



INVITING

PLACES

Our vision for Lenexa is to be a community full of places with beauty, social offerings and openness that draw people to them.



THE VISION: INVITING PLACES

Lenexans want inviting places designed for interaction that have both a strong sense of community and a positive image, as well as a unique setting, activities and uses that collectively add up to something more than the sum of its parts.

STRATEGIES

We strive to be recognized as one of the most liveable places by America by:

1. Creating welcoming gateways.
2. Creating inspiring places that are flexible, connected and sustainable.
3. Activating public places, commercial spaces and neighborhoods.

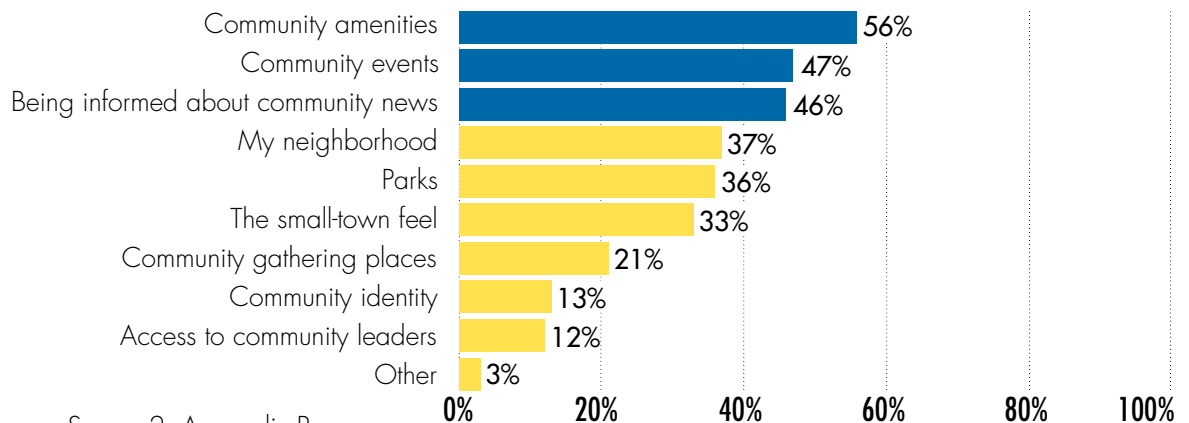


OVERALL CONTEXT

- *Money Magazine* has named Lenexa one of the best places to live. Thirty-three parks connected by 37 miles of multiuse trails are filled with activities and festivals, drawing people to them nearly every weekend.
- The Project for Public Spaces researched successful public places around the world and found that they have four essential qualities:
 - » They are accessible to people of all ages, incomes, mobility and ability.
 - » People are engaged in activities; there are at least 10 things to do.
 - » Spaces are comfortable and has a good image.
 - » They are sociable places, where people meet each other and take guests.
- Lenexa’s system of beautiful, inviting parks and public spaces with dynamic programming meet the criteria of successful public places because the parks are accessible, have activity offerings, are comfortable, present a good image and are places where people meet.
- Lenexans want to maintain their strong sense of community and “small-town atmosphere with the best of city life.” Keeping a sense of place, identity and culture can be challenging in a growing and changing community. People desire places that celebrate nature, the arts, culture and creativity to create that sense of community.

We surveyed Lenexans about what things make them feel connected to the community. Their responses are below.

What makes you feel connected to our community?



SOURCE: Where to Focus — Survey 2. Appendix B

STRATEGY 1: WELCOMING GATEWAYS

Integrating sustainable, unique gathering places, green spaces, the arts and historical and cultural assets throughout neighborhoods, commercial developments, public parks and facilities takes Lenexa from one of the best places to live to a new level.



CONTEXT

Gateways create a sense of arrival to Lenexa. As a first impression, they should tell a story about Lenexa's culture, history and inclusiveness. Public art along corridors or incorporated into infrastructure can create a sense of arrival to a special place.

Lenexa's corridors are major reinvestment opportunities positioned for long-term financial prosperity. Transform them from simply "a way of getting somewhere" to a community space to "go to," a place to meet friends and neighbors and a place to catch up on what's happening.

