

The De Soto Area CHAT Report

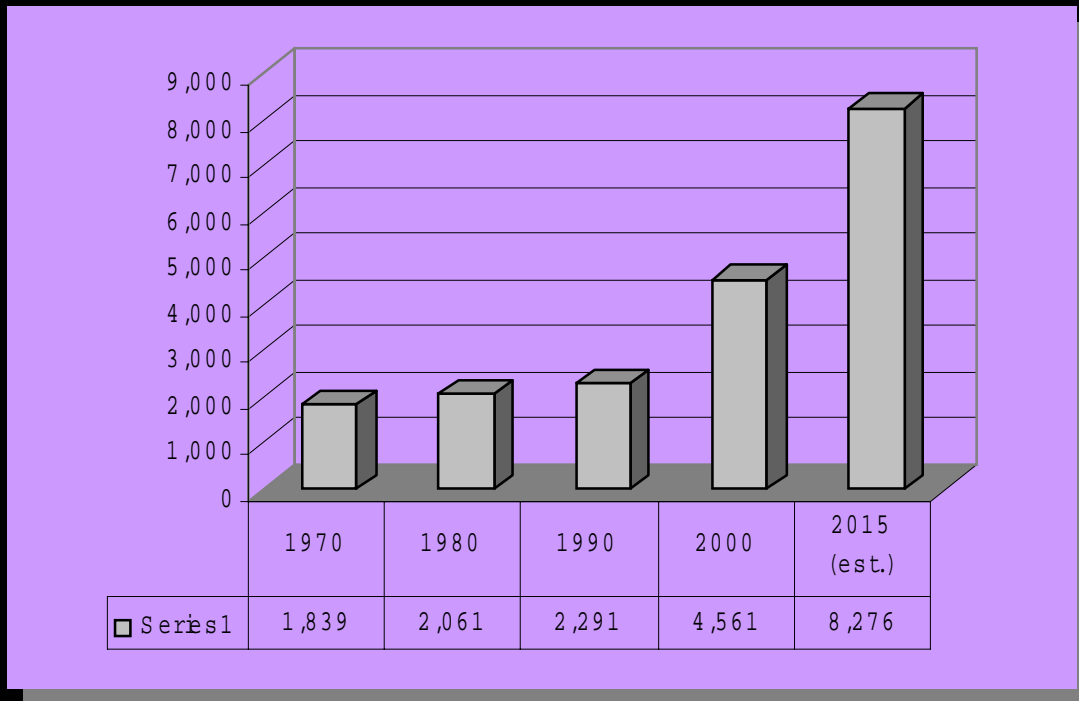
Community Housing Assessment Team

Martin H. Shukert, AICP

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Population Change

De Soto



Source: US Census, RDG Planning & Design

- De Soto's population has increased dramatically since 1990. Before this the city experienced a more gradual growth pattern.

- De Soto's annual growth rate has been comparable to other suburban communities in Johnson County over the past 20 years.

- Some of the growth during the 1990s is the result of annexation, the largest of which involved Clearview City. Based on construction patterns during the 1990s, the 2000 population, excepting annexed areas, was in the range of 3,900. This corresponds to an annual growth rate of about 5.46%.

Population Change: 1960-2000

	Change in Population	% Growth During Decade	Annual Growth Rate
1960-1970	568	44.7%	3.8%
1970-1980	222	12.1%	1.1%
1980-1990	230	11.2%	1.1%
1990-2000	2,270	99.1%	7.1%
1990-2000 (controlled for annexation)	1,600	69.8%	5.5%
Total, 1960-2000	3,290	258.9%	3.2%

Population Change by Age

	1990(%)	2000 (%)	Change
Under 15	533 (23.3)	1190 (26.1)	+657(123.3%)
15-19	182 (7.9)	312 (6.8)	+130(71.4%)
20-24	113 (4.9)	256 (5.6)	+143(126.5%)
25-34	385 (16.8)	697 (15.3)	+312(81.0%)
35-44	352 (15.4)	784 (17.2)	+432(122.7%)
45-54	264(11.5)	588 (12.9)	+324(122.7%)
55-64	200 (8.7)	365 (8.0)	+165(82.5%)
65-74	149 (6.5)	200 (4.4)	+51(34.2%)
75-84	90 (3.9)	118 (2.6)	+28(31.1%)
85 and Over	23 (1.0)	51 (1.1)	+28(121.7%)
Median	33.4	32.3	

