

Downtown Lawrence Plan



Adopted – August 10, 2021



City of Lawrence
Downtown Lawrence Plan

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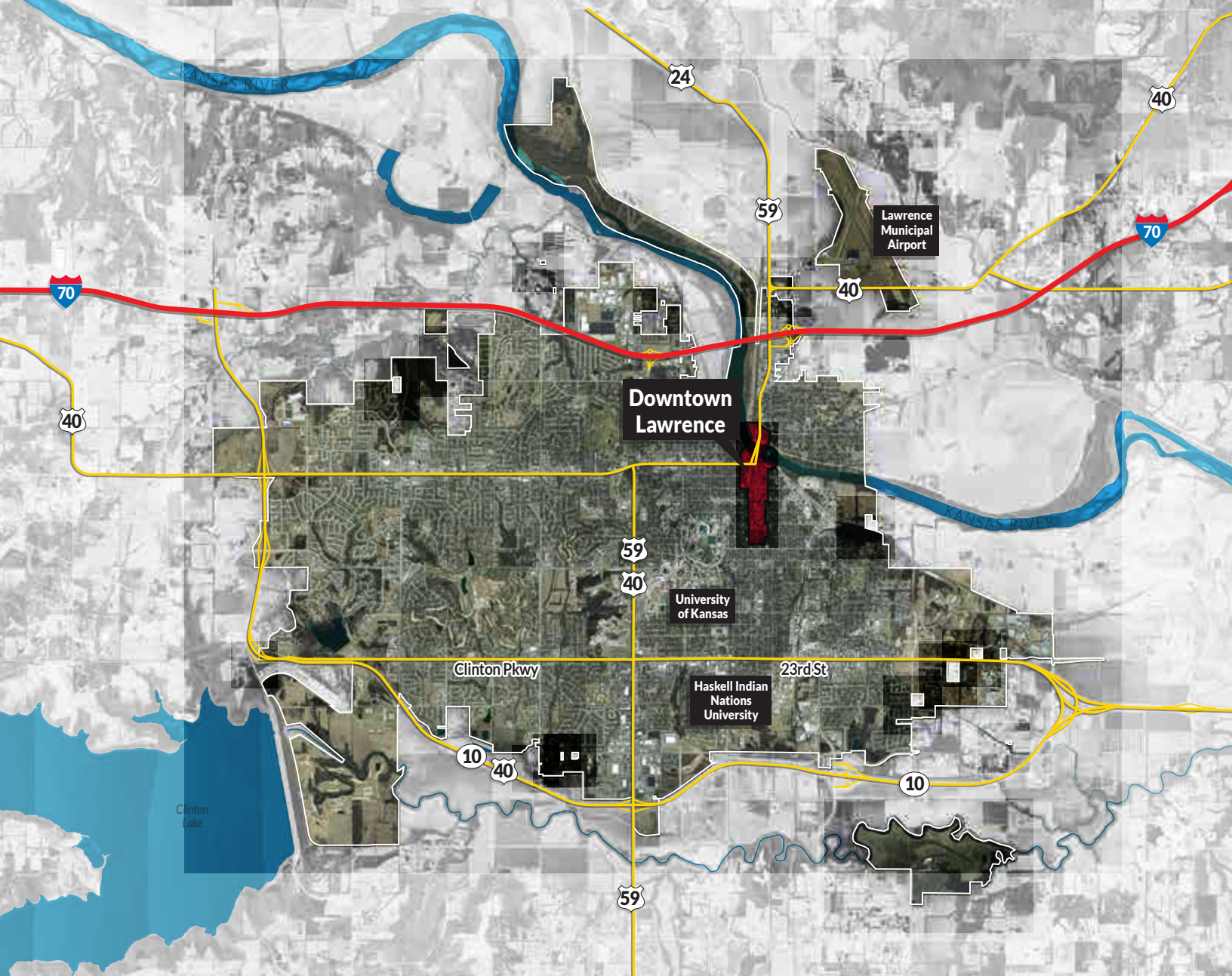


CHAPTER ONE

Introduction & Context

Since 1854, when the City of Lawrence was first platted, Downtown has served as the heart of the community. Downtown's rich history is etched into the façades of its storefronts yet continues to be a living, evolving entity, adapting to changing times and circumstances. The purpose of the Downtown Lawrence Plan is to guide growth and development. The Plan is meant to provide information and resources to elected and appointed officials, city staff, and the community for how to preserve the uniqueness of Downtown as the area grows and changes over time. Overall, the Plan establishes a vision for the future of Downtown and includes the recommendations and policies to make that vision a reality.

This section of the Plan presents how the community came together to create the vision. Feedback from residents, business owners, property owners, and all Lawrence stakeholders was combined with an analysis of the existing land use, development regulations, and market and demographic realities, to serve as the foundation for all recommendations and policies included in the Plan.



Regional Settings




The City of Lawrence is located in north-eastern Kansas, equidistant to Topeka and Kansas City. The community is situated along the Kansas River, a natural resource that spurred the development of Downtown Lawrence. Downtown is accessible by Interstate 70 and the Kansas State highway network.

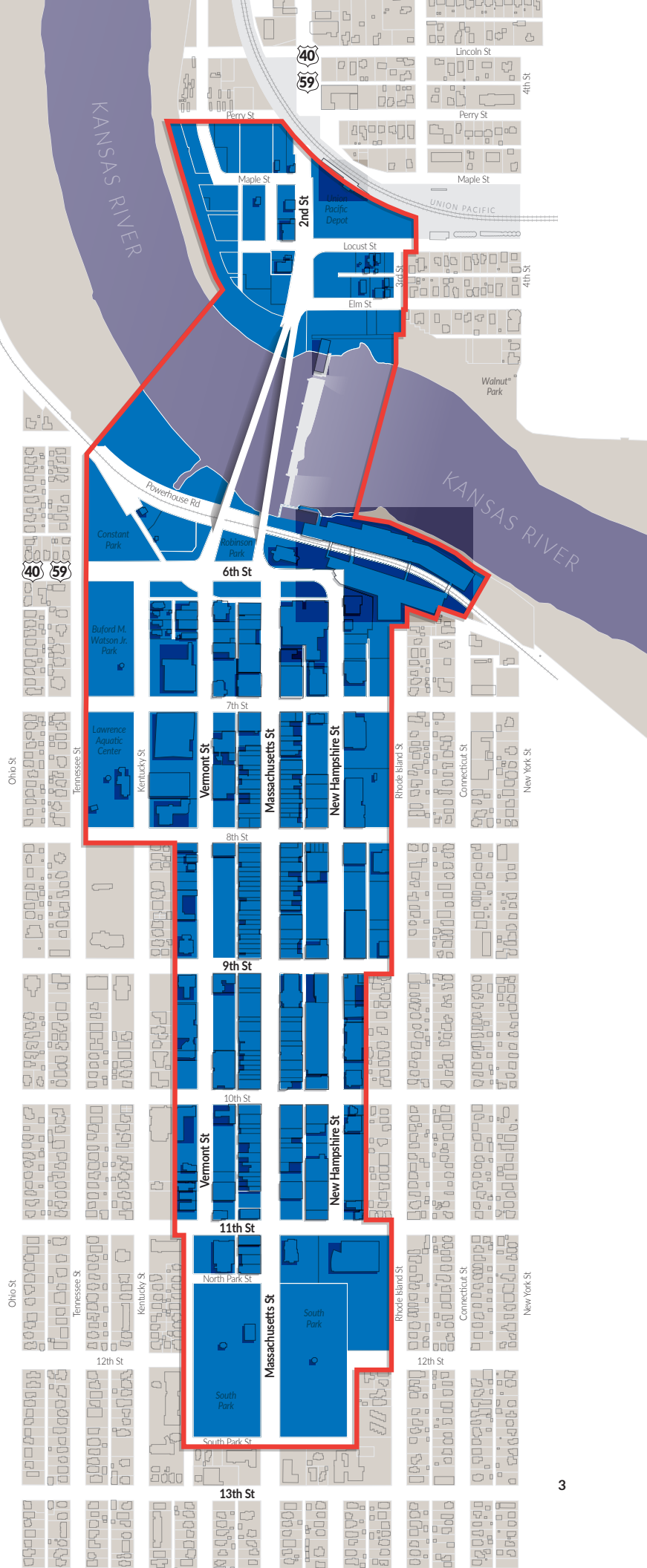
Downtown Planning Area

The boundaries of Downtown Lawrence are defined differently by nearly all residents, business owners, and stakeholders. The Planning Area captures the commercial core of the Downtown, along with the parks and open spaces that act as Downtown public gathering and event spaces.

Although the residential neighborhoods surrounding Downtown are not included in the planning area, their relationship with Downtown will be a prime consideration of the Master Plan.

Legend

-  Study Area
-  Parcels in the Planning Area
-  Surrounding Context





ROLE OF THE DOWNTOWN PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

The Downtown Plan Steering Committee (DPSC) was established to ensure that public participation was central to the planning process. The DPSC was comprised of residents, business owners, property managers, elected and appointed officials, and other stakeholders that represented a wide spectrum of perspectives, interests, and a unifying love of Downtown. The DPSC was activated at key steps throughout the process including project initiation, visioning, and draft plan review.

Community Engagement (In-Person Events)

The City of Lawrence is full of passionate residents, business owners, and other stakeholders who are invested in the future of Downtown. Their ideas, concerns, and vision for Downtown are central to the planning process and it is the City's goal to equitably and transparently engage all people. To that end, the City has hosted several in-person outreach events.

