

Memorandum



To: Planning and Zoning Commission
From: Rita Trapp and Kendra Ellner, Consulting Planners
Subject: Imagine Waukee 2040 Update Project
Date: May 9, 2025

Introduction

HKGi was rehired by the City of Waukee to update the Imagine Waukee 2040 plan, which was adopted in 2019. Over the past six years the city has experienced significant growth, necessitating this update to ensure the plan reflects current and future community needs. The intent of the update is to confirm or update the community's vision, guiding principles, and directions for topics such as housing, land use, transportation, community facilities, and more. As part of the initial task for the project, HKGi is in the midst of gathering existing condition data through community engagement activities, in-person and virtual listening sessions, and drafting a new Community Context report that reflects more recent data.

Project Approach

HKGi has developed a schedule and approach for updating the Imagine Waukee 2040 Plan which includes key deliverables aimed at enabling the development of the final updated plan for adoption in the first quarter of 2026. A summary of the project scope tasks are outlined below:

Task 1 - Build an Understanding: HKGi will gather foundational data and information on the existing conditions of the community since the 2019 plan. This task will involve initial community engagement activities and stakeholder listening sessions to gauge community perceptions, issues, and opportunities in the community. HKGi will also be in the community for a two-day visit that encompasses a city tour, hosting the in-person listening sessions including separate group discussions with developers, Council, and City staff. The information collected through this task will inform the Community Context report and the foundation of rest the plan update process.

Task 2 - Exploration of Ideas and Directions: Building on the information from Task 1, HKGi will identify key themes to prioritize for the update. These themes will be used to the explore scenarios, strategies and potential policy directions for each chapter. A joint meeting with P&Z Commission and Council will lead us to desired concepts for framing the plan update. Community outreach and stakeholder discussions will be continued as needed to identify gaps or confirm objectives.

Task 3 - Identify and Prioritize Actions: From the key themes and concepts identified in Task 2, action items will be outlined to support the needs of implementation. HKGi will explore any new tools, resources, and organization of the actions.

Task 4- Prepare the updated plan: All the efforts from the previous tasks will allow us to formalize a draft of the updated plan. There will be an opportunity for the community to provide feedback on the content of the plan. HKGi will summarize the comments received and address them in the next draft iteration to reach a final draft for adoption.

Task 5- Adoption: The updated plan final draft and meeting materials will be prepared for adoption. All the deliverables and data will be presented back to the city.

Community Engagement

Community engagement will shape and guide the development of the plan update with feedback being sought from the public, stakeholders, City staff, and elected officials or board members. Staff and the consultant team are currently preparing two opportunities for providing feedback: 1) a community survey and 2) an issue/opportunity mapping exercise. P&Z Commission are encouraged to share the project information and opportunities for participation when it is released to the public. Throughout the process there will be project updates and many more opportunities for the community to engage.

Planning Commission Input

In addition to community input opportunities, a Comprehensive Plan Audit has been created for the P&Z Commission, City Council, and City Staff to assist in evaluating the usability, gaps, and relevance of the existing Imagine Waukee 2040 plan. This Comprehensive Plan Audit will be sent separately for commissioners to complete. In preparation for the upcoming meeting, please consider these discussion questions:

1. What topics do you think should be addressed through the plan update?
2. What is your perception on the current development and growth in Waukee?
3. What recent development trends have you observed that should be considered in the plan update?
4. What recent P&Z Commission cases you have found to be challenging and why (i.e. variances, rezonings, plats etc.)?
5. What concerns are you hearing or experiencing in the community regarding development?
6. Are there ways for the city to improve communications and transparency about the development process?
7. What uses are needed or desired in the community?

Initial Findings

Through the initial project understanding up to this point, HKGi has begun identifying patterns that may help inform the plan update. The current Imagine Waukee 2040 plan is organized into nine chapters, with the community vision and guiding principles defining the values of the community. There are six major chapters encompassing key topics such as housing, land use, transportation, parks and recreation, etc. Each of these topic chapters includes an overview, detailed content related

to the topic, and related goals, policies, and actions. The goals, policies, and actions are grouped together to assist in the implementation process, with each topic having different scales of goals, policies, and actions. With the fast-paced growth of the community, the aim of the project is to uncover which items have been accomplished, which are still relevant, and what is not working to be redefined in the plan update.

Since the Imagine Waukee 2040 plan adoption the city has demonstrated a strong commitment to transparency and proactive planning. The following seven supplemental plans have been adopted since 2019: the Major Streets Plan, Street Design Guide, Neighborhood Design Guidelines, Northwest Neighborhood Area Plan Phase 1, Civic Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, and Trails Master Plan. This demonstrates the City's investment in all topic areas for improvements and best practices. HKGi is looking forward to visiting and learning more from the community.