



## ***Section V: Corridor Structure***

A growth and development policy must be established to address the future of the K-96 Corridor. The elements of development pattern, corridor cooperation, and planning regulations provide the growth and development policy for the corridor. These three elements will provide equity across the corridor for future development, as well as a stronger overall corridor image. They should be considered in unity as the structure within which future development of the K-96 Corridor will happen. ***Section VII: Implementation*** will provide a compiled list of those action items necessary to create the structure outlined in this section.

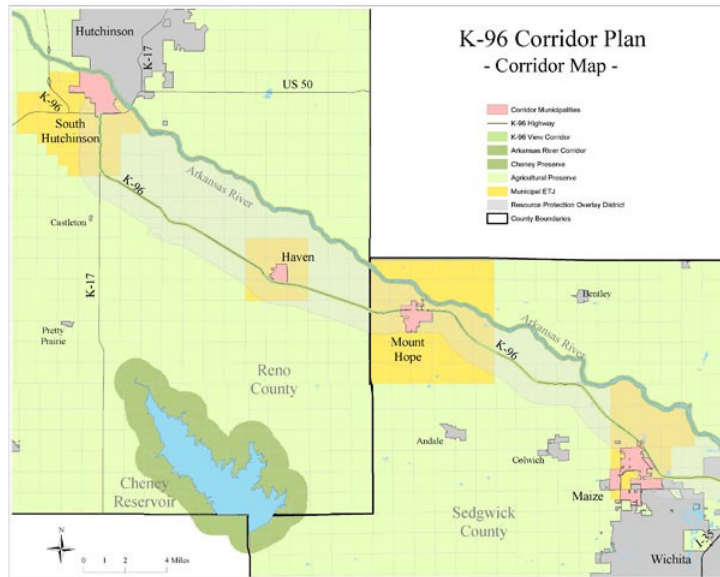
### ***DEVELOPMENT PATTERN***

Future development within the corridor should be concentrated around the existing municipalities. There are numerous reasons for a nodal future development structure. The primary reason for developing in a nodal pattern, however, is the more efficient use of resources including infrastructure and land.

#### ***Efficiency & Economy***

The development temptation along a primary travel corridor like K-96 is to “strip” development along the length of the corridor. In particular, increased development along the corridor and at every intersections of similar routes is a modern day practice.

This temptation must be overcome to achieve the desired goals and vision for the corridor as defined by this plan.



**Figure 5-1: Corridor Structure**

The ability to use existing infrastructure investments is a key component and benefit of a nodal development pattern. The existing infrastructure systems within each of the municipalities along the corridor provide resources that can be utilized. The water and sewer systems in each of the municipalities currently have excess capacity to accommodate additional development. The use of the existing infrastructure systems is an additional benefit to the overall corridor as well.

Reduced cost of development can be realized by not having

to extend infrastructure into undeveloped areas of the county. These cost saving benefits can be used to entice development or be used to accomplish other goals of the plan, such as beautification or enhanced development design.

### *Agricultural Preservation*

An identified goal for the corridor was that of agricultural preservation. The *Nodal Clusters* concept will assist in achieving this goal. Directing development to the existing municipalities results in a more efficient use of land. A nodal development pattern encourages concentration of development and discourages encroachment on the agricultural resources of the corridor. The land that exists in the K-96 corridor and region are comprised of a unique soil structure that provides some of the best croplands in the United States. This irreplaceable resource should be protected and preserved for future generations.

### *Competition*

A perceived negative associated with a nodal development pattern is the competition for development that is created. The individual municipalities within the corridor desire development to grow and prosper. Development in the corridor should be competitive; however, it should be “friendly” competition and collaboration that benefits the corridor as a whole. The competition issue, a common thread throughout the development structure of the corridor, is being addressed within this plan.

### ***ONE CORRIDOR***

The creation of the K-96 Corridor Study Coalition is evidence that the participants realize their common interest in the future development of the K-96 Corridor. This continued common interest is an important factor in the future success of the corridor. While competition among participants is expected, it should, first and foremost occur within the context of benefiting the corridor. In addition to “friendly” competition, there are other corridor activities that should be accomplished in unity. These activities include marketing the corridor, protecting the scenic nature of the corridor, regulating development within the floodplain, and agricultural preservation within and adjoining the corridor.