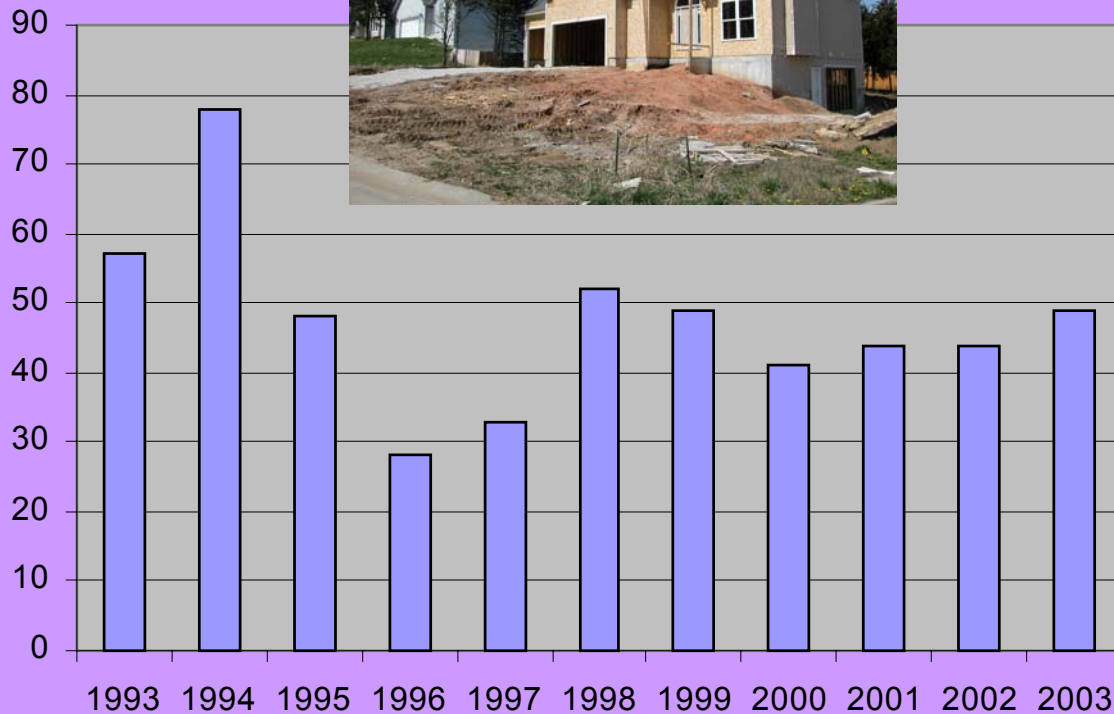
Population Change: De Soto and Johnson County

	1980	1990	2000	% Difference 1980-90	% Difference 1990-200
De Soto	2,061	2,291	4,561	11.2%	99.1%
Johnson County	270,269	355,054	451,086	31.4%	27.0%

- During the 1980s De Soto experienced moderate growth, but at a slower rate than the rest of the county.
- During the 1990s De Soto's growth rate substantially exceeded that of the county (partially because of its much smaller base). However, this suggests that the city began capturing regional growth in the Kansas City metro area. This pattern should continue over the next ten to fifteen years.

Housing Construction

1993-2003



- De Soto has experienced a steady construction rate during the last ten years, averaging 52 single-family units annually.

- The US Census Bureau indicates that the city has increased the total number of housing units by 864 or 86 units annually from 1990 to 2000, exceeding the new construction rate of that period. Some of this excess is accounted for by the annexation of Clearview City during the 1990s.

Source: City of Clinton

Population Forecast

	2000	2004 (estimate)	2010 Forecast	2015 Forecast
0% Migration	4,561	4,656	4,780	4,875
Average Construction Rate (3.23%)	4,561	5,061	6,147	6,967
1990s Adjusted Growth Rate (5.5%)	4,561	5,061	6,978	9,120
1990s Overall Growth Rate (7.1%)	4,561	5,061	7,638	10,762

• In determining the 10 year population growth for De Soto, we begin with natural population change as a base. Without additional development or migration, De Soto's current population will produce a population of about 4,875 by 2015.

