Community Vision

Stilwell is a community of neighbors - proud of their rural heritage and proud of their commitment to civic involvement. Adjacent to expanding suburbia, the community is committed to retaining its historic small town identity - characterized by well-preserved, small locally-owned businesses, safe walkable neighborhoods, great community facilities - all surrounded by abundant agriculture and open spaces, clean air, and beautiful night skies.

Stilwell Community Plan

This brochure is a summary of the Stilwell Community Plan (Plan) that was adopted (Resolution No. 068-13) by the Board of County Commissioners as an amendment to the Johnson County Rural Comprehensive Plan in 2013. The six-square mile Planning Area shown below, contains some of the oldest and most diverse land uses and development patterns in the unincorporated area of the County. Though focused on this Planning Area, these goals and objectives may also be applied throughout Aubry Township which is located in the southeast corner of the County.

Purpose of the Plan

- Identify and protect important community, historic, and natural assets;
- assure development coordination with nearby jurisdictions;
- promote orderly growth through the establishment of goals and objectives to aid both public and private sector development decisions.

Community Input

Initial public input was obtained through two series of focus group meetings attended by over 200 residents and business owners. The first series of meetings identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and the second series focused on proposed goals and objectives. Over 160 individuals participated in the final public meeting to review the proposed goals and objectives. The meeting at Stilwell Elementary School was conducted by the AOCZB, the Township Trustee, and the Chairman of the Stilwell Community Organization.

Development Pressures

Currently, two external developments are occurring near the Planning Area that will have lasting impact on future development and the southeastern portion of the County.

Sanitary Sewers - Sanitary sewers are now under construction to serve an area recently annexed by Overland Park, generally located east of Mission Road and south of 175th Street. It is anticipated that higher density residential and limited commercial development will occur here. Much of the area at the intersection of 179th Street and Metcalf Avenue already has sanitary sewers. A mix of residential, commercial, and business park uses is planned for this area by Overland Park. Also, west of U.S. Highway 69, Overland Park proposes more residential development with a mix of commercial and office uses.

Roads - Two important future arterial road improvements are planned by Overland Park. Both roads are proposed to connect with the existing Missouri road system to the east. One arterial connection is the extension of 191st Street east of Mission Road. The other connection is an extension of 199th Street east of Mission Road, northeast to approximately 195th Street.

Project Background

Development in the Planning Area over the past 20 years has been gradual. Limited proposed changes or new commercial development continues along Metcalf Avenue and 199th Street, particularly to the south. The upgrade of residences has been ongoing along with recent improvements to old downtown Stilwell, including the removal of older structures and the addition of new businesses and residences. The eastern and southern portions of the Planning Area still contain large tracts of agriculture and undeveloped land.

Aubry-Oxford Consolidated Zoning Board (AOCZB)

In 2001, the Aubry-Oxford Rural Comprehensive Plan Committee recommended the preparation of a “Village Plan” for the vicinity of 199th Street and Metcalf Avenue. In 2004, the Johnson County Rural Comprehensive Plan update recommended a community-centered plan for the area.

In 2010, the Aubry-Oxford Consolidated Zoning Board (AOCZB) requested the County Planning, Development, and Codes Department undertake such a project. With authorization from the Board of County Commissioners and the County Planning Commission, the AOCZB served as the project Steering Committee, establishing the boundaries, scope, and content for the project. The projected time horizon for the Plan was set for 2030.

Community Participants

List of Participants:

