

FLINT HILLS REGION

Joint FHEDD Steering Committee & FHRC Board of Directors November 30, 2021 8:00 am – 10:00 am

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86292577197>
Meeting ID 862 9257 7197

Invited: Directors from Member Jurisdictions, Fort Riley, Kansas State University, Governor's Military Council, Community Stakeholders – Open to the Public

1. Welcome / Roll Call / Establish Quorum Richard Weixelman, President
2. FHEDD Steering Committee to consider recommending the FHEDD Plan Update for adoption by the Flint Hills Regional Council & submit to EDA Christy Rodriguez & Team
3. Approval November 19 FHEDD Steering Committee & Bd Meeting Minutes Richard Weixelman, President
4. New Business Richard Weixelman, President
 - a. Consider adopting the FHEDD Plan Update and approve authority to submit to the Economic Development Administration to ensure compliance with EDA regulations, 13 C.F.R. § 303.7 Christy Rodriguez
 - b. Consider authorization to submit the Environmental Protection Agency Brownfield Assessment Grant in the amount of \$500,000 & accept if awarded. Jenna Williams
 - c. Continue discussion and consider increasing membership dues from \$0.60 / capita to \$0.90 / capita beginning in January 2022. Christy Rodriguez
 - d. Consider authorization to develop a Good Jobs Challenge grant application, submit and accept, if awarded. Marissa Jones-Flaget
Planner & Grant Specialist
 - e. Consider granting Executive Committee authority to advertise and hire an Interim Executive Director for 3-6 months and reassess to determine next steps based on updated funding projections based on recommendation from FHRC Accounting team and FHRC staff, while also posting the Executive Director as both a part-time and full-time position to keep the hiring options flexible. Christy Rodriguez
 - f. Discuss and consider approving a new policy regarding employment agreements to better safeguard the organization financially and to ensure consistent treatment of all employees. Christy Rodriguez
5. Community Updates Round Table
6. Adjourn Richard Weixelman, President

**A Special-Called Board meeting will be called in December 2021.
Date and time to be announced once Central National Bank provides draft loan extension agreement for review & to consider resolution for organization signatory authority.**

Enhancing the economic viability and improving the quality of life through regional collaboration in the Flint Hills

FLINT HILLS REGION

Flint Hills Regional Council
Joint FHEDD Steering Committee & Board of Directors

November 30, 2021



Roll Call / Quorum

Clay County

Voting Board Member

1. Clay Center – James Thatcher
2. Wakefield – Chris Dumler

Dickinson County

Voting Board Member

1. Herington – Debi Urbanek

Non-Voting Board Member

- Chapman – Mark Campbell

Geary County

Voting Board Member

1. Geary County – Trish Giordano
2. *Junction City – Tim Brown

Lyon County

Non-Voting Board Member

1. Reading – Tonya Coppock

Morris County

Voting Board Member

1. *Council Grove – Sharon Haun
2. Morris County - David Fox

Non-Voting Board Member

- Dwight – Heather Brown
- White City – Susan McKenzie

Pottawatomie County

Voting Board Member

1. *Pottawatomie County – Dee McKee
2. * Wamego - Richard Weixelman
- 3a. St George Deb Werth
- 3b. Westmoreland Jeff Rosell

Non-Voting Board Member

- Onaga - Sarah McKinsey

Riley County

Voting Board Member

1. *Manhattan – Linda Morse
2. Riley County - Kathryn Focke

Non-Voting Board Member

- Leonardville - Deandra Anderson
- Ogden - Angela Schnee

Wabaunsee County

Voting Board Member

1. *Alma – Pam Bales
2. Wabaunsee County - Nancy Hier
- 3a. Alta Vista Ryan Armbrust
- 3b. Eskridge Dolly Mercer

Non-Voting Board Member

- Harveyville - Roy Rickel

Ex-Officio

Non-Voting Board Member

1. Fort Riley – Ben Van Becelaere / Kelly Paskow
2. Kansas State University - Linda Cook

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / QUORUM
2. FHEDD STEERING COMMITTEE CONSIDER RECOMMENDING THE FHEDD PLAN UPDATE FOR ADOPTION BY THE FHRC BOARD & SUBMIT TO EDA
3. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 19 MINUTES
4. NEW BUSINESS
5. COMMUNITY UPDATES
6. ADJOURN



New Business

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Consider adopting the 2021-2026 Flint Hills Economic Development District Plan Update and authorizing the submission to the Economic Development Administration to ensure compliance with EDA regulations, 13 C.F.R. § 303.7.

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Consider authorization to submit the Environmental Protection Agency Brownfield Assessment Grant in the amount of \$500,000 & accept if awarded.

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Continue discussion and consider increasing membership dues from \$0.60 / capita to \$0.90 / capita beginning January 2022.

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Membership Dues Discussion - Decision Point #1

Option 1

Consider increasing cost per capita to more sustainable level starting in 2022

Option 2

Consider one-time special assessment to get organization in more stable financial position in 2022 & increase dues in 2023

Option 3

Retain \$0.60 per capita dues knowing this is not sustainable & therefore may not be able to hire an Executive Director willing to take on the financial risk

Membership Dues Discussion

Option 1

Consider increasing cost per capita to more sustainable level starting in 2022

Current Rate	2010 Population	Annual Dues
\$0.60 / capita	Population of Member Communities 139,434	\$83,660.40

Proposed Rate Options	2020 Population (Census data not released to-date)	Annual Dues	Gain
\$0.90 / capita	Population of Member Communities 146,729	\$132,056.10	\$48,395.70
\$1.00 / capita	Population of Member Communities 146,729	\$146,729	\$63,068.60

In 2020, FHRC had less than \$1,000 for operational expenses, outside of grant match requirements. This is not practical or sustainable.

Membership Dues Discussion - Decision Point #2 – For Decision in Dec



Recommend Adjusting the Current Model to Incorporate All Three Concepts

1. Consider Pay-to-Play Model – Meaning Dues Provide Seat on the Board. Funding is Applied toward Operational Cost & Some/Limited Grant Match, as needed.

2. All grants convert to model in which jurisdictions benefitting would pay required match specific to that grant. (This is separate from membership dues.)
 - This was already implemented as part of Build Back Better – Regional Challenge should we be invited to submit Phase II application
 - This is somewhat being implemented in the new EDA Partnership Planning Grant
 - CARES and EPA do not have a match requirement
 - OLDCC grants would need to convert to this model, if approved.

3. Fee-schedule established for grant writing & other services, using needs assessment system for board to prioritize and approve grant application services and scopes.

Consider authorization to develop a Good Jobs Challenge grant application, submit and accept, if awarded.

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Consider Granting Executive Committee authority to hire a part-time Interim Executive Director for 3-6 months, while at the same time posting the permanent Executive Director position as both a part-time and full-time position to keep the hiring options flexible, and prior to hiring permanent position, reassess funding projections to determine next steps (in hiring permanent part-time vs full-time).

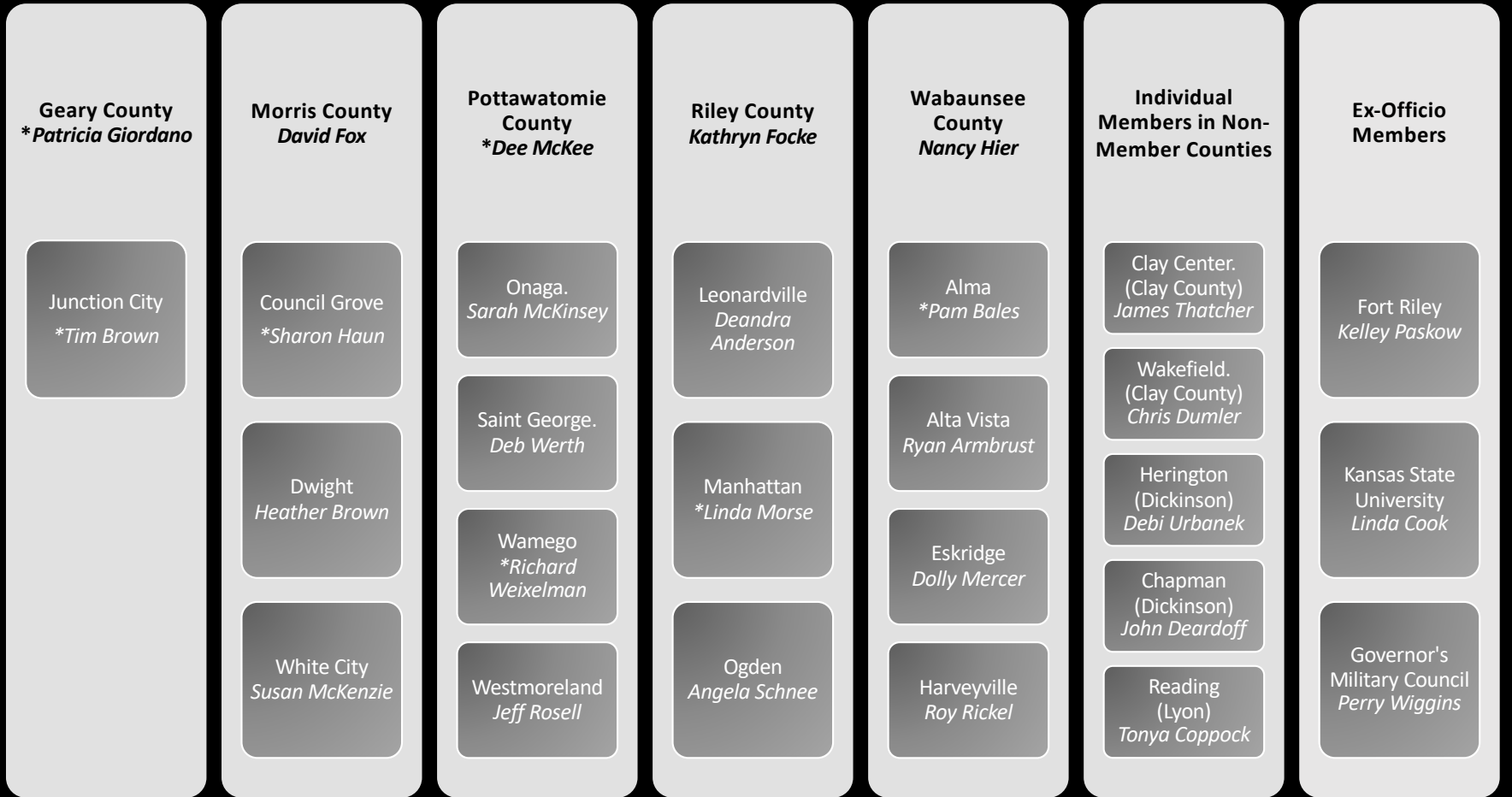
Options for Consideration of New Policy

- i. Consider new policy to amend all FHRC Employee Agreements to include term end-date based on available funding, with option to renew should additional funding become available to financially support the position in full, and include this term in all future employment agreements.
- ii. Consider same policy listed above, but do not amend existing employee agreements and instead grandfather in existing employees that do not already have a term-end date, and only include term end-date based on available funding on all future employment agreements.
- iii. Do not consider a new policy related to term end-dates based on available funding.

Community Updates

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Community Updates



Flint Hills Economic Development District – EDA Designation
(Chase County & Lyon County are also within FHEDD District, but are not a current members of FHRC)

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Questions?

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Joint FHEDD Steering Committee & FHRC Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

November 19, 2021
Zoom Meeting

Present from Board: **Pam Bales**, City of Alma Council Member; **Ryan Armbrust**, City of Alta Vista Council Member, City Administrator; **Mark Campbell**, City of Chapman; **Sharon Haun**, City of Council Grove Council Member; **Justin Rush (sitting in for Dolly Mercer, Mayor)** City of Eskridge Council Member; **Ben Van Becelaere**, Fort Riley; **Trish Giordano**, Geary County Commissioner; **Tim Brown**, City of Junction City Commissioner; **Linda Morse**, City of Manhattan Commissioner; **David Fox**, Morris County Commissioner; **Angela Schnee**, City of Ogden Zoning Administrator; **Dee McKee**, Pottawatomie County Commissioner; **Kathryn Focke**, Riley County Commissioner; **Nancy Hier**, Wabaunsee County Commissioner; **Leza Chyssovergis**, City of Wakefield Councilmember; **Richard Weixelman**, City of Wamego Commissioner.

Absent from Board: **James Thatcher**, Mayor City of Clay Center; **Heather Brown**, City of Dwight;; **Kelley Paskow**, Fort Riley; **Perry L. Wiggins**, Governor's Military Council; **Roy Rickel**, City of Harveyville; **Debi Urbanek**, City of Herington Council Member; **Linda Cook**, Kansas State University, Chief of Staff; **Deandra Anderson**, City of Leonardville; **Sarah McKinsey**, City of Onaga; **Tonya Coppock**, City of Reading; **Chris Dumler**, City of Wakefield Mayor; **Jeff Rosell**, City of Westmoreland; **Susan McKenzie**, City of White City.

Guest Presenters: **Eric Spiess, CPA**, VonFeldt, Bauer & VonFeldt

Present from Steering Committee & General Public:

Allen Dinkel, City of Junction City; **Amalia Murguia**, Wabaunsee County; **Amanda Gnad**, Wabaunsee County; **Angela Schwerdtfeger**, TCT; **Bruce McMillan**, McMillan Architects; **Caron Daugherty**, Flint Hills Technical College; **Daryn Soldan**, Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce; **Jack Allston**, Pottawatomie County EDC; **Jason Smith**, Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce; **Jim Genandt**, Manhattan Area Technical College; **Jim MacGregor**, Wabaunsee County; **Kara Holle**, Wamego Area Chamber of Commerce; **Rob Gilligan**, Ignite Emporia/City of Emporia; **Ron Fehr**, City of Manhattan, Administration; **Stephanie Peterson**, Flint Hills MPO; **Susan Harris**, Council Grove/Morris County Chamber of Commerce & Tourism; **Terry Butler**, Junction City Main Street; **Tracy Anderson**, Anderson Knight Architects; **Tracy Henry**, Greater Morris County Development Corporation; **Vern Henricks**, GMCF.

Present from Staff Support: **Christy Rodriguez**, Executive Director; **Janna Williams**, Regional Planner; **Marissa Jones-Flaget**, Recovery Planner & Grant Specialist; **Rachel Foss-Peterson**, Planner; **Deb Werth**, Grant Specialist.

1. Welcome

Richard Weixelman, President

Richard Weixelman called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. Roll Call. A quorum was present.

2. Review & Prioritization of Regional Tactics for FHEDD Plan Update

Christy Rodriguez & Team

Christy Rodriguez stated the first hour of the meeting will be dedicated to the review and prioritization of the regional tactics for the FHEDD Plan. Christy stated there were 17 responses to the regional tactics survey and that there have been working meetings with each county for the county-specific action items.

Rachel Foss-Peterson began presenting regional tactics, focusing on the timeline for the tactic. Christy indicated that Staff would work on project lead and project partners later for review after the meeting.

Christy stated that each county has a similar spreadsheet for their county-specific items. Christy presented a table that showed which strategies are applicable to each county, stating that if a strategy was applicable to multiple counties, then it was included on the Regional Tactics spreadsheet.

Christy worked through each regional tactic to identify the appropriate timeline. Christy clarified that tactics that have multiple timelines will be identified as such in the regional dashboard.

Christy stated that Strategy 1.4 was a new strategy and asked if there was any opposition to adding the strategy. With no opposition, Christy stated Strategy 1.4 was approved. Jason Smith stated that in addition to the site in Wabaunsee County, there is a site in Geary County that has expressed interest in developing a Visitor Center and inquired if there would be a future process to help select that site. Christy stated that currently there is no funding for that facility at any of the locations and that it is something that would need to be discussed in the future. Christy noted that the FHRC does not control where this facility goes but could assist in facilitating conversations in the future. General discussion ensued regarding placement of facility, funding, and Kansas Travel Centers. Jim MacGregor stated the travel plaza developer in Wabaunsee County is eager to promote the Flint Hills and they are happy to reschedule a tour or presentation to provide additional details on the project. Jim MacGregor noted that project is privately funded and that if the project goes as planned that the timeline should be immediate. Richard Weixelman stated it should also be ongoing.

Dee McKee recommended the addition of the word “appropriate” to tactic 1.4.2.

Linda Morse inquired about the verbiage in tactic 2.1.1., specifically the use of “Provide”. Kathryn Focke agreed, stating that the USDs would be more appropriate and that the FHRC would just provide “Support”. Marissa Jones-Flaget indicated that the project lead column may need to be shown to provide context to these tactics as the FHRC is not executing these tactics, the project leads are.

Richard Weixelman expressed concern about the verbiage of tactic 2.1.3. since FHRC would not be creating a Career Academy. Jim MacGregor inquired about how we keep the project leads accountable if they are not part of this process. Christy stated that the project leads are suggestions, but that the project leads will be reporting progress back to FHRC staff that will be populated into the regional dashboard. Christy stated there will be additional conversations as there will be FHRC staff that will work with the project leads and that these can be adjusted over time. Dee McKee stated that USD 383 is not an appropriate project lead for the region and that Wamego and other USDs have those programs, and that they are beyond what the regional council should do. Jim Genandt provided clarification on what is meant by career academies and offered alternative verbiage, project leads, and project partners for tactic 2.1.3.

Dee McKee recommended new verbiage for tactic 2.1.1.

Daryn Soldan and Kara Holle provided update for tactic 2.1.2 and recommended it be listed as “Ongoing”.

Christy asked if tactic 2.1.4 was still relevant. Jason Smith stated they restarted a regional talent council that includes Riley and Pottawatomie counties and they would be willing to expand across the region. Terry Butler stated that Junction City is working on a similar initiative. Trish Giordano indicated she was not sure if the JCMI program in Junction City could expand beyond the military community. Linda Morse stated she thinks it is important to support any of these initiatives across the region. Ben Van Becelaere stated that the MOU tied to JCMI is not as narrow as it sounds and aims to incorporate universities and technical colleges.

Christy continued to work through tactic timelines.

Dee McKee moved that the balance of this portion be tabled to the end of the meeting and go ahead with business meeting because of the two-hour timeline.

Rachel Foss-Peterson stated that we are about halfway through the tactics. Christy provided instructions on how to finish the remaining regional tactic review.

Kathryn Focke seconded the motion. With no opposition, Christy thanked the Steering Committee members for attending and invited them to stay for the regular meeting but acknowledged they may need to depart. Dee McKee stated her motion was for the Steering Committee items to be moved to the end of the meeting. Dee McKee withdrew the second part of her motion. Richard Weixelman called for a second vote of the original motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion. Motion carried. Christy expressed concern as many of the Steering Committee left the meeting but stated she would send follow-up materials to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee portion of the meeting ended at 9:09 a.m.

3. Approval of October FHEDD Steering Committee & Board Meeting Minutes Richard Weixelman, President

Pam Bales moved to approve the minutes as presented. Linda Morse seconded. Board voted unanimously to approve. Motion carried unanimously. October FHEDD Steering Committee and Board Meeting Minutes were approved.

4. Review & Approval of October Financial Report

Richard Weixelman, President

Christy Rodriguez provided an overview of how the financial report is laid out.

Kathryn Focke inquired about the current assets figure listed on the Statement of Financial Position. Christy stated the current assets come from the donations received through the community match days. Christy noted that the fixed assets had been zeroed out. Kathryn Focke stated that the original loan papers showed those as actual assets and that is what the loans were based on so she is not sure how they can just be zeroed out. Christy concurred, stating that is why she has been inquiring about where the fixed asset figures came from and provided a general background on the information she had on the assets.

Christy provided an overview of the financial report. Linda Morse inquired about if the balance at the end of the year would be positive. Christy stated that she has ran the numbers with the accountant and that it would be very close.

Linda Morse moved to accept and file the October Financial Report as presented. Pam Bales seconded. Kathryn Focke expressed concern about filing this financial report with the asset issue and inquired about if the financial reports can be amended in the future. Christy stated FHRC's policies do not address this issue and deferred to Eric Spiess of VonFeldt, Bauer & VonFeldt. Eric Spiess stated he could provide insight on the accounting aspect, but that he does not have the authority to weigh in on the management and presentation perspective, as that is a Board decision. Eric Spiess indicated that amending the financials can be done, but it is up for debate on if it is productive. General discussion about related policies, grant compliance, and the origin of the fixed assets ensued.

Stephanie Peterson stated that the MPO was still under the FHRC when the loan was taken out and that each entity owned its own furniture, which as destroyed by a flood. Stephanie Peterson provided an overview of the type of furniture that was owned and stated that there used to be a spreadsheet of the assets, but at this time she only has documentation for the MPO's assets which may help provide context to the FHRC's reported fixed assets figure. Kathryn Focke indicated she is willing to go through the FHRC documents at the

FHRC office on Fort Riley to see if there is asset documentation. Christy stated she reviewed a lot of the paperwork in the office but did not find the necessary details, but that additional review and work with the MPO may help provide the necessary details.

Richard Weixelman called for a vote on the pending motion. Board voted unanimously to approve. Motion carried unanimously. October Financial Report was approved as presented.

5. Review of 2022 Financial Projections, Status of Potential Funding & Options to Consider in Filling the Executive Director Position

**Eric Spiess, CPA
VonFeldt, Bauer & VonFeldt
& Christy Rodriguez**

Eric Spiess, CPA with VonFeldt, Bauer & VonFeldt presented three 2022 financial projections. Christy provided context on the projection figures.

Eric Spiess provided three 2023 financial projections and stated the scenarios remain the same, but funding is different due to grant periods ending. Christy provided context on the projection figures and details on existing and potential grant funding. Christy stated that she has requested the loan extension through Central National Bank and has not received that document back yet.

Christy stated that the recommendation would be somewhere between Projection 2 and Projection 3, which would include hiring a part-time interim executive director while searching for an executive director, then visiting with each jurisdiction to determine if there are ways to pay off the loan.

Jack Allston inquired about OEA projected amounts. Christy stated that she was told that the funding was reduced significantly so the projects would have to be very justifiable to show why we would need the money this year and not in a future year. Jack Allston stated that there is a lot happening in the Green Valley area in particular and the Manhattan Chamber met with state representatives, so indicated they may be able to help secure OEA funding that has been critical to the area's success. Jack Allston stated it is critical for the communities around the base and so we need to pursue that funding like we have done in the past. Christy stated that we will be pursuing those funds and that Janna Williams has a project list and will be meeting with the grant manager to determine the competitiveness of the projects.

Ben VanBecelaere inquired about Christy's last day. Christy stated she would be leaving December 10th. Ben VanBecelaere provided context about the past efforts to address the FHRC's financial sustainability and stated a weakness is the heavy reliance on grants. Christy stated that FHRC staff visited with other regional councils who often are sustainable through the Weatherization Program, Department of Defense funding, and through having grant writers on staff. Christy stated FHRC submitted a letter of interest to become a Weatherization Program subrecipient.

Christy provided details on existing loan, recent payments, loan balance, and pay-off plan.

Christy provided an overview of the status of existing grants, grant writing assistance, and future grant opportunities and how these contribute to FHRC's financial sustainability. Christy indicated that to pursue future grants FHRC needs to work on its policies to ensure compliance. Christy stated that FHRC has been working with Washburn University to create new policies, has created a Needs Assessment System to identify unfunded needs in the region, hired a grant writer, and needs to establish a fee schedule for member jurisdictions.

Christy stated she highly recommends hiring a part-time interim Executive Director until the position is filled. Christy provided overview of the job posting minimum requirements for the Executive Director.

Kathryn Focke stated she would like someone part-time or existing staff to assist in finding the position

replacement. Dee McKee stated that she appreciates Christy's offer to assist, but that the selection committee should be the FHRC Board, and that the economic development directors or someone with an HR background may be better. Dee McKee stated it is difficult without a job description it is difficult to hire quickly and that she is very interested in reducing the loan amount.

Christy stated that any position hired would be posted, would be competitive, and the Board would go through the process to hire the position. Christy stated that the skillset needed in the Executive Director does not exist in current staff, so an interim is needed until the position is posted and hired. Christy stated a job posting would be provided to the Board by Monday if the Board agrees with items A through G as part of the posting to begin the process. Richard Weixelman, Tim Brown, and Linda Morse agreed with the items. Richard Weixelman stated he would like Christy to assist with the interviews and hiring process. Dee McKee stated she does not think that is necessary if Christy is gone on December 10th. Tim Brown disagreed, stating if Christy volunteers to help that would be welcome help. Angela Schnee stated that although she is not a voting member that she thinks it would be beneficial. Sharon Haun agreed.

Tim Brown inquired about if the items could be split up for a vote. Linda Morse indicated she generally supports the recommendations. Richard Weixelman stated that Item 1 presented is on the agenda and indicated he recommends voting on Items 2 and 3, and then discuss Item 1 as Item b. on the regular agenda. Christy concurred.

Tim Brown moved to accept Items 2 and 3 as part of the recommendations to consider in filling the Executive Director position.

Dee McKee made a motion for division of the question, 1 then 2. Linda Morse asked for clarification as Item 1 is not being discussed. Dee McKee amended her motion for a division of the question, voting on Items 2 and 3 separately. Richard Weixelman called for a second to Dee McKee's motion. Kathryn Focke seconded. Board voted to oppose the motion. Motion failed.

Richard Weixelman called for a second to Tim Brown's motion. Richard Weixelman seconded. Board voted to approve the motion. Motion carried.

6. Discussion Regarding Membership Dues to Become More Financially Sustainable

Executive Committee & Christy Rodriguez

Christy Rodriguez stated there are two decisions that need to be made, with the first regarding the dues structure. Christy stated that paying off the loan sooner rather than later will help the organization be more sustainable. Christy stated the current membership dues are \$.60 per capita and presented three options: increasing cost per capita starting in 2022, consider a one-time special assessment, or retain existing per capita rate. Christy provided details on each option.

Kathryn Focke inquired about how the county figures are calculated. Christy stated that other jurisdictions within the counties are removed from the county population. Kathryn Focke stated she would like to table this discussion until a discussion can be had with the bank about reducing the loan amount. Christy stated that this is a discussion item, not a voting item, so it could be voted upon at the November 30th meeting or the first week of December. Deb Werth stated she did not think St. George would have an issue with the proposed dues increase. Christy provided clarification on Junction City's dues amount since they were the only non-economic development organization entity that contributed match for Partnership Planning and that they would pay less with the increased dues. Jack Allston noted that Pottawatomie County Economic Development and the Manhattan Chamber put in a match voluntarily and they did not get a Board seat. Christy stated the bylaws are currently written to be elected officials, but that would be a Board decision in the future. Christy discussed a possible pay-to-play option.

Deb Werth and Angela Schnee indicated that their jurisdictions would presumably not be opposed to the increase given the benefit they receive from FHRC. Deb Werth inquired about if a jurisdiction wanted to provide funds in excess of the per capita amount if that could be considered a donation to the organization. Christy stated that donations are always accepted.

Jim MacGregor requested the presentation be sent out for the representatives that are not longer on the call. Jim MacGregor noted that the figures used in the presentation are 2010 Census figures and that the updated figures are available. Jim MacGregor stated that in most cases, especially in Wabaunsee County, the population numbers decreased. Christy stated that staff would obtain the updated figures prior to final consideration.

Linda Morse stated that as the Manhattan representative she supports the \$.90 because of the necessity to make the organization more sustainable.

Tim Brown stated he would like to see the \$.90 per capita dues but that he is not sure how the Board and City Commission would approve, but that the increase would almost pay the payment for the first year of the bank loan. Tim Brown noted there will be a new representative for Junction City in January, but that he will bring it up at the meeting in December.

Christy stated the original goal was to bring the item back at the November 30th meeting, but Kathryn Focke indicated that she would like to visit with the bank first. Richard Weixelman stated we should try it on November 30th. Christy stated she would prepare information on FHRC's service value and the dollar figure for each county about how the dollars directly and indirectly impact each jurisdiction.

Christy stated a quorum was no longer present.

Christy provided background on the second decision point to consider a Pay-to-Play model and establish a fee structure. Pam Bales agreed with the idea. Angela Schnee stated that she thinks there should be a fee system for various services such as comprehensive plans. Linda Morse agreed. Angela Schnee inquired about Ogden's voting status. Christy stated if they have an elected official represent on the Council then they can vote, but several do not have the time to do that and send non-elected staff instead. Tim Brown agreed with the Pay-to-Play model.

Christy provided another concept to convert to a model in which jurisdictions benefitting from a grant would pay required match specific to that grant. All remaining members were in agreement with this model but did not vote due to lack of quorum.

Christy provided details on Geary Community Match Day and the Wamego Community Match Day donations.

7. New Business

Richard Weixelman, President

- a. **Consider approval of new policy to amend all FHRC Employee Agreements to include term end-date based on available funding, with option to renew should additional funding become available to financially support the position in full and include this term in all future employment agreements.**

Christy Rodriguez reiterated that a quorum is not present, so there will be no vote. Christy stated that four employees currently have term end dates on the employment agreements and two employees that do not. Christy stated that she believes the employment agreements should align with the funding sources for that position and have a term end date with an option to renew should additional money come available.

Remaining members supported the idea. Linda Morse indicated that there is generally a difference

between full-time and part-time employees, but that she does not think the terms should change for an existing employee but should be established for new positions. Richard Weixelman agreed with Linda Morse and indicated that it should be discussed with existing employees first but does not have an issue with adding it to new hires. General discussion ensued. Jim MacGregor inquired if it requires a policy or if it is the Director's prerogative. Christy stated that she thinks the policy is necessary to protect the organization and be more sustainable in the future.

- b. Consider granting Executive Committee authority to hire a part-time Interim Executive Director for 3-6 months and reassess to determine next steps based on updated funding projections based on recommendation from FHRC accounting team and FHRC staff.**

Christy Rodriguez indicated that ideally the organization would be structured with an administrative position, possibly shared with another organization, so other higher-level staff can focus on their projects and initiatives. Christy stated that ideally an interim Executive Director would be hired so there is time to assess which of the financial projections is best to determine if the position would be full-time or part-time.

Christy noted that there were discussions with the Executive Committee about whether someone like Stephanie Peterson with the MPO would be able to serve as a part-time interim since she has grant skills and works regionally until a final decision is made. Remaining members agreed that having the Executive Committee the authority to hire an interim. Christy noted that a quorum is not present, so a vote would be taken at the next meeting. Christy clarified that the permanent position would be posted and that the interim could be posted as well, if needed. Linda Morse indicated that a position description would need to be written for the interim, but as a temporary position the interim position would not need to be submitted. Angela Schnee agreed that a position description needs to be available if the existing options for the interim positions do not work.

- c. Consider authorization to submit the Environmental Protection Agency Brownfield Assessment Grant in the amount of \$500,000 and accept if awarded.**

Christy Rodriguez stated that this item cannot be voted on, and will be voted on at the next meeting, the day before the application is due.

- d. Consider authorization to develop a Good Jobs Challenge grant application, submit and accept, if awarded.**

Christy Rodriguez stated that this item cannot be voted on and will be voted on at the next meeting. Christy stated Marissa Jones-Flaget is currently working on this, and it is due in January. Linda Morse inquired about who the sponsor is for the Good Jobs Challenge. Marissa Jones-Flaget responded that the EDA is the sponsor.

Pam Bales stated that materials need to be sent to Board members that were unable to attend the entire meeting so they can catch up. Linda Morse stated that at the next meeting we need to ensure that high priority items are addressed early as after hour two of the meeting many members have to drop off the call.

Christy stated that Stephanie Peterson requested a list of all the items that are needed by the organization and for the interim position. Stephanie Peterson stated that she thinks she can help temporarily, but that even if she does not work as interim, she wants to find more ways for the MPO and FHRC to work together more. Stephanie Peterson stated that the MPO and FHRC would not combine but would stay as two independent organizations. Christy reiterated that point and that there may be opportunity for shared resources.

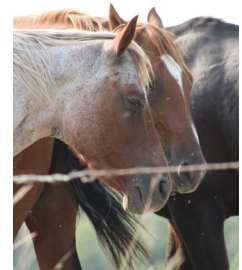
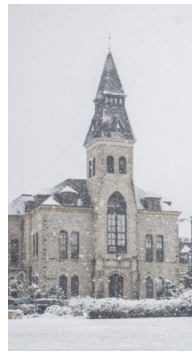
8. Community Updates

Round Table

9. Adjournment

Richard Weixelman, President

Next meeting is November 30, 2021, at 8:00 a.m. via Zoom.



Flint Hills Economic Development District Plan:

Our Strategy-Driven Plan for Regional Economic Development

Serving Chase, Geary, Lyon, Morris, Pottawatomie, Riley, and Wabaunsee Counties

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Flint Hills Regional Council
PO Box 514
Odgen, KS, 66517
www.flinthillsregion.org



This plan was led by the Flint Hills Regional Council with financial investment from the U.S. Economic Development Administration.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The Flint Hills Region is a dynamic region with a commitment to building a better future for our residents and businesses. Home to world-class assets such as Fort Riley, Kansas State University, Emporia State University, and the new National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility, the Flint Hills Region is poised to become an even more competitive destination for jobs and talent. Even with our impressive assets, the Flint Hills must continue to evolve and improve to better compete in the changed economic landscape of the modern economy and post-COVID-19 economy. In service to this goal, leaders throughout our region initiated a series of community and economic development planning processes to create a consensus-based vision for the next five years and beyond.

Acknowledgments

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Pottawatomie County Commission

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Member

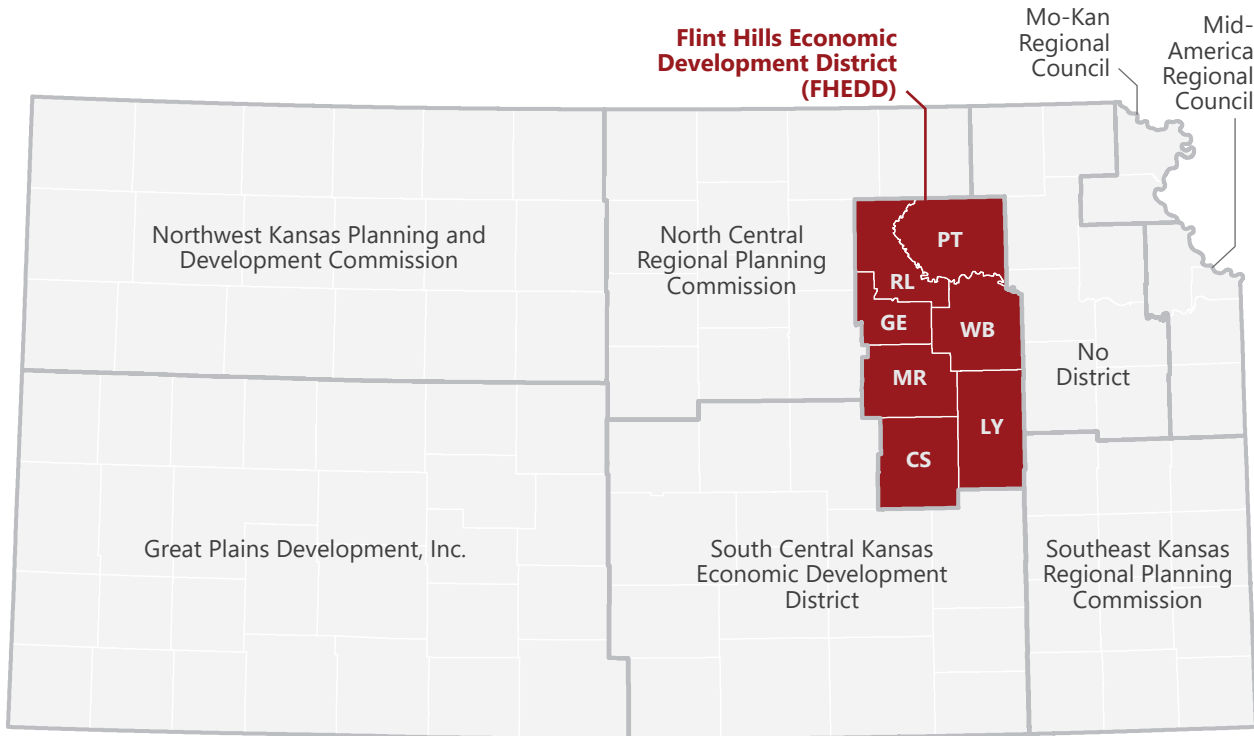
Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD)

The Flint Hills Economic Development District is our region's most valuable designation.

Established in 2014, the Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD) provides access to millions of dollars through the Economic Development Administration. The Flint Hills Regional Council (FHRC) is the organization that serves as the administrator of the FHEDD. No other entity is positioned like FHRC to apply for invitation-only/non-competitive funding to support regional economic development efforts that serve Chase, Geary, Lyon, Morris, Pottawatomie, Riley, and Wabaunsee counties.

▼ Figure 1.1. Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD)

The area shown in red outlines the FHEDD led by the FHRC in comparison to other Districts within the State of Kansas.



Flint Hills Regional Council (FHRC)

Your Mission is FHRC's Mission

FHRC exists to support the facilitation of collaborative efforts that bring mutual benefit to the region. Industry markets, workforce, healthcare, emergency services, and environmental issues do not stop at jurisdictional boundaries. These issues

require cooperation and coordination between communities. FHRC provides grant, planning, and technical assistance to member jurisdictions.

Active Grants and Projects

Community Economic Adjustment Assistance for Compatible Use and Joint Land Use Studies

The U.S. Department of Defense Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC) supports the implementation of the Flint Hills/Fort Riley Joint Land Use Study. The OLDCC provides funding assistance for community, economic development, and resiliency initiatives. Most recently, OLDCC and FHRC funded a multi-jurisdictional Military Infrastructure Resiliency Analysis, Green Valley Transportation Plan, Junction City housing condition assessment, Unmanned Aircraft Corridor project, and more in support of Fort Riley's mission readiness and the surrounding communities.

EDA Partnership Planning

The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) provides funding to support FHRC staff in updating, implementing, and reporting progress of the FHEDD Plan. This funding also supports FHRC staff time to apply for grant opportunities that directly assist with plan implementation.

EDA CARES Act

The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) provides funding for eligible activities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the economic injury as a result of COVID-19. CARES-funded staff are incorporating regional recovery and resiliency strategies throughout the FHEDD Plan, developing a needs assessment system to collect and track unfunded needs, providing the public with an online tools to connect their skillset with regional job openings as a talent retention tool, conducting a regional economic impact analysis, and regional skills gap analysis.

EPA Brownfield Grant

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides environmental assessments for private property owners interested in revitalizing their commercial property, remove gas tanks, and assistance to overcome barriers preventing economic activities on site. Funding also assists with commercial district planning. This funding was most recently used in Junction City and at Plaza West in Manhattan.

NPS Regional River and Trail Plan

The National Park Service (NPS) awarded a non-monetary, technical assistance Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Program grant. This grant provides assistance to develop a Regional River and Trail Plan along the Kansas River from Junction City to Wamego, and connection to Milford Lake, Tuttle Creek, and downtowns. This project aims to generate economic activity and attract and retain talent to the region.

Regional Committee - Step Toward \$6M

The FHRC Board approved the formation of a Regional Committee to review potential projects to submit in the U.S. Department of Defense's Defense Community Infrastructure Program. The Committee, facilitated by FHRC, reviewed and assessed three potential projects and selected the Manhattan Regional Airport Runway Reconstruction Project as the most competitive to move forward. The City of Manhattan then took the lead in collaboration with Fort Riley to submit a proposal and application and was recently awarded almost \$6M to support the use of Manhattan Regional Airport by larger aircraft used by Fort Riley, Kansas State University, and other regional entities--critical to our economy.

Planning for the Future, Today



Our Vision Statement

Increase regional prosperity by being a globally competitive, business-friendly region, comprised of healthy communities that sustain a high-quality of life.



Our Regional Partners and Stakeholders Represented:

- chambers of commerce
- cities and counties
- community-based foundations
- economic development organizations
- elected officials
- Fort Riley military installation
- healthcare representatives
- higher education institutions
- minority and women-owned businesses
- non-profits
- small businesses

The Purpose of the 2021 Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD) Plan

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a regional economic development plan that serves as the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) prerequisite for an official Economic Development District designation. In 2014, the Flint Hills Regional Council submitted its first CEDS. Once approved by the EDA, the FHEDD became a designated district. The FHEDD is one of many Economic Development Districts throughout Kansas and the United States (shown in *Figure 1.1*). However, our CEDS, or FHEDD Plan (as it's referred to throughout this document), is unique to our region. Our FHEDD Plan and planning process helps identify initiatives and projects that could be eligible for EDA funding. These priorities can only be identified and achieved through a locally-based, regionally-driven economic development planning and implementation process.

Every five years, Economic Development Districts throughout the United States are required to update their CEDS to maintain their EDA designation and to qualify for EDA assistance. FHRC conducted a planning process and submitted an updated Plan to EDA in 2019 to meet this five-year requirement. However, in 2020, our EDA Regional Office requested to realign the submission schedule to a 2021-2025 horizon. This FHEDD document serves as an early update to align with the new time horizon.

FHEDD Plan: Aligning Existing Economic Development Planning Efforts

FHRC took advantage of the 2021 FHEDD Plan Update opportunity to align existing economic development planning efforts of each county and to incorporate both regional and local initiatives into the plan so that commonalities may be highlighted, regional initiatives may be formed, and collaborative implementation may be sparked.

Each respective agency provided critical input and information on their priorities that strengthened our ability to identify

opportunities and initiatives, where it makes sense to work collaboratively, and at the same time support each other's individual efforts to collectively build a better future for our region.

Each county is working toward the Region's Strategic Directions already--making it easy to endorse the regional framework and strategies that each county's individual priorities fall within. These strategies are detailed in Chapter 3.

Aligning the FHEDD Plan With Existing Regional Plans

- 2014** | **The First FHEDD Plan**
The first regional seven-county economic development plan was created, which led to the formation of the FHEDD.
- 2018** | **The Greater Manhattan Project**
Supported by the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce, a group of private, public, and nonprofit leaders took steps to be proactive and understand trends negatively impacting the region. They worked to develop strategies to turn around these trends and make strides to become a more economically stable and resilient region.
- 2018** | **Region Reimagined Strategic Plan**
In 2018, the Greater Manhattan Project was re-branded to Region Reimagined. Over 250 volunteers and community stakeholders from Geary, Pottawatomie, and Riley counties fine-tuned and validated the strategies from the Greater Manhattan Project. These volunteers are continuously working to move strategies into action on economic diversification, talent attraction and retention, the built environment, quality of place, and entrepreneurialism.
- 2019** | **FHEDD Plan Update**
The FHEDD Plan was updated and submitted to the Economic Development Administration. The similarities amongst strategies from this plan and Region Reimagined are identified in *Figure 1.2*.
- 2020** | **Flint Hills Metropolitan Planning Organization: Connect 2040**
In 2020, the Flint Hills Metropolitan Planning Organization's (FHMPPO) Policy Board adopted the *Connect 2040* Plan--the region's long-range transportation plan. The partnership between FHRC and FHMPPO is crucial to access funding in support of transportation improvements within the FHMPPO's three county geographic area.
- 2021** | **Kansas Department of Commerce: Framework for Growth**
The Kansas Department of Commerce's Framework for Growth Plan provided critical information and priorities, of which FHRC worked to align regional strategies with the State's priorities.

FHEDD Plan: Aligning Existing Economic Development Planning Efforts (continued)

County and City Involvement

Chase County

The Chase County Chamber of Commerce reviewed the FHEDD Plan draft and provided feedback.

