



RIVER TO RAIL

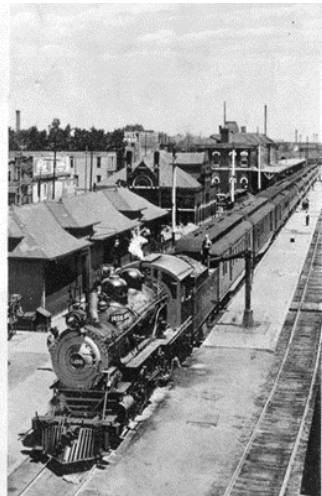
DISTRICT

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

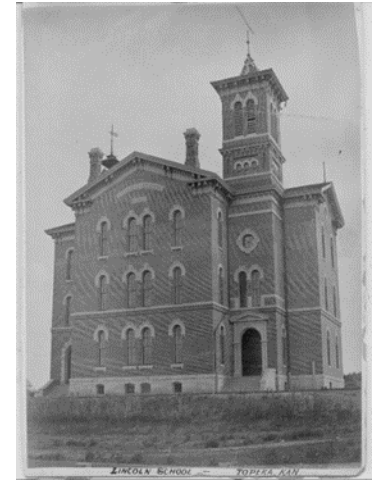


AT&SF Railroad Depot in background SE 5th & Holliday Streets, circa 1910

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.

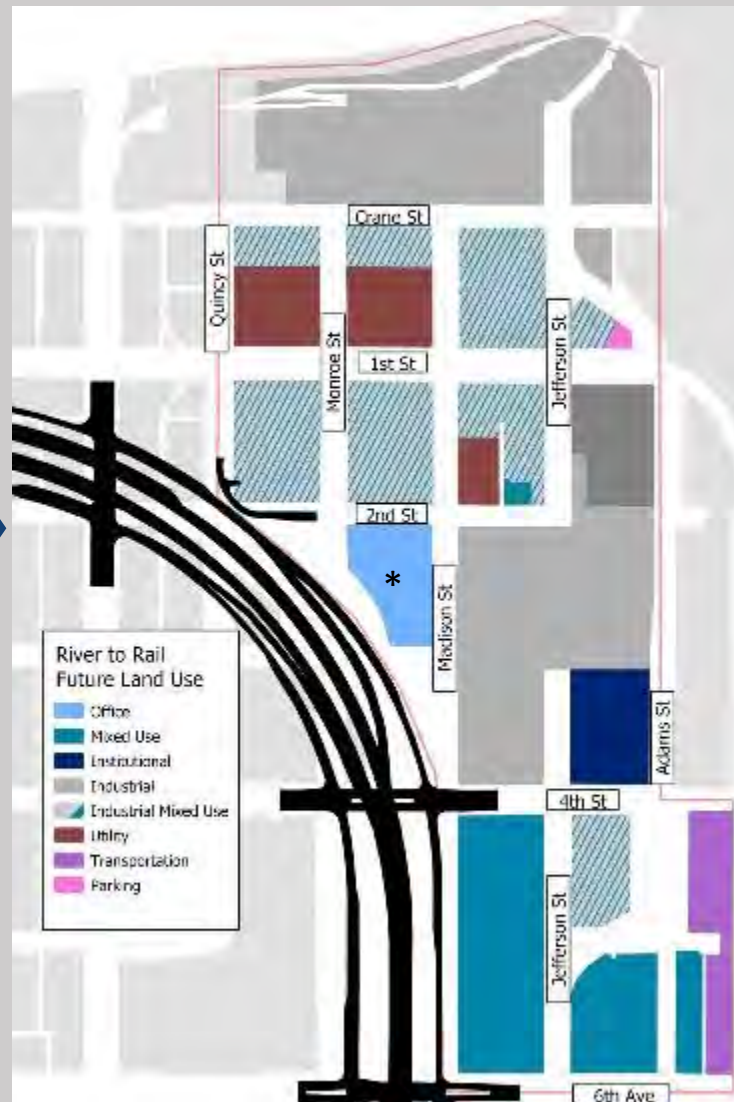
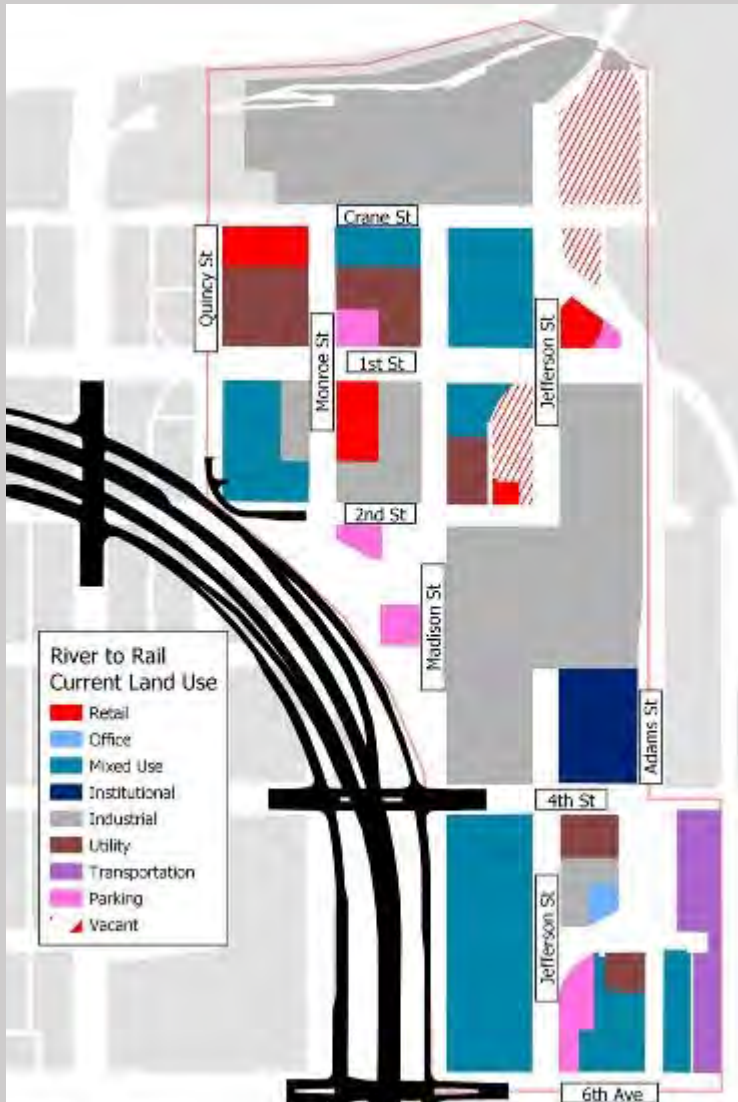
Westbound Exits	Westbound Entrances	Eastbound Exits	Eastbound Entrances
10th Street	8th Avenue	Topeka Boulevard	Kansas Avenue
Kansas Avenue	Topeka Boulevard	8th Avenue	10th Avenue



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.

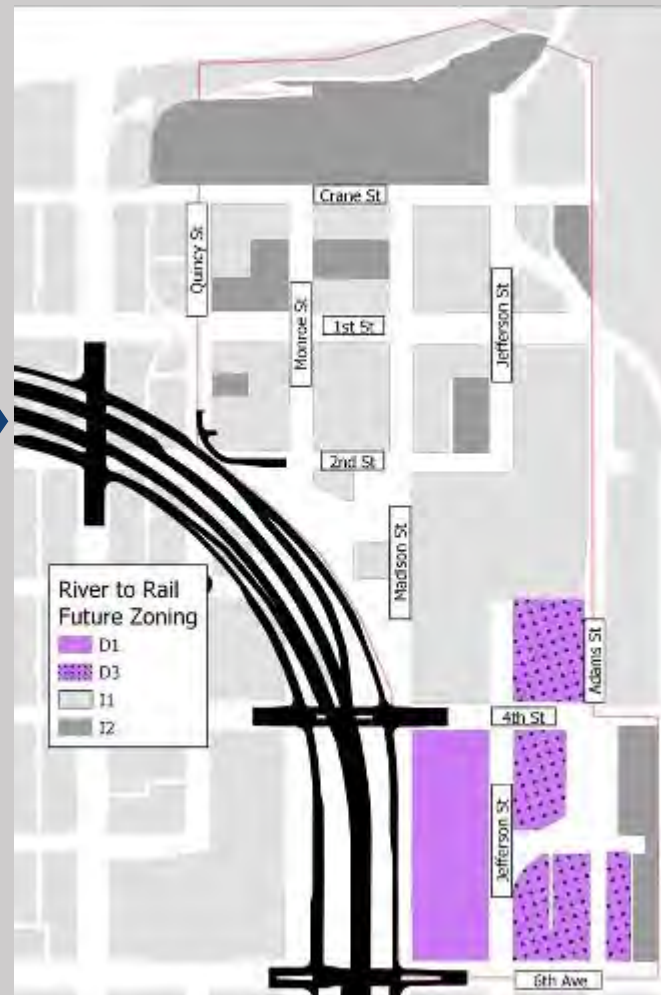
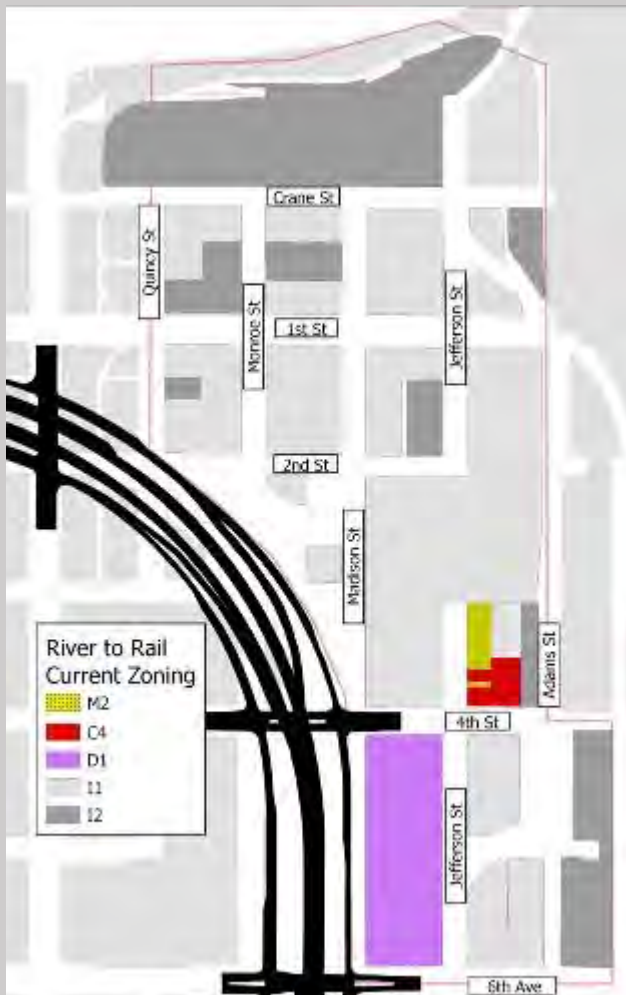
Existing Character

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.

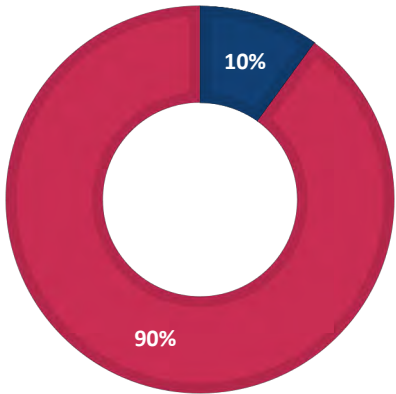
D-3 Zoning - Intended to reestablish the linkage between downtown and the Kansas River. The district includes industrial, commercial and office uses as primary uses and housing as a secondary use. Land use in this zoning district should emphasize the relationship between downtown, the river, and rail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



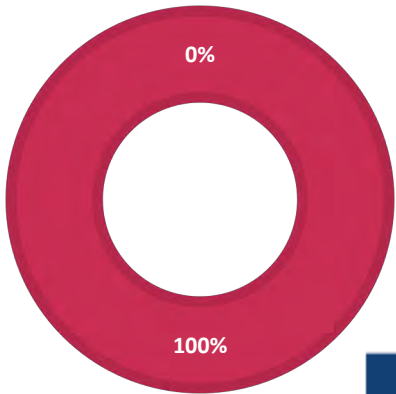
Implementation Summary

	Recommendations	Other Considerations
Land Use	Increase quantity of retail uses and housing units.	
Zoning	Rezone a portion of the district to D-1, D-3. Retain some I-1 and I-2 zoning.	See map in Existing Character
Housing	Potential to add 90 units of new housing , mainly through hotel room conversions.	
Office	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.
Retail	Retail component would be part of new mixed use developments, with no new commercial developments projected.	
Hotel	No new hotel rooms added; some conversions to other uses.	Forecasts a decline in rooms which can be made up in other districts.
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.	

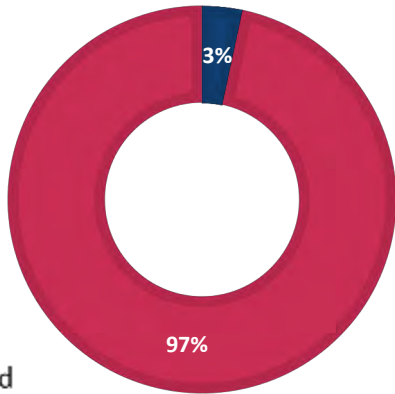
HOUSING



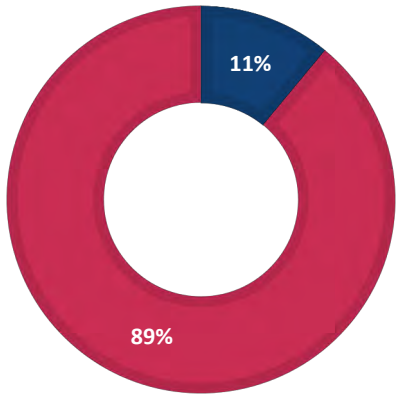
HOTEL ROOMS



OFFICE



EXISTING RETAIL



■ Added
■ Needed