• De Soto has experienced a fairly steady residential construction rate since 1990. Continuing that rate will produce a population of just under 7,000 by 2015. This could be viewed as a status quo projection.

Population Forecast

	2000	2004 (estimate)	2010 Forecast	2015 Forecast
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Average Construction Rate (3.23%)	4,561	5,061	6,147	6,967
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•During the 1990s, De Soto grew at a rate of about 5.5% controlling for annexation. Continuing this rate from 2004, we project a 2015 population of about 9,120.

• More rapid development can produce a population approaching 11,000. This uses the city's overall growth rate during the 1990s.

•Our model for housing potential will use the adjusted 1990s growth rate.

The Forecasting Process



- Use population forecast, recent construction activity and assumptions about people per household generate ten-year overall housing demand.
- Consider the distribution of household income in De Soto.
- Match income ranges with affordability price points, based on housing costs equal to 30% of adjusted gross income.
- Define price breakouts for new housing demand, based on the assumption that new construction should ideally be affordable to the existing household income distribution.

Ten-Year Development Projection, De Soto

	2004-2010	2010-2015	Total
Population at End of Period	6978	9120	
HH Population at End of Period	6978	9120	
Average PPH	2.78	2.78	
HH Demand at End of Period	2510	3281	
Projected Vacancy Rate	5.09	5.09	
Unit Needs at End of Period	2644	3456	
Replacement Need	18	18	36
Cumulative Need During Period	744	825	1569
Average Annual Construction	124	165	142

- Housing demand is based on a replacement need of 6 units annually. Vacancy and population per household are held constant – assumptions that are conservative and result in lower statistical demand.

- This analysis suggests a demand for about 142 units annually, or over twice the city's current output. This could increase substantially.

Income Distributions and Housing Affordability Ranges

Income Range	Number of Households	Affordable Range for Owner Units	Number of Owner Units	Affordable Range for Renter Units	Number of Renter Units	Total Affordable Units	Balance
\$0-25,000	348	\$0-50,000	40	\$0-400	172	212	-136
\$25-49,999	550	\$50,000-99,999	291	\$400-800	392	683	133
	366	\$100,000-149,999	343	\$800-1,250	0	343	-23
\$75-99,999	221	\$150,000-200,000	202	\$1,250-1,500	0	202	-19
\$100-149,999	103	\$200,000-300,00	176	\$1,500-2,500	0	176	73
\$150,000+	54	\$300,000+	26	2,500+	0	26	-28
Median Household Income \$46,426							

Source: RDG Planning & Design

- De Soto has a shortage of housing in the lowest price range, and a shortage for those households with incomes between \$50,000 and \$100,000.
- As of the 2000 census the city lacked rental units with prices over \$800.

Ten-Year Housing Development Program, De Soto

	2004-2009	2010-2015	Total
Total Need	1,102	1,633	2,735
Total Owner Occupied	716	1,061	1,777
Affordable Low: Under \$100,000	105	156	261
Affordable Moderate: \$100-150,000	199	295	494
Moderate Market: \$150-225,000	203	301	503
High Market: \$225-300,000	122	181	304
High End: Over \$300,000	87	128	215
Total Renter Occupied	386	572	958
Assisted: Less than \$500	98	146	244
Affordable: \$500-700	151	224	375
Market: Over \$700	136	202	338

•About 19% (about 43 units annually) of the city’s owner-occupied housing demand is for houses priced over \$225,000. However, in a metropolitan economy, people may tend to move where housing is available, potentially lending market support for more units.

•De Soto has a need for about 619 affordable rental units during the next 12 years, based on current income distribution. However, the city is lacking market rate units with a demand for over 330 units.