This section briefly summarizes the community outreach efforts completed during the planning process. For more detail, refer to the Appendix for more information about each outreach event.

Community Workshop

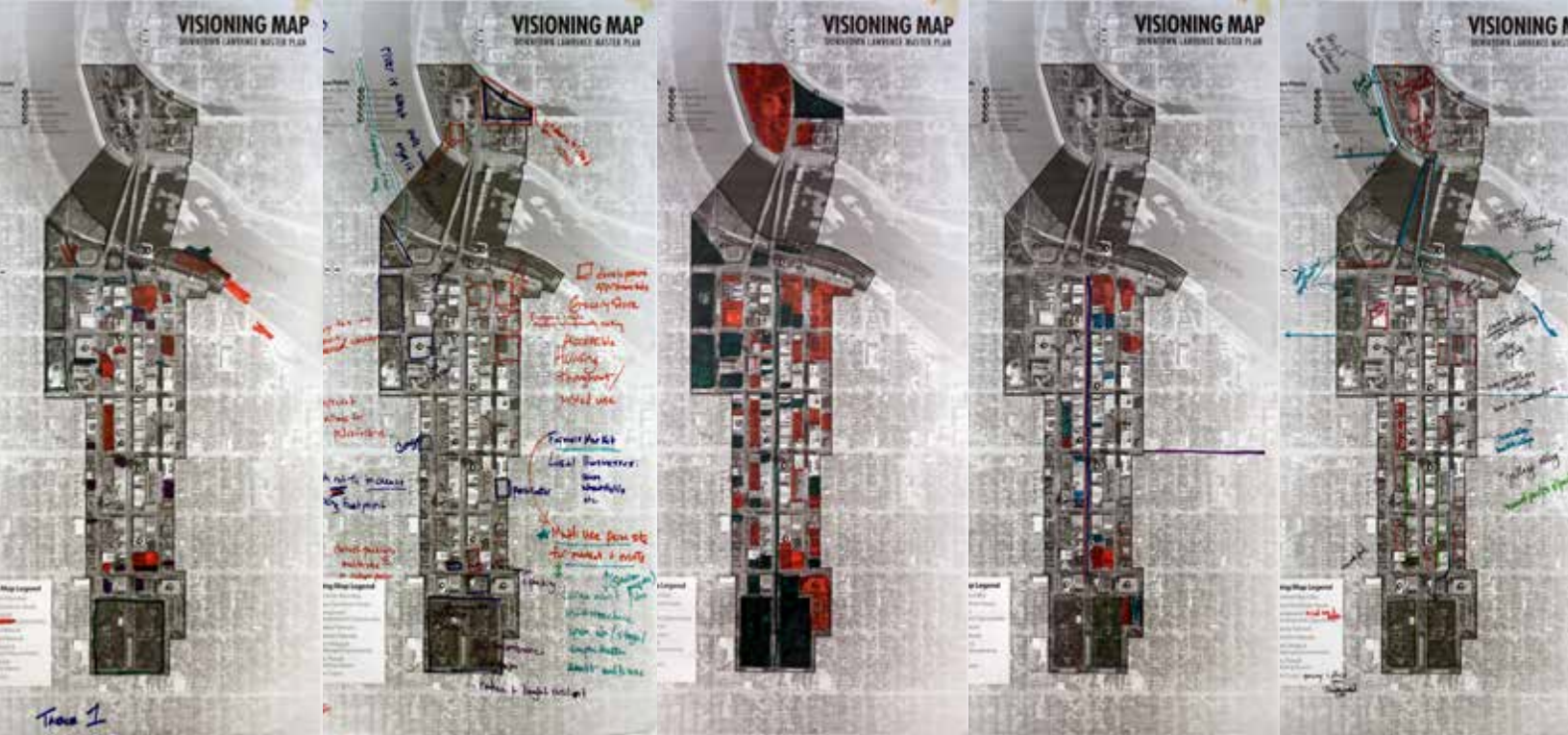
Approximately 100 people attended an evening workshop at the Carnegie Building on June 5, 2019. The workshop began with an overview of the purpose of the Downtown Lawrence Plan and the Community Workshop as well as the current stage of the planning process. The remainder of the workshop was dedicated to an exercise that spurred conversation surrounding the issues and concerns, projects and actions, and strengths and assets of the Downtown as identified by participants.

Business Workshop

Approximately 50 people attended a morning workshop at the Carnegie Building on June 6, 2019. The workshop began with an overview of the purpose of the Downtown Lawrence Plan and the Business Workshop as well as the current stage of the planning process. The remainder of the workshop was dedicated to an exercise that spurred conversation surrounding the issues and concerns, projects and actions, and strengths and assets of the Downtown business community as identified by participants.

Downtown & Adjacent Neighborhoods Workshop

Nearly 100 people attended this evening workshop at the Lawrence Public Library on February 4, 2019. The workshop began with an overview of the purpose of the Downtown Lawrence Plan and the Downtown and Adjacent Neighborhoods Workshop as well as the current stage of the planning process. The remainder of the workshop was dedicated to an exercise that spurred conversation surrounding the issues and concerns, projects and actions, and strengths and assets of the Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods as identified by participants.



Focus Groups

City of Lawrence staff; developers, architects, and property managers; stakeholders and organizers of Downtown arts and events; and stakeholders and service providers that work to address issues in the Downtown were invited to attend focus groups on February 5, 2019. The intent of the focus groups was to gather feedback and insight on key issues facing the Downtown from those individuals and groups able to provide perspective due to their involvement in such key issues.

Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Workshops

DIY Workshop Kits were made available on the City of Lawrence website and project website to offer residents and other stakeholders the opportunity to hold their own workshops. The DIY workshops were styled after the community workshop and focused on the issues and concerns, projects and actions, and strengths and assets of the Downtown as identified by participants. The City received five completed DIY Kits. Five DIY Kits were completed including Gould Evans, Leadership Lawrence Advisory Board, Lawrence Arts Roundtable, East Lawrence, and an anonymous group.

Visioning Workshop

On the evening of October 16, 2019, the City of Lawrence held a Visioning Workshop at the Douglas County Fairgrounds. Attendees were assigned to one of four “breakout” groups and provided markers and a large map of Downtown to work as a team to draw their “vision” for Downtown Lawrence. Generally, workshop participants felt strongly about preserving Downtown’s historic character, improving parking, redeveloping underutilized sites into preferred uses, and finding a permanent location for the farmer’s market.

COVID-19 Pandemic

During the fall of 2020, staff conducted four engagement sessions around the topic “How has the COVID-19 Pandemic affected the long-term vision for Downtown?”

- October 22, 2020 | 6:30pm – 8:00pm
- October 27, 2020 | 12:00pm – 1:30pm
- October 27, 2020 | 6:00pm – 7:30pm
- October 29, 2020 | 8:00am – 9:30am

Staff also conducted a Lawrence Listens survey.

Draft Plan Open House

On the evening of May 20, 2021, the City of Lawrence held a virtual Open House to present the Draft Lawrence Downtown Plan (April Draft) to the public. Participants submitted their questions and comments about the Draft Plan using the Zoom meeting chat feature and/or by filling out a survey provided on the project website. Comments from the Open House were presented to the Steering Committee for review and discussion.

PARTICIPATION

300+ Workshop Participants

833 Residential Surveys

38 Business & Property Owner Surveys

29 Youth & Student Surveys

5 DIY (Do it Yourself) Kits

45 map.social maps + 292 unique points

259 VPS participants



Lawrence is developing a Downtown Master Plan and we need your help!

[Learn More](#)

Get Involved



Visual Preference Survey



Map social



Online Questionnaires

Community Outreach (Online)

Online outreach was designed to be accessible, interactive, and personal, providing a supplement to in-person events for those unable to attend. Using online tools, residents and community stakeholders are able to provide feedback regarding the planning process at their own speed and in their own time. Online outreach also allows the Plan to capture feedback from those unlikely to attend traditional events, generating a wider range of feedback in support of the Downtown Lawrence Plan.

Project Website

A project website was developed in support of the planning process, intended to act as a central hub for information regarding the Plan. From the website, residents were able to learn about the plan and upcoming events, access interim documents and reports, and take part in various online outreach tools, including online questionnaires, map.social, and the visual preference survey.

Online Questionnaires

Beginning in October 2018, the City made three questionnaires available on the project website and received 900 responses. The questionnaires targeted residents (833 responses), youth and students (29 responses), and the business community (38 responses).

map.social

map.social is a public outreach tool, allowing residents, stakeholders, and other participants to provide feedback and comments tied spatially to a point or area. The tool provides a way for anyone to create a map of their community, identifying their own issues, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats.

Participants provided 292 map features on varying subjects including downtown assets, bike access, development opportunities, desired uses and developments, undesired uses and developments, pedestrian and streetscape improvements, parking, areas that have a poor appearance, problematic intersections, and public safety concerns.

COMMUNITY MAPPING

Callouts shown on this map represent a random selection of comments from the Lawrence survey.

Riparian restoration



We keep losing trees in this area and we need to restore the riparian buffer to prevent erosion



Create connection with the river.

Lawrence essentially turns its back to the Kaw. Should instead create a safe connection with the river where possible using natural/historical/traditional elements for attraction. Oral-History based display of historical transportation or fishery practices by previous region inhabitants.



