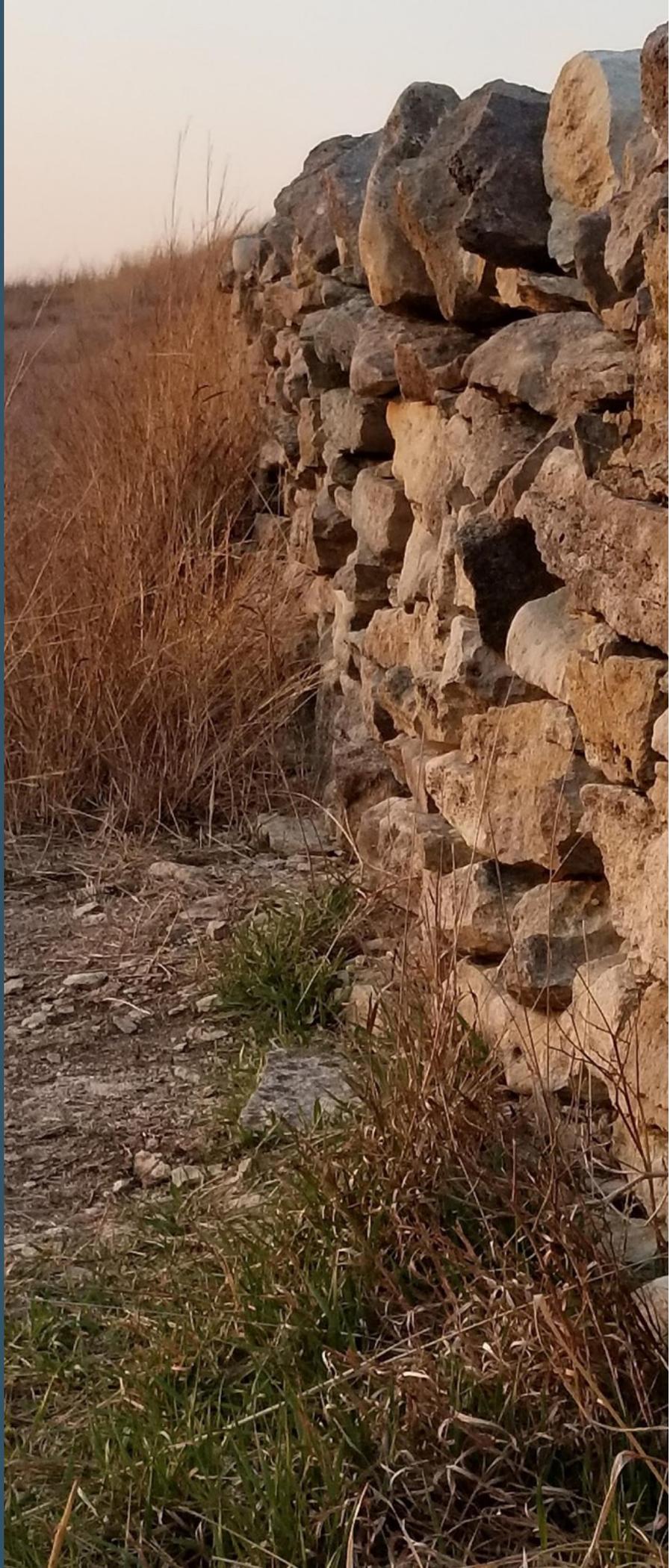


**COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN  
2019**





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Comprehensive Plan was made possible by the generous efforts of citizens and professionals who care about Wabaunsee County.

## WABAUNSEE COUNTY

### COMMISSIONERS

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James H. Suber, Chair  
Joel S. Fagar

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Chris Torrey  
Karen Wright

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Monte Davidson  
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Michael Adams  
James Wurtz  
James W. Garrison  
Dan Wagner  
Steve Tharman



## STEERING COMMITTEE

**Ryan Armbrust** - representing  
Wabaunsee County Planning &  
Zoning, City of Alta Vista

**Lori Daniel** - representing  
Wabaunsee County Signal-  
Enterprise

**Henry Dreier** - representing  
Wabaunsee County Planning &  
Zoning, City of Harveyville

**Dwight Faulkner** - representing Bank of  
the Flint Hills

**Jim Foresman** - representing  
Wabaunsee County Planning &  
Zoning, City of Maple Hill

**Jack Foster** - representing  
Wabaunsee County Planning &  
Zoning, City of Eskridge

**Jerry Haahr** - representing  
Wabaunsee County Economic  
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**Don Hendricks**-representing  
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Commission District 1

**Ken Kirsop** - representing Stockgrowers  
State Bank, Alma, Maple Hill, Paxico

**Dan Riley** - representing Wabaunsee County  
Planning & Zoning, At-Large

**Jennifer Savage** - representing  
Wabaunsee County Clerk

**Larry Setter** - representing Wabaunsee  
County Planning & Zoning, City of  
McFarland

**Ryan Theel** - representing Wabaunsee  
County Planning & Zoning, City of Paxico

**Karen Wright** - representing Stop-2-Shop &  
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*\*Steering Committee Members were  
appointed by the Wabaunsee County  
Commission on February 5, 2018*

## FLINT HILLS REGIONAL COUNCIL

Gary Stith | Director

Janna Williams | Regional Planner

Amber Berg | Planning Intern

Rachel Foss | Planning Intern

Abby Mason | Planning Intern

This plan was made possible by a grant  
awarded to the Flint Hills  
Regional Council from the Economic  
Development Administration and matching funds  
from Wabaunsee County.



# VISION STATEMENT

Looking to the future to preserve our rich cultural history for the next generation with the tolerance to consider new ideas, opportunities and innovations for Wabaunsee County's prosperity while protecting our awe-inspiring Flint Hills landscape.





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**BACKGROUND**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Wabaunsee County Comprehensive Plan will help guide County decision makers on a wide array of issues over the next twenty years in creating a desired place to live, work and do business. The Wabaunsee County Comprehensive Plan is a policy plan with the overall goal to provide a county-level perspective and planning direction that strengthens local planning efforts throughout the county. It provides guidance to 7 towns, 13 townships, and the Lake Wabaunsee Improvement District (LWID) as well as local community partners. All together they make up Wabaunsee County, a special place to live.

## Background

The creation of the plan was a year-long process led by the Steering Committee appointed by the County Commission which studied the past, current and future issues of Wabaunsee County. Stakeholders, steering committee members and the public provided input and guided the process. The plan sets the framework for the community to grow and change over the next twenty years and includes: a history of Wabaunsee County, current trends, a public survey and interview results from stakeholders. The public also participated in a county SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) study to identify issues in the county.

## Planning Process

A Public Participation Plan was created and used throughout the comprehensive plan process. The participation plan utilized methodology to collect data and citizen input. The Public Participation Plan was prepared to encourage residents, employees, and visitors to be actively involved in the comprehensive planning process. This process requires input from a range of public participants. It also determined the most effective means of collecting the best source of data. Key findings and responses included in this document are found in the appendix and support the future goals and strategies.

Three public meetings were held in various communities during the course of the planning process. The first set of public meetings were in Eskridge, Paxico and Alta

Vista. Residents were invited to show where they lived in the county and to list the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Residents were also provided a community survey at the open houses and on social media and the website.

During the plan, staff interviewed key stakeholders in the community. These community members value the history of Wabaunsee County, however, all are interested in seeing economic development increase; thereby decreasing the need for residents to go out of town for services. Smart growth is desired along I-70 while maintaining agricultural lands.

The Wabaunsee County Steering Committee discussed the goals and strategies outlined in the plan as well as the implementation timeline. The goals were prioritized into a time frame of 1-2 years, 5 years, 5 to 10 years and ongoing. The steering committee also discussed persons and organizations that have an interest in the specific goal.

The Comprehensive Plan should act as a living and practical document guiding development that enhances and protects the quality of life for County residents while preserving its natural and cultural resources for future generations. The analysis and subsequent recommendations put forth in this plan are intended to reflect the County's desire to formalize existing practices and implement new contemporary policies to address the identified major issues of public concern.



# METHODOLOGY

A Public Participation Plan was prepared to encourage opportunities for community members to be actively involved in the comprehensive planning process. This process looked to ensure that input was acquired from a broad range of public participants. Key findings and responses are included in this document as a supplement to future goals and strategies.

## Communication Strategy

The communications strategy outlines the various forms of communication and timeline throughout the process. Each form of communication was tailored to a specific activity or part of the plan in order to best involve community members.

## Outreach Strategy

Outreach strategies outline the challenges that were considered, the potential project participants, the approach and process for each challenge, and they provide a flexible timeline for completion of various required tasks.

## COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

### Website

Updates and summaries of progress were available at

[www.WabaunseeCountyCompPlan.com](http://www.WabaunseeCountyCompPlan.com).

This website contains meetings, presentations, open house information, surveys and plan updates for the public. Flint Hills Regional Council updated the site following steering committee meetings, public meetings and open houses. Both community surveys, which guided the public input, were also made available on this site. Scheduled meetings were posted on the site for all county residents and other interested parties.

### Social Media

The Flint Hills Regional Council Staff created a Facebook Page that posted public meetings and community engagement opportunities. The community surveys were also posted on the Wabaunsee Facebook Page.

### Printed Documents

Notification flyers of meetings and community engagement opportunities were printed and placed in high-traffic areas in the entire county. Notifications of meetings were printed and placed at least one to two weeks before the meeting date as well as printed in The Wabaunsee County Signal-Enterprise.

### Press Releases

The Flint Hills Regional Council staff distributed press releases to the county newspaper, The Wabaunsee County Signal-Enterprise, as well as contacting publications in the surrounding area with updates on the comprehensive plan process. There were press releases at the beginning of the process, prior to all open houses and public meetings as well as for the public meeting of the Planning and Zoning Board and the County Commission.

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TIMELINE

Task	Objectives	Time Frame
1. Initiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formation of Steering Committee</li> <li>• Creation of Base Maps</li> <li>• Collect Demographic Data</li> </ul>	January 2018-February 2018
2. Vision, Trends, & Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steering Committee Meetings 1 &amp; 2</li> <li>• Engagement Opportunities</li> <li>• Community Survey</li> </ul>	February 2018-April 2018
3. Draft Plan & Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Meetings 1 &amp; 2</li> <li>• Organize and collect information from previous phases</li> <li>• Identify planning strategies to reach goals</li> </ul>	May 2018-December 2018
4. Plan Review & Adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Meeting 3</li> <li>• Draft review by planning commission</li> <li>• Presentation to Planning/Zoning Board &amp; City Council</li> <li>• Revisions and Adoption</li> </ul>	January 2019-April 2019

# OUTREACH STRATEGY

The Wabaunsee County Steering Committee was responsible for the planning and oversight of the project. Appointed by the Wabaunsee County Planning Board they defined plan goals and objectives and provided direction throughout the process. In addition, the Steering Committee members acted as liaisons between county residents and the Flint Hills Regional Council staff.

## Public Meetings

Throughout the course of the planning process, there were three sets of public meetings in multiple locations. Each meeting was designed to actively engage community members with the current stage of plan development. Locations of the meetings were in various communities throughout the county. FHRC staff also attended all seven community city council meetings twice to apprise the council of the progress of the plan and to discuss specific issues within their community to include in the plan.

## Community Survey

A community survey was created with the help of the Wabaunsee County Steering Committee. The survey was distributed both online and in hard copy at meetings to provide residents the opportunity to express their opinions about the existing conditions in Wabaunsee County, their vision for the future as well as prioritize key issues.

## Stakeholder Interviews

Members of the Wabaunsee County Steering Committee were asked to identify stakeholders. Stakeholders are Wabaunsee County residents, groups, and institutions invested in the future of the county.

Stakeholders represent fundamental aspects of the local community and economy and will be impacted by the recommendations made in the comprehensive plan. There are a broad range of interests important to the community thus it is important to identify varied groups or individuals to ensure the process completely represents a variety of perspectives in the community. Some potential stakeholders include: city officials and leaders, county staff, members of local organizations and boards, community groups and organizations, regional organizations and institutions, utilities, banks as well as local business owners.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

Meeting 1: Introduction, Trends Report, & Opportunities	The first meeting covered what a comprehensive plan is, current trends and the preliminary strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats addressed in the plan. Meetings were held in Eskridge, Paxico and Maple Hill.
Meeting 2: Visioning	This meeting was for visioning of the future. Meetings were held in Alma and Alta Vista.
Meeting 3: Goals & Strategies Creating	Goals for Wabaunsee County and strategies to review the goals in the draft comprehensive plan and provide input. These meetings were held in Harveyville and Alma.

# INTRODUCTION

A Comprehensive Plan guides the growth and development of a community, county or region. It lists the goals and strategies that the Wabaunsee County Commission and Zoning Board reference for informed land use development decisions and investments in infrastructure. It is a blueprint for creating a unique quality of place, of community and of life based on the County's vision for its future. The Comprehensive Plan is based on an analysis of current land use, desired future growth and the infrastructure needed to serve existing and future residents such as schools, transportation, recreation and utilities roads.

The Comprehensive Plan goals consist of four major components:

1. **Land Use**
2. **Cultural**
3. **Economic Development**
4. **Facilities and Infrastructure**

Each goal lists specific strategies, timelines and responsible parties. Additionally, each goal is supported by informational appendices, related studies or other associated policy documents such as maps that illustrate or identify important features of the plan. In accordance with Kansas State statute this comprehensive plan is for the physical development of Wabaunsee County with the purpose of guiding a coordinated

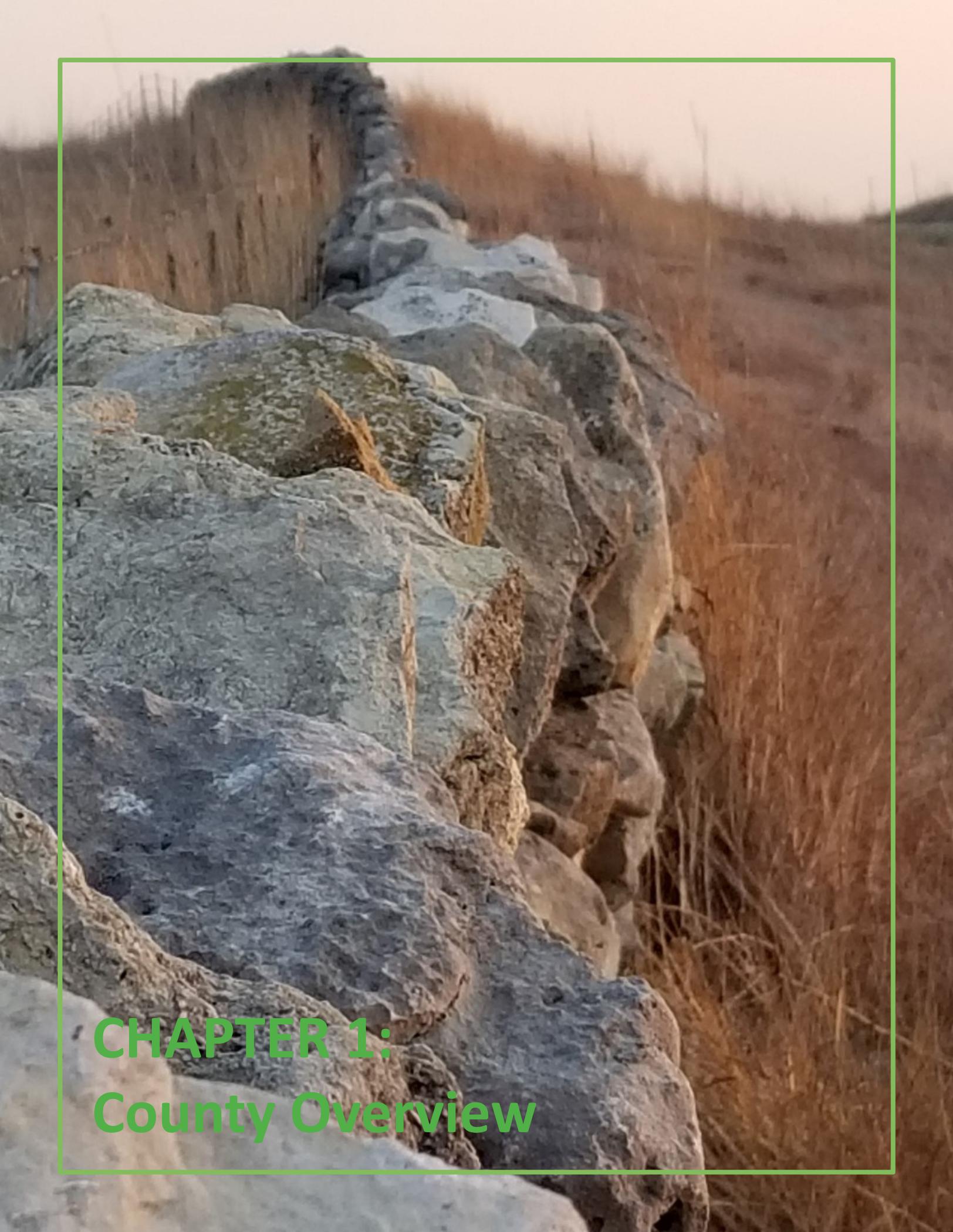


development of the County in accordance with present and potential future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities. Development of this plan is based on comprehensive surveys and studies of the existing conditions and trends of growth and the potential future requirements of the County and its inhabitants. The comprehensive plan is general in nature, in that it designates the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature, including any road improvement and any transportation improvement, shown on the plan and indicates where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be.

Wabaunsee County last adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 2004. The Comprehensive Plan is prepared and then recommended by the Planning Commission at a public hearing or hearings, and forwarded to the Board of County Commission for public hearing and adoption. The Comprehensive Plan is available on-line on the County's website at <https://www.wabaunseecounty.complan.com>. While this plan is intended to be used by governing officials, it is also meant for community members and is a reflection of the values and priorities of the residents of Wabaunsee County.







**CHAPTER 1:**  
**County Overview**

# COUNTY OVERVIEW

## HISTORY

For the Wabaunsee County Comprehensive Plan to be useful it must also be relevant by establishing a vision for growth and supporting goals, guiding principles, and providing practical recommendations to implementation and achievement. This Trends Report examines key facts and influences that make Wabaunsee County unique.

The intention of the report is to provide community members, city officials, and the planning team with an understanding of how these facts can and will shape the community, today and into tomorrow. This report is the first document of the Comprehensive Plan and will largely be the foundation upon which the plan is formed.

The Trends Report is comprised of the following:

- Demographic Trends
- Economics
- Transportation
- Housing
- Education
- Regional Influence
- Resources
- Land Use
- Culture & Recreation



## EARLY SETTLEMENT

In 1848, Chief Wabaunsee relocated his tribe of 2,000 from Iowa to Kansas settling on the Pottawatomie Reservation in the northeast portion of what is now Wabaunsee County. In 1855, the Territorial Legislature identified a certain portion of land west of Shawnee County, which they name Richardson County after William Richardson of Illinois, who introduced the first Kansas and Nebraska Bill in the House of Representatives. This bill declared Kansas and Nebraska to be “slave free” territories. In 1859, this land was renamed in honor of Chief Wabaunsee of the Pottawatomie tribe. Additionally, Wabaunsee means “Dawn of Day.”

In 1856, the Honorable Charles B. Lines led a group of abolitionists from New Haven, Connecticut. Henry Ward Beecher, the great minister from Brooklyn, New York, pledged rifles and 25 bibles for the expedition. The company, known as the “Beecher Rifle Company”, was determined to go west and establish a new way of life on the frontier. In March 1859, an election was held to elect county commissioners. The commissioners then divided the county into four townships - Alma, Wabaunsee, Mission Creek, and Wilmington.

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Many residents of Wabaunsee County were members of the abolitionist movement. In 1861, the “Underground Railroad” was successfully established in Wabaunsee County. There were two “stations” in the county where escaped slaves sought freedom, one in Wabaunsee and one in Mission Creek. The Mission Creek “station” provided safe passage through Wabaunsee County to Fremont County, Iowa. As many as eighteen people would be transported at one time and all travel was done at night to avoid attention. Sixty civil war veterans and abolitionists who were involved with the “Underground Railroad” are buried in the Wabaunsee Township Cemetery, one of the oldest cemeteries in Kansas.



*Wabaunsee County Poor Farm, located south of Alma, 1901.  
Source: Wabaunsee County Historical Society*

## MANHATTAN, ALMA, and BURLINGAME RAILWAY

After years of resistance to a railroad and a halt of plans due to economic recession, in 1879, Wabaunsee county voters finally approved a line to connect the coal fields near Burlingame with the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway. ATSP and the Union Pacific Railroad jointly financed this project. Construction on the Manhattan, Alma, and Burlingame Railway began in 1880.

In 1898, the M. A. & B. was sold and the 22.32 miles of track from Alma to Manhattan dismantled. ATSF operated the remaining line from Burlingame to Alma for the next 75 years.

Around the time of M. A. & B.'s construction, there was not a single paved highway in Wabaunsee County, thus railroads provided the region with reliable nationwide transportation. However, as the 1950s brought paved highways into the county,

the short line's importance diminished. Ranchers used the line until 1962 and ten years later the line from Burlingame to Alma closed and was sold. Wabaunsee County citizens tried to raise enough money to buy the railway, but they were unsuccessful.



*ATSF tracks east of the Eskridge Ci-op and the Eskridge depot, visible in the distance.*

*Source: Wabaunsee County Museum, Dean Dunn photographer*

## HISTORY

The county did not grow as quickly as expected, reaching its highest population of 12,000 residents in 1900, and then experiencing a steady decline. In the early 1870's, a cheese factory was established in Alma. In 1920 the town developed into a supply and shipping center with a prosperous agricultural base. The county's first church, Wabaunsee Church of Christ, was founded in June 1857.

In 1861 Kansas became the 34th U.S. state, entering the union as a free state. The first railroad to be built through Wabaunsee County was the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe in 1880. In 1887, the Chicago, Kansas and Nebraska Railway built a main line from Topeka to Herington. This main line connected Topeka, Valencia, Willard, Maple Hill, Vera, Paxico, McFarland, Alma, Volland, Alta Vista, Dwight, White City, Latimer, and Herington.

*Source: Images of American: Wabaunsee County*

A massive drought beginning in 1930 resulted in a series of dust storms that lasted until 1941. The state became a participant in New Deal relief programs, such as the Civil Works Administration, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, the Civilian Conservation Corps, and the Works Progress Administration, which put tens of thousands of Kansans to work.

One project was the construction of Lake Wabaunsee near Eskridge. During World War II, a POW camp at the lake housed German POWs. The prisoners were paid \$0.40 per hour and granted a daily noon lunch, in exchange for their work on farms and bridges throughout the region. After the war the lake returned to recreational uses with private homes and a golf course.

*Source: The Complete History of Lake Wabaunsee by Greg A. Hoots*



*Source: Wabaunsee County Courthouse - George N Brown Photography*

# TRENDS REPORT

The Trends Report examines key facts and influences that make Wabaunsee County unique. This report includes information on current conditions and trends in Wabaunsee County on which to build a successful comprehensive plan.

The trends report for the 2018 Wabaunsee County Comprehensive Plan was first drafted on March 29, 2018. The report was continually updated and

revised upon feedback from the county’s stakeholders. Each revision was made publicly available on the Wabaunsee County Comprehensive Plan website and shared on the plan’s Facebook page. The final trends report was completed September 21, 2018.

The following pages include the content of the final 2018 Wabaunsee County Comprehensive Plan Trends Report.

## POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

### POPULATION

Population in Wabaunsee County has fluctuated over the last century. In the earlier half of the 20th century Wabaunsee County saw an overall rapid decrease in the population. Between 1910 and 2010 there was an average decrease in county population of 4.9 percent. However, between 1980 and 2010, Wabaunsee County saw an increase in population of 186 residents, which is an average increase of 2.7 percent per decade. Similarly to the State of Kansas, Wabaunsee County is anticipated to grow in population within the next few decades.

### COMPARISON OF GROWTH TRENDS

Clay, Chase, Dickinson, and Morris Counties are just a few nearby counties similar in population size to Wabaunsee County. Between 2000 and 2015, Wabaunsee County has the highest average growth trend in comparison to its comparable counties at 0.8 percent. Of its comparable counties, shown below, it was one of the only ones with a positive growth trend between 2000 and 2015.

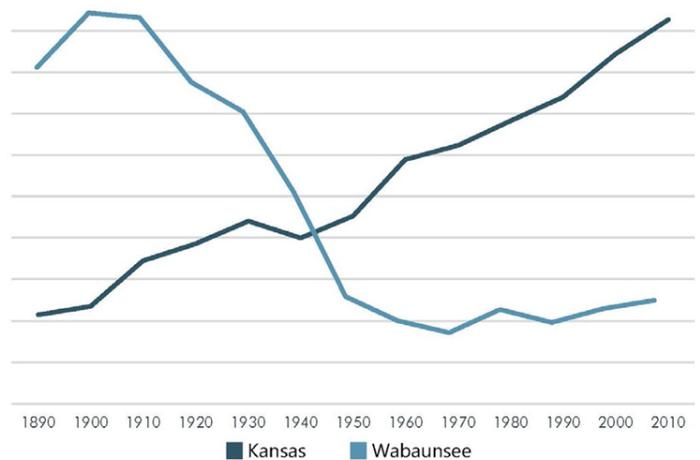


Figure 3: Population trend comparison between Wabaunsee County and the State of Kansas. Source: American Community Survey (ACS)

TABLE 1: COMPARISON GROWTH TRENDS: 2000 TO 2010

	2000	2010	2015	Change 2000-2010	Change 2010-2015	Growth Trend
Wabaunsee County	6,885	7,053	6,997	+2.4%	-0.8%	+0.8%
Clay County	8,822	8,531	8,421	-3.3%	-1.3%	-2.3%
Dickinson County	19,344	19,643	19,516	+1.5%	-0.6%	+0.4%
Morris County	6,104	5,946	5,750	-2.6%	-3.3%	-2.9%
Kansas	2,688,418	2,853,118	2,892,987	+6.1%	+1.4%	+3.8%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS)

## GEOMETRIC POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Of the several population projection methods, geometric projection is often used because it is a method that uses percent change to determine future growth. Percent change is averaged together between years to determine the average percent change and is then multiplied by the most recent year to get a projection for the next predicted year. According to this type of analysis, the population in Wabaunsee County is expected to either increase or decline. When looking at population data from 1890 to 2010, the population of Wabaunsee County is projected to decline by 262 residents in 2020 and by 253 in 2030. In contrast, looking at population data from 1980 to 2010 the population is expected to increase by 180 residents in 2020 and by 185 in 2030.

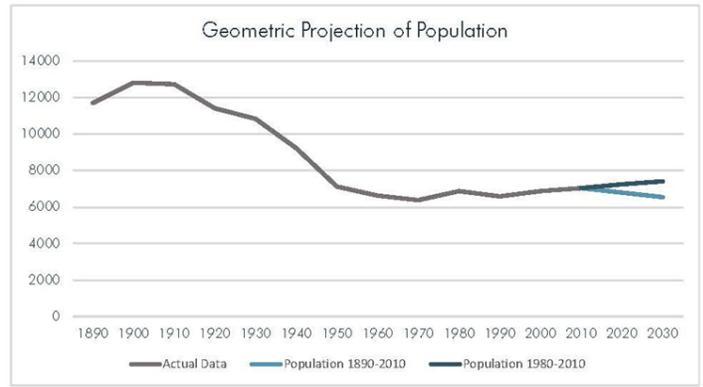


Figure 4: Geometric Population Projection Source: ACS

TABLE 2: GEOMETRIC POPULATION PROJECTION OF WABAUNSEE COUNTY															
Year	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Population	11,720	12,813	12,721	11,424	10,830	9,219	7,121	6,648	6,397	6,867	6,603	6,885	7,053	-	-
Population 1890-2010	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,664	7,217
Population 1980-2010	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,275	7,381

Source: ACS

## STRAIGHT-LINE POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Another method of population projection analysis that is often used is a straight-line projection. For this form of analysis results are typically more conservative than that of a geometric projection analysis. Straight-line projection uses the differences in population between two years in particular (two decades in the case of Wabaunsee County). The difference in those two years are averaged together to determine the average population. The change is then added to the most recent year to get a projection for the following year. When looking at population data from 1890 to 2010, the population of Wabaunsee County is projected to decline by 389 residents in 2020 but grow by 553 in 2030. In contrast, looking at population data from 1980 to 2010 the population is expected to decrease by 778 residents in 2020 and by 1,106 in 2030.

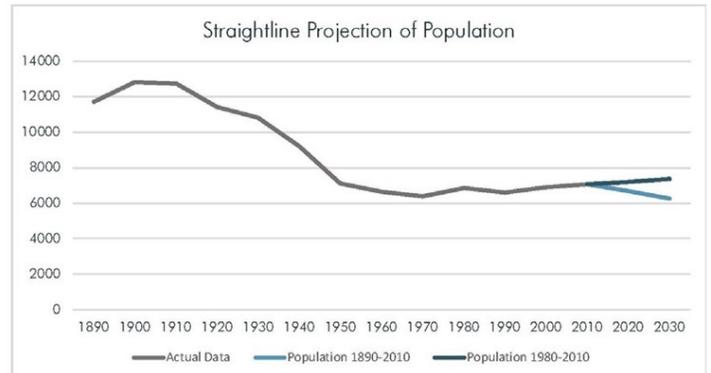


Figure 5: Straightline Population Projection Source: ACS

TABLE 3: STRAIGHT-LINE PROJECTION OF WABAUNSEE COUNTY															
Year	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Population	11,720	12,813	12,721	11,424	10,830	9,219	7,121	6,648	6,397	6,867	6,603	6,885	7,053	-	-
Population 1890-2010	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,791	6,538
Population 1980-2010	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,233	7,418

Source: ACS

## COMMUNITY TRENDS

The constituent communities of Wabaunsee County vary in size. Though Alma is the largest city in Wabaunsee County, growth has remained stagnant. However smaller cities such as McFarland, Maple Hill, and Paxico have increased in population by over 30 percent between 2000 and 2010. Harveyville was the only city to lose a significant amount of their typical population, between 2000 and 2010 Harveyville saw a decrease in population by 20 percent. However, since Harveyville is the smallest city within Wabaunsee County, there was only a loss of 55 residents. Between 2000 and 2010 Eskridge and the unincorporated areas of Wabaunsee County are the only areas to decline in population. Though Wabaunsee County's constituent communities experience both rises and falls in population, the entire county is experiencing a stagnant growth in population between only 2 and 4 percent.

	1990	2000	2010
Alma	-5.8%	-8.5%	+5.0%
Alta Vista	+10.9%	-7.3%	+7.0%
Eskridge	-14.1%	+13.7%	-9.8%
Harveyville	-4.6%	0%	-20.6%
McFarland	+6.6%	+15.5%	+49.3%
Maple Hill	-7.4%	+21%	+34.3%
Paxico	+3.6%	+21.3%	+46.4%
Unincorporated Areas	-4.5%	+5.3%	-6.1%
Wabaunsee County	-3.8%	+4.3%	+2.4%

Source: ACS

## RACE AND ETHNICITY

As the population changes in Wabaunsee County, so does its racial and ethnic composition. Wabaunsee County's population is predominantly non-Hispanic and white. Since 2000, both black and Hispanic populations have grown, but only at a minimal rate. Between 2000 and 2015 Wabaunsee County has had an average non-Hispanic white population of nearly 95 percent. On average, both minority non-Hispanic and Hispanic populations have comprised 2.5 percent of the overall county population between 2000 and 2015.

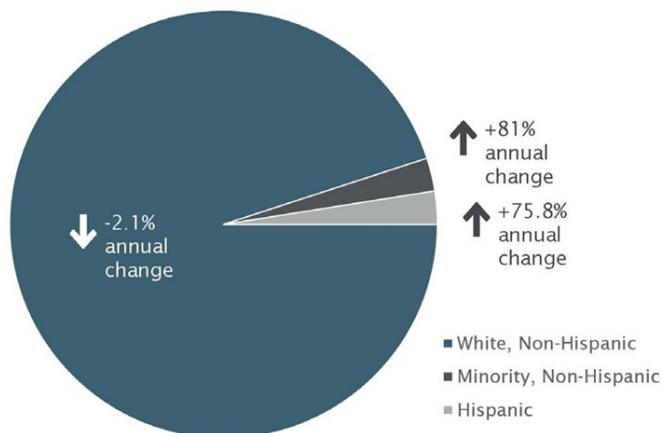


Figure 6: Annual percentage change of population by race and Hispanic origin for 2000, 2010, & 2015. Source: ACS

## AGE & SEX OF THE POPULATION

In rural areas it is common to see a large percent of the population over the age of 60. Between 2000 and 2015 this trend is complimented because the highest growth in County residents was at 30 percent for those aged 60 to 69. This is a significant increase in comparison to the second highest growth in population by age where residents 70 and over grew by 14 percent. Though the aging population is growing in Wabaunsee County, the younger populations under the age of 40 has declined. Between 2000 and 2015 there was a loss in population between the ages 19 and under by 6 percent and 7 percent for residents aged 20 to 39 years of age. The median age of all residents within Wabaunsee County was 42.1 which is 6 years above the state average for Kansas.

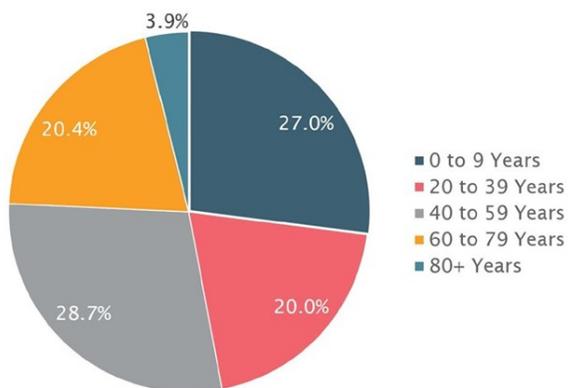


Figure 7: Population Distribution by Age, 2015. Source: ACS

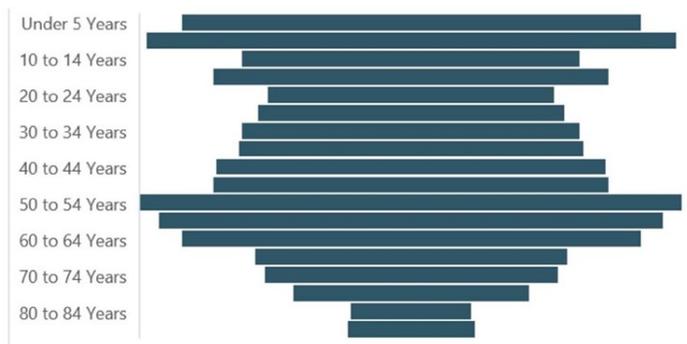


Figure 8: Population Distribution by Age, 2015. Source: ACS

# HOUSING

## TENURE

Between 2000 and 2015 the number of housing units has increased by 208 units which is a 7 percent increase. Yet, with the addition of new units, owner occupied which is 72 percent of total units has only increased by 1.3 percent. Within Wabaunsee County there has been a decrease in the number of renter occupied units by 16 percent and an increase of vacant housing units by 43 percent in recent years.

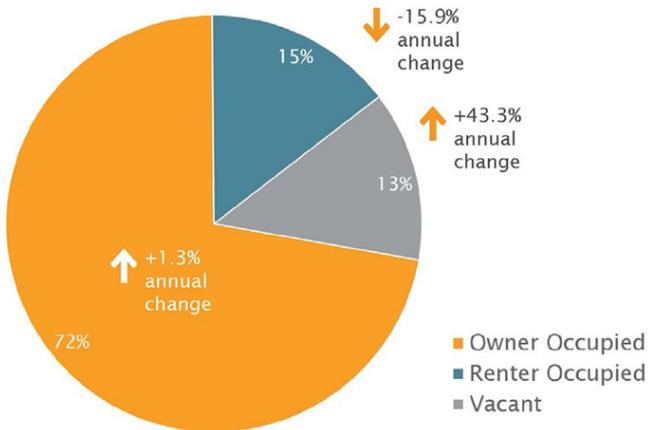


Figure 9: Housing Tenure, 2015. Source: ACS

## FAMILY COMPOSITION AND LENGTH OF OCCUPANCY

Wabaunsee County is predominantly occupied by families. In 2015, approximately 75 percent of the county is occupied by families. The remaining 25 percent of the county is occupied by single individuals or unrelated individuals living together. Between 2000 and 2015 there has been a slight decline of family households by 3 percent and an increase of 1.4 percent of non-family households. There is a large majority of residents who have occupied their home since 1979 or earlier at 17 percent, nearly double the state average.

TABLE 5: YEAR HOUSEHOLDER MOVED INTO UNIT

	Wabaunsee County	Kansas
2010 or Later	25%	34%
2000 to 2009	32%	35%
1990 to 1999	19%	15%
1980 to 1989	7%	8%
1979 or Earlier	17%	9%

TABLE 6: FAMILY COMPOSITION

	2010	2015	Annual % Change
Family Household	2,750	2,338	-3.0%
Married Couple	1,690	1,606	-1.0%
Female-Headed Family	175	162	-1.5%
Non-Family Household	751	804	+1.4%

Source Table 5 & 6: ACS

## PROJECTIONS

Using the number of owner and renter units from 2000 to 2010, a set of projections were created to estimate the number of housing units in 2020 and 2030. Both the geometric and linear housing unit projections used for this analysis yielded similar results. The geometric projection and the linear projection both estimate a growth of 244 total housing units between 2010 and 2030. The number of owner occupied housing units is anticipated to increase by 207 units by 2030 in the geometric projection and by 198 units in the linear projection. Both projections estimate there to be an increase in 5 rental units between 2010 and 2020 and again between 2020 and 2030.

TABLE 7: GEOMETRIC HOUSING UNIT PROJECTION

	2000	2010	2020	2030
Total Households	2,633	2,750	-	-
Household Projection	-	-	2,872	2,994
Owner	2,187	2,286	-	-
Owner Projection	-	-	2,390	2,493
Renter	446	451	-	-
Renter Projection	-	-	456	461

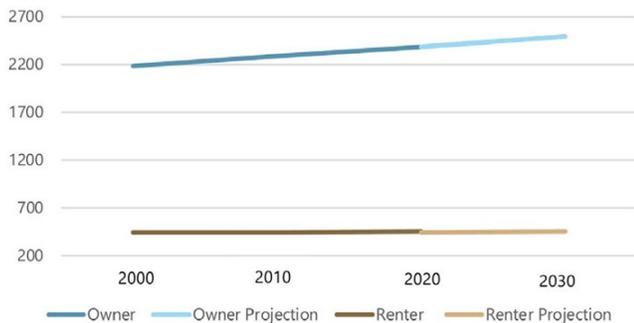


Figure 10: Geometric Housing Unit Projection 2000-2030. Source: ACS

TABLE 8: LINEAR HOUSING UNIT PROJECTION

	2000	2010	2020	2030
Total Households	2,633	2,750	-	-
Household Projection	-	-	2,867	2,994
Owner	2,187	2,286	-	-
Owner Projection	-	-	2,385	2,484
Renter	446	451	-	-
Renter Projection	-	-	456	461

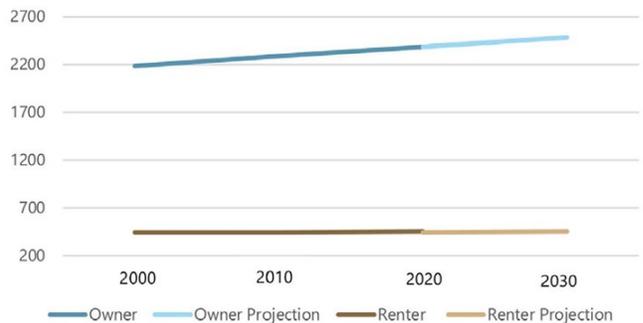


Figure 11: Linear Housing Unit Projection 2000-2030. Source: ACS

## VALUE

In 2000, the median owner-occupied unit value was \$62,600 and the median gross rent was \$378. As of 2015, the owner-occupied unit value was \$115,300 and the median gross rent was \$711. Owner-Occupied values increased at a rate of 5.6 percent annually while gross rent increased 5.9 percent annually.

TABLE 9: MEDIAN OWNER-OCCUPIED VALUE AND GROSS RENT				
	2000	2010	2015	% Change
Median Home Value	\$62,600	\$99,400	\$115,300	+84.2%
Median Gross Rent	\$378	\$577	\$711	+88.1%

Table 7, 8, & 9 Source: ACS

## EDUCATION

96.2%

residents earned a high school diploma or higher

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

For the population of Wabaunsee County aged 25 to 64 years, there was a notable decrease in the total number of people with a high school diploma or less than a high school diploma. Between 2010 and 2015 there was an increase of 135 residents who attained an associates degree or higher which is an 11.4 percent increase.

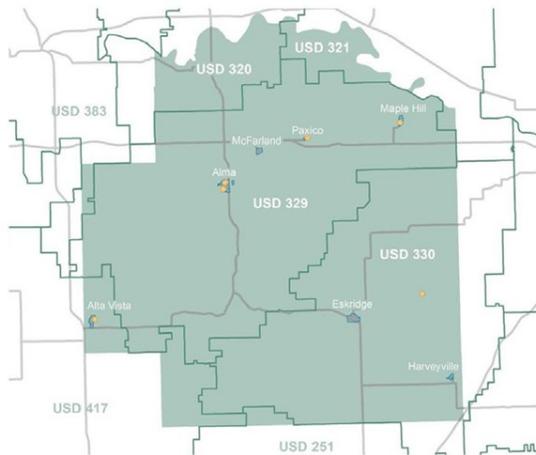


Figure 12: School Districts within Wabaunsee County. Source: KDASC

### SCHOOL DISTRICTS

There are seven Unified School Districts (USD) that serve students in Wabaunsee County. USD 330 and USD 329 primarily serve Wabaunsee County students, with some overlap into Shawnee County and Morris County, respectively. The school districts from other counties that cross into Wabaunsee County are USD 383, 320, 321, 417, and 251.

### ENROLLMENT & FREE/REDUCED LUNCH

Since 2000, school enrollment in Wabaunsee County has slowly declined at an average annual rate of 1.2 percent each year. Though the enrollment rate has declined the average annual rate for free or reduced lunch has steadily increased by 1.7 percent. The highest number of approved free or reduced lunches was 442 during the 2013-2014 school year.

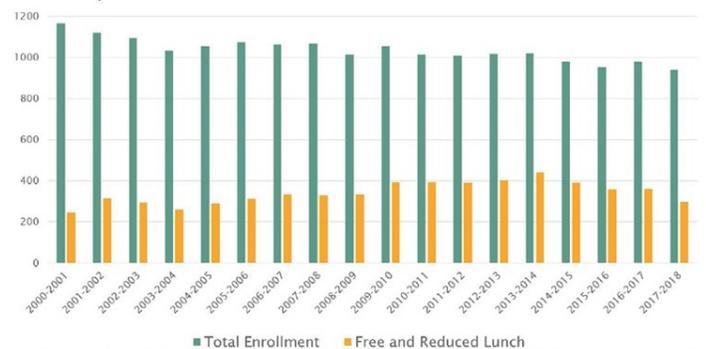


Figure 13: Wabaunsee County School Enrollment and Free or Reduced Lunch. Source: ACS

# EMPLOYMENT

## EMPLOYMENT

In 2015, 46.1 percent of the Wabaunsee County population aged 16 and over was part of the labor force. Of the residents within the labor force there has been a decline of those in the armed forces and those employed while there has been an increase in the number of residents unemployed. The percentage of residents not in the labor force in 2015 was 53.9, almost double the average for the state of Kansas at 31 percent. In general, the employment in Wabaunsee County has been stagnant.

**TABLE 10: EMPLOYMENT IN WABAUNSEE COUNTY (AGES 16 & OVER)**

	2000	2010	2015	Annual % Change
In Armed Forces	10	9	6	-2.7%
Employed	3,492	3,607	3,295	-0.4%
Unemployed	96	358	216	+8.3%

**+8.3%**  
 annual change in  
 unemployment 2000-15

**70.5%**  
 of workers are employed  
 outside of the county

## WORKERS

As of 2015, 14.3 percent of workers commute into Wabaunsee County for daily employment, 70.5 percent of workers leave the community to work elsewhere, and 16.2 percent of workers live and work within the county. The data shows that Wabaunsee County in general is a commuter community.

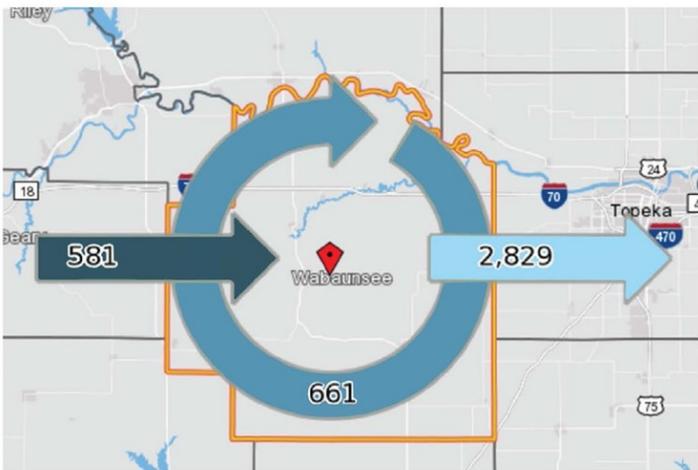


Figure 14: Map of Wabaunsee County Inflow/Outflow Job Counts, 2015. Source: ACS

## MAJOR INDUSTRIES

In 2010, 3,755 of Wabaunsee County's residents were employed. Between 2010 and 2015, the economy has remained primarily constant. The economy of Wabaunsee County, KS is specialized in Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting; Utilities; and Construction. The largest industries in Wabaunsee County are Healthcare & Social Assistance (534), Manufacturing (424), and construction (310), and the highest paying industries are Professional, Scientific, Tech Services (\$45,313) and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting (\$36,250).

**TABLE 11: MAJOR INDUSTRIES**

	2010	2015
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Mining	8.0%	7.3%
Construction	8.3%	9.4%
Manufacturing	13.3%	12.9%
Wholesale Trade	1.5%	2.8%
Retail Trade	10.1%	7.8%
Transportation and Warehousing, and Utilities	6.8%	6.5%
Information	2.0%	1.1%
Finance and Real Estate	4.5%	6.3%
Professional, Management, and Administrative	3.8%	4.8%
Educational, Health, and Social Assistance	22.4%	25.9%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, and Food	5.7%	3.7%
Public Administration	6.8%	4.3%
Other Services	6.7%	7.3%

Source Table 10 & 11: ACS

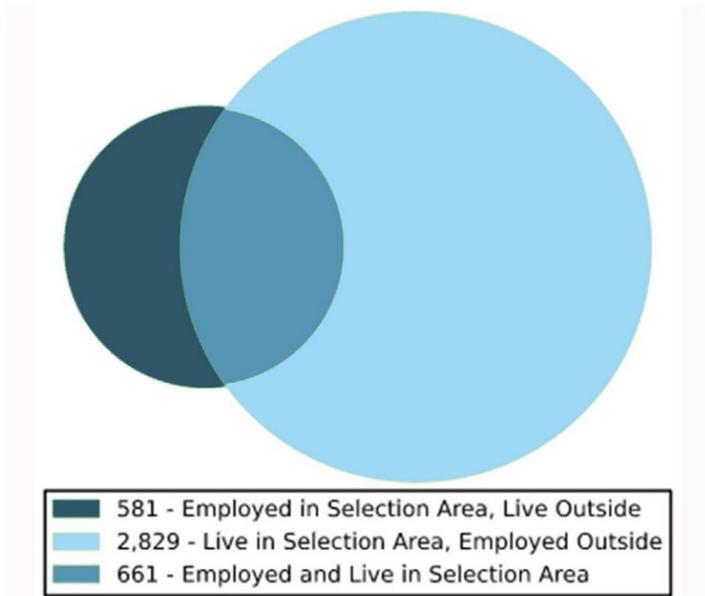


Figure 15: Wabaunsee County Inflow/Outflow Job Counts, 2015. Source: ACS

## JOB COUNTS BY DISTANCE FOR ALL WORKERS

The majority of workers commute to the east and northeast of the county to work. Since Wabaunsee County is part of the greater Topeka Metropolitan Area, the majority of residents are likely commuting to Topeka for employment.

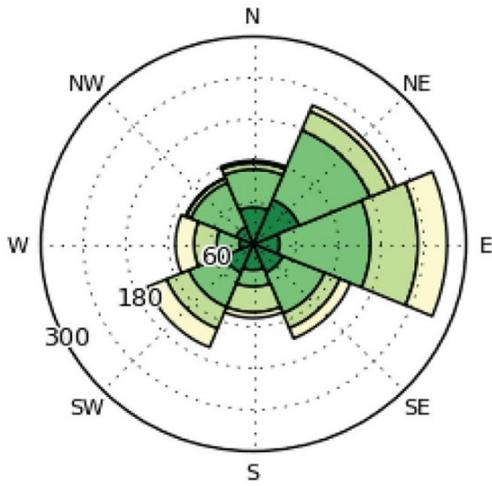


Figure 16: Job Counts by Distance/Direction for All Workers, 2015. Source: ACS

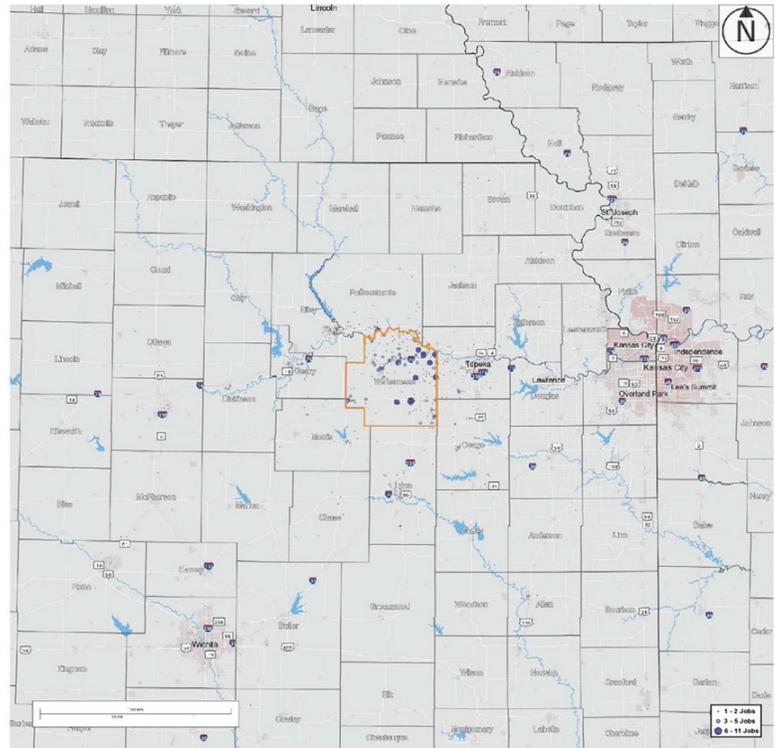


Figure 17: Distribution of where Wabaunsee County residents work, 2015. Source: ACS

## INCOME

**+2.14%**  
annual change in median household income

**+0.14%**  
annual change in the number of households

### HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Between 2000 and 2015 the median income increased by \$13,331 at an annual average increase of 2.14 percent. For owner-occupied household units, there was an increase in income by \$14,596 at an annual change of 2.22 percent. Median income for renter-occupied units only increased by \$7,828 at an average annual rate of 1.82 percent. The Midwest inflation rate has fluctuated throughout the last fifteen years, however, the annual increase of 2.14 percent is close to the Federal Reserve target rate of 2 percent.

TABLE 12: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY TENURE

	2000	2010	2015	Avrg Annual % Change
<b>Total</b>	\$41,377	\$52,133	\$54,688	+2.14%
<b>Owner-occupied</b>	\$43,833	\$57,373	\$58,429	+2.22%
<b>Renter-occupied</b>	\$28,636	\$23,917	\$36,464	+1.82%

Source: ACS

### POVERTY IN WABAUNSEE COUNTY

The poverty rate in Wabaunsee County was 8.8% in 2010. Poverty rates increased between 2000 and 2010, but have decreased by almost 3% since 2010. Poverty is greatest among single-mother households, especially those with related children under the age of 18. This has been the trend for Wabaunsee County since 2000 and poverty rates for these households has grown by over 150% between 2000 and 2010. Poverty rates are also greater for Wabaunsee County's 65 and over population and individuals living alone. This trend has changed since 2000, when poverty was most significant among people under 18 years of age. Poverty is expected to decrease among all families and individuals, most significantly individuals under 18 years of age.

Percentage of People Whose Income is Below the Poverty Level

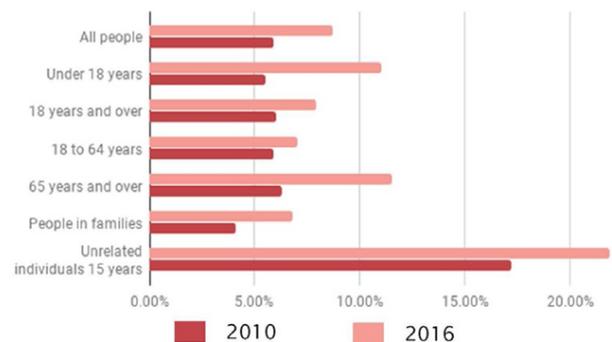


Figure 18: Poverty within Wabaunsee County. Source: ACS

## EARNINGS BY GENDER

Individual earnings between full-time working men and women have both increased from 2000 to 2015. Working women saw the highest annual increase of 4.7 percent while men only saw an increase in income of 3 percent. However, women in Wabaunsee County still only make 76 percent of the earnings that men in Wabaunsee County do.

**TABLE 13: MEDIAN EARNINGS BY GENDER (AGE 16 AND OVER)**

	2000	2010	2015	Avg Annual % Change
<b>Total Population</b>	\$22,413	\$28,945	\$33,076	+3.17%
<b>Male</b>	\$27,528	\$35,545	\$40,074	+3.04%
<b>Female</b>	\$17,734	\$21,576	\$30,344	+4.74%
<b>Women's earnings as a % of men's earning</b>	64.4%	60.7%	75.7%	+1.17%

**TABLE 14: EARNINGS BY GENDER (AGE 16 AND OVER)**

	2000		2010		2015		Avg Annual % Change	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
<b>Less than \$10,000</b>	375	533	284	537	290	406	-1.51%	-1.59%
<b>\$10,000 to \$19999</b>	295	492	227	336	231	290	-1.45%	-2.74%
<b>\$20000 to \$29999</b>	465	398	307	408	290	248	-2.51%	-2.51%
<b>\$30000 to \$39999</b>	493	249	356	248	268	372	-3.04%	+3.29%
<b>\$40000 to \$49999</b>	221	101	293	155	237	180	+0.48%	+5.21%
<b>\$50000 to \$64999</b>	148	29	338	184	334	163	+8.38%	+30.80%
<b>\$65000 to \$74999</b>	27	12	144	69	118	37	+22.47%	+13.89%
<b>\$75000 to \$99999</b>	55	5	96	16	94	38	+4.73%	44.00%
<b>\$100000 and over</b>	19	8	34	20	112	0	+32.63%	-6.67%

Tables 13 & 14 Source: ACS

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME & HOME VALUE

Most households in Wabaunsee County own their homes. There is a greater number of high-income households who own homes than there are lower-income households. Homeownership among low-income households has decreased between 2000 and 2010, but remains stagnant across most lower-income levels. The most dramatic homeownership increase between 2010 and 2015 occurs for households who make less than \$5,000, which had quadrupled. Homeownership continues to decrease for nearly all other income levels, with exception to those who make more than \$100,000 a year jumping from 297 to 352 households. Similarly, the number of housing units valued over \$100,000 has increased since 2010 while the number of units valued below that have decreased.

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME & HOME VALUE/GROSS RENT

In 2010, there were a variable number of households across all incomes who rented their residences in Wabaunsee County. This same year, 23.8% of the county's rental units had a gross rent between \$650 and \$899 and only 4% were more than \$900 a month. Most income groups saw a decrease in the number of renter-occupied units with exception to those who make between \$35,000 and \$74,999, which increased by 153%. The number of units available at lower rents has decreased between 2010 and 2015 while the number of units with rents greater than \$900 a month has increased by 568%.

Household Income and Home Value 2010

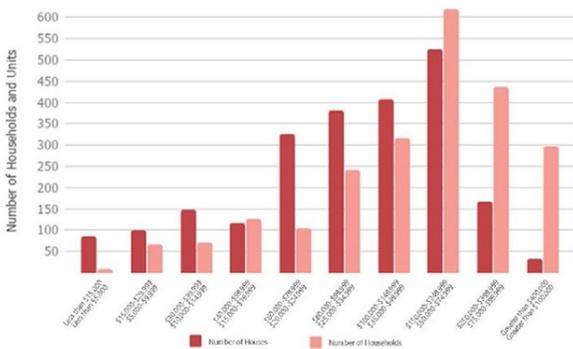


Figure 19: Household Income and Home Value, 2010. Source: ACS

Household Income and Gross Rent 2010

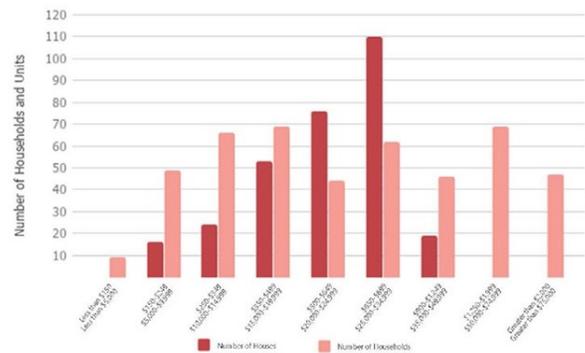


Figure 20: Household Income and Gross Rent, 2010. Source: ACS

Household Income and Home Value 2015

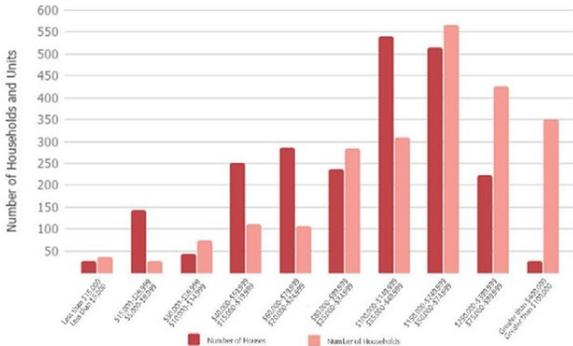


Figure 21: Household Income and Home Value, 2015. Source: ACS

Household Income and Gross Rent 2015

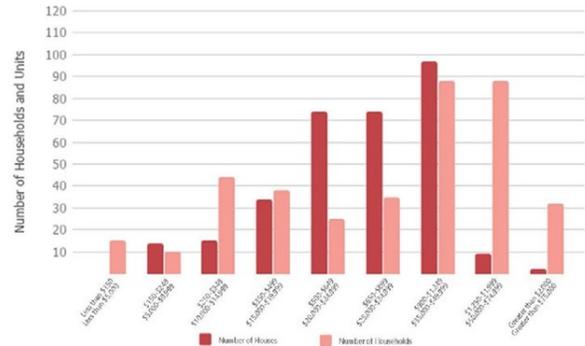


Figure 22: Household Income and Gross Rent, 2015. Source: ACS



# TRANSPORTATION

## REGIONAL ROADWAY CONNECTIONS

Regional connections are extremely important in the viability of a community. Interstate 70 runs along the northern portion of the County and seven other highways run through the county. There are many opportunities to integrate more regional connections and improve the city's regional presence. There is a demand for affective regional transportation for commuter shed and internal economic development.

## INTERSTATE & HIGHWAY SYSTEM

Interstate 70 (I-70) is a major interstate highway, connecting ten US states. I-70 runs for 24 miles east and west along the northern portion of Wabaunsee County near Maple Hill, McFarland, and Paxico. This interstate connects to larger cities outside the region like Kansas City, an hour and half to the east, and Denver, seven hours to the west. Kansas state highway (K)-99 runs north and south through Alma and throughout the county, totaling 38 miles in length. K-99 north goes to the Nebraska border. K-4 is the largest highway in the county and runs east and west, totaling 40 miles in length. This highway connects Alta Vista and Eskridge east to Topeka. K-31 is the second largest highway connecting Wabaunsee County east to Osage County off K-99. K-18, a major connection to Manhattan and Junction City, connects to K-99 at the northwestern edge of the county. The remaining state highways run from either I-70, K-99, or K-31 to the nearest city. K-30 goes to Maple Hill, K-135 to Paxico, K-185 to McFarland, K-195 to Harveyville.

## TRAFFIC COUNTS

**37,305**

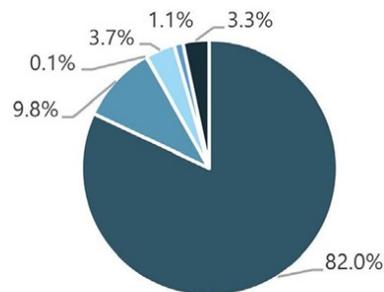
estimated daily vehicles in the county

According to the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) 2016 annual averages, there are 4 roadways within Wabaunsee County that see an estimated traffic volume of 1,000 or more vehicles a day. The highest stretch of roadway is along I-70 where there is an estimated 20,745 vehicles and 4,065 heavy commercial vehicles passing through county lines each day. The second highest roadway traffic volume in Wabaunsee County is the portion of K-99 that extends between K-24 and I-70. K-99 sees an estimated 3,870 vehicles each day and 290 heavy commercial vehicles. Moving further south along K-99, between I-70 and Alma, there was an estimated daily volume of 1,980 vehicles and 210 heavy commercial vehicles. The final roadway segment with just over 1,000 vehicles a day is the roadway, K-30, which runs between I-70 and Paxico seeing an estimated 1,380 vehicles and 85 heavy commercial vehicles a day.

Figure 24, shows the estimated daily traffic counts for each highway and overpass in the county.

## MODE OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK

Wabaunsee County is primarily a commuter community where 70.5 percent of the population commutes outside of the county for work. For that reason it is not surprising to see a high percentage (91.8 percent) of workers taking a car to their employment. Of those who drive to work 82 percent drive alone while the other 9.8 percent carpool. In Wabaunsee County there is a small percentage of workers who walk to work and since there is no public transportation service within the county, 0 percent of workers take public transportation.



- Drove Alone
- Carooled
- Public Transportation
- Walked
- Other Means
- Worked at Home

Figure 23: Mode of Transportation to Work, 2010. Source: ACS

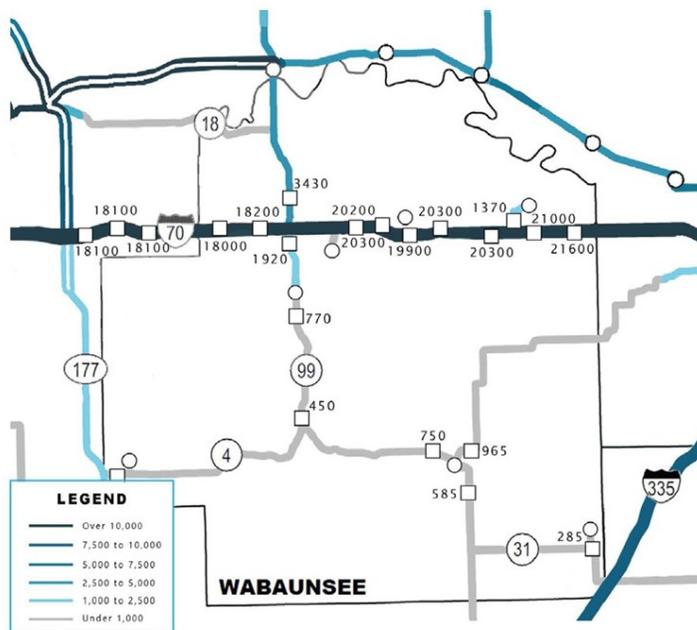


Figure 24: Wabaunsee County Traffic Count Map, 2017. Source: KDOT

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

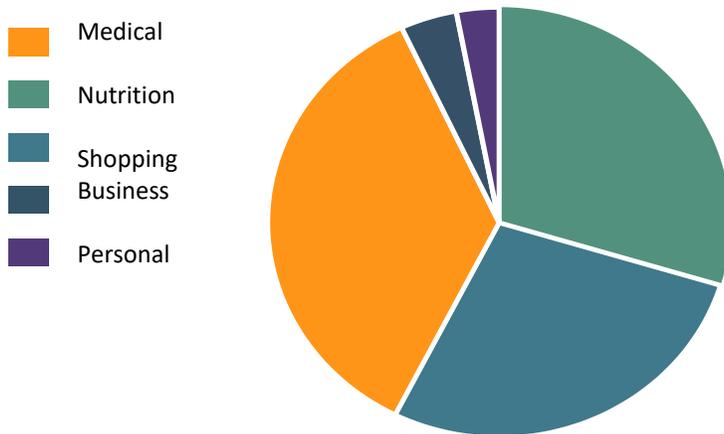
Wabaunsee County General Public Transportation Service provides either scheduled or reservation-based public transportation services to county residents. This service gives residents an opportunity to go to medical appointments, shop, visits, or just simply a day out for people of all ages and abilities. Each city has two days a month set aside for transportation use.

**997**  
more rides given in 2016 than 2010

**99.9%**  
of trips in 2010 were out of the county

**55,386**  
miles traveled in 2016

### DATA SUMMARIES 2010 & 2016



Share of 2016 Public Transportation Trip Types  
Source: Wabaunsee County Clerk

### RAILWAY

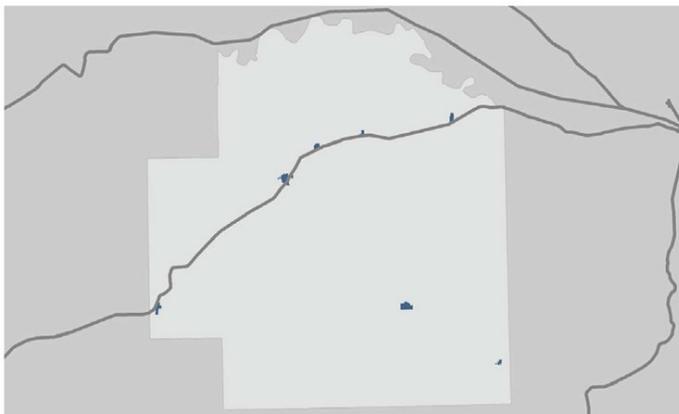


Figure 26: Railway Lines Surrounding Wabaunsee County. Source: ACS

Historically Wabaunsee County residents fought to have a railroad once they saw national growth trends of towns along the railroad. The first opportunity of rail service came after the Civil War when county residents gathered together to organize the Manhattan, Alma, & Burlingame Railway Co. established in 1872. However, due to a loss of business the first railroad line was removed and sold in 1972. Other major railroads such as the Rock Island and Sante Fe Railroad once ran through county territory. Today, a shipping and distribution railway network by BSNF passes through the County, stopping in Topeka and Hutchinson, Kansas. The nearest passenger station, Amtrak, is located in Topeka.

### AIRPORTS

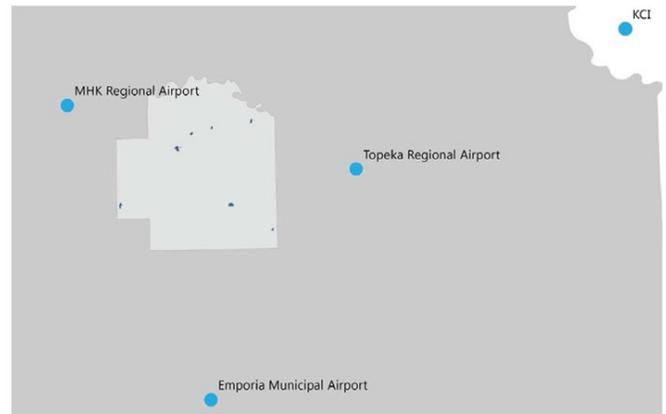


Figure 27: Airports Surrounding Wabaunsee County. Source: ACS

There are two airports in the area that fly commercial airlines. The closest, Manhattan Regional Airport, is approximately 17 miles northwest of the Wabaunsee County border. There are five flights a day at the airport flying non-stop between Dallas, Texas and Chicago, Illinois. Kansas City International Airport is approximately 90 miles from the Wabaunsee County border and is a major commercial airline carrier. There are two smaller airports nearby: the Topeka Regional airport, approximately 20 miles away from the border and the Emporia Municipal Airport, approximately 30 miles from the border.

# TRANSPORTATION

## ROADS

Wabaunsee County is a large rural county. Transportation is critical to the communities of the County. Roads connect farm to market, workforce to employment, students to schools. Wabaunsee County maintains 237 miles of roads: 167 miles of gravel surfaced and 70 miles of paved roads. There are state funds that assist the county's road maintenance, but this has declined significantly over the last decade.

The 13 townships in Wabaunsee County maintain other roads half of which are gravel and half are dirt roads. The township maintenance is managed by the township boards. The County maintains the culverts that are 5 feet by 5 feet or larger on the township roads.

## IDENTIFIED TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

### *Belvue Bridge*

The Belvue Bridge provides a direct paved link from Pottawatomie County to Paxico which has an economic benefit to employees working in Pottawatomie County and farmers in Wabaunsee County. The current bridge, constructed in 1955, is deteriorating. In 2016, weight restrictions removed large trucks from using the bridge. This adds new travel expenses for farmers and businesses. The cost of a new bridge estimated to be between \$20 million and \$25 million would be shared between Pottawatomie County and Wabaunsee County based on the population in both counties. It has been recommended that the counties seek State and Federal funding assistance for this high dollar project. If the Belvue Bridge is not improved, it may be necessary to upgrade Wells Creek Road from Paxico Road west to K99 as an alternate route. This project is estimated to cost \$10 million and would be the responsibility of Wabaunsee County.

### *K99 Super Two Improvements*

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) plans for improvement of K99 to a super two highway by widening, straightening, and making shoulder improvements. These improvements will be made from Wamego south to the I-70 interchange. These improvements will support heavy truck traffic from some of the manufacturers in Wamego and will enhance safety on this stretch of the highway. While the road improvements will likely include controlled access, it will support potential development along this corridor. This would increase the opportunity for commercial development at the K99/I-70 interchange.

### *K177 Highway Improvements*

KDOT has plans for improvements to K177 which will serve as an improved access from western Wabaunsee County and Morris County to I-70. See graphic on page 130. This project will add shoulder improvements, sight distances, and widening of the roadway. Safety is the primary enhancement to this highway that will improve access from Alta Vista to I-70. Much of the right of way for this project has been acquired by KDOT. K177 has been called the "Spine of the Flint Hills."

## SCENIC BYWAYS AND DRIVES

### *Native Stone Scenic Byway*

This State designated Scenic Byway starts at I-70 and K4 and follows K4 south and west through Wabaunsee County to K99 south of Alma. The Byway follows K99 north crossing I-70 further north to K18. The Byway follows K18 west to K177 just south of Manhattan then south on K177 to I-70. This covers a good part of the beautiful Flint Hills passing near several Wabaunsee communities and historic sites.

### *Skyline/Mill Creek Drive*

The County should consider adding the Skyline/Mill Creek Drive to the State's system of Scenic Byways. This would increase awareness and improve identification signage for this drive through a beautiful part of Wabaunsee County.



## BRIDGES AND CULVERTS

### *Local and County Projects*

- There are 180 bridges maintained by Wabaunsee County. Many of these bridges are past their useful life. All bridges in the County are inspected every two years. Critical bridges are inspected every year. The 30 bridges in the County designated as obsolete or structurally deficient need to be replaced at a cost of \$11 million. The annual budget for bridge replacement is \$2.3 million.
- Wabaunsee Road to I-70 is subject to localized flooding problems.
- Impact of heavy trucks from the quarries in the County is significant. Designated routes are always indicated in the use permits for the quarries. The review of these routes is very important. The County may want to consider requiring

the quarry applicant to provide an Engineer's review of the proposed route as part of their permit application. The heavy truck traffic takes a toll on the roads increasing the cost of maintenance. The County may want to consider a Quarry Road Impact Fee to offset these maintenance costs.

- The County has a sales tax of ½ cent for road maintenance that generates about \$250,000 to \$300,000 annually. If the State does not increase support for local road maintenance and improvements, the County could consider a referendum for an increase in this sales tax to help catch up on road maintenance issues.

### *State T-Works Projects*

- Bridge Replacement over Hatch Creek two miles south and 5.2 miles east of Eskridge. This \$514,000 project is scheduled to start in August 2019 and be completed by February 2020.
- Union Pacific Railroad crossing modernization on Cowboy Road east of Maple Hill. This \$321,000 project is scheduled to start in February 2020 and be completed by September 2021.
- Culvert Replacement on K99 two miles north of K99/K4 junction. This \$701,000 project is scheduled to start in March 2020 and be completed in December 2020.
- Culvert Replacement on K4 two miles west of K99. This \$1,263,000 project is scheduled to start in March 2020 and be completed in December 2020.
- The County should identify future projects and assist the State in setting priorities for future T-Works projects.





- Mill Creek Skyline Byway
- Scenic Byway

*Scenic Byways of Wabaunsee County*

# CULTURE & RECREATION

## OVERVIEW

Nature and culture collide in the Flint Hills of Kansas. Wabaunsee County offers unforgettable events, trails and parks that offer breathtaking scenery, museums that take you back in time, farms that are dedicated to the conservation of the Flint Hills, and art galleries that focus on community.

This chapter features many cultural and recreational assets and explores them based on their classification: trails, golf courses, parks and city parks, cultural features, agritourism and nature reserves, museums, and historic sites.

## Trails

### Flint Hills Gravel Route

Bikers and hikers alike are able to enjoy Wabaunsee County as part of the 431.5 mile Flint Hills Gravel Route. The route begins in South Central Nebraska and continues through North Central Oklahoma. The trail extends through the Flint Hills ecoregion and travelers will pass through Alma and Eskridge.

### Echo Cliff Nature Trails

Echo Cliff Park (see Parks section) is located south of Maple Hill. There are nature trails in the park with views of sandstone and large sculptures.

### Lake Wabaunsee

Situated just west of Eskridge, Lake Wabaunsee is a spring fed lake nestled into the Flint Hills. Lake Wabaunsee offers recreational opportunities to the public such as camping, fishing, boating, and swimming.

## City Parks

### Alma City Park

The Alma City Park features a Municipal Swimming Pool and a playground. There is also the historic Stone House in the Park.

### Alma McKnight Park

Softball, baseball, T-ball fields, tennis courts, playground equipment, and concessions stand are all located at McKnight Park. There is also camping stalls for tents and RVs.

### Eskridge City Park

The Eskridge City Park is known as a community gathering place for events ranging from community picnics to parades. The park features a basketball court, a place to play a game of horseshoes, and a bandstand in the National Register of Historic Places. An All Veterans Memorial was recently added to the southeast section of the park.

### Harveyville Park

In 2016, Harveyville Park got a makeover. With CDBG funds and the support of the community, the park now features a playground structure, a picnic pavilion shelter, and a basketball court.

## Golf Courses

### Wabaunsee Pines Golf Course

Wabaunsee Pines Golf Course welcomes all to their 9 hole golf course located near Lake Wabaunsee.



Figure 28: Echo Cliff Park

## Parks

### Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie

The Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Park is a 45-acre public park known for its breathtaking views of the Flint Hills and its wildflowers. The park also has a historical link to the Anti-Slavery Freestate Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony.

### Echo Cliff Park

Located near Maple Hill on Highway 4, Echo Cliff Park offers unusual folk art signs, picnic tables, and shelter overlooking the Mission Creek and the natural fifty foot cliffs that give the park its name.



Figure 29: View of the Wabaunsee Pines Golf Course

#### Maple Hill City Park

Maple Hill City Park is located on the southern portion of the city. The park offers picnic benches, a baseball field, and a variety of playground equipment.

#### McFarland City Park

McFarland has a rich history with baseball, which is still evident today at McFarland City Park. The park features a large baseball field, a basketball court, a sheltered picnic area, and a variety of play equipment.

#### Paxico Park

In 2016, Paxico Park was renovated to include a large playground, picnic shelter, and plenty of play space.

#### Mill Creek Campground & RV Park

Mill Creek Campground & RV Park just southwest of Paxico offers 47 equipped campsites, cabins, tent stalls and a playground.

### Cultural Features

#### Flint Hills Stone Cellars

Within Wabaunsee County there are 58 known historic stone cellars and there are over 270 within the Flint Hills Region. Stone cellars from the late 1800s to the early 1900s are man-made and typically feature an arched-roof in native stone. These structures were mostly built as root cellars or storm shelters but they also may have been dugout homes. The Volland Store offers tours in the spring and fall.



### Agritourism & Nature Reserves

#### Flint Hills Prairie Bison Reserve

The North American bison has been the provider on the prairie for thousands of years. The Flint Hills Prairie Bison Reserve, near Alta Vista, focuses on the conservation of the prairie, education for the public, and the restoration of the bison population within the Flint Hills.

#### Alpacas of Wildcat Hollow

Situated just outside of Eskridge is a 99 acre Alpaca farm. This farm offers education, support in husbandry, and farm design. They also have an online store of Alpaca themed clothing, accessories, and toys.

#### Wabaunsee County Bumpkin Pumpkin Patch

Each October the Wabaunsee County Bumpkin Pumpkin Patch, located southeast of Harveyville, attracts visitors from all over the county. They offer hayrides, homemade treats, and a variety of pumpkins, gourds, and squash to bring home.

#### Plumlee Buffalo Ranch

Plumlee Buffalo Ranch is located just north of Alma in Wabaunsee County. It serves both agricultural and agritourism purposes and is known for breeding bison.



Figure 30: Barn quilt, Maple Hill

#### Kansas Flint Hills Barn Quilt Trail

One of the unique features about Wabaunsee County is the Flint Hills Barn Quilt Trail. There are nearly 50 Quilt Blocks that are painted on boards and can be found on barns, homes, businesses, and other structures. These blocks celebrate the agricultural history and culture that is so important to the Flint Hills.

#### Native Stone Scenic Byway

A 75-mile route between Wabaunsee County and Shawnee County along K-4 and K-99 offers visitors a glimpse of walls, bridges, and buildings constructed of limestone native to the region.

#### The Harveyville Project

The Harveyville Project is housed in what was once a high school and elementary school in Harveyville. This unique workshop and retreat venue provides lodging and innovative classroom spaces for events that attract guests from all over the United States.

#### Mill Creek Lodge at Volland Point

Mill Creek Lodge at Volland Point on the Claussen Ranch is a rustic 1865 ranchstead located on the scenic Mill Creek in the Flint Hills area below Volland Hill. The Mill Creek Lodge has an event center and a large ranch barn available for weddings, family gatherings, and business meetings.

#### Alma Creamery

Alma Creamery has been making cheeses on-site since 1946. It offers a variety of cheeses, including naturally smoked cheeses.

#### Prairie Thunder Elk

Prairie Thunder Elk offers an opportunity for the public to visit and learn about elk. They also sell food items such as elk snack sticks and elk steaks.



Figure 31: Mill Creek Lodge



## Museums

### Ag Heritage Park

Ag Heritage Park celebrates early agricultural life in rural America with two museums and a large collection of memorabilia. Located in Alta Vista, anyone can come learn what life was like a hundred years ago.

The Volland Store & Gallery or the Kratzer Brothers Store In 1913, the commercial center of Volland was the Kratzer Brothers Store. Today, what is now known as the Volland Store, is an event venue and art gallery that represents a unique venue for art and community gatherings. Homesteaders and visitors alike come from all over the country to hold meetings, reunions, workshops, weddings, poetry readings, art exhibits and musical performances at this architectural award winning venue.



Figure 32: Ag Heritage Park, 2018

## Historic Sites

### Alma Downtown Historic District

The central business district of Alma, the county seat of Wabaunsee County, sits on either side of Highway 99 on Missouri Street in Alma. On either side of the street are two-story commercial buildings made of stone and brick, which came from nearby quarries. This historic district is reminiscent of when Alma was a market center for the Rock Island Railroad, which located its main line on the southern portion of the town.

### East Stone Arch Bridge & Southeast Stone Arch Bridge - Lake Wabaunsee

A paved roadway encircles Lake Wabaunsee and includes two stone bridges with three arches -- one on the east side of the lake and the other outside the southeast side. Because modern lake-front houses surround the lake's perimeter, and therefore prevent the entire lake from being listed in the National Historic Register, these bridges remain as historic remnants of Lake Wabaunsee.

### Wilmington School

One of the oldest remaining structures in the county is the Wilmington School located in the original town site of Wilmington. The schoolhouse is made of local limestones and has been recognized as a potential site to yield additional information on the era through archaeological investigation.



Figure 33: Volland Store & Gallery. Source: ArchDaily

### Wabaunsee County Historical Museum

Learn about the rich history of Wabaunsee County at the Wabaunsee County Historical Museum in Alma. The museum offers artifacts ranging from schoolhouse memorabilia to historic vehicles and wagons, including a 1928 REO fire truck.



Figure 34: Historic Limerick building in downtown Alma, 2018

### Brandt Hotel

Brandt Hotel is located on the northeastern side of Alma's historic downtown. It is associated with the development of downtown Alma and is characterized by a southwest-facing diagonal corner with an ornamental metal balcony on its second floor.

### Wabaunsee County Courthouse

The Wabaunsee County Courthouse stands four-stories tall and occupies a full square block to the west of the Alma business district. The Courthouse was erected in 1931 and is architecturally significant to the time period.

### Beecher Bible and Rifle Church

Located in Wabaunsee Township, Beecher Bible and Rifle Church is significant to Wabaunsee County. It is one of the earliest permanent church buildings in the state of Kansas and was named after Rev. Henry Ward Beecher who helped smuggle rifles past pro-slavery forces in crates marked Beecher's Bibles.

### Eskridge City Park & Bandstand

The Eskridge City Park and its bandstand were built between June 1908 and March 1909. These are both noted for their entertainment and recreation significance to the community and are attributed to when the city's economic growth and community development were at their peak. The bandstand was originally built for the city's band but has since been used for a number of other events including city fairs and graduations.

### Fix Farmstead

Fix Farmstead, located just outside of Alma near Mill Creek, is an Italianate-style house, characteristic of other structures in the area, accompanied by a tenant house, barn, granary, storage cellar, storm cellar, and a garage. The site is named after the Fix Family, German-American migrants who settled on this land, and is significant to the area's early settlement, agriculture, and architecture.

### Southeast Stone Arch Bridge

A single paved roadway encircles the New Deal-era Wabaunsee lake and includes this historic arch bridge. The construction of the Southeast three-arch stone bridge took place in 1937- 1938 and was funded by the Works Progress Administration. It remains an integral part of the historic road system encircling Lake Wabaunsee

### Paxico Historic District

The Paxico Historic District is comprised of four commercial buildings that were listed under the National Register of Historic Places in 1998.

### Snokomo School

In the 1860s the Snokomo School was built in modern day Paxico to hold class for seven months a year. The one-room schoolhouse was repurchased in 1941 by the Silent Workers Club who refurbished the property.

### Peter Thoes Barn

One of the earliest Wabaunsee County settlers, Peter Thoes, built a settlement on a property near the Potawatomi Indian Reservation. Though his house suffered from a terrible fire, the remaining barn was nominated as part of the Historic Agriculture-Related Resources of Kansas multiple property nomination in the areas of agriculture and exploration/settlement for its association with Peter Thoes.

### Wabaunsee District #1 Grammar School

Wabaunsee District #1 Grammar School symbolizes the prosperity of the 1880s and mimics the classic appearance of early common schools in Kansas.



Figure 35: Security State Bank Paxico, 2018

### Security State Bank

Founded primarily by the Waugh brothers, the Security State Bank was one of the most beautiful and convenient bank buildings of any city in Central Kansas. The early 20th century bank had spaces available for rent and was fondly regarded within the community.

### Stuewe House

Brothers Albert and Ferdinand Stuewe were community leaders who played a significant role in the development of Alma. The Stuewe House was once the location of the historic Stuewe Brothers Creamery.



Stone Arch Bridge



Figure 36: The Old Stone Church, 2018

### Old Stone Church

The Old Stone Church was part of a gift to Maple Hill from the family of William A. Pierce, a wealthy Englishman. He gave 40 acres for the building of the church, which was then known as Eliot Union Congregational Church, and a cemetery.



# RURAL WATER DISTRICTS & FLOOD RISK

## RURAL WATER DISTRICTS

Understanding the capacity of the water districts that serve Wabaunsee County is important if the county wishes to grow. The rural water districts (RWD) indicate the capacity of the county to grow in its rural areas. However, the county may have to impose limits on the RWDs if it wants to grow more within its communities rather than in rural areas.

Wabaunsee County has two rural water districts, Wabaunsee RWD 2 on the northwestern side and Wabaunsee RWD 1 on the eastern side. Wabaunsee RWD 1 serves Maple Hill and Eskridge, as well as units in rural areas of the county in between these two communities. Wabaunsee RWD 2 serves Alma, Paxico, and McFarland, as well as some areas to the northwest in Riley and Pottawatomie Counties.

The county also receives water from other counties' rural water districts that overlap county borders. Morris RWD 1 provides water to Alta Vista and its surrounding areas; Osage RWD 8 provides water to Harveyville and other units in rural areas on the eastern side of the county; Shawnee RWD 1 also provides water to rural areas on the eastern side of the county. However, the RWDs from the surrounding counties only supply water to a fraction of the county's residential units. Therefore, most of Wabaunsee County's residential units and all of their commercial units receive water from the county's rural water districts.

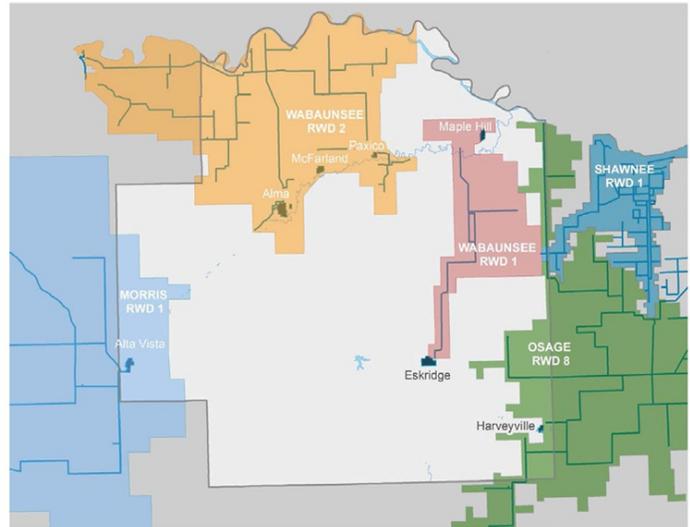


Figure 37: Rural Water Districts that serve Wabaunsee County

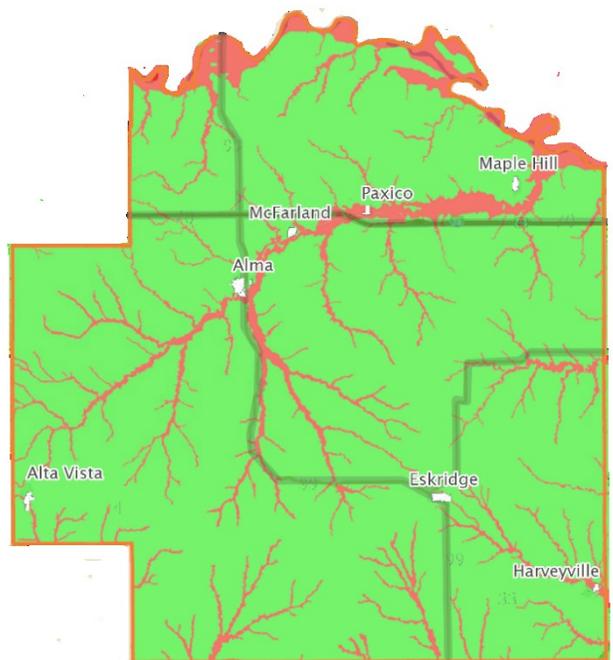
## FLOOD RISK

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) oversees flooding and flood-related issues in the United States. FEMA defines levels of flood risk, including the 100- and 500-year floods. Flooding is a concern for communities within Wabaunsee County, especially those near the Kansas River and within the floodplain.

The map shown in this figure displays the level of flood risk that Wabaunsee County experiences. Each community's level of flood risk, described below, is visible in the community trends section of this report.

High risk indicates that the area has a one percent chance of being flooded in any given year -- otherwise known as a 100-year flood. Moderate risk indicates a 0.2 percent chance of being flooded in any given year -- otherwise known as the 500-year flood. A low risk means that an area has less than 0.2 percent annual chance of being flooded in any given year.

Maple Hill is the only community that is completely within a low flood risk area. Eskridge, McFarland, and Harveyville have considerable portions of their communities that are within a high flood risk. Paxico is almost completely within a high flood risk area, which has the potential to pose challenges to the community if precautions are not taken.



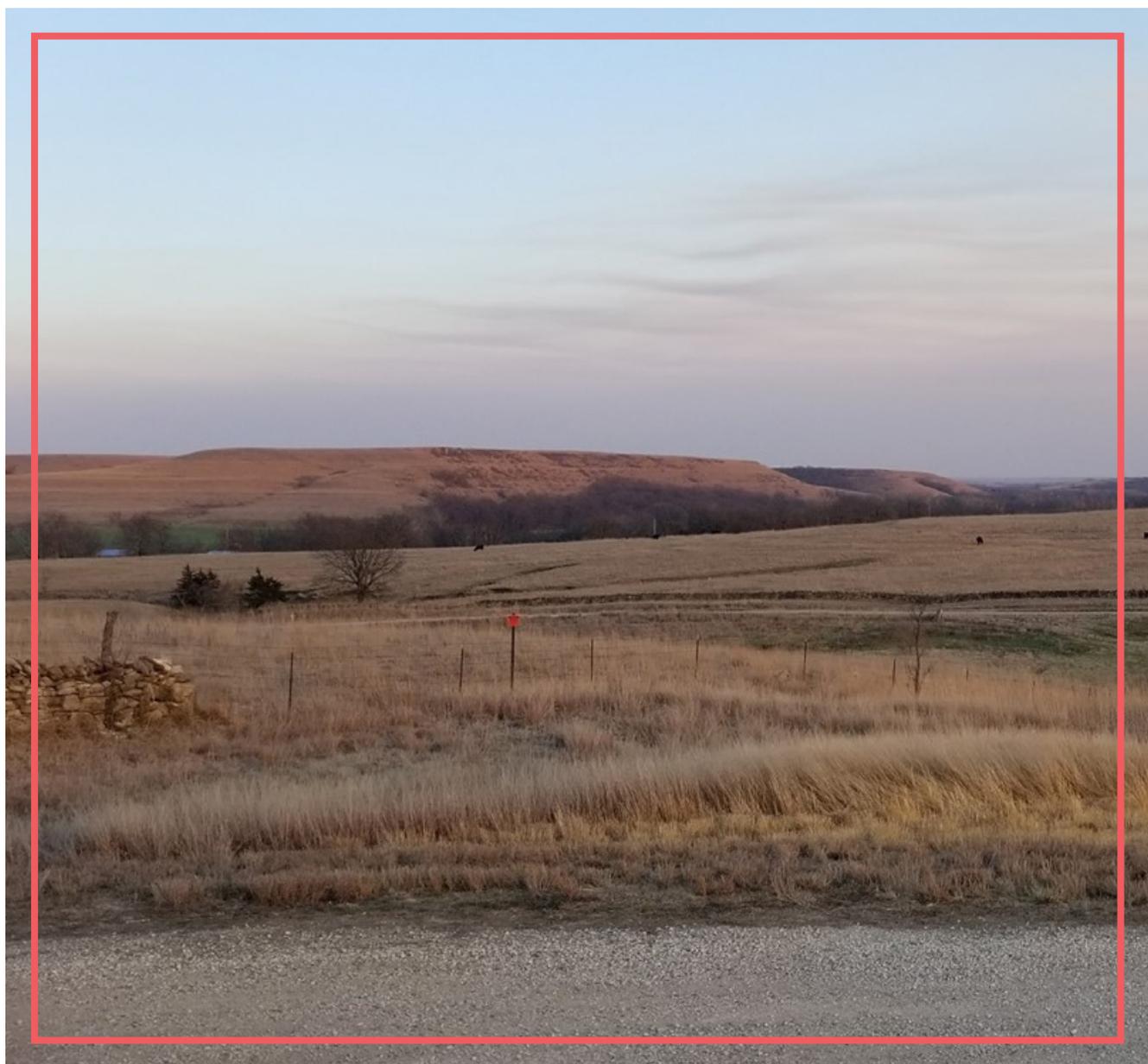


# CHAPTER 2: Communities

*Source: U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Reardon, 1st Sustainment Brigade*

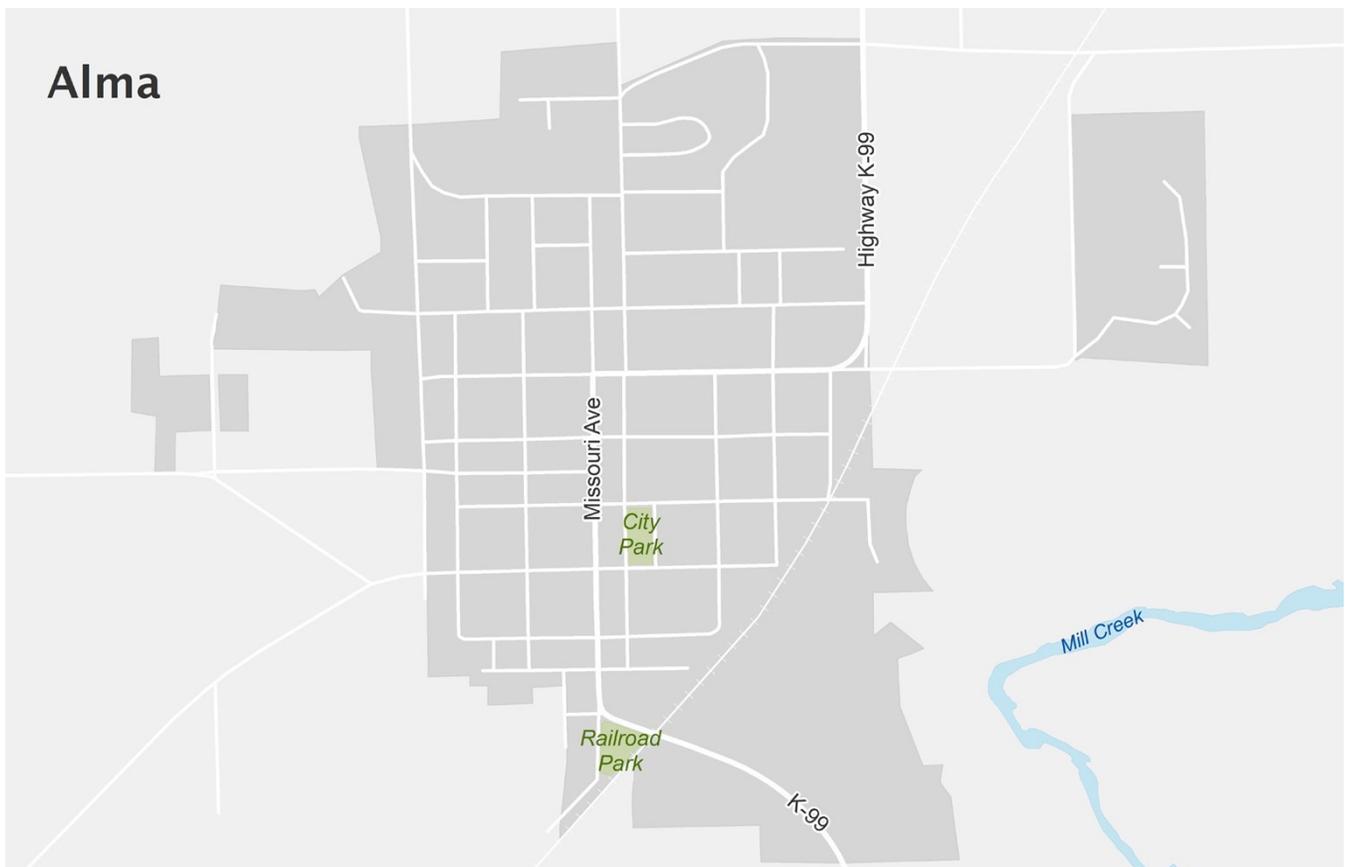
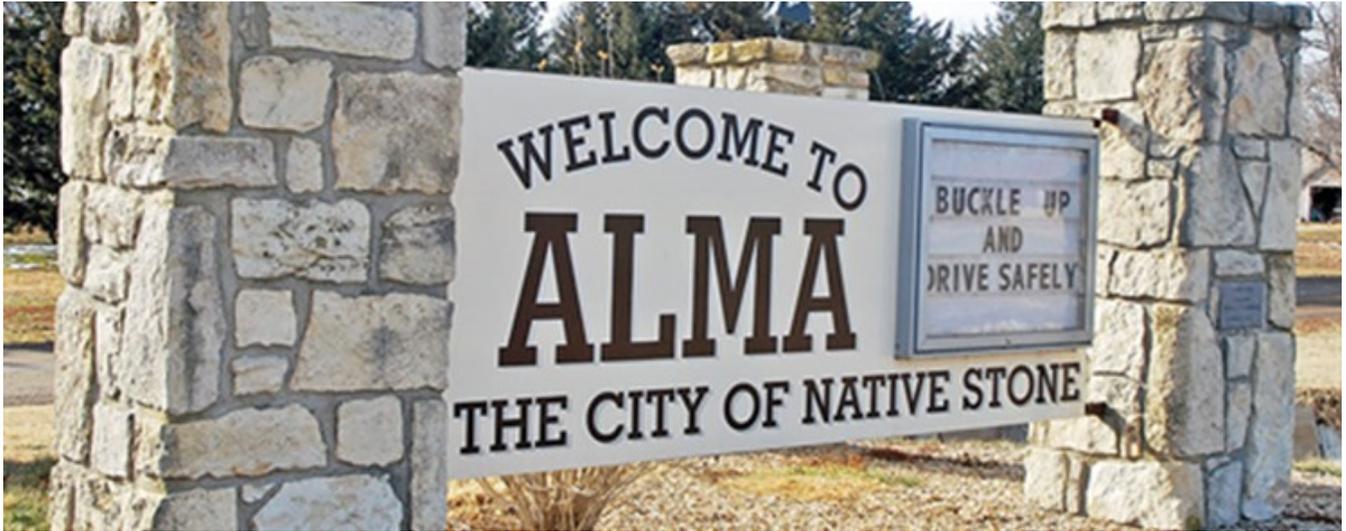
# COMMUNITIES

Wabaunsee County is a large rural county just west of Topeka, the Kansas State Capitol. The county is comprised of thirteen communities, seven of which are incorporated towns: Alma, Alta Vista, Eskridge, Harveyville, Maple Hill, McFarland, and Paxico. The unincorporated communities include Allendorf, Volland, Wabaunsee, Wilmington, Hessdale, and Chalk. Wabaunsee County also includes Lake Wabaunsee where many residents find warm-weather recreation and reside throughout the year.



# ALMA

Alma is a small community of German heritage and part of the Scenic Mill Creek Drive and the Native Stone Scenic Byway. Located near I-70, Alma was declared the county seat in 1866 after two votes and the records were moved from Wabaunsee Township to Alma.



# ALMA

## Infrastructure

**Gas:** The gas line between Alma and Wamego is circa 1958 and undersized. Kansas Gas supplies the gas and Alma owns the line. There is currently a gas line project underway in 2019.

**Water:** The source of water is the watershed lake. The water line system contains old lines that need improvement. Currently the city is replacing lines as they need repair.

**Sewer System:** The sewer treatment plant and fourth lagoon cell are fairly new. The sewer lines have also been lined recently.

**Streets:** Sidewalks to various destinations are being improved. A one cent sidewalk improvement tax is available for improvements.

**Drainage:** There are localized flooding in isolated areas from the Co-op south and in the alley between 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Street between Missouri and Kansas Street. The south end of town needs storm sewers.

## Development Opportunities

**Housing:** The city would like to see Park Valley developed in the future. Currently, there are available lots and any purchased lots are undeveloped as streets and sewer need to be constructed in one area.

**Commercial:** A neighborhood revitalization plan is currently available for commercial property county-wide.

**City Park:** Recreation facilities are in good shape. The city recently upgraded playground equipment in the park.



# ALMA



Median Age: 43  
Population under 15: 21%  
Population over 65: 22%

Female Population: 47%  
Male Population: 53%

**832**  
population

**342**  
number of  
households

Average Household Size: 2.4  
Total Housing Units: 381  
Median Home Value: \$84,100

Owner-Occupied Units: 78%  
Renter-Occupied Units: 22%  
Median Gross Rent: \$518

Population Over 16 Years in  
Labor Force: 77%  
Unemployment Rate: 6.8%  
Poverty Rate: 10.2%

**Largest Industry:** Educational  
Services, Health Care, Social Assistance  
**Workers Living and Employed  
in Community:** 10.9%

**\$50,114**  
median  
household  
income

# ALTA VISTA

Alta Vista has a Spanish meaning of “high view” and was named because of its elevation. Before being settled as Alta Vista, this area was a German settlement called Templin. The city was founded in 1887 and incorporated in 1905.

## Infrastructure

**Water:** The water tower has recently been repainted and the water lines are in good condition.

**Street:** There is chip and seal deterioration especially at Park and Logan St.

**Drainage:** There have been some drainage issues during recent rainfall events.

**City Park:** The city would like to enclose Shelter Park. Enclosing it is less of a liability and would save money. The dugouts and fence can be purchased from the school.

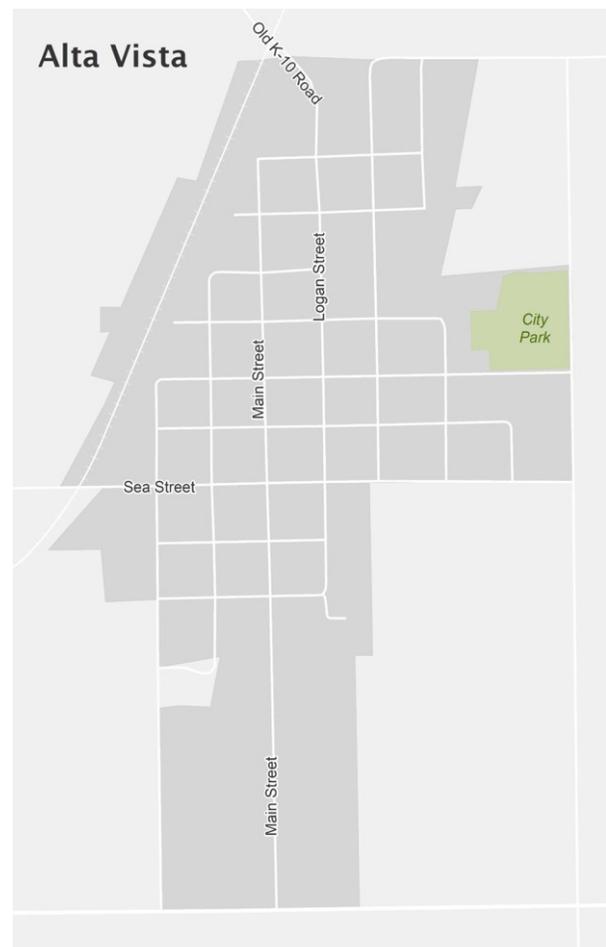


## Development Opportunities

**Infill development:** Alta Vista needs housing stock and would like to annex vacant land south of town. Currently there is no infrastructure to serve this area and they would like to pursue funding.

**Rehabilitation:** There are a handful of dilapidated structures that need to be torn down. Most houses are renovated and there is no new construction occurring in town.

**Economic Development:** The city acknowledges they need to pursue more residents and businesses in town.



# ALTA VISTA



Median Age: 42  
 Population under 15: 20%  
 Population over 65: 16%

Female Population: 48%  
 Male Population: 52%

**444**  
 population

**189**  
 number of households

Average Household Size: 2.4  
 Total Housing Units: 211  
 Median Home Value: \$46,000

Owner-Occupied Units: 73%  
 Renter-Occupied Units: 27%  
 Median Gross Rent: \$556

Population Over 16 Years in Labor Force: 65%  
 Unemployment Rate: 7.4%  
 Poverty Rate: 10.5%

Largest Industry: Retail Trade  
 Workers Living and Employed in Community: 1.7%

**\$39,276**  
 median household income

# ESKRIDGE

The City of Eskridge was laid out in 1868. The town experienced growth in 1880 when the railroad was built through it.

Eskridge is named for Charles V. Eskridge, an Emporia, Kansas, journalist and politician. Colonel Ephraim Sanford, the founder of the town company allowed Eskridge to buy the first lot and have the town named after him. Eskridge served in both houses of the Kansas legislature and was elected as lieutenant governor under Governor James M. Harvey in 1869.

In 1943, German and Italian prisoners of World War II were brought to Kansas and other Midwest states as a means of solving the labor shortage caused by American men serving in the war effort. Large internment camps were established in Kansas: Camp Concordia, Camp Funston (at Fort Riley), Camp Phillips (at Salina under Fort Riley). Fort Riley established 12 smaller branch camps, including one west of Eskridge at Lake Wabaunsee.

Eskridge is host to several annual events including the Eskridge Labor Day Rodeo, Veteran's Day Parade, Fourth of July picnic in the park, a fireworks display at Lake Wabaunsee and the Eskridge Fall Festival. Come spend a day with us and enjoy the relaxed atmosphere of small town America.

*Source: City of Eskridge*



# ESKRIDGE

Median Age: 43  
Population under 15: 20%  
Population over 65: 12%

Female Population: 52%  
Male Population: 48%

534  
population

187  
number of households

Average Household Size: 2.5  
Total Housing Units: 233  
Median Home Value: \$68,100

Owner-Occupied Units: 75%  
Renter-Occupied Units: 25%  
Median Gross Rent: \$476

Population Over 16 Years in Labor Force: 58%  
Unemployment Rate: 3.3%  
Poverty Rate: 27.0%

Largest Industry: Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance

Workers Living and Employed in Community: 6.7%

\$36,429  
median household income

## Infrastructure

**Sewer System:** The City will be making improvements to the sewer system including lagoon improvements, and sewer line replacement and lining.

**Water:** The City has improved its water system with upgrades to the water treatment plant.

**Gas:** The gas distribution system is city owned. There is a need to bury some exposed gas lines.

**City Park:** Eskridge has a beautiful city park. Some potential improvements include lights on the baseball fields. The park is supported by the Eskridge Park Foundation, a 501c(3) formed two years ago. The park contains the Eskridge Bandstand which was recently added to the National Register of Historic Places, and also contains an All Veteran's Memorial. Additional amenities are desired to add to the city park.

**City Pool:** There is an opportunity to make some improvements around the City Pool with the addition of playground equipment and a picnic shelter.

# ESKRIDGE

## Development Opportunities

**Housing:** There are some residential structures that should be demolished for safety reasons. A housing rehabilitation program could be helpful to make the community safer and more attractive.

**Historic Buildings:** The downtown area of Eskridge has several historic buildings. Some of these buildings need to be rehabilitated with care to preserve the historic character of the buildings. There are grants and tax credits available to assist the funding of such improvements.

**Redevelopment Opportunity:** The old school building in Eskridge has great potential for redevelopment and

economic use. The Flint Hills Regional Council has a Brownfields Assessment Grant that could evaluate if there is any contamination in the building such as asbestos and lead based paint. This grant could develop a cleanup plan and evaluate the potential for reuse of the building.

The adaptive re-use of this building as a community center may fit in well with the recreational zone (pool and ballfields) adjacent to it. Other future improvements: The city would like to pursue residential rehabilitation to maintain home values as well as expansion of the library internet service.



# HARVEYVILLE

The City of Harveyville was platted in 1880 by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway. Settlers lived in the area for 25 years prior, called the Dragoon creek settlement. The town was named for Henry Harvey, a missionary to the Shawnee Indians who homesteaded at in the settlement after the creation of the Kansas Territory. Harveyville was a known stop on the Underground Railroad via the Harris house providing movement for slaves to freedom. Harveyville was incorporated in 1905.

Today, Harveyville is home to: The Harveyville Project, an Artist Residency and Sculpture Garden focused on fiber as an artistic medium.

Bell Wildlife Specialties, professional outfitting and taxidermy, the First National Bank of Harveyville, small bank appeal with big bank services, Harveyville Seed Co., Inc., provider of farm and ranch supplies and services.



Source: Jodi Cedarquist



# HARVEYVILLE

Median Age: 40  
Population under 15: 20%  
Population over 65: 12%

Female Population: 49%  
Male Population: 51%

236  
population

93  
number of households

Average Household Size: 2.5  
Total Housing Units: 106  
Median Home Value: \$62,500

Owner-Occupied Units: 75%  
Renter-Occupied Units: 25%  
Median Gross Rent: \$500

Population Over 16 Years in Labor Force: 57%  
Unemployment Rate: 3.2%  
Poverty Rate: 16.8%

Largest Industry: Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance

Workers Living and Employed in Community: 1.9%

\$37,500  
median household income

## Infrastructure Needs

**Sewer System:** Since 2003 Harveyville has made two major improvements to the system utilizing CDBG grants. The first constructed a third lagoon cell, a new lift station and a generator backup while improving surface water infiltration to specific locations. The second project was after the tornado in 2012. This project focused on removal of tornado debris, de-sludging, facility repairs and improved erosion control. Future plans should focus on an aging collection system.

**Water:** Since 1995 the city has utilized two CDBG grants for major water improvements. The first installed a new distribution system. The second

addressed an aging water treatment facility while aligning with the desire of state agencies to regionalize water resources. Today, Harveyville contracts with Osage City to treat and Burlingame to transport water purchased out of Melvern reservoir.

Future plans should include a study to evaluate water quality and overhead expenses affecting rates. Areas of focus to include water distribution, flushing and reviewing the purchase contracts.

**Gas:** The city owns a gas distribution system including the service line from the junction of highways K-99 and K-31 to town. Future projects will focus on line safety, valve replacement and potential burial of the service line.

# HARVEYVILLE

**Streets:** The streets are approximately six-year old asphalt resulting from a CDBG grant. Focus should include maintenance of these asphalt roads. There currently are minimal sidewalks for walkers.

**Drainage:** Ditches and culverts need attention to improve drainage. There are no serious flooding issues with only a small area existing inside the federal flood plain.

**Municipal property improvements:** The current city hall has water infiltration issues and needs repair. The city shop has roof leaks and is an aging facility in need of repairs. A study should be conducted to evaluate options between repairs and new construction.

**Community Senior Center:** Harveyville has an active senior group whose' members extend beyond the city limits. Currently, there is not a community owned facility for them to meet. This is a desired facility within the community. Potential efficiencies may exist in the development of senior, community health and recreational programs.

**City Park:** A new playground and tornado shelter was recently constructed with CDBG funds. A need has been expressed for a walking trail and other healthy living initiatives. Improvements to the ball fields are also identified as a priority. The recreational needs of the community extend beyond the city limits. Exploration of funding the community needs beyond the city budget will be required to expand services.

**Emergency Services:** Harveyville is served by RFD #3 a volunteer fire department for fire and first responder services. A noted concern is the availability of volunteer's on week days when many are at work. Law enforcement is provided by the Wabaunsee County Sherriff. Noted is the importance of increased patrol officers and improved response times.

**Health Care:** Currently there is no local health care beyond the Wabaunsee County Health Department. The need for increased services were expressed with a focus on seniors and those with transportation needs. Explore increased local clinics, mobile clinics and county supported transportation services.

**Library:** The Harveyville Mini Library is part of the Pottawatomie-Wabaunsee Regional Library and was originally built by the Harveyville Lions Club. It was suggested to explore options on how to expand internet access for families without home internet during hours when the library is closed.

**Long Term Plan:** The city council should review and update the "Harveyville Long Term Plan" on an annual basis.

# HARVEYVILLE

## Development Opportunities

**Housing:** There are many empty lots in the community and a few dilapidated structures. Promoting development and rehabilitation of these should be considered.

The city recently participated in developing a senior housing duplex utilizing a tax credit program in conjunction with Osage County Economic Development. Future should consider additional similar projects focused on both seniors or younger working families.

**Economic Development:** The community noted the importance economic development for the area. An interchange with K-31 and KTA I-335 is believed to open development opportunities. A joint effort with Burlingame and Osage County should be considered.

A much-needed business is a convenience store to supply basic needs as there is no grocery store.

**Broadband:** The city is served by Mercury Wireless and Century Link. Quality of cellular coverage varies by carrier.



# MAPLE HILL

Maple Hill is located two miles north of Interstate 70 and just minutes from the state capital, Topeka. In 2018 Maple Hill was home to 620 residents.

The beginning of Maple Hill is intertwined with the Potawatomi Indian Reservation. In 1848, the Jesuits tried to convince the Indians that a better location was on the north side of the Kansas River, but some stayed on the south side and the government built grist mills on Mill Creek to assist the Indians in milling grain. Maple Hill's name arose from a small grove of maple trees on a knoll near the Waterman's house. Rufus Waterman was one of the first settlers of the area.

Over the next ten years, Maple Hill formed a solid settlement with ranching and farming. In 1874 Santa Fe Railway officials and their families moved into

the area. Like much of the West, Maple Hill anticipated the arrival of the railroad and interest in land and prices soared. W.J. Tod built his ranch into a world renowned cattle ranch. The ranch was originally owned by Mr. Fowler. Tod brought several families from his native Scotland to work on the ranch and Maple Hill became a Scottish community.

Maple Hill is home to the Maple Hill Elementary School Cowboys, a part of the consolidated Mill Creek Valley school district that is just a short distance from the middle school, junior high and high school of the county's consolidated school system. The Maple Hill community is also home to St. Vianney's Catholic School (K-12) operating as a home school co-op.

Sunset Ridge Development has been developing on the west side of Maple Hill. A senior citizen's center sits on the east side of the town's main street.



# MAPLE HILL

## Infrastructure

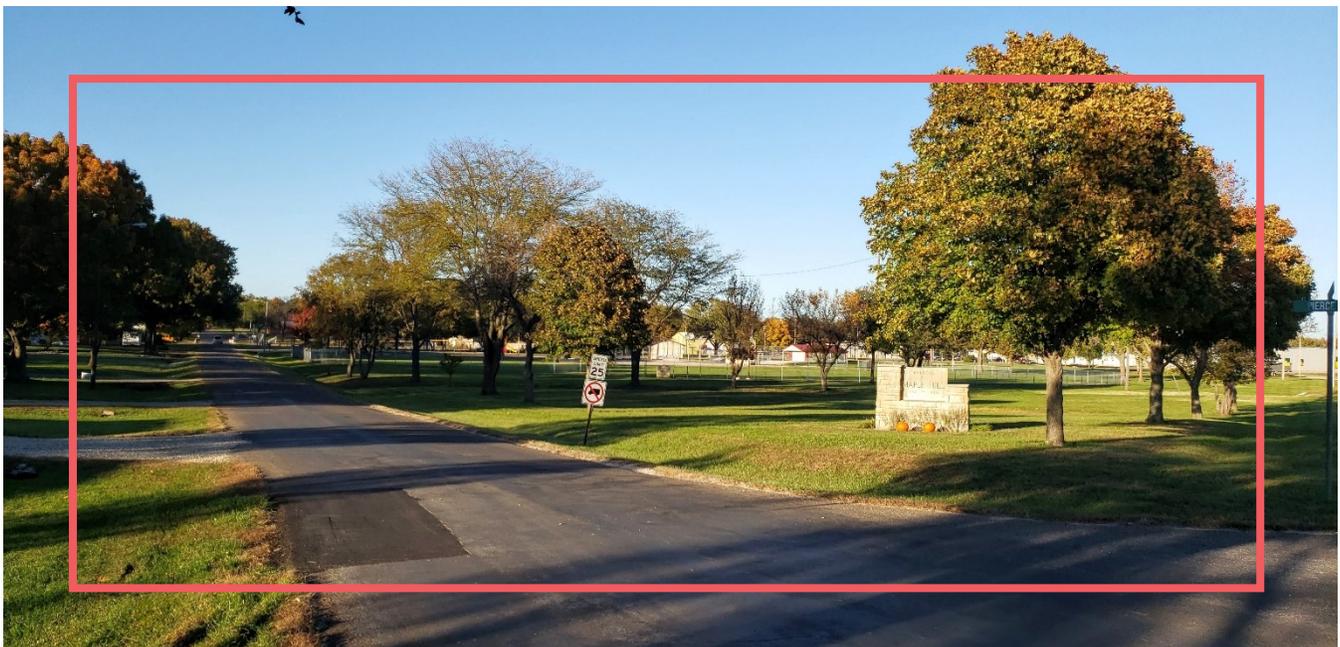
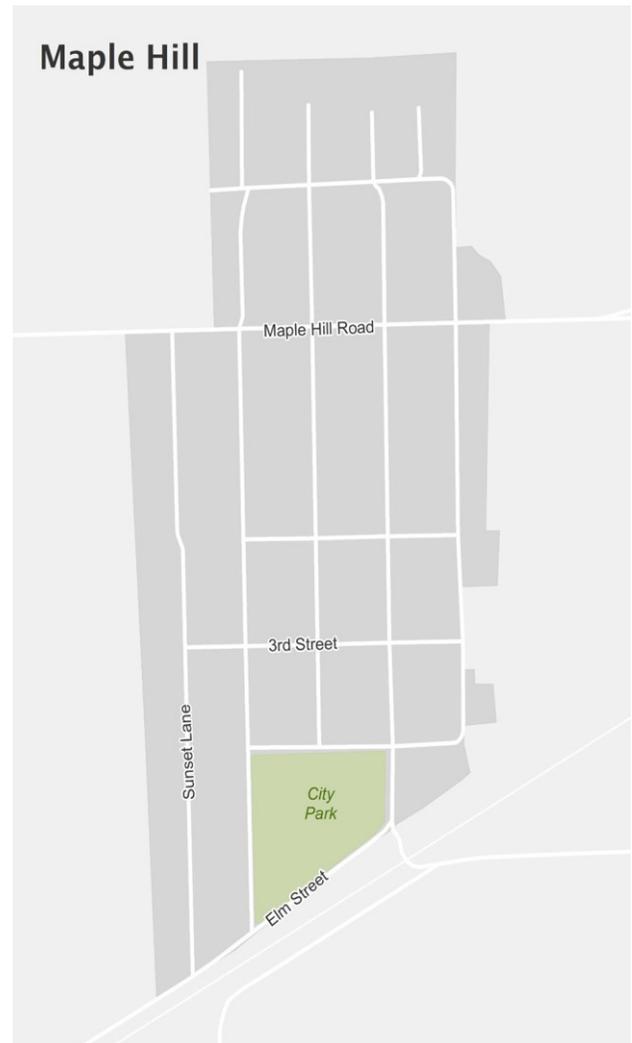
**Drainage:** There is flooding in some areas which needs to be addressed.

**Sewer:** Recently, a half million dollars was spent on lining the existing sewer system.

**Sidewalks:** There is potential for sidewalk improvements in the residential neighborhoods.

**Schools:** Maple Hill has K-4 currently and would like to get the pre-K back in Maple Hill.

**Future growth:** In 2018, the city council passed a temporary moratorium to halt any new construction till January 1st, 2019 until more water infrastructure is built. The water tower built in 1924 is undersized for fire and water service. A new tower is slated for 2020. Currently, Maple Hill is served by three wells, but one more is needed.



# MAPLE HILL



Median Age: 31  
 Population under 15: 34%  
 Population over 65: 12%

Female Population: 51%  
 Male Population: 49%

**620**  
 population

**210**  
 number of households

Average Household Size: 3.0  
 Total Housing Units: 217  
 Median Home Values: \$109,900

Owner-Occupied Units: 91%  
 Renter-Occupied Units: 9%  
 Median Gross Rent: \$775\*

Population Over 16 Years in Labor Force: 69%  
 Unemployment Rate: 1.7%  
 Poverty Rate: 6.6%

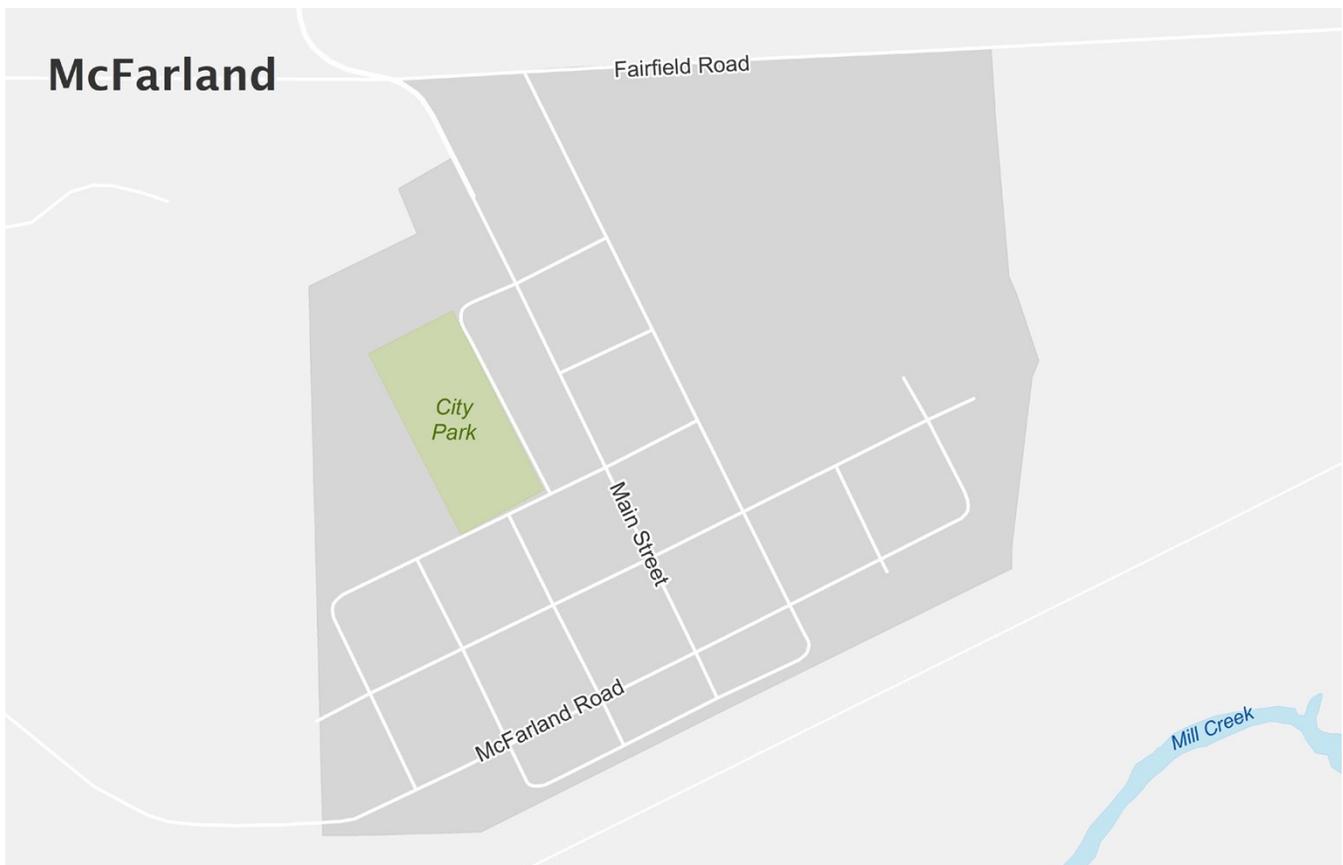
**Largest Industry:** Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance  
**Workers Living and Employed in Community:** 1.3%

**\$56,641**  
 median household income

# MCFARLAND

McFarland was founded in 1887 by S.R. Fairfield. McFarland was incorporated in 1903. The town was platted at the Rock Island Railroad point where the rail branched northwest to Denver and the Pacific coast, as well as branching southwest toward the Gulf of Mexico. Railroad activity peaked in the 1920's then began to dwindle in the 1950's as railroad facilities were reduced in town. Although there is little business in McFarland, this small bedroom community is actually seeing a population increase in recent years.

McFarland is a charming, quiet and proud small town located along beautiful Mill Creek in the Flint Hills of Wabaunsee County. A friendly community with low taxes, breathtaking natural surroundings and vistas. The town maintains an outstanding city park with tennis court, basketball court, covered picnic tables and a ball field for all the town celebrations. A rich historical display is housed in the renovated depot that serves as City Hall.



# McFARLAND



## Infrastructure

**Sewer System:** The City has made investments in the sewer system recently as well as to the streets.

**Water:** The City has improved its water system with upgrades to the water treatment plant.

**Gas:** City owns the gas line from Highway 99 to town.

**City Park:** McFarland has a beautiful city park. Future potential improvements include upgrade the restroom and shelter house.

**Drainage:** The City noted some drainage ditches in town need to be improved.

## Development Opportunities

**Housing:** There are some residential structures that require demolition for safety reasons. A housing rehabilitation program could be helpful to make the community safer and more attractive.

**Historic Buildings:** The downtown area has several historic buildings which could be rehabilitated with care to preserve the historic character of the buildings. There are grants and tax credits available to assist the funding of such improvements.

# MCFARLAND



Median Age: 41  
Population under 15: 18%  
Population over 65: 15%

Female Population: 46%  
Male Population: 54%

**256**  
population

**110**  
number of households

Average Household Size: 2.3  
Total Housing Units: 123  
Median Home Value: \$87,300

Owner-Occupied Units: 84%  
Renter-Occupied Units: 16%  
Median Gross Rent: \$575

Population Over 16 Years in Labor Force: 73%  
Unemployment Rate: 5.1%  
Poverty Rate: 10.6%

**Largest Industry:** Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance

**Workers Living and Employed in Community:** 0%

**\$40,938**  
median household income

# PAXICO

In 1869 the Potawatomi Indian Reservation was opened for settlement. Newbury located one mile north of Paxico began in 1869 in anticipation of the railroad. “Old” Paxico, located one mile east of Paxico, began in 1879 when the Strowig Mill was built by two brothers, Robert and William Strowig. A few other settlers established a post office and general store. Meanwhile a St. Mary’s businessman purchased a small tract of land because of his anticipation that the railroad would be laid through this area next to “Old” Paxico. He then formed the Paxico Town Company with two other gentlemen. This area began to develop and in 1887 the rail was finally laid through the settlement. With this new activity “Old” Paxico and Newbury faded away and Paxico grew. The town of Paxico was incorporated in 1914.

Today Paxico is a mecca for antique shoppers and jazz fans. The Paxico Blues Festival is held every September.



# PAXICO

## Infrastructure

**Sewer System:** The sewer system was installed in 1973. At this age, maintenance of an aging system is an ongoing need as well as improving manholes. The lagoon is in good shape having been recently improved.

**Water:** The city may need a new water treatment system in the future. Currently, the need is to maintain and improve water quality.

**Drainage:** Storm sewer and flood mitigation is an issue in parts of town. See flood map for Zone A boundaries.

**City Park:** The playground has been recently improved and is well used, even at night. Need to improve lighting. Tennis courts are the next goal.

**Senior Center:** The center requires parking lot improvements.



## Development Opportunities

**Historic Buildings:** The downtown area has several historic buildings. Some of these buildings need to be rehabilitated with care to preserve the historic character of the buildings. There are grants and tax credits available to assist the funding of such improvements.

**Redevelopment Opportunity:** The community would consider more streetscape improvements to downtown. This is the site of the jazz festival and antique shops.



# PAXICO



Source Mill Creek Antiques, Paxico

Median Age: 36  
 Population under 15: 26%  
 Population over 65: 13%

Female Population: 49%  
 Male Population: 51%

**221**  
 population

**85**  
 number of households

Average Household Size: 2.6  
 Total Housing Units: 93  
 Median Home Value: \$69,800

Owner-Occupied Units: 69%  
 Renter-Occupied Units: 31%  
 Median Gross Rent: \$450

Population Over 16 Years in Labor Force: 62%  
 Unemployment Rate: 9.0%  
 Poverty Rate: 4.7%

Largest Industry: Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance  
 Workers Living and Employed in Community: 0%

**\$53,021**  
 median household income

# LAKE WABAUNSEE

## Lake Wabaunsee Improvement District

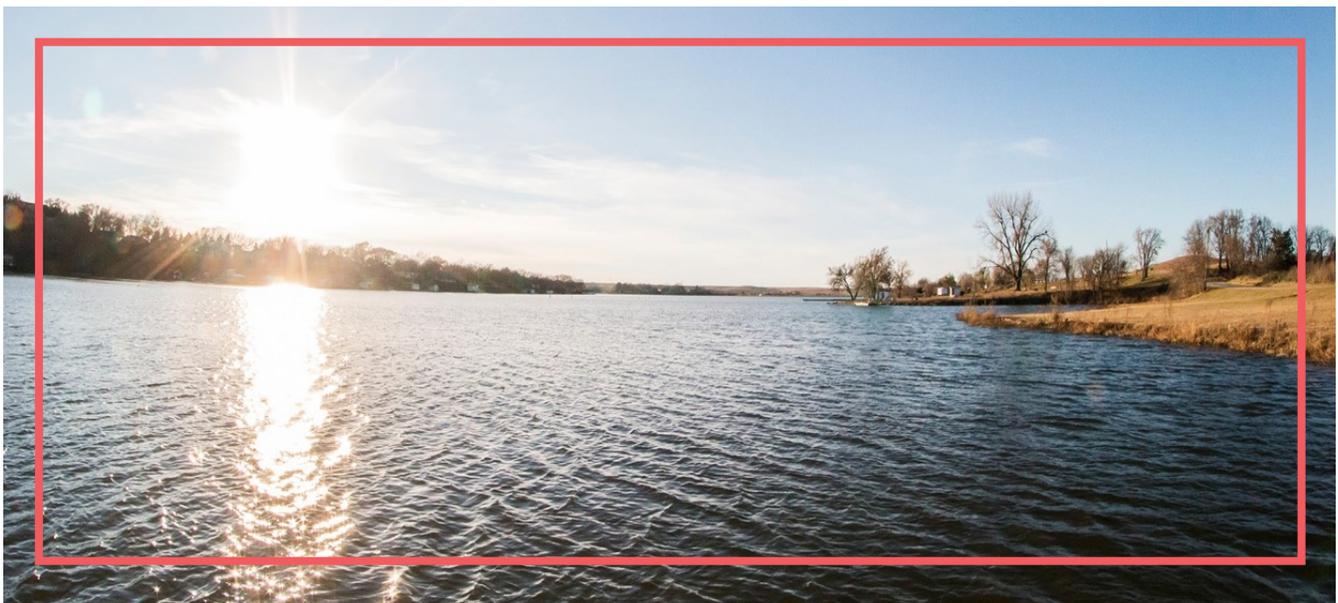
In 1943, German and Italian prisoners of World War II were brought to Kansas and other Midwest states as a means of solving the labor shortage caused by American men serving in the war effort. Large internment camps were established in Kansas: Camp Concordia, Camp Funston (at Fort Riley), Camp Phillips (at Salina under Fort Riley). Fort Riley established 12 smaller branch camps, including one west of Eskridge at Lake Wabaunsee.

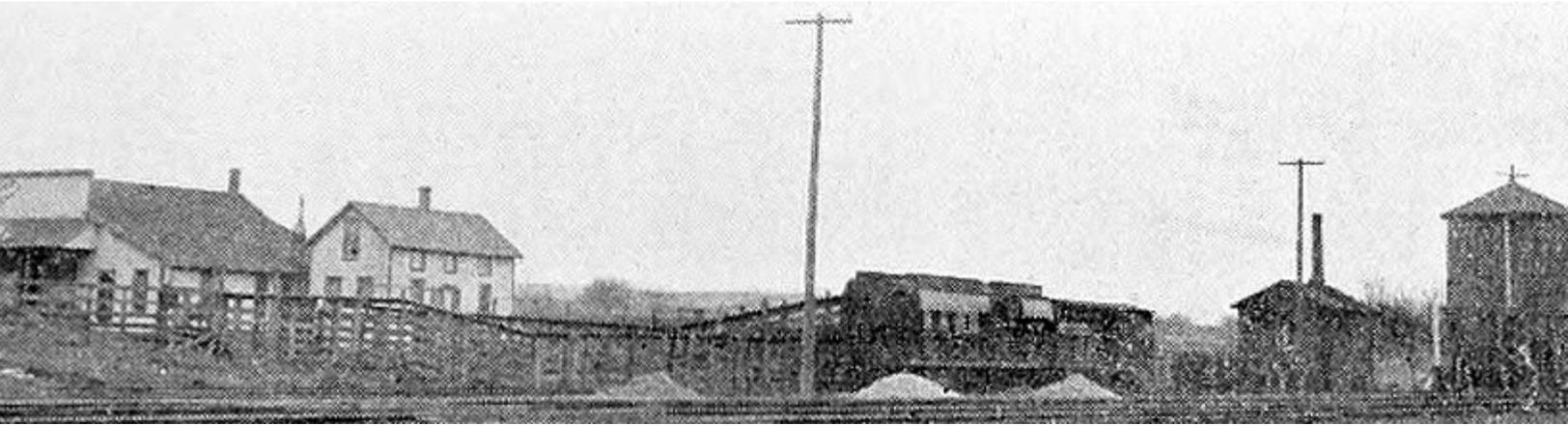
Lake Wabaunsee is located five miles west of Eskridge on Highway K99 and K4. The lake is one of only a handful in Kansas that has cottages and year-round homes right on the lake shore. The City of Eskridge purchased the lake from the Lake Wabaunsee Corporation in 1937. It is a great source for our public water supply and recreational uses. Nestled in the Flint Hills, the drive around the lake is well worth making a side trip to see. A trip around the lake and you will see why this is a special place.

In 1978 the property owners at the lake formed the Lake Wabaunsee Improvement District. The LWID is responsible for maintaining the roads, operation of the water system, operation of the sewer system, snow removal from the roads, trash collection, and appearance of property around the Lake.

## Infrastructure

*Wabaunsee Lake:* Owned by the City, there are some improvements that could make the lake more useable such as improvements to the bathrooms, adding a shower house, extending water to the camp sites and replacing the shelters.





*Volland in 1901*

*Source: Wikipedia: Volland, Kansas*

## VOLLAND

Volland is a former railroad community. Volland opened a post office in 1887 that was discontinued in 1955. This rail community, though, is known for the Volland Store, a general store built in 1913 by the Kratzer Brothers Mercantile. It was filled with every kind of merchandise and it quickly became more than just a store, then as now, it was the social and cultural center of Volland and the surrounding community.

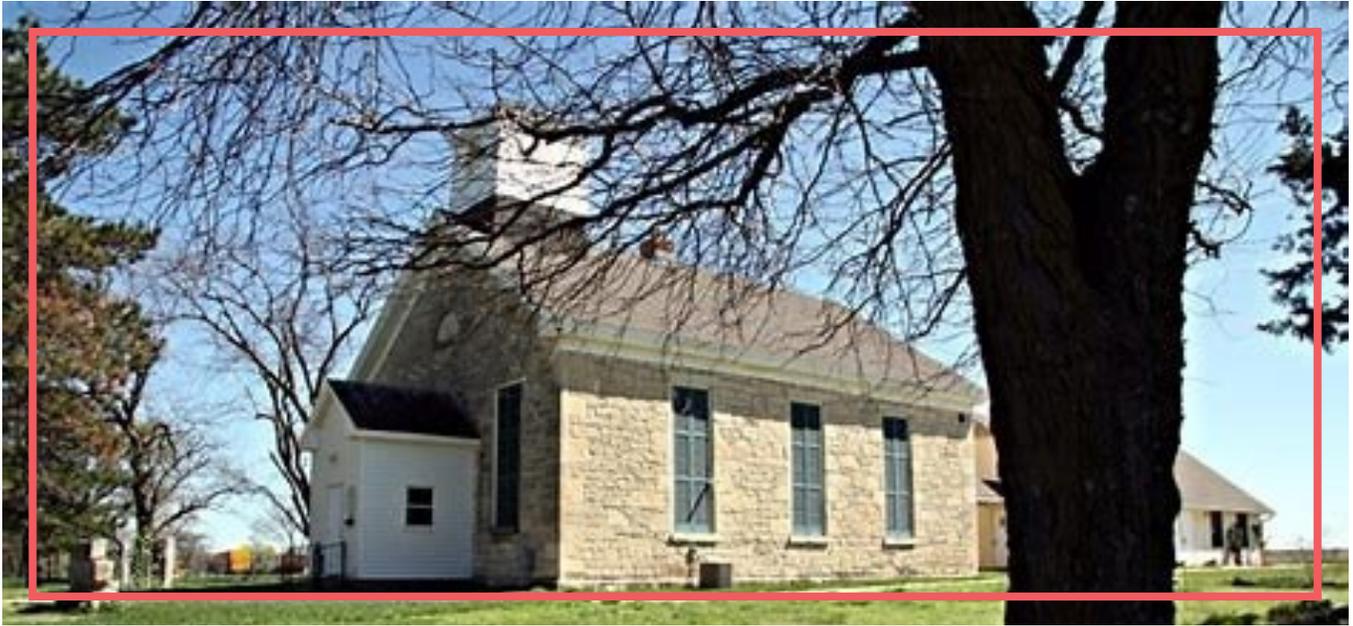


*Source: The Volland Store*

## WABAUNSEE Township

Wabaunsee is an unincorporated community of Wabaunsee County that was founded in 1855. It is located along Kansas Highway 18 in the northwestern corner of the county, just south of the Kansas River. Wabaunsee was the county seat until the position was transferred to Alma after the Civil War.

Wabaunsee Township is home to the Beecher Bible and Rifle Church, named after the abolitionist Henry Ward Beecher who helped supply rifles for those seeking asylum through the Underground Railroad.



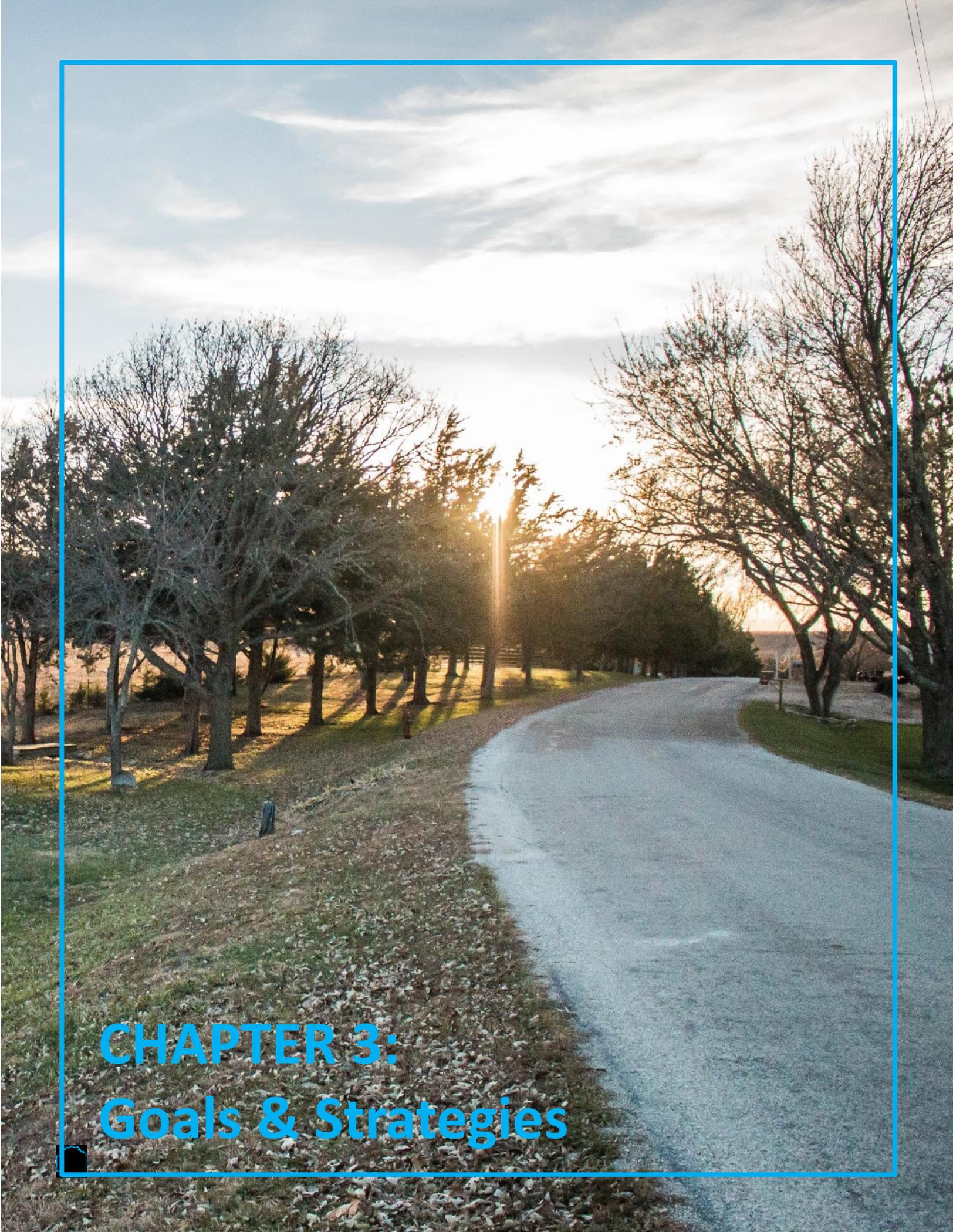
## HESSDALE

Located six miles south of Alma, Kansas, Hessdale was a major cattle shipping railhead on the ATSF spur line. The town was first called Bismarck and then renamed Halifax in 1885.



*Small rail depot next to the Hessdale stockyards, seen in the background*

*Source: Wabaunsee County Historical Society & Museum*



# **CHAPTER 3: Goals & Strategies**



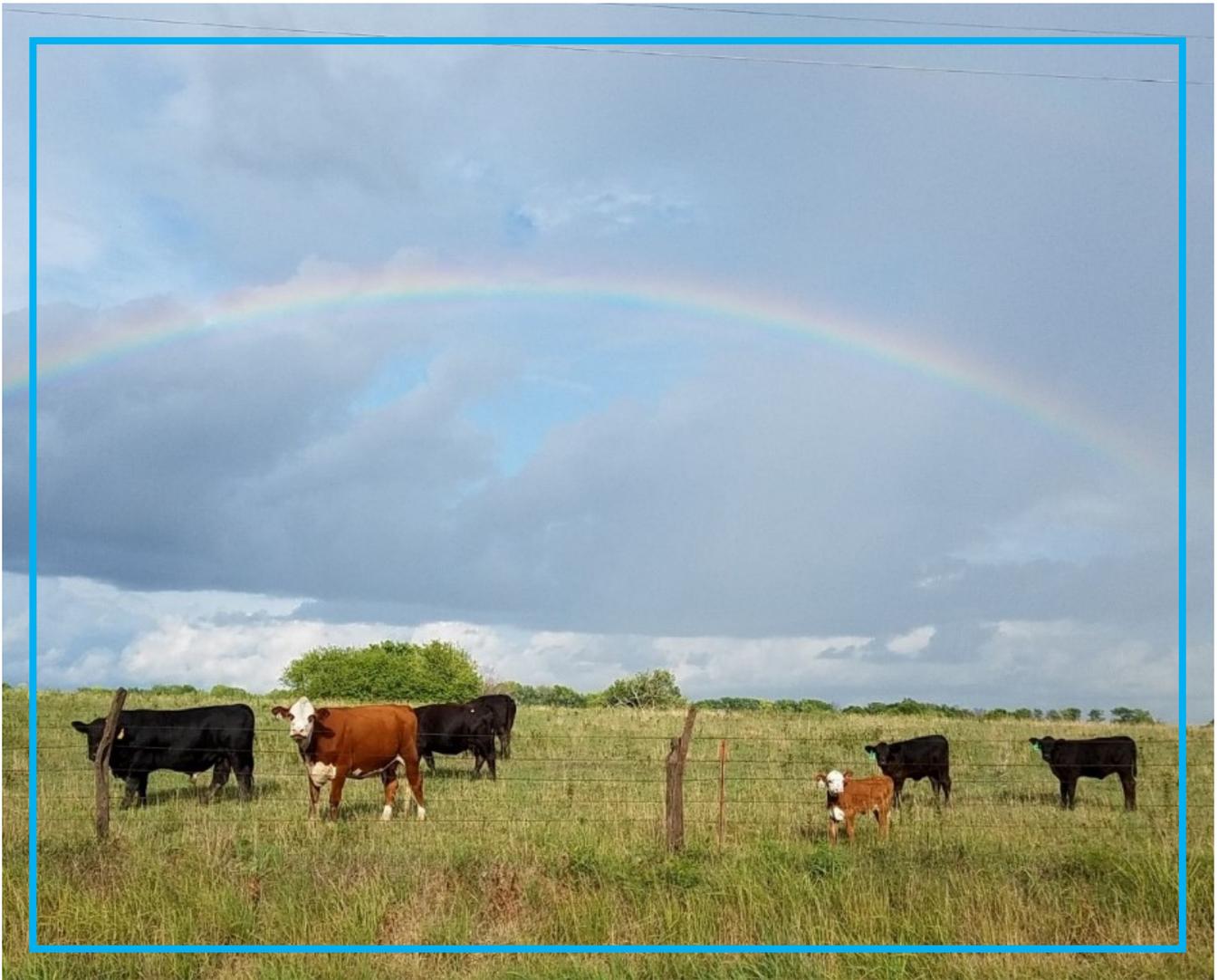
# GOALS & STRATEGIES

The goals and strategies are a product of Steering Committee members, public input and continuation from the 2004 plan. There was much discussion on the topic of windfarms in Wabaunsee County. Residents are divided over the future of windfarms in the county, many feel that it is an individual property rights issue as well as could provide additional revenue for the county and others are passionate about maintaining the “pristine prairie”. The Wabaunsee County Planning and Zoning Board indicated that windfarms would not be included in their goals, but not necessarily the consensus of the entire committee, and therefore is not included in the goals.

Through the survey residents expressed their priorities for their county for the future:

- Land Use
- Economic Development
- Cultural
- Facilities and Infrastructure





Source: Jodi Cedarquist

# GOALS & STRATEGIES

## LAND USE GOALS

### Organize Land Use Pattern

*Establish an organized pattern of land use with controlled and smart growth that brings prosperity to Wabaunsee County while also respecting its rural character.*

- 1.1 Promote growth north of I-70 and preservation south of I-70
- 1.2 Encourage new development along KS-99 Super 2 highway
- 1.3 Focus growth within or near existing communities by promoting new and infill residential and commercial development .
- 1.4 Limit residential building in areas of unmaintained roads
- 1.5 Implement subdivision requirement of direct access to paved roads.

## Protect Natural Resources

*Develop realistic plans to protect natural resources such as the agricultural land, landscape, scenic views and Flint Hills through regulatory policies.*

- 2.1 Protect from incompatible and intrusive development policies
- 2.2 Implement road use fees for quarries to offset roadway and bridge damage.
- 2.3 Continue usage of the quarry 24-point criteria for conditional use permits.
- 2.4 Review subdivision ordinance for 3,5, 10 and 40 acre rules.
- 2.5 Develop agricultural preservation policies.

## Provide Affordable Housing

*Provide affordable and good quality housing with respect to current deficiencies and future needs. Renovate older, dilapidated structures and encourage new construction.*

- 3.1 Diversify housing stock. Housing options and opportunities that accommodate a range of incomes and variety of lifestyles essential for creating strong, diverse neighborhoods located within existing city limits. This includes market rate and affordable housing, owner and rental occupied, single family, multi-family, housing for seniors and special needs.
- 3.2 Conduct a housing needs assessment (HAT) to identify and evaluate needs. Prioritize county housing needs.
- 3.2 Expand senior housing
- 3.3 Work with government partners and affordable housing developers to develop new, affordable, single-family housing

## Renovate Old Structures

- 4.1 Rehabilitate existing homes through home improvement loan incentives.
- 4.2 Remove dilapidated structures- Adopt chronically vacant structure fees used in adjacent counties.
- 4.3 Identify any vacant land for development within city limits.

## Encourage Construction

- 5.1 Provide financial incentives from federal home loan banks
- 5.2 Develop housing grant community programs
- 5.3 Identify future growth areas for development served by utilities
- 5.4 Establish rural housing incentives



## CULTURAL GOALS

### Maintain Rural Character

*Maintain the rural character of the county with respect to its landscape, open spaces, scenery, peace tranquility, and solitude*

- 1.1 Preserve visual and cultural assets such as historic stone structures, walls, landmarks and historical sites.
- 1.2 New construction to be compatible to existing structures in downtown business districts.
- 1.3 Encourage beautification within communities through landscaping with focus on entrances to the community, downtown business districts and new housing.
- 1.4 Discourage chronically vacant structures

## Promote Historic Preservation

*Promote historic preservation, protect and restore historic properties, old limestone buildings, and landmarks in the county.*

- 2.1 Expansion of museum hours.
- 2.2 Expand scenic byways and improve signage.
- 2.3 Provide comprehensive inventory of all Wabaunsee County Historic properties.
- 2.4 Provide information on how to preserve historic buildings through available grants and tax credits.
- 2.5 Apply for Kansas Historic Preservation Survey Grant (county or city-wide)
- 2.6 Create marketing brochure of historic properties.
- 2.7 Allocate county funds for preservation.

## Develop Tourism Programs

*Develop tourism program involving historic properties, nature of rural character, and scenic landscape.*

- 3.1 Develop website of historic and cultural assets as well as agri-tourism in the county.
- 3.2 Continue participation in regional marketing for tourism.
- 3.3 Implement existing and new social media to include county/city events and businesses.
- 3.4 Increase visibility on I-70 for tourism and services.
- 3.5 Develop a wayfinding signage plan throughout Wabaunsee County.
- 3.6 Locate and develop a Flint Hills Regional Tourism Center on I-70.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### Industry Growth

*Develop moderate and slight growth businesses, industries, and services with small-scale employment adjacent to cities and the I-70 corridor.*

- 1.1 Encourage larger commercial industrial development with a conditional use permit.
- 1.2 Maintain and retain existing business with state/federal programs.
- 1.3 Consider I-335 access to Harveyville and Burlingame to encourage economic development in southern Wabaunsee County.

## Small Business Growth

- 2.1 Manage the size and type of businesses through the use of conditional use permits.
- 2.2 Encourage businesses to locate within cities/downtowns.

## Attract and Retain New Labor Force

*Attract and retain population and labor force.*

- 3.1 Promote Wabaunsee County Rural Opportunity Zones with the county assisting communities to capitalize on zones. <http://www.kansascommerce.com/320/Rural-Opportunity-Zones>
- 3.2 Develop housing in appropriate areas in cities. Ensure affordable housing availability especially for young families/residents moving into the county.
- 3.3 Attract a healthcare facility.
- 3.4 Develop better broadband service by lobbying and mapping coverage as a county.
- 3.5 Retain youth through entrepreneurial programs such as Network Kansas and E- Programs in schools.

## FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE GOALS

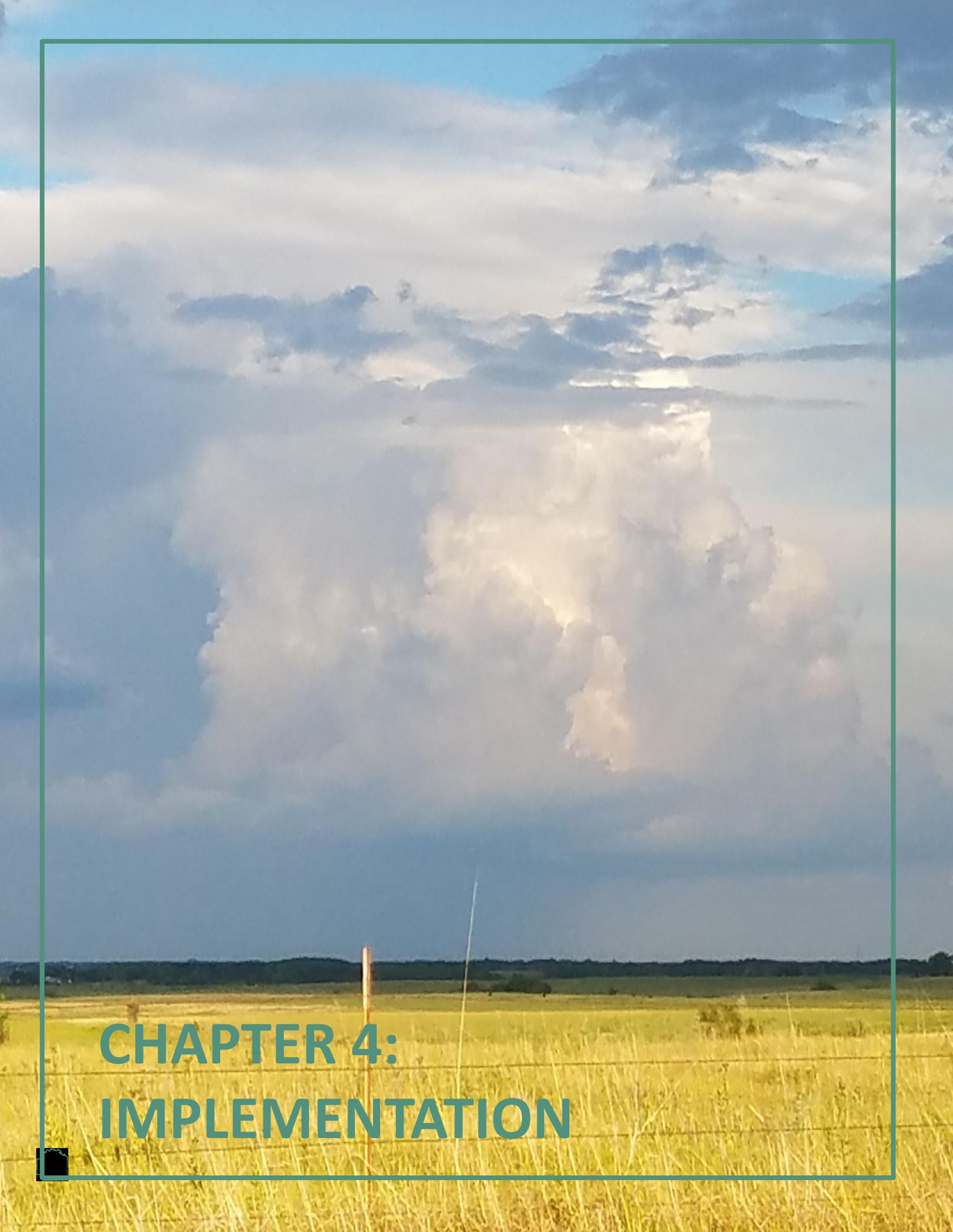
### Schools and Day Care

- 1.1 Identify after school programs
- 1.2 School renovations
- 1.3 Implement the K-State Extension survey of needs and grants for day care.
- 1.4 Establish an accredited preschool.
- 1.5 Research grants and lenders for preschool development
- 1.6 Improve healthcare access in county through mobile clinics and recruitment of physicians/dentists. Community Health Ministries visits Alma by request. Crosswinds provides mental health services in Alma through schools.

### Improve Infrastructure

- 2.1 Create a 10-year improvement program to inventory the condition of roads and bridges
- 2.2 County to provide inventory of culverts which are maintained by townships
- 2.3 Develop fee structure for heavy truck use from quarries on county roads





# CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION



# IMPLEMENTATION

Whereas the Comprehensive Plan has a 20 year horizon, the Implementation Strategy will provide guidance for specific targets, action items, implementation tools and roles and responsible parties for five-year periods. This allows the Implementation Strategy to be updated at regular intervals to better respond to unanticipated opportunities and challenges and to support the long-term vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

Actions are key steps for implementing policies, achieving goals and moving toward targets over the next five years.



# IMPLEMENTATION

Land Use		Responsible Parties	Prioritization	
Goal 1	Establish an organized pattern of land use with controlled and smart growth that brings prosperity to Wabaunsee County while also respecting its rural character.			
		1.1 Promote growth north of I-70 and preservation south of I-70.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rural Water Districts</li> <li>- Economic Development</li> <li>- KDOT</li> <li>- Planning Board</li> <li>- County Commission</li> </ul>	Ongoing
		1.2 Encourage new development along K-99 Super 2 highway improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rural Water Districts</li> <li>- Economic Development</li> <li>- KDOT</li> <li>- Planning Board</li> <li>- County Commission</li> </ul>	Ongoing
		1.3 Focus growth within and near to existing communities by promoting new and infill residential and commercial development within city limits and on I-70 corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- City Councils</li> <li>- County Zoning Board</li> <li>- Alma Zoning Board</li> </ul>	Ongoing
		1.4 Limit residential building in areas of unmaintained roads.		
	1.5 Create subdivision code requiring direct access to paved roads			

Goal 2	Develop realistic plans to protect natural resources such as the agricultural land, landscape, scenic views, and Flint Hills through regulatory policies.				
Implementation	2.1 Protect from incompatible and intrusive development proposals	- County Commission - Zoning Board		Ongoing	
	2.2 Quarries-Implement road use Impact fee.	- County Commission		1-2 years	
	2.3 Continue enforcement of 24-point criteria for conditional use permit for quarries	-Zoning Board		Ongoing	
	2.4 Review subdivision rules for 3, 5, 10, 40 acre rules.	-Zoning Board		Ongoing	
	2.5 Develop Ag preservation policies	-Zoning Board		1-2 years	
Goal 3	Provide affordable and good quality housing with respect to current deficiencies and future needs. Renovate older, dilapidated structures and encourage new construction.				
Implementation	3.1 Diversify housing stock; Expand housing for persons with special needs and senior housing.	- Local communities - Community Development Block Grant - Zoning Board - FHLBank's Affordable Housing Program		Ongoing	
	3.2 Rehabilitate existing homes; Remove dilapidated structures	- Local communities -FHLBank - Flint Hills Regional Council		Ongoing	
	3.3 Identify any vacant land for development within city limits	- County Zoning Board - 7 communities		Ongoing	
	3.4 Identify future growth areas that are served by utilities	- 7 communities		Ongoing	
	3.5 Pursue funding for infrastructure to support new housing development	- Community Development Block Grant - USDA Rural Development		Ongoing	

Cultural		Responsible Parties	Prioritization
Goal 1	Maintain the rural character of the county with respect to its landscape, open spaces, scenery, peace tranquility, and solitude.		
	Implementation		
	1.1 Preserve visual and cultural assets such as historic stone structures, walls, landmarks and historical sites.	- County Museum - State Historic Preservation Office Grant	Ongoing
	1.2 New construction to be compatible to existing structures in downtown business districts.	- County Zoning Board - Alma Zoning Board	1-2 Years
	1.3 Encourage beautification within communities through landscaping with focus on entrances to the community downtown business districts and new housing	- County Zoning Board - Alma Zoning Board	1-2 Years
	1.4 Discourage chronically vacant structures	-County Zoning Board -Alma Zoning Board	Ongoing
Goal 2	Historic Preservation-Promote historic preservation, protect and restore historic properties, old limestone buildings, and landmarks in the county.		
	Implementation		
	2.1 Expansion of museum hours	- Museum Board	1-2 Years
	2.2 Expand scenic byways and improve signage	- Form local community	3-5 Years
	2.3 Provide comprehensive inventory of all Wabaunsee County Historic properties	- County Zoning Board	1-2 Years
	2.4 Provide information on how to preserve historic buildings through available grants and tax credits	-County & Communities	
	2.5 Apply for Kansas Historic Preservation Survey Grant (county or city-wide)	- County & Community	1-2 Years
	2.6 Create marketing brochure of historic properties	-County	1-2 Years
	2.7 Allocate county funds for preservation	-County Commission -KDOC	3-5 Years

Cultural		Responsible Parties	Prioritization
Goal 3	Develop tourism program involving historic properties, nature of rural character, and scenic landscape.		
Implementation	3.1 Develop website of historic and cultural assets as well as agritourism in the county.	- County	3-5 Years
	3.2 Continue participation in regional marketing for tourism	- Economic Development Office	1-2 Years
	3.3 Implement existing and new social media to include county/city events and businesses	- Economic Development Office	1-2 Years
	3.4 Increase visibility on I-70 for tourism and services	-Economic Development Office -KDOC	3-5 Years
	3.5 Develop a wayfinding signage plan through Wabauunsee County	-County -KDOC	1-2 Years
	3.6 Locate and develop a Flint Hills Regional Tourism Center on I-70	-County -Economic Development Office -KDOC	3-5 Years

Economic Development			Responsible Parties	Prioritization
Goal 1	Develop moderate and small businesses, industries, and services with small scale employment adjacent to cities and I-70 corridor.			
	Implementation	1.1 Encourage larger commercial industrial development with a conditional use permit.	- Zoning Board - Economic Development Chamber of Commerce - Paxico Community Foundation	Ongoing
		1.2 Maintain and retain existing business utilizing state and federal programs.		
		1.3 Pursue I-35 access to Harveyville to encourage economic development in Southern Wabaunsee County	- Economic Development - KDOC, KDOT	Ongoing
Goal 2	Small Business Growth			
	Implementation	2.1 Manage the size and type of businesses through condition use permits.	- Zoning Board	Ongoing
		2.2 Encourage businesses to locate within cities/downtowns.	- Economic Dev. - Individual communities	Ongoing
Goal 3	Population and Labor Attraction and Retention			
	Implementation	3.1 Promote rural opportunity zones	- County	1-2 years
		3.2 Ensure affordable housing availability especially for young families/residents.	- Individual Communities	3-5 Years
		3.3 Attract a healthcare facility	- Community Health Ministries	3-5 Years
		3.4 Develop better broadband service in underserved areas (lobbying, mapping coverage)	- Economic Development - Individual communities - KDOC	Ongoing
		3.5 Retain youth through entrepreneurial programs such as Network Kansas and E-Programs in schools.	- Wabaunsee Count - Economic Development	Ongoing

Facilities & Infrastructure		Responsible Parties	Prioritization	
Goal 1	Improve school system and other public facilities to address the existing deficiencies and needs.			
	Implementation	Schools and day care	Ongoing	
		1.1 Evaluate after school programs.	- County	Ongoing
		1.2 Identify school renovation needs.	- School Boards	Ongoing
		1.3 Implement the K-State Extension survey of needs and grants for day care	- County	1-2 Years
		1.5 Research grants and lenders for preschool development with K State Extension	- County	1-2 Years
		1.6 Improve healthcare/mental healthcare access in county through mobile clinics	- County - KDOC	
Goal 2	Implementation	Infrastructure		
		2.1 Create a 10-year improvement plan to inventory the condition of roads and bridges	- County	1-2 Years
		2.2 County to provide inventory of culverts which are maintained by townships	- County	Ongoing
		2.3 Develop fee structure for heavy truck use from quarries on county roads	- County Zoning Board	1-2 Years



APPENDIX

HALL ANNY GARLAND  
CH. OH  
SUN NY  
REV. MRS. PETERSON  
FRID & LANDIA

# APPENDIX

## COMMUNITY SURVEY

The Flint Hills Regional Council launched a community survey for the comprehensive plan on May 1st, 2018. The survey closed on June 11, 2018. The questions below were included in the 2018 Wabaunsee County Comprehensive Plan Community Survey. If the question was not open-ended, its answer choices are provided in italics.

**1. Do you live in an incorporated town? (Alma, Alta Vista, Eskridge, Harveyville, Maple Hill, McFarland, or Paxico)**

*Yes/No*

**2. What is your zip code?**

**3. What town do you live in or what is the nearest incorporated town you visit for shopping, dining, errands, etc?**

*Alma / Alta Vista / Eskridge / Harveyville / Maple Hill / McFarland / Paxico*

- The housing options are of good, livable quality (e.g. has heating and insulation).

*Strongly Agree/Agree/Neutral/Disagree/ Strongly Disagree*

- The physical condition of my neighborhood needs to be improved.

*Strongly Agree/Agree/Neutral/Disagree/ Strongly Disagree*

- My neighborhood feels safe.

*Strongly Agree/Agree/Neutral/Disagree/ Strongly Disagree*

### Quality of Life

**4. Please rate the following characteristics about the town you live in or live closest to.**

#### Housing & Neighborhood:

**5. Please rate the following characteristics about the town you live in or live closest to.**

- There are various types of housing, such as single-family houses, townhomes, and apartments.

*Strongly Agree/Agree/Neutral/Disagree/ Strongly Disagree*

- The housing options are affordable.

*Strongly Agree/Agree/Neutral/Disagree/ Strongly Disagree*

#### Infrastructure:

**6. Please rate the following elements about the town you live in or live closest to.**

- Maintenance of major city streets in your town.

*Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor/Very Poor*

- Maintenance of streets in your neighborhood.

*Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor/Very Poor*

- Maintenance of sidewalks in your town.

*Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor/Very Poor*

- Maintenance of street signs in your town.

*Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor/Very Poor*



- Appearance of city to visitors.  
*Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor/Very Poor*
- Overall appearance of downtown including lighting and landscaping in your town.  
*Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor/Very Poor*
- Maintenance of city buildings.  
*Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor/Very Poor*
- Storm drainage in your town.  
*Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor/Very Poor*

**7. What should Wabaunsee County or your town invest its resources in developing? Please rank from 1 (highest importance) to 11 (least importance).**

- Such as streets, sewer & water. Quality of Life, (i.e. parks, community amenities).
- Maintenance of streets in your neighborhood.
- Attracting industry and manufacturing.
- Expanding and Growing Existing Businesses.
- Developing an Entrepreneurial Culture.
- Capitalizing on Wabaunsee County's Agriculture Economy.
- Tourism as an Economic Development Tool.
- Building New Homes.
- Restoring Existing Homes.
- Tearing Down Dilapidated Homes.
- Basic Infrastructure

**Employment:**

**8. Please select your primary place of work.**

*Alma/Alta  
Vista/Eskridge/Paxico/Maple Hill/McFarland/Harveyville/Council Grove/Topeka/Wamego/Manhattan/Retired/Other (please specify)*

**Health and Wellness:**

**9. Please rate the quality of the following services offered in Wabaunsee County.**

- Availability of preventative health services.

*Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor*

- Availability of affordable quality food.

*Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor*

- Availability of affordable quality health care.

*Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor*

- Access to recreational opportunities for youth.

*Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor*

- Access to recreational opportunities for adults.

*Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor*

- Availability of affordable quality child care.

*Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor*

**Parks, Recreation & Services:**

**10. Please rate the quality of services in the town you live in or live closest to.**

- Maintenance of city parks & equipment.

*Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor*

- The city’s youth recreation programs.

*Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor*

- Availability of youth opportunities in our community.

*Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor*

- Extension and improvement of recreational trails.

*Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor*

- Do registration fees for youth recreation programs impose a financial constraint on your budget?

*Yes/No/ N/A*

**Growth:**

**11. Please rate the speed of growth or decline in the following categories of Wabaunsee County over the past 5 years.**

- Population Growth.

*Too slow/Somewhat too slow/Right amount/  
Somewhat too fast/Too fast*

- Retail Growth.

*Too slow/Somewhat too slow/Right amount/  
Somewhat too fast/Too fast*

- Job Growth.

*Too slow/Somewhat too slow/Right amount/  
Somewhat too fast/Too fast*

- Housing Growth.

*Too slow/Somewhat too slow/Right amount/  
Somewhat too fast/Too fast*

**12. Community:**

**Please rate the following about Wabaunsee County.**

- How well does your community plan for growth and development?

*Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor/Very Poor*

- How well is your local government at welcoming citizen involvement?

*Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor/Very Poor*

- How is your community in leveraging community assets and resources?

*Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor/Very Poor*

- How well does your community work with regional partners?

*Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor/Very Poor*

**13. Future Growth in the County: Please answer which best represents your opinion.**

- Retaining and expanding current business and industry.

*Essential/Very important/Somewhat important/Not important at all*

- Attracting new businesses through incentives (i.e. tax credits, land donation, special financing, etc.

*Essential/Very important/Somewhat important/Not important at all*



- Capitalizing on Wabaunsee County’s agricultural economy with businesses that feature horse-riding, farm visits, bed & breakfast experiences, hunting excursions.  
*Essential/Very important/Somewhat important/Not important at all*
- Renovating existing homes.  
*Essential/Very important/Somewhat important/Not important at all*
- Building new homes.  
*Essential/Very important/Somewhat important/Not important at all*
- Addressing rundown and blighted homes through code enforcement.  
*Essential/Very important/Somewhat important/Not important at all*
- Addressing rundown and blighted homes through demolition.  
*Essential/Very important/Somewhat important/Not important at all*
- Addressing rundown and blighted commercial properties through demolition.  
*Essential/Very important/Somewhat important/Not important at all*

- Improving downtown.  
*Essential/Very important/Somewhat important/Not important at all*
- Improving street paving conditions.  
*Essential/Very important/Somewhat important/Not important at all*
- Developing connections with neighboring communities.  
*Essential/Very important/Somewhat important/Not important at all*
- Marketing Wabaunsee County and communities to new residents and visitors.  
*Essential/Very important/Somewhat important/Not important at all*
- Maintain historic architecture in downtown.  
*Essential/Very important/Somewhat important/Not important at all*
- Improving park conditions.  
*Essential/Very important/Somewhat important/Not important at all*

- Establishing a pedestrian and bicycle trail.

*Essential/Very important/Somewhat important/Not important at all*

- Renovating community centers and expanding programming.

*Essential/Very important/Somewhat important/Not important at all*

- Upgrading existing and developing more athletic fields.

*Essential/Very important/Somewhat important/Not important at all*

- Developing additional community amenities.

*Essential/Very important/Somewhat important/Not important at all*

- Improving street and pedestrian lighting.

*Essential/Very important/Somewhat important/Not important at all*

- Developing job training opportunities, such as job shadowing and apprenticeship.

*Essential/Very important/Somewhat important/Not important at all*

**14. Demographics: Please enter the number of people in your household (including yourself).**

**15. Demographics: Please select your gender.**

*Male/Female*

**16. Please describe Wabaunsee County in three words.**

**17. Describe the town you live in or live closest to in three words.**

**18. Any other comments or suggestions about Wabaunsee County you would like to add but are not mentioned above:**



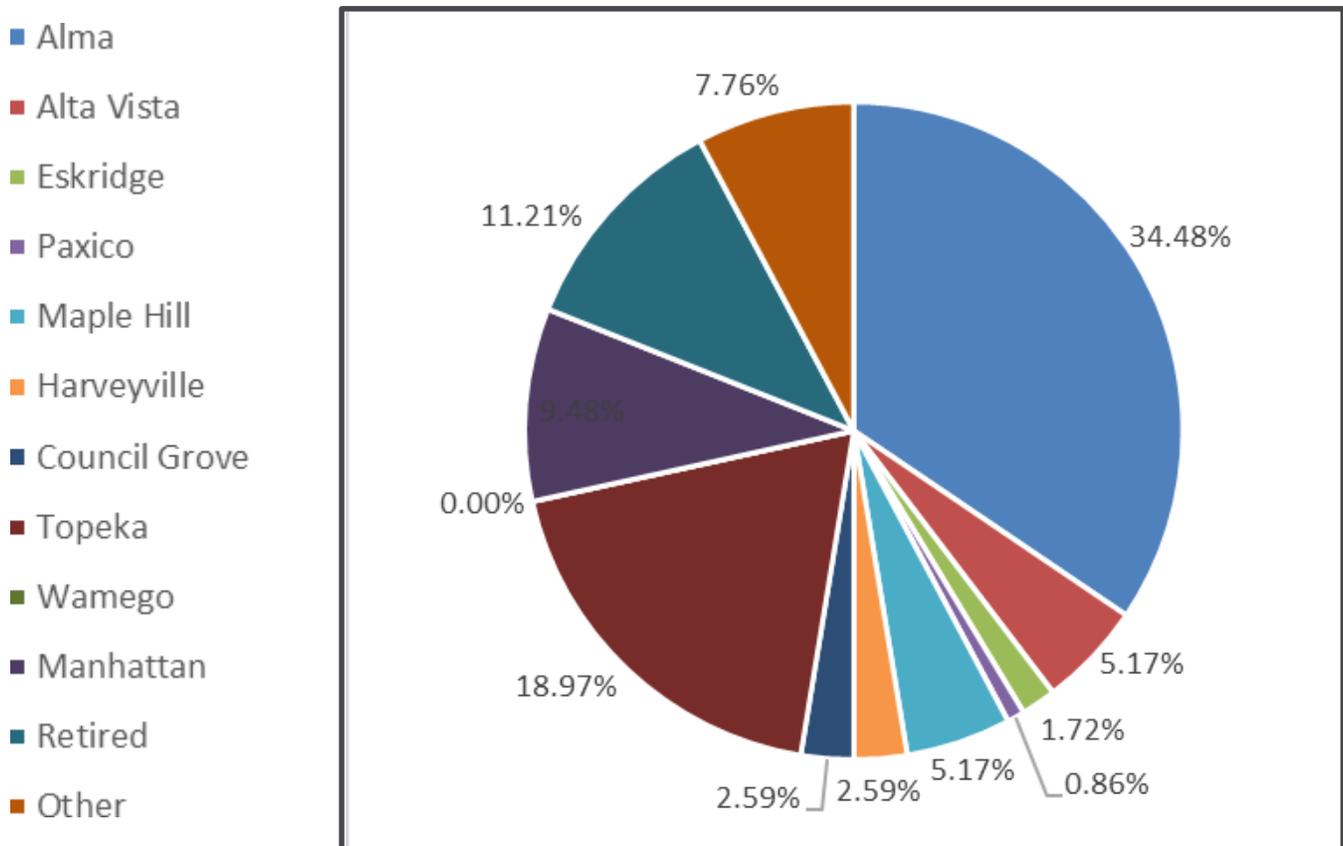
# COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

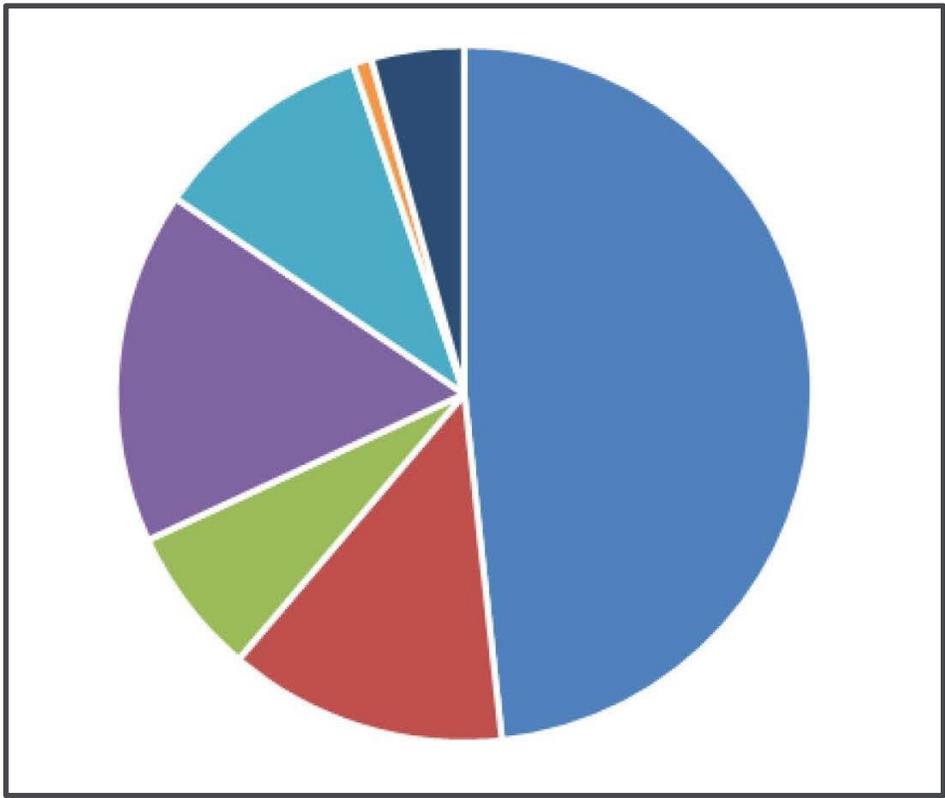
The following pages are the results of the Wabaunsee County Comprehensive Plan community survey summary. The results summarize the responses at the county level as well as the responses from each community that had more than ten responses: Alma, Alta Vista, Harveyville, Maple Hill.

## Overview of survey respondents:

- 116 people responded to the Wabaunsee County Comprehensive Plan Survey
- 70% of respondents were female
- Household size
  - Average: 3 people
  - Minimum: 1 person
  - Maximum: 6 people
- 68% of respondents live in an incorporated town (Alma, Alta Vista, Eskridge, Harveyville, Maple Hill, McFarland, Paxico)
- Respondents' primary place of work:
  1. Alma
  2. Topeka
  3. None (retired)

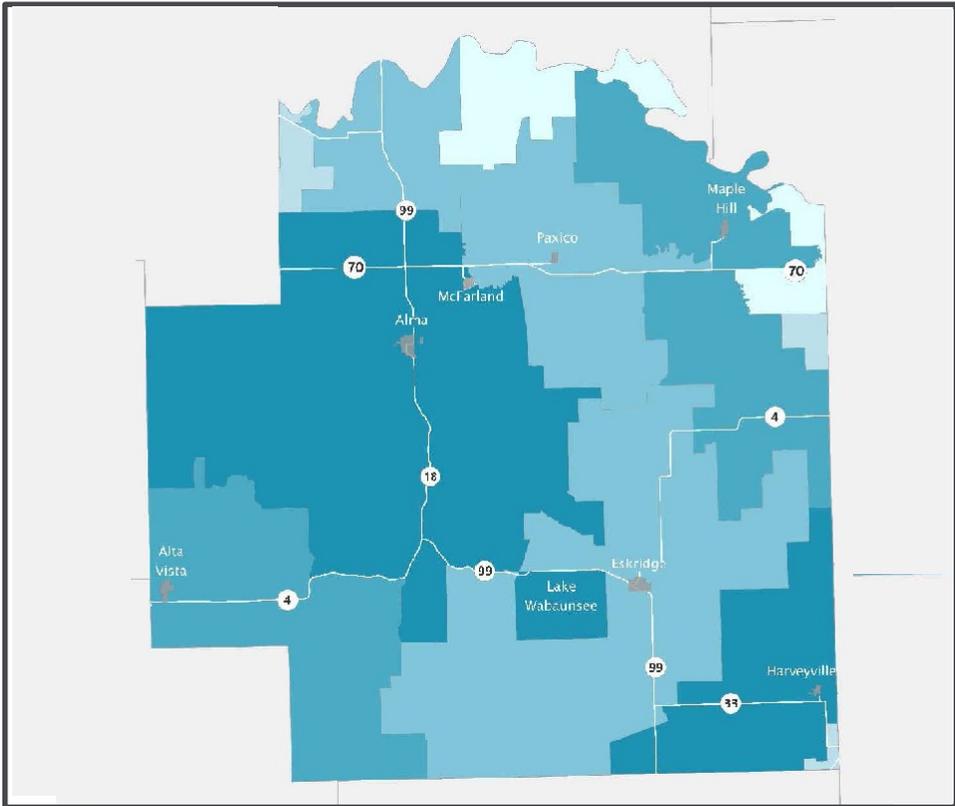
## Wabaunsee County Primary Place of Work



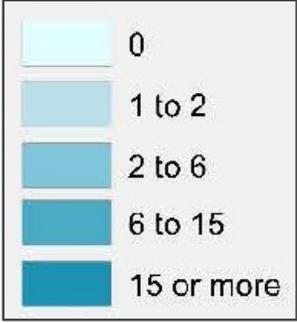


*Towns respondents live in or live closest to.*

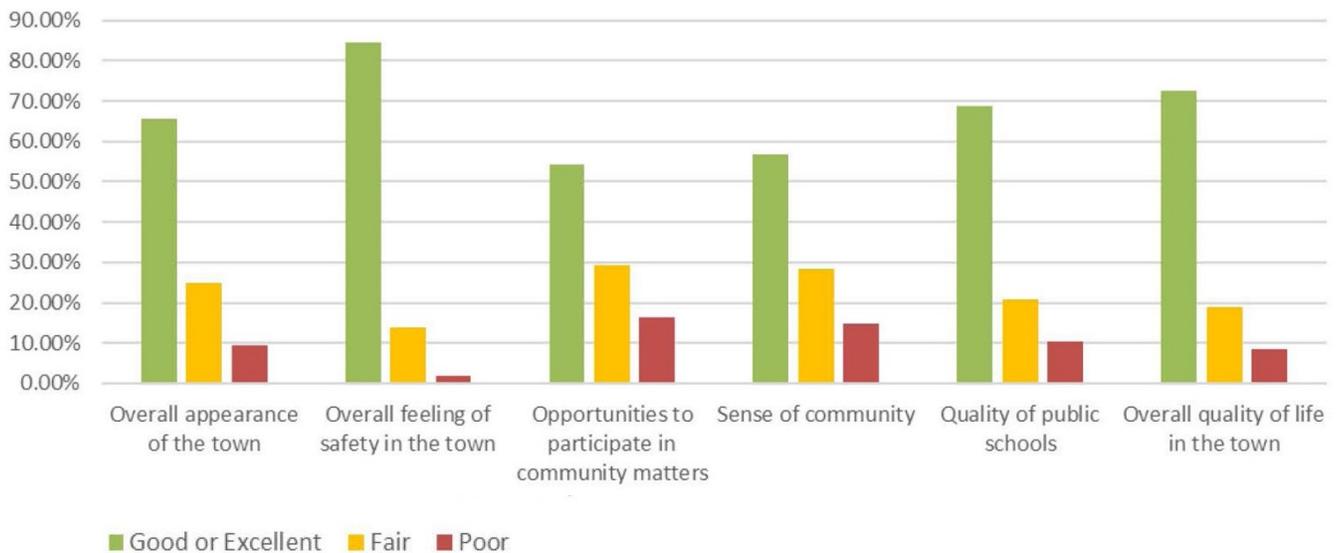
- Alma
- Alta Vista
- Eskridge
- Harveyville
- Maple Hill
- McFarland
- Paxico



*Number of survey respondents from each zip code in Wabaunsee County.*



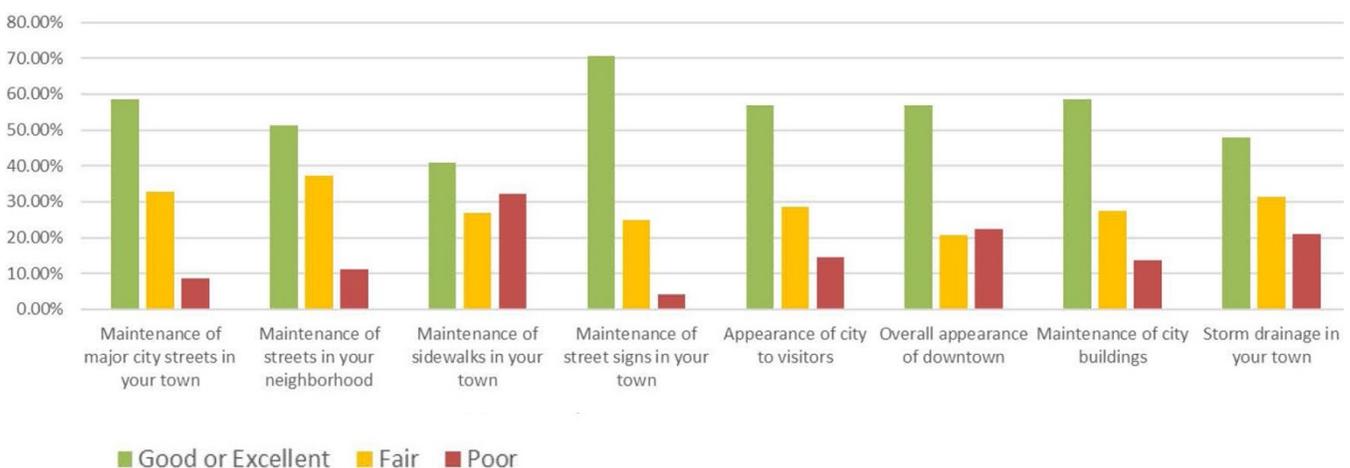
## Quality of Life



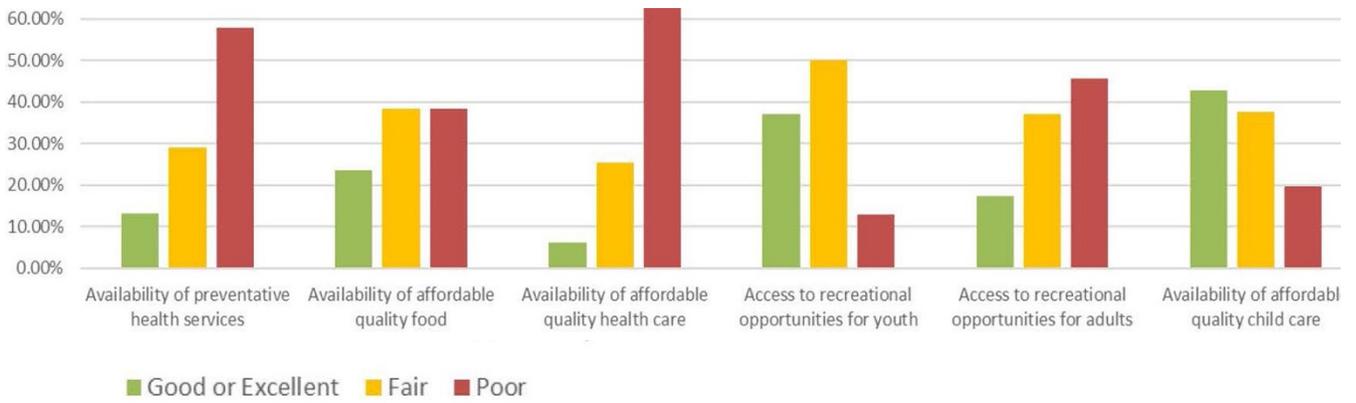
## Housing & Neighborhood



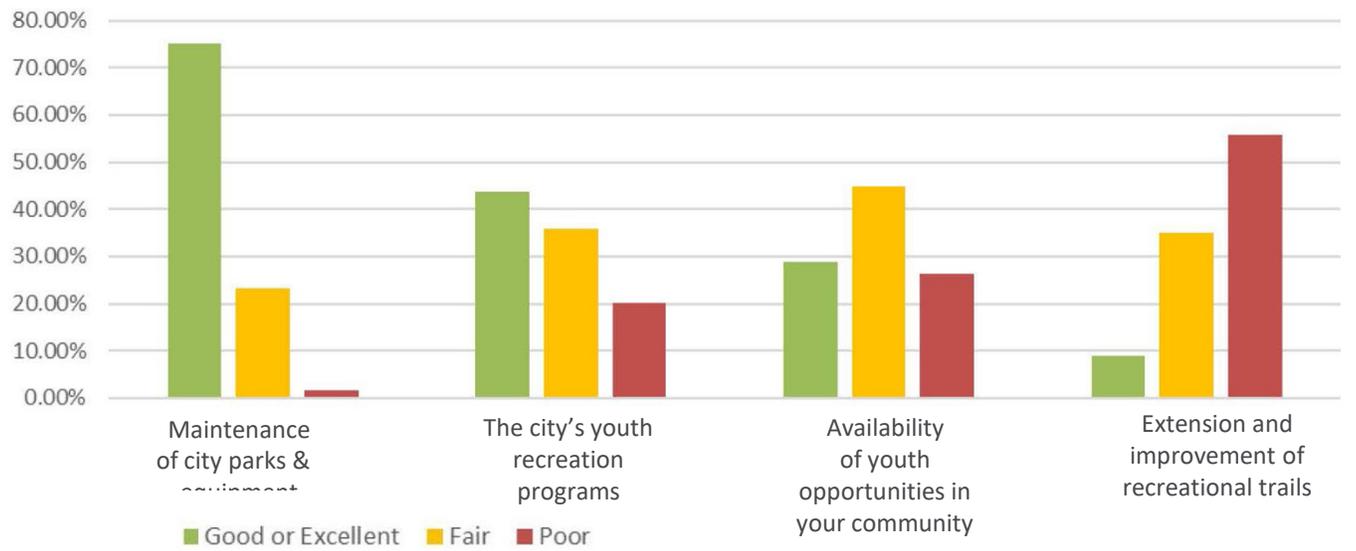
## Infrastructure



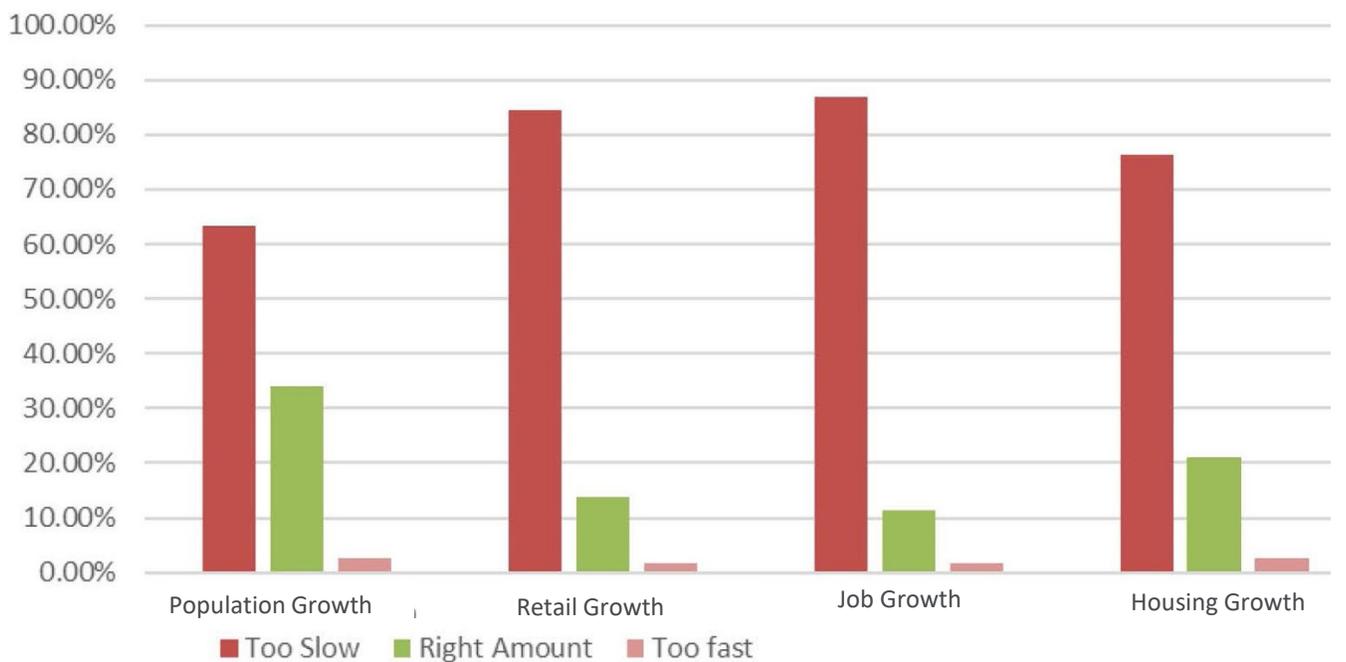
## Health & Wellness



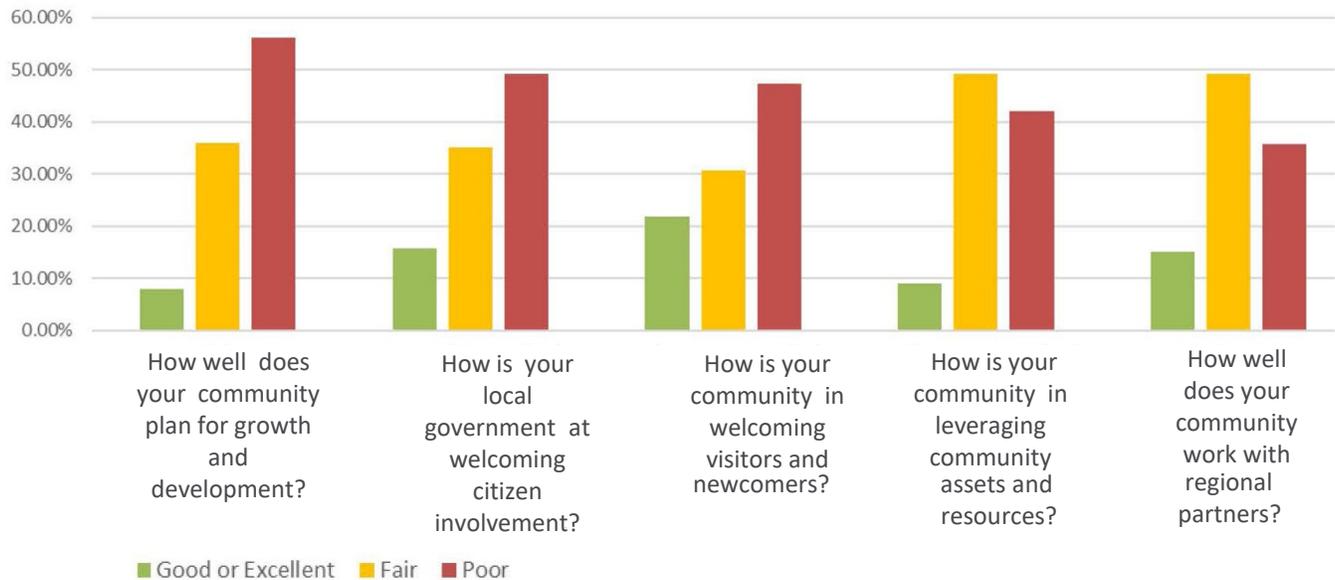
## Parks & Recreation



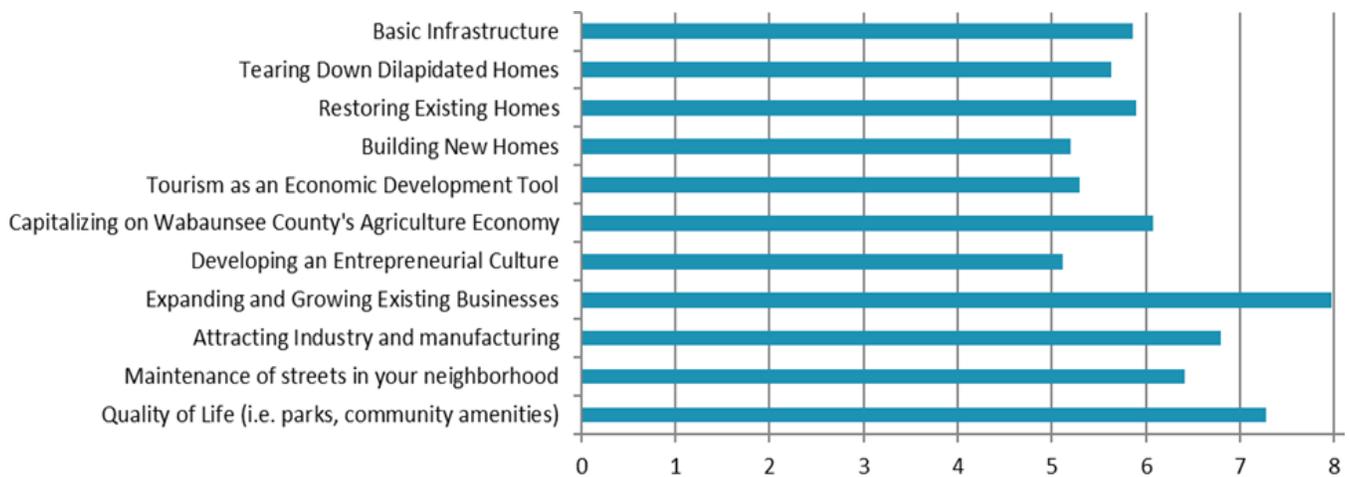
## Growth



## Community



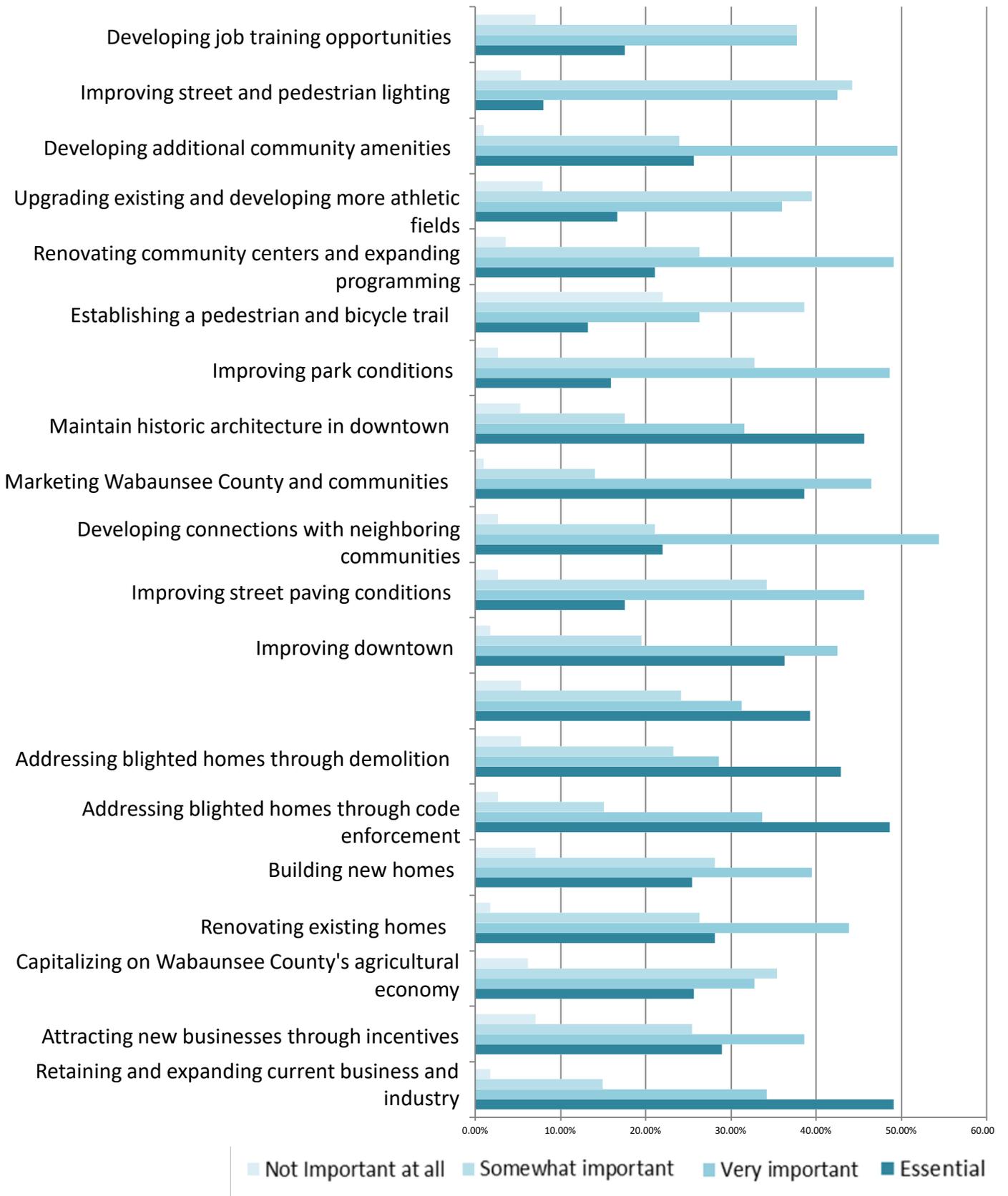
## Investment (what Wabauensee County should invest its resources in)



\*Calculated based on each respondent's ranking of each item to provide an overall rank of these categories

1. Expanding and growing existing businesses
2. Quality of life (i.e. parks, community amenities)
3. Attracting industry and manufacturing
4. Maintenance of streets in your neighborhood
5. Capitalizing on Wabauensee County's Agriculture Economy
6. Restoring existing homes
7. Basic infrastructure such streets, sewer, and water
8. Tearing down dilapidated homes
9. Tourism as an economic development tool
10. Building new homes
11. Developing an entrepreneurial culture

## Future Growth in the County



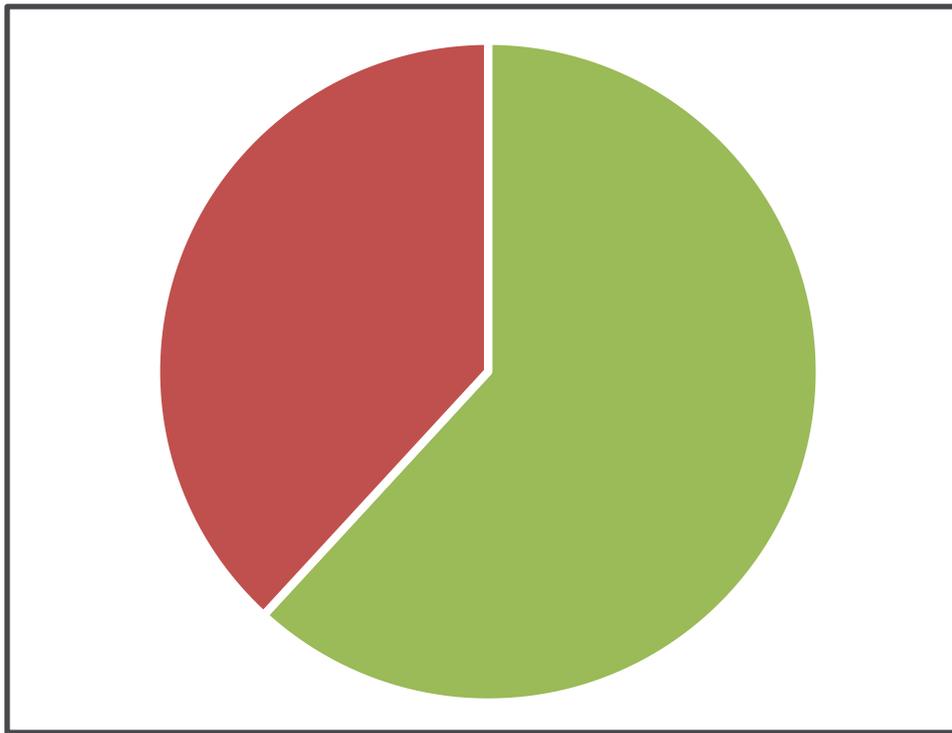
*Describe Wabaunsee County in three words (most common words used)*

Place Wonderful Scenic Love Flint Hills Conservative  
Community Home Sweet Home Rural  
Agriculture Beautiful Country Quiet Slow  
Friendly High Property Taxes Peaceful Kansas  
County Welcoming Family

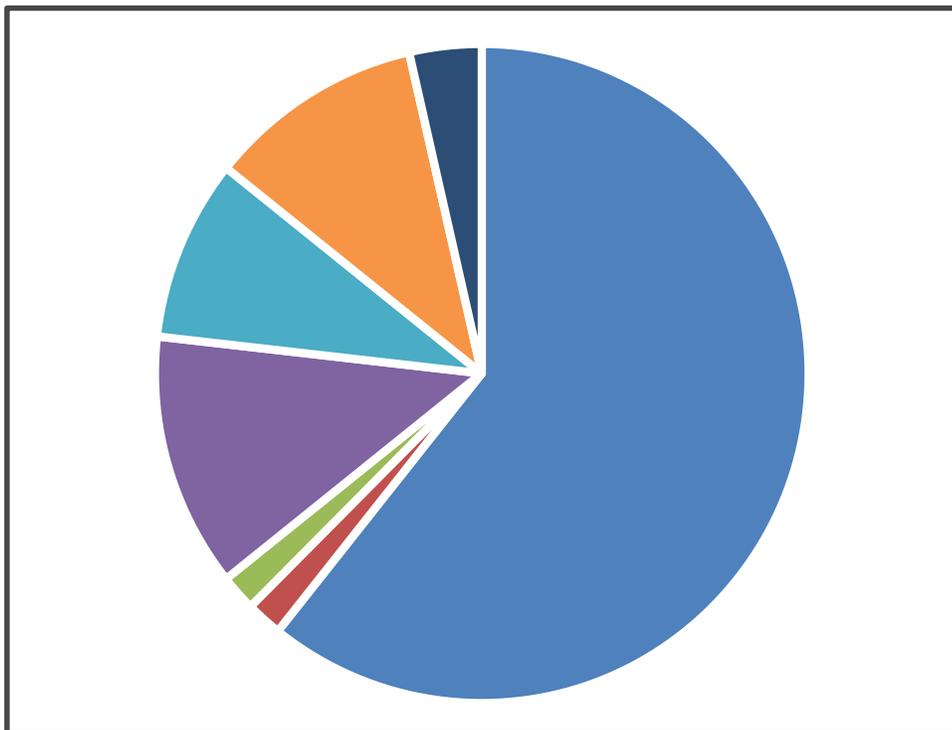
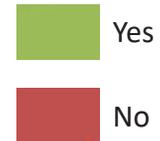
*Describe the town you live in or closest to in three words (most common words used)*

Houses Comfortable Family Love Nice Dying Clean Jobs  
Historic Poor Quiet Kids Friendly Beautiful  
Safe Bedroom Community Town Drug Needs Nosey  
Peaceful Lacking

# ALMA



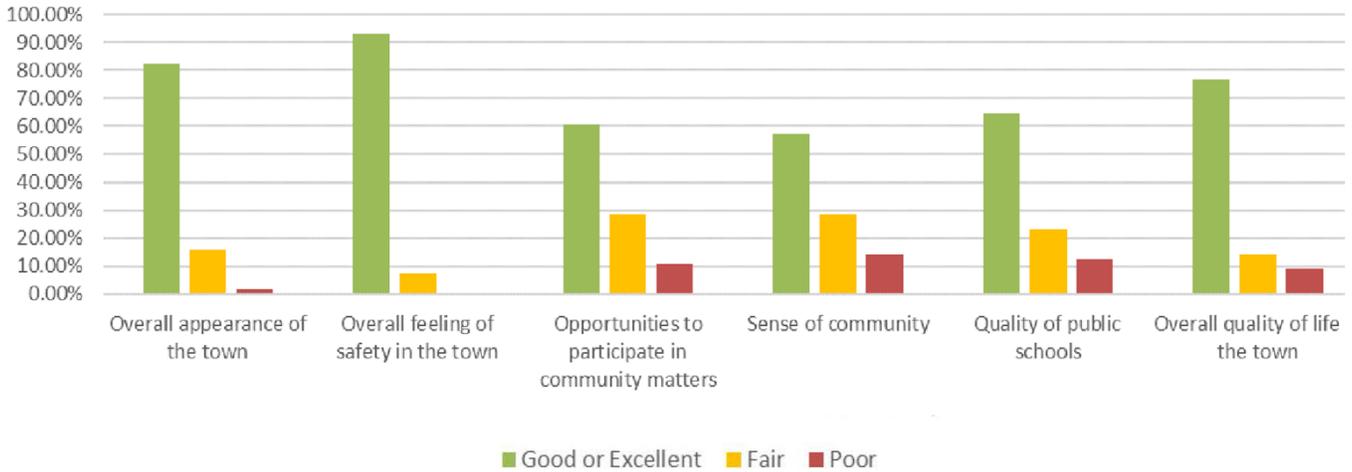
*Do you live in Alma?*



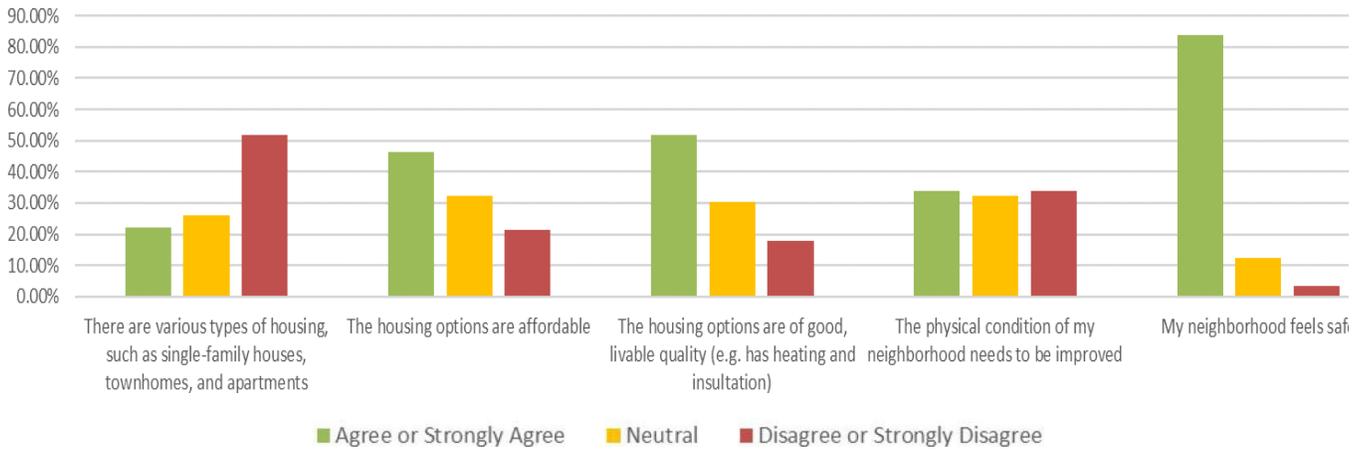
*Primary place of work*



## Quality of Life



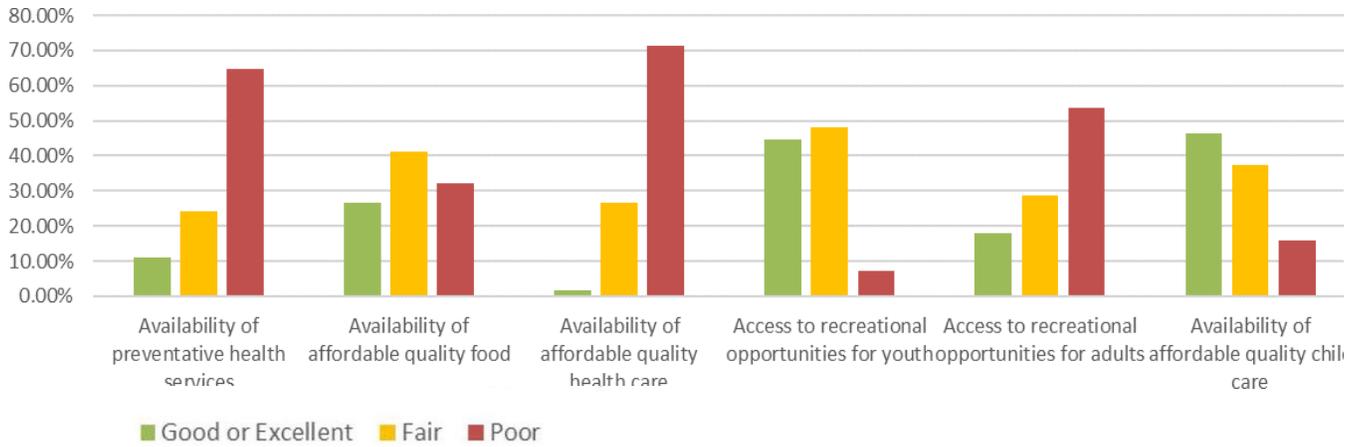
## Housing & Neighborhood



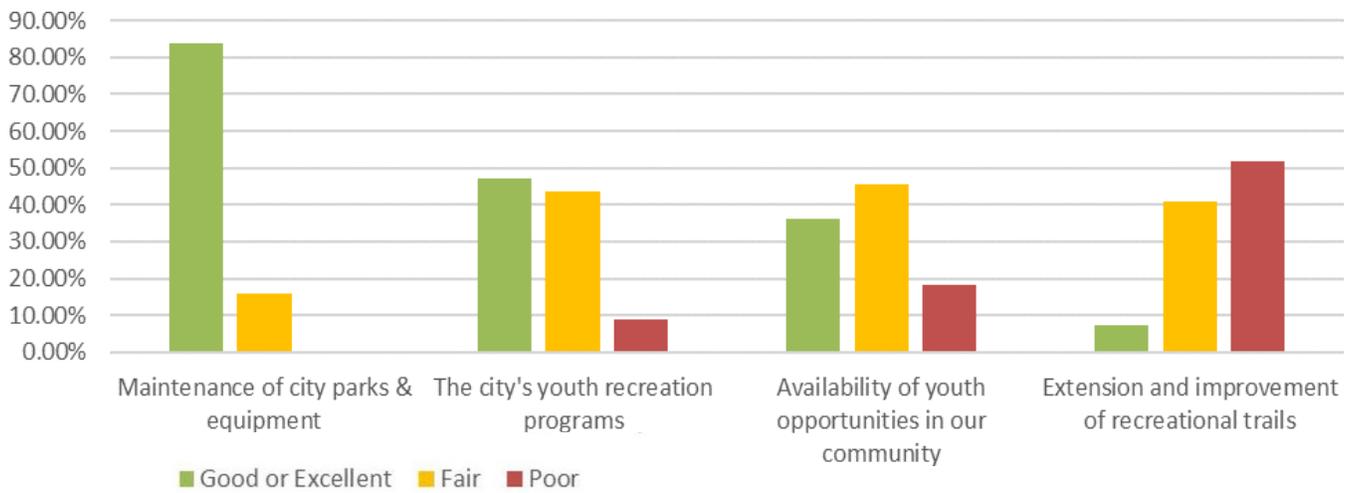
## Infrastructure



## Health & Wellness

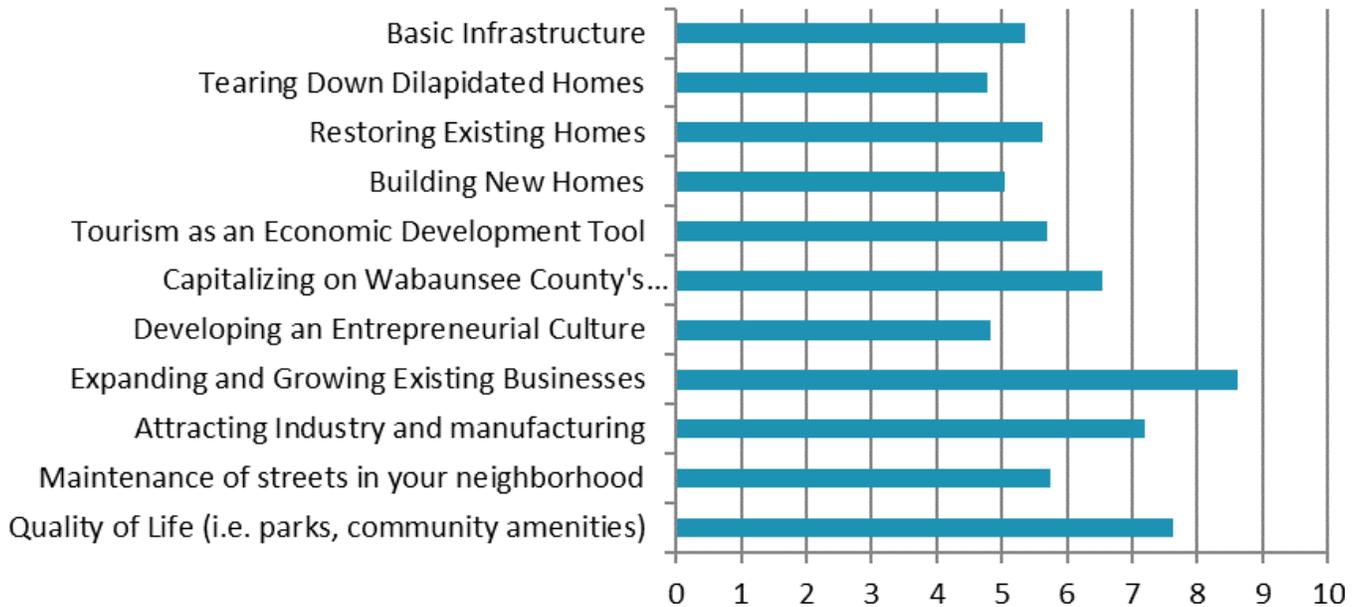


## Parks & Recreation



**Growth**

# What should Wabaunsee County or your town invest its resources in developing?



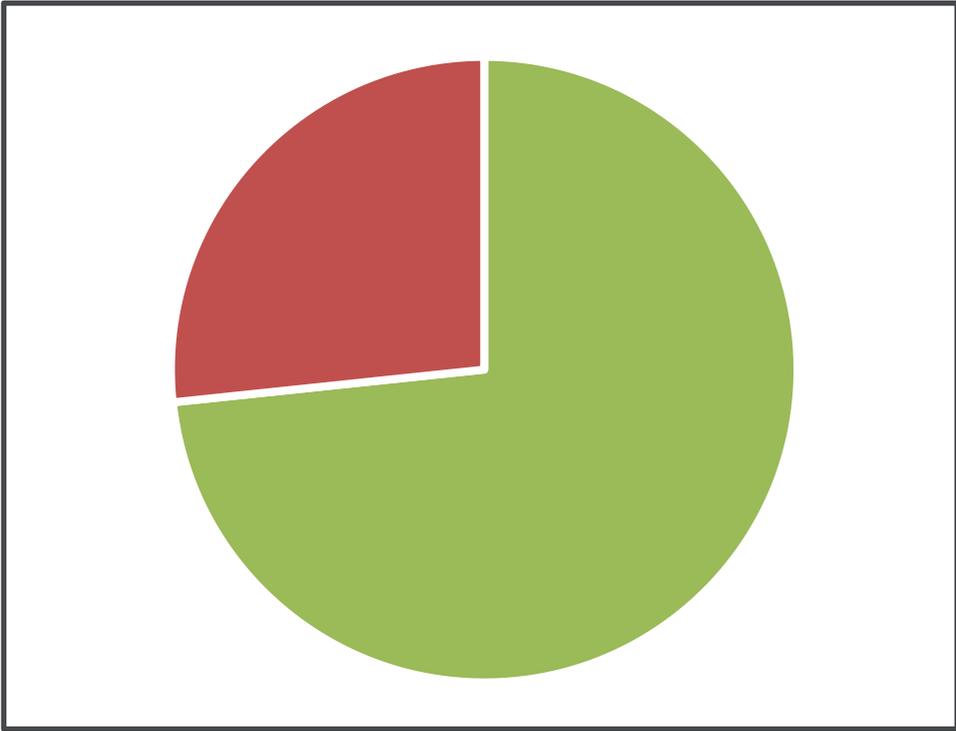
**Describe Wabaunsee County in three words (most common words used)**

Home Sweet Home Welcoming Friendly Scenic  
 Rural Family Beautiful Tax Quiet Picturesque  
 Community Slow Love

**Describe the town you live in or closest to in three words (most common words used)**

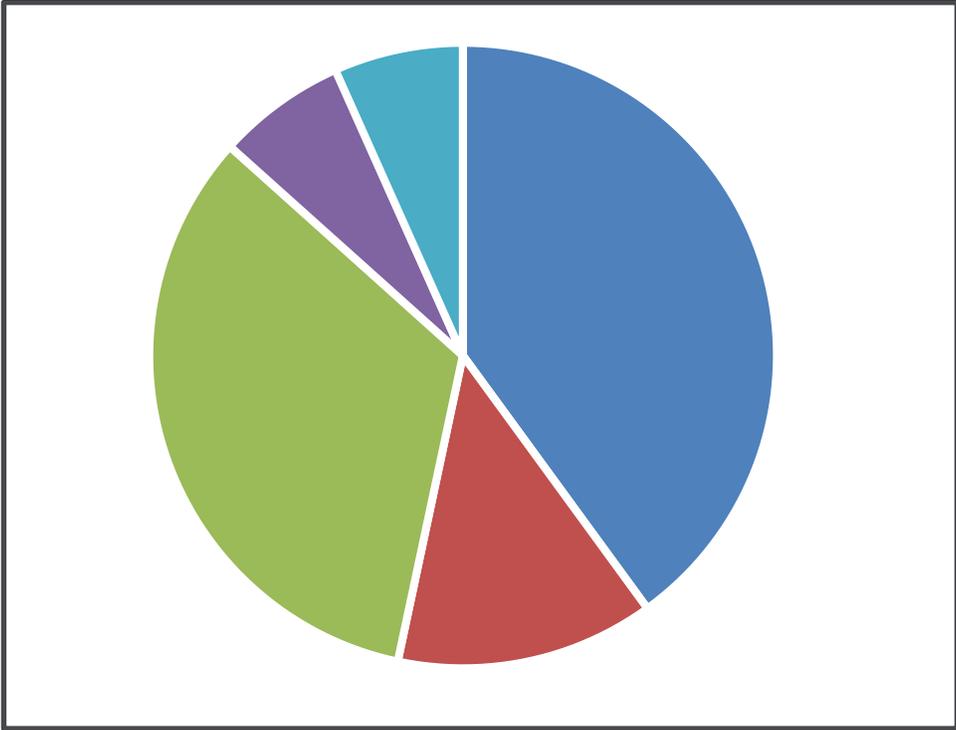
Beautiful Lacking Nice Comfortable Safe Jobs Historic  
 Community Friendly Needs Quiet Family Clean  
 Town

# ALTA VISTA



*Do you live in Alta Vista?*

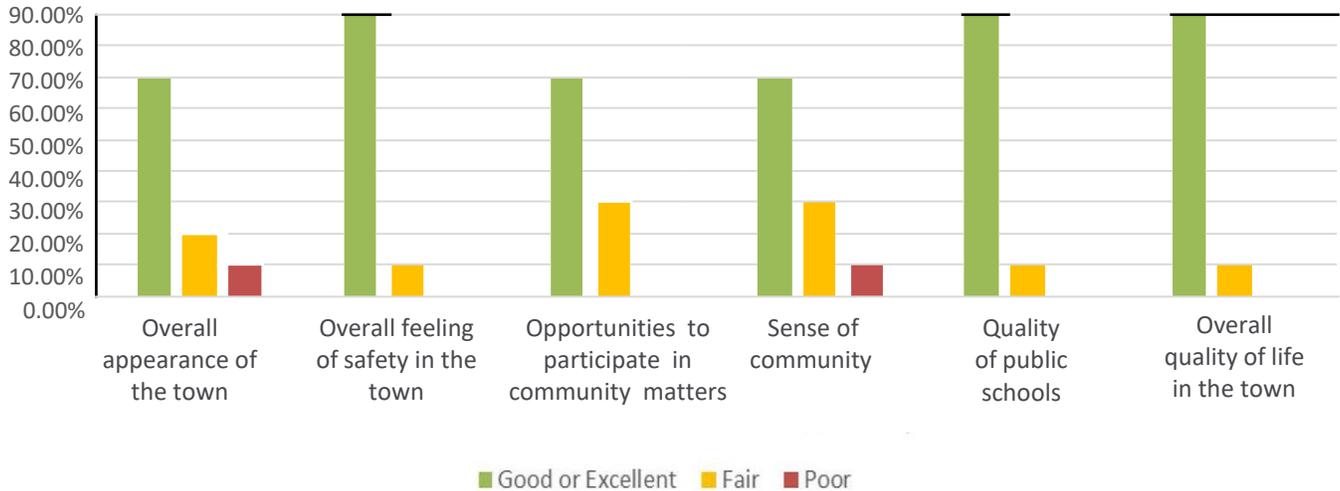
- Yes
- No



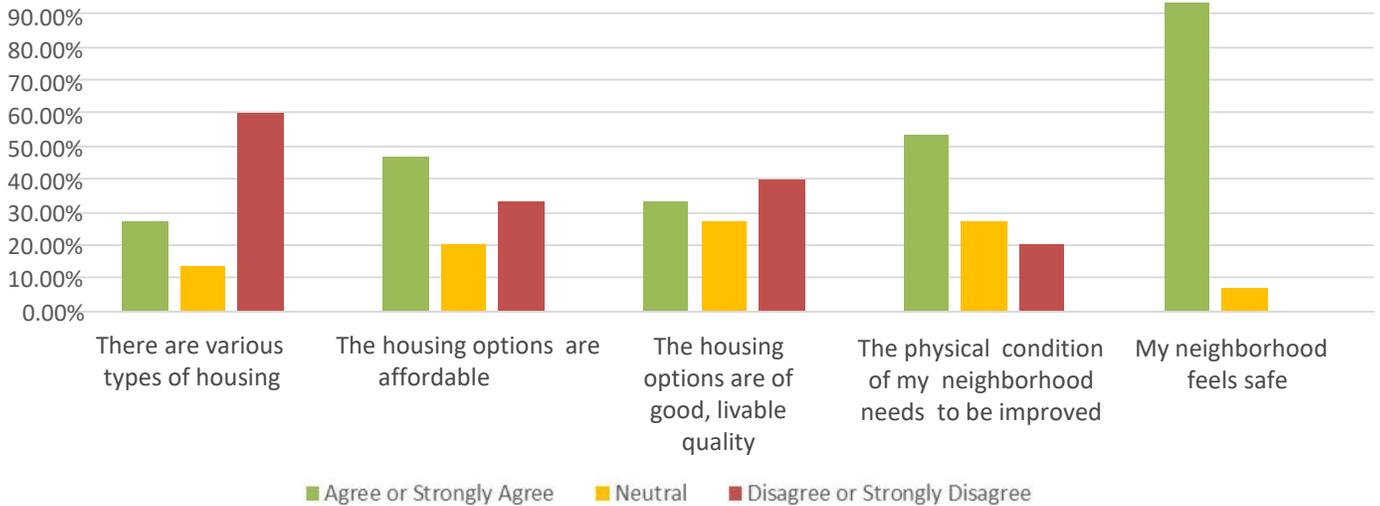
*Primary place of work*

- Alma
- Alta Vista
- Eskridge
- Harveyville
- Maple Hill

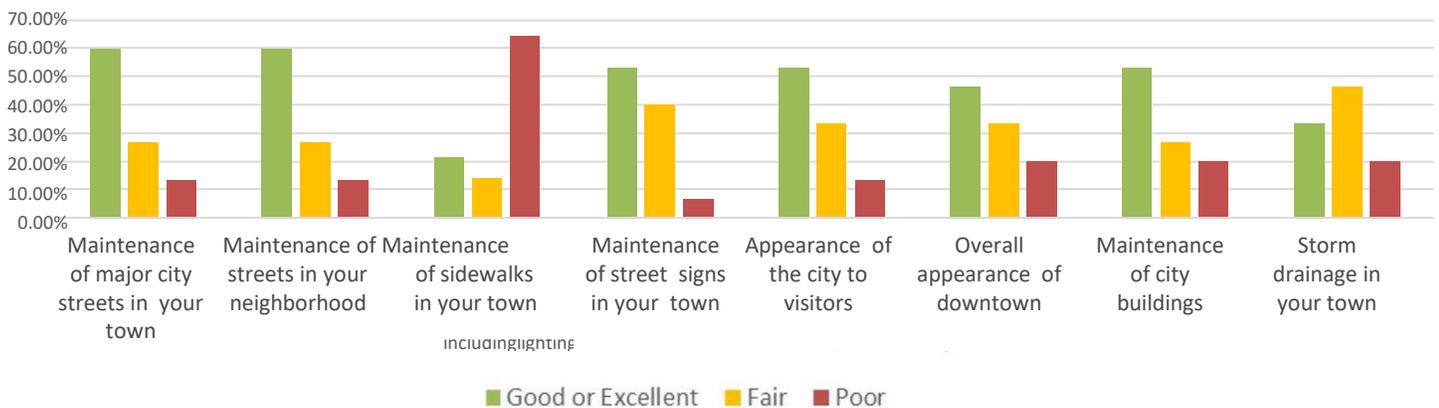
## Quality of Life



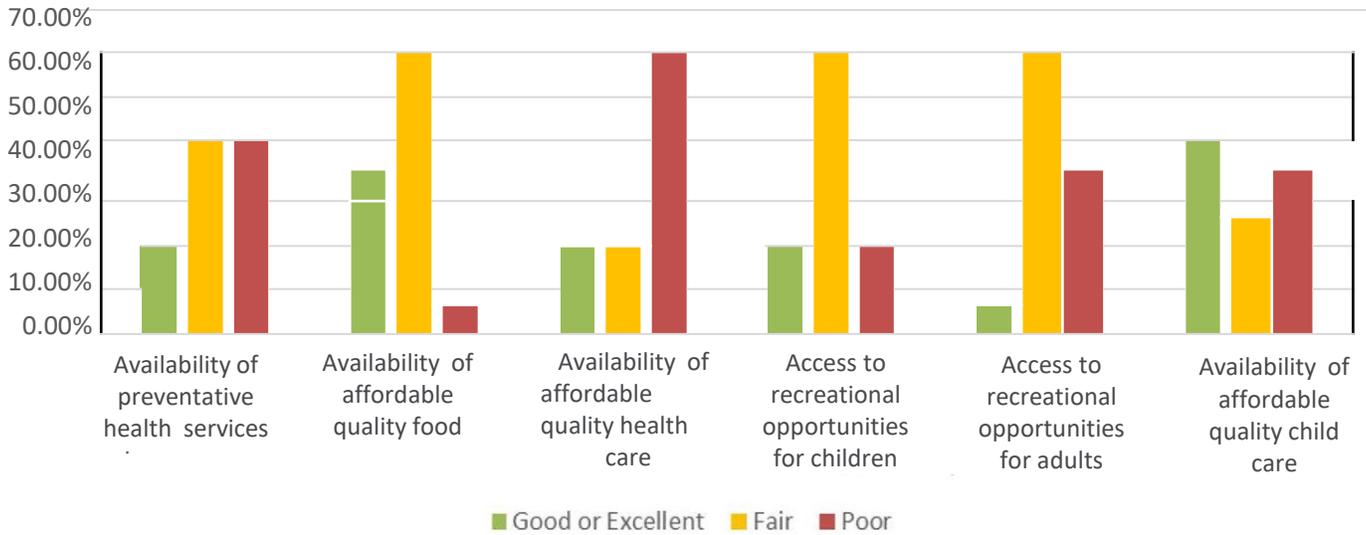
## Housing & Neighborhood



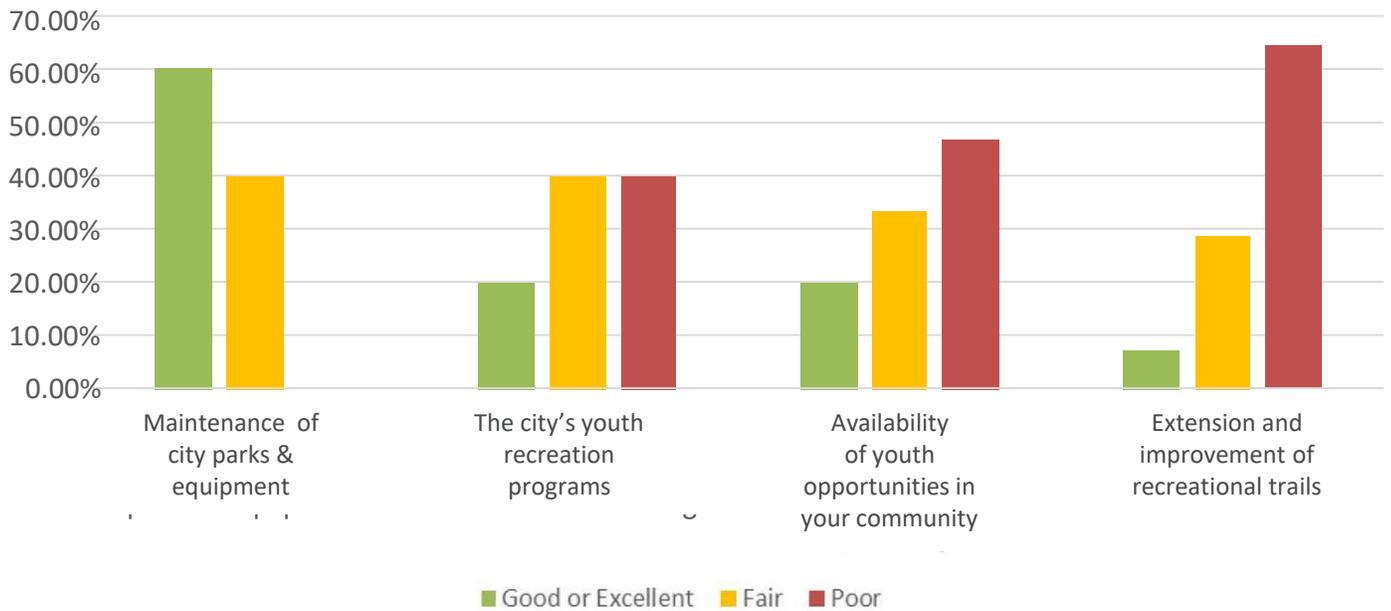
## Infrastructure



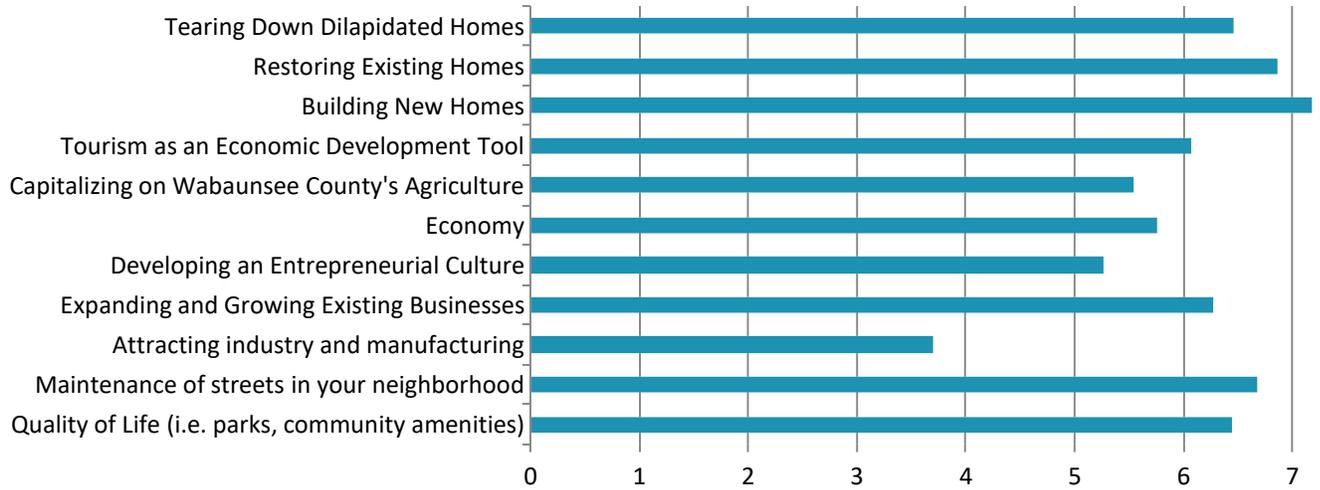
## Health & Wellness



## Parks & Recreation



**Growth**



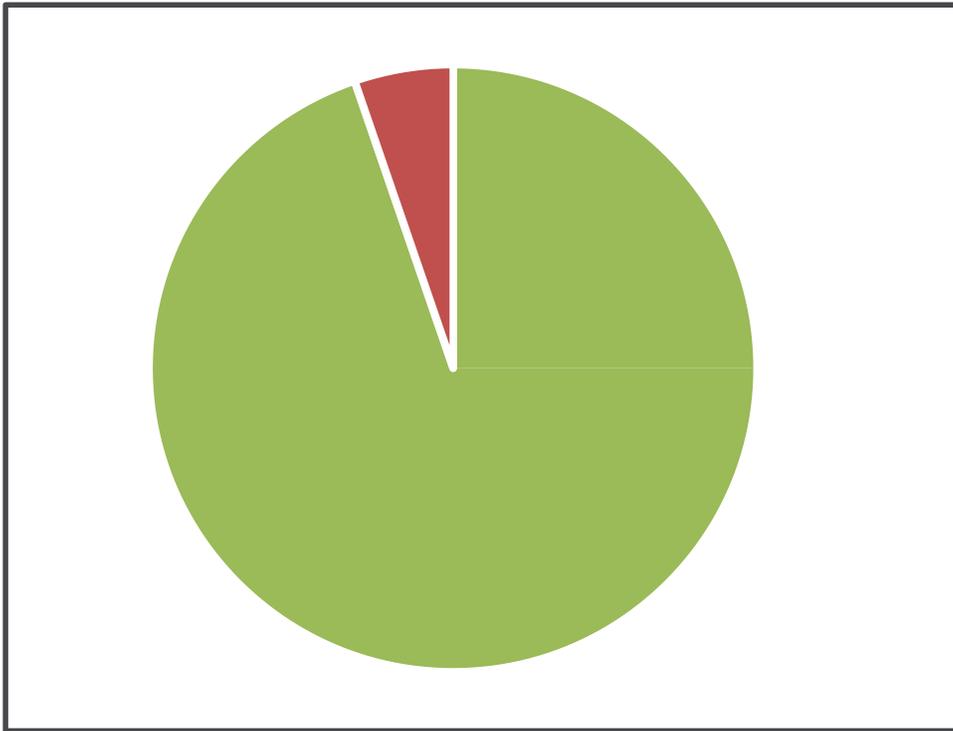
*Describe Wabaunsee County in three words (most common words used)*

Family Rural Beautiful Place Peaceful

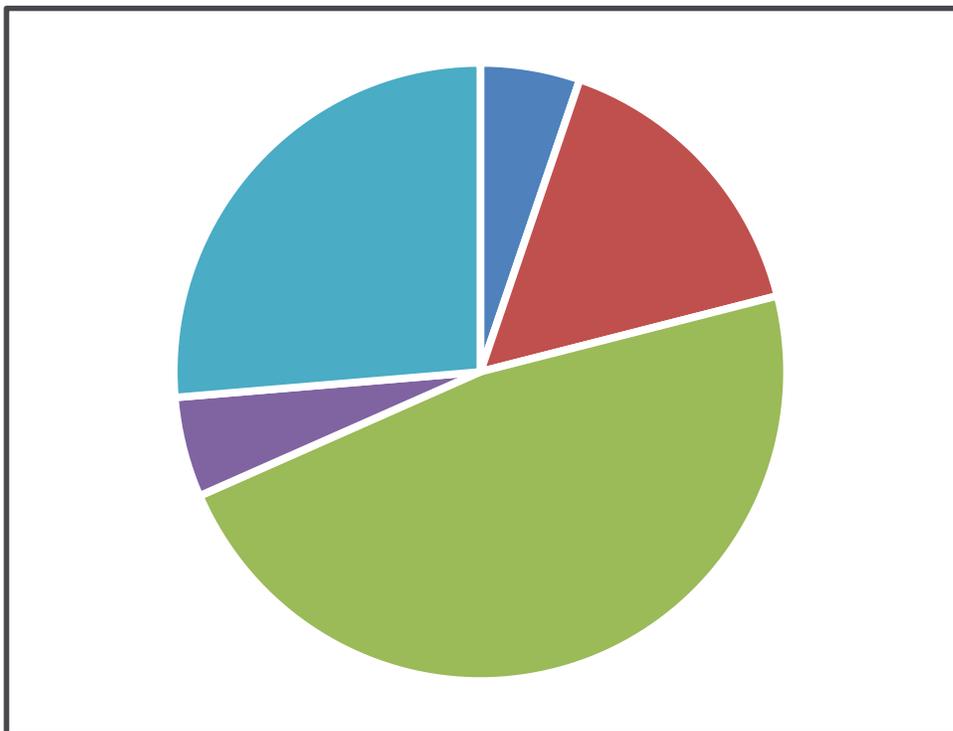
*Describe the town you live in or closest to in three words (most common words used)*

Needs Quiet Friendly

# HARVEYVILLE



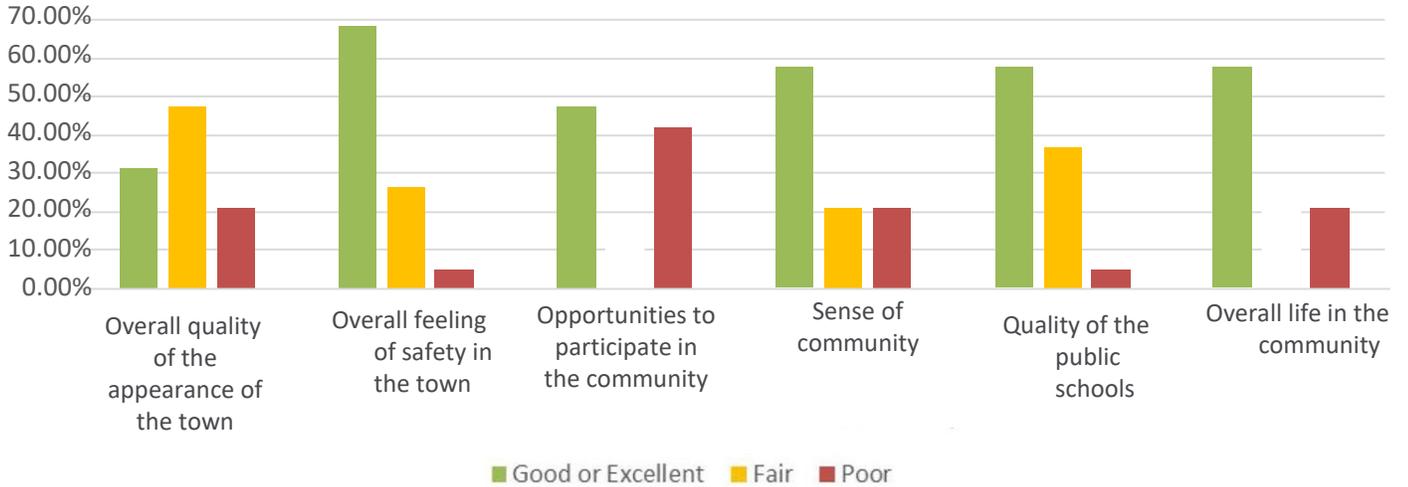
*Do you live in Harveyville?*



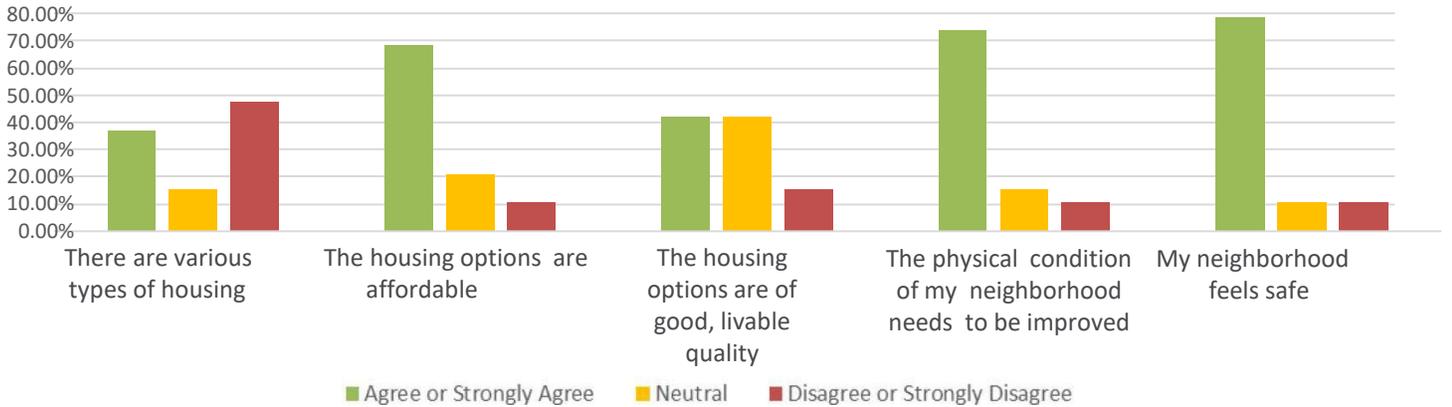
*Primary place of work*



## Quality of Life



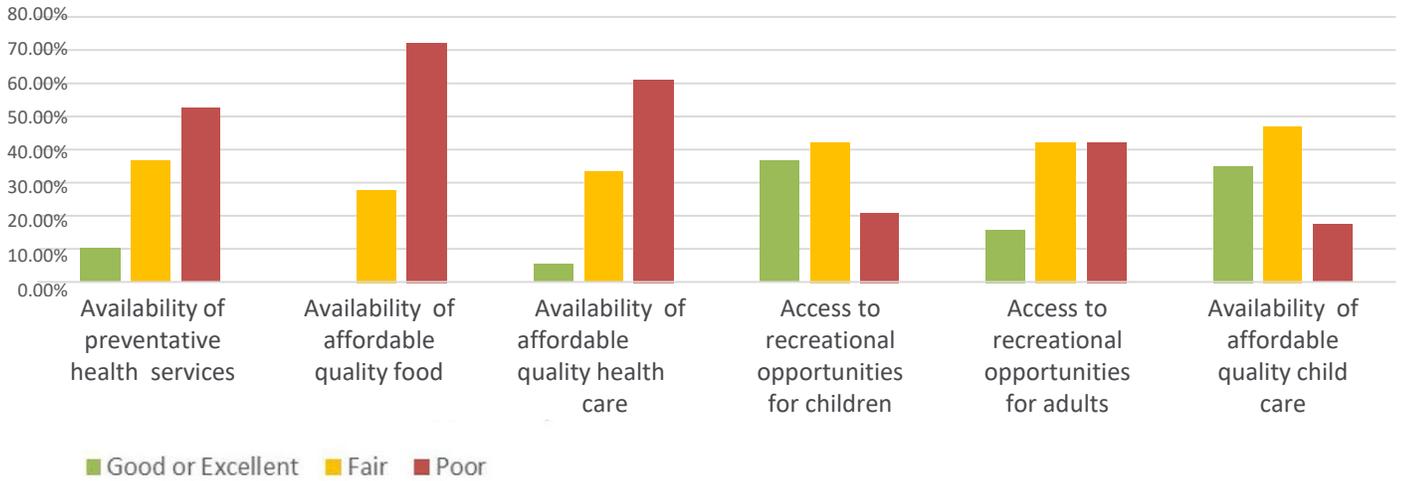
## Housing & Neighborhood



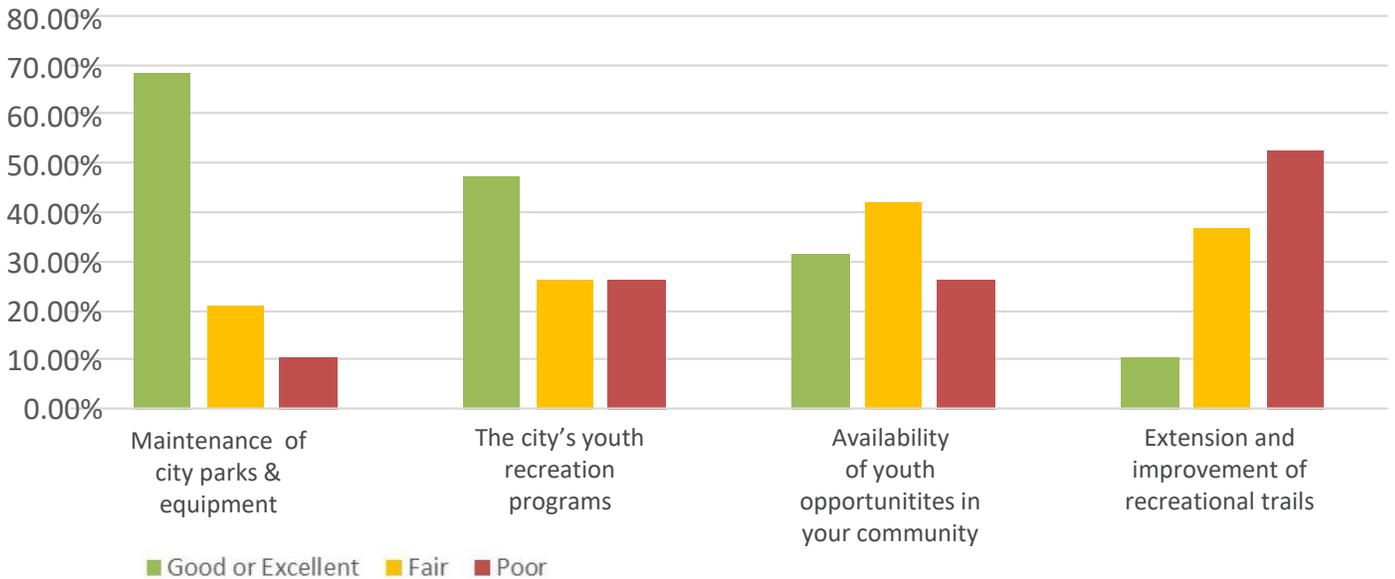
## Infrastructure



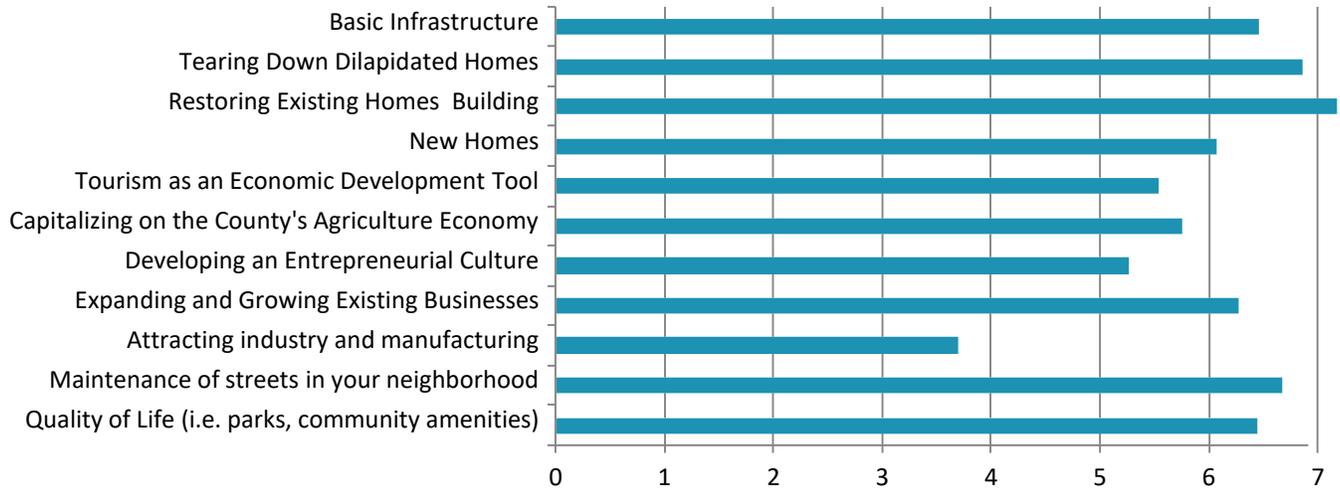
## Health & Wellness



## Parks & Recreation



## Growth



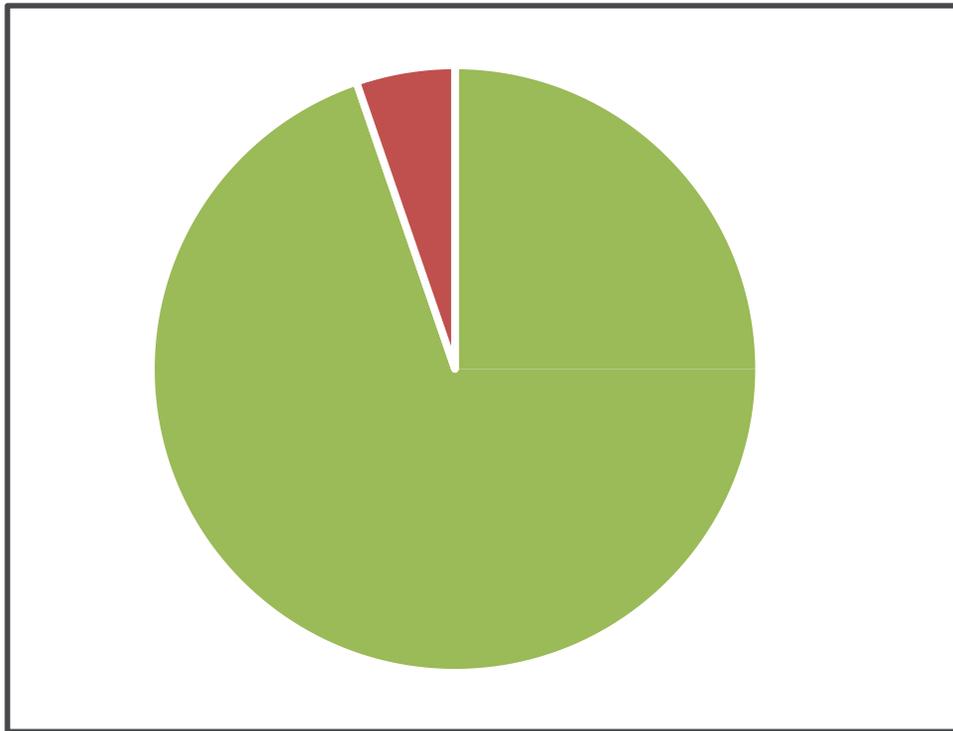
**Describe Wabaunsee County in three words (most common words used)**

Communities Quiet Beautiful Poor Peaceful

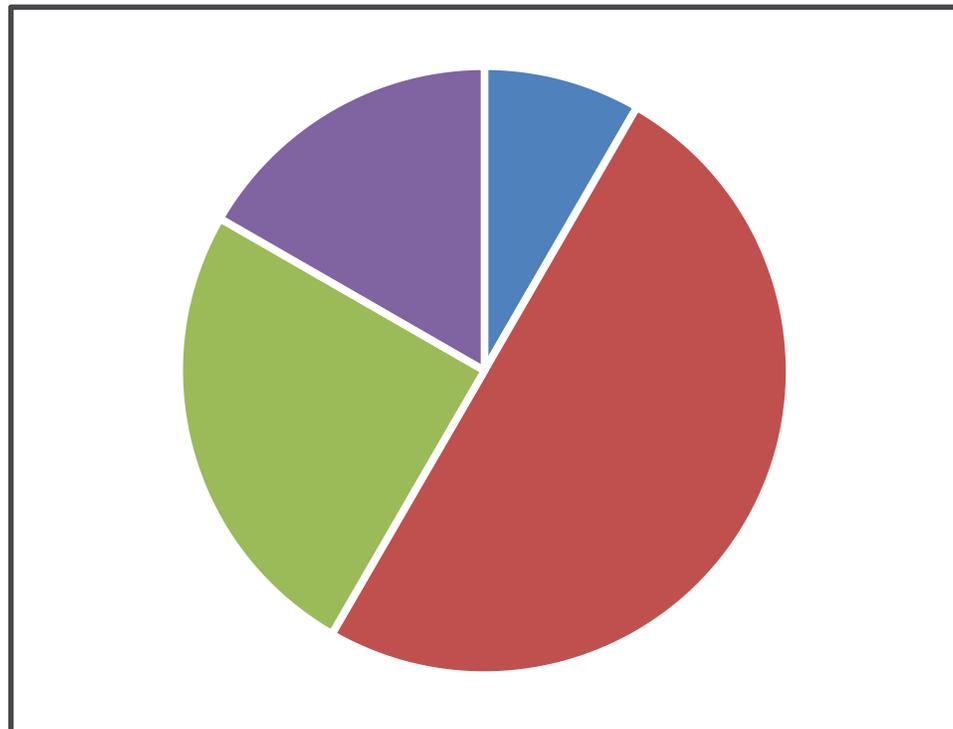
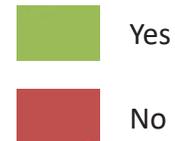
**Describe the town you live in or closest to in three words (most common words used)**

Houses Lacking Town Kids Friendly Peaceful Dying

# MAPLE HILL



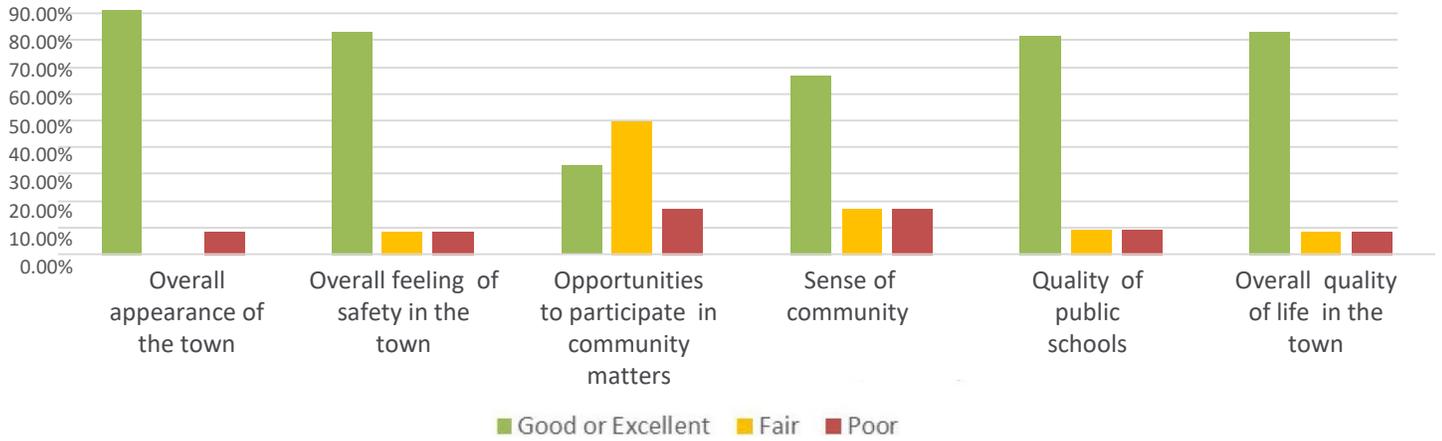
*Do you live in Maple Hill?*



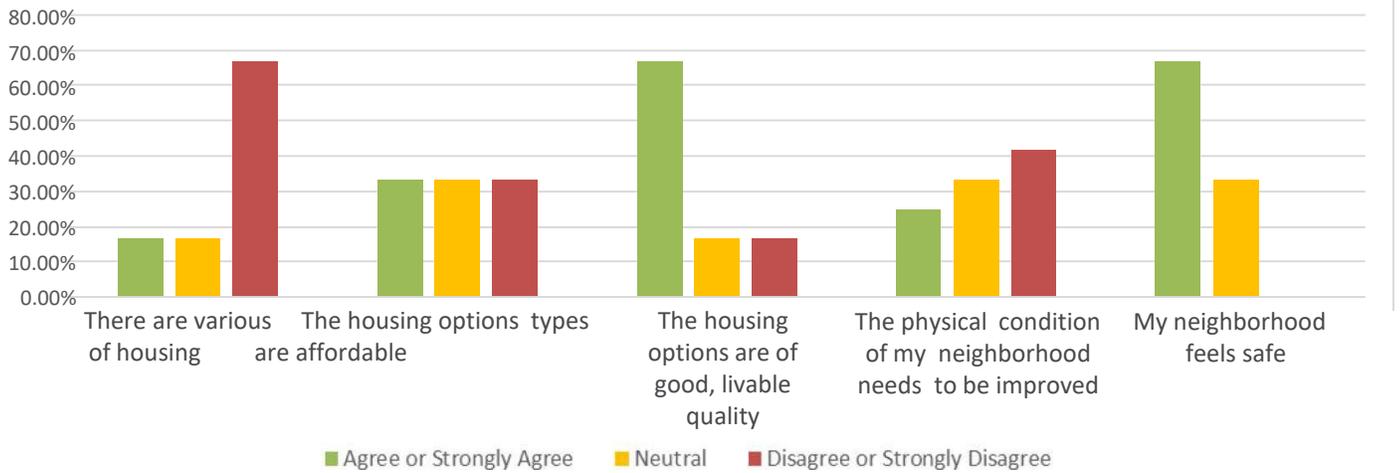
*Primary place of work*



## Quality of Life



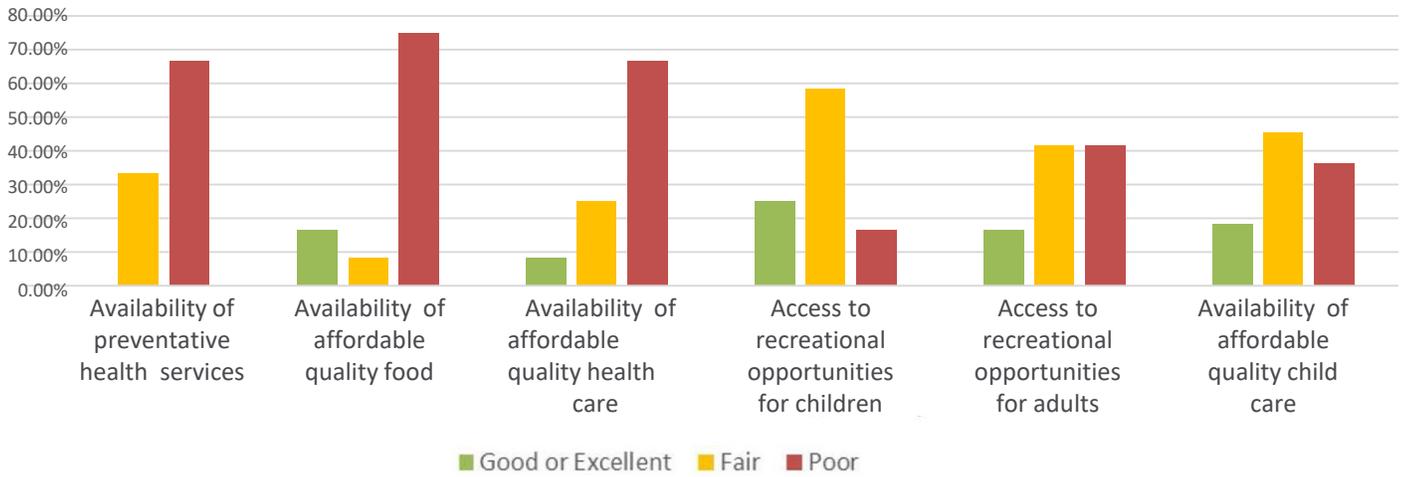
## Housing & Neighborhood



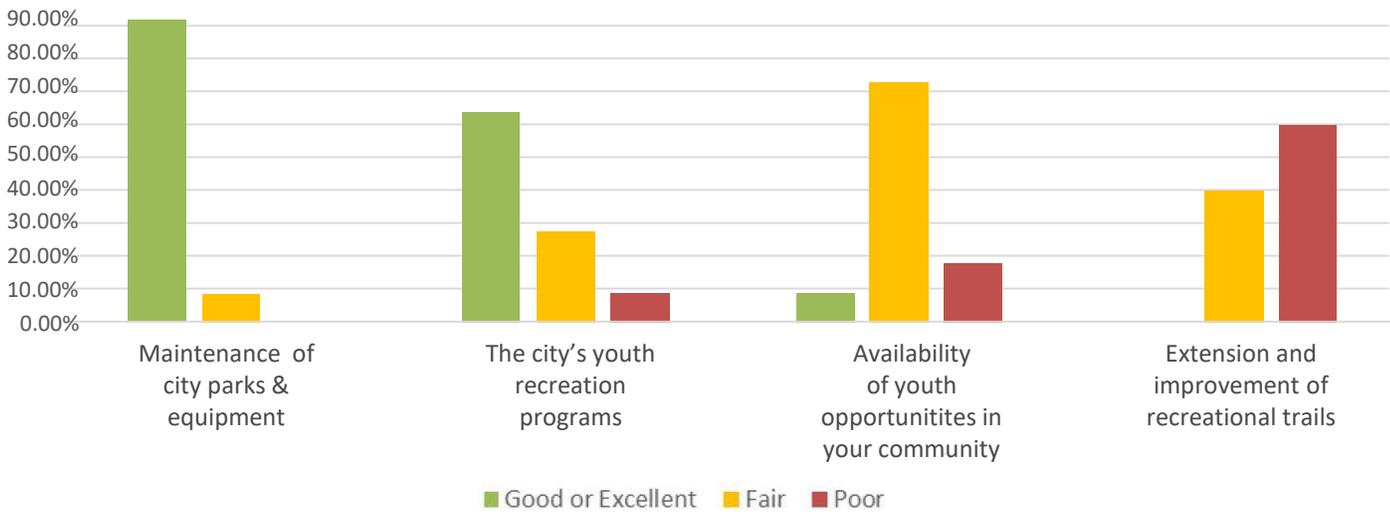
## Infrastructure



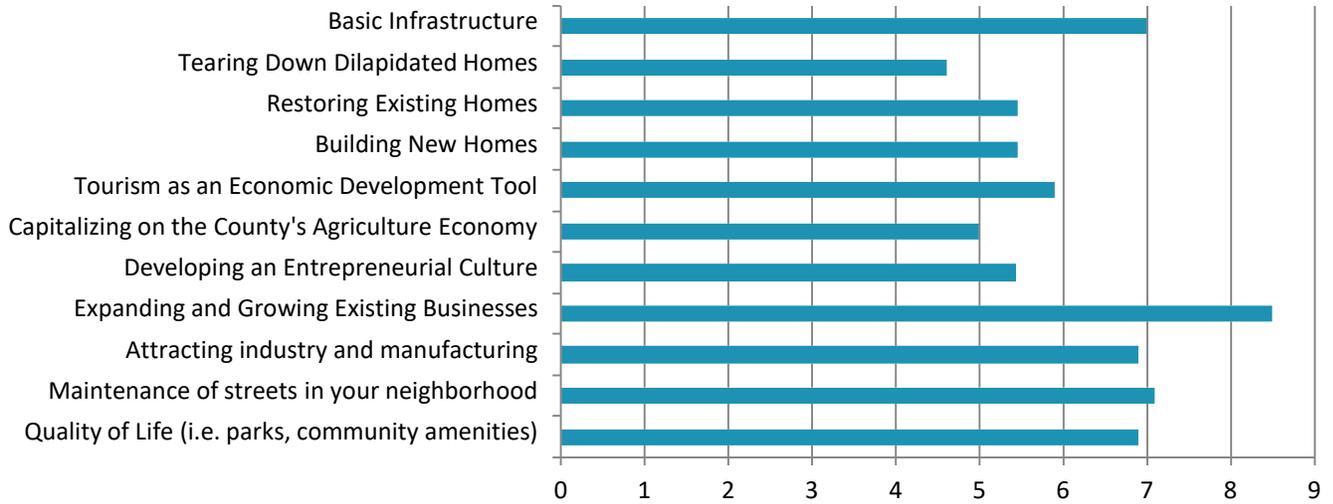
## Health & Wellness



## Parks & Recreation



## Growth



**Describe Wabaunsee County in three words (most common words used)**

Beautiful High Property Taxes

**Describe the town you live in or closest to in three words (most common words used)**

Town Quiet

# STAKEHOLDER QUESTIONNAIRE

In May of 2018, stakeholder interviews were conducted to better understand the needs of the community. The interviews took place over the phone on a one-to-one basis. The goal was to interview a diverse group of people to obtain the broadest range of input on issues relevant to the Wabaunsee County Comprehensive Plan. The eleven people interviewed include:

- Business owners
- City Employees
- City Council Members
- Elected Officials
- Residents
- Education leaders
- Community Activists

The following page includes the questions asked in the stakeholder interviews.

