

CITY OF TOPEKA, KANSAS

# Downtown MASTER PLAN



**ADOPTED:**

TOPEKA PLANNING COMMISSION, MARCH 15, 2021

TOPEKA GOVERNING BODY, MAY 04, 2021



JUST BE THE CHANGE YOU WISH TO SEE

# Acknowledgements

## City of Topeka Mayor

Michelle De La Isla

## Topeka City Council

Karen Hiller

Christina Valdivia-Alcalá

Sylvia Ortiz

Tony Emerson

Michael Padilla

Hannah Naeger

Neil Dobler

Spencer Duncan

Michael Lesser

## Topeka Planning Commission

Brian Armstrong

Del-Metrius Herron

Corey Dehn

Katrina Ringler

Ariane Messina

James Kaup

Matthew Werner

Wiley Kannarr

Marc Fried

## Topeka Planning & Development Department

Bill Fiander, AICP, Director

Dan Warner, AICP, Planning Division Director

Tim Paris, Historic Preservation Planner II

Bryson Risley, Neighborhood Planner/Planning Analyst

## Downtown Topeka, Inc.

Rhiannon Friedman, President

Vince Frye, Past President



## Technical Assistance

Architect One

Stantec

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# DOWNTOWN CONTEXT

# Background

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Downtown Topeka has seen a resurgence of public and private improvements in the last decade on Kansas Avenue between 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets unlike any in the past 30 years. This unprecedented \$10 million public/private partnership (P3) led to a complete rebuild of Kansas Avenue and underlying utilities, reduction of vehicle lanes to emphasize pedestrian/bike modes, establishment of a national historic district, multiple pocket parks and art/statue installations, historic façade renovations, the opening of the Cyrus Hotel, the Iron Rail and Pennant restaurants, and Every Plaza. These investments have breathed new life into Downtown south of the Kansas River. North of the Kansas River, the NOTO Arts District flourished over this time and stands poised to experience further business and residential growth.



**“If you don’t see it, before you see it, you’ll never see it”**

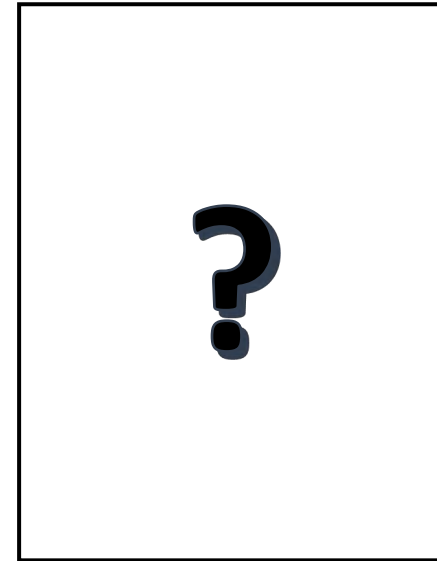
# So why slow down to plan now? Isn't everything going great?

The seeds bearing fruit for the current generation of Downtown were sown in community planning efforts 10-15 years ago. And that built off the blooms of previous generations dating all the way back to the founding vision of Topeka by its father, Cyrus K. Holliday in 1854. Generation to generation had a chance to take a crack at visionary improvements. Each one builds off another and leaves a legacy for the next generation to build from .

**Current Gen**



**Next Gen**



Today, public investment based on the last 10-15 years of visioning is reaching its natural conclusion. And while private investment is still following that vision, the next vision for Downtown is unclear. Not because it has few visions, but because there are many visions. No less than 19 well-intended studies or plans, or major actions impact Downtown. All of these well-intended “boats” may be rowing forward but in different directions or not together. This includes an outdated 20-year old City of Topeka Downtown Redevelopment Plan. The primary goal of the Downtown Master Plan is to get us all rowing together in the same boat for at least the next 10 years of Downtown development.

**“If you want to go faster, go alone. If you want to go further, go together”**

# Plan Purpose and Organization

Topeka's Downtown Master Plan (DMP) is an element of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Its purpose is to align many efforts into a singular shared vision. It is intended to be an affirmation of Downtown's strengths and re-imagining of its weaknesses. The momentum of the last few years focused on a game-changing, yet achievable vision. The DMP should be no different...a believable vision but with expanded scope to show how all of Downtown's assets could work together to achieve a whole greater than the sum of its parts. The foundation of the DMP includes:



## Physical Development/Land Use Guide

- First and foremost, the DMP will establish a geographic framework for land use, development, and infrastructure decision-making. Where should development opportunities be targeted for optimal success? Where and how can public investment have the most impact to spur development?

## Market-Based Vision (10 years)

- Land use development recommendations for the next 10 years will be grounded in the realities of the 2019 Downtown Market Study and Strategy. This includes projected demand for housing, retail, office, and hospitality.

## Aspirational Vision (>10 years)

- Not all development in the DMP will necessarily be realized over next 10 years but imagining "what if" is just as important so ideas have time to take hold once the pace of the market and resources allow.

## Plans Within a Plan

- In order to properly align the myriad of functions in Downtown with its vast area, nine (9) geographic District Plans will be defined with their own brand so they complement one another instead of compete.

## The DMP is organized into the following three parts:

Part 1/Downtown Context – This section informs about the context of Downtown including purpose, boundaries, overarching goals, district framework, market demand, street network/circulation, incentives, land use, zoning, and design emphasis.

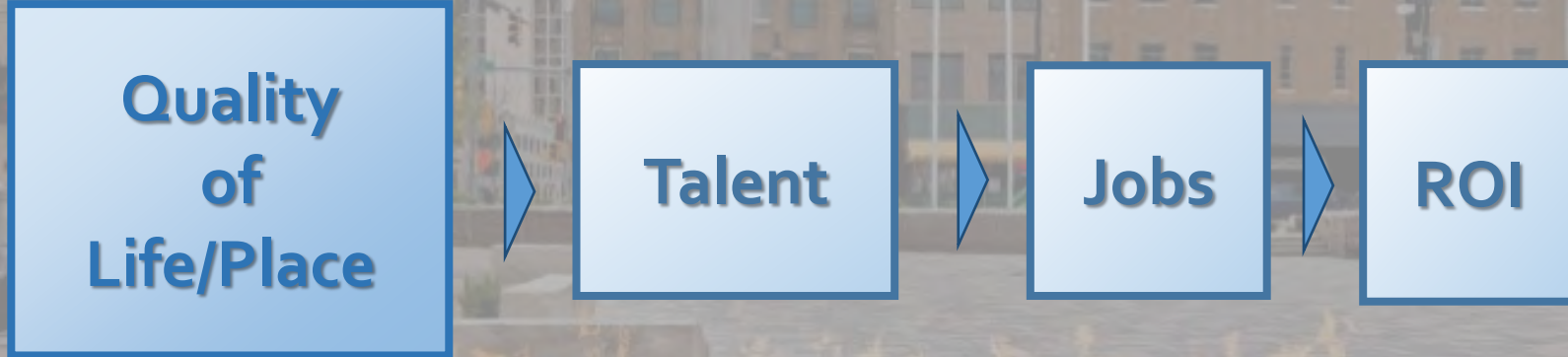
Part 2/District Plans – This section will translate the demand identified in the market study towards real life development projects on the ground. This is done in a way that is catalytic and intentional for downtown. The hope is that this will create confidence that can help inspire property owners and attract developers. Each district plan contains more specific recommendations with regards to branding, potential development and timing, circulation/streets, land use, and zoning for that geographic area and how the districts complement one another.

Part 3/Implementation – This section includes a framework for priorities and actions to help implement the district plans including infrastructure projects, catalytic development, zoning changes, and building design standards.



# Goals and Objectives

The end game for the DMP is to not just put forth plans of future land uses and infrastructure investment, but to do it in a way that elevates the **quality of life** for Downtown Topeka as a premier economic development asset of the region and State. A vibrant and attractive mixed-use regional center is not only crucial for its function, but to compete with other metros for talent retention and attraction, particularly of young professionals. If we can continue to do that by investing in place-based strategies aligned with an achievable vision that signals Downtown is “everybody’s neighborhood”, then the DMP can really be more of a “talent attraction” plan than a “land use” plan. In the world of today and tomorrow, jobs follow talent. And it is in those jobs and subsequent push to be a part of Topeka as an employer or resident, that Downtown can leverage a return on investment (ROI) unlike any other in the community.



“Young professionals are the primary target group for Downtown Topeka (housing), particularly early on. They will expect high quality rental apartments and walkable amenities.” *Downtown Market Strategy (2019)*



# Goals and Objectives

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There are four (4) foundational objectives that will support a higher quality of life and place for downtown:

## Welcoming

Downtown Topeka, with the State Capitol and I-70, is Topeka's front door to visitors and travelers. The image and quality of place should be inviting. To all. This will also raise civic pride for Topeka's residents and lead to greater localized spending patterns.

- Promote a high aesthetic in design/appearance in new construction, rehabilitation, and public realm. Include "green" streets, cooling effects, and landscaping
- Be authentic by reinforcing the existing character of Downtown. Tell Topeka's history.

## Activating

Ramping up efforts to make streets/alleys more inviting for people to be outside will make downtown more interesting to visitor and residents alike.

- Support "3<sup>rd</sup> spaces" or those non-work or non-home spaces for people gathering such as plazas pocket parks alleys, art installations, greenspace, etc.
- "Bring the inside outside" along sidewalks and within on-street parking spaces.

## Resiliency

Vibrant downtowns are diverse in both people and offerings. They are employment centers, residential neighborhoods, visitor destinations, entertainment venues, and shopping districts – and are the only places where such an array of experiences/uses can occur together. It is what makes them special. And what will also make them resilient and stable over time.

- Diversify living, business, visitor, and transportation choices within district framework.
- Extend stays by providing different purposes to use Downtown particularly on evenings and weekends ("Hey, I don't know what to do but let's go Downtown and we'll figure it out.")

## Connecting

Enhance transportation choices and adjacency of living/work areas to promote an efficient, equitable, interconnected and accessible network including:

- Give attention to the human-scale of street spaces making them more walkable and bike friendly.
- Reinforce a vibrant Kansas Avenue as the primary spine of Downtown that all districts benefit from.
- Reimagine critical sites for new catalytic –type projects and activity hubs within walking distance of each other.
- Support compatible development in adjoining neighborhoods to reinforce symbiotic affect (see page 1.7)



# Return on Investment

Why is ROI so good? Downtown is very job and building dense with a small land footprint. It can also be population dense. The community made a down-payment on downtown infrastructure years ago. There is no need for new infrastructure that will add to the operational costs of a municipality. Instead, modernizing and extending its life cycle for future generations in a densely developed area will lower operational costs and lead to a return on investment unsurpassed in the city as illustrated by the graphics below.

This ROI can also be expected to create a ripple effect in “near Downtown” neighborhoods as well. A common real estate marketing tip is to attach property in more challenging areas to stronger image areas they are in proximity to (e.g., “Potwin area”, “Wanamaker area”, etc.). Hence, any perceived or real value increase in the desirability of “Downtown” can overlap into the real/perceived value of nearby neighborhoods. The flip-side is true too. “Near Downtown” improvements on the edges should be supported just as much since it will have a symbiotic relationship on Downtown.

## 900 S. Kansas Avenue

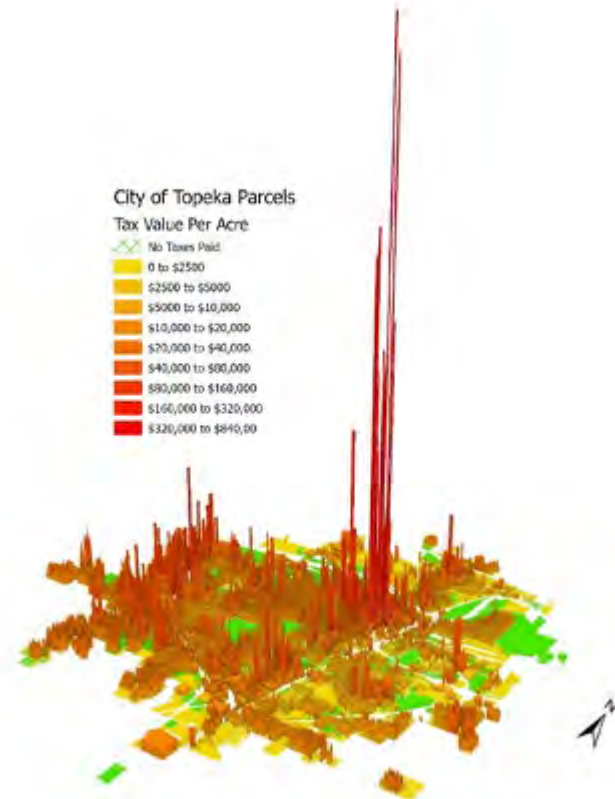
- Pre-Development Appraised Value/Acre- \$250,884\*
- Post-Development Appraised Value/Acre - \$2,368,800\*



\*In 2014 \$

City of Topeka Planning Dept.

*Building rehabilitation increased appraised property value/acre by 844%*



*Downtown property tax value per acre is 4-5 times greater than any other location in the city*

# Framework: Districts and Hubs

The 2019 Downtown Market Strategy revealed that development opportunities will need to be focused in target areas. In other words, there is not enough development opportunity to reinvest in all of Topeka's 740-acre downtown that need reinvestment today. So areas for future investment must be chosen carefully and intentionally. To do that, a "districts" and "hubs" framework is recommended to shape a coherent investment strategy that optimizes success for Downtown.

## Districts

The character and functions of downtown distinguish themselves over time as geographic districts. A district framework sets the stage to not just recognize what that place has become, but what it can be. By having purpose for your audience, products, and places, it will lead to a set of branded districts that are unique yet complimentary to each other. This will avoid competing districts that dilute demand. It will create a unified downtown that is greater than the sum of its parts and lead to a higher "hit rate" with investment decisions.

In Topeka, there are 9 districts each with its own set of uses and unique brand that builds upon the assets of Downtown today and tomorrow as illustrated on the next page. Each of those districts will have its own specific branding and development recommendations as outlined in Part II.

## Activity Hubs

The nine districts should be organized around and tied together by three overlapping corridors – Kansas Avenue, I-70, and Van Buren (new). **Kansas Avenue** is the most important to Downtown's success and must be reinforced as its primary north-south spine to continue building off of past investments. Right now, it is too fragmented in character or purpose outside of the Historic Kansas Avenue district to be a unifying force between all districts unless a series of activity hubs, or catalytic developments, can be established along it. Activity hubs are major destination points that draw people into downtown. But if they are spaced too far apart outside of comfortable walking distance, they may fail to have a synergistic effect on each other.

With the new **Evergy Plaza** acting as the primary activity hub, other activity hubs can be spaced from it appropriately at 5-minute walking intervals acting as stepping stones from one district to another. A 5-minute walking radius around the Plaza would denote where new development could be best positioned early on to take advantage of the Plaza's "pull" for a walkable core (i.e., new housing).

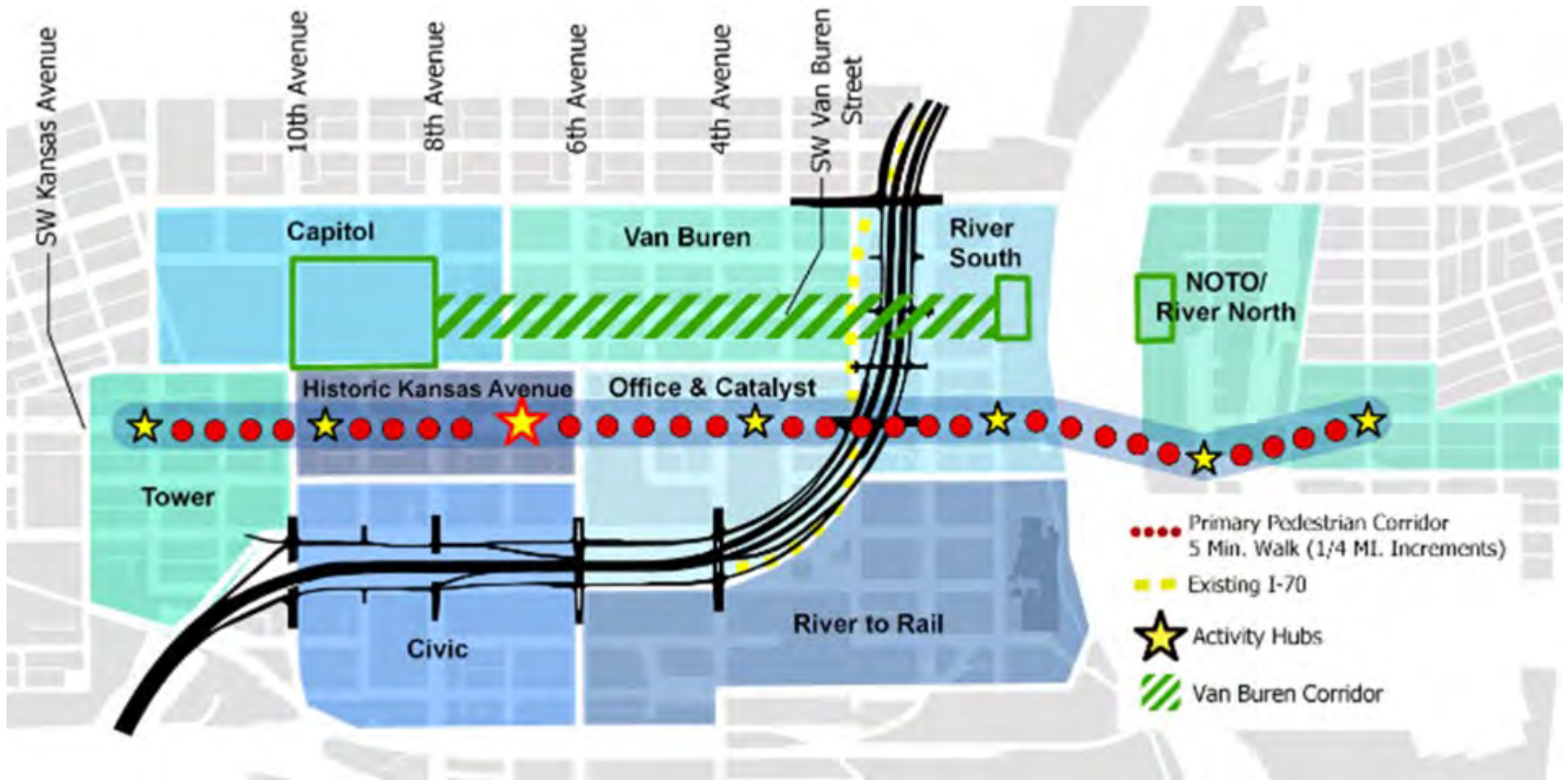
DOWNTOWN MARKET STRATEGY,  
TOPEKA (2019)

*"There is not enough  
development opportunity  
to reinvent all areas of  
downtown that need  
reinvestment today."*

Development Strategies LLC

# Districts and Hubs

## Downtown Topeka



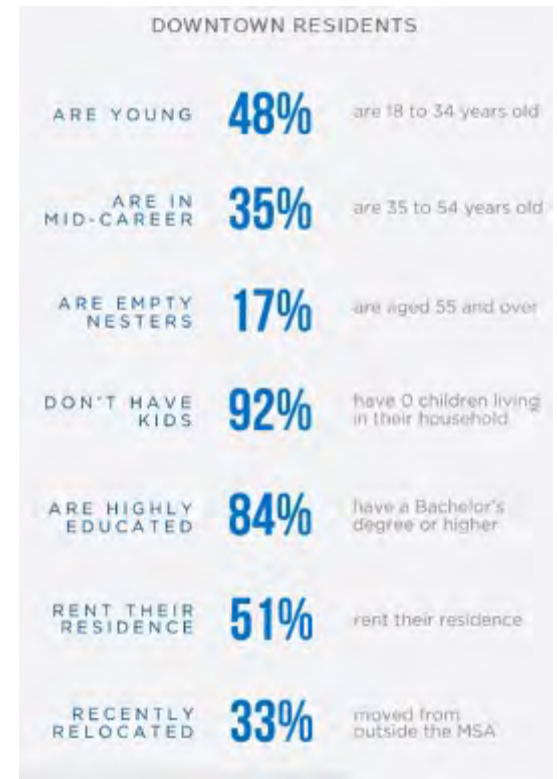
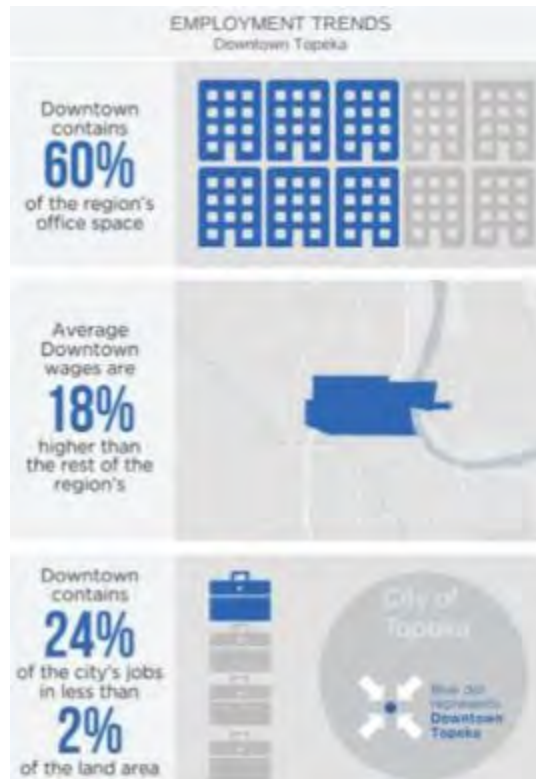
\*Much like Kansas Avenue connects the districts it goes through, **Van Buren Street** has the potential to be a parallel north-south pedestrian-oriented spine connecting River South to the Capitol.

# Market Summary

The Downtown Market Strategy was prepared for Downtown Topeka, Inc. in 2019. The document provides market analysis as a foundation of understanding what development demand and land uses need to be planned for over the next decade. Its conclusions show support for the following:

- 900 new housing units
  - Doubles current total and will drive the next generation of growth
- 690K supportable square feet of retail
  - Shrinks overall footprint from 800K
- 300K of new/rehabbed office space
  - Neutral footprint but transforms 5% (6M sf) to Class A or HQ space. 150K vacant in Historic Kansas Avenue District.
- 200 new hotel rooms
  - Subsequent market studies prior to COVID show 300 rooms could be supported

Each district plan in Part II will allocate where those new uses will be accommodated within the next 10 years, while also detailing development that may be beyond the 10 year horizon, but could occur if market trends are accelerated. It should be noted the market study was pre-Covid 19. Some other findings are illustrated here and on the following page.



# Market Summary

## PEOPLE




**YOUNG PROFESSIONALS**

<b>Target Demo (s)</b> Singles Couples	<b>Peak Activity Hours</b> Evening/Late Evening Weekends
<b>Income</b> \$35,000-\$45,000	<b>Product Types</b> Apartments - New and Rehabbed
<b>Tenure</b> 80% Renter	<b>Level Of Support</b> High



**MID-CAREER & EMPTY NESTERS**

<b>Target Demo (s)</b> Empty Nesters Professional Couples	<b>Peak Activity Hours</b> Early Evening Weekends
<b>Income</b> \$70,000-\$75,000	<b>Product Types</b> Townhomes and Condo Apartments
<b>Tenure</b> 20% Renter	<b>Level Of Support</b> Moderate



**STUDENTS**

<b>Target Demo (s)</b> Graduates Undergraduates	<b>Peak Activity Hours</b> Evening Weekends
<b>Income</b> \$20,000-\$25,000	<b>Product Types</b> Apartments
<b>Tenure</b> 100% Renter	<b>Level Of Support</b> Low

## PRODUCTS



**NEW CONSTRUCTION**

<b>Avg. Rent Per Month</b> \$850-\$1,200	<b>Demand</b> ± 350
<b>Unit Sizes (Sq. Ft.)</b> 600-950	<b>Target Market</b> Young Professionals Mid-Career Professionals Students
<b>Avg. Rent Per Sq. Ft.</b> \$1.25-\$1.50	



**TOWNHOMES**

<b>Avg. Rent Per Month</b> \$1,000-\$1,650	<b>Demand</b> ± 100
<b>Unit Sizes (Sq. Ft.)</b> 1,100-1,850	<b>Target Market</b> Empty Nesters Mid-Career Professionals
<b>Avg. Rent Per Sq. Ft.</b> \$0.90-\$1.10	



**REHABBED APARTMENTS**

<b>Avg. Rent Per Month</b> \$750-\$1,350	<b>Demand</b> ± 175
<b>Unit Sizes (Sq. Ft.)</b> 700-1,100	<b>Target Market</b> Young Professionals Mid-Career Professionals
<b>Avg. Rent Per Sq. Ft.</b> \$1.00-\$1.25	



**FOR-SALE**

<b>Avg. Sale Price</b> \$200K-\$350K+	<b>Demand</b> ± 250
<b>Unit Sizes (Sq. Ft.)</b> 1,500-2,500	<b>Target Market</b> Empty Nesters Mid-Career Professionals
<b>Price Per Sq. Ft.</b> \$120-\$150+	

# Circulation

An ideal transportation system in a downtown area is a comprehensive and multimodal network of facilities that provides convenient access to goods and services, efficient vehicular circulation, and safe mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists. The transportation system in Downtown Topeka has many desirable features and offers a multimodal network of street, transit, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

There is room for improvement in the current transportation system. Planned improvements from other policy documents and recommendations from this Plan are geared towards improving the system for all modes.

The following is a discussion of the existing transportation network.

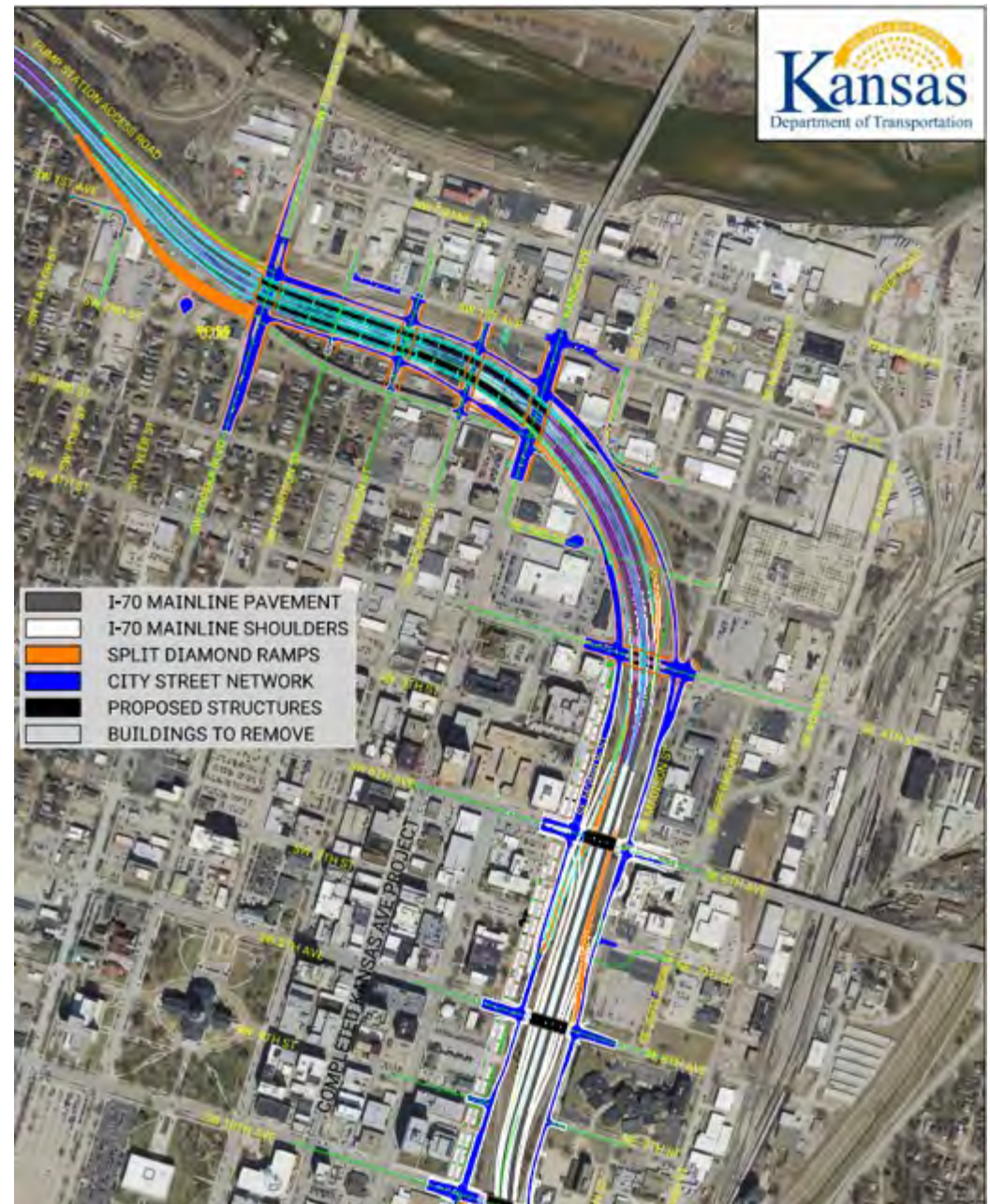
## Polk-Quincy Viaduct

I-70 bisects downtown Topeka and has been in its current alignment since the 1960's when it was originally built. The portion of the highway that traverses downtown is known as the Polk-Quincy Viaduct (PQV). There is a current Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) project to widen PQV, soften the curve at 4th Street that has become a safety issue, and change the access ramps. Funding has been approved for Phase I of the project which will occur between SW MacVicar and SW 4th Street.

The PQV will also impact the local street system within the various districts. Each district plan will touch on those changes. As an example, northbound Van Buren Street currently terminates at I-70 in the Van Buren District. The PQV changes will allow Van Buren to extend under the viaduct and connect to the River South District. This opens a direct path/vista from the river to the Capitol that is not present today.

The City of Topeka has committed \$20 million in match dollars to the PQV project which is estimated to be a \$230-50 million project. The current design was undertaken when market conditions were different and plans showed the area around the River South District for much higher density of development than what is shown in this plan.

The City is working with KDOT on potential changes to the PQV design as reflected in the River to Rail and River South district plans.





# Circulation

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## Sidewalks

Within Downtown, paved sidewalks are provided along both sides of streets. There are a few gaps in the pedestrian system that limit mobility and cause pedestrians to walk on the street. Some segments are in a state of disrepair.

Sidewalk widths vary Downtown. The widest sidewalks are along Kansas Avenue between 6th and 10th Street, which was recently reconfigured with reduced travel lanes and wider sidewalks. This treatment to the street improved the overall pedestrian experience and should be repeated north and south along Kansas Avenue and also along other streets where traffic lanes are proposed to be reduced.

Recommendations from the [Topeka Pedestrian Master Plan](#) include:

- Making pedestrians the priority
- Wider sidewalks
- Bulb outs for shorter pedestrian crossings
- Mid-block crossings

“Bringing the inside out” is an important - and often relatively easy - strategy for activating a street, attracting foot traffic, and introducing new audiences to programming and products. Strategies to bring the inside out include:

- Sidewalk dining areas
- Street parks (using parking spaces to create mini parks)



# Circulation

## Bike Network

There are two types of bicycle facilities present in Downtown:

- Bicycle lanes are marked on the street and provide dedicated and separated space for bicyclists.
- “Sharrows” designate routes where cars and bicycles share the road
- There is a gravel trail along the top of the levee on the north and south sides of the Kansas River.

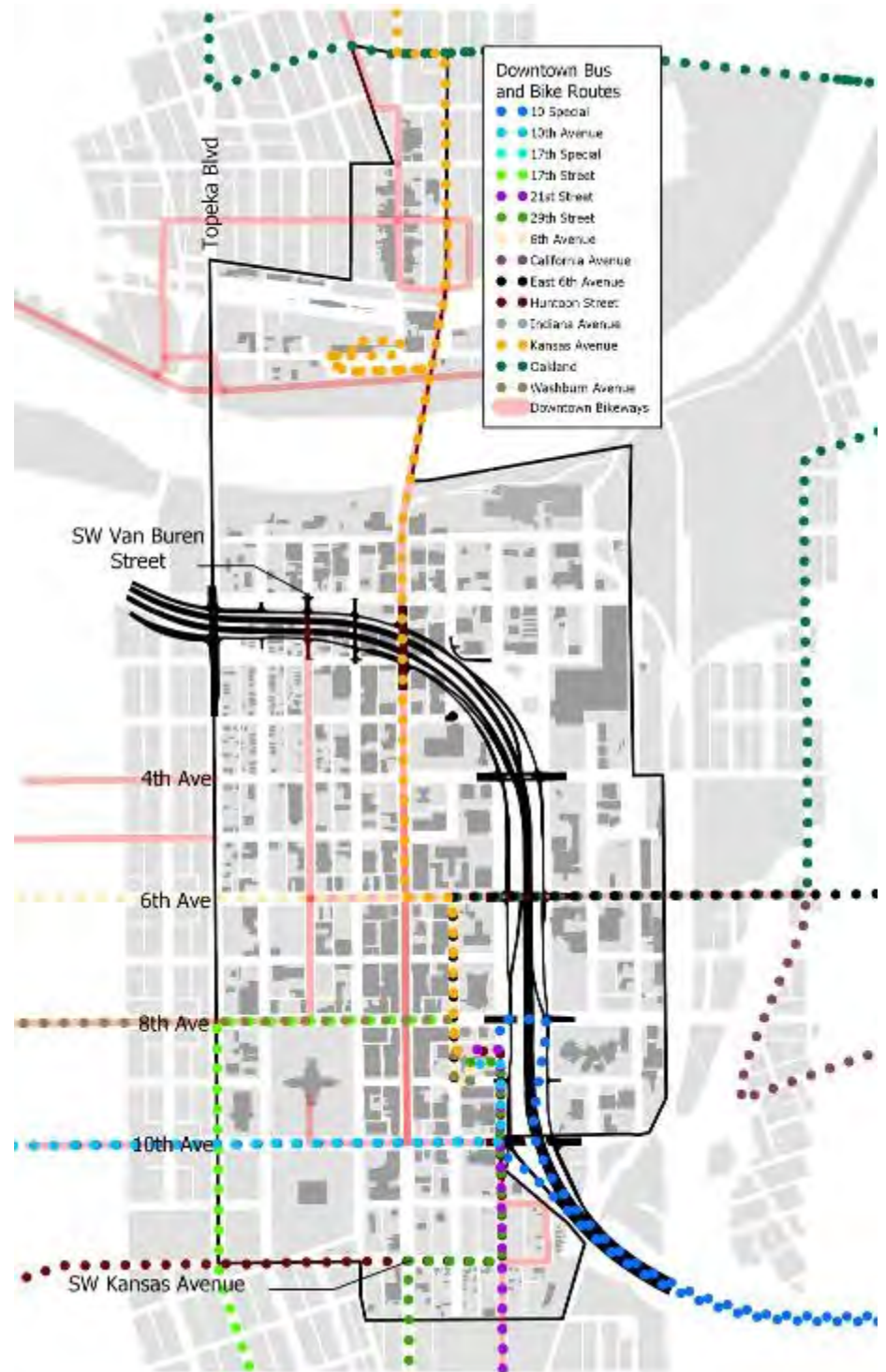
Recommendations from the [Topeka Bikeways Master Plan](#) include:

- Protected bikeways on Kansas Avenue bridge and links to riverfront levee
- Separated bike facilities along 6<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Street
- Connecting downtown to neighborhoods via existing bike facilities and trails

## Transit/Mobility

Downtown is well served by Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority (TMTA) bus service including a transit hub station at 9th & Quincy which connects Downtown to neighborhoods citywide. TMTA also has a maintenance shop and offices along the south bank of the river at NW Crane Street and N. Kansas Avenue in the River South District.

There is a need expressed to better connect all districts with a more frequent shuttle/trolley system and/or electric scooters (e.g., Bird) or bike sharing.



# Circulation

## Street Network

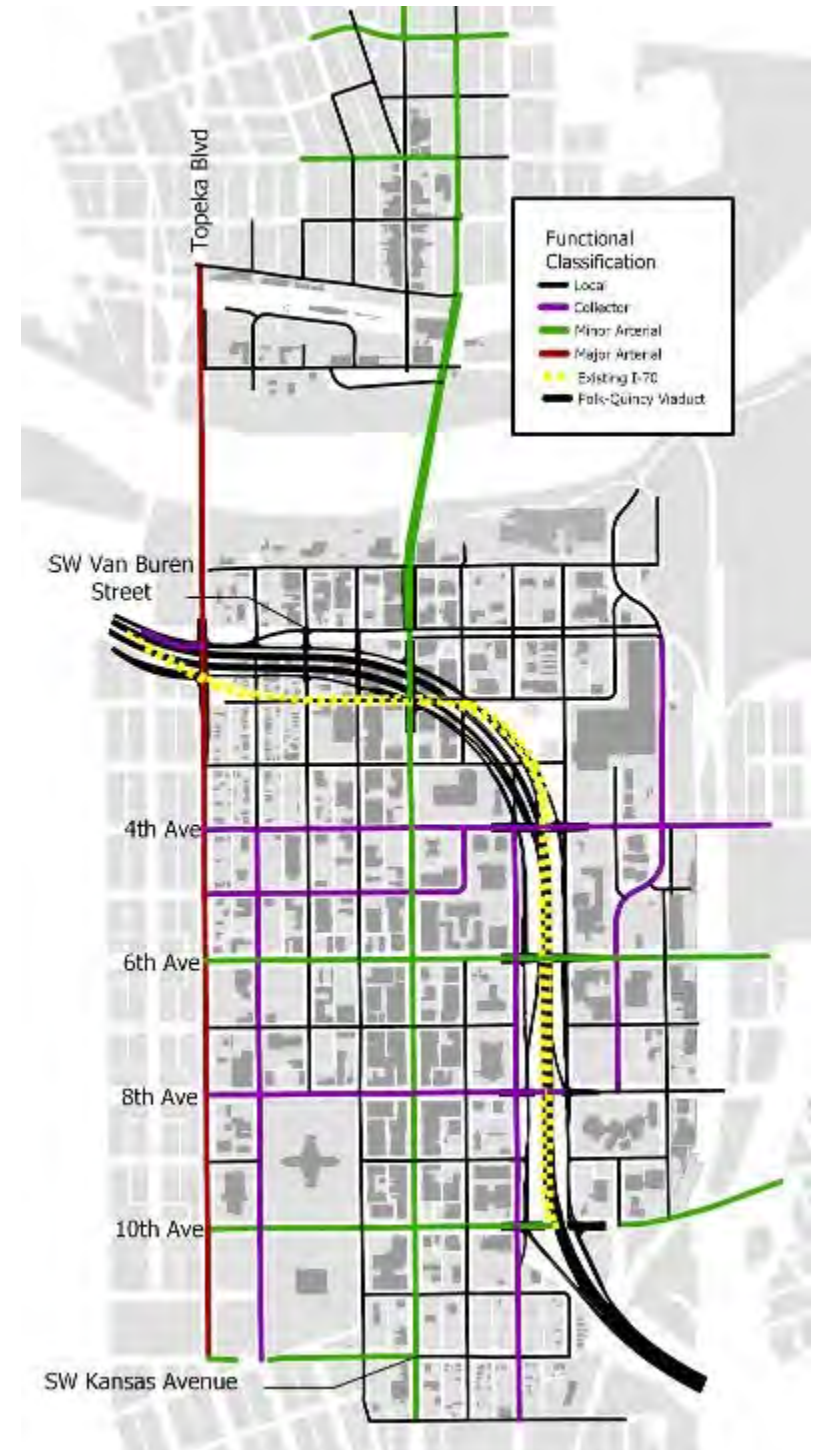
The existing street network in downtown is a grid pattern that functions well. It generally does well to move people in and out of downtown on a daily basis or for special events.

