

## Appendix F: Excerpts from Cowley County Vision 20/20

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**Vision 20/20 Community Plan ~ Updated November 5, 2007:** The following material contains the "concerns" and "strategy statements" taken from the major subject headings of the Vision 20/20 Community Plan authored by Cowley First. What follows is only a small portion of the full document, as updated in 2007, which contains valuable materials which this 2013 Plan hopes to complement.

I. **Introduction:** The following community vision is a collective expression from the people of Cowley County of the hopes and dreams for the year 2020, and a multi-year plan for mobilizing the people and resources to claim that vision and make it real.

- Cowley County is a safe and drug-free place to live, rear children, work and play.
- Cowley County boasts a strong economy with good jobs, lively downtowns and a modern transportation infrastructure to support us.
- Cowley County accomplishes many of our goals through creative, forward-thinking public private partnerships.
- Cowley County attracts and retains youth and young families.
- Cowley County schools help each individual develop his or her talents and interests to their fullest potential.
- Our private and public spaces reflect the pride and creativity of our people.
- Our community charm and tourism attractions lure visitors.
- Cowley County treasures our historic, cultural financial and human resources.
- All residents have safe, affordable and suitable housing.
- Cowley County is a healthy community blessed with good doctors and other health care professionals.
- Diversity enriches all of us. This is the future that through public input, the people of Cowley County have determined that we will achieve and maintain. To honor their input, this plan requires support of a long-term community development partnership. We will attract others to join with us. We will work together throughout the years to bring this shared vision to life.

II. **Cowley County People:** The strategies that follow are intended to contribute to the community's social capital: positive, reciprocal relationships among people. The strategies empower all community members, increase harmony among racial and ethnic groups, improve opportunities for young people, retain youth in the community, enhance technology skills and nurture community leaders.

a. **Community Concerns:**

- Retain youth in the county
- Further strengthen and fund public education
- Address poverty among children and families
- Increase resources for senior services, especially in smaller communities
- Address the shortage of childcare and early childhood education
- Ensure that programs are inclusive and serve all communities in the county
- Strengthen cooperation and partnerships among individual communities

b. **Strategy Statements:**

1. Attract and retain young people in the community through increased economic opportunities, appealing housing choices and civic partnerships that make the area more appealing to young people.
2. Increase available early childhood programs (birth to age 5) and build community awareness about the value of these programs, so as to enable all children in our community to learn, grow and develop their potential.
3. Build understanding of our diverse cultures through affirmative steps to welcome all residents and include them in public decision-making and community affairs.
4. Support and improve public education for all students
5. Expand educational opportunities for young people who elect not to attend college, and for young women and gifted students.
6. Provide mentoring and leadership to promote diversity, reduce poverty and create a balanced economy.
7. Improve services for seniors countywide by obtaining increased funding at the local level, countywide.

III. **Cowley County Economy:** The strategies that follow are intended to contribute to sustaining and expanding the county's economic base in ways that support entrepreneurship, business retention, business development, workforce recruiting and development, regional partnerships, wealth retention, tourism promotion and downtown development.

a. **Community Concerns:**

- Support home-grown business and industry
- Attract new business and industry
- Overcome barriers to successful workforce recruiting
- Stimulate and support entrepreneurship
- Provide incentives to develop more retail businesses
- Promote county tourism attractions and agri-tourism
- Strengthen regional economic partnerships
- Retain local wealth and direct it to future needs
- Continue to provide property tax exemption for new and expanding industry

b. **Strategy Statements:**

1. Secure adequate, long-term funding for the Cowley First Economic Development Partnership
2. Retain and expand existing industry
3. Overcome barriers to successful workforce recruiting and development, especially in
4. Promote entrepreneurship development through a network of services to stimulate and support startup business ventures
5. Promote rural development through expansion of tourism activities and initiatives in agri-tourism
6. Target and recruit new businesses and industries that will create jobs
7. Expand the number and variety of retail businesses in the county
8. Grow endowments for the purpose of retaining wealth in the community and directing its use to future community needs

IV. **Cowley County Place:** The strategies that follow address the physical infrastructure and appeal of the community, including affordable, suitable housing, attractive visual appearance, appropriate development of transportation corridors, improvements in public transportation and expansion of air and rail services.

