



City of
Hillsboro

Respect for the past, vision for the future.

2021-2026 Strategic Plan

City Council and Steering Committee

Mayor Lou Thurston
Council Member Brent Driggers
Council Member Renee Gehring
Council Member David Loewen
Council Member Byron McCarty

USD 410 Superintendent Max Heinrichs
HDC Executive Director Anthony Roy
City Administrator Larry Paine
City Administrator Matt Stiles

A WORD FROM THE MAYOR

Bias for action.

Born on the prairie, part of the Great Plains, the City of Hillsboro was founded in 1879 by John Gillespie Hill. Mr. Hill homesteaded the area in 1871. For the next 140 plus years, Hillsboro has not only grown, but thrived. Like any place on the prairie, we have survived numerous storms, of both natural and human origin, and through that surviving have grown stronger and more resilient. To continue to survive on the prairie today, requires that same resilience. Being resilient today requires planning for the future, for the storms and opportunities that are sure to come. That is why the City Council in 2020 decided that it was of critical importance for us to create a Strategic Plan, complete with a Vision Statement and Value Statement. The purpose of this plan and these statements is to help define and communicate who we are, where we came from and where we would like to go.



Like any good plan, it requires structure, priorities, accountability and most importantly flexibility. To ensure our future, we have to grow, and these goals represent a path forward to address that. By creating this Strategic Plan, we also hope to establish a “bias for action.” As the late Indira Gandhi said: “Have a bias towards action – let’s see something happen now. You can break that big plan into small steps and take the first step right away.” No matter how good the plan, nothing ultimately happens without someone taking action and making something happen. We see this plan as the framework for that action.

We invite you to join us in implementing this Strategic Plan for Hillsboro, it’s about People, Places and Progress and more to the point, our future depends on it!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Lou Thurston". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Mayor Lou Thurston

Process

The City of Hillsboro began its strategic planning process in early 2020. City Administrator Larry Paine found assistance on the planning process from Tim Blodgett from the organization, Hometown Connections. Blodgett facilitated the early development process. The City Council was joined by the Superintendent of USD 410 schools, the Executive Director of Hillsboro Development Corporation and city economic development director, and the City Administrator in developing the plan. Unfortunately the process was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The group resumed the process in early 2021.

A cohesive vision was developed and the underlying values were also shaped to provide the driving force for the plan. Through the process several issues were identified and categorized into overall goals with clear objectives and defined strategies. To focus and prioritize the plan the group determined that the goals fell into two tiers. The first tier were challenges most pressing to the community. Making progress on Tier 1 requires extensive cooperation and collaboration. Tier 2 goals, while just as important, are more narrowly focused. The final plan represents a vision for the future

Our Vision

Hillsboro is a Prairie Community focused on People, Places and Progress.

Our Values

Values help define and shape the decision making of a community. They are a reflection of who the community is and aspires to be. To guide this plan, the city of Hillsboro embraces prairie values:



Importance of Family



Lifelong Learning



Strong Work Ethic



Resiliency to Meet Challenges



Respect for the Past



Vision for the Future

TIER 1 GOALS

1

Childcare

Have childcare options that support positive childhood development and support parental employment.

2

Housing

Offer a range of housing options that improve existing housing stock and add additional homes to meet community expansion.

3

Workforce

Develop a pipeline of educated talent to support current and future businesses.

4

Community Development

Make investments in grow the community, increase vitality, ensure orderly development and continue to sustain a high quality of life.

5

Financial Stability

Safeguard the City's financial well being with enhanced long-term planning & financial management tools.

6

Public Safety

Provide quality facilities for public safety organizations serving the community.

TIER 2 GOALS

TIER 1 GOALS

Childcare

Have childcare options that support positive childhood development and support parental employment.

Objectives

- Ensure sufficient opportunities for anyone in need of childcare.
- Provide a safe and nurturing environment for children in the community.
- Improve school preparedness for school aged children.

Strategies

- Create a community based steering committee to guide the creation of a community daycare facility.
- Investigate potential partnerships between USD 410, local churches, the City and other organizations to locate in a daycare facility.
- Study the feasibility of the daycare facility in the old hospital.
- Develop the necessary public-private partnerships to access funding and make a workable business model.

When Will It Be Done?

