

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. 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
Conversions (1-way to 2-way)	Jackson St. (10th Ave to 6th Ave)	Main Street	•	•		•
Lane Reallocation (Removal of Travel Lanes)	Quincy St. (10th Ave to 6th Ave) - Street treatment to create pedestrian friendly environment. See Below.	Main Street	•	•	•	•
No Change	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

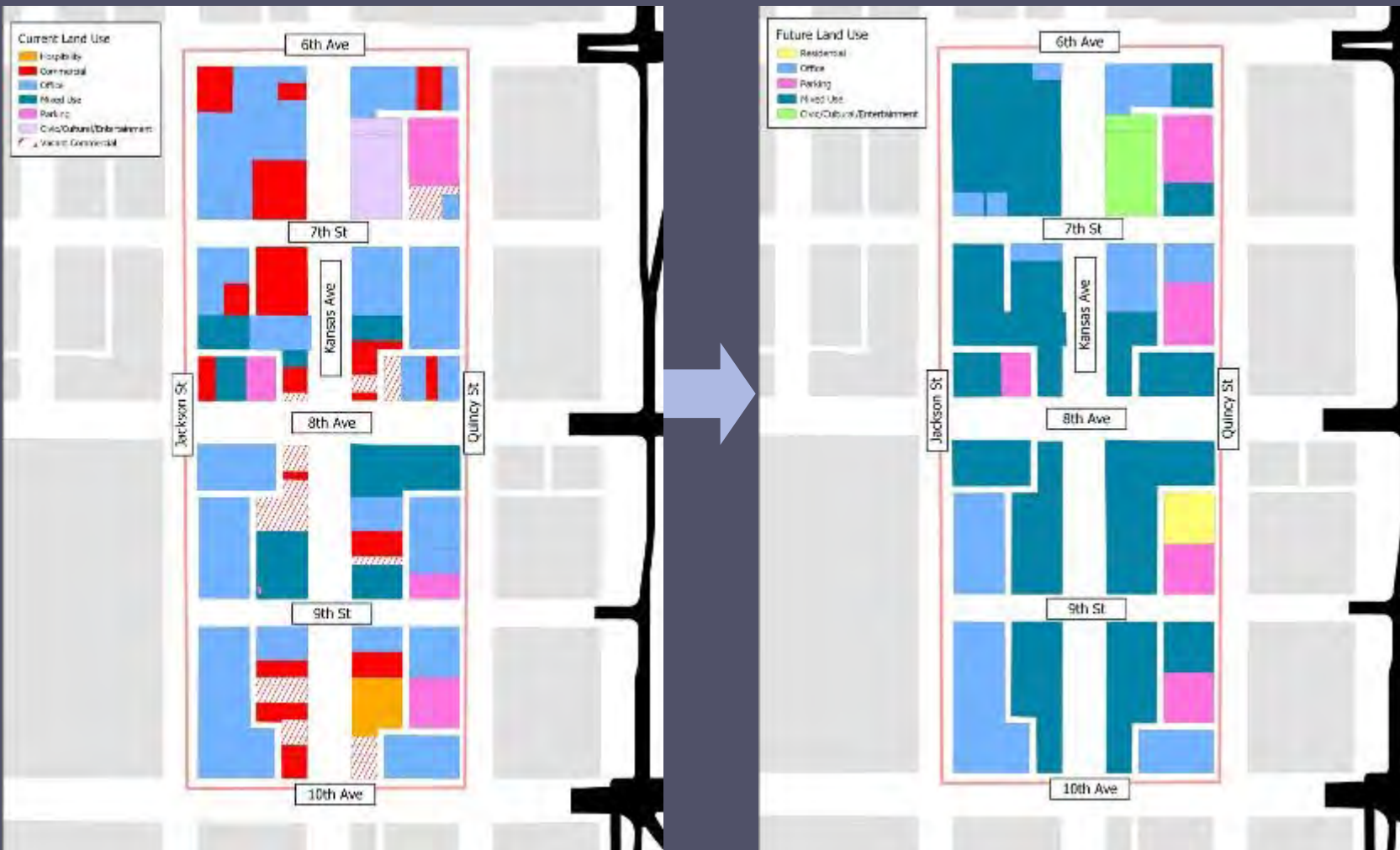


- 1 Travel Lanes Reduced to 3 lanes from 5
- 2 Sharrows/dedicated bike lanes
- 3 Angled Parking
- 4 Increased sidewalk widths for increased pedestrian use
- 5 Mixed Use Developments increase pedestrian amenities
- 6 Pedestrian medians, bump outs, and mid-block crossings

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.

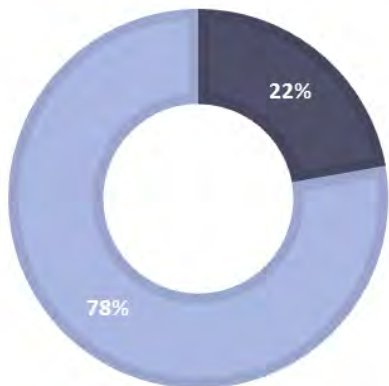


Example of a hotel that was converted to mixed use commercial and housing. The D-1 zoning district encourages this type of development.

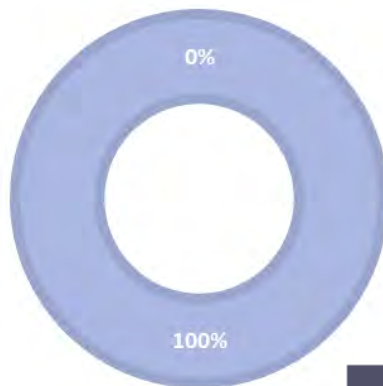
Implementation

	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.	

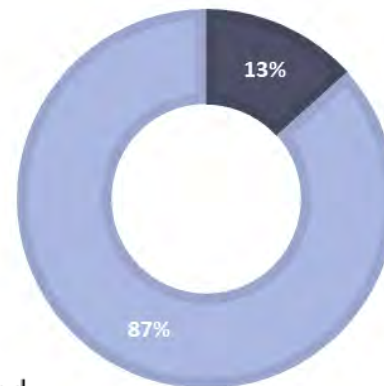
HOUSING



HOTEL ROOMS



OFFICE



EXISTING RETAIL

