

City of Johnston – Thrive 2040 Comprehensive Plan

Frequently Asked Questions/Comments

October 2020

The following provides a list of topics that have emerged throughout the course of the Thrive 2040 Public Engagement process. This list of topics is not in any specific order. We have provided a brief narrative describing the comments and questions we have received and a response to the comment or question. You will see a recurring theme in the responses we provided. Comprehensive planning processes are designed to identify issues and strategies at a high level. Many of the issues required a more focused planning effort that is identified as an implementation strategy. Our hope is that those of you who have taken the time to comment and express concerns will stay involved and help the City continue to evolve these ideas into workable implementation efforts.

1. Aquatic facilities demand

A number of comments were made throughout the process with regards to having an aquatic facility of sorts. Comments ranged from a water park down to a simple splash pad. The draft plan recognizes the trend for communities to invest in aquatic related park amenities and further recognizes the interest from the community. This is not a new interest from the community and has been the subject of historical failed referendums. The draft plan does recognize the importance of continuing the dialogue around this topic and enabling a more focused discussion to define what options there are, who the partners might be, what potential capital and ongoing maintenance costs are associated with such an investment and how they might be financed. (See *implementation strategy #9 in chapter 9 Parks and Trails.*)

2. Indoor recreation facilities

Comments were made regarding the need for more indoor recreation facilities. Similar to aquatic facilities, indoor recreation facilities can come in many forms and can be public or privately owned. Opportunities to partner with public or private entities that already are established to provide such programs should be a first step. Defining what Johnston's needs are and determining the right facilities, programming, ownership, and operations requires flushing out the details through a more focused discussion and planning process similar to the aquatics facilities. Indoor recreation was added to an implementation strategy in the plan to identify this. (See *implementation strategy #9 in chapter 9 Parks and Trails.*)

3. Greenway corridors/park open space land use designation and how they are implemented

The Future Land Use Map defines a series of green corridors the legend defines as "Parks & Open Space". Various policies throughout the plan talk about the importance of connecting park facilities and preserving areas of open space and natural resources. A number of references are made to greenway corridors. Much of the land within the park and open space land use category consists of already owned city park land or undevelopable lands such as wetlands, floodways, and storm ponds. There are also areas that include known sensitive natural resources identified through other studies or where readily available data sets exist to map such resources. In some cases, the park and open space designation includes land area that is developable. The intent of the comprehensive plan in its interpretation is to encourage context sensitive development patterns and conservation-oriented design to preserve and protect areas in a way that helps

create a continuous corridor. This could include dedication of park lands or trails. Implementation would occur through the development process.

4. Concerns about multi-family housing

A number of concerns were expressed about multi-family housing. Issues were raised mostly about “to much” multi-family housing and impacts on schools and traffic for example. Housing is a critical part of a successful community and a balanced supply of house is necessary. A wide variety of (and divergent) opinions exist about what the right balance of housing types is appropriate for a given community. High density housing is included in the plan in order to achieve many other desired goals and strategies within the community. The vast majority of undeveloped land designated for future growth is guided for lower density residential. Infill areas and redevelopment areas are often guided for higher density because they are better locations with existing services that provide opportune and more efficient places for greater densities and associated services. Housing demands a more focused implementation strategy and an ongoing dialogue with the community to understand the issues associated with high density housing and importance that such housing presents to a city.

5. Senior Support services

A number of comments were made about the need to connect existing senior citizen resources in the community. While there may be perceived or real gaps in service, linking the various resources together will help in providing greater service to Johnston residents.

6. Public health, active/healthy living

A number of comments were made relating to the desire to maintain and improve Johnston to be an active / healthy living community. This theme is thread throughout the plan in a number of indirect but intentional ways including policy supportive of trail and sidewalk connections, land use patterns that support walkable destinations, economic development strategies that promote outdoor recreation, and variety of related implementation strategies.