## Background:

What community or part of Wabaunsee County do you live in?

What is your background/experience with Wabaunsee County?

What do you value most about Wabaunsee County?

## Issues:

What are the most important issues facing the Wabaunsee County Area?

Which are your top priorities to address through this planning process?

What impacts might the community see from more growth in Wabaunsee County?

## Current Plans and Efforts:

Are there any recent planning-related efforts that your group/organization is involved with that could help inform this comprehensive plan?

Are you familiar with the local zoning ordinances, or any other planning related regulations? What are the planning deficiencies or strengths for Wabaunsee County?

## Public Participation:

What do you believe will be the most effective way to get the general community involved in the planning process?

How can we best involve you and/or your organization or group in the planning

## Best Advice:

What is the best advice you can give us that will lead to a successful planning process?

## Community Needs:

In your opinion, are improvements needed in Wabaunsee County or your community? If yes, what is needed?

In your opinion, are additional protection efforts needed for the historic resources including the buildings, structures and historic places? If yes, what efforts are needed and which protection efforts/ resources should receive priority? If no, what existing protection efforts/resources should receive priority?

What park and recreation activities and events are most needed in Wabaunsee County or your community?

What improvements, if any, to Wabaunsee County or your community do you think should be the highest priority?

How can Wabaunsee County serve the needs of the residents, tourists, schools, others?

How could your organization/group partner or build upon existing partnerships in the future to improve the facilities, resources, events or programming in Wabaunsee County?



# QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The one-on-one interviews provided important feedback on Wabaunsee County. Interviewees broadly responded to questions on the communities most valuable assets, perceived challenges, and hopes and suggestions for the future.

## ***Interviewees provided insight into the communities existing opportunities and most valuable features.***

Respondents noted the high quality of personal relationships and natural beauty as some of the most valuable assets of Wabaunsee County. Respondents perceived a strong sense of community, attributed to the “rural way of life” in the county, which is what attracted them to Wabaunsee County, or what has made them stay. Promoting the historic character and preserving the natural resources of Wabaunsee County were perceived as high priority items by many respondents.

## ***Interviewees discussed the various challenges that might hinder the future of the community.***

The main challenges addressed by interviewees included infrastructure issues such as lack of high speed internet/cell service and road and bridge maintenance.

Several residents expressed concern over policies related to the quarrying operations in the county. Additionally, respondents expressed overall satisfaction with the school district and educational opportunities in the county, but emphasized the importance of maintaining those high quality schools and adding early childhood education opportunities to attract more young families to the county.

## ***Interviewees presented their goals or hopes and offered suggestions for the future.***

Most interviewees expressed a desire for Wabaunsee County to maintain its small town, rural community way of life. They highlighted the importance of attracting

new industry and just enough new residents to the county to maintain the current standard of living for generations to come. Residents did not want to see explosive growth in the area, but rather carefully regulated growth. Maintaining the safety, historic character, and natural beauty of Wabaunsee County were some of the main goals respondents listed.

## **Interview Questions and Summary of Responses**

Stakeholder participants were asked open ended questions. Responses varied greatly, the following is a brief summary of the interviews conducted.

### **Background:**

#### ***1. What community or part of Wabaunsee County do you live in? What is your background or experience with Wabaunsee County? What do you value most about Wabaunsee County?***

The background of each stakeholder with Wabaunsee County ranged from a few years spent living in the county to a whole lifetime. Most interviewees had multigenerational family ties in the county, however some were just brought there by work and chose to stay because of the great quality of life. There were a variety of communities represented, including Alma, Maple Hill, and numerous rural parts of the county.

Respondents identified the rural way of life, small town feel, quiet country life, beauty of county, people working together, family values, and small schools as valuable components of the community.

**Issues:**

**2. What are the most important issues facing your community in Wabaunsee County? Which are your top priorities to address through this planning process?**

Issues noted included challenges related to retaining young people, creating job opportunities, maintaining the school district, controlled growth to expand the tax base, using retail to generate sales tax, improving rural infrastructure, getting broadband, maintenance of roads and bridges, access to healthcare, and attracting more tourism.

**3. What impacts might the community see from more growth in Wabaunsee County?**

Growth in Wabaunsee County was viewed in a cautious light. Respondents noted that more industry would lessen tax burden on ranchers and farmers, and businesses would bring more jobs, services, and people. However, some respondents were hesitant about how growth would change the overall way of life in the county.

**4. Are you familiar with the local zoning ordinances, or any other planning related regulations? What are the planning deficiencies or strengths in Wabaunsee County?**

Overall, respondents were familiar with the current planning efforts, policies, and regulations in Wabaunsee County and had been involved with county planning in some way. That involvement ranged from having to be very aware of the regulations because of a business, to involvement with previous comprehensive planning activities.

Planning deficiencies identified by stakeholders included fixing the 40 Acre rule and improving effort to promote growth along I-70 and K-99.

**5. Community Needs: In your opinion, are improvements needed in community facilities or services in Wabaunsee County? If yes, what is needed?**

Several key themes emerged among responses regarding community needs:

Infrastructure improvements: expanded utility services and resources, acquiring high speed internet and improving cell service, road and bridge maintenance.

School district and community asset improvement: more activities for youth, improving quality of schools and access to child care

Small town growth: working together with other communities and counties to promote regional assets, zoning carefully for controlled growth

**6. In your opinion, are additional protection efforts needed for the historic resources including the buildings, structures and historic places? If yes, what efforts are needed and which protection efforts/resources should receive priority? If no, what existing protection efforts/resources should receive priority?**

All interview respondents emphasized the importance of the historic preservation efforts in the county. Respondents suggested that historic preservation should be a high priority but should use the resources currently allocated and incentives already available. Respondents also noted that the county and incorporated communities already do a great job with their preservation efforts, so new regulations are not necessary.



**7. What park and recreation activities and events are most needed in Wabaunsee County?**

Most survey respondents spoke very highly of the summer ball program in Wabaunsee County, but mentioned that facility improvements, like field lights, were needed to improve the program further.

Stakeholders expressed a desire for walking and biking trails, new recreation fields, and expanded summer sports programs with more variety. Residents also noted that community pool improvements were necessary.

**8. What improvements, if any, to Wabaunsee County do you think should be the highest priority?**

Respondents overwhelmingly noted the need to prioritize infrastructure improvements, especially bridges and roads. Respondents also perceived acquiring high speed internet and maintain affordable utilities as a priority. Moderately controlled growth should also be a high priority according to some stakeholders.

**9. How can Wabaunsee County better serve the needs of the residents, tourists, etc.?**

Provide emergency and police services for existing residents. Advertise the quality of life here to attract new residents. Need day care. Have integrated events and amenities that tourist expect like lodging, meals, recreation and excellent marketing. Broadband internet.

**10. How could your organization/group partner or build upon existing partnerships in the future to improve the facilities, resources, events or programming in Wabaunsee County?**

Most respondents felt that they were already involved enough and donating their time, money, etc. to the county and in their communities where it needs to be.

**11. Public Participation: What do you believe will be the most effective way to get the general community involved in the planning process? How can we best involve you and/or your organization or group in the planning process?**

Newspapers, flyers, free meal, signs. Help people understand that planning matters and how it will benefit them. Hard to do in a conservative county. People need to see that the tax base broadens and that economic development doesn't just have to be a 1/2 dozen jobs. It can be more than just job creation. Knowing that the tax base will broaden might engage people, but only a few people will really be involved. Bigger goal would be to not harden people against the idea of a comprehensive plan. Show people that a broadened tax base will prevent living in the county from being more expensive; helps secure utilities, mobile health and dental care, access to groceries and what they need.

**12. Best Advice: What is the best advice you can give us that will lead to a successful planning process?**

Respondents noted that making personal connection with people and continuing to have open channels of communication was key to a successful planning process.

# OPEN HOUSE

The public involvement process of the Wabaunsee County Comprehensive Plan included a series of open houses. Because Wabaunsee County covers a large area geographically, each open house was conducted multiple times in different communities in the county to try to reach residents from different parts of the county. The first series of open houses took place in Eskridge, Paxico, and Alta Vista.

At this open house, the attendees were asked to participate in a SWOT. This activity asked participants to identify the county's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. The following pages document the participants' responses to this activity.

## Strengths

- People are nice, helpful
- Gives people a great place to call home
- Step up to help those in need
- Promote the ag background of the county-grass-farming-land use.
- Pasture burn notification
- Grading of roads
- Park improvement
- Community involvement events
- Historic preservation
- Nice parks
- Great schools
- Tradition
- Multigenerational
- Safe, great place to live
- County historical museum
- Honor our history
- Protects/preserves historic buildings and fences
- Strong commitment to agriculture
- Natural beauty
- Care for the land
- Sense of community
- Support family values
- Agriculture
- Cost-effective local government
- Ranching

### *Strengths Summary*

- People, great place to call home, sense of community
- Agricultural heritage, ranching
- Roads
- Parks
- Historic preservation
- Schools
- Local Government

- Everything you need
- Everyone knows each other
- Community dinners (funeral, etc)
- Eskridge welcome bags to newcomers, new babies baskets, and dinners
- Safety
- Sense of community when it counts
- Informal communication
- Strong support at individual community levels
- Conserve land



## Weaknesses

- Government should be more responsive to citizens
- Encourage population growth
- Get out of unelected, unconstitutional regional planning council
- Road repair and maintenance
- Attract business to create more tax revenue
- Bring in business for more jobs and better schooling
- Promote rural living areas but preserve our Flint Hills
- Retail sales (gas)
- Commercial development along I-70 corridor
- Local job opportunities
- Develop and provide healthcare (access to healthcare) in the county
- Bridge maintenance
- Job opportunities
- More involvement from all communities not the same group
- More chamber of commerces and active chambers pushing business
- Inclusivity and inviting to new residents
- Communication between towns
- Working together to achieve goals
- Marketing and telling county story
- Better support of local businesses
- Welcome growth
- More youth involvement in the community
- No follow through
- Capitalize on existing resources
- Intentionally planned public spaces
- Welcome people, visit with them more, be friendly
- Utilize scenic by-ways more
- Formal communication
- High speed internet
- Attract younger people
- County road
- Housing opportunities
- More local in town employment
- Internet

- Transparency of government
- Stronger youth recreation programs
- Business development county wide
- Zoning that supports small parcel land ownership
- Family housing

### *Weaknesses Summary*

- Government responsiveness
- Population
- Roads, bridges
- Business, jobs growth, marketing
- Retail sales
- Community involvement, communication
- Internet
- Attract young people
- Housing
- Recreation
- Zoning
- Capitalize on existing resources

## Opportunities

- Low crime
- Rural living
- Senior housing
- Small town living but close to larger municipalities
- Hotels
- More businesses and bigger businesses
- Young family activities
- I-70 business development
- Manufacturing plant
- Business growth
- Grocery store
- Doctor
- Attract tourism for the Flint Hills
- Large land mass
- Exercise facilities
- Access to highway infrastructure
- Potential for population growth in many areas
- Areas of Wabaunsee County close to Topeka, Manhattan, Wamego, Emporia to attract business for employment opportunities.
- Native Stone scenic byways
- Lake Wabaunsee
- Mount Mitchell
- Rural way of life
- Outdoor recreation
- Natural beauty
- Fall tours
- Skyline Scenic Byway
- Santa Fe and Oregon Trail go through county
- County Historical Society
- Agritourism
- Conserve economic way of life (ranching)
- Quarries
- Military retirement location
- Housing for regional jobs
- Tourism
- Land for more housing
- Population growth
- (I- 70)

- Recreation
- Relaxed lifestyle
- Located close to employment centers
- Easy access to travel through county

### *Opportunities Summary*

- Low crime
- Rural living, way of life
- Proximity to major cities
- More business growth
- Family activities
- Recreation
- Population growth
- History, agritourism
- Land for housing
- Healthcare, grocery stores



## Obstacles

- Inability to visualize opportunities
- Reluctance to change
- No restaurants or places to stay
- We are mostly a drive through county. Tough for businesses to survive.
- Lack of direction from the leadership to go out and find new opportunities
- Opposition to population growth in some areas
- Poor internet service
- It will take investments and risk-taking. May require tax or financial incentives.
- Established businesses/larger cities are too close.
- Access to sewer, water, gas, internet, phone
- Low population, leading to small tax base and over-taxation.
- Old boys' club.
- Resistance to commercial growth
- Developing business while still keeping small town appeal
- Residents don't like change
- Access to healthcare
- If there is conflict between large landowners and residential development, then work to overcome that
- Lack of sufficient local medical and grocery facilities
- Get funding help
- Attracting younger people
- Need coordination of helpers from the community
- People are busy and don't participate in the community
- Need to start on small projects and issues
- Apathy - this is the way it's always been
- How to reach the public
- How to develop, grow and stay local in the economy
- Geographic fragmentation
- Distance to schools
- Limited law enforcement capacity
- Failure to retain youth
- A lot of remote areas

- Broadband connectivity
- Local employment opportunities
- Main Street vitality
- Limited housing stock
- Low population
- Low incentive for business development
- Fear of change

### *Obstacles Summary*

- Fear and reluctance to change
- No hotels, restaurants
- Inability to visualize opportunities
- Lack of leadership
- Poor internet
- Dollars
- Access to sewer, water, gas, internet, phone, healthcare
- Low population, especially younger population
- Apathy
- Communication difficult
- Geographically isolated, remote
- Limited law enforcement
- Low incentive for business development

## Future

- Unlimited but up to residents
  - Medical clinic, viable grocery store, better internet
  - Promote large families
  - Promote greater cooperation between neighbors
  - Lower taxes
  - Bedroom community for Topeka
  - Think it will stay about the same, but business growth would be great
  - Some small business growth, not chain stores, so we can maintain our small town appeal with some big town benefits
  - Stop funding contraception
  - Healthcare
  - Internet and cell service that works throughout the county
  - Grocery store
  - Coming together as a whole county
- 
- Quality cell phone reception
  - Historic preservation of stone buildings
  - Protection of ancient Flint Hills
  - Housing opportunities for NBAF
  - Commercial growth for I-70 corridor
  - Fastest internet
  - Gold star example of historic buildings in use as productive businesses
  - Additional animal research area for KSU and government
  - Population growth
  - State of the art retirement community
  - Develop the Highway 99 and I-70 corridor
  - Preserve small town living
  - Increase employment opportunities- attract new business
  - Protect the valuable ag assets
  - Cultural opportunities with the historical society
  - Northwest will grow Manhattan and Wamego
  - Alma will always have life as county seat and near I-70

- Smaller communities with unique assets
- Vital not dying local commerce
- The top counties to visit in Kansas
- Communities working together not independently
- Population increase primarily near Manhattan, Topeka
- Respect for agriculture

### *Future Summary*

- Healthcare
- Lower taxes
- Business growth
- Internet
- Population growth
- Retirement community
- Develop I-70, Highway 99 corridors
- Preserve small town living
- Historic preservation
- Connected communities
- Preservation of Ag

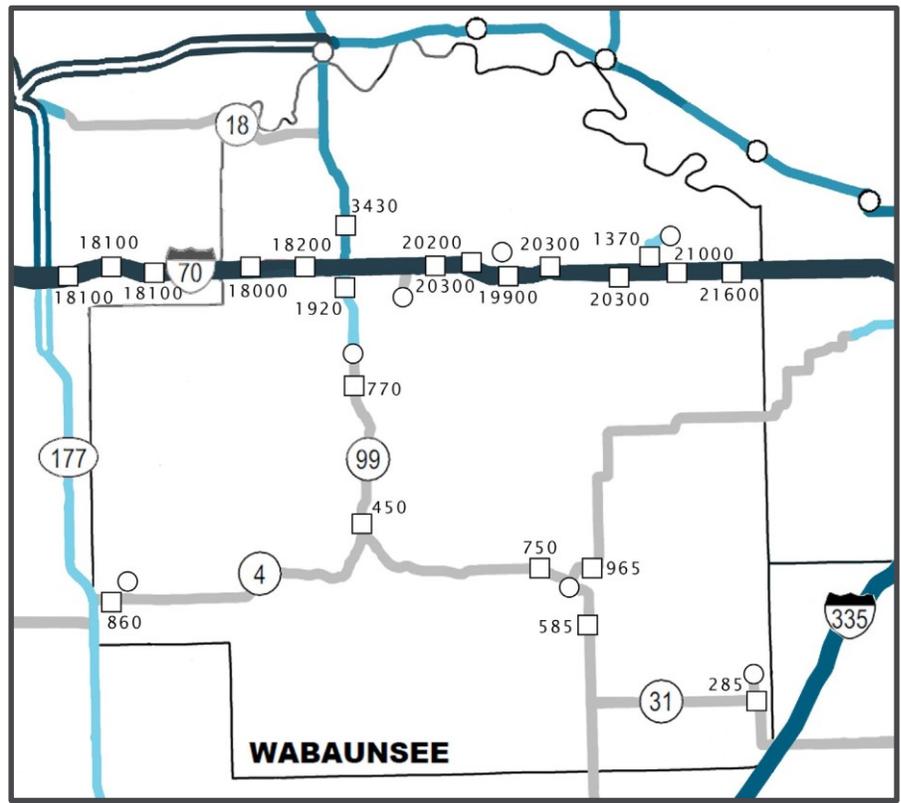
## SWOT Results Summary

**Overall, participants of the first open house had a lot to offer for the SWOT activity. They identified common themes of Wabaunsee County having beautiful landscapes and an abundance of cultural and natural resources, but lacking in political and economic opportunities. Alma, the county seat of Wabaunsee County, and locations along Interstate 70 and Kansas Highway 99 have some opportunities for businesses, but there is concern that the communities in Wabaunsee County will compete for resources and population.**

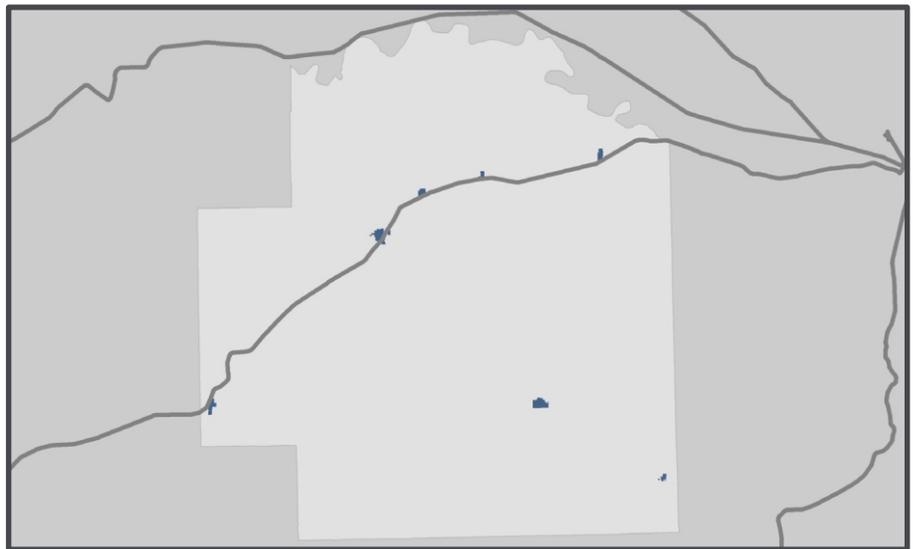


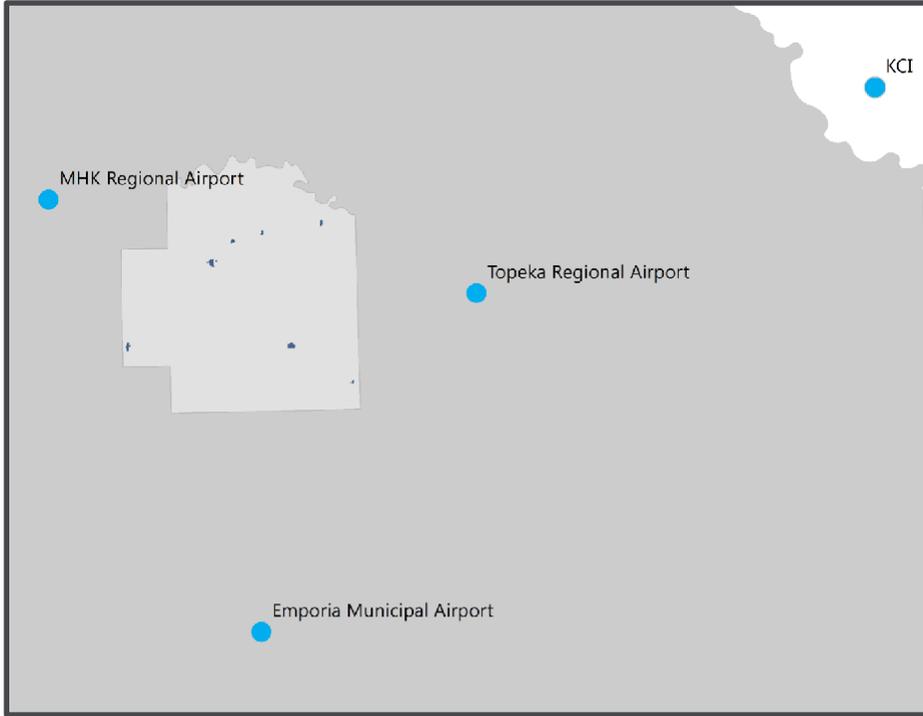
# GRAPHICS & MAPS

Traffic counts of highways that go through Wabaunsee County. Wabaunsee County's highways serve 37,305 vehicles per day.  
Source: Kansas Dept. of Transportation

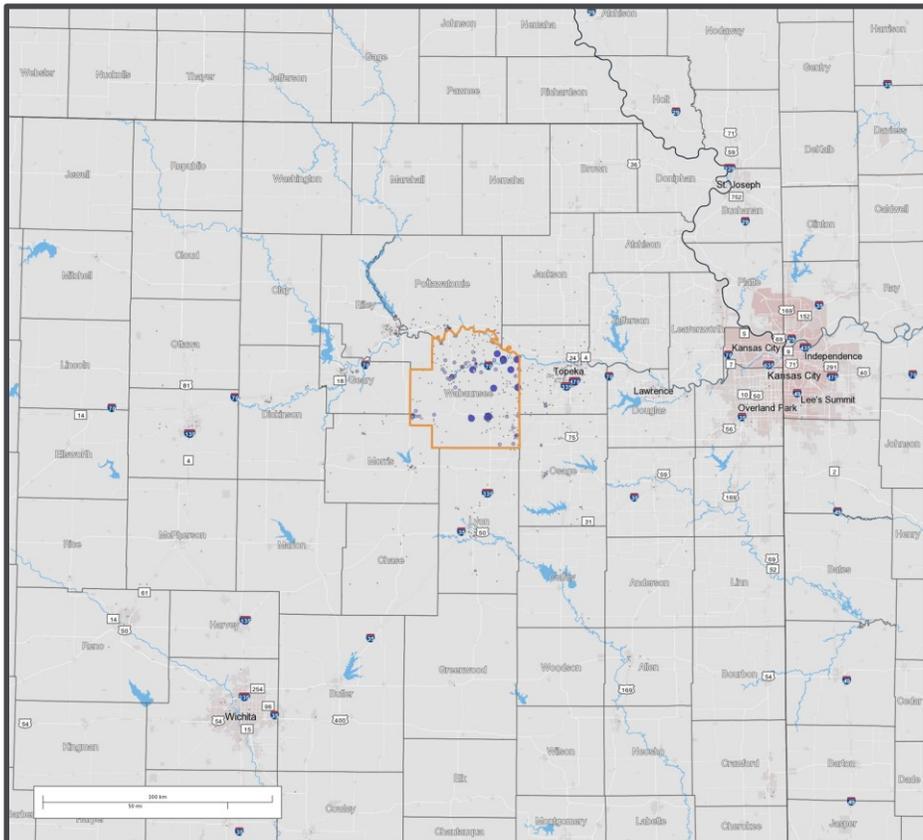


Railway Lines Surrounding Wabaunsee County. Source: American Community Survey

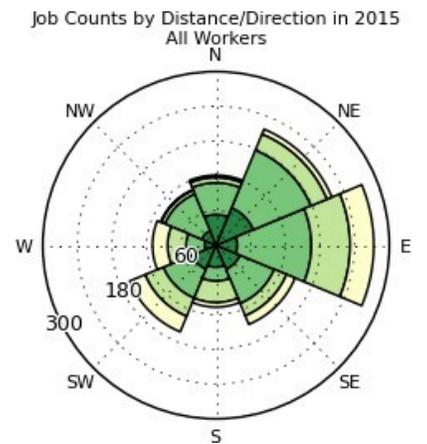




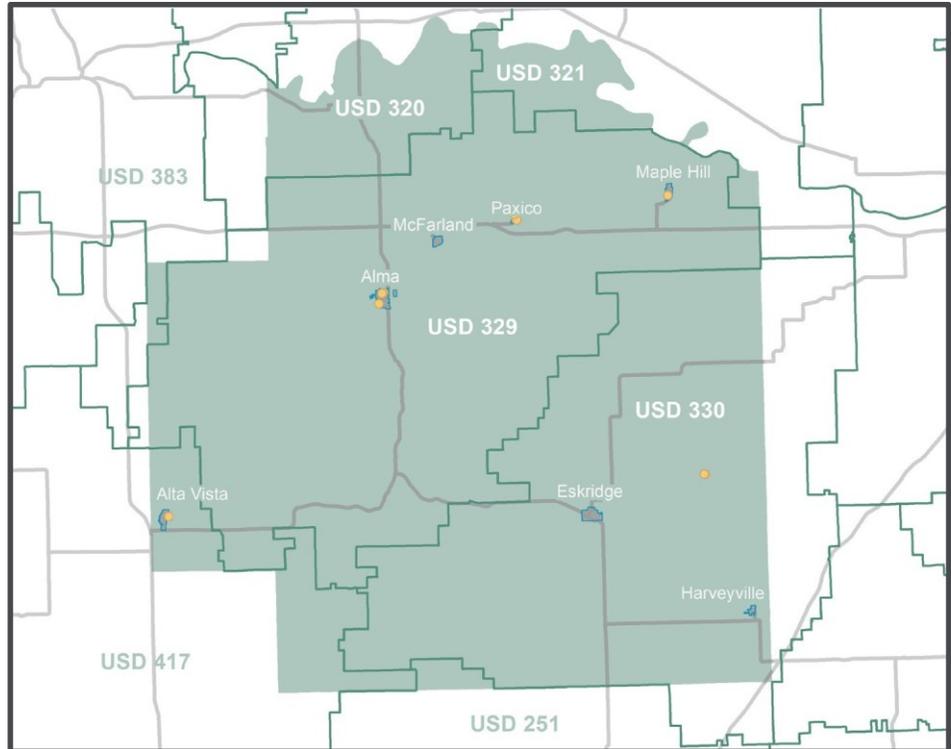
Airports near Wabaunsee County. Source: American Community Survey



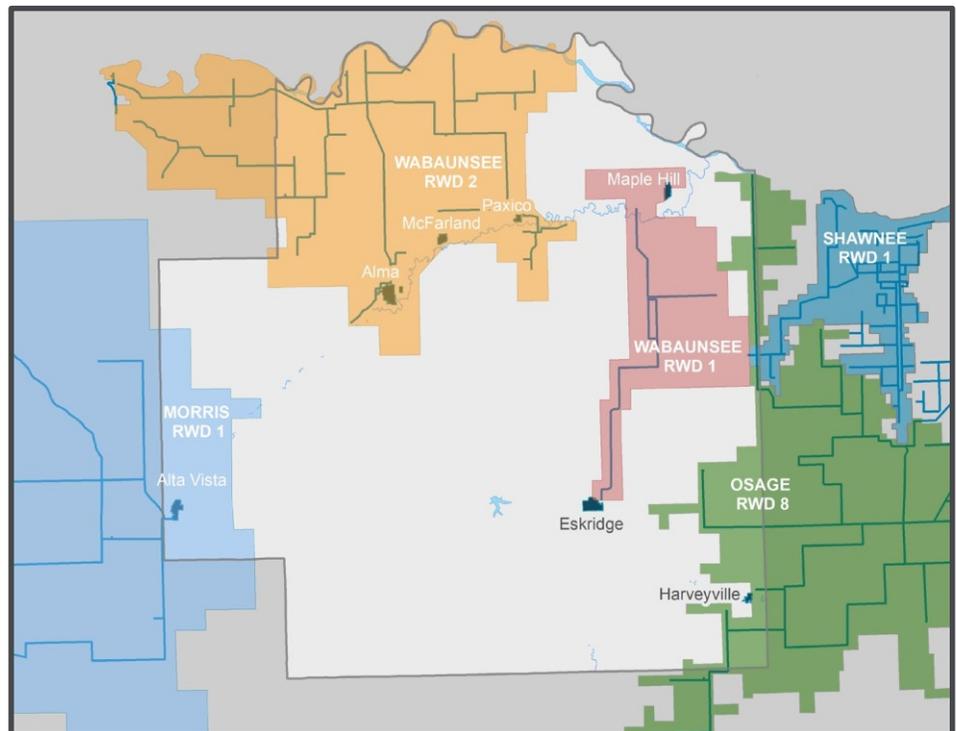
Where residents of Wabaunsee County work. The majority commute to the east and northeast. Source: American Community Survey



*School districts that serve Wabaunsee County.*

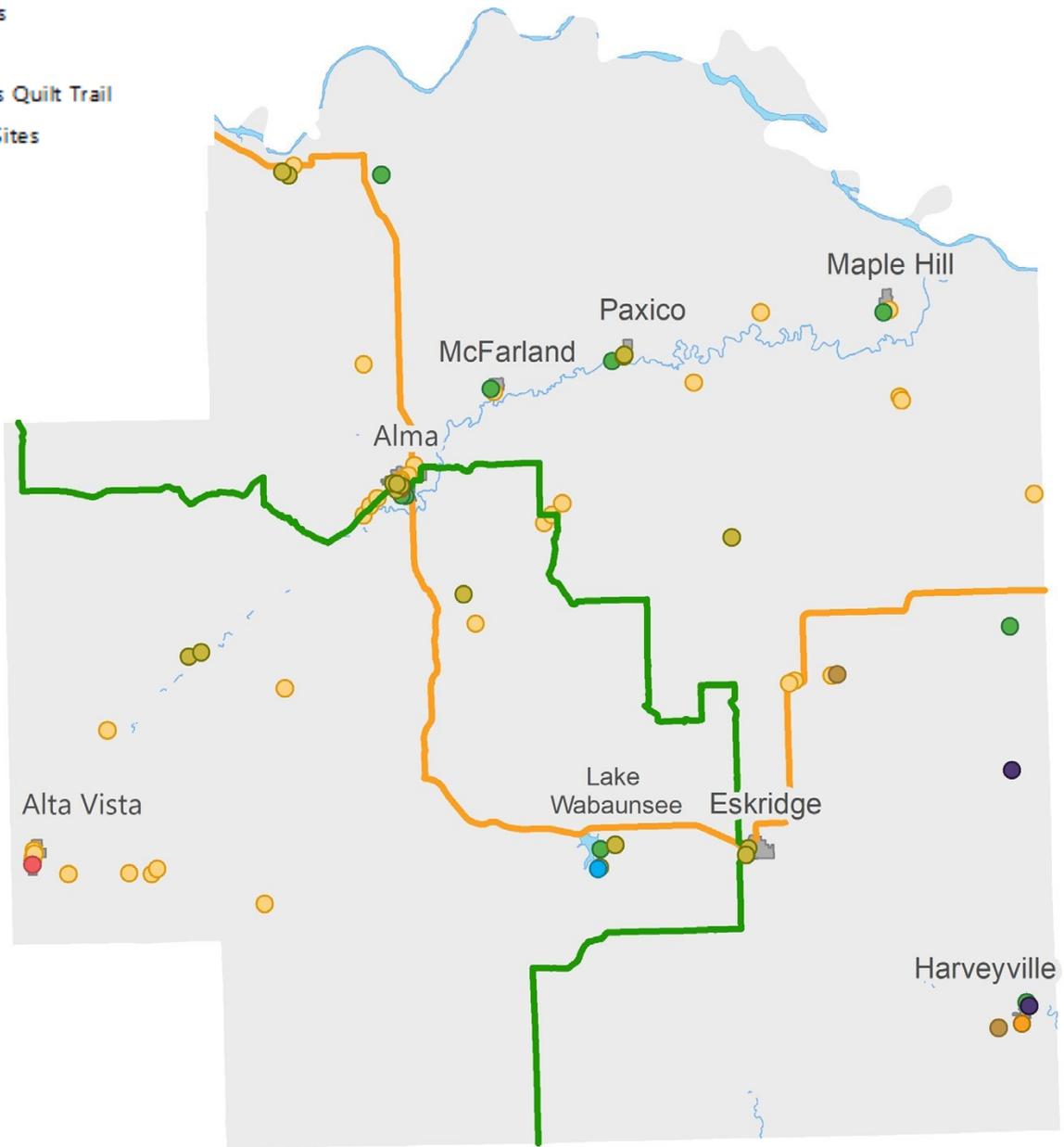


*Rural water districts that serve Wabaunsee County.*



# CULTURAL ASSETS of Wabaunsee County

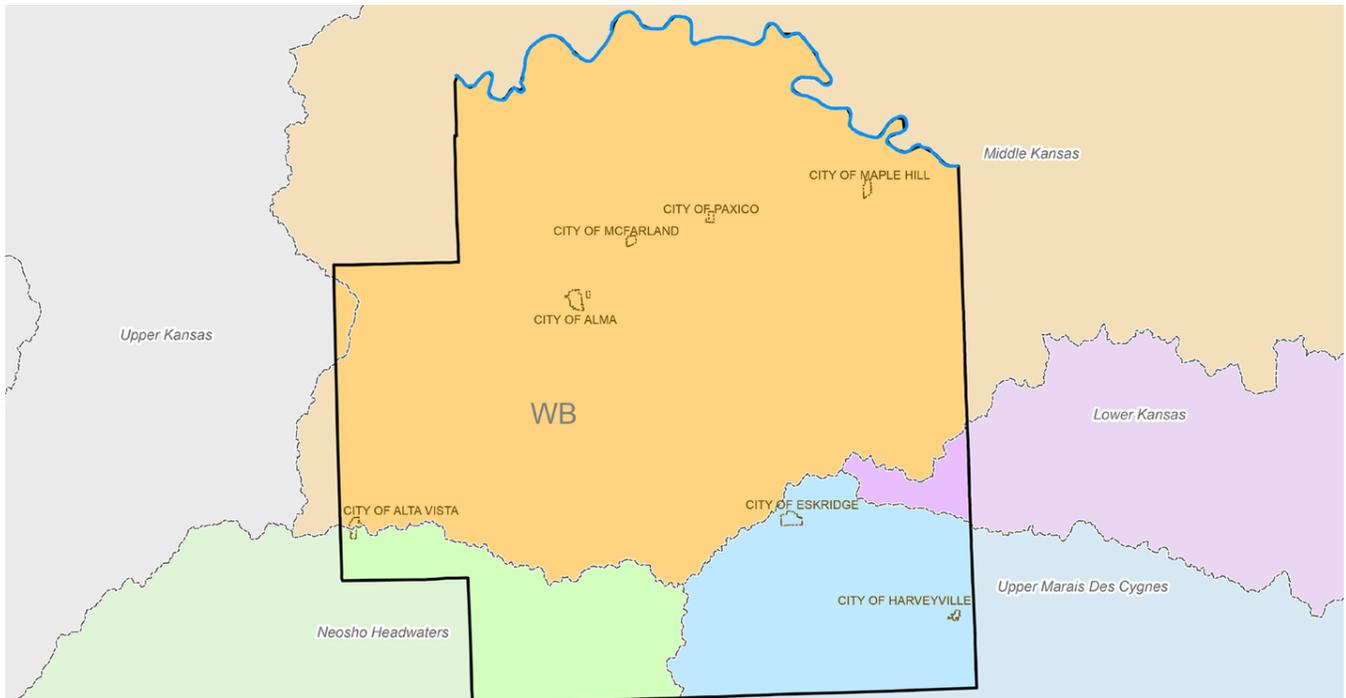
- Trails
- Native Stone Scenic Byway
- Parks
- Golf Courses
- Hunting
- Agritourism & Nature Reserves
- Museums
- Cultural
- Flint Hills Quilt Trail
- Historic Sites





*Map of Wabaunsee County, its communities, and the highways and waterways in the county.*

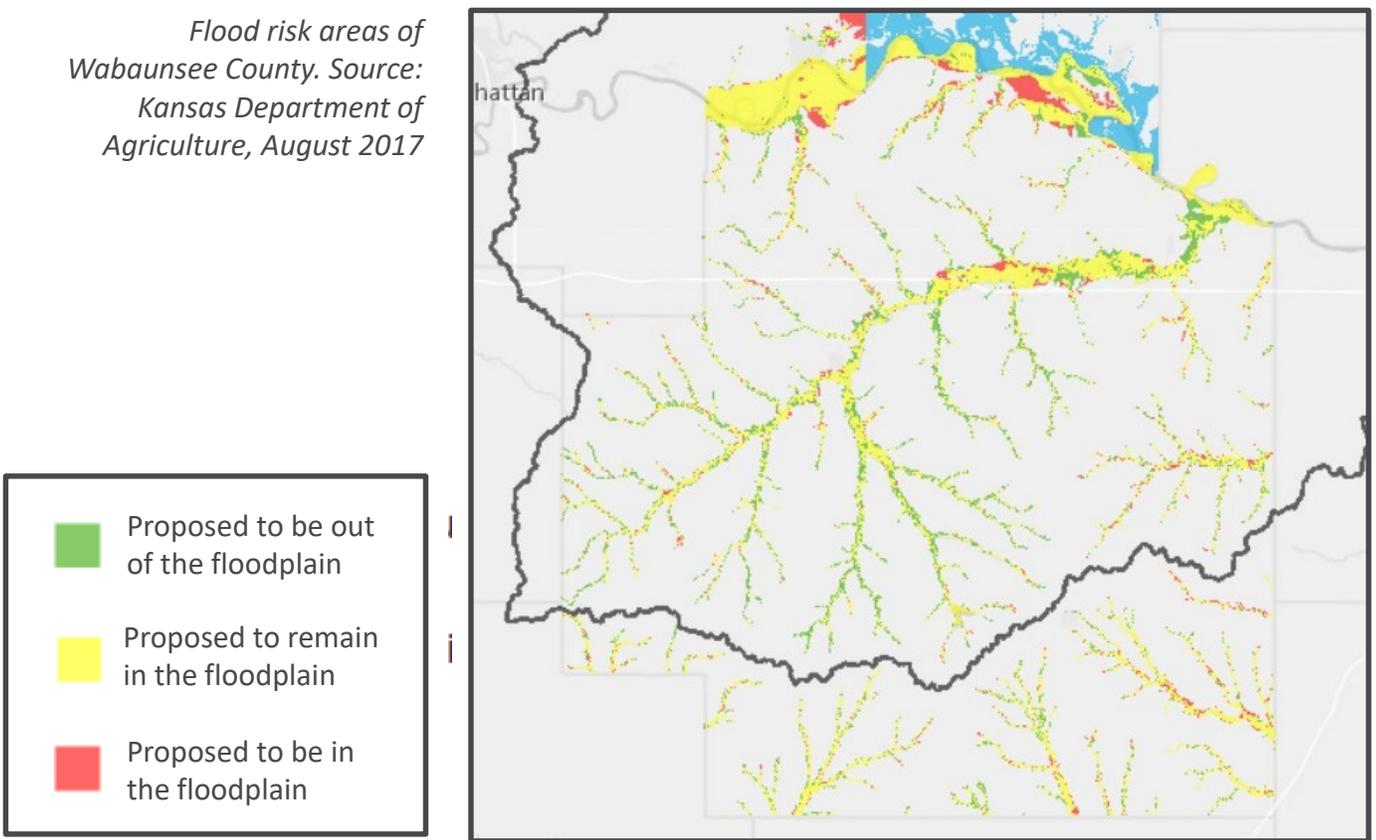
## FLOODPLAINS AND FLOODING

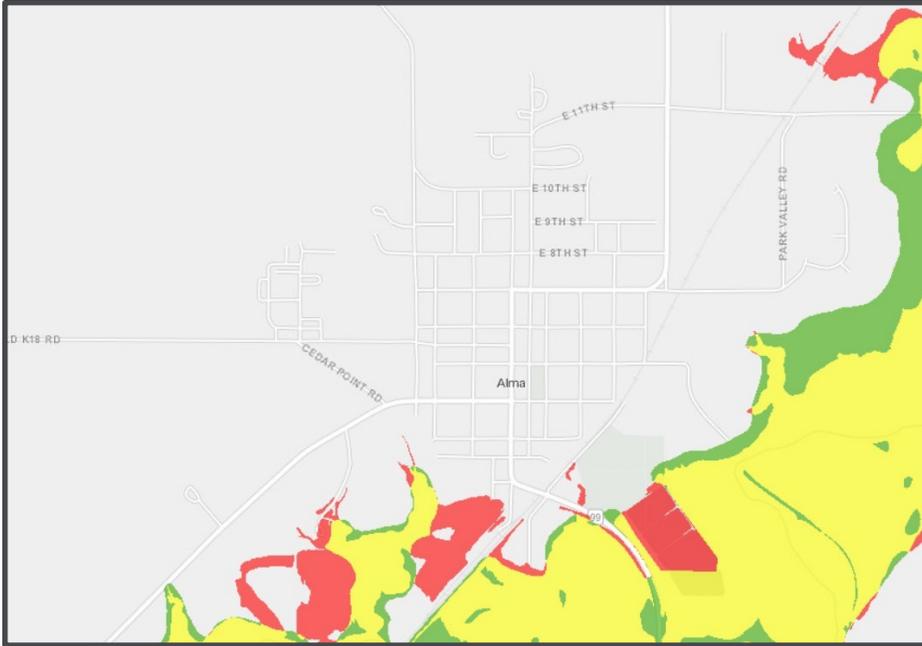


Watersheds of Wabaunsee County. Source: Kansas Department of Agriculture

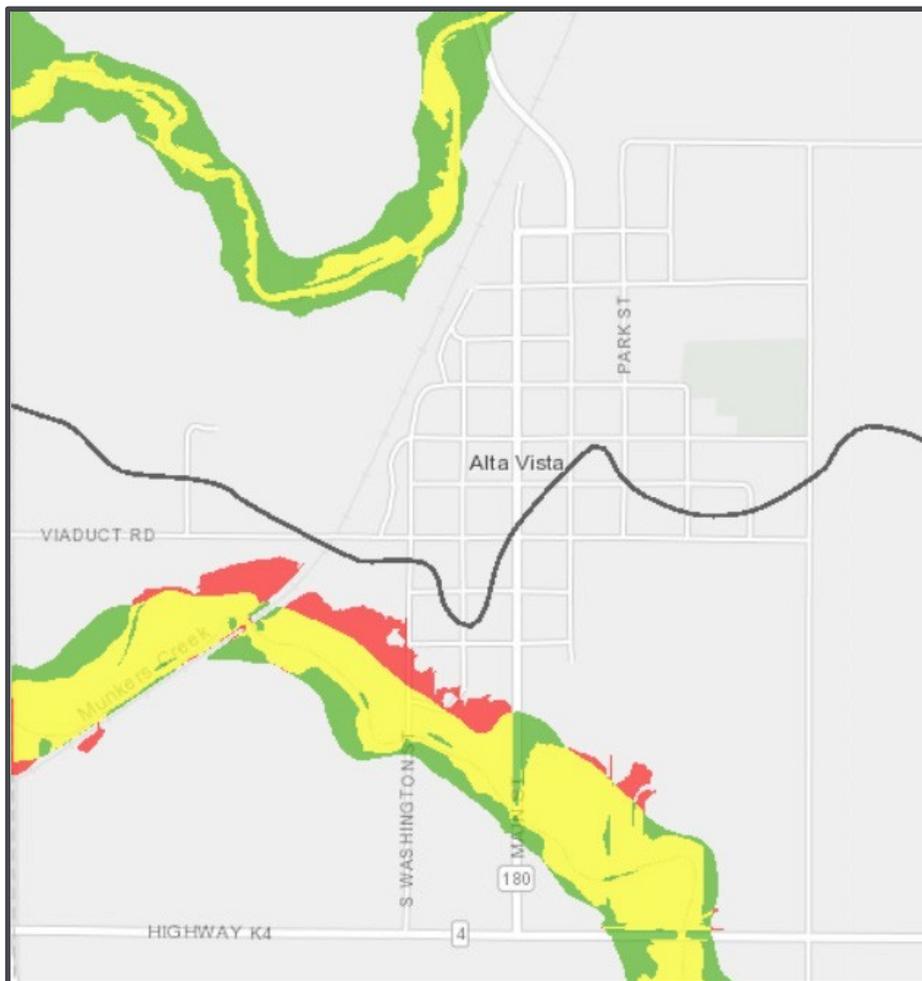
## KANSAS DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE FLOOD RISK AREAS