Free State Brewery

Essential downtown establishment



Bank parking lot wasteland

Wasted space. The bank razes a neighborhood for an underused parking lot. Maybe legally open this up for parking when bank not open



Night Illumination. All downtown backstreets

Antique style LED street lights everywhere in downtown and especially in the art areas along East 9th str.



Honeybee and butterfly habitat



A place (of meaningful size) for butterflies & bees. In calmest area in downtown.



Crosswalk

Would be great to have a crosswalk at this intersection. Would help connect both sides of the park and prevent dangerous jaywalking



- Downtown Asset
- Bike Access
- Development Opportunity
- Desired Use/Development
- Undesired Use/Development
- Pedestrian/Streetscape Amenity
- Parking
- Poor Appearance
- Problematic Intersection
- Public Safety Concern

TOP RANKED VPS IMAGES FOR EACH CATEGORY

These five images represent the highest ranked image for each of the five VPS categories.

Visual Preference Survey

A visual preference survey (VPS) is an image-based survey that asks individuals to rank images on a scale of one to five stars, with one star representing uses that are inappropriate or undesirable and five stars representing uses that are appropriate or desirable. The VPS included images examples from five specific categories:

1. Built Form
2. Parking
3. Streetscape
4. Parks, Plazas & Open Space
5. Identity & Character

Ratings for the the images were cumulative across all participants, establishing an overall ranking for which images were most and least desirable. This created an understanding of what development types, streetscape improvements, and public amenities members of the Lawrence community would like to see in Downtown. The VPS was available on the project website for over six months and received a total of 259 participants.



BUILT FORM (4.18)



PARKING (3.59)



STREETSCAPE (4.18)

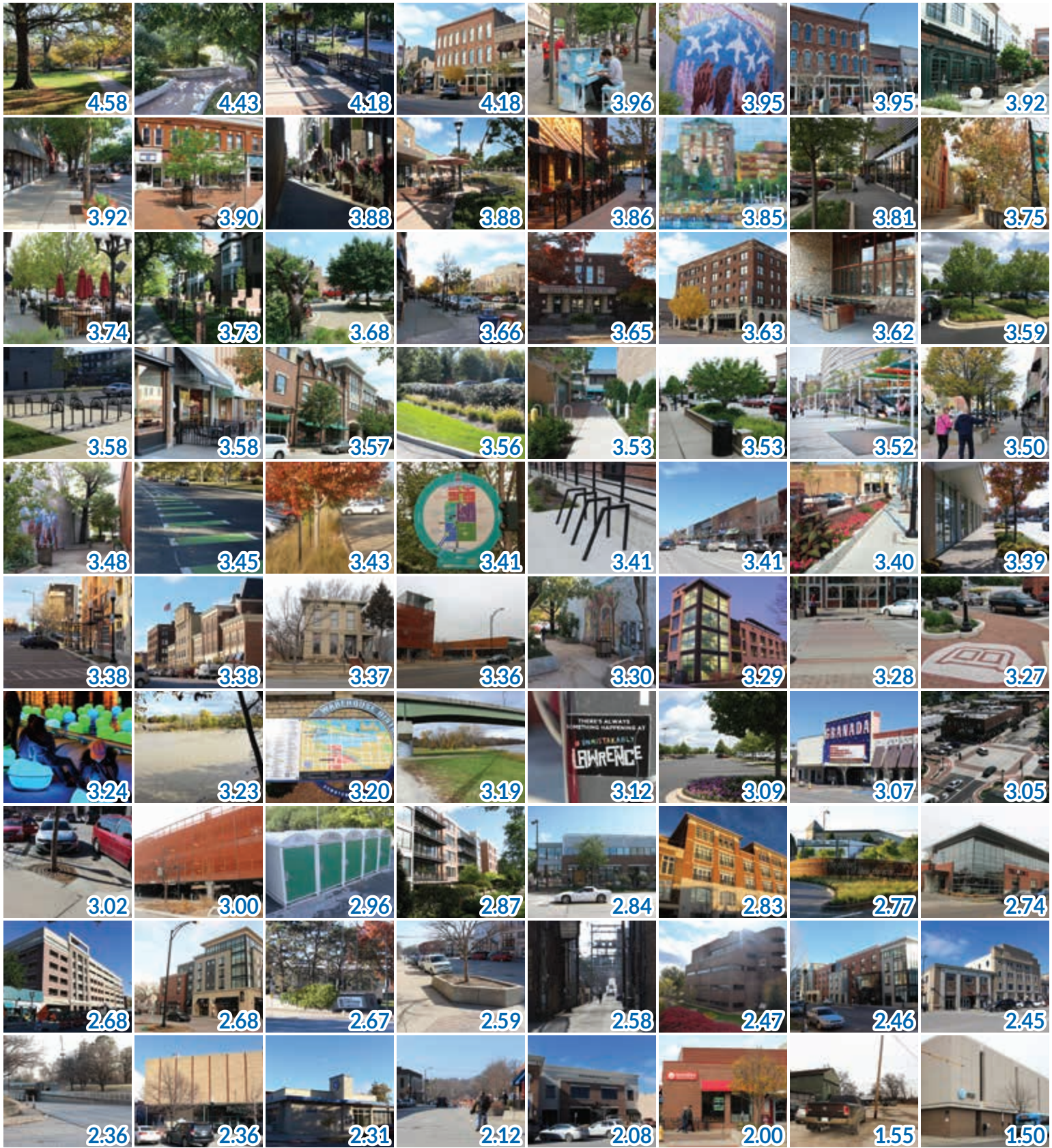


PARKS, PLAZAS & OPEN SPACE (4.58)



IDENTITY & CHARACTER (3.96)













Visual Preference Survey Results

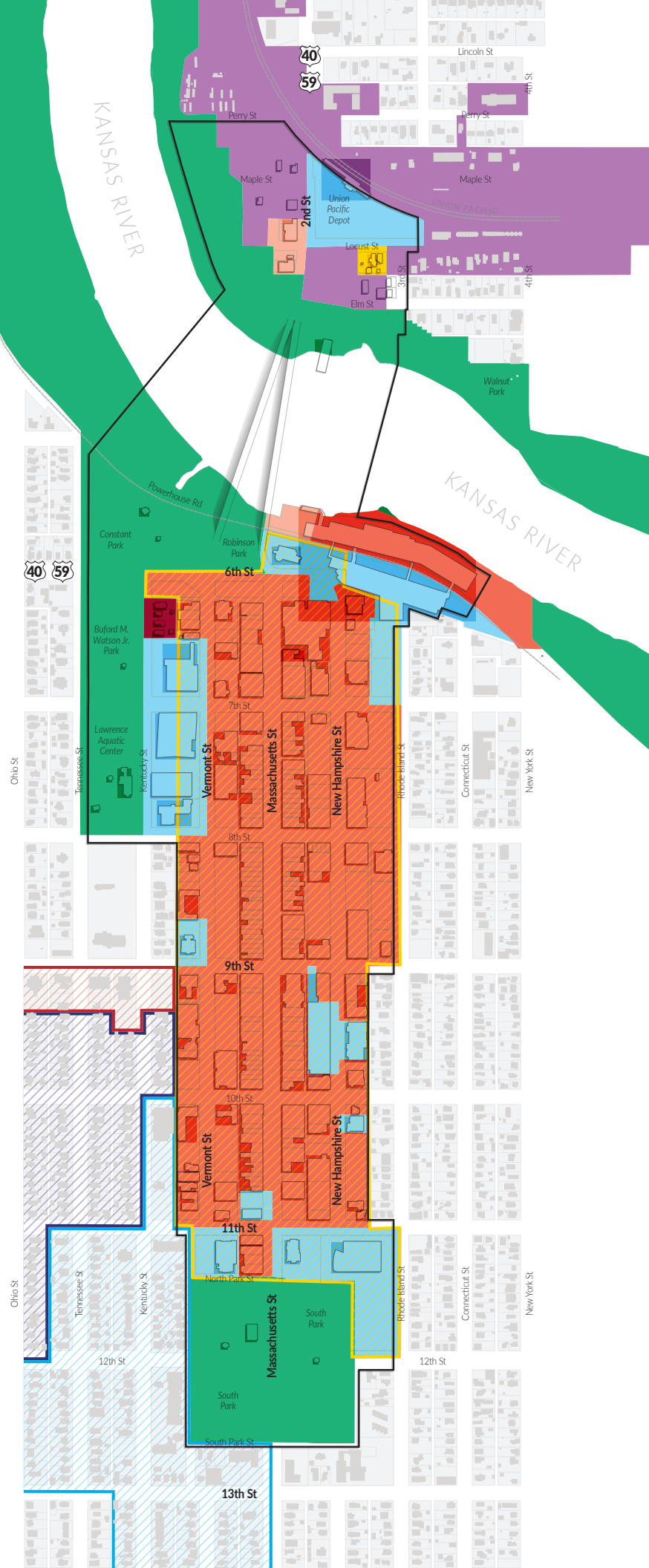


Current Zoning

Zoning and development controls have the power to shape and reshape communities by determining where specific land uses are permitted and the density of those uses, and by establishing requirements for parking, landscape, signs, and other standards that help to shape the visual attractiveness of a community or corridor.

