



Leawood, Missouri

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# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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**ADOPTED** June XX, 2025



## Contents

ABOUT THE PLAN .....	3
WHAT IS A .....	4
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN? .....	4
PLANNING PROCESS .....	5
REGIONAL SETTING .....	6
Community Profile .....	9
VISION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES .....	13
VISION STATEMENT .....	14
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES .....	15
Commercial and Industrial Areas .....	16
Transportation and Mobility .....	16
Parks, Open Space, and Community Facilities .....	17
FUTURE LAND USE .....	19
LAND USE CATEGORIES .....	20
Commercial .....	21
Agricultural .....	21
DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER AND DESIGN .....	23
TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY .....	25
ROADS .....	26
CURRENT ROAD CONDITIONS .....	27
COMMUNITY FACILITIES, PARKS, AND OPEN SPACE .....	28
COMMUNITY FACILITIES .....	30
Schools .....	31
Library .....	33
PARKS AND OPEN SPACE .....	34
Trails .....	35
IMPLEMENTATION .....	37
HOW TO USE THE PLAN .....	38
Funding .....	40



## CHAPTER

# 1

# ABOUT THE PLAN

The Village of Leawood Comprehensive Plan serves as a foundation for decision-making and is intended to help guide the Village over the next several years as it works to implement the community's vision. This document represents the culmination of a planning process and community input and serves as the Village's primary policy guide for growth and development, residential areas, commercial and industrial planning, transportation, community facilities, and parks and open spaces.

Reflecting the community's commitment to having great neighborhoods, a strong local economy, and excellent public facilities and services, the Village prioritizes being a charming, welcoming, and livable community, providing a high quality of life and unique sense of place for its residents.

The Village's previous comprehensive plan was adopted in 2015, and although it has served the community well, the plan no longer adequately serves as a guide for the Village. The new Village of Leawood Comprehensive Plan will help ensure Village officials have a strong foundation and guidance to work with residents, businesses, and stakeholders to lead the community into the future.



## **WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?**

The Comprehensive Plan is a document designed to guide and inform the long-range future decision-making of a community, primarily for matters relating to land use, growth, and development. A comprehensive plan provides a unified future vision along with policies, goals, and recommendations necessary to achieve that vision. The Comprehensive Plan is long-range and intended to plan for a 10- to 20-year horizon. It is a tool for the community to help coordinate efforts and direct how a community grows over time.

### ***Purpose and Authority***

The Comprehensive Plan is the Village's official policy document for future growth and development. Authorized by Illinois State Law (65 ILCS 5/11-12-5), it informs local decisions regarding land use, residential areas, commercial and industrial areas, community facilities, and parks and open space. It acts as the Village's "roadmap" or "blueprint" to a better future.

### ***Using the Comprehensive Plan***

The Village of Leawood Comprehensive Plan serves several important functions for the Village and should be used on a regular basis by Village officials, staff, developers, and other stakeholders. The Comprehensive Plan serves the following key functions:

### ***Communicates the Village's Vision***

The Plan is a powerful statement of the community's vision for how it should grow and evolve over the coming years. The Plan identifies the Village's land use and development priorities and charts a path for long-term growth.

### ***Informs Development Proposals***

The Plan is a long-term guide by which to measure public and private proposals that affect the physical, social, and economic environment of the community. The Plan guides and assists in the evaluation of

public and private development proposals and helps ensure that proposed development supports the Village's long-term objectives.

### ***Provides a Foundation for the Regulatory Framework***

The Plan is a foundation for zoning regulations, the official zoning map, and other decisions guided by these regulations. Zoning and development regulation can be an effective implementation tool for helping to realize the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

### ***Coordinates Initiatives***

The Plan informs and coordinates planning initiatives that affect the Village at the local, county, and regional levels. The Plan may aid and inform efforts related to housing, transportation, trails, natural resources, economic development, and recreation.

### ***Supports CIF and Budgeting***

The Plan informs the development of the Village's Capital Improvement Fund and budgeting processes by helping to establish priority expenditures and sequence capital improvement programming.

### ***Identifies Future Studies***

The Plan establishes a path forward but cannot address every issue faced by the Village in sufficient detail. The plan can help identify additional studies and future action steps that may be needed to address specific needs.

### ***Informs and Educates***

The Plan is a valuable source of information for the Village Board, local organizations, businesses, and residents. This broad spectrum of interests should use the Plan to inform the community and provide important information that can assist with future initiatives. The Plan is also an effective marketing tool that can be used to promote the community and highlight opportunities for investment



## PLANNING PROCESS

The Village of Leawood Comprehensive Plan is the product of a multi-phased planning process that involved residents, business owners, stakeholders, Village staff, and the consulting team. The process included the following:

### ***Project Initiation/Issues and Opportunities***

The planning process was initiated with community engagement with the Village officials, residents, and stakeholders to identify issues, opportunities, and priorities regarding a wide range of issues, influences, and conditions.

### ***Existing Conditions Assessment (including review of existing plans and ordinances)***

This step included the preparation of the Existing Conditions Assessment. It was based on information provided by the Village, feedback from community outreach, data sources, field reconnaissance, and a review of the Village's past plans, studies, and ordinances.

### ***Preliminary Recommendations Framework***

This step of the planning process included the development of preliminary recommendations and framework for the plan.

### ***Draft Plan***

This step included the draft, review, and discussion of the Draft Plan with the community – residents, officials, and stakeholders.

### ***Final Plan Documents and Adoption***

A final version of the Comprehensive Plan document was prepared for local review, consideration, and adoption, based on feedback from the community.



## Summary of Public Input

A summary of input received during the planning process is outlined below. At the meetings, participants stated:

- **Preserving Leawood's rural and residential character – The community values open spaces and low-density housing while resisting overdevelopment.**
- **Enhancing infrastructure – Road maintenance, improved drainage, and updated utilities were identified as critical needs.**
- **Supporting small businesses – Residents favor limited commercial growth that provides essential services without disrupting the rural setting**
- **They would like improved sidewalks on both sides of the street to improve walkability and bikeability.**
- **They would like new green space wherever possible which would help improve the Village's public image.**

## REGIONAL SETTING

### *The Introduction*

Nestled in the heart of north-central Newton County, Missouri, the Village of Leawood is a unique residential community that blends small-town charm with convenient access to urban amenities. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Leawood is home to 620 residents, with a population density of 502.84 people per square mile (United States Census Bureau, 2021). Despite experiencing a 9.1% population decline since 2010, Leawood remains a desirable place to live due to its scenic landscapes, strong community ties, and proximity to Joplin.



Spanning 747 acres, the village consists of 317 acres of residential land, reflecting its predominantly suburban character, and 303 acres dedicated to agriculture, preserving the area's rural heritage (Truman Coordinating Council, 2014). Despite its peaceful setting, Leawood benefits from a strategic location near Joplin, a regional economic hub, and major transportation arteries such as Interstate 44, ensuring residents can easily access employment, education, and recreational opportunities throughout the region.