Ten-Year Housing Development Program, De Soto

	2004-2009	2010-2015	Total
Total Need	744	825	1,569
Total Owner Occupied	521	578	1,099
Affordable Low: Under \$100,000	77	85	162
Affordable Moderate: \$100-150,000	145	161	306
Moderate Market: \$150-225,000	148	164	312
High Market: \$225-300,000	89	99	188
High End: Over \$300,000	63	70	133
Total Renter Occupied	223	247	470
Assisted: Less than \$500	57	63	120
Affordable: \$500-700	87	97	184
Market: Over \$700	79	87	166

- This program is based on the current distribution of incomes in De Soto.
- The largest demand for new owner-occupied units is in the range of \$150,000 to \$225,000. The city does have a significant demand in cost ranges below \$150,000.
- The city exhibits significant demand for rental housing at all ranges, although assisted or low rents account for a relatively small amount of this total demand. This could grow if obsolete units leave the housing supply.

Housing Resources and Assets

- The K-10 Corridor and Regional Access
- Active Production Market
- The Luxury of Self-Determination
- Quality Industry
- Excellent Schools
- Geographic Character
- Quality Recent Development
- Mobilization for Action
- Community Quality Features
- Jurisdictional Control

The K-10 Corridor and Regional Access

De Soto is located strategically on the K-10 Corridor, nationally noted for its status as a knowledge and technology corridor and as an example of innovative advance planning. This status makes the corridor a major employment generator and provides De Soto with excellent regional transportation access and connections to other parts of the Kansas City metropolitan area.

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Active Production Market

De Soto and the surrounding area experience active builder involvement that generates a substantial amount of housing annually. Since 1991, the city has produced a stable average of about 50 units annually, and experienced accelerating growth after many years of relatively slow growth. Even controlling for annexation, these growth characteristics indicate a community whose opportunity has come to participate fully in Johnson County's growth.

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The Luxury of Self-Determination

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he growth context of the K-10 corridor and Johnson County give De Soto the opportunity to define its own future. In a way, K-10 is like a pipe full of flowing water. Within reasonable limits, the city can determine its size and character by deciding how wide to open the faucet. The challenge is in finding the balance between costs (financial and otherwise) and benefits.

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Quality Industry

Although it considers itself a “bedroom” community, De Soto has been unusually successful at attracting an enviable core of high quality, clean industries. These include Huhtamaki, Intervet, Mr. Goodcents R&D, Custom Foods, Engineered Air, and Rehrig Pacific. These industries are diverse, relatively inelastic economically, employ a range of staff from production employees to Ph.D.’s, and maintain extremely attractive sites that establish a tone of quality.

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Excellent Schools

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The De Soto School District is nationally recognized for excellence, and benefits locally from its superb physical facilities. The district also incorporates parts of Shawnee, Lenexa and Olathe, ensuring that De Soto as a municipality remains educationally competitive with any town in Johnson County.

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Geographic Character

De Soto enjoys a varied, wooded environment, creating a sense of country living in the town. This environment, created by the Kansas River and the valleys of Cedar and Kill Creeks, provides texture and definition to various parts of the city, and differs from either the gradually rolling surrounding prairie or the built-up nature of adjacent suburban cities.

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Quality Recent Development

De Soto benefits from excellent recent residential development that is helping to redefine the city's image. These projects include Oak Country Estates, surrounding its picturesque and very visible golf course; Timber Trails and Timberlake; and Cherished Oaks. While not unusual in design, they respond well to their geographic settings and include attractive homes.

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Mobilization for Action

De Soto has taken several strategic steps to position itself to address significant community issues. These actions include:

- Completing a new comprehensive plan in 2004. While this document did not resolve all issues about the future direction of the city, it did focus the debate.
- Commissioning sewer and water master plans.
- Designating Old Town as a Revitalization Area, offering economic incentives such as tax rebates and an excise tax exemption.

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Community Quality Features

De Soto markets itself as a full-service town that includes the institutions and features that support the life of a community. The city has several special attributes that can be developed or extensively marketed as strong image features, including the:

- Kill Creek valley and greenway.
- Kansas Riverfront.
- Historic farm on Kill Creek Road
- Adjacent school campuses
- Town center and nearby Miller Park

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Jurisdictional Control

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hrough its annexation program of the 1990s, De Soto has incorporated a large amount of open land within its corporate limits, most notably extensive areas north of 95th Street to the east and west. This gives the city substantial control over its adjacent urban growth area. However, the Urban Service Area designated by the comprehensive plan extends farther to the southeast.