There is question, however, if the built capacity of some streets are overbuilt and whether or not the existing one way pair of streets are still necessary. Jackson and Harrison are the north/south one-way pairs and 4th and 5th are the east/west one-way pairs. Making changes to overbuilt or one-way streets can help enhance the downtown environment by creating a sense of place, enrich quality of life and improve opportunities for multi-modal transportation options.

The City is embarking on a signalization project to upgrade signal software and detection with a focus on Downtown intersections. This will increase adaptive control at the intersections with an overall goal of improving Downtown circulation. Greater control of signals can help facilitate the reduction of vehicular lanes on downtown streets and give that space back to buses, bikes and pedestrians while still having the ability to keep cars moving.

## Complete Streets

The Topeka and Shawnee County Complete Streets Design Guidelines view streets as more than just a tool to move traffic throughout the city. Complete Streets provides an approach to streets that views them as shared public spaces that should complement the neighboring land uses, while providing and promoting multi-modal access and connectivity. These new street typologies should support places to live, shop, work, and play by proving a sense of safety and comfort for uses regardless of the intensity of uses in the surrounding area. Streets that are viewed through this lens can help shape our public realm and promote culture and creativity throughout the City.



# Circulation

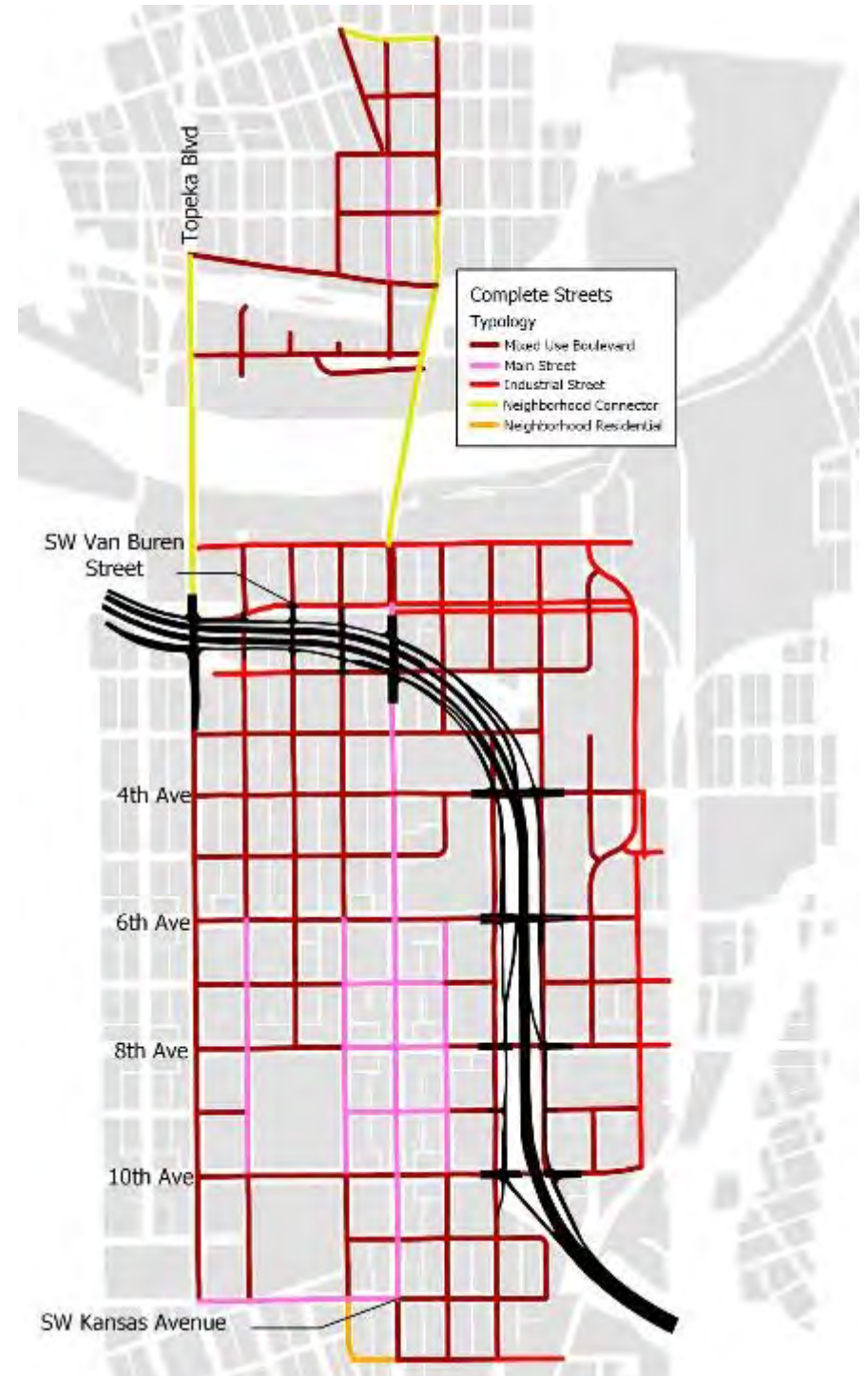
## Downtown Street Typologies

**Mixed Use Boulevard** - characterized by their mix of medium to high density land uses and street presence, these streets should focus on serving residents, visitors, and workers. Design of these streets should support and encourage high levels of walking, bicycling, transit, loading, parking and deliver vehicles in a cohesive manner.

**Main Street** - found in areas lower intensity mixed land uses with a street presence, these streets can be enhanced through streetscape improvements that separate bicycle and pedestrian traffic from motor vehicle. These streets should focus on supporting pedestrian and bicycle activity but also can provide space for events and festivals.

**Neighborhood Connector** - the backbone of Topeka's street network, these streets connect neighborhoods between small business and retail nodes. Often these are dominated by motor vehicles but should accommodate bicycle and pedestrian activity. Street design in these areas should have pedestrians in mind and focus on reducing traffic speeds, improve street crossings, provide sidewalks, street lighting, and consider bus stops for neighborhood access to transit.

**Industrial Street** - serving as the industrial corridors these streets should be designed to accommodate commercial trucks. Design considerations for these streets should ensure adequate lane width and turning radii for commercial trucks while accommodating pedestrians and street trees.



# Circulation

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## Speed Limits

Street segments throughout the Downtown Master Plan are designated for lane reallocation and conversion. The coinciding street typology identified through complete streets should be considered when designating speed limits for these segments of roadway. Streets identified as Mixed Use Boulevards or Main Streets need to accommodate high levels of pedestrian, bicycle and motor vehicle traffic, and speeds to be limited in a manner that ensure pedestrians and bikers alike feel safe while navigating these roads. Neighborhood Connectors, while dominated by vehicle traffic, should be considerate of pedestrian and bike traffic and limit speeds to ensure a safe environment for all users.

## Rail

The Topeka Amtrak Station is located within Downtown along the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad (ATSF) and within the River to Rail District. The station is owned by the railroad and is a stop for the Amtrak Southwest Chief passenger route.

ATSF operates a maintenance yard within the Rail to River District. Rail traffic in this part of Downtown is related to maintenance. Union Pacific Railroad operates a line that traverses through NOTO/North Topeka that has regular train traffic with an at-grade crossing at Kansas Avenue.



## Parking

The City of Topeka conducted a [Comprehensive Parking Plan](#) in 2017, the plan includes reviews of existing parking facility utilization and efficiency, determining capacity of current parking supply to absorb additional daily demand for both on- and off-street facilities and determining a current and future rate structure to finance the long-term parking demands and goals of Downtown Topeka. In short, there is plenty of parking in the downtown area within walking distance but some blocks may be at capacity with regards to structured parking. Implementing aspects of the parking plan such as creating a more user-friendly public parking environment (e.g., smart garages and parking meters) and adding walkable complimentary parking opportunities will align well with other DMP quality of place recommendations such as making streets more multi-modal, shared parking for housing developments, and garage façade makeovers.

# Land Use

Existing land use provides an inventory of every parcel in the Downtown to identify how land is used. Downtown's land uses have been broken into 13 land use designations.

Residential uses are a mixture of single-family and a range of higher densities of medium to high density multi-family. There are stand-alone residential buildings and residential uses located in mixed use buildings.

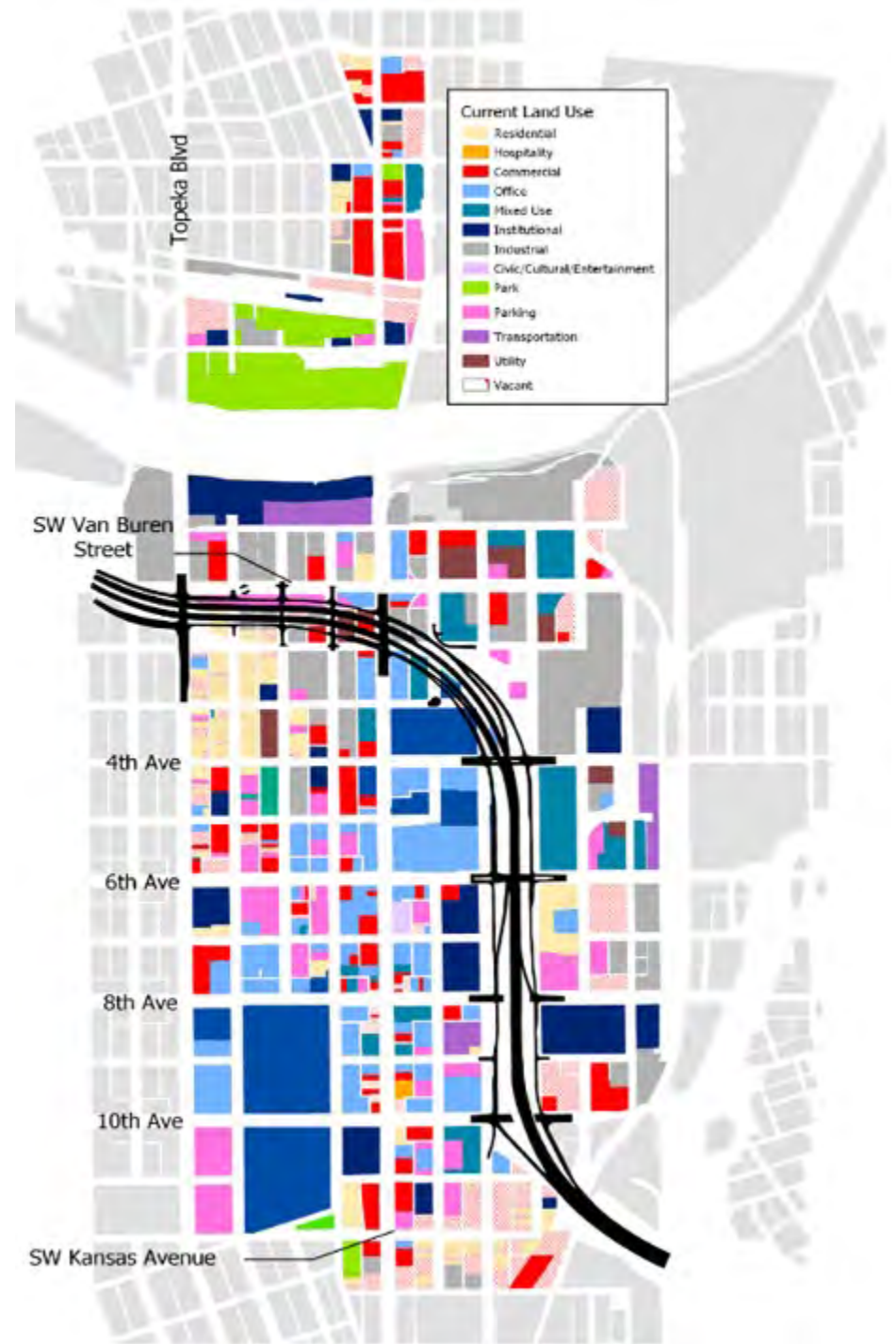
The recently constructed Cyrus Hotel on Kansas Avenue is an example of a hospitality use. Commercial uses are sprinkled throughout Downtown with a concentration located within the core of downtown along Kansas Avenue. There is a concentration of commercial uses within NOTO as well.

Downtown is a major office district. Downtown contains offices for the State of Kansas, including the Docking office building. There are many other offices located downtown, including offices for Evergy, Burlington Northern, the City of Topeka, and Shawnee County.

Mixed use buildings are primarily located along Kansas Avenue, north and south of the river. Churches and certain State of Kansas buildings make up institutional uses.

Industrial uses are found primarily along the south bank of the Kansas River and east of I-70. Major industrial businesses, such as Hill's Pet Food and Burlington Northern Railroad, make up the area along with smaller businesses.

Park spaces is primarily located on the north side of the Kansas River. There is an abundance of surface parking lots located in the downtown area, along with a number of public and private parking garages.



# Zoning

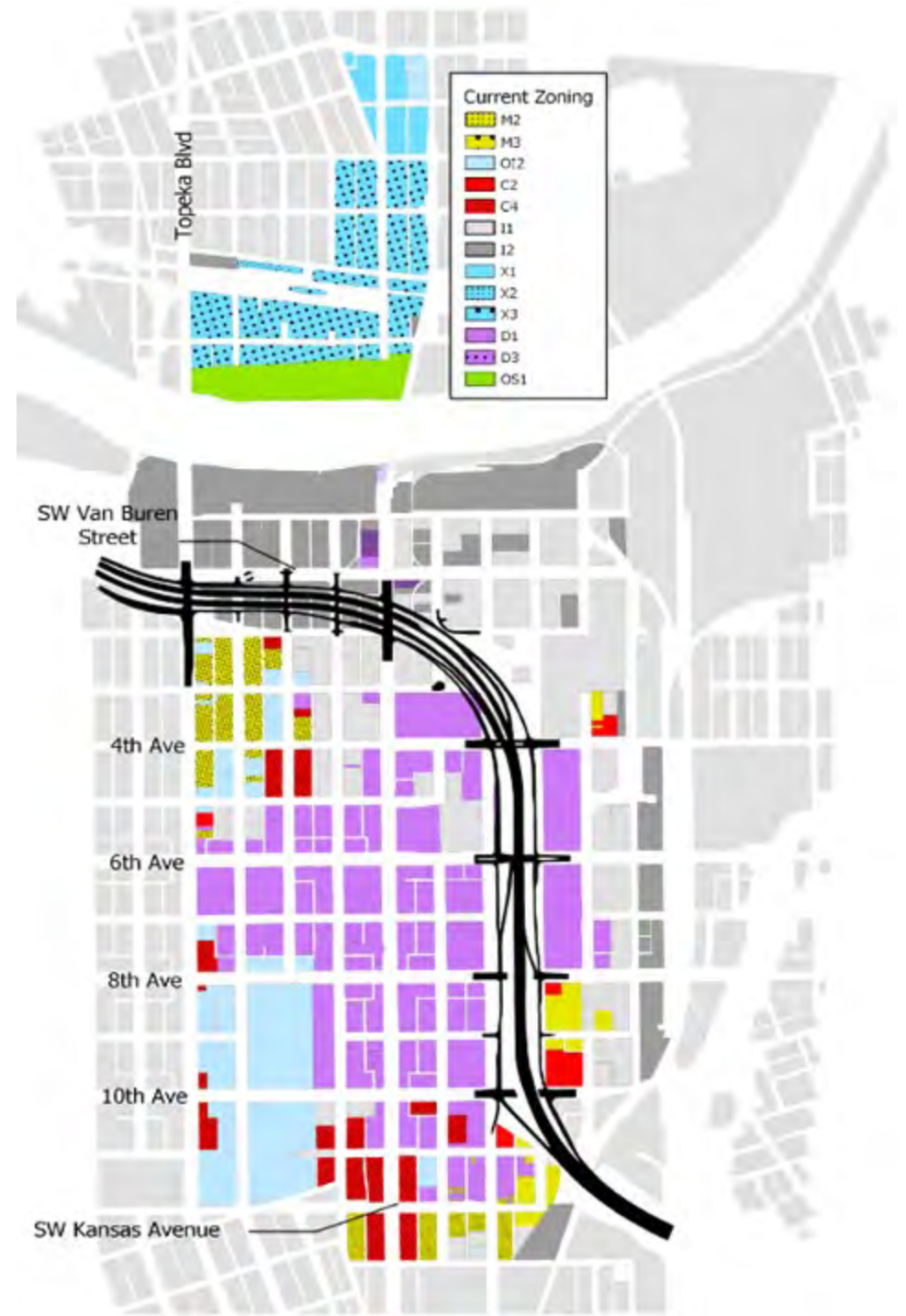
Land use in Downtown Topeka is regulated by the Topeka Development Code (Title 18). The Topeka Development Code includes regulations for 13 zoning districts located downtown.

The districts include a combination of mixed use districts - X Districts in NOTO/River North and D Districts south of the river. The X districts were implemented in the NOTO/River North area through the implementation of the Historic North Topeka Neighborhood Plan in 1999.

There are also residential zoning districts in the northwest corner of the Van Buren District and industrial districts along the south side of the river and west of the rail yards. Office zoning is primarily found around the State Capitol.

## D District Zoning

The Topeka Zoning Code contains zoning districts specific to downtown. The downtown districts are provided to encourage a compatible mixed use activity. These districts have been partially implemented with the conversion of the former downtown C5 district to D-1 in 2017. See the Implementation section for recommendations to implement D District zoning throughout the rest of downtown. Below is a summary of the D Districts.



# Zoning

There are **three downtown district classifications**. A review of the descriptions should be performed to see if an update to the purpose language is needed.

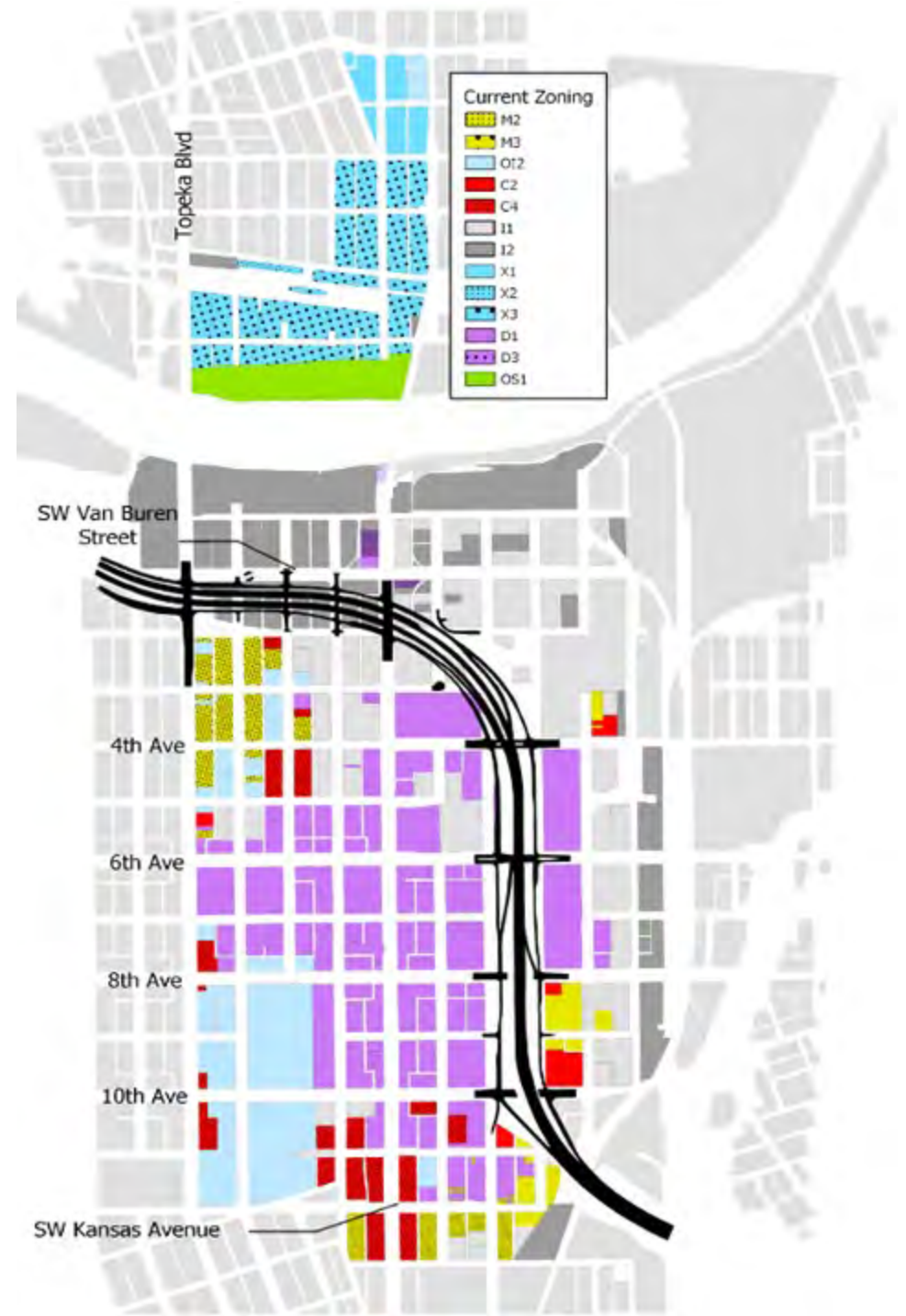
**D-1 District** - The purpose of this district is to facilitate a compatible mixed use activity center within the core area of downtown Topeka. The district is predominantly composed of State offices, as well as local and Federal facilities, commercial and retail uses. The district includes compatible residential, office, civic, and commercial retail/service uses which complement and support a high density of activity and facilitate pedestrian usage.

**D-2 District** - The purpose of this district is to integrate a compatible mixed use activity with urban residential neighborhoods. The district includes a balance of compatible residential, office, cultural, and neighborhood commercial retail/service uses of low to moderate intensity that complement and support neighborhood residential areas and pedestrian usage.

**D-3 District** - The purpose of this district is to reestablish the linkage between downtown and the Kansas River through intensive redevelopment of the area north of Crane Street to the Kansas River. The district includes housing, commercial and office uses that emphasize the relationship between downtown and the river, as well as expand cultural opportunities in the general downtown area.

Within the downtown zoning districts are adopted design guidelines. The guidelines primarily deal with non-residential building and parking. Using the model of the recently adopted city-wide non-residential design standards, the downtown design guidelines should be updated and converted to more prescriptive design standards. Further, design standards should also be created to provide design guidance to residential projects. This Plan will house the new design standards.

Finally, there are adopted downtown sign standards. These sign standards were recently crafted and adopted and are right sized for downtown.





# Design

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A high design aesthetic is promoted by this Plan as a way to protect property investments and help make downtown more welcoming. The overall design aesthetic should be based, in part, on the current built form and street wall of downtown as a way to “right size” the design expectation for downtown.

## Built Form

The built form of a downtown describes the relationship of structures to one another, comparing size, massing, and proximity. Traditional downtown areas feature a built form based on mass, density, and the creation of a continuous street wall. Inline buildings, with little to no front and side yard setbacks are a common characteristic, creating compact, walkable areas. These buildings are built right up to the sidewalk, establishing a street wall of side-by-side, united structures. This built form provides a classic pedestrian environment unique to city centers. Establishing the built form for Downtown and how that differs based on the varying parts of Downtown is a key component of the Plan. The tower for the Cyrus hotel (photo on the right) was built set back from the lower two-story façade to help maintain the existing street wall and not overwhelm the street below.

## Street Wall

The term street wall is used to describe a continuous row of structures along the property line, near the sidewalk, with no setbacks and minimal side yards. Street walls create a comfortable urban environment by establishing a sense of enclosure, providing easy access between adjacent uses, slowing automobile traffic, and emphasizing the pedestrian over the automobile in a way that improves safety. Maintaining a complete street wall is a valuable component of creating an active, vibrant, and pedestrian-oriented Downtown. The Plan should work to maintain the street wall where it is important to the design of Downtown. The image on the right is an existing street wall on 7th Street in the Van Buren District.



# Design

## Historic Properties

A large number of properties within Downtown Topeka are officially designated as historic. Many of these properties are individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, while many are also included within nationally listed historic districts. The structures on all of these properties date from the 1890s through the mid-1960s, and represent a broad array of architectural styles.

In total, there are a total of 35 structures individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, as well as three National Register Historic Districts. Highlights of individually listed structures include:

- the United State Post Office & Courthouse,
- the Kansas State Capitol Building
- and, the Kansas Free State Capitol Building.

The historic districts contain a total of 137 individual properties, each district representing a broad array of architectural styles and adaptive reuses. Several buildings within the Districts have been converted from warehouse or office to residential, and retail to office.

Design review for historic properties is performed locally by the Topeka Landmarks Commission and is based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The Downtown Topeka Historic District Guidelines also apply to the Mill Block and South Kansas Ave. historic districts.



# Economic Incentives

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There are a number of incentives available for development downtown. Certain incentives – like the NRP and historic tax credits – can be used to layer financing for the same project. However, if a project wishes to utilize the Dynamic Core TIF District, it cannot use the NRP as those incentives are both property tax based. There are links provided for additional program information for each of the incentives described below.

## **Neighborhood Revitalization Program**

The City's Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) is a property tax rebate incentive. Qualified improvements are able to earn a property tax rebate on the taxes that are increased by the improvements. The standard rebate is 95% for 5 years and 50% for 5 years. Historic properties are eligible for a 95% rebate for the full 10 years. [Additional information.](#)

## **Dynamic Core TIF District**

The Dynamic Core TIF District is a property tax based incentive that covers a district that includes downtown. The TIF District captures the increased property tax increment from all of the properties within the district. The funds are collected for use within the district. A development must apply to use the TIF funds. Eligible expenses include property acquisition, site preparation, utilities, and parking facilities. [Additional information.](#)

## **Historic Tax Credits**

Historic tax credits are an income tax based incentive. Federal (20%) and State (25%) income tax credits are available to historic property owners for qualified rehabilitations costs. [Additional information.](#)

## **Opportunity Zones**

Opportunity Zones offer investors preferential tax treatment for capital gains invested in low-income communities. The program is designed to encourage long-term investment in economically distressed areas and promote economic growth. These investments provide support to projects focused on a wide array of issues including, downtown revitalization, housing improvements and expansion of industrial parks and innovation districts. There are three opportunity zones in Topeka. They include Downtown and North Topeka. [Additional information.](#)

## **Star Bonds**

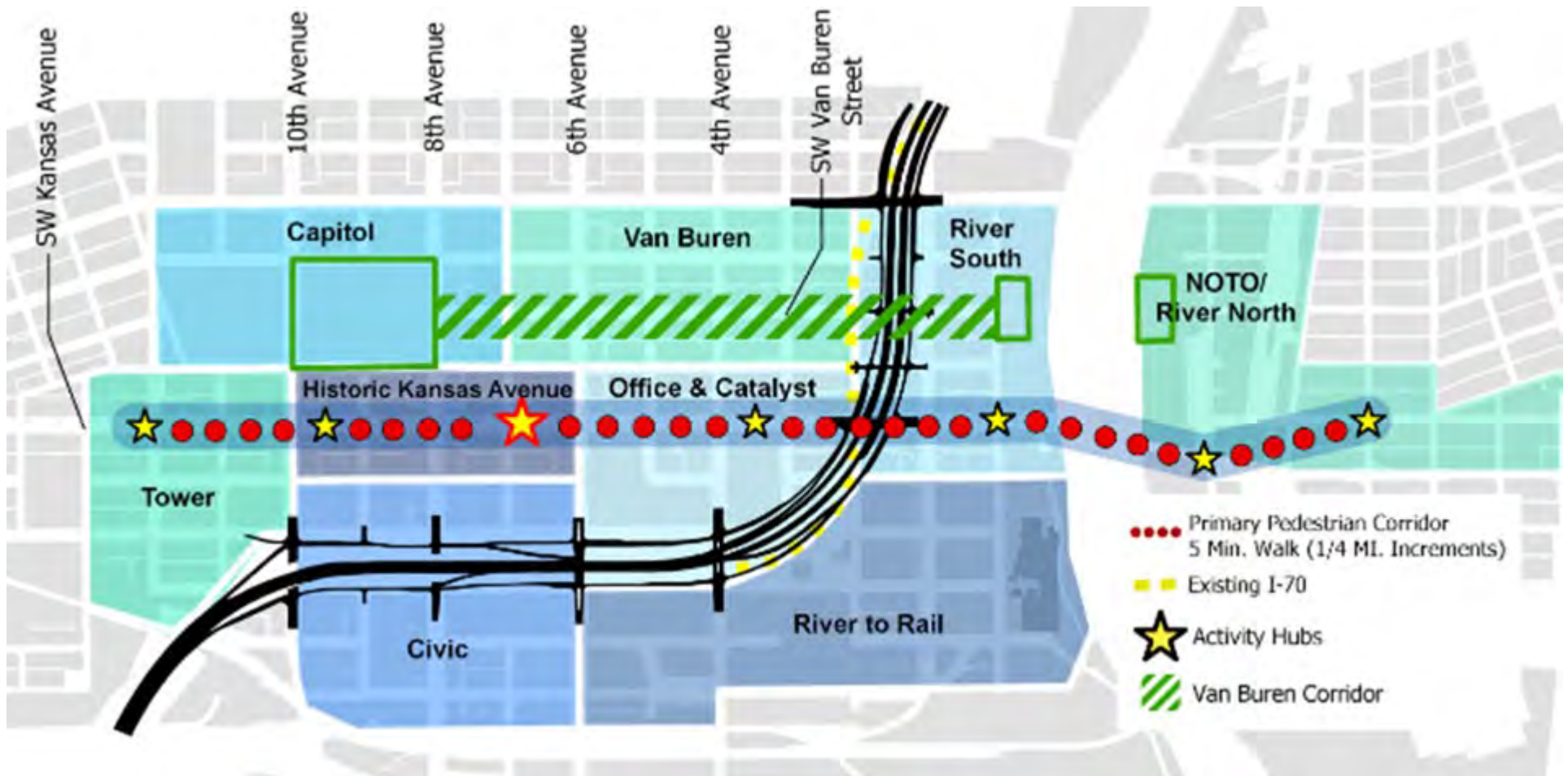
There are no current Star Bond district downtown, but they remain a possibility. Sales Tax and Revenue (STAR) Bonds are a financing tool that allows Kansas municipalities to issue bonds to finance the development of major commercial, entertainment and tourism projects. The bonds are paid off through the sales tax revenue generated by the development. The intent is to increase regional and national visitation to Kansas. [Additional information.](#)

# Demographics

The following graphic is a summary of the downtown demographics.



# PART II: DISTRICT PLANS



# CAPITOL DISTRICT



# History

The Capital District is located on what was southwestern edge of the City of Topeka back during its first full decade as an incorporated city. Its status as undeveloped land changed dramatically in 1866 when construction of the Kansas State Capitol Building commenced on the four square block area between SW 8th & SW 10th Avenues, and between SW Jackson Street, and SW Harrison Avenue. Construction on the Capitol Building would last for 37 years until its final completion in 1903. Topeka's first free public library was constructed on the Statehouse grounds at the south west corner of SW 8th & Jackson Streets in 1883. The Library would remain standing and in operation at this location until it moved to its current location in 1953.



*Topeka Free Public Library with the Kansas State Capitol under construction in the background, 1888*

For the remainder of the 19th Century, the areas surrounding the State Capitol were constructed consistent with the initial development patterns of the City, with business and commercial businesses rising to the east and north, and predominantly residential dwellings being built to the south and west.

It was not until the turn of the Century that government and institutional/civic uses began to occupy the frontage of SW 10th Avenue, directly south of the State Capitol Building. By 1910, the Kansas State Printing Office was built at the corner of SW Jackson & SW 10th Avenue. This was followed by the Masonic Temple next door to the west by 1920.

In 1954, the State of Kansas expanded their offices with the construction of the Docking State Office Building in the 900 block of SW Harrison, directly west of the Capitol. With this development began the replacement of the residential neighborhood to the south with vehicle parking lots to accommodate the expanding State workforce.

Devastation, however, struck this area on June 8, 1966 when an F5 tornado destroyed the vast majority of buildings south of 10th Street. The recovery of this disaster prompted the wholesale replacement of all residences within the Capital District with



*Damage caused by the June 8, 1966 tornado*

## District Parking Development and Utilization

1942



1966



1994



2002



2018



# Capitol



- State government focus
- The People's greenspace - dual purpose
- Docking renovation/Class A space
- Parking lot re-use/infill
- Jackson/Harrison conversions

# Government Green Space

The Capitol building is the heart of this district, which is dominated by government uses. This area will remain as one of the major employment centers downtown and would be a great place for a new museum or cultural destination. In an area with little other green space, the Capitol Grounds can act as an oasis for downtown residents - a great place to read a book under a tree, meet with friends or eat lunch outside.





# Potential Build-Out

## New Development & Conversions

- 1 New Mixed Use/Flex** Contingent on the development of structured parking for Docking State Office Building, a new opportunity could arise for a variety of uses including class A office space, retail, lofts or sports fieldhouse with shared parking for weekends. Construction on this site provides a more intensive use than the existing surface parking, while putting space back on the tax rolls .
- 2 Potential Office Rehabilitation** - The Docking Building currently sits vacant. Multiple rehabilitation proposals provide a varying level of occupancy. Only a full rehabilitation accommodating new KDHE labs, conference space, other State office consolidation and structured parking will provide the highest economic impact .
- 3 Mixed Use Infill** - Replacing surface level parking with infill development will complete the streetwall along the block and provide space for new retail, office and residential housing units, with a spectacular front door view of the Capitol Building.
- 4 Parking Garage** - To account for parking spaces lost to new development, structured parking will provide parking for nearby offices.
- 5 New Office** - With a need for new Class A office space, new development along 7th Street would fit in appropriately with other office uses.



- 6 New Residential** - Replacing the State's surface parking on the southeast corner of Van Buren and 7th Street, a new mixed use housing development would provide needed housing units and anchor the southern end of the Van Buren housing corridor. Structured parking should be integrated to replace the lost surface parking.
- 7 Potential Office Rehabilitation/ Conversion** - The State's Eisenhower Building, currently not on their central plant, could provide needed housing units and anchor the future Van Buren housing corridor. The building height/proximity and location would provide excellent views of the Capitol and walkability to Kansas Avenue.

# RESIDENCES AND GREENSPACE



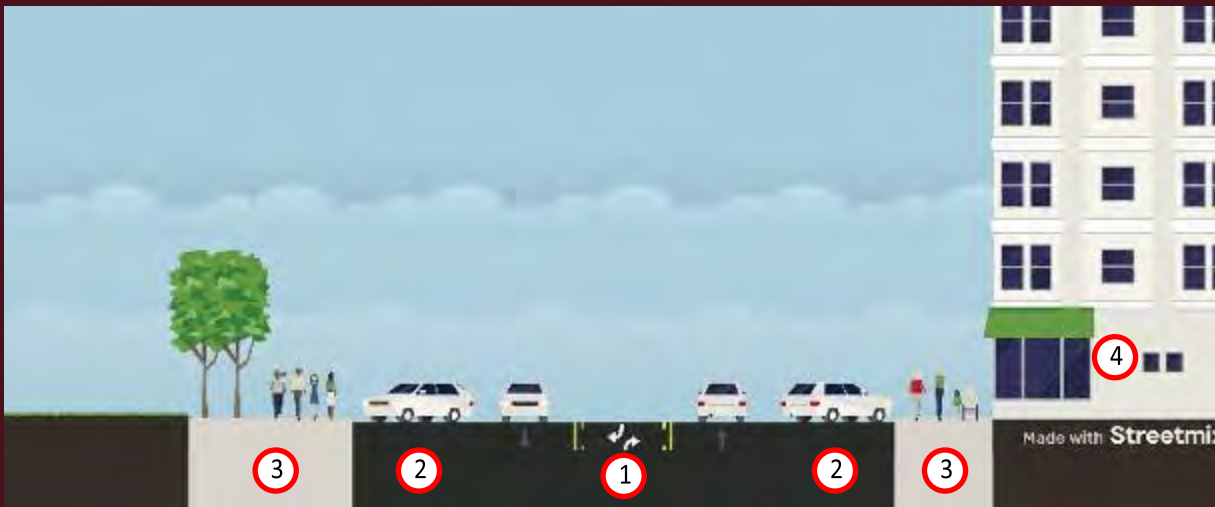
# Circulation/Complete Streets



Significant changes are proposed on Jackson St. and Harrison St. While accommodating existing traffic counts, both roads are recommended for conversion to two-way traffic throughout Downtown Topeka. These changes will create a more user and pedestrian friendly circulation pattern. 12th Street is currently under construction to remove one traffic lane and create a designated bike and pedestrian path.

Type/Location	Recommendation	Complete Streets Typology	Ped	Bike	Bus	Car
<b>Conversions (1-way to 2-way)</b>	Jackson St. (7th to 12th)	Main Street	•			•
	Harrison St (7th to 12th)	Main Street	•			•
<b>Lane Reallocation (Removal of Travel Lanes)</b>	12th St. (Topeka Blvd to Jackson St.)	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•	•	•
	8th Ave.	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•	•	•
<b>No Change</b>	7th St.	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
	9th St	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
	10th Ave	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•	•	•
	Topeka Blvd	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
	Van Buren St.	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•		•

## Jackson Street 7th Street to 12th Street

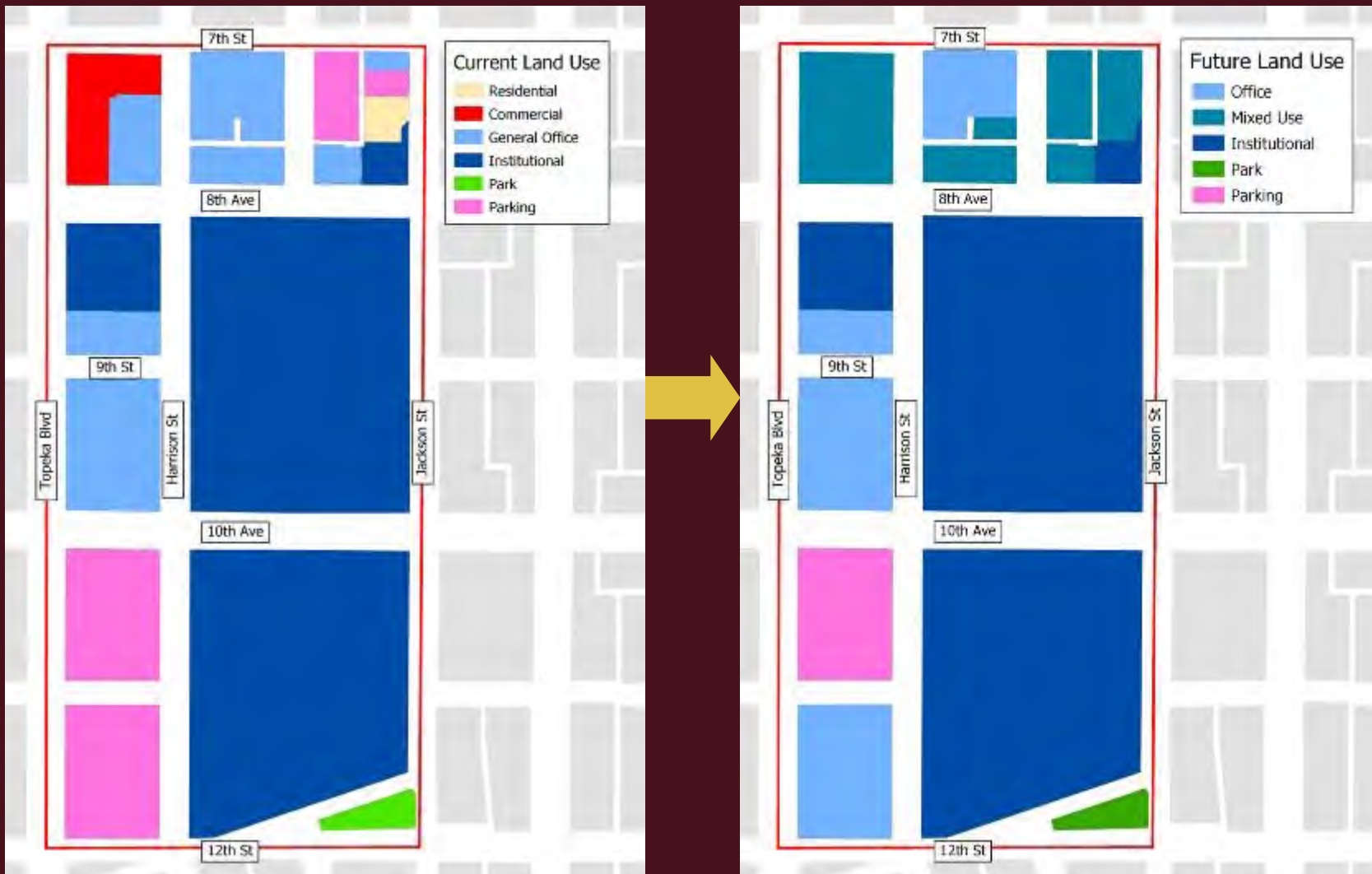


- 1 Travel Lanes converted to two-way traffic
- 2 Angled parking along both travel lanes
- 3 Generous sidewalk widths for increased pedestrian use and implementation of crosswalk bump-outs
- 4 Promote mixed use development to increase pedestrian amenities

# Existing Character

## Land Use

Land uses in the Capitol District are dominated by State offices, and to accommodate these uses, two full city blocks dedicated to parking make up the southwest corner of the district. With the State searching for a new KDHE research site and rehabilitation of the Docking building, both of the blocks dedicated to surface parking can be utilized to accentuate Topeka Boulevard and condense State offices. The northern end of the district has plenty of opportunity to provide new commercial and residential uses, building towards a centralized “core” within Downtown Topeka. A proposed new housing development at the southeast corner of 7th and Van Buren can act as transitional zone to more intensive residential and commercial uses.