### *A Community Built on Tradition and Strong Governance*

Leawood was officially incorporated in 1956 to maintain its distinct identity and protect its rural character from urban encroachment (Truman Coordinating Council, 2014). The village is governed by a five-member Board of Trustees, which oversees development, municipal services, and long-term strategic planning. As part of Shoal Creek Township and Missouri's 7th U.S. Congressional District, Leawood actively engages in county and state-level initiatives that promote responsible growth while preserving its heritage (State of Missouri, 2023).

### *A High Quality of Life and a Commitment to Preservation*

The Village of Leawood offers a high standard of living with stable housing, a strong community, and access to regional amenities. The median household income is \$67,438, exceeding Missouri's \$57,409 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). Homeownership is 69.5%, fostering stability and neighborhood cohesion. The median home value is \$185,200, reflecting steady appreciation.

Residents enjoy a safe, family-friendly environment with low crime rates. The Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center provides hiking, wildlife observation, and environmental education. While Leawood lacks commercial areas, proximity to Joplin ensures easy access to services. The village remains committed to preserving its character, maintaining infrastructure, and enhancing quality of life.

### *Planning for the Future: Growth, Infrastructure, and Sustainability*

As Leawood continues to evolve, village leadership remains dedicated to thoughtful, sustainable planning that balances progress with preservation. Key priorities for the future include:

- Infrastructure Improvements – Maintaining and upgrading roads, utilities, parks, sidewalks, and public services to accommodate future needs.
- Community Engagement – Enhancing communication between residents and local government through town hall meetings, online platforms, and community events.
- Economic & Residential Growth – Supporting responsible residential expansion while maintaining the village's open spaces and agricultural land.

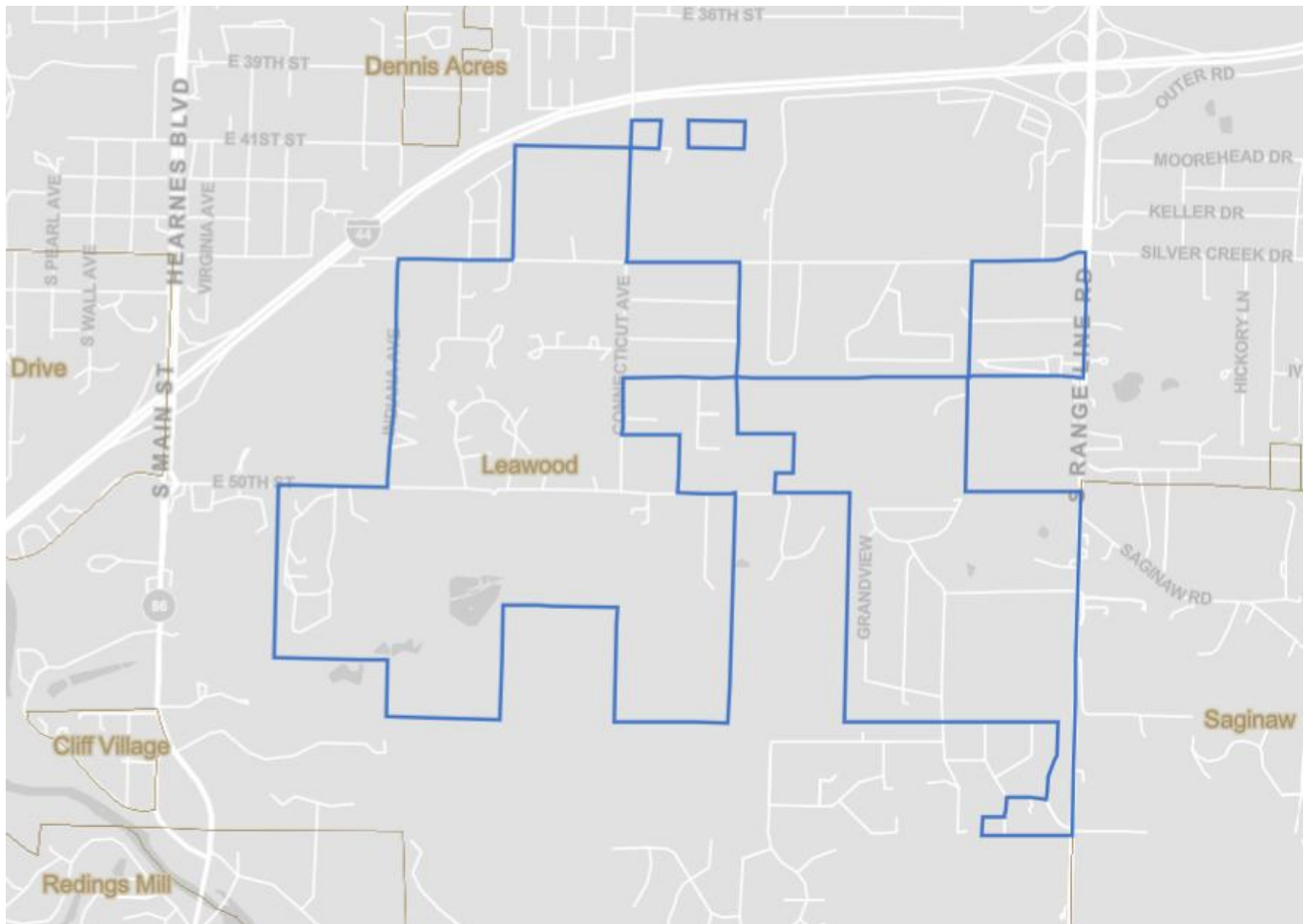
- Environmental Stewardship – Encouraging conservation efforts and smart growth strategies that protect natural resources and preserve the village’s rural charm.

With a strong governance framework, a dedicated community, and a clear vision for the future, the Village of Leawood is well-positioned to maintain its unique identity while adapting to the opportunities and challenges of regional growth. Residents can look forward to a community that remains vibrant, sustainable, and deeply connected to its historical roots for generations to come.



Missouri

# Village of Leawood



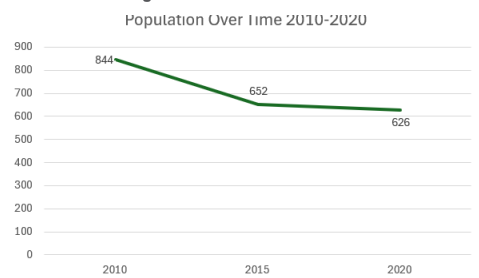
## Community Profile

The Village of Leawood, Missouri, is a small, residential community in north-central Newton County. Incorporated in 1956, it was founded to preserve its character and prevent annexation by nearby municipalities. Unlike many expanding cities, Leawood remains a low-density, landlocked village, prioritizing a peaceful, rural atmosphere over commercial development.

