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<b>State:</b>	Missouri
<b>Jurisdiction Type:</b>	Municipal
<b>Municipality:</b>	City of Kansas City
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<b>Community Type – applicable to:</b>	Urban; Suburban
<b>Title:</b>	FOCUS Kansas City
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### ***Abstract***

FOCUS Kansas City is a comprehensive twenty-five year plan. It is too large to be online, and can be purchased from the city. It has over 600 initiatives, and Kansas City has been working on and with the document since 1994. Phase II of the plan along with implementation strategies were adopted by the City Council in October of 1997. The plan has resulted in seven neighborhood FOCUS centers intended to house neighborhood projects and keep local projects close to home.

### ***Resource***

FOCUS Kansas City started in 1992 when Mayor Emanuel Cleaver appointed a Civic Steering Committee to lead a strategic planning process initiated by the City Council. Kansas City, like other American cities, was facing a variety of issues such as urban poverty, blight, shifts in the structure of our economy and others. Recognizing that short term solutions to these problems would not provide adequate long term benefits, the Mayor and City Council embarked in a process to identify long-term strategies to address neighborhoods, jobs, education, the expenditure of public funds, and many other issues important to our citizens and to our city. The result is the FOCUS Plan, a comprehensive and integrated plan to guide the future of Kansas City for the next 25 years.

#### Organization of the Plan

The FOCUS Plan was completed in two phases. During [Phase I](#) the Mayor, City Council and the FOCUS Steering Committee guided an innovative citizen participation process, which resulted in a new Policy Plan for Kansas City. The Policy Plan establishes a vision of Kansas City as a people centered community and provides fourteen Principles of Policy to help us in guiding key decisions throughout the city, not just in City Hall. The Policy Plan was adopted by the City Council in 1994.

Phase II of the FOCUS Plan started in 1996. In this phase, citizens and civic leaders developed a Comprehensive and Strategic Plan with specific recommendations to implement the vision and policies outlined in Phase I. Given the breadth of issues addressed in Phase I, three types of plans were developed during Phase II: a physical environment plan, a governance plan, and a human investment plan. These plans were coordinated by

the FOCUS Steering Committee with the help of citizen-led Work Teams and support from the City Planning & Development Department. Although each of the plans was prepared independently, their recommendations are coordinated through twelve over-arching strategies, called the FOCUS Building Blocks. As we move ahead with implementation, these twelve strategies will serve as a guide. Phase II of the plan along with the implementation strategies were unanimously adopted by the City Council in October of 1997.

## Citizen and Civic Participation

The planning process for the FOCUS Kansas City Plan could be held up as a model for citizen participation in planning. During Phase I, thousands of citizens organized into 12 perspective groups worked through a Guidebook addressing important planning issues. Consensus among the 12 perspective groups was not an objective of this process. Nevertheless, the process revealed that many of the groups shared a common perspective with one another. These common perspectives became the foundation of the Vision for the Future and the Principles for Policy developed in this phase.

Citizen and civic participation were also key ingredients during Phase II of the plan. In this phase, citizens and civic leaders were organized in seven Work Teams to develop strategic implementation plans for the vision and policies developed in Phase I. Each Work Team consisted of approximately 30 to 40 citizens and was supported by a Community Advisory Team, a consultant and a staff planner from the City's Planning and Development Department. More than 3,000 citizens loaned countless hours to complete this important phase of the plan, making FOCUS a true community based planning effort.

## Phase I: The Policy Plan

The FOCUS vision statement and principles of policy were adopted by the City Council in 1994 as Kansas City's public policy framework. This framework provides a strong foundation for addressing complex issues in a more strategic manner. In addition, the policy principles are also the foundation for Phase II: The Comprehensive and Strategic Plan.

## FOCUS Vision for the Future

"We, as Kansas Citians, envision our city as a people-centered community. From economic development to the readability of street signs, we consider people first. Kansas City shapes and guarantees its future by examining first and foremost the impact of every decision on future generations.

We, as Kansas Citians, are full of hope. We demonstrate this hope through our investment in our families, our homes, or neighborhoods, our schools, our businesses and our city." The Vision Statement is supported by the accompanying Principles for Policy. Derived from the wealth of citizen ideas, these principles are essential to achieve Kansas City's vision.

## FOCUS Principles for Policy Reaffirm and Revitalize the Urban Core

Central to the city's vitality is the Urban Core, with its diverse population, historic neighborhoods; cultural, recreational, and sports attractions; central business corridor, and its revival as a pleasant and sought-after place to live, work, do business and learn.

#### Advance and Encourage Quality Suburban Development

The health of our city depends on recognizing the interdependency of the city's suburban areas and the Urban Core. Each must be healthy for the city to attract development and grow. Quality suburban development enables the city to compete for residents and jobs and is an important part of the city's ability to grow in the future.