a. **Community Concerns:**

1. Clean up unsafe properties, trash and junk
2. Make city entrances more attractive
3. Provide more affordable housing
4. Enhance the county's transportation infrastructure
5. Protect and improve the natural environment
6. Undertake more long-range community planning

b. **Strategy Statements:**

1. Improve the appearance of commercial, residential and public properties, with a priority for those areas first encountered by visitors to the community.
2. Improve and expand the availability of good quality, affordable housing for rental and home ownership.
3. Begin implementation of a plan for development of the Highway 77 corridor from the north to the south county borders.
4. Complete and implement regional and countywide transportation plans.
5. Provide reliable air and rail service for agricultural, commercial and industrial transport needs.
6. Develop and implement countywide public transportation services to address the mobility needs of residents who lack access to a personal automobile.
7. Protect and improve the natural environment and natural resources in the Cowley County region.

**V. Cowley County Health:**

**a. Community Concerns:**

- Address the drug abuse problem
- Expand substance abuse prevention
- Improve the availability of affordable health care
- Provide and encourage more recreation opportunities for young people
- Reduce child abuse

**b. Strategy Statements:**

1. Reduce drug and alcohol abuse among youth and adults in Cowley County through strengthened prevention initiatives, expanded mentoring opportunities and aggressive law enforcement and judicial responses to offenders.
2. Offset the attraction to alcohol and illegal drugs by expanding recreation and other programs for young people and adults.
3. Promote the physical and mental health of residents through expansion of public facilities and programs to encourage, walking, jogging, biking and community gardening.
4. Establish accessible free or low-cost medical clinics in Winfield and Arkansas City.
5. Increase access to health insurance in Cowley County
6. Increase the number of healthcare professionals in Cowley County.
7. Undertake a public education campaign for a countywide tobacco free environment in public spaces and the elimination of youth access to tobacco products.
8. Reduce the historically high incidence of confirmed child abuse in Cowley County.
9. Reduce the health threat from childhood obesity through school programs that increase physical activity and promote healthy nutrition choices.
10. Protect the quality of our air and water and continue to provide adequate quantities of water for Cowley County.

**VI. Cowley County Culture:**

**a. Community Concerns:**

- Preserve and promote historic landmarks and structures in the county
- Strengthen downtown revitalization
- Preserve the natural beauty of rural Cowley County
- Promote the humanities, including music festivals, theater and performing arts

**b. Strategy Statements:**

1. Develop pedestrian-friendly downtowns for day and evening activities to offer leisure and tourist opportunities for all ages.
2. Showcase Cowley County's history, architecture, waterways and other natural spaces in order to expand leisure activities for residents and tourists.
3. Encourage diverse local cultural festivals and celebrations, leisure activities and sports.
4. Develop a Cowley County cultural life center to promote collaboration among cultural arts organizations and enrich the cultural life of the community.
5. Develop and begin implementation of a countywide plan for marketing cultural arts.

VII. **Survey Results ~ Survey of Arkansas City Respondents:** The following data, provided by Cowley First, are results from responses from 338 randomly selected Arkansas City residents, to a survey it conducted in 2010.

**(Ark City (338) Random Survey Results)**

**Section 1: Priority Issues**

In Section A, circle the number that best describes your level of agreement with the following statements. In Section B, mark with an X the one sector that should take the lead to address each issue.

