

Imagine Lexington 2045 Goals and Objectives
FINAL - ADOPTED BY URBAN COUNTY COUNCIL JUNE 15, 2023

Preamble

To ensure that long range planning policies and other urban growth boundary issues address the expected needs for new urban development and equitably contribute to the health and prosperity of Lexington-Fayette County, these Goals and Objectives have been drafted based upon an evaluation of existing conditions, robust public input, examination of land use planning best practices, review of current local plans and documents, and the projected community needs for the future. While these Goals and Objectives look forward to 2045, they will continue to be reviewed and revised as necessary on the five-year review cycle mandated by state statute. Anytime in the interim, the Planning Commission may recommend that Council amend the Goals and Objectives, and any recommendation shall be presented for consideration, amendment, and adoption by the Council.

Mission Statement

The 2045 Comprehensive Plan, Imagine Lexington, seeks to provide flexible yet focused planning guidance to ensure equitable development of our community's resources and infrastructure that enhances our quality of life, and fosters regional planning and economic development. This will be accomplished while protecting the environment, promoting successful, accessible neighborhoods, promoting job growth opportunities for all residents, and preserving the unique Bluegrass landscape that has made Lexington-Fayette County the Horse Capital of the World.

Theme A – Growing and Sustaining Successful Neighborhoods

Goal 1: Expand housing choices.

Objectives:

- a. Pursue incentives and regulatory approaches that encourage creativity, energy efficiency, and sustainability in housing development.
- b. Accommodate the demand for housing in Lexington responsibly, prioritizing higher-density and mixture of housing types.
- c. Plan for safe, affordable and accessible housing to meet the needs of Lexington's aging population and residents with disabilities.
- d. Create and implement housing incentives that strengthen the opportunities for higher-density and housing affordability.
- e. Improve access to stable long-term housing for those experiencing homelessness.
- f. Explore opportunities for unused and underused publicly owned land to be developed for affordable housing developments.

Goal 2: Support infill and redevelopment throughout the urban service area as a strategic component of growth.

Objectives:

- a. Identify areas of opportunity for infill, redevelopment, adaptive reuse, and mixed-use development.
- b. Respect the context and design features of areas surrounding development projects and develop design standards and guidelines to ensure compatibility with existing urban form.

- c. Incorporate adequate greenspace and open space into all development projects, which serve the needs of the intended population.
- d. Encourage infill and redevelopment through the creation and implementation of innovative programs such as the Lexington Infrastructure Fund, regulatory changes, development incentives, optional off-site mitigation funds, and other methods.
- e. Create materials about the Comprehensive Plan and do outreach to educate the public about infill and redevelopment.

Goal 3: Provide well-designed neighborhoods and communities.

Objectives:

- a. Enable existing and new neighborhoods to flourish through improved regulation, expanded opportunities for neighborhood character preservation, and public commitment to expand options for mixed-use and mixed-type housing throughout Lexington-Fayette County
- b. Strive for positive and safe social interactions in neighborhoods, including, but not limited to, neighborhoods that are connected for pedestrians and various modes of transportation.
- c. Minimize disruption of natural features when building new communities.
- d. Encourage the use of neighborhood-enhancing elements, such as green infrastructure, street trees, neighborhood-serving businesses, gathering spaces and other types of community focal points.
- e. Improve Lexington’s transportation network through ample street and sidewalk connections between new and existing development.

Goal 4: Address community facilities at a neighborhood scale.

Objectives:

- a. Incorporate schools, libraries, parks, greenways, and other community-focused educational and recreational facilities into neighborhoods in order to maximize safe routes for all pedestrians and bicyclists.
- b. Plan for equitable and accessible social services and healthcare facilities that address the needs of all residents, maximizing the opportunity to reach geographically underserved areas throughout the community.
- c. Establish and promote road network connections to reduce police, EMS, and fire response times and improve efficiency and operations of city services.

Goal 5: Ensure equitable development and rectify Lexington’s segregation by race and socioeconomic status caused by historic planning practices and policies.

Objectives:

- a. Take an actively anti-racist approach to land use policy, with the purpose of integrated, walkable, transit accessible neighborhoods for all residents.
- b. Protect existing housing affordability for all and expand low- and middle-income housing across the city.
- c. Ensure that public infrastructure investment in vulnerable areas provides benefits to that community and actively avoids, minimizes, or mitigates the disparate impact and displacement of vulnerable populations.
- d. Develop new enforcement and housing programs and revise existing policies to prioritize the health, wellbeing, and protection of at-risk homeowners and renters.
- e. Implement and develop innovative programs, such as land banks, the Affordable Housing Fund, community land trusts, or other methods to subsidize affordable housing.
- f. Update zoning regulations to allow for greater density, supply, and affordability.