- Aubry Township Officials
- Brad Miller, Trustee
- Tim Gnau, Clerk
- Lori Hole, Treasurer
- Stilwell Community Organization (SCO)
- Kennet Klingensmith, Pres.
- Ronald Smith, Vice-Pres.
- Stacie Moeller
- Mike Ward
- Chris Bramhall
- Focus Group Participants (not an exhaustive list):
  - Ackerly, Mike
  - Adair, Pat
  - Adair, Tony
  - Aquina, Arturo
  - Baldwin, Thomas
  - Ballentine, Scott
  - Baum, Bill
  - Baum, Karen
  - Bauman, Jonathan
  - Bottaro, Pat
  - Bradshaw, Joe
  - Bramhall, Chris
  - Brown, Ben
  - Brown, Gary
  - Burnett, Rhonda
  - Burnett, Ron
  - Cross, Vicki
  - Daschke, Charlene
  - Davidson, Lindsay
  - Devinkl, Sam
  - Dougan, Darrel
  - Dunn, Jeff
  - Durham, Benham
  - Edemiller, Don
  - Elliott, Roger
  - Emel, Brandon
  - Epps, Haley
  - Fathollahi, Ali
  - Fish, Dustin
  - Fish, Vicke
  - Fountain, Paul
  - Fountain, Vickie
  - Francis, Jim
  - Frank, Jerame
  - Fry, John
  - Gates, Tim
  - Gaul, Brandt
  - Gorden, Terry
  - Gnau, Tim
  - Ham, Amy
  - Ham, Shane
  - Harris, Eleanor
  - Harris, Vicke
  - Hauser, Edward
  - Hemstrom, Dave
  - Hill, Dave
  - Huggins, Mark
  - Inman, Steven
  - Johnson, Jim
  - Johnson, Lois
  - Kika, Steve
  - Koch, Tim
  - Kopple, Aaran
  - Kranker, Paul
  - Kuhnkal, Mark
  - Kure, Ken
  - Kure, Linda
  - Lambie, Jim
  - Langhofer, Tom
  - Lawson, Linda
  - Ledgin, Norm
  - Malliacoat, Barbara
  - Malliacoat, Charles
  - Malliacoat, Howard
  - Maser, Michael
  - Matile, Lynne
  - McDaniel, David
  - Meier, Jason
  - Meyers, Lorna
  - Miller, Paul
  - Miller, W. R.
  - Moeller, Staci
  - Moore, Pam
  - Moore, Tom
  - Morse, Roxanne
  - Mosby, Vic
  - Mourning, Josh
  - Park, Sue
  - Parker, Ken
  - Passantino, Dante
  - Pennington, Virginia
  - Phelps, Harold
  - Pitar, Gil
  - Pibby, Norman
  - Predmore, Corby
  - Quinn, Dan
  - Read, Dave
  - Read, Joyce
  - Read, Marvin
  - Reed, Donna
  - Richardson, Dave
  - Robb, Debbie
  - Robinson, Tom
  - Rodlind, Daphne
  - Roseler, Joan
  - Rozell, Laura
  - Rudnik, Maggie
  - Ruperok, Brooke
  - Rupert, Tyler
  - Rusinger, Brian
  - Sapp, Fletcher
  - Scheumann, Brent
  - Schulz, Mark
  - Shyver, Tom
  - Siegel, Herbert
  - Smith, Matt
  - Smith, Tracy
  - Stamminger, Charles
  - Stater, Dale
  - Stuart, Bill
  - Thome, Jim
  - Thompson, Phyllis
  - Tulloch, Matt
  - Turner, Ted
  - Twedt, Colin
  - Vano, Ruth
  - Veatch, Randy
  - Wallin, S.
  - Walton, James
  - Ward, Mike
  - Ward, Nacona
  - Webb, Dave
  - Williams, Matt
  - Wilson, Mary

Other Participants:

- Johnson County Planning Commission
- Chris Ifil, Chair
- Floyd Danner, Vice-Chair
- Dennis Boldin
- E. Glenn Bonar
- Mike Fowks
- Bonnie Givens
- Katherine Hoffman
- Mark S. Huggins
- George Lund
- Roger Mason
- Rosanne Morse
- Peter Opperman
- Johnson County Board of County Commissioners
- Ed Elert, Chairman
- Jason Osterhaus, Vice-Chair
- E. Edward Peterson, 1st District
- Tim Allen, 2nd District
- Steve Kika, 3rd District
- Michael Ashcraft, 4th District
- John Toplikar, 6th District
- Johnson County Staff
- Hannes Zacharias, County Manager
- Penny Postakoff Ferguson, Deputy County Manager
- Diane Wicklund, Principal Planner, Project Manager
- Dean Palos, Director
- Paul Greedley, Deputy Director
- Jeffrey Malotte, Senior Planner
- Pamela Hayhow, Senior Planner, Project Assistant
- Karen Miller, Planner

Advisors

- Gil Pintar
- Brant Gaul
- Jody Hanson

County Commissioner Steve Kika speaks at public meeting
Community Initiatives (continued)

- Capitalize on the number of bicyclists that ride through Stilwell by providing inviting amenities and commercial services, similar to communities along the KATY bicycle/pedestrian trail in Missouri.

- Environmental Quality
  - Promote the planting of hardy flowering trees and ornamental plants to reinforce a common image for the community (e.g., host annual community festivals in celebration of a select tree’s flowering) as well as to improve the overall environment.

- Future Development
  - Support existing local businesses as well as encourage new business and new employment opportunities.