Legend

-  Study Area
-  RSO - Single-Dwelling Residential - Office District
-  RMO - Multi-Dwelling Residential - Office District
-  CD - Downtown Commercial District
-  CS - Commercial Strip District
-  IG - General Industrial
-  OS - Open Space
-  GPI - General Public & Institutional Use
-  Downtown Urban Conservation Overlay District
-  Oread Medium Density - UC3
-  Oread Historic District - UC5
-  Oread Commercial - UC6



Existing Land Use

Existing land use provides an inventory of every parcel in the Downtown to identify how land is used within the study area. Downtown's land uses have been broken into 15 distinct land use designations, which together create a strong mix that support residents, visitors, employees, and students. This inventory represents data collected in November 2019.

Legend

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Study Area | Mixed Use |
| Single-Family Detached | Parks & Open Space |
| Commercial Retail | Place of Worship |
| Commercial Service / Auto | Public / Semi-Public |
| Restaurant / Bar / Brewery | Parking (Public & Private) |
| Entertainment | Utility |
| Bank | Vacant Lot |
| Office | Vacant Building / Storefront |







CHAPTER TWO

Vision & Guiding Principles

The Vision Statement and Guiding Principles describe Downtown Lawrence as it will be in 2040. It is a future retrospective that chronicles the accomplishments of the upcoming decades. It records the projects, improvements, and developments that have been undertaken since the Downtown Lawrence Plan was adopted in 2021. The Vision Statement establishes focus and direction for the Plan and provides an overview of its recommendations.



Vision Statement

The Vision Statement paints a picture of what Downtown Lawrence should look like in the future, 20 years from the adoption of the Downtown Lawrence Plan. The Vision Statement incorporates the most central ideas and themes generated during the community outreach process and provides a guiding framework for other elements of the Plan.

In 2040 Downtown Lawrence is thriving as the heart of the community and has grown in prominence as a regional and statewide destination. Downtown has adapted to the changes in the retail environment forced by trends in e-commerce with a shift toward experience-based businesses. Long ago, you could stroll along Massachusetts Street and buy a pair of shoes and a shirt. While traditional retail still exists, today you can play with gadgets, meet with personal stylists, and so much more. Established niche retailers remain anchors of Downtown and complement new and diverse restaurant, entertainment, and nightlife options.

Lawrence residents now have a breadth of options when choosing to live Downtown. Rental apartments and condominiums are available at a variety of price points and are made even more attractive by the new grocery store that makes Downtown more livable. Updates to the zoning code ensure that new development does not loom over adjacent neighborhoods. The first construction project to conform to the new regulations was the Allen Press property, which was fully supported by adjacent neighborhoods and Downtown stakeholders. Taking advantage of rapidly emerging technologies in the transportation sector, the City has moved to replace many now unneeded surface parking lots with new attractive infill mixed-use development.





New mixed-use development includes parking decks to offset the converted surface spaces. On-street parking has also experienced an upgrade; drivers now pay for parking digitally. In some areas, on-street parking buffers new bike lanes to help people feel safe biking Downtown. The City made the conscious decision to keep bike lanes off of Massachusetts Street to maintain the pedestrian environment and instead targeted improvements to Vermont and New Hampshire Streets. These protected bike lanes connect to off-street shared use paths, including the completed Lawrence Loop.

Improved access to North Lawrence via the Lawrence Loop has spurred interest for a pedestrian bridge. The City has undertaken a study to analyze the array of options for improving pedestrian mobility over the Kansas River to complement recent investment in the development of a River Walk. The River Walk supports new commercial uses that leverage the River as an asset. The City, in conjunction with the Army Corps of Engineers, Friends of the Kaw, and other stakeholders, have activated the river by expanding fishing, kayaking, and other recreational opportunities, and are exploring opportunities to establish a whitewater course.

The River has become a source of sustainable energy for the City via the Bowersock Mill. To further improve energy efficiency and sustainability in Downtown, the City established a grant program which offers limited funding for building improvements, such as window repair, fire sprinkler installation, and solar panel installation. This funding complements the new minority business program which offers incentives and advice to help minority business owners establish in Downtown and the new façade improvement grant which offers property owners financial and planning assistance for the restoration of historic storefronts. Weaver's, Lawrence's long-standing department store, was the first recipient to utilize this grant to reveal and revive its historic aesthetic.

Improved façades have contributed to the beautification of Downtown and are complemented by an enhanced streetscape, that together create an attractive pedestrian environment. Street furniture, upgraded planters, and hanging baskets improve pedestrian comfort while targeted wayfinding helps people easily reach their destination. Public art is strategically located throughout Downtown, highlighting a diverse array of voices and perspectives and taking advantage of unexpected spaces such as the AT&T tower, which is now an iconic, revolving art piece.

As a part of streetscape improvements, the City has installed bollards to easily and safely block off roads for festivals, parades, and block parties. A permanent outdoor event space allows for year-round use and is home to the expanded farmer's market. South Park continues to be a hub of activity, hosting events such as the car show, summer concert series, and Lawrence Fall Arts & Crafts Festival.

Just as South Park and the Douglas County Courthouse anchor the southern end of Downtown, community facilities such as City Hall and the Lawrence Public Library anchor its northern end. The concentration of these uses and others reinforce Downtown as the civic heart of the community. Throughout its evolution, Downtown has retained the characteristics that make it special while continuing to remain relevant, reaffirming its sense of identity as uniquely Lawrence.

Guiding Principles

The Downtown Lawrence Plan is the City's official guide and blueprint for improving Downtown Lawrence and achieving the community's desired vision for this critical area of the community. Driven by community and stakeholder input, the Plan provides a flexible guide for decision-making and community action. The Guiding Principles describe desired end situations toward which the plans, policies, and recommendations should be directed. They are broad and long-range, and represent an end to be sought, although they may never actually be fully attained.

Strengthen Downtown as a destination.

Downtown Lawrence is the top tourist attraction in Kansas and draws residents and visitors from around the region every day. People travel from outside the state to experience the unique character and atmosphere that is engrained in the Downtown. This local and regional identity needs to be reinforced as Downtown changes and grows.

Leverage the riverfront.

The Kansas River is a natural amenity that provides many opportunities for users to recreate and relax. To take advantage of these opportunities, connections to the River and activation of the riverfront must be undertaken.

Balance historic preservation with infill development.

The architecture and history throughout Downtown are a crucial part of its identity. Protecting and enhancing these elements is critical to the future of Downtown Lawrence. The challenge is preserving them, while still incorporating new infill development to ensure Downtown's long-term viability. To be successful, these forces must be considered by encouraging mixed-use development, affordable housing options, and contemporary design in appropriate areas.

Maintain Downtown as the civic and cultural heart of Lawrence.

Downtown is the heart of Lawrence and should continue to be a place where government, public gathering, and community facilities thrive and as the center for the City's renowned special events.



Reinforce Downtown as an economically thriving district.

Downtown is a regional shopping destination that offers unique goods from its boutique retailers and niche services from local providers as well as generates employment opportunities for the City. Downtown is also home to an increasingly diverse number of residents who are supported by new affordable housing and shopping options to satisfy daily needs. Balancing these tasks will require minimizing vacancies, increasing business involvement, supporting the development of new housing, improving opportunities for starting a business, and strengthening the vital Downtown business climate.

Make it easy to get around.

Through strategic enhancements to pedestrian amenities, bicycle connections, transit facilities, parking areas, vehicular circulation, and wayfinding, Downtown should be a place that is easy to maneuver for all modes of transportation.

Create an attractive pedestrian environment.

Currently, Downtown has a pedestrian environment that supports activity intermittently. Improvements to the public realm by updating streetscape elements and establishing welcoming spaces on the street would help enhance the beauty and functionality of Downtown.

Ensure equitable participation and involvement.

Downtown is built for and used by local residents and stakeholders. To ensure that all members of the Lawrence community are included in activities regarding Downtown, transparency must be preserved. Maintaining transparency includes providing better access, ensuring community involvement, and welcoming everyone to be a part of the process. Building upon the community participation and involvement that form the foundation of the Downtown Lawrence Plan, the City should continue to meaningfully involve residents, business owners, and stakeholders to ensure equity and transparency in the implementation of plan recommendations.







CHAPTER THREE

Land Use & Development

Historically developed adjacent to the Kansas River in a traditional grid pattern, Downtown Lawrence is highly accessible and walkable. A mix of storefronts, restaurants, and other uses line Massachusetts Street, the primary pedestrian-oriented corridor that defines Downtown. As Downtown extends east and west, development patterns change and uses vary more greatly, including larger-scaled mixed-use developments and surface parking lots, which then transition into residential neighborhoods.

Through this planning process, the Lawrence community has voiced a strong desire to maintain and strengthen Downtown as an energized and thriving center with a critical mass of commercial, entertainment, civic, cultural, recreational, and residential activity. By embracing traditional planning principles such as walkability, density, mixed-use environments, and design quality, Downtown Lawrence can be positioned for decades of continued success. To that end, this chapter presents a framework for land use and development within Downtown in a manner that balances its existing charm and character with opportunities for new development and growth.

The recommendations presented in this chapter are based on an assessment of existing conditions and market potential, previous planning efforts, input from residents and business owners, and best planning practices.