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Strategic Issues and Opportunities

- Community Future
- The Rooftop/Business Dichotomy
- Sewers and Infrastructure Issues
- Binary Community
- Operations Costs and Low Density
- Image
- Housing Market Gaps
- Housing Deterioration in Old Town
- Redevelopment Capacity
- Development Fees
- Sunflower

Community Future

Despite recent completion of a new comprehensive plan, the debate about the future configuration of De Soto appears unresolved. These questions address the ultimate size of the city; the type and cost of housing that is developed; the balance between residential, commercial, and industrial/business park development; and the dichotomy and sometimes conflict between individual and community values. The Arbor Ridge debate seems to have crystallized some of these issues. The swimming pool bond issue is another fundamental test.

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Community Future

Residents of De Soto clearly want to be different from Lenexa and Olathe, viewed as places with relatively continuous subdivision development. They see the texture and country quality of the town as part of a distinctive brand. However, the question of how to balance and maintain character and manageable growth remains open and difficult. The current infrastructure master plan efforts will address the technical and perhaps financial implications of alternative patterns, but cannot really address the broader issue of the future form of the community.

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Rooftop/Business Dichotomy

Some in De Soto have tended to view business development as a revenue producer and residential development as a revenue consumer. This has tended to favor a policy of encouraging business and industrial development over residential and population growth. However, communities achieve significant benefits from providing both significant industrial development and supportive housing environments. These benefits include property tax revenues; a greater population base that generates supporting local retail demand with moderately greater local sales tax revenues; attraction and retention of long-term resident households; and a greater ability to develop community leadership.

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Sewers and Infrastructure Issues

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With the exception of new subdivisions in the northwest part of the city (Timber Trails, Timberlake, Cedar Ridge), De Soto's sanitary sewer system is largely limited to the Old Town area. As a result, most new development is on lots larger than one acre, using septic systems. This complicates the difficulty and increases the cost of extending urban services to new growth areas. In addition, De Soto's wastewater treatment plant is at capacity and much of its water supply depends on a treatment plant on the Sunflower site. The issues of community vision and infrastructure development policies are highly connected, and, in many ways, the answer to the first question dictates the solutions of the second.

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A Binary Community

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he unresolved nature of the complicated choices that De Soto faces has tended to produce a “binary” community, characterized by dichotomies with little room between them. These include:

- A relatively high-density older core versus very low-density acreage development.
- A lower-cost city housing stock versus a high-cost peripheral housing supply.
- A division between business/industrial and residential development.

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Operations Costs and Low Density

There is a connection between the cost of services and low development density. Low-density development means more length of sewers, streets, and water lines to build and maintain per unit. In addition, residents of large lot developments tend to remain urban in orientation, and typically demand city maintenance levels of their streets and infrastructure systems. A city where new growth is entirely composed of large lot development will be very expensive to operate, ultimately requiring high property tax rates.

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Image

De Soto residents report a number of image issues, that vary depending on one's familiarity with the city or residency in the metropolitan area. Some of these include:

- A lack of clear identity or brand.
- A sense of remoteness – of being “way out there” beyond the edge of developed Johnson County.
- An image a an older, somewhat run-down rural town.
- A lack of a sense of place or signature attraction

The K-10 corridor and the city's residential and industrial development can transform these perceptions.

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Housing Market Gaps

De Soto's "binary" nature appears to result in a lack of in-between or move-up housing in its market (typically a \$150,000-200,000 range). Given De Soto's current income character, this segment (adjusted for inflation) generates the largest single price point demand in the city. A failure to produce housing in this range will force some community residents either to look elsewhere for housing or to sacrifice financially to remain in De Soto. Other emerging markets may include cluster or attached housing communities with maintenance provided.