Geary County

The City of Junction City, the Junction City Chamber of Commerce, Geary County, Junction City Main Street, and several other key stakeholders contributed to the planning process providing Geary County priorities and action items. Information from prior work groups were incorporated as well.

Lyon County

The City of Emporia, Emporia Chamber of Commerce, Regional Development Association of East Central Kansas, and a Lyon County elected official reviewed and provided feedback. The Ignite Emporia Initiative aligns with the regional framework of this Plan.

Morris County

The Greater Morris County Development Corporation and the Morris County Chamber of Commerce provided a list of their priorities for incorporation into the FHEDD Plan Update. Many Morris County strategies and action items complement the Greater Morris County Development Corporation "Revised" Plan.

Pottawatomie County

Priorities from the *Pottawatomie County Economic Development Corporation (PCEDC) Implementation Plan and Plan Pottawatomie 2040 Comprehensive Plan* both align with the local and regional action items found in Chapter 3.

Riley County

Representatives from the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce, Riley County, City of Manhattan, City of Ogden, and several other key stakeholders provided feedback on the strategies and action items found within this Plan.

Wabaunsee County

In January 2021, Wabaunsee County hired a new Director of Economic Development. The new Director immediately began working with FHRC. Draft strategies were provided for review, and the Director invited FHRC to present information about the Plan Update and invited them to join the Steering Committee and assist to identify Wabaunsee County priorities and how they align with regional priorities.

Regional Partner Involvement

Representatives from Fort Riley, the Flint Hills Metropolitan Planning Organization, and many other key stakeholders reviewed and provided feedback on the FHEDD Plan. A complete list of representatives can be found in the acknowledgments section of this chapter.

▼ Figure 1.2. Strategies: 2019 FHEDD Plan vs 2018 Region Reimagined

Key elements of both regional plans are nearly identical. The difference is the level of detail.

2019 Economic Development Strategy

Key Elements:

- Regional Collaboration and Partnerships -----
- Robust Regional Workforce -----
- Regional Tourism and Branding -----
- Business Retention and Expansion -----
- Educated / Trained Workforce -----
- Population Retention and Attraction -----
- Entrepreneurship -----
- Broadband -----
- Childcare Access -----
- Medical Care Access -----
- Leadership Training -----

2018 Region Reimagined Strategic Plan

Key Elements:

- Regional Collaboration
- Talent Attraction and Retention
- Tourism / Marketing Regional Assets
- Business Attraction, Retention, and Expansion
- Connect Students/Soldiers to Businesses
- Quality of Place (To Retain and Attract Population)
- Entrepreneurship
- Broadband
- Childcare
- Healthcare / Mental Health
- Leadership Training

FHEDD Plan: A Summary of Planning Efforts

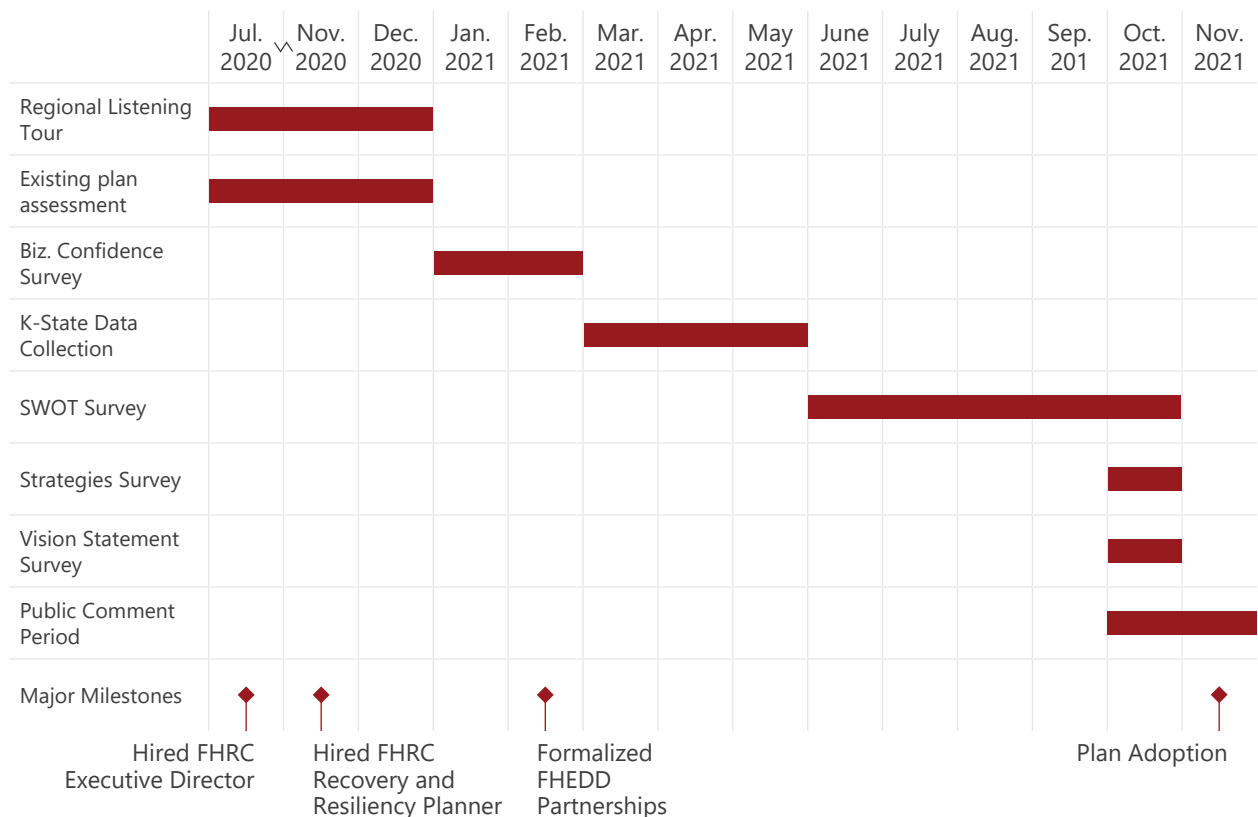
The vision, strategic directions, overarching regional strategies, and specific action items were a direct result of an extensive planning process (highlighted in *Figure 1.3*). The 2021 FHEDD Plan Update was created through a collaborative engagement with the region’s public and private partners. The process provided the region an opportunity for stakeholders and citizens to specify community priorities, assess our situation, and prioritize our shared goals.

June - December 2020: Listening and Learning About Our Region

FHRC staff launched a listening tour throughout the region to learn more about active economic development efforts. Staff met with stakeholders to discuss the 2021 FHEDD Plan Update process, its value, and the advantage of cross-pollinating existing planning efforts. This included formal presentations to City and County Commissions and Economic Development Partners.

▼ Figure 1.3. Outreach Timeline

This FHEDD Plan Update stems from over a year of collaborative and strategic planning efforts.



FHEDD Plan: A Summary of Planning Efforts (continued)

November 2020: Hiring a Recovery and Resiliency Planner

In November, FHRC hired a Recovery and Resiliency Planner to lead related efforts including the development of a recovery and resiliency plan.

January 2021: Business Confidence Survey

In January, FHRC launched a Business Confidence Survey to better understand what businesses were needing as a result of the coronavirus, or COVID-19, pandemic. An online dashboard was developed to showcase survey results both at the seven-county FHEDD scale and at the county scale.

February 2021: Formalizing Partnerships

In February, FHRC was in the process of closing out its 2016-2021 Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Partnership Planning Award that supports the implementation of the FHEDD Plan. As this award was coming to a close, FHRC determined that it would not have adequate resources to meet the 50% match requirement for a new 2021-2023 EDA Partnership Planning award. Consequently, FHRC reached out to Economic Development Partners to request cash and/or in-kind contributions. A total of six entities agreed to contribute including the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce, the City of Junction City, the Junction City Area Chamber of Commerce, the Pottawatomie County Economic

Development Corporation, the Greater Morris County Development Corporation, and the Wabaunsee County Office of Economic Development. These donations were paired with FHRC's membership dues and enabled each entity to be more engaged and supportive throughout the planning process.

March - May 2021: Data Collection and Kansas State University Applied Learning Opportunity

FHRC worked with the Kansas State University, College of Architecture, Planning and Design (APDesign) to offer an applied learning opportunity to participate in the FHEDD Plan Update. The APDesign Plan Making Course consisted of graduate students who were learning how to gather data, develop recommendations, and apply them to the development of a plan. Students analyzed FHEDD demographic and economic trends as well as issues relating to the pandemic.

June - October 2021: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Survey

FHEDD's SWOT survey was launched in June for public input. The SWOT Survey was distributed and promoted through multiple networks, boards, and posted on the FHRC website. A total of 140 SWOT survey responses have been received and a summary of responses can be found in Chapter 2. Detailed survey responses can be found in Appendix A.

FHEDD Plan: A Summary of Planning Efforts (continued)

October 2021: Proposed Strategies Survey

FHRC consolidated the extensive input received throughout the year from key stakeholders and the public. FHRC staff worked to incorporate existing priorities of each county, identify common themes, and ways to work together regionally to provide a higher level of support. The Proposed Strategy Survey was launched in October for members of the FHEDD Plan Steering Committee and the public to provide input related to the draft strategies. Final strategic directions can be found in Chapter 3.

October 2021: Expansion and Restructure of the FHEDD Steering Committee

To ensure broad input and collaboration for this Plan, FHRC restructured and expanded the FHEDD Plan Steering Committee. More than 70 stakeholders from the FHRC Board, economic development professionals, cities, counties, regional and federal stakeholders, a broad spectrum of business leaders, higher education institutions, healthcare representatives, community foundations, and nonprofits were invited. The restructured Steering Committee met to hear the results of the SWOT Survey, Proposed Strategies Survey, and to consider approving the Strategic Directions. FHEDD Steering Committee members were tasked to identify and update county-specific action item(s) and/or project(s).

October 2021: Vision Statement Survey

A vision statement survey was distributed to FHEDD Plan Steering Committee members and posted on the FHRC website for both the Steering Committee and public to be able to participate. At the end of October, the Steering Committee reviewed the updates from these assignments and were provided a draft plan to review.

October - November 2021: 30-Day Public Comment Period and Plan Adoption

The Public Comment period occurred October 29, 2021 through November 28, 2021. The draft plan was posted with a form for the public to provide comments on the FHRC website and was available in hard copy upon request. One comment was received, reviewed, and is incorporated in Appendix D. On November 30, 2021, a joint meeting was held with the FHEDD Plan Update Steering Committee and FHRC Board of Directors. The FHEDD Steering Committee approved the Plan and recommended plan adoption. The Flint Hills Regional Council Board of Directors then considered and approved this Plan for adoption.



2

Page 2-3 **Our Regional Assets,
Challenges, and Opportunities**

Chapter 2

Understanding Our Region

Understanding our current assets, challenges, and opportunities allows us to understand where we are today and how we might alter our decisions for where to go in the future. The current and historic regional data provided in this section helps lay a foundation so that we may deeply understand our region. Our regional data, combined with input from the public and stakeholders, provides a vision of how we can continue to thrive, increase resiliency, and work toward an economically diverse and stable place for individuals of all ages and walks of life to live, work, learn, and play.

Our Regional Assets, Challenges, and Opportunities

The goal of the 2021 Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD) Plan update was to develop actionable strategies that can be implemented in the Flint Hills region that will promote (and protect) economic health over the next five years. A regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) survey was launched in June 2021. The Steering Committee members and the public provided input. In looking at the SWOT data, the assets, challenges, and opportunities listed in *Figure 2.1*, and throughout the next few pages stood out in the context of existing and emerging opportunities for our region. Detailed SWOT results can be found in Appendix A.

Strengths are a region's relative competitive advantages and are often internal in nature.

Weaknesses are a region's relative competitive disadvantages and are also often internal in nature.

Opportunities are chances or occasions for regional improvement or progress and are often external in nature.

Threats are chances or occasions for negative impacts on the region or regional decline, which are also often external in nature.

FHEDD Assets

Unique Community Character and Spirit

Nature and culture collide at the Flint Hills. The Flint Hills has an unforgettable horizon that both captivates and excites artists and visitors from all walks of life. Our counties have contributed to the preservation and appreciation of the largest remaining tallgrass prairie in North America. Each county within our region also has its own unique identity that contributes to the overall vitality of the region. The southern portion of the region comprises primarily rural, agricultural communities that are built on the fabric of traditional Midwestern values. The northern portion of the region is bolstered by the educational and military institutions in the region.

This unique character and spirit is the foundation for many of our strengths. Our region has a rich military history and is home to the 1st Infantry Division, the oldest continuously serving division in the U.S. Army. We also have deep ties to the Underground Railroad—the Flint Hills Region is home to four Network to Freedom Underground Railroad locations.

Although travel and tourism may not be expressed as a target industry for our communities, it is an industry that is critical to the culture and heritage of our region. Encouraging the growth of the travel and tourism industry will contribute tremendously to our region's strengths.

▼ **Figure 2.1. Key Topics From the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Survey**



Educational Opportunity

The educational opportunity and capacity of our region is represented by 11 institutions of higher education, including four community colleges, two technical colleges, two private colleges, two state universities, and a professional training institute, creating an increasingly educated workforce. These institutions also provide our region with a strong competitive advantage of research and innovation, helping to attract and retain national assets such as Fort Riley and NBAF.

This is something our region believes we need to continue building upon in order to advance economic prosperity. Our region is also home to 15 unified school districts (USDs), although several more school district boundaries cross into the FHEDD region.

Our Strategic Location

While continuing to support the growth and success of our educational industries, we must assess the region’s competitive advantages and ability to build capacity to attract other industries. Our region is strategically positioned near the:

Animal Health Corridor

Lyon and Riley counties are located within the Kansas City Animal Health Corridor, which represents 56 percent of total worldwide animal health, diagnostics, and pet food sales. The Animal Health Corridor is home to over 300 animal health companies between Manhattan, KS and Columbia, MO--the largest concentration in the world.

▼ **Table 2.1. Regional Higher Education Opportunities**

Institution	Location
American Institute of Baking	Riley County (Manhattan)
Barton Community College	Geary County (Fort Riley & Grandview Plaza)
Butler Community College	Morris County (Council Grove)
Cloud County Community College	Geary County (Junction City)
Emporia State University	Lyon County (Emporia)
Flint Hills Technical College	Lyon County (Emporia)
Highland Community College	Pottawatomie County (Wamego)
Kansas State University	Riley County (Manhattan)
Manhattan Area Technical College	Riley County (Manhattan)
Manhattan Christian College	Riley County (Manhattan)
St. Mary’s College	Pottawatomie County (St. Mary’s)

Proximity to Fort Riley

Fort Riley Military Installation is home to soldiers and families of the 1st Infantry Division known as “The Big Red One.” Fort Riley is the largest employer in the region. Fort Riley’s FY20 Economic Impact Study reports that there are approximately 15,000 active duty service members assigned to Fort Riley with nearly 16,000 family members, 26,500 veterans and retirees, and 5,500 civilian employees who live in the region and/or work on the installation. Of those who retire from Fort Riley, around 40 percent choose to stay in Kansas, many in the Flint Hills Region. Their skills and experience are assets to the surrounding communities. Fort Riley has a \$1.8 billion direct economic impact. When applying the Congressional Budget Office economic multiplier of \$2.2 per \$1 of direct expenditures, Fort Riley’s full economic impact is more than \$4 billion on the surrounding area’s economy.

Great Plains Technology and Manufacturing Cluster

The Great Plains Technology and Manufacturing Cluster is an initiative through the U.S. Small Business Administration’s Regional Innovation Clusters program, and is hosted by the K-State Technology Development Institute. These programs exist to help small businesses thrive through economic development as well as provide resources to attract, create, and grow businesses throughout the region.

The Kansas Eighteen-County, Multi-Regional Healthcare Growth Cluster

Our Healthcare Coalition industry and municipal partners have committed to a multi-regional Healthcare Growth Cluster. Between 2018 and 2020, there was a 6 percent employment decline in local health services. This decline was magnified even further by the COVID-19 Pandemic where there was a 381 percent increase in unemployment within the local health services industries (April 2018 - April 2020). There are approximately 6,575 healthcare and social assistance sector employees within the FHEDD, while an average area of this size should have 9,400 employees. Due to these trends, the Growth Cluster is charged with addressing the shortage of healthcare workers through the creation of a robust, innovative talent pipeline--bringing together public and private sector investment to create a holistic wraparound approach to expand training capacity, and provide equitable access to both physical and mental healthcare services. To meet this charge, FHRC submitted a Build Back Better Regional Challenge concept proposal on behalf of the Growth Cluster.

National Security Crossroads

In 2021, the governors of Kansas and Missouri announced the launch of the National Security Crossroads, a multi-state initiative aimed at raising awareness and facilitating collaboration and efficiencies within national security missions. Three primary national security-related assets are located within the FHEDD (Fort Riley, National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility, and Kansas State University).

FHEDD Challenges

A Declining/Aging Population

Over the past five years, the Flint Hills Economic Development District has experienced a population decline of approximately 2.25 percent with a total population of just over 181,000. This trend is consistent across the United States and Kansas, with 80 of the 105 counties in Kansas having experienced population loss. Despite the region's overall population decline, Pottawatomie County is one of the five fastest growing counties in Kansas and is the only rural county on that list (Source: Kansas Health Institute, "A Kansas Twist — 2020 Census Data Reveal a Changing Kansas").

In 2010 the median age for our seven-county region was 34.5 years. In 2020, that number increased to 36.4 years. Though this 2.3 percent change may seem small, five of the seven counties saw an aging population during the last decade and three counties surpassed the state of Kansas' median age of 36 years by at least six years. There was a 15.7 percent increase in the elderly population (those aged 65 years and older) between 2010 and 2019 (Source: U.S. Census Bureau: Decennial Census (2020) and U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2019)).

Access to Quality Housing

Housing quality refers to the physical condition of a person's home as well as the quality of the social and physical environment in which the home is located. Several of our communities have recently undertaken the initiative of conducting housing studies to understand the lack of access to quality housing and help to create strategies to address this issue. Lyon County and Chase County recently concluded their housing study. Junction City is in the process of finalizing a housing study.

Access to Child Care

Although exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, access to child care has been a longstanding issue in Kansas and our region. The 2019 Child Care Supply Demand Report produced by Child Care Aware of Kansas noted that 38 percent of Kansas counties do not have child care centers. In this same report, Geary County was identified as a "high needs" county based on its unemployment rate, childhood poverty, and children in out of home placement.

Child care access has direct impacts on the resilience of our workforce. In a survey conducted by the Harvard Business Review, 20 percent of working parents had to leave work or reduce their work hours solely due to a lack of child care during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, lack of access to child care may push women out of the workforce entirely.

Heavy dependence on government employer

The top three industries in the FHEDD (as shown in *Table 2.1.*) are Federal Government (military), State Government (education and hospitals), and Local Government (education and hospitals). These industries coincide with our region’s top five employers: Fort Riley (military), Kansas State University and Emporia State University (state government), and USDs 475 and 383 (local government).

These three industries provide significant benefits to our regional economy. However, “heavy dependence on government employers versus local employers” has been identified as one of our top five regional threats in our SWOT analysis. Although these industries are typically perceived as reliable, they are not immune to challenges, such as declining student enrollment and base realignment and closures (BRAC).

▼ Table 2.1. Top Three Industries

Source: Emsi Burning Glass

<p>FHEDD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Government, Military • Education and Hospitals (State Government) • Education and Hospitals (Local Government) 	<p>Chase County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crop Production • Local Government (Excluding Education and Hospitals) • Nonmetallic Mineral Mining and Quarrying
<p>Geary County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Government, Military • Federal Government, Civilian • Education and Hospitals (Local Government) 	<p>Lyon County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and Hospitals (State Government) • Restaurants and Other Eating Places • Education and Hospitals (Local Government).
<p>Morris County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and Hospitals (Local Government) • Local Government, (Excluding Education and Hospitals) • Crop Production 	<p>Pottawatomie County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and Hospitals (Local Government) • General Medical and Surgical Hospitals • Local Government, (Excluding Education and Hospitals)
<p>Wabaunsee County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and Hospitals (Local Government) • Local Government, (Excluding Education and Hospitals) • Animal Slaughtering and Processing 	

FHEDD Opportunities Moving Forward

External trends and forces impacting our region can be identified through assessing our opportunities and threats. Our opportunities offer occasions for regional improvement or progress, while our threats are occasions for negative impacts on the region or regional decline; both of which are often external in nature. Our SWOT indicated that our region's top two opportunities are to grow our own labor force and to support business retention and expansion efforts. These two opportunities can help address our top two regional threats: housing affordability (more than 30 percent of household income) and lack of labor force for available jobs/mismatch of skills to job openings.

Target Industries Within the FHEDD Chase County

The five industries seeing the most growth, in terms of jobs, in Chase County are:

- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
- Manufacturing
- Transportation and Warehousing
- Other Services (except Public Administration)
- Retail Trade

Geary County

The Junction City-Geary County Economic Development Commission identified the following target industries:

- Ag and Bio-Based Products
- Defense-Based Businesses
- Manufacturing
- Robotics/Automation
- Transportation/Warehousing/Distribution
- Unmanned Aviation Systems

Lyon County

The Emporia Regional Development Association of East Central Kansas (RDA) has identified the following target industries:

- Value Added Agriculture
- Animal Health
- Manufacturing

Note: RDA recently partnered with Flint Hills Technical College and the Kansas State Technology Development Institute to submit a concept proposal to the Build Back Better Regional Challenge to build a microfactory in Emporia as part of the proposed Great Plains Microfactories Network.

Morris County

The five industries seeing the most growth, in terms of jobs, in Morris County are:

- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
- Information
- Government
- Manufacturing
- Accommodation and Food Services

Pottawatomie and Riley Counties:

The Greater Manhattan Economic Partnership and the Pottawatomie County Economic Development Corporation (Pottawatomie and Riley Counties) have identified the following target industries:

- Animal Health and Science
- Biosecurity and Food Safety
- Computer Science and Information Technology
- Crop Science, Grain Science, and Milling
- Metal Fabrication, Machinery, and Equipment

Wabaunsee County

The Office of Economic Development in Wabaunsee County identified four target industries:

- Light manufacturing
- Information technology and data
- Business support services
- Travel and tourism, venues, accommodations, and services

Relationship of the Area's Economy to the Larger Region or State

The Kansas Framework for Growth has identified five target sectors to support employment and income growth. Three of the five sectors (advanced manufacturing, distribution, logistics, and transportation, and food and agriculture) align with target industries identified throughout the FHEDD. The FHEDD is uniquely positioned to help address strategic opportunities associated with the other two industries (aerospace and professional and technical services). The five target sectors and a sample of applicable strategic opportunities for the two industries not identified in the FHEDD are as follows:

- **Advanced Manufacturing**
- **Aerospace**
 - *Strategic opportunity:* Promote cross-sectors applications such as Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS)
 - Junction City/Geary County has identified UAS as a target industry
 - *Strategic opportunity:* Expand the state's resources into aerospace industry conferences and events
 - To address our own strategic directions, we are working to increase awareness of our region's assets; the FHEDD is home to numerous convention and conference centers.
- **Distribution, Logistics, and Transportation**

- **Food and Agriculture**
- **Professional and Technical Services**
 - *Strategic opportunity:* improve air service connectivity at Kansas' major airports
 - The FHEDD is home to Manhattan Regional Airport (MHK), one of the five primary airports in Kansas. MHK was recently awarded almost \$6M to support the use of Manhattan Regional Airport by larger aircraft used by Fort Riley, Kansas State University, and other regional entities, enhancing air service connectivity.
 - *Strategic opportunity:* invest in vibrant business districts to attract employers and talent
 - FHEDD communities have a long history of investing into their downtown and business districts. Two of our communities are designated Kansas Main Streets (Emporia and Junction City) with other communities interested in also pursuing this designation.

Broadband Needs

The Kansas Framework for Growth outlines Community Assets as one of its Strategic Pillars. It is Kansas' objective to "rise to the top of Midwestern states with respect to broadband connectivity and access". Our strategic directions align with this objective, helping our region contribute to this goal through building external awareness of our

broadband assets to assist in regional and state economic development efforts. The FHEDD is home to Emporia, one of the first three gigabit fiber internet communities in Kansas, helping lead the charge in rural broadband connectivity and access.

Our SWOT survey results show that an almost equal number of respondents identify access to broadband as a regional strength as those who identify broadband access as a regional weakness. The 2015-2019 American Community Survey reports that 11.4 percent of households in the Flint Hills Region do not have access to the internet. This is slightly lower than that of Kansas, in which 14.5 percent of households are reported as not having access to the internet. In today's technology-driven society, purely having internet access is not sufficient; quality of access is key to a strong, resilient region.

Despite the broadband successes throughout the FHEDD, access to quality internet is still an issue in our region. The issue of broadband in rural America has been brought to the forefront at the local, state, and national levels as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The State of Kansas has prioritized this issue and established the Kansas Office of Broadband Development in 2020 to help ensure all Kansans have the opportunity to live, work, learn and compete in a global economy by improving universal access to quality, affordable and reliable broadband. This prioritization has led to the injection of funds into local communities to bolster not only

their access to broadband, but their access to quality broadband. More information on the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic on broadband access throughout the FHEDD is available in Appendix B.

Energy Needs

FHRC began a Military Installation Resiliency Study and Action Plan (MIR) in June 2021. This project assists in providing critical information that enables communities to make informed decisions related to resilience and to work in partnership with the Fort Riley to respond to, address, and mitigate activities that are either impairing or may impair the installation mission. Energy needs of the region are not fully analyzed and understood at this time. Current work on the MIR aims to address that issue. This will require understanding current energy resources and distribution, assessing potential hazards and threats, evaluating impacts and vulnerabilities, and developing plans to address the shortcomings. The importance of reliable energy security is generally understood in relation to Fort Riley, Kansas State University, the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF), and other critical facilities.

The production, transmission, and distribution of energy (both electricity and natural gas) are provided by commercial utility companies. There are very limited on-site and localized energy resources or storage in the event the commercial grid experiences major outage. The utility companies have been involved in major economic development such as

the NBAF. Additionally, they are aware of areas targeted for economic development that require additional energy such as the industrial area at Manhattan Regional Airport.

Cities and counties in the Flint Hill region do not have significant plans to develop distributed and advanced energy systems such as renewables, energy storage, and microgrids. This is something that the region should consider to be more resilient. The utility companies should be included in developing these plans to ensure seamless integration into the overall power grid. Despite the lack of significant plans to develop such systems in our region, some communities are beginning to embrace these options. In 2021 DSO Electric Cooperative and Today's Power, Inc. built a solar farm to supplement the use of traditional energy.

Pottawatomie County has been identified as a coal community, due to the location of the Jeffrey Energy Center (JEC). JEC is a coal-fired and natural gas power plant that has been in operation since 1980 and is slated to cease operation in 2030. It is critical that we monitor and assess what impact this closure will have on our energy needs and local economy, so we can plan for the future.

Economic and Disaster Resilience Background

One of the most critical goals for the FHEDD is to plan for and ensure the resilience of the Flint Hills region. Economic resilience includes three major attributes: the ability to recover quickly from a shock, the ability to withstand a shock, and the ability to avoid shock.

For proper integration of resilience efforts into the FHEDD Plan, EDA outlines a two-pronged approach through the incorporation of:

1. **Steady-State Initiatives:** Planning for and implementing resilience through specific goals or actions to bolster the long-term economic durability of the region
2. **Responsive Initiatives:** Establishing information networks among the various stakeholders in the region to encourage active and regular communications between the public, private, education, and non-profit sectors to collaborate on existing and potential future challenges

One of the five Strategic Directions of this Plan is Recovery, Disaster Preparedness, and Resiliency. Throughout the formulation of our Plan and based on the results of our SWOT, we have created a strategic framework of resilience-related items and their associated actions. Resilience-related actions are not confined to the Recovery, Disaster Preparedness, and Resiliency Strategic Direction, rather several cross-cutting actions and initiatives have been identified. These actions are a combination of steady-state and responsive initiatives to ensure resilience is properly integrated into our Plan.

Threats to Resilience

Shocks or disruptions can have an impact on the region's economy, society, and environment. Our SWOT analysis identified 16 regional threats which have been categorized as either an economic or societal risk. More information about these threats and their impact on our region can be found in the SWOT Section and SWOT Appendix.

Environmental Risks

Since 2000 there have been 13 Presidential Disaster Declarations for floods and 10 Presidential Disaster Declarations for tornadoes in Kansas Homeland Security Region I. The entirety of the FHEDD resides within Region I, unifying all FHEDD communities under the Kansas Region I Hazard Mitigation Plan. The alignment of these regions fosters communication between regional economic development entities/initiatives and emergency management personnel/initiatives to help mitigate environmental risks.

Resilience Throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic

In 2020, the Flint Hills Regional Council was awarded Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) grant funding through the EDA. The awarded CARES grant provided assistance to the region for COVID-19 economic recovery and resiliency efforts and is included as part of our Plan. The Flint Hills Recovery and Resiliency Plan is located in Appendix B.

▼ **Table 2.2. Economic and Societal Risks**

Economy	Society
Lack of labor force for available jobs/ mismatch of skills to job openings	Close mindedness
Heavy dependence on government employers vs. local employers	Rural population declining, loss of population overall
High taxes (property county)	Quality of place factors important to talent pools and families compared to other comparable communities competing for our talent
Limited jobs for highly educated talent & ability to pay competitive wages	Lack of inclusivity
Lack of applicable job openings for highly educated workforce	Loss of local schools in rural areas
Death of brick & mortar businesses	Lack of vision
Fluctuation of military population (Fort Riley)	
Poor roads & infrastructure	
Availability and diversity in job opportunities	
Loss of Jeffrey Energy Center	

3

- Page 3-3 **Regional Crosswalk of Strategies by County**
- Page 3-5 **List of Acronyms/Shortened Names**
- Page 3-9 **Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD)**
- Page 3-43 **Chase County**
- Page 3-47 **Geary County**
- Page 3-55 **Lyon County**
- Page 3-61 **Morris County**
- Page 3-67 **Pottawatomie County**
- Page 3-75 **Riley County**
- Page 3-87 **Wabaunsee County**

Chapter 3

Our Economic Development Strategy and Implementation

As the region assessed opportunities and challenges, the Flint Hills Regional Council's Board developed a set of criteria to make informed decisions specific to the needs of the Flint Hills.

The Fundamentals of Our Plan:

1. Business Support, Economic Diversification, and Economic Development Infrastructure
2. Talent Attraction and Retention
3. Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurialism
4. Recovery, Disaster Preparedness, and Resiliency
5. Partnerships, Funding Strategy Development, Plan Implementation

Regional Crosswalk of Strategies by County

Strategy Framework	Chase	Geary	Lyon	Morris	Pottawatomie	Riley	Wabaunsee
Strategic Direction 1: Business Support, Economic Diversification, and Economic Development Infrastructure							
1.1. Build external awareness of the region’s assets among prospect employers, investors, and corporate relocation professionals to attract new businesses and industries to our region.		X	X	X	X	X	X
1.2. Support and facilitate the retention and expansion of existing regional businesses.		X		X	X	X	X
1.3. Provide a sufficient supply of economic-growth-supportive infrastructure.		X	X	X	X	X	X
1.4. Promote the Flint Hills as a destination for cultural, historical and outdoor recreational opportunities.							X
Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention							
2.1. Continue to enhance the capacity and productivity of the region’s pre-K to 20 educational institutions and other training programs geared to enhance employability skills of the emerging, transitional and current workforce.		X	X	X	X	X	X
2.2. Increase the number of recent graduates remaining in our region to live and work.		X					X
2.3. Provide support to transitioning soldiers leaving the military-- helping to make connections to employment, education, and/ or social networks so they make our region their home.		X	X				X
2.4. Expand medical education capacity, increase support for mental health services, increase access to services in rural communities and improve health outcomes throughout the FHEDD.			X	X		X	X
2.5. Improve the attraction and retention of talent to the region.		X		X		X	X
2.6. Construct and rehabilitate diverse, high-quality, and suitable housing for regional labor force sustainability.	X	X	X	X	X	X	
2.7. Provide quality of place environments and amenities that enhance community, appeal to and attract professionals across all economic sectors, and enhance tourism.	X	X		X	X	X	X
2.8. Develop long-term programs designed to enhance partnerships between business, education and training officials to enhance the availability, quality and characteristics of the current and future workforce.			X				

Regional Crosswalk of Strategies by County (continued)

Strategy Framework	Chase	Geary	Lyon	Morris	Pottawatomie	Riley	Wabaunsee
Strategic Direction 3: Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurialism							
3.1. Grow and diversify the Innovation Ecosystem throughout the Region.	X		X			X	
3.2. Enhance support for entrepreneurs of all ages.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Strategic Direction 4: Recovery, Disaster Preparedness, and Resiliency							
4.1. Identify and support efforts that assist in creating a more resilient, sustainable region.(responsive)		X			X	X	X
4.2. Assist with implementation and updates, as necessary, of Kansas Region I Hazard Mitigation Plan. (responsive)							
4.3. Analyze the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through an economic impact study to better understand how we can be more resilient in the future. (steady-state)							
Strategic Direction 5: Partnerships, Funding Strategy Development, Plan Implementation							
5.1. Create partnerships, leverage resources and obtain grant funding to move priorities forward.		X		X	X	X	X
5.2. Support the FHRC in their role to administer the Flint Hills Economic Development District through plan updates, coordination of plan implementation, and tracking and reporting implementation progress.							
5.3. Utilize the regional needs assessment system for identified unfunded needs so that FHRC and regional partners can assist in developing funding strategies.							
5.4. Communicate Plan Progress.							

List of Acronyms/Shortened Names

County	Acronym/Shortened Name	Name
General	ATA Bus	Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency
General	Broadband Providers	Broadband Providers
General	Community Care	Community Care Network of Kansas
General	CORI	Center on Rural Innovation
General	CrossWinds	CrossWinds Counseling & Wellness
General	CVB	Local Convention and Visitor Bureau
General	EcoDevo Orgs	Economic Development Organizations
General	EDA	U.S. Economic Development Administration
General	EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
General	FABA	Flint Hills Area Builders Association
General	Fed. Agencies	Federal Agencies
General	FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
General	FH Healthcare Consortium	Flint Hills Regional Healthcare Consortium
General	FH Tourism Coalition	Flint Hills Tourism Coalition
General	FHAR	Flint Hills Association of REALTORS
General	FHMPO	Flint Hills Metropolitan Planning Organization
General	FHRC	Flint Hills Regional Council
General	FHTC	Flint Hills Technical College
General	FHWC	Flint Hills Wellness Coalition
General	Fort Riley SFL-TAP	The Soldier for Life – Transition Assistance Program
General	GMEP	Greater Manhattan Economic Partnership
General	HEAL	Historic Economic Asset Lifeline
General	Health Dept.	Health Department
General	Higher Ed.	Higher Education Institutions
General	Historical Society	Kansas Historical Society
General	HRMN	Human Resource Management Network
General	KAC	Kansas Association of Counties
General	KDC	Kansas Department of Commerce
General	KDC ORP	Kansas Department of Commerce Office of Rural Prosperity
General	KDEM	Kansas Division of Emergency Management
General	KDHE	Kansas Department of Health and Environment

List of Acronyms/Shortened Names (continued)

County	Acronym/Shortened Name	Name
General	KDOT	Kansas Department of Transportation
General	KDWPT	Kansas Wildlife, Parks & Tourism
General	Konza	Konza Prairie Community Health Center
General	KS Sampler	Kansas Sampler Foundation
General	KSDE	Kansas State Department of Education
General	K-State	Kansas State University
General	K-State Center for Entrepreneur.	Kansas State University's Center for the Advancement of Entrepreneurship
General	K-State Extension	Kansas State University's Research and Extension
General	K-State TDI	Kansas State University's Technology Development Institute
General	KU	University of Kansas
General	KU Med	University of Kansas Medical Center
General	Main Street	Local Main Street Group
General	NAMI	National Alliance on Mental Illness
General	NBAF	National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility
General	NCFHAAA	North Central-Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging, Inc.
General	NEK-CAP	Northeast Kansas Community Action Program
General	NetWork KS	NetWork Kansas
General	Non-Profit	Non-Profit Partner
General	NPS	U.S. National Park Service
General	Pawnee	Pawnee Mental Health Services
General	PRIDE Group	Kansas PRIDE Group
General	Regional Infra. Committee	Regional Infrastructure Committee
General	RWD	Rural Water District
General	SBA	U.S. Small Business Administration
General	SBDC	Small Business Development Centers
General	SCORE	U.S. Small Business Administration SCORE
General	Spark	Spark Manhattan
General	Startup MHK	Startup MHK
General	USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
General	USD	Unified School District
General	USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

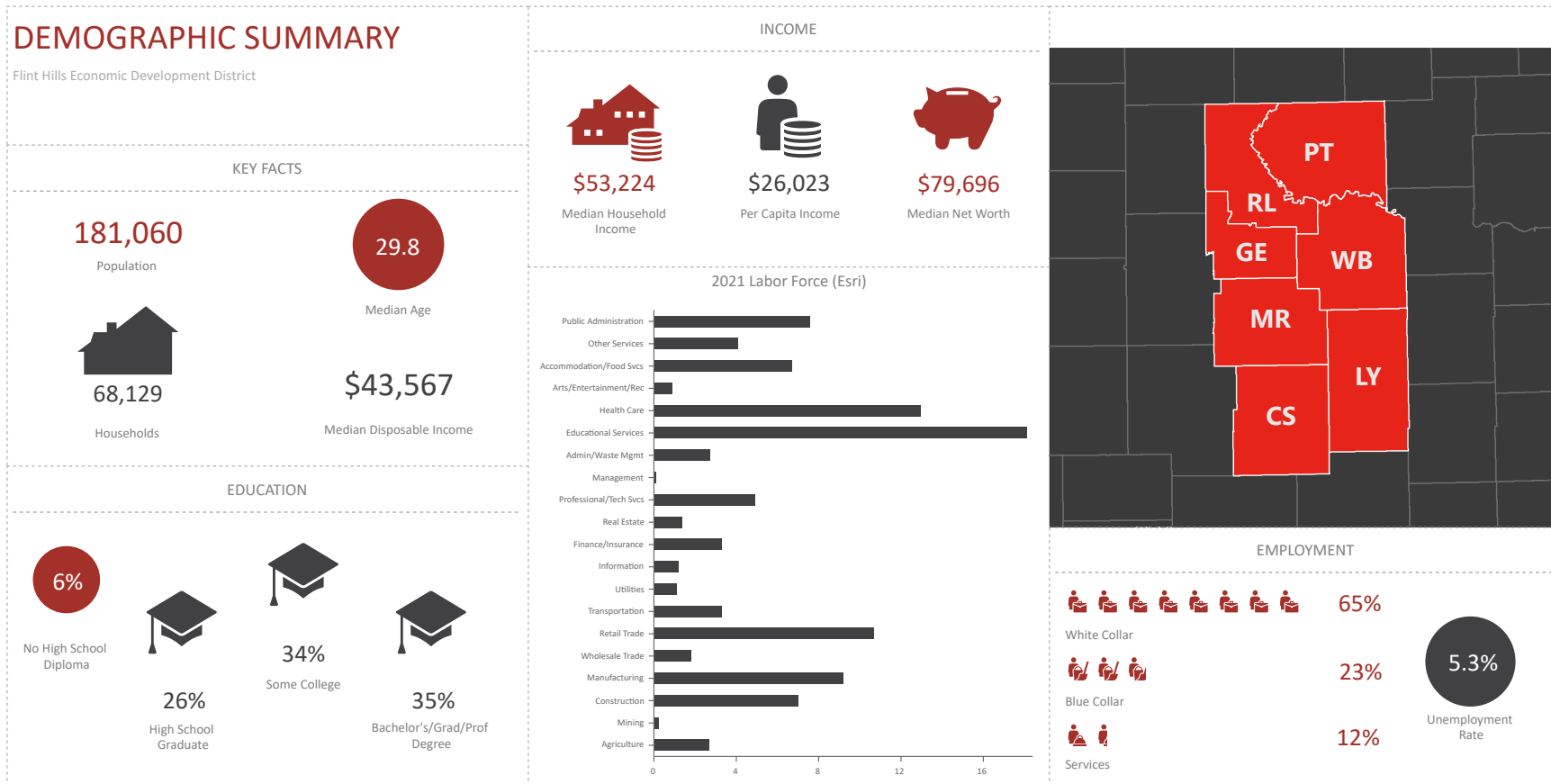
List of Acronyms/Shortened Name (continued)

County	Acronym/Shortened Name	Name
General	Utility Providers	Utility Providers
General	Via Christi	Ascension Via Christi
General	WSU	Wichita State University
General	YP	Young Professionals
Geary	Bramlage Library	Dorothy Bramlage Public Library
Geary	Geary Food Pantry	Geary County Food Pantry
Geary	JCGC EDC	Junction City Geary County Economic Development Commission
Geary	Junction City	City of Junction City
Geary	Play JC	Quality Play for All / Play JC
Lyon	BNSF	BNSF Railway
Lyon	Child Care Aware	Child Care Aware of Eastern Kansas
Lyon	Emporia	City of Emporia
Lyon	ESU	Emporia State University
Lyon	FH Community Health	Flint Hills Community Health Center
Lyon	Literacy First	Literacy First in Emporia
Lyon	Newman	Newman Regional Health
Lyon	RDA	Regional Development Association
Lyon	Trussler	Trussler Business Center
Morris	Community Arts Council	Community Arts Council Of Council Grove
Morris	Council Grove	City of Council Grove
Morris	Council Grove EcoDevo	Council Grove Economic Development Committee
Morris	Dwight CDC	Dwight Community Development Corporation
Morris	GMDC	Greater Morris County Development Corporation
Morris	TCT	TCT
Pottawatomie	ACT WRC	ACT Work Ready Communities
Pottawatomie	Blue Township	Blue Township
Pottawatomie	PCEDC	Pottawatomie County Economic Development Corporation
Pottawatomie	Wamego	City of Wamego
Riley	KBED	Manhattan Knowledge Based Economic Development
Riley	Manhattan	City of Manhattan
Riley	Ogden	City of Ogden

List of Acronyms/Shortened Name (continued)

County	Acronym/Shortened Name	Name
Riley	RCPD	Riley County Police Department
Riley	Stormont Vail	Stormont Vail Health
Wabaunsee	OED	Office of Economic Development (Wabaunsee)
Wabaunsee	PWRLS	Pottawatomie-Wabaunsee Regional Library System

Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD)



Source: This infographic contains data provided by Esri, Esri. The vintage of the data is 2021, 2026.