# Existing Character

## Zoning

The Capitol District will be rezoned to D-1. Rezoning of this district will accommodate the existing office spaces, while promoting new commercial and residential uses along the north end of the district.

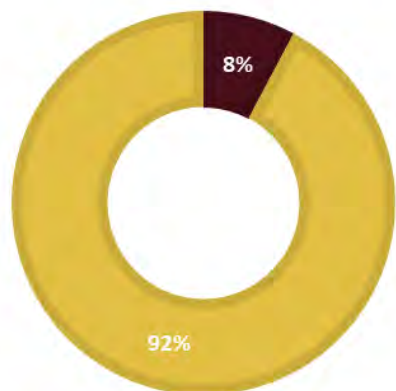
**D-1 Zoning** - Designed to facilitate a compatible mixed use activity center within the core area of downtown Topeka. The district is predominately composed of state offices, as well as local and federal facilities, commercial and retail uses. The district includes compatible, office, civic, commercial retail/service, and residential uses which complement and support a high density of activity and facilitate pedestrian usage.



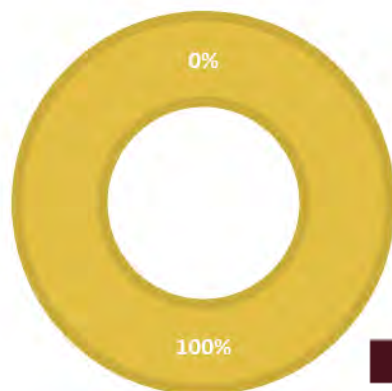
# Implementation Summary

	Recommendations	Other Considerations
Land Use	Increase quantity of retail uses and housing units.	
Zoning	Rezone district to D-1	See map in Existing Character
Housing	Potential to add 70 units of new housing	Reliant on development of new housing on the southeast corner of 7th and Van Buren and conversion of Eisenhower building.
Office	Rehabilitation of Docking building and other government-owned spaces allow for consolidation of government office space.	Government-owned space not included in estimates of new class A office space.
Retail	Retail component would be part of new mixed use developments, with no new commercial developments projected.	
Hotel	No new hotel beds.	
Parking	Angled parking is preferred in high density commercial areas. However, bike and pedestrian considerations may dictate the need for parallel parking or other parking requirements.	Structured Parking is preferred. Where possible surface parking lots should be replaced with higher density structured parking.
Building Design Standards	Create residential and nonresidential design standards for D Districts.	

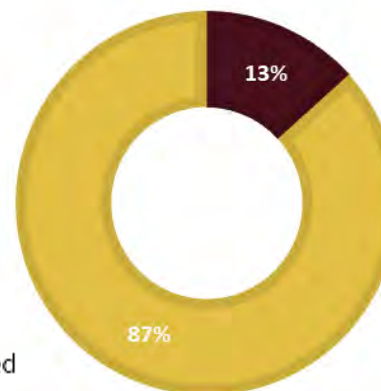
HOUSING



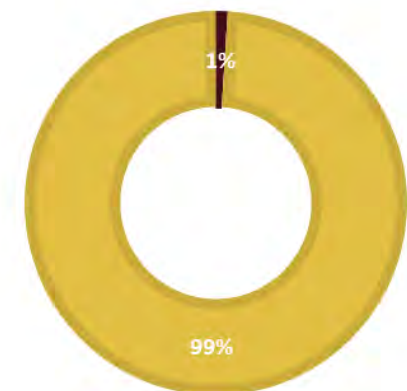
HOTEL ROOMS



OFFICE



EXISTING RETAIL



Added  
 Needed



# CIVIC DISTRICT

# History

Downtown Topeka's Civic District has a broad and varied history in terms of its overall character and more specifically its predominant uses. This variance in its history is due in no small part to its geographic spread, extending from S. Quincy Street east to the railroad tracks. As Downtown and the railroad grew, so did the divergence of the character of the District from its original development.

During this area's initial years in the 1880's, the frontage of 6th Avenue was developed in the service and retail industries. 6th Avenue, at this time, was the main access road to Topeka from the east, and was given the name "Liberty Highway" for its end destination of the Free State Capital of Kansas. Its definitive character was similar in most respects to the development occurring along S. Kansas Avenue.



Fire Station No. 2, City Hall, and Civic Auditorium at SE 7th and Quincy, 1900

The majority of the District, however, was developed as a residential neighborhood, home of many prominent early Topekans. One home in particular belonged to Col. George Veale, a prominent early developer and entrepreneur within Topeka's first several decades. Col. Veale lived at the northeast corner of SE 8th & Quincy Streets. The City of Topeka obtained this property in 1900 for the development of a multi-purpose building containing Topeka's City Hall, Fire Station No. 2, and a Civic Auditorium .

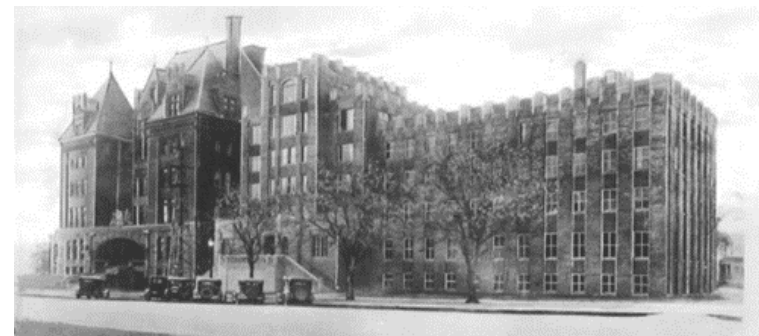
The area north of SE 7th Street, however, set its early development pattern in a different trajectory. The most prominent business to be located in the 700 block of SE Quincy Street was that of the Smith Automobile Manufacturing Company. Smith Automobile Manufacturing Company built luxury cars between the years of 1902 to 1912. Smith was the first automobile manufacturer west of the Mississippi River, and also produced the very first automobile to successfully ascend Pikes Peak in Colorado .



The Smith Automobile Co. Side Door Tanneau. 1906 Model

The Great Depression brought significant changes to the area. Among the highlights in new construction was a significant addition to the Santa Fe Railroad Hospital in 1930, and Works Progress Administration project to build what is now the current Topeka City Hall and the Topeka Performing Arts Center in 1937. After the Great Depression and WWII, construction began of Interstate Highway-70 began in 1956, becoming among the first miles completed of the nation's Interstate Highway system .

Major public development projects within the Civic District continued through the turn of the Century with the construction of the Shawnee County Jail in 1987, the new BNSF office building in 1992, and the Metropolitan Transit Authority Quincy Street bus transfer station in 2003 .



Santa Fe Hospital. SE 6th & Madison St. 1930s



# Civic



- Government complex
- Office/facility consolidations
- High-quality public building design
- Gateway

# Local Government Hub

The Civic District can act as the local government “campus” unifying City, County, and Transit headquarters and operations among others. Large surface parking lots provide an opportunity for government office relocation that would enable valuable property along Kansas Avenue and riverfront for catalytic developments. A consolidation of uses would enhance efficient collaboration and partnering among different agencies while providing feasible re-use of marginalized parcels in the shadow of County jail facilities.



# Potential Build-Out

## New Development and Conversions

- 1 **Justice Center** - The consolidation of City/County law enforcement and judicial facilities will free prime parcels for new development, streamline coordination, and transform a blighted gateway to Downtown. A new law enforcement center would feature structured parking for increased parking density limiting the footprint.
- 2 **Fleet Building** - Currently fleet facilities are located adjacent to the Law Enforcement Center and Topeka Metro. Whether necessary in one or two locations, new fleet buildings will be necessary to maintain the Topeka Police and Topeka Metro fleet. Consolidation of fleet facilities should be considered to reduce cost and increase efficiencies.
- 3 **Metro Transit Site** - Potential relocation of Topeka Metro from the River South District to the Civic District would further consolidate government uses to the Civic District and place operations near the Quincy Street Station. The proposed new site for some operations, bus barn and fleet building would replace surface parking lots and vacant parcels, and represents the most viable re-location site downtown.



4 **The Topeka Capital Journal Building** is currently under new ownership. The buildings mid-century modern design makes it worth preserving through rehabilitation. The resurgence of this formidable 120k sq. ft. space can be another downtown destination point for unique entertainment, recreation, retail, or drinking/eating experience in line with other nearby repurposed historic buildings.

5 **Entertainment Venue Rehab** - The old Capital Iron Works facility with large windows and brick exterior has the makings to become some sort of adaptive re-use entertainment venue. Other cities have experienced an increase in rehabilitation of similar structures, with intent to create a 12+ hour hub. The structures large size would allow for multiple uses like concert venue, brew or food hall, or banquet hall would add a unique destination point on the east side of Downtown.

# Government Uses

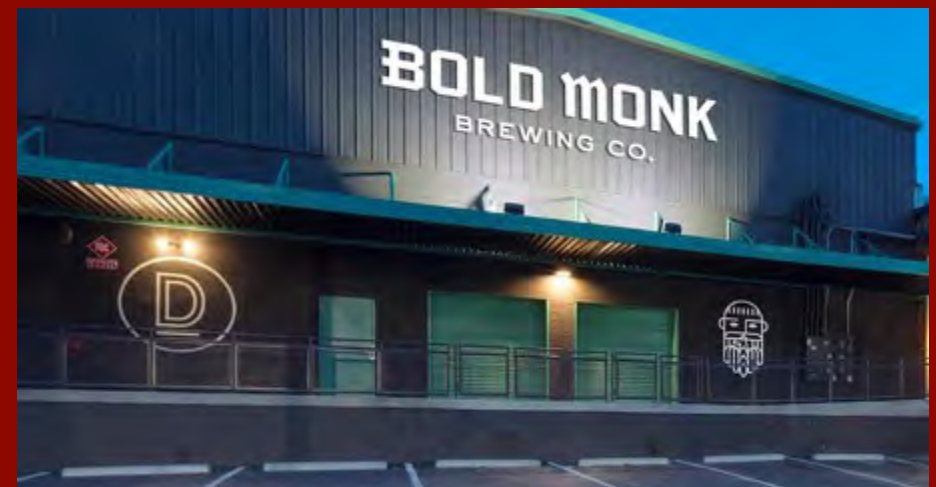
## Justice Center



## Metro Facility



# Entertainment Venue



# Circulation/Complete Streets



Changes to I-70/Polk-Quincy Viaduct will ultimately impact the circulation surrounding the Civic District. A split-diamond design between 8th Avenue and 10th Avenue will simplify access points safely and open up potential to convert Monroe Street and Madison Street will be limited to access points at 6th Avenue and 10th Street. New development along the Polk-Quincy Viaduct will highlight the government heavy uses found within the district.

Type/Location	Recommendation	Complete Streets Typology	Ped	Bike	Bus	Car
No Change	6th Avenue	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•	•	•
	7th Street	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
	8th Avenue	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•	•	•
	9th Street	Industrial Street	•			•
	10th Avenue	Industrial Street	•	•		•
	Jefferson Street	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
	Adams Street	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
No Change/ Conversion	Monroe Street	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
	Madison Street	Mixed Use Boulevard	•		•	•
Lane Reallocation (Removal of Travel Lane)	Quincy Street	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•	•	•

## Polk-Quincy Viaduct Impacts

Expected changes to I-70/Polk-Quincy Viaduct will impact how vehicles interact with the Civic District. Current proposals will simplify the number of entrances and exits into the district, directing traffic to the corridors designed to handle greater levels of traffic.

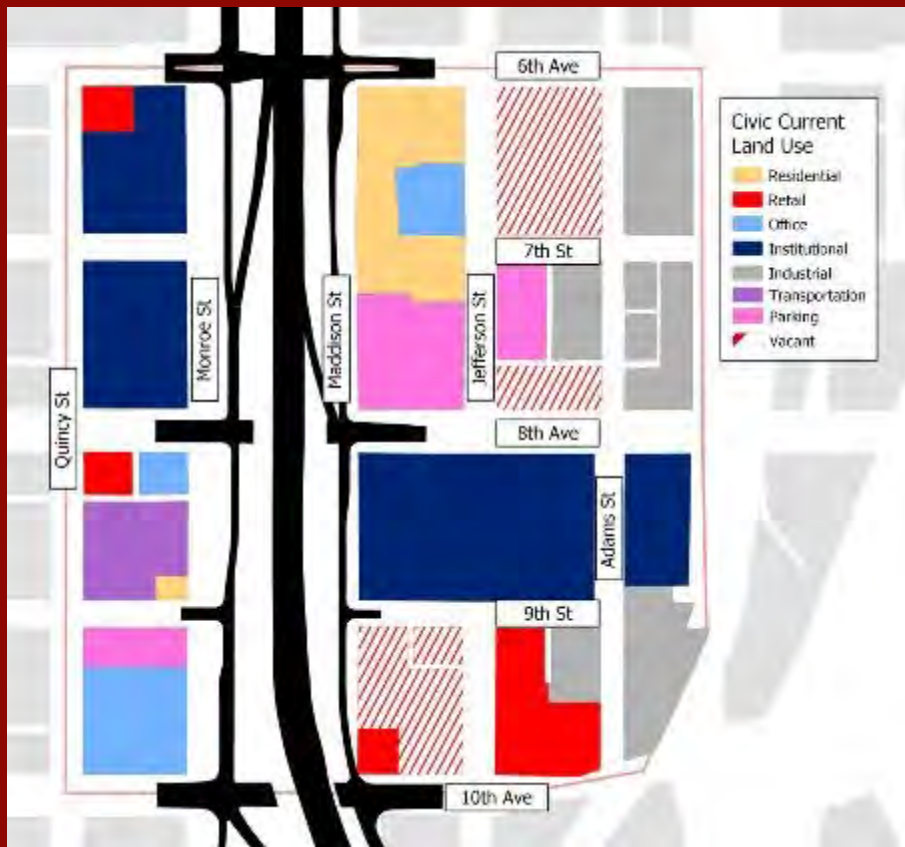
Westbound Exits	Westbound Entrances	Eastbound Exits	Eastbound Entrances
10th Avenue	8th Avenue	Topeka Boulevard	Kansas Avenue
Kansas Avenue	Topeka Boulevard	8th Avenue	10th Avenue



# Existing Character

## Land Use

Land uses in the Civic District are dominated by City, State, and institutional uses and is split by I-70 running through the middle of the district. Two full city blocks are dedicated to the Shawnee County Detention Center that dominates the eastern landscape of the district. Industrial uses are located adjacent to the BNSF rail lines on the eastern edge with vacant parcels and buildings dotting the landscape. Future land use in the district should provide further consolidation of City, State, and institutional uses for new office space oriented toward government use. Jefferson and 8th Avenue could be a potential location suitable for relocation of Topeka Metro operations facility, bus barn, and fleet services building. While Jefferson and 10th Avenue can accommodate a combined City/County Justice Center at the gateway to Downtown. New industrial mixed use at Adams and 8th Avenue may house an entertainment venue providing activity to the district after 5:00 PM.



# Existing Character Zoning

The Civic District will be rezoned to D-1 and D-3. Rezoning of this district will accommodate the existing office spaces, while promoting continued development of government oriented office space and institutional uses.

**D-1 Zoning** - Designed to facilitate a compatible mixed use activity center within the core area of downtown Topeka. The district is predominately composed of state offices, as well as local and federal facilities, commercial and retail uses. The district includes compatible, office, civic, commercial retail/service, and residential uses which complement and support a high density of activity and facilitate pedestrian usage.

**D-3 Zoning** - Intended to reestablish the linkage between downtown and the Kansas River, it also supports linkages to rail and freight areas. The district includes industrial, commercial and office uses as primary uses and housing as a secondary use. Land use in this zoning district should emphasize the relationship between downtown institutional, and industrial, as well as expanded cultural opportunities in the general downtown area.



# Implementation Summary

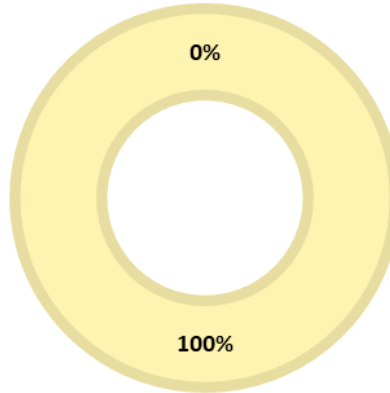
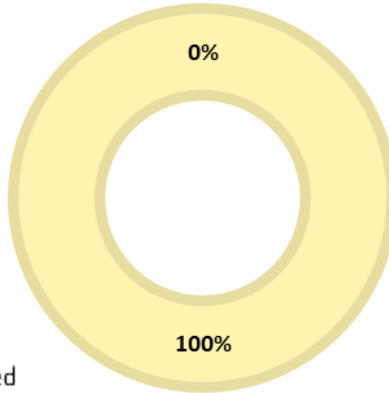
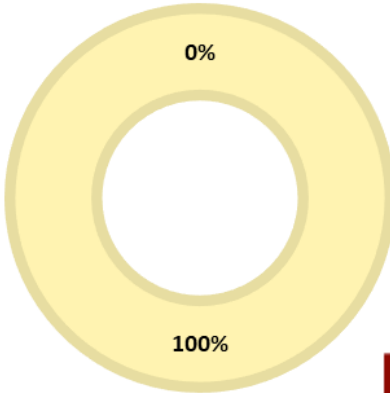
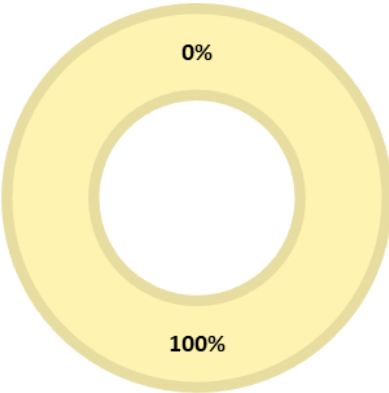
	Recommendations	Other Considerations
<b>Land Use</b>	Consolidation of government and institutional uses.	Reliant on new build.
<b>Zoning</b>	Rezone district to D-1 and D-3	See map in Existing Character
<b>Housing</b>	No new housing added.	
<b>Office</b>	330,000 sq. ft. of new and rehabbed office space added for government use.	This office space does not count toward new Class A office space due to government need.
<b>Retail</b>	Rehabilitation of existing industrial building for entertainment venue.	
<b>Hotel</b>	No hotel beds added.	
<b>Parking</b>	Much of the existing parking will remain in place. Need structured parking may be required with new government office development.	
<b>Building Design Standards</b>	Create residential and nonresidential design standards for D Districts.	

**HOUSING**

**HOTEL ROOMS**

**OFFICE**

**EXISTING RETAIL**



- Added
- Needed

An aerial photograph of a city street, likely Kansas Avenue, showing a mix of historic brick buildings and modern structures. A prominent building on the right has a large red sign that says "CYRUS". The street is lined with parked cars and has a clear view of the buildings' facades and windows. The text "HISTORIC KANSAS AVENUE DISTRICT" is overlaid in large, bold, black letters across the center of the image.

# HISTORIC KANSAS AVENUE DISTRICT



# History

The history of this area closely parallels the rest of Downtown Topeka, albeit only a decade later than the histories of those districts extending north toward the Kansas River. Permanent commercial development south of 6th Avenue began in earnest during the 1870s, roughly 20 years after the City's initial settlement. By this time, the State of Kansas had been officially admitted to the Union as a Free State, and Topeka had won a popular vote to become the State's official capital city. The City's two major railroads, the Union Pacific, and the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, had both become firmly established within the entire region, thus propelling the city to new economic heights.



Hotel Kansan, 9th & Kansas Avenue. 1920

The distance of the Historic Kansas Avenue District from the Kansas River and the rail lines further north enabled this area to be developed for more traditional business purposes, as opposed to the service industries that defined the earliest settlement period in Topeka's history. This "business" character was solidified in 1884 when the AT&SF railroad constructed their corporate headquarters at the southeast corner of SW 9th and Jackson streets. By 1924, the headquarters of the AT&SF offices had expanded to encompass nearly the entire 900 block of SW Jackson Street. This building was occupied by AT&SF until 1992 when the Railroad relocated to a new office building located at 900 SE Quincy Street. It is currently occupied as an office building by the State of Kansas.

S. Kansas Avenue, meanwhile, developed as the City's primary customer service corridor, offering myriad retail opportunities for Topeka's citizens, along with café's, restaurants, and hotels. The Hotel Kansan (*right*) is the last remaining hotel in Downtown Topeka from the first half of the 20th Century. This hotel has since been converted for office and residential uses.



Hotel Kansan, 9th & Kansas Avenue. 1920

The Historic Kansas Avenue District remains a significant and intact example of the dense commercial corridor that began Topeka's history as the Capital of Kansas. This area reflects the economic and civic development of Topeka from shortly after its founding to the present day. Although most of the development in this area occurred in the early to mid-twentieth century, a significant revival in development is taking place within the area with the establishment of a historic district, and the construction of a new hotel and conference center the 900 block of S. Kansas Avenue in 2018.



8th and Kansas Ave., 1935

# Historic Kansas Avenue



- Destination—place to gather, be seen, date night, etc.
- Retail/Dining core
- Office to residential conversion
- Historic eclectic—renovations and key infill
- Quincy Street makeover

# Historic Mixed Use Centerpiece

The stock of historic commercial buildings on South Kansas Avenue is unparalleled in the City of Topeka and this burgeoning mixed-use district that will continue to evolve as the centerpiece of Downtown. As more residents and workers are drawn to the area, the quality of commercial spaces will continue to improve. Independent shops and restaurants will benefit from being clustered together in this special district, which will be the prime spot for people watching and outdoor dining.



# Potential Build-Out

## New Development

**1 New Mixed Use** - Building off of the energy of the Cyrus Hotel, a mixed use development with covered parking can continue the momentum at a highly visible intersection. Alley and sewer lines will need relocated to make this feasible.

**2 New Mixed Use** - Infill along Quincy Street will help provide a street presence while removing surface parking in the district.

**3 Parking Garage** - With new housing units and office space anchor proposed next door at 823 Quincy Avenue, adding structured parking will provide needed parking spaces at the corner of 9th and Quincy.

**4 Mixed Use Addition** - Existing structures in this area do not take advantage of 2nd and 3rd story space and the exteriors are in need of investment. An addition to the existing structures could provide needed capital while increasing the density of commercial, office or residential

**5 New Mixed Use** - Another infill project, new development on this site would help establish a Quincy Street presence, while matching existing uses along 8th Avenue.

**6 New Mixed Use** - With Evergy Plaza acting as a catalyst site, new infill/rehab development with ground floor commercial uses would benefit from the increased pedestrian activity.



**7 New Mixed Use** - With Evergy Plaza acting as a catalyst site, new development with commercial uses would benefit from the increased pedestrian activity. However, this site may be less of a priority given the green space flexibility it provides for the plaza

**8 Parking Garage Façades** - With multiple parking garages in place along Quincy (and one proposed), improved façades will soften the aesthetic of Historic Kansas Avenue's "back door" and create a more attractive pedestrian corridor (see page 4.6)

**9 Alley Activations** - Concentrated within a block of Evergy Plaza, some alleys could be transformed for public gatherings, music, and art installations on a temporary or as needed basis. This includes the alley behind the Jayhawk Theater as a compliment to their use (see page 4.6)

# Potential Build-Out Conversions

- 1 **The Mills Building** - Located at 901 S Kansas Avenue, this building features ample windows and could provide market rate units.
- 2 **823 SE Quincy Street** - Having recently changed ownership, there is potential for half of the building to convert to housing units, capitalizing on anticipated pedestrian amenities along SE Quincy St
- 3 **818 S Kansas Avenue** - While currently housing Evergy, the building prime location would provide excellent views of the Capitol building and Downtown Topeka. Access to an existing parking garage would relieve the need for new structured parking.
- 4 **800 SW Jackson** - Home to multiple state offices, this building would provide excellent views of the Capitol building and Downtown Topeka. Access to an existing parking garage would relieve the need for new structured parking.
- 5 **709 S Kansas Avenue** - Currently, this building sits partially vacant. New residential units located along Kansas Avenue will provide an improved street presence with new market rate units featuring ample windows. Housing units would be located on the upper floors allowing for a mixed use land use.



6 **Wolfe's Camera Shop** - The historic building located at 635 S Kansas Avenue is currently for sale. Located across from Evergy Plaza, this property is adjacent to structured parking and could be used for innovation workspace.

7 **Jayhawk Tower/Theater** - The buildings historic context as a hotel would be fitting to return to residential uses. When paired with the rehabilitation of the historic Jayhawk Theatre as a new entertainment venue, this segment of the block will act as a mixed use destination for Downtown Topeka .

# Festivals/Events



# Parking Garage Facade



# Alley Activation



# ENVISIONING QUINCY STREET



# Circulation/Complete Streets



Significant changes are proposed on Jackson St. and Quincy St. While accommodating existing traffic counts, Quincy St will have a reduction in travel lanes, creating a pedestrian friendly streetscape and promoting residential and retail uses. Jackson St. is recommended for conversion with two-way traffic throughout Downtown Topeka. While not directly influencing the boundaries of the district, changes to the Polk/Quincy Viaduct (I-70) will impact it. The current split-diamond proposal for PQV will occur at 8th Ave and 10th Ave resulting in removal of the 8th Ave westbound off-ramp and eastbound on-ramp.

Type/Location	Recommendation	Complete Streets Typology	Ped	Bike	Bus	Car
<b>Conversions (1-way to 2-way)</b>	Jackson St. (10th Ave to 6th Ave)	Main Street	•	•		•
<b>Lane Reallocation (Removal of Travel Lanes)</b>	Quincy St. (10th Ave to 6th Ave) - Street treatment to create pedestrian friendly environment. See Below.	Main Street	•	•	•	•
<b>No Change</b>	Kansas Avenue	Main Street	•	•	•	•
	6th Avenue	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•	•	•
	7th Street	Main Street	•	•	•	•
	8th Avenue	Main Street	•		•	•
	9th Street	Main Street	•		•	•
	10th Avenue	Mixed Use Boulevard	•		•	•

## Quincy Street 6th Avenue to 10th Street

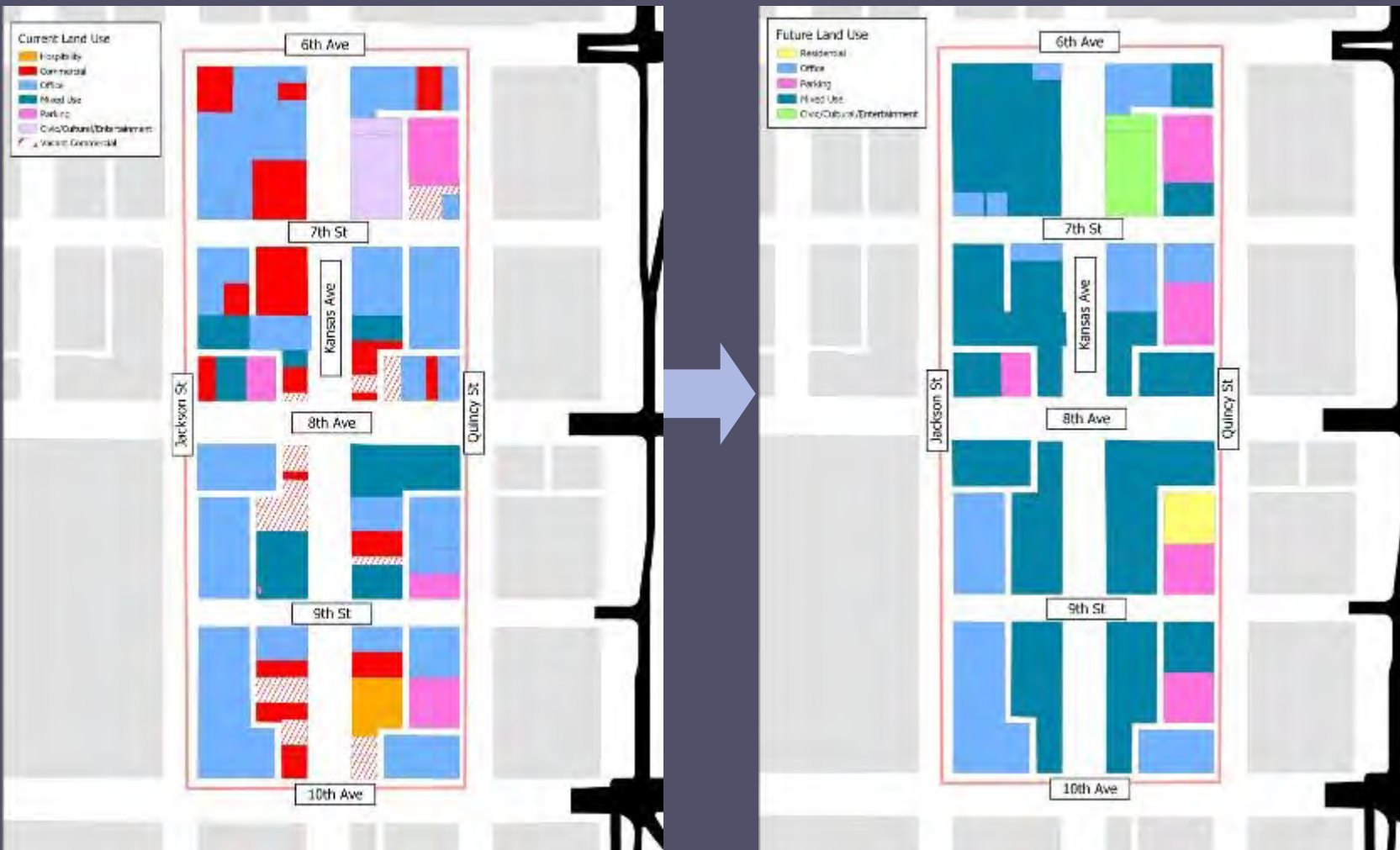


- 1 Travel Lanes Reduced to 3 lanes from 5
- 2 Sharrows/dedicated bike lanes
- 3 Angled Parking
- 4 Increased sidewalk widths for increased pedestrian use
- 5 Mixed Use Developments increase pedestrian amenities
- 6 Pedestrian medians, bump outs, and mid-block crossings

# Existing Character

## Land Use

Much of the existing land use is dominated by office and commercial uses with housing as a secondary land use, typically located above the active street front. Every Plaza located between 6th Avenue and 7th Street on Kansas Avenue, combined with the Kansas Avenue Streetscape project, is designed to bring 12+ hour energy and enhance the public spaces in the district. The existing office, commercial, and vacant space provides adequate square footage to generate new retail and housing units through conversion. While no one single project will elevate the district, there is ample opportunity for multiple smaller projects to generate new activity and create a higher quality of life for those who work, live, and shop in Historic Kansas Avenue.





# Existing Character

## Zoning

The Historic Kansas Avenue District is made up entirely of D-1 Zoning. Following the adoption of the D-1 Zoning district in 2017, the Historic Kansas Avenue District was rezoned from C-5 to D-1. This rezoning allowed existing land uses to remain while creating a cohesive zoning district for the Core of Downtown Topeka.

**D-1 Zoning** - Designed to facilitate a compatible mixed use activity center within the core area of downtown Topeka. The district is predominately composed of state offices, as well as local and federal facilities, commercial and retail uses. The district includes compatible residential, office, civic, and commercial retail/service uses which complement and support a high density of activity and facilitate pedestrian usage.

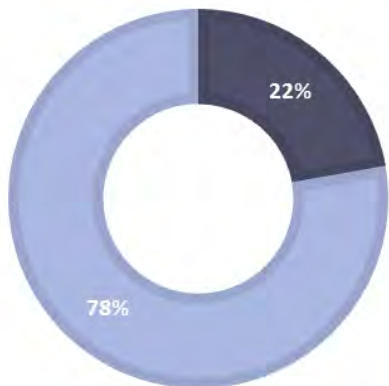


Example of a hotel that was converted to mixed use commercial and housing. The D-1 zoning district encourages this type of development.

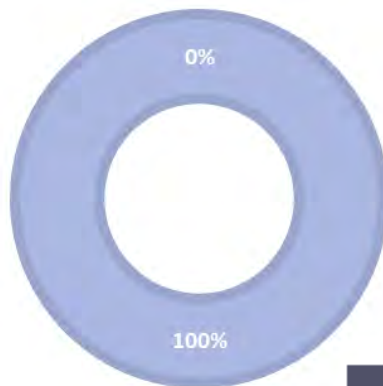
# Implementation

	Recommendations	Other Considerations
Land Use	Increase quantity of retail uses and housing units.	
Zoning	Retain D-1 Zoning	See map in Existing Character
Housing	Potential to add 200 units in the next ten years.	Reliant on conversion of existing office uses to reach unit count proposed.
Office	Conversion of segments of office space to accommodate needed housing units with new Class A office created in new mixed use development.	
Retail	New retail uses within mixed use new developments will help guide the district to become a 12+ hour district.	A new variety of retail uses will increase quality of life.
Hotel	No new proposed hotel beds in district.	
Parking	Angled on-street parking is preferred in high density commercial areas. However, bike and pedestrian considerations may dictate the need for parallel parking or other parking requirements.	Structured Parking is preferred. Where possible surface parking lots should be replaced with higher density structured parking.
Building Design Standards	Create residential and nonresidential design standards for D Districts.	

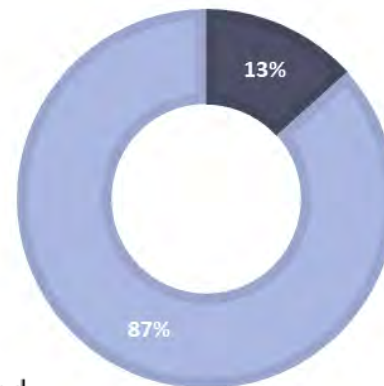
HOUSING



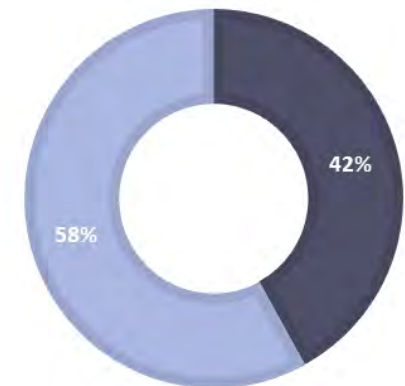
HOTEL ROOMS



OFFICE



EXISTING RETAIL



# NOTO/RIVER NORTH DISTRICT



# River North History

Life along the north bank of the Kansas River in Topeka began in 1842 as the exit point of Pappa's Ferry across the Kansas River. Pappan's Ferry provided passage to settlers travelling westward on the Oregon Trail. This point was roughly inline with Harrison Street, immediately east of Topeka Boulevard. Many travelers on the Oregon Trail did not continue beyond this crossing, however, choosing instead to make the north bank of the Kansas River their home. These settlers established their own community on the north bank of the Kansas River, prospering as a pivotal stop for other westward travelers. The growth and stability of this settlement was eventually founded as the **Town of Eugene** in 1865 by William Curtis.

Less than a year after its establishment, on New Years Day, the Town of Eugene welcomed the first Union Pacific train. The presence of the Union Pacific in the Town of Eugene resulted in the annexation of Eugene into the City of Topeka in 1867. This annexation gave the former Town of Eugene the status of the First Ward of the City of Topeka.

Development within the First Ward was heavily influenced by the presence of the Union Pacific Railroad as nearly all commercial and industrial development was located between the Kansas River and the parallel Union Pacific railroad tracks. This included a short, one-block mainstreet along Kansas Avenue immediately south of the railroad tracks. This mainstreet was anchored by the Union Pacific Depot and Hotel at its north end, accompanied by the presence of a barber, grocer, restaurants and saloons, a hardware store, drugstores, another hotel, along with other retail businesses.



Union Pacific Railroad Depot & Hotel  
700 N. Kansas Avenue, facing east, 1887

Development to the west of Kansas Avenue along the railroad tracks was dominated mostly by the Union Pacific Railroad. By 1883, the Union Pacific had constructed their Freight Depot immediately south of the railroad tracks on the west side of Jackson Street.



Union Pacific Railroad Depot and Freight Depot, 1945

The Union Pacific replaced their freight depot with the new construction of their passenger depot in 1927, with the freight depot being shifted across Railroad Street to the south. Shortly thereafter, the Topeka Avenue Bridge was constructed in 1938 as a project through the Federal Works Progress Administration (WPA).

Most of area west of Kansas Avenue was occupied by modest homes, originally constructed during its era as a residential neighborhood. These residential uses gradually transitioned into heavier industrial uses over the next several decades.

In 1991, a new entity emerged within the River North area, that being the Topeka Rescue Mission Ministries. This ministry constructed a facility at Curtis & Kansas Avenue to house over 100 homeless men, women, and families. Since this date, the Mission has continued to expand its facilities and services on adjacent properties, and within the River North district.



Homes near the future site of the Topeka Avenue Bridge, 1935

# NOTO History

The 2-block stretch of N. Kansas Avenue commonly referred to as the NOTO Arts District began its life in the 1850s as the Town of Eugene. Growth of Eugene as a town, brought on by settlers traversing the Oregon Trail, and the substantial growth of the Union Pacific Railroad, quickly created economic competition with the City of Topeka on the south side of the Kansas River. This competition ultimately led to the annexation of Eugene into the City of Topeka in 1867, thus creating the City of Topeka's 1<sup>st</sup> Ward.

During the late 19th Century, the area to the west of Kansas Avenue was developed as a low-density single-family neighborhood, commonly known as The Sands. The Sands was an Exoduster settlement, dedicated by Charles Curtis.

Charles Curtis, who later would become Vice President of the United States, dedicated his portion of the Half-Breed Reservation along the Kansas River to Exodusters seeking freedom and land after the emancipation of slaves after the Civil War. Living remnants of The Sands are still visible today in the 2nd Missionary Baptist Church, located at 416 NW Laurent, and St. Mark's AME Church at 801 NW Harrison St.