#### Plan for a Well Designed City Framework

The design and maintenance of the city's transportation and infrastructure systems create a framework for sustainable development. Excellent planning systems create a framework for sustainable development. Excellent planning and urban design create a unique city that is physically unified and beautiful.

#### Strengthen Neighborhoods

Well-planned neighborhoods create identifiable communities in which to attain a sense of belonging, forge common goals and work together.

#### Ensure Environmental Stewardship

Natural resources and energy are valuable assets we should use judiciously and manage wisely for the benefit of present and future generations.

#### Create a Secure City

Personal comfort, safety, security and peace of mind are essential to residents and businesses in a livable city.

#### Respect Diversity

Social, gender, cultural, ethnic, racial, economic and religious diversity bring richness to the city.

#### Advance Education, Culture and the Arts

Learning is fundamental to citizenship, self-enrichment and employment. A strong, vibrant cultural and arts environment takes citizens beyond everyday concerns, adds to their quality of life and supports the city's economic base.

#### Develop Jobs for the Future

The far-reaching effects of technological change and a new global economy challenge Kansas City to identify its competitive role and provide employment opportunities for its citizens.

#### Create Opportunity

Community and individual self-esteem and growth flourish in the presence of equitable opportunities and resources.

### Create a Better Future for Our Young People

Positive environments and attitudes that recognize and encourage children to be productive and enable them to be healthy will prepare our youth for tomorrow's world.

### Target Financial Investments Strategically

The City must have a sustainable tax base and must help target financial investments where they will be most effective and where they will achieve the city's vision.

### Build Government through a Strong Partnership with Citizens

Responsive and creative governance connects and stimulates cooperation between government, citizens, and business and community organizations.

### Build Metropolitan Leadership and Regional Cooperation

The City of Kansas City is at the center of a metropolitan community where the challenges of building on the region's strengths and addressing its problems demand a collective response.

### FOCUS Phase II - The Strategic and Comprehensive Plan

Based upon the Phase I Policy Plan, work began in 1995 on the strategic and comprehensive plan. Utilizing the key concepts of balance, linkage and partnership, seven distinct, but interwoven component plans were developed to detail the action steps needed to make the

FOCUS vision and policy principles a reality.

An expanded Steering Committee, with the help of seven Work Teams made up of over 350 people and additional Community Advisory Teams developed the seven component FOCUS plans. They are outlined below:

#### Physical Environment Plans

Citywide Physical Framework Plan

Neighborhood Prototypes Plan

Preservation Plan

Urban Core Plan

Northland Plan

Human Investment Plan

Governance Plan

The Citywide Physical Framework Plan provides strategic land use planning guidelines, addresses the future character of growth, development and redevelopment as well as capital needs of the City.

The Neighborhood Prototypes Plan recommends specific actions to improve Kansas City neighborhoods and encourage resident partnerships in determining their future and delivery of city services. A unique neighborhood assessment process helps citizens target city services and specific strategies to their distinct requirements.

The Preservation Plan highlights the importance of Kansas City's rich legacy of landmark structures, historic neighborhoods, and archeological resources that make our city a special place. Strategies on transportation, urban design, capital improvements, and tourism complete our vision of the future from a preservation perspective.

The Urban Core Plan includes inventive strategies for central city neighborhoods, downtown, the Central Business Corridor, and plans for economic development, jobs, capital improvements, public transit and neighborhood livability. Strategies for the location of cultural facilities, marketing the urban core, revitalizing and sustaining neighborhoods are outlined in this plan.

The Northland Plan targets investment strategies to maintain our existing neighborhoods, and encourages development where public facilities (water, sewer, streets) already exist. Protecting the natural environment and current character of the Northland are fundamental to the plan. Specific transportation improvements are recommended to improve east-west traffic, extend the boulevard system north of the river and create pedestrian and bicycle friendly thoroughways.

The Human Investment Plan outlines recommendations related to life long education, diversity, equipping citizens for the changing work environment, job retention and expansion strategies, programming for stimulating interest in culture and the arts as well as practical life skills for Kansas City's youth, and enhancing Kansas City as a place of excellence, creativity, celebration and unity.

The Governance Plan sets out specific strategies for improving city services, establishing and maintaining the financial health of the city, strengthening metropolitan cooperation and political and organizational restructuring to insure implementation of the FOCUS initiatives.

Each of these seven plans shares a set of twelve common strategies with one another. These strategies, called the FOCUS Building Blocks, are designed to integrate the plan and also to guide the implementation of the plan.

If you have questions about the FOCUS Plan, call the FOCUS Office at 816-513-2822 or contact us via email at [FOCUS@kcmo.org](mailto:FOCUS@kcmo.org)