

## 2008 Kansas Planning Awards

### Award Category:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ad Astra Award                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Pioneer Award (Rural)            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Horizon Award (individual) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pioneer Award (Urban) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Horizon Award (group)      | <input type="checkbox"/> Sod Buster Award                 |

**Nominee:** City of Overland Park, Kansas

**Name of Project:** *Vision Metcalf: A Vision Plan for the Metcalf Corridor*

Mailing Address: City of Overland Park, 8500 Santa Fe Drive, Overland Park, Kansas 66212

Email Address: Bill.Ebel@opkansas.org

**Submission:** Please find attached four complete sets of the application (including all support material) dated August 8, 2008, mailed to Lisa Koch, Bureau of Transportation Planning, Kansas Dept of Transportation, 700 SW Harrison, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Topeka, KS 66603-3754.

**Pioneer Award (Urban):** The City of Overland Park is pleased to submit our 2007-2008 plan, *Vision Metcalf: A Vision Plan for the Metcalf Corridor*, in recognition of the City's creative and innovative response to land use change—and urban decline—along Metcalf Avenue: the “spine” of Overland Park. The plan is a visionary response to a community need for revitalization of business districts and neighborhoods along this key 9-mile corridor in north Johnson County, Kansas. As a vision plan, the document will help solve the very real and perceived public problem of disinvestment along this major arterial street, which also serves as state route Highway 69 from I-435 north to I-35. The solutions to urban decline and disinvestment meet the award criteria:

- **Sustainable:** the plan envisions Overland Park's first fixed guideway transit system—a Bus Rapid Transit system in the middle of Metcalf Avenue—as well as dozens of sustainable land use applications, such as low impact development stormwater treatments, green roofs, and mixed use residential-business districts that will become walkable as the plan is implemented.
- **Public Support:** the 14 public workshops, steering committee meetings, neighborhood meetings, and hearings were attended by 2,000 citizen participants over a 12-month planning period, supported by more than 1,900 on-line participants who scored “Visual Preference Surveys” from home on the project website. The “community visioning” process was led by a Steering Committee of public and private sector stakeholders, including business owners, neighborhood residents and the school districts.
- **Ability to be Implemented:** the City of Overland Park began implementing the plan immediately upon adoption this past winter with studies of multimodal transportation solutions and utility right-of-way revisions: how to relocate public utilities beneath Metcalf Avenue over time, so that mixed use developments can favor the street edge, defining the corridor as a “Great Street” where pedestrians can walk safely, gather comfortably and travel on multimodal systems.

**Nominator:** Nominee

---

Bill Ebel, Planning Director, City of Overland Park

---

Date



**Criteria—Planning Solution:** The problem or need and how planning played a role in designing solutions.

The *Vision Metcalf Plan* tackled many communitywide and neighborhood problems. The plan had to embrace a multifaceted 9-mile corridor with thousands of parcels and buildings, developed from pre-20<sup>th</sup> century to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The planning process defined future development and redevelopment nodes throughout the Metcalf Corridor: **commercial nodes** and **neighborhood nodes**. Each node type contained four sub-types, evaluated based on a consistent set of criteria. The results were visionary and comprehensive:

- **Pedestrian-friendly open space** is created within each node. The open space created is both active and passive, parks and a range of green spaces.
- A **balanced, multimodal street network** for the needs of vehicular, transit, and non-motorized movement.



*14 public workshops hosted 2,000 citizen participants, with more than 1,900 more joining in through website Visual Preference Surveys.*

- **Downtown Overland Park** flourishes through the expansion of the Farmers Market, and higher-density housing on the newly created plaza. Parking lots are infilled with a municipal parking garage and mixed-use buildings, making full use of the historic place.
- Land and building uses are **structured to create neighborhoods**.
- The Plan provides for a wider **variety of housing types** than found in the corridor today, which will be attractive to a wide **range of household types**.
- Housing is located **within a five-minute walk** of a neighborhood park, plaza, or retail node to balance private spaces with public gathering spaces in the **neighborhood centers**.
- An **appropriate amount of retail** to responsibly serve the diverse needs of neighborhoods created within the nodes, given local and regional market opportunities.
- Stormwater management to maintain water quality and flood control, incorporating best management practices and detention, where applicable, to ensure the **long term sustainability** of the Corridor's streams and waterways.
- Retail is sited to be **convenient to Bus Rapid Transit** and within walking distance of residences and employment nodes.
- A **northern gateway** includes water, wind, and landscape elements linking Overland Park to outlying areas. The **southern gateway** is designed with landmark buildings, intricate open spaces and wind turbines.
- 95th Street and Metcalf Avenue will become a regional **civic plaza** and business center.
- The **employment plan** (based on a detailed market analysis, *Vision Metcalf: Financing Strategies*) recognizes that Overland Park should obtain a preeminent position in the regional office market.
- The plan proposes a **transit system** to accommodate both frequent commuters and short-term visitors through an extensive linear Bus Rapid Transit system down the center of the avenue.



Pioneer Award (Urban): *Vision Metcalf: A Vision Plan for the Metcalf Corridor*

**Criteria—Creative yet Practical:** The original thinking involved with the solution and how the City garnered public involvement and support.

**Susceptibility to Change:** Four committees assessed the Metcalf study area using GIS maps to show potential for change of each parcel within the 9-mile corridor, creating an innovative consensus:

- No or Low Susceptibility to Change: lots and/or buildings that of historic value.
- Low Susceptibility to Change: may go through minor changes but will remain.
  - Moderate: expected changes including removal of buildings, and targeted infill.
  - High Susceptibility to Change: lots and/or buildings which are underutilized, deteriorated or vacant and likely to be replaced by significant infill or redevelopment.



*Committees of citizens, staff, land owners and residents collaborated on planning solutions.*

**Synthesis:** These maps were synthesized representing the consensus opinion of each committee. This process involved overlay comparison techniques designed to measure and combine the relative assessments of each tract of land into a cumulative assessment. The combined committee synthesis map from this process represents a **sophisticated analysis of the potential for change in the Metcalf Corridor**: a creative and practical way to define the City's greatest opportunity for community consensus.

**The Visual Preference Survey:** The plan process employed a Visual Preference Survey™ (VPS) planning technique that brought residents, planners, business owners and community leaders together to develop a consensus vision as to what they would like their community to look and feel like. The VPS was administered in a series of public meetings and on-line to nearly **4,000 participants** who were asked to rate images in a variety of categories including streets, open space, and mobility.



*Simulation of a multimodal Metcalf Corridor as "voted" by the nearly 4,000 plan participants in the VPS workshops and on-line.*

The highest rated images represent the visual and spatial characteristics desired for the Metcalf Corridor. These highest rated images were formulated into recommendations and translated into two and three dimensions: a development plan that was approved and **adopted with unanimous public support.**



Plan author: City of Overland Park. Consultant: A. Nelessen Associates. Subconsultants: BWR and ERA.