St. Mark's AME Church, 1919



Kansas Avenue Iron Bridge, 1870

Meanwhile, the North Topeka business district along North Kansas Avenue was flourishing. With the completion of the Kansas Avenue bridge in 1869, access between the commercial entities south of the river and industrial areas north of the river was convenient and reliable, allowing North Topeka to establish its own downtown. By the 1880s, North Kansas Avenue had established itself as a solid commercial core, consisting of banks, drugstores, clothiers, hardware and lumber, a post office, and even Topeka's Fire Station No. 1.



Fire Station 1 at Gordon and Kansas Avenue.  
Fire Station No. 1, 1890



Flood damage along N. Kansas Ave., 1903

Flooding, however, took its toll on every part of this area. Floods in 1903 and again in 1951 washed away homes and businesses, and forced the demolitions and reconstruction of many more surviving buildings. It was not until the construction of the levee system along the north and south banks of the Kansas River immediately following the flood of 1951 that residential, commercial, and industrial development could proceed free from the concerns of regular flooding.

In recent years, the life of this area has revived. During the early 2000s, the NOTO Arts & Entertainment District was born, with new types of businesses occupying the storefronts that cater to an arts scene that had never before been served in Topeka at this scale.

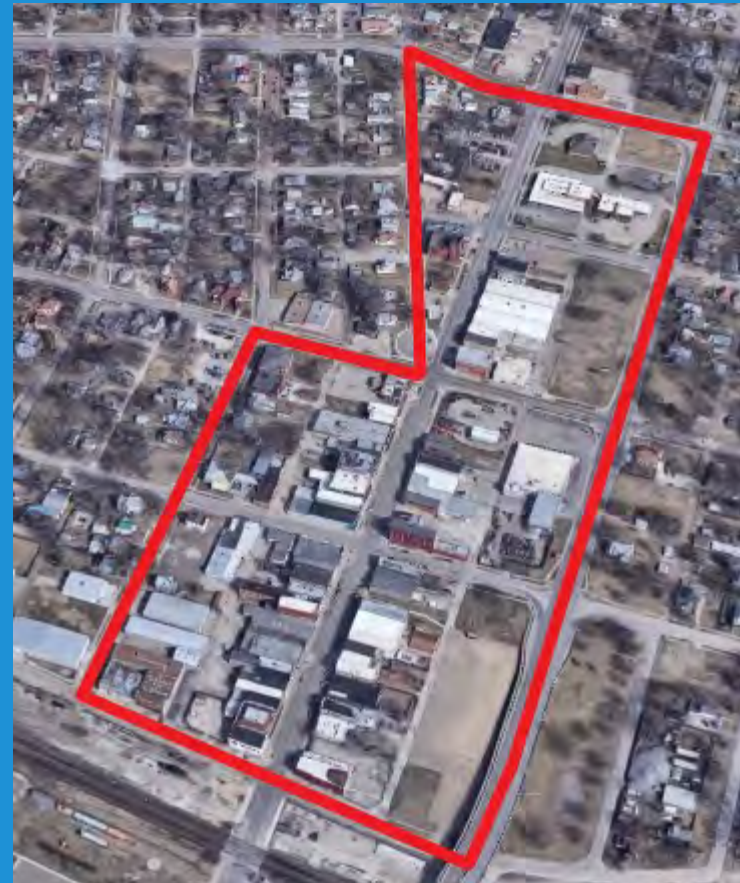
# NOTO



- Unique public art
- Active street life
- Walkable & urban
- Outdoor dining
- Creative office
- Live-work opportunity
- Entrepreneurial
- Local

## Eclectic Arts District

NOTO has successfully positioned itself as the arts district in Topeka. This area has a charming, local, entrepreneurial spirit that distinguishes it from other areas of the city. The existing mural program should continue to be encouraged. A future strategy that increases the amount of public art will draw more visitors to the area. Street art could provide a funky and unique alternative to more traditional public art. Rotating outdoor displays could be used to encourage people to continually revisit the area. This increased traffic will help support retail and restaurant spaces which will help activate the district.



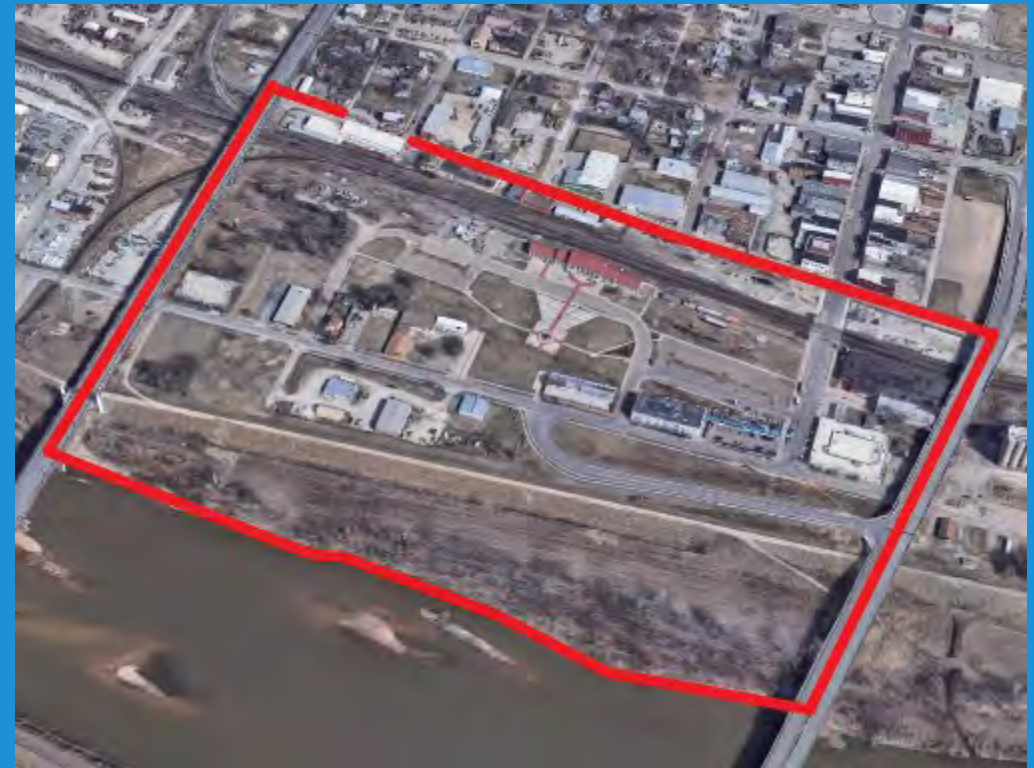
# River North



- Build upon the Great Overland Station
- Develop a riverfront park
- Connect to the river
- Connect with greenways and trails
- Community event space
- Incorporate art
- Open space

## Destination Park Space

Great Overland Station is a beautiful, historic asset that cannot reach its fullest potential without major improvements to the surrounding area. The planned Topeka Riverfront Park would make the area more appealing and provide another destination to bolster visitation. These improvements should include opportunities to meaningfully connect with the river by walking, biking, boating and perhaps even zip lines right over the water. Several nearby industrial properties should be adapted to infuse art into the district through major mural projects, decorating lighting, and potentially an immersive indoor art experience that could act as another anchor for the district.



# NOTO

## Potential Build-Out

### New Development & Conversions

**1 Improved and Accessible Alleys** - With potential to become “green corridors” these alleys can host special events and highlight local artists murals. These alleys could include wayfinding signage, plantings and pop-up people spaces.

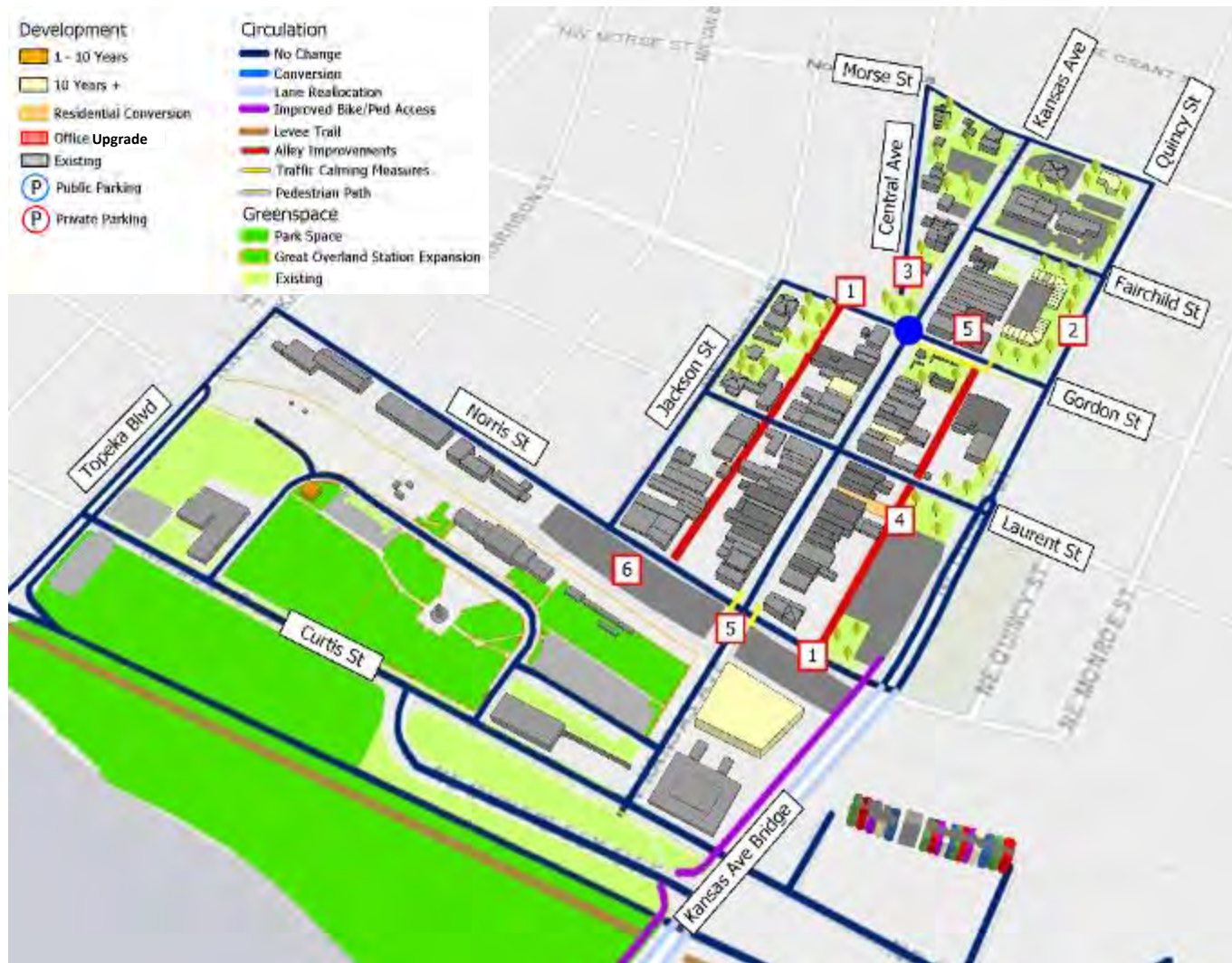
**2 New Artist Housing** - Filling in currently vacant property, new townhomes could provide artist housing for the District. These new units proximity to Kansas Avenue could act as a model project for higher density housing within the district.

**3 Cul-de-sac Park** - Building off the energy of the adjacent Redbud Park, realignment of Central Avenue would allow for a new park space to be created. This park space could act as a “North Stage” for the district to feature special events and act as a gateway from the north.

**4 Pedestrian Access** - Connecting Kansas Avenue to the enhanced alleys. These corridors can highlight local art while driving pedestrians to Kansas Avenue.

**5 Traffic Calming Measures** - As NOTO continues to be the premiere art district for Topeka, with an increased pedestrian presence, there will be a need to provide safe pedestrian passage from surface level parking to the core of the district.

**6 Parking** - With events like First Fridays flooding the district with pedestrians, there is a need for more parking within the district. By focusing on surface level parking on the periphery of the district, parking along Kansas Avenue can be used to create an improved pedestrian environment.

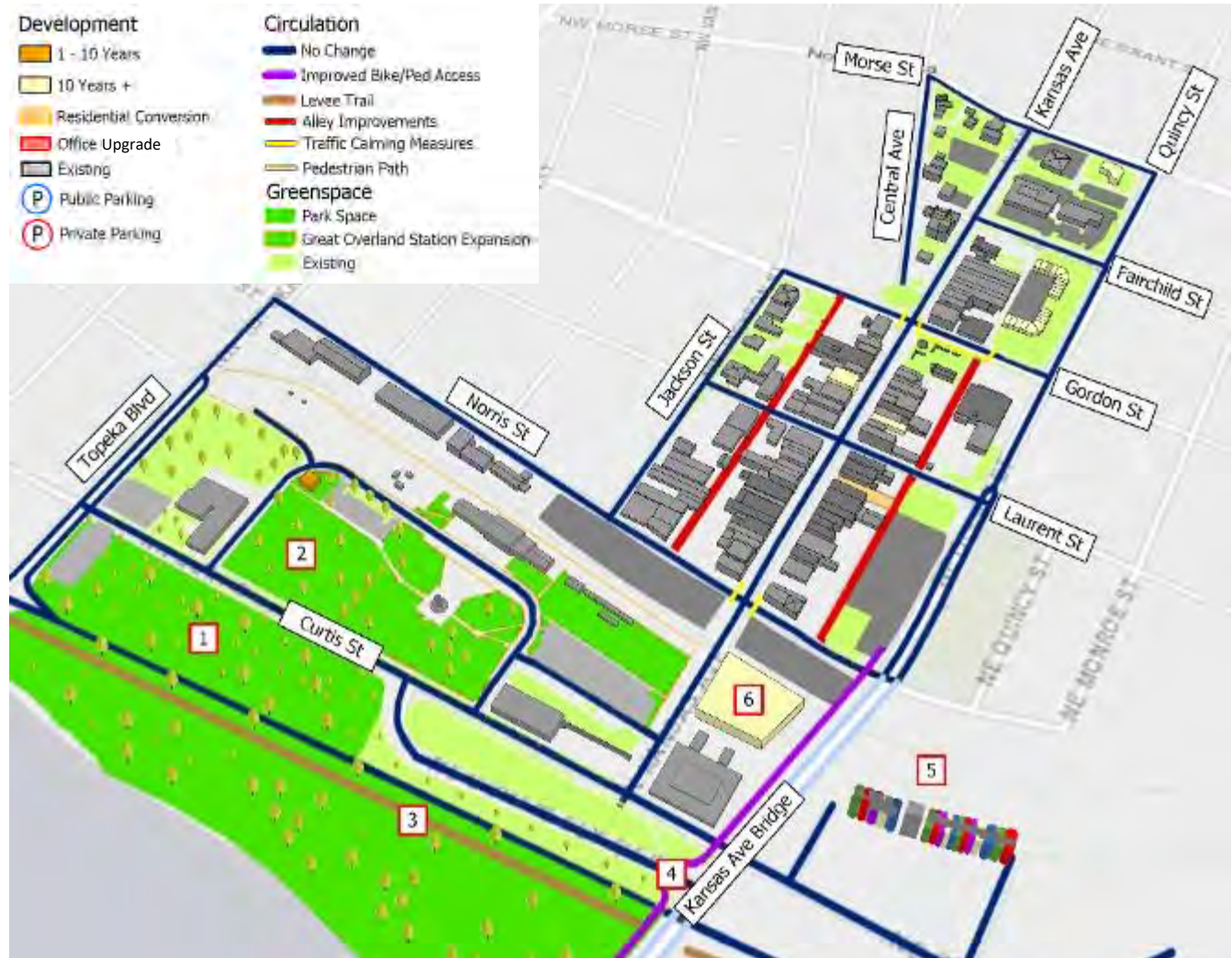




# River North Potential Build-Out

## New Development & Conversions

- 1 **Riverfront Park** - Keeping in line with the Papan's Ferry Charrette, the Riverfront park has potential to expand. Features of an enhanced riverfront park could include a new trailhead and parking, an amphitheater, river seating, overlook locations, and improved river access
- 2 **Great Overland Station Expansion** - With Shawnee County taking ownership of the Great Overland Station, an expansion could help the River North District act as a signature park space. Expansion would allow for an Oregon Trail retracement, flexible park space and programming making the River North district a true recreation destination.
- 3 **Kansas River Levee Trail** - Starting at the segment of the Curtis Fly-off, an enhanced trail will create a new recreational use connecting the Riverfront park to surrounding neighborhoods.
- 4 **Improved Pedestrian/Bike Access** - Conversion of one lane of the Kansas Avenue Bridge, to protected bicycle/pedestrian lanes, will enhance connectivity across the Kansas River. Enhanced connectivity will encourage more visitors to River North and the NOTO Arts & Entertainment District.



- 5 **Creative Lighting/NOTO Branding** - The currently unused grain silos present an opportunity to strategically brand the NOTO Arts & Entertainment District. Capitalizing on the artistic nature of the districts, lighting and or painting can of these silos can act as the welcome mat for the districts.
- 6 **New Hotel** - With few vacant parcels in the district, a new hotel on the eastern side of the district would provide new lodging for out-of-town visitors to NOTO Arts District

# District Growth/Expansion

The NOTO District most closely reflects the NOTO Arts District Core, which is outlined in the NOTO Arts District Master Plan. This area acts as the heart of NOTO with the majority of recent investment occurring within this area. However, NOTO has long term plans to expand its district boundaries to assist in the revitalization of retail buildings. The growth of NOTO focuses on greater economic development in the surrounding residential, commercial and light industrial blocks.

Expansion to the Creative Arts and Technology Area will appeal to more than just artists, with additional focus on small commercial and industrial businesses associated with arts, design and technology. This area may focus on graphic design, architectural studios, internet start-ups, wood and metal working shops, and printing/framing stores

The area to the northwest of the Arts District Core will grow into the Creative District Housing (Artist Zone). This area is roughly eight blocks, with room for new infill housing catered towards artists and small business start-ups. New housing is important to the vitality of the area and bolster overall resiliency. New housing is important to the vitality of the area and bolsters overall resiliency. This area's close proximity to the Arts District Core helps facilitate an environment for creative minds to live, work and play.

For more information about the NOTO Arts District Core and surrounding areas please see the [NOTO Arts District Master Plan](#).



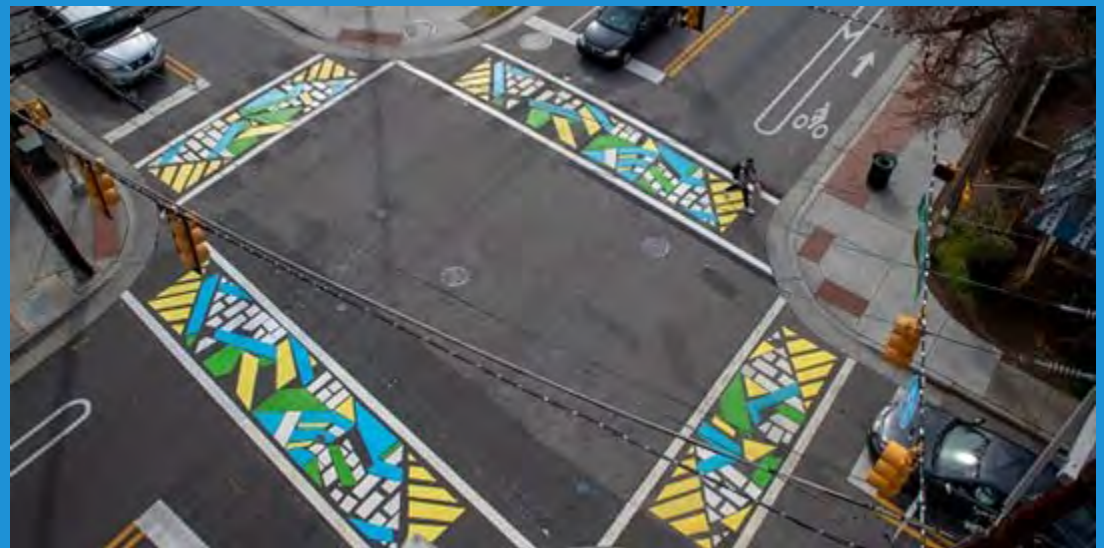
# ARTS DINING CULTURE



# HISTORY & TOURISM



# IMPROVING THE PUBLIC SPACE



# Circulation/Complete Streets



Changes to circulation within NOTO and River North Districts center around improved pedestrian and bicycle access. The Kansas Avenue Bridge will reallocate lanes to allow for dedicated bike lanes and a pedestrian path, while still allowing for two-way traffic. The intersection of Kansas Avenue and Gordon will be converted to improve pedestrian safety surrounding Rosebud Park and the proposed cul-de-sac park.

Type/Location	Recommendation	Complete Streets Typology	Ped	Bike	Bus	Car
No Change	Morse St	Neighborhood Connector	•		•	•
	Fairchild St	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
	Gordon St	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
	Laurent St	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
	Norris St	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
	Curtis St	Mixed Use Boulevard	•		•	•
	Quincy St	Mixed Use Boulevard	•		•	•
	Kansas Ave	Main Street	•	•		•
	Central Ave	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•		•
	Jackson St	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
Lane Reallocation	Kansas Avenue Bridge	Neighborhood Connector	•	•	•	•

## Kansas Avenue Bridge

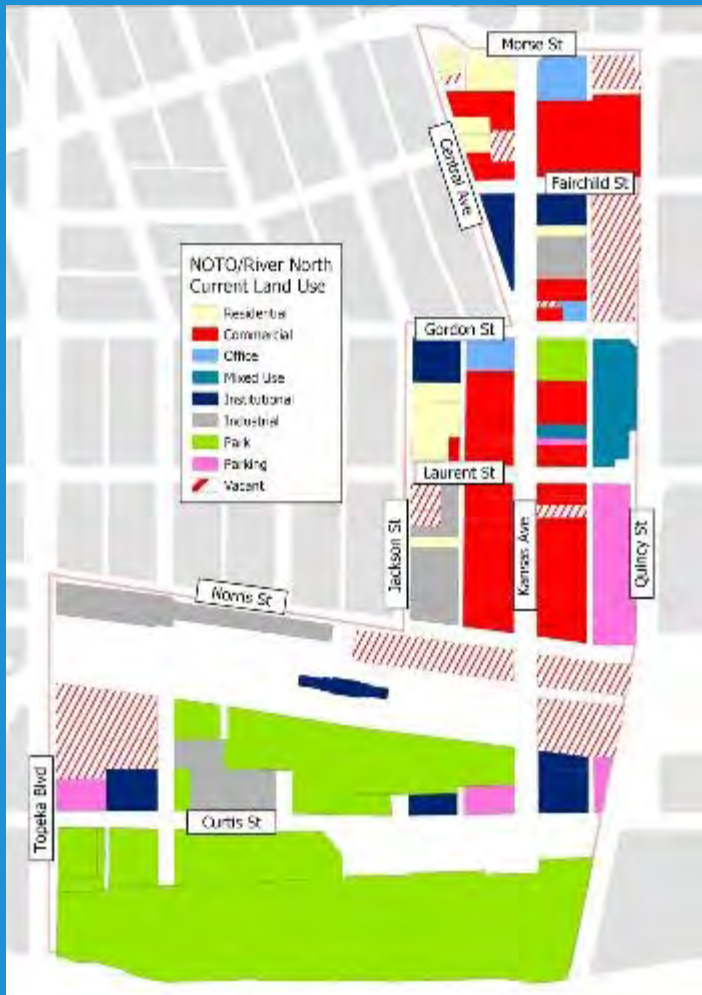


- ① Travel lanes maintained
- ② Lane Reallocation to accommodate bike/ped.
- ③ Protected bike lanes.
- ④ Pedestrian Path

# Existing Character

## Land Use

Land Use in NOTO and River North define a clear transition from open space to a commercial corridor with Kansas Avenue acting as the spine, with pockets of industrial, office and residential within the boundaries. Additionally, there are large segments of vacant property found throughout the two districts. Future land uses, and infill development, will likely be determined by their proximity to Kansas Avenue. Highlighting the desire for NOTO to become a 24 hour destination site, the landscape will likely be defined by a mixture of land uses. These mixed use sites would allow for first floor office and commercial and residential units on other floors. Industrial mixed use sites will ensure existing industrial uses can remain but provide an opportunity for heavier intensity art studios. New residential developments in the area are regulated by the X-1 zoning district that call for a traditional residential environment, thus limiting development density. Other new construction sites should fit the existing character of the surrounding built environment.



# Existing Character Zoning

NOTO and River North are currently zoned “OI-2” Office and Institutional, “I-2” Heavy Industrial, “OS-1” Open Space, and “X-1, X-2 and X-3” Mixed Use. It is proposed all properties retain their current zoning classifications, with the exception of properties near the Kansas River should be considered for rezoning to “OS-1”. The retention of Mixed Use zoning districts will allow for the existing row stores to have commercial, office, and residential uses.

**X-1 Zoning** - facilitates a compatible mixed use activity center within a traditional residential neighborhood. The district includes a balance of compatible residential, office, civic, and neighborhood commercial retail/service uses of low to moderate intensity that complement and support dense neighborhood residential areas and pedestrian usage with quality urban design.

**X-2 Zoning** - facilitates a mixed use area that transitions from a higher intensity industrial use area to lower intensity neighborhood-scale residential areas and includes a balance of compatible residential, office, commercial/service, and light industrial uses.

**X-3 Zoning** - a destination-oriented mixed use that serves as the northern entertainment/cultural anchor of downtown. This zoning designation is intended to improve the area to a 24 hour destination for urban, culture, entertainment, community and residential experiences. Furthermore, this district should focus on the retention and attraction of businesses, workplaces and residences through adaptive reuse, rehabilitation, or redevelopment of vacant or underutilized properties, all of which should include high quality urban design that maintains a sense of history, human scale, and pedestrian-orientation.





# Implementation Summary

	Recommendations	Other Considerations
<b>Land Use</b>	Promote mixed uses with office/commercial uses on lower floors with top floor residential.	
<b>Zoning</b>	Retain existing zoning.	See map in Existing Character
<b>Housing</b>	Potential to add 50 new housing units within the NOTO Arts District Core. New units may also be provided through rehabilitation and infill in the Creative District Housing Zone.	New top floor residential units will increase the number of housing units in the District.
<b>Office</b>	Rehabilitation of existing row stores will provide new office space.	Any growth in this category is reliant on rehabilitation of existing buildings.
<b>Retail</b>	Rehabilitation of existing row stores will provide new retail space.	Any growth in this category is reliant on rehabilitation of existing buildings.
<b>Hotel</b>	No new hotel beds.	
<b>Parking</b>	While structured parking is preferred, the demand for parking in NOTO is currently not being met. A focus on surface parking on the periphery of the district can provide much needed parking spaces.	
<b>Building Design Standards</b>	Follow existing design standards.	City-wide non-residential and X District dimensional and performance standards





# OFFICE AND CATALYST DISTRICT

# History

The Office & Catalyst District reflects the oldest remnants of the history of the City of Topeka, being the location where the first permanent structures within this city were built. The City of Topeka has always centered its commercial activities along Kansas Avenue extending south from the Kansas River, so it was a natural progression of events for the city's first stone building to be erected in the 400 block of S. Kansas Ave. This building was originally built for mercantile and commerce, but was almost immediately adopted for use as the meeting place for the framers of the Kansas Free State Constitution (Constitution Hall). This same building was later used as the senate chamber in the early days of Kansas state government.



Shawnee County Courthouse (4th and Kansas Avenue)

As the population of the city increased, the building known as Constitution Hall ceased being a free-standing building, and was incorporated within the block by adjacent structures, and was given a new, matching brick façade. Several of the buildings within this block extending north were later collectively utilized as the Kansas State Capital during construction of the (current) State Capital building.

Construction within this block culminated in the 1870s with the construction of the first Shawnee County Courthouse and jail, built at the southwest corner of SW 4th St. & S. Kansas Ave.

Most of what is visible today within the Office & Catalyst District is the result of Topeka Urban Renewal program. Topeka initiated its Urban Renewal program in 1956 with the creation of the Topeka Urban Renewal Authority (URA). The URA established its mission in accordance with the Federal Urban Renewal Program by designating an area in the northeast corner of Downtown Topeka, for clearance and redevelopment. This area was referred to by the URA as the Keyway Urban Renewal Project, and included an area known as "The Bottoms." Historically lacking in large-scale commercial development, the Bottoms was predominately owned and occupied by Topeka's immigrant and ethnic minority population. The area suffered much damage as a result of the 1951 flood and was in declining condition. The Keyway Urban Renewal Project sought to remedy this decline with the wholesale purchase of land, and the subsequent displacement of approximately 3,000 residents from within this area, whose homes and businesses were subsequently demolished.

Another result of Keyway Urban Renewal Project was the construction of US Interstate Highway 70 along the east side of Downtown Topeka. Interstate-70 not only played a major role within the Keyway Urban Renewal Project, but it also contributed significantly to the development of the city's built environment, including the establishment of a major racial and socioeconomic divider within the city.

Other significant developments along the path of I-70 within Downtown Topeka were the construction of a Montgomery Ward's Department store (currently used as the Topeka & Shawnee County Law Enforcement Center), The Townsite Plaza & Tower (S. Kansas Ave. & SE 6th Ave.), the American Home Life Insurance Building (S. Kansas Ave. & SE 4th St.), and the Southwestern Bell Telephone Building (SE 6th & Madison).

Other historic buildings within this area include Constitution Hall, originally constructed in 1855, and the US Federal Courthouse, constructed in 1933. The US Federal Courthouse was the first courtroom to hear the historic *Brown v Board of Education* decision ending racial segregation in the United States in 1954.



U.S. Federal Courthouse (5th and Kansas Avenue)

# Office and Catalyst



- Class A office upgrades/HQs
- Office to residential conversions
- Catalyst 1 - Convention Center/Hotel
- Catalyst 2—Post Office Redux
- Extend KS Ave makeover (“bridge” to river)

## Convention Center Hub

While government-related uses are likely to cluster around the Capitol building, this district has the most potential for upgraded Class A office space and hospitality growth. Many office users are straying away from sterile office parks and seeking out more active places. Adding a major convention center/hotel hub to the mix of office workers will bring 12-hour activity and food/beverage choices within a 5 minute walk to Evely Plaza or riverfront. Potential catalytic projects at 4th Street and Kansas Avenue , Post Office Building, and Townsite Plaza can fortify Kansas Avenue as the mixed-use spine and become key stepping stones between River South and Historic Kansas Avenue.



# Potential Build-Out

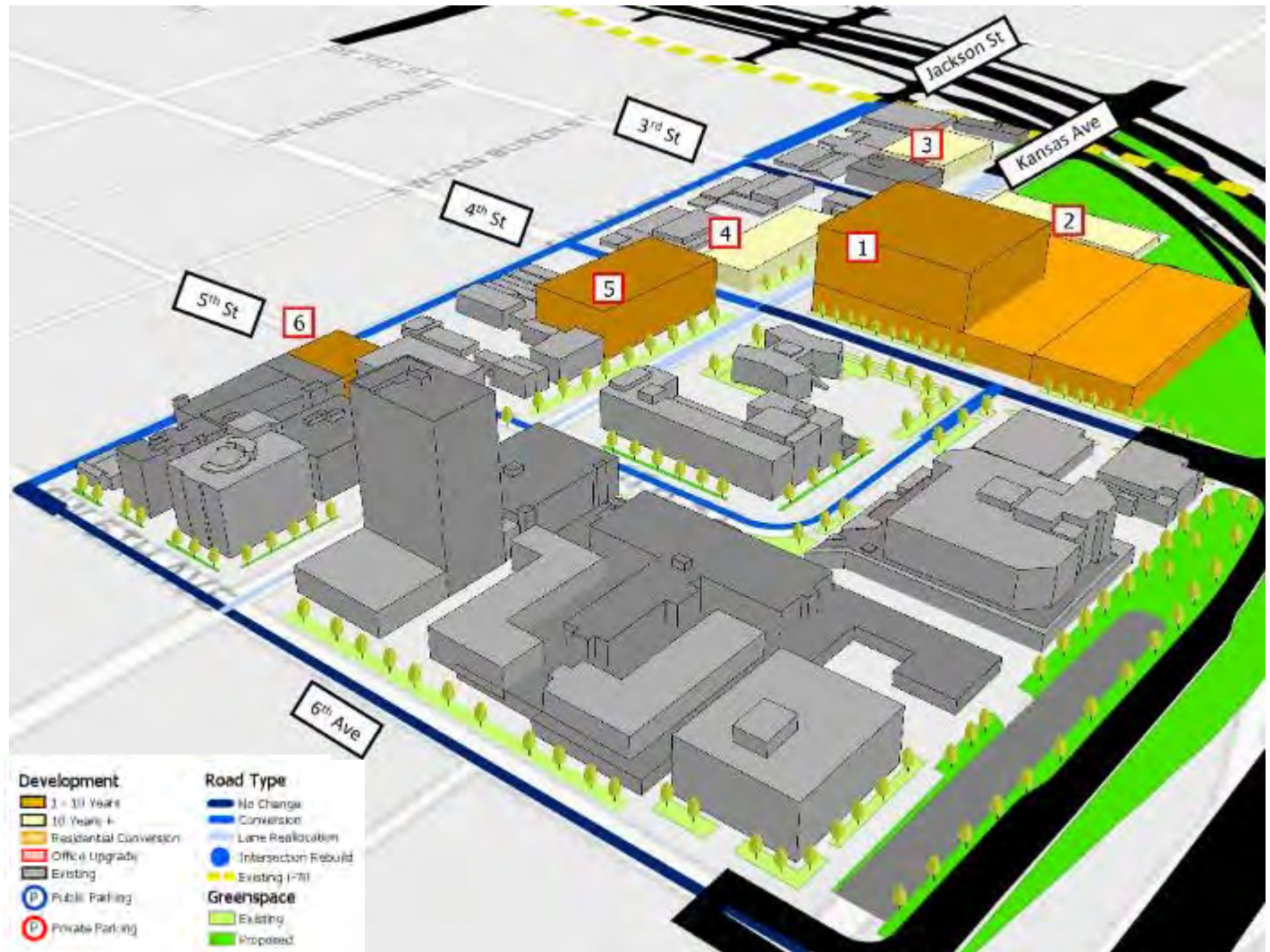
## New Development

**1 Convention Center/Hotel** - This new activity hub would replace the LEC and concentrate significant pedestrian activity on Kansas Avenue only 5 minutes from Evergy Plaza and River South. This addresses a higher and better use of the site post PQV while capturing larger conferences lost to other cities.

**2 New Mixed Use** - Due to the new Polk/Quincy Viaduct alignment the existing structures will likely be impacted. Replacement of these building with new infill will allow for a Kansas Avenue presence.

**3 Parking Garage** - Potential new housing located at 235 S Kansas Avenue and a signature park in the River South District would drive up the need for new structured parking. A new parking garage would align with the desire to remove surface parking for higher and better uses.

**4 New Mixed Use** - Development of new mixed use along Kansas Avenue would promote a vibrant and active 12 hour spine for Downtown Topeka. Mixed Use may include commercial, office and residential uses.



**5 Boutique Hotel** - A recently conducted Hotel Market Study showed a need for additional hotel beds in Downtown Topeka. New development on this site would remove surface parking while providing needed hotel beds.

**6 Parking Garage Extension** - As surface parking lots are replaced with other uses, a need for higher density parking will arise. This project builds off of an existing parking garage while eliminating another surface parking lot.

# Potential Build-Out Conversions

- 1 **Townsite Tower** - To align with greater demand for housing, a portion of the 16-story Townsite Tower has potential to convert to new apartments with amazing views of Downtown and the Capitol. In addition, new conference/event space could be integrated into the “Top of the Tower”, first floor lobby, and a unique “outdoor” roof deck on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.
- 2 **503 S Kansas Avenue** - Similarly to Townsite Tower, this building is currently a State used Office Building. However, the buildings prime location on Kansas Avenue makes it a candidate for conversion to housing.
- 3 **424 S Kansas Avenue** - The predominantly vacant Post Office Building, home of the US Federal Courthouse and historic Brown v Board of Education, shows potential to convert to a more active use(s). The variety of spaces available in the building has potential for a food hall, office space, and potential for a few housing units.
- 4 **235 S Kansas Ave** - Another example of existing office space that has potential for housing conversion. It’s location on the north end of the district could act as an buffer from Office and Catalyst to the River South district.



- 5 **220 SE 6th Avenue** - As identified in the Downtown Market Study. Downtown Topeka is in need of new Class A Office Space. The current AT&T building shows potential for rehab, taking existing Class B office space and elevating it to Class A.
- 6 **Townsite Plaza** - With the need for a makeover, the mid-century modern Townsite Plaza is ripe for Class A office space rehab if it can soften up its outdoor plaza space with more shade and inviting features for tenants including the Tower. Critical public parking is below grade, but will need capital investment soon.

# Catalyst Site

## Hotel and Convention



# Mixed Use

## Historic US Court House



# Circulation/Complete Streets



The Polk-Quincy Viaduct will impact the Office and Catalyst District, with properties to the northeast being intersected by the viaduct. The new Polk-Quincy will lead to the closure of 3rd Street, with highway access located at Kansas Avenue, 4th Street, and 6th Avenue.