- Transportation and Accessibility
  - Establish a “Quiet Zone” along the Union Pacific tracks in residential areas.

- Public Facilities/Services and Coordination
  - Support retaining Stilwell Elementary School at its current location while improving accessibility (e.g., sidewalks, bike lanes).

- Implementation:
  - The full version of the Stilwell Community Plan is posted on the Planning, Development & Codes website at www.jocogov.org.

Community History

Brief History of Stilwell - Mount Auburn
The following is a direct excerpt from Volume II of Kansas: a cyclopaedia of state history, embracing counties, institutions, industries, towns, prominent persons, etc…. 1912

“Stilwell, one of the new towns that have grown up in the southeastern part of Johnson County, is located on the Missouri Pacific R. R. 10 miles from Olathe, the county seat. The railroad was the making of the town, which has a good public school; several churches and general stores, a blacksmith and wagon shop, implement and hardware house, lumber yard, express and telegraph facilities, and a money order post office with one rural route. In 1910 its population was 200. Being the only large town in the southeastern part of the county it is the shipping and supply point for a rich agricultural district and does considerable business. The town was formerly known as Mount Auburn, the name having been changed by act of the legislature, approved March 2, 1899.

*There is something joyful and peaceful and comforting about living in Stilwell that I have never seen or felt in any other community around here.*

- Stilwell Train Depot
- Conboy Store
- Short Line Service Station and Woltkamp Family
- Arthur E. Stilwell

The Stilwell train depot was located northeast of Main and Wall Streets. East of the Stilwell depot, across the tracks, was a fenced area with loading chutes used as a stockyard. The farmers would often use 190th Street, which was also known as Missouri or Ocheltree Road, as the path for driving their hogs and cattle to the stockyard. Southwesest of the Stilwell depot was a hotel owned by the Adam Miller family and later managed by the Burgess family.

Shortly after the train came to the area, telegraph service was established and located inside the train depot. Another means of communication arrived on June 22, 1888, when the US Post Office at Stilwell was established.

The first telephone office was located on Delaware Street, west of the railroad tracks. In 1907 the company was called the Mijo Telephone Company, referring of course to the areas it served, Miami and Johnson Counties. Because the Stilwell-Aubry community did not have a fire department, the telephone was used to communicate the location of the fire; four long rings announced the location and the need for volunteer firemen.”
**Community Characteristics**

**Planning Area Demographics**
- Population: The U.S. Census population estimate for the Planning Area in 2010 was 1,845 compared to 1,763 in 2010, for a decline of 4 percent.
- Age and Gender: The graphic below shows the population breakdown for age and gender in 2010. In 2010, 10 percent of the population was within the age range of 50-64 and 27 percent was between 0-19 years of age. The split between males and females was almost even in 2010.
- Race: In 2010, 92 percent of the population was Caucasian compared to 97 percent in 2000.
- Income: According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the average household income was $103,069 and the median household income was $79,870.
- Housing: In contrast to the population decline noted above, the estimated number of housing units increased between 2000 and 2010. In 2000, there were 640 household units compared to 698 in 2010, representing a 9 percent increase. Average household size between 2000 and 2010 increased from 2.8 persons per household in 2000 to 3.0 persons per household in 2010.

**Natural Environment**
The Planning Area may be generally characterized as very low-density development with large areas of agriculture and open spaces.
Two watersheds encompass the Planning Area - Wolf Creek watershed on the west and Camp Branch Creek watershed on the east. A tributary of Wolf Creek is located on the north just west of the Aubry Cemetery on 191st Street. The Camp Branch Creek tributary is located generally east of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks between 191st and 207th Streets. The lands adjacent to these tributaries are designated as flood plain, where development is discouraged.

**Community Initiatives**
The following list of Community Initiatives was developed during the preparation of the preceding Goals and Objectives. Because these initiatives are generally beyond the normal realm of government services, responsibility for implementation will be up to Stilwell’s residents, businesses, and property owners. Some of these initiatives, however, might be implemented jointly through public/private sector partnerships or support by the County and community organizations working together.

### Community Heritage
- Promote Stilwell’s heritage as essential to maintaining the community’s rural small town identity as well as to its sense of pride and connection to its past.
- Survey important historic and cultural features to identify structures or locations important to the community and to preserve residences. The Johnson County Museum may provide assistance for conducting a survey.
- Develop a sample historic-themed village architectural style pamphlet for property owners to consider when remodeling or building new structures.
- Establish a venue or location (e.g., future village green) to commemorate the community’s history, e.g., historical markers, public displays, etc.