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Housing Deterioration in Old Town

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hile much of De Soto's Old Town provides very good housing in an attractive setting, many areas are obsolete, deteriorating, or unappealing to contemporary homebuyers. Some of this deteriorated housing is highly visible, affecting the image and marketability of what should be a strong image district for the city. Evidence of this is the relatively low use of Revitalization Area rebates for residential reinvestment in Old Town. Potential private redevelopers have also been discouraged by prices that make reuse economically unfeasible.

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Redevelopment Capacity

Despite the designation of Old Town as a Revitalization Area, city policy in the district has tended to be relatively passive – offering incentives to people investing in property. A more active role might involve both assembling sites and developing or partnering in projects. The city lacks mechanisms like a redevelopment authority or community development corporation that may be necessary to implement a more entrepreneurial redevelopment strategy.

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Development Fees and Costs

Builders express concern about the cost of development in De Soto. System improvement fees, tap fees, and excess taxes have a significant effect on housing costs. In addition, most development in De Soto appears to be privately financed. Development fees in the range of \$9,000 per lot, added to infrastructure costs that may typically total \$15,000 for an urban homesite, produce lot costs in the range of \$40,000 – typically requiring houses in excess of \$200,000. In addition, the application of urban street standards to rural density subdivisions appears to have a dampening effect on development in that range as well.

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Sunflower

The Sunflower Plant is an “800 pound gorilla” out in the future that can have significant impact on De Soto’s development future. Current plans to allocate 4,000 acres to residential development can generate up to 10,000 units at a gross density of 2.5 du/A, or a population in the range of 20,000-25,000. This population will ultimately create the critical mass that can generate major retail and employment demand.

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he Sunflower development can be enormously beneficial to De Soto, or could cause the town to be passed by entirely. The city must be part of the conversation, and coordinate its development and infrastructure planning (including water supply and wastewater management and treatment) carefully with the Sunflower site developers. Because actual development at Sunflower may be a decade away, an opportunity exists for careful advance planning and coordination.

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De Soto Area Housing Objectives

A housing program for De Soto should:

1. Establish consensus over the future growth vision of the city.
2. Establish a policy framework that brings about desired outcomes for each of De Soto's desired housing and community development targets.
3. Focuses on the revitalization of Old Town as a major center of opportunity and development activity.
4. Resolves sewer and water development and financing issues through the completion and implementation of infrastructure master plans.
5. Implements major community enhancements to solidify De Soto's image as a balanced community that offers quality living and working environments.

De Soto Area Housing Objectives

6. Review land development regulations to encourage desirable development outcomes. These outcomes include:
 - Flexibility that encourages innovative and amenity-rich forms of development, such as New Urbanist developments.
 - More extensive development of attached or cluster housing solutions for an empty-nester and aging baby-boomer market.
 - Regulations that apply to development in Old Town without variances or creating nonconformance.

In general, zoning regulations should encourage desirable outcomes, rather than create obstacles that must be worked around.

7. Coordinate with the planning and development of the Sunflower Plant.

A Future Growth Vision

De Soto must define its development vision - determining both how big it is likely to be and what types of development it needs to target. This vision may be derived from the quality of the place and the desire to remain an identifiable and unique community that maintains continuity with its small town roots.

Defining this growth vision, particularly in a high-growth opportunity corridor, is a fundamental question for De Soto. Many residents moved to town for its large lots and country feel. They believe that the town should retain this distinctive sense and not become another "Johnson County suburb." Yet, they also understand the exigencies of growth, and the fact that services, institutions, and even to some degree the employment base require population growth.

A Future Growth Vision

Perhaps the most appropriate growth vision for De Soto is in fact an amalgam: a town that offers a range of opportunities and settings, in fact something for all tastes. The recipe includes:

- A vital Old Town district providing the best in traditional small town living and urbanism.
- Continued large lot development, perhaps using development techniques that encourage clustering and more efficient provision of services.
- Quality subdivisions with full urban services, providing the mid-level house prices that are currently in scarce supply in the city, but are necessary to serve employers and assure that growing and maturing families can stay in the community.
- Innovative development settings, such as TND's, clusters, and planned developments with maintenance provided.

Policy Framework to Achieve Desired Outcomes

De Soto should implement and market a policy program designed to bring about desirable outcomes, producing a balanced and varied community.