Strategic Direction 1: Business Support, Economic Diversification, and Economic Development Infrastructure

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners	
1.1. Build external awareness of the region's assets among prospect employers, investors, and corporate relocation professionals to attract new businesses and industries to our region.	1.1.1. Develop a competitive marketing & communication program.	a. Leverage new intra-regional agreements among economic development entities to partner on external promotion efforts.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EcoDevo Orgs Stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers GMEP 	
		b. Leverage the Target Sector Analysis to prioritize business sectors for promotion and pursuit.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EcoDevo Orgs EDCs GMEP
		c. Create a best-in-class regional economic development website and e-communications tools, referencing and linking to local community information.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EcoDevo Orgs Chambers EDCs GMEP
		d. Identify high-value markets for prospecting trips and conference attendance.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EcoDevo Orgs Chambers EDCs GMEP
		e. Fully leverage state economic development resources and travel opportunities.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EcoDevo Orgs Chambers EDCs GMEP
	1.1.2. Conduct inbound marketing for site selectors and corporate relocation professionals.	a. Identify a group of top site location professionals to invite for inbound visits. Tie visits to a high-profile events.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EcoDevo Orgs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers 	
	1.1.3. Leverage regional meetings and conferences as marketing opportunities.	a. Partner with tourism officials to identify strategies for incorporating media, messaging, and materials promoting region into attendees' meeting packets and sessions.	3-4 years / Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers GMEP 	
		b. Host planned and programmed excursions for conference attendees to destinations that build awareness of regional assets and amenities.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers CVB
	1.1.4. Invest in a robust public relations (PR) program.	a. Develop internal PR capacity or contract with a proven outside PR firm.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers CVB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers GMEP 	

Strategic Direction 1: Business Support, Economic Diversification, and Economic Development Infrastructure (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
1.1. Build external awareness of the region's assets among prospect employers, investors, and corporate relocation professionals to attract new businesses and industries to our region.	1.1.4. Invest in a robust public relations (PR) program.	b. Communicate our region's story to the world promoting who we are and what makes our region different than any other.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • CVB • EcoDevo Orgs • GMEP • Main Street • Businesses • Cities • Counties • FHRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing Stakeholders
		c. Incorporate earned media placements and high rankings on "best of" lists into paid and owned media marketing.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • CVB • EcoDevo Orgs • GMEP • Main Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties
	1.1.5. Cultivate networks of K-State and Emporia State researchers and alumni to inform external marketing efforts	a. Develop more focused outreach to faculty and on-campus researchers to identify national and international firms in their networks that could become corporate attraction prospects.	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EcoDevo Orgs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • Higher Ed. • KBED
		b. Assess opportunities to attract non-local K-State/ Emporia State alumni companies or firms in their networks to region.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EcoDevo Orgs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers, • Higher Ed. • Alumni Association • KBED
		c. Leverage faculty and alumni relationships to feed external marketing programs and inform efforts to develop and attract high-profile meetings and conferences to region.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EcoDevo Orgs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • Higher Ed. • KBED

Strategic Direction 1: Business Support, Economic Diversification, and Economic Development Infrastructure (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
1.1. Build external awareness of the region's assets among prospect employers, investors, and corporate relocation professionals to attract new businesses and industries to our region.	1.1.6. Research high-value strategies to pursue foreign direct investment (FDI).	a. Pursue discussions with K-State/Emporia State experts, state export officials, or organizations like the Brookings Institution to develop a strategy for increasing FDI into region.	5+ years	• EcoDevo Orgs	• Chambers, • Higher Ed. • GMEP • KBED • SBDC
		b. Incorporate export support strategies into existing business programming, economic gardening efforts, and market-development activities for small business and startup enterprises.		• EcoDevo Orgs • SBDC	• Chambers, • Higher Ed. • GMEP • KBED
	1.1.7. Continue attracting local offices of top companies from adjacent regions.	a. Continue to leverage partnerships to solicit a local presence of top external firms.	3-4 years	• EcoDevo Orgs	• Chambers • GMEP
		b. Determine effective strategies to increase the commitment of personnel and programs of relocated corporate personnel.		• EcoDevo Orgs	• Chambers • GMEP
		c. Coordinate efforts to provide "landing pads" for companies seeking proximity to K-State / Emporia State research talent and proximity to Fort Riley, NBAF, and other large institutions / agencies.		• EcoDevo Orgs	• Chambers • Cities • Counties • GMEP • Higher Ed.
	1.1.8. Identify and pursue additional opportunities to recruit government facilities and research centers.	a. Consistently monitor all state and federal requests for proposals (RFPs) for new facilities or relocations	3-4 years	• EcoDevo Orgs	• Chambers • GMEP
		b. Incorporate government relocation opportunities into marketing and prospecting programs		• EcoDevo Orgs	• Chambers • GMEP
		c. Leverage K-State faculty and alumni networks to also identify government relocation, expansion, and development prospects		• EcoDevo Orgs	• Chambers • GMEP
		d. Capitalize on reported or proactive opportunities to expand military and civilian personnel, program, technology, and facilities capacity		• EcoDevo Orgs	• Chambers • Fort Riley • Legislators • Military Relat. Committees

Strategic Direction 1: Business Support, Economic Diversification, and Economic Development Infrastructure (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners	
1.1. Build external awareness of the region's assets among prospect employers, investors, and corporate relocation professionals to attract new businesses and industries to our region.	1.1.9. Enhance marketing tools, training and support to local businesses, higher education institutions, USDs, and workforce agencies.	a. Promote awareness of black-owned businesses through programs and partnerships with publications and other community organizations.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EcoDevo Orgs Black Entrep. of the Flint Hills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVBs Chambers GMEP 	
		b. Support marketing efforts of identified target industries, as well as, our incredible K-12 USDs, higher education institutions, and employment opportunities the region offers.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher Ed. KDC NetWork KS Private Partners USDs 	
1.2. Support and facilitate the retention and expansion of existing regional businesses.	1.2.1. Formalize an expanded business retention and expansion (BRE) program.	a. Develop formal tools, processes, and protocols for conducting targeted visits with the region's largest employers based on high-priority sectors identified in the Target Sector Analysis.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EcoDevo Orgs GMEP 	-	
		b. Structure BRE discussions around key competitive issues affecting companies' sustainability and growth prospects.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EcoDevo Orgs GMEP 	-
		c. Record full visit details in a customer resource management (CRM) database, including efforts to follow up on identified concerns and opportunities.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EcoDevo Orgs GMEP 	-
		d. Leverage BRE visits to identify corporate relocation prospects.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EcoDevo Orgs GMEP 	-
		e. Continue working with and providing networking opportunities for businesses of all sizes that invest in economic development membership.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers EcoDevo Orgs Main Street 	-
		f. Conduct an annual follow-up Business Confidence Survey in January 2022 (responsive).			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses Chambers Cities Counties EDCs Main Street

Strategic Direction 1: Business Support, Economic Diversification, and Economic Development Infrastructure (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
1.2. Support and facilitate the retention and expansion of existing regional businesses.	1.2.1. Formalize an expanded business retention and expansion (BRE) program.	g. Provide access to business training opportunities (steady-state).	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers EcoDevo Orgs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black Entrep. of the Flint Hills FHRC Main Street SBDC SPARK
	1.2.2. Utilize existing economic gardening programs.	a. Leverage NetWork Kansas Economic Gardening Network as template for standalone efforts in the region.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers EcoDevo Orgs NetWork KS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses Cities Counties Main Street
		b. Support the program's research, market development, and business planning components.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers EcoDevo Orgs NetWork KS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses
		c. Utilize and market economic gardening tools to identify local businesses for next-level advancement by helping them export to new national and international markets by improving their access to customers and suppliers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers EcoDevo Orgs NetWork KS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses
1.3. Provide a sufficient supply of economic-growth-supportive infrastructure.	1.3.1. Leverage ongoing comprehensive and land use planning to direct infrastructure development.	a. Create a regional infrastructure committee or joint meeting/work session to discuss infrastructure needs	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities Counties FHEDD Steering Com. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHMPO FHRC
		b. Prioritize investment in infrastructure to support economic development--identifying areas in which infrastructure is currently limiting economic development.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities Counties EcoDevo Orgs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHRC FHEDD Steering Com.
		c. Work across city and county lines to ensure that planning and project-development is effectively coordinated		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities Counties FHRC FHEDD Steering Com. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EcoDevo Orgs GMEP

Strategic Direction 1: Business Support, Economic Diversification, and Economic Development Infrastructure (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
1.3. Provide a sufficient supply of economic-growth-supportive infrastructure.	1.3.1. Leverage ongoing comprehensive and land use planning to direct infrastructure development.	d. Lead and/or assist with applying for funding and implementation of projects that support military infrastructure resiliency and overall infrastructure throughout the Flint Hills Economic Development District.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties • FHRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FHEDD Steering Com. • Fort Riley
	1.3.2. Prepare shovel-ready development sites.	a. Conduct a regional development site capacity analysis to determine current and projected needs.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties • EcoDevo Orgs • GMEP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDA • KDC • FHEDD Steering Com. • FHRC
		b. Develop new and expanded industrial parks.			
		c. Develop a robust infrastructure network to provide high-quality business and industrial parks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities, Counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EcoDevo Orgs • GMEP • Private Partners 	
		d. Enhance infrastructure needed to support current residents and growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities, Counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EcoDevo Orgs • Private Partners 	
	1.3.3. Make broadband and cellular connectivity available for data-intensive businesses and users.	a. Assess existing connectivity capacities and deficits.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband Providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties • KDC • KU • Legislators

Strategic Direction 1: Business Support, Economic Diversification, and Economic Development Infrastructure (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners	
1.3. Provide a sufficient supply of economic-growth-supportive infrastructure.	1.3.3. Make broadband and cellular connectivity available for data-intensive businesses and users.	b. Explore the possibility of a public-private cost-sharing partnership to capitalize on opportunities to expand fiber and cellular infrastructure in a coordinated manner	1-2 years		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadband Providers Cities Counties FHRC Legislators 	
		c. Implement fiber enhancements and extensions based on prioritized deficit data.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadband Providers Cities Counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDA KDC
		d. Explore viable strategies to implement capacity enhancements, including the potential to incentivize service from a private or non-profit provider, link to institutional fiber trunk lines, or publicly fund comprehensive broadband connectivity.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadband Providers Cities Counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDA KDC
		e. Engage service providers to assess the COVID-related broadband service expansions and identify remaining gaps in service or opportunities to improve quality of service. (responsive)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadband Providers Cities Counties 	-
		f. Support and assist with applying for funding for the deployment of rural broadband service within the region.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities Counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EcoDevo Orgs FHRC
1.4. Promote the Flint Hills as a destination for cultural, historical and outdoor recreational opportunities.	1.4.1. Develop a Flint Hills Visitor Center.	a. Establish a Flint Hills Visitor Center or Gateway to the Flint Hills facility with interactive features that serves as a marketing tool for community assets and tourist destinations throughout the Flint Hills--continuing the discussion among the three communities and/or other communities that have expressed interest and actively taken steps to provide a resource to benefit the region.	1-2 years	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers CVBs Developers EDA KDC FHEDD Steering Com. Non-Profits 	

Strategic Direction 1: Business Support, Economic Diversification, and Economic Development Infrastructure (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
1.4. Promote the Flint Hills as a destination for cultural, historical and outdoor recreational opportunities.	1.4.1. Develop a Flint Hills Visitor Center.	b. As an option, explore partnering with Wabaunsee County developer at I70, Exit 328, as developer is offering to provide the site for a Gateway to the Flint Hills facility, walking trail and other entertainment features to serve as a marketing tool for all Flint Hills tourism destinations and is eager to partner with other regional stakeholders to begin the visioning process and explore what may be possible in partnership with the region. Junction City & Manhattan have also explored this concept, and should any community bring forward a proposal, it should be discussed and explored further to determine which site is most probable to make forward progress. Funding for the project has not been identified to-date. Water and sewer is available and adequate for the Wabaunsee proposed site, which therefore may become the most feasible location should a funding strategy be identified to move the project forward.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVBs • Developers • FHEDD • Steering Com. • Non-Profits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • CVBs • Developers • EcoDevo Orgs • KDC • Non-Profits • Private Partners • FH Tourism Coalition
		c. Improved wayfinding signage and web visibility once site location is confirmed and funding is identified.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVBs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EcoDevo Orgs • FHRC
	1.4.2. Preserve appropriate natural, historical and cultural sites and structures.	a. Develop a coalition of mutually-supportive partners across the travel, tourism and hospitality industry; preserve natural, historical, and cultural sites and structures.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archaeological Societies • CVBs • FH Tourism Coalition • Historic Preservation Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native Stone Scenic Byway • Tuttle Creek • Milford Lake • Kansas River, • Neosho River, • Cottonwood River • U.S. Tallgrass Prairie Preserve • Flint Hills Trails State Park • FHRC

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.1. Continue to enhance the capacity and productivity of the region's pre-K to 20 educational institutions and other training programs geared to enhance employability skills of the emerging, transitional and current workforce.	2.1.1. Support public and private early childhood programming in support of businesses and education.	b. Implement strategies that lead to long-term programming and solutions that assist in increasing the quantity of trained and licensed childcare providers to ensure families have both quality and affordable childcare options in communities throughout the FHEDD District.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Care Task Force • USD 320 Early Childhood Coalition • NEK-CAP • Higher Ed. • Health Dept. • Private Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • Child Care Aware
		c. Explore the possibility of mirroring the pilot childcare training program currently being implemented by Childcare Aware of Eastern Kansas (in Topeka) to offer additional short-term training opportunities in strategic locations throughout the Flint Hills Economic Development District. Utilize Childcare Aware of Eastern Kansas data to determine the highest priority locations based on need.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FHEDD Steering Com. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Care Aware
		d. Obtain childcare capacity data from Childcare Aware of Eastern Kansas, and inventory demand for programming, and usage rates to determine if additional funding or programmatic capacity is necessary (Including pre-natal and post-pregnancy support, well-child programs, affordable childcare, pre-kindergarten programs, food security efforts, and parental education programs).		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Care Task Force • USD 320 Early Childhood Coalition • NEK-CAP • Higher Ed. • Health Dept. • Private Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -
	2.1.2. Optimize the Classroom-to-Career Partnership Program (4th grade) 2.1.2. Optimize the Classroom-to-Career Partnership Program (4th grade)	a. Continue this program and regularly assess whether this program should continue for 4th grade and/or if a program specifically for high school students should be developed and implemented to introduce career options early and pathways to obtain the training necessary to pursue these options. (Saint Joseph, Missouri has an excellent program that could serve as a model).	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers, • Private Partners • Public Partners • USDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses • EcoDevo Orgs • Higher Ed.

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.1. Continue to enhance the capacity and productivity of the region's pre-K to 20 educational institutions and other training programs geared to enhance employability skills of the emerging, transitional and current workforce.	2.1.3. Support relevant career pathways and area projects such as Career Academy projects through the USDs to address regional workforce needs.	a. Expand career pathway programs from USD to community college/technical college to university that integrate education and training to ensure student success in the workplace and meet the needs of the regional economy. Work toward developing a career academy in partnership with higher education institutions--enabling dual credit opportunities, conduct feasibility studies, and identify funding strategies to move the project forward.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher Ed. USDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers EcoDevo Orgs FHRC
		b. Focus academy and career pathways programs in areas that are in high demand and meet the needs of the region, including healthcare, bio-science, technology, etc.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher Ed. USDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers EcoDevo Orgs FHRC
		c. Establish a "school within a school" or standalone campus for the Academy with eligibility for high school students in local USDs.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher Ed. USDs 	-
	2.1.4. Provide support to regional talent councils including but not limited to JMCI.	a. Optimize the development, production, and/or delivery of educational support programs and services and leverage involvement and expertise of youth membership and support organizations.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers Fort Riley Higher Ed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HRMN USDs Youth Organizations
		b. Continue to work with administrators, program officers, curriculum committees, and other representatives from all higher educational institutions in the region to encourage course and degree development are informed by business community skills gap analysis data and priorities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHRC Higher Ed.
		c. Leverage the necessary resources to customize programs to effectively prepare graduates at all degree levels for employment at NBAF.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher Ed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NBAF

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
<p>2.1. Continue to enhance the capacity and productivity of the region's pre-K to 20 educational institutions and other training programs geared to enhance employability skills of the emerging, transitional and current workforce.</p>	<p>2.1.4. Provide support to regional talent councils including but not limited to JMCI.</p>	<p>d. Host regularly scheduled, facilitated meetings with MATC, FHTC, K-State & Emporia State Career Center Directors and other key leaders seeking information on the most impactful support that could be provided by the business, non-profit, and philanthropic communities.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHEDD Steering Com. Higher Ed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers, EcoDevo Orgs
	<p>2.1.6. Work to enhance existing programs and facilities and develop critical new capacity.</p>	<p>a. Complete a regional Skills Gap Analysis to quantitatively identify how effectively the region is producing the talent necessary to meet the region's future occupational demand (steady-state) (FHRC EDA CARES funded - active project 2021-2022).</p>	<p>1-2 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EcoDevo Orgs Heartland Works Higher Ed. USDs
		<p>b. Soft skills training to improve the employability of the local workforce.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers Fort Riley Higher Ed. KANSAS-WORKS SBDC USDs 	<p>-</p>
		<p>c. Target other programming focused on Fort Riley soldiers and spouses. Consider utilizing the Soliders for Life programming, including the KEEP transitioning soldier community tours, and rotate tours throughout the Flint Hills Economic Development District.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers EcoDevo Orgs Military Relations Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fort Riley SFL-TAP
		<p>d. Create an academic triage program for students who have been separated from a four-year college or university due to poor academic standing. This would provide a second chance to put them on track toward earning an academic credential at a two year college or technical school.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDCs Higher Ed. 	<p>-</p>
		<p>e. Promote work-ready programs and training opportunities.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDCs HRMN PCEDC

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.2. Increase the number of recent graduates remaining in our region to live and work.	2.2.1. Better embed college students in the community.	a. Design a coordinated, multi-pronged initiative to anchor K-State and Emporia State students in the region.	1-2 years / Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers Higher Ed. HRMN YP 	-
		b. Foster deliberate and consistent efforts to connect students with volunteer opportunities, organizational membership, and service on public and private committees and councils.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers CVBs Higher Ed. HRMN YP 	-
		c. Consider opportunities to offer student loan forgiveness or housing subsidies to incentivize graduate residency for an established period.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Partners Higher Ed. 	-
		d. Explore and develop creative solutions to integrate students into the fabric of the community.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers CVBs Higher Ed. 	-
		e. Better integrate students into business and entrepreneurial networks, including representation on the boards of business organizations and inclusion in the Young Professionals program. Coordinate efforts to encourage and/or require students to participate in applied-learning opportunities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Million Cups Chambers EcoDevo Orgs Spark 	-
		f. Continue to implement the micro-internship program and rejuvenate and expand the Talent Consortium--providing all universities and colleges within the Flint Hills Economic Development District a mechanism to coordinate initiatives that are mutually beneficial.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher Ed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers FHEDD Steering Com. Kansas Board of Regents

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.3. Provide support to transitioning soldiers leaving the military--helping to make connections to employment, education, and/or social networks so they make our region their home.	2.3.1. Continue enhancing efforts to involve & integrate Fort Riley / National Guard soldiers in the community.	a. Continue to leverage the Military Relations Committee as the community's principal vehicle to plan, coordinate, and execute programming and activities that strengthen the relationship between Fort Riley and the Region.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber • Military Liaisons 	-
		b. Support existing Junction City Adopt a Military Family program and consider expanding throughout the region to welcome new soldiers into the region, (if desired) and provide support and connections during soldiers' deployments		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Riley • Junction City 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers
		c. Explore and develop creative solutions to integrate soldiers into the fabric of the community. (CVBs coordination with ATA Bus to provide transit services to community festivals throughout the region; expansion of mentoring and networking opportunities)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • Cities • CVBs • Fort Riley • Military Liaisons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • Non-Profits
		d. Implement projects and activities that demonstrates that the region supports Fort Riley soldiers.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • Cities • CVBs • Fort Riley • Military Liaisons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses • Chambers • Counties • Business
		e. Identify training needs for enlisted soldiers to receive training locally.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Riley • Higher Ed. 	-
		f. Partner with local colleges to provide life skills training and soft skill training for transitioning soldiers.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Riley • Higher Ed. 	-

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.3. Provide support to transitioning soldiers leaving the military--helping to make connections to employment, education, and/or social networks so they make our region their home.	2.3.2. Foster linkages between current and past soldiers and their spouses with employers.	a. Effectively promote and utilize existing employment tools such as KEEP, Military OneSource, Soldier and Family Readiness Groups, Recruit Military's Fort Riley Job Fair, career skills development programs for soldiers, the Soldier for Life Transitions Assistance Program, USO, Spousal Programs, and the SAVE Training Farm to expand job opportunities for former personnel.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers EcoDevo Orgs Military Liaisons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fort Riley
		b. Enhance efforts to connect military spouses and veterans with business internships by improving engagement of off-post employers with on-post career placement staff (6 months of sponsored employment with no cost to employer).		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers Fort Riley Military Liaisons 	-
		c. Promote entrepreneurial programming to Fort Riley personnel as potential participants.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pipeline Fellowship Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Million Cups K-State Center for Entrepreneur. Spark
2.4. Expand medical education capacity, increase support for mental health services, increase access to services in rural communities and improve health outcomes throughout the FHEDD.	2.4.1. Work with K-20 Educational Institutions to create stackable curriculum to ensure the regional medical community is adequately staffed.	a. Pursue funding opportunities to assist higher education institutions for both construction and non-construction funding necessary to expand medical education capacity throughout the Flint Hills Economic Development District. (See FHRC Build Back Better - Regional Challenge application for details)	1-2 years / Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHRC Higher Ed. USDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FH Healthcare Consortium
		b. Maximize opportunities to partner with higher education institutions to provide applied learning opportunities, while at the same time providing services to rural areas throughout the Flint Hills Economic Development District. (See FHRC Build Back Better - Regional Challenge application for details - Also see Health Outcomes Crosscutting Tactic).		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHRC K-State Pawnee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CrossWinds FH Healthcare Consortium Higher Ed.

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.4. Expand medical education capacity, increase support for mental health services, increase access to services in rural communities and improve health outcomes throughout the FHEDD.	2.4.1. Work with K-20 Educational Institutions to create stackable curriculum to ensure the regional medical community is adequately staffed.	c. Encourage career pathway programs that focus on medical occupations, including a CNA program at the high school level. (See FHRC Build Back Better - Regional Challenge application)	1-2 years / Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher Ed. USDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers EcoDevo Orgs FHRC FH Healthcare Consortium
	2.4.2. Expand capacity of mental health providers to meet the needs of our region in support of our current and future workforce.	a. Pursue opportunities to develop partnership and funding opportunities that assist to increase mental health service capacity (staff, facilities and services) throughout the Flint Hills Economic Development District (See FHRC Build Back Better - Regional Challenge application)	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHRC Pawnee Via Christi USDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CrossWinds FH Healthcare Consortium Higher Ed. NAMI
		b. Proceed with efforts to fund and develop an expanded mental health stabilization center and a behavioral intervention unit.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pawnee Via Christi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHRC Varies
		c. Support initiatives being lead by mental healthcare providers and efforts to expand training capacity.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crosswinds Pawnee Private Providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher Ed. USDs
	2.4.3. Continue partnering on efforts to expand access to healthcare service in rural communities and improve overall local health outcomes of all counties within the FHEDD.	a. Expand the Regional Healthcare Consortium based on the FHEDD boundaries and/or beyond should it make sense to do so to also align with the Pawnee Mental Health & Crosswinds geographic boundaries, and other higher education institutions as outlined in the 18-county FHRC Build Back Better - Regional Challenge application.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FH Healthcare Consortium FHRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthcare Health Depts. Higher Ed. NAMI, USDs
		b. Continue holding regular community health events to provide vulnerable populations with critical health and wellness services, information, and counsel.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FH Healthcare Consortium Health Depts. NAMI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthcare Higher Ed.

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.5. Improve the attraction and retention of talent to the region.	2.5.1. Work with K-State & Emporia State to determine how local partners can support student-recruitment efforts.	a. Customize and enhance current online and promotional materials and targeted advertising to reflect the expanded attraction focus.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers EcoDevo Orgs Higher Ed. Workforce Organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHRC
	2.5.2. Develop a targeted talent recruitment program.	a. Create a robust job placement program, connecting local, relocation and returning prospects with a local employer seeking qualified job candidates and/or interns.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers EcoDevo Orgs Higher Ed. Workforce Organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHRC
		b. Implement a “trailing spouse” program focused on identifying employment options and facilitating the hiring of the attraction prospects’ husbands and wives. Increase welcome-to-the-community efforts for the entire family to make connections.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers EcoDevo Orgs Higher Ed. HRMN Workforce Organizations 	-
		c. Outreach to the Kansas City Area Development Council (KCADC) to determine how the region can leverage its membership in the KC Animal Health Corridor to tap into extensive talent attraction programming implemented by KCADC.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers EcoDevo Orgs KCADC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GMEP KBED
	2.5.3. Continue providing concierge talent relocation services to local employers.	a. Continue offering individualized prospect management services to top local employers to introduce job candidates to community amenities and current residents with shared interests	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers 	-
		b. Promote talent relocation management services to all employers who invest in economic development programming		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers 	-
		c. Develop a regional relocation guide for recruitment and retention purposes covering the entire Flint Hills Economic Development District.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHEDD Steering Com. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers CVBs EcoDevo Orgs

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.5. Improve the attraction and retention of talent to the region.	2.5.4. Recruit talent prospects at career fairs and scheduled events at Kansas universities and those in adjacent states	a. Research and identify the highest value campuses to incorporate into regular visitation schedules.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers EcoDevo Orgs Workforce Organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher Ed.
		b. Create multi-media promotional materials to utilize at talent-attraction events.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers, Economic Development Organizations, CVBs
		c. Repeatedly follow up with all viable prospects cultivated at attraction events.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers CVBs EcoDevo Orgs
	2.5.5. Partner with tourism marketers to customize a segmented campaign-focused on talent.	a. Determine the most cost effective and impactful strategy to design a talent-directed campaign complementary to visitor-attraction programming.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVBs 	-
		b. Consider creating a "regional talent portal" tied to the talent initiative, serving as a hub for information from throughout the region, linking to a mix of interactive applications that assist to deliver creative solutions that help attract and retain students in coordination with higher education institutions. The site could include local job boards, K-State/Emporia-State,/ College sites, neighborhood information, things to do, internships and job opportunities, regional employer information, volunteer opportunities with YP and other civic and business programs, local community profiles, and other informational resources.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHEDD Steering Com. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses Chambers Cities Counties Higher Ed.
2.6. Construct and rehabilitate diverse, high-quality, and suitable housing for regional labor force sustainability.	2.6.1. Conduct housing studies based on existing infrastructure capacity (local or regional, as deemed appropriate.)	a. Conduct a series of housing conditions assessments in target areas using the same methodology throughout the region, as determined necessary.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities Counties FHRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> K-State

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.6. Construct and rehabilitate diverse, high-quality, and suitable housing for regional labor force sustainability.	2.6.1. Conduct housing studies based on existing infrastructure capacity (local or regional, as deemed appropriate.)	b. Research region's housing market to determine current needs, opportunities, and challenges to residential development.	1-2 years	• Cities • Counties	• WSU
		c. Based on housing conditions assessment and market analysis, develop and implement recommendations for each jurisdiction.		• Cities • Counties	• Various
		d. Link housing scenario assessments and recommendations to development opportunities informed by the region's existing transportation network.		• Cities • Counties	• FHMPO
	2.6.2. Optimize regulatory tools and incentives to support diverse housing development.	a. Consider supporting ongoing and future joint land use and comprehensive planning, district-level master planning, zoning and development code updates, and new overlay zoning districts that incorporate policies supporting mixed-use, mixed-income, accessory dwelling unit, live-work, and small-lot detached housing types.	3-4 years	• Cities	-
		b. Provide developer incentives for designs promoting aging-in-place, walkability, supplemental greenspace, mixed-use developments, and other best practice components.		• Cities	-
		c. Continue to educate renters on how to report safety concerns.		• Cities	• Higher Ed. • Renters
	2.6.3. Effectively implement adopted plans and studies (comprehensive plans, master plans, downtown/neighborhood plans, etc.)	a. Implement and support regional plans including the Flint Hills Economic Development District Plan, Flint Hills Transportation Plan, Flint Hills /Fort Riley Joint Land Use Study (JLUS); and Corridor Studies.	Ongoing	• FHEDD Steering Com. • FHMPO	• Bussinesses • Cities • Counties • EcoDevo Orgs • Fort Riley • Higher Ed.

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.6. Construct and rehabilitate diverse, high-quality, and suitable housing for regional labor force sustainability.	2.6.4. Launch a program to revitalize neighborhoods and commercial activity areas.	a. Develop grassroots neighborhood revitalization plans that outline strategies for neighborhood improvements that can be implemented by both the property owners and the city.	1-2 years / Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties • Habitat for Humanity • Property Owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FHRC
		b. Continue to inventory potential brownfield sites, provide assistance to commercial property owners by conducting environmental assessments and providing guidance on next steps to revitalize the property, and continue to develop area plans for commercial areas to assist property owners with environmental assessments and analyzing a series of option for improvement and/or redevelopment. In addition, continue to provide assistance to commercial property owners to properly remove abandoned gas tanks and assist to re-purpose old/vacant school buildings, courthouse, etc. for a higher and better use to assist with an alternative community and/or economic need.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties • FHRC • K-State TAB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • EcoDevo Orgs
2.7. Provide quality of place environments and amenities that enhance community, appeal to and attract professionals across all economic sectors, and enhance tourism.	2.7.1. Develop modern regulatory frameworks for regional activity centers.	a. Encourage dynamic, mixed-use, pedestrian friendly, accessible, and visually stimulating built environments for downtowns and other activity centers through development controls.	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities 	-
		b. Review examples and consider adopting a unified development ordinance (UDO) to integrate existing zoning, subdivision, and other applicable regulations to optimize human-scale development patterns throughout the region (Manhattan's UDO may be a model to consider)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities 	-

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.7. Provide quality of place environments and amenities that enhance community, appeal to and attract professionals across all economic sectors, and enhance tourism.	2.7.1. Develop modern regulatory frameworks for regional activity centers.	c. Seek to incorporate “complete streets” policies into regulatory frameworks. Complete streets are streets designed to balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road. www.smartgrowthamerica.org	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • FHMPPO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AARP • ATA Bus • Counties • FHRC • FHWC • LiveWell Geary County • NCFHAAA
	2.7.2. Support implementation of local placemaking initiatives, including parks, natural areas, trails, riverfront, outdoor and indoor recreational, cultural experiences, entertainment, community entrances, wayfinding signage, and target area improvements.	a. Implement placemaking projects that improve quality of place throughout the region. (Project for Public Spaces has resources/guides available, funding programs and more. www.pps.org)	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various
		b. Identify resources to serve as a project fund supporting implementation of placemaking activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • EcoDevo 	
		c. Develop a regional placemaking concept plan as a resource for local governments, non-profit entities, and community partners to design and implement local placemaking strategies. Project for Public Spaces recommends utilizing the Power of 10 concept to get started, which includes identifying at least ten ultimate placemaking goals that provide variety and choice, which can be accomplished at different scales. Region Reimagined Quality of Place Work Group (www.regionreimagined.org) identified 10 common placemaking themes for Riley, Pottawatomie & Geary Counties, which should be used to as initial guide. This process could be replicated by Wabaunsee, Morris, Lyon and Chase Counties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FHRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties • CVBs • FHMPPO • Higher Ed. 	
d. Evaluate parks and designated natural areas and identify placemaking opportunities to implement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties • KDWPPT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FHRC 			

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
<p>2.7. Provide quality of place environments and amenities that enhance community, appeal to and attract professionals across all economic sectors, and enhance tourism.</p>	<p>2.7.2. Support implementation of local placemaking initiatives, including parks, natural areas, trails, riverfront, outdoor and indoor recreational, cultural experiences, entertainment, community entrances, wayfinding signage, and target area improvements.</p>	<p>e. Expand the capacity and connectivity of the region's trail systems, including connections between communities, connections to recreational amenities, such as city parks, Tuttle Creek State Park, and Milford Lake, as well as connections to the Neosho River. Long-term work towards connections to the Quad-State Trail System.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties • FHMPO • FHRC • KDWPT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various
		<p>f. Visioning process regarding various riverfronts throughout the region to see what placemaking opportunities may be possible in 10-20 years.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties • FHMPO • FHRC • Friends of the Kaw • KDWPT • Riverfront MHK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various
		<p>g. Provide additional outdoor recreational spaces and facilities. This includes exploring long-term opportunities to design and develop a major athletic complex somewhere in the region with sufficient numbers of ballfields to supply local demand and attract major youth tournaments to the region.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Riley • Higher Ed. • Non-Profits • Private Partners
		<p>h. Construct an indoor recreational facility(ies) in the region. Steps may include the following: 1. Form public/private project committee to oversee consensus-building, design and development of facility 2. Conduct public outreach to determine the desire uses 3. Reach consensus on the most viable means of funding project design, construction, operations and maintenance 4. Leverage the facility to attract youth and adult sporting events and competitions to the region.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities / Counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Riley • Higher Ed. • Non-Profits • Private Partners

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.7. Provide quality of place environments and amenities that enhance community, appeal to and attract professionals across all economic sectors, and enhance tourism.	2.7.2. Support implementation of local placemaking initiatives, including parks, natural areas, trails, riverfront, outdoor and indoor recreational, cultural experiences, entertainment, community entrances, wayfinding signage, and target area improvements.	i. Explore ways to enhance cultural experiences throughout the fabric of the community, incorporating art and performing arts, as able. This may be through formal/permanent means or through informal/temporary means.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various
		j. Explore ways to enhance entertainment options for all.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various
		k. Implement trail connectivity projects and coordinate multi-county gravel rides.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FHMPO
		l. Promote both local and regional community assets including the National Kansas Water Trail, the Scenic Byways, Tuttle Creek State Park, Konza Prairie Biological Station, etc.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVBs • Chamber • Cities • Counties • FHRC • GMEP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -
	2.7.3. Effectively program local activity districts/community amenities and identify events and festivals that celebrate regional assets.	a. Identify community entryways and implement improvements at strategic locations. This could incorporate ways to celebrate key regional assets.	1-2 years / Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • EcoDevo Orgs • KDOT,
		b. Install wayfinding signage system(s) throughout the region to help navigation to popular designations, amenities, districts, public facilities, trail systems, within college campuses / military base, etc.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVBs • Chambers • FHMPO • FHRC
		c. Identify targeted areas within each community to invest and make improvements. This includes both small-scale and large-scale projects, implementation of downtown and other district plans, and determining if design guidelines are desired in designated areas and/or if there are specific design elements that the community may recommend for incorporation into the design of key projects.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties • Main Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVBs • Chambers • FHMPO • FHRC

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.7. Provide quality of place environments and amenities that enhance community, appeal to and attract professionals across all economic sectors, and enhance tourism.	2.7.3. Effectively program local activity districts/community amenities and identify events and festivals that celebrate regional assets.	d. Continue investing in successful existing programming and promotion of downtowns and other business districts and activity areas.	1-2 years / Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties • Main Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • Property Owners
		e. Enhance activity program to focus on event development that appeals to a more diverse group of citizens and encourages inclusion.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties • Main Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers
		f. Consistently explore event calendars from comparison communities to inform expansion of regional efforts (CVBs would be lead. If this were to become a regional resource, then it would require CVBs to coordinate and agree to assist in updating their part, and would require a part-time paid employee).		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVBs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FHRC
		g. Leverage multi-media technologies and partnerships to promote activities to visitors, residents, and the K-State, Emporia State and Fort Riley communities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties • Main Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FHRC
		h. Consider identifying a local entity to create a "seed to table" local food program--workings with local farmers, restaurateurs, grocers, and farmers market representatives to discuss and design the program using best practices.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -
		i. Identify a regional champion to host regional events to bring the communities together (i.e. Bike, Run, Kayak Relay event from J.C. to Wamego; Film festival utilizing each community's theaters, etc.).		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.7. Provide quality of place environments and amenities that enhance community, appeal to and attract professionals across all economic sectors, and enhance tourism.	2.7.4. Enhance region's supply of shared meeting room space that could be used by community groups and organizations that on a daily basis office from small-scale spaces yet need larger-shared conference room and multi-purpose meeting room space with adequate built-in video-conferencing technology.	a. Identify additional potential opportunities for new or enhanced meeting facilities in other locations across the region.	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber • Cities • Counties • Private Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various
2.8. Develop long-term programs designed to enhance partnerships between business, education and training officials to enhance the availability, quality and characteristics of the current and future workforce.	2.8.1. Develop talent pipelines to meet regional labor demands.	a. Encourage the development of dual credit programs, internships & apprenticeships, and other programs to enhance and propel student's awareness and preparedness for careers and jobs upon graduation.	• Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Ed. • USDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • FHRC
		b. Continue to facilitate the Kansas Eighteen-County Multi-Regional Healthcare Growth Cluster, if funded by Build Back Better Regional Challenge (responsive)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FHRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FH Healthcare Consortium • Higher Ed. • Pawnee • USDs • Via Christi
		c. Establish meaningful partnerships to connect talent to an online regional workforce hub (steady-state)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FHRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • EcoDevo Orgs
		d. Support the continuation of enhanced online tools for individuals to connect their skills to employment opportunities specifically within our seven-county region.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • EcoDevo Orgs • Higher Ed. • USDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FHEDD Steering Com. • KANSAS-WORKS

Strategic Direction 3: Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurialism

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
3.1. Grow and diversify the Innovation Ecosystem throughout the Region.	3.1.1. Grow and Diversify the Innovation Ecosystem throughout the Region.	a. Conduct regional asset mapping of all existing innovation resources / assets	3-4 years	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • EcoDevo Orgs
		b. Continue university/college/community partnerships, leverage resources to expand research, development and commercialization opportunities and work to increase net importation to the region.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • EcoDevo Orgs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GMPEP • KBED
		c. Work to ensure the region provides environments in which innovation may thrive. As a part of this strategy, support the creation of physical spaces (innovation center, makerspace, accelerators, etc.) that promote innovation.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • EcoDevo Orgs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties • Higher Ed. • Private Partners
		d. Enhance Innovation-Related Programming and Networking Opportunities and Make Innovation Public and Celebrated		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • EcoDevo Orgs • Higher Ed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GMPEP • KBED
		e. Leverage existing federal investments (Fort Riley, USDA, KDA, NBAF, etc.) to further attract, expand, and retain federal agencies, as well as, related niche markets		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • EcoDevo Orgs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GMPEP • KBED
3.2. Enhance support for entrepreneurs of all ages.	3.2.1. Promote and support coworking, maker-spaces, shared meeting spaces, incubator space, microfactories for manufacturing startups, and event spaces in the region.	a. Provide promotional support for existing coworking spaces, makerspaces, shared meeting spaces, and event spaces to ensure awareness of their facilities, programs, and services is widespread among potential users and clients	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • EcoDevo Orgs 	-
		b. Create spaces that feature broadband connectivity speeds, professional-quality videoconferencing equipment, cellular, and other cutting-edge technologies to support and be shared among businesses and organizations throughout the region. This includes video-conferencing upgrades to existing city and county facilities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • Cities • Counties • EcoDevo Orgs • Higher Ed. • Libraries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FHRC

Strategic Direction 3: Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurialism

(continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
3.2. Enhance support for entrepreneurs of all ages.	3.2.1. Promote and support coworking, maker-spaces, shared meeting spaces, incubator space, microfactories for manufacturing startups, and event spaces in the region.	c. Work to establish an environment that immerses coworkers in a culture of collaboration, idea-sharing, problem-solving, constant learning, and mentorship. This includes training opportunities for managers and CEOs on how to change the culture of their place of employment. (retention strategy)	Ongoing	• Businesses	• Chambers
		d. Provided tiered levels of business-development support for members offered by experienced, professional staff.		• SBDC	• Chambers • EcoDevo Orgs
		e. Determine the potential for local governments, businesses, and organizations to partner in the development of entrepreneurial facilities and programs that complement for-profit entities.		• Businesses • Chambers • Cities • Counties	• 1 Million Cups • K-State Center for Entrepreneur. • Spark
		f. Develop microfactories in strategic locations to support startup manufacturing companies and work with economic development organizations throughout the region for future relocation within the Flint Hills Economic Development District. (Build Back Better - Regional Challenge Application Submitted Oct 2021).		• K-State Technology Development Institute	• Chambers • Cities • Counties • EcoDevo Orgs • FHEDD Steering Com.
	3.2.2. Foster enhanced entrepreneurial event and networking opportunities.	a. Support existing entrepreneurial events and programming provided by 1 Million Cups, The Fellow, SPARK, K-State Technology Development Institute, K-State Center for the Advancement of Entrepreneurship's entrepreneurial career fairs, lecture series (open to the public) and classes on small business development, Emporia State University and Flint Hills Technical College's Emporia Entrepreneurial Challenge and School of Business Entrepreneurial programming / concentration, Startup MHK, and other entrepreneurially focused programs.	1-2 years	• Various	• Counties

Strategic Direction 3: Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurialism

(continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
3.2. Enhance support for entrepreneurs of all ages.	3.2.2. Foster enhanced entrepreneurial event and networking opportunities.	b. Outreach to the K-State & Emporia State alumni networks to identify local or external graduates who would be interested in meeting or speaking with student entrepreneurs and inexperienced startup founders.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher Ed. Alumni Associations K-State Center for Entrepreneur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers EcoDevo Orgs
		c. Launch an annual or semi-annual makerfaire, regular events such as hackathons, and other events focused on additive manufacturing technologies.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers EcoDevo Orgs Higher Ed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Million Cups K-State Center for Entrepreneur. Spark
		d. Incorporate entrepreneurship programming into Young Professionals offerings and networking events.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers EcoDevo Orgs K-State Center for Entrepreneur.
	3.2.3. Build awareness of entrepreneurialism as a viable career path for K to 14 students.	a. Fully support existing career focused programs such as Future Farmers of America and Future Business Leaders of America.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers EcoDevo Orgs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various
		b. Consider launching a best-practice entrepreneurship program in every local school district.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers
		c. Coordinate events with local K-12 districts to visit coworking spaces, startup businesses, and entrepreneurial events as field trip opportunities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers USDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EcoDevo Orgs
		d. Bring entrepreneurs, K-State / Emporia State entrepreneurship faculty, and other experts into schools to engage students and promote entrepreneurship.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers USDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various

Strategic Direction 3: Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurialism

(continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
3.2. Enhance support for entrepreneurs of all ages.	3.2.3. Build awareness of entrepreneurialism as a viable career path for K to 14 students.	a. Provide a scholarship to K-State / Emporia State entrepreneurship program for a high-achieving regional high school senior through a competitive process	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses • Chambers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Ed. • Spark • USDs
		b. Design and launch a certificate program in entrepreneurship at Manhattan Area Technical College and Flint Hills Technical College, and other Colleges, as desired, linked to established career and technical opportunities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Ed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers, • EcoDevo Orgs
	3.2.4. Actively connect entrepreneurs to available resources and programming.	a. Increase access to early-stage capital and connect entrepreneurs to resources	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Million Cups • Chambers, • EcoDevo Orgs • SBDC • Spark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Entrep. of the Flint Hills • K-State Center for Entrepreneur.
		b. Support small businesses with incentive funds by way of reimbursing or supporting through shared resources a portion of startup costs and business enhancements.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Entrep. of the Flint Hills • K-State • Spark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • Cities • Counties
		c. Provide training to disadvantaged businesses on how to access capital, earn minority-owned business state certification, host diverse supplier and business expos and other valuable resources that are proven to develop and positively impact disadvantaged businesses.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Entrep. of the Flint Hills • Chambers • EcoDevo Orgs • Spark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBDC

Strategic Direction 4: Recovery, Disaster Preparedness, and Resiliency

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
4.1. Identify and support efforts that assist in creating a more resilient, sustainable region.(responsive)	a. Leverage the Community Toolbox from the Flint Hills Frontiers plan to provide local governments with solutions to shared issues of planning, zoning, and land use management	1-2 years	• Cities • Counties	• FHRC
	b. Utilize approved recommendations from the Flint Hills/Fort Riley Joint Land Use Study to guide inter-governmental growth management decision making		• Cities • Counties	• FHRC
	c. Pursue long-term solutions to issues of inconsistent levels of land use and zoning prescriptions, varying utilities service levels, and other challenges that lead to divergent growth patterns and sub-standard water, sewer, and public service levels for many regional residents and businesses		• Cities • Counties	• FHRC
	d. Utilize JLUS, Flint Hills Frontiers, and city and county comprehensive plans to guide land use decisions		• Cities • Counties	• FHRC
	e. Protect valuable agricultural land and industrial development property from being rezoned		• Cities • Counties	• EcoDevo Orgs
	f. Implement recommendations for the Regional Connections Plan to provide safe access for non-motorized users between Blue Township and Manhattan, and other connections throughout the region.		-	• FHMPO • FHRC
	g. Continue to investigate the feasibility to expand the K-18 Connector to Geary County to improve regional access for employees, students, military personnel, and other residents for increased mobility		• Cities • Counties • FHMPO	• ATA Bus
	h. Create a Regional Resiliency Task Force to coordinate planning efforts and to serve as an information-sharing hub (responsive)		• FHEDD Steering Com.	• Cities • Counties • FH Healthcare Consortium • Higher Ed. • USDs
	i. Acquire & utilize Economic Modeling Information (responsive) (FHRC EDA CARES funded for 2021-2022)		• Chambers • FHRC, • EcoDevo Orgs • Cities • Counties	• Businesses • GMEP • Higher Ed.

