

• **QUALITY OF LIFE**

VISION

Shawnee County will be a safe and caring community with vibrant arts, cultural entertainment and recreational activity and caring for all.

STRATEGIES

A. Recreation, Arts and Culture

- 1. Develop and implement interdependent comprehensive master plans for recreation, arts and culture and entertainment that serves as a focal point for our community. Determine a required level of service for each element that results in meeting our Key Benchmarks. Determine the gap between existing facilities and this level of service and eliminate the gap within ten years while at the same time providing for annual growth as it occurs. Ensure that all facilities are staffed and maintained for high quality service. When developing levels of service for each element, insure that proper consideration is given to age, income level and life style. Consideration will also be given to use of these facilities by Shawnee County visitors and tourists and becoming a regional attraction. The master plan will include sections for creation of events and programming, promotion, marketing and calendars of activities. The plans will include but not be limited to the items below:**

a) Entertainment

- i. Downtown entertainment district (town square concept).**
- ii. Main street farmers market.**
- iii. Expand the music festivals**
- iv. Retain and expand entertainment venues and events**

b) Arts and Culture

- i. ArtsConnect.**
- ii. Venues for musicians to perform.**
- iii. Place historical markers and monuments at appropriate places throughout the county as part of promoting community culture and history.**

c) Recreation

- i. Create a countywide system of trails for walking and biking.**
- ii. Attract and promote sporting events**

B. Healthcare

- 1. Provide equal quality and affordable healthcare available when needed for all Shawnee County residents.**
 - a) Opportunities for individuals and small business owners to participate in a group insurance plan.**
 - b) Insurance for students who are no longer eligible for family insurance.**
 - c) Continue the cooperation between our two excellent hospitals.**
 - d) Focus on prevention and wellness programs.**
 - e) Health care not dependant on wealth and open to undocumented citizens.**
 - f) Mental health service available for all ages.**
 - g) Recruit doctors, dentists, psychiatrists, nurses and other healthcare professionals.**
 - h) Provide health care clinics in Shawnee County neighborhoods labeled as intensive care, at risk and outpatient (see City of Topeka Neighborhood Heath 2007 composite map, p.253). In order to free emergency room from**

non-emergency visits the clinics should be open during times when most needed.

i) Provide incentives to young medical professionals to practice in Shawnee County.

2. Make the region aware that we are a regional center for world-class health care.

C. Sense of Community and Image

- 1. Commit as a community to have a positive attitude where we live, work, learn and play.**
- 2. Create a “welcoming” image whenever possible, including through beautiful corridors into the city, improved customer service, a visitors welcome center either downtown or at some point off of I-70.**
- 3. Develop and implement a national campaign to brand and communicate the excellent quality of life our community offers in the arts, entertainment, recreation, health care, community services and employment.**
- 4. Commit to keeping our young people in our community.**
5. Create a sense of place and identity that is sustained by support of local institutions and businesses and the heritage of the community.
6. Promote the diversity of Shawnee County through advertisements that includes persons of color.
7. Take pride in our local educational systems.

D. Social Services

1. Create an understanding of the culture of poverty and seek to remove the impediments to meaningful employment, including: transportation, child care, access to job availability, skills training, assistance for substance abuse, mental illness and help for people returning from prison.
2. Insure that all residents in need have the basic necessities of life.
3. Expand volunteerism.
4. Diverse representation on social service boards.

E. Family and Youth

1. Encourage collaboration, cooperation, coordination, common sense, commitment, accountability and strategic planning for all organizations serving family, youth, disabled, economically disadvantaged and the elderly.
2. Encourage employers to provide living wages with benefits; part-time, three-quarter time and flextime positions; on-site daycare, bring your baby/toddler to work programs to help bring up healthy, happy kids with involved parents.
3. Teach kids to be civic minded.
4. Provide affordable and safe childcare.

F. Public Safety

1. Reduce crime so that Shawnee County is the safest county with a capital city in the United States above 100,000 population.
2. Concentrate on reducing/eliminating drugs and drug trafficking!! Drugs and drug-related problems cross every line and affect everything we're concerned about.
3. Maintain building code requirements that enhance the safety of our residents.
4. Provide police substations under the control of a police major, each having two to four detectives and a proportional number of patrol officers (for very visible areas of the neighborhood communities).
5. Prosecute all property crime to serve as a deterrent to violent crime.
6. Invest in educating and exposing low income areas to the benefit of reporting crime.
7. Increase public safety through a comprehensive disaster and emergency preparedness plan.

G. Elderly

1. Increase community-based services for the elderly and disabled on par with the same access as in nursing facilities and institutions.
2. Value our senior population as the sustaining population that has provided value to our community.
3. Use the knowledge and skills of our seniors.