	Section A (Circle the Number)						Section B (Mark with an X, see descriptions below)				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Total Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Local Gov't	Non-Profit	Private Sector	Public/Private Partnership	
1. Drug abuse needs to be addressed (meth labs).	65%	30%	95%	5%	1%	0%	62%	3%	4%	31%	
2. Home-grown business & industry should be supported.	53%	40%	93%	6%	0%	1%	28%	3%	18%	51%	
3. There is a shortage of good jobs.	63%	30%	93%	6%	1%	0%	35%	1%	11%	53%	
4. Efforts should be made to retain youth in the county.	48%	41%	89%	10%	1%	0%	21%	7%	12%	60%	
5. Quality public education should be further strengthened.	49%	36%	85%	11%	3%	1%	55%	3%	2%	40%	
6. There is a shortage of quality restaurants.	55%	27%	82%	13%	4%	1%	14%	3%	42%	41%	
7. Unsafe properties, trash & junk need to be cleaned up.	48%	36%	84%	12%	2%	1%	98%	3%	6%	22%	
8. There is a need for more retail (e.g. clothing/shoe stores).	47%	31%	78%	17%	4%	1%	17%	3%	42%	38%	
9. Poverty among children/families is a problem locally.	34%	37%	71%	23%	5%	0%	32%	15%	8%	45%	
10. Regional economic partnerships need to be strengthened.	28%	46%	74%	23%	2%	1%	33%	4%	7%	55%	
11. Teenagers need more recreational activities.	34%	36%	70%	21%	8%	1%	20%	13%	18%	49%	
12. County tourism attractions need to be promoted.	24%	48%	72%	23%	2%	2%	38%	16%	9%	38%	
13. Historic preservation efforts should be strengthened.	23%	46%	69%	24%	6%	1%	25%	19%	13%	43%	
14. Attractive city entrances would improve image.	28%	38%	66%	21%	9%	4%	57%	6%	5%	31%	
15. Young people need more after-school programs.	27%	37%	64%	23%	12%	1%	29%	14%	12%	45%	
16. Downtown revitalization efforts are needed.	22%	42%	64%	23%	9%	4%	32%	6%	17%	45%	
17. Start-up agri-tourism businesses should be supported.	16%	41%	57%	38%	2%	2%	27%	10%	19%	44%	
18. More affordable housing is needed.	22%	34%	56%	28%	13%	3%	30%	3%	29%	38%	
19. Affordable health care is readily available.	5%	16%	21%	24%	31%	24%	35%	3%	19%	44%	
20. City streets are well maintained.	4%	27%	31%	17%	30%	23%	92%	0%	2%	6%	
21. There are insufficient services and support for seniors.	18%	25%	43%	38%	16%	2%	31%	17%	9%	43%	
22. There is a lack of adequate child care.	12%	20%	32%	56%	11%	1%	15%	9%	41%	35%	
23. Non-profit organizations need more local funding.	12%	22%	34%	45%	16%	5%	21%	30%	19%	30%	
24. County/township roads are well maintained.	4%	26%	30%	39%	23%	8%	91%	0%	3%	7%	
25. Countywide land use planning & zoning is needed.	10%	19%	29%	42%	16%	14%	71%	1%	6%	22%	
26. Racial prejudice & profiling is a problem in the county.	6%	11%	17%	39%	35%	9%	46%	8%	11%	35%	
27. More bilingual written communication is needed.	4%	13%	17%	31%	30%	23%	36%	12%	15%	36%	
28. Other (insert):											

\* Weighting reversed due to the format of the question.

**(Ark City (338) Random Survey Results)**

**Section 2: Cowley County Quality of Life**

This section intends to measure what you value about life in Cowley County. Please circle the number that best describes your level of agreement with the statements below.

Quality of Life Indicators	Strongly Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total		Waited Average
	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	
1. Residents would shop in additional local retail businesses.	19%	66%	14%	1%	15%	3.03			
2. I feel safe in my community.	13%	67%	17%	3%	20%	2.9			
3. Local volunteerism and charitable giving are alive and well.	9%	64%	24%	3%	27%	2.79			
4. Residents welcome and accept people of every age and background.	6%	61%	26%	7%	33%	2.66			
5. I am optimistic for the future of Cowley County.	10%	48%	35%	6%	41%	2.63			
6. Residents have adequate leisure and recreational opportunities (sports, parks, cultural events, museums, etc.).	5%	54%	34%	7%	41%	2.57			
7. Public schools do a good job of preparing children for employment and life in general.	6%	54%	29%	11%	27%	2.55			
8. Residents have choices for adequate and affordable housing.	2%	45%	44%	8%	52%	2.41			
9. Residents have good access to quality health care.	5%	45%	36%	14%	50%	2.4			
10. I have confidence in community leaders to address community issues.	5%	38%	40%	17%	57%	2.31			
11. In the past 10 years, Cowley County has become a better place to live.	3%	28%	54%	15%	69%	2.18			
12. Cowley County has good employment opportunities.	1%	13%	52%	35%	87%	1.79			



**(Ark City (338) Random Survey Results)**

**Section 3: Strategies to Enhance Economic Growth & Community Development**

Please review the following potential strategies for stimulating new businesses and job growth in Cowley County. Circle the number that best describes your support for each specific strategy.

