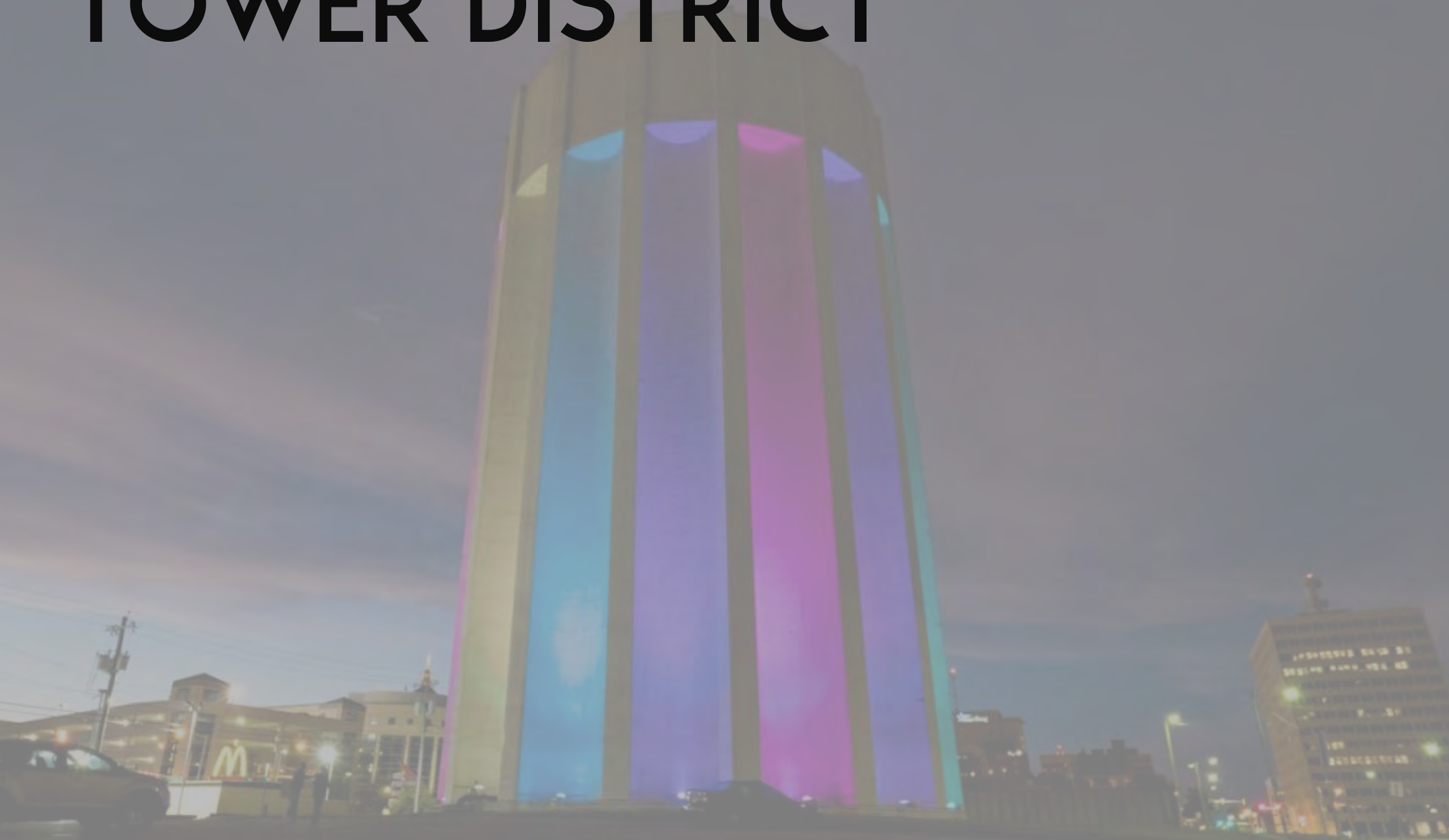


# TOWER DISTRICT



# History

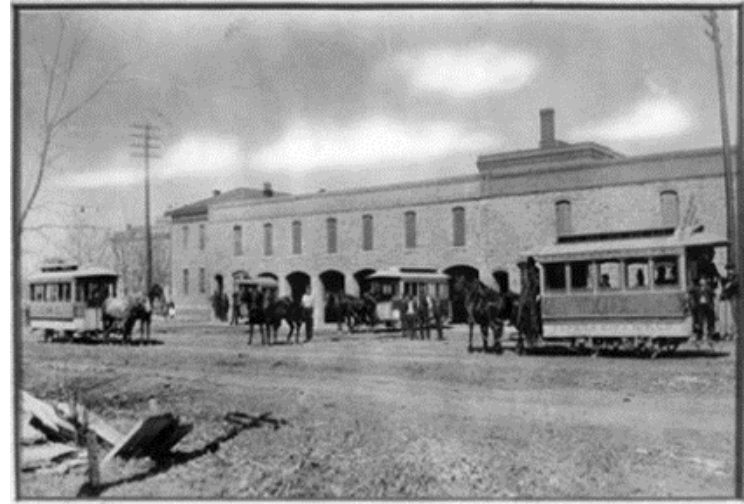
Despite current appearances, Downtown Topeka's Tower District has had a varied and important role in the growth and development of Topeka. The first notable activity within the Tower District occurred almost immediately after the City's founding when in 1855 a small tract of land outside the boundaries 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

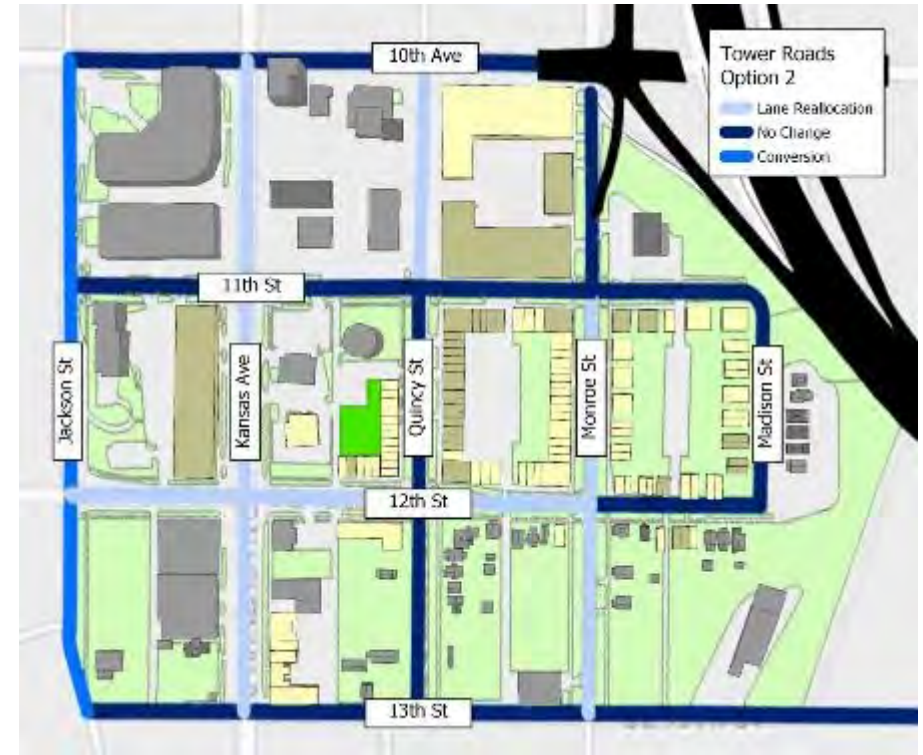
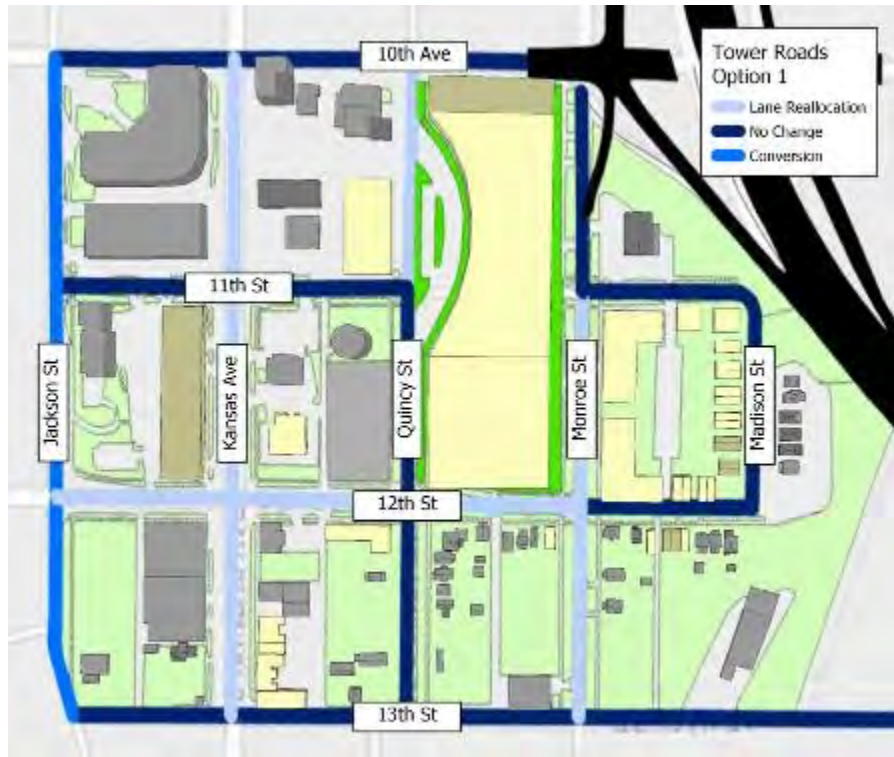


# Residential Village





# 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	•			•
	Kansas Ave	Main Street	•		•	•
Lane Reallocation (Removal of Travel Lanes)	Quincy St (10th to 11th)	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•	•	•
	12th St (Jackson to Monroe)	Main Street	•	•	•	•
	Monroe St	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•	•	•
	10th Ave	Mixed Use Boulevard	•	•	•	•
No Change	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

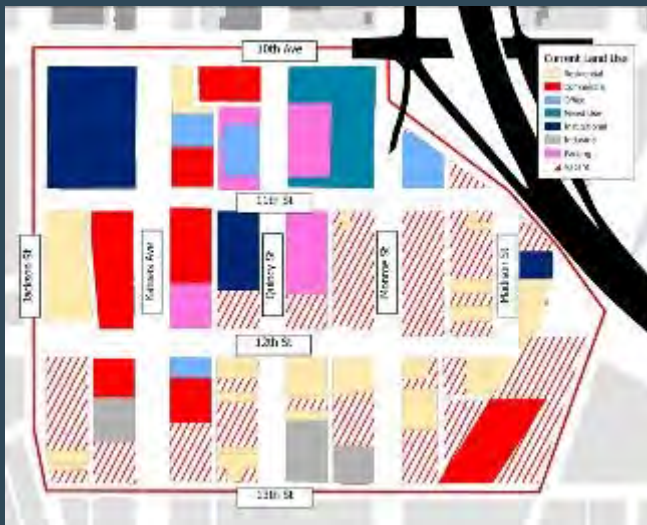
## Land Use

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.

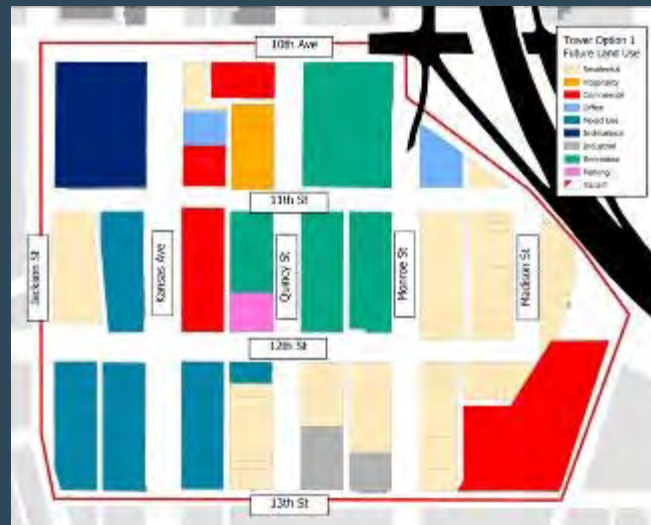
**Option 1 Sports Complex:** With the development of a Catalytic Sports Complex along Quincy Street, neighboring land uses will need to accommodate the large influx of people. New mixed use infill along Kansas Avenue would provide retail space and restaurants that appeal to families who are attending 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





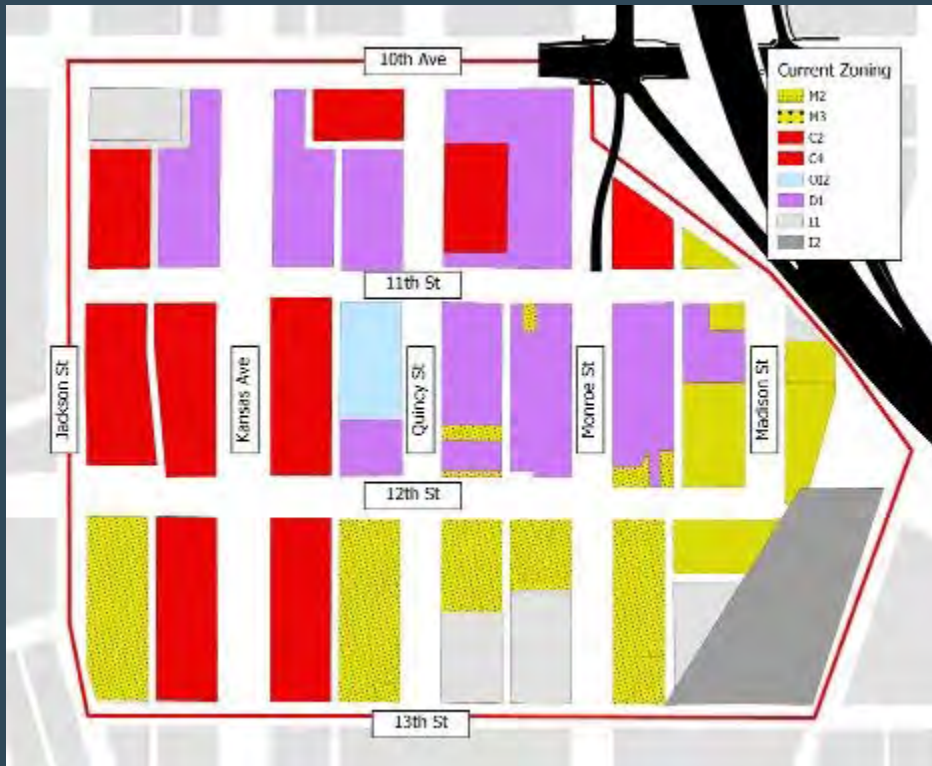
# Existing Character

## 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
Land Use	Provide catalytic sports destination use; and/or 10+ year housing village	All housing projected 10 plus years.
Zoning	Rezone district to D-1 and D-2	See map in Existing Character
Housing	No new housing units.	All housing projected 10 + years with development of urban village setting.
Office	Little new office space anticipated.	
Retail	New retail uses within mixed use new developments will accommodate additional traffic due to sports complex or additional housing.	
Hotel	New boutique hotels may follow development of sports complex.	Reliant on sports complex development.
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 for fieldhouse. 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.	