- g. Provide an ongoing and contextualized educational curriculum on historical planning practices and policies, acknowledging their impact on marginalized neighborhoods in Lexington.

THEME B – PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Goal 1: Protect water resources by improving urban stormwater and sanitary sewer infrastructure.

Objectives:

- a. Continue to implement sanitary sewer Consent Decree programs (remedial measures, capacity assurance, management, operation and maintenance).
- b. Protect and improve water quality through the development of cost-sharing and grant programs to assist homeowners, neighborhoods, and developers.
- c. Retrofit stormwater infrastructure to improve water quantity and quality concerns.
- d. Continue to develop protections for watersheds, including installation of elements to improve and protect water quality, reforesting appropriate areas, and improving aesthetic and educational experiences.
- e. Provide an ongoing educational curriculum that focuses on sustainable planning, development, and at-home behaviors to help build a culture focused on creating a more resilient, equitable, and livable future for all.
- f. Ensure stormwater and sanitary sewer infrastructure is placed in the most efficient and effective location to serve its intended purpose.

Goal 2: Identify and mitigate local impacts of climate change by tracking and reducing Lexington-Fayette County’s carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions, and commit to community-wide net zero greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2050.

Objectives:

- a. Continue programs and initiatives to track and improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gasses, and prioritize reducing, reusing, and recycling.
- b. Identify and assess potential climate change local impacts, including but not limited to, temperature, precipitation, extreme weather, agriculture, and human health.
- c. Develop incentives and update regulations for green building, sustainable development, and transit-oriented development with civic agencies leading by example.
- d. Prioritize multi-modal options that de-emphasize single-occupancy vehicle dependence.

Goal 3: Apply environmentally sustainable practices to protect, conserve and restore landscapes and natural resources.

Objectives:

- a. Support the funding, planning and management of a green infrastructure program.
- b. Identify and protect natural resources and landscapes before development occurs.
- c. Incorporate environmental equity and green infrastructure principles in new plans and policies.
- d. Coordinate intragovernmental planning, funding, programs and activities across LFUCG departments and divisions; ensuring that all planning and operational activities that impact the protection, conservation and restoration of landscapes, natural resources, and our natural environment are aligned and complementary.
- e. Incentivize green infrastructure practices in the design of new development.
- f. Promote, maintain, and expand the urban forest throughout Lexington.

THEME C – CREATING JOBS AND PROSPERTY

Goal 1: Support and showcase local assets to further the creation of a variety of jobs.

Objectives:

- a. Strengthen efforts to develop a variety of job opportunities that support a living wage and lead to prosperity for all.
- b. Strengthen regulations and policies that propel the agricultural economy, including, but not limited to, local food production and distribution, agritourism and the equine industry that showcase Lexington-Fayette County as the Horse Capital of the World.
- c. Collaborate with institutions of higher learning to foster a capable and skilled work force while engaging agencies that address the lack of prosperity for residents by reducing joblessness.
- d. Encourage development that promotes and enhances tourism.
- e. Encourage developers of government-funded or subsidized projects to employ residents in the vicinity.

Goal 2: Attract a wide array of employment opportunities that encourage an entrepreneurial spirit, and enhance our ability to recruit and retain a talented, creative workforce by establishing opportunities that embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion in our community.

Objectives:

- a. Prioritize the success and growth of strategically-targeted employment sectors (healthcare, education, high-tech, advanced manufacturing, agribusiness, agritourism, and the like), and enable infill and redevelopment that creates jobs where people live.
- b. Improve opportunities for small business development through the encouragement of incubator spaces, home-based businesses, shared work opportunities, and government-led programs to educate entrepreneurs, particularly for people of color and underserved communities.
- c. Review and improve regulations and policies that attract and retain high paying jobs through close collaboration with agencies that focus on economic development.
- d. Provide entertainment and other quality of life opportunities that attract and retain young, and culturally diverse professionals, and a work force of all ages and talents to Lexington.
- e. Encourage minority businesses to locate in areas that have experienced displacement and gentrification by creating incentives and removing barriers to entry.
- f. Encourage land development that attracts, expands, and retains jobs in employment sectors that provide upward mobility and prosperity for all and prioritizes identifying land opportunities for job creation and housing needs.

Goal 3: Identify and update land use policies and regulations to improve economic mobility and related socioeconomic and health issues.