	Strongly Support	Support	Total Support	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Total Oppose	Waited Average
<b>Economic Development Strategies</b>								
1. Incentives to attract new business & industry to Cowley County	30%	56%	86%	8%	3%	2%	5%	4.11
2. Incentives to develop additional retail stores/restaurants	30%	46%	76%	17%	5%	2%	7%	3.96
3. Incentives to encourage local industry to expand	18%	63%	81%	12%	5%	2%	7%	3.91
4. Funding for adult education and job skill training	21%	50%	71%	23%	5%	1%	6%	3.86
5. Additional funding for elementary and secondary education	30%	37%	67%	22%	9%	3%	12%	3.82
6. Funding for micro-loan programs to support locally-owned businesses	14%	46%	60%	31%	6%	2%	8%	3.62
7. Additional funding for post-secondary education	23%	36%	59%	26%	13%	3%	16%	3.62
8. Funding to support a entrepreneurship (small business) center to provide technical assistance to locally-owned businesses	15%	44%	59%	31%	8%	3%	11%	3.60
9. Funding to promote tourism attraction in the county	10%	39%	49%	36%	12%	3%	15%	3.39
10. Property tax exemptions for new or expanding industry	12%	39%	51%	24%	19%	6%	25%	3.32
<b>Community Development/Social Services Efforts</b>								
1. Expand funding for drug & alcohol abuse prevention	32%	44%	76%	16%	6%	1%	7%	3.99
2. Funding to enhance senior services	20%	39%	59%	34%	5%	2%	7%	3.70
3. Fund additional youth recreational programs & facilities	22%	42%	64%	23%	11%	3%	14%	3.68
4. Incentives to develop additional affordable/suitable housing	12%	36%	48%	30%	18%	4%	22%	3.33
5. Additional tax funding to maintain/improve city streets	9%	23%	32%	32%	26%	11%	37%	2.92
6 Tax funding to maintain & improve the Strother Field Industrial Park	8%	18%	26%	38%	24%	12%	36%	2.85
7. Additional tax funding to maintain/improve county/township roads	6%	18%	24%	39%	26%	11%	37%	2.81
8. Tax funding to maintain & improve the Strother Field Airport	6%	16%	22%	41%	24%	14%	38%	2.75
<b>Possible Funding Sources</b>								
1. Continue the 1/2 percent sales tax approved by voters in June 2005 when it expires (estimated expiration year 2016)	11%	35%	46%	15%	19%	20%	39%	2.98
2. Increase user fees to pay for facilities, programs & services	8%	30%	38%	24%	19%	20%	39%	2.87
3. Support an additional sales tax at the present time	7%	18%	25%	18%	28%	30%	58%	2.45
4. Support a property tax increase at the present time (one to four mills)	1%	7%	8%	16%	30%	46%	76%	1.87

# (Ark City (338) Random Survey Results)

## Section 4: Demographics

Responses to the following questions are very important to help us understand differences in resident perspectives, priorities, and experiences. Your individual responses will remain strictly confidential.

1. What is your place of residence?  
(choose one)

- 338 (100%) a. Arkansas City  
b. Atlanta  
c. Burden  
d. Cambridge  
e. Dexter  
f. Parkerfield  
g. Winfield  
h. Udall  
i. Rural area outside of a city  
338 Total

4. Please indicate your gender:

134 (40%) a. male 200 (60%) b. female

5. What is your racial/ethnic group?

- 3 (1%) a. African American  
0 b. Asian/Pacific Islander  
294 (92%) c. Caucasian (white)  
4 (1%) d. Hispanic  
15 (5%) e. Native American  
5 (1%) f. Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. How long have you resided in Cowley County?  
(choose one)

- 6 (2%) a. less than five years  
22 (7%) b. 5 - 10 years  
39 (12%) c. 11-20 years  
271 (80%) d. over twenty years

6. Please indicate your present employment status  
(choose one):

- 155 (47%) a. employed full-time  
19 (6%) b. employed part-time  
2 (1%) c. student  
115 (35%) d. retired  
7 (2%) e. not employed  
9 (3%) f. seeking employment  
26 (8%) g. homemaker

3. Please provide your year of birth:

- 0 0-17 Yrs Old  
4 (1%) 18-25 Yrs Old  
29 (9%) 26-35 Yrs Old  
77 (25%) 36-50 Yrs Old  
156 (50%) 51-74 Yrs Old  
47 (15%) 75 Plus Yrs Old