Outcome	Policies
Vital Old Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Development Capacity•Rehabilitation•Site assembly and redevelopment•Financial incentives•Town center and corridor enhancements•Appropriate zoning
Acreage and large lot development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Develop intermediate subdivision standard•Cluster and “build-through” development concepts•Designation of acreage areas

Policy Framework to Achieve Desired Outcomes

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Outcome	Policies
Subdivisions with Urban Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Designation of areas for urban services•Interceptor sewer/wastewater management program
Innovative Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Fee incentives•Developer recruitment•Zoning modifications

Old Town Policies

A program to revitalize Old Town requires three components: careful and detailed planning, a redevelopment agency, and programs for plan implementation.

The necessary first step is a careful, phased redevelopment plan for the entire Old Town district, establishing:

- Potential redevelopment sites
- Properties that are significant rehabilitation candidates
- Infrastructure improvements
- Urban design and district enhancements
- Phasing and priorities
- Establish zoning categories that are appropriate to Old Town lot sizes and land use patterns.

Old Town Policies

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The second step is creation of a redevelopment authority or entity, capable of assembling property, promoting and even developing projects, and administering incentive programs like TIF or CDBG. The redevelopment authority may include a development entity to execute specific projects or form partnerships with private developers.

Old Town Policies

A program to revitalize Old Town requires three components: careful and detailed planning, a redevelopment agency, and programs for plan implementation.

The third step is the development of programs and financing techniques to implement the plan. These may include property assembly and conveyance for new development; acquisition/rehab/resale of single-family homes; and rehabilitation financing for private property. Reinvestment programs should also be reinforced by improved property maintenance enforcement.

Acreage Development

Acreage and large lot development should remain an important part of De Soto's development picture, but with specific conditions.

Large lot living encouraged many of De Soto's residents to move to the area, adds distinction to the town, and should remain part of the development picture. Modified policies to encourage appropriate large lot development include:

- Designating specific areas within the city and planning jurisdiction for acreage development, based on specific performance criteria, feasibility of extending urban services, and land use precedents.
- Establishing intermediate subdivision standards appropriate for low-density development.
- Encouraging innovative development techniques, such as acreage clusters.

Subdivisions with Urban Services

Subdivisions with urban services will provide the mid-level housing that is currently not being produced in De Soto, yet is fundamental to the community's ability to retain maturing families.

Urban subdivisions will be a central part of De Soto's housing future, and will accommodate housing in mid-level ranges above \$150,000. However, De Soto should also not be carpeted by subdivisions. Policies to help assure a proper development balance include:

- Designating areas for urban residential development, based on specific performance standards and feasibility of sewer extensions as established by the wastewater master plan.
- Establishing a sewer financing program, potentially using the excise tax as a benefit fee to finance interceptor sewer extensions.

Innovative Development

De Soto should be a focus for innovative development and institute policies that encourage desired developments.

These policies could include:

- Participation in the Mid-America Regional Council's program to identify sites for mixed use TND's (traditional neighborhood developments) and encourage their development.
- Reduce or eliminate excise taxes and some development fees for targeted forms of development.
- Creating zoning tools to encourage cluster development.

Community Quality Enhancements

Carefully selected image and quality enhancements can, over time, frame a new image of the city as a place of choice for living and working in Johnson County.

Image enhancement opportunities include:

- The Riverfront, currently relatively inaccessible, but a major recreational and development opportunity.
- A trail system related to the Kill Creek and Cedar Creek greenways.
- The Lexington Avenue corridor.
- De Soto Town Center, reinforced as a center of civic life and community activity.

Coordination with Sunflower Redevelopment

Major development at the Sunflower Ammunition Plant site could be as much as ten years away. However, De Soto must be a party at discussions about eventual development. Supporting infrastructure should be coordinated for common benefit by all stakeholders, including the site developer, Johnson County, and the city.

The ultimate development of Sunflower could be a transforming opportunity for De Soto, and provide access to community assets and development that the town could not otherwise achieve. However, coordination is essential to assure that development on the site works to the benefit of all parties. Key areas of coordination include water treatment; location of a wastewater treatment plant; regional open space and trails; and location of industrial and commercial development.