### Sense of Community
- Encourage development of agritourism businesses such as orchards, vineyards, pumpkin patches, etc., that reflect the community’s rural traditions and character and that attract visitors to the area.
- Encourage local civic organizations to bring neighbors together through community social, cultural, and historic events (e.g., Stilwell Parade).
- Create a Stilwell logo or “brand” that can be used throughout the area on signs, banners, newsletters, websites, etc.
- Support redevelopment of the original Stilwell School into a community center or public gathering space.

### Public Gathering Places - Parks, Greenways, Paths, and Recreation
- Continue collaboration between the County Park and Recreation District and the Stilwell Community Organization to develop parkland at 207th Street, east of Metcalf Avenue and create other “pocket parks” or trails in this area as well.
- Increase awareness of Stilwell’s old downtown through the addition of new directional signs and markers.
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Community Goals and Objectives (continued)

- Encourage the inclusion of conserva-
  tion or open space areas as part of
  new development, particularly, non-
  residential development.
- Minimize stormwater run-off by utiliz-
  ing natural drainage systems and con-
  tinue to restrict development in flood
  prone areas.
- Develop "general" voluntary design
  guidelines, including lighting and land-
  scaping, for non-residential develop-
  ment to establish a common frame of
  reference for future and current devel-
  opments.
- Restrict parking for future non-
  residential development to the rear or
  sides of the new building as well as
  provide sufficient screening from adja-
  cent residential uses. Consider lower-
  ing parking requirements; particularly
  in the downtown area.
- Explore opportunities for public trans-
  portation (e.g., Johnson County
  Transit Local Link or Commuter Ex-
  press) to serve Stilwell as well as pro-
  mote use of the 151st Street and Anti-
  och Road Park and Ride facility. Also,
  explore the potential for a future Park
  and Ride facility in Stilwell for carpool-
  ing and possibly for a future Stilwell
  JO route, if feasible.
- Address traffic safety (e.g., pedestri-
  an, bicycles, railroad crossing) on
  190th Street, while minimizing ad-
  verse impacts on surrounding existing
  development including Stilwell Ele-
  mentary School.
- Centralize future community facili-
  ties to create a "civic center" or area
  that would include other commu-
  nity facilities such as a post office,
  after-school facilities, a library, or a
  community center.
- Plan and design the future installation
  of public utilities, including sanitary
  sewers, to limit adverse impacts on
  existing development.
- Identify locations with utility services
  deficiencies (e.g., water pressure,
  power, etc.) and work with the utility
  providers to upgrade these services.
- Increase communication and coordi-
  nation with surrounding jurisdictions
  to ensure development is coordinated,
  orderly, efficient, and compatible.

Goal: Future Development
Undeveloped land provides a wide range of opportunities for new development including a balanced mix of housing types, shopping, entertainment, em-
ployment, and new community facili-
ties, and differing land uses.
Objectives:
- Support a diversity of housing types
  with a wide range of prices.
- Review applicable zoning and building
  codes to identify possible regulation
  changes that might facilitate new res-
 idential development.
- Explore establishing new zoning regu-
  lations that will allow for mixed
  use development in the unincorpo-
  rated area.
- If sanitary sewers become available,
  assure that any new medium density
  development is appropriately located
  and compatible with adjacent existing
  development.
- Encourage infill development of va-
cant and underutilized lots; particularly
  in old downtown Stilwell.
- Assure harmonious transitions be-
  tween new and existing development
  and differing land uses.
- Explore new zoning and building
  regulations that will allow for mix-
  used development within the unincor-
  porated area.
- If sanitary sewers become available,
  assure that any new medium density
  development is appropriately located
  and compatible with adjacent existing
  development.
- Encourage infill development of va-
cant and underutilized lots; particularly
  in old downtown Stilwell.

Government Jurisdictions
The entire Planning Area is within the unincorporated area of
Johnson County. The only shared municipal border of the
Stilwell Planning Area is with the City of Overland Park on the
west side of U.S. Highway 69. The Blue Valley School District
serves most of Aubur Hill Township, including Stilwell.
Blue Valley Plan Future Land Use Map - No Changes

For the purpose of this planning project, no changes were made to the goals, objectives, or to the land uses recommended in the Blue Valley Plan “Future Land Use Map.” The Blue Valley Plan was originally made an amendment to the County’s Comprehensive Plan in 1996 and as shown below, encompasses the Planning Area.