Objectives:

- a. Create and implement mechanisms for low, moderate, and middle income residents to access affordable and equitable home financing options for those who desire to own a home.
- b. Collaborate with developers, commercial entities, and non-profits to ensure food security, providing residents access to affordable and nutritious food.
- c. Create a central coordinating function for all social services in the county, including non-profit, faith-based, and governmental services.

Goal 4: Identify, provide and sustain readily available publicly-controlled economic development land to meet Fayette County's need for jobs, amending the comprehensive plan as necessary to ensure it remains an up-to-date & workable framework for economic development.

THEME D – IMPROVING A DESIRABLE COMMUNITY.

Goal 1: Work to achieve an effective, equitable, and comprehensive transportation system.

Objectives:

- a. Implement the Complete Streets policy, prioritizing a pedestrian-first design that also accommodates the needs of bicycle, transit and other vehicles.
- b. Expand the network of accessible transportation options for residents and commuters, which may include the use of mass transit, bicycles, walkways, ride-sharing, greenways and other strategies.
- c. Concentrate efforts to enhance mass transit along our corridors in order to facilitate better service for our growing population, as well as efficiencies in our transit system.
- d. Improve traffic operation strategies, traffic calming, and safety for all users.
- e. Provide the infrastructure to promote and encourage electric vehicles throughout Lexington.
- f. Enhance transportation options that are affordable, equitable, and responsive to the needs of residents and that support their preferred or necessary mode of transportation, with an emphasis on sidewalk improvements and connectivity.

Goal 2: Support a model of development that focuses on people-first to meet the health, safety and quality of life needs of Lexington-Fayette County's residents and visitors.

Objectives:

- a. Ensure built and natural environments are safe and accessible through activated and engaging site design.
- b. Collaborate with educational and healthcare entities to meet the needs of Lexington-Fayette County's residents and visitors.
- c. Collaborate with service providers about how their community facilities should enhance existing neighborhoods.
- d. Monitor and evaluate newly passed parking regulations to ensure they are achieving more walkable, people-first development, and lowering development costs.
- e. Ensure the provision of supportive services that meets the needs of the homeless population, as well as interim and long term housing options.

Goal 3: Protect and enhance the natural and cultural landscapes that give Lexington-Fayette County its unique identity and image.

Objectives:

- a. Protect historic resources and archaeological sites.
- b. Incentivize the renovation, restoration, development and maintenance of historic residential and commercial structures.
- c. Develop incentives to retain, restore, preserve and continue use of historic resources such as historic sites, rural settlements and urban and rural neighborhoods.

Goal 4: Promote, support, encourage and provide incentives for public art.

Objectives:

- a. Initiate and support public art through projects originated by the Public Arts Commission and collaborative projects with LexArts and other neighborhood and community groups.
- b. Incentivize the addition of public art to new and existing spaces.
- c. Ensure public art is distributed equitably, enhancing and activating public and publicly accessible spaces, and providing a vehicle for communities to express their unique identity and culture.
- d. Maintain established public art.

THEME E - MAINTAINING A BALANCE BETWEEN PLANNING FOR URBAN USES AND SAFEGUARDING RURAL LAND

Goal 1: Uphold the Urban Service Area concept.

Objectives:

- a. Preserve the Urban Service Boundary concept, which is the first of its kind in the United States, and has been foundational in fiscally responsible planning and growth management in Lexington since 1958.
- b. Continue to monitor the absorption of vacant and underutilized land within the Urban Service Area.
- c. Ensure all types of development are environmentally, economically, equitably, and socially sustainable to accommodate the future growth needs of all residents while safeguarding rural land.
- d. Emphasize redevelopment of underutilized corridors.
- e. Maximize development on vacant land within the Urban Service Area and promote redevelopment of underutilized land in a manner that enhances existing urban form and/or historic features.
- f. Pursue strategies to activate large undeveloped landholdings within the Urban Service Area.

Goal 2: Support the agricultural economy, horse farms, general agricultural farms, local food production, ag-tech, and the rural character of the Rural Service Area.

Objectives:

- a. Protect and enhance the natural, cultural, historic and environmental resources of Lexington-Fayette County's Rural Service Area and Bluegrass farmland to help promote the general agricultural brand and ensure Lexington-Fayette County remains the Horse Capital of the World.
- b. Support the Purchase of Development Rights and private sector farmland conservation programs to protect, preserve and enhance our signature agricultural industries, historic structures, cultural landscapes, natural environments and community welfare.

Goal 3: Through a robust public engagement process, the Urban County Council has identified a critical need for additional acreage inside the Urban Service Area for housing and job creation. The 2045 Comprehensive Plan shall maintain the urban service area concept, but it is also this Plan's responsibility to meet existing needs and plan for future growth to meet the needs of our community through 2045.