Type/Location	Recommendation	Complete Streets Typology	Ped	Bike	Bus	Car
<b>Conversions (1-way to 2-way)</b>	4th St. (from Jackson St. to Kansa Ave.)	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•		•
	5th St. (from Jackson St. to 4th St.)	Mixed Use Boulevard		•		•
	Jackson St. (from PQV to 6th Ave.)	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
<b>Lane Reallocation (Removal of travel lanes)</b>	Kansas Ave. (PQV to 6th Ave.) - Street treatment to create pedestrian friendly environment while accommodating existing traffic demand. See below.	Main Street	•	•	•	•
<b>No Change</b>	6th Street	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•	•	•
	3rd Street	Mixed Use Boulevard				•

## Kansas Avenue 6th Avenue to 2nd Street



- 1 Travel Lanes Reduced to 3 lanes from 5
- 2 Sharrows/dedicated bike lanes
- 3 Angled Parking
- 4 Increased sidewalk widths for increased pedestrian use
- 5 Mixed Use Development to increase pedestrian amenities
- 6 Catalyst Hotel and Convention Center

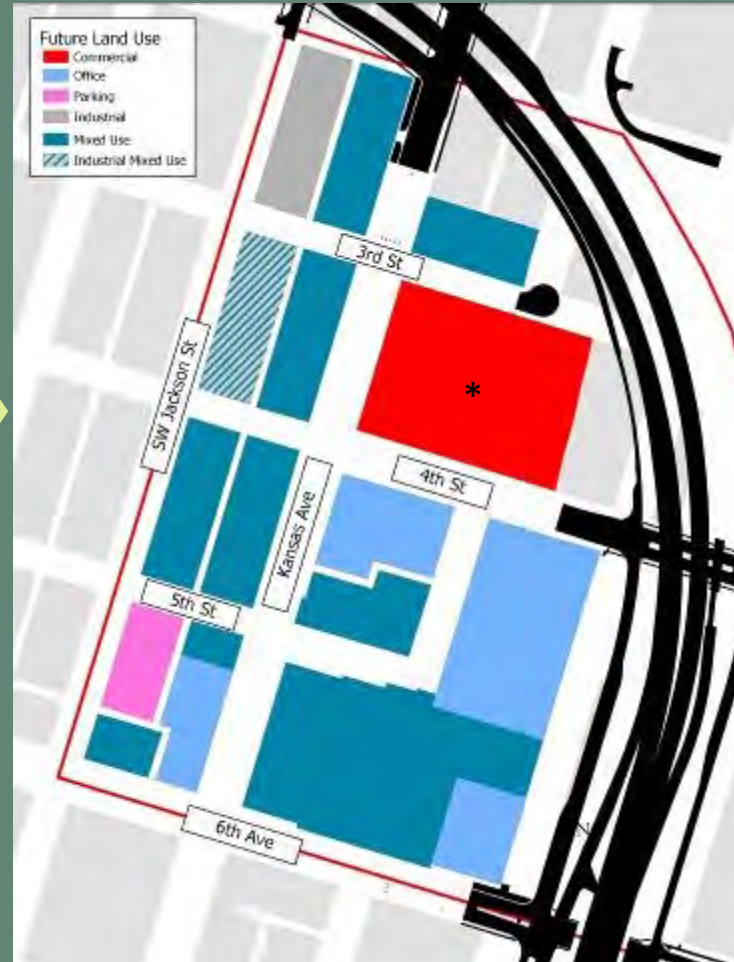
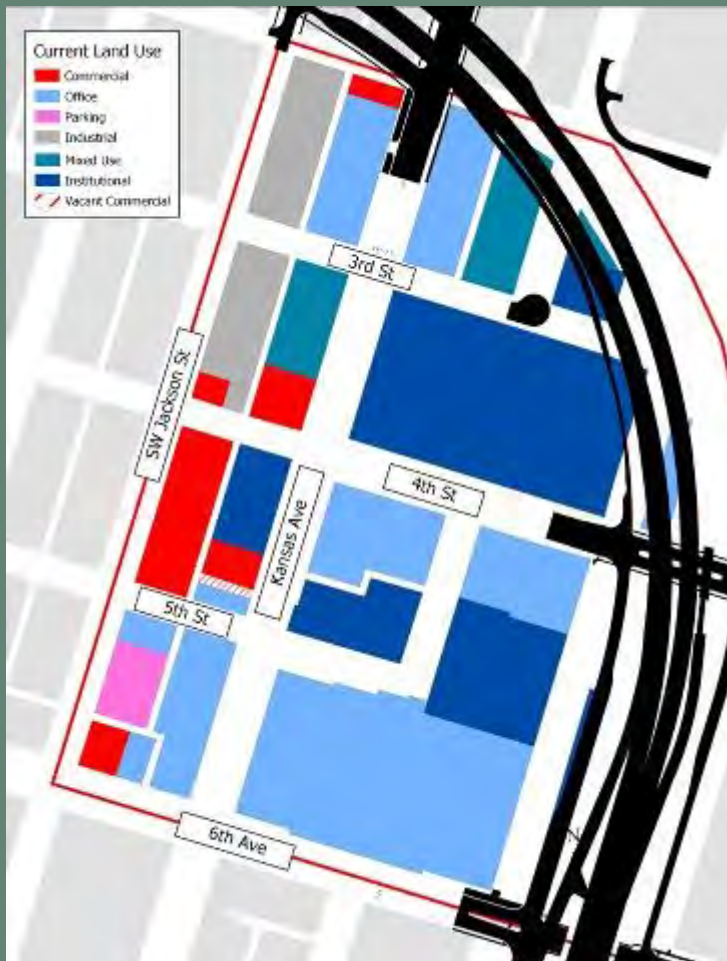


# Existing Character

## Land Use

Much of the existing land use is dominated by office and institutional uses with scattered commercial uses. Building off the success of the Kansas Avenue Streetscape implementation to the south, the Office and Catalyst District expects the same street treatment from 6th Street to 2nd Street. Along with streetscape improvements, a new hotel and convention center on the Law Enforcement Center site will act as a Catalyst for the district. Several other sites along Kansas Avenue and 6th Avenue have potential for rehabilitation or conversion.

- Potential Rehab Sites:
- AT&T Building (Office)
  - Townsite Plaza and Tower (Mixed Use)
  - U.S. Post Office/Historic Court House (Mixed Use)
  - 235 S Kansas Ave (Housing)



\* Catalyst Site - Proposed Hotel and Convention Center site.

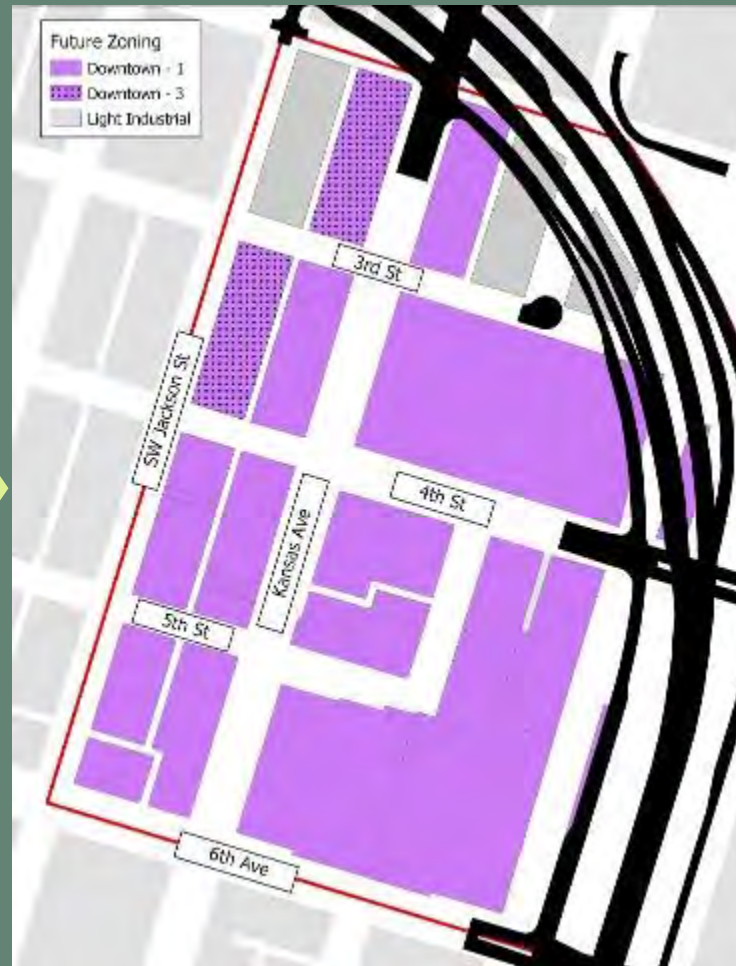
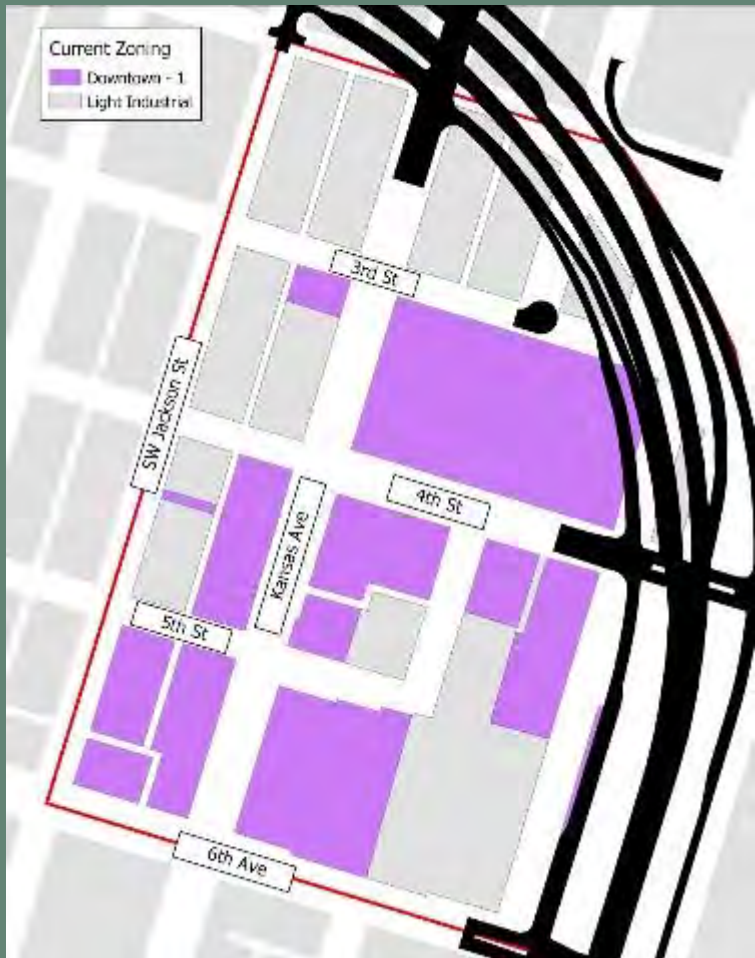
# Existing Character

## Zoning

The Office and Catalyst District has segments of “D-1” Downtown District and “I-1” Light Industrial. It is proposed to rezone this area to D-1 and D-3, allowing the existing uses to remain and expanding options for new development and aligning zoning with the existing office uses.

**D-1 Zoning** - Designed to facilitate a compatible mixed use activity center within the core area of downtown Topeka. The district is predominately composed of state offices, as well as local and federal facilities, commercial and retail uses. The district includes compatible residential, office, civic, and commercial retail/service uses which complement and support a high density of activity and facilitate pedestrian usage.

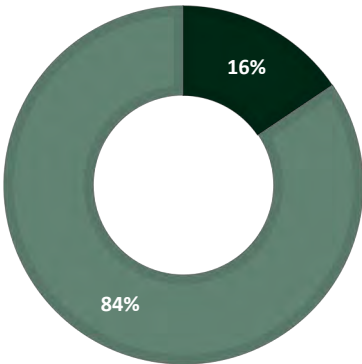
**D-3 Zoning** - Intended to reestablish the linkage between downtown and the Kansas River. The district includes industrial, commercial and office uses as primary uses and housing as a secondary use. Land use in this zoning district should emphasize the relationship between downtown and the river, as well as expand cultural opportunities in the general downtown area.



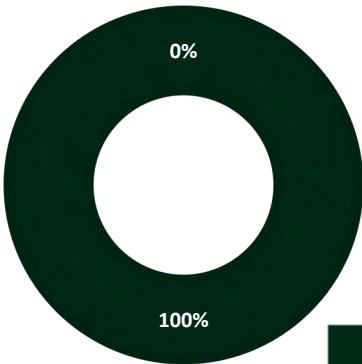
# Implementation Summary

	Recommendations	Other Considerations
<b>Land Use</b>	Increase quantity of retail uses and housing units.	
<b>Zoning</b>	Rezone district to D-1 and D-3	See map in Existing Character
<b>Housing</b>	Potential to add 140 units of new housing	Reliant on conversion of existing office uses to reach unit count proposed.
<b>Office</b>	Conversion of segments of office space to accommodate needed Class A office space and housing units.	
<b>Retail</b>	New retail uses within mixed use new developments will help guide the district to become a 12+ hour district.	
<b>Hotel</b>	Development of a hotel and convention center will provide much needed hotel beds to Downtown Topeka.	Boutique hotels could build off of energy generated by downtown hotel and convention center.
<b>Parking</b>	Angled on-street parking is preferred in high density commercial areas. However, bike and pedestrian considerations may dictate the need for parallel parking or other parking requirements.	Structured Parking is preferred. Where possible surface parking lots should be replaced with higher density structured parking.
<b>Building Design Standards</b>	Create residential and nonresidential design standards for D Districts.	

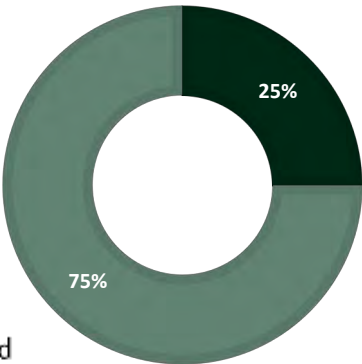
HOUSING



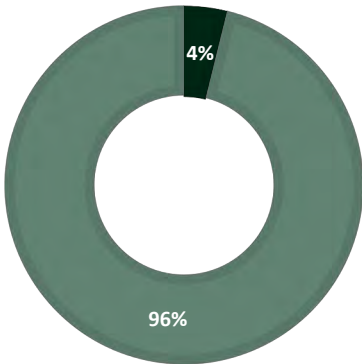
HOTEL ROOMS



OFFICE



RETAIL



Added  
 Needed

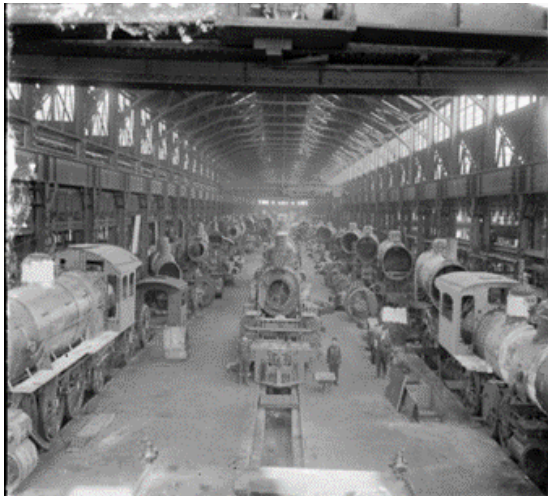


**RIVER TO RAIL**

**DISTRICT**

# History

The River to Rail District lies along the southern bank of the Kansas River, and as such, means of transportation is a core element of its history. In 1854, only two blocks to the west was located Pappan's Ferry crossing, and it was at this point where the Oregon Trail found its most secure passage across the Kansas River. The settlement of those early days was mostly residential, but also included those businesses and industries necessary for the development of a growing town, such as lumberyards, blacksmith shops, grain mills, and foundries. Nearly all non-residential development during the first few years of the city occurred along Crane Street, both east and west of Kansas Avenue.



AT&SF Railroad shops where steam Locomotives were Manufactured, 1924



AT&SF Railroad Depot in background SE 5th & Holliday Streets, circa 1910

One of Topeka's founding fathers, Cyrus K. Holliday, chartered the Atchison and Topeka Railroad Company, with Topeka as its company headquarters. In 1863, the Railroad was officially renamed the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad when President Abraham Lincoln awarded a land grant to the company, thus enabling its expansion to the south and west. This event spawned an era of unprecedented growth of the City of Topeka as the railroad established the City as its production headquarters for its steam-powered locomotives.

The increase in rail traffic to this area fostered businesses catering to both freight and passenger-related businesses, as well as housing needed by those businesses' workers. Grocery stores, barbers, clothiers, and breweries/taverns were operated in close proximity to people's homes, while heavier industry continued its development along E. Crane Street and adjacent to the rail yards. Public schools were also built for the children of these workers.

The persistent problem of flooding from the Kansas River, however, prevented the area from establishing itself in terms of capital investment and permanent infrastructure. Two floods in particular in 1903 and 1951 decimated all development within a ½-mile or more along both sides of the Kansas River in Topeka. As a result of the flood in 1951, The US Corps of Engineers constructed a series of reservoirs and levees along the Kansas River to control and prevent subsequent flooding events.



Lincoln elementary School SE 5th & Madison Streets. Circa 1880



1950 Sanborn Map showing the impact of right-of-way acquisition required for I-70

The aftermath of the 1951 flood, however, revealed an area that was ripe for the implementation of two new federal programs. The first of these programs was the construction of Interstate Highway 70 in 1956, while the second was Topeka's Urban Renewal Program in 1957.

Together, these projects purchased land from approximately 3,000 residents, most of whom were immigrant or ethnic minority, and demolished their homes and businesses to make room for redevelopment. The subsequent development completely reshaped the character of the River to Rail District, by replacing residential and light commercial in favor of heavy commercial and industrial developments. Major industries to establish production facilities within this area include Hallmark Cards and Hill's Pet Nutrition. The construction of Interstate-70 not only played a major role within the Keyway Urban Renewal Project, but it also created a major racial and socioeconomic divider within the city.

# River to Rail



- Railroad roots
- Large-scale industry
- Smaller-scale industrial services
- PQV impacts/sustain intuitive freight access
- Reclaim new development site
- Historic conversions

# Industry and Re-Use District

Influenced by major industrial footprints such as Hills Pet Nutrition, the former Hallmark building, and BNSF, the River to Rail district is well positioned on Downtown's levee-protected eastern edge to attract more intermediate manufacturing, warehousing, innovation, and heavy service industries between the riverfront and railyards. Sprinkled within this urban renewal-era landscape are a few industrial heritage buildings with adaptive re-use potential for creative entrepreneurs.



# Potential Build-Out

## New Development and Conversions

- 1 **Topeka Transfer & Storage Building** - With the recent purchase and development of a Vendors Market, this space is large enough to facilitate housing units, gym space, office space and/or retail vendors.
- 2 **Housing Conversion** - With a need for new housing units in Downtown Topeka, the existing Ramada hotel presents an opportunity for some conversion. With hotel units already featuring similar amenities to residential units the Ramada hotel can provide a significant number of new housing units.
- 3 **BNSF Office Re-Use** - Located between Downtown Topeka and East Topeka North, this vacant BNSF office building could provide a unique re-use for housing units or co-work /living space.
- 4 **Mixed Use Rehab** - While currently providing retail space, 414 SE 2nd has potential to be used as an innovative space for continued retail, co-working office space or small residential housing units



- 5 **Rehabilitation** - This building once used by the ATSF railroad, is in need of major rehabilitation. The properties historic characteristics makes it a prime candidate to become a staple of the River to Rail district that could feature uses like a distillery or brewery. The gritty character of the building and surrounding district could capitalize on the national trend of adaptive reuse, creating an recreational activity hub for the district.
- 6 **Potential New Build** - Based on the re-alignment of the Polk-Quincy Viaduct, a new parcel may be developed. Ideally, this property would produce new class A office/lab space, light industrial needs similar to the former Hallmark facility across Madison, or a landing spot for a nearby business that needs to be relocated because of Polk-Quincy.
- 7 **1st Street Improvements** - Reuse of the railroad right-of-way will allow for a reconfigured signalized intersection in conjunction with I-70 upgrades, a beautified median, critical new parking stalls, and new bike/pedestrian paths.

# Adaptive Reuse



# 1st Street Improvements





# Circulation/Complete Streets



The Polk-Quincy Viaduct will impact the River to Rail District, with properties to the southwest being intersected by the viaduct. The new Polk-Quincy Viaduct will lead to the closure of 3rd Street, with highway access re-directed to a new frontage road parallel to I-70 with on/off ramps at Kansas Avenue.

Type/Location	Recommendation	Complete Streets Typology	Ped	Bike	Bus	Car
No Change	6th Avenue	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•	•	•
	4th Street	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
	2nd Street	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
	1st Street	Industrial Street	•	•		•
	NE Crane Street	Industrial Street	•			•
	Quincy Street	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
	Monroe Street	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
	Madison Street (2nd to Crane)	Mixed Use Boulevard	•		•	•
	Jefferson Street	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
	Adams Street	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•		•
Conversion (1-way to 2-way)	Madison Street (4th to 2nd)	Mixed Use Boulevard	•		•	•

## Polk-Quincy Viaduct Impacts

Expected changes to the Polk-Quincy Viaduct will impact how vehicles interact with the River to Rail District. Current proposals will simplify the number of entrances and exits into the district, directing traffic to the corridors designed to handle greater levels of traffic. New “frontage roads” parallel to I-70 will allow continuous flow between Topeka Boulevard and 10th Street with the potential for a separated 10’ shared use bike/pedestrian path.

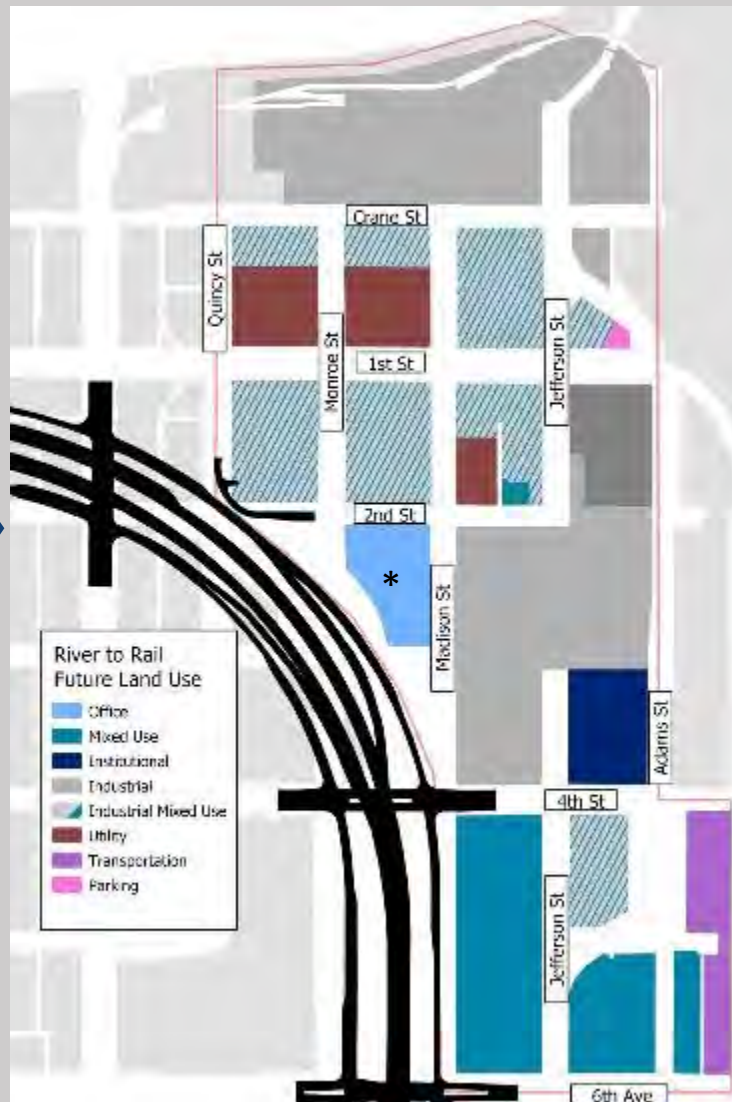
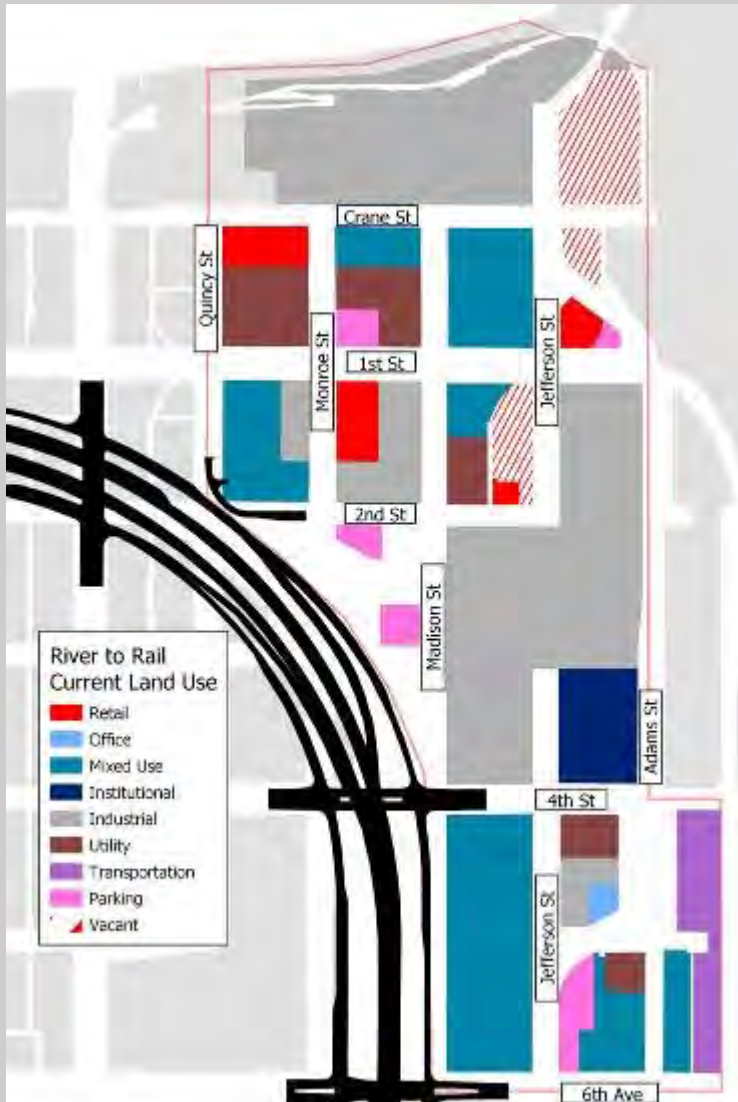
Westbound Exits	Westbound Entrances	Eastbound Exits	Eastbound Entrances
10th Street	8th Avenue	Topeka Boulevard	Kansas Avenue
Kansas Avenue	Topeka Boulevard	8th Avenue	10th Avenue



# Existing Character

## Land Use

Influenced by major industrial footprints such as Hills Pet Nutrition, the former Hallmark building, and BNSF, the River to Rail district lies along the south bank of the levee-protected Kansas Riverfront, and adjacent to the BNSF railyards, making it well positioned to attract more intermediate manufacturing, warehousing, innovation, and heavy service industries. Sprinkled within this former urban renewal-era landscape are several iconic industrial heritage buildings that offer opportunities for investment and adaptive re-use by a host of creative entrepreneurial interests.



\* New Development Site  
Dependent on Polk-  
Quincy Viaduct  
alignment.

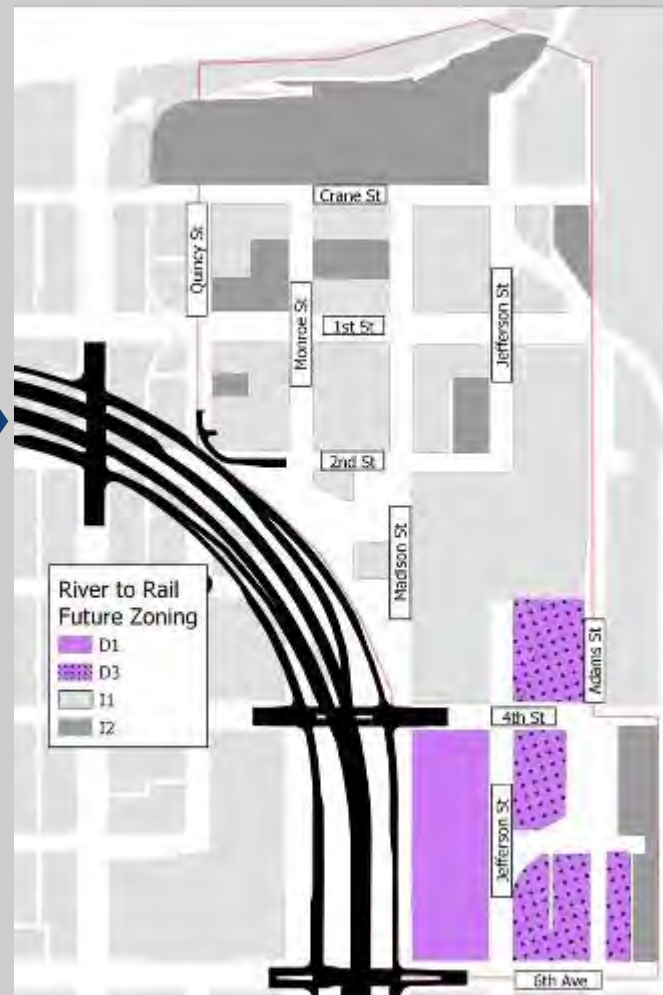
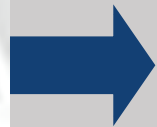
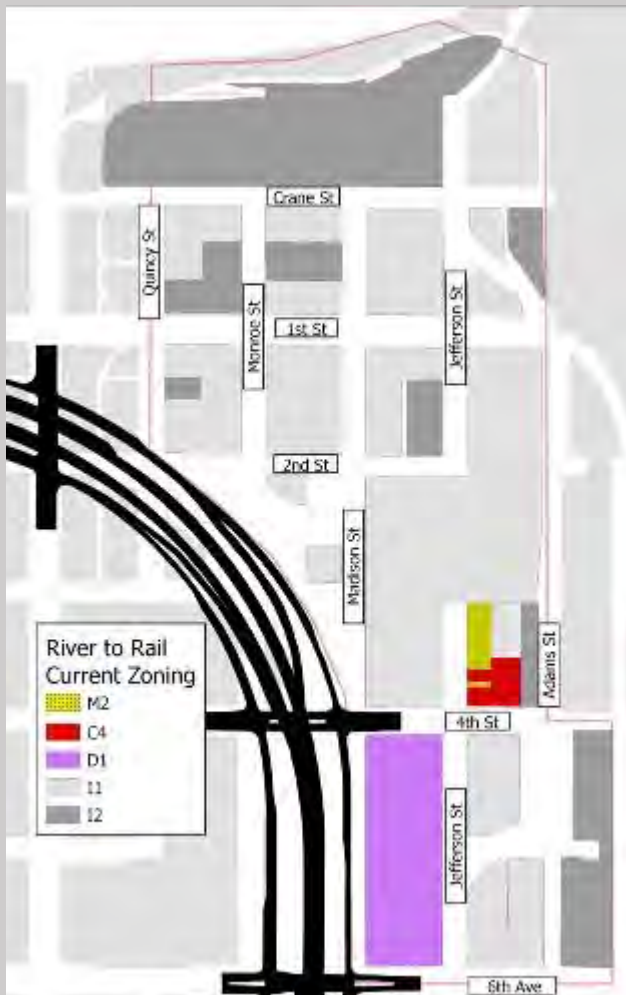
# Existing Character

## Zoning

The River to Rail District is primarily composed of Industrial uses. It is proposed that the district retains much of its current I-1 and I-2 zoning. Segments near 6th Avenue may be rezoned to D-1 and D-3 allowing the existing uses to remain while expanding options for conversions to accommodate other downtown related uses.

**D-1 Zoning** - Designed to facilitate a compatible mixed use activity center within the core area of downtown Topeka. The district is predominately composed of state offices, as well as local and federal facilities, commercial and retail uses. The district includes compatible residential, office, civic, and commercial retail/service uses which complement and support a high density of activity and facilitate pedestrian usage.

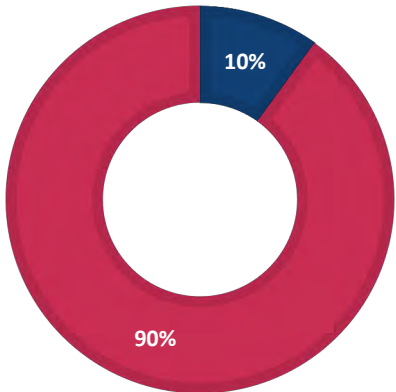
**D-3 Zoning** - Intended to reestablish the linkage between downtown and the Kansas River. The district includes industrial, commercial and office uses as primary uses and housing as a secondary use. Land use in this zoning district should emphasize the relationship between downtown, the river, and rail yards, as well as expand cultural opportunities in the general downtown area.



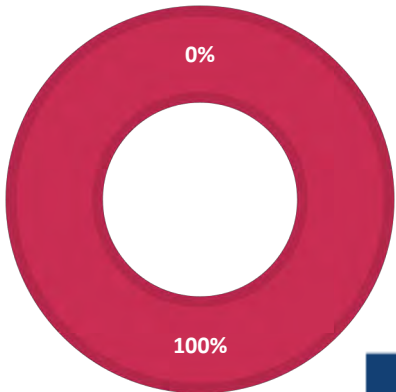
# Implementation Summary

	Recommendations	Other Considerations
<b>Land Use</b>	Increase quantity of retail uses and housing units.	
<b>Zoning</b>	Rezone a portion of the district to D-1, D-3. Retain some I-1 and I-2 zoning.	See map in Existing Character
<b>Housing</b>	Potential to add 90 units of new housing , mainly through hotel room conversions.	
<b>Office</b>	Potential for 10,000 new Class A space through conversions	Any significant growth in this category is reliant on a new build adjacent to the Polk-Quincy Viaduct.
<b>Retail</b>	Retail component would be part of new mixed use developments, with no new commercial developments projected.	
<b>Hotel</b>	No new hotel rooms added; some conversions to other uses.	Forecasts a decline in rooms which can be made up in other districts.
<b>Parking</b>	Angled parking is preferred in high density commercial areas. However, bike and pedestrian considerations may dictate the need for parallel parking or other parking requirements.	Density still lends itself to surface parking. Heavier truck traffic may influence on-street parking capacity.
<b>Building Design Standards</b>	Create residential and nonresidential design standards for D Districts.	

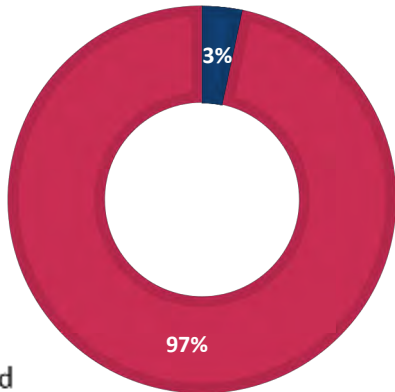
**HOUSING**



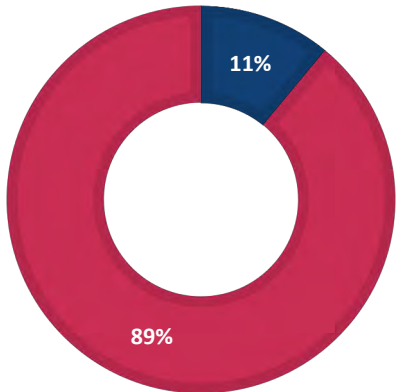
**HOTEL ROOMS**



**OFFICE**



**EXISTING RETAIL**



# RIVER SOUTH DISTRICT



# History

Downtown's River South District began in 1843, when three French Canadian brothers – Joseph, Ahcan, and Louis Pappan - moved to Topeka and established a ferry service across the Kansas River along the Oregon Trail. This ferry remained in service until 1870. A few years later, in the end of 1854, nine men formed the Topeka Town Association, and selected Cyrus K. Holliday as their leader. Under his leadership in 1857, the City of Topeka incorporated as a city and was designated as the Shawnee County seat a year later in 1858.

Topeka's first Original Town plat established the land adjacent to the Kansas River and Pappan's Ferry as City Park. This land remains in use for municipal services to the present day.



*Topeka City Park in a colorized photograph, 1905*



*Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad Depot*

Located to the south of City Park were services and industries closely affiliated with the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad, which constructed its depot on the southwest corner of 1<sup>st</sup> & Kansas Avenues.

Although not great in size, the entirety of the River South District became fully developed with a complete mixture of uses necessary to sustain a small and

growing town. Along with homes, there were also dance halls, a bowling lane, blacksmith shops, lumber yards, hotels,

and even the City's first crematory. Also located within the area were the City's first water pump station, complete with steam-powered water pumps, and the City's Street Department.

An iron bridge was constructed that extended Kansas Avenue north to the recently annexed town of Eugene in 1870. This was replaced in 1898 by the Melan Arch Bridge, which remained in use until its collapse in 1965. The Topeka Avenue Bridge was originally constructed through the Works Progress

Administration in 1938.

There has been a resurgence of interest in this area in recent years with the dedication of the Mill Block National Register Historic District in 2015, along with the adaptive restoration of the buildings within this district for new uses. This activity is exemplified most recently with the restoration and conversion of the Parkhurst-Davis Mercantile Warehouse into upscale loft apartments.



*Topeka Municipal Water Works Plant  
SW Crane & Harrison St., circa 1895*



*The Melan Arch Bridge, Kansas Avenue, 1898*



*Parkhurst-Davis Mercantile Co. Warehouse, circa 1890*

# River South



- Reclaimed riverfront land
- Potential Plug and Play/R&D
- Mix of old and new buildings; walkable scale
- Amenity rich – housing, food/beverage, “open” to public, river access
- New Polk-Quincy Viaduct access
- Convergence of all districts and corridors

# Innovation District

A mix of existing industrial, repurposed buildings, and new buildings along the river could lead to an amenity-rich innovation district. It takes advantage of views to the river, nature, Great Overland Station, and Capitol in a gritty urban walkable setting to accommodate entrepreneurs and growth in animal health sciences or other research. Shared green space, river trail, and bike amenities open up a hidden and important part of Topeka’s history while complimenting the downtown core and NOTO. Updated Polk Quincy Viaduct is a portal for economic development.



# River South Innovation District



**Goal:** Retain the existing character of the River South District, while promoting new infill construction that attracts reinvestment and diversity in the local economy through job creation in tech and innovation.

## Key Ingredients for an Innovation District

**Economic Assets:** firms, institutions, and organizations that drive, cultivate or support an innovation-rich environment.

**Physical Assets:** publicly and privately owned spaces, building, open spaces, streets and other infrastructure - designed to stimulate new and higher levels of connectivity, collaboration, and innovation.

**Networking Assets:** relationships between individuals, firms and institutions that have the potential to generate, sharpen, and/or accelerate the advancement of ideas.



# Potential Build-Out

## New Development and Conversions



# Potential Build-Out

## New Development and Conversions



**View of the potential River South build out, looking southeast from the Kansas River.**

# Potential Build-Out

## New Development and Conversions



View of Van Buren Street looking south toward the State Capitol Building.

- 1 Park space located under the Polk-Quincy Viaduct , can create an active space that acts as an activity site.
- 2 New mixed-use developments, helping create a district that provides housing, retail, and office space that adds to the existing industrial character of the district.
- 3 Designated bike lanes can provide a multi-modal transit system within the district, enhancing the Van Buren Corridor, and linking the Capitol District to the River South District.

# Park Space Under Viaduct



# Redevelopment Examples



# Circulation/Complete Streets

## 1st Street Improvements

Before



After



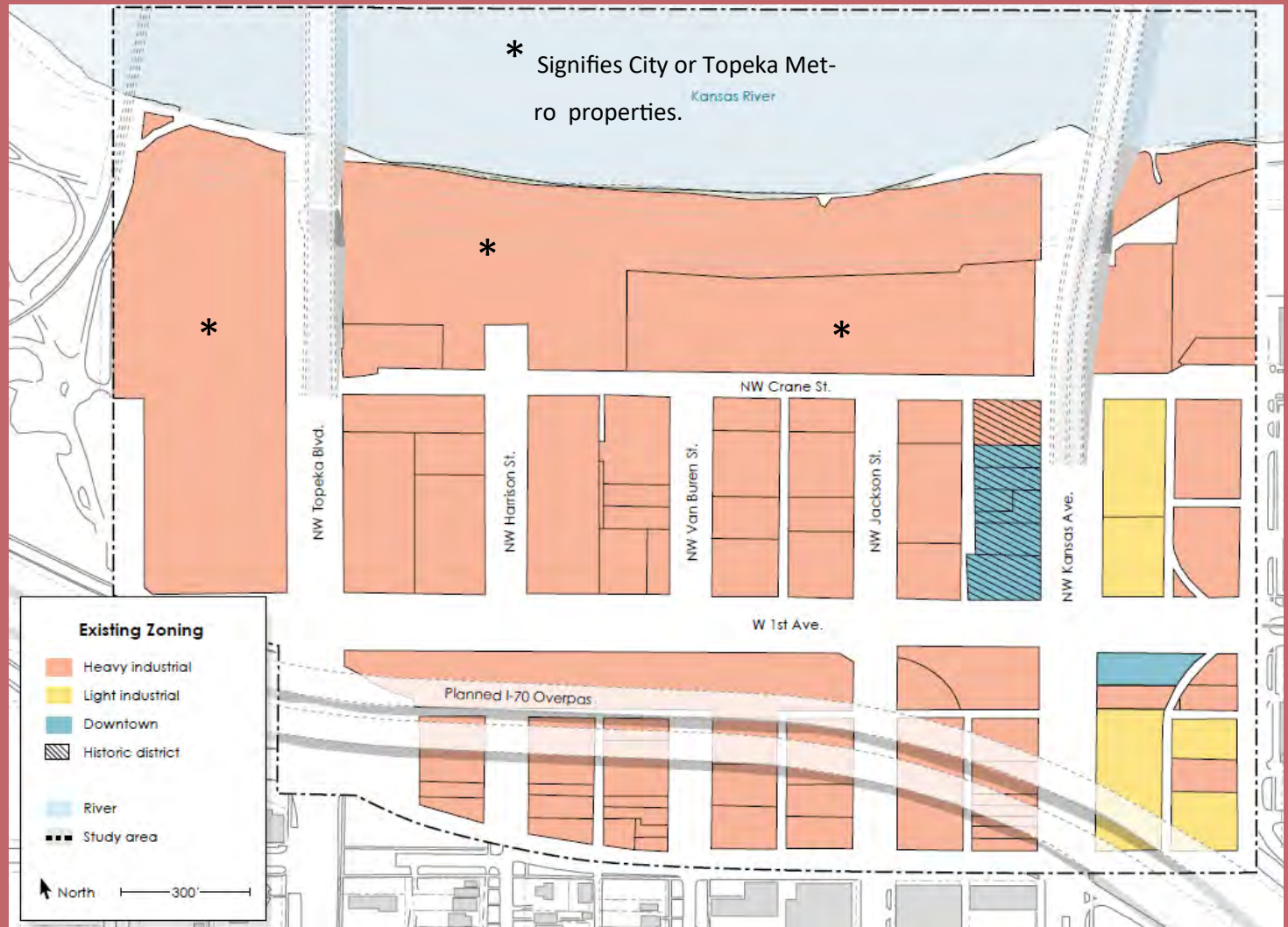
# Existing Character

## Land Use & Zoning

**Zoning** - The River South District is primarily composed of Industrial uses. It is proposed that the district be rezoned to D-3. As the River South District realizes its development/redevelopment potential, zoning changes may be necessary to accommodate the mix of uses outlined in the River South Brownfields Area Wide Planning Study. Recently, few properties along Kansas Avenue have been rezoned to a D District Zoning in conjunction with the rehabilitation of existing warehouse buildings.