Land Use

Downtowns are best described as a mix of different land uses within a walkable environment. A mix of appropriate land uses is essential for establishing a self-sustaining, vibrant destination, with a critical mass of activity Downtown. Downtown should continue to be strengthened and improved as a “mixed-use” area, unique to the City and the region. By remaining flexible and promoting a variety of uses, the City can diversify consumer options and continue to support the desired character and energy in Downtown. This section provides a brief and general overview of desirable land uses within Downtown Lawrence and how they contribute to making it a unique area. Specific recommendations relative to use intensity and location are included in the subsequent section (Functional Subareas). The following are desirable land uses appropriate for Downtown Lawrence.

Residential

A residential population provides a consumer base for Downtown businesses and leads to greater pedestrian activity and foot traffic making the area more vibrant. Downtown Lawrence should support a greater level of residential density and a wider range of housing types, including townhomes and apartments/condominiums, either as stand-alone products or as a part of mixed-use.

Retail

Retail is an essential element in positioning Downtown Lawrence as a neighborhood shopping area for Downtown residents, a destination for the entire community and an attraction to visitors. Downtown is currently home to a wide variety of retail establishments ranging from traditional clothing and furniture stores to experience-based niche retailers.

Restaurants & Bars

Similar to retail, restaurants, bars, and breweries are a crucial Downtown component for both residents and visitors, significantly contributing to the overall character, appeal, and experience of the area. These uses represent some of the most prominent businesses in Downtown and should be balanced with the area’s other land uses. The City should explore flexible alcohol regulations for Downtown establishments.

Service

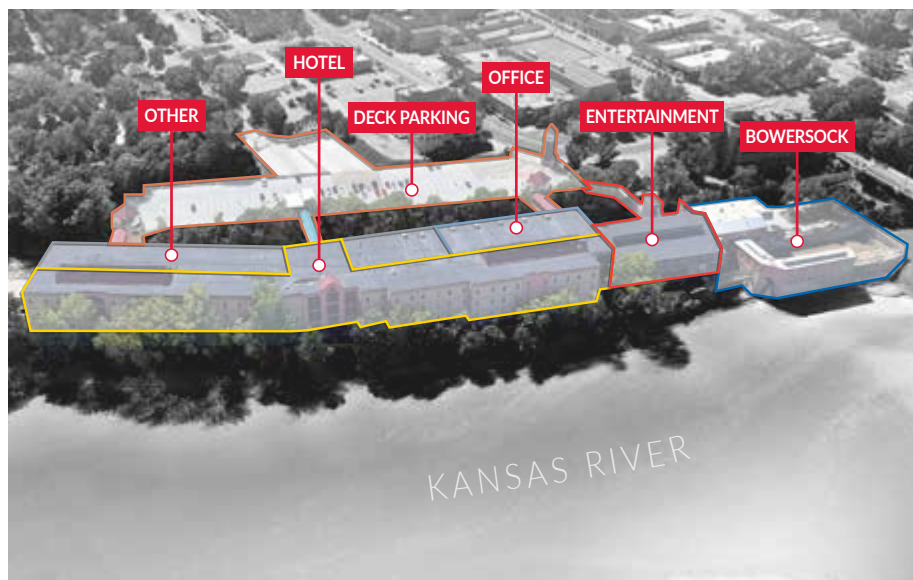
Service uses, such as barber shops, spas, yoga studios, dry cleaners, and banks, generate activity Downtown and support the day-to-day needs of Downtown residents and employees. The operating hours of many service uses are often limited to the daytime and can lead to a lack of vibrancy at night if there is too great a concentration in a compressed area.

Office

Office uses, including professional firms and medical practitioners, increase the daytime population of Downtown Lawrence and support retail, dining, and service businesses, particularly during lunch and after work hours. Office uses can take many different forms, including small single-story buildings, free-standing multi-story spaces, and as part of mixed-use buildings.

LAWRENCE RIVERFRONT AREA

The Lawrence Riverfront Area is a good example of how a broad range of uses can function in one building. Located along the Kansas River, each of these individually owned uses and businesses are connected into one large building.





Downtown Mixed-Use

Mixed-use buildings are either stacked vertically, with retail, restaurant, service, or office space on the ground floor and service, office, or residential uses on the upper floors; or stacked horizontally, with retail, restaurant, service, or office spaces located side-by-side in a single building with multiple storefronts. Mixed-use buildings should continue to be the predominant land use and development type Downtown.



Artisan Manufacturing

Artisan manufacturing includes the application, teaching, making, or fabrication of crafts or products by an artist, artisan, or craft person and is often limited to light industrial uses, such as small-scale fabrication, small-batch bakeries, or micro-distilleries. These uses often include accessory retail space as well as live-work units.

Entertainment & Culture

Experiences like visiting an art gallery or museum, attending a concert, or joining a game night are all unique attractions of Downtown. These types of “experience-driven” uses give downtowns a market edge, generating foot traffic and activity, and creating a unique experience that is generally hard to replicate in other areas of the community.

Institutional & Civic

Downtown serves as the civic heart of Lawrence and is anchored on both the northern and southern ends by City of Lawrence and Douglas County facilities. Additional institutional and civic uses include schools, educational institutions, libraries, museums, and places of worship. These uses remain stable over time and help Downtown remain a community focal point.

Parks & Open Space

Parks and open space provide essential public gathering spaces that differentiates Downtown from other commercial areas in the City. Downtown has six parks.

Housing

Housing in Downtown Lawrence has grown significantly over the last decade, mainly as a component of mixed-use development. This growth has impacted the Downtown by providing more potential customers directly in the area. These units are market-rate, which provides higher property taxes and improves the City’s overall economy. It also has negative impacts on the community related to affordability. Increasing rental rates limits the opportunity for a lower-income household to move into Downtown and can also force existing residents out. This affect can also spill over into adjacent neighborhoods.

The Affordable Housing Advisory Board (AHAB) was established to ensure all residents can afford to live in the City. Through AHAB, a toolkit for improving residential development in Lawrence and an Affordable Housing Trust Fund to financially support future development were created. The strategies, programs, and incentives in the toolkit remain the City’s best opportunity for strengthening affordable housing development in Lawrence.

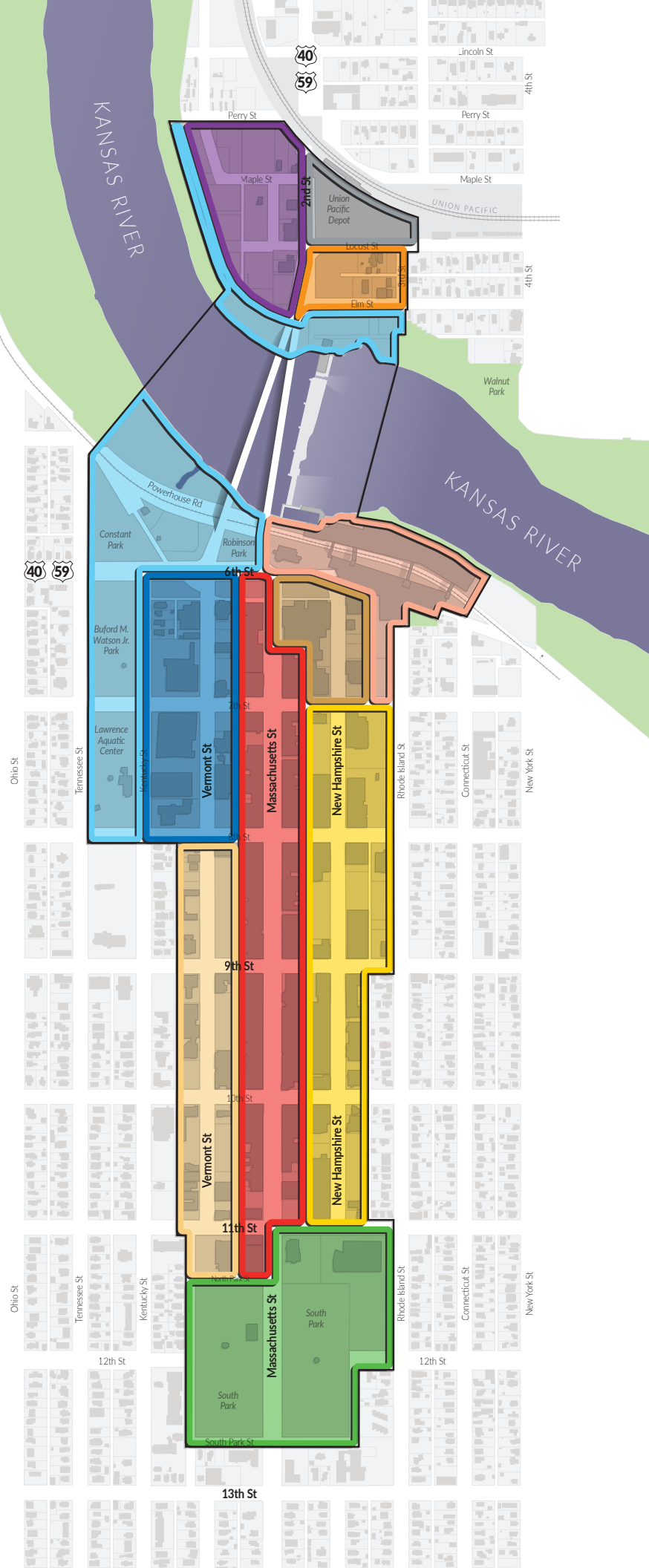
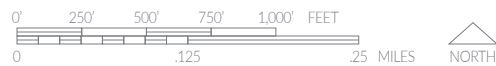
To expand affordable housing options in Downtown, the City should prioritize these strategies at the outset of the development process. They should be offered to the property owner or developer during initial discussions as opportunities for improving and successfully completing their potential project. Collaboration is paramount to the success of affordable housing in Downtown Lawrence and the City should foster partnerships with property owners, developers, and nonprofits whenever possible to ensure its success.