Strategic Direction 4: Recovery, Disaster Preparedness, and Resiliency

(continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
4.1. Identify and support efforts that assist in creating a more resilient, sustainable region.(responsive)	j. Stay apprised of proposed legislation that could impact regional resilience; explore revenue diversification strategies.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers EcoDevo Orgs Cities Counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHRC
4.2. Analyze the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through an economic impact study to better understand how we can be more resilient in the future. (steady-state)	a. Conduct a regional Economic Impact Analysis (steady-state) (FHRC EDA CARES funded for 2021-2022)	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses Chambers

Strategic Direction 5: Partnerships, Funding Strategy Development, Plan Implementation

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
5.1. Create partnerships, leverage resources and obtain grant funding to move priorities forward.	a. Develop regional hub to facilitate dialogue between economic development professionals, local government officials, and other stakeholders regarding COVID investments and allocations. (responsive)	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities Counties EcoDevo Orgs
	b. Continue to leverage lobbying and advocacy with the region’s federal representatives to influence military decision-makers on the value, impact, and importance of Fort Riley to the region and the nation’s warfighting capacity		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers EcoDevo Orgs 	-
	c. Support Fort Riley enlisted and commissioned personnel and their families by increasing participation levels in public, private, and institutional committees, programs, and events		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers Fort Riley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHRC

Strategic Direction 5: Partnerships, Funding Strategy Development, Plan Implementation (continued)

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
5.1. Create partnerships, leverage resources and obtain grant funding to move priorities forward.	d. Seek greater fiscal commitments for Manhattan Area Technical College to reflect increased training needs for NBAF and key occupations impacted by talent shortages	1-2 years	• MATC	• Chambers, • EcoDevo Orgs
	e. Pursue reintroduction of HB 2570 to enable communities to put a technical college funding levy up for voter approval		• Chambers, • EcoDevo Orgs	-
	f. Consider developing economic development incentives for firms meeting stringent performance criteria		• Chambers, • EcoDevo Orgs	-
	g. Continue to inform annual state and federal legislative priorities through consensus-driven input from key regional public and private stakeholders		• Chambers, • EcoDevo Orgs	-
	h. Optimize the development review and permitting processes through use of new technologies, creation of "one-stop" shop permitting offices, and service-oriented public-facing policies		• Cities • Counties	-
	i. Incorporate panel recommendations with direct benefit to the region into federal advocacy agendas and platforms		• Chambers, • EcoDevo Orgs	-
	j. Continue working to position region as a location for public events, press conferences, and other activities		• Chambers, • EcoDevo Orgs	-
	k. Support regional legislative priorities related to NBAF and the region's biosecurity cluster		• Chambers, • EcoDevo Orgs	-
5.2. Utilize the regional needs assessment system for identified unfunded needs so that FHRC and regional partners can assist in developing funding strategies.	a. Launch, promote, & actively maintain online Needs Assessment System (responsive) (FHRC EDA CARES funded)	1-2 years	• FHRC	• EcoDevo Orgs • FHRC

Cross-Cutting Tactics and Suggested Action Items

FHEDD Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
6.1. Seek more equivalent standards for regional planning, zoning, and infrastructure capacity.	a. Leverage the Community Toolbox from the Flint Hills Frontiers plan to provide local governments with solutions to shared issues of planning, zoning, and land use management.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties 	-
	b. Utilize approved recommendations from the Flint Hills/Fort Riley Joint Land Use Study to guide inter-governmental growth management decision making.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FHRC
	c. Pursue long-term solutions to varying utilities service levels, and other challenges that lead to divergent growth patterns and sub-standard water, sewer, and public service levels for many regional residents and businesses.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties 	-
6.2. Improve critical accessibility between regional counties.	a. Implement the recommendations in the US-24 Corridor Plan to improve accessibility to Blue Township.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FHMPPO • Pottawatomie County • Riley County 	-
	b. Feasibility study for providing transit access to Blue Township.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATA Bus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Counties
	c. Implement recommendations for the Regional Connections Plan & support the development of the Regional River and Trail Plan and implementation.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various 	-
6.3. Maximize the efficacy of regional leadership programs and events.	a. Enhance the tri-county Regional Leaders Retreat by meeting more frequently, providing agenda materials further in advance, utilizing video-conference technology to enable leaders to participate remotely, and better engaging the public through live streaming of the proceedings or making them available via social media websites.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • FHRC 	-
	b. Consider ways to more effectively leverage and engage graduates of the Flint Hills Regional Leadership Program through development of impactful projects to improve the region.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • Cities • Counties 	-
6.4. Maintain the region's strong "town-gown" relations.	a. Continue enhancing formal and informal relationships and partnerships between K-State & Emporia State leaders and representatives of regional public and private constituencies.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • Cities • Counties • ESU • K-State • Community Stakeholders 	-

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Chase County

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

Chase County

KEY FACTS

2,572

Population



1,159

Households

46.4

Median Age

\$37,456

Median Disposable Income

EDUCATION

7%

No High School Diploma



30%

High School Graduate



37%

Some College



26%

Bachelor's/Grad/Prof Degree

INCOME



\$44,884

Median Household Income



\$23,256

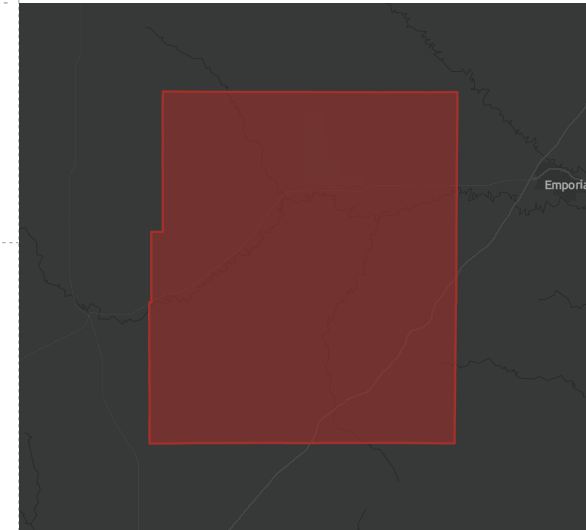
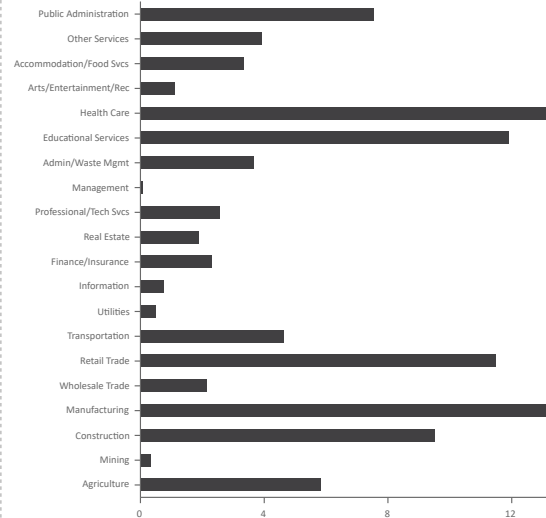
Per Capita Income



\$135,977

Median Net Worth

2021 Labor Force (Esri)



EMPLOYMENT



60%

White Collar



31%

Blue Collar



9%

Services

5.3%

Unemployment Rate

Source: This infographic contains data provided by Esri, Esri. The vintage of the data is 2021, 2026.

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention

Chase County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.6. Construct and rehabilitate diverse, high-quality, and suitable housing for regional labor force sustainability.	a. Utilize the recent Chase County Housing Conditions Assessment conducted by the Flint Hills Regional Council to discuss strategies to assist in making improvements to properties in need of repair.	1-2 years / Ongoing	• Chamber	• FHRC
	b. Conduct a Housing Market Analysis to determine current needs, opportunities and challenges to residential development in Chase County.		• Chamber	• Cities
	c. Form a Housing Task Force to implement programs that can assist property owners make improvements.		• Chamber	• Property Owners
	d. Link residential development to the region's existing transportation network.		• Cities • Chase County	-
	e. Develop grassroots neighborhood revitalization plans that outline strategies for neighborhood improvements that can be implemented by both the property owners and the city.		• Cities	• Chamber • Chase County
	f. Explore methods to improve housing conditions, including incentive programs, code enforcement, etc.		• Cities • Chase County	• Chamber
2.7. Provide quality of place environments and amenities that enhance community, appeal to and attract professionals across all economic sectors, and enhance tourism.	a. Encourage dynamic, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly, accessible and visually stimulating built environments.	Ongoing	• Cities • Chase County	• Chamber
	b. Identify placemaking improvement opportunities, and develop a placemaking strategic plan, identifying priorities and potential funding sources for implementation throughout Chase County.		• Various	• FHRC
	c. Identify 10 top things to do or reasons to be in Chase County and promote.		• Chamber	• FHRC
	d. Enhance outdoor recreational spaces and facilities throughout Chase County.		• Cities • Chase County	• Chamber
	e. Consider pursuing a regional open space and recreation plan.		• Chamber	• FHRC
	f. Conduct a reuse/feasibility study for the old Chase County Elementary school building, owned by the Chase County Old School Development District to provide support and information regarding possible reuse options.		• Community Leaders as identified by the Chamber	• Chamber • EPA Reuse Program • FHRC

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

Chase County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.7. Provide quality of place environments and amenities that enhance community, appeal to and attract professionals across all economic sectors, and enhance tourism. (continued)	g. Invest in programming and promotion of downtown and other business districts and activity areas.	Ongoing	• Chamber	• Cities
	h. Enhance event programming to attract a diverse group of resident and tourist and build upon relationships and social capital and share events of surrounding communities and vice-versa.		• Chamber	• Community Leaders
	i. Continue Blue Cross Blue Shield efforts to identify the needs/wants of the community regarding healthy living and encouraging healthy lifestyles.		• Community Leaders as identified by the Chamber	-
	j. Host regional events to bring the communities together		• Chamber	• Community Leaders as identified by the Chamber

Strategic Direction 3: Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurialism

Chase County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
3.1. Grow and diversify the Innovation Ecosystem throughout the Region.	a. Utilize the Old CCES building to create space that feature broadband connectivity speeds, professional-quality videoconferencing equipment, cellular, and other cutting-edge technologies to support member companies.	3-4 years	• Community Leaders as identified by the Chamber	• EDA • EPA • FHRC
	b. Establish environments providing coworkers ability to immerse in a culture of collaboration, idea-sharing, problem-solving, constant learning, and mentorship.		• Private Partners	• Chamber

Strategic Direction 3: Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurialism

(continued)

Chase County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
3.1. Grow and diversify the Innovation Ecosystem throughout the Region. (continued)	a. Provided tiered levels of business-development support for members offered by experienced, professional staff.	3-4 years	• Chamber	• FHRC • Main Street • SBDC
	b. Determine the potential for local governments, businesses, and organizations to partner in the development of entrepreneurial facilities and programs that complement for-profit entities.		• Chamber	-
	c. Facilitate NetWork Kansas educational workshops.		• NetWork KS	• Chamber
3.2. Enhance support for entrepreneurs of all ages.	a. Support career focused programs such as Future Farmers of America and Future Business Leaders of America.	Ongoing	• Chamber	
	b. Consider launching a best-practice entrepreneurship program in every local school district		• USDs	• Chamber
	c. Facilitate Network KS YEC competition to coordinate events with local K-12 districts to visit coworking spaces, startup businesses, and entrepreneurial events as field trip opportunities		• Community Leaders as identified by the Chamber	-
	d. Bring entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial experts into schools to engage students and promote entrepreneurship		• USDs	• Chamber
	e. Provide a scholarship to K-State's entrepreneurship program for a high-achieving regional high school senior through a competitive process		• Chamber	• K-State Center for Entrepreneur.
	f. Work with K-State Extension Services or other partners to host prescribed burning workshops. Explore developing a regional prescribed burning association.		• Chamber	• K-State Extension

Geary County

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

Geary County

KEY FACTS

36,739

Population



11,836

Households

29.6

Median Age

\$43,880

Median Disposable Income

EDUCATION

5%

No High School Diploma



26%

High School Graduate



45%

Some College



24%

Bachelor's/Grad/Prof Degree

INCOME



\$53,229

Median Household Income



\$23,681

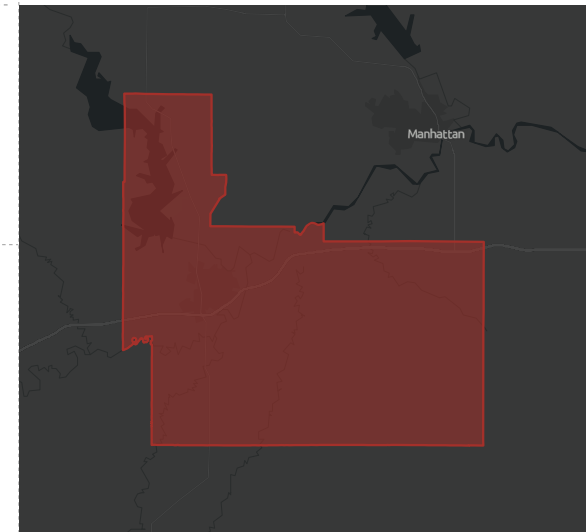
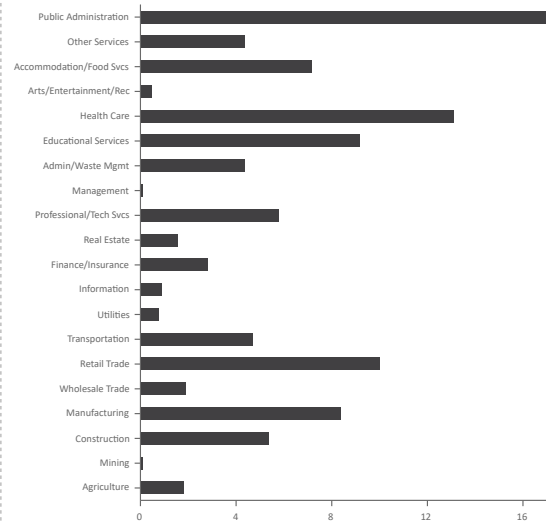
Per Capita Income



\$38,908

Median Net Worth

2021 Labor Force (Esri)



EMPLOYMENT



60%

White Collar



26%

Blue Collar



15%

Services

6.5%

Unemployment Rate

Source: This infographic contains data provided by Esri, Esri. The vintage of the data is 2021, 2026.

Strategic Direction 1: Business Support, Economic Diversification, and Economic Development Infrastructure

Geary County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
1.1. Build external awareness of the region's assets among prospect employers, investors, and corporate relocation professionals to attract new businesses and industries to our region.	1.1.1. Develop a competitive marketing & communication program.	a. Increase marketing efforts that tell Geary County's story to include Junction City Main Street for downtown revitalization.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVB • JCGC EDC • Main Street 	-
1.2. Support and facilitate the retention and expansion of existing regional businesses.	1.2.1. Formalize an expanded business retention and expansion (BRE) program.	a. Promote and market (and partner as opportunities arise) SBDC, Junction City Main Street, Chamber, Economic Development Corporation and other organizations' training and support services to businesses.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JCGC EDC • Main Street 	-
		b. Conduct visits to the area's largest employers to assist with retention and expansion.	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geary County • JCGC EDC • Junction City 	-
		c. Support local businesses and help them utilizing our SBDC agreement and expand its support locally.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber
		d. Maximize Rural Opportunity Zone benefits.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geary County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber • KDC
1.3. Provide a sufficient supply of economic-growth-supportive infrastructure.	1.3.2. Prepare shovel-ready development sites	a. Participate in efforts to conduct a regional development site capacity analysis to determine current and projected needs.	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JCGC EDC • Junction City 	-
		b. Utilize and/or purchase land to develop for new and expanded industrial park. Extend infrastructure to sites.	5+ years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junction City 	-
	1.3.3. Make broadband and cellular connectivity available for data-intensive businesses and users.	a. Assess existing connectivity capacities and deficits i.e. 5G.	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geary County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband Providers • Chamber • Fort Riley
		b. Capitalize on opportunities to expand fiber and cellular infrastructure in a coordinated manner.	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geary County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband Providers • Chamber • Fort Riley

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention

Geary County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.1. Continue to enhance the capacity and productivity of the region's pre-K to 20 educational institutions and other training programs geared to enhance employability skills of the emerging, transitional and current workforce.	2.1.1. Provide early childhood programming for all eligible local students	a. Increase program capacity to enhance the availability and affordability of day care for children from birth to five years to assist growth in the labor force by young parents.	1 - 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geary County • Junction City • Konza • USD 475 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Care Aware • Fort Riley • Geary Food Pantry • KDHE • Private Partners
2.2. Increase the number of recent graduates remaining in our region to live and work.	2.2.3. Create a regional Career Academy open to high school students from multiple local districts.	a. Continue to build upon USD 475's Career Academy career tracks to meet current workforce needs.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USD 475 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses • Chamber • Fort Riley • Higher Ed.
		b. Connect high school programming with industry with internships and through job opportunities.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber • USD 475 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses • Fort Riley
		c. Incorporate hospitality & service industry (10% of labor market) into training and internship programming.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses • Main Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JCGC EDC
	2.2.4. Empanel a Regional Talent Council.	a. Continue Tech-Ed Work Group Efforts.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber • USD 475 	-
		b. Continue to have a broad spectrum of representatives on the Tech-Ed Work Group, include USD superintendents, human resource professionals, higher education representatives, and economic and workforce development organization personnel.	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber • USD 475 	-
2.1.6. Work to enhance existing programs and facilities and develop critical new capacity.	a. Continue Work Keys Program in Geary County.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KANSAS-WORKS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber 	

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

Geary County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.3. Provide support to transitioning soldiers leaving the military--helping to make connections to employment, education, and/or social networks so they make our region their home.	2.3.2. Foster linkages between current and past soldiers and their spouses with employers.	a. Launch & continue to support the Junction for Military to Civilian Innovation (JMCI) project to make connections between transitioning soldiers / military families and businesses.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JCGC EDC Junction City 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AstrumU Fort Riley SFL-TAP Main Street
2.5. Improve the attraction and retention of talent to the region. Attract students vs. attracting talent	2.5.1. Work with higher education programs to determine how local partners can support student-recruitment efforts.	a. Training zone for student development / tech education and explore vocational training opportunities w/ USD -- Consider support for businesses desiring to hire young adults with special needs and partner this opportunity with USD 475.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USD 475 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses Higher Ed.
2.6. Construct and rehabilitate diverse, high-quality, and suitable housing for regional labor force sustainability.	2.6.1. Conduct housing studies based on existing infrastructure capacity (local or regional, as deemed appropriate).	a. Inventory Land Bank & Other Neighborhoods as identified by City/County Administration.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Junction City 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geary County JCGC EDC
		b. Conduct Junction City housing conditions assessment in identified northeast neighborhoods.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHRC, Junction City 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> K-State
		c. Continue to assess housing conditions and market trends citywide.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Junction City 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber Main Street
	2.6.4. Launch a program to revitalize neighborhoods and commercial activity areas.	a. Pursue upper floor development downtown.	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geary County Historical Society Junction City

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

Geary County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.7. Provide quality of place environments and amenities that enhance community, appeal to and attract professionals across all economic sectors, and enhance tourism.	2.7.2. Support implementation of local placemaking initiatives, including parks, natural areas, trails, riverfront, outdoor and indoor recreational, cultural experiences, entertainment, community entrances, wayfinding signage, and target area improvements.	a. Seek local and/or national sources to implement effective placemaking opportunities.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities Geary County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber FHMPO FHRC Main Street Play JC
		b. Complete Bramlage Park Improvements & 5th Street Park - 2nd Phase; Two pavilions at Playground Park.	1-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play JC Junction City 	-
		c. Support Junction City's new designation as a Main Street Community; Implement steps to support the program financially and through efforts to implement initiatives; Develop a downtown revitalization plan, leverage funding to renovate buildings set-up for commerce, explore usage of vacant lots for food trucks and transient businesses; promote outdoor consumption; help restaurants establish outdoor dining opportunities; improve art in front of businesses and streetscaping, including signage, wayfinding, flowers and tree beautification projects, etc.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various
		d. Improve wayfinding signage and other signage in front of businesses and throughout Junction City.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Junction City Main Street 	-
		e. Implement the Junction City Comprehensive Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Junction City Safe Routes to School Plan, Northeast Junction City Area-Wide Plan	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geary County Junction City 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHMPO Main Street
		f. Increase capacity to host concerts.	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play JC Geary County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVB Chamber Businesses
		g. Develop a Parks Master Plan to identify a strategy to improve the overall park system including the addition of park assets and the enhancement of existing park areas. (JC/GE Plan p. 121).	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities Play JC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber FHMPO FHRC Fort Riley Geary County NPS

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

Geary County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.7. Provide quality of place environments and amenities that enhance community, appeal to and attract professionals across all economic sectors, and enhance tourism. (continued)	2.7.2. Support implementation of local placemaking initiatives, including parks, natural areas, trails, riverfront, outdoor and indoor recreational, cultural experiences, entertainment, community entrances, wayfinding signage, and target area improvements. (continued)	h. Connect Milford Lake to our city parks and trail system.	3-4 years	• Cities	• Chamber • CVB • FHMPPO • FHRC • Fort Riley • Geary County • NPS • USACE
		i. New walking/biking trail that circles the old high school site connecting it to the bike/ped network and plan.	3-4 years	• Junction City	• FHMPPO • KDOT
		j. Explore redevelopment strategies for the old high school site at 8th and Eisenhower including but not limited to a new outdoor splash park, outdoor pool to replace city pool, library, and sports complex.	3-4 years / Ongoing	• Junction City	• Chamber • CVB
		k. Complete improvements to Rathert Stadium and increase opportunities to promote attendance and be able to host larger events.	1-2 years / 3-4 years	• Junction City	• CVB
		l. Develop a sports complex and associated youth programming that attracts tournaments to Geary County.	1-2 years	• Junction City	• Chamber • CVB • Geary County
		m. Complete Freedom Park upgrades to provide trail access to "Atomic Annie" effectively reopening this regional outdoor asset along I-70.	3-4 years	• CVB	• Fort Riley • Geary County
		n. Increase outdoor restaurant seating options.	1-2 years	• Main Street	• Businesses • Chamber • Geary County • Junction City
		o. Explore opportunities for expansion of existing or establishment of new types of entertainment options.	3-4 years	• JCGC EDC • Junction City	• Businesses • Geary County

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

Geary County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.7. Provide quality of place environments and amenities that enhance community, appeal to and attract professionals across all economic sectors, and enhance tourism. (continued)	2.7.2. Support implementation of local placemaking initiatives, including parks, natural areas, trails, riverfront, outdoor and indoor recreational, cultural experiences, entertainment, community entrances, wayfinding signage, and target area improvements. (continued)	p. Improve branding to pull visitors off of I-70; explore commercial development space at Chestnut Street exit; improve statues and art at all exits.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVB • Chamber • JCGC EDC Main Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geary County • Junction City • KDOT
		q. Support and explore opportunities for public and private museum and cultural venues that highlight Geary County's heritage such as its historic military, African American, and agricultural roots.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-Profit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Chamber • CVB • Fort Riley • Geary County • Historical Society
		r. Assess future waterfront development.	1-3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber • Junction City • Main Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County, CVB, FHRC, FHMPO
	2.7.3. Effectively program local activity districts/community amenities and identify events and festivals that celebrate regional assets.	a. Support programs to assist tourism, history and agriculture that will benefit small businesses and target new retail opportunities that will enhance the tax base including downtown revitalization, festivals, eco-tourism programs, such as the Kansas River trail system and ag-tourism businesses.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber • Main Street
		b. Increase activities and capacity at Milford Lake as a destination - increase hunting and fishing tournaments, guided hunts; fishing expeditions; ropes course / zip line; create waterskiing/wakeboarding zones; water based bounce park - kids play zone.	5+ years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses • FH Tourism Coalition • Geary County • KDWPT • USACE
		c. Continue exploring opportunities for new cultural and arts events in the area, such as the Celebration on 7th Street, Sundown Salute, Oktoberfest and other cultural events. Identify creative ways to bring more activity to the Junction City Downtown/Heritage Park area. (i.e. Festivals, Food Truck Friday, Farm-to-Table events similar to Salina's Feast on the Fay, etc.).	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses • CVB • JCGC EDC • Main Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geary County • Junction City

Strategic Direction 3: Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurialism

Geary County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
3.2. Enhance support for entrepreneurs of all ages.	3.2.1. Promote and support coworking, maker-spaces, shared meeting spaces, incubator space, microfactories for manufacturing startups, and event spaces in the region.	a. Create a maker space.	1-2 years / 3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber Bramlage Library Main Street 	-
		a. Shark tank style entrepreneurial contests to promote startups & small businesses.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JCGC EDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Million Cups K-State Center for Entrepreneur. Spark Startup MHK USD 475
	b. Continue to develop programs for small and new business, as well as, supporting their efforts for legislation and advocacy and working closely with existing resources.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JCGC EDC Junction City Main Street 	-	

Strategic Direction 4: Recovery, Disaster Preparedness, and Resiliency

Geary County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
4.1. Identify and support efforts that assist in creating a more resilient, sustainable region.	a. Continue to analyze, adopt plans, and implement mitigation measures to reduce flood risk to life and property (i.e. Milford Lake, Republican River, Smoky Hill River, and the Kansas River).	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geary County Junction City 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FEMA KDEM USACE
	b. Pursue expanding access of 5G throughout Geary County to aid emergency management.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fort Riley

Lyon County

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

Lyon County

KEY FACTS

32,179

Population



13,186

Households

34.5

Median Age

\$39,107

Median Disposable Income

EDUCATION

10%

No High School Diploma



30%

High School Graduate



31%

Some College



28%

Bachelor's/Grad/Prof Degree

INCOME



\$47,395

Median Household Income



\$25,476

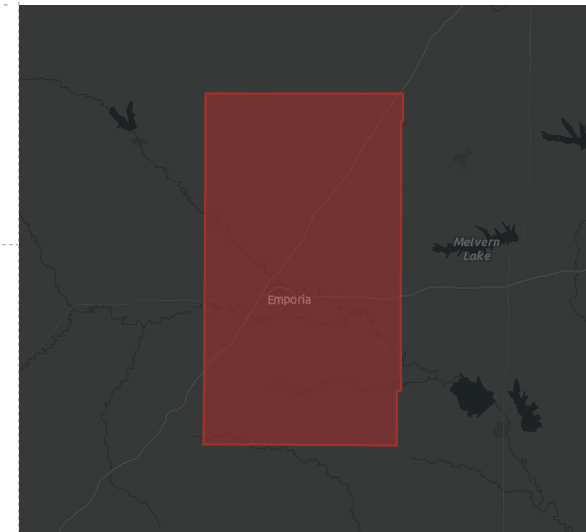
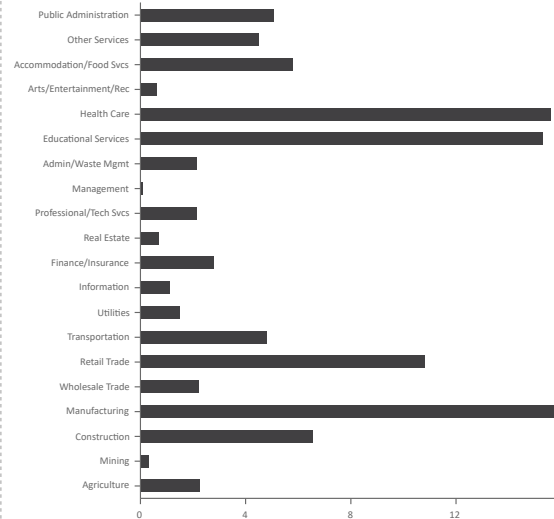
Per Capita Income



\$89,950

Median Net Worth

2021 Labor Force (Esri)



EMPLOYMENT

59%

White Collar



31%

Blue Collar



10%

Services

5.0%

Unemployment Rate

Source: This infographic contains data provided by Esri, Esri. The vintage of the data is 2021, 2026.

Strategic Direction 1: Business Support, Economic Diversification, and Economic Development Infrastructure

Lyon County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
1.1. Build external awareness of the region’s assets among prospect employers, investors, and corporate relocation professionals to attract new businesses and industries to our region.	1.1.1. Develop a competitive marketing & communication program.	a. Focus Lyon County story on Broadband Access and connectivity with shared workforce opportunity.	1-2 years	• Trussler	• Chamber • Main Street • RDA
		b. Add efforts to combine our broader community messaging with that of the Flint Hills Region taking advantage of natural landscapes and regional connectivity to be a positive addition to our region.	Ongoing	• Visit Emporia	• Chamber • FHRC • Main Street
	1.1.9. Enhance marketing tools, training and support to local businesses, higher education institutions, USDs and workforce agencies.	a. Support marketing efforts of identified target industries, as well as, our incredible K-12 USDs, higher education institutions, and employment opportunities the region offers.	Ongoing	• ESU • FHRC • Trussler • USDs	• FHRC
1.3. Provide a sufficient supply of economic-growth-supportive infrastructure.	1.3.2. Prepare shovel ready development sites.	a. Further develop available space for growth and development in Industry within Lyon County. Add available space to State Certified Sites list for added marketing efforts.	5+ years	• Emporia • Emporia Enterprises	• Chamber • Lyon County • RDA
		b. Utilize passage of County 1-cent sales tax to focus on improved infrastructure and resources for business success (extended by voters through 2039).	Ongoing	• Emporia • Lyon County	• Cities
	1.3.1. Leverage ongoing comprehensive and land use planning to direct infrastructure development.	a. Implementing transportation strategies from the Plan ELC: Emporia-Lyon County Joint Comprehensive Plan.	Ongoing	• Emporia • Lyon County	• BNSF • KDOT
	1.3.3. Make broadband and cellular connectivity available for data-intensive businesses and users.	a. Expand broadband capacity in rural areas and complete plan build out.	3-4 years	• Lyon County • Broadband Providers	• Emporia • Trussler

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention

Lyon County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.1. Continue to enhance the capacity and productivity of the region’s pre-K to 20 educational institutions and other training programs geared to enhance employability skills of the emerging, transitional and current workforce.	2.1.1. Provide early childhood programming for all eligible local students.	a. Increase access to quality and affordable child care in order to assist in recruiting and retaining talent to Lyon County.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESU • Literacy First 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Care Aware • Ignite Emporia • Fed. Agencies • State Agencies
		b. Work to remove barriers that are preventing our ability to recruit and retain talent including workforce engagement.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RDA • SE KANSAS-WORKS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber • Main Street
	2.1.6. Work to enhance existing programs and facilities and develop critical new capacity.	a. Work to remove barriers that are preventing our ability to recruit and retain talent including workforce engagement.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RDA • KANSAS-WORKS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber • Main Street
2.3. Provide support to transitioning soldiers leaving the military--helping to make connections to employment, education, and/or social networks so they make our region their home.	2.3.2. Foster linkages between current and past soldiers and their spouses with employers.	a. Expand connections and relationship with military bases regionally to recruit transitioning talent i.e. hosting soldiers through the KEEP Program.	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESU • FHTC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FHRC • Fort Riley
2.4. Expand medical education capacity, increase support for mental health services, increase access to services in rural communities and improve health outcomes throughout the FHEDD.	2.4.1. Work with K-20 Educational Institutions to create stackable curriculum to ensure the regional medical community is adequately staffed.	a. Expand medical profession training opportunities through partnerships with Higher Education and local Healthcare organizations.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESU • FHTC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CrossWinds • FHRC • FH Community Health • Newman

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

Lyon County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.6. Construct and rehabilitate diverse, high-quality, and suitable housing for regional labor force sustainability.	2.6.2. Optimize regulatory tools and incentives to support diverse housing development.	a. Expand use of Rural Housing Incentive District (RHID) tool for development of additional single-family residential neighborhoods.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emporia • Ignite Emporia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lyon County • Fed. Agencies • State Agencies
		b. Access Weatherization grants to improve housing quality and affordability through energy efficiency improvements.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FHRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emporia • Ignite Emporia
		c. Develop a strategy for the acquisition and rehabilitation or redevelopment of dilapidated properties within the original town square of Emporia.	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emporia • Ignite Emporia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lyon County • Fed. Agencies • State Agencies
		d. Updated City of Emporia Planning and Zoning Regulations to support implementation of the Plan ELC Document and better align with regulations already adopted by Lyon County.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emporia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignite Emporia • Realtors
		e. Diversify housing types to create options for all sectors of the population including young professionals and seniors.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emporia • Ignite Emporia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEAL • Main Street
2.8. Develop long-term programs designed to enhance partnerships between business, education and training officials to enhance the availability, quality and characteristics of the current and future workforce.	2.8.1. Develop talent pipelines to meet regional labor demands.	a. Improve connectivity and support from K-12 to local/regional higher ed for both dual credit programs as well as transition of program relationships -- creating talent pipelines.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emporia • ESU • FHTC • USDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber • Ignite Emporia • Main Street • RDA
		b. Partner with our Higher Education Institutions to enhance recruitment efforts in areas that can enhance our local workforce.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Street • Tressler 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESU • FHTC

Strategic Direction 3: Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurialism

Lyon County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
3.1. Grow and diversify the Innovation Ecosystem throughout the Region.	3.1.1. Grow and Diversify the Innovation Ecosystem throughout the region.	a. Focus on Digital Economy Growth and opportunity for remote work and entrepreneurship within the region.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignite Emporia • Main Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CORI • ESU • FHTC • RDA
		b. Expand Digital Skills development programs for underrepresented populations in technology related industries.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignite Emporia • Main Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CORI • ESU • FHTC • RDA
		c. Develop talent pipeline programs focused on technology for K-12 and Higher Education Institutions.	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignite Emporia • Main Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CORI • ESU • FHTC • USDs
3.2. Enhance support for entrepreneurs of all ages.	3.2.4. Enhance support for entrepreneurs of all ages in specific growth sectors that can support our regional economy.	a. Expand and better acknowledge Agriculture related business and industry to the community and region to build better connections for entrepreneurial activities.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignite Emporia • Main Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CORI • ESU • FHTC • NetWork KS • RDA
		b. Support expanded programs in Computer Science, Coding and Digital Security at ESU with collaboration from Entrepreneurship Program.	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CORI • Ignite Emporia • Main Street
		c. Enhance Entrepreneurial Ecosystem supports for technology and future of work opportunities.	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignite Emporia • Main Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CORI • ESU • FHTC • NetWork KS • RDA

Strategic Direction 5: Partnerships, Funding Strategy Development, Plan Implementation

Lyon County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
5.1. Create partnerships, leverage resources and obtain grant funding to move priorities forward.	a. Re-engage with the FHRC in a meaningful way to better facilitate our efforts and connections to regional partnerships.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emporia • Ignite Emporia • Lyon County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FHRC
	b. Update local economic development strategies for Emporia/Lyon County including Pet Nutrition, ESU, and Tourism.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emporia • Ignite Emporia • Lyon County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber • ESU • FHRC • Main Street • RDA

Morris County

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

Morris County

KEY FACTS

5,386

Population

48.9

Median Age



2,477

Households

\$48,936

Median Disposable Income

EDUCATION

8%

No High School Diploma



37%

High School Graduate



33%

Some College



22%

Bachelor's/Grad/Prof Degree

INCOME



\$57,972

Median Household Income



\$34,518

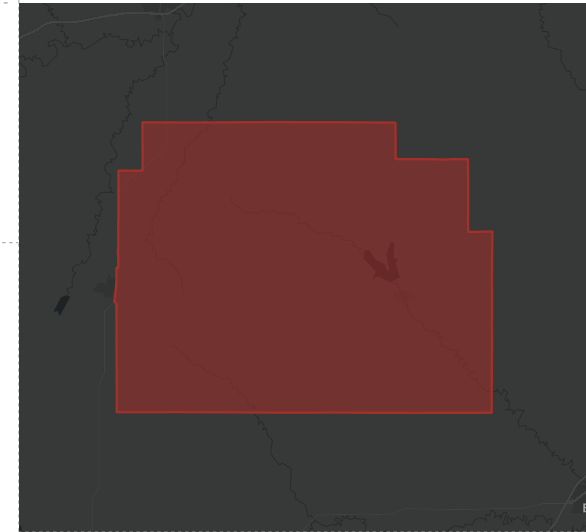
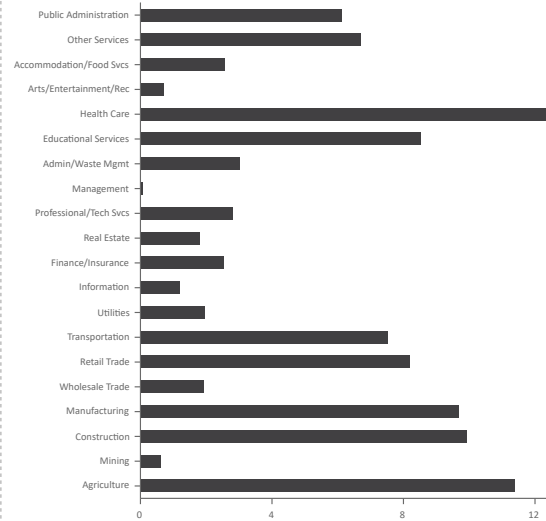
Per Capita Income



\$196,318

Median Net Worth

2021 Labor Force (Esri)



EMPLOYMENT



54%

White Collar



34%

Blue Collar



13%

Services

1.5%

Unemployment Rate

Source: This infographic contains data provided by Esri, Esri. The vintage of the data is 2021, 2026.