7. Climate change and low impact development

Comments were made inquiring about how the plan addresses climate change trends and issues related to environmental impacts. Similar to active living and healthy communities, this topic is addressed indirectly throughout Thrive 2040 in an intentional way. Policies supportive of alternative mobility, alternative energy usage, low impact development strategies, natural resource protection, greenway corridors, etc. Land uses are designed in a way to ensure economic sustainability and support walkable destinations. Through these kinds of policies, we hope Johnston Thrive 2040 has a positive impact on the issue of climate change.

Where do we go from here?

Chapter 11 of the Thrive 2040 Plan layouts out a clear, concise, and aggressive implementation plan that will guide future decision making and aid in prioritizing and budgeting resources necessary to achieve this plan. The highlighted implementation strategies are as follows:



Go to the Natural Resources Chapter for more information

NATURAL RESOURCES IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	LEVEL OF EFFORT
1. Update City's Subdivision Regulations to protect and preserve sensitive natural resources: To preserve trees, floodplain, steep slopes, water quality, select stands of timber, and other similar environmentally sensitive features, examine specific requirements for environmental protection, such as erosion control or limited development on steep slopes, that may be incorporated into the city's subdivision regulations.	0-3 years	Community Development	Staff Resources - 2 Financial Resources - 2
2. Cooperate with the Wastewater Reclamation Authority (WRA) and other levels of Des Moines metropolitan government in promoting the use of innovative sewage treatment systems.	On-going	Public Works	Staff Resources - 1
3. Study the possibility of creating a program of public acquisition of select plant and wildlife habitat areas to ensure preservation.	0-3 years	Parks	Staff Resources - 3 Financial Resources - 3
4. Sand and gravel deposits are a natural resource. Future reclamation efforts for lands being mined for sand and gravel should be continually monitored and evaluated.	3-5 years	Community Development/ Parks	Staff Resources - 1

TABLE 11.1 NATURAL RESOURCES IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES



Go to the Land Use Chapter for more information

LAND USE IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	LEVEL OF EFFORT
1. Growth Area Planning	On-going	Community Development/ Public Works	Staff Resources - 2 Financial Resources - 1
2. Zoning and Subdivision Code Update	0-3 Years	Community Development	Staff Resources - 2 Financial Resources - 2
3. Merle Hay Road Streetscape Corridor Study	3-5 Years	Community Development/ Public Works	Staff Resources - 2 Financial Resources - 2
4. Re-use study of gravel pit areas	5-10 Years	Community Development/ Parks	Staff Resources - 2 Financial Resources - 1

TABLE 11.2 LAND USE IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES



Go to the Transportation Chapter for more information

TRANSPORTATION IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	LEVEL OF EFFORT
1. Implement Walkability Study recommendations	0-3 Years	Community Development/ Public Works/ Parks	Staff Resources - 2 Financial Resources - 4
2. Retrofit non-ADA pedestrian infrastructure	0-3 Years	Public Works	Staff Resources - 2 Financial Resources - 4
3. Conduct transit ridership demand survey	3-5 Years	Community Development/ DART	Staff Resources - 1
4. Collaborate with DART to evaluate and improve connections to transit and transit infrastructure. i.e. stops and shelters	Ongoing	Community Development/ Public Works	Staff Resources - 1 Financial Resources - 1
5. Update standard roadway sections (see Land Use #2)	3-5 Years	Public Works	Staff Resources - 1 Financial Resources - 1
6. Merle Hay Road Corridor Study (see Land Use #3)	3-5 Years	Community Development/ Public Works	Staff Resources - 3 Financial Resources - 3
7. Explore north/south corridor connections in collaboration with Iowa National Guard and Camp Dodge.	0-3 years	Community Development/ Public Works/ Iowa National Guard	Staff Resources - 2 Financial Resources - 2

TABLE 11.3 TRANSPORTATION IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES



Go to the Economic Development Chapter for more Information

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	LEVEL OF EFFORT
1. Coordination with property owners and prospective developers.	On-going	Economic Development/JEDCO	Staff Resources -1
2. Biannual Community Surveys	On-going	Economic Development	Staff Resources - 1
3. Business Attraction	On-going	Economic Development/JEDCO	Staff Resources -1
4. Utilize tax incentives and other tools	On-going	Economic Development	Staff Resources -1 Financial Resources - 3
5. Develop outdoor recreation plan and strategy	3-5 Years	Economic Development/Parks	Staff Resources 3 Financial Resources 2
6. Continue acquisition of flood plain properties along Beaver Creek for inclusion in recreation corridor	On-Going	Parks	Staff Resources - 1 Financial Resources - 4
7. Develop a sign and façade replacement program	0-3 Years	Economic Development	Staff Resources - 1 Financial Resources - 1
8. Invest in iconic commercial districts	Ongoing	Economic Development	Varies

TABLE 11.4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES



Go to the Housing Chapter for more Information

HOUSING IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	LEVEL OF EFFORT
1. Update Zoning and Subdivision Regulations	0-3 Years	Community Development	Staff Resources - 2 Financial Resources - 2
2. Develop a housing study	0-3 Years	Community Development	Staff Resources - 2 Financial Resources - 2
3. Monitor Housing conditions and trends	On-going	Community Development/ Non-profits/ Polk County Housing Trust Fund	Staff Resources - 2 Financial Resources - 1
4. Organize and facilitate community conversations	On-going	Community Development/ JEDCO/Regional Agencies	Staff Resources - 2
5. Build partnerships with lending institutions to provide grants or low interest or zero interest loans	0-3 Years	Community Development/ Economic Development	Staff Resources - 2

TABLE 11.5 HOUSING IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES



PARKS, TRAILS, AND RECREATION IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	LEVEL OF EFFORT
1. Review and update the Park System Master Plan	0-3 Years	Parks	Staff Resources - 2 Financial Resources - 2
2. Develop a community wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	0-3 Years	Parks/Community Development/Public Works	Staff Resources - 2 Financial Resources - 2
3. Utilize the City's website to promote park facilities and programs	On-going	Parks	Staff Resources - 1
4. Develop a community wide natural resources plan	0-3 Years	Parks/ Community Development	Staff Resources - 2 Financial Resources - 2
5. Install bicycle parking at park system destinations	0-3 Years	Parks	Staff Resources - 1 Financial Resources - 1
6. Develop partnerships to fund active living and recreation programs	On-going	Parks/Army Corp/ Iowa National Guard/ Youth Athletics	Staff Resources - 2
7. Conduct community facilities study exploring aquatics opportunities, educational and cultural resources.	0-3 Years	Parks/ Community Development/ Non-Profits	Staff Resources - 2 Financial Resources - 2
8. Create an interconnected park, trail and recreation corridor (Greenway Corridor) along Beaver Creek	On-going	Parks/ Community Development/ Engineering/ Polk County Conservation	Staff Resources - 2 Financial Resources - 3
9. Collaborate with developers to secure strategic park land and trail connections	On-going	Parks/ Community Development/ Developers	Staff Resources- 1
10. Provide adequate staff and programming resources	On-going	Parks	Financial Resources - 3

TABLE 11.6 PARKS, TRAILS, AND RECREATION IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES



UTILITIES IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	LEVEL OF EFFORT
1. Undertake a high-speed internet visioning study.	0-3 Year	Economic Development	Staff Resources - 2 Financial Resources - 1
2. Evaluate and update operation and maintenance standards.	0-3 Year	Public Works	Staff Resources -2 Financial Resources - 2
3. Evaluate and update methods and best practices for managing surface water run-off.	0-3 Year	Public Works	Staff Resources - 2 Financial Resources - 2
4. Monitor changes in collection methods that minimize airborne or water eroded material collection.	On-going	Public Works	Staff Resources -2 Financial Resources - 1
5. Establish and enact a monitoring, education, and improvement program to address Inflow and Infiltration.	On-going	Public Works	Staff Resources - 1
6. Coordinate with the contracted solid waste vendor to encourage reduction in waste, reuse of materials, and increased recycling of household goods.	On-going	Public Works	Staff Resources - 1

TABLE 11.7 UTILITIES IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES