

# PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

March 23, 2026



Case No: CPA24-0001

Request: Consideration of a Resolution adopting the revised City of Olathe Comprehensive Plan, *Elevate Olathe*.

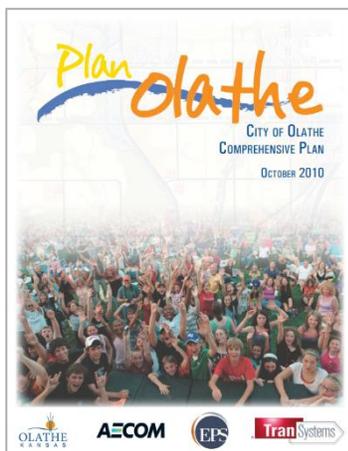
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## Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

A Comprehensive Plan is a **blueprint for the future and a shared community vision to guide Olathe over the next 15 years. It establishes policies and strategies** to direct growth and development, helping community leaders make thoughtful, informed decisions about the City's future. The Comprehensive Plan topics include land use, demographics, transportation, public facilities, economic conditions, and natural resources as required by Kansas State Statute 12-747. The plan outlines recommendations for the location and relationships among land uses and intersections with the transportation network, while furthering quality of life improvements.

The Comprehensive Plan reflects the needs and vision of the community, which was gathered through **extensive stakeholder engagement** throughout the almost 2-year process. Elevate Olathe **transforms this feedback into goals, strategies, and actionable tasks** for the City and organizational partners to bring this plan to fruition over the next 15 years.

## History of Olathe Comprehensive Plans



The current Comprehensive Plan, **PlanOlathe**, was adopted by the City Council on **October 5, 2010**, by Ordinance No.10-60. Since 2010, the Planning Commission and Governing Body have periodically updated the Comprehensive Plan through the adoption of area and corridor plans, amendments to the future land use map, and regular reviews.

**PlanOlathe was a significant shift from the previously adopted 1997 Comprehensive Plan**, which had a simplified Future Land Use map. PlanOlathe expanded the future land use categories using different types of residential housing, focusing on major employment areas, created additional commercial districts and urban mixed-use centers, and focused on greenways throughout the city. The land use patterns within **PlanOlathe also encouraged**

**the creation of five unique districts throughout the city**, which were further refined through adopted studies and design guidelines.

## PlanOlathe Implementation Successes

Throughout the last decade, the **city and community partners have accomplished significant projects, policy updates, and improvements** in furthering quality development and advancing a high quality of life. Key guiding frameworks were adopted, including the Transportation, Parks and Historic Preservation Master Plans, and updates to the Unified Development Ordinance,

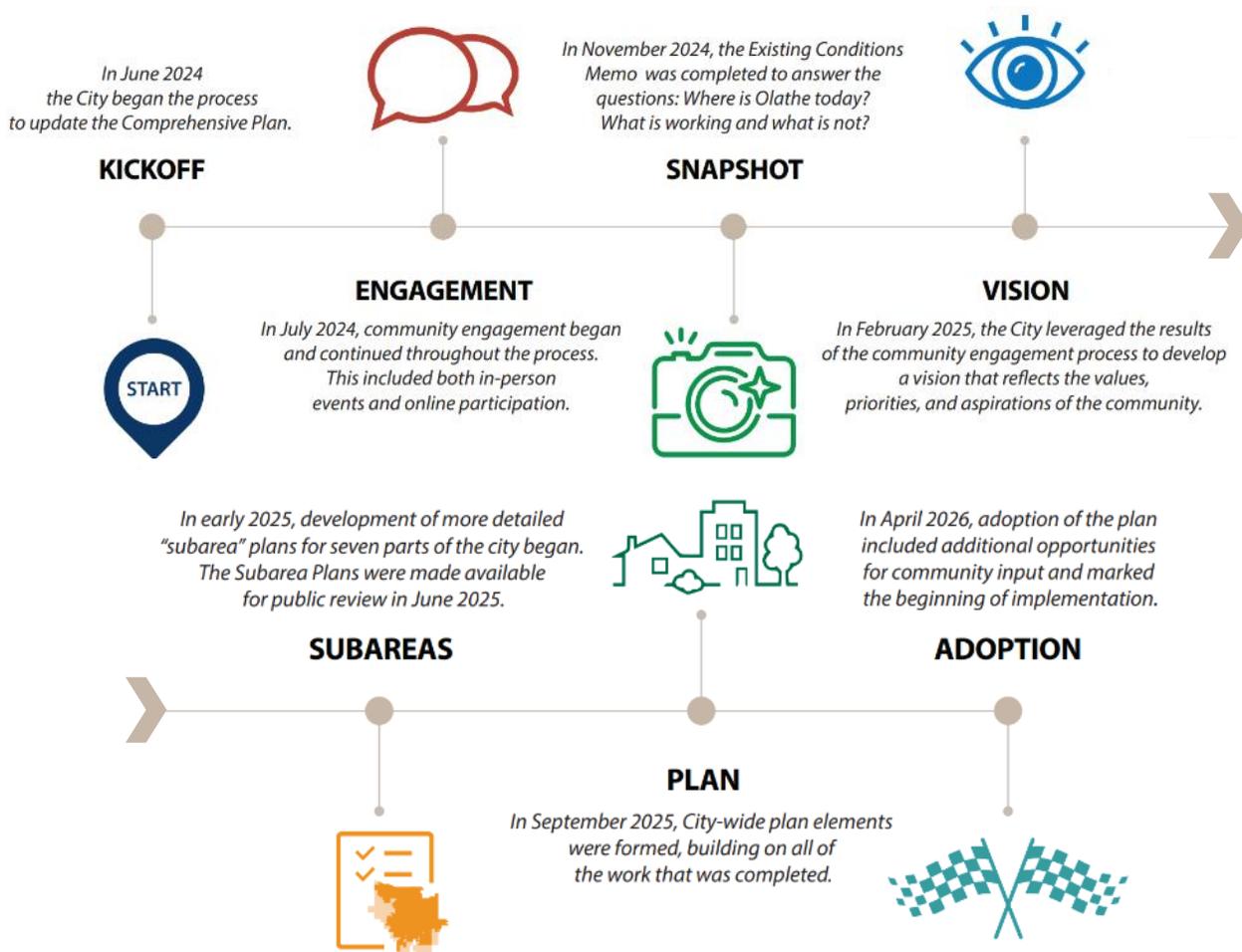
strengthening architectural and site design standards. The City **successfully attracted growth** in several business sectors including industrial and logistics while fostering the development of **regional entertainment nodes and expanding downtown programming** and redevelopment opportunities. Significant investments were made in public facilities and amenities, including new libraries, a community center, upgraded fire stations, enhancements to signature parks, and a new police headquarters. **Additionally, the Healthy Neighborhoods Program and Public Arts Initiative were launched**, major infrastructure upgrades were completed to key intersections, bridges and utility facilities.

## Comprehensive Plan Update Process

The City issued a Request for Proposals on September 11, 2023, to solicit consultant assistance in the update of the Comprehensive Plan. After reviewing responses to the Request for Proposals, the consultant firm Houseal Lavigne Associates was selected to assist in the Comprehensive Plan update process referred to as *Elevate Olathe*. **The Elevate Olathe Steering Committee was established with representatives from the Planning Commission, City Council, and Olathe business owners and residents.** The committee met throughout the planning process, providing critical guidance and feedback to guide the plan framework and draft documents.

The update process included seven phases beginning in June 2024 with the community kickoff, culminating in the final draft plan review and public adoption process in Spring 2026.

### Project Timeline



The development of **Elevate Olathe** is based on direction and input from **City Council, the Planning Commission, the Elevate Olathe Steering Committee, City staff, residents, community partners and the business community** collected through stakeholder workshops, interviews, public meetings, online public engagement tools, data collection, and field observations. The Plan also incorporates previous planning efforts, existing policies, and local, regional, and national data, which were analyzed geospatially to examine and assess the future of Olathe.

## Public Engagement Overview

Public input is summarized throughout the document to reflect community feedback that shaped the Plan recommendations. Each chapter begins with a summary highlighting key themes from all engagement activities, and every subarea includes a **“What We Heard” section drawn directly from workshops and participant feedback.**

Community feedback from **over 4,000 individuals** was instrumental in informing the recommendations and strategies found in the Comprehensive Plan. Over **65 City staff engagers** gathered feedback at dozens of community events and open houses. Both in-person and online communication methods were provided throughout the plan update to provide a variety of thoughtful and approachable engagement opportunities. Additionally, accommodations and translated materials were provided for Spanish-speaking residents and business owners, as well as the deaf community, to expand accessibility to the planning process.

### Community Outreach Summary

**ELEVATE  
OLATHE**  
*Comprehensive Plan*

**4,000+**  
Total Participants



**750**

Comments  
at Community Events



**65**

Staff  
Engagers



**30+**

Stakeholder Meetings

**30**

Workshops  
& Events



**230+**

Map Comments



**870+**

Online Surveys



## Elevate Olathe Plan Elements

The Comprehensive Plan is organized into **eleven chapters, establishing the overall framework of the Plan** as well as **summarizing the community engagement efforts**. Chapters 4 through 9 provide context, maps, and direction for specific topics of the Plan including: Land Use & Development, Housing & Neighborhoods, Economic Development, Transportation, Community Facilities, Parks & Infrastructure, and Natural Environment. Chapter 10 focuses on six subareas that address important planning considerations, including land uses, infrastructure improvements, development characteristics, and design specific to areas of the City where the most change is anticipated to occur. Finally, Chapter 11 includes the next steps and the implementation matrix with actionable steps to bring the plan to life.

## Key Themes & Plan Highlights

**Land Use & Development:** The Future Land Use Map sets forth the **desired development pattern** for the City and is intended to serve as a guide for future land use decisions. Eleven land use categories work cohesively to provide the framework for the Future Land Use Map along with a **new development matrix** delineating preferred and complementary uses. Priorities for **annexation and strategic growth** are outlined as the community continues to expand and develop while providing high-quality services.

**Housing & Neighborhoods:** Priority is placed on **neighborhood reinvestment and infill** development supporting a **range of housing options** responsive to a variety of neighborhood characteristics. There is a focus on mixed-use development and furthering amenity-abundant neighborhoods, **prioritizing complete neighborhoods with access to amenities**. Resources and partnerships for housing instability and housing options supporting all ages and abilities are also emphasized in the plan.

**Economic Development:** The plan provides strategies for the **revitalization of commercial corridors, attracting and supporting local businesses** and major employers. Strategies for furthering **downtown as a destination** are emphasized along with placemaking and event programming opportunities. **Workforce development** recommendations and opportunities for furthering **entrepreneurial stewardship** through collaboration with community partners are recognized.

**Transportation & Mobility:** Active transportation options are encouraged, along with increasing **roadway and pedestrian safety**, and responding to **emerging transportation trends** such as drone delivery, autonomous vehicles, and electric vehicles. There is a focus on **filling gaps in the existing sidewalk and bicycle network**, and exploring **public transit opportunities** and partnerships to connect residents to key destinations and services.

**Community Facilities, Parks & Infrastructure:** The plan provides recommendations on the **expansion of critical city facilities and infrastructure** as the City grows and continues to provide high-quality services to residents. Additionally, an evaluation of city-owned properties for potential redevelopment and identification of **opportunities for new parks and recreation amenities** are emphasized.

**Natural Environment:** The plan emphasizes the **preservation and protection** of environmentally sensitive areas and critical habitats. Plan recommendations support **sustainable development practices** that minimize environmental impact and encourage green infrastructure and low-impact development techniques.

## Implementing the Plan

The Implementation Matrix of the Comprehensive Plan **establishes the “next steps”** to be taken after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. It **includes recommendations and tangible actions** to move the plan forward, **ongoing community planning and investment opportunities, and strategies** to ensure the Plan remains responsive to community needs and aspirations. Four key themes, including livability, mobility, resiliency and identity, are woven throughout the plan reflecting community values that guide efforts to achieve the plan.

Long-range planning is an ongoing process, and state law (Kansas Statute 12-747) requires an annual review of the Comprehensive Plan. This review ensures the Plan remains an effective guide for the City, reflects the community’s evolving priorities, and is adaptable to significant market and social changes. Methods of review and ongoing implementation of the plan include:

- **Referencing the Plan regularly** to guide city policies and decision-making.
- **Updating the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), Corridor Plans, Overlay Districts** and other development controls to align with the Plan.
- **Aligning the Capital Improvement Program (CIP)** with Plan recommendations for CIP infrastructure improvements.
- **Conducting regular updates of the Plan** to reflect current conditions and shifts in community priorities.

## Joint City Council & Planning Commission Workshop

The City Council and Planning Commission met on **March 2, 2026** during a joint workshop for a discussion on the comprehensive plan update. An **overview of the planning process and key elements of the comprehensive plan update**, including the proposed *Future Land Use* map was provided. The City Council and Planning Commission **discussed proposed uses and categories**, and ultimately, direction was given to adjust the *Development Matrix* (Page 37 of the Comprehensive Plan). Commercial uses were added as complementary within the industrial district to allow for additional opportunities to increase commercial activity within the City. This update is reflected in the attached draft plan, along with incorporation of the implementation matrix.

## Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of CPA24-0001 and adoption of Resolution No. PC26-0001 for consideration by the City Council.

## Next Steps

The plan requires adoption by the Planning Commission and City Council. Following action from the Planning Commission, the draft plan is tentatively **scheduled for consideration at the April 21, 2026 City Council meeting**.