for Overland Park. Successful implementation of this Vision will depend on continuing collaboration among the partners and across the entire community. The partners are preparing a management plan to help ensure the ongoing implementation of the Vision.

City of Overland Park
The City of Overland Park provides a wide array of services to its 195,000 residents. It spans four top school districts, operates fire and police departments, economic development and capital improvement programs, and extensive parks, recreation, and community centers.

Overland Park Chamber of Commerce
The Overland Park Chamber of Commerce is a business organization working to build a more vibrant community by connecting companies and their representatives, pursuing economic development efforts and representing pro-business interests through public policy and advocacy.

Visit OP
Visit OP serves as the official marketing organization of Overland Park by promoting the city’s visitor experiences to a local, regional and national audience. It is a not for profit corporation that drives new revenue to Overland Park by attracting convention delegates, youth sports competitors, corporate travelers and leisure visitors.
Action Summary

The following summary includes the 39 actions and a suggested timeframe for implementation.

**Timeframe**

This is a suggested timeframe for completion of the action. Some actions due to the nature of them will take many years to complete, however smaller sub-steps will provide visible evidence of progress over time. The timeframe suggested is the target for getting the entire action implemented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. GATHERING</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Key Recommendation</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Create large, signature gathering spaces.</td>
<td>mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Explore opportunities to integrate smaller-scale gathering and green spaces within existing areas.</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Expand and create community-wide events celebrating cultural diversity.</td>
<td>short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Explore opportunities for dedicated parks and recreation funding and park land dedication requirements.</td>
<td>short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Build a new city hall in alignment with the city's growth and needs.</td>
<td>mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>Develop attractions and recreation options along the trail system.</td>
<td>short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Continue to grow the youth sports culture.</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>Create a public/private partnership to help fund and manage neighborhood events.</td>
<td>short-term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. LIVING</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Key Recommendation</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Create more diverse housing options.</td>
<td>long-term, ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Create an Age-Friendly and All-Abilities Community Plan.</td>
<td>short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Strengthen the identity of neighborhoods.</td>
<td>short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Establish policies that support the creation of &quot;pocket neighborhoods.&quot;</td>
<td>mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Convene conferences on the topic of maintaining vibrant suburbs.</td>
<td>short-term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. LEARNING</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Key Recommendation</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Establish the Education City Initiative.</td>
<td>long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Enhance joint school and parks summer youth programming.</td>
<td>short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Expand the current mentorship program between schools and local businesses.</td>
<td>short-term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 4. WELL-BEING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Key Recommendation</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Develop a center for wellness.</td>
<td>long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Evaluate the creation of a center for social entrepreneurship and innovation.</td>
<td>mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Explore increased access to social services.</td>
<td>mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Promote mental health awareness and training programs for the business and nonprofit community.</td>
<td>short-term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5. CONNECTING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Key Recommendation</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Develop a state-of-the-art mobility system.</td>
<td>long-term, ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Conduct an audit to define and cultivate walkability.</td>
<td>short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Implement the Overland Park Bicycle Master Plan.</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Explore new transportation funding opportunities.</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6. WELCOMING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Key Recommendation</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Develop an international center for cultural understanding.</td>
<td>long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Create and implement a diversity inclusion plan for future leaders.</td>
<td>short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Create an “Open OP” event.</td>
<td>short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Create a welcome kit for new community members.</td>
<td>short-term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7. INNOVATING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Key Recommendation</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Create a corporate innovation environment.</td>
<td>long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Create a citywide “smart” and connected infrastructure plan.</td>
<td>long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Create a personal mobile experience that provides guidance and improves event and leisure experiences in the city.</td>
<td>short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Expand support for local businesses and entrepreneurs.</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Create an innovation council.</td>
<td>short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>Attract new, emerging event and sporting opportunities.</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 8. PLACEMAKING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Key Recommendation</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Develop a culinary arts initiative.</td>
<td>long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Expand the network of community gardens throughout the city.</td>
<td>short-term, ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>Enhance community beautification efforts.</td>
<td>short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>Create an iconic piece of art or attraction.</td>
<td>mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>Create a once a year high profile temporary public art event that would attract visitors from around the state and nation.</td>
<td>mid-term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>