



Section 1: Introduction to the Planning Process

Introduction

Comprehensive city planning is analogous to preparing for a family vacation; before the journey can begin, one has to determine not only the destination, but the best route to get there. And just like any extended trip, community planning requires a substantial, detailed examination of the needs and desires of all involved stakeholders. Having expressed an ambition to effectively manage civic growth and development, the City of Lathrop chose during the summer of 2005 to begin the process of comprehensive city planning. The result of that planning process, and over 12 months of dedicated work by Lathrop's citizens, is the comprehensive city plan you now hold in your hands.

A comprehensive city plan should not be viewed as a step-by-step guide to successful growth management. Such a document would be prohibitively complex, and could never include every miniscule detail that encompasses civic development. Rather, this plan should serve as an overarching policy guide, designed to aid community leaders in the decision-making process. The Lathrop City Plan covers an approximate planning timeframe of ten years; generally from 2006 to 2016. This is not to say, however, that the plan will be as effective or valid in 2016 as it is now. In fact, a city plan should be a living document, not relegated to a city shelf, but used, maintained, updated, and modified as changing city conditions warrant. The Lathrop Comprehensive City Plan expresses the development vision of the citizenry, and serves as a guide to make that vision a reality. We hope that it will serve as a useful planning document for the next ten years and beyond.

Planning Area

The City of Lathrop, Missouri is located in northwest Missouri near the center of Clinton County. The city lies wholly within the Lathrop Township, as well as United States Congressional District 6, Missouri Senate District 12, and Missouri House District 5. Lathrop lies approximately 32 miles northeast of downtown Kansas City, and is considered part of the extended metropolitan area. Transportation to and from the city is primarily via Interstate 35 and Missouri State Highway 116. Interstate 35 serves as the primary north/south corridor for the city, with direct access to Kansas City, Missouri, while Highway 116 provides an east/west route, connecting Lathrop to the City of Plattsburg and U.S. Highways 169 and 69. Secondary routes for the city include Missouri State Highway 33 and Missouri Route A.

The planning area for the Lathrop Comprehensive City Plan expands beyond the current corporate limits of the city. In preparation for future growth, it is imperative to assess not only development potential within the city, but also those parcels of land adjacent to the current city limits and beyond (particularly towards the interchange of Interstate 35 and Highway 116). For a map of the planning area, please see Map 1 in Appendix B.

Methodology

The planning process for the Lathrop Comprehensive City Plan began with a town hall meeting on September 6, 2005. The meeting, which was advertised and open to the public, drew more than 40 concerned citizens that volunteered to play a part in the development of the plan. Using a modified Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) method, the citizens were asked to define the benefits of and challenges to the development and growth of the City of Lathrop. After open discussion and a brief presentation, the citizen volunteers were then divided into five functional committees responsible for defining the vision, goals, and objectives of their particular interest area.

The five committees were:

- Community Development
- Physical Appearance & Aesthetic Value
- Education & Youth Activities
- Parks & Recreation, Culture & Arts
- Public Services

(for a list of the committee members, please see Appendix C)



September 6th Lathrop Town Hall Meeting

After an explanation of the vision, goals, and objectives for the city plan, the next phase was to ascertain public opinion on the issues pertinent to the growth and development of the city. During the fall of 2005, two surveys were developed for the purpose of gathering public opinion on a multitude of issues facing the city of Lathrop. The first survey was targeted towards the residents of the community, and was delivered and collected by members of the Lathrop R-2 High School Band. Utilizing the water bill addressing system, every household in the city received a survey (approximately 750). With 134 surveys returned, the process yielded a 17.8% return rate. The second survey targeted business owners in Lathrop, and was also distributed by hand. Of the approximately 60 surveys distributed, 16 were returned, for a 26.7% return rate. Both survey instruments can be found in Appendix D, while raw survey results are contained in Appendix E.

The next step of the comprehensive planning process was the utilization of geographic information systems (GIS). GIS, which can be best described as a spatial analysis utilizing both maps and tabular data, is often used in the planning process to determine relationships between two or more seemingly disparate datasets from a geographic perspective. For example, median household income for a census block group can be compared with population density to determine the most appropriate pick-up locations for a low-income transportation service such as OATS. A series of maps and GIS products were produced in support of the Lathrop Comprehensive City Plan, and can be found in Appendix B.

The final phase of plan development was drafting and draft review by committee members, the Lathrop Board of Aldermen, and the city administration. Committee members were given an opportunity to review their respective chapters and, at a joint meeting on May 23rd, 2006, presented their suggestions and changes. On June 20th, 2006, the Lathrop Board of Aldermen and city administration were presented

the final draft of the comprehensive plan for review. The finalized version of the Lathrop Comprehensive City Plan was created from those components.

Plan Structure

The Lathrop Comprehensive City Plan is divided into six sections, as follows:

- **Section 1: Introduction to the Planning Process**

The first section gives an overview of the city plan, and details the methodology, plan structure, and community acknowledgements.

- **Section 2: Community Planning**

Section 2 details the visions, goals, and objectives drafted by each citizen committee. Each subsection (2a-2e) contains a discussion on the current state of the topic, results from the citizen and business surveys, and committee recommendations.

- **Section 3: Transportation Considerations**

The third section examines the current condition of the transportation network, both within the corporate limits of Lathrop and outside of the city proper, connecting with the regional transportation system.

- **Section 4: Land Use Recommendations**

Section 4 investigates the development potential of open land within Lathrop, and proposes a phased annexation study area in anticipation of future annexation and land use planning.

- **Section 5: Implementation**

The fifth section offers suggestions to implement the policy recommendations made in the city plan.

- **Section 6: Background Studies**

Finally, Section 6 contains seven subsections (6a-6g) that describe, in-depth, various aspects of the community, such as history, demographics, and housing.

Acknowledgements

A great number of people contributed to the completion of the Lathrop Comprehensive City Plan.

Those individuals include:

- Don Moore, Lathrop City Administrator
- Susie Freece, Lathrop City Clerk
- Roy Wieneke, Lathrop Mayor
- Pauli Slibowski, Chair, Community Development Committee
- Coetta Whiteley, Chair, Physical Appearance & Aesthetic Value Committee
- Kelly Butler, Chair, Education & Youth Activities Committee
- Sherry Wright, Co-Chair, Parks & Recreation, Culture & Arts Committee
- Gwen MacComber, Co-Chair, Parks & Recreation, Culture & Arts Committee
- Aaron Greer, Chair, Public Services Committee