Functional Subareas

Downtown Lawrence consists of 11 distinct functional subareas, each with their own uses, built form, functionality, and opportunities. The Downtown Lawrence Master Plan addresses the specific needs of each area and establishes recommendations for their enhancement, improvement, and maintenance.

Legend

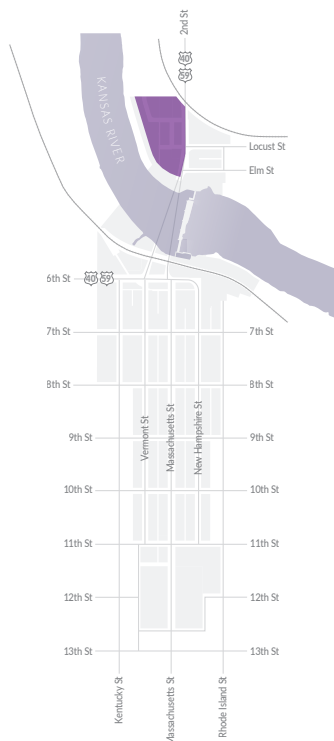
-  Study Area
-  North Lawrence Anchor
-  Union Pacific Depot
-  North Lawrence Gateway
-  Recreation
-  Riverfront
-  6th & Mass
-  Massachusetts Street
-  North Vermont Street
-  South Vermont Street
-  New Hampshire Street
-  South Park/Civic Campus





NORTH LAWRENCE ANCHOR

The North Lawrence Anchor subarea has the greatest opportunity for redevelopment in North Lawrence. Currently, a majority of the subarea is vacant or undeveloped land with two businesses: Johnny's Tavern and Gaslight Gardens, located at opposite corners of Locust Street, creating the most activity. The entire subarea could be redeveloped as one large project, ideally in phases, or as four to five individual, cohesive developments.



Built Form

Buildings in the North Lawrence Anchor subarea should complement, but not directly mimic, those in the Massachusetts Street subarea using appropriate materials and design elements. A campus-like setting should be prioritized with a centralized focal point from which pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers branch out to frequent their favorite stores. This should be a small-square or public gathering space. To reinforce this design, all buildings should primarily face this focal point, and the façades of buildings on 2nd Street should be well-designed to maximize visibility and draw people from the main road into the Subarea.



Building Height

2-3 stories along 2nd Street and 4-6 stories in the remaining portions of the area.

Parking

Parking should be completely internalized in this subarea, ideally located on the north side of Maple Street. At minimum, all parking should be located behind buildings on 2nd Street.



Uses

- Mixed-Use (includes Multi-family, Restaurant, Retail, Entertainment, and Service)



UNION PACIFIC DEPOT

The Union Pacific Depot subarea is characterized by the existing Union Pacific Depot facility on the active Union Pacific rail line. Although it no longer operates as a train station, the Depot is a State- and local-registered historic structure that is used as a rentable event space. The subarea also includes a garden in front of the Depot, a landscaped roundabout, and a small parking lot, all of which should remain to support the entertainment use for the Depot. The Union Pacific Depot subarea should maximize the space of the site to allow for more parking to redevelopment or to partially redevelop the ancillary lot across the street.

Built Form

The built form of the subarea should not change to maintain the historic nature of the Union Pacific Depot.

Building Height

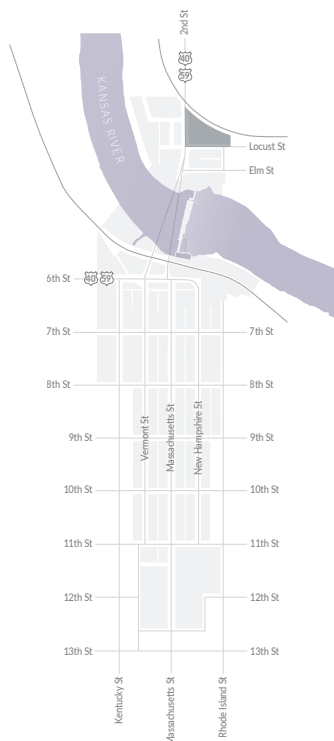
1 story to maintain the historic design of the Depot.

Parking

On-site, maximizing the amount of space to prevent the need to utilize the parking lot across Locust Street.

Uses

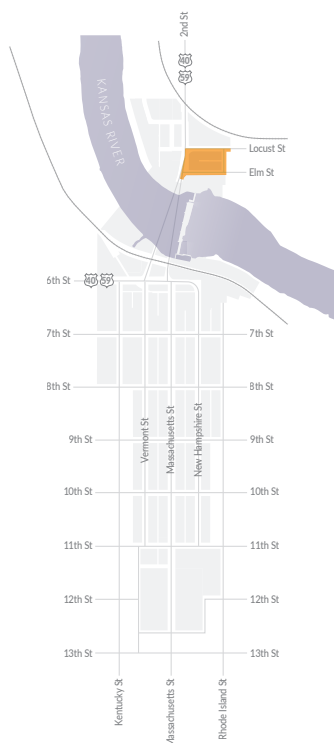
- Public/Semi-Public
- Event Space





NORTH LAWRENCE GATEWAY

The North Lawrence Gateway subarea exemplifies some of the unique residential character of North Lawrence. Being in North Lawrence, this subarea is on the edge of Downtown and experiences mostly through traffic. However, both the parcels facing Elm Street and Locust Street are suitable for small, neighborhood-serving commercial uses.



Built Form

Standalone buildings oriented toward either Elm Street or Locust Street. Building and streetscape elements should complement the low-intensity character of the adjacent residential neighborhood to the east. Redevelopment of the parking lot should prioritize maximizing visibility from 2nd Street with access to buildings either on Locust Street or Elm Street.

Building Height

2-3 stories for redevelopment(s) along 2nd Street and 1-2 stories closer to 3rd Street.

Parking

Parking should be primarily on-street. A portion of the existing lot on the west end of the subarea could be preserved for additional off-street spaces.

Uses

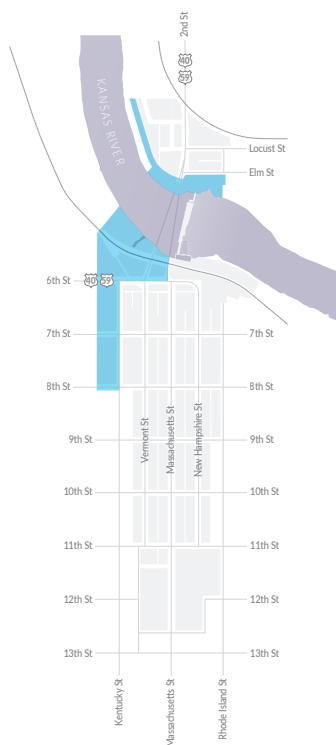
- Single-Family Detached
- Restaurant
- Retail
- Service





RECREATION

The Recreation subarea is characterized by its functions for passive and active recreation, and its adjacency to the Kansas River. This subarea should maximize connection to the Kansas River by formalizing non-motorized boat access points on the north bank east of the Bowersock Dam. The existing boat exit west of the Dam should be expanded to improve visibility. A motorized boat landing on the south bank, west of the Dam could also be appropriate. Robinson Park should include additional pedestrian elements, such as benches and tables, to improve passive recreation opportunities. The Lawrence Aquatic Center and Buford M. Watson Jr. Park should maintain their programmed and unprogrammed uses.



Built Form

Buildings within existing parks, such as the Lawrence Aquatic Center and Buford M. Watson Jr. Parks, should be maintained. Any additional structures should solely be created to enhance recreational opportunities and improve access to the Kansas River, which includes boat landings and trailheads.

Building Height

Various to maintain the existing structures in the formal park facilities.

Parking

For parts of the subarea south of the River, parking exists at Constant Park, on-street, and at the library parking garage. Parking at Constant Park may need to be expanded or reconfigured to improve access to the Burcham Park Trail and the motorized boat landing. On the north side of the River, parking within North Lawrence Anchor and North Lawrence Fringe subarea can be shared to help serve the Recreation subarea.

Uses

- Parks
- Open Space





RIVERFRONT

The Riverfront subarea is home to City Hall and acts as the civic anchor of the northern end of Downtown. The area currently comprises City Hall, the Riverfront Plaza, and a parking deck. The Riverfront Plaza includes additional City offices and a hotel but is primarily vacant. The City should consider consolidating its current offices and the remaining vacant space to ensure room for expansion of City offices in this area as the community continues to grow. Before expansion of City offices is necessary, the space could be utilized as a business incubator for local entrepreneurs interested in a mixture of commercial retail, restaurant, and entertainment uses.

Built Form

Buildings replicate the design of structures in the Massachusetts subarea with materials that allow for maximum views of the River on their north sides. Entrances of these buildings face the parking lot but orientation is toward the River. The City should work with the hotel to offer users access to and use of the existing riverfront promenade to better utilize and activate the space for outdoor dining and public gathering.

