

CHAPTER ONE -- INTRODUCTION

On September 6, 1864, a town company was founded along the south side of the Marais des Cygnes River, and served as the basis for development of the Ottawa community. The property had become available from the Ottawa Indians through treaty and purchase in connection with the founding of Ottawa University, beginning in 1860. The City of Ottawa was incorporated in 1866, and in 1867, voted to become a City of the Second Class under the guidelines established by the State of Kansas. In 1870, Ottawa's population was 2,940, and in 1880 it was 4,035. Growth continued steadily and many of the fine buildings, homes and churches remain throughout the community.



Ottawa Main Street, Circa 1905

Franklin County was organized in 1855, with Ottawa selected as the County Seat in 1864. Rail service arrived on 1868, with the Leavenworth, Lawrence and Galveston Railroad. This was followed in 1870 by what is commonly referred to as the Santa Fe Railroad and, in 1880, by the Missouri Pacific Railroad.

In 1903, a Carnegie Free Library was built on City-owned land. Located at 5th and Main in City Park, the building is now the Carnegie Cultural Center (CCC).



The CCC is home to Suzuki Strings and the Ottawa Community Arts Council.



Franklin County Courthouse, built in 1893, was one of 13 Kansas courthouses designed by George P. Washburn of Ottawa.

Ottawa has had three Municipal Auditoriums in its history, losing the first two to fires in 1895 and 1915. The current auditorium (OMA) was constructed in 1919.



OMA is able to seat up to 840 people.

In 1911, a City Hall (also designed by Washburn) was built and was used as such until 1996 when the City bought a larger building at 1st and Hickory. Ottawa was governed by a Mayor-Council system until 1913 when the City became a Commission form of government. In 1970, the voters established the City Manager form of government with a five member Commission who selects a Mayor from its ranks to serve a one year term.



Ottawa City Hall and Library

The City of Ottawa has provided a variety of municipal services for most of its existence. Currently the City provides library, fire, police, finance and utility billing, water treatment and distribution, wastewater collection and treatment, electric generation and distribution, street and alley maintenance, parks (including swimming pool), cemeteries, planning, zoning and codes administration, municipal court, auditorium and airport.

One of the newer attractions in Ottawa is the Prairie Spirit Rail Trail -- a former railroad converted to a hard surfaced trail for walking, hiking and bicycling. The trail currently runs 33 miles from Ottawa south to Welda (in Anderson County). The trailhead in Ottawa will begin at the historic Old Depot Museum



The Ottawa University campus is another landmark and known for many fine historic stone buildings.



Ottawa University Administration Building, built in 1891

COMPREHENSIVE Plan 2004

This update of the City's comprehensive plan began in 2000, when City Planning staff and the Planning Commission raised the need for a complete overhaul of the existing plan. Other than minor revisions, the plan had not been fully updated since 1990. Since the community had grown and was facing new challenges, a thorough update was warranted.

The community's priorities were identified during the Ottawa Vision project conducted in 2001-2002. Building on this information, the consultant held public workshops and other public input tools to help solidify the issues and preferences. The public workshops held during the update process also focused on more specific topics related to land use development, growth, services and the impact they have on the community.

The City has long sustained a public planning process and related programs -- such as a Capital Improvement Program -- that support a full service community in the Kansas City metropolitan area. A strategic location on I-35, K-68, and US-59 has positioned Ottawa as a vital suburban community.

The City has added about 1,100 people in the last three decades, growing from a city of 10,919 people in 1970 to 11,921 people in 2000, and an estimated 12,044 in 2003. Ottawa's population of 11,921 in 2000 was an increase of 1,293 people (12.2%) from the 1990 Census (Ref. Chapter 2, Table 2.1). The City of Ottawa was identified in the report of the National League of Cities "Research Brief on American Cities," [Issued June 2003] as one of the "Strong Growth -10% to 20% growth" cities. In comparison, the State of Kansas grew by 9.3% and the Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) registered a population increase of 12.2% during the past decade.

The City has the opportunity to build on its strengths as it plans for growth, capitalizing on its investment in urban infrastructure, its commitment to strong residential neighborhoods, its identity, the revitalization of commercial and industrial centers and growth of new ones, and its role as an employment and service center. That growth must be planned both as infill (Ref. Map 8: Development Opportunity Districts) and new development in the City's planning areas (Ref. Map 1: City Limits, Planning Area, and Natural Features).

Ottawa is undergoing fundamental changes in population and development patterns. The rate of population increase is projected to be from 10% to 12% per decade (Ref. Chapter 4, Table 4.1). The City will attract more and more suburban development as the outward growth of the Kansas City Metropolitan area continues. In the last three years alone there have been 80 to 100 residential units built each year. New non-residential construction has also been increasing steadily since the 1990s. The City therefore needs to act now, and plan for development in its defined planning areas.

The Future Land Use Map (Ref. Map 7: Future Land Use) shows the future development patterns for the City, both within the current city limits and in the City's planning areas. These are based on the land use projections, market trends and demands, land use planning principles and land serviceability. The Future Land Use Policies for the City are outlined in Chapter 4: Future Land Use and Growth Strategies. One key recommendation of the Plan is for the City to plan for quality development along the major corridors leading into the City. Urban growth in key corridors such as I-35, Davis Avenue, K-68, US-59, 23rd St. and Eisenhower Road, etc., must be planned strategically for appropriate uses, and at densities great enough to pay for extension of services and infrastructure such as water and sewer systems.

The projected demand for housing, based on population projections, indicates up to 130 housing units should be added annually (Ref. Chapter 4, Table 4.2). The Plan outlines development and

redevelopment areas called Development Opportunity Districts, and presents strategies and recommendations for future land use opportunities (Ref. Chapter 5, Plan Implementation, Map 8: Development Opportunity Areas).

Goals, objectives, and policies of the Plan are presented as guides when evaluating the direction and pace of growth (Ref. Chapter 3, Goals, Objectives and Policies). The future land use scenarios of the Plan are presented in text and map form (Ref. Chapter 4, Future Land Use and Map 7: Future Land Use). Also presented is an updated thoroughfare plan that will enable Ottawa to more appropriately plan for future road rights-of-way (Ref. Map 6: Major Thoroughfare Plan). Recommendations of the Plan (Ref. Chapter 5, Plan Implementation) cover the principal subject areas of the Plan:

- Business development and retention.
- Urban design and creating quality places.
- Housing development supply and demand.
- Utilization and preservation of natural resources.
- Provision of public services and utilities.
- Transportation system maintenance and enhancement.

In summary, the Comprehensive Plan calls for the City to plan for growth in its current boundaries as infill development and in planning areas outside current city limits to achieve key policy objectives. One policy objective is to promote high quality planned residential and commercial districts that are designed well to improve the image of the City. Another is to promote a range of quality affordable housing a policy objective is to support infill development that promotes revitalization of existing urban areas and new development in its planning areas. The policies of the Plan are supported by design guidelines for downtown, for development opportunity districts, and for corridor overlay districts along I-35 and along the local arterial roads in the city.

The Plan a) consists of the maps and the supporting text, both of which must be considered when making land use changes, b) guides the direction and type of growth, but at the same time is a dynamic tool that accommodates changes in local markets, and c) serves as the basis for zoning decisions. If applications for zoning changes are in accordance with the Plan, they are presumed to be reasonable. If zoning change requests are not in accordance with the Plan, but are perceived as reasonable, the City should review its planning and regulatory documents and amend either the Zoning Ordinance or the Plan. Additionally, to comply with state law and ensure that the City proactively responds to development trends, the Plan should be updated in an annual public hearing and thoroughly reviewed approximately every five years.