The recommendation for no change is based upon an evaluation of the information collected for this Plan; particularly an assessment of the unlikely potential that sanitary sewers will reach the Planning Area within the 20-year project time horizon. Also, although substantial, the impact of continuing development pressures from the north, east, or west are not anticipated to significantly alter the existing on-going fragmented, low-density, and low-intensity development pattern that has occurred within the Planning Area over the past two decades. For these reasons, the Blue Valley Plan goals, objectives, and the future land use recommendations for the Stilwell Community Plan remain appropriate for the Planning Area and have not been modified.

Stilwell Community Plan

Future Streamway Park and Greenway Linkages

Streamway park development, also referred to as greenway linkages, are open spaces set aside for public use. Greenway linkages are generally wide enough to accommodate pedestrian, bike, and sometimes even equestrian trails. Typically, greenway linkages are located along or within existing floodplain areas or existing public right-of-way.

As noted in the preceding Natural Environment section, the Planning Area has two major drainage ways: Camp Branch and Wolf Creek. Camp Branch extends between the future Stilwell Community Park on the north side 207th Street east of Metcalf Avenue and property donated for a future park on the north at 163rd Street and Mission Road. A greenway linkage along the floodplain would connect the two future parks through the Planning Area. Potential future greenway linkages are shown along the two areas where Wolf Creek enters the Planning Area. These linkages, along with linkages along U.S. Highway 69, would tie the Planning Area with the Overland Park Arboretum, Heritage Park, the County’s Streamway Park System, the greenway system in Leawood, and the Blue River Parkway.

Greenway Linkages Map

Future Transportation

The County will continue to utilize the Comprehensive Arterial Road Network Plan (CARNP) adopted in 1999 as its guide for future road improvements within the Planning Area. CARNP designates 199th Street as a Type III (4-lane), Metcalf Avenue as a Type II (2-lane), and Nall Avenue as a Type I (2-lane). All of the other arterial or section line roads within the Planning Area are designated as Type I (2-lane) routes.

CARNP Conceptual Road Design

The following list of Goals and Objectives align with the Goals, Policies, and Action Steps contained in the County’s Comprehensive Plan. Responsibility for implementation of these Goals and Objectives is shared by the County and the Stilwell Community.

Goal: Historic Small Town Character and Sense of Community Stilwell residents are proud of their community and share a strong sense of commitment to enhancing as well as preserving its rural traditions and small town character.

Objectives:

- Encourage new development, particularly nonresidential structures and uses, to be appropriately scaled and designed to be compatible with and embrace the community’s character.
- Establish guidelines to restrict excessive lighting, particularly on new nonresidential development. Undertake voluntary efforts to encourage businesses and residents to limit outdoor lighting to be sufficient for safety and promote the use of new lighting technologies to reduce glare, e.g., LED when and if this lighting option becomes available.
- Encourage multigenerational development that supports residents in all stages of their lives and particularly support efforts to enable the elderly to “age in place” with access to essential services (e.g., groceries, medical, and health services).
- Support the establishment of a new centrally located and easily accessible public gathering place like a village green to provide a common space, e.g., outdoor stage, picnic shelters, etc., for community events and enjoyment as well as a place of civic pride.

Goal: Environmental Quality Protection of the natural environment is essential to maintaining a balance between the natural and built environments, as well as, maintaining Stilwell’s rural small town character.

Objectives:

- Increase efforts to improve property maintenance; particularly with absentee property owners and initiate a campaign to promote a “litter-free” community.
- Develop a Camp Branch Creek bicycle and pedestrian greenway and possibly horse trail to connect with the recently acquired parkland at 17th Street and Mission Road as recommended in the Johnson County Rural Comprehensive Plan. Access to these improvements should be safe and convenient and could be developed through public/private partnerships.
- Identify utility corridors and unused land near stream corridors suitable for future trails.
- Develop a future bicycle and pedestrian trail connection to the Overland Park Arboretum.

Goal: Public Gathering Places - Parks, Greenways, Paths, and Recreation Parks, greenways, paths, and recreational facilities are essential public amenities for Stilwell’s residents as well as providing opportunities to meet and interact.

Objectives:

- Encourage redevelopment and adaptive reuse of older structures by reviewing applicable zoning and building codes to identify possible regulation changes that might facilitate redevelopment, particularly within old downtown Stilwell.
- Increase opportunities for residents to meet and interact, including the addition of sidewalks or safe walking areas.
- Develop a future bicycle and pedestrian trail connection to the Overland Park Arboretum.
- Integrate new development with the natural environment, minimizing adverse impacts while conserving open spaces.