

MEMORANDUM

Hoisington Koegler Group Inc.



To: Johnston Comprehensive Plan Advisory Board, City Council, Planning & Zoning Commission and City Staff
From: Mark Koegler
Subject: Comprehensive Plan Update Meeting – Tuesday, October 13, 2009
Date: October 7, 2009

The early stages of the Johnston Comprehensive Plan update includes three meetings focused on: 1) initiating the update process, and 2) critiquing and updating the vision and guiding principles that were contained in the 1998 plan. The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Board met on August 6th to review the planning process. On October 13th, a combined meeting will be held including the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Board, City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission. This memo addresses the combined meeting. On Tuesday, October 27th, a community meeting will be held to seek broader public input on establishing direction for the current plan; direction that will help shape the evolution of the community over the next 10 to 20 years.

The details of the October 13th combined meeting are as follows:

Date: Tuesday, October 13, 2009

Time: 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Location: Johnston Public Library

Agenda:

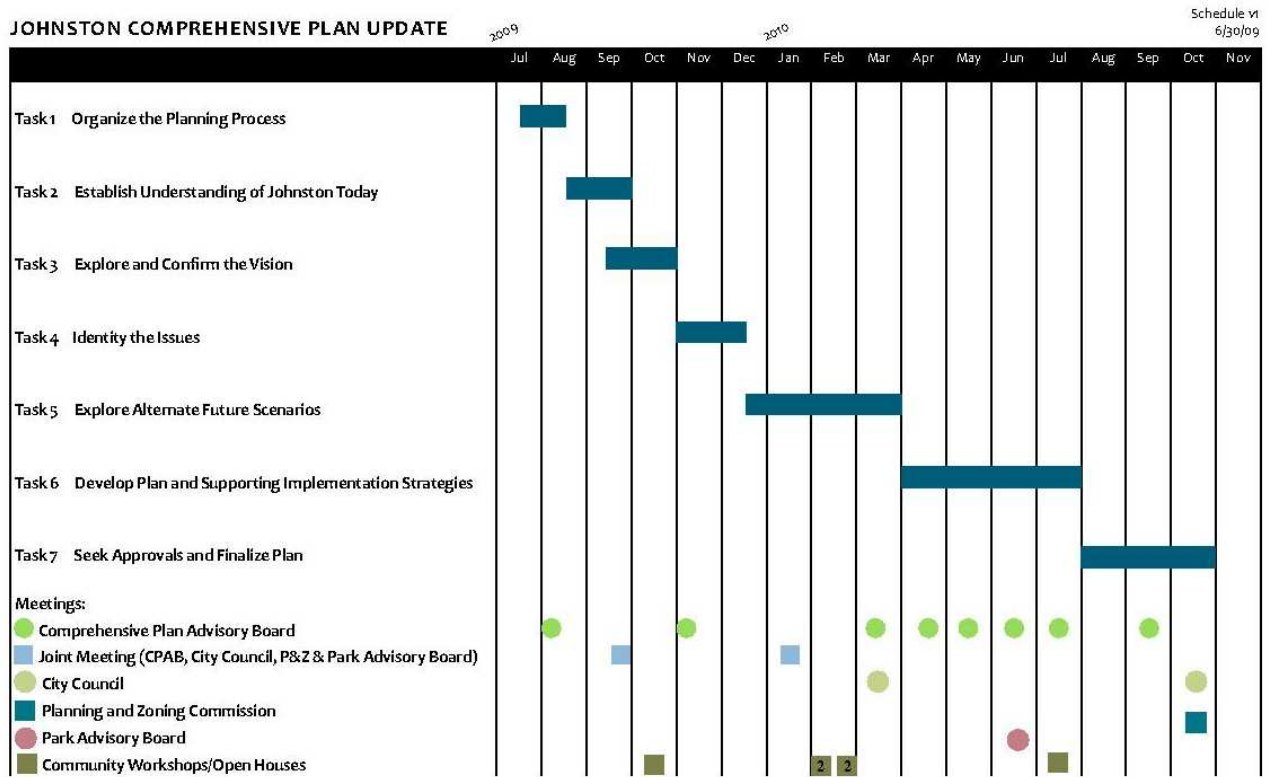
- 1) Opening (6:00 p.m.)
 - Introductions
 - Review Agenda
- 2) Planning Process Overview (6:15 p.m.)
 - Review schedule and tasks
- 3) A Snapshot of Changes in Johnston – 1998 to 2009 (6:30 p.m.)
 - Land Use
 - Housing
 - Demographics
- 4) Framework Review - 1998 Plan (6:45 p.m.)
 - Vision
 - Guiding Principles
 - Strengths and Weaknesses
 - Issues
- 5) Next Steps (7:50 p.m.)
- 6) Adjourn (8:00 p.m.)