Strategic Direction 1: Business Support, Economic Diversification, and Economic Development Infrastructure

Morris County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
1.1. Build external awareness of the region's assets among prospect employers, investors, and corporate relocation professionals to attract new businesses and industries to our region.	a. Continue to develop the City and County Marketing Program to tell Morris County's story and create solid brand identity that markets our value and attracts new and returning residents and visitors regularly.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber GMDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities Morris County TCT
	b. Support the Council Grove/Morris County Chamber of Commerce & Tourism and the local cities' efforts to attract tourism to the region.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Grove Morris County
	c. Increase website presence and marketing efforts outside of Morris County through promoting resources and activities connected to the County.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber Cities GMDC 	-
	d. Facilitate the delivery of industry-specific training programs by proactively linking available resources with companies in need of these services.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GMDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber
	e. Continue to market remote workers to Morris County.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TCT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber CMDC
	f. Maximize and capitalize on ag-tourism potential.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GMDC
1.2. Support and facilitate the retention and expansion of existing regional businesses.	a. Assess the needs of our major employers.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GMDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber
	b. Conduct regular Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) interviews with local industry to determine development opportunities and capture other relevant data such as workforce, facility, capital, and infrastructure challenges.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GMDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber
	c. Assist with expansion projects by providing gap financing through low-interest loans/grants.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GMDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities FHRC
	d. Serve as a liaison to outside sources to assist business needs.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GMDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber Cities FHRC Morris County

Strategic Direction 1: Business Support, Economic Diversification, and Economic Development Infrastructure (continued)

Morris County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
1.3. Provide a sufficient supply of economic-growth-supportive infrastructure.	a. Expand infrastructure to future industrial park.	5+ years	• GMDC	• Council Grove
	b. Continue water and sewer upgrades to prepare for growth and ensure quality service.	Ongoing	• Cities • Morris County	• GMDC

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention

Morris County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.1. Develop long-term programs designed to enhance partnerships between business, education and training officials to enhance the availability, quality, and characteristics of the current and future workforce.	a. Develop a robust comprehensive action plan that enables Morris County to make progress towards creating jobs and supporting entrepreneurship.	3-4 years	• Higher Ed. • USD	• Chamber • GMDC
	b. Internships via the high school for introducing students to rewards and responsibilities of government work and how it shapes a community.	Ongoing	• Chamber	• USDs
2.4. Expand medical education capacity, increase support for mental health services, increase access to services in rural communities and improve health outcomes throughout the FHEDD.	a. Partner on efforts that assist to create a talent pipeline supporting the availability of qualified healthcare and mental health workforce and promote existing resources including group health insurance health programs.	Ongoing	• Healthcare • Higher Ed.	• Chamber • CrossWinds, • FHRC • USDs
2.5. Improve the attraction and retention of talent to the region.	a. Recruit skilled workers inside and outside our community based on industry needs.	Ongoing	• GMDC	• Chamber • Cities
	b. Build and maintain a collaborative community website to work with industries seeking employees to fit their needs.	3-4 years	• GMDC	• Chamber • Cities • Morris County

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

Morris County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.6. Construct and rehabilitate diverse, high-quality, and suitable housing for regional labor force sustainability.	a. Develop suitable and affordable housing that attracts young families, retirees and workers--options for all ages and incomes. - Conduct and solicit a county-wide housing study to identify and implement strategies throughout Morris County.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GMDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builders • Chamber • Cities • Council Grove EcoDevo • Developers • Dwight CDC • Morris County
	b. Work with cities to identify potential development areas and improve infrastructure.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Morris County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric Providers • GMDC • Infrastructure providers • RWD • TCT
	c. Encourage the County to adopt a Neighborhood Revitalization Plan to promote housing development.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Morris County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber • Council Grove EcoDevo • GMDC • USDs
	d. Work with the City and County to develop housing incentives such as the Rural Housing Incentive Districts.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber • Council Grove EcoDevo • GMDC • USDs
	e. Pursue incentives for advisable housing & rehabilitation programs utilizing State and Federal Tax Credits.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • GMDC • Morris County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dwight CDC
	f. Renovate living spaces in 2nd story of main street businesses to create housing for young professionals.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Property Owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morris County

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

Morris County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.7. Provide quality of place environments and amenities that enhance community, appeal to and attract professionals across all economic sectors, and enhance tourism.	a. Continue to advance the Riverwalk improvements, the amphitheater event center, downtown revitalization, bike/ped trail system improvements and projects that enhance tourism.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber • KDOT
	b. Assistance programs for community clean-up / development of rundown areas & identify funding opportunities for rehabbing blighted buildings.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRIDE Group • Morris County
	c. Install wayfinding signage that maximizes visitor experiences: where to find trails, lakes, shopping, food, riverwalk, etc.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morris County
	d. Provide regular trolley routes.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber 	-
	e. More community art projects that deepen the beauty and culture and celebrate the Native roots of Council Grove.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber • Community Arts Council • Historical Society 	-
	f. Bike-Share Program.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber 	-
	g. City/County Incentives to help with expenses to renovate the 2nd floor of the Main Street buildings.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Developers • Property Owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morris County
	h. Council Grove City Lake Improvements and establishing water and sewer distribution to lake homes.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Grove 	-

Strategic Direction 3: Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurialism

Morris County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
3.2. Enhance support for entrepreneurs of all ages.	a. Obtain grants for incubating small business.	Ongoing	• GMDC	• Chamber • NetWork KS • USDs

Strategic Direction 5: Partnerships, Funding Strategy Development, Plan Implementation

Morris County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
5.1. Create partnerships, leverage resources and obtain grant funding to move priorities forward.	a. Work on capital campaign with potential investors interested in advancing economic development initiatives.	Ongoing	• GMDC	• Investors

Pottawatomie County

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

Pottawatomie County

KEY FACTS

25,348

Population

37.1

Median Age



9,295

Households

\$54,354

Median Disposable Income

EDUCATION

5%

No High School Diploma



30%

High School Graduate



31%

Some College



35%

Bachelor's/Grad/Prof Degree

INCOME



\$66,429

Median Household Income



\$29,699

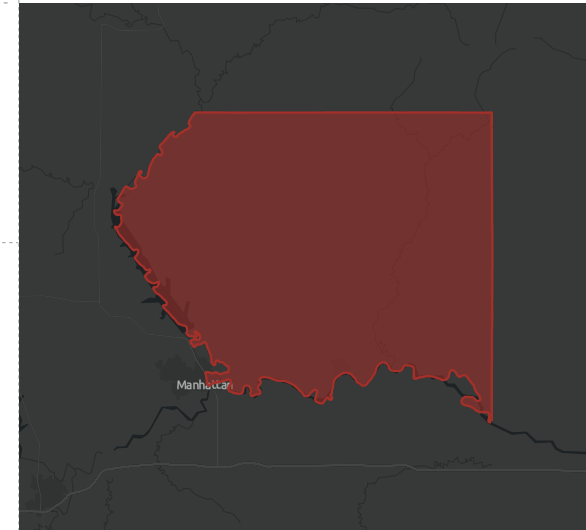
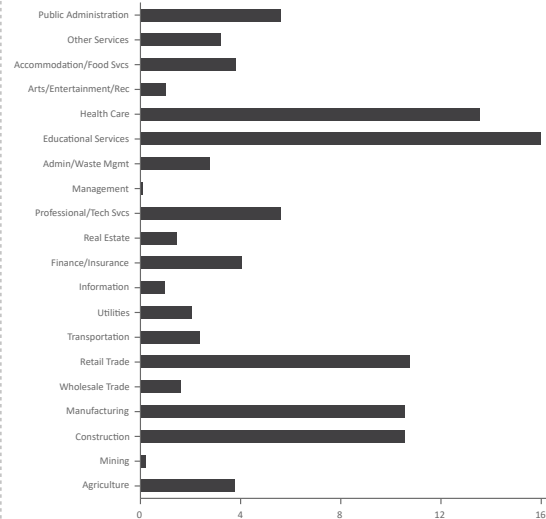
Per Capita Income



\$184,635

Median Net Worth

2021 Labor Force (Esri)



EMPLOYMENT

67%

White Collar

26%

Blue Collar

8%

Services

4.5%

Unemployment Rate

Source: This infographic contains data provided by Esri, Esri. The vintage of the data is 2021, 2026.

Strategic Direction 1: Business Support, Economic Diversification, and Economic Development Infrastructure

Pottawatomie County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
1.1. Build external awareness of the region's assets among prospect employers, investors, and corporate relocation professionals to attract new businesses and industries to our region.	1.1.1. Develop a competitive marketing & communication program.	a. Through Greater Manhattan Economic Partnership (GMEP) implement a strong business attraction target marketing program focused on specific industries (Goal 4 of PCEDC Plan).	Ongoing	• GMEP	• KDC
		b. Develop a county-specific map that highlights the recreational and open space opportunities in Pottawatomie County (PTCO Plan p106).	1-2 years	• Pottawatomie County	• CVB • FHMPO • KDWPT
1.2. Support and facilitate the retention and expansion of existing regional businesses.	1.2.1. Formalize an expanded business retention and expansion (BRE) program.	a. Continue to develop strong business retention expansion programs by actively continuing building relationships with existing industry in Pottawatomie County (Goal 5 of PCEDC Plan).	Ongoing	• PCEDC	• Chamber(s) • Pottawatomie County
1.3. Provide a sufficient supply of economic-growth-supportive infrastructure.	1.3.1. Leverage ongoing comprehensive and land use planning to direct infrastructure development.	a. Help coordinate / participate in the regional infrastructure committee.	1-2 years	• FHRC	• Chamber(s) • Cites • FHMPO • GMEP • Pottawatomie County
		b. Utilize Comprehensive Plan to advance infrastructure priorities at a regional level, including a cost-benefit analysis for the proposed Marlatt/Junietta Bridge extension (PTCO Plan p102).	1-2 years (Advanced Preliminary Engineering)	• Pottawatomie County • Riley County	• Blue Township • USDs
		c. Update the County's development regulations and standards to ensure the development process will result in necessary level of infrastructure (PTCO Plan p102).	Ongoing	• Pottawatomie County	-

Strategic Direction 1: Business Support, Economic Diversification, and Economic Development Infrastructure

Pottawatomie County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
1.3. Provide a sufficient supply of economic-growth-supportive infrastructure.	1.3.2. Prepare shovel-ready development sites.	a. Purchase & develop at least one new site and build an industrial park in phases (Goal 1.A of PCEDC Plan).	1-2 years	• PCEDC	• GMPE • KDOT • Pottawatomie County • Wamego
		b. Map existing infrastructure & identify infrastructure needs and potential funding sources (Goal 1.B of PCEDC Plan).	1-2 years	• Cities • Pottawatomie County	• PCEDC
	1.3.3. Make broadband and cellular connectivity available for data-intensive businesses and users.	a. Create a broadband plan to ensure that as technologies change the County is prepared (PTCO Plan p103).	Ongoing	• Broadband Providers	• FHRC • Pottawatomie County • USDs
		b. Identify ways to support local broadband providers.	Ongoing	• Chamber(s) • Cities, • Regional Infra. Committee	• Broadband Providers

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention

Pottawatomie County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.1 Continue to enhance the capacity and productivity of the region's pre-K to 20 educational institutions and other training programs geared to enhance employability skills of the emerging, transitional and current workforce.	2.1.6. Work to enhance existing programs and facilities and develop critical new capacity.	a. Continue to promote and utilize WorkKeys as a tool to assist with employability and promote Workbased learning opportunities.	Ongoing	• USDs	• Businesses • KSDE • PCEDC
		b. Develop creative strategies to prepare young people for the workforce essentials of the 20th Century (Goal 2.A. of PCEDC Plan).	Ongoing	• Higher Ed. • USDs	• Businesses • Chamber(s) • PCEDC

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

Pottawatomie County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.6 Construct and rehabilitate diverse, high-quality, and suitable housing for regional labor force sustainability.	2.6.2. Optimize regulatory tools and incentives to support diverse housing development.	a. Encourage the development of a diversity of housing types and sizes within areas of existing development and growth (PTCO Plan p98).	Ongoing	• Developers, Cities, County	• FABAA • FHARA • KDC • PCEDC
	2.6.3. Effectively implement adopted plans and studies (comprehensive plans, master plans, downtown/ neighborhood plans, etc.).	a. Implement the Plan Pottawatomie County 2040 (Comprehensive Plan), Vision Wamego, individual community comprehensive plans, Green Valley Area Plan, Wamego Safe Routes to School Plan, Flint Hills Long-Range Transportation Plan, US-24 Corridor Plan and update as appropriate.	Ongoing	• Variety	-
2.7. Provide quality of place environments and amenities that enhance community, appeal to and attract professionals across all economic sectors, and enhance tourism.	2.7.2. Support implementation of local placemaking initiatives, including parks, natural areas, trails, riverfront, outdoor and indoor recreational, cultural experiences, entertainment, community entrances, wayfinding signage, and target area improvements.	a. Support programs to assist tourism, history and agriculture that will benefit small businesses and target new retail opportunities that will enhance the tax base including festivals, eco-tourism programs, such as the Kansas River trail system and ag-tourism businesses (Goal 5.C. of PCEDC Plan).	Ongoing	• CVB • FH Tourism Coalition	• CVB • FHRC • Mount Mitchell Prairie Guards
		b. Integrate the “Complete Streets” concept into County transportation planning and projects (and other areas as appropriate) PTCO Plan p99.	Ongoing	• Cities • Pottawatomie County	• FHMPO
		c. Continue implementation of trail projects. Plan Pottawatomie County 2040 highlights the opportunity for regional stormwater management projects to incorporate not only flood protection, but also additional recreational opportunities (as joint-use facilities) incorporating trails into the design of the project.	Ongoing	• Variety	• Variety

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

Pottawatomie County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.8. Develop long-term programs designed to enhance partnerships between business, education and training officials to enhance the availability, quality and characteristics of the current and future workforce.	2.8.2. Promote ACT Work Ready.	a. Promote and develop the ACT Work Ready System to identify skill gaps, provide training and enhance employability by leveraging the National Career Readiness Certificate (Goal 2.B. of PCEDC Plan).	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT WRC • Chamber(s) • PCEDC
2.9. Work to overcome fundamental challenges individuals and families are facing that impact their ability and/or desire to make this region their home including basic human need resources such as childcare, access to healthcare, employment with competitive salaries, suitable housing, adequate infrastructure, and community assets that support healthy lifestyles, and recreational and social opportunities that promote connectivity and enhance sense of belonging.	2.1.1. Provide early childhood programming for all eligible local students	a. Continue to develop programs to enhance the availability and affordability of day care for children from birth to five years to assist growth in the labor force by young parents (Goal 2.E. of PCEDC Plan).	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCEDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Care Aware • KSU Extension • Private Partners • USDs

Strategic Direction 3: Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurialism

Pottawatomie County Strategy Framework		Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
3.2.	Enhance support for entrepreneurs of all ages.	3.2.2. Foster enhanced entrepreneurial event and networking opportunities.	a. Continue to develop programs for small and new business, as well as, supporting their efforts for legislation and advocacy and working closely with existing resources, including work with NetWork Kansas (Goal 5.A. of PCEDC Plan).	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PCEDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber(s) HEAL SBDC SPARK

Strategic Direction 4: Recovery, Disaster Preparedness, and Resiliency

Pottawatomie County Strategy Framework		Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
4.1.	Identify and support efforts that assist in creating a more resilient, sustainable region (responsive).	a. Explore revenue strategies to offset current and anticipated tax revenue decreases as a result of the impending closure of Jeffrey Energy Center (i.e., alternative energy generation, alternative sources of tax revenue, etc.).	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities Pottawatomie County PCEDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GMEP

Strategic Direction 5: Partnerships, Funding Strategy Development, Plan Implementation

Pottawatomie County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
5.1. Create partnerships, leverage resources and obtain grant funding to move priorities forward.	a. Continue to develop programs & initiatives by working closely with Human Resource Management Network, the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce Talent Programs, and KANSASWORKS (Goal 2. D. of PCEDC Plan).	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber(s) • HRMN • KANSASWORKS • PCEDC 	-
	b. Embark on new private sector fundraising campaign or a program that demonstrates the \$2M tax revenue generated annually from PCEDC industrial parks (Goal 3.B. of PCEDC Plan).	5+ years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCEDC 	-

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Riley County

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

Riley County

KEY FACTS

71,959
Population

25.3
Median Age

27,312
Households

\$41,310
Median Disposable Income

EDUCATION

4%
No High School Diploma

19%
High School Graduate

31%
Some College

46%
Bachelor's/Grad/Prof Degree

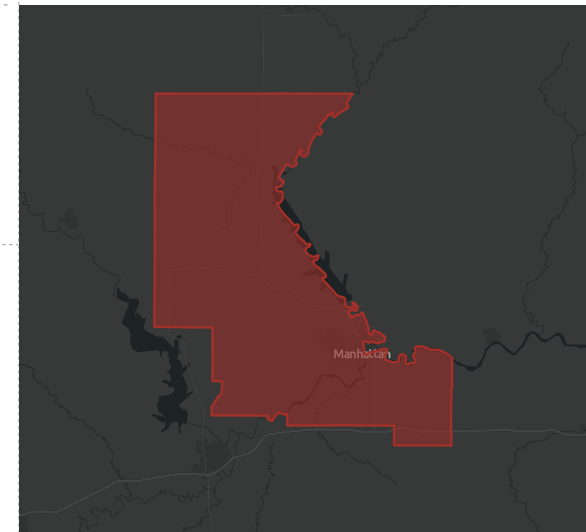
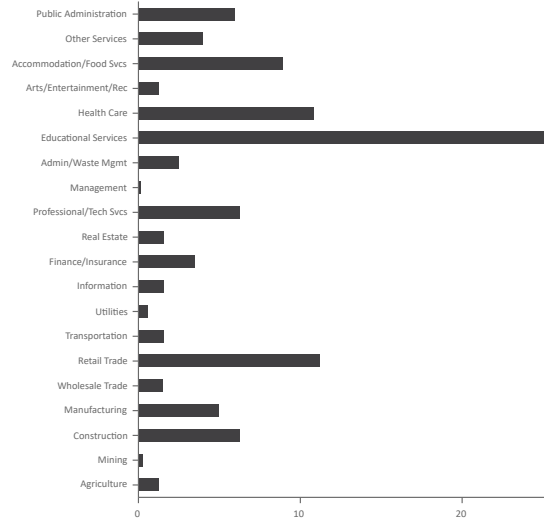
INCOME

\$51,287
Median Household Income

\$25,313
Per Capita Income

\$34,475
Median Net Worth

2021 Labor Force (Esri)



EMPLOYMENT

70%

White Collar

15%

Blue Collar

14%

Services

5.6%

Unemployment Rate

Source: This infographic contains data provided by Esri, Esri. The vintage of the data is 2021, 2026.

Strategic Direction 1: Business Support, Economic Diversification, and Economic Development Infrastructure

Riley County Strategy Framework		Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
1.1.	Build external awareness of the region's assets among prospect employers, investors, and corporate relocation professionals to attract new businesses and industries to our region.	1.1.1. Develop a competitive marketing & communication program	a. Confirm Greater Manhattan's external brand, either maintaining "The Little Apple" or developing a new campaign equivalent to competitor regions.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber GMEP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses
1.2.	Support and facilitate the retention and expansion of existing regional businesses.	1.2.3. Continue enhancing passenger air accessibility to the Manhattan area	a. Conduct specialized analysis by consulting firm for expanded air service & retention of existing service & implement recommendations.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manhattan 	-
			b. Obtain and implement an air service development grant.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber Manhattan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KDC
1.3.	Provide a sufficient supply of economic-growth-supportive infrastructure.	1.3.2. Prepare shovel-ready development sites	a. Consider priority opportunities to purchase and assemble land adjacent to the Manhattan Regional Airport's new fixed base operations (FBO) facility and future runway extension for shovel-ready development sites (moved from regional to Riley County)	1-2 years / Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber GMEP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manhattan Ogden Riley County
			b. Continue to update and implement infrastructure master and other plans to ensure adequate primary utility services including domestic water supply/fire flows, sanitary sewer, stormwater and transportation as well as private utility services including electrical power, natural gas and broadband.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manhattan Riley County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builders Chamber Developers Utility Providers

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention

Riley County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.1. Continue to enhance the capacity of the region's pre-K to 20 educational institutions and other training programs geared to enhance employability skills of the emerging transitional and current workforce.	2.1.6. Work to enhance existing programs and facilities and develop critical new capacity.	a. Enhance the capacity of Manhattan Area Technical College Programs and facilities to more effectively serve the region's current and future employers, this includes enhanced awareness and continued creation of stackable programs of study leading to an industry-recognized credential targeting high demand, skilled occupations needed for the regional economy. (See FHRC Build Back Better - Regional Challenge Application)	1-2 years	• MATC	• Chamber • FHRC • GMEP • Higher Ed. • USDs
2.4. Expand medical education capacity, increase support for mental health services, increase access to services in rural communities and improve health outcomes throughout the FHEDD.	2.4.1. Expand medical education capacity by identifying funding to support development of local medical education programs	a. Charge the Regional Healthcare Consortium with working to secure residency slots in family medicine.	5+ years	-	• Via Christi
		b. Partner with local healthcare providers for physician assistant clinical rotations.	1-2 years	-	• Stormont Vail
		c. Partner with local healthcare providers for nursing clinical rotations.	1-2 years	-	• WSU
		d. Pursue all viable means to secure funding for residency slots, including applying for federal dollars and/or sourcing public, private, or philanthropic investments from state or local governments, companies, foundations, or individual donors.	5+ years	• KU Med	-
	2.4.3. Continue partnering on efforts to expand access to healthcare service in rural communities and improve overall local health outcomes of all counties within the FHEDD.	a. Support initiatives of mental health and substance abuse providers and seek funding to support.	1-2 years	• Pawnee	• Various
		b. Consolidate some mental health services into one facility, if the opportunity arises, and use vacated space to expand the crisis stabilization center.	3-4 years	• Pawnee	• Health Dept. • Crisis Stabilization Center
2.5. Improve the attraction and retention of talent to the region.	2.5.1. Work with higher education programs to determine how local partners can support student-recruitment efforts.	a. Work with K-State's recruitment office to determine how the community can best assist K-State with recruitment through improvements to transportation, quality housing, and community assets.	1-2 years	• K-State • Manhattan	• ATA Bus • Chamber • FHMPO • FHRC • Ogden

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

Riley County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.5. Improve the attraction and retention of talent to the region.	2.5.1. Work with higher education programs to determine how local partners can support student-recruitment efforts.	b. Determine how enhanced economic development marketing in overseas markets can support promotion of K-State as a destination for international talent.	3-4 years	• K-State	• GMEP
		c. Leverage the K-State alumni network to serve as local ambassadors for targeted admissions candidates in their communities, either domestically or internationally.	3-4 years	• K-State	• Chamber
	2.5.2. Work with employers and higher education institutions on how to attract and retain talent to the community from all sectors of the population	a. Develop overall targeted talent recruitment program for all sectors of the population.	Ongoing	• Chamber	-
		b. Explore opportunities to reserve 1-2 seats on each Higher Education Institution's Departmental Advisory Board to ensure local representation for recruitment of talent to the community.	3-4 years	• Chamber	• Businesses
		c. "Provide support to local businesses by providing information about competitive wages by position type so that employers are encouraged to pay competitive wages as both a talent attraction and retention strategy."	Ongoing	• Chamber	• Various
		d. Expand marketing efforts to further support talent attraction and retention strategies, including the implementation of the Made for Manhattan marketing program that began in 2021.	Ongoing	• Chamber	-
		e. Implement a redesigned workforce recruitment program.	Ongoing	• Chamber	-
		f. Work with K-State Alumni Association and Veterans Support Groups to stay connected with prior residents of the Flint Hills and encourage a potential return to region.	1-2 years	-	• K-State • Veteran Affiliate Groups

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

Riley County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.6. Construct and rehabilitate diverse, high-quality, and suitable housing for regional labor force sustainability.	2.6.1. Conduct a series of housing studies based on existing infrastructure capacity.	a. "Complete current city-wide, in-depth Housing Market Analysis. a) Study Manhattan's housing market, housing stock, and housing needs in detail. b) Complete a community-wide review of data (previous and current) and conditions on-the-ground. c) Engage the community in dialogue about their housing experiences, desired strategies, and their priorities for the future. d) Utilize a Steering Committee to listen to and provide feedback to City staff, Development Strategies, and the City Commission as it pertains to the Housing Market Analysis. e) Create strategies to shape specific policies, programs, and projects that address Manhattan's housing needs."	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manhattan 	-
		b. Conduct Housing Condition Assessments with consistent methodology for communities within the county and incorporate within comprehensive plans.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manhattan Riley County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHRC
		c. Collaborate with local partners and gather resources to support the rehabilitation of deteriorated housing.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habitat for Humanity HEAL Non-Profits
	2.6.3. Effectively implement adopted plans and studies. (comprehensive plans, master plans, downtown/ neighborhood plans, etc.)	a. Based on findings and recommended action steps from the Manhattan Housing Market Analysis, design and implement appropriate revitalization / rehabilitation programs, and conduct additional Neighborhood Plans, as needed.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manhattan Riley County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses Chamber
	2.6.4. Launch a program to revitalize neighborhoods and commercial areas.	b. Establish the Housing Advisory Board, based on input from the Housing Market Analysis	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manhattan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHRC K-State Non-Profits

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

Riley County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.6. Construct and rehabilitate diverse, high-quality, and suitable housing for regional labor force sustainability.	2.6.4. Launch a program to revitalize neighborhoods and commercial areas.	b. Identify a variety of housing options, types, densities, and areas for development /redevelopment to accommodate the full range of housing needs of the community, based on recommendations from the Housing Market Analysis and recommendations from the Housing Advisory Board.	1-2 years	• Manhattan	-
		c. Leverage existing tools provided through Manhattan's CDBG Housing Rehab Program, if applicable.	3-5+ years	• Manhattan	• FAB • FHAR • WSU
		d. Implement housing strategies as identified in the Housing Market Analysis and by the Housing Advisory Board.	3-4 years	• Manhattan	-
		e. Consider using TIF and other financing tools to fund infrastructure and public-space improvements.	3-5+ years	• Manhattan	-
		f. Review and update the housing element and other elements of the Manhattan Urban Area Comprehensive Plan, as needed.	3-4 years	• Manhattan	-
2.7. Provide quality of place environments and amenities that enhance community, appeal to and attract professionals across all economic sectors, and enhance tourism.	2.7.2. Support implementation of local placemaking initiatives, including parks, natural areas, trails, riverfront, outdoor and indoor recreational, cultural experiences, entertainment, community entrances, wayfinding signage, and target area improvements.	a. Develop a Master Park Plan for Ogden to ensure that existing park and recreation facilities are meeting the current and future needs of residents	1-2 years	• Ogden	-
		b. Encourage hospitality-related businesses and both public and private developments to incorporate flexible multi-purpose space to create more options for hosting small and large-scale events.	Ongoing	• CVB • Cities • Private Partners • Riley County	-
		c. Implement trail connectivity projects and coordinate multi-county gravel rides.	Ongoing	• Cities • Riley County	• FHMPO
		d. Pursue partnerships for additional competitive level 18-hole disc golf course.	Ongoing	• Disc Golf Clubs • Manhattan • Ogden • Riley County	• CVB

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

Riley County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.7. Provide quality of place environments and amenities that enhance community, appeal to and attract professionals across all economic sectors, and enhance tourism.	2.7.2. Support implementation of local placemaking initiatives, including parks, natural areas, trails, riverfront, outdoor and indoor recreational, cultural experiences, entertainment, community entrances, wayfinding signage, and target area improvements.	e. Explore the potential development of an indoor aquatic facility that would serve the USD and the Community.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manhattan USD 383 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> K-State Private Partners
		f. Continue public and private art initiatives.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Art Enthus. Comm. Foundation Businesses Cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities GMCF Private Partners
		g. Promote both local and regional community assets including the National Kansas Water Trail, the Scenic Byways, Tuttle Creek State Park, Konza Prairie Biological Station, etc.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities CVB Riley County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GMEP, Chamber, FHRC
		h. Continue to support public and private museum and cultural venues to ensure sustainability and expansion of attraction facilities, promoting the arts for education, and local tourism. (EDA Travel, Tourism, & Outdoor Recreation Application for Museum of Art & Light)	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities Non-Profits Private Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHRC, State Agencies Fed. Agencies Investors Private Position
		i. Update and implement the gateway plan.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities Riley County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KDOT
		j. Implement recommendations from the City of Manhattan Bicycle and Pedestrian Systems Plan.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manhattan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> K-State KDOT FHMPO
		k. Complete Riley County's portion of the four-county, five municipality, River and Trail Plan with technical assistance from the National Park Service, Rivers, Trails and Conversation Program.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHMPO FHRC Ogden Manhattan Riley County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varies

Strategic Direction 3: Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurialism

Riley County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
3.1. Grow and diversify the innovation ecosystem.	3.1.1. Provide support to major initiatives that will enhance our region's innovative ecosystem and contribute to making our region more resilient and prepared for the future.	a. Complete build out of the Edge Collaboration District.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-State • K-State Athletics • K-State Foundation • Manhattan • Riley County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDA • KDOT • Investors
		b. Implement K-State's Strategic Plan.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • K-State Alumni Association • K-State Athletics • K-State Foundation
		c. Support the needs of major federal, state and regional employers (Fort Riley, K-State, NBAF, etc.) and create an environment and culture that encourages innovative ideas and helps to attract innovative spin-off businesses to the FHEDD.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber • Cities • Riley County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FHRC • GMPE • K-State TDI • KBED
3.2. Enhance support for entrepreneurs of all ages.	3.2.1. Promote and support coworking, maker-spaces, shared meeting spaces, incubator space, microfactories for manufacturing startups, and event spaces in the region.	a. Explore opportunities to create maker-spaces and/or additional flexible multi-purpose space to support entrepreneurial activities.	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investors • Stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundations • Higher Ed. • Non-Profits
		b. Consider relocating the Kansas Entrepreneurial Center program, a partnership of the Manhattan Area Chamber and the City of Manhattan, from its existing facility to an alternative location to better position itself as a landing pad for outside firms.	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber • Manhattan 	-

Strategic Direction 3: Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurialism

(continued)

Riley County Strategy Framework	Tactic	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
3.2. Enhance support for entrepreneurs of all ages.	3.2.2. Develop, implement, and build capacity to support and expand entrepreneurial programming, capital resources, and infrastructure.	a. Develop a local microfactory to support start-up manufacturing businesses and entrepreneurs. (K-State TDI, Build Back Better - Regional Challenge)	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-State TDI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FHRC & Economic Development Organizations throughout the FHEDD, Black Entrepreneurs of the Flint Hills, SPARK
		b. Build capacity to support and expand entrepreneurial programming, capital resources and infrastructure --(i.e. providing access to landing pad(s) and capital resources for businesses looking to capitalize on proximity to Fort Riley, K-State, NBAF and other major regional anchors).	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Entrep. of the Flint Hills • Chamber • GMEP • K-State Foundation • K-State TDI • KBED • Spark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDA • FHRC • Investors

Strategic Direction 4: Recovery, Disaster Preparedness, and Resiliency

Riley County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
4.1. Identify and support efforts that assist in creating a more resilient, sustainable region (responsive).	a. Ensure that property adjacent to the Manhattan Regional Airport is reserved for future runway, terminal, and fixed-base operations expansion, and high-value industrial development projects.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber • Manhattan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites and Buildings Task Force

Strategic Direction 4: Recovery, Disaster Preparedness, and Resiliency

(continued)

Riley County Strategy Framework		Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
4.1.	Identify and support efforts that assist in creating a more resilient, sustainable region (responsive).	b. Continue to analyze, adopt plans, and implement mitigation measures to reduce flood risk to life and property (i.e. Big Blue River, Kansas River, and Wildcat Creek).	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities Riley County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FEMA KDEM USACE
		c. Identify funding to implement stormwater management improvements, including detention structures, conveyance systems, pumping stations, recovery elements of repair, and other strategies as identified within stormwater management plans.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities Riley County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FEMA
		d. Implement strategies that strengthen our emergency management and hazard mitigation capabilities including improved facilities, equipment and systems.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities Riley County RCPD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FEMA, Homeland Security
		e. Implement Riley County's portion of the Military Infrastructure Resiliency Study and Action Plan.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities Riley County FHRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fort Riley
		f. Explore and implement recommendations from Food and Farm Council for resiliency measures.	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manhattan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Foundations Fed. Agencies State Agencies Non-Profits
		g. Explore strategies to provide better support-services to the homeless.	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manhattan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Foundations Fed. Agencies State Agencies Non-Profits

Strategic Direction 5: Partnerships, Funding Strategy Development, Plan Implementation

Riley County Strategy Framework		Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
5.1.	Create partnerships, leverage resources and obtain grant funding to move priorities forward.	b. Continue efforts to seek state and federal funding to support local and regional priorities.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber • EDA • FHRC • KDC • K-State Foundation, • KDC

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Wabaunsee County

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

Wabaunsee County

KEY FACTS

6,877

Population



2,864

Households

44.4

Median Age

\$50,263

Median Disposable Income

EDUCATION

4%

No High School Diploma



35%

High School Graduate



36%

Some College



25%

Bachelor's/Grad/Prof Degree

INCOME



\$59,516

Median Household Income



\$27,842

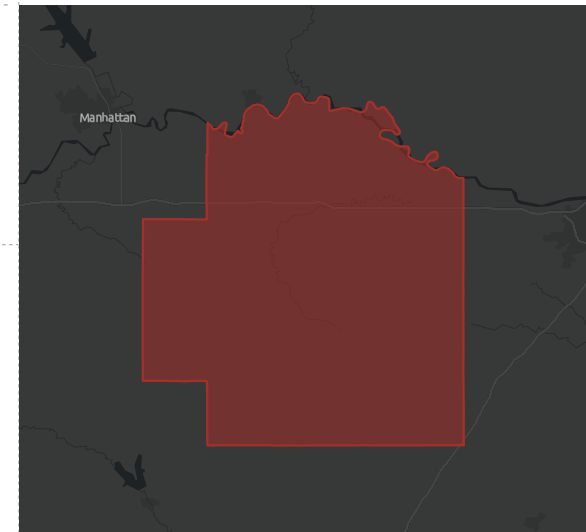
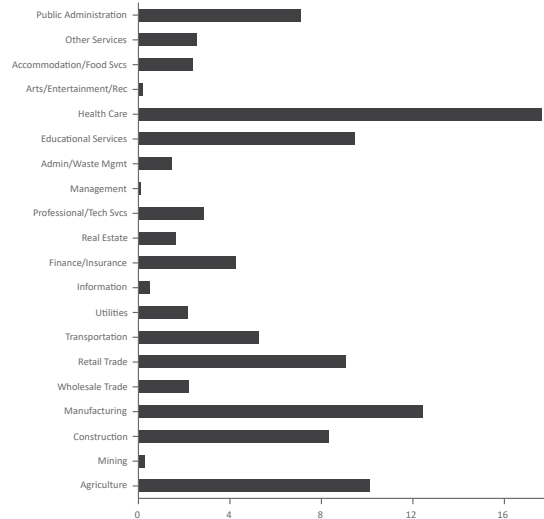
Per Capita Income



\$215,639

Median Net Worth

2021 Labor Force (Esri)



EMPLOYMENT



68%

White Collar



24%

Blue Collar



8%

Services

4.8%

Unemployment Rate

Source: This infographic contains data provided by Esri, Esri. The vintage of the data is 2021, 2026.

Strategic Direction 1: Business Support, Economic Diversification, and Economic Development Infrastructure

Wabaunsee County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
1.1. Build external awareness of the region's assets among prospect employers, investors, and corporate relocation professionals to attract new businesses and industries to our region.	a. Begin 1.3 & 2.7/2.8, and then certify sites with KDOC.	5+ years	• OED	• KDOC
	b. Improve web visibility.	Ongoing	• OED	• FHRC • KDC
1.2. Support and facilitate the retention and expansion of existing regional businesses.	a. Incentivize training and educational programs for micro-businesses.	1-2 years	• OED	• FHRC • SBA • SBDC • SCORE
	b. Expand revolving loan and other financing options with lenders.	1-2 years	• OED	• Lenders • NetWork KS • SBA
	c. Maximize use of SCORE, SBDC, and other programs to provider mentors, technical expertise.	Ongoing	• OED	• NetWork KS • SBA • SBDC • SCORE
	d. Improve and expand the small business network, locally and regionally.	1-2 years	• OED	• Chambers • Businesses
	e. Work with state and federal governments, and non-governmental entities, on rural development issues.	Ongoing	• OED	• FHRC • KAC • KS Sampler • USDA • Fed. Agencies • State Agencies
	f. Advocate for rural, agricultural, and micro-business friendly legislative proposals.	Ongoing	• Commission	• KAC • Fed. Agencies • State Agencies

Strategic Direction 1: Business Support, Economic Diversification, and Economic Development Infrastructure (continued)

Wabaunsee County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
1.3. Provide sufficient supply of economic-growth-supportive infrastructure.	a. Assess, engineer, and develop infrastructure along K99 and I70.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OED Rd_Bdge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developers KDOT Utility Providers
	b. Upgrade utility infrastructure in cities.	5+ years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KDHE Utility Providers
	c. Improve broadband access in non-city areas.	5+ years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadband Providers KDC USDA
	d. Improve drinking water access in non-city areas.	5+ years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RWD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KDHE USDA
	e. Remove/update/reuse blighted buildings, roads, and sidewalks.	5+ years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA FHRC KS Sampler USDA
	f. Develop and implement tools/incentives to address abandoned buildings and spaces	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHRC
	g. Develop and implement 10- and 25- year plans for road and bridge sustainability	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rd_Bdge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KDOT
1.4. Promote the Flint Hills as a destination for cultural, historical and outdoor recreational opportunities.	a. Establish a Flint Hills Visitor Center at I70, Exit 328.	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developers KDC KDWPT FHRC FH Tourism Coalition
	b. Improve wayfinding signage and web visibility	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FH Tourism Coalition KDC KDOT Private Partners

Strategic Direction 1: Business Support, Economic Diversification, and Economic Development Infrastructure (continued)

Wabaunsee County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
1.4. Promote the Flint Hills as a destination for cultural, historical and outdoor recreational opportunities. (continued)	c. Develop a coalition of mutually-supportive partners across the travel, tourism and hospitality industry.	1-2 years	• OED	• Private Partners
	d. Preserve natural, historical, and cultural sites and structures.	Ongoing	• Wabaunsee County	• OED • Historical Society • KDC

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention

Wabaunsee County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.1. Continue to enhance the capacity and productivity of the region’s pre-K to 20 educational institutions and other training programs geared to enhance employability skills of the emerging, transitional and current workforce.	a. Support building, curricula, and technology modernization efforts of USD 329, USD 330, and USD 417.	Ongoing	• USD	-
	b. Improve quality of place to attract/retain faculty and staff.	Ongoing	• USD	-
	c. Expand child care services by supporting state-approved sites.	3-4 years	• Businesses	• OED • KDC • KDHE • USDs
	d. Expand library services, specifically in technology services.	3-4 years	• PWRLS	• Non-Profit • USDs
2.2. Increase the number of recent graduates remaining in our region to live and work.	a. Develop incentives to attract and/or retain young adults.	1-2 years	• OED	• KDC ORP • KS Sampler • NetWork KS
	b. Encourage and incentivizing those working in neighboring communities to “stay home” as opportunities in the County develop.	3-4 years	• OED	-

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

Wabaunsee County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.3. Provide support to transitioning soldiers leaving the military-- helping to make connections to employment, education, and/or social networks so they make our region their home.	a. Work with MATC and FHTC to have medical/nursing students gain practical experience Wabaunsee County; see also 2.7 for action items associated with expanding local access.	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Dept 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Care • Higher Ed. • OED
2.4. Expand medical education capacity, increase support for mental health services, increase access to services in rural communities and improve health outcomes throughout the FHEDD.	a. Develop incentives to attract and/or retain young adults; see also 2.7 and 2.2.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CrossWinds • Health Dept.
2.5. Improve the attraction and retention of talent to the region.	a. Review and update local zoning regulations, zoning maps, and other development-related guidelines, policies, and incentive programs.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OED • Wabaunsee County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • FHRC
	b. Retain the services of a county engineer.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighboring Counties • Wabaunsee County
	c. Work with cities and landowners to identify sites and where acceptable, prepare them for development.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OED • Wabaunsee County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • Property Owners • Realtors • Developers
2.7. Provide quality of place environments and amenities that enhance community, appeal to and attract professionals across all economic sectors, and enhance tourism.	a. Invest in outdoor recreation and leisure programs and places.	3-4 years	-	-
	b. Promote County-wide community-building events and organizations.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • FH Tourism Coalition
	c. Expand in-person, mobile, and virtual access to medical and veterinary care access	5+ years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Dept 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Ed. • KDHE • USDA

Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention (continued)

Wabaunsee County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
2.7. Provide quality of place environments and amenities that enhance community, appeal to and attract professionals across all economic sectors, and enhance tourism. (continued)	d. Develop diversified-in-cost, high quality housing options.	5+ years	• Cities	• EPA • KDHE • Utility Providers
	e. Improve broadband access in non-city areas.	5+ years	• OED	• Broadband Providers • KDOC • USDA
	f. Improve drinking water access in non-city areas.	5+ years	• RWD	• EPA • KDHE • USDA
	g. Remove/update blighted buildings, roads, and sidewalks.	5+ years	• Cities	• EPA • FHRC • KS Sampler • USDA
	h. Develop and implement tools/incentives to address abandoned buildings and spaces.	1-2 years	• Cities	• FHRC
	i. Develop and implement 10- and 25- year plans for road and bridge sustainability.	1-2 years	• Rd_Bdge	• KDOT
	j. Promote growth and sustainability of locally available essential retail (i.e., grocery, pharmacy, auto care, dining) services.	3-4 years	• OED	• KDC; • NetWork KS • SBA • SBDC

Strategic Direction 3: Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurialism

Wabaunsee County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
3.2. Enhance support for entrepreneurs of all ages.	a. Incentivize training and educational programs for micro-businesses.	1-2 years	• OED	• FHRC • SBDC • SCORE
	b. Expand revolving loan and other financing options with lenders.	1-2 years	• OED	• NetWork KS • Lenders
	c. Maximize use of SCORE, SBDC, Network Kansas and other programs to provider mentors, technical expertise.	Ongoing	• OED	• Network KS • SBA • SBDC • SCORE
	d. Improve and expand the small business network, locally and regionally.	1-2 years	• OED	• Chambers • Businesses
	e. Create and invest in youth and young adult programs.	Ongoing	• OED	• NetWork KS • USDs
	f. Expose the community to goods and services available locally.	Ongoing	• OED	• NetWork KS

Strategic Direction 4: Recovery, Disaster Preparedness, and Resiliency

Wabaunsee County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
4.1. Identify and support efforts that assist in creating a more resilient, sustainable region.	a. Incentivize training and educational programs for micro-businesses.	1-2 years	• OED	• FHRC • SBDC • SCORE
	b. Expand revolving loan and other financing options with lenders.	1-2 years	• OED	• Lenders • NetWork KS

Strategic Direction 4: Recovery, Disaster Preparedness, and Resiliency

(continued)

Wabaunsee County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
4.1. Identify and support efforts that assist in creating a more resilient, sustainable region. (continued)	c. Promote use of SCORE, SBDC, and other programs to provider mentors, technical expertise.	Ongoing	• OED	• SBDC • SCORE
	d. Improve and expand the small business network, locally and regionally.	1-2 years	• OED	• Chambers • Businesses
	e. Include small business owners, lenders, economic development professionals in disaster response and recovery planning and rehearsals.	1-2 years	• Wabaunsee County	• Chambers • FEMA • FHRC • KDC • KDEM • OED

Strategic Direction 5: Partnerships, Funding Strategy Development, Plan Implementation

Wabaunsee County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
5.1. Create partnerships, leverage resources and obtain grant funding to move priorities forward.	a. Incentivize training and educational programs for micro-businesses.	1-2 years	• OED	• FHRC • SBDC • SCORE
	b. Expand revolving loan and other financing options with lenders.	1-2 years	• OED	• Lenders • NetWork KS
	c. Maximize use of SCORE, SBDC, Network Kansas and other programs to provider mentors, technical expertise.	Ongoing	• OED	• SBDC • SCORE

Strategic Direction 5: Partnerships, Funding Strategy Development, Plan Implementation (continued)

Wabaunsee County Strategy Framework	Action Items	Timeline/ Priority	Project Lead	Potential Partners
5.1. Create partnerships, leverage resources and obtain grant funding to move priorities forward.	d. Improve and expand the small business network, locally and regionally.	1-2 years	• OED	• Chambers • Businesses
	e. Create and invest in youth and young adult programs.	Ongoing	• OED	• Network KS • USDs
	f. Expose the community to goods and services available locally.	Ongoing	• OED	• NetWork KS
5.2. Support the FHRC in their role to administer the Flint Hills Economic Development District through plan updates, coordination of plan implementation, and tracking and reporting implementation progress.	a. Actively Participate.	Ongoing	• OED	• FHRC
5.3. Utilize the regional needs assessment system for identified unfunded needs so that FHRC and regional partners can assist in developing funding strategies.	a. Actively support identify and share unfunded needs.	Ongoing	• OED	• Cities • Wabaunsee County • Non-Profits
5.4. Communicate Plan Progress.	a. Actively Participate.	Ongoing	• OED	-

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4

Page 4-3 **Performance Measures**

Page 4-4 **Indicators**

Chapter 4

Evaluation Framework


To achieve our vision for regional prosperity by being a globally competitive, business-friendly region, comprised of healthy communities that sustain a high-quality of life, we must be able to monitor and understand how our system is performing. This information will be updated annually to track our progress and identify where we are and how this Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD) Plan impacts our regional economy.

Performance Measures

Employment

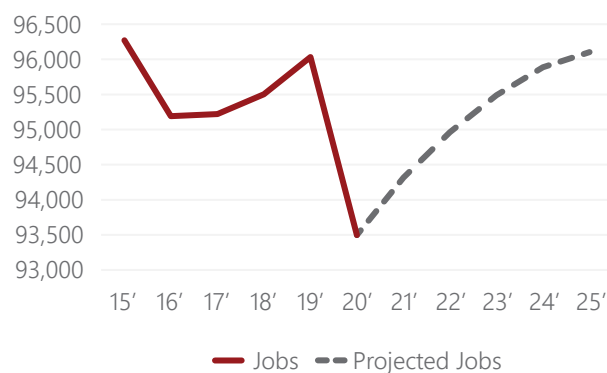
Number of Jobs Created

Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic the FHEDD experienced job growth from 2016 to 2019. If job growth had continued at that rate, the trend indicated an average of 280 new jobs per year. However, overall from 2015 to 2020, jobs declined by 2.9 percent from 96,268 to 93,501. Projected job growth is anticipated to climb back to pre-pandemic levels by 2025.

 **Benchmark:** Return to pre-pandemic job growth. Ideally, at the same or exceeding the rate experienced from 2016 to 2019 (average of ~280 new jobs per year).

▼ **Figure 4.1. FHEDD Job Trends, 2015-2025**

Source: Emsi Burning Glass



Changes in the Economic Environment of the Region

In 2022, regional and county-specific performance measures, indicators, trends, demographics, and more will be hosted on an FHEDD online dashboard. This progress report dashboard will showcase economic performance through the use of interactive charts, data points, and maps in an accessible format so that we can understand where we are as a region and where we are going.