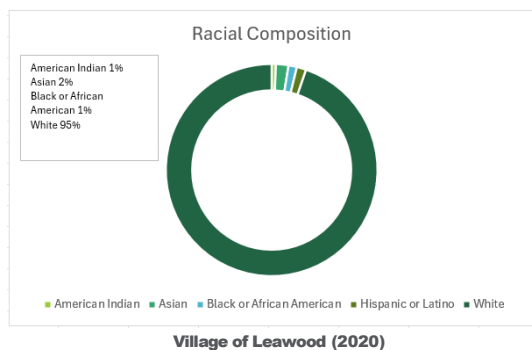
According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the Village of Leawood has 620 residents, marking a 9.1% decline from 2010. The median age is 45.3, reflecting an aging population, and 69.5% of homes are owner-occupied, reinforcing neighborhood stability. The median household income is \$67,438, surpassing Missouri's \$57,409, while the median home value is \$185,200 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021).

The Village of Leawood's residential-based economy has few businesses, with most residents commuting to Joplin for employment. The village provides access to outdoor recreation, including the Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center, promoting environmental appreciation. With a strong sense of community and a commitment to preservation, the Village of Leawood remains a stable, desirable place to live.

**Population Over Time**  
Village of Leawood 2010-2020



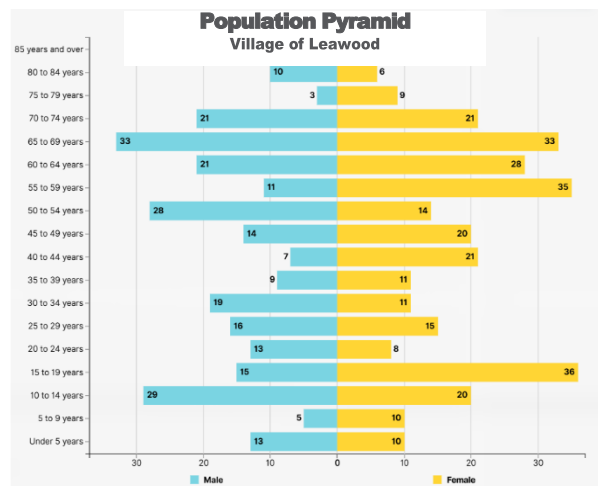
**Racial Composition**



Sources: US Census Bureau 2020 Decennial Census

## Population

Leawood's population has steadily declined over the past decades. The village had 904 residents in 2000, dropping 24.5% to 682 in 2010, and further declining 9.1% to 626 in 2020 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). Limited land availability and an aging population contribute to this trend, reinforcing Leawood's identity as a stable, landlocked residential community.



Sources: [US Census Bureau 2020 Decennial Census](#)

## Age

The Village of Leawood's median age is 45.3, higher than Missouri's 38.6 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). The median age increased by 7.5 years from 2000 to 2020 and by 4.2 years between 2010 and 2020. The largest age group is 45 to 64, reflecting an aging population. The 65+ age group saw a 56.8% increase from 2010 to 2020, highlighting demographic shifts toward older residents.

## Race and Ethnicity

Leawood's racial composition remains predominantly White (95.2%), reflecting trends in many small Missouri communities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). Other racial groups include Native American (1.5%), Asian (1.3%), and individuals identifying as two or more races (2.0%). Unlike more diverse urban areas, Leawood's demographic profile has remained relatively stable over time, with limited minority population growth.

## Housing

Leawood has 277 housing units, reflecting a 4.5% decrease since 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). The occupancy rate remains high at 95.9%, indicating a stable housing market. 69.5% of homes are owner-occupied, making Leawood a predominantly homeowner-driven community. The 30.5% renter-occupied share is lower than Missouri's average, reinforcing Leawood's long-term residential character.

## Housing Type

Most housing units in Leawood are single-family detached homes, reinforcing the village's low-density residential character. Nearly all housing units fall into this category, with very few multifamily units. Only 3.1% of housing in Leawood is multifamily, significantly lower than Missouri's state average, which includes more diverse housing options. This composition aligns with Leawood's long-standing commitment to preserving a quiet, residential atmosphere.

## Housing Value

Leawood's median home value was \$185,200 in 2020, lower than Missouri's \$194,000 average (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). From 2010 to 2020, home values declined 8.6%, likely due to market shifts and limited new development. Most homes fall within the \$200,000 - \$299,999 range (32.5%), reflecting a stable yet aging housing market.

## Housing Age

The majority of Leawood's housing stock was built before 1980, reflecting the village's long-established residential nature. Nearly 60% of homes were constructed between 1960 and 1979, with slower development in later decades. This stability fosters a strong sense of community, with long-term homeowners maintaining properties and preserving Leawood's unique character. From 1980 to 1999, about 25% of homes were built, while post-2000 construction remains minimal due to limited expansion opportunities, ensuring Leawood

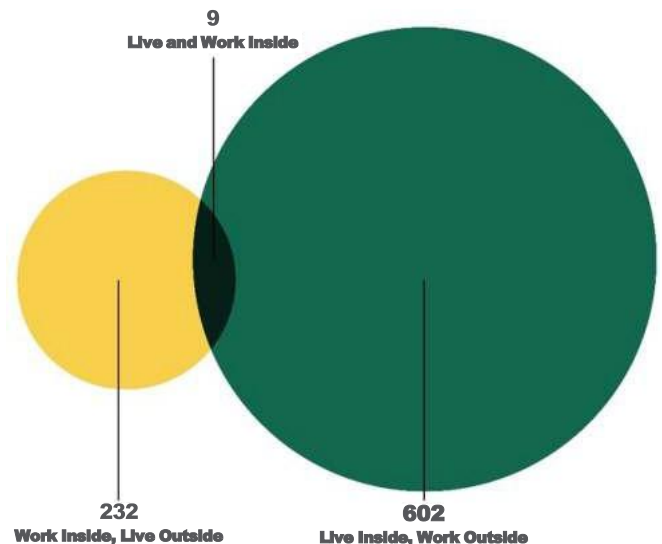
retains its small-town appeal and well-maintained neighborhoods.

## Employment

Leawood reported 241 jobs in 2020, a 91.2% increase over the past decade (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). Growth is primarily due to small business expansion, though the village remains residential-focused. The Retail Trade sector employs the most workers, followed by Educational Services and Construction, with most residents commuting to Joplin for employment.

## Inflow/Outflow

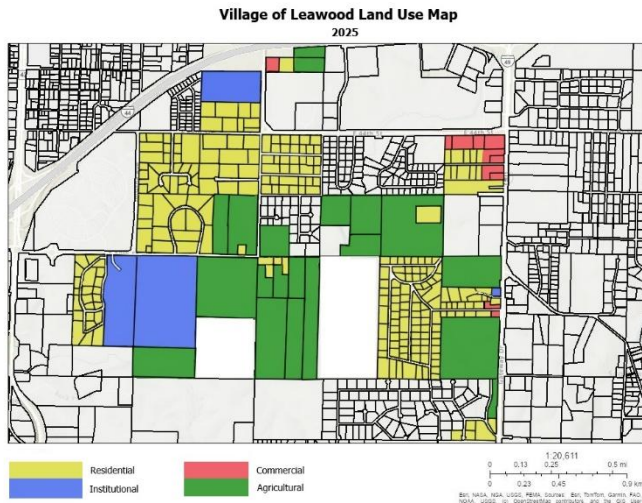
According to 2020 U.S. Census employment estimates, 602 Leawood residents work outside the village, while 9 individuals both live and work in Leawood. Additionally, 232 individuals work in Leawood but live elsewhere. Since 2009, the number of residents commuting out increased by 56%.