Planning Process Overview

Meeting Objectives:

- Briefly review schedule and tasks
- Highlight future meetings and opportunities for input
- Answer questions

Over the course of the next 12 months, a series of tasks will be completed leading to an updated Johnston Comprehensive Plan in the fall of 2010. At the present time, we are moving toward the completion of Tasks 2 and 3 while beginning the early stages of Task 4. The first four tasks of the work program are intended to build a base for the plan update. Exploring and confirming Johnston’s vision is key element in directing subsequent steps in the plan and therefore, the focus of the combined meeting.



Changes in Johnston – 1998 to 2009

Tasks currently underway will provide a detailed illustration of Johnston today as compared to the community ten years ago. Many of the changes are obvious, more people living in the community, more jobs and yes, more traffic. As we move into a discussion of what Johnston wants to be ten years from now, we’d like to start with at least a brief overview of general changes that have occurred and trends that may hint at the future. Accordingly, we will spend some time at the meeting presenting information on land use changes, housing changes and shifts in the community’s demographics. It’s important to at least consider some of the broader patterns of change as we move into a review of the framework of the 1998 plan.

Review of Framework Elements – 1998 Plan

Meeting Objectives:

- *Review each of the framework elements from the 1998 plan*
- *Gather initial reactions as to the continued applicability of each statement*
- *Identify other topics and/or thoughts not addressed in the 1998 plan*

The Planning Framework chapter of the 1998 plan contained a vision statement, a set of guiding principles, a statement of community strengths and weaknesses and a list of planning issues. Collectively, this information set the stage for the direction of the plan and was reflected in policy recommendations as well as action steps and implementation strategies.

As a base for the 2010 plan update, we would like to start with a critique of the 1998 information by those of you who have worked most directly with the plan over the past decade, the City Council, P & Z and the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Board. At the upcoming community meeting, we will continue the broader process of testing the validity of this information and then crafting new language for the plan that represents contemporary thinking.

In order to accomplish the review in an efficient manner, each of the topic areas is shown below in chart form with the past plan language appearing on the left side and space for noting comments and changes on the right side. Consider this a bit of homework between now and the meeting – it would be helpful if you would review the statements from the past plan and note any of your initial reactions and/or comments. In your opinion, is the statement from the 1998 plan still valid? We will review each of these statements during the combined meeting with the intent of beginning the process of amending them as appropriate.

Vision Statement

The 1998 plan states, “Johnston’s vision speaks to what the city should be based on the community’s heritage, the natural features that are inherent to the area, and the values of its people. In the context of this plan, vision serves as a reminder of “what Johnston wants to be.” The vision sets the stage for establishing goals for the community.” The vision statement below is from the current plan.