Work of the taskforce began during the planning process in 2020. Work continues on the studying feasibility and building partnerships. The committee plans to be finished in 2022.



The former community hospital, located on South Main Street, was vacated in 2019 and is currently owned by the Public Building Commission.

Who Does the Work?

A community based steering committee has been formed from groups representing the City of Hillsboro, USD 410, the Marion County Health Department, K-State Extension, Parents as Teachers, Kids Connection and other local church leadership.

TIER 1 GOALS

Housing

Offer a range of housing options that improve existing housing stock and add additional homes to meet community expansion.

Objectives

- Understand the housing needs of the community and commercial viability of housing.
- Develop an average of 5 new housing units per year.
- Actively have 3 housing developers working with the community.
- Actively prevent blight or underuse of property.

Strategies

- Complete Housing Assessment Tool (HAT) to become eligible for housing related grants and establish a market.
 - Develop housing strategy for individuals markets identified by the HAT.
 - Implement tools not currently used by the city to housing development based on needs.
 - Consider a city based program to control blight by improving the appearance of homes and businesses.
 - Focus on developing additional duplex or apartment units.
 - Apply for grant funds for CDBG, Kansas Housing Resource Commission, HUD or any available programs to offset development costs.
 - Identify redevelopment properties for South Central Kansas Economic Development District (SCKEDD) development program.
 - Develop applicable codes for the use of alternative construction methods such as tiny homes or container homes.
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Who Does the Work?

Collaboration between the City, private developers, community housing development organizations and regional development organizations.

When Will It Be Done?

The Housing Assessment Tool was completed in Summer 2021. While the goal is ongoing the intention is to complete the initial work by 2023.

TIER 1 GOALS

Workforce

Develop a pipeline of educated talent to support current and future businesses.

Objectives

- Strengthen collaborative relationships between educational providers
- Meet the workforce needs of the community and county.
- Provide opportunities for community members to find employment.

Strategies

- Develop a "Key Customer" plan.
- Develop a CEO Roundtable that includes Tabor College, USD 410, HCC and BCCC
- Develop a workforce awareness plan.
- Establish training collaborations to strengthen workforce development.
- Focus development strategies to promote entrepreneurship.
- Develop specific training programs between USD 410 and industrial partners to meet workforce needs.
- Investigate potential opportunities for apprenticeships or paid tuition programs that encourage employee training.
- Research opportunities to recruit workforce from other groups such as immigrant populations.

Who Does the Work?

The City, as the lead economic development organization can help facilitate collaboration between Tabor, USD 410 and other educational providers.

When Will It Be Done?

Work in developing workforce is ongoing and will never be fully complete. The intention is to complete the initial work by early 2023.



Countryside Feed began a multi phase expansion project in 2021. Improvements to the facility will improve production and increase the workforce.

TIER 2 GOALS

Community Development

Make investments in growing the community, increasing vitality, ensuring orderly growth and continue to sustain a high quality of life.

Objectives

- Grow Hillsboro population by .05% per year.
- Complete the Community Plaza project and plan for future park and recreational facilities
- Provide opportunity for all residents and businesses to have access to gigabyte internet speeds.
- Modernize City Planning documents to reflect the current needs of the community
- Adjust City Codes to promote better partnerships with businesses.



The Community Plaza Phase 1 will be completed in 2022. Over \$165,000 has been privately raised for the plaza project.

Who Does the Work?

The City will lead most of the work. Partners including TC Wireless, community groups and outside consultants will also complete work.

When Will It Be Done?

TC Wireless will complete the fiber project in 2021. Other strategies will be completed by 2024.

Strategies

- Implement a community marketing plan focused on increasing visitors and residents.
 - Complete phase 1 of the Community Plaza project by 2022, then remaining phases.
 - Develop a plan for recreational facilities and park development including trails.
 - Work with TC Wireless to complete a gigabyte fiber to the premise project.
 - Apply for three trail grants for identified trail expansion.
 - Support efforts for a community garden.
 - Review and update the City's Comprehensive Plan, zoning code and subdivision regulations.
 - Work with downtown businesses to improve regulations to support commerce.
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TIER 2 GOALS

Financial Stability

Safeguard the City's financial well being with enhanced long-term planning & financial management tools.