Building Height

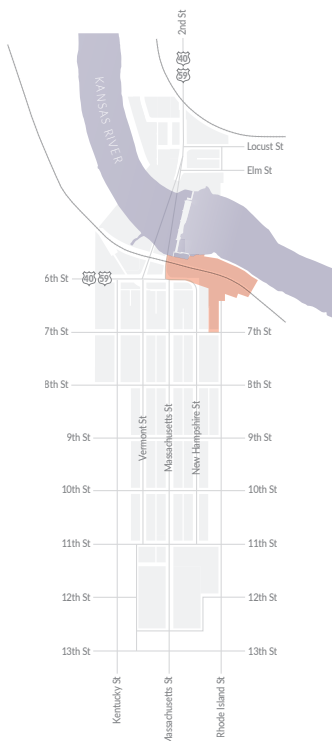
3-4 Stories.

Parking

The existing parking deck should be utilized.

Uses

- Restaurant
- Retail
- Entertainment
- Service
- Office





6TH & MASS

The 6th & Mass subarea boasts tremendous redevelopment potential and should be transformed into a prominent employment hub for Downtown. Traditional offices mixed with light, tech-based manufacturing should be the primary uses in this subarea. Live-work units incorporated into the primary uses should be considered. This subarea should be pedestrian focused with well-managed vehicular traffic. The subarea is further discussed as a catalyst site on page 39.

Built Form

A majority of the buildings in this subarea are targeted for adaptive reuse with the general intent that existing design elements and materials would remain. However, new development, particularly on the east side of New Hampshire Street, in this subarea should match recent developments in the New Hampshire Street subarea.

Building Height

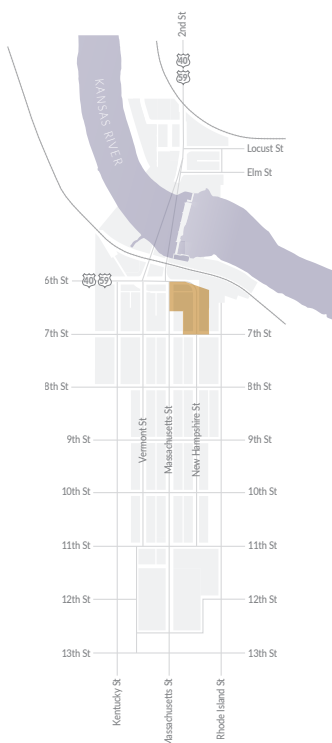
3-5 stories.

Parking

Parking should be located behind buildings on the east side of New Hampshire Street.

Uses

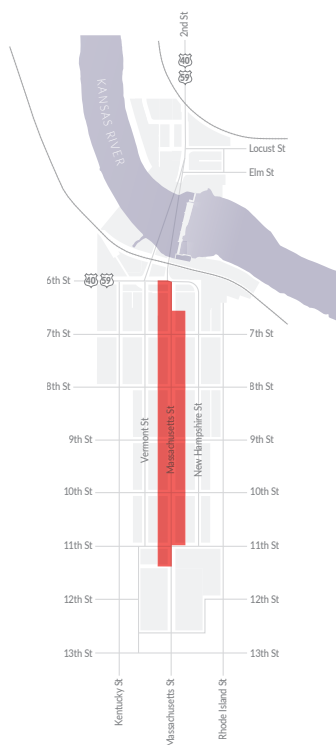
- Mixed-Use (includes Restaurant, Retail, Entertainment, Service, Office, Multi-family, and Hotel/Hospitality)
- Convention Center





MASSACHUSETTS STREET

The Massachusetts Street subarea is Lawrence's traditional main street and the anchor for Downtown. As the heart of Lawrence, this subarea generates the most activity with storefronts occupied by a plethora of local restaurants, retail, and entertainment businesses, as well as limited office uses that generate daytime foot traffic. Residential units and additional office uses are included above the majority of ground floor businesses. To continue to support businesses and residents, this subarea prioritizes pedestrian mobility over vehicular.



Built Form

As a well-developed subarea, the built form of the Massachusetts Street subarea should support its historic nature, preserving building and architectural elements where appropriate. New development should complement existing character, with particular emphasis on buildings between 7th Street and 11th Street. Buildings should remain at the sidewalk in this subarea. A continuous streetwall should be persevered with the exception of pedestrian cut-throughs to rear parking. The pedestrian cut-throughs should be well-designed with appropriate lighting and other streetscaping elements as further discussed on page 107.

Building Height

2-4 stories with variation to provide visual interest and avoid monotonous facades.

Parking

Parking should be provided on-street or in garages located on New Hampshire Street or Vermont Street. Public lots on these two streets should also be used until they are redeveloped.

Uses

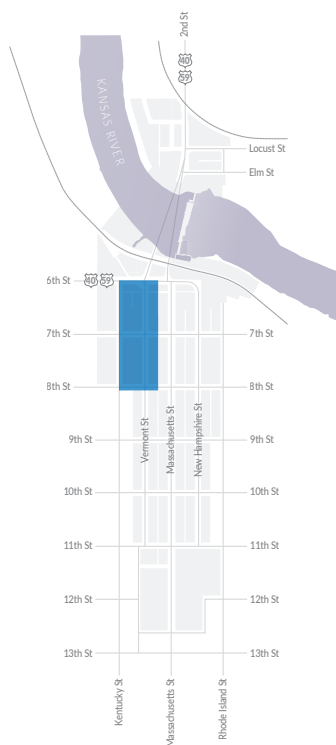
- Mixed-Use (includes Restaurant, Retail, Entertainment, Service, Office, and Multi-family)





NORTH VERMONT STREET

The North Vermont Street subarea is primarily characterized by the variety of civic uses located on the west side of Vermont Street, anchored by the Lawrence Public Library and its plaza space. It also includes a mix of small commercial and office uses. The public uses provide critical, often-free resources and services not only to Downtown residents but to the entire Lawrence community. Redevelopment in this subarea should be primarily comprise of office and multifamily uses to complement the retail, restaurant, and entertainment focus of the Massachusetts Street subarea.



Built Form

Architectural and design elements for this subarea should encourage creativity and innovation to complement the modern style of the Library while also supporting the traditional character of Massachusetts Street.

Building Height

1-3 stories on the west side of Vermont Street and 2-4 stories on the east side of Vermont Street.

Parking

Businesses with their own lots should maintain their parking areas. Existing public parking options, including the library garage, on-street, and in public lots on the east side of the street, should be used (until redevelopment occurs).

Uses

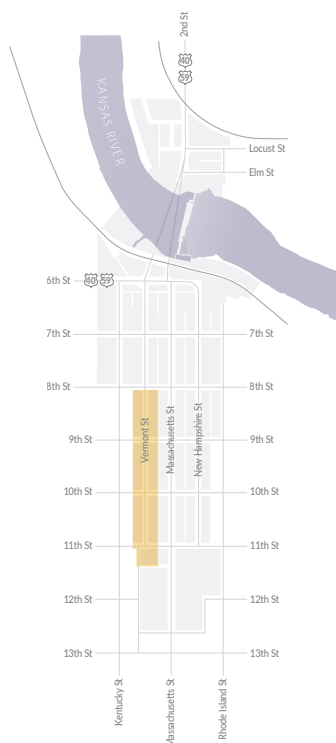
- Public/Semi-Public
- Office
- Multi-family
- Mixed-Use (includes Restaurant, Retail, Entertainment, Service, Office, and Multi-family)





SOUTH VERMONT STREET

The South Vermont Street subarea is comprised of smaller, less-intense office and commercial uses and several public/semi-public uses, particularly three places of worship that comprise nearly two full blocks. A significant number of public parking lots establish South Vermont Street as a primary redevelopment area. Redevelopment should prioritize standalone multi-family or office buildings as well as limited mixed-use buildings with ground-floor commercial or office uses and residential above.



Built Form

Architectural and design elements for this subarea should encourage creativity and innovation to complement recent development, such as the TreanorHL offices, while also supporting the traditional character of the Massachusetts Street subarea.

Building Height

1-3 stories on the west side of Vermont Street and 2-5 stories on the east side of Vermont Street.

Parking

On-street parking and public lots are the primary source of parking in this subarea. An additional parking garage should be considered as the lots become redeveloped, potentially on the lot between 9th and 10th Streets.

Uses

- Public/Semi-Public
- Office
- Retail
- Service
- Mixed-Use (Restaurant, Retail, Entertainment, Service, Office, and Multi-family)





NEW HAMPSHIRE STREET

The New Hampshire Street subarea builds off the success of Massachusetts to provide additional mixed-use development with denser residential uses. The additional residential will help support the businesses directly below it as well as those throughout the rest of Downtown. As such, pedestrian and cyclist activity is promoted in this area with sidewalks, bike lanes, and safe pedestrian crossings. There are several opportunity sites for redevelopment, including the public parking lots, Allen Press building, and the two private parking lots between 10th Street and 11th Street.



Built Form

Development in the subarea is more modern but still complements the buildings along Massachusetts Street. Buildings should be at the sidewalk and front property line to maintain streetwall continuity and mimic Massachusetts Street.

Building Height

2-4 stories on the east side of New Hampshire Street and 4-6 stories on the west side of New Hampshire Street.

Parking

Parking should be behind buildings on the east side of New Hampshire Street and underground wherever appropriate to maximize developable area, using the 888 Lofts development as an example. The public parking garage between 9th Street and 10th Street should be utilized, and an additional parking garage should be considered, potentially included in the redevelopment of the Allen Press building.