Objectives:

- a. The Planning Commission, in carrying out the land use element of this Comprehensive Plan, shall identify no less than 2,700 acres but no more than 5,000 acres for inclusion within the Urban Service Area. Properties that are contiguous to the current Urban Service Area, or have existing frontage on corridors, arterials and collector roadways, or with common ownership of such parcels should be given priority for inclusion.
- b. Plan growth along major transportation and federal highway corridors. The Planning Commission should consider for said acreage that which has been identified as capable of meeting infrastructure requirements

for growth and is contained within Lexington’s major transportation corridors. This area is also limited with the recognition of the community’s desire to ensure Lexington remains the Horse Capital of the World.

- c. By December 1, 2024, adopt a new Expansion Area Master Plan to ensure the above acreage is responsibly developed while balancing the integrity of our agricultural land and the clear need for additional acreage to address Lexington’s housing and economic development requirements. To ensure coordinated development, the master plan should plan for infrastructure, community facilities, and land uses that include a variety of housing types, with a focus on low and middle income housing types, and a wide array of employment opportunities. It is the intention of the Urban County Council that the new Expansion Area Master Plan include provisions for the construction, creation and/or funding of additional affordable housing units, as defined by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, and middle income housing. As such, the Planning Commission shall recommend to the Urban County Council mechanisms to create, construct and/or fund affordable housing units and middle income housing in correlation to the development provided for in the Expansion Area Master Plan. Completion of this master plan shall be the priority of the work of the Division of Planning to ensure timely adoption and implementation of critical needs identified.
- d. Future decisions concerning the boundaries of the Urban Service Area and Rural Activity Center, as well as creation of new Rural Activity Centers, will be determined by implementation of the process created pursuant to Goal 4.

Goal 4: Protect Lexington’s invaluable rural resources and inform long-range planning for housing, infrastructure, community facilities and economic development by finalizing on the work of the Sustainable Growth Task Force and the Goal 4 Workgroup to create a data-driven and creating and adopting a new-process, to include robust public input and a public hearing, for determining long-term land use decisions involving the Urban Service Boundary and Rural Activity Centers.

Objectives:

- a. Ensure this process preserves the Urban Service Area concept, even if the boundary of the Urban Service Area is altered.
- b. Create a process that is informed by robust public and stakeholder engagement and is built upon a thorough research-based foundation.
- c. Make certain this new process informs long-range planning for infrastructure, community facilities, and economic development, while protecting Lexington’s invaluable rural resources and continuing to focus on infill, redevelopment and land use efficiency as the continued primary objectives.
- d. Ensure outcomes of this process are fiscally sustainable, equitable, environmentally focused, multimodal, agriculturally supportive, and economically forward.
- e. Incorporate Urban County Council input, and adopt the process as an amendment to the elements of the Comprehensive Plan by August 1, 2026 and establish a mechanism to immediately implement the process.

THEME F – IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN FOR LEXINGTON-FAYETTE COUNTY AND THE BLUEGRASS

Goal 1: Engage and educate the residents of Lexington-Fayette County in the planning process.

Objectives:

- a. Pursue all venues of communication, including, but not limited to, electronic and social media to involve advocates and stakeholders.
- b. Establish early and continuous communication with stakeholders.

- c. Ensure that community involvement includes renters, lower-income households, people who are experiencing homelessness, people of color, youth, and families, so they have a greater voice in the decision-making processes.
- d. Build on the On the Table initiative and continue to engage in partnerships with community organizations to reach underrepresented populations.
- e. Ensure Lexington's complex and technical planning efforts, policies, documents, and plans are written at a basic reading level, with concrete wording, along with clarification when the meaning of a word differs, so residents understand all materials and strategies.

Goal 2: Implement the 2045 Comprehensive Plan.

Objectives:

- a. Utilize the annual Sustainable Growth Report update to establish and maintain Comprehensive Plan metrics.
- b. Maintain a website to host the metrics, updating the general public on progress while providing transparency and supporting data.
- c. Continue to update the Zoning Ordinance and development process to better address Lexington's growth and development needs.

Goal 3: Increase regional planning to ensure greater collaboration and stewardship of shared resources.

Objectives:

- a. Set the standard through leadership and engagement to identify and resolve regional issues.
- b. Support legislative efforts and cross-county actions that improve regional planning, including, but not limited to, developing regional policies; sharing information; and planning for regional systems of transportation, open space, water supply and infrastructure.