There are a few performance metrics that we were unable to measure at this time but will be included with the online dashboard. These metrics include:

- Taxes
- Fees
- New Incentive Programs
- Imports/Exports

Indicators

Talent Supply and Education

Average Annual Wage

In 2021, the Kansas mean annual wage was \$48,609 which was an increase of approximately \$5,900 since 2016. The regional average for the FHEDD was consistent with this increase and the weighted average of the FHEDD’s 2021 Mean Annual Wage was \$43,841. In both 2016 and 2021, many counties within the FHEDD were lower or significantly lower than the state average with the exception of Riley and Geary counties.



Benchmark: It is unrealistic to expect the mean annual wage of each county within the FHEDD to exceed the Kansas mean annual wage, particularly when some are 25 percent less than that figure. We aim to see a positive trend in the mean annual wage of each county, with the FHEDD as a whole meeting or exceeding the Kansas mean annual wage.

▼ **Table 4.1. Average Annual Wage, 2016 and 2021**

Source: Kansas Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Services and the Bureau of Labor Statistics; Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS)


Counties	Employment 2016	Employment 2021	Avg. Annual Wage 2016	Avg. Annual Wage 2021	% Change 2016-2021
Chase	790	910	\$33,950	\$35,629	4.9%
Geary	16,670	12,190	\$37,921	\$47,909	26.3%
Lyon	15,760	15,520	\$34,737	\$38,865	11.9%
Morris	1,120	1,120	\$38,069	\$40,237	5.7%
Pottawatomie	9,470	9,520	\$38,882	\$42,567	9.5%
Riley	28,120	27,110	\$41,105	\$45,805	11.4%
Wabaunsee	1,220	1,330	\$35,490	\$42,365	19.4%
FHEDD	73,150	67,700	\$38,502	\$43,841	15.6%
Kansas	144,000	1,331,950	\$37,930	\$48,609	15.6%

Talent Supply and Education (continued)

8th Grade Math Performance

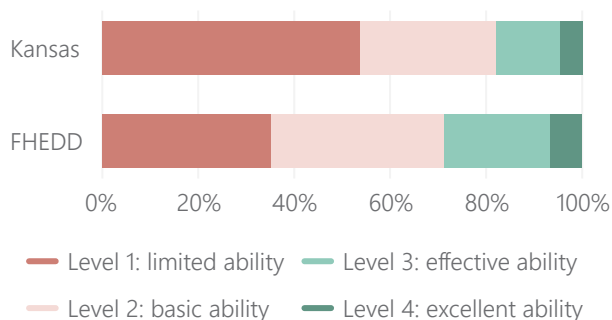
Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) define the knowledge, skills, and processes that students likely demonstrate at different levels of proficiency needed for college and career readiness (1, 2, 3, 4). These PLDs appear on Individual Student Reports and describe student performance on the assessment. PLDs are important to understand because they provide a snapshot of how middle school students are likely to perform in high school. Low achievement levels in grade 8 may indicate that students are not adequately prepared for high school, and may attribute to low graduation rates.

Fortunately, FHEDD counties are generally performing at or above statewide averages (see *Figure or Table 4.2*). However, there is one county that far surpasses the statewide average at a Level 1 where students show a limited ability to understand and use the skills and knowledge needed for college and career readiness.

 **Benchmark:** For counties that exceed the statewide averages - continue to exceed and increase scores. For counties below the statewide average score - see an annual increase in the average score, with a long term goal of exceeding the statewide average.

▼ **Figure 4.2. 8th Grade Math Performance**

Source: Kansas State Department of Education, Longitudinal Performance Level Reports



▼ **Table 4.2. 8th Grade Math Performance**


Source: Kansas State Department of Education, Longitudinal Performance Level Reports

Counties	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Chase	27%	55%	18%	0%
Geary	58%	24%	16%	2%
Lyon	42%	32%	21%	5%
Morris	35%	26%	28%	11%
Pottawatomie	35%	41%	20%	4%
Riley	22%	36%	22%	20%
Wabaunsee	27%	29%	36%	8%
FHEDD	54%	28%	13%	5%
Kansas	35%	36%	22%	7%

Talent Supply and Education (continued)

ACT Composite Score

ACT is a national college admissions exam where students receive subject scores that range from 1 to 36 on English, Math, Reading, and Science. Students also receive an overall Composite score. *Table 4.3.* shows the average Composite score for the 2020 graduating seniors and provides a glimpse of student achievement levels. In the FHEDD, 40 percent of school districts report ACT scores higher than the statewide average.

 **Benchmark:** For counties that exceed the statewide ACT average score - continue to exceed and increase scores. For counties below the statewide average score - see an annual increase in the average score, with the long term goal of exceeding the statewide average.

▼ Table 4.3. ACT Composite Scores by Unified School District


Source: Kansas State Department of Education, Accountability Reports

#	District Name	2020 ACT Score
284	Chase County	22.0
475	Geary County Schools	19.1
251	North Lyon County	19.1
252	Southern Lyon County	18.8
253	Emporia	18.6
417	Morris County	18.4
320	Wamego	20.0
321	Kaw Valley	20.0
322	Onaga-Havensville-Wheaton	20.7
323	Rock Creek	21.6
378	Riley County	19.0
383	Manhattan-Ogden	23.2
384	Blue River	20.5
329	Wabaunsee	21.7
330	Mission Valley	19.3
-	FHEDD	20.1
-	Kansas	20.4

Talent Supply and Education (continued)


High School Graduation Rates

Between 2010 and 2019, there was a 28.2 percent decrease in the number of our FHEDD population over 25 that did not have a high school diploma - far exceeding the state and national averages. Six of the seven FHEDD counties have higher high school graduation rates than Kansas, which reports a 91 percent high school graduation rate.

 **Benchmark:** Continue to see an increase in the high school graduation rate.

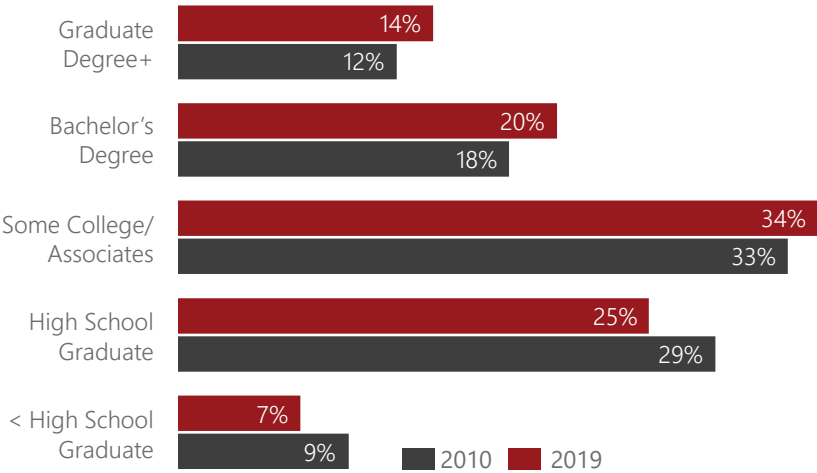
Higher Educational Attainment

Within the last decade, there has been a significant number of the FHEDD that has worked towards higher education opportunities. 68.2 percent of the seven-county region has taken some college credits; received an Associate’s Degree or equivalent; a Bachelor’s Degree; and a Graduate or Professional Degree.

 **Benchmark:** Aim to see an increase in the percentage of higher educational attainment and an introduction of new programs to meet demands of target industries.

▼ **Figure 4.3. Educational Attainment, 2010 vs. 2019**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2010 and 2019)



93%
of the FHEDD is a high school graduate on average which exceeds the Kansas average of 91%

68%
of the FHEDD population has pursued or attained a degree in higher education (ages 25+)

Innovation and Economic Development

Gross Domestic Product

Nationwide, real gross domestic product (GDP) increased in 2,484 counties, decreased in 612 counties, and was unchanged in 17 counties in 2019. However, only two counties in the FHEDD saw increased GDP, while the remaining five experienced decreased GDP.



Benchmark: For the FHEDD's change in GDP to meet or exceed the nationwide percent change in GDP.

If our regional GDP grows, it is indicative of a strong regional economy. If the GDP decreases, as it did for the majority of counties in the FHEDD, that could indicate challenges within our regional economy.

▼ **Table 4.4. Real Gross Domestic Product by County, 2016–2019**

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Gross Domestic Product by County (2019)

Counties	2016	2017	2018	2019	Rank in State 2019 (of 105)	% Change 2016-2019
Chase	115,719	116,097	130,967	127,796	99	-2.4
Geary	2,618,150	2,591,469	2,561,818	2,538,211	9	-0.9
Lyon	1,149,326	1,233,720	1,320,776	1,342,271	18	+1.6
Morris	186,558	180,694	213,399	204,122	76	-4.3
Pottawatomie	1,282,876	1,275,724	1,284,159	1,166,518	23	-9.2
Riley	2,513,132	2,460,148	2,431,775	2,416,723	10	-0.6
Wabaunsee	117,026	121,161	135,149	142,171	97	+5.2
Kansas	152,511,532	154,456,581	158,192,687	160,059,345	-	+1.2

Innovation and Economic Development (continued)

Bed Tax Collections

Of the 48 incorporated cities and seven counties in the FHEDD, four cities and four counties have transient guest tax rates. To preserve confidentiality, not all entities are required to disclose their transient guest tax distributions in public reporting documents; four of our communities did not disclose. The communities within the FHEDD that disclosed their transient guest tax distributions saw an increase in the amount from FY15 to FY19 (*Table 4.5*). Transient guest tax collections can help illustrate the health of the travel and tourism industry throughout our region.



Benchmarks:

- Increased transient guest tax distributions.
- Increased number of businesses that have transient guest tax.
- Retention of businesses that have transient guest tax.

▼ **Table 4.5. Transient Guest Tax Rates and Collections, FY15-FY19**

Source: Kansas Department of Revenue

Location	Rate	Effective Date	FY15 Amount Distributed	FY19 Amount Distributed	% Change
Chase Co.	6.0%	10/1/2014	\$7,574.14	\$ 26,346.34	+248%
Geary Co.	6.0%	1/1/2015	\$591,172.64	\$ 642,499.36	+9%
Lyon Co.	5.0%	4/1/2004	confidential	confidential	-
Morris Co.	4.0%	1/1/1992	confidential	confidential	-
Emporia	7.0%	1/1/2017	\$525,916.93	\$ 706,254.02	+34%
Manhattan	7.5%	7/1/2019	\$1,352,060.60	\$ 1,928,171.21	+43%
Strong City	2.0%	10/1/1995	confidential	confidential	-
Wamego	5.0%	10/1/2004	confidential	confidential	-

Infrastructure and Growth Leadership

Population Counts, Estimates, and Projections

Over the last several decades the population throughout the Flint Hills region has stayed fairly consistent and it is anticipated that this general trend will continue (Figure 4.5). However, over the past five years, the FHEDD has experienced a population decline of approximately 2.25 percent. This trend is consistent across Kansas, with 80 of the 105 counties in Kansas having experienced a loss of population over the past 10 years. Despite the region’s overall population decline, Pottawatomie County is one of the five fastest growing counties in Kansas and is the only rural county on that list.

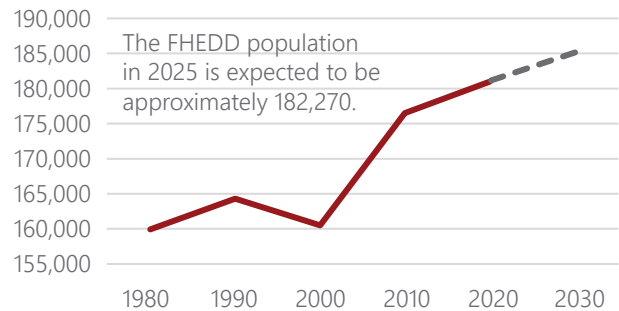


Benchmarks:

- Increase the population within the FHEDD as a whole, including rural populations
- Monitor outmigration - especially within the FHEDD

▼ **Figure 4.5. FHEDD Population Trends, 1980-2030**

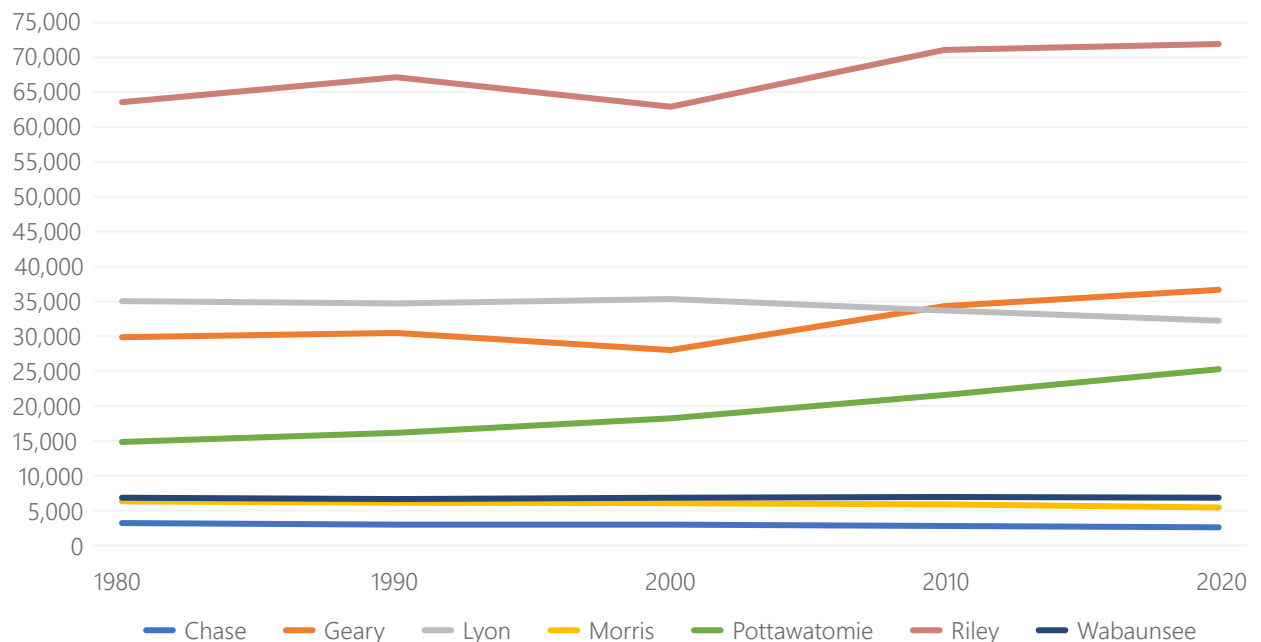
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census



— Observed Population — Projected Population
Please note: the geometric projection used is based on 1980-2020 data.

▼ **Figure 4.4. County Population Trends, 1980-2020**


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census



Infrastructure and Growth Leadership (continued)

Building Permits

Building Permits are a leading economic indicator. Building Permit reports measures the current demand in the real estate market and gauge the strength of the housing market and economy in general. Though there was a decline in the number of building permits between 2015 and 2019, this decline was consistent with the state (*Table 4.6*).

 **Benchmark:** Increased number of building permits annually. Monitor the category (i.e. residential, ag, commercial) to understand economic development trends.

▼ **Table 4.6. Building Permit Trends**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2015 and 2019)

Counties	2015 Building Permits	2019 Building Permits
Chase	0	1
Geary	32	16
Lyon	92	40
Morris	4	4
Pottawatomie	192	164
Riley	297	225
Wabaunsee	18	11
FHEDD	635	461
Kansas	8,644	8,211

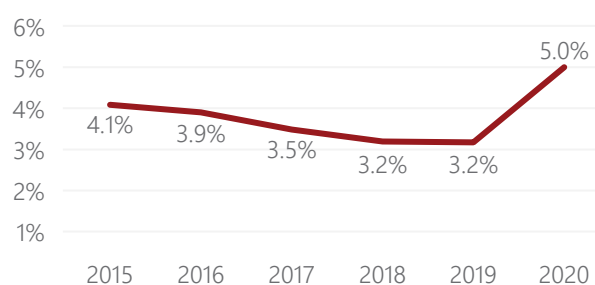
Business Climate and Competitiveness


Average Annual Unemployment Rates

Prior to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, the FHEDD saw a steady decline in average annual unemployment rate. If the unemployment rate had continued to decline at that rate, the trend indicated a .26 percent average annual decline. However, overall from 2015 to 2020, the annual average unemployment rate increased from 4.09 percent to 5.00 percent. The average annual unemployment rate within the FHEDD is less than Kansas, which reported a 5.90 percent average annual unemployment rate in 2020.

▼ **Figure 4.6. FHEDD Unemployment Trends**

Source: Emsi Burning Glass



 **Benchmark:** Return to pre-pandemic unemployment rate at the same or exceeding the rate of decline experienced prior to 2020 (.26 percent average annual decline).

Business Climate and Competitiveness (continued)

Industry Metrics

In Chapter 2, each county has identified target industries that will help diversify the regional economy and contribute to overall regional resilience. To determine if we are successful in retaining, growing, and/or attracting these industries we must monitor employment and wages by industry.



Employment by Industry Benchmark:

Using a baseline of 2021 data, observe annual employment growth over the next five years.



Wages by Industry Benchmark:

Exceed the local prevailing wage for the target industries.

▼ Table 4.7. 2021 Kansas Wage Survey


Source: Kansas Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Services and the Bureau of Labor Statistics; Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS)

FHEDD Industry	2021 Employment	2021 Mean Annual Wage
Management Occupations	3,070	\$84,672
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	3,490	\$61,334
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	1,380	\$61,318
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	840	\$72,573
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	920	\$58,634
Community and Social Service Occupations	980	\$46,497
Legal Occupations	200	\$83,670
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	6,310	\$42,427
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	810	\$47,998
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	3,610	\$65,575
Healthcare Support Occupations	2,250	\$29,761
Protective Service Occupations	1,180	\$42,421
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	6,230	\$23,975
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	2,020	\$30,021
Personal Care and Service Occupations	1,680	\$25,540
Sales and Related Occupations	5,630	\$37,537
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	8,830	\$33,138
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	30	\$42,829
Construction and Extraction Occupations	3,300	\$45,404
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	3,250	\$51,996
Production Occupations	4,550	\$37,581
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	4,710	\$35,015
Total, All Occupations	65,270	\$48,178

Quality of Life and Quality Places


Per Capita Income

All counties in the FHEDD report lower than the state per capita income of \$31,814, as shown in *Table 4.8*. Per capita income can show how equitably income is distributed throughout the region and helps us understand trends in our regional economy.

 **Benchmark:** Per capita income increases annually, with the long-term goal of our communities meeting or exceeding the state per capita income.

Persons Living in Poverty


In 2019 it was estimated that four of the seven counties in the FHEDD were at or below the Kansas percentage of persons living in poverty. The other three counties exceeded that percentage, with one Riley County being nearly double. Riley County is the only county in Kansas to be classified as a “persistent poverty” county, meaning they have had over a 20 percent poverty rate over the past 30 years.

 **Benchmark:** Annual reduction in the percentage of persons living in poverty.

Cost of Living Index

The cost of living is defined as the amount of money needed to sustain a certain standard of living by affording basic needs such as housing, food, healthcare, and more. The common formula is often used to compare how expensive it is to live in one location compared to another and provides a percentage difference in the cost of living. The percentage difference is always compared to 100 which represents the U.S. average. Therefore, if the State of Kansas cost of living index is 83.1 (shown in *Table 4.8*), it is 16.9 percent below the U.S. average cost of living and is significantly cheaper.

Four of the seven counties in the FHEDD have a cost of living index less than that of Kansas. A 80.7 cost of living indicates the FHEDD is more affordable than other areas of the state, helping to serve as an attraction and retention tool for residents.

 **Benchmark:** Maintain cost of living index below that of Kansas.

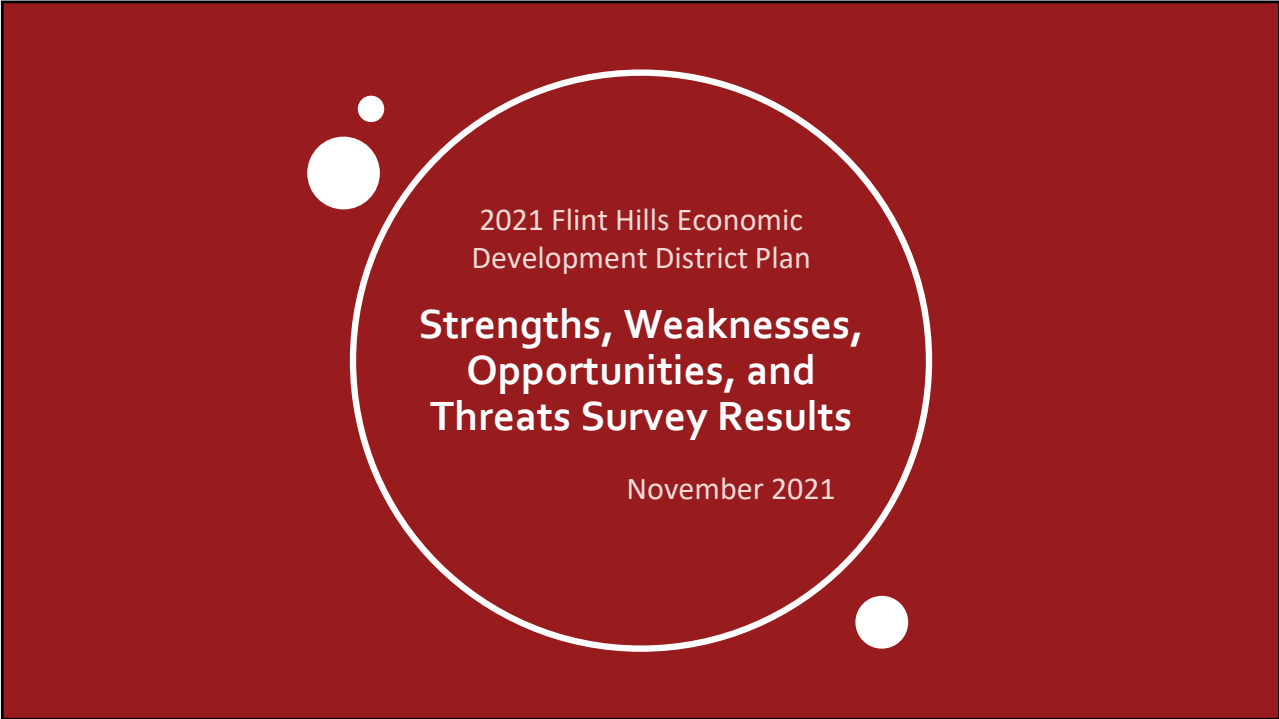
Quality of Life and Quality Places (continued)

▼ Table 4.8. Quality of Life and Quality Places

Income and Poverty Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2019); and Cost of Living Source: Sperling's Best Places

Counties	2019 Per Capita Income	2019 Persons Living in Poverty	2020 Cost of Living Index
Chase	\$ 23,055	11.40%	71.9
Geary	\$ 23,897	11.70%	78.7
Lyon	\$ 26,904	15.10%	74.9
Morris	\$ 29,558	10.50%	76.6
Pottawatomie	\$ 29,345	7.20%	90.3
Riley	\$ 27,272	20.90%	88.4
Wabaunsee	\$ 27,876	6.90%	84.2
FHEDD Average	\$ 26,844	11.96%	80.7
Kansas	\$ 31,814	11.40%	83.1

**Appendix A:
Strengths, Weaknesses,
Opportunities, and Threats
Survey Responses**



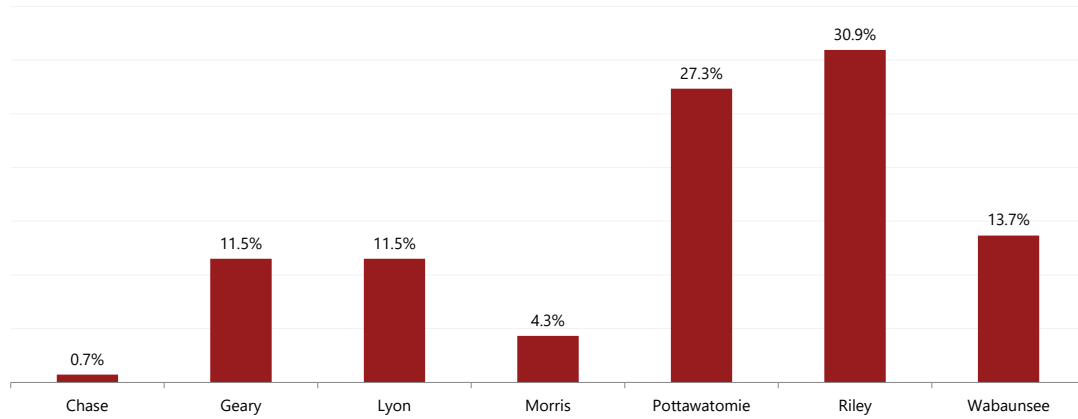
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Q1. What county are you from or do you represent?

Respondents: 139



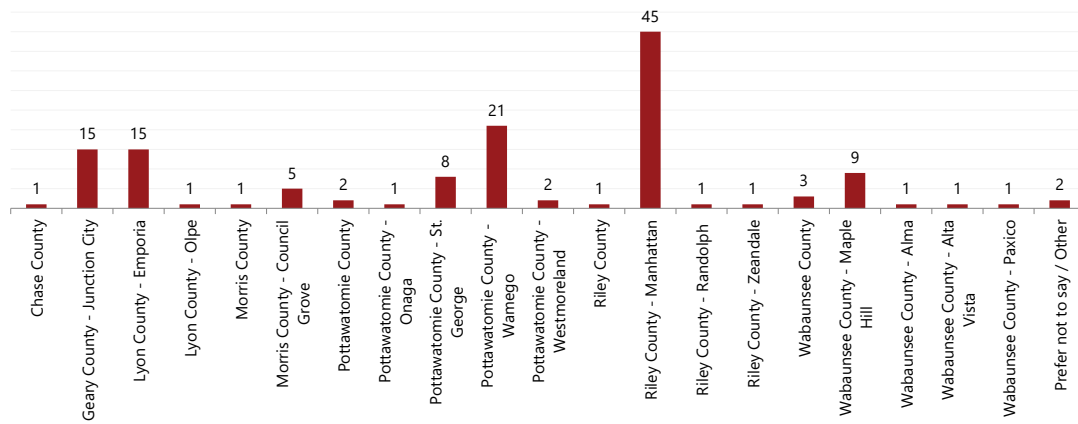
2021 Flint Hills Economic Development District Plan

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3

Q2. What community are you from or represent?

Respondents: 137



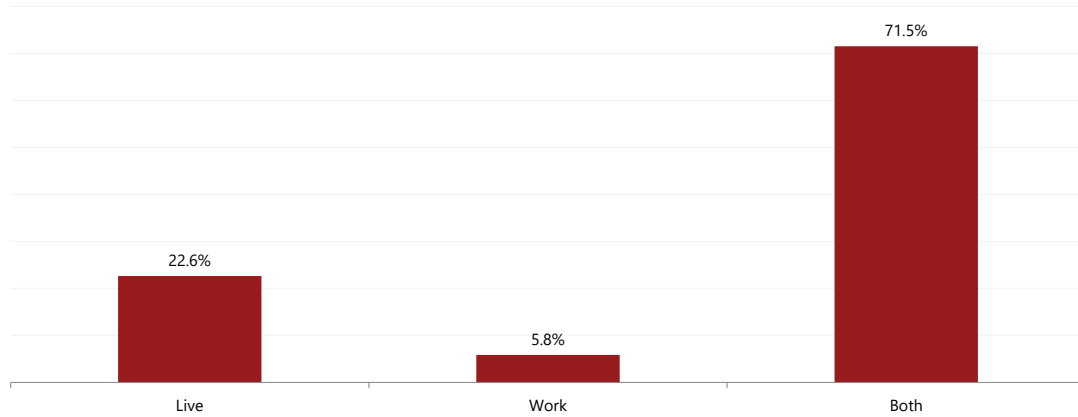
2021 Flint Hills Economic Development District Plan

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Q3. Do you live or work in the community you specified above?

Respondents: 137



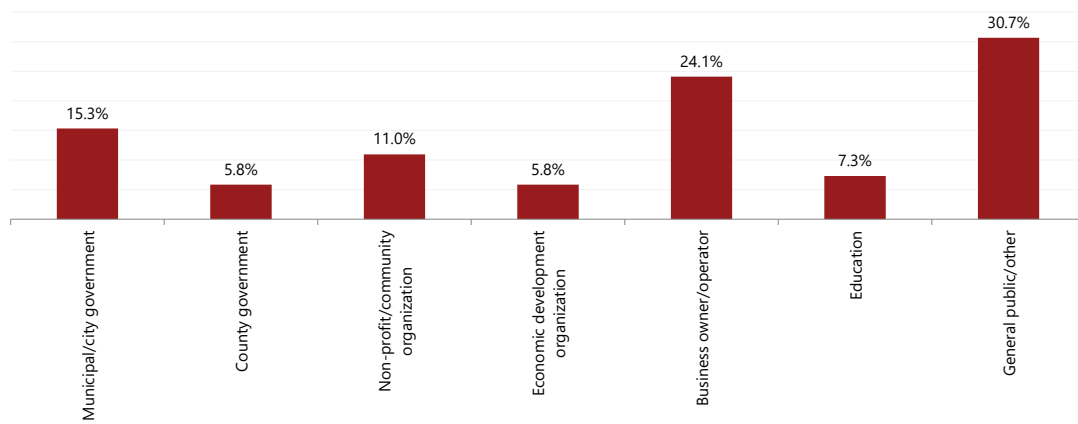
2021 Flint Hills Economic Development District Plan

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Q4. Which of the following sectors are you representing in your responses?

Respondents: 137



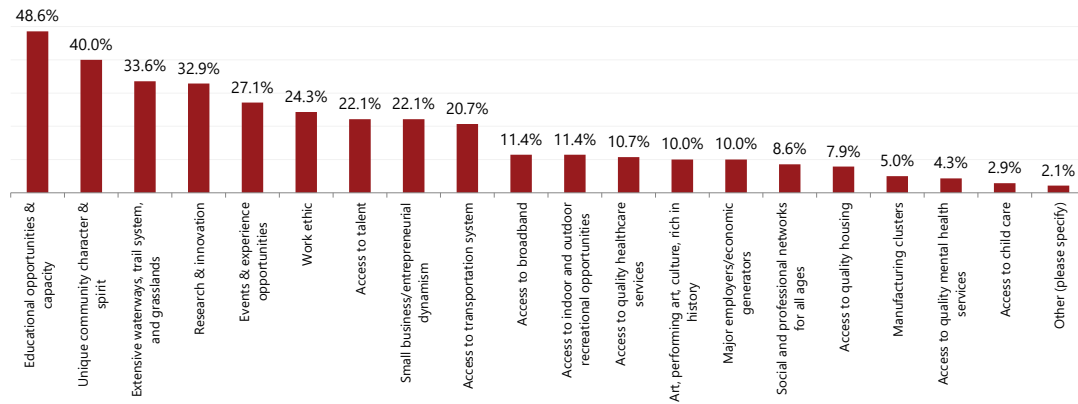
2021 Flint Hills Economic Development District Plan

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6

Q5. Which of the following do you perceive as the top strengths of the Flint Hills Region? (Please choose THREE)

Respondents: 140



2021 Flint Hills Economic Development District Plan

7

7

Q5. Which of the following do you perceive as the top strengths of the Flint Hills Region?

Respondents: 140

Individual Comments (3)

1. I wouldn't say any of these are particularly a strength I would tout about our region.
2. Prior to 2020 all were awesome but [REDACTED] ruined most of it. [REDACTED]
3. Lots of Wide Open Spaces

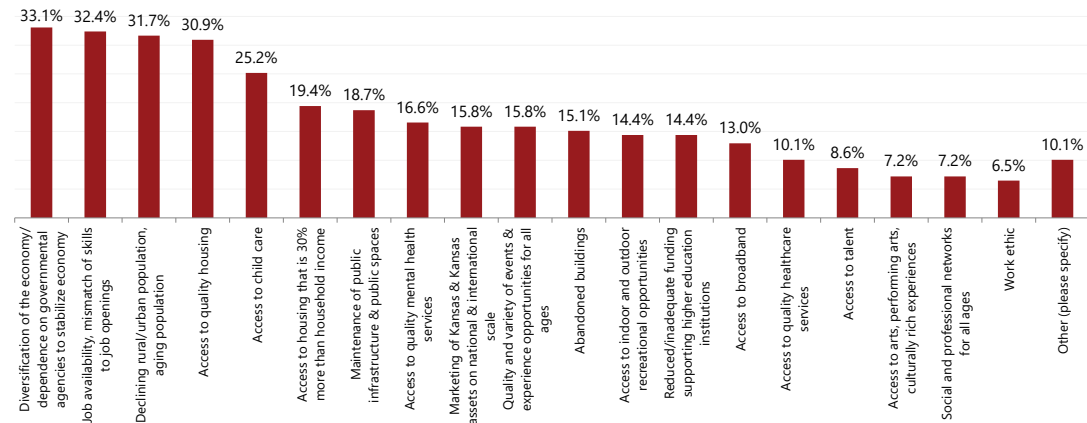
2021 Flint Hills Economic Development District Plan

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8

Q6. Which of the following do you perceive as the most critical weaknesses of the Flint Hills Region today? (Please choose THREE)

Respondents: 139



2021 Flint Hills Economic Development District Plan

9

9

Q6. Which of the following do you perceive as the most critical weaknesses of the Flint Hills Region today?

Respondents: 139

Individual Comments (1-7/14)

1. There needs to be more large employers in Wamego. Wamego and Pott county should be offering incentives for large companies to move into this area.
2. Did great with NBAF, doing great overall, could do better with marketing Kansas on National/international scale, we have a lot to offer for businesses
3. need for nicer restaurant, need for indoor entertainment to keep youth from driving to manhattan.
4. Support for Senior citizens
5. Limited public transport
6. Mhk looks like [redacted]. Can they lay some sod along the main arteries or at the very least mow!
7. Government agencies such as this one that do nothing for the little guy - it is all about government

2021 Flint Hills Economic Development District Plan

10

10

Q6. Which of the following do you perceive as the most critical weaknesses of the Flint Hills Region today?

Respondents: 139

Individual Comments (8-14/14) (continued)

8. Salaries compared to Cost of Living
9. Lack of shovel-ready developable land/sites
10. Access to standard amenities (e.g., grocery stores, health care, veterinarians, etc.)
11. A state legislature that is anti-municipal government
12. infrastructure for business parks & land
13. While I agree with this option, "Job availability, mismatch of skills to job openings," I believe it should include competitive salary or pay. Manhattan's salaries are very low.
14. Diversity is a positive but not emphasized enough

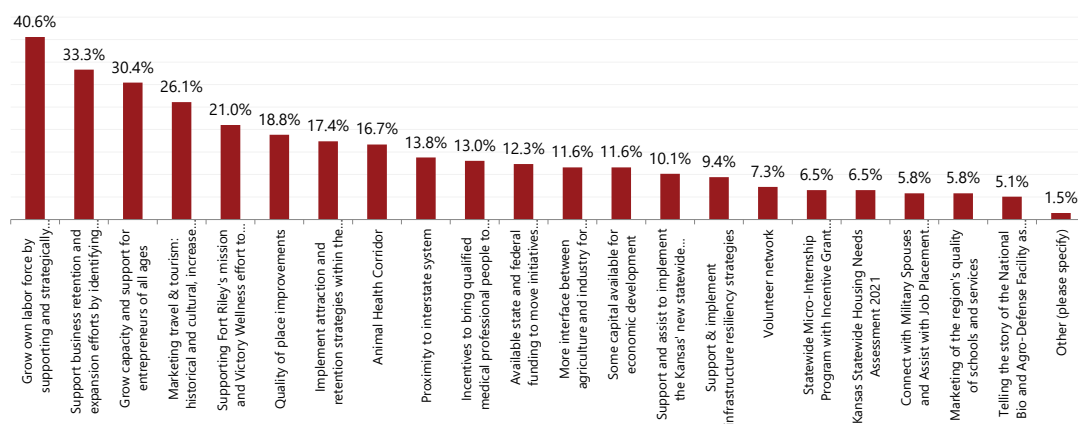
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11

Q7. Which of the following do you perceive as the top opportunities for the Flint Hills Region? (Please choose THREE)

Respondents: 138



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12

Q7. Which of the following do you perceive as the top opportunities for the Flint Hills Region?

Respondents: 138

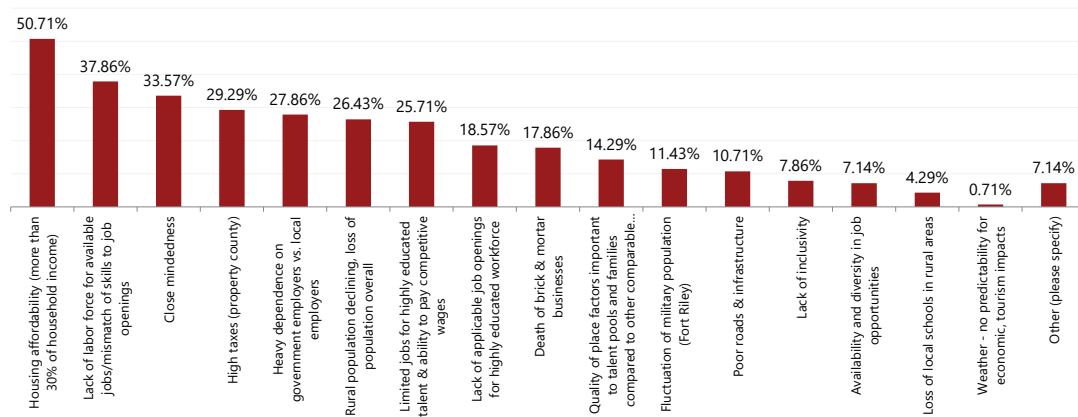
Individual Comments (2)

1. Increased childcare access
2. having a strong public transportation system providing services outside the 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM time frame, jobs exist at other times.

13

Q8. Which of the following do you perceive as the top threats that could hinder economic growth in the Flint Hills Region? (Please choose THREE)

Respondents: 140



14

Q8. Which of the following do you perceive as the top threats that could hinder economic growth in the Flint Hills Region?

Respondents: 140

Individual Comments (1-6/10)

1. Lack of big city attractions to attract people: Kohl's, Costco, etc.
2. We need more diverse, professionals from outside of manhattan, who will come here and start businesses, less f250 driving farmers. I'm sure that sounds horrible but manhattan is trying to move into a more modern and diverse community ahead of the curb, and many outsiders see it as an old farmer town still, of course agriculture will always be important here, but we need to continue (because I do feel like we are) in moving away from that and into a more unique, diverse economy in this county, leveraging income and business earned from business outside of agriculture, food orveterinary, like Civic Plus
3. Lack of space in early childhood education programs and quality after-school programs.
4. Too much reliance on the service industry.
5. Lack of childcare
6. Lack of affordable childcare

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15

Q8. Which of the following do you perceive as the top threats that could hinder economic growth in the Flint Hills Region?

Respondents: 140

Individual Comments (7-10/10)

7. Lack of mass transit
8. Leftism
9. Loss of Jeffries Energy Center
10. Lack of agreement on simple, unifying, vision for region.

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16

Q9. What would you like to have in the region that does not exist now?

Respondents: 95

Key Regional Economic Development Themes/Topics from 95 Comments

(in no particular order)

- Business diversification, and workforce attraction and retention
- Name brand shopping and dining
- Quality and affordable childcare
- Diverse, quality, and affordable housing
- Meeting spaces / large event venue
- Improved public transit / mass transit
- Quality broadband
- Indoor and outdoor recreation spaces i.e. parks, trails, pools

17

Q9. What would you like to have in the region that does not exist now?

Respondents: 95

Individual Comments (1-7/95)

1. Broader and more wide spread publicity of sources, availability and flexibility of skilled labor resources.
2. Intensive, coordinated work, across all levels of government and institutions, to diversify our economy and create economic and cultural opportunities that will keep Fort Riley and KSU alumni in area.
3. Semi Pro Baseball team.
4. A focus on technology and exponential age industries.
5. New entry/exit corridor into Manhattan along Marlatt.
6. Big city retail
7. More affordable childcare and housing.

18

Q9. What would you like to have in the region that does not exist now?

Respondents: 95

Individual Comments (8-13/95)

8. We just need to continue to expand poynts , make it our own mass street to aggieville, and make it all walkable. And we need to bring more population the growth has been horrible, obviously we need to bring the businesses in that will sustain that growth, I would like to see Manhattan at about 80K population by 2035, that's not much at all , 20 new people per week, diverse, younger, wealthy, professional.
9. entertainment for youth year round. (not free)
10. More community spaces for groups to meet -- maybe a community center with a feel of a YMCA. Open access to said facility.
11. Indoor recreation facilities. Better maintenance of country roads. Additional funding for public schools—possibly an education endowment.
12. A spa
13. More outdoor recreation, i.e. paved trails like Ankeny, IA area and NW Arkansas.

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Q9. What would you like to have in the region that does not exist now?

Respondents: 95

Individual Comments (14-22/95)

14. Quality health care and affordable childcare for infants
15. Indoor pool
16. A river waterway for recreation
17. SKILL/CRAFT WORKFORCE TRAAINING
18. Indoor Recreation Facility
19. More competitive and affordable services in small towns
20. More childcare
21. Better access to childcare. As a household with two masters degrees who work in higher education we would save more money if one of us quit our job and could stay at home which limits us in advancing our career and earning more income.
22. Quality and affordable childcare

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20

Q9. What would you like to have in the region that does not exist now?

Respondents: 95

Individual Comments (23-30/95)

23. Indoor children's activities
24. More outdoor accessibility for trails and biking. Roads in Pott County are way to dangerous and not patrolled enough to keep us safe when running or biking
25. Walk-ability, practical public transit, better trails and outdoor activities.
26. Mass transit needs to be much more than the ATA bus.
27. More businesses
28. Increased public transit options
29. I honestly feel like our region has a lot to offer, small town living but big city experiences are a short drive away.
30. Broader range of events that appeal to different ages. Manhattan needs an indoor pool. A more inclusive vibe.

21

Q9. What would you like to have in the region that does not exist now?

Respondents: 95

Individual Comments (31-37/95)

31. [REDACTED] for govt officials that don't think and a winning football team.
32. Indoor swimming facilities
33. More diversity in restaurant selections (i.e. Italian, Indian, etc.)
34. nationally recognized retail food and shopping.
35. Large event center 8,000+
36. The Flint Hills and this region is a prime area with being in the Center of the US for large Manufacturing/Warehousing. Distribution of goods from the Center of the Country makes sense. Also, if there were more tourism opportunities for the Flint Hills, that would be an asset. This area is untapped and beautiful
37. A mentoring program for the LatinX, Hispanic communities in public service and entrepreneurial endeavors.

22

Q9. What would you like to have in the region that does not exist now?

Respondents: 95

Individual Comments (38-47/95)

- 38. More technology related industries.
- 39. a focus on housing
- 40. More housing development and incentives
- 41. Labor force
- 42. A greater emphasis on developing future work opportunities in technology. We can't only focus on Industrial development.
- 43. Transportation for rural communities
- 44. Good broadband in the spaces between the towns
- 45. Medical facilities
- 46. Younger population.
- 47. Job service corridors for mentally disabled not state run.