Vision Statement (1998)	Comments:
<p data-bbox="220 1413 776 1476"><i>The Vision for the City of Johnston is for it to be a diverse and well-balanced community.</i></p> <p data-bbox="191 1514 802 1709"><i>Johnston will derive its sense of community from those very elements that define its small town heritage - the people, the neighborhoods, the schools, the businesses and the parks. Johnston will respect its natural setting, acknowledge the relevance of its history and embrace future opportunities.</i></p> <p data-bbox="191 1764 802 1860"><i>Johnston will invoke a strong expression of community pride. It will be known as an unparalleled place to live, work, recreate or just spend a little time.</i></p>	

Guiding Principles

A set of guiding principles was established as part of the 1998 plan as a way to guide development of the plan and to serve in the future as statements of criteria by which community development issues can be assessed. Together, these guiding principles and the vision serve the following purposes:

- They orient the community to the future, even to a future that is twenty years distant.
- They require imagination, recognizing that the direction that they set today will be the reality of the future.
- They look to current conditions and community traditions for clues to the appropriate future.
- They are based on a shared understanding of what the community desires for itself.
- They will be used as tools for evaluation of proposals, projects, ideas and future directions.
- They will be an anchor during conflict, a way of finding common ground and shared values.
- They become a basis for coordination and cooperation.
- They are a source of energy and enthusiasm for maintaining a commitment to the future of Johnston.

The guiding principles are an important tool to be used in addressing future issues in Johnston. They can be used as a conceptual yardstick in assessing future projects, developments and issues. While the community’s plan will continue to evolve over time and modifications will be necessary to accommodate unforeseen circumstances, it is important that the spirit and intent of the guiding principles be upheld. In doing so, they will help to ensure that the steps that Johnston has taken in preparing this comprehensive plan produce the desired results.

The following Guiding Principle statements were included in the 1998 plan:

Guiding Principles (1998)	
<p><i>An atmosphere that captures the spirit of a small town</i> Johnston should retain its small town qualities by promoting development that presents a logical pattern of organization. The community should maintain a safe, harmonious and attractive environment that places jobs, parks, schools and shopping in locations that are convenient to residential areas. Johnston should continue to be a community where you truly have the opportunity to know your neighbors</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p><i>Housing that reflects a full range of choices</i> Johnston should continue to offer housing choices that serve a broad range of incomes, lifestyles and age groups. The community’s housing stock should allow people to become life-long Johnston residents by affording them opportunities to move into alternative forms of housing as their needs change over time.</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p><i>A place for people to gather</i> Providing places for people to gather and interact is a key component in establishing a sense of community. Historically, the town square served as a central gathering space for formal and informal events.</p>	<p>Comments:</p>

<p>Johnston needs to provide a space and/or a series of spaces that captures the function and spirit of a town square, a place that promotes and accommodates groupings of people.</p>	
<p><i>A well balanced tax base</i> Johnston should preserve its fiscal integrity by maintaining a mix of land uses that result in a balanced tax base. A proper mix of uses in the community will provide desired employment, goods, and services while maintaining manageable residential tax rates.</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p><i>A proactive position on future growth</i> Johnston should position itself to plan for rather than react to growth. The Comprehensive Plan in tandem with the community’s codes and ordinances should be used to establish locations and rates of future growth and development. Future growth should be phased to maintain pace with the services and facilities necessary for its support.</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p><i>An identity that reflects the place</i> Johnston should present a clear community identity that includes a common “green” theme depicted in consistent, visible ways. Elements of the community’s heritage including Camp Dodge, the Des Moines River, Saylorville Lake, Pioneer and Johnston Station can be used to help create a distinctive and unique place.</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p><i>A built environment in harmony with the natural environment</i> The built environment in Johnston should express integrity, quality and diversity while respecting the patterns of the natural environment. Open space areas should be integrated with development to preserve significant natural systems and provide habitat for wildlife.</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p><i>Efficient infrastructure</i> Johnston should maintain a high quality, efficient infrastructure system. Utility and service delivery systems should serve both the present and future needs of the community. Infrastructure expenditures should be made on the basis of long-term cost and benefit rather than initial cost.</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p><i>Recreation opportunities for residents and visitors</i> The environment in and around Johnston presents a number of unique recreational opportunities. Johnston</p>	<p>Comments:</p>