### *Marketing the Corridor*

The assets of the corridor, in their entirety, should be marketed to prospective businesses and developers. A united effort to attract business will be necessary to develop the corridor in the manner prescribed by this plan. Each of the counties and municipalities has unique characteristics that make it attractive to development. While these characteristics are important to the individual entities in the corridor, they provide an advantage to the entire corridor when combined. While competitive advantages exist within the corridor, it is the combined competitive advantage of the entire corridor that will assist in attracting significant development. Assets and characteristics

that should be marketed address many of the goals of the Coalition and the plan. They include:

- ◆ Quality of Life (small town)
  - ◆ Inter-jurisdictional Cooperation
  - ◆ Accessibility of Corridor
  - ◆ Educated Workforce
  - ◆ Scenic Nature of Corridor
  - ◆ Proximity of Corridor to:
    - Population
    - Amenities
    - Transportation (Airport, Rail, Interstate)
  - ◆ Traffic Volumes
  - ◆ Existing Infrastructure
  - ◆ Housing Opportunities (economic diversity)
- ◆ Recreational Opportunities (Arkansas River & Cheney Reservoir)
- ◆ All communities have existing land and buildings available for development
- ◆ Excellent educational system with highly ranked secondary school systems with access to six college/university level systems within 30 miles of the corridor cities/counties



***Corridor CO-OP***

#### *Agricultural Preservation*

It is accepted that the K-96 corridor, with its proximity to Wichita and Hutchinson, is ripe for development. In addition to the potential for commercial and industrial development, it should be remembered that the corridor currently has an established industry. Agriculture and farming have been a way of life along this corridor since the area was settled. Agricultural land, with its unique soil structure, offers some of the

best agricultural opportunities in the Midwest and United States. Such a valuable resource should be protected from random, unorganized development. To protect the agricultural land and its value to the community, there are several different methods that the corridor can employ.

Zoning is the simplest method in which the land could be protected from unwanted development. Zoning the rural agricultural land to a designation that does not allow development, other than farm housing and accessory buildings that support farming operations, offers a modest level of protection. Alternatively, providing a zoning designation that promotes the clustering of development in a smaller area to protect the agricultural resource is another option. Zoning, however, can be more easily changed than other options.

A tool called “transfer of development rights” is a method that could also be used. Generally, the development potential of a property is bought and “transferred” to a different parcel, which allows a higher density or intensity of development. To utilize this tool, a program must be established that identifies the specific areas that can transfer rights and the areas that can receive transferred rights. A transfer of development rights program can be established by a local (city or county) jurisdiction and is administered by the same. It should be noted that a transfer of development rights program is a legal process that affects the development of land in perpetuity, and it should be thoroughly researched and evaluated prior to being established.



***Corridor Agriculture***

Another option to protect the future of agricultural land is the creation of an “agricultural preservation easement.” An agricultural preservation easement typically prohibits the future non-agricultural

development of land. Unlike a transfer of development rights, an agricultural easement does not relocate the development rights to another parcel of land. The development rights remain with the property however they are unusable during the length of the agricultural easement. An easement can be in perpetuity or written for a specific period of time. Similar to a transfer of development rights, agricultural easements are legal contracts that are established. An agricultural easement is very similar to a "conservation easement" and is established and administered in the same manner, typically by the local jurisdiction. The use of this tool should be researched and evaluated prior to establishment.

#### *Scenic View Corridor*

The K-96 Corridor is not currently littered with signage and billboards. It is a goal of this plan to protect the scenic nature of the corridor and its small towns. One method in which this can be accomplished is to have the corridor officially designated as "scenic." There are two different options in obtaining this, including state or federal designation. The designation of a scenic highway will have multiple implications for future development. The aspects that are regulated by the designation can include:

- ◆ Land uses and density of development;
- ◆ Land and site planning;
- ◆ Outdoor advertising (billboards);
- ◆ Attention to earthwork and landscaping;  
and
- ◆ Design and appearance of structures and equipment.

The Kansas Department of Transportation has a "scenic byways" program established for the state. Currently there are six designated state byways. Similarly the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, National Scenic Byways Program establishes "America's Byways," a national designation. Currently there are no American

Byways in Kansas. The potential for official designation should be investigated and pursued as a method to protect the scenic nature of the corridor.

### *Floodplain Regulation*

The Arkansas River represents an important influence along the K-96 Corridor. In addition to the river's scenic qualities, it represents a significant natural resource that needs to be protected. The Arkansas River is an important segment of the natural drainage pattern of the area that serves the region. Also, the importance of the river to regional ecological systems is immeasurable. To protect such a valuable resource, appropriate steps should be taken.