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23

Q9. What would you like to have in the region that does not exist now?

Respondents: 95

Individual Comments (48-56/95)

- 48. Nothing. I would like to invest in and take care of what we already have rather than chase windmills.
- 49. Amtrak and Regional Transit options.
- 50. A CDFI, Kansas has none-pitiful
- 51. High speed internet to support education and local businesses and rural families. A more open mindset to businesses - more support of local businesses as a valuable player in the county.
- 52. More jobs with competitive salaries. I feel like I cannot move up or switch jobs here.
- 53. More employees willing to work.
- 54. Restaurants
- 55. Windfarms in Wabaunsee County
- 56. greater availability to quality leisure time activities

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24

Q9. What would you like to have in the region that does not exist now?

Respondents: 95

Individual Comments (57-64/95)

- 57. Access to the Kansas River for recreation opportunities and commercial development from city and residential areas.
- 58. Nothing, everything one might need is "in the region." Thing is, "the region" can mean it's still 45-60 minutes away.
- 59. Biking/Walking Path that connects the region...especially along waterways...
- 60. Retention of a more diverse workforce
- 61. Development of structures and trails along the Kansas and Blue Rivers and Wildcat Creek.
- 62. Business attraction incentives
- 63. industrial/business parks
- 64. Better support for private sector job growth.

25

Q9. What would you like to have in the region that does not exist now?

Respondents: 95

Individual Comments (65-72/95)

- 65. Greater diversity of employers: Manufacturing, Development, outside the gate supporting companies, private businesses.
- 66. more attractions that would increase visitors and attraction of employees. Attraction beyond sports which are important but the region already has.
- 67. More Housing
- 68. More name restaurants
- 69. A bridge connecting Junietta/Marlatt is very important. Ease of commuting is vital, along with safety. Now more than ever with the new Oliver Brown school.
- 70. Restaurants
- 71. Increased diversity
- 72. Family attractions (water park, shopping, zoo, advertising of local family friendly activities)

26

Q9. What would you like to have in the region that does not exist now?

Respondents: 95

Individual Comments (73-80/95)

73. Opportunities for an uneducated workforce
74. Indoor aquatics center for public access
75. strong collaboration of regional entities (education, communication/information, a sense of belonging to region rather than to individual communities)
76. A larger private sector employment based
77. Stronger workforce
78. light rail to connect cities and universities along the Kansas City, Lawrence, Topeka, Manhattan, Salina corridor to reduce climate and environmental impact of car travel infrastructure for frequent commuters. It would also increase connections between institutions and businesses.
79. More good paying jobs for skilled non college grads.
80. More opportunities for out intellectual capital.

27

Q9. What would you like to have in the region that does not exist now?

Respondents: 95

Individual Comments (81-85/95)

81. In Junction City, I would like to be able to provide affordable "entertainment" for the young children. This could be a free splash park associated very near/in the downtown area. When soldiers deploy, families left behind need an affordable place to congregate. Could be a discovery center similar to Topeka, in/near downtown.
82. A mid-sized beef cattle packing plant
83. City leadership that has energy and innovation
84. More collaboration and less factions between larger populated counties in the Filt Hills Region and smaller communities. The larger communities appear to only be looking out for themselves.
85. I would like to see each community have biking/exercise trails similar to what they have in Manhattan. I believe that short trails within the city limits or at the very edge would be safer than the long trails between cities especially if they go through areas of sparse population where there are long stretches where nobody will see what is going on at specific sites on the trail.

28

Q9. What would you like to have in the region that does not exist now?

Respondents: 95

Individual Comments (80-84/95)

85. KSU at 25,000 students
86. An area off of the interstate that would attract visitors with an anchor like a Bass-Pro or Cabelas. Other chain stores and restaurants.
87. Higher paying jobs and more things to do/eat at.
88. Train Service
89. Connective transportation for local growth
90. Rural Broadband, accessibility and affordability
91. More support for drawing businesses into the area
92. Senior relief programs to encourage the over 55 to stay
93. Mass transportation
94. Sports Complex

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29

Q10. What do you feel was the greatest lesson learned from the pandemic?

Respondents: 123

Key Regional Economic Development Themes/Topics from 123 Comments

(in no particular order)

- Quality of place matters
- Shop local
- Government and businesses should work on resiliency and sustainability
- Broadband is essential infrastructure
- Some industries/jobs will remain in-person/brick and mortar while others will become remote
- Changes are desired with childcare
- Should be a diversification of jobs / industries

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30

Q10. What do you feel was the greatest lesson learned from the pandemic?

Respondents: 123

Individual Comments (1-6/123)

1. Broader and more accurate dissemination of practical and scientific information related to available vaccination resources
2. Multiple streams of income is a must.
3. Fear works as a motivator.
4. Less big government, more community involvement - programs, funding, ect.
5. Place isn't meaningless--quite the opposite. But now we know it doesn't have to be an immutable barrier. Now more than ever, we can attract people to live here how otherwise thought jobs/career would have been impossible in a place so far from the dynamic coast. And we HAVE to work to keep people here (housing, quality of life & ed, arts and culture, entertainment, inclusion) because a job doesn't necessarily tie them anywhere.
6. People are willing to help support each other.

31

Q10. What do you feel was the greatest lesson learned from the pandemic?

Respondents: 123

Individual Comments (7-14/123)

7. \$1,200 checks from the government do not sustain families and economies. Normal business operations and practices are more sustainable than government handouts.
8. That we can't rest on what has been working.
9. Workforce accountability is possible outside of an office setting.
10. The benefits of wide open spaces with entertainment value
11. We need a more even distribution of wealth.
12. We can focus on enticing companies that offer remote work to headquarter in Manhattan, without necessarily overgrowing the population
13. Business could be conducted wherever you could get internet.
14. That for local business to survive they had to have immediate support

32

Q10. What do you feel was the greatest lesson learned from the pandemic?

Respondents: 123

Individual Comments (15-23/123)

15. "Our schools are essential and they need more support from the community. It is time for people to think outside the box and find more efficient ways to meet/conduct business. "
16. We were not prepared. Our health and medical fields are undeserved in this area.
17. Childcare hurdles for full workforce families
18. Work can happen anywhere
19. Cleanliness
20. Do not trust the government
21. WE HAVE A GREAT PUBLIC HEALTH DEPT AND DIRECTOR
22. Need for extended high speed internet to rural areas.
23. So many take advantage of free handouts and increased unemployment benefits instead of accepting available work opportunities

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33

Q10. What do you feel was the greatest lesson learned from the pandemic?

Respondents: 123

Individual Comments (24-32/123)

24. Government money is NOT the answer
25. Social media will be the downfall of our community
26. How to do more with less.
27. Community can come together but the government does not support the community.
28. People can depend on hand outs from the government and do not need to work.
29. Maybe not the greatest but definitely important: childcare is so related to productivity in the workforce
30. How important childcare and quality healthcare is to our infrastructure
31. Will not comment
32. That half the population is progressive and half the population is stuck in a reality that doesn't exist outside of Fox News.

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34

Q10. What do you feel was the greatest lesson learned from the pandemic?

Respondents: 123

Individual Comments (34-39/123)

34. Population is too easily influenced by government and a news media that lacks integrity.
35. We have a long ways to go to achieve inclusiveness and open mindedness. The politicization of the pandemic showed a lot of true colors. Also people learned they can get by and have a better quality of life without the need to accept low wages
36. I feel like in our community of Wamego a lesson I learned was how supportive we are as a community to our small local businesses, to my knowledge only 1 closed, and there were even a few businesses that started up during the pandemic and are thriving. In short greatest lesson from pandemic is small town people pulled together in a big way during the pandemic.
37. Our region is incredibly resilient, and the community is eager to come together to support itself.
38. People coming together to help one and another
39. That our elected officials honestly dont give a [REDACTED] about truth.

35

Q10. What do you feel was the greatest lesson learned from the pandemic?

Respondents: 123

Individual Comments (40-46/123)

40. Preparedness - financial, emotional/mental health, basic food and staples storage - the importance of "side hustles"
41. Shopping locally benefits everyone and we have a lot to choose from
42. Things are going to happen. To assume that we can make with a tight budget and small reserves could one day cause us disasters.
43. Belief in the science.
44. No more handouts
45. There are still many things we are learning. IE: disruption in the supply chain. We as the US rely heavily on other countries for goods and maybe it is time to look at how we bring some of that back to the US so we are not so dependent.
46. Wage suppression over the past twenty years is finally coming to light.

36

Q10. What do you feel was the greatest lesson learned from the pandemic?

Respondents: 123

Individual Comments (47-57/123)

47. Diversity is a must.
48. The lingering after-effects of the shutdown could be worse than the shutdown itself.
49. learning to create flexible work schedules/hours
50. Some meetings could have been emails
51. Take nothing for granted
52. Many people can work from Anywhere, we have a great place to be let's make it better!
53. Political leaders are using it as an agenda
54. Small business cannot compete with higher wages and government benefits for basic employees
55. That we are resilient and innovative.
56. Because of our small size and community spirit, we seem to be more resilient to challenges.
57. Shop at home

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Q10. What do you feel was the greatest lesson learned from the pandemic?

Respondents: 123

Individual Comments (58-66/123)

58. How easily many job functions can be done from home if broadband is available.
59. businesses will still profit and individuals without knowledge will suffer
60. That people are self-interested and not willing to put others and the needs of the community first.
61. Not everyone can work from home.
62. government can't figure out how to manage -but the resilient Kansans did despite government
63. Government overreach
64. The need for highspeed/broadband internet to reach all corners of the county.
65. FEAR and Government control by mandates
66. Flexible work schedules work. For example: That you don't have to take a sick day to stay home from work with sick kids.

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Q10. What do you feel was the greatest lesson learned from the pandemic?

Respondents: 123

Individual Comments (67-76/123)

67. Political agendas are ruining and dividing our Country!
68. We need local produce producers to fill all food needs.
69. people can effectively work from home and be as productive as they are in the office
70. that the government is the problem
71. We have to grow out of this economic downturn. There will be generational investment and growth in many areas of the country, need to be on the right side of that coin.
72. Problems and challenges don't go away by ignoring them.
73. economic activity does not always require investment in brick and mortar
74. Respect for the health and viability for all our citizens.
75. Use of technology to make it easier for people to gather.
76. That we were not prepared for a pandemic at any level.

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Q10. What do you feel was the greatest lesson learned from the pandemic?

Respondents: 123

Individual Comments (77-85/123)

77. Vaccination is the only realistic solution towards immunity, and this pandemic is far from over.
78. Working together we can beat the odds.
79. Remote learning has obvious weaknesses.
80. Ability to pivot and think outside of the box
81. any office worker can work remotely, therefore, impacting downtowns
82. Our reliance on a worldwide supply chain and JIT inventory controls allows other countries to dictate and control our economy.
83. The need to communicate the importance of vaccinations and mask wearing
84. People can work remotely which will change the workforce of the future.
85. Connectivity is Key - Broadband

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Q10. What do you feel was the greatest lesson learned from the pandemic?

Respondents: 123

Individual Comments (86-95/123)

86. Quality Broadband- like Fiber to Premise, can allow people to work from anywhere and open job market to those wanting to live in the rural flint hills.
87. "Government was too invasive and ""Bricks and mortar"" are not essential for success"
88. Lack of preparedness
89. Brick/Mortar offices are not as important as one may think. Exceptional broadband is essential.
90. brick and mortar is not essential for every business or group
91. No opinion
92. People can work from anywhere. We need to target people who want to move from urban areas.
93. Priorities
94. Remote working is a viable opportunity.
95. Many jobs can be done from home. We must be flexible in how we offer services.

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Q10. What do you feel was the greatest lesson learned from the pandemic?

Respondents: 123

Individual Comments (96-104/123)

96. We need to consistently do what is necessary to maintain good health
97. "There are some jobs that can be done from anywhere--there is an opportunity to entice people to move to Kansas. Other jobs, especially manufacture, need people in place. "
98. We can handle long term emergencies, but need the resources and infrastructure to do it better
99. Don't believe or trust the CDC or the government
100. heightened sense of community at the level of our neighborhood, and our network of friends or groups we belong to within the city, watching out for one another and helping each other.
101. People will live on unemployment and other government support money rather than work.
102. Methods for virtual management of meetings and business opportunities.
103. That we can adapt to challenges without losing our minds
104. That KSU leadership is not well-equipped to adjust to adversity.

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42

Q10. What do you feel was the greatest lesson learned from the pandemic?

Respondents: 123

Individual Comments (105-112/123)

- 105. Adaptability and resilience
- 106. "That we can be productive, and effective in our jobs without having to have large group meetings. Having digital meetings or a mixture of digital and live has proven to be very effective and safe.
- 107. Small social groups can be as effective as large groups and not as likely to spread disease."
- 108. We need to trust science
- 109. We must have a competent [REDACTED]. We have a long journey ahead of us to recover from the damage of the [REDACTED] fiasco.
- 110. Things don't prosper without leadership
- 111. The needs of target populations in the region. Communal meals, food pantries, food insecurity, and etc.
- 112. People can work from home and be almost as effective.

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Q10. What do you feel was the greatest lesson learned from the pandemic?

Respondents: 123

Individual Comments (113-119/123)

- 113. People can work from home
- 114. The division in health administration -- individual counties were the weak link in mitigation. Who knew there would be such intense resistance to pandemic mitigation!! Conflict between city and county on mitigation measures was very serious. Conflict between known health best practices vs. absolute resistance from the business and political organizations.
- 115. Government can't force local businesses to close and not suffer in the future.
- 116. There is a different way to work. There can be more family time available if life is structured differently. Some businesses cannot find help because individuals choose to stay on unemployment rather than work.
- 117. Remote work and meetings
- 118. Don't rely on tourism for much of your revenue
- 119. We can survive.

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Q10. What do you feel was the greatest lesson learned from the pandemic?

Respondents: 123

Individual Comments (113-119/123)

120. Media Stinks and people judge

121. Importance of relationships for support

122. We can adapt and change is sometimes good.

123. Great opportunities for rural America. You don't have to be in a metro area to work, and make a good living.

45

Q11. What area of your business, organization, or community is still vulnerable due to the impact of the pandemic?

Respondents: 112

Key Regional Economic Development Themes/Topics from 112 Comments

(in no particular order)

- Job vacancies / staff shortages
- Access to quality and affordable childcare
- K-12 Education
- Higher Education
- Businesses recovery / long-term resiliency
- Public health and safety
- Suffering industries such as tourism, retail, etc.

46

Q11. What area of your business, organization, or community is still vulnerable due to the impact of the pandemic?

Respondents: 112

Individual Comments (1-11/112)

1. None. Nature of organization is such it is not vulnerable.
2. We still are not meeting, which was a big part of what we were doing.
3. Fear of human contact and communication, face to face.
4. Anything brick and mortar, especially if lockdowns are imposed again.
5. In public education, thanks to hyper-polarization and politicization, all of it.
6. The idea that we're going back to normal at some point.
7. Daycare
8. Grocery stores it appears. Some of the gyms also.
9. affordable housing due to increased building costs.
10. The lack of the supply chain to keep up (or catch up)
11. Public school system. Healthcare system.

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Q11. What area of your business, organization, or community is still vulnerable due to the impact of the pandemic?

Respondents: 112

Individual Comments (12-22/112)

12. The economic impact less expendable income means less business.
13. No business can rely on getting products in a timely manner.
14. Childcare 0-9
15. None
16. Always have a backup business plan. Internet connectivity is critical.
17. Landlords
18. Locally owed businesses
19. LARGE PORTION OF COMMUNITY REPELS SCIENCE AND COMMUNAL GOOD
20. Reduced need for physical structures and work places.
21. Lack of personnel to fill job positions
22. Small businesses

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Q11. What area of your business, organization, or community is still vulnerable due to the impact of the pandemic?

Respondents: 112

Individual Comments (23-32/112)

23. Still too many people choosing unemployment
24. Recruitment and retention of students and staff.
25. Education
26. Quality of workers.
27. Quality, affordable childcare so employees can work
28. None
29. K-12 Education has suffered greatly. High schoolers aren't prepared for ACT, college, or workforce.
30. Restaurants, entertainment, media
31. Potential lock downs and government control over clients.
32. Job vacancies until employers decide to make pay worth it

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Q11. What area of your business, organization, or community is still vulnerable due to the impact of the pandemic?

Respondents: 112

Individual Comments (33-42/112)

33. None that I'm aware of, I'm employed by a school district.
34. The community is incredibly divided, like the rest of the country. The politicization of public health makes running a safe business difficult.
35. social events
36. All of it. We're [REDACTED]!
37. Can't think of anything at this time.
38. keeping students in school
39. Restaurants
40. staffing,
41. In person meetings and hosting events.
42. small business and restaurants

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Q11. What area of your business, organization, or community is still vulnerable due to the impact of the pandemic?

Respondents: 112

Individual Comments (43-50/112)

- 43. We are all still vulnerable as a whole. There are several residual impacts of the pandemic we are still facing. We have more job openings than I have ever seen in our community and higher wages.
- 44. Newly discovered remote work opportunities accelerated urbanization - depopulating rural communities.
- 45. Destination businesses- usually mom and pop shops
- 46. Inventory levels of raw materials and finished goods.
- 47. Hospitality
- 48. Shortage of labor
- 49. ESU
- 50. Hospitality and manufacturing

51

Q11. What area of your business, organization, or community is still vulnerable due to the impact of the pandemic?

Respondents: 112

Individual Comments (51-60/112)

- 51. Labor supply and supply lines overall
- 52. All communities, especially those with poor broad band
- 53. Employee retention
- 54. large group gatherings
- 55. People that did shop more, locally
- 56. Distance to health care facilities.
- 57. Jobless and disabled
- 58. Staff. There is still a lack of good paying jobs.
- 59. Low vaccine rates and lack of mask wearing and social distancing.
- 60. all of us because of the government that wants to shut us down

52

Q11. What area of your business, organization, or community is still vulnerable due to the impact of the pandemic?

Respondents: 112

Individual Comments (61-68/112)

- 61. Education, older adults. So many people are still not vaccinated (I think by choice) - this concerns me for keeping students in school (face to face) and for the overall health and well-being of the population, especially older adults.
- 62. Stewardship and involvement in community programs and tasks
- 63. In my job I interact with a lot of people daily. Interaction can cause sickness. I'm immunized but I still worry. A bit.
- 64. Job openings.
- 65. People making the pandemic political and abusing business employees.
- 66. all of them, they still have not yet dug themselves out of the forced trap
- 67. Mainstreet businesses
- 68. The negative impact of Covid on already declining enrollment at Kansas State University is directly impacting our services in Manhattan

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Q11. What area of your business, organization, or community is still vulnerable due to the impact of the pandemic?

Respondents: 112

Individual Comments (69-78/112)

- 69. tourism
- 70. Those who choose not to be vaccinated.
- 71. The County actually weathered the storm well, though some individuals suffered (or closed).
Whether we learned anything that will make us more resilient is doubtful.
- 72. budgets; and ongoing public health
- 73. My personal confidence in "authorities" after seeing disfunction between cities, county and state.
- 74. Local retail
- 75. Hospitality and housing availability
- 76. hospitality and some retail
- 77. Workforce shortages.
- 78. At this time none.

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Q11. What area of your business, organization, or community is still vulnerable due to the impact of the pandemic?

Respondents: 112

Individual Comments (79-86/112)

- 79. Continued spread of the virus which could slow business, shut down operations and hurt economic recovery.
- 80. Service industry businesses- lack of workforce. Online shopping increases, which could hurt small town sales tax profits.
- 81. Local businesses, due to loss of revenue and employee shortage.
- 82. The youth
- 83. K-State is vulnerable. Students/parents look at the dollar amount spent for higher education vs. the experiences gathered. Those experiences lead to lifelong lessons and employability skills.
- 84. demise of social interaction
- 85. No opinion
- 86. Tourism

55

Q11. What area of your business, organization, or community is still vulnerable due to the impact of the pandemic?

Respondents: 112

Individual Comments (87-94/112)

- 87. Activities for the family
- 88. Institutions of Education are arguable going to go the way of brick and mortar store fronts.
- 89. Rising material costs and availability of delivery will stop or postpone indefinitely construction progress
- 90. food service and manufacturing do not do well with social distancing. Tourism is impacted but hopefully turning around.
- 91. employment and public sector revenue
- 92. The ability to hire workers that want to work
- 93. vulnerability to continued emergence of Coronavirus cases due to partisan resistance to vaccination and mask wearing.
- 94. Employers lack of people willing to work.

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Q11. What area of your business, organization, or community is still vulnerable due to the impact of the pandemic?

Respondents: 112

Individual Comments (95-104/112)

- 95. Decreased need for brick and mortar businesses.
- 96. None
- 97. Education both K-12 and Higher Ed
- 98. All of it.
- 99. "Many small businesses are struggling to survive and they are the backbone of our communities"
- 100. The economy is slow to rebound in our profession.
- 101. Na
- 102. The needs of target populations when stimulus money, pandemic benefits and increased unemployment benefits cease.
- 103. Entertainment (sports inside buildings and restaurants)
- 104. Restaurants

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Q11. What area of your business, organization, or community is still vulnerable due to the impact of the pandemic?

Respondents: 112

Individual Comments (105-112/112)

- 105. MHK has the most dense population in the region and therefore the most vulnerable. The student population is most vulnerable in the upcoming variant situation. Kansas has been so resistant to mitigation measures.
- 106. Local hometown grocery and service industries....&...food providers
- 107. Restaurants.
- 108. Don't rely heavily on travel and tourism for revenue dollars
- 109. programs and structures
- 110. Aging population
- 111. none
- 112. Small business. Supply pipeline.

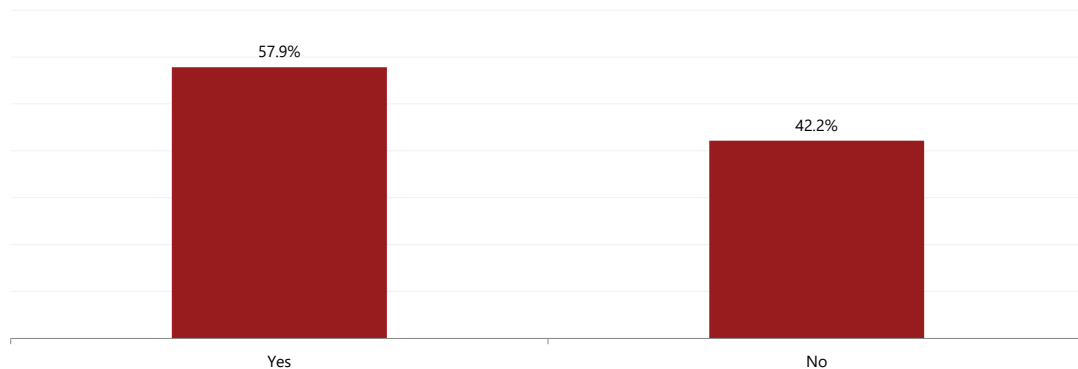
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Q12. Did any overall community/commercial/governmental processes change in response to the pandemic that will likely stay in place? If so, what?

Respondents: 121



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Q12. Did any overall community/commercial/governmental processes change in response to the pandemic that will likely stay in place? If so, what?

Respondents: 121

Individual Comments (1-7/72)

1. I wish. City government seems to be returning to old ways, making it too hard for folks to participate in meetings
2. Remote work
3. High number of remote workers and remote opportunities has/will create an oversupply off office space.
4. Closing of kids activities centers like Widgets
5. Lots of remote jobs
6. Many workers staying home for work.
7. I believe some businesses will continue to allow their employees to work from home. Schools should no longer need to cancel school due to offering classes online.

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Q12. Did any overall community/commercial/governmental processes change in response to the pandemic that will likely stay in place? If so, what?

Respondents: 121

Individual Comments (8-15/72)

- 8. Pottawatomie county offices improved online access to services
- 9. Schools staying open
- 10. The idea that Masks will stop a virus.
- 11. ABILITY OF CITY AND UNIVERSITY TO RESPOND TO PUBLIC HEALTH DISASTERS
- 12. State Agencies started to rely on electronic communication vs. in person meetings and communications. KSU and State of KS.
- 13. More jobs available at increased wage rate
- 14. Free meals for kids K-12 was a good support for both the kids and parents.
- 15. Less flexibility with working remotely (which seems counter to what should've happened)

61

Q12. Did any overall community/commercial/governmental processes change in response to the pandemic that will likely stay in place? If so, what?

Respondents: 121

Individual Comments (16-23/72)

- 16. Infection control standards
- 17. [REDACTED] mandates from incompetent government
- 18. "More delivery More dependency on broadband "
- 19. Governmental control allowing renters to suspend payment of their rent and no assistance for the impacted property owner / landlord.
- 20. Unfortunately customer service has grossly declined and workforce shortages have only enhanced that
- 21. My commitment to shop local
- 22. Who [REDACTED] knows they are all too lazy to go back to the old ways of actually working.
- 23. We all got used to streaming movies and not going to the movies!

62

Q12. Did any overall community/commercial/governmental processes change in response to the pandemic that will likely stay in place? If so, what?

Respondents: 121

Individual Comments (24-31/72)

- 24. Universal masking and other mitigation strategies, including promotion of vaccines
- 25. I think several businesses now realize that they can still have productivity with a remote workforce. Also several efficiencies have been brought forth for companies and small businesses that they might not have thought of pre pandemic
- 26. Wages, flexible jobs.
- 27. Remote meetings
- 28. I would guess more parent involvement in our local schools and school boards
- 29. Remote Work availability and openness
- 30. Mask and flu shot mandates
- 31. Wages went up and they will not go back down

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Q12. Did any overall community/commercial/governmental processes change in response to the pandemic that will likely stay in place? If so, what?

Respondents: 121

Individual Comments (32-36/72)

- 32. All aspects of community/commercial/governmental processes had to change in response to the pandemic but the one likely to remain in place until we know we are truly out of the pandemic is the need to meet virtually and/or continue to wear masks. Everyone seems to think that the pandemic is going to end on a certain date when in truth it will not. This is particularly true in Riley County where our vaccination rate is sadly so very, very low.
- 33. oh sure our county spent lots of the COVID money on the county needs and did a terrible job of serving the the small communities or widespread needs.
- 34. Zoom meetings or the zoom option could stay in place.
- 35. "Face to face accountability Commissioners just ignore email requests and comments"
- 36. I think going forward pivoting to a digital platform will be much easier and efficient. I also think flexible work from home schedules are here to stay.

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Q12. Did any overall community/commercial/governmental processes change in response to the pandemic that will likely stay in place? If so, what?

Respondents: 121

Individual Comments (37-42/72)

- 37. Processes for streamlining customer service. More online shipping out of state.
- 38. the need for authoritarian concepts of power and control
- 39. improved availability of state and federal grants
- 40. Because of advancing computer technology, many people can function productively from a variety of locations under a variety of circumstances.
- 41. Our change is associated with new ideas, by new people. Inflexibility, close mindedness, those who say, "it's always been this way," are significant challenges to our future. It's not even the unwillingness to change that is the issue, it's the unwillingness to listen, learn, and consider so thoughtful decisions can be made.
- 42. Retail sales will continue to grow via the internet with less need of brick and mortar stores....

Q12. Did any overall community/commercial/governmental processes change in response to the pandemic that will likely stay in place? If so, what?

Respondents: 121

Individual Comments (43-49/72)

- 43. Formalized and implemented telework policies and more flexible staff scheduling, without reducing services.
- 44. Acceptance that in person meetings are a very poor use of the majority's time.
- 45. Remote working.
- 46. more Zoom meetings, less travel to meetings
- 47. More availability of digital services.
- 48. I believe some sort of social distancing will still be in play and the possibility of masks.
- 49. Many processes converted to remote work, remote meetings, online sales with deliveries (even for local businesses. This will continue and will require more use of technology and broadband.

Q12. Did any overall community/commercial/governmental processes change in response to the pandemic that will likely stay in place? If so, what?

Respondents: 121

Individual Comments (50-57/72)

- 50. Municipalities are offering more online interactions and the remote workforce has increased. More people are buying goods online, which can hurt local sales tax profits.
- 51. Meetings and conventions are not going to be "on site"attending events may also be viewed differently
- 52. Hybrid office hours. A few days in-house, a few days at-home.
- 53. see number 11
- 54. Less "in person" interaction
- 55. Remote working which at times makes it more difficult to access services needed.
- 56. I hope access to more events via virtual means will increase accessibility and inclusiveness.
- 57. There are so many it really to early to know

Q12. Did any overall community/commercial/governmental processes change in response to the pandemic that will likely stay in place? If so, what?

Respondents: 121

Individual Comments (58-63/72)

- 58. More businesses allowing staff to work from home
- 59. The ability to shop locally from home and pick up at the curb as well home deliveries of groceries or other products. It is more than a convenience but a life line for some residents.
- 60. Outside opportunities such as outside dining and outside recreation. Junction City/Geary County has so many wonderful opportunities to capture these experiences.
- 61. More zoom conferences
- 62. Ability to communicate and work through video conferencing.
- 63. The SPARK/CRF Kansas Department of Commerce Connectivity Grant. Brought countywide 1Gig fiber to 2,700 residents (our entire) population. THANK YOU commerce!!! We fell in a gap in the digital divide funding structure and would never have made this possible without Ideatek and the State of Kansas.

Q12. Did any overall community/commercial/governmental processes change in response to the pandemic that will likely stay in place? If so, what?

Respondents: 121

Individual Comments (64-69/72)

- 64. Relaxed drinking laws
- 65. Remote working is more accepted.
- 66. Hopefully the schools providing lunches to kids when school is not in session. They are better equipped to handle meal preparation than any other entity.
- 67. More online services
- 68. "MHK issued an emergency declaration and changed some administrative policies that has now ended. It was much more difficult for the public to engage elected officials. City Manager has assumed more authority, short-term and long-term. Community is jittery about abandoning pandemic protocols such as masks and distancing. Federal CARES \$'s brought local gov'ts new money for mitigation measures and reimbursement so they were not hit so hard.

69

Q12. Did any overall community/commercial/governmental processes change in response to the pandemic that will likely stay in place? If so, what?

Respondents: 121

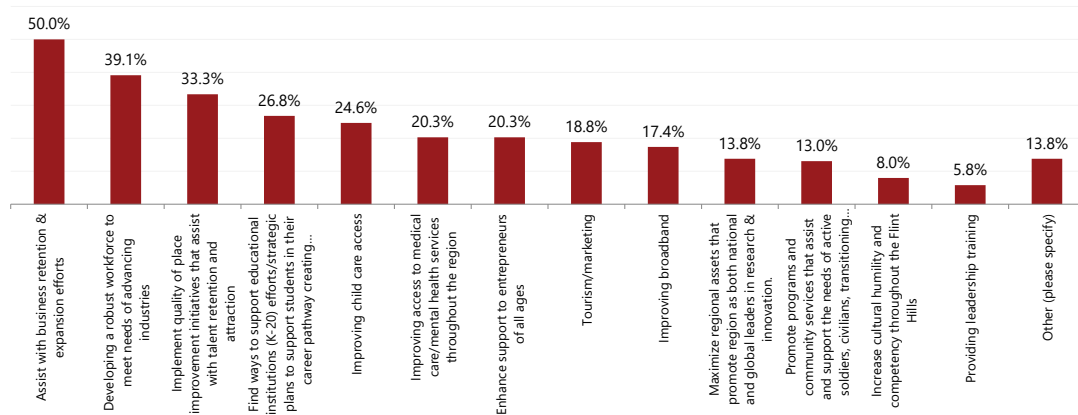
Individual Comments (64-69/72)

- 70. "Less need for offices, bricks and mortar at universities and schools. More distance work. Social disconnect increases"
- 71. Those with the ability to telecommute may be able to do so.
- 72. More reliance on broadband or internet for business operation and training. Governmental entities conducted meetings on Zoom.
- 73. zoom meeting and less travel

70

Q13. What do you think should be the top priorities for your community in the next five years? (Please choose THREE)

Respondents: 138



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Q13. What do you think should be the top priorities for your community in the next five years?

Respondents: 138

Individual Comments (1-8/19)

1. None of this can succeed if our infrastructure is falling apart. Some of our roads are being fixed now, but many of our county and city streets are literally falling apart.
2. Focus on the technologies that are likely to impact the next 3-5 years. Embrace them and help others understand where they lead.
3. Build the [REDACTED] bridge.
4. We need to bring a little more ethnically diverse professionals. Manhattan is seen as lacking diversity.
5. Improve public transportation and energy in an eco conscious way.
6. AFFORDABLE HOUSING
7. Indoor Recreation Facility
8. water line eruptions, poor roads, poor lighting

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Q13. What do you think should be the top priorities for your community in the next five years?

Respondents: 138

Individual Comments (9-17/19)

9. leadership training and entrepreneur support specifically for the Hispanic and LatinX populations
10. Develop more new housing
11. Housing
12. More middle class single family housing
13. Adequate housing both to own and rent in small communities
14. Elect leaders and hire professional staff who are not science deniers and who support public health and safety.
15. we need to quit creating jobs for only the elite and focus on wage earners in our small towns
16. I'd put several of these together under "improve quality of place"
17. infrastructure and business park development

73

Q13. What do you think should be the top priorities for your community in the next five years?

Respondents: 138

Individual Comments (18-19/19)

18. Year round K12 offerings to prevent regression in students and efficiency of educational advancement. Summers off is both expensive and damaging to employees and ignores our role in world competition
19. Housing is critical for our community at this time.

74

Q14. If you could implement just one strategy to improve our region's economic vitality, resiliency and quality of place, what would it be?

Respondents: 103

Key Regional Economic Development Themes/Topics from 112 Comments

(in no particular order)

- Market assets
- Access to quality and affordable childcare
- Diversification of quality and affordable housing
- Beautification and community cleanup
- Diversification of industry
- Improved broadband
- Changes to tax and business incentives
- Small business support

75

Q14. If you could implement just one strategy to improve our region's economic vitality, resiliency and quality of place, what would it be?

Respondents: 103

Individual Comments (1-5/103)

1. Expand public relations and marketing efforts
2. More local. More community activities, activists, help - funding. Lets rely less on big government thats making laws for big cities vs rural America.
3. Diversify economy
4. Manufacturing jobs and maintain property taxes.
5. Learn how to market ourselves. Our marketing is horrible. We've had massive displacement from the cities and Kansas sat around watching. We have affordable living, people can have more space, we have relatively great internet in a lot of spots... all things that can and will thrive in the future. Why not tell people about it? Why not embrace the next wave of technologies and tell people that we are embracing them. Wyoming adopted new laws to attract digital asset/crypto companies, as did Nebraska (nebraska!).

76

Q14. If you could implement just one strategy to improve our region's economic vitality, resiliency and quality of place, what would it be?

Respondents: 103

Individual Comments (6-8/103)

6. Lower property taxes.
7. Increase services for kids and families: day care centers, activities centers, after school services/activities in rural areas.
8. 1 strategy with two parts. Simply put, bring in big business by providing incentives, and entice those businesses by continuing to make manhattan a place there employees would want to live. I honestly think we are going in the right direction, but we do need to continue to diversify the economy, and bring in business owners with unique and different ideas like the guy who owns paw woof and stay and the car museum, civic plus, etc those type of business owners. Or whoever owned widget. We need more than just resteraunts and health facilities. A big one for me, is we need to diversify the population as well, there is a lack of diversity here. Need about 5,000 or more individuals from diverse backgrounds at least, educated professionals.

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Q14. If you could implement just one strategy to improve our region's economic vitality, resiliency and quality of place, what would it be?

Respondents: 103

Individual Comments (9-16/103)

9. Community interaction.
10. Determine why companies do not have or move their headquarters to this area. NW Arkansas and the Des Moines area has so many business headquarters. Why there and not here?
11. Improve winter road maintenance
12. Food services
13. Lower property tax
14. Get rid of the freeloaders that consume resources while not offering production in return.
15. ATTRACT AND TRAIN WORKFORCE
16. Personal responsibility to provide services to their business with consistency and affordable prices

78

Q14. If you could implement just one strategy to improve our region's economic vitality, resiliency and quality of place, what would it be?

Respondents: 103

Individual Comments (17-22/103)

- 17. Investing in broadband could make our small city and rural surrounding towns an ideal home for remote workers.
- 18. Quit letting government spend money on so many projects
- 19. Access to affordable childcare.
- 20. Definitely improving childcare availability and access. So many people would work if they could
- 21. Access to childcare
- 22. Financial and educational support for new businesses. I have been open for over 5 years but the other places that opened at for during that time did not stay because of lack of support from community leaders and chamber of commerce. I joined when I opened and all I got was a ribbon cutting. Absolutely nothing before or after from them.

Q14. If you could implement just one strategy to improve our region's economic vitality, resiliency and quality of place, what would it be?

Respondents: 103

Individual Comments (23-31/103)

- 23. K-20 Education
- 24. A viable mass transit system
- 25. Better access to small business funding.
- 26. i'm not sure
- 27. Less dependence on KState.
- 28. Education
- 29. Make the health director an elected position.
- 30. Less government, more volunteerism and community spirit.
- 31. Increasing cultural humility and competency throughout the Flint Hills

Q14. If you could implement just one strategy to improve our region's economic vitality, resiliency and quality of place, what would it be?

Respondents: 103

Individual Comments (32-38/103)

- 32. We might not be able to rebuild the town. But we can keep roads in good shape, paint, pull weeds. What do you see when you get here. Is it a place that strikes you as attractive?
- 33. Incentives to improve the pride and quality of life in rural communities.
- 34. Business retention and expansion. " If you build it, they will come" With jobs and expansion comes new opportunities and people will follow
- 35. I would ask the legislature to eliminate taxes on food and clothing and expand Medicaid
- 36. Newer housing across all price ranges.
- 37. Create a downtown living district that would promote business develop and activity. A place to live, work and play
- 38. More housing will increase work force in area

Q14. If you could implement just one strategy to improve our region's economic vitality, resiliency and quality of place, what would it be?

Respondents: 103

Individual Comments (39-47/103)

- 39. Retention of population = labor force
- 40. HOUSING!
- 41. Offer strategic planning, grant money and tax incentives to legitimate start up and small businesses
- 42. Build quality small family affordable homes in rural communities
- 43. Toursim
- 44. improve broadband
- 45. Reliable broadband to all communities.
- 46. Improving the quality of medical and mental health in all regions
- 47. There are too many to name.

Q14. If you could implement just one strategy to improve our region's economic vitality, resiliency and quality of place, what would it be?

Respondents: 103

Individual Comments (48-55/103)

- 48. Cleaning up all the ugly houses and yards in Junction City.
- 49. Get rid of [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] county - [REDACTED] has no clue what it is like in rural America- we are not the army.
- 50. More quality, high paying jobs.
- 51. Secure more land for Economic Development to recruit more businesses.
- 52. Stop being unwelcoming of people that move to the area and become inclusive.
- 53. Inject patience and kindness into all citizens
- 54. a private industry developed and run mentorship program providing work-based learning experiences and internships to high school students that run the gamut of employment careers
- 55. Job growth

Q14. If you could implement just one strategy to improve our region's economic vitality, resiliency and quality of place, what would it be?

Respondents: 103

Individual Comments (56-60/103)

- 56. affordable housing
- 57. Develop the city of Manhattan's access to the Kansas River for recreation, quality of life, ecological restoration and commercial developmental potential.
- 58. It's not a strategy, but we need the tools to describe, in clear terms, the impacts of past and contemporary decisions. We need to help people see how what they do today impacts where we will be in the future. We have to stop looking at tomorrow and look at five, ten, twenty years into the future.
- 59. Offer Career Pathways through local High Schools to meet needs of local/regional employers.
- 60. workforce and job expansion

Q14. If you could implement just one strategy to improve our region's economic vitality, resiliency and quality of place, what would it be?

Respondents: 103

Individual Comments (61-69/103)

61. Get everyone on board with the simple goal of being the youngest and most diverse region in the State of KS and 5 state region.
62. Improve self-image!
63. More resources to help small/start up businesses
64. build new business parks
65. Invest in programs that encourage students to pursue careers in expanding industries.
66. Diversify the overall economic base to lower the reliance on government employment.
67. To showcase all small towns in the region for tourism and potential population growth
68. job growth
69. Digital Entrepreneurship

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Q14. If you could implement just one strategy to improve our region's economic vitality, resiliency and quality of place, what would it be?

Respondents: 103

Individual Comments (70-74/103)

70. Continue to promote the region in a wholistic way, focusing on quality of life, affordability, recreational assets, and growing animal science industry. All counties/towns need included and contribute (monetarily as well as collaboratively) to the campaign.
71. Focus on safety, security, and let private businesses find ways to earn profits in quality of life and service instead of looking to government and taxes to underwrite such "opportunities "
72. Lower taxes
73. Starting salaries to put families above the poverty line. Living wages are very important. Our region has a mindset that \$10/hr is a good starting salary. It is not.
74. Ensure the stability of Fort Riley by keeping the 1st Infantry Division here in the Flint Hills and encourage some defense contracting business in addition to the NBAF initiatives already focused on by Manhattan.

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Q14. If you could implement just one strategy to improve our region's economic vitality, resiliency and quality of place, what would it be?

Respondents: 103

Individual Comments (75-80/103)

- 75. improve availability of arts and quality entertainment for all ages
- 76. Bulldoze the inhabited homes and buildings to make our community look better
- 77. Improve housing options
- 78. Community pride and cleanup
- 79. Consistency throughout the state funding structure.
- 80. Concentrate on increased emphasis to faculty and administration at KSU that their constant promotion to students to seek high profile positions in high profile communities in order to raise the profile of the university so it can advertise this to potential students, thus limiting the ability of local firms to retain quality employees. I could go on forever on this topic.

Q14. If you could implement just one strategy to improve our region's economic vitality, resiliency and quality of place, what would it be?

Respondents: 103

Individual Comments (81-84/103)

- 81. find a way to communicate all the good things in place to our current residents. It is difficult to find one means of communication (newspapers, radio, television, social media are all used but not all are used well.)
- 82. Better technology through broadband and wireless
- 83. We have I-70 with 5 exits. Recruitment of businesses at each of these exits to get people off the highway is a no brainer.
- 84. Recognizing that development can happen while making and keeping our towns and cities livable. Do not make Manhattan into a sprawling city, preserve its historic heritage and the existing quality of place linked to that history and the natural environment by developing stricter urbanism guidelines to preserve the town's charm and prevent the expansion of ugly suburban subdivisions that destroy and impact our natural environment.

Q14. If you could implement just one strategy to improve our region's economic vitality, resiliency and quality of place, what would it be?

Respondents: 103

Individual Comments (85-87/103)

- 85. Bring employers who pay good wages.
- 86. Marketing to change the reputation of Junction City in coordination with all the wonderful, dynamic changes that are about to unfold. We are on 2 major highways and want people exiting those highways and landing in Junction City. This would mean having a draw into JC with growth of trails and access to the lake and river, downtown entertainment, state of the art sports complex, continued recruitment and retention of educators (which includes promoting our new high school) with sufficient funding to meet our children's needs to access educational opportunities, and working to improve the percentage of our LMI status. Marketing to improve our reputation with the military so Ft Riley becomes a place for them to choose and not avoid.
- 87. Attract capital for business ventures that would employ skilled labor that pays great salaries and wages with excellent benefits.