## Existing Land Use

Existing land use has been inventoried based on research conducted in 2022. Parcels within the Village have been categorized into the following land use classifications.



### ***Agriculture***

Agriculture includes land that is actively being used to produce crops and farming-related activities. Farmhouses and low-density, single-family detached homes within the same parcel utilized for agricultural production are also included in this land use category. This use is found in the primarily south of 50th street.

### ***Public Open Space***

This land use includes parks that provide both active and passive recreation options as well as open space areas.

### ***Non-public Open Space***

This land use includes open space that can only be accessed by paying to use services as well as private parks in planned subdivisions. In the Village, Non-public Open Space is only located within the Northbrook Sports Club.

### ***Utility/Right-Of-Way***

The Utility/Right-Of-Way designation includes properties that accommodate transportation systems, utilities, municipal infrastructure, and Village operations not generally accessible to the public.

## CHAPTER

# 2

# VISION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

*The Vision Statement* reflects the notion of continuing and increasing Village of Leawood's distinct and desirable status in the region for the people who live or work in the Village, and for those who love to visit. The Vision Statement describes what the Village of Leawood will achieve in the future, following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. Looking ahead, the community's vision incorporates central ideas, aspirations, and themes generated during the community outreach process and provides a guiding framework for the Plan.

Places such as inviting residential areas and accessible open spaces are what make the Village great today. The Vision Statement articulates how these aspects of Village of Leawood will continue in the future.





## VISION STATEMENT

The Village of Leawood is a quiet, welcoming residential community with well-maintained neighborhoods, strong homeownership, and access to parks and natural spaces. Its efficient roadways and proximity to Joplin provide convenience while preserving its small-town charm. Leawood remains a highly desirable place to live, offering a strong sense of community and high quality of life. While limited in expansion, the village remains committed to preserving its identity, supporting small businesses, and maintaining infrastructure to enhance its residential appeal and character.

### *Neighborhoods & Housing*

The Village of Leawood will continue to be known for its well-maintained neighborhoods and high-quality housing. The village remains committed to meeting the needs of current and future residents by ensuring a range of housing options for individuals at all stages of life. While growth is limited, Leawood will focus on preserving its strong residential character, maintaining affordability, and supporting neighborhood stability.

### *Commercial & Industrial Areas*

The Village of Leawood features a small but essential mix of businesses that serve local residents and surrounding communities. While primarily residential,

the village supports conveniently located shops and services, primarily along major roadways. Pedestrian-friendly connections ensure safe access. Commercial properties reflect Leawood’s small-town charm, with well-maintained buildings and attractive landscaping that enhances the village’s character.

### *Transportation and Mobility*

The Village of Leawood is a connected and easily navigable community that safely accommodates drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists to allow residents of all abilities to easily navigate the community.

### *Community Facilities, Parks, and Open Space*

The Village of Leawood will continue to be an amenity-rich community with responsive local services and facilities. By prioritizing green space, the Village of Leawood has become a more livable, active, and healthy community, and responsible stewards of the natural environment. Expanded and connected local trails ensure convenient access to local recreation and open spaces, and coordination with regional agencies and neighboring communities ensure regional trail connectivity and access.



## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Village of Village of Leawood Comprehensive Plan looks toward the coming decades and expresses what the Village desires to become in the future. This section presents the Plan's goals which outline how the Village can achieve its desired outcomes. The goals and objectives form the framework for planning recommendations, policies, future projects, and actions.

### **Goals**

Goals describe desired end situations toward which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad and long-range. They represent an end to be sought, although they may never actually be fully attained.

### **Objectives**

Objectives describe more specific actions that should be undertaken by the Village to advance toward the overall goals. They provide more precise and measurable guidelines for planning action. Together, the goals and objectives provide specific direction and serve as a guide for the evaluation of development proposals and land use alternatives. Goals and Objectives have been established for:

- ▶ Residential Areas
- ▶ Commercial and Industrial Areas

- ▶ Transportation and Mobility
- ▶ Parks, Open Space and Community Facilities

### ***Residential Areas***

#### ***Goal***

Protect and enhance the quality of existing neighborhoods.

#### ***Objectives***

- ▶ Support Village of Leawood's continued vision as a primarily single-family detached and attached residential community by promoting the construction of new homes in neighborhood areas where possible and the rehabilitation and expansion of existing homes to increase their value and better meet the needs of residents.
- ▶ Consider the construction of appropriately scaled multi-family or mixed-use development near the Village's commercial areas to offer more housing options.
- ▶ Continue to maintain the appearance and character of established neighborhoods through streetscape enhancements, pedestrian mobility enhancements, and enforcement of the Village codes and ordinances.



## Commercial and Industrial Areas

### **Goal**

Maintain and enhance the Village's commercial and industrial areas along Rangeline as a vibrant and attractive district that serves the day-to-day needs of residents, draws customers from neighboring communities and the greater region, and provides enhanced employment opportunities.

### **Objectives**

- ▶ Attract a more diverse range of shops and restaurants to strengthen the tax base, to make the Village of Leawood more unique, and give residents a greater variety of commercial/retail options.
- ▶ Support the development of new commercial buildings on vacant parcels along 50th and Rangeline
- ▶ Prioritize pedestrian and bicycle access and mobility within the commercial areas through better on-site design, additional facilities and amenities, and better direct connections to public sidewalks.
- ▶ Support development and expansion of light-industrial businesses in the area of Rangline Rd
- ▶ Ensure commercial and industrial development is attractive when viewed from public streets, with quality building design and materials, extensive landscaping, appropriate screening of outdoor storage areas and activity, and buffering/screening from adjacent residential areas.

## Transportation and Mobility

### **Goal**

Provide a safe and efficient road network, sidewalk and trail system, and access to transit in a manner that meets the needs of all users.

### **Objectives**

- ▶ Enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety by expanding sidewalk connectivity, adding street furniture, and improving landscaping to create a welcoming streetscape.
- ▶ Work with MoDOT and Newton County to enhance road conditions, crosswalk safety, and intersection improvements, particularly along 44th Street and Range Line Road.
- ▶ Improve traffic flow and safety by minimizing unnecessary access points, improving cross-access between adjacent properties, and addressing speed limit inconsistencies.
- ▶ Develop a formalized Capital Improvements Plan to ensure sustained investment in roads, sidewalks, and emergency access
- ▶ Increase community engagement by implementing QR codes, porch meetings, and digital outreach to encourage resident participation in infrastructure planning.





