



**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



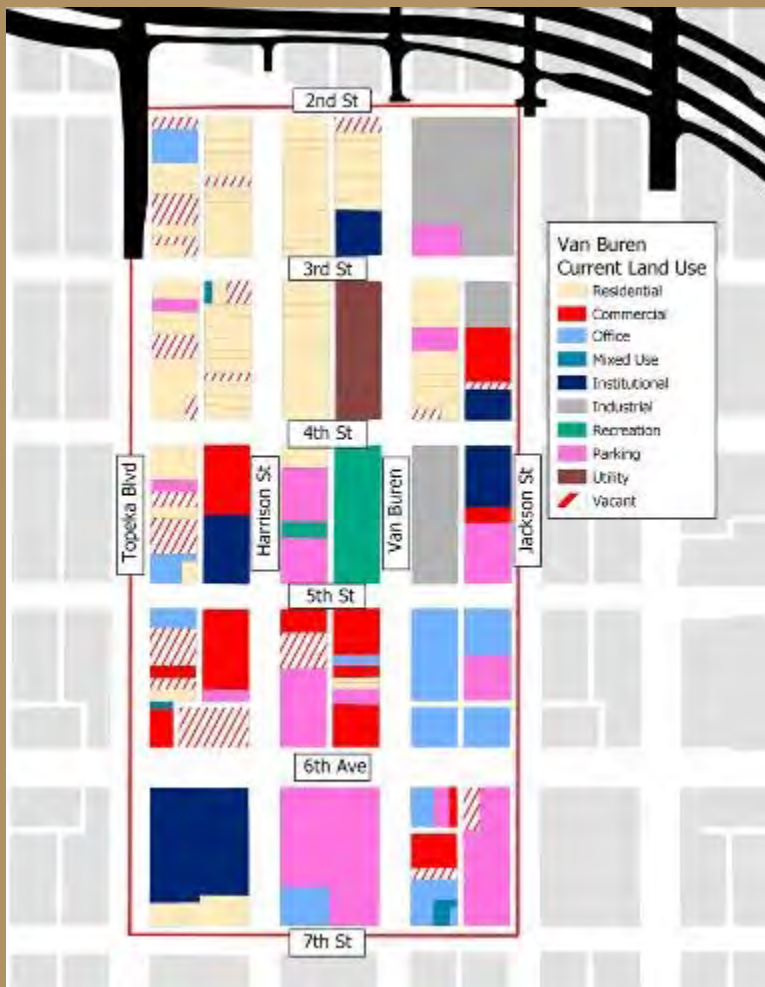
- 1 Travel Lanes converted to two-way traffic
- 2 Angled parking/parallel parking along both travel lanes
- 3 Generous sidewalk widths for increased pedestrian use and implementation of crosswalk bump-outs
- 4 Promote mixed use development to increase pedestrian amenities



# 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.

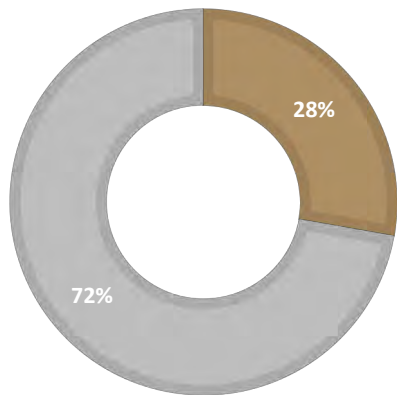




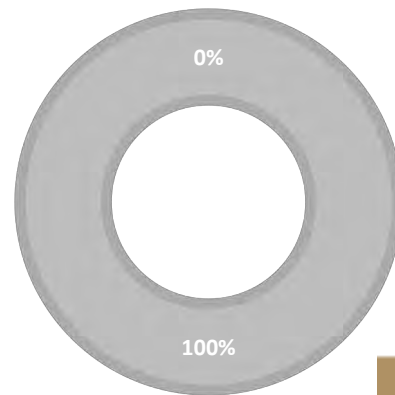
# Implementation Summary

	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.	

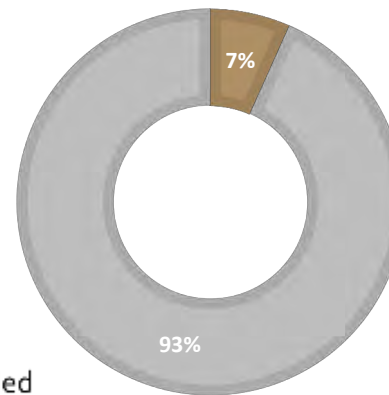
HOUSING



HOTEL ROOMS



OFFICE



RETAIL

