



Chapter 1 Introduction

The ReNewton 2030 Comprehensive Plan is the official document produced by the cities of Newton and North Newton that outlines the plan for future town growth, as well as the redevelopment or enrichment of already established areas. By its very name, the plan is comprehensive in scope and outlook. This means it covers a broad range of “big picture” planning issues that influence the growth of Newton and North Newton, such as roads, water and sewer utilities, and environmental constraints. The plan also expresses “finer grain issues” affecting how to build or rebuild a better place for people to live, work, and play in the community.

The true value of the plan comes in serving as a guide for community decision makers. The comprehensive plan is viewed as a living document that provides a clear set of goals, policies, and strategies to set forth a framework for Newton to retain its local heritage and identity; and of equal importance, to create a sense of community, identity, and individual belonging as the city grows in size and population. The comprehensive plan must be looked upon by local decision makers as a source of collective wisdom to build a better community. The preferred methods, principles, and standards presented in the comprehensive plan convey how Newton ought to revitalize, reinvest, rebuild for the future. **In short, the comprehensive plan is the foremost source for managing community change to achieve the desired quality of life.**

Plan Organization

The vision and values guiding the future desired course, actions, and image of the Newton community in 2030 are found in **Chapter Two, “Community Vision and Values.”** This chapter describes the community characteristics that Newton will be working toward achieving:



Vibrant Economy



Revitalized Downtown and Main Street Historic District



Livability



Commitment to Education



Innovations in Transportation



Healthy Living



Preserving Our Town Character



Housing for All



Visionary Leadership



Cultural Diversity and Social Cohesion Sustainability



Community Marketing

A list of community-wide goals is found in **Chapter Three, “Community Goals.”** Many of these goals originated from public feedback obtained through interviews, community workshops and focus group retreats. The goal statements provide a broad set of policy targets to guide community leaders as they create a vision for Newton in 2030.

The key challenges and strategies to preserve what makes the Newton community unique is presented in **Chapter Four, “Preserving Community Character, Neighborhoods, and Downtown.”** This chapter deals with the importance of sustaining and enhancing the existing built portions of the city.

Chapter Five, “Creating a Livable and Healthy Community,” highlights the importance of integrating quality of life, community health and wellness, and cultural diversity and social cohesion. How Newton develops its land use, transportation, housing, and open spaces defines the community’s livability and environment.

The physical development and growth of the community is the focus of **Chapter Six, “Future Land Use: Principles and Policies.”** The plan identifies an urban growth framework by mapping an urban growth boundary and identifying policies for this growth. Sustainable development, neighborhood development, Kansas Avenue, and the I-135 corridor are addressed. The issue of community design principles on the physical aspects of development is covered, as is a Future Land Use Map that establishes broad use guidelines.

Future strategies and policies covering transportation systems, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists, are located in **Chapter Seven, “Transportation.”**

The planning elements of water, wastewater, and stormwater are addressed in **Chapter Eight, “Municipal Utilities.”**

Traditional implementation tools and collaborative strategies are identified in **Chapter Nine, “Plan Implementation.”** A summary table is presented identifying each implementation strategy, required actions, implementation partners, and a projected timeline.

Plan Development Process

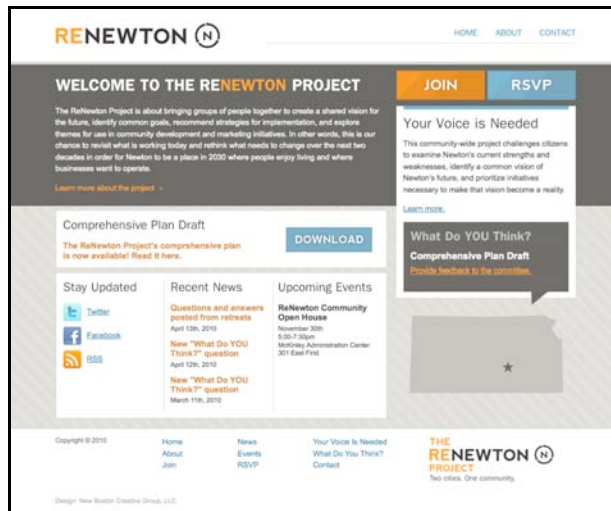
Participation and input from the citizens of the Newton community have been critical to the identification and development of community values and goals, which led to the ReNewton 2030 Plan vision. The ReNewton Project relied on an extensive public involvement process. A variety of techniques to gain citizen input from the community were employed in the development of this plan.

ReNewton Steering Committee

The steering committee included the Newton-North Newton Planning Commission, which is charged with preparing the community’s comprehensive plan. Eight other citizens were included to increase the diversity of views. This group comprised the ReNewton Steering Committee.

ReNewton Website

Nearly 250 citizens registered on the website. All registrants were invited to participate in the community retreats or focus group retreats. In addition, they could answer online questions to provide their input without being present at a public meeting. To publicize the website, over 1,000 informational cards were handed out by elected officials, Steering Committee members, Chamber of Commerce members, and city staff. The cards were also provided to citizens who participated in a ReNewton public meeting. Poster boards were distributed throughout the community to advertise the ReNewton Project and encourage people to visit the website and join the planning effort.



ReNewton Key Group Interviews

This involved interviewing key groups within the community – health care, education, Chamber of Commerce, faith-based groups, social

service agencies, banks, neighborhoods, arts and livability group, public spaces and facilities group, and the Next Great Ideas group. The city staff invited 73 citizens to participate and a total of 43 were able to join in the interview process.

Reimagine Newton Community Retreats

Two separate community-wide retreats were conducted. These retreats were open to the public. Participants were solicited through newspaper notices, direct notices in Newton household water bills, ReNewton website registration, and through the mailing of 500 personal invitations to citizens.

ReNewton Small Group Receptions

Eight focus groups were conducted to address specific issues and needs facing the community.

- Revisit Newton: Creating a Visitor-Friendly Community
- Reconsider Commerce: Reacting to the Changing Economy
- Rediscover Newton's Many Cultures: Embracing Our Community's Diverse Heritage
- Reconsider Physical and Mental Challenges: Anticipating Needs and Exploring Quality of Life Issues
- Redesign the Future: Creating a Cool Community
- Redefine Aging: Preparing for the Baby Boomers
- Redefine Community: Engaging Young Professionals and Families
- Reconnect Downtown: Making Downtown the Heart of the Community

Using the Plan

This plan is envisioned to help the community as a whole, and its leadership, move toward a new and brighter future. Rediscovering and respecting the town's heritage, sense of place, and unique qualities that contribute to making it an appealing community are vital.

The plan is intended to function as a guidance document for city elected officials and staff members who make decisions that will ultimately determine the community's future direction, appearance, quality of life, and capacity to sustain healthy living and well-being for all citizens.

The 2030 vision and many of the policies and strategies contained in the plan were crafted with the hope and desire that they will inspire citizens, groups, and leaders to be actively engaged in creating a better future. This is why both "traditional" and "collaborative" implementation strategies are required to achieve the goals and vision of the plan.

The hard work of enabling a city to reach its described goals and vision requires the involvement, leadership, and participation of everyone. The hopes, aspirations, and desires for a better future rest within the people of Newton and the visionary leadership of elected officials.