## Parks, Open Space, and Community Facilities

The Joplin Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the City's recreational programs and maintains 22 City-owned parks and greenways. Other facilities include Memorial Hall, 3 aquatic centers, 4 cemeteries, Joe Becker Stadium, the Joplin Athletic Complex, and Schifferdecker Golf Course

- ▶ Support improvements to existing green spaces within Leawood, maintaining and modernizing facilities to meet changing community needs.
- ▶ Protect and enhance natural areas, including water features, wetlands, and open spaces, preserving their role as vital habitats and community amenities.
- ▶ Enhance pedestrian and bicycle connectivity by improving trail access to regional parks and conservation areas, such as Wildcat Glades and Joplin's greenway network.
- ▶ Explore opportunities to repurpose underutilized open spaces, such as detention areas, into small community parks or gathering spaces.
- ▶ Work with Newton County and local emergency services to ensure that public safety infrastructure supports future development while maintaining quick access to emergency response services.







## CHAPTER

# 3

# FUTURE LAND USE

This section outlines the preferred land use for the Village of Leawood, ensuring balanced growth while preserving its predominantly residential character. Land use planning will guide development review, zoning amendments, and long-term community planning.

Leawood is divided into three primary land use areas:

**Residential Areas** – Comprising 317 acres, these neighborhoods are the foundation of Leawood's identity, maintaining low-density, single-family homes.

**Commercial Corridors** – Limited commercial development exists along Range Line Road and 44th Street, supporting local services.

**Agricultural & Open Space** – Approximately 303 acres remain agricultural or undeveloped, preserving the village's rural appeal.

Mercy Hospital's construction near Leawood has increased regional traffic, impacting future development. However, the village remains committed to preserving open spaces and residential stability. The Land Use Plan Map serves as a guide for future zoning and infrastructure decisions.





## LAND USE CATEGORIES

As a cornerstone of the Comprehensive Plan, the Land Use Plan is a general guide for growth and development within the Village of Leawood. Parcels within the Village have been assigned nine general land use categories to serve as the basis for development review and approval, as well as for future zoning amendments.

### *Single-Family Detached*

Single-family detached residential consists of single-family homes on an individual lot. These single-family homes define much of the Village's residential neighborhoods within the Focus Area.

## What is Land Use Planning?

Land use planning allows communities to consider the impacts of land use decisions on immediate and future growth and development. Local governments create land use plans to respond to these potential impacts and guide desired development. The Village of Leawood's Land Use Plan evaluates what the Village will look like if the Comprehensive Plan's land policies, implemented to reach the desired future, are successful.





## Commercial

Commercial uses include retail, restaurant, office, and services uses geared toward serving the daily needs of residents as well as providing for the shopping, dining, and service needs of people within the Village, passing through the Village, or visitors coming from surrounding communities.

## Agricultural

Approximately 303 acres remain agricultural or undeveloped, preserving the village's rural appeal. Agricultural land supports livestock, crop cultivation, and conservation areas, maintaining Leawood's open space character and environmental quality





### **Public Open Space**

Natural open spaces, parks, and recreation areas such as Union Square Park and the Cranberry Lake Natural Area are included in this land use designation. These areas contribute to Village of Leawood's residential areas and overall community character and should be preserved and enhanced for outdoor use and enjoyment.

### **Non-Public Open Space**

This designation supports land that is privately owned and used for sporting and recreational activities, with complimentary/accessory facilities or leisure facilities. This designation outdoor spaces within residential neighborhoods.

### **Utility/Right-of-Way**

Utility properties support local infrastructure and provide easements for the transmission of gas, electricity, water, and sewer. Transportation rights-of-way, like the Liberty Utilities and ATAT help support transportation and Broadband goals.

## **Land Use and Zoning**

Zoning regulations are the legal tool used to implement the Land Use Plan. Zoning addresses physical characteristics of development such as height, bulk, density, and lot coverage. It also defines allowable uses within zoning districts. Zoning regulations should align with the Land Use Plan to achieve the desired land use and development patterns within a community.

### **RIGHT OF WAY & EASEMENTS**



The **public right of way** is property dedicated to the city for public infrastructure like roadways, storm sewers, sidewalks and streetlights. The state also allows utility providers to use the public right of way for their facilities.

**Utility easements\*** are areas of a property dedicated for utilities to deliver services such as electricity, gas, water, sanitary sewer, telephone, internet and cable.

The land belongs to the homeowner, but utilities can access easements to perform routine maintenance, construct improvement projects and repair utility lines during emergencies.

\*Not all properties have utility easements in the same location. The ones included in this illustration likely do not reflect where the ones on your property may be. All easements should be shown on the title work and plot plan provided at the time your property was purchased.

## DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER AND DESIGN

The Village of Leawood is known for its small-town charm, appeal, and rural character. These attributes are desirable and help to establish the community's overall identity and sense of place, distinguishing the Village from other nearby communities. Welcoming neighborhoods and open spaces set the tone for the Village.

Development should utilize traditional high-quality building materials such as masonry, stone, and wood, and architectural styles should reflect a more residential scaled aesthetic, including such elements as pitched roofs, dormers, façade detail and articulation, and earth tones. Rather than dictate specific design guidelines, the Village should work with developers to ensure future development is reflective of and reinforces Village of Leawood's desired character and aesthetic.

Example images from are provided below to help guide developers, Village officials, and other decision-makers when considering and evaluating future development proposals.

### Commercial Character

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## Residential Character

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## Industrial Character

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## CHAPTER

# 4

# TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

The Village of Leawood is supported by an existing roadway network that facilitates local and regional access. Range Line Road, 44th Street, and 50th Street serve as the village's primary corridors, connecting Leawood to Joplin and nearby communities. While Leawood does not have direct public transit access, Joplin's Metro Area Public Transit System (MAPS) provides transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in Leawood is limited but expanding, with sidewalks present in residential neighborhoods and opportunities to connect to Wildcat Glades trails and Joplin's Park system. Strategic improvements to Leawood's transportation system will focus on enhancing road safety, improving pedestrian access, and ensuring long-term infrastructure maintenance.





## ROADS

Roads are divided into functional classifications that describe the character of the service intended for the roadway and degrees of travel, access, and overall mobility. The existing road network provides safe and efficient travel throughout the Village with connections to the regional network.