Uses

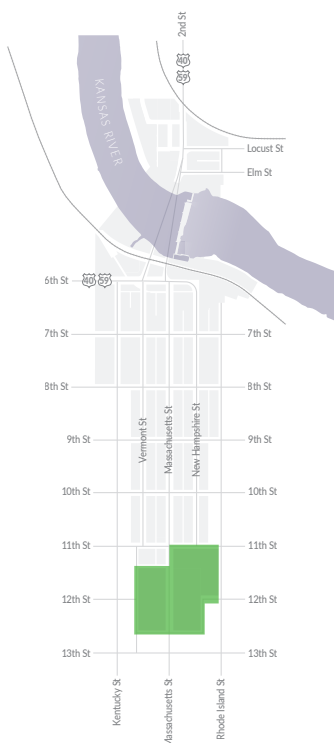
- Public/Semi-Public
- Mixed-Use (Restaurant, Retail, Entertainment, Service, Office, and Multi-family)





SOUTH PARK/ CIVIC CAMPUS

Two uses define the South Park/Civic Campus: parks and public/semi-public. The South Park/Civic Campus subarea is the southern gateway into Downtown Lawrence. As the most prominent outdoor gathering space in Downtown, this subarea hosts some of the City's most popular public events and supports other programmed and informal activities daily. The Douglas County Courthouse and County Judicial and Law Enforcement Center provide regular public services to Downtown, the City, and Douglas County. Both uses appearing in the subarea should be maintained and enhanced to help continue their unique functions for Downtown.



Built Form

Architectural design elements of both public buildings and structures in the park should be preserved and maintained for their historical and functional significance.

Building Height

3-5 stories to complement the heights of the existing County buildings. Structures in South Park should be no more than 1 story tall.

Parking

On the west side of the park, parking is available on-street on all four sides, as well as in the Community Center parking lot. On the east side, parking is available on-street on New Hampshire Street and in the County Judicial and Law Enforcement Center parking lot. Additional parking for the Douglas County Courthouse is available on the south side of the building.

Uses






- Parks
- Open Space
- Public/Semi-Public

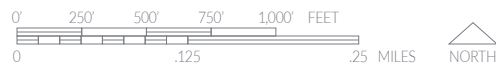


Opportunity Sites

Several buildings and sites in Downtown Lawrence deserve to be highlighted because of their untapped potential. The identified sites are best suited for infill, strategic investments, or buildings that could be adaptively reused. The development and use of any of these properties should be aligned with the recommended uses and character identified in the Functional Subarea section. It is important to note that at any time redevelopment may occur in areas not identified on the opportunities sites map or discussed in this section.

Legend

-  Study Area
-  Redevelopment Sites (pg 36-37)
-  Parking Lot Redevelopment (pg 37)
-  Catalyst Sites (pg 38-41)
-  Strategic Investments & Adaptive Reuse (pg 42-43)





Types of Opportunity Sites

There are several types of opportunity sites in Downtown Lawrence including infill development, transforming an underutilized surface parking lot, reimagining an underperforming building, and reinvesting in storefronts and building facades. The following section has been divided into four categories including Redevelopment Sites, Parking Lot Redevelopment, Catalyst Sites, and Strategic Investment.



Redevelopment Sites (pg 36-37)

These sites include parcels that are likely to be redeveloped to maximize their use and better leverage their key locations. The City should work with property owners and developers as proposal come forward to position these sites for adaptive reuse or construction of a new building.



Parking Lot Redevelopment (pg 37)

Surface parking lots in Downtown represent significant redevelopment opportunities and should be planned for accordingly. Redevelopment should only be considered if parking spots can be accommodated elsewhere or if they are deemed no longer necessary based on changes in transportation habits.



Catalyst Sites (pg 38-41)

Catalyst sites comprise Downtown Lawrence's most significant opportunities for redevelopment. The transformation of these properties will have a catalytic impact on surrounding development—spurring reinvestment and enhancement.



Strategic Investment (pg 42-43)

These properties are worth maintaining due to their aesthetic appeal, architectural significance, and functionality. The City should work with property owners and businesses to activate vacant storefronts, enhance outdated or deteriorating façades, and explore adaptive reuse where feasible.



Redevelopment Sites

These sites include Downtown parcels that due to vacancy, underutilization, or lack of intensity may be redeveloped to maximize their use and better leverage their key locations. If redevelopment proposals are brought forward, the City should work with property owners and developers to adaptively reuse existing structures, which could involve the significant renovation of an existing building to meet the needs of a new use, or to raze and construct a new building.

Note: *The recommendations included in this section reflect preferred scenarios at the time of Plan adoption. The recommendations are flexible and should be considered in part with all other Plan goals and objectives.*

1 North Lawrence

This site is currently an amalgamation of restaurant and retail uses, vacant buildings, a single-family home, a mobile home park, and open space adjacent to the levee. The wide variety of uses in this area, as well as their limited access off Locust Street, makes them favorable for assembly and redevelopment. Redevelopment should feature a mix of uses, including residential options geared toward young professionals, retirees/active adults, and empty nesters looking for living options close to Downtown. Retail and restaurant options in a pedestrian friendly environment unique to North Lawrence should also be developed.

2 Employment Areas

This site currently consists of a local television studio, vacant office building, and more than an acre of surface parking. Redevelopment of the western portion of the site should reflect the adaptive reuse potential of the Lawrence Journal World building across the street and include live-work spaces for local entrepreneurs. The eastern portion of the site stands in an area of transition between residential uses to the east and the Downtown core to the west providing an opportunity for Downtown Lawrence to better respond to existing residential areas. This portion of the site should remain as surface parking to support the redevelopment of the western portion but should be better buffered along Rhode Island Street through a low masonry wall and better maintained landscape elements.

3 700 New Hampshire Street

This building is the only big box style development in Downtown. Although the built form is not ideal, it provides the opportunity to accommodate uses that do not often locate in traditional Downtown buildings but would make the area more livable. At approximately 20,000 square feet, the building could be adaptively reused for a neighborhood grocery store, pharmacy, or other retail use that would serve the day-to-day needs of Downtown residents. Alternatively, the existing building could be demolished and replaced with a mixed use building similar to those on New Hampshire Street. To ensure a smoother transition to the residential neighborhood to the east, new development should step down in height abutting Rhode Island Street.

4 734 Vermont

The site is a fully occupied, multitenant office building that houses housing telecommunications infrastructure. The space is reminiscent of a late 20th century server farm with its minimal windows and an essentially unbroken façade. While the businesses can and should remain, the building façade should be improved or the site should be redeveloped to reflect more modern office styles and capitalize on its adjacency to the Library.

5 Vermont Street Vacancy

These sites are currently vacant open space. The northern site is flanked by an office building and historic single-family home that has been converted into a salon. The southern site is adjacent to a church and office building. The vacancy of these sites contributes to the overall disconnect between the western side of Vermont Street and Downtown. Redevelopment of the sites could feature mixed-use buildings with office and commercial-service space on the ground floor and residential uses above.

ANTICIPATING REDEVELOPMENT

It is important to note that at any time redevelopment may occur in areas not identified on the opportunity sites map or discussed in this section.



6 838 & 840 Massachusetts Street

These two buildings are fit for redevelopment. 838 Massachusetts Street has sat vacant for several years and to help incentivize a new business the building could be redesigned to be at least two stories to better fit its specific needs. While the uses of the other building is appropriate and can remain, they could also be redeveloped to a similar height to provide the opportunity for residential above, if not a new office-related business.

7 U.S. Bank

U.S. Bank owns and operates this 70,000-square-foot office building in Downtown Lawrence. It is not only the tallest building on Massachusetts Street, but also one of the largest in terms of footprint. The entire building is split into two uses: office that operates out of the five-story tower and commercial, which is located in the single-story space. With the additional four stories attached, the single-story segment of the structure is wasting valuable space. This portion of the U.S. Bank building should be redeveloped to include at least two more stories to provide additional office space for the bank and another business, or residential units.

8 Army Career Center

This building, anchored by the Army Career Center, was built as a strip center in 1975, renovated in 1986, and updated its façade in 2017, but still maintains its function as a retail strip center. This property has experienced significant business turnover in the past decade, in part because it is not the appropriate type of retail development for Downtown Lawrence. The other part is its primary use as a recruitment office. This building is optimal real estate in Downtown with the highest visibility and access due to its location on Massachusetts Street. This building offers a key opportunity to be redeveloped as a multistory, mixed-use residential building with activity-promoting uses on the ground floor. These include restaurant, local shops, niche services, and entertainment.

9 Strip Center

This site currently an amalgamation of commercial service use with a drive-through, a parking lot, and an office building. The orientation of the buildings and the strip mall style sign located in the parking lot do not reflect the desired character for Downtown. The site should be redeveloped as a mixed-use building that fronts onto New Hampshire Street with office and commercial service uses on the first floor and residential uses above.

Parking Lot Redevelopment

The Opportunity Sites map highlights existing public surface parking lots Downtown. These lots represent significant redevelopment opportunities and should be planned for accordingly. Redevelopment should only be considered if the lost parking spots can be accommodated elsewhere or if they are deemed no longer necessary based on changes in transportation habits. The City should prioritize the redevelopment of parking lots that hold street corners, such as the lot located at Vermont Street and 9th Street. Redevelopment should include a mix of uses with retail, restaurant, service, and office uses on the first floor and office and residential uses above.