TACTICS

We can create welcoming gateways and corridors by:

- Creating a sense that you have arrived in Lenexa through installation of branded features.
 - » Implementing Lenexa's gateway signage plan.
 - » Installing wayfinding signage that helps people of all ages and abilities navigate through Lenexa.
- Transforming major corridors into thriving places.
 - » Reviewing Lenexa's existing codes and regulations to make them more flexible for redevelopment and infill development.
 - » Supporting quality, flexible design of buildings and an innovative mix of land uses to appropriately integrate them into the community.
 - » Incorporating public art into gateways and corridors.



Lenexa City Center features branded entryway signs to let visitors know they have arrived in the neighborhood.

STRATEGY 2: INSPIRING, CONNECTED, FLEXIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE SPACES

The key to creating inviting places is connecting people, businesses and neighborhoods through the community's geography and history. This includes designing central green space and gathering places into business areas as they develop and redevelop, and building partnerships with businesses to encourage facility and landscape improvements.

Inspiring places also incorporate elements such as public art, striped crosswalks, pedestrian havens and public recreational features. To be sustainable, these places could also have green construction, energy-efficient buildings and be able to be transformed into different uses in the future.



CONTEXT

Technology connects us but can also make people feel more isolated from each other. People seek places to experience life together. The proliferation of online shopping is changing the types of retail development people are seeking. Warehouses will be retooled as high-tech fulfillment centers. Driverless vehicles will change the parking needs in these developments. Changing weather patterns and climate instability will likely drive up the cost of water and electricity, inciting more efficient buildings.

Lenexa's commercial and industrial spaces will need to be inviting, connected to neighborhoods and parks, adaptable and green to compete in the global economy.

The best way to bring in an innovative workforce is to offer high-quality places. Talented workers are the engines of community innovation, whether from the inside of companies where they spearhead new ideas and spin off new divisions, or through

entrepreneurship, forming their own enterprises and creating jobs. The places people work should cultivate and attract innovation.

Places thrive when users have a range of reasons to be there. Ideally, some of these activities will be unique to that place, reflecting the culture and history of the surrounding community. Including reasons other than just shopping and working will make commercial spaces more of an experience, attracting successful companies to expand or locate here.

Lenexa will be even more attractive to residents, visitors and investors with many different inviting places or nodes, making these places more resilient as consumer and worker preferences evolve over the next 20 years.

TACTICS

We plan to create inspiring places that are flexible, connected and sustainable by:

- Creating inviting places that connect people, businesses and neighborhoods by reflecting the community's culture, geography and history.
 - » Addressing physical barriers such as major highways and at-grade railroad crossings.
 - » Connecting Old Town, the Community Center and surrounding neighborhoods with a pedestrian crossing over the railroad.
 - » Designing gathering places into business areas.
 - » Connecting people to nearby businesses from home or work.
- Encouraging businesses to beautify their buildings and surrounding landscape to make the space more inviting.
 - » Focusing on low-cost, high-impact improvements such as seating, outdoor cafés, public art, striping of crosswalks, community gardens and murals.
 - » Implementing temporary and permanent public art features in public and commercial places.

INSPIRING PLACES: OLD TOWN



Lenexans have a special place in their hearts for Old Town, and they want to preserve its historic character, energize its economic activity and continue to ensure it is a community gathering place.

CONCEPT: PEDESTRIAN CROSSING IN OLD TOWN



Better connectivity throughout Old Town and surrounding neighborhoods includes enhanced pedestrian amenities, improved railroad crossings, integrated bicycle facilities and interpretive features to reflect the area's unique history.

Other areas can benefit from connection, too. Ideas include building a central gathering space in all commercial developments to create a sense of community, or taking advantage of Lenexa's extensive trail network to connect people to parks, neighborhoods and businesses.

CONCEPT: PUBLIC ART AS PLACEMAKING



(LEFT) In Houston, Texas, public art is placed between the roadway and sidewalks to create a sense of separation and safety. (RIGHT) Seattle's knitting trees demonstrate that public art doesn't have to be an expensive investment and can even be temporary to create a magical sense of place.