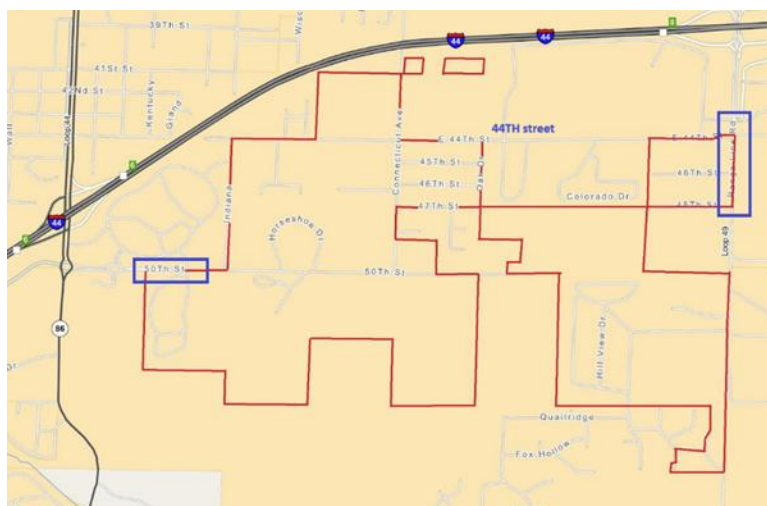
### **Functional Classification**

The roadway network in Village of Leawood consists of the following classifications.

▶ Arterial – High-capacity thoroughfares that deliver traffic from local roads to highways. Arterial roads in Village of Leawood include the following:

- ▷ 50th street
- ▷ Connecticut
- ▷ 44th street

▶ Local – Low-capacity and low-speed roads that are primarily used throughout residential areas.



### **Jurisdictional Cooperation**

Roadway jurisdictional responsibility in Leawood is determined by Missouri state statutes. Roads within the village fall under the jurisdiction of MoDOT, Newton County, or the Village of Leawood. Key corridors such as Range Line Road and 44th Street require ongoing coordination with MoDOT and county officials to ensure high levels of safety, efficiency, and long-term maintenance.





## CURRENT ROAD CONDITIONS

### ***Strengths***

Existing roadway network effectively connects residents to Joplin and regional destinations.

Low traffic congestion in most residential areas supports quiet, safe neighborhoods.

Recent improvements near Mercy Hospital have enhanced regional access and emergency response times.

### ***Weaknesses***

Narrow roads in residential areas contribute to deterioration and maintenance challenges.

Inconsistent speed limits create safety concerns along major roadways like 44th Street and 50th Street.

Limited pedestrian infrastructure restricts safe walking and biking options, particularly near commercial areas.

### ***Opportunities***

Improve road maintenance funding through county and state partnerships.

Enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety by adding sidewalks and crosswalks in key areas.

Work with MoDOT and Newton County to develop long-term transportation improvement plans.

### ***Threats***

Increased traffic from Mercy Hospital and future developments may strain existing roadways.

Limited funding availability could delay needed infrastructure upgrades.

Weather-related wear and tear accelerate road deterioration, requiring proactive maintenance strategies.

### ***Goals for Roadway Improvements***

- Enhance road safety and maintenance by prioritizing repairs and long-term infrastructure investments.
- Expand pedestrian and bicycle access through sidewalk improvements and trail connections.
- Improve traffic flow and speed regulation by evaluating and adjusting speed limits.
- Strengthen coordination with MoDOT and Newton County to ensure effective road management and funding access.
- Develop a Capital Improvements Plan to guide future roadway enhancements and ensure sustainable growth.

## CHAPTER

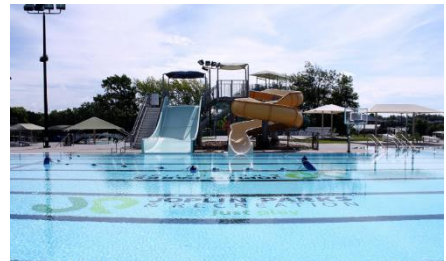
# 5

# COMMUNITY FACILITIES, PARKS, AND OPEN SPACE

While the Village of Leawood does not have its own parks or recreational facilities, residents enjoy convenient access to a variety of amenities in nearby Joplin and the surrounding area.

**Parks:** Joplin maintains 22 city-owned parks and greenways, offering playgrounds, walking trails, and picnic areas. Notable parks include McClelland Park, approximately 3 miles from Leawood, featuring a disc golf course and open spaces.

**Aquatic Centers:** Joplin operates three aquatic centers, providing swimming facilities for all ages. These centers are within a short drive from Leawood, offering residents opportunities for aquatic recreation.



**Tennis and Pickleball Courts:** Several parks in Joplin are equipped with tennis and pickleball courts, accessible to Leawood residents seeking these recreational activities.

**Athletic Complexes:** The Joplin Athletic Complex offers facilities for various sports, including baseball, softball, and soccer, and is located within a convenient distance from Leawood.

**YMCA:** The Joplin Family YMCA provides fitness programs, swimming pools, and community events, and is easily accessible to Leawood residents.

**Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center:** Located approximately 2 miles from Leawood, this center offers nature trails, educational programs, and access to Shoal Creek, enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities for residents.

These nearby amenities ensure that Leawood residents have ample opportunities for recreation and leisure, contributing to a high quality of life in the village.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities and services typically include administrative services, police, fire, public works, library, schools, utilities, and more. While many of these services are provided by organizations other than the Village of Leawood, they are provided in a coordinated manner that ensures a high service standard for Village residents and businesses.

### ***Village Governance***

The Village of Leawood is governed by a Board of Trustees, consisting of five elected members serving two-year staggered terms. Elections occur annually in April, with two or three trustees elected each cycle. Once certified by Newton County, the newly elected trustees appoint officers, including a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, and Clerk. The Planning and Zoning Commission, appointed by the Board of Trustees, oversees zoning regulations and development standards to ensure sustainable growth and community well-being.

### ***Public Works***

The Village of Leawood does not have a dedicated Public Works Department, instead relying on contracted services to handle road maintenance, snow removal, and infrastructure repairs on an as-needed basis. Newton County and MoDOT assist in maintaining roadways under their jurisdiction. Tree trimming, storm cleanup, and minor landscaping are often coordinated through local partnerships and private contractors. Future goals include securing additional resources for road maintenance and enhancing service efficiency to ensure Leawood remains a well-maintained and accessible community.

### ***Police***

The Newton County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement services to the Village of Leawood. The department oversees patrol services, emergency response, and crime prevention efforts. In previous community surveys, 58% of residents rated sheriff services as fair, indicating room for improvement in enforcement and response times.

### ***Fire***

The Redings Mill Fire Protection District serves Leawood, with fire stations located on South Range Line Road and Hearnese Boulevard. Fire protection services are well-rated, with 73% of residents describing them as good. Snow removal services are also provided during inclement weather, with 66% of respondents rating them as good.

Future goals include exploring additional law enforcement partnerships, enhancing community policing efforts, and ensuring continued excellence in fire and emergency services.





## Schools

The Village of Leawood is served by the Joplin R-8 School District, offering comprehensive educational opportunities from elementary through high school. Within the village, South Middle School stands out as a beacon of academic excellence, having been recognized as a Missouri Gold Star School. The school boasts outdoor athletic facilities, including soccer fields, football fields, and basketball courts, enriching both student life and community engagement.

Joplin High School, located nearby, provides a robust curriculum with Advanced Placement (AP) courses, diverse career and technical education programs, and a wide array of extracurricular activities, ensuring students are well-prepared for post-secondary endeavors.