**D-3 Zoning** - Intended to reestablish the linkage between downtown and the Kansas River. The district includes industrial, commercial and office uses as primary uses and housing as a secondary use. Land use in this zoning district should emphasize the relationship between downtown and the river, as well as expand cultural opportunities in the general downtown area.

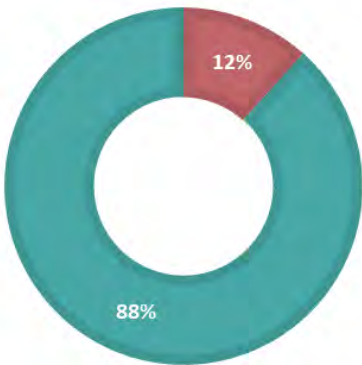
**Land Use** - Influenced by intensive industrial uses such as Lardner Stone, TMTA, City impound lots and various others, the River South district lies along the south bank of the levee-protected Kansas Riverfront. While intent on keeping the districts industrial and gritty feel, the large parcels owned by the City and TMTA provide opportunity for new mixed-use redevelopment attracting new office, innovation, commercial, and residential uses. These new uses will allow for growth within the district that allow for its potential to be reached.



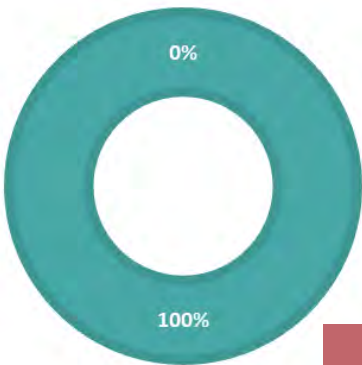
# Implementation Summary

	Recommendations	Other Considerations
Land Use	Increase quantity of office, retail and residential uses.	
Zoning	Retain existing zoning until rehabilitation dictates need for change.	See map in Existing Character
Housing	Potential to add 105 units of new housing , primarily through new development.	
Office	Potential for 110,000 new Class A space.	Any significant growth in this category is reliant on a new build
Retail	Retail component would be part of new mixed use developments, with no specific new commercial developments projected.	
Hotel	No new hotel rooms added; some conversions to other uses.	
Parking	Angled parking is preferred in high density commercial areas. However, bike and pedestrian considerations may dictate the need for parallel parking or other parking requirements.	Density still lends itself to surface parking. Heavier truck traffic may influence on-street parking capacity.
Building Design Standards	Create residential and nonresidential design standards for D Districts.	

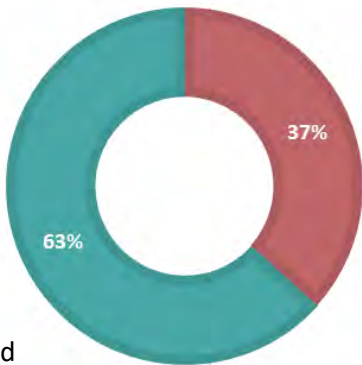
HOUSING



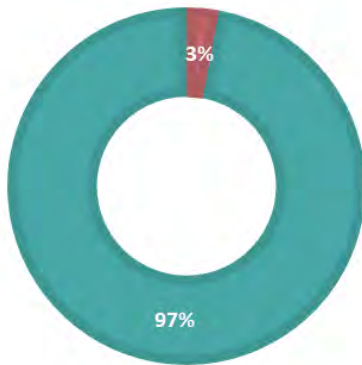
HOTEL ROOMS



OFFICE



RETAIL



■ Added  
■ Needed

For more information on the River South District view the [Downtown Topeka: River South Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Study](#)

# TOWER DISTRICT





# History

Despite current appearances, Downtown Topeka's Tower District has had a varied and important role in the growth and development of Topeka. The first notable activity within the Tower District occurred almost immediately after the City's founding when in 1855 a small tract of land outside the boundaries of the Original Town plat, located within the east side of the 1000 block of S. Kansas Avenue, was dedicated as the City's first cemetery. This cemetery was used by Topeka's earliest settlers until 1859 when a larger, more formal burial location was dedicated as the City's cemetery a mile east on SW 10th Street. Approximately 100 remains were moved in conjunction with this transition .



*Hale & John Ritchie Houses, circa 1900*

During this same period of time, the Kansas Free State Movement was well underway, led by one of Topeka's most prominent founders, Mr. John Ritchie. John Ritchie and his son Hale, lived in two adjacent homes that still stand at 1116 and 1118 SE Madison Street on the District's eastern boundary. John Ritchie's residence within this area mirrored the overall pattern of early development within the Tower District, which was that of an upper to middle class residential neighborhood .

The overall character of the block west of S. Kansas Avenue was developed in an urban industrial direction, highlighted by the construction of the Topeka Railway Company's horse and trolley barn within the 1100 block of SW Jackson Street in 1887. The use of this block continued in this use, either for horse-drawn trolleys, electric trolleys, or the City's municipal bus system until as late as 1966 .



*Topeka Railway Company Horse & Trolley Barn SW 11th & JACKSON. 1887*

Commercial-oriented development began in earnest along the frontages of SW 10th Street and S. Kansas Avenue after the turn of the 20th Century. The State Capitol heating and lighting plant was constructed at the southeast corner of SW 10th & Jackson Streets in this Century's first decade. Construction of commercial buildings along S. Kansas Avenue intensified in 1928 when the National Reserve Life Insurance Company constructed a 10-story office tower at SW 10th & Kansas in 1928.

The Tower District would not be known by this name without the presence of the water tower, located in the 1100 block between S. Kansas Avenue and SE Quincy Street. Construction of the tower began in 1942 during WWII, and was completed early in 1943. The need for this tower was prompted by the establishment of the Forbes Airforce Base at the City's southern boundary which placed a significantly higher demand for the City's water services.



*11th & Quincy Water Tower. 1943*

The June 8, 1966 tornado destroyed most of the residential area within the Tower District. After this date, some of parcels along S. Kansas Avenue have been redeveloped for commercial purposes, but only one property, the Jackson Tower Apartments (1969), 1122 SW Jackson Street, has been redeveloped for residential purposes. New development within the Tower District culminated in the year 2000 with the construction of the Curtis State Office Building and parking garage.

# Tower



- Sports complex/Fieldhouse
- Residential village
- Mature households
- Connection to heritage sites
- Long-term feasibility

# Urban Village

As Downtown Topeka progresses, it will be able to attract more mature residents who are looking for different types of housing than young professionals. This new neighborhood could include a signature sports complex that will be surrounded by new homes in the form of townhomes, duplexes, and small-scale apartment buildings. Residents will appreciate being within walking distance of the activity on Kansas Avenue, while maintain a little more space, privacy, and quiet. Redevelopment in this district can be used to help build a better connection to heritage sites farther to the south and east.



# Potential Build-Out

## New Development & Conversions (Option 1)

- 1 Sports Pavilion/Field House** - As a new activity hub, a sports complex intended for youth games and tournaments would add a destination site and tourist draw anchoring the south end of Kansas Ave visible from I-70 gateway. The location would be catalytic to support extended stays for hotels, shops, and food during “off-hour” evenings and weekends. Below grade parking is a must to have a more vibrant and walkable district.
- 2 Boutique Hotel** - The need for hotel beds will be exacerbated by the addition of a sports complex. A boutique hotel can address that need in close proximity.
- 3 New Mixed Use/Hotel** - New development on this site can help reinvigorate Kansas Avenue in the southern end of Downtown Topeka. Market needs will dictate which type of development will happen, but new development will be required to provide the needed amenities for the projected traffic for this district.
- 4 New Retail** - Added restaurant/retail uses, and the removal of surface parking will provide the needed density to create a vibrant district.
- 5 Climbing Tower/Observation Deck** - The existing water tower provides an opportunity to become an activity node. A climbing tower provides needed recreation for downtown, while an observation deck can provide a birds eye view of Downtown.



- 6 New Mixed Use** - New development along Kansas Avenue can provide needed commercial uses required to accommodate the additional traffic generated by a new sports complex.
- 7 New Mixed Use** - New development along Kansas Avenue can provide needed commercial uses required to accommodate the additional traffic generated by a new sports complex. Additionally, this development could include residential units as the buffer to the lower density residential uses nearby.
- 8 New Multi-Family/Flex Space** - This area has potential to develop as either higher density housing, missing middle housing, or may fill a need for new parking. Missing middle housing would provide housing options to the district, but the addition of higher density housing and sports complex may dictate a need for surface or structured parking.

# Potential Build-Out

## New Development & Conversions (Option 2)

- 1 Large Multi-family/Hotel** - As noted previously Downtown Topeka is in need of additional housing units and hotel beds. With an ideal location along 10th Avenue, this has potential to develop based upon current and future market demand.
- 2 New Mixed Use** - New development on this site can help reinvigorate Kansas Avenue in the southern end of Downtown Topeka. The mixed use site may include new retail, office and housing units increasing the density of uses along Kansas Avenue.
- 3 New Retail** - Added restaurant/retail uses, and the removal of surface parking will provide the needed density to create a vibrant district.
- 4 Climbing Tower/Observation Deck** - The existing water tower provides an opportunity to become an activity node. A climbing tower provides needed recreation for downtown, while a observation deck can provide a birds eye view of Downtown.



- 5 Missing Middle Housing** - In a movement to provide workforce and affordable housing, a variety of housing types, such as, duplexes, townhomes and small apartments could fill the primarily vacant lots that exist in much of the Tower District. The introduction of high-quality affordable housing units will create a residential village feel encouraging walkability for the district.
- 6 New Mixed Use** - New development along Kansas Avenue can provide needed commercial uses required to accommodate the influx of residential units in the district. The addition of uses like grocery stores and small retail can provide a self sustaining district.

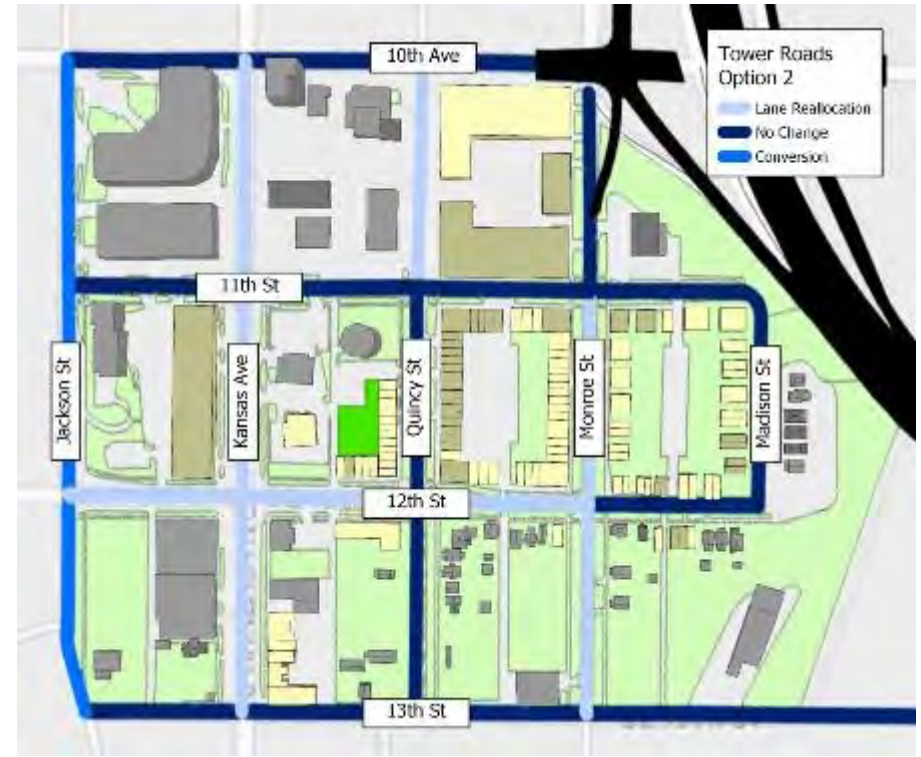
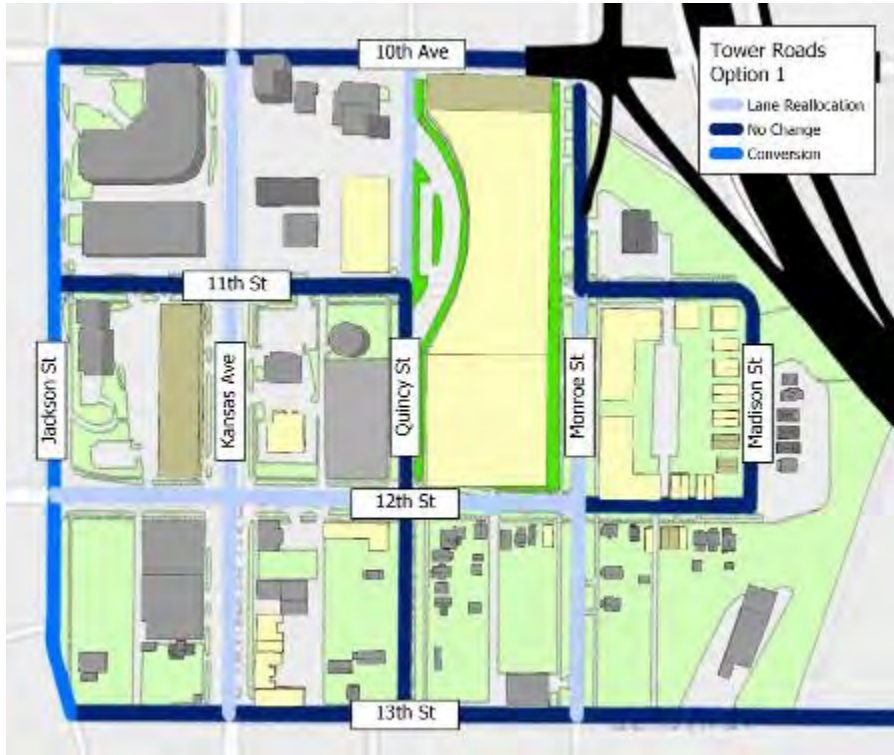
# Sports Fieldhouse



# Residential Village



# Circulation/Complete Streets



Monroe Street is proposed for conversion, continuing the change to two-way travel found in the Civic District. Kansas Avenue, 12th Street, and Quincy Street from 10th to 11th are proposed lane reallocations that reduce the number of travel lanes. These changes will help create a more pedestrian friendly circulation pattern including 12th street which is currently under construction to reduce vehicle lanes to add a multi-use path.

Type/Location	Recommendation	Complete Streets Typology	Ped	Bike	Bus	Car
Conversions (1-way to 2-way)	Jackson St	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
	Monroe St	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•	•	•
Lane Reallocation (Removal of Travel Lanes)	Kansas Ave	Main Street	•		•	•
	Quincy St (10th to 11th)	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•	•	•
	12th St (Jackson to Monroe)	Main Street	•	•	•	•
	Monroe St	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•	•	•
No Change	10th Ave	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•	•	•
	11th St	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
	13th St	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•	•	•
	Jefferson St	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•		•
	Quincy St (11th to 13th)	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•	•	•

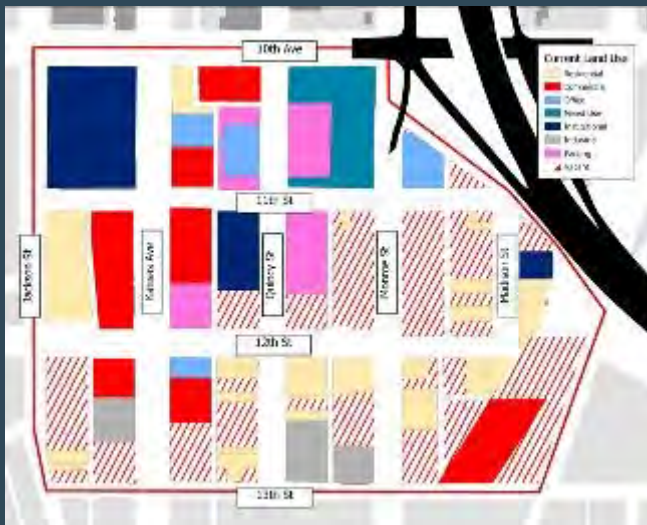
# Existing Character Land Use

Land Use in the Tower District transitions from primarily office and retail uses to the north to residential in the south. However, much of the district is currently vacant with occupied parcels primarily located along Kansas Avenue and 10th Avenue. Changes in land use are currently projected to occur after 10 years, but the development of a catalyst fieldhouse within the district may spur a faster transition of surrounding blocks.

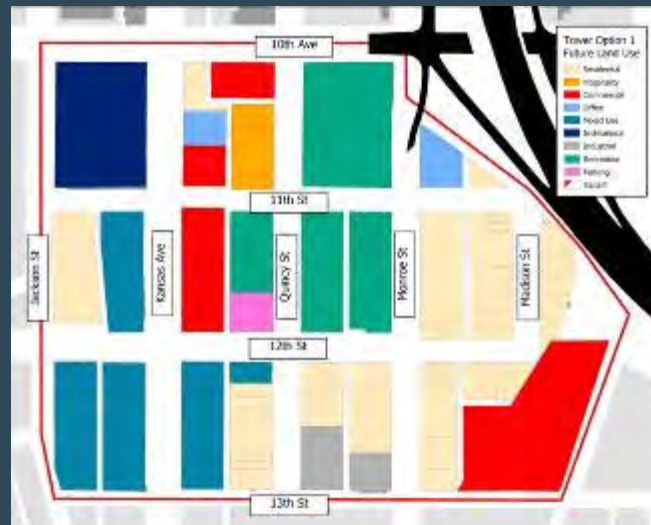
**Option 1 Sports Complex:** With the development of a Catalytic Sports Complex along Quincy Street, neighboring land uses will need to accommodate the large influx of people. New mixed use infill along Kansas Avenue would provide retail space and restaurants that appeal to families who are attending weekend events at the sports complex. Future land use changes likely will take place north of 12th Street, building off of the energy in the Historic Kansas Avenue District. Residential uses could make up most of the remaining parcels with a varying degree of density.

**Option 2 Residential Village:** With no new singular district-changing development taking place, a residential village is one alternative for the Tower District. Residential land use will encompass most of the district. Higher density housing could be located farther north in the district acting as a transitional zone to lower density missing middle housing located between 11th and 12th Streets. New single family or two-family residential infill should make up the remaining residential land uses. New mixed use developments along Kansas Avenue will provide needed commercial uses to accommodate the influx of residential uses.

Current Land Use



Option 1  
Sports Complex



Option 2  
Residential Village



# Existing Character

## Zoning

The Tower District is composed of a mixture of office, commercial, and residential uses. It is proposed to rezone this area to D-1 and D-2 zoning districts to accommodate the existing uses and proposed growth of residential uses.

**D-1 Zoning** - Designed to facilitate a compatible mixed use activity center within the core area of downtown Topeka. The district is predominately composed of state offices, as well as local and federal facilities, commercial and retail uses. The district includes compatible residential, office, civic, and commercial retail/service uses which complement and support a high density of activity and facilitate pedestrian usage.

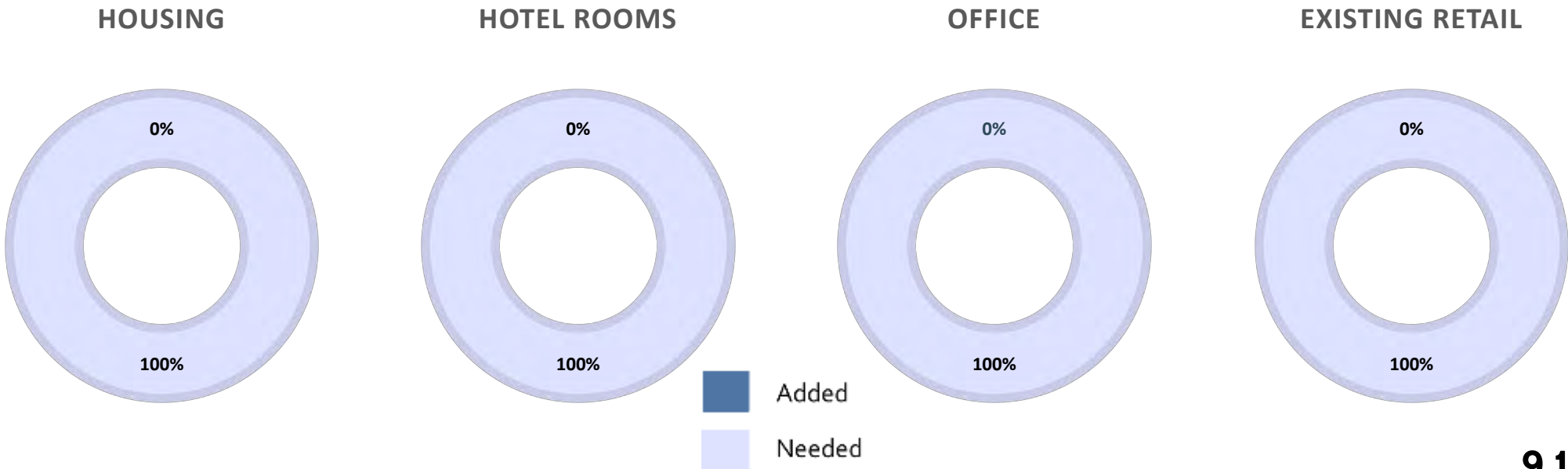
**D-2 Zoning** - Intended to integrate a compatible mixed use activity with urban residential neighborhood. The district includes a balance of compatible residential, office, cultural, and neighborhood commercial retail/service uses of low to moderate intensity that complement and support neighborhood residential areas and pedestrian usage.





# Implementation Summary

	Recommendations	Other Considerations
<b>Land Use</b>	Provide catalytic sports destination use; and/or 10+ year housing village	All housing projected 10 plus years.
<b>Zoning</b>	Rezone district to D-1 and D-2	See map in Existing Character
<b>Housing</b>	No new housing units.	All housing projected 10 + years with development of urban village setting.
<b>Office</b>	Little new office space anticipated.	
<b>Retail</b>	New retail uses within mixed use new developments will accommodate additional traffic due to sports complex or additional housing.	
<b>Hotel</b>	New boutique hotels may follow development of sports complex.	Reliant on sports complex development.
<b>Parking</b>	Angled on-street parking is preferred in high density commercial areas. However, bike and pedestrian considerations may dictate the need for parallel parking or other parking requirements.	Structured Parking is preferred for fieldhouse. Where possible surface parking lots should be replaced with higher density structured parking.
<b>Building Design Standards</b>	Create residential and nonresidential design standards for D Districts.	





**VAN BUREN**

**DISTRICT**

# History

The Van Buren Corridor District was originally settled in the 1850s and 1860s as the City's first residential neighborhood, just west of the trading and business activities established to the east along Kansas Avenue. Early residents within this area were a mix of mostly European immigrants, based on the scattered placement of churches and schools. Also, given this area's location just south of the Kansas River and railroad tracks, and west of the City's prime commercial corridor, early Sanborn maps indicate a variety of businesses also located within this area, such as lumberyards, cabinet shops, blacksmith shops and livery stables.



Shawnee County Courthouse



St. Joseph's Catholic Church

Construction of the west wing of the Kansas State Capitol Building commenced in 1866 and continued for 37 years. The presence of the Capitol Building just south of SW 8th Avenue, and centered at Van Buren Street, established a principal corridor for government services, including the Shawnee County Sheriff's office and jail at SW 5thth & Van Buren (1889), and the Shawnee County Courthouse, also at SW 4th & Van Buren (1896). The grandeur of these buildings was accompanied in 1901 with the construction of St. Joseph's Cathedral, located at SW 3rd & Van Buren.



Looking north from the Kansas State Capitol along SW Van Buren Street toward the Kansas River, 1951

Over the course of the 20th Century, this area's conversion from predominantly residential to more intensive business and industrial uses accelerated in conjunction with Topeka Urban Renewal Program. Although no portions of the Van Buren Corridor District were included within Topeka's Urban Renewal Keyway Project, this specific era marked the deliberate transition of the southern portion of downtown from residential to more intensive, non-residential uses. Today, nearly all residential uses are present only within the district's northwestern quadrant, north of SW 5th Street, and along SW Harrison Street and SW Topeka Blvd. Those areas east of Van Buren and south of SW 5th St. are predominantly occupied by heavy commercial and industrial uses, government and institutional uses, and vehicle surface parking lots.

# Van Buren



- New residential construction
- Younger professionals focus—closer to action
- Pedestrian/bike connection to river
- State - development partner
- Grocery anchor

# Residential Corridor

Van Buren will act as the spine for a new residential neighborhood with retail nodes at key corners. Numerous underutilized properties and parking lots provide great sites for new upscale apartments. These high quality buildings will “raise the bar” for downtown housing and provide amenities and quality that cannot be found elsewhere in the city. Young professionals will value being in an active urban environment, close to the shops and amenities along Kansas Avenue.



# Potential Build-Out New Development

**1 Catalyst Site/Large Multi-family** - New Development on the State's surface parking lot could be the housing catalyst needed for the Van Buren District to become the true residential district. The mixed use site would provide new market rate units as well as new commercial and office space, enhancing the visual appeal of the district.

**2 New Mixed Use** - With a grocery store as the anchor tenant, redevelopment of this site would provide a centralized amenity to all of Downtown. The addition of structured parking removes existing surface level parking and allows for higher intensity uses in neighboring blocks.

**3 New Mixed Use** - Building off of the new mixed use developments south of 6th Avenue, another new mixed use infill development could provide new office or commercial sq. ft. while removing surface parking.

**4 Small Multi-family Housing** - Emphasizing the Van Buren District as the residential district, a smaller multi-family housing development could provide a range of units from market rate to low/moderate income units, providing additional housing choices for the district.

**5 Missing Middle Housing** - New infill projects throughout the district will provide a range of housing types that are compatible in scale and form to the single family homes located on the northern end of the district.



**6 Dog Park** - Located near the Great Life Athletic Center, and centrally located within the Van Buren District, a new dog park would provide needed greenspace for the influx of new renters in the district.

**7 Single-family Infill** - North of 4th Street there is a number of vacant parcels. These parcels could be filled with new single-family infill projects.

**8 Van Buren Extension** - Connecting the Van Buren District to River South, the extension of Van Buren will include new park/green space with opportunity to extend the residential corridor.

# ENVISIONING VAN BUREN



# NEW HOUSING CHOICES



# RESIDENTIAL SERVICES





# Circulation/Complete Streets



The Polk-Quincy Viaduct will impact the Van Buren District, with properties to the north being intersected by the viaduct providing new park and open space under the viaduct. Jackson Street, Harrison Street, 5th Street and 4th Street are all anticipated as conversions to two-way traffic. Changing these roads to two-way traffic will allow for greater mobility throughout Downtown Topeka.

Type/Location	Recommendation	Complete Streets Typology	Ped	Bike	Bus	Car
<b>Conversions (1-way to 2-way)</b>	Jackson St. (from 3rd St. to 7th St.)	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
	Harrison St.	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
	4th St.	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•		•
	5th St	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•		•
<b>No Change</b>	2nd St.	Industrial Street	•			•
	3rd St.	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
	6th Ave.	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•	•	•
	7th St.	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
	Topeka Blvd.	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•
	Van Buren St.	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•		•
	Jackson St. (from 2nd St. to 3rd St.)	Mixed Use Boulevard	•			•

## Jackson Street 3rd Street to 7th Street

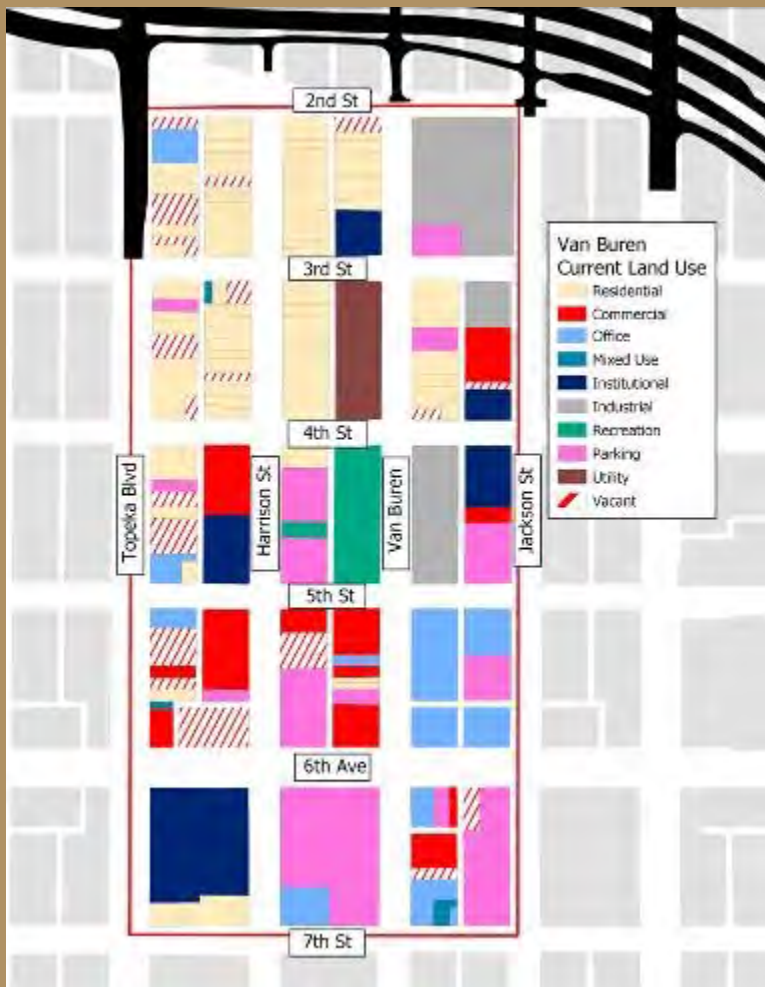


- 1 Travel Lanes converted to two-way traffic
- 2 Angled parking/parallel parking along both travel lanes
- 3 Generous sidewalk widths for increased pedestrian use and implementation of crosswalk bump-outs
- 4 Promote mixed use development to increase pedestrian amenities

# Existing Character

## Land Use

The existing land uses in Van Buren District is composed primarily of office, commercial and residential, with pockets of industrial found along Van Buren Street. However, as noted in the Downtown Market Study, the Van Buren District has potential to become the residential district. The large quantity of surface parking and vacant lots provides an opportunity for new infill housing, ranging from high density apartments to new single-family homes. A new mixed use development, north of the State's Eisenhower building, would replace a large State owned surface parking lot. This building could provide new market rate housing, as well as provide new commercial uses for Downtown Topeka. East of this site a new mixed use development could provide a Downtown with a much needed grocery store and structured parking. Other new housing options could focus on addressing the need for missing middle housing.



# Existing Character Zoning

The Van Buren District has segments of “M-3” Multi-family, “C-2 and C-4” Commercial, “OI-2” Office and Institutional, “I-1” Industrial, and “D-1” Downtown. It is proposed to rezone this area to D-1, D-2 and D-3, allowing the existing uses to remain and expanding options for new development and aligning zoning with the existing uses.

**D-1 Zoning** - Designed to facilitate a compatible mixed use activity center within the core area of downtown Topeka. The district is predominately composed of state offices, as well as local and federal facilities, commercial and retail uses. The district includes compatible residential, office, civic, and commercial retail/service uses which complement and support a high density of activity and facilitate pedestrian usage.

**D-2 Zoning** - Intended to integrate a compatible mixed use activity with urban residential neighborhood. The district includes a balance of compatible residential, office, cultural, and neighborhood commercial retail/service uses of low to moderate intensity that complement and support neighborhood residential areas and pedestrian usage.

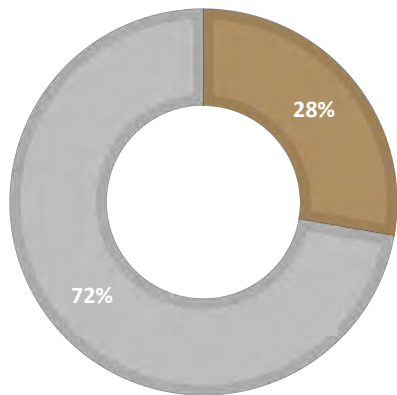
**D-3 Zoning** - Intended to reestablish the linkage between downtown and the Kansas River. The district includes industrial, commercial and office uses as primary uses and housing as a secondary use. Land use in this zoning district should emphasize the relationship between downtown and the river, as well as expand cultural opportunities in the general downtown area.



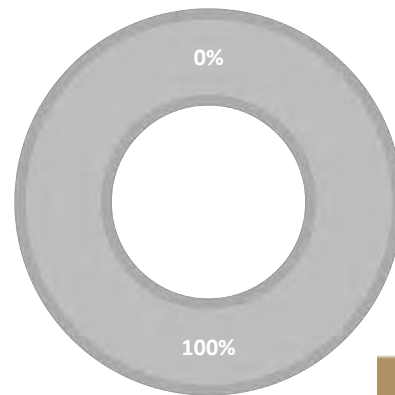
# Implementation Summary

	Recommendations	Other Considerations
Land Use	Increase the quantity of Housing units through new missing middle and new mixed use development.	
Zoning	Rezone district to D-1, D-2 and D-3	See map in Existing Character
Housing	Potential to add 250 new units from new development and rehabilitation in the first 10 years.	Potential for 260 additional units after year 10.
Office	Potential to add 20,000—70,000 sq. ft. of office space	Any growth in this category is reliant on significant rehab or new build.
Retail	Retail component would be part of new mixed use developments, with no new commercial developments projected.	
Hotel	No new hotel beds	
Parking	Structured Parking is preferred. Where possible surface parking lots should be replaced with higher density structured parking.	Angled parking is preferred in high density commercial areas. However, bike and pedestrian considerations may dictate the need for parallel parking or other parking requirements.
Building Design Standards	Create residential and nonresidential design standards for D Districts.	

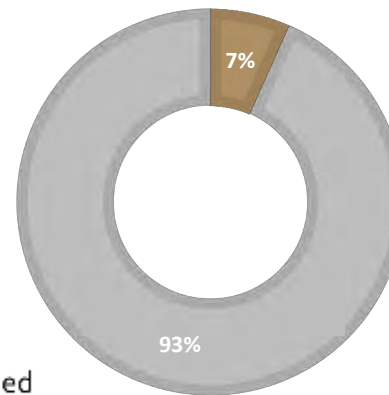
HOUSING



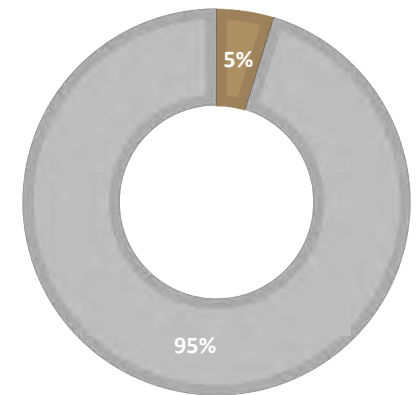
HOTEL ROOMS



OFFICE



RETAIL



# PART III: IMPLEMENTATION



# Big Ideas – Implementation Path

Almost all of the ideas - big and small - represented in the Downtown Master Plan (DMP) evolved from various Downtown stakeholders who own property, work, live, advise, or represent organizations that do these things in the DMP area. Those ideas were further tested through a broader public lens by 1) direct mailing to all property owners in the nine districts, 2) virtual presentation on-line and at the Planning Commission, and 3) community-wide survey and social media outreach. This information was used to refresh the district plans and prioritize big ideas on an implementation path that reflects community values.

Downtowns must think boldly and inclusively post-pandemic. Ideas with the most wide-reaching and catalytic impacts for Downtown are categorized as “big ideas”. It is these big ideas that will ultimately change the face of Downtown during its next generation. **Not all big ideas can or will be able to be implemented in the next 10 years but to the extent that positive steps are taken to at least make these vision more “deal ready” will become their measure.**

## Community Survey

Data collected from a Downtown Topeka Citizen Input Survey between January 25 and March 1, 2021 provides valuable feedback for prioritizing these big ideas presented in the DMP. The survey asked what new developments were considered the highest priorities for Downtown over the next 10 years. The top 5 responses based on the number of times they were mentioned include:

- Dining/Café/Food/Beverage (62%)
- Riverfront Access (62%)
- Entertainment Venues (49%)
- Retail Storefronts (40%)
- Grocery Store (37%)

Honorable mentions include Aesthetic Makeovers (34%), sports Pavilion/Fieldhouse (31%), and Walkability/Mobility (31%). Nearly 60% of respondents have weekly interactions with Downtown with half of those having daily interactions. The second largest subgroup of respondents were those that had less than one visit per month to Downtown (19%). The full list of responses can be seen in Appendix B.



# Big Ideas– Implementation Path

This input allows us to view new developments through the citizen lens which sheds light on what citizens view as important vs. what is perceived as a public need. While not necessarily statistically valid for the entire citizenry, the survey did give us several key insights on an implementation path for the big ideas.

- **Riverfront Access.** The big idea of “Riverfront Access” was further described in the survey to include “parks, trails, kayaks, etc.” but not necessarily inclusive of “development”. Access to the Kansas River for recreation activity as a priority for Downtown was only surprising in that it tied for the top honor! This idea ranked high with both high and low use respondents of Downtown. The high interest in riverfront access shows a desire for increased recreational options Downtown and aligns nicely with the DMP’s objective to diversify the array of quality of life offerings. The visions in the River North/NOTO and River South districts to activate this space should be further explored on a more granular level through the Riverfront Authority. Many actions are in the works already - up-river weir, kayak chutes, levee trails, bikeways, etc. - to make this a greater destination for leisure activity downtown. Properties owned by government entities along the river should continue to be freed up for greater community use and made “deal ready” from private development consistent with the DMP.
- **Grocery Store.** Grocery stores bring people together. They are social hubs. It’s not a surprise a grocery store had the highest response rate for those who live/work Downtown other than riverfront access. This type of convenient amenity (think fresh produce) would not only have a profound effect on quality of life for those who use Downtown now, but be a game-changing draw for more resident, visitor, and worker growth in the future. By being strategically centered along transit routes as envisioned in the Van Buren district, it could also address some of the food desert needs of nearby neighborhoods and be a recipe to positively impact lower socio-economic groups.



