

# Greensburg Sustainable Comprehensive Plan

## Greensburg, Kansas, U.S.A.

It is human nature to revert to survival mode after a devastating event like the tornado that struck Greensburg, destroying over 90 percent of the town's buildings and structures. Despite the physical and psychological strain of the disaster, the people of Greensburg knew that in order to preserve the future of the town, they needed to step back and create a long term vision for rebuilding as a sustainable, resilient community. To develop the vision, the people of Greensburg initiated a Comprehensive Master Planning Process.

The Greensburg Comprehensive Master Plan was designed to help the community become a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable city. The Master Plan emerged directly from the community and is representative of both the planning team's recommendations, the city's operational requirements and input from many stakeholder groups. This is not about disaster recovery but instead a strategy to benefit from an opportunity to build sustainable systems with flexibility for future generations from the ground up. The community saw the great opportunity that was presented by the disaster. They want to create a progressive, inclusive town that provides jobs, education, and recreation to attract and retain a young generation of Greensburg residents.

Due to the immediate needs of the community, the process for completing the Comprehensive Master Plan was compressed into two phases lasting six months. Phase 1 presents the bones of the plan. This allows many important projects to keep their momentum while simultaneously planning for the future. Phase 2 is intended to deal with ongoing energy discussions, an economic development plan, and the implementation plan.

In Phase 1, the planning team addressed the most pressing needs of the city. These included the

creation of Greensburg design goals and principles for rebuilding, a conceptual design scheme for downtown, a future land-use map, zoning refinements, infrastructure analysis, preliminary housing policy recommendations, conceptual streetscape design for signature streets, preliminary energy-efficiency and energy policy recommendations, a strategy for building a highly walkable community, and a conceptual parks and open-space layout. Based on the vision for a "green Greensburg," the entire Comprehensive Master Plan was built around the principles of economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

At the completion of Phase 1, the city will need to address other long-term needs for Greensburg. The topics to be covered in Phase 2 are as important as those in Phase 1, but slightly less urgent. Possible Phase 2 tasks include the completion of a detailed parks and open space plan, a cultural resources analysis, an economic development strategy, and an implementation program. Although Phase 1 is adopted as the legal plan for the city, some small adjustments could be made through further investigation in Phase 2.

Community goals serve as a living document providing guiding principles for the creation of the Greensburg Comprehensive Master Plan. Each of the following 11 goals was strongly considered as part of every recommendation in the plan. Greensburg community goals:

Community — A progressive community that offers urban services within the unassuming feel of a rural, Midwestern community.

Family — A community that provides opportunities for its young people in the way of jobs, education, and recreation as reasons to stay in Greensburg.

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## Greensburg Sustainable Comprehensive Plan

**Prosperity** — A community where entrepreneurial spirit, customer service, and a sustainable economy permeate the business sector and where residents, travelers, and tourists enjoy a full line of locally-owned businesses that provide jobs and services to an exceptional example of small-town America.

**Environment** — A community that recognizes the importance of the natural environment and balances the need for growth and economic development with the maintenance and improvement of the environment.

**Affordability** — An up-to-date, affordable rural community where housing plans and strategies incorporate energy-efficient design and materials and serve as a regional and national model for integrating residents of all ages and needs with services of all kinds.

**Catalysts** — The rebuilding process starts with the most stimulating structures and spaces. These will spawn further growth.

**Growth** — A community that opens its doors to new residents and visitors without affecting the values and lifestyles of its current residents.

**Renewal** — A community that makes proactive decisions that use this opportunity to reverse the decline of the community and build a progressive city with a strong future.

**Water** — Treat each drop of water as a precious resource.

**Health** — Improve quality of life by promoting a healthy and active lifestyle.

**Energy** — Promote a high level of efficiency in new construction and look to renewable options for generation.

**Wind** — Greensburg's vast wind resources are part of an emerging economy and should be harvested.

**Built Environment** — Build a town that encourages interaction between residents, welcomes guests, and serves as a model community. New development should be durable, healthy, and efficient. City projects will lead the way by becoming examples of green practices that are built to last.

## Project Resources

### **Residents of Greensburg, Kansas**

John Janssen, *Mayor*; Steve Hewitt, *City Administrator*; Kim Alderfer, *Recovery Coordinator/Asst. City Administrator*; Michael Gurnee, *Planning and Zoning Administrator*; Pam Reves, *AICP Treasurer*; Mike Hayes, *Street Department*; Mick Kendall, *Utilities Director*; Stacy Barnes; Christy Pyatt; *Office Administrator*; Planning Commission

### **BNIM — Sustainable Community Planning**

Bob Berkebile; Stephen Hardy; Rachel Stroer; Aaron Ross; Jim Schuessler, *ASLA*; Mark O'Hara, *ASLA*; Greg Pfau, *Associate ASLA*; Celine Andersen, *Associate ASLA*; Tim Duggan, *ASLA*

### **National Renewable Energy Laboratories**

Lynn Billman; Duncan Prah; John Thorton; Tom Wind; Gerry Harrow

### **Greensburg GreenTown**

Daniel Wallach, *Director*

### **State of Kansas**

Steve Weatherford, *Governor's Liaison*

### **Kansas Energy Office**

Russ Rudy

### **Kansas Communities**

Terry Woodbury

### **USDA Rural Development**

Chuck Banks; Tim Rodgers; Gary Smith; Brandon Prough

### **Professional Engineering Consultants, Inc.**

Tim Lenz

### **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

David Doyle; Chilton "Chet" McLaughlin

### **Federal Emergency Management Agency**

Steve Castanar; Benjamin Alexander; Erin Miles; John Boyle