Leawood's proximity to several higher education institutions further enhances the educational landscape:

Missouri Southern State University (MSSU): Situated approximately six miles from Leawood in Joplin, MSSU is a public university established in 1937. As of Fall 2023, it enrolled 4,087 students. The university offers a variety of degree programs across disciplines such as business, health sciences, and engineering, providing residents with accessible higher education opportunities.



Crowder College: Located in Neosho, Missouri, Crowder College is a public community college founded in 1963. Serving 3,864 students as of 2023, it offers associate degrees and certificates in fields like nursing, agriculture, and alternative energy, catering to both traditional and non-traditional students.



Franklin Technology Center: Based in Joplin, Franklin Tech provides vocational and technical training in areas such as health sciences, industrial technology, and computer networking, equipping students with practical skills for immediate employment.



Pittsburgh State University (PSU): Located in nearby Pittsburg, Kansas, PSU offers undergraduate and graduate programs across various disciplines, including a renowned technology and workforce learning department, further expanding educational opportunities for Leawood residents.

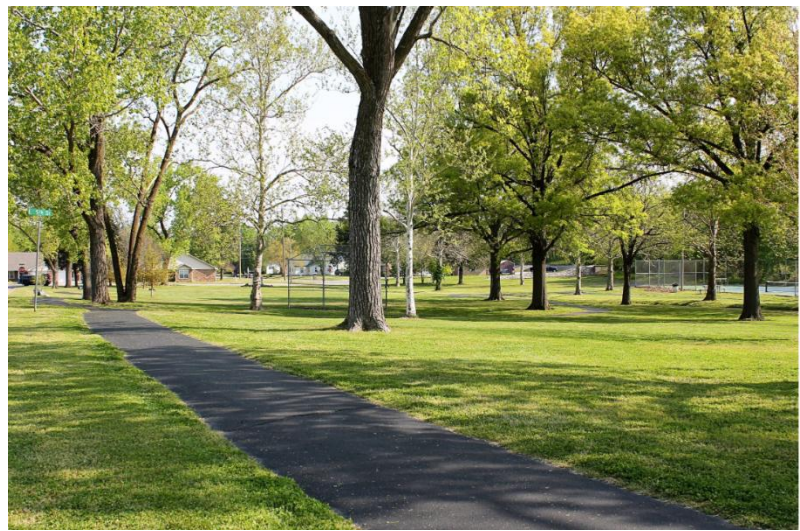
The presence of these institutions within and around Leawood not only enriches the community's educational fabric but also fosters a culture that values lifelong learning and skill development. The village's strategic location near these diverse educational entities ensures residents have access to a wide spectrum of learning opportunities, from foundational education to specialized technical training and advanced degrees.

## Library

Leawood residents have access to the Joplin Public Library, located approximately six miles away. The library offers a vast collection of books, digital resources, community programs, and public meeting spaces. Services include children's literacy programs, career development resources, and technology access, supporting lifelong learning and community engagement.







## PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

While the Village of Leawood does not have municipal parks within its boundaries, residents have convenient access to Joplin's extensive park system and nearby natural areas. The Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center, located just two miles from Leawood, provides scenic trails, wildlife habitats, and environmental education programs. Additionally, Leawood is near McClelland Park, Leonard Park, and Parr Hill Park, offering playgrounds, picnic areas, and sports facilities.

Leawood residents can also utilize Joplin's recreational amenities, including the Schifferdecker Golf Course, Joplin Athletic Complex, and multiple aquatic centers. These facilities provide opportunities for sports, fitness, and community events.



## WILDCAT PARK

55th & South Main Street

### PARK AMENITIES

- SHELTER
- BOAT RAMP
- PUBLIC FISHING
- WALKING TRAILS
- MUST CALL WILDCAT GLADES NATURE GROUP TO RESERVE - (417) 708-7713



SHOAL CREEK



SHELTER



WALKING TRAIL



SPRING

[WWW.JOPLINPARKS.ORG](http://WWW.JOPLINPARKS.ORG)



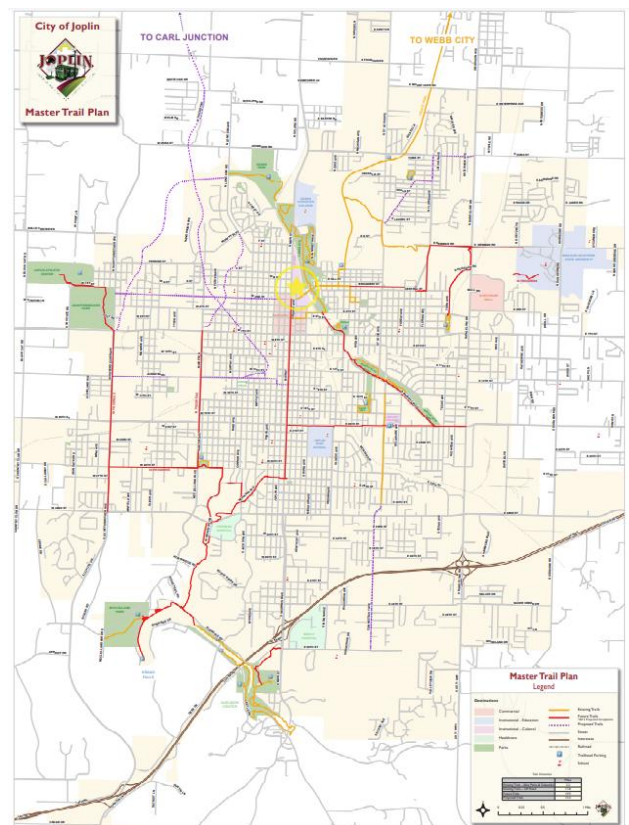


## Trails

Joplin and the surrounding Southwest Missouri region offer an extensive network of scenic trails, providing opportunities for hiking, biking, and outdoor recreation. The Wildcat Glades Walk is a 3.8-mile trail that traverses unique chert glades and Shoal Creek, offering scenic views and environmental education.

The Frisco Greenway Trail, an 8.4-mile rail-trail, connects Joplin and Webb City, featuring a packed gravel surface ideal for walking, running, and cycling. Grand Falls Dam Trail, though short at 0.2 miles, provides access to Missouri's largest continuously flowing waterfall. The Murphy Boulevard Park Loop and Landreth Loop offer additional short-distance options within Joplin's park system.

Beyond Joplin, the region includes the Ozark Trail and Mark Twain National Forest, with thousands of miles of trails suited for various outdoor activities. These trails not only promote recreation and tourism but also enhance conservation efforts and public health. Future goals include improving connectivity between local trails and regional trail networks, ensuring accessibility and expanding outdoor recreational opportunities for Leawood residents.







## ENVIRONMENT

The Village of Leawood is surrounded by an abundance of natural beauty, offering residents access to scenic waterways, wooded areas, and diverse wildlife habitats. The village is located near Shoal Creek, a picturesque waterway that provides opportunities for fishing, kayaking, and canoeing. Shoal Creek is home to numerous fish species, making it a popular destination for anglers and outdoor enthusiasts. Additionally, Turkey Creek winds through the region, adding to Leawood's rich environmental landscape.

Beyond the village, residents are within driving distance of Elk River and Big Sugar Creek, both of which offer crystal-clear waters ideal for floating, paddling, and fishing. The Beaver Lake Reservoir in nearby Arkansas serves as a major regional attraction, providing ample opportunities for boating, water recreation, and scenic getaways. These waterways not only offer recreational benefits but also serve as critical wildlife corridors, supporting fish populations, migratory birds, and native plant species.



Leawood's landscape also includes wooded areas, wetlands, and designated floodplains, which contribute to stormwater management, erosion control, and ecological preservation. Conservation of these areas is essential for maintaining the village's rural charm and protecting local biodiversity. Future development should incorporate conservation-based designs to minimize environmental impact, ensuring that natural resources remain intact for future generations.

The region's mild climate and diverse ecosystems support a variety of outdoor activities, from hiking along the trails at Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center to exploring nearby state parks and nature preserves. These areas offer scenic walking paths, educational programs, and habitat protection for native wildlife.

Maintaining Leawood's natural environment is a priority, and the village will continue to encourage eco-friendly practices, responsible land use, and collaboration with conservation groups to enhance green spaces. Whether enjoying a quiet morning fishing along Shoal Creek, paddling down the Elk River, or hiking through the region's wooded trails, residents of Leawood benefit from an unparalleled connection to nature. Protecting these resources ensures that Leawood remains a beautiful, environmentally conscious community that values both recreation and preservation.

## CHAPTER

# 5

# IMPLEMENTATION

The Village of Leawood Comprehensive Plan serves as a guiding framework for future land use, development, and community enhancements. This Plan outlines a clear vision and strategic direction to preserve Leawood’s residential character, natural assets, and small-town charm while addressing infrastructure and growth needs.

Successful implementation requires collaboration among Village staff, elected officials, and community stakeholders. Their coordinated efforts will ensure that goals, objectives, and recommendations within this Plan drive positive progress and maintain Leawood as a highly desirable place to live. Continued engagement and partnerships will be essential in shaping the Village’s long-term success.

## HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The Village of Leawood Comprehensive Plan serves as an official policy guide for the Zoning and Planning Commission, Board of Trustees, and other decision-makers. It should be referenced regularly to ensure land use policies, infrastructure projects, and community initiatives align with Leawood's vision and goals. Partner organizations, service providers, and developers are encouraged to use the Plan when considering new projects, facilities, and infrastructure updates. The Plan will be used to:

- ▣ Evaluate and shape policies and zoning regulations;
- ▣ Collaborate with partner agencies and service providers;
- ▣ Review and assess development proposals;
- ▣ Prioritize public expenditures and infrastructure improvements;
- ▣ Ensure new facilities and programming align with the Plan's goals.

To promote regular utilization of the Plan, the Village will:

- ▣ Make the Plan available on the Village website and in government offices for public access.
- ▣ Educate residents on its connection to development decisions.
- ▣ Provide guidance to the Board of Trustees and Planning Commission on Plan interpretation.
- ▣ Maintain a record of potential amendments and necessary updates.
- ▣ Coordinate with and assist the Village Board in the Plan amendment process, as necessary.





## **WORK WITH PARTNERS**

Implementation of the Village of Leawood Comprehensive Plan requires a coordinated effort between local service providers, government agencies, and community organizations. While the Village of Leawood assumes the primary leadership role, maintaining and strengthening existing partnerships will be essential to effective implementation and long-term success.

Leawood has established partnerships with Newton County, regional municipalities, and local service providers to ensure coordinated efforts in infrastructure planning, emergency services, and economic development. The Village will continue to collaborate with key stakeholders, including:

- ▶ Newton County government and elected officials
- ▶ Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT)
- ▶ Joplin R-8 School District
- ▶ Joplin Parks and Recreation Department
- ▶ Joplin Public Library
- ▶ Redings Mill Fire Protection District
- ▶ Newton County Sheriff's Department
- ▶ Local utility and service providers
- ▶ Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
- ▶ Pace Suburban Bus

By fostering these relationships, The Village of Leawood can effectively address transportation improvements, public safety coordination, infrastructure upgrades, and economic development initiatives, ensuring a sustainable and prosperous future for the Village.

## **UPDATE THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AS NEEDED**

The Comprehensive Plan is not a static document and must be able to evolve and change over time. For example, if community attitudes change or new issues arise that are beyond the scope of the current Plan, the Plan will be revised and updated accordingly. The Village should undertake a complete review and update of the Plan every five years, and intermittent evaluations every two to three years to identify smaller changes. The Village should maintain a public list of potential amendments, issues, or needs. Ideally, these reviews can coincide with the preparation of the Village's budget and upcoming capital improvements. In this manner, recommendations or changes relating to capital improvements or other programs can be considered as part of the commitments for the upcoming fiscal year. Routine examination of the Plan will help ensure that the planning program remains relevant to community needs and aspirations.

## **IDENTIFY FUNDING**

To implement the Village of Leawood Comprehensive Plan, funding will be essential for transportation improvements, infrastructure maintenance, and public safety enhancements. While economic development opportunities are limited, the Village can pursue transportation-related funding sources to support key improvements. The availability of funding sources may change over time, and Leawood will continue to evaluate and update potential funding opportunities as needed.

## **Funding**

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grants Administered by MoDOT, TAP grants support projects that improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, including sidewalk expansion, crosswalk safety enhancements, and trail connectivity. While TAP grants require a local funding match, they present a strong opportunity to improve Leawood's walkability and accessibility.

### *Cost-Share Program (MoDOT)*

The MoDOT Cost-Share Program provides funding to local governments for roadway and safety improvements. This program requires a 50/50 match, making it viable for intersection upgrades, resurfacing projects, and enhanced roadway infrastructure.

### *Community Improvement Districts*

Although Leawood does not have large commercial areas, a CID could be explored for roadway maintenance, signage, and beautification projects within designated areas. A CID allows businesses or property owners to levy an additional sales or property tax to fund specific improvements.

### *Revolving Loan Funds*

A Revolving Loan Fund is administered to provide financial support and assistance to new or expanding businesses. The borrower may use the low-interest loan for construction, property rehabilitation/ improvements, and land acquisition, among other things.

### *Local Capital Improvement Fund*

The Village should develop a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) to prioritize funding allocation for street repairs, sidewalk construction, and stormwater management projects. This approach ensures fiscal responsibility and positions Leawood to leverage matching grant opportunities.

## *Foundation & Specialized Grants*

The successful implementation of the Plan requires realization of projects that range in scale and scope. One type of funding source that becomes increasingly significant when issue-specific programs or programs are considered is the foundation grant.