Objectives

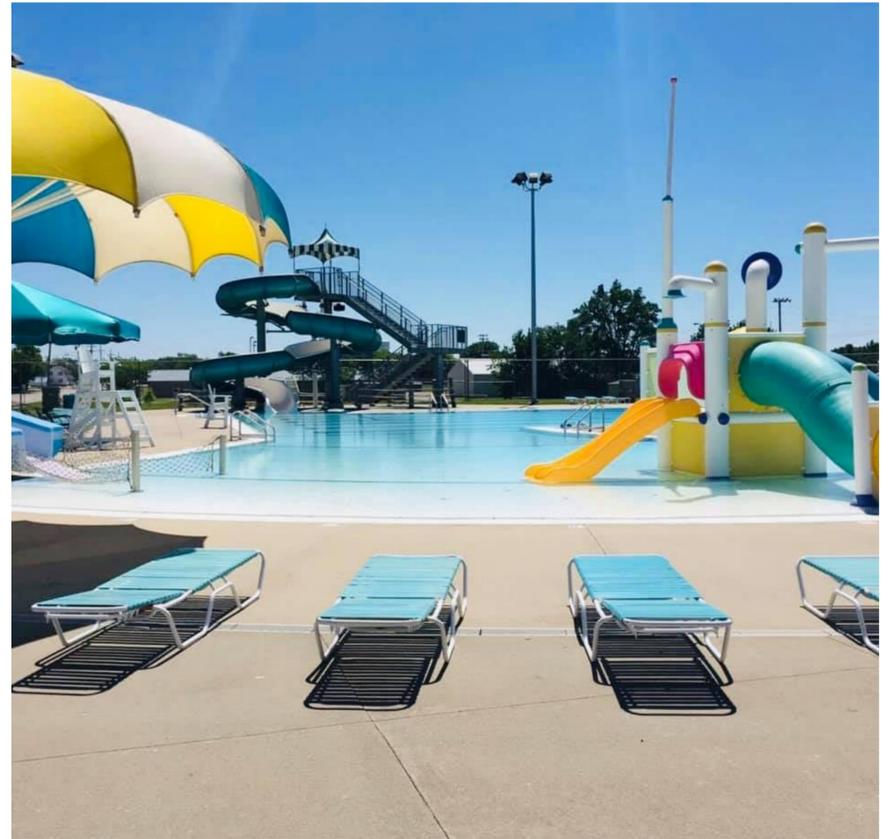
- Manage and reduce long-term debt while balancing infrastructure needs.
- Meet the City's stated fund balance policy goals by 2026.
- Maintain reasonable income streams and reduce overall costs through operational changes.

Strategies

- Allocate necessary funds to meet the General Fund requirement for the Fund Balance Policy.
- Complete a City-wide capital improvement plan and capital equipment plan.
- Allocate necessary funds to meet the Utility Fund requirements for the Fund Balance Policy.
- Develop a comprehensive rate and fee schedule for all City revenue streams.

Who Does the Work?

The City will initiate and lead the work for this goal.



The Family Aquatics Center was built in 2005 after voters approved a local 1% sales tax.

- Work on regular utility rate adjustments to fully fund the capital improvement and equipment plan.
- Develop a plan for the local option sales tax once the FAC bonds are retired in 2025.
- Create a stabilization reserve funds for each utility to maintain financial stability during unforeseen events.

When Will It Be Done?

Planning work will begin in 2021 and will continue through 2026.

TIER 2 GOALS

Public Safety

Provide quality facilities for public safety organizations serving the community

Objectives

- Secure an ideal location Marion County EMS for long-term service.
- Improve efficiency by locating HFD equipment in one location.
- Get HPD out of the dilapidated AMPI building.

Strategies

- Work with Marion County EMS on co-locating an EMS facility with Hillsboro emergency services.
- Develop a concept and plans for new public safety building.
- Apply for funding including any grant or community facility programs to complete the public safety building.
- Complete new public safety building.

Who Does the Work?

The City will partner with Marion County for the EMS location. Additional contractors will be used to help with design, construction and funding.

When Will It Be Done?

Construction of the EMS Facility will be complete in 2021. The new public safety building will be completed in 2024.



Fire and Police would locate in a new facility next to the Marion County EMS, south of the AMPI building.