Floodplain protection tools, similar to those for agricultural preservation and scenic view protection, are available. Zoning that severely restricts or prohibits development within the floodplain is a moderately effective tool. A floodplain overlay district is another zoning tool that addresses development within and adjacent to the floodplain. The most appropriate tools should be studied and considered to provide the protection desired for the corridor.

### *Summary*

The future success of the corridor can benefit from a united approach to future decisions. The ability to market all of the assets of the corridor is a benefit to all entities in their pursuit of business and development. Additionally, businesses interested in the corridor will see the advantage of locating within an area that local participants have planned for its future development. The desire of the community to protect natural resources and the natural beauty of the corridor is an asset that will appeal to potential businesses and their employees interested in locating along K-96. The development framework that is established by this plan can offer a "peace of mind" to potential developers about the future of the corridor and the quality environment that will be established.

### ***PLANNING REGULATIONS***

The difference in planning regulations across the corridor provides an unstable environment to address development within the corridor. To level the playing field and potentially make development within the corridor simpler, a unified or compatible series of development regulations should be adopted. The adoption of planning regulations should begin with the adoption of this plan by both counties and all municipalities as a part of their long-range planning efforts. The adoption of this plan will signify the continued dedication to the corridor, as well as establish the general planning and development framework for the corridor.



***Corridor Industry***

### ***Zoning***

To implement the recommendations of this plan, appropriate zoning regulations need to be implemented. Ideally, each county and municipality would have similar zoning regulations to manage the development within the corridor. A necessary first step is the adoption of zoning in the southeast section of Reno County. One manner in which zoning could be implemented on a corridor-wide basis is the creation of a new zoning code, which could address the limits of the corridor.

A more efficient manner of managing growth and development within the corridor may be the creation of a "K-96 Corridor Resource Protection Overlay" district. The overlay district should be designed to regulate development similar to a typical zoning category. Elements covered by an overlay district could include use, height, bulk, and mass of buildings, setbacks, design, parking, and amenities. The overlay district would be prescribed for all development for certain areas in which the regulations would apply. Municipalities and counties could adopt the overlay district, regardless of their underlying zoning regulations.

Additionally, the resource protection overlay district should incorporate agricultural, floodplain, and scenic protection overlay ordinances. Each of the overlay elements could be tailored to address the specific issues and goals identified in this plan.

#### *Formalize Coalition*

Under Kansas State statutes (§12-744) the ability to form regional planning commissions exists. An inclusive commission, with equal representation of those impacted could be formed to oversee the future development of the K-96 Corridor. The municipalities and counties represented in this planning study did not desire the loss of decision making power that would occur with the creation of a regional commission. Specifically, those involved valued the ability for the individual entities to make decisions regarding land use and development for themselves. However, they did see the importance of continued involvement of the group that was responsible for the creation of the corridor plan.

The participants felt that the "K-96 Corridor Coalition" should incorporate as a non-profit corporation to enhance its legitimacy and permanency. The coalition should assist in coordinating the implementation of these goals and recommendations and annually report to its membership the status of these efforts. The Coalition should serve as a resource and provide support, as requested, to the county's economic development organizations through a unified marketing effort that complements each community's individual efforts.

Additionally, the "K-96 Corridor Coalition" will remain and have an advisory role to the municipalities and counties within the corridor. The coalition will be responsible for the review of planning and development proposals within the corridor and make recommendations to the appropriate governing body. Any actions taken or recommendations made on a development proposal would be advisory in nature and

carry no legal authority. The coalition would adopt this plan as their guiding document. The goal of the coalition is to better assure equality across the corridor and design quality in the regulation of development.

A detailed process of formalizing the K-96 Corridor Study Coalition can be found in ***Section VII: Getting it Done***, in this plan.

The ability to accommodate and manage future growth within the corridor is the basic premise of this planning effort. Specifically, the planning process was engaged to protect the assets that the corridor has and to attract development that enhances the economy and the physical nature of the corridor. The three most important elements that need to be addressed in achieving the vision for the future are a sustainable development pattern, cooperation among represented entities, and providing balanced development regulations across the corridor. The policy recommendations that have been outlined in this chapter include a nodal development pattern, corridor cooperation efforts, and subsequent planning regulation address these elements.