<p>should provide a balanced system of neighborhood and community parks and open spaces that are connected within the city as well as being linked to regional points of interest in the area.</p>	
<p><i>Made in Johnston</i> Johnston should continue to accommodate the local production of goods and the provision of local services. Land use planning should allocate an adequate supply of land to accommodate the continued growth of existing businesses and the establishment of new business opportunities.</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p><i>Transportation Linkages</i> Transportation in Johnston should be used as an element of linkage rather than as an element of separation. Roads, sidewalks, trails, and mass transit should be used in an attractive manner to provide safe, convenient connections throughout the community and the surrounding area.</p>	<p>Comments:</p>

Strengths and Weaknesses

During two community meetings that were held in the fall of 1996, participants were asked to identify Johnston’s strengths and weaknesses. Their assessment of the community’s strengths and weaknesses was done in the context of how such factors either enhanced the opportunity to attain the City’s vision or posed challenges to attaining the identified future vision.

The following were identified as the community’s strengths in the 1998 plan:

<p>Strengths</p>	
<p>Location - Location - Location Location (Interstate and Saylorville Lake) Accessibility (Interstate, Other Communities, Commercial Developments) Interstates 80 and 35 Good geographic location Capitalize on Saylorville Lake (resort “feel”)</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>Corporate Neighbors/Partners Pioneer set standard for community development Camp Dodge Pioneer Hi-bred International</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>Land Available - Access to Recreation/Parks Open Spaces (flexible development) Undeveloped Areas - Growing Community Undeveloped Land Availability of Commercial/Industrial Land Land Development Opportunities</p>	<p>Comments:</p>

Availability of Developable Land (Open Space)	
Proactive Infrastructure Development of Sewer and Other Infrastructure Quality Developments Willingness to Provide Incentives	Comments:
Planned Development Potential Ability to Plan	Comments:
Positive Community Pride Community Awareness/Loyalty Good Reputation Attitude of Supportiveness People - Leadership and Cooperation Sense of Community Spirit (business and volunteers)	Comments:
Parks and Open Space Recreation Availability Existing Green/Open Spaces	Comments:
Schools Quality Schools Good Schools School System	Comments:

The following were identified as the community's weaknesses in the 1998 plan:

Weaknesses	
Infrastructure Inequities Infrastructure (streets, sewer, natural gas) Pace of Growth of City Services Public Safety Emergency Services (police, fire and medical) Infrastructure Inequity (unserved area)	Comments:
Uncontrolled Growth Threat of Uncontrolled Development (zoning and communication) Potential Uncontrolled Growth Uncontrolled Growth Difficulty Controlling Rapid Growth Planning and Zoning Consistency	Comments:
Old vs. New Lack of Community Confidence Rural/Urban Paradigms Young City Growth Erodes Community Spirit	Comments:

<p>External Influences No Control of Neighbors Limited Contiguous Land</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>Eyesores Neglected/Abandoned Property Ugly Architecture</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>Imbalance of Tax Base Commercial Development Challenge Lack of Commercial/Industrial Tax Base</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>Lack of Diversity Lack of Diversity Affordable Housing Issues</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p><i>Inadequate Community Facilities</i> Inadequate Community Facilities (library, recreation center/pool, parks) Lack of Community Facilities (library, city hall, community theater) Lack of Recreation Facilities (pool, parks, connections to bike trails) Few Actual Parks No City Center</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>Lack of Traffic Management Public Transportation Traffic Congestion Traffic Flow Traffic Control Lack of East/West Connections</p>	<p>Comments:</p>

Issues

In the early stages of the comprehensive planning process, issues were identified during the community meetings. Participants were asked, “What are the most significant issues facing Johnston today?” The following is a listing of the issues that were identified by the general public.

<p>Issues Parks Schools Future Land Use Traffic Patterns Future Commercial Growth Housing Aesthetics</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
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Community Entryways Future Industrial Growth Tax Base Community Identity Design Theme/Community Focus Rural Character Green Meadows Library Recreation Facilities Swimming Pool Infrastructure	
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The information resulting from the critiquing exercise above is intended to jump start the process of establishing the framework for the 2010 plan update. We will use the results of the effort along with information collected at the upcoming community meeting to assemble a new draft of plan framework elements.

Issues:

Issues:

