The Johnson County Board of County Commissioners establishes its strategic priorities for periods of two years. The board adopted its priorities for 2023-24 on April 20, 2023. The following is a report out of our progress for January to July 2023.
Improving housing options

Impact statement
Safe, stable, and attainable housing is a foundational element in an individual’s life and the overall health of a community. Current activities include planning for those experiencing homelessness, vulnerable populations, and justice involved residents and supporting attainable housing projects across the continuum.

Progress towards priorities and outcomes: January to July 2023

**Chronic homelessness (experiencing long-term homelessness) and experiencing homelessness (temporary or sporadic homelessness)**
- Building/purchase funding allocated for non-congregate shelter
  - $3.9 million new HUD-HOME funds
  - $6 million State Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
- Funded a community-wide report on homelessness prepared by the Dignity Project

**Vulnerable populations (Special housing needs)**
- $12,000 of SLFRF for an eviction mediation pilot program led by the Johnson County District Court.

**Cost-Burdened Renters (>30% of income going to housing)**
- Housing Choice Vouchers – Johnson County Housing Authority
  - Effective September 1, 2023 19 additional HCV’s have been added to the Housing Authority – the first increase since 2010
  - Raised payment standards to 120% of Fair Market Rent in April 2023
  - Landlord Recruiter hired in November 2022
  - Approved Landlord Incentive Pilot Program – goals include the recruitment of 25 new landlords and 50-75 net new living units by the end of 2024
- Affordable Housing Developer support
  - Provided financial support ($950k) for a single family land trust subdivision in Olathe, KS
  - Researching Housing Trust Fund policy/program options.
Potential Homeowners (*1st* time home buyers; transition from rental to home ownership)

- Thirty families enrolled in Family Self Sufficiency program for Housing Choice Voucher and Emergency Housing Voucher participants. Goal to add five additional families.
- Housing Counseling partnership with CHES, Inc. established August 2023 – provides HUD Certified Housing Counseling. Goal is to refer 15-20 families for counseling and 3-5 homes purchased by the end of 2024.

Additional information, updates or next steps:

Chronic homelessness (experiencing long-term homelessness) and experiencing homelessness (temporary or sporadic homelessness)

- Continued community engagement and RFP development to operate a non-congregate shelter and provide identified services.
- Department of Corrections Problem-Solving Beds will add four Mental Health professionals to the program to enhance services.
- Engage in capacity building activities to, at a minimum, identify sustainable funding sources and increase non-profit organizational capacity for homeless services.
- Finalize discussions with the Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services that will support the community’s effort to comprehensively address homeless services.

Vulnerable populations (Special housing needs)

- Johnson County Housing Authority is exploring new housing voucher opportunities to be completed by the end of 2023. These include:
  - Foster Youth Initiative vouchers for youth aging out of foster care
  - HUD-VASH vouchers for homeless veterans
  - Mainstream vouchers for people who are disabled ages 18-61
- Local property Tax relief program for seniors and disabled veterans is currently in the FY 2024 Proposed Budget
- Five new Friends of JCDS houses are in various stages of development and will provide housing to 14 individuals with an intellectual or developmental disability, served by JCDS.

Cost-Burdened Renters (*>30% of income going to housing*)

- HOME Investment Partnerships Program
  - Provided financial support ($1m) for a Low Income Housing Tax Credit project in Gardner. **76 units scheduled for occupancy in November 2023.**
  - Provided financial support ($1m) for a low-income apartment project in Shawnee. **144 units are scheduled for occupancy in December 2023**
- HUD-HOME Rehab and Minor Home Repair
  - Researching with Contractor Licensing possible incentives to encourage contractors to bid on HOME and Minor Home projects to be completed by October 2023.
  - Establishing marketing efforts for Minor Home Repair with Aging and Human Services and DTI-AIMS staff to be completed by the end of 2023.
- Researching weatherization program with state designated contractor to enhance our repair program to be completed by the end of 2023.
• Researching the development of a public/private partnership that streamlines/directs referrals to range of programs, co-locates services/funding, helps braid funding sources to make more repairs to a single home to be completed by the end of 2023.

Cost-burdened homeowners (>30% of income going to housing)
• HUD-HOME Rehab and Minor Home Repair
  o Researching with Contractor Licensing possible incentives to encourage contractors to bid on HOME and Minor Home projects to be completed by October 2023.
  o Establishing marketing efforts for Minor Home Repair with Aging and Human Services and DTI-AIMS staff to be completed by the end of 2023.
  o Researching weatherization program with state designated contractor to enhance our repair program to be completed by the end of 2023.
  o Researching the development of a public/private partnership that streamlines/directs referrals to range of programs, co-locates services/funding, helps braid funding sources to make more repairs to a single home to be completed by the end of 2023.
Impact statement

As we continue to make health and safety a priority, we will do so through the lens of sustainability and diversity, equity and inclusion to promote a healthier environment and create a sense of belonging/connection throughout Johnson County. This will be accomplished by considering sustainability and inclusiveness when making funding and policy recommendations/decisions.

Progress toward priorities and outcomes: January to July 2023

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Employees, Programs, Structures

- Review of County policies, procedures and practices to align with DEIB objectives.
- Language accessibility outcome-based project on schedule.
- Staff training and initiatives
  - Continuously improve DEIB employee survey results
  - Core VIBE Team training and education directly reaching 25% of staff annually.
  - Expanding opportunities for staff to engage in DEI initiatives through Core VIBE workshops and department/agency/offices DEI teams (D/A/O VIBE Teams)

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Advisory Coalition

- Recommendations for training, policies and practices in programs, activities, functions – existing and proposed.
- Promote civility and enhance communication and understanding through community outreach, assessment of current DEI initiatives and community partners

Sustainability: Employees, Programs, Structures

- Review of County policies, procedures and practices to align with sustainability objectives to:
  - Reduce energy consumption and solid waste
  - Increase recycling and local sourcing
  - Improve water management
  - Promote efficient transportation
A 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emission compared to 2013 was reported in the April 2023 greenhouse gas inventory.

**Sustainability: Advisory Coalition**

- Encourage environmental stewardship across the Johnson County community by:
  - Raising awareness
  - Participating in regional planning with collaborative partnerships
- Advise the County in establishing sustainability goals and priorities
- Advise and assist with practical methods to:
  - Reach sustainability goals
  - Identify and pursue funding opportunities

**Additional information, updates and next steps:**

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Employees, Programs, Structures**

- Internal review underway of agenda process and documentation
- The Core VIBE Team has developed a strategic plan and prioritized language accessibility, initiating in 2023
- In addition to the Core VIBE Team, an additional 40 VIBE volunteers are supporting web content, recruiting and learning programs. Together they have directly reached over 600 employees, providing:
  - 19 VIBE workshops, with another 17 planned this year
  - Numerous sessions across the County on 25 different learning and development topics
- Departments/Offices/Agencies (DOA) are following up with action plans from the DEIB employee survey
- Additional employee resource groups will provide additional engagement opportunities in 2024
- Eight DOA VIBE Teams have been established with their specific organizations
- Examples of significant milestones and accomplishments from both the VIBE Team and the DOA’s include:
  - REDLINED exhibit received two national awards
  - Website recognized for ease of access for those with disabilities
  - JCPRD opened another “Park for All”
  - 2nd annual Juneteenth observance drew an estimated 400-500 people with engagement by 40 staff representing 13 departments and planned by a committee of 10 county staff.

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Advisory Coalition**

- On June 29, the BOCC established the Coalition
- Appointments to the 15-member Coalition are estimated to be made in September
- Coalition estimated to convene in October with the objective of establishing bylaws and structures in the 4th quarter of 2023
Sustainability: Employees, Programs, Structures

- Provides educational materials, how-to suggestions, and updates in both the county intra-net site and the county web site.
- Grant submitted for electric vehicle infrastructure, “Connecting JOCO,” to expand the reach of EV charging to 17 additional sites, replacing fueling for 500 gasoline-powered vehicles.
- Accomplishments and activities include:
  - LEED Gold Certification for Johnson County
  - GHG update reflected a reduction in emissions, establishing a more precise GHG baseline
  - Regional recognitions in numerous programs including:
    - Storm water management based upon watershed boundaries
    - Wastewater design and operations of Tomahawk plant
    - Park & Recreation District invasive species management

Sustainability: Advisory Coalition

- On June 29, the BOCC established the Coalition
- Appointments to the 15-member Coalition are estimated to be made in September
- Coalition estimated to convene in October with the objective of establishing bylaws and structures in the 4th quarter of 2023.
Focus on infrastructure

Impact statement

Identify needs and seek partnerships to deliver initiatives for the rapid development of the northwest portion of Johnson County while creating an Area Development Plan that will include not only traditional land use, but also transportation, transit, and broadband infrastructure.

Progress towards priorities and outcomes: January to July 2023

Transportation/Transit and Fire Station

- Create a transportation plan update for the northwest area of the County with the Kansas Department of Transportation and local partners on

- Investigate existing and innovative transit solutions for employers in the region with KDOT, De Soto and other transportation providers.
  - Completed: Identifying the correct point of contacts for Panasonic.

- Plan, construct and own a Northwest Fire District fire station which will support development and housing in that area.
  - Completed: County Facilities selected a firm to design the station.

Park and Recreation

- Update the Kill Creek Park and Sunflower Nature Park: Master Plan (including adding ~2000 acres to Kill Creek Park).

- Design Kill Creek Streamway Trail – North of Kill Creek Park (connecting Kill Creek Streamway to Kill Creek Park with donated Sunflower land).

Community Planning

- Comprehensive Plan update for the northwest portion of the county for land use related to housing density and area covered in the comp plan.
  - Completed: Approved by the Board of County Commissioners Q2 2023.
• Begin conversations between residents in unincorporated northwest Johnson County, the state, and private sectors to identify solutions to increase broadband access. Meeting will gauge interest in broadband for area residents.
  o **Completed**: outreach to a private sector provider.

Additional information, updates and next steps:

**Transportation/Transit and Fire Stations**

• Create a transportation plan update for the northwest area of the County with the Kansas Department of Transportation and local partners on
  o **Next Step**: Finalize consensus scope of work Fall 2023. Also finalize the funding agreement for local road improvements with KDOT.

• Investigate existing and innovative transit solutions for employers in the region with KDOT, De Soto and other transportation providers.
  o **Next Step**: Determine correct entities/individuals to develop transit options: Kansas Department of Commerce, Panasonic, KCATA, Chamber of Commerce(s) Fall 2023.

• Plan, construct and own a Northwest Fire District fire station which will support development and housing in that area.
  o **Next Step**: Continue design and finish MOU for the fire station funding.

**Park and Recreation**

• Update the Kill Creek Park and Sunflower Nature Park: Master Plan (including adding ~2000 acres to Kill Creek Park).
  o **Next Step**: Comprehensive look at this region of JCPRD/the County and associated public input to determine path of future development.

• Design Kill Creek Streamway Trail – North of Kill Creek Park (connecting Kill Creek Streamway to Kill Creek Park with donated Sunflower land).
  o **Next Step**: Accept property transfer and start design of a connecting segment of the Kill Creek Streamway trail, bringing the total contiguous length up to ~11 miles.

**Community Planning**

• Begin conversations between residents in unincorporated northwest Johnson County, the state, and private sectors to identify solutions to increase broadband access. Meeting will gauge interest in broadband for area residents.
  o **Next Step**: Schedule Meeting in mid-Fall with residents to present initial information.
Impact statement
A resilient workforce that maximizes the county’s ability to deliver exceptional services, contributing to a high quality of life for Johnson County residents.

Progress towards priorities and outcomes: January to July 2023

Recruitment and Retention
- **Annual turnover goal: 10% - 14%**
  - For the period 1/1/23 thru 7/31/23 we are at 6.85% turnover, which annualized would result in 11.7% turnover for 2023 should the trend continue. At this same time last year, we were at 8.04%.

- **Number of applications per open position goal: 20**
  - For the period 1/1/23 thru 7/31/23 we are averaging 16 applications per open position.

Workplace culture
- **Goal for employee response to the survey question: “More often than not, I am very satisfied to work here”: 80% positive or higher**
  - In 2020 the positive response to this question was 82.3%, it was not surveyed in 2021, and was 76% in 2022.

Additional information, updates or next steps:

Recruitment and Retention
- A new JoCo pay table implemented July 9, 2023 brought our positions to 50% of the market. Additionally, a 2% range movement adjustment was implemented for the Emergency Services pay table with the intent to bridge the gap for the anticipated step pay plan that is forthcoming for 2024.

- Staff attended nine job fairs along with co-sponsoring the Community Supported Employment Program job fair. In addition, staff provided recruitment support through over 950 Indeed postings and additional connections to specialty recruitment boards that target hard to reach populations like veterans.

- Many HR and departmental staff are working on the implementation of the iCIMS Applicant Tracking System that will significantly shorten application times, increase communication with candidates and improve the candidate experience.
• The Board of County Commissioners adopted KPERS Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP), which allows KPF members that are eligible for full retirement to earn their salaries and retirement benefits at the same time. By incentivizing eligible staff, it allows the County to reap the benefits of experienced staff not separating from employment, so they are available to guide and mentor less experienced staff at time when recruitment is difficult.

Workplace culture

• Our next employee survey will be held in early 2024, followed by an employee benefits survey in late spring 2024.
• We believe that our strong HPO culture supports employee satisfaction. Since January 1st, 542 employees have attended the LEAP (leadership empowers all people) training as we are catching up from the pandemic.
• Our wellness program was enhanced by our participation in Corporate Challenge. We had 307 Johnson County employees representing 27 departments compete in 30 events, earning us a 9th place finish in Division A.
• In addition to the estimated 44 VIBE-related programs, events, and initiatives that have taken place thus far in 2023, HR has facilitated 23 VIBE educational workshops and presentations for approx. 420 employees of various departments this year to date. New departmental VIBE teams have emerged in DTI, DES, and JCW, raising the count to 8 departmental VIBE teams.
• The Innovation Team’s new steering committee is helping to guide and prioritize the work in this area. We also have more than 100 “sparks” – employees embedded in the organization available to assist with innovation team projects.
• Employees gave back to the community through the annual Feed the Need campaign collecting 256,000 pounds of food, nearly double from the 2022 campaign. Activities as part of this year’s campaign included Canstruction, Event Day, Spring into Summer Golf Tournament, Family and Friends Night Out, and more. We also have more than 230 employees supporting United Way through payroll deduction.
• Employees enjoyed a successful Juneteenth celebration, and over 400 employees and their family members attended the County’s employee night at Theater in the Park in July.
• New policies and procedures were adopted enhancing tuition reimbursement, bringing the County into compliance with the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, and other minor housekeeping revisions.