# Big Ideas– Implementation Path

- **Housing.** Based on the 2019 Downtown Market Strategy, high quality residential living will be the bellwether of Downtown Topeka’s success and should be the highest priority for new development over the next 10 years. This includes both affordable and market rate. There is demand for at least 900 new housing units in Downtown Topeka over the next 10 years that could double the population and catalyze other investments. New units would target students, young professionals, mid-career and empty nesters. The Market Strategy should be followed for appropriate products. The biggest game-changer will be new construction units to broaden appeal beyond niche loft renovations and set market comps. The biggest gap fillers to incentivize housing will come through use of TIF funds (e.g., parking), an expanded 20-25 year NRP tax rebate program, and/or JEDO funding. Adding new households can be just as impactful as adding jobs if not more with greater local spending. While the survey feedback ranked housing outside the top 5, the 28% that believe it is a priority is a much higher percentage of the market that will personally ever live Downtown. That’s a very good sign. What separates housing from other big ideas critical to the future of Downtown is that it can be the accelerant to achieving so many other goals (e.g., Plug and Play, dining, entertainment, recreation, shopping, street life, grocery, etc.) and provide resiliency in changing economic times.
- **Hotel/Conference Center.** A pointed takeaway from the survey was that the big idea of a new hotel/conference center was not an instinctive “want” as it ranked last in priorities by respondents. The “need” is apparent as indicated in Visit Topeka’s 2019 market study where it was shown that there is a growing competitive gap between Topeka and other cities with regards to conference center capacity. A new signature hotel and convention center with structured parking in the downtown area would stem the loss of larger conferences to newer facilities in other cities and draw more “outside revenue” to support our visitor economy. Positioning it within walking distance to the Evergy Plaza at 4<sup>th</sup> and Kansas as envisioned in the Office and Catalyst District is critical to its appeal and synergy for vibrant street life Downtown. However, based on the survey results there may be a need for more public education on why this big idea, estimated around \$40M in value, can be a game-changer for Downtown as well as a big economic “need” for the community.





# Big Ideas– Implementation Path

- **Dining/Entertainment/Retail.** Dining/Café/Food/Beverage, Entertainment Venues, and Retail Storefronts all ranked in the Top 4 priorities of the survey. Not surprisingly, these scored much higher with those respondents who do not frequent Downtown as much. This may be telling for those who would like to frequent Downtown more. While more diverse and quality dining/entertainment/retail *experiences* contribute to a vibrant downtown, they require more people and longer periods of time to be spent Downtown. That is why having a mix of reasons for being Downtown or extending your stay is paramount to supporting this idea. For example, an influx of new residents to Downtown would check all of those boxes and provide more disposable income to be spent in a 12+ hour period beyond 5:00 PM for smaller businesses.
- **Sports Pavilion/Fieldhouse.** This big idea was middle of the pack as a priority for respondents but surprisingly higher for those who do not frequent Downtown as much. Again, creating more reasons for using Downtown is an economic resiliency theme emphasized over and over in the DMP. Based on the comments, it appears this idea would have garnered even more support if its purpose was clarified as a youth-oriented sports facility to drive more tournaments Downtown for indoor court, ice, or field events. This facility is not intended to support minor league sports. Much like the convention center/hotel, bringing thousands of visitors for tournaments to the heart of Downtown will have a decided ripple effect on demand for eating, shopping, hospitality, and recreation services. Plus, it will meet a continuously growing demand for local youth practice and event space that will save Topeka households time and dollars. A logical next step would be to perform a market study for such a facility Downtown, which is estimated in the \$30-40m range for an 80,000-120,000 square foot facility, and understand the scale and activities that could be supported. There are national firms that can advise, build, and operate this type of facility. A mega-project could combine this with a convention center/hotel in the Office and Catalyst or Tower District.



# Big Ideas– Implementation Path

- **Aesthetic Makeovers.** Next to riverfront access and grocery stores, there was no higher priority idea for those who live/work Downtown as the visual appeal of the area. While we often think of aesthetics as something that will be more welcoming to outsiders, it is clearly a priority for the quality of life and pride for those who spend more of their time here. Ultimately, things such as building facades, pocket parks, landscaping, urban design, and cleanliness are qualities that must be prioritized to retain expectations of the most ardent users who are our champions for Downtown.
- **Diversity and Inclusion.** One idea that is big but not necessarily a physical improvement, is embracing more diversity and inclusion of all people for Downtown. There was commentary that believed that Downtown’s future was not inclusive of people of color or lower socio-economic status. Or that it will lead to gentrification. Those were valid concerns as they would be contrary to the plan’s foundational objectives of being welcoming, authentic, resilient, and connected. The DMP prioritizes preservation, mobility for people without a car, bringing the public to the Kansas River, housing for all income levels, small business inclusion, revitalization efforts of adjacent neighborhoods, and diversification of offerings. Downtown is “everybody’s neighborhood” and must appeal to all Topekan to truly become the best version of itself.



Pictured: Brown v. Board Mural Project - Legacy & Vision | [artstopeka.org/mural/bvb](http://artstopeka.org/mural/bvb)

# Big Ideas– Implementation Path

- **Justice Center.** While the magnitude of this idea took on greater meaning in the shadows of nationwide civil unrest over criminal justice/police reforms in 2020, it still only managed to be a priority for 16% of respondents. There are many practical reasons to consider a new consolidated City/County law enforcement and court facility including the dire need for existing building upgrades, encroachment of the future Polk Quincy Viaduct, redevelopment of Kansas Avenue, cost-efficiencies, staff recruitment, etc. But the most powerful reason could be for the community to feel a sense of ownership creating a space of “justice” emblematic of all its citizens. The preferred location is at a gateway to Downtown that can stand as a new symbol of our collective unity. Minimum cost for a new LEC will be in the \$60 million range so careful considerations must be given to financing alternatives including private/public partnerships and any economic yield to be realized by redevelopment of the LEC site. A feasibility study should be conducted to further understand cost, savings, and scope of such a project before taking any next steps which certainly will need to include more community conversations.
- **Big “Big Idea” Financing.** It is an admittedly daunting task to begin lining up the price tags on achieving many of the bigger ideas. They will likely have different timelines and sources. Some more private. Some more public. But in almost all cases, the need for public/private partnerships (P3s) will be expected. P3s models where private entities can develop sites in return for the revenue stream may be much more palatable than heavy public bonding burdens or ownership. In other cases, traditional public incentives such as TIF, CID, NRP, IRB, local bonds, state/federal grants, etc. are in place to fill gaps in the financing model. But the most extraordinary financing measures that could make these a reality come through either a sales tax ballot measure and/or STAR bonds. For example, a 1/4 cent or less “public safety” sales tax could be used to finance the Justice Center and other needed public safety facilities. A STAR bond package of the Sports Pavilion, Convention Center/Hotel, and other entertainment venue projects could meet the minimum \$50-75 million investment to qualify for this State incentive. Other non-traditional options that could be sought include federal earmarks or stimulus funds.

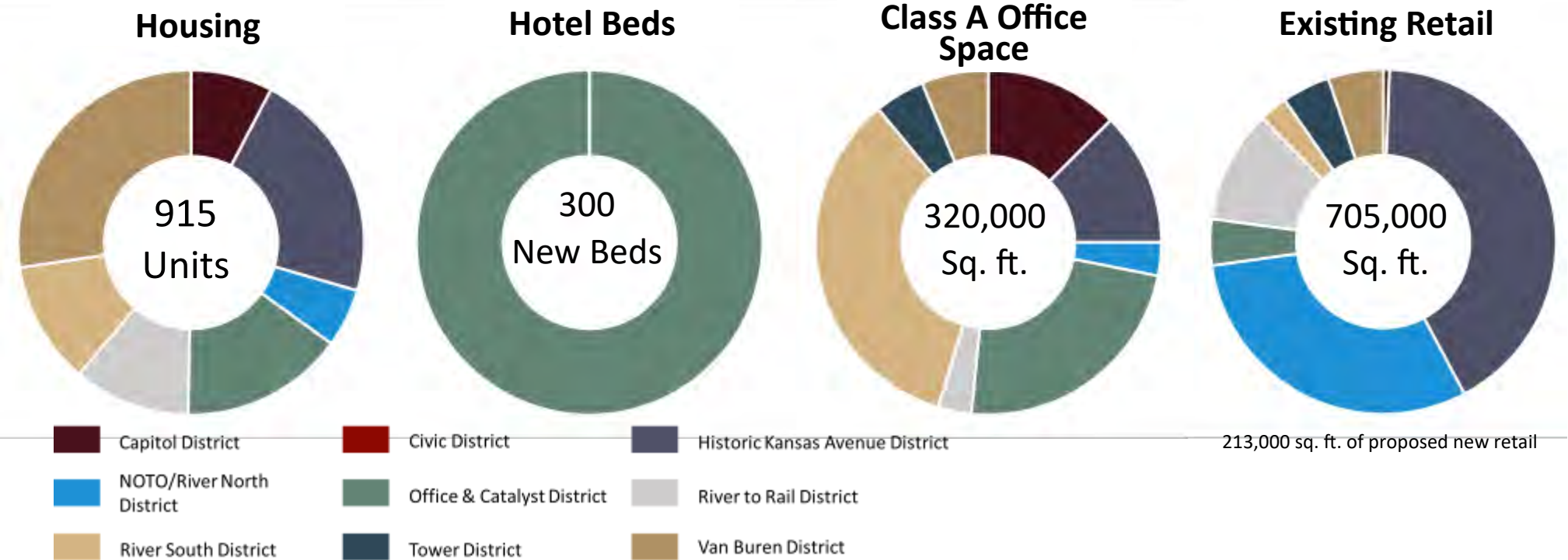


# Big Ideas– Implementation Path

- **Innovation District.** Overall, this idea was ranked below average in priorities which belies its true catalytic impact reshaping Downtown and the local economy. High frequency Downtown users actually ranked it much higher as a priority. Topeka’s Plug and Play initiative will continuously cycle animal science start-up companies through the local economy every few months with bigger hopes that some of them will elect to stay and grow their company here. This can take shape as a “campus” early on in existing buildings along Kansas Avenue that will strengthen our spine. Future spin-off of companies that want to stay and grow could potentially be accommodated in a collaborative mix of old and new buildings along the riverfront as envisioned in the River South district. A key “public” greenspace and levee trail access would not only benefit workers in the area but pay tribute to the former City Park which served a largely segregated African-American neighborhood displaced by Urban Renewal in the River to Rail district. The long play of this vision will be accelerated if deliberate steps can continue to be taken to relocate public facilities, reclaim land for new building sites, mitigate any brownfield issues, activate levee trail access, budget for complete street improvements, and construct a new Polk-Quincy Viaduct. This includes potential for a new TMTA transit facility as recommended in the Civic district which could be largely financed through State/Federal transit grants to cover its estimated \$21-26 million cost. The Riverfront Advisory Committee should take the lead to ensure steps continue.



# Implementation Summary – District Allocations



New housing units in Downtown Topeka will be through a variety of development, ranging from new builds to conversions. The three districts projected to gain the most housing units are the Van Buren District, Historic Kansas Avenue and the Office & Catalyst District. New units in the Van Buren District will likely come through new development, as surface level parking lots are replaced. Within Historic Kansas Avenue and the Office & Catalyst District, units will likely be conversions from office space to residential units with opportunity for additional units through mixed-use infill development.

A recent market study showed a need for additional hotel beds in Downtown Topeka. A likely site for this is within the Office and Catalyst District, where a new hotel and convention would alleviate much of the need for hotel beds. There is potential in 10+ years that additional smaller-scale hotels could be developed, as need dictates.

There is a current need for roughly 300,000 sq. ft. of new class A office space. It is anticipated that much of that growth will happen within the River South, Office and Catalyst, and Historic Kansas Avenue Districts. Within the River South District, much of the new class A space would be driven by new development. Within the Historic Kansas Avenue and Office & Catalyst District, the addition of new class A office space would come through upgrades to existing office space.

The allocation of retail space will likely continue to fall into two district. Currently, Historic Kansas Avenue and NOTO hold the largest footprint of retail space. Along Kanas Avenue there are empty storefronts that present an opportunity for growth of retail businesses. Similarly, as NOTO continues to be the prominent Arts District for Topeka, there is expected to be growth of retail square feet. The River to Rail District does feature a significant share of retail square feet, but these uses lean industrial retail or business oriented and not necessarily designed for leisurely shopping.

# Streets – Downtown Topeka Roadway Projects

There are numerous roadway projects identified in the Downtown Master Plan. Improvements will include repair and replacement of waterlines, storm water structures and piping, sanitary sewer mains, pavement, sidewalk infrastructure, streetscapes, and complete street elements. Projects fall into two categories - “independent” and “development dependent”. Independent projects are listed below in priority order and can proceed as funding allows. Development dependent projects are not listed in priority order but instead “float” until a future development proposal warrants them as a priority. The categories help to prioritize projects and establish a rough implementation sequence. It is recommended a “Downtown” line item be funded in the CIP to implement on an annual basis over 10 years using a variety of sources including G.O. Bonds, TIF, Grants, Sales Tax, Polk-Quincy match, etc.

Priority	Independent Projects (Proceed as funding allows)	Project Type
1	Quincy Street (6th Avenue to 8th Avenue)	Lane Reallocation
2	Quincy Street (8th Avenue to 10th Avenue)	Lane Reallocation
3	Kansas Avenue (4th Street to 6th Avenue)	Lane Reallocation
4	Gordon Street Intersection at Kansas Avenue	Intersection
5	Jackson Street (3rd Street to 14th Street) and 14th Street west of Kansas Avenue	Conversion
6	Harrison Street (2nd Street to 12th Street)	Conversion
7	Kansas Avenue (10th Avenue to 13th Street)	Lane Reallocation
8	4th Street (Topeka Blvd to Kansas Avenue)	Conversion + Lane
9	5th Street (Topeka Blvd to 4th Street)	Conversion + Lane
10	Monroe Street (11th Avenue to 17th Street)	Conversion
11	Kansas Avenue (13th Street to 17th Street)	Lane Reallocation
12	1st Street (Quincy Street to Adams Street)	Lane Reallocation
<b>Total Estimated Cost</b>		<b>\$28,200,000</b>

Development Dependent Projects ("Floating" Priorities)	Project Type
Van Buren Street (6th Avenue to 8th Avenue)	Complete Street
Van Buren Street (2nd Street to 6th Street)	Complete Street
Quincy Street (10th Street to 11th Street)	Lane Reallocation
Kansas Avenue (3rd Street to 4th Street)	Lane Reallocation
Crane Street (Topeka Boulevard to Quincy Street)	Complete Street
Van Buren Street (1st Street to Crane Street)	Complete Street
Van Buren (1st Street to 2nd Street)	PQV/ Complete Street
Madison Street (2nd Street to 4th Street)	PQV
Kansas Avenue (1st Street to 3rd Street)	PQV
3rd Street (Kansas Avenue to Quincy Street)	PQV
6th Avenue (Branner Traffic way to Topeka Blvd.)	Complete Street
8th Avenue (Topeka Blvd. to Quincy Street)	Complete Street
4th Street (Monroe Street to Kansas Avenue)	Streetscape
<b>Total Estimated Cost</b>	<b>\$13,175,000</b>

## Project Type:

**Lane Reallocation:** Reduction of travel lanes typically from five travel lanes to three travel lanes or as traffic demand models dictate.

**Conversion:** Change in direction of travel from one-way to two-way.

**Complete Street:** Complete Street projects will enhance the multi-modal travel with emphasis placed on bike/ped/transit improvements.

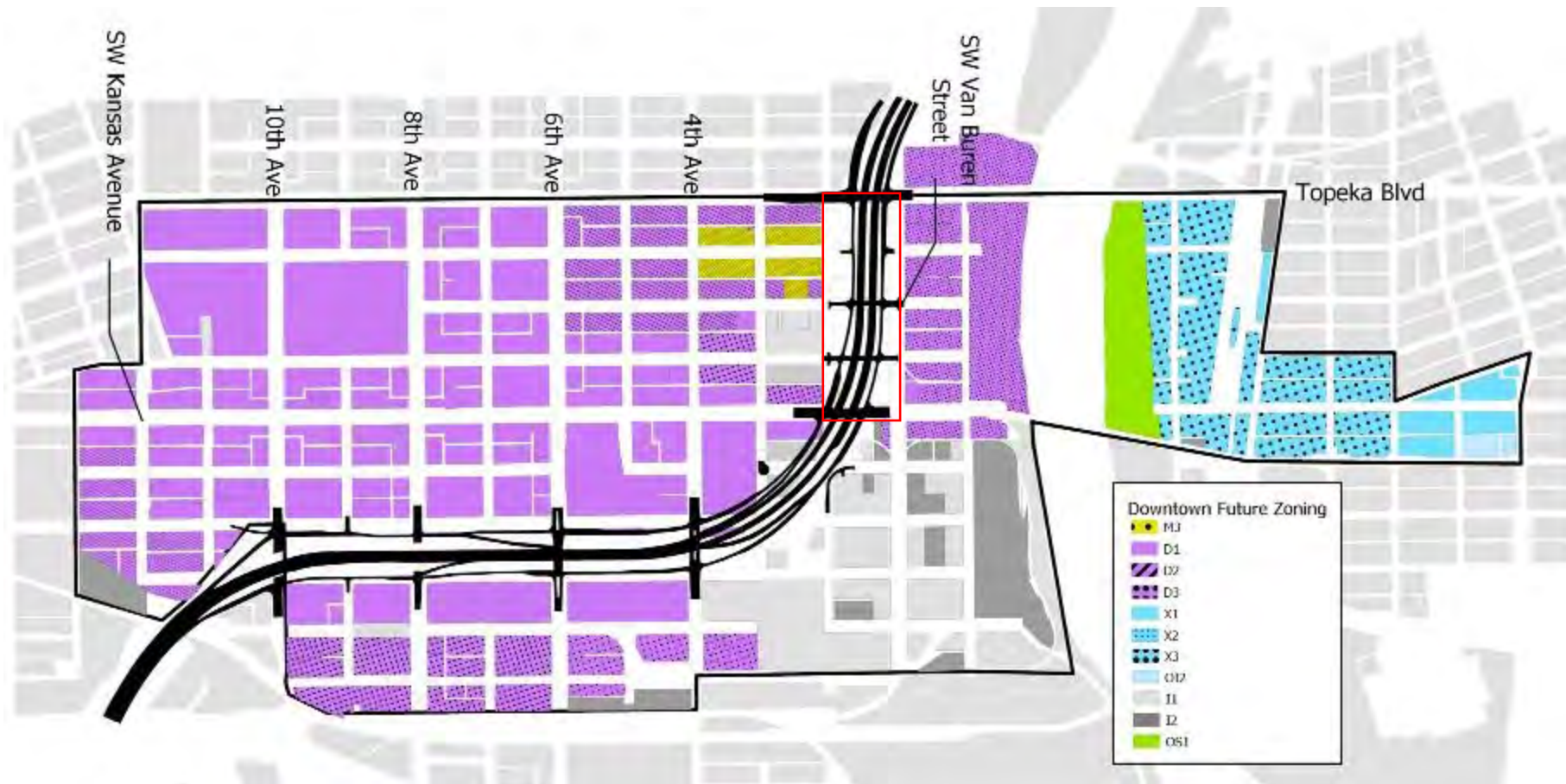
**PQV (Polk-Quincy Viaduct):** The PQV project presents an opportunity to make roadway improvements through various Federal, State, or Local sources .


# Downtown Zoning Changes

There are a number of changes to the D Downtown Zoning Districts that are related to the adoption of this plan. Some of these changes are being implemented along with the adoption of the plan, while others will be worked on at a later date. The following is a summary of future downtown zoning changes.

## Future Changes

- Newly drafted design standards for residential and non-residential projects within the D districts are included in Appendix A and will be adopted by ordinance at a future date.
- Rezoning recommendations for properties are found within each district plan. These rezoning recommendations will be used to craft zoning cases that will be worked on after the plan is adopted.
- Minor tweaks to Section 18-200 D Downtown Districts – includes tweaks to the district classification descriptions – will also be worked on after the adoption of the plan.
- There will also be changes identified to the D Districts' use tables and also certain specific use standards.



 Parcels impacted by the Polk-Quincy Viaducts future zoning will be assessed based upon which parcels are acquired as right-of-way.



# APPENDIX A: DOWNTOWN TOPEKA URBAN DESIGN STANDARDS



# Purpose and Context

The purpose of these standards is to provide the regulatory authority to ensure that new construction and renovation of existing structures is consistent with the established urban form of Downtown Topeka. These standards should be used for the design and evaluation of new public and private projects within the Downtown Master Plan area. These standards seek to balance private property rights while protecting the appearance and viability of existing investments downtown, and serve to implement the Downtown Topeka Master Plan.

- Specifically, these standards are intended to address the following objectives that are identified by the Downtown Redevelopment Plan:
- Maintenance of the street wall at the front property line;
- Enhancement of the design of street facades;
- Ensuring pedestrian compatibility between buildings and the public realm;
- Design of public spaces at a pedestrian scale;
- Creating an appealing visual interest; and
- Maintaining design integrity and compatibility with surrounding structures.

**Applicability** - The Urban Design Standards shall apply to all new construction and renovations of existing buildings designated for D zoning by the Downtown Master Plan, and within the D-1, D-2, and D-3 Districts, each with their own specific design and regulatory criteria. Types of applicable development activity include:

1. Non-residential
2. Mixed-Use (Commercial/Office/Residential)
3. Residential
4. Parking

A mix of uses (including office, retail, residential, or other uses) within a given project is encouraged whether it is a single building or a redevelopment district.

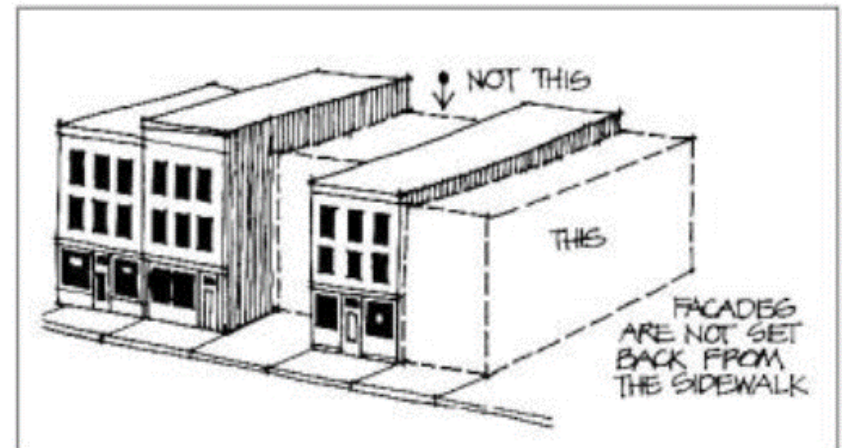
No building permit shall be issued unless it is in compliance with the design guidelines which are set forth. Compliance shall be determined by the planning director by evaluating building permits, site plans and exterior elevations for conformity with the design guidelines. An appeal from the planning director's decision as to compliance with the downtown Topeka general design guidelines may be made to the board of zoning appeals pursuant to Chapter 2.45 TMC.

These standards apply to development projects within each of the D zoning districts with the exception of projects located within designated historic districts or individually listed historic properties. For these exceptions, projects must follow the US Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, as adopted by the amended "D" District Regulations.

## SECTION I. NON-RESIDENTIAL & MIXED-USE BUILDING DESIGN STANDARDS

**A. Site Design** - These Standards are intended to guide future development on properties within the 'D' Districts in a manner that reflects historical building patterns. These standards are not intended to restrict creative solutions, but are intended to form the framework within which new development must occur to meet the key concepts and goals for good downtown design.

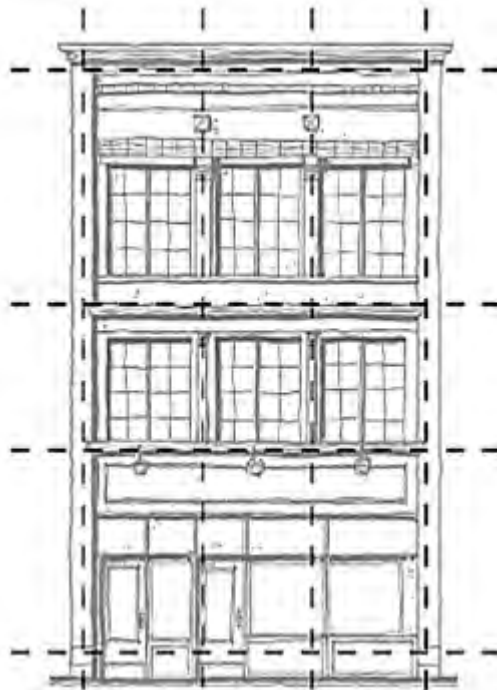
- 1. Setbacks** - All new non-residential development within each D District must be constructed to maintain the street wall by locating the new building adjacent to the sidewalk or front property line. This will ensure that all street-level facades fit within the established context with neighboring properties. All other street-level setbacks, plazas and widened sidewalks from the building line must be strategically placed in accordance with an overall open space plan. The new open spaces shall be located to relate to other land uses such as retail, entertainment and transit routes.



**2. Orientation** - All primary and secondary entrances to principle buildings must face a street frontage. All loading docks or ramps must be designed to be unobtrusive and compatible with the primary use of the site, and should not be located on the major pedestrian street side of new buildings.

**B. Architectural Character** - Buildings within the “D” Districts have traditionally been built in relatively narrow configurations, with street widths typically ranging from 25 to 50 feet along the street frontage. Within these widths, buildings have been further divided into vertical units, or “bays,” with each bay spanning a width of no more than 10-feet.

Buildings within the D District have also generally followed a horizontal demarcation to separate the floors of a building, while still accommodating an established “rhythm” for building facades. This rhythm uses a consistent level for the placement of upper-story windows above a lower storefront, and also utilizes design elements such as intermediate cornices, projecting moldings, and changes in materials to consistently define each building level within the façade.



Facades which contain expanses of wall area with no windows or entrances, and no other elements or features to provide pedestrian interest and supporting pedestrian circulation or activity represent a serious detriment to the vitality and viability of our Downtown area. The continuity of lively, inviting and visually appealing street-facing facades is extremely important in encouraging pedestrian movement, and enhancing the area’s economic vitality.

**1. Building Composition** - All buildings should be open and inviting in both their principal and secondary street-facing facades. All street-facing facades must reflect a consistent pattern of articulation using **architectural features** that create interest and long-term quality in design. Differentiating architectural features include the following:

- Columns
- Pilasters
- Piers
- Windows
- Doorways
- Vertical and horizontal modulations of wall planes, or
- Vertical changes in texture or material.

Additional architectural features should be added to the corners of buildings at street intersections. Care must be taken to avoid over-articulation, which can be just as inappropriate as buildings with too little articulation.



*Typical Façade Architectural Features  
Traditional Vertical and Horizontal  
Demarcation of Primary Building Façade*

**2. Materials** - The total square footage of all facades on new non-residential and mixed-use buildings within the “D” Downtown Districts shall utilize a combination of the building materials specified in this Chapter. All building materials selected for use within the list shall fulfill a proportionally designated role as Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary/Accent//Remainder building materials according to the following volumes:

- Primary = >60%
- Secondary = <40%
- Tertiary/Accent/Remainder

Materials should be chosen that are as maintenance free as possible, and have an estimated life expectancy of greater than of 50 years. No street-facing façade may be composed exclusively in a Primary building material. Acceptable materials used within ground-level and upper-level facades for new non-residential and mixed-use buildings within the “D” districts are:

Brick	Glass
Stone	High quality wood
Cast Stone	Synthetic wood
Synthetic stone	Pre-cast concrete
Architectural metal panels*	Water-managed EIFS
Stucco	Glass Fiber Reinforced Concrete (GFRC)
Integrally colored or glazed masonry units	Cement board
High quality pre-stressed concrete systems	Ceramic or Terra Cotta tiles

*\*Architectural metal panels must be a higher quality material and heavier gauge than standard industrial, ribbed, pre-engineered metal panels. All fasteners for metal panels must be hidden from view, and not visible on the corresponding façade.*

Synthetic building materials, such as foam moldings and water-managed EIFS, shall not be used unless they can be demonstrated to age in a superior manner to non-synthetic or natural materials.

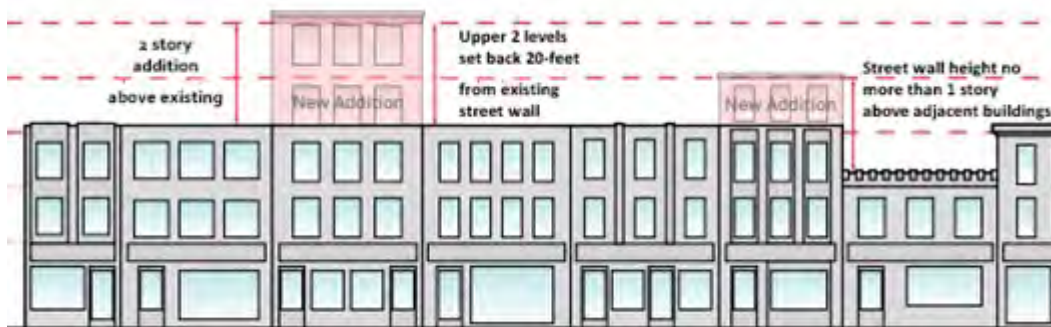
**3. Ground Level Design** - The design of street-facing building facades must include high quality materials and detailing which relate to the rest of the building and to adjacent buildings to convey a sense of permanence, durability, and richness in character. Buildings fronting multiple streets must be consistent in the design and character of façade treatments, including materials, scale, proportion, and architectural features.

- a. **Building Transparency** - A predominance of glass which assures transparency between interior activities or products and pedestrian activity on the streets and sidewalks is very important to the vitality of the pedestrian environment. All primary street-facing, ground-level facades shall contain no less than 60 percent glass. All secondary street-facing, ground-level facades shall contain no less than 40 percent glass or other transparent opening. Facades with lesser volumes of transparency shall not be placed along public streets, but may be placed along alleys and service lanes.
- b. **Building Entrances** - Building entrances should be considered as an integral component of a building’s appearance and should relate to the overall façade in terms of its style and scale, quality of design, selection of materials and detailing. The placement and design of entrances to buildings and businesses must be readily identifiable and have a prominence on the building’s street façade. Such entrances should not overpower the façade but should be designed to complement the character and features of the building’s overall architecture and ground level appearance. Secondary facades along public streets should provide access using the same considerations as primary facades.
- c. **Architectural Features** - Decorative and functional elements and ornamentation should be used to create human scale elements on the street-level facades to further encourage openness. The maximum horizontal length of undifferentiated ground-level facades along public streets may not exceed 25-feet. The use of any combination of previously listed architectural features shall be used to create a human scale within lower facade designs.

**4. Upper Level Design** - The architectural design of the upper levels of new buildings, and the rehabilitation of existing buildings should be sensitive to their surrounding built and natural environment. The architecture of the existing downtown buildings provide examples of architectural themes, window rhythm, materials and forms. To enhance these rhythms, materials, and forms within the upper levels of developments within the “D” Districts, the following standards shall apply:

- a. New construction is not required to implement any particular architectural style, but shall be designed to be compatible with the scale, forms, rhythms, and materials of surrounding structures.
- b. The architecture of the building’s upper floors and termination shall be designed to complete the building form within an overall design concept for the base, middle, and top that works in concert with architectural compatibility of the building with surrounding properties.
- c. **Height & Step-backs** - In areas where more than 50% of an existing street wall within the extent of the block-face remains intact, new infill construction and additional levels added to the height of existing buildings are limited to no more than 1 level greater in height than its adjacent building. For infill construction and new additions in height of two levels or more, all additional levels above the established street wall shall adhere to a step-back no less than 20-feet from the front face of the building.

1) **Façade Composition - Windows** - Windows in new construction must maintain the same rhythmic proportions and configuration for windows in adjacent buildings.



- 2) **Architectural Features** - Ornamentation, decorative, and functional elements previously listed as recommended architectural features shall be used within the upper levels of building facades to continue and enhance the visual and architectural fabric of the Downtown area. The maximum square footage of undifferentiated upper-level facades along public streets may not exceed 225 sq. ft.
- 3) **Balconies** - Balconies on all types of non-residential and mixed-use buildings within the D-1 District must be recessed along all street-facing facades to maintain the common street wall with area buildings. Balconies on all types of non-residential and mixed-use buildings within the D-2 and D-3 Districts may project beyond the primary street-facing facades.
- 4) **Parapets** - New parapets, with or without a cornice, should not exceed 6-feet in height above the top of the building wall, unless the roof-height slopes in one direction, making a level parapet otherwise unattainable. A parapet must include a change in height or form at least once every 50 feet. This change should align with the vertical building bays. Parapets and other roof top elements should be used to screen roof top equipment.
- 5) **Cornices** - To preserve the continuation of existing street walls and the urban form of Downtown Topeka, the front facades of all new infill buildings and building additions must include a cornice designed in a manner that is consistent with the general height and depth of cornices on adjacent and nearby buildings.

**SECTION II. PARKING FACILITY DESIGN STANDARDS** - All new parking facilities within the “D” Downtown Districts shall be evaluated as either a structural parking facility, mechanical lift facility, or a surface parking facility. Sub-grade parking facilities not visible from the street right-of-way are not subject to these standards. Criteria and standards for each type of above-grade facility are listed below.

**A. Structural Parking Facility** - All new structural parking facilities within the “D” Districts shall be mixed-use, or shall be an accessory use to an adjacent primary facility. Parking facilities within the “D” Districts should be designed to serve as connecting links between buildings and uses within Downtown Topeka, and avoid becoming features that separate surrounding buildings and functions. As such, it is important that all parking facilities be designed in a manner consistent with the overall objectives of the “D” District Design Standards to become an amenity within the urban fabric that enhances the quality of Downtown Topeka's built environment.

1. **Site Design** - To maintain the general character of Downtown Topeka, new structural parking facilities shall be consistent with the standards, criteria and guidelines developed for the district. The placement of new structural parking facilities shall be integrated into their surrounding environment by use of the following standards.
  - a. **Building Height** - The overall height of structural parking facilities, and the height of its individual components shall be visually compatible to the height of adjacent buildings and structures to which it is directly associated.
  - b. **Rhythm of the street wall** - The setback of a structural parking facility shall be consistent with adjacent buildings and structures to which it is visually related.

2. **Architectural Character** - Street facing facades of parking facilities should reflect and enhance the architectural character of their immediate surrounding area by employing the following standards.

- a. Street-facing facades of new structural parking facilities shall be treated with an architectural finish and given vertical articulation and emphasis. The facade should be designed so as to visually screen cars at street level.
- b. Street-facing facades of new structural parking facilities shall distinguish a base, middle and top by using different materials, or other methods, and also respond to the context of surrounding buildings by employing the use of similar materials, scale, massing, and rhythm of the street wall.
- c. Sloping and open horizontal interior floors shall not be visible or expressed on the exterior face of the building.
- d. The exterior design of all street-facing façades of a structural parking facility shall be reflect the traditional 25’-50’ building width pattern within Downtown Topeka, and shall integrate vertical and horizontal architectural design elements accordingly.
- e. The proportional width to height of openings on street facing facades on structural parking facilities shall be visually compatible to traditional building patterns in the immediate surrounding vicinity.



3. **Architectural Detailing** - All new structural parking facilities should be open and inviting in both their principal and secondary street-facing facades. All street-facing facades must reflect a consistent pattern of articulation using **architectural details** that create interest and long-term quality in design. Differentiating architectural features include the following:

- Columns
- Green walls or expose planters for vegetation
- Pilasters
- Variations in primary, secondary, and tertiary materials
- Windows
- Vertical and horizontal modulations of wall planes, or

Additional architectural features should be added to the corners of buildings at street intersections. Care must be taken to avoid over-articulation, which can be just as inappropriate as buildings with too little articulation.

4. **Materials** - The total square footage of all facades on structural parking facilities within the “D” Downtown Districts shall utilize a combination of the building materials specified in this Chapter. All building materials selected for use within the list shall fulfill a designated role as Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary/Accent//Remainder building materials according to the following volumes:

- Primary =>60%
- Secondary =<40%
- Tertiary/Accent/Remainder

Materials should be chosen that are as maintenance free as possible, and have an estimated life expectancy of greater than of 50 years. No street-facing façade may be composed exclusively in a Primary building material. Acceptable materials used within ground-level and upper-level facades for new structural parking facilities within the “D” districts are:

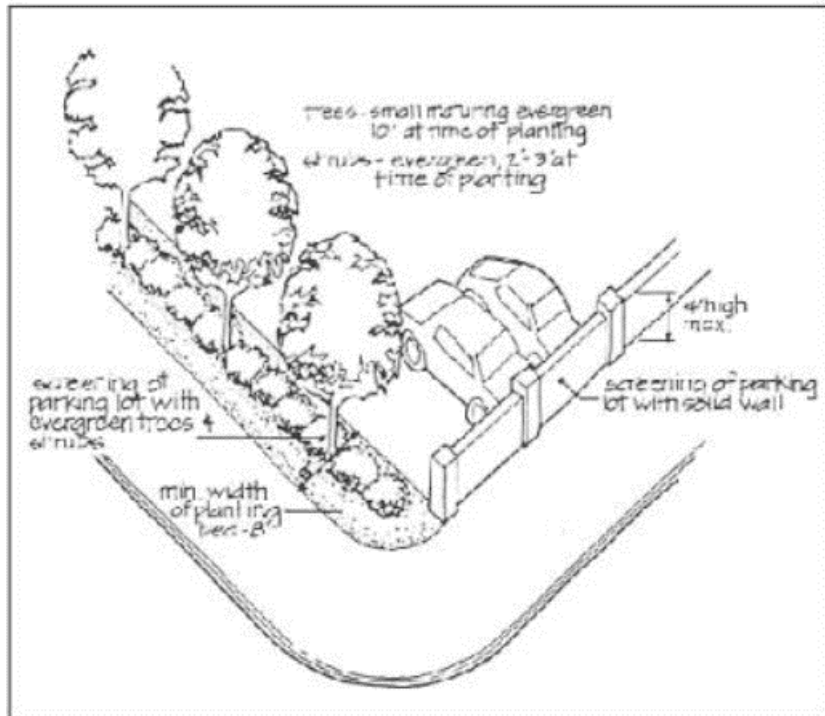
Brick	Glass
Stone	High quality wood
Cast Stone	Synthetic wood
Synthetic stone	Pre-cast concrete
Architectural metal panels*	Water-managed EIFS
Stucco	Glass Fiber Reinforced Concrete (GFRC)
Integrally colored or glazed masonry units	Cement board
High quality pre-stressed concrete systems	Ceramic or Terra Cotta tiles

*\*Architectural metal panels must be a higher quality material and heavier gauge than standard industrial, ribbed, pre-engineered metal panels. All fasteners for metal panels must be hidden from view, and not visible on the corresponding façade.*

Synthetic building materials, such as foam moldings and water-managed EIFS, shall not be used unless they can be demonstrated to age in a superior manner to non-synthetic or natural materials.

## B. Surface Parking Facility

- 1. Landscaping** - Surface parking facilities must provide landscaping in accordance with Topeka's landscape ordinance. Landscaped buffer strips along all street frontages must be designed to continue the existing street wall, where applicable.
- 2. Setbacks & Site Design** - New surface parking facilities must maintain the existing street setback and street wall along all street frontages. Tools for accomplishing this can include walls, decorative fences, row of trees, hedges or any combination of these elements. The height and placement of such features should be in accordance with CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design) principles.
- 3. Lighting** - All lighting for surface parking facilities shall be controlled to avoid spill out on the adjacent streets creating excessive glare, and shall conform to the City of Topeka external lighting standards.



## SECTION III. RESIDENTIAL BUILDING DESIGN STANDARDS -

**Purpose and Context:** The Downtown Residential Building Design Guidelines are unique to Downtown Topeka, and are provided to guide the development of multiple-family housing to achieve a high standard for the physical and aesthetic qualities of Downtown Topeka's built, mixed-use environment. The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that new construction and renovation of existing buildings for multi-family housing is consistent with the established urban form of Downtown Topeka. New multiple-family development projects should utilize these guidelines as the designated criteria for their design, and in their evaluation. These guidelines seek to balance both private and public interest of protecting the appearance and existing investments downtown, and serve to implement the Downtown Master Plan, which is part of the City of Topeka's Comprehensive Plan.