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Q14. If you could implement just one strategy to improve our region's economic vitality, resiliency and quality of place, what would it be?

Respondents: 103

Individual Comments (88-96/103)

- 88. Get everyone on the same page and get the City leadership involved in the plan.
- 89. Work together, think as a region, not just as each county. This happens more so on the tourism side, but not when it comes to economic development.
- 90. Be sure employees are trusted and valued
- 91. More opportunities for young people to stay in Manhattan and have great jobs.
- 92. Research dollars for KSU, N bath and research labs
- 93. Improved quality of life for all residents in the region.
- 94. Working together to highlight the region's assets and not just one community!
- 95. Workforce development
- 96. Improve access to childcare

90

Q14. If you could implement just one strategy to improve our region's economic vitality, resiliency and quality of place, what would it be?

Respondents: 103

Individual Comments (97-100/103)

- 97. "Growth in energy-efficient and energy provision as Kansas being the center of quality gas, sun and wind possibilities. Consider possible Uses for cost reductions as incentives for business development and growth"
- 98. Get people on unemployment benefits back to work WITHOUT incentivizing them even further. There is starting to be a huge gap between essential workers who had to continue to work without additional pay and those who chose to take unemployment and not work. I don't have the answer but I hear this more and more often as I am out and about.
- 99. Affordable childcare and rural broadband
- 100. Help local businesses to expand and not have other groups get in the way of those developments.

Q14. If you could implement just one strategy to improve our region's economic vitality, resiliency and quality of place, what would it be?

Respondents: 103

Individual Comments (101-103/103)

- 101. Housing
- 102. Improve access to medical care/mental health services throughout the region
- 103. Find a way to build affordable quality housing.

Appendix B: Recovery and Resiliency Plan

From Valley to Hilltop

The FHEDD Recovery and Resiliency Plan

Background

In 2020 the FHRC was awarded Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) grant funding through the EDA. The awarded CARES grant provided assistance to the region for COVID-19 economic recovery and resiliency efforts, including the creation of a regional recovery and resiliency plan.

COVID-19 has severely impacted the Flint Hills Region, and the road to recovery is anticipated to be long and hard. Our approach to recovery must be both holistic and practical. One of our top two regional strengths, identified in our SWOT analysis, is “unique community character and spirit”. The ongoing pandemic has highlighted this uniqueness and reinforced the notion that a “one size fits all approach” is not the path forward to effective recovery or creating a resilient region. The impact of COVID on our region has yet to be fully realized, however it is apparent that the impacts vary greatly across our region.

The Flint Hills Recovery and Resiliency Plan uses the Strategic Directions as its foundation, proposing cross-cutting strategies to aid in recovery and build a more resilient region:

1. Business Support, Economic Diversification, and Economic Development Infrastructure
2. Talent Attraction and Retention
3. Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurialism
4. Recovery, Disaster Preparedness, and Resiliency
5. Partnership, Funding Strategies, Plan Implementation

In relation to our Strategic Directions, this plan looks at four primary areas that have been impacted by the ongoing pandemic: 1) Housing, 2) Workforce, 3) Small Businesses and the Local Economy, and 4) Digital Inclusion.

Other Recovery and Resiliency Planning Efforts

After the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated impacts to our communities, a number of local efforts were undertaken across our region to help our communities not just survive the pandemic but to come back stronger and more resilient. Several of our downtown organizations and economic development organizations conducted periodic surveys to gauge business confidence, consumer confidence, and overall industry/workforce impacts. Local governments formed steering committees to assess and identify how to effectively and efficiently expend/request COVID-related funds. Additionally, two formalized planning efforts took place, anchored by two of our region's largest communities: Emporia and Manhattan.

Emporia-Lyon County Road to Recovery

In April 2020, partners from across Emporia and Lyon County joined forces to establish the Road to Recovery, to strengthen the local economy in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis and beyond. Seven teams and two subsets were formed to address specific industries and sectors working to identify and help craft solutions that can assist businesses, organizations, and institutions successfully navigate the new economic and social conditions of our region.

The Road to Recovery effort produced two reports focusing on the following components: 1) Restore and 2) Resiliency, Renewal, and Transformation. The reports outlined each team's findings and proposed actionable strategies as they related to the following areas:

- Leveraging strengths of anchor institutions
- Restarting hospitality and tourism
- Rebuilding nonprofit, faith, and community organizations
- Reviving small businesses
- Protecting arts and creative economy
- Assessing key industries
- Preparing vital infrastructure

The actionable strategies outlined in these reports are instrumental in not only recovery and resiliency efforts in Emporia and Lyon County, but can serve as a tool for other communities throughout our region to help guide their planning efforts. The Road to Recovery also identified some lessons learned throughout the pandemic.

Other Recovery and Resiliency Planning Efforts (continued)

Manhattan Area Recovery Task Force

In April 2020, the Mayor of Manhattan announced the formation of the Manhattan Area Recovery Task Force with the charge to develop a measured and phased path forward for the community. The goal of the Task Force is successful reopening implementation through the transition phases.

To achieve the charge and goal, the focus of the Regional Task Force is to:

1. Facilitate how to make the phased reopening transition successful for multiple business types and organizations as well as for residents and visitors
2. Have broad representation that can help communicate information back to multiple networks and industries
3. Provide input from business and community leaders back to appointed and elected officials
4. Assist in shaping and coordinating consistent, practical information for business owners and individuals about how to safely provide products and services using best practices
5. Work towards and recommend consistent approaches and messaging among Geary, Potawatamie, and Riley Counties

The Task Force produced an "Opening With Care" toolkit for businesses and worked at the end of 2020 to determine lessons learned during the first year of the pandemic to assist with increased resiliency and effective recovery efforts.

Summary of Lessons Learned Identified Through These Planning Efforts:

- Early action was important
- Establishing effective, accurate, and accessible channels of communication is key
- Need to analyze the impact of the shutdown/lockdown to better understand what steps need to be taken in the future
- Technology is critical
- Decisions need to be data-driven when implementing protocols and mandates
- We need to assist small businesses in navigating e-commerce
- Businesses may need to adapt to provide increased flexibility for workers

Strategy Framework 4.1 - Identify and support efforts that assist in creating a more resilient, sustainable region. (responsive)

Action a. - Create a Regional Resiliency Task Force to coordinate planning efforts and to serve as an information-sharing hub (responsive)

The Impact of COVID on the FHEDD

The State of Kansas received \$1.034 billion in Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) dollars from the federal CARES Act to support State, Local and Tribal governments as they confront the COVID-19 pandemic. The investment priorities for these funds were determined by Governor Laura Kelly’s Strengthening People and Revitalizing Kansas (SPARK) Taskforce, which is composed of business, community, and legislative leaders from across Kansas and county governments with input from stakeholders in their communities.

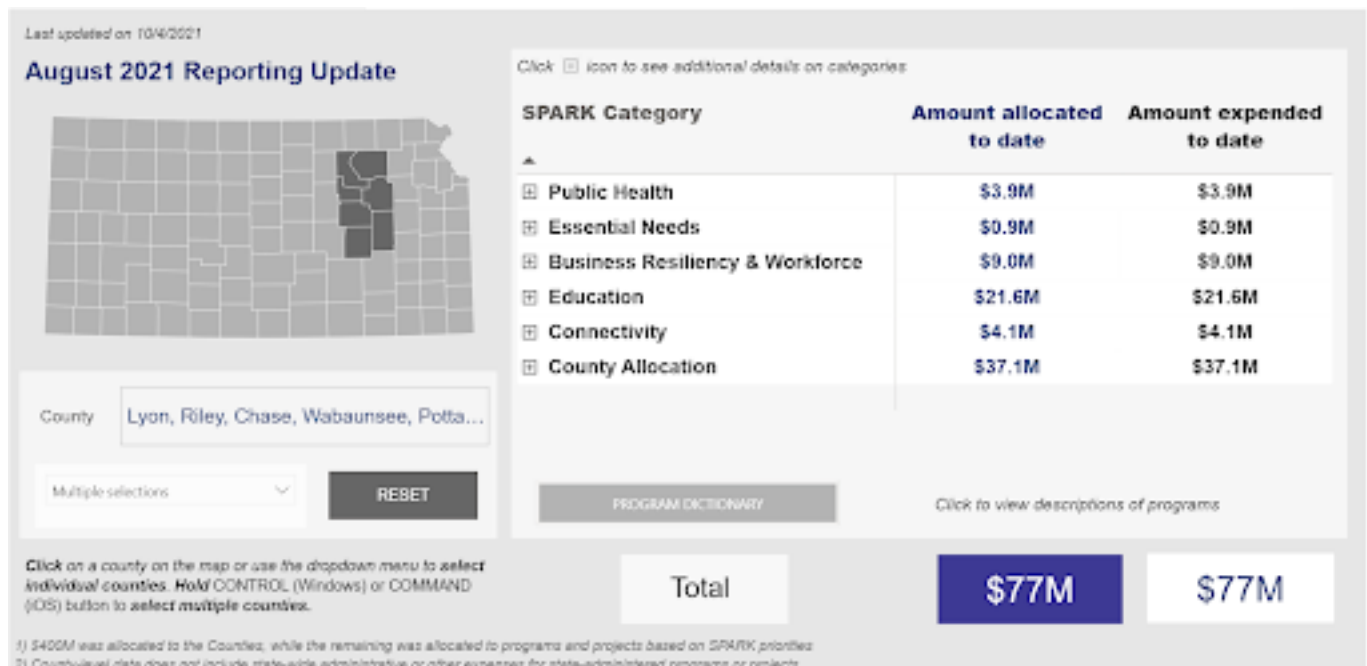
The Flint Hills Region received \$77 million in CRF dollars, with the bulk of those funds being directly allocated to counties. The

Kansas CRF Dashboard provides county-level data about the amount of funds allocated toward each investment priority.

The Regional Economic Impact Analysis will help guide data-driven discussions on the impact COVID has had on our regional economy. Every community in our region is unique, so it is imperative that we collect data that will accurately represent how each community was impacted. Despite the unique challenges each community faces, there are some common areas that were impacted: 1) **Housing**, 2) **Workforce**, 3) **Small Business**, and 4) **Digital Inclusion**.

▼ Map 1.1 FHEDD CRF Allocation

Source: <https://covid.ks.gov/covid-data/>



The Impact of COVID on the FHEDD (continued)

Housing

Housing affordability has been identified through our SWOT as our region’s primary threat. Data provided by the Kansas Office of Judicial Administration in May 2021 indicated that the FHEDD saw a 20 percent increase in eviction filings per year over a five year span ending in Fiscal Year (FY) 19, with a 24 percent increase between FY 18 and FY 19. This general trend, coupled with the economic downturn associated with the COVID-19 pandemic leading to increased housing prices, job uncertainty, and high inflation, makes this threat even more significant than before.

▼ Figure 1.1. Eviction Filings by Fiscal Year

Source: Kansas Office of Judicial Administration

District	County	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19
2	Pottawatomie	28	29	20	11	33
2	Wabaunsee	2	3	1	2	2
5	Chase	0	0	1	2	1
5	Lyon	83	61	75	89	109
8	Geary	172	208	229	161	202
8	Morris	3	4	7	9	4
21	Riley	375	288	281	334	408

The Eviction Lab at Princeton University produces rigorous and novel research about the causes and consequences of the affordable housing crisis and housing instability in the United States. Eviction Lab analyzed housing policies across the nation from March 15, 2020 to June 30, 2021 and generated a COVID-19 Housing Policy Scorecard for each state; Kansas received a score of 1.43 out of 5.00.

Eviction Lab acknowledged that Kansas enacted tenancy preservation measures through focusing on housing stabilization. On March 15, 2021 the Kansas Emergency Rental Assistance (KERA) Program began accepting applications. KERA provides rent, utility, and internet assistance to households experiencing financial hardship as a result of the COVID pandemic. Landlords and tenants apply via a joint online process. If the application is approved, the landlord or service

provider receives funds directly from KERA and applies KERA funds to the applicant’s account. Approved applicants are eligible for up to 12 months of assistance.

Kansas Housing Resources Corporation reported that 420 KERA applications have been paid throughout the FHEDD.

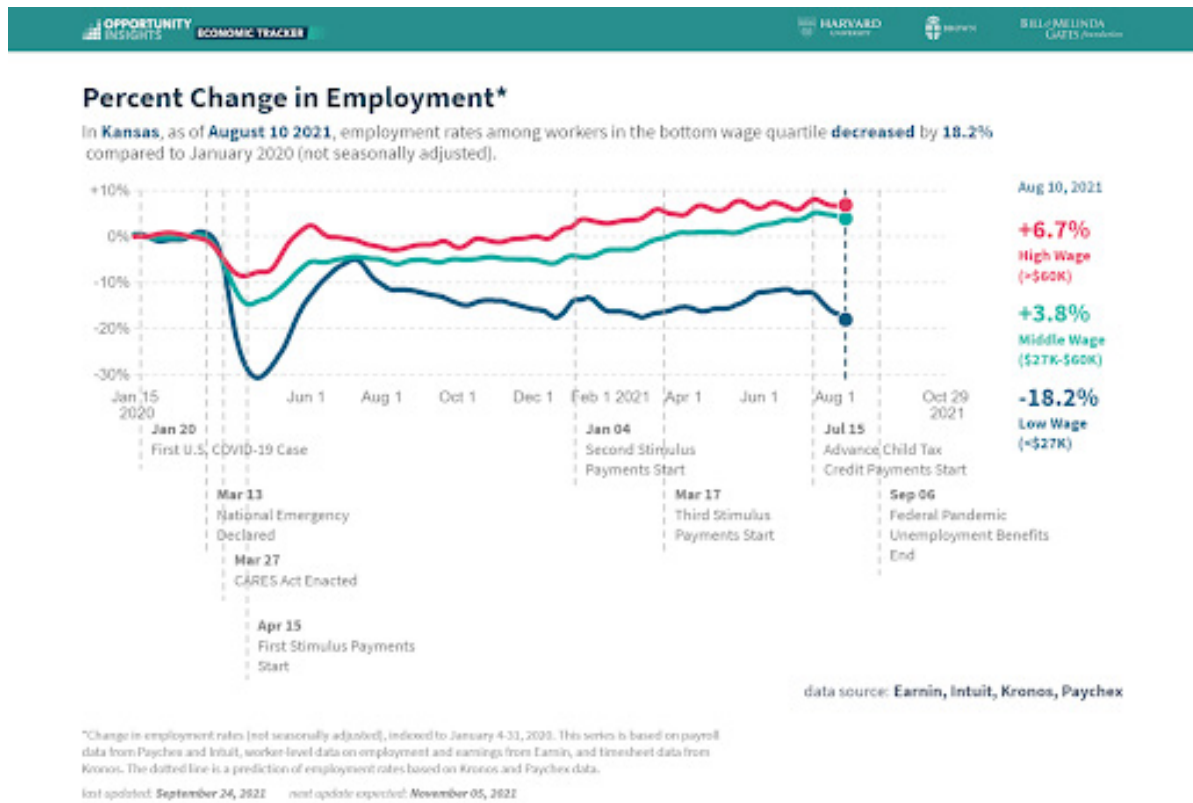
County Name	Total Applications in Process as of 9/7/21	Total Applications Paid as of 9/7/21
Chase	0	0
Geary	171	132
Lyon	61	40
Morris	6	4
Pottawatomie	16	14
Riley	182	205
Wabaunsee	1	1
Total Applications as of 9/7/21	459	420

The Impact of COVID on the FHEDD (continued)

Workforce

Our SWOT analysis and Business Confidence Survey both indicate that workforce issues threaten the resilience of our region. Unemployment across the nation, state, and our region peaked during the onset of the pandemic. Through a combination of steady-state and responsive actions associated with our Plan’s Strategic Direction 2: Talent Attraction and Retention our goal is to build a resilient workforce and resilient economy.

▼ **Figure 1.2. Kansas Unemployment**
Unemployment chart overlaid with COVID-19 timeline

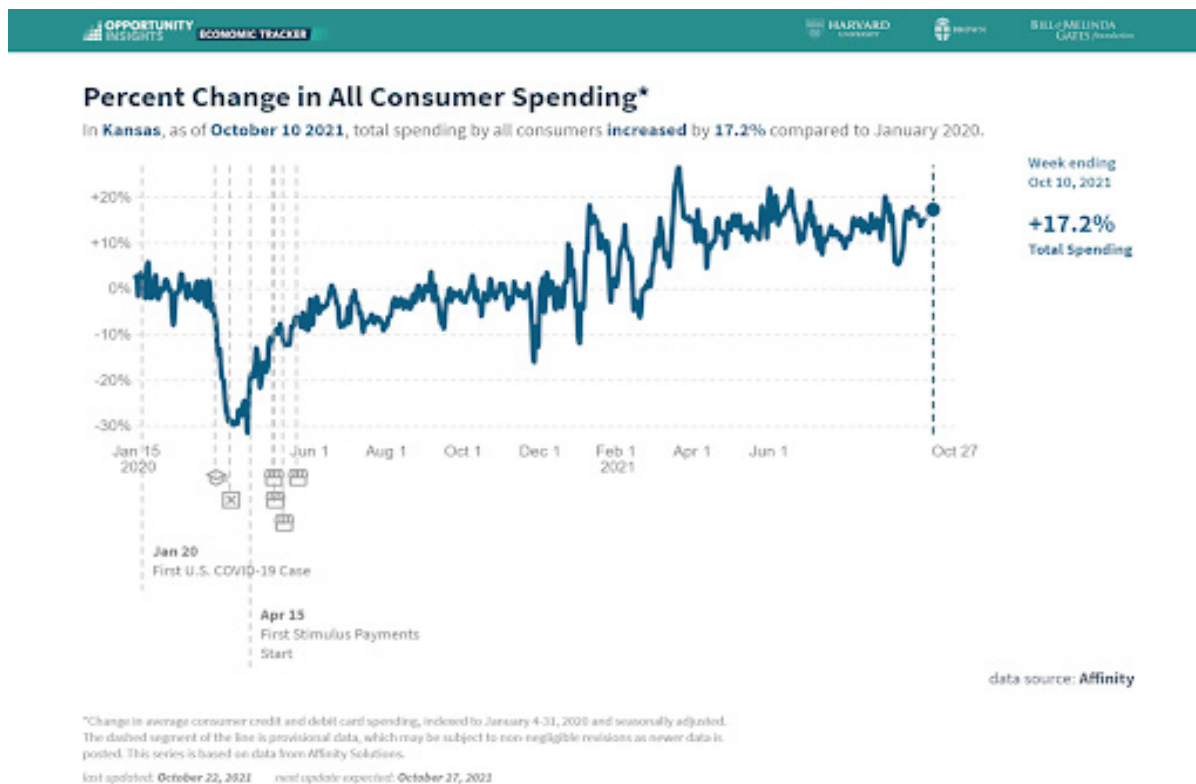


The Impact of COVID on the FHEDD (continued)

Small Business

On March 30, 2020, the State of Kansas enacted a “Stay Home” Order. Shortly thereafter, consumer spending throughout Kansas declined approximately 30 percent from January 2020. Although data show that as of October 2021, consumer spending in Kansas has increased over 17 percent from January 2020, our small businesses still need assistance to recover and thrive.

▼ **Figure 1.2. Kansas Consumer Spending**
Consumer Spending chart overlaid with COVID-19 timeline



\$77 million CRF dollars were allocated throughout the FHEDD; \$9 million was directed towards Business Resiliency and Workforce. Business Resiliency and Workforce allocations were used to support five areas: 1) workforce development, 2) securing local food systems, 3) remote learning, 4) private colleges, and 5) business retention and expansion. Almost 85 percent of those funds supported workforce development and business retention and expansion initiatives.

The Impact of COVID on the FHEDD (continued)

Digital Inclusion

Our SWOT survey results show that an almost equal number of respondents identify access to broadband as a regional strength as those who identify broadband access as a regional weakness. The 2015-2019 American Community Survey reports that 11.4 percent of households in the Flint Hills Region do not have access to the internet. This is slightly lower than that of Kansas, in which 14.5 percent of households are reported as not having access to the internet. In today's technology-driven society, purely having internet access is not sufficient; quality of access is key to a strong, resilient region.

The issue of broadband in rural America has been brought to the forefront at the local, state, and national levels as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The State of Kansas has prioritized this issue and established the Kansas Office of Broadband Development in 2020 to help ensure all Kansans have the opportunity to live, work, learn and compete in a global economy by improving universal access to quality, affordable and reliable broadband. This prioritization has led to the injection of funds into local communities to bolster not only their access to broadband, but their access to quality broadband.

Just over five percent of the total CRF dollars allocated throughout the FHEDD were applied to broadband connectivity, which entails expansion of broadband infrastructure (fiber, fixed wireless, etc.) through grants to reach areas currently unable to access minimally adequate services (residential: $\geq 25/3$ Mbps).

As school, work, and services (such as health and mental health) shift to adjust to the post-pandemic world, broadband access will play a key role in the success of our region's economic development efforts.

Strategy Framework 1.3 - Provide a sufficient supply of economic-growth-supportive infrastructure.

Action b1. -Engage service providers to assess the COVID-related broadband service expansions and identify remaining gaps in service or opportunities to improve quality of service. (responsive)

Cross-Cutting Strategies

Several resilience-related actions are associated with strategic directions other than Recovery, Disaster Preparedness, and Resiliency. These actions are considered cross-cutting and help to ensure that resilience is embedded throughout our economic development strategies.

Strategic Direction 1:

Business Support, Economic Diversification, and Economic Development Infrastructure

Strategy Framework 1.2. - Support and facilitate the retention and expansion of existing regional businesses

Action b. - Conduct a Regional Business Confidence Survey (responsive)

From January 8, 2021, to February 5, 2021, FHRC conducted a Business Confidence Survey, receiving responses from 127 businesses/organizations from across the Flint Hills Economic Development District. The goal of this survey was to identify what funding, tools, or resources were needed to help our businesses in the short-term, be prepared to pursue new economic recovery funding and resources that may help to support them in their recovery and resiliency efforts, and help our businesses and communities be more resilient in the future.

The survey was distributed by local chambers, economic development professionals, community members, and FHRC staff. Several downtown organizations and economic development organizations throughout our region conducted periodic surveys to gauge business confidence, consumer confidence, and overall industry/workforce impacts. A coordinated effort was made to ensure the Business Confidence Survey was complementary to these efforts and not duplicative.

Our survey responses came from a large cross-section of businesses/organizations from across the Flint Hills Economic Development District, including both large and small businesses. Industries represented include many impacted by efforts to help “flatten the curve” and slow the spread of COVID-19: retail, food services, personal services, events, arts, entertainment, and recreation.

Cross-Cutting Strategies (continued)

Action b. - Conduct a Regional Business Confidence Survey (continued)

Initial findings indicated that:

- Losing business and customer traffic were the biggest concerns for respondents' organizations and employees
- COVID exposure of staff and employees (quarantines, staff turnover) and target market has avoided going out were the most cited impacts
- Cumulatively, over 25 percent of respondents were unsure or did not feel like they had the resources and information to bring employees back to work safely
- Faster access to vaccines was the most cited tool or resource that would most help their businesses survive the pandemic and be able to thrive during recovery
- Marketing/social media marketing training was the most cited training/technical assistance category to help respondents' businesses to be more resilient
- 20 percent of respondents plan to create a social media presence and/or increase marketing

Despite the challenges the pandemic posed to our local economy and business community, the survey indicated that seven of the respondents represented businesses that opened during the pandemic, highlighting the resiliency of the entrepreneurial spirit of our region. Survey results were shared with the public via an online dashboard and summary report.

Action c. - Conduct an annual follow-up Business Confidence Survey in January 2022 (responsive)

Action d. - Provide access to business training opportunities (steady-state)

The Flint Hills Regional Council became an affiliate member of Kansas Main Street in 2021. This membership provides interested parties throughout the FHEDD with the opportunity to attend business-related training sessions. The first training session was centered on social media, complementing the feedback we received from the Business Confidence Survey.

Cross-Cutting Strategies (continued)

Strategic Direction 2:

Talent Attraction and Retention

Strategy Framework 2.1. - Develop medical education capacity in the region and increase support for mental health services.

Action a.-Continue to facilitate the Kansas Eighteen-County Multi-Regional Healthcare Growth Cluster (responsive)

In 2021, the Kansas Eighteen-County, Multi-Regional Healthcare Growth Cluster was established. The Growth Cluster is charged with addressing the critical shortage of healthcare workers through the creation of a robust, innovative talent pipeline--bringing together public and private sector investment to create a holistic wraparound approach to expand training capacity, and provide equitable access to both physical and mental healthcare services across rural Kansas and ultimately across the nation at one of the most critical times in U.S. history. To meet this charge, the FHRC submitted a Build Back Better Regional Challenge concept proposal on behalf of the Growth Cluster.

Strategy Framework 2.2. Continue to enhance the capacity and productivity of the region's pre-K to 20 educational institutions and other training programs geared to enhance employability skills of the emerging, transitional and current workforce.

Action a. -Conduct a regional Skills Gap Analysis to quantitatively identify how effectively the region is producing the talent necessary to meet the region's future occupational demand (steady-state)

Our SWOT identifies several threats to the resiliency and strength of our region's economy, such as inadequate workforce, reduction in forces, and loss of rural jobs. In addition to our SWOT, the Community Impacts Associated with Army Personnel Reductions at Fort Riley (CIAR) has highlighted workforce needs as a priority, specifically related to addressing skills gaps, career readiness training, job placement, and retention of separating personnel from Fort Riley. One way to address these threats and work towards becoming a more resilient region is to conduct a regional Skills Gap Analysis.

In July 2021, FHRC issued an RFP calling for qualified contractors to conduct the regional Skills Analysis to define the unique skill shapes, roles, and the particular skill gaps in our region. After completing an open and competitive process and obtaining the FHRC Board of Directors' approval, FHRC entered a contract with Emsi Burning Glass in October 2021 to conduct this analysis. The Skills Analysis is anticipated to be completed by April 2022.

Cross-Cutting Strategies (continued)

Strategic Direction 2:

Talent Attraction and Retention

Strategy Framework 2.9 - Support the continuation of enhanced online tools for individuals to connect their skills to employment opportunities specifically within our seven-county region.

Action a. -Establish a regional workforce hub (steady-state)

In July 2021, FHRC issued an RFP calling for qualified contractors to procure and launch a software system that would serve as a regional workforce hub. After completing an open and competitive process and obtaining the FHRC Board of Directors' approval, FHRC entered a contract with Emsi Burning Glass in October 2021 to develop this software system. The FHEDD chose Emsi Burning Glass' SkillFit to allow individuals to search and browse local careers, obtain relevant labor market information, and see the related education and training requirements/offering. The FHEDD's goal for this web application is to create a more resilient region through aiding talent attraction and retention efforts by assessing a worker's career interests and competencies and connecting those skills and competencies with relevant job postings or educational opportunities. This system combines job searching, career exploration, upskilling, and skills mapping for workers to have a holistic view of career opportunities throughout our region. Additionally, SkillFit will provide FHEDD decision-makers with insights on these data points to help guide decisions on gaps in training offerings, business opportunities, etc.

SkillFit launched October 29, 2021 on the Flint Hills Regional Councils [Skills2Careers webpage](#).

Strategic Direction 4:

Recovery, Disaster Preparedness and Resiliency

Strategy Framework 4.1. - Identify and support efforts that assist in creating a more resilient, sustainable region.

Action b. - Economic Modeling Information (responsive)

To make data-driven decisions we must have access to current, quality data. In July 2021, FHRC issued an RFP calling for qualified contractors to provide a software system that would provide the region with economic modeling information to help guide recovery and resiliency decisions and include in regional reports and plans. After completing an open and competitive process and obtaining the FHRC Board of Directors' approval, FHRC entered a contract with Emsi Burning Glass in October 2021 to obtain access to their Developer software application.

Cross-Cutting Strategies (continued)

Strategic Direction 2:

Talent Attraction and Retention

Strategy Framework 4.3 - Analyze the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through an economic impact study to better understand how we can be more resilient in the future.

Action a. -Conduct a regional Economic Impact Analysis (steady-state)

In July 2021, FHRC issued an RFP calling for qualified contractors to conduct an economic impact analysis to evaluate the impact COVID-19 has had on the regional workforce. After completing an open and competitive process and obtaining the FHRC Board of Directors' approval, FHRC entered a contract with Emsi Burning Glass in October 2021 to conduct this analysis.

The FHEDD Economic Impact Analysis (EIA) will provide data and insights on components such as county-level unemployment rates, industry and occupational-level job postings, county-level COVID-19 index and how it affects industries throughout the region, and industry-level job posting index. These data will lay the foundation for the EIA with the ultimate goal of providing the FHEDD with the information necessary to understand how to develop resilient strategies to address business support, economic diversification, and economic development infrastructure.

EIA work has already been started, with a kickoff meeting taking place in December 2021. It is estimated the EIA will be completed by February 2022.

Cross-Cutting Strategies (continued)

Strategic Direction 5:

Partnerships, Funding Strategy Development, Plan Implementation

Strategy Framework 5.1 - Create partnerships, leverage resources and obtain grant funding to move priorities forward

Action a. -Develop regional hub to facilitate dialogue between economic development professionals, local government officials, and other stakeholders regarding COVID investments and allocations. (responsive)

Throughout our region, local government officials and economic development professionals indicated that it would be beneficial to have more detailed information about how their counterparts across the region utilized COVID-related funds.

The Kansas CRF Investment Dashboard helps to provide high level detail about where funds were allocated. The Kansas Association of Counties (KAC) has created a Listserv for local government officials to exchange specific questions, feedback, and information regarding COVID-related funds. These are valuable resources that can be scaled to our region to help enhance communication, identify common ground, and possibly assist with developing holistic funding strategies throughout our region.

Strategy Framework 5.3 - Utilize the regional needs assessment system for identified unfunded needs so that FHRC and regional partners can assist in developing funding strategies.

Action a. -Create an online Needs Assessment System (responsive)

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the lack of fully scoped projects. It also brought to light other projects that did not fit within the confines of current funding sources or lacked funding strategies. In March 2021, FHRC issued an RFP calling for qualified contractors to develop a web-based Regional Needs Assessment System. The goal of the Needs Assessment System is to provide the efficient and safe collection and ranking of unfunded needs as it relates to regional recovery and resiliency and overall economic and community development needs that will contribute to recovery and resiliency for our region. The Needs Assessment System will provide the FHEDD with the tool necessary to identify unfunded needs, prioritize those needs, and pursue appropriate funding strategies. The Regional Needs Assessment System was launched October 29, 2021. Training on how communities can submit their unfunded needs will be conducted throughout the remainder of the year and as needed.

Appendix C:

Legal Advertisements

(First published in the Chase County Leader News 11/13/2021)

The Flint Hills Regional Council (FHRC) and the Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD) Steering Committee will conduct a joint meeting on Monday, November 29, 2021 via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86292577197431>

from 8:00-10 :00 a.m. to provide a recommendation to the board and consider the approval of the draft 2021-2025 Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD) Plan Update, serving as our region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), as required by the Economic Development Administration. The FHEDD serves seven counties including Chase, Geary, Lyon, Morris, Pottawatomie, Riley, and Wabaunsee. The FHEDD Plan includes an economic analysis of the region and outlines a series of strategies, tactics and action items that will enhance economic viability of the region. The FHEDD Plan is available for review and comment at www.FlintHillsRegion.org from October 29 - November 28, 2021.



INTERIM AD DRAFT

This is the proof of your ad scheduled to run in **Council Grove Republican** on the dates indicated below. If changes are needed, please contact us prior to deadline at **(620) 767-5123**.

Notice ID: CMEKFLMUfk53NQOKCXhT | **Proof Updated: Nov. 04, 2021 at 04:21pm CDT**
Notice Name: CEDS Final Council Grove

This is not an invoice. Below is an estimated price, and it is subject to change. You will receive an invoice with the final price upon invoice creation by the publisher.

FILER	FILING FOR
Johanna Williams jannawill@gmail.com	Council Grove Republican

Columns Wide: 1	Ad Class: Legals
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11/08/2021: Custom	24.08
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Subtotal	\$24.08
Tax %	0.00
Processing Fee	\$2.41
Total	\$26.49

The Flint Hills Regional Council (FHRC) and the Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD) Steering Committee will conduct a joint meeting on Monday, November 29, 2021 via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86292577197431> from 8:00-10:00 a.m. to provide a recommendation to the board and consider the approval of the draft 2021-2025 Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD) Plan Update, serving as our region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), as required by the Economic Development Administration. The FHEDD serves seven counties including Chase, Geary, Lyon, Morris, Pottawatomie, Riley, and Wabaunsee. The FHEDD Plan includes an economic analysis of the region and outlines a series of strategies, tactics and action items that will enhance economic viability of the region. The FHEDD Plan is available for review and comment at www.Flint-HillsRegion.org from October 29 - November 28, 2021.
(Published in the Council Grove Daily Republican November 8, 2021)



INTERIM AD DRAFT

This is the proof of your ad scheduled to run in **The Emporia Gazette** on the dates indicated below.
If changes are needed, please contact us prior to deadline at **(620) 342-4800**.

Notice ID: vrQloFNif2O8NI7XxAlq | **Proof Updated: Nov. 04, 2021 at 04:22pm CDT**
Notice Name: CEDS Final Emporia

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FILER	FILING FOR
Johanna Williams jannawill@gmail.com	The Emporia Gazette

Columns Wide: 1	Ad Class: Legals
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11/09/2021: Custom	24.44
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Subtotal	\$24.44
Tax %	0.00
Processing Fee	\$2.44
Total	\$26.88

(First Published in the Emporia Gazette on November 09, 2021).

The Flint Hills Regional Council (FHRC) and the Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD) Steering Committee will conduct a joint meeting on Monday, November 29, 2021 via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86292577197431> from 8:00-10 :00 a.m. to provide a recommendation to the board and consider the approval of the draft 2021-2025 Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD) Plan Update, serving as our region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), as required by the Economic Development Administration. The FHEDD serves seven counties including Chase, Geary, Lyon, Morris, Pottawatomie, Riley, and Wabaunsee. The FHEDD Plan includes an economic analysis of the region and outlines a series of strategies, tactics and action items that will enhance economic viability of the region. The FHEDD Plan is available for review and comment at www.FlintHillsRegion.org from October 29 - November 28, 2021.



INTERIM AD DRAFT

This is the proof of your ad scheduled to run in **Junction City Union** on the dates indicated below. If changes are needed, please contact us prior to deadline at **(785) 762-5000**.

Notice ID: 7DzgXyy4wgz7qXEwMjxj | **Proof Updated: Nov. 04, 2021 at 04:24pm CDT**
Notice Name: CEDS Final JC

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FILER	FILING FOR
Johanna Williams jannawill@gmail.com	Junction City Union

Columns Wide: 1	Ad Class: Legals
11/09/2021: Custom	36.30

Subtotal	\$36.30
Tax %	0.00
Total	\$36.30

The Flint Hills Regional Council (FHRC) and the Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD) Steering Committee will conduct a joint meeting on Monday, November 29, 2021 via Zoom [https://us02web. zoom. us/j/86292577197431](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86292577197431) from 8:00-10 :00 a.m. to provide a recommendation to the board and consider the approval of the draft 2021-2025 Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD) Plan Update, serving as our region’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), as required by the Economic Development Administration. The FHEDD serves seven counties including Chase, Geary, Lyon, Morris, Pottawatomie, Riley, and Wabaunsee. The FHEDD Plan includes an economic analysis of the region and outlines a series of strategies, tactics and action items that will enhance economic viability of the region. The FHEDD Plan is available for review and comment at www.FlintHillsRegion.org from October 29 - November 28, 2021.

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INTERIM AD DRAFT

This is the proof of your ad scheduled to run in **The Manhattan Mercury** on the dates indicated below. If changes are needed, please contact us prior to deadline at **(785) 776-2200**.

Notice ID: pOGdIAIbAG2G4dK9zRut | **Proof Updated: Nov. 04, 2021 at 04:26pm CDT**
Notice Name: CEDS Final MHK

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Johanna Williams
jannawill@gmail.com

FILING FOR

The Manhattan Mercury

Columns Wide: 1

Ad Class: Legals

11/09/2021: Custom

51.05

Subtotal \$51.05

Tax % 0.00

Total \$51.05

The Flint Hills Regional Council (FHRC) and the Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD) Steering Committee will conduct a joint meeting on Monday, November 29, 2021 via Zoom [https://us02web. zoom.us/j/86292577197431](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86292577197431)

from 8:00-10 :00 a.m. to provide a recommendation to the board and consider the approval of the draft 2021-2025 Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD) Plan Update, serving as our region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), as required by the Economic Development Administration. The FHEDD serves seven counties including Chase, Geary, Lyon, Morris, Pottawatomie, Riley, and Wabaunsee. The FHEDD Plan includes an economic analysis of the region and outlines a series of strategies, tactics and action items that will enhance economic viability of the region. The FHEDD Plan is available for review and comment at www.FlintHillsRegion.org from October 29 - November 28, 2021.

Published in the Manhattan Mercury on November 9, 2021.
#####



INTERIM AD DRAFT

This is the proof of your ad scheduled to run in **The Times, Pottawatomie County** on the dates indicated below. If changes are needed, please contact us prior to deadline at **(785) 456-2602**.

Notice ID: dGYpStbVKb0SJ5MQYmLn | **Proof Updated: Nov. 05, 2021 at 11:21am CDT**
Notice Name: CEDS Final Pott

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FILER	FILING FOR
Johanna Williams jannawill@gmail.com	The Times, Pottawatomie County

Columns Wide: 1	Ad Class: Legals
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11/11/2021: Custom	25.50
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Subtotal	\$25.50
Tax %	0.00
Processing Fee	\$2.55
Total	\$28.05

The Flint Hills Regional Council (FHRC) and the Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD) Steering Committee will conduct a joint meeting on Monday, November 29, 2021 via Zoom [https://us02web. zoom us/j/86292577197431](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86292577197431) from 8:00-10 :00 a.m. to provide a recommendation to the board and consider the approval of the draft 2021-2025 Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD) Plan Update, serving as our region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), as required by the Economic Development Administration. The FHEDD serves seven counties including Chase, Geary, Lyon, Morris, Pottawatomie, Riley, and Wabaunsee. The FHEDD Plan includes an economic analysis of the region and outlines a series of strategies, tactics and action items that will enhance economic viability of the region. The FHEDD Plan is available for review and comment at www.FlintHillsRegion.org from October 29 - November 28, 2021.

Nov. 11, 2021



INTERIM AD DRAFT

This is the proof of your ad scheduled to run in **The Wabaunsee County Signal-Enterprise** on the dates indicated below. If changes are needed, please contact us prior to deadline at **(785) 765-3327**.

Notice ID: P8Mf1zmd8aDZH77AT0rF | **Proof Updated: Nov. 04, 2021 at 04:30pm CDT**
Notice Name: CEDS Final Wabaunsee

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FILER	FILING FOR
Johanna Williams jannawill@gmail.com	The Wabaunsee County Signal- Enterprise

Columns Wide: 1 **Ad Class:** Legals

11/11/2021: Custom	26.50
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Subtotal	\$26.50
Tax %	0.00
Processing Fee	\$2.65
Total	\$29.15

See Proof on Next Page

*First published in The Wabau
see County Signal-Enterprise
Thursday, November 11, 2021.*

The Flint Hills Regional Council (FHRC) and the Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD) Steering Committee will conduct a joint meeting on Monday, November 29, 2021 via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86292577197431> from 8:00-10:00 a.m. to provide a recommendation to the board and consider the approval of the draft 2021-2025 Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD) Plan Update, serving as our region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), as required by the Economic Development Administration. The FHEDD serves seven counties including Chase, Geary, Lyon, Morris, Pottawatomie, Riley, and Wabau
see. The FHEDD Plan includes an economic analysis of the region and outlines a series of strategies, tactics and action items that will enhance economic viability of the region. The FHEDD Plan is available for review and comment at www.FlintHillsRegion.org from October 29 - November 28, 2021.



INTERIM AD DRAFT

This is the proof of your ad scheduled to run in **Wamego Smoke Signal** on the dates indicated below. If changes are needed, please contact us prior to deadline at **(785) 456-2602**.

Notice ID: 33ch7K0J31UwKgf6Y73D | **Proof Updated: Nov. 04, 2021 at 04:28pm CDT**
Notice Name: CEDS Final Wamego

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FILER	FILING FOR
Johanna Williams jannawill@gmail.com	Wamego Smoke Signal

Columns Wide: 1	Ad Class: Legals
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11/09/2021: Custom	33.40
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Subtotal	\$33.40
Tax %	0.00
Processing Fee	\$3.34
Total	\$36.74

First published in the The Smoke Signal on November 9, 2021

The Flint Hills Regional Council (FHRC) and the Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD) Steering Committee will conduct a joint meeting on Monday, November 29, 2021 via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86292577197431>

from 8:00-10 :00 a.m. to provide a recommendation to the board and consider the approval of the draft 2021-2025 Flint Hills Economic Development District (FHEDD) Plan Update, serving as our region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), as required by the Economic Development Administration. The FHEDD serves seven counties including Chase, Geary, Lyon, Morris, Pottawatomie, Riley, and Wabaunsee. The FHEDD Plan includes an economic analysis of the region and outlines a series of strategies, tactics and action items that will enhance economic viability of the region. The FHEDD Plan is available for review and comment at www.FlintHillsRegion.org from October 29 - November 28, 2021.

Appendix D: Public Comments

Public Comments Received

1

What county are you from or do you represent?

Riley

What community are you from or represent?

Manhattan

Please provide your public comment regarding the Flint Hills Economic Development District Plan Update using the comment box below:

The innovation district around K-State is named the Edge Collaboration District and is served by the public right-of-way infrastructure project known as the North Campus Corridor master plan. (pages 47, 48, 63)

Appendix E:

Population Tables

▼ **Table E.1. FHEDD Populations**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census

Counties/ Incorporated Cities	2020 Census Population	2010 Census Population
FHEDD	181,060	176,537
Chase County	2,572	2,790
Cedar Point	22	28
Cottonwood Falls	851	903
Elmdale	40	55
Matfield Green	49	47
Strong City	386	485
Geary County	36,739	34,362
Grandview Plaza	1,697	1,560
Junction City	22,932	23,353
Milford	408	530
Lyon County	32,179	33,690
Admire	130	156
Allen	160	177
Americus	776	894
Bushong	27	34
Emporia	24,139	24,916
Hartford	355	371
Neosho Rapids	229	265
Olpe	519	546
Reading	181	231
Morris County	5,386	5,923
Council Grove	2,140	2,182
Dunlap	27	30
Dwight	217	272
Latimer	31	20
Parkerville	46	59
White City	447	618
Wilsey	139	153

Counties/ Incorporated Cities	2020 Census Population	2010 Census Population
Pottawatomie County	25,348	21,604
Belvue	177	205
Emmett	170	191
Havensville	119	133
Louisville	131	188
Olsburg	218	219
Onaga	679	702
St. George	1,054	639
St. Mary's	2,759	2,627
Wamego	4,841	4,372
Westmoreland	740	778
Wheaton	98	95
Riley County	71,959	71,115
Leonardville	432	449
Manhattan	54,100	52,281
Ogden	1,661	2,087
Randolph	159	163
Riley	938	939
Wabaunsee County	6,877	7,053
Alma	802	832
Alta Vista	409	444
Eskridge	439	534
Harveyville	178	236
Maple Hill	631	620
McFarland	272	256
Paxico	210	221