Flood risk areas of Wabaunsee County. Source: Kansas Department of Agriculture, August 2017



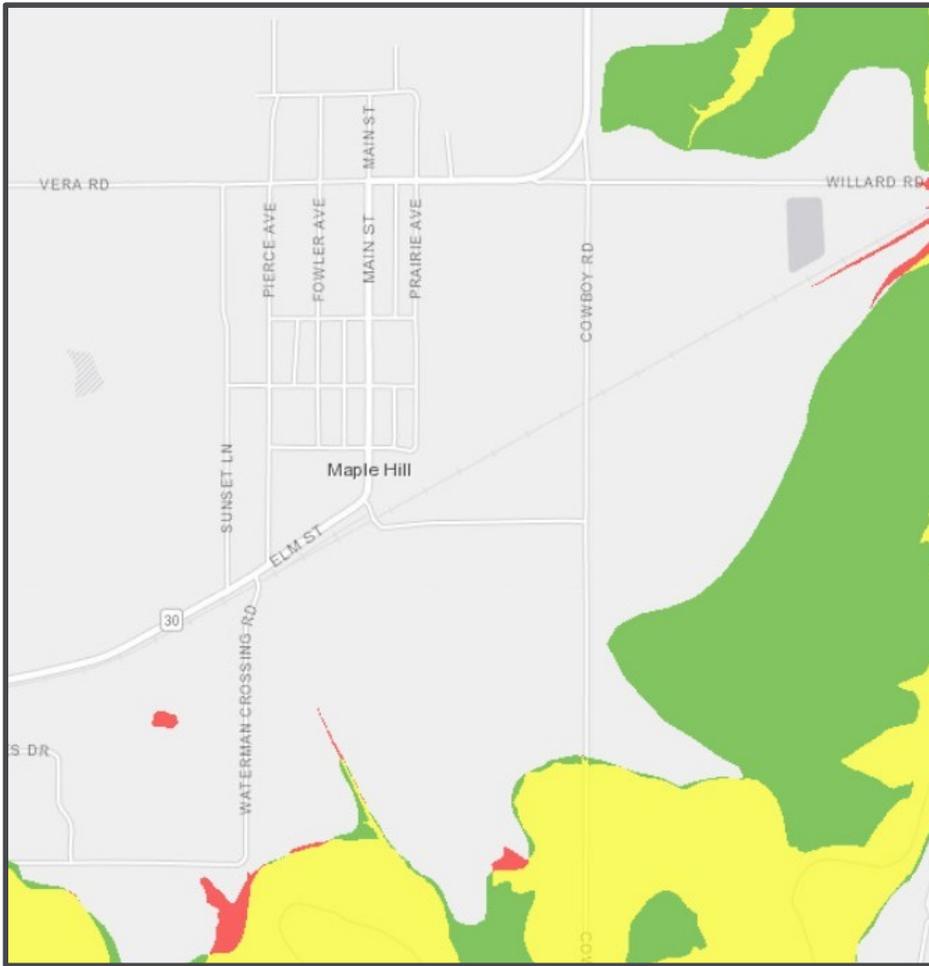


*Flood risk areas of Alma.  
Source: Kansas  
Department of  
Agriculture, August 2017*



*Flood risk areas of Alta  
Vista. Source: Kansas  
Department of Agriculture,  
August 2017*

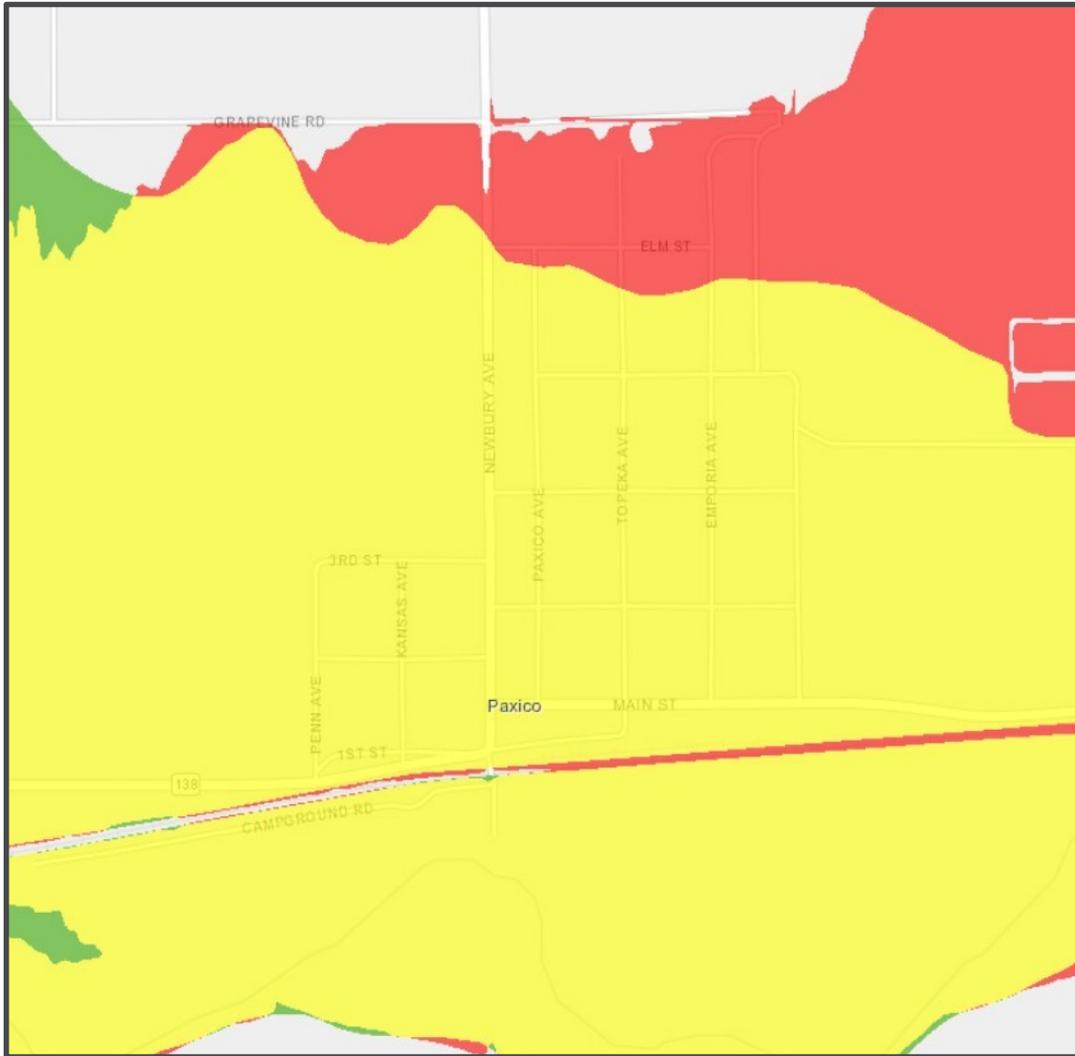




*Flood risk areas of Maple Hill. Source: Kansas Department of Agriculture, August 2017*

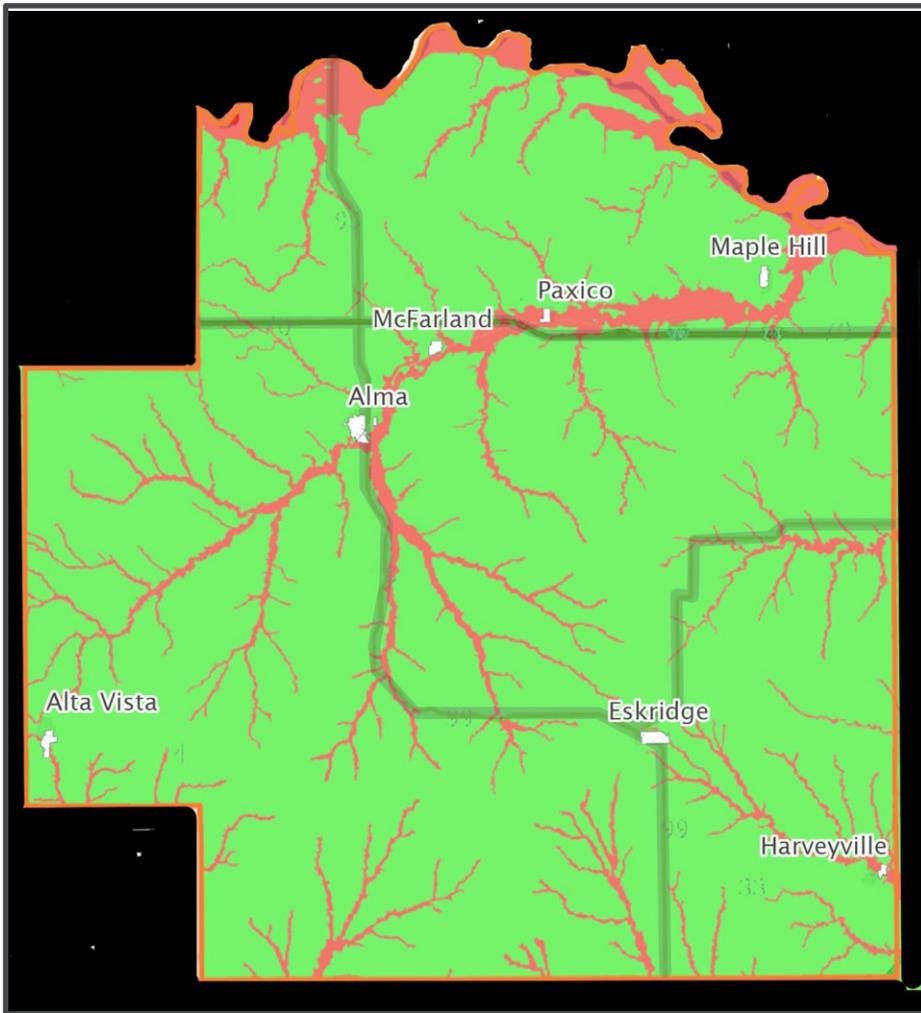


*Flood risk areas of McFarland. Source: Kansas Department of Agriculture, August 2017*

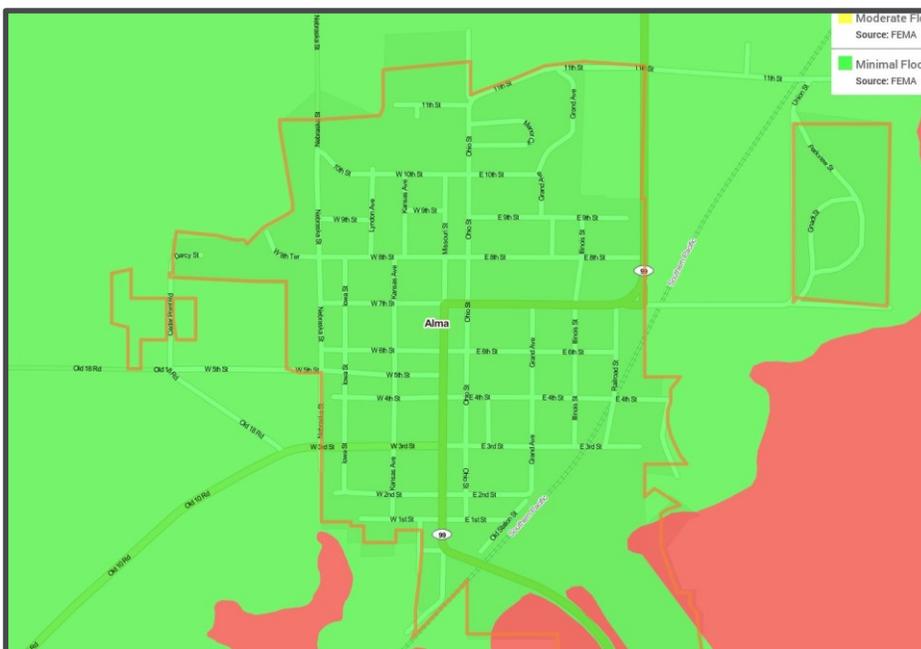
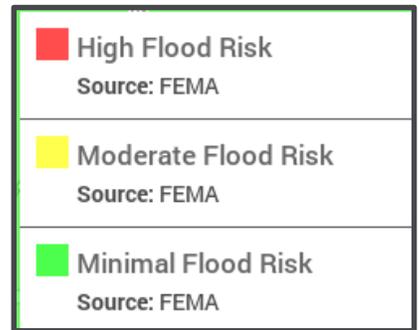


*Flood risk areas of Paxico. Source: Kansas Department of Agriculture, August 2017. Proposed changes flood risk areas can be viewed online at : [http://gis2.kda.ks.gov/gis/middle\\_ks/](http://gis2.kda.ks.gov/gis/middle_ks/)*

# FEMA FLOOD RISK AREAS

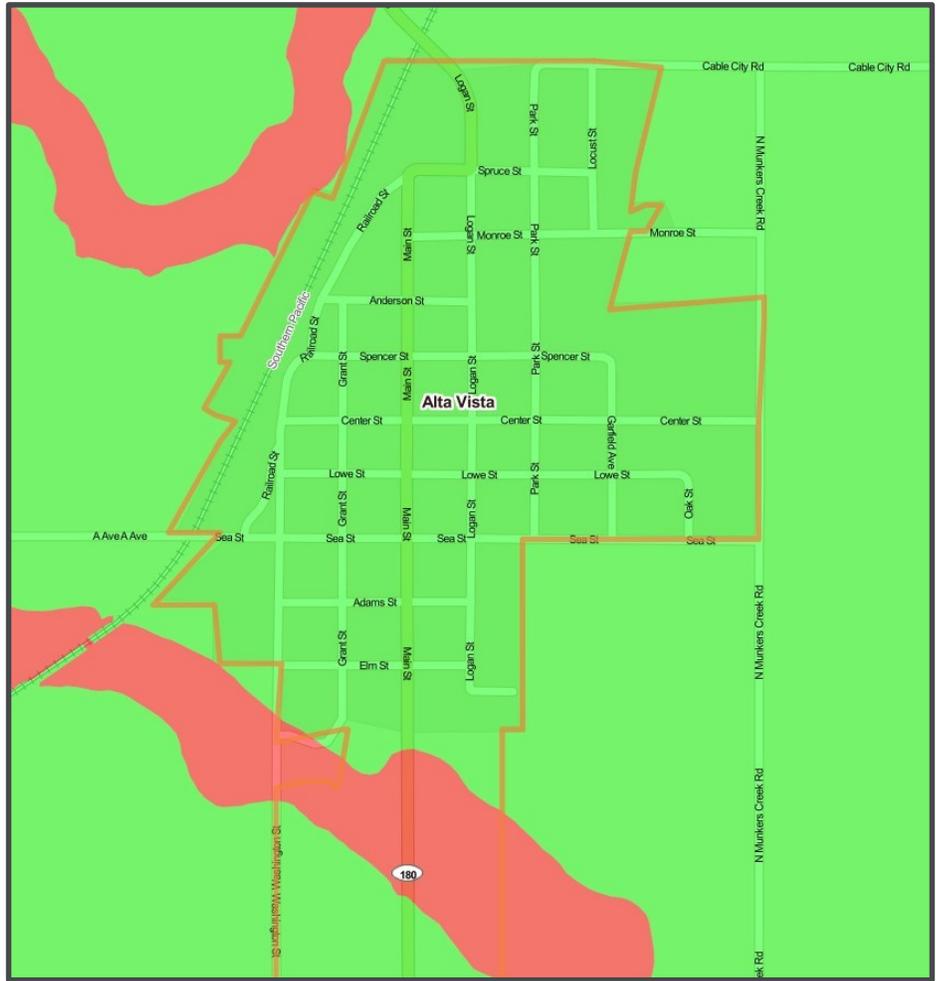


Flood risk areas of Wabaunsee County. Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency, April 2018

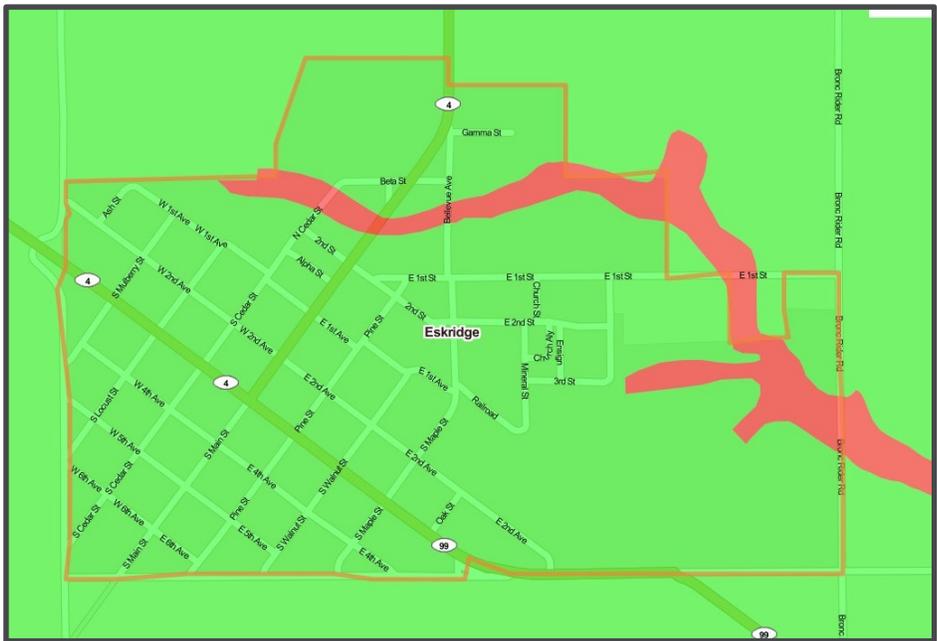


Flood risk areas of Alma. Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency, April 2018

Flood risk areas of Alta Vista. Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency, April 2018

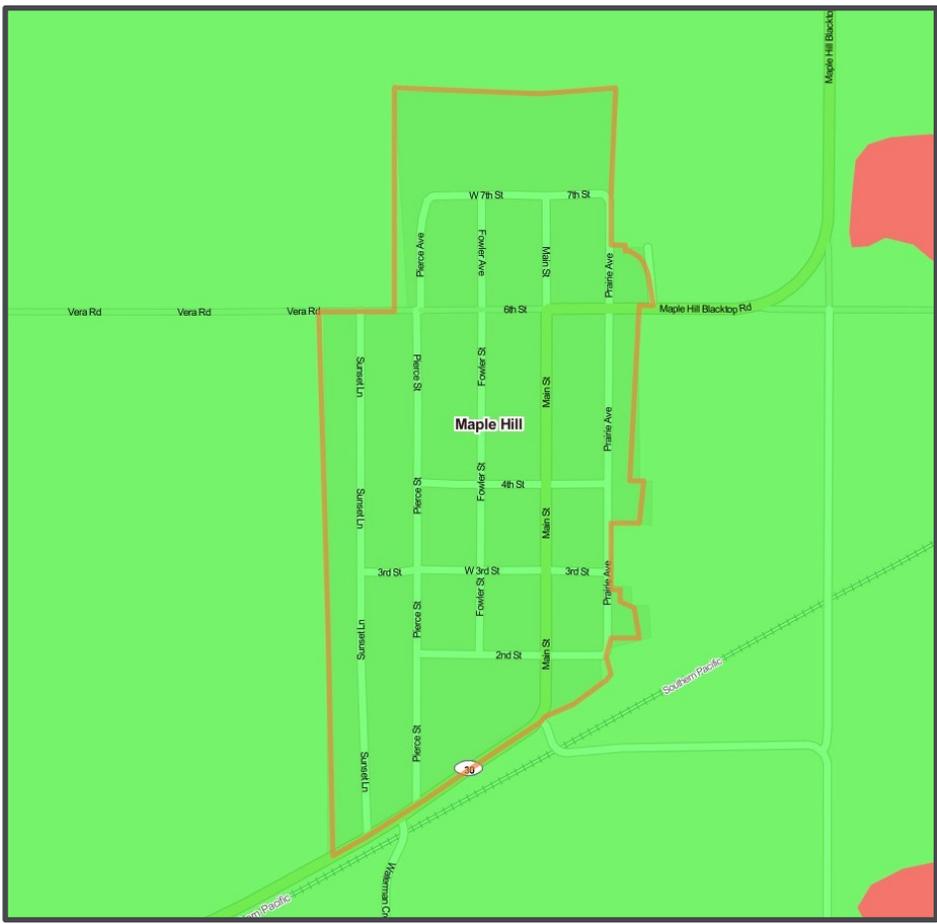


Flood risk areas of Eskridge. Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency, April 2018





Flood risk areas of Harveyville. Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency, April 2018

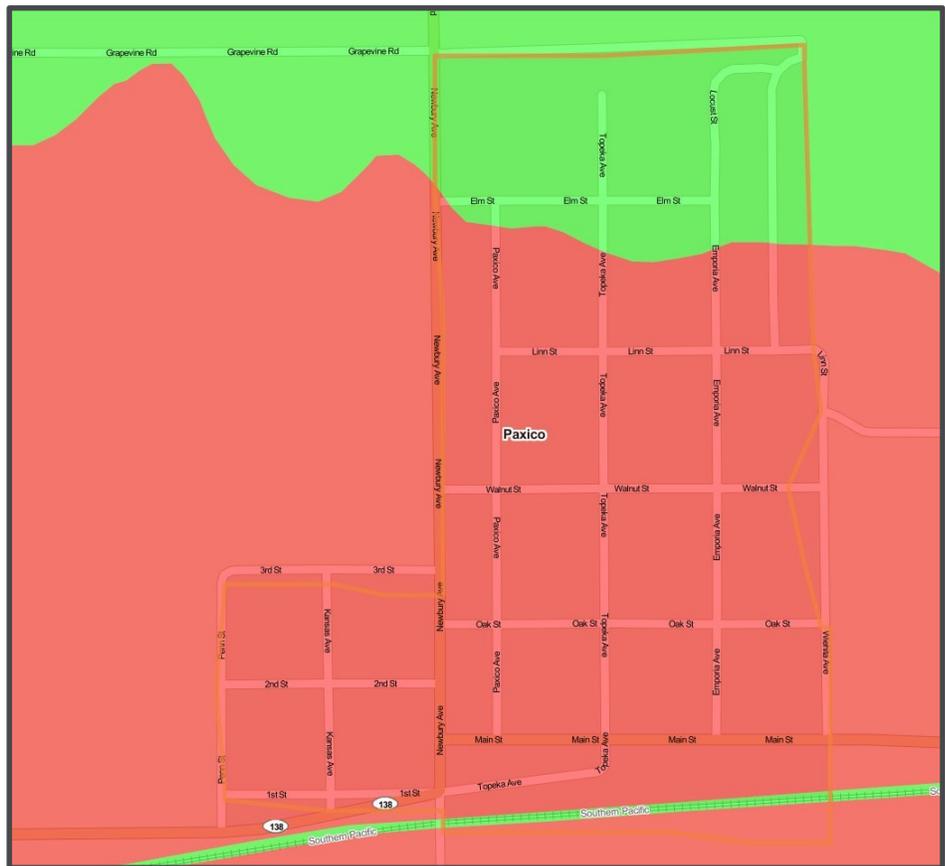


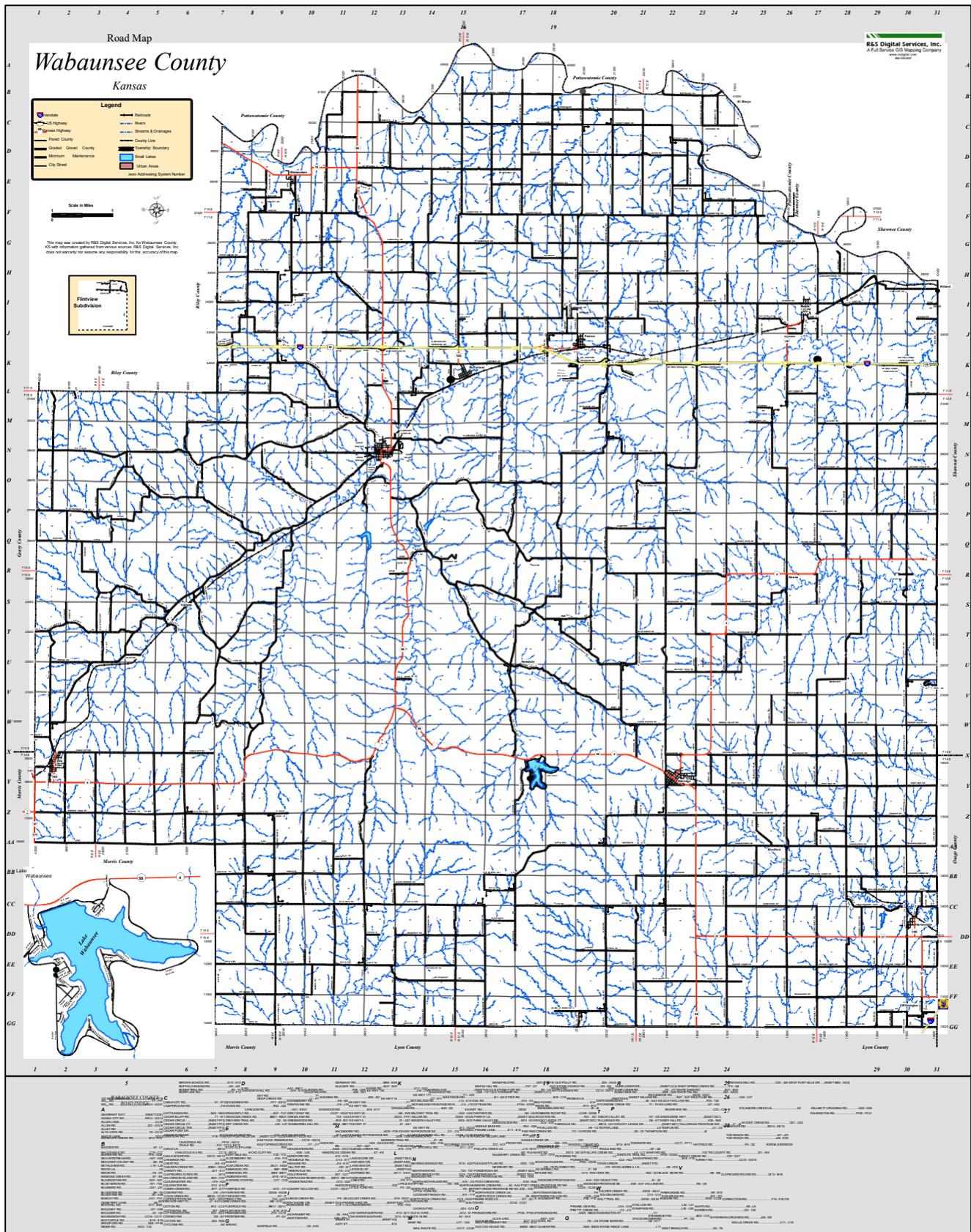
Flood risk areas of Maple Hill. Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency, April 2018

Flood risk areas of McFarland. Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency, April 2018



Flood risk areas of Paxico. Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency, April 2018





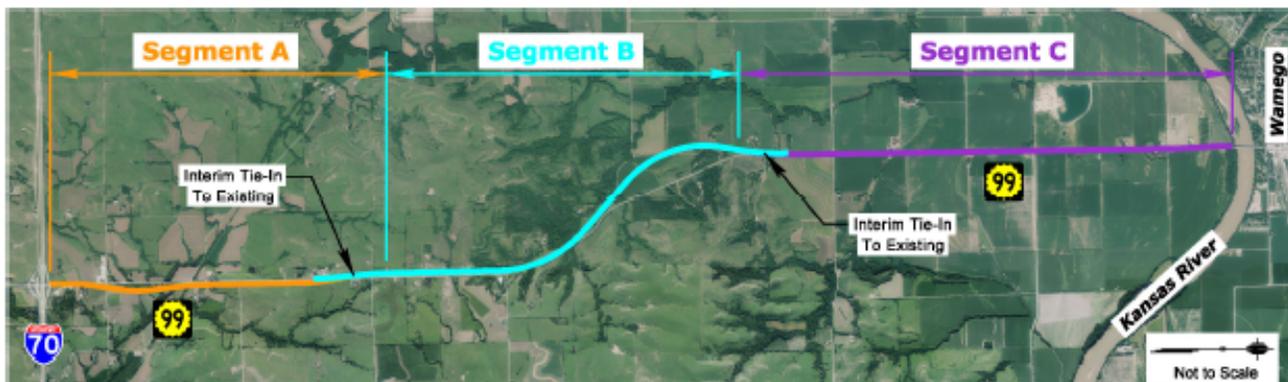
# K-99 Corridor Improvement Project



**Public Open House:**  
May 3, 2016; 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm  
Wamego Area Senior Citizens Center  
501 Ash Street, Wamego, KS 66547

## Welcome

The purpose of today's Public Open House is to provide you the opportunity to review proposed changes to the K-99 Corridor. Kansas Department of Transportation staff is on hand to explain the proposed improvements, answer your questions and take your comments. Feel free to look at all of the displays and talk to the KDOT staff.



## Project Overview

The K-99 Corridor Improvement Project comprises K-99 from the I-70 interchange to just south of the Kansas River bridge in Wabaunsee County. The existing roadway consists of 2 12-foot lanes with 2-foot shoulders, steep side slopes, and horizontal and vertical curves that do not meet current design criteria. The goal of the K-99 project is to improve increasing traffic and safety concerns by providing wider shoulders, flatter side slopes, and increased stopping and passing sight distances. The roadway improvements will be on an offset alignment and provide 2 12-foot lanes with 10-foot paved shoulders.

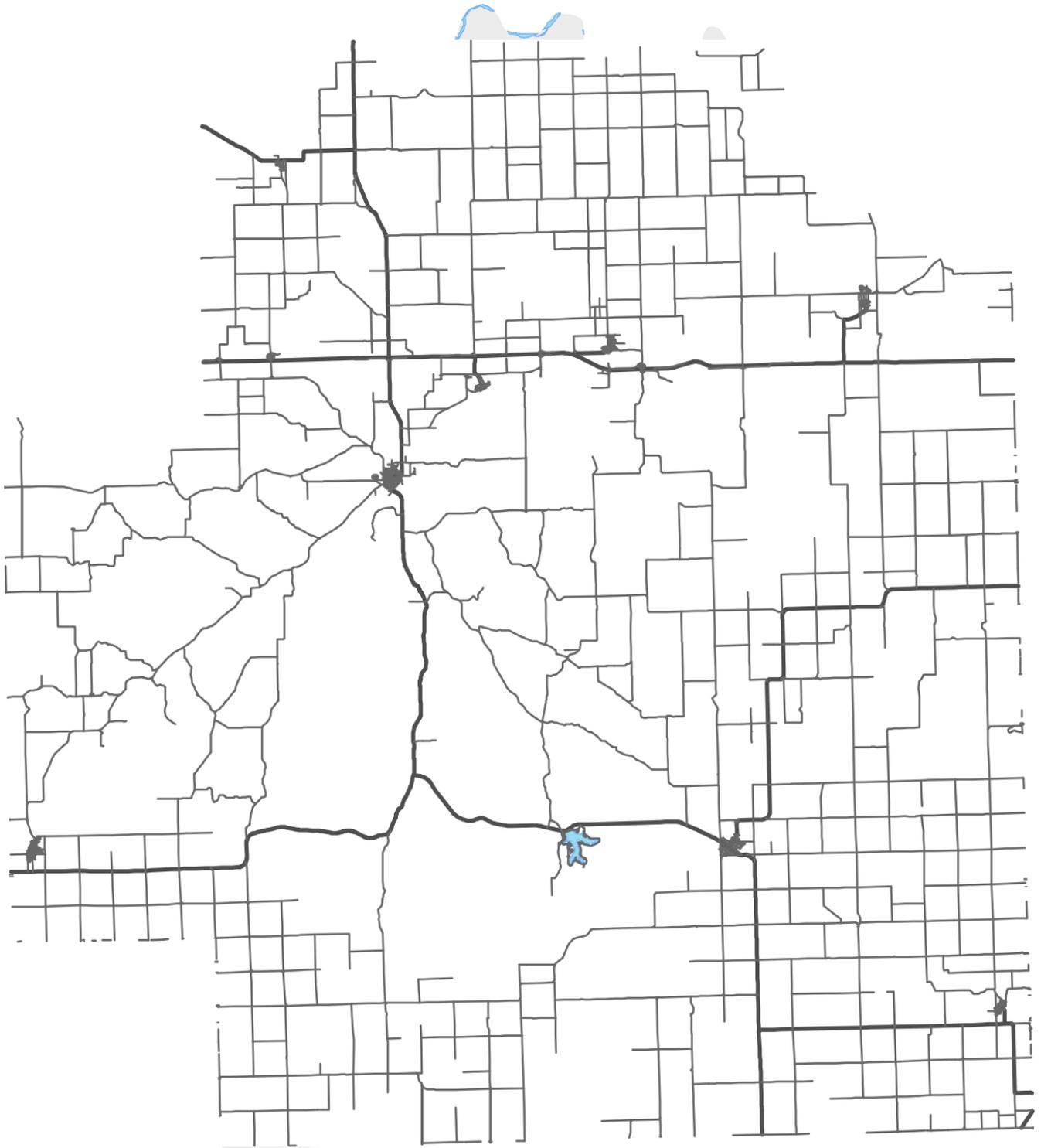
The corridor is broken into three segments. Segment A extends from the K-99 and I-70 interchange north 2.4 miles to just south of Hereford Road. Segment B begins just south of Hereford Road and extends 3.9 miles north approximately 1/3-mile south of the K-99 and K-18 intersection. Segment C will tie into Segment B approximately 3/4-miles south of the K-99 and K-18 intersection and extend north approximately 3.7 miles to the south end of the Kansas River Bridge.

Based on crash data and input from local officials and KDOT staff, the segments have been prioritized to address the areas with the greatest safety concerns.

- Priority #1 ▶ Segment B
- Priority #2 ▶ Segment A
- Priority #3 ▶ Segment C



KDOT Project No. 99-99 KA-2603-02



*Roads & streets in Wabaunsee County.  
Source: Kansas Geographic Information Systems.*



# RESOURCES



# INDUSTRIAL CLUSTER DATA

## Executive Summary

- Your highest ranked cluster is **Nonmetal Mining**, with a score of 98 (out of 100) points.
- Your average cluster score is 58 (out of 100) points. This is *not* a benchmark against other regions; it only compares the relative performance of your clusters to each other. Clusters ranked higher than 58 are above average for your region, while clusters ranked lower than 58 are below average.
- Top clusters must have a score of at least 72, while bottom clusters must have a score of 45 or less. These thresholds are determined by applying the average deviation (plus or minus 14) to the average cluster score 58.

■ 4 Top Clusters  
 ■ 15 Average Clusters  
 ■ 1 Bottom Clusters



## Cluster Rankings

### ↗ Nonmetal Mining

98

You have 1 industry in this cluster:

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
212311	Dimension Stone Mining and Quarrying	39	98

### ⚙ Transportation and Logistics

86

You have 1 industry in this cluster:

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
482110	Rail transportation	26	86

### 🛠 Agricultural Inputs and Services

84

You have 2 industries in this cluster:

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
112000	Animal Production	41	100
115115	Farm Labor Contractors and Crew Leaders	20	50

## Local Education and Training

74

You have 1 industry in this cluster:

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
903611	Elementary and Secondary Schools (Local Government)	241	74

## Local Financial Services

70

You have 1 industry in this cluster:

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
522110	Commercial Banking	52	70

## Local Real Estate, Construction, and Development

64

You have 8 industries in this cluster:

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
236115	New Single-Family Housing Construction (except For-Sale Builders)	20	53
236118	Residential Remodelers	10	62
236220	Commercial and Institutional Building Construction	27	61
238140	Masonry Contractors	17	56
238340	Tile and Terrazzo Contractors	14	68
238350	Finish Carpentry Contractors	12	51
238910	Site Preparation Contractors	39	83
332322	Sheet Metal Work Manufacturing	30	59

## State Government Services

64

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
902999	State Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	28	64

## Livestock Processing

63

You have 1 industry in this cluster:

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
311612	Meat Processed from Carcasses	21	63

## Local Motor Vehicle Products and Services

56

You have 2 industries in this cluster:

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
447110	Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores	41	56
811111	General Automotive Repair	15	56

## Local Hospitality Establishments

54

You have 1 industry in this cluster:

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
722511	Full-Service Restaurants	34	54

## Federal Government Services

53

You have 2 industries in this cluster:

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
901149	US Postal Service	13	57
901200	Federal Government, Military	26	51

## Local Personal Services (Non-Medical)

52

You have 1 industry in this cluster:

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
624410	Child Day Care Services	24	52

## Local Government Services

51

You have 1 industry in this cluster:

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
903999	Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	178	51

## Local Health Services

51

You have 1 industry in this cluster:

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
623110	Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	84	51

## Food Processing and Manufacturing

48

You have 1 industry in this cluster:

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
311421	Fruit and Vegetable Canning	40	48

## Local Food and Beverage Processing and Distribution

47

You have 1 industry in this cluster:

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
445110	Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores	14	47

## Local Community and Civic Organizations

46

You have 1 industry in this cluster:

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
813110	Religious Organizations	37	46

## Local Household Goods and Services

46

You have 1 industry in this cluster:

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
561730	Landscaping Services	22	46

## Education and Knowledge Creation

45

You have 1 industry in this cluster:

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
903612	Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools (Local Government)	27	45

## Local Commercial Services

13

You have 2 industries in this cluster:

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
561320	Temporary Help Services	38	1
561720	Janitorial Services	13	49

## Clusters that don't appear in Wabaunsee County

-  Automotive
-  Recreational and Small Electric Goods
-  Plastics
-  Production Technology and Heavy Machinery
-  Performing Arts
-  Oil and Gas Production and Transportation
-  Paper and Packaging
-  Textile Manufacturing
-  Music and Sound Recording
-  Construction Products and Services
-  Trailers, Motor Homes, and Appliances
-  Metalworking Technology
-  Vulcanized and Fired Materials
-  Coal Mining
-  Biopharmaceuticals
-  Business Services
-  Video Production and Distribution
-  Upstream Metal Manufacturing
-  Wood Products
-  Water Transportation
-  Communications Equipment and Services
-  Upstream Chemical Products
-  Tobacco
-  Information Technology and Analytical Instruments
-  Downstream Metal Products
-  Local Industrial Products and Services
-  Electric Power Generation and Transmission
-  Environmental Services
-  Financial Services
-  Local Entertainment and Media
-  Downstream Chemical Products
-  Distribution and Electronic Commerce
-  Local Utilities
-  Local Logistical Services
-  Local Retailing of Clothing and General Merchandise
-  Fishing and Fishing Products
-  Footwear
-  Lighting and Electrical Equipment
-  Leather and Related Products
-  Marketing, Design, and Publishing
-  Apparel
-  Medical Devices
-  Jewelry and Precious Metals
-  Insurance Services
-  Forestry
-  Furniture
-  Hospitality and Tourism
-  Aerospace Vehicles and Defense
-  Metal Mining





The clusters in this analysis are defined according to the methodology of Harvard Business School's U.S. Cluster Mapping Project. Cluster icons used with permission of the U.S. Cluster Mapping Project (<http://clustermapping.us>).

Source: U.S. Cluster Mapping (<http://clustermapping.us>), Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness, Harvard Business School. Copyright © 2014 President and Fellows of Harvard College. All rights reserved. Research funded in part by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration.

Emsi has made modifications to the Harvard clusters in order to integrate our additional data.

## Appendix A - Data Sources and Calculations

### Input-Output Data

The input-output model in this report is Emsi's gravitational flows multi-regional social account matrix model (MR-SAM). It is based on data from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and American Community Survey; as well as the Bureau of Economic Analysis' National Income and Product Accounts, Input-Output Make and Use Tables, and Gross State Product data. In addition, several Emsi in-house data sets are used, as well as data from Oak Ridge National Labs on the cost of transportation between counties.

### Industry Data

Emsi industry data have various sources depending on the class of worker. (1) For QCEW Employees, Emsi primarily uses the QCEW (Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages), with supplemental estimates from County Business Patterns. (2) Non-QCEW employees data are based on a number of sources including QCEW, Current Employment Statistics, County Business Patterns, BEA State and Local Personal Income reports, the National Industry-Occupation Employment Matrix (NIOEM), the American Community Survey, and Railroad Retirement Board statistics. (3) Self-Employed and Extended Proprietor classes of worker data are primarily based on the American Community Survey, Nonemployer Statistics, and BEA State and Local Personal Income Reports. Projections for QCEW and Non-QCEW Employees are informed by NIOEM and long-term industry projections published by individual states.

### Location Quotient

Location quotient (LQ) is a way of quantifying how concentrated a particular industry, cluster, occupation, or demographic group is in a region as compared to the nation. It can reveal what makes a particular region unique in comparison to the national average.

### Shift Share

Shift share is a standard regional analysis method that attempts to determine how much of regional job growth can be attributed to national trends and how much is due to unique regional factors.

### State Data Sources

This report uses state data from the following agencies: Kansas Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Services, Kansas Wage Survey





RESOLUTION 2019- 12

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AS  
SUBMITTED

BE IT ORDERED, by the Board of County Commissioners of  
Wabaunsee County, Kansas:

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee submitted  
the "Comprehensive Plan 2019" to the Planning Commission;

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission voted unanimously for the  
approval of the Comprehensive Plan 2019 and the plan is now before the  
Board of County Commissioners;

WHEREAS, pursuant to K.S.A. 12-747, the Board of County  
Commissioners of Wabaunsee County, Kansas, upon discussion, motion and  
a unanimous vote of the commissioners during the regular course of business  
approve the Comprehensive Plan 2019 as submitted and incorporate it by  
reference.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall be effective  
upon execution of this document.

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF  
Wabaunsee County, Kansas this 20<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2019.

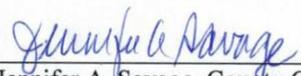
  
Jim Suber, Chairman

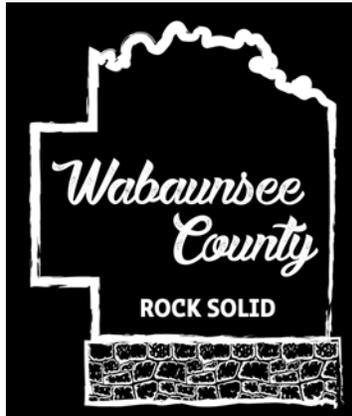
  
Joel Fager, Commissioner

  
Rodney Allen, Commissioner

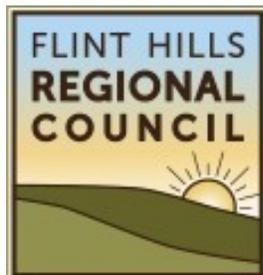
Attested by:



  
Jennifer A. Savage, County Clerk



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**Flint Hills Regional Council**

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