**Applicability:** These standards shall apply to all newly constructed residential development, residential conversions, and all newly constructed and converted mixed-use development that incorporates residential uses. All exterior modifications to buildings that incorporate residential uses shall be consistent with these standards.

## A. Residential Building Types

### 1. Attached Single-Family



Townhomes/Row Houses



Duplexes/Triplexes

### 2. Attached Single-Family



Garden Apartments



Lo-Rise Apartments (1-3 Story)



Hi-Rise Apartments (4 or more stories)

### 3. Mixed Use



(Vertical mixture of uses that does not include residential on ground floor.)



#### 4. Zoning District Allocations\*

	D-1	D-2	D-3
<b>Attached Single Family</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Apartments</b>			
Garden	<b>X</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>P</b>
Lo-Rise	<b>P</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>P</b>
Hi-Rise	<b>P</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Mixed Use</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>P</b>

*P = Permitted Use*  
*X = Not Allowed*

\* **Subject to the requirement of Chapter 18.225(k)** - Dwelling units located on main floors shall meet the following requirements:

- (1) *The units must be subordinate in area or location to nonresidential uses on the main floor; or*
- (2) *The units shall be allowed in structures that were originally built for use as dwelling units, the structure has been used historically for dwelling units, or the dwelling units were converted from hospital, school, or hotel rooms.*

#### 5. Site Design

a. Height and Scale	D-1	D-2	D-3
<b>1) Attached Single Family</b>			
• Side-by-side	X	1-3 story	X
• Stacked	X	2-4 story	X
<b>2) Garden Apartments</b>	X	1-3 story	1-6 story
<b>3) Low-rise apartment buildings</b>	2-3 story	2-3 story	2-3 story
<b>4) Hi-rise apartment buildings</b>	4-10 story	4-6 story	4-10 story
<b>5) Mixed-use apartment buildings</b>	2-10 story	2-6 story	2-10 story

\* *Mixed-use apartment buildings within the D-2 District are limited to corner lots along arterial streets, and may not be placed on lots interior to the block face.*

b. Setbacks ( <i>maximums</i> )	D-1	D-2	D-3
<b>1) Attached Single Family</b>			
• Side-by-side	X	5-10 feet	X
• Stacked	X	5-10 feet	X
<b>b. Garden Apartments</b>	X	0-10 feet	0-7 feet
<b>c. Low-rise apartment buildings</b>	0-feet	0-feet	0-feet
<b>d. Hi-rise apartment buildings</b>	0-feet	0-feet	0-feet
<b>e. Mixed-use apartment buildings</b>	0-feet	0-feet	0-feet

**c. Building Orientation** - The orientation for all types of multi-family residential buildings within all "D" Downtown Zoning Districts must be front-loaded, with the ground-level main entrance facing the street. Garden apartments within these districts may orient the front door toward an internal entrance common and central to the entire apartment complex.

#### d. Parking

- 1) Off-street parking provisions are not required for residential developments within the D-1 and D-3 District classifications. Off-street parking provisions are required within the D-2 District at a ratio of one parking space per dwelling unit. All non-residential portions of mixed-use developments shall provide parking within the D-2 District at a ratio of one parking space per 500 sq. feet of retail or office floor area.
- 2) All parking for multi-family residential buildings shall be consistent with the following type-specific parking requirements:

<b>a. Attached Single Family</b>	
• Side-by-side	Parking to the rear from the alley
• Stacked	Parking to the rear from the alley
<b>b. Garden Apartments</b>	Parking to the rear or adjacent parcel
<b>c. Low-rise apartment buildings</b>	Parking to the rear from the alley
<b>d. Hi-rise apartment buildings</b>	Sub-grade or structured parking, adjacent parcel, or on-site parking to the rear
<b>e. Mixed-use apartment buildings</b>	Sub-grade or structured parking, adjacent parcel, or on-site parking to the rear

- 3) Street access and curb-cuts to those parking facilities is subject to approval by the City of Topeka Traffic Engineer, and is strongly discouraged.
- 4) Higher density residential structures are encouraged to consider on-site or adjacent structural, internal, or below ground-level parking accommodations for their buildings.
- 5) Parking requirements for all types of apartments may be met through the use of adjacent or nearby properties, provided rear access is maintained.

**e) Outdoor accommodations for New Multi-Family Apartments and Mixed-Use Development** - All new multi-family apartments and mixed-use residential complexes shall provide a minimum of 50 sq. ft. of open space per dwelling unit within the building premises. Outdoor accommodations may be accrued through the use of any, or the combination of the following:

- 1) Balconies
- 2) Rooftop gardens and/or common open space
- 3) Interior ground-level courtyards

**f) Pedestrian accommodations**

- 1) Primary building entrances must be designed as prominent building features, easily accessible from the public street or public open space. Secondary building entrances shall be oriented to the side or rear of the building, specifically to provide easy and safe accommodation from common areas of shared open space and designated parking areas.
- 2) The upper levels of buildings 3 stories or more shall utilize materials and scale to avoid the creation of an imposing character on adjoining properties, rights-of-way, or public open spaces.

**g) Service and Utility** - all multi-family buildings within the “D” Districts shall conform with the following standards with regard to the provisions of services and utilities.

- 1) All mixed-use and stand-alone apartment buildings shall be designed to access services and utilities from the rear of the properties, and shall not be front-loaded from the street right-of-way. In addition,
- 2) Utilities should be extended to the sites in a manner complimentary to all storm water facilities and useable common open space.
- 3) Utilities such as electrical, cable, and transformers should be placed underground or screened from view from the public right-of-way and from adjacent properties.
- 4) Utility locations should not interfere with the viability of associated landscaping.
- 5) All drive entrances for service vehicles should be located to the rear of the property and accessed from the alley.
- 6) All roof mounted mechanical units (including evaporative coolers, HVAC units, vents, etc.) for all building types shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from the project’s property lines that are adjacent to public and private streets, as well as adjacent to residential properties (unless height difference makes screening impractical). The screening methods/materials shall be consistent with and incorporated into the design of the building.

**B. Architectural Character** - The overall character of Downtown Topeka should be consistent in its development patterns, but should not be repetitive to the point where creativity and vibrancy are lost. Adherence to the following standards is, therefore, required to achieve the overall goal for downtown development as established within the “D” Downtown District regulations.

1. New multi-family buildings must include at least 3 different façade treatments or architectural designs when multiple buildings are massed on sites 2-acres or larger.
2. Side and rear faces of all buildings must maintain the same architectural character, and employ the use of similar and compatible materials used in the design of the front façade.
3. The ground-level street facades of *mixed-use buildings* must follow the following standards, consistent with other building types within the “D” Districts:
  - a) Transparency - All primary street-facing, ground-level walls shall contain no less than 60 percent glass. All secondary street-facing, ground-level walls should contain no less than 40 percent glass. Blank walls, or walls with lesser volumes of transparency shall not be placed along public streets, but may be placed along alleys and service lanes.
  - b) Building Entrances - The placement and design of entrances to buildings and businesses must be readily identifiable and have a prominence on the building’s street façade. Such entrances should not overpower the façade but should be designed to complement the character and features of the building’s overall architecture and ground level appearance. Secondary facades along public streets must provide access using the same considerations as primary facades.
  - c) Architectural Detailing - Decorative and functional elements and ornamentation should be used to create human scale elements on the street-level facades to further encourage openness. The maximum horizontal length and vertical height of undifferentiated ground-level facades along public streets may not exceed 25-feet.

**c. Door and Window Openings**

1. Doors and windows should be specifically designed and built to contribute to the form and architectural style of the building.
2. All openings into a building must relate to one another according to a clear system of the composition and architectural style of the structure.

**d. Building Materials** - The total square footage of all facades on apartment and mixed-use buildings within the “D” Downtown Districts shall utilize a combination of the building materials specified in this Chapter. All building materials selected for use within the list shall fulfill a designated role as Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary/Accent/Remainder building materials according to the following volumes:

- Primary = >60%
- Secondary = <40%
- Tertiary/Accent/Remainder

Materials should be chosen that are as maintenance free as possible, and have an estimated life expectancy of greater than of 50 years. No street-facing façade may be composed exclusively in a Primary building material. Acceptable materials used within ground-level and upper-level facades for apartment and mixed-use buildings within the “D” districts are:

Brick	Glass
Stone	High quality wood
Cast Stone	Synthetic wood
Synthetic stone	Pre-cast concrete
Architectural metal panels*	Water-managed EIFS
Stucco	Glass Fiber Reinforced Concrete (GFRC)
Integrally colored or glazed masonry units	Cement board
High quality pre-stressed concrete systems	Ceramic or Terra Cotta tiles

*\*Architectural metal panels must be a higher quality material and heavier gauge than standard industrial, ribbed, pre-engineered metal panels. All fasteners for metal panels must be hidden from view, and not visible on the corresponding façade.*

Synthetic building materials, such as water-managed EIFS, shall not be used unless they can be demonstrated to age in a superior manner to non-synthetic or natural materials.

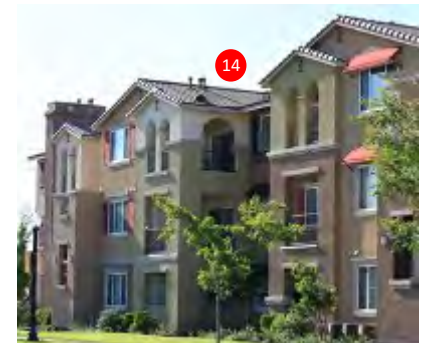
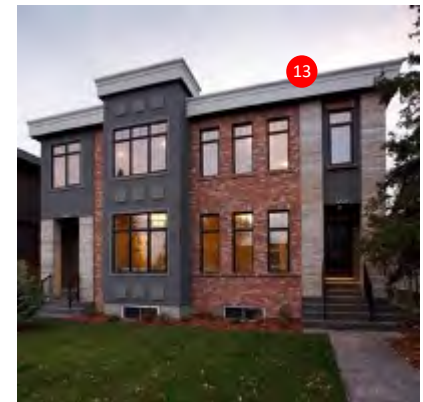
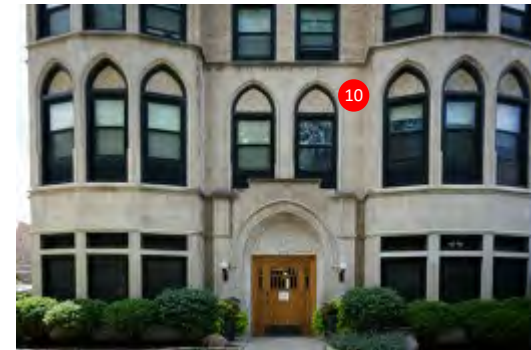
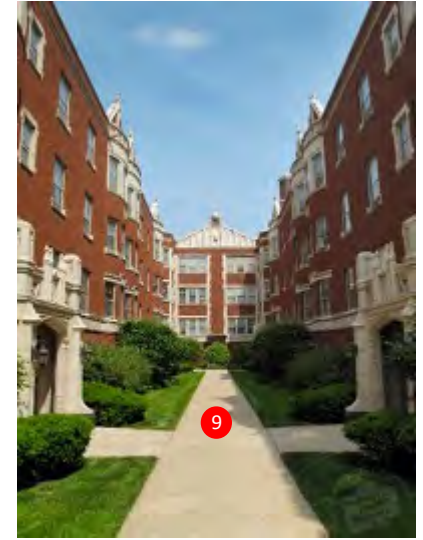
The Planning Director may approve other building materials not listed herein.

**Prohibited features** on multi-family dwellings and buildings are:

1. Security grills over windows on exterior facades above the ground level
2. Reflective materials, other than windows

**Architectural Detailing** - A minimum of 5 of the following types of architectural details are required to be integrated into the exterior facades of all residential building types within the “D” Downtown Districts. These architectural details include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Horizontal or vertical recesses, projections, or off-sets
2. Modulating facades
3. Variation of roof heights
4. Varied roof forms
5. Porches
6. Balconies (Balconies on all types of allowable apartment buildings within the D-1 District must be recessed along all street-facing facades to maintain the common street wall with area buildings. Balconies on all types of allowable residence's within the D-2 and D-3 Districts may project beyond the primary street-facing facades)
7. Awning or canopies at ground lever (permanent)
8. Structurally different building materials (i.e. stone and brick)
9. Courtyards
10. Arches
11. Art that is integrated into the façade
12. Decorative tile work, brick patterns, molding or other materials integrated into the façade
13. Well-defined cornice
14. Premium roofing materials such as tile





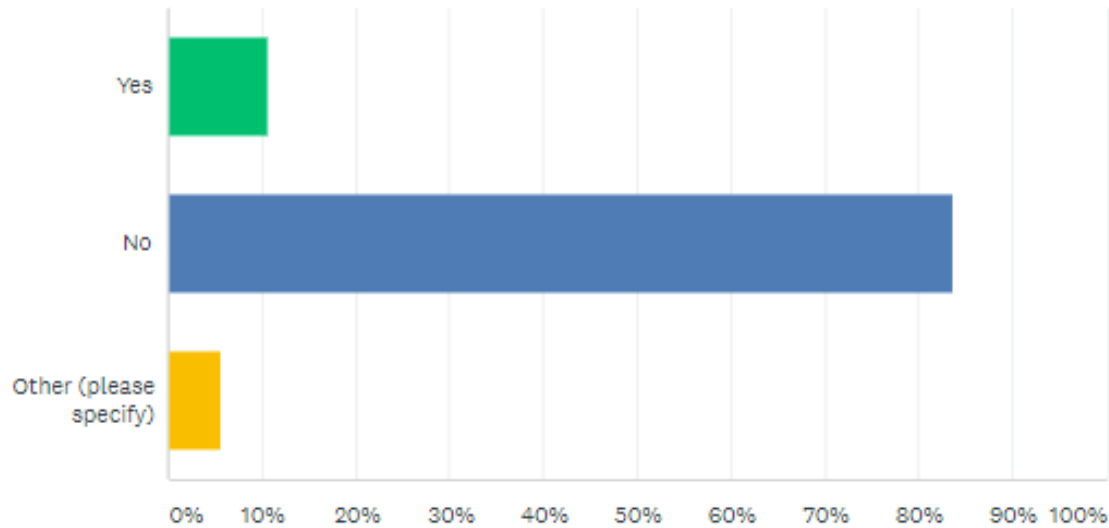
**APPENDIX B: DOWNTOWN  
TOPEKA CITIZEN INPUT SURVEY**

From January 25th, 2021 to March 1st, 2021 the City of Topeka received input from the public on the Downtown Master Plan. The survey asked residents of Topeka what new developments were considered as their highest priorities within Downtown Topeka over the next 10 years. The survey consisted of four questions and received 178 responses from the public. The following pages will detail the results of the survey.

### Question 1:

## Do you live or own a business in Downtown Topeka?

Answered: 178 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	10.67% 19
No	83.71% 149
Other (please specify)	5.62% 10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>178</b>

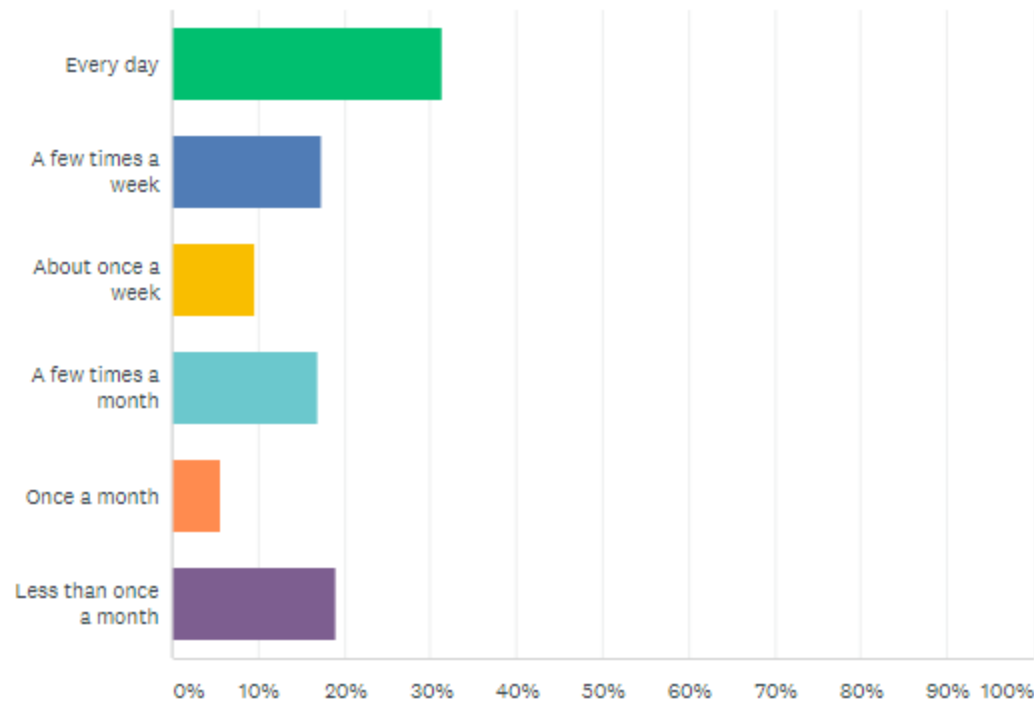
## Question 1: Do you live or own a business in Downtown Topeka - Other Responses

1/25/2021	Work
1/25/2021	North Topeka
1/25/2021	I work downtown Monday-Friday.
1/25/2021	I work downtown
1/25/2021	Office Lead for a business that leases space downtown
2/1/2021	Work downtown
2/5/2021	I work (se Madison) and "play" & sho (north & south Kansas venue) downtown
2/9/2021	Live in Topeka, just outside of "Downtown Topeka"
2/10/2021	Work
2/13/2021	I live in Topeka but not downtown

## Question 2:

### How often do you visit Downtown Topeka?

Answered: 178 Skipped: 0



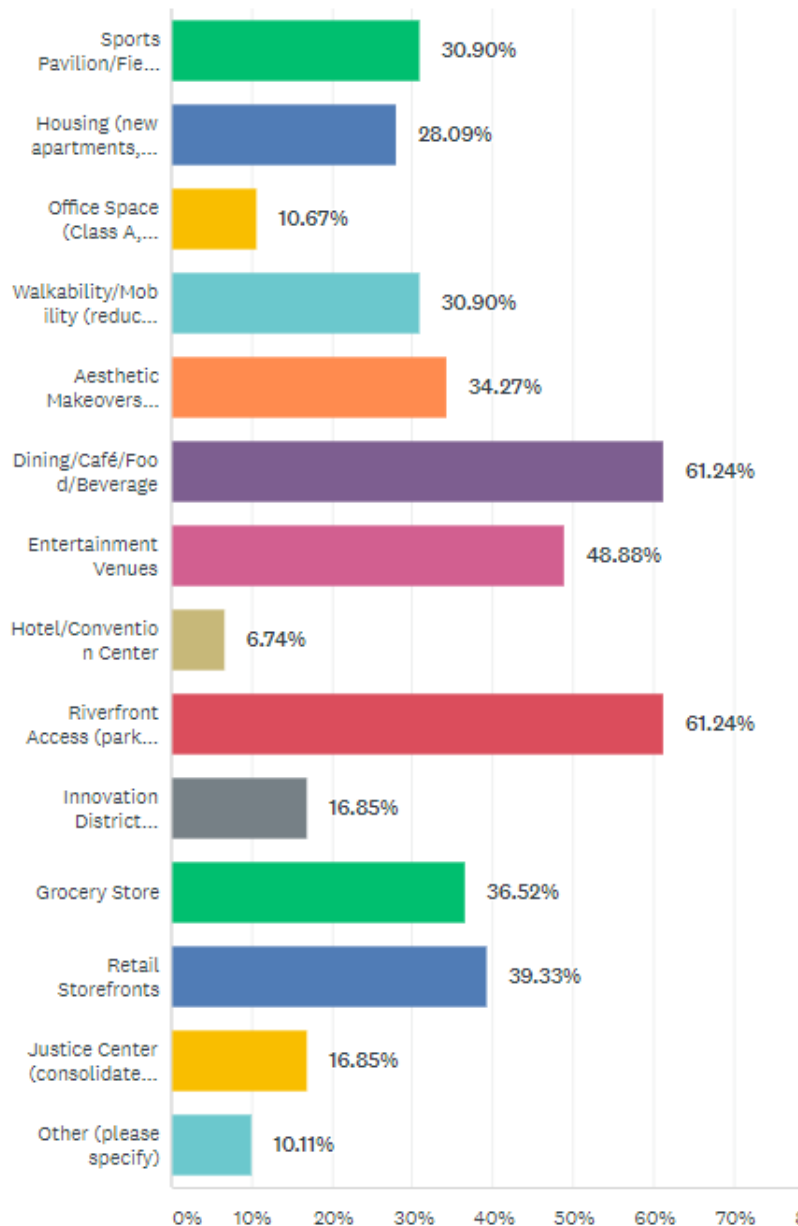
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Every day	31.46% 56
▼ A few times a week	17.42% 31
▼ About once a week	9.55% 17
▼ A few times a month	16.85% 30
▼ Once a month	5.62% 10
▼ Less than once a month	19.10% 34
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>178</b>



### Question 3:

What new developments or ideas are your highest priorities for Downtown over the next 10 years? (Pick up to 5)

Answered: 178 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Sports Pavilion/Fieldhouse (indoor courts, ice, turf, tournaments)	30.90% 55
▼ Housing (new apartments, lofts, townhomes)	28.09% 50
▼ Office Space (Class A, new/rehabbed)	10.67% 19
▼ Walkability/Mobility (reduce vehicle lanes, safer pedestrian crossings, bike lanes, etc.)	30.90% 55
▼ Aesthetic Makeovers (streetscapes, building facades, pocket parks, trees, art, murals, alleys, etc.)	34.27% 61
▼ Dining/Café/Food/Beverage	61.24% 109
▼ Entertainment Venues	48.88% 87
▼ Hotel/Convention Center	6.74% 12
▼ Riverfront Access (parks, trails, kayaks, etc.)	61.24% 109
▼ Innovation District ("campus" for start-up/growth industries)	16.85% 30
▼ Grocery Store	36.52% 65
▼ Retail Storefronts	39.33% 70
▼ Justice Center (consolidated law enforcement and courthouse building)	16.85% 30
▼ Other (please specify)	<a href="#">Responses</a> 10.11% 18
<b>Total Respondents: 178</b>	

### Question 3: What new developments or ideas are your highest priorities for Downtown over the next 10 years? (Pick up to 5) - Other Responses

Limited homelessness in downtown area. It is unsightly and displeasing.

Soccer stadium / complex

Starbucks, Target, Home Depot,

For new and existing structures and fixtures to be run from clean energy. There is NO climate change plan whatsoever that I've seen.

Please stop all downtown development, this failure gobbles tax dollars for no reason, fix our STREETS, downtown is a rotting corpse.

Expansion of the commercial (non retail) entity that downtown already is. why continue to fight what it is?

Please give me my tiny T-Town Target, a grocery store/market, wine, meats, chees \*& veggies deli & beer brats & regular hotdogs bar and I'd be very happy.

I-70 exit directly onto Kansas and Topeka BLVD. Duh

Expanded outdoor markets

Community garden

Free Parking

Have law enforcement stop harassing those who live down town

SOMETHING for the YOUTH of Topeka

Safer access on and off of I-70

Update to the visual appearance of the fire station along I 70. Looks pretty dated.

Stop wasting my taxes. People would invest downtown if it were a worthwhile investment.

I think this is a waste of our tax money and we have other problems that require attention.

Improve/clean-up neighborhoods around downtown.

## Question 4:

Tell us what you think! Are there things you feel were overlooked? Or are you happy with the content within the plan?

Answered: 105 Skipped: 73

Date	Comment
Feb 22 2021	I prefer wider streets to keep traffic moving
Feb 22 2021	Quit wasting tax dollars
Feb 22 2021	More Restaurants
Feb 21 2021	Happy with your plan
Feb 18 2021	Curious about how this will be funded, and what will be done to improve the neighborhoods around downtown to increase visitors "feeling" of safety to explore downtown
Feb 18 2021	No. We have a rampant crime problem in Topeka that we ignore and a stagnant growth problem we have yet to address. I am not really sure what kind of government system we have here either. We have more bureaucracy here than we have sense. As good as these plans look, I have no faith in the part time professionals we have leading our community. Government leadership has mismanaged it's employees for decades. I am not sure I trust them to handle something of this scope. If we did the little things correctly, then perhaps I would have more faith. But as it stands, this will end poorly and only the people will suffer because of their inept decisions.
Feb 18 2021	This is all great in theory. The fact is everything has gone west to Wanamaker. The city has supported this. If you want downtown to work, get the state office buildings to pay taxes and, clean up the residence around downtown so you don't see the homeless or gang banger type, and get more shops and restaurants downtown.
Feb 17 2021	Overall, I think the plan is good. Main concern about the sports complex is the long term viability. If the intent is to attract a team to anchor the venue, there are major limitations. MLB have the most stable development system and they have even drastically reduced the teams they are supporting. I like hockey but the crowds for the Pilots were not all that great and I doubt it was a big money draw. I am a sports fan but I am not sure a sports complex downtown will be all that much help economically for a long-term. Too many around here are just as content to drive to KC area and the KC area (Lawrence included) won't migrate this direction. We could draw from the west to Junction City but that is about it.
Feb 17 2021	Would like a LEC. Desperately needed.
Feb 17 2021	Again, stop wasting my taxes. This type of nonsense has me looking for property outside of the city limits.
Feb 17 2021	Looks good to me! Excited for the changes!
Feb 17 2021	Seems to be lacking in safety concerns and parking issues. Great you get people there, but where are you going to park them? Garages eat up store space.

Date	Comment
Feb 17 2021	Happy
Feb 17 2021	I think this is a great plan, but think the corridor between Capitol and Train Station is unrealistic.
Feb 17 2021	What are you going to do to increase safety in downtown topeka, especially after dark? People won't hang out there if they don't feel safe. But a very nice design. I would certainly hang out there more if it was easier to get around. We have a very sprawled downtown and making it easier to get around via car, bike, walking is a great idea.
Feb 17 2021	special needs access
Feb 17 2021	Large employers so there are lots of people to shop and eat downtown
Feb 16 2021	Public transit seems to be overlooked. It's very possible that light rail would be huge attractive and beneficial to Topeka. Topeka already has a cute aesthetic, but it needs to be more intentional and leaned into more. In the status quo, the aesthetic seems more happenstance than intentional. This should also include cleaning up ditches, sidewalks, etc. Proud of y'allâ€”you're doing great! Keep it up, and we'll get there.
Feb 15 2021	Well laid out with visions for Downtown all can see. Hope we can do some of these things.
Feb 15 2021	The plan looks great.
Feb 13 2021	No, this money is better spent fixing the laughable excuses we call streets. Helping reuse some of the abandoned homes and businesses all over town.
Feb 11 2021	Minor league Baseball Park
Feb 11 2021	easier way to get between downtown and noto. the kansas Ave Bridge is pretty long. a short rail system or something? I dunno.
Feb 11 2021	We moved to Topeka a year ago and downtown does not have a good feel or look. I appreciate the initiative to improve the atmosphere and environment. Thanks
Feb 11 2021	When you have renters that can afford to live there with nice housing options, your businesses will thrive. Topeka is a great place waiting to blossom. Repaint the Wren. It is way too faded.
Feb 10 2021	So much to digest. Would be nice to see a video presentation. Otherwise, I like the idea of retaining as much as possible of original buildings.
Feb 10 2021	doesn't matter what you do because I can't get there from my crappy maintained neighborhood roads
Feb 10 2021	Its a lot to believe
Feb 10 2021	Not sure we need another convention space
Feb 10 2021	People who dont live in downtown pushing those who live downtown around
Feb 10 2021	Minority involvement in creating the plan.

Date	Comment
Feb 09 2021	I think more of an emphasis on how we can fix what is still broken in the city, the wealth divide, women's health services, housing the poor and low income. We have dynamic opportunities to change and embrace more social programs that will benefit the city over bringing in more Corporations that only want to see a profit off the labor of the people.
Feb 09 2021	Yes, but make sure that there is plenty of security gaurds
Feb 09 2021	There is a lot of run down housing in those areas that needs to be improved and we should not displace or move out the people that already live in the area.
Feb 09 2021	I have worked on Kansas Ave for about 21 years. There used to be many options for lunch or breakfast. All these empty buildings it's depressing. In looking at the plans. I see a lot of potential in the Tower development. So much unused space. The Kansas Ave draft is as well. I like the Van Buren draft. I'd think once these are developed you'd start on the other drafts. But I see Kansas Ave buildings full rather business, dining or retail is most important. Then Tower project. Finally Van Buren.
Feb 09 2021	concerned over the homeless situation. I don't visit some of these areas now also because they feel unsafe.
Feb 09 2021	it looks great! I'd like to see more retail stores though
Feb 09 2021	No fix the roads around Topeka.
Feb 08 2021	Happy with the plan
Feb 08 2021	None of the links (including those posted on WIBW) allow access to the plan currently from iPhone. I look forward to viewing them once that issue is resolved.
Feb 08 2021	Your questionnaire is skewed if you are providing scenarios or outcomes instead of asking what we think or want without pre programmed answers.
Feb 08 2021	I think it takes into consideration a lot of good things
Feb 08 2021	I think its a big waste of money!!
Feb 08 2021	Need a sports fieldhouse or pavillion
Feb 08 2021	You have to allow an I-70 entrance and exit directly from Kansas Blvd.
Feb 08 2021	Happy
Feb 08 2021	Plan seems to have a very aggressive agenda and timeline.
Feb 08 2021	I think the pre-COVID growth and progress downtown has been good, and I look forward to it continuing. Working to rehab existing properties, such as removing mid-century facades on century-old buildings would be great! In addition, having some sort of walkable, river access would be incredible.

Date	Comment
Feb 05 2021	I realize retail can mean lots of things, but I really believe we've missed the boat by sort of selling ourselves on the viability of downtown retail. Let's bring back shopping on my lunch breaks and Saturdays especially around various holidays and holiday seasons within our downtown environments - wishing us all good things with this!
Feb 05 2021	I wish there was a way to develop a outdoor market place similar to legends in order create more jobs downtown and to encourage youth to visit the area and help make a more "lively" atmosphere.
Feb 05 2021	Very happy with the plan. Would recommend getting rid of some of the old run down houses
Feb 05 2021	I would just like to emphasize my interest in sporting facilities in downtown to Topeka. Many kids travel every weekend to KC, Lawrence, Wichita, Salina and Manhattan for tournaments. I believe the easiest low hanging fruit to attract people downtown is with youth sports facilities. It also fills a need for the people of Topeka where it can be hard to find facilities for kids to practice and play as much as they would like.
Feb 05 2021	The idea of "ice" downtown is ridiculous. Not only is it expensive to maintain, but it creates scheduling problems. If it can't be privately built, then it shouldn't be built.
Feb 05 2021	It would be nice if we could go downtown and just feel like we could spend time leisurely instead of going downtown for specific reasons. The only places, for the most part, that are downtown are very specific. Theres next to NO shopping, not enough restaurants, no nightlife at all. This city is SO INCREDIBLY BORING!!!!
Feb 05 2021	Get rid of the good ole boys network when it comes time to pass these projects out
Feb 05 2021	A sports complex would be a waste of money. They tend to cost more than they bring in. Also not sure sure what good more hotel rooms does for downtown. There are several hotels in the area with plenty of empty rooms. If downtown could attract more people to live there, and have access to grocery and other shops, the rest could be built later. Focus on filling the empty properties already there.
Feb 05 2021	You have overlooked East Topeka, Oakland, Central Topeka, and South Topeka. Why do we continue to pump money into this? We have already spent money on downtown to improve it. We were told that if we did, businesses would come. They have not (or if they do, they close up a 18 months later). It is time to put downtown on hold...10 to 15 years while we spend money on the other parts of town that need it. Where is the plan for the renovation of the Eastboro shopping center or the old center at 29th & California? White Lakes area? Further, there is no need to move the law enforcement center other than individuals are greedy for the land it is at. Unless you are afraid to have the police on the main road of downtown, they have a building with more than enough space, that would not cost anything to continue in and if need be, has the space for expansion. To move it is a waste. Downtown had its time...let us fix the rest of the city and then come back to downtown.

Date	Comment
Feb 04 2021	Racist plans shouldn't be paid for with tax dollars, make sure the citizens don't pay for that debacle. We do have more than one race here. The plan is overwrought and too expensive.
Feb 04 2021	You really need a night life atmosphere for the younger crowd too! If where going to university here there needs to be a place for the young adults to have entertainment too.
Feb 04 2021	Happy with the plan
Feb 04 2021	Extravagant
Feb 04 2021	To work with Topeka Metro and become worker friendly and figure out how to get less homeless people to ride around taking up seats. But a over all great plan lived here my whole life 49 yrs and this town has not be aggressive enough to make changes to keep citizens happy. I tell my teenager everyday to go to college in another state and move somewhere he has a opportunity to grow and have fun with a family.
Feb 04 2021	After spending 45 million on the already usable convention space in the Expocentre as well as TPAC and hotel ballrooms, are we really going to add another option in a market that struggles as it is to bring new conferences or events to Topeka? Seems like taxpayers competing against themselves should there be an added taxpayer subsidized mass gathering venue space in an area we already have that option. I'd like to see the old TPD building be used as more retail/small business space with low rents to create community growth. Like a strip mall
Feb 04 2021	Noto would receive far more traffic and, therefore, financial investment, if north kansas ave was connected to south kansas ave via the kansas bridge.
Feb 04 2021	There is so much more that you could do. Clean energy sources have to play a role in this, or it is outdated before you begin. Downtown would especially be impacted by putting in solar roads. They allow you to add parking space for certain events, move parking spaces at will, turn streets into one way venues when needed.. the possibilities are endless. Why we aren't seeing this type of technology is beyond me.
Feb 01 2021	Really disappointed that it was necessary that citizens of color had to remind those that worked on putting this together that diversity, in all areas, is best for the growth of Topeka. Did we not learn anything from 2020?
Jan 30 2021	Feeling safe downtown is a huge issue. No one wants to walk around an area full of vacant and run down buildings.
Jan 29 2021	I lived a few streets over for years. As a single woman I would not walk alone. And parking isn't very good. For being by the TPD it's a pretty rough area. Creating things that locals must have money for wouldn't include anyone living close by.
Jan 29 2021	I think it is important that buildings in downtown be rehabbed rather than new buildings put up.
Jan 29 2021	Second story restaurant outdoor eating area/"boardwalk" along south riverbank with access to levee trail
Jan 29 2021	Modern Downtown Riverfront Casino and Convention Center that is held responsible to buildout several of the other civic items like riverfront parks, bridges, sidewalks, etc. etc. etc.
Jan 29 2021	I think expanding improvements made to Kansas Avenue to more of DT is great idea.

Date	Comment
Jan 29 2021	Historic features should be highlighted more, much has been demolished for the sake of progress, the City is overlooking why it is a historic district and was created as one way too much.
Jan 29 2021	I was just telling my husband on MKL Day as we traveled throughout the city showing our young boys that it's sad DTI doesn't look beyond the radius of 4th-10th and blvd - KS. There are entire neighborhood surrounding the potential of downtown that are trash. The city needs to look at the area as a whole and invest. Bring the people community and buildings to life together
Jan 28 2021	Update materials to be representative of the diversity of Topeka
Jan 28 2021	Embrace our diversity as an asset and strength. Where is the true representation of our community in the stock photos selected. Will the housing options be sufficient?
Jan 27 2021	The community should drive downtown development, not business adventures.
Jan 27 2021	This plan is very inspiring to look at and see what Topeka can be. I think prioritizing unused buildings like the Docking building and turning the existing building into a multi use place for retail, office, and restaurant would be fabulous. Would be so cool to have rooftop dining. A city's best marketing is the condition of its historic buildings. More outdoor spaces for dining, utilize alley space for breweries and movie nights. Less parking lots, implore people to walk, bike. Love the highlighting the crosswalks with a band of color or simple design. 2 bike lanes, a walkway and a car lane on the Kansas Ave. bridge is great! Keep that continuously throughout downtown, by adapting it as you have on the visual. An indoor venue for concerts would be great, thinking of Lawrence bars that host smaller shows, but draw a crowd. I also was thinking about where are the opportunities for collaboration in other parts of the plan outside the justice center. Partnering with WU in creating opportunities for students in Downtown is key. Collaborate with YWCA CSE on how to design a safe and inclusive space for victims in the justice center- consider a victim's needs priority. Beautification grants for those homes directly next to downtown to help keep established neighbors in their homes. To look at not just housing, but transitional housing like Cornerstone.
Jan 27 2021	The zones are a great idea. It makes sense from a consumer perspective as well as a planning perspective. It was helpful to see both long and short term goals, as well as how the areas all fit together. There was a lot of thought put into not just building but foot and traffic ways.
Jan 27 2021	Happy with content
Jan 27 2021	Parking Lots and Garages (paid or free) are not the best land-use for any downtown. I am pleased to see that Value Per Acre is being considered. Hopefully this is considered more when others comment saying we need more parking for private vehicles---not true, and not of value.
Jan 27 2021	Minority representation. It's very white looking.
Jan 27 2021	Are the plans inclusive to all demographics, or do they cater to young white professionals specifically?
Jan 27 2021	This plan is racist. It's clear, even in the choice of graphics, that people of color are not going to be welcome in this space. We are better than this.



Date	Comment
Jan 26 2021	Like the River South concept and the pedestrian link between downtown and NOTO.
Jan 26 2021	Re-building the infrastructure to support this plan will carry a high cost. Overall, I like the plan, I wish Topeka had more to offer downtown right now.
Jan 26 2021	Please continue supporting local businesses already in downtown.
Jan 26 2021	Think that the plan looks good--can't think of anything to add
Jan 26 2021	Please focus on livability and small-scale business development.
Jan 26 2021	Looks good
Jan 25 2021	Not sure
Jan 25 2021	There is no reason to go downtown except for one or two restaurants, otherwise there are no quality stores to go to.
Jan 25 2021	OK
Jan 25 2021	safe transportation for all socio-economic levels into downtown, not IN downtown
Jan 25 2021	Liked it. Put alot of thought into it. Would definitely support it.
Jan 25 2021	I am happy with the content, I do hope the law enforcement center and courthouse finally see some changes.
Jan 25 2021	I like the overall layout of the plan. Please ensure we deal with vagrants in the area. It lowers the visual appearance and having panhandlers is a turn off for an area.
Jan 25 2021	The Topeka Municipal Court needs a new building, I don't know why it seems everyone else gets upgrades and they get nothing.
Jan 25 2021	The Topeka Municipal Court needs to be updated. There are so many leaks in our ceilings, and not enough room.
Jan 25 2021	Downtown doesnt need expensive apartments, and those prices are expensive. The small municipal courthouse needs a makeover. It is old and needs a new elevator and courtroom. That office is small too, they need more people and space.
Jan 25 2021	I think the plan looks great. I think the focus should start on in-filling the many vacant lots dotted around downtown--especially in the Tower District and Kansas Ave. north of 6th. While I'm wary about a sports facility/convention center (we have the Expocentre), if the city works to get a permanent sports team, maybe it would succeed--arena football, hockey, or basketball.
Jan 25 2021	The Municpal Court is in need of a new building badly. It has been sadly overlooked and neglected. I will not be happy unless the court is given a new building that is up to date and functional for the people that work there. The court brings in a sizeable amount of the City's revenue and should not be left out of the renovation and revitalization of downtown Topeka.
Jan 25 2021	I 100% Support the Justice Center, this has been long awaited!
Jan 25 2021	A consolidated Parking Garage for State Uses