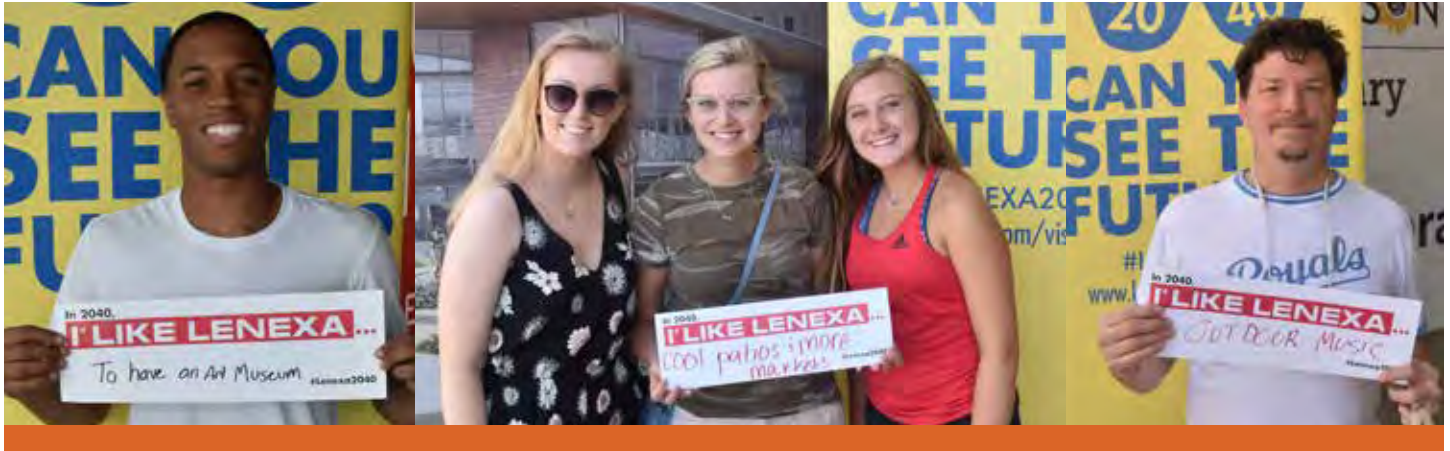
CONCEPT: SPLASH PAD

When Lenexans were asked what they'd like Lenexa to have in 2040, one of the more popular suggestions was a splash pad. This water feature is perfect for a more urban setting like a retail area adjacent to green space or outdoor seating because it doesn't require a lot of space. A splash pad feature can attract families to retail spaces. Informal play at a splash pad can enhance social connections and improve the mental and physical health of children.



STRATEGY 3: ACTIVATING PLACES

We can take the success of large-scale festivals, like the Lenexa Chili Challenge and Great Lenexa BBQ Battle, and small-scale recreational and cultural programming and adapt it to make our public places come alive. We can create a critical mass of activity in neighborhood nodes to help support retail centers, foster healthy social settings and provide a feeling of familiarity and security so that people want to be in those spaces throughout the year.



CONTEXT

Lenexans would like to see more:

- Live performances — music, art and theater
- Food trucks
- Outdoor movies
- Activities for kids of all ages
- Classes
- Public art

They would like to see these things not just in parks and public facilities, but also in Old Town and other neighborhood nodes.

TACTICS

We will activate public places, commercial spaces and neighborhoods by:

- Working with businesses to create regular pop-up events in their spaces.
 - » Incorporating kids' activities and intergenerational activities.
 - » Creating a speaker series.
 - » Offering something different to connect people together in a variety of fun, interactive and exciting ways.
 - » Including a range of reasons to be in the space: a place to gather, art to touch, music to hear, food to eat, history to experience and people to meet.
- Fostering the development of an outdoor music venue in Old Town.
- Supporting partnerships and educational programs that celebrate diversity.
- Encouraging block parties and neighborhood get-togethers that activate smaller geographic areas through grants and donated services.
- Investing in adequate staffing and using volunteers to plan and coordinate events.
- Incorporating innovative recreational features and attractions such as splash parks and public art.
- Continuing to support festivals and activities throughout the city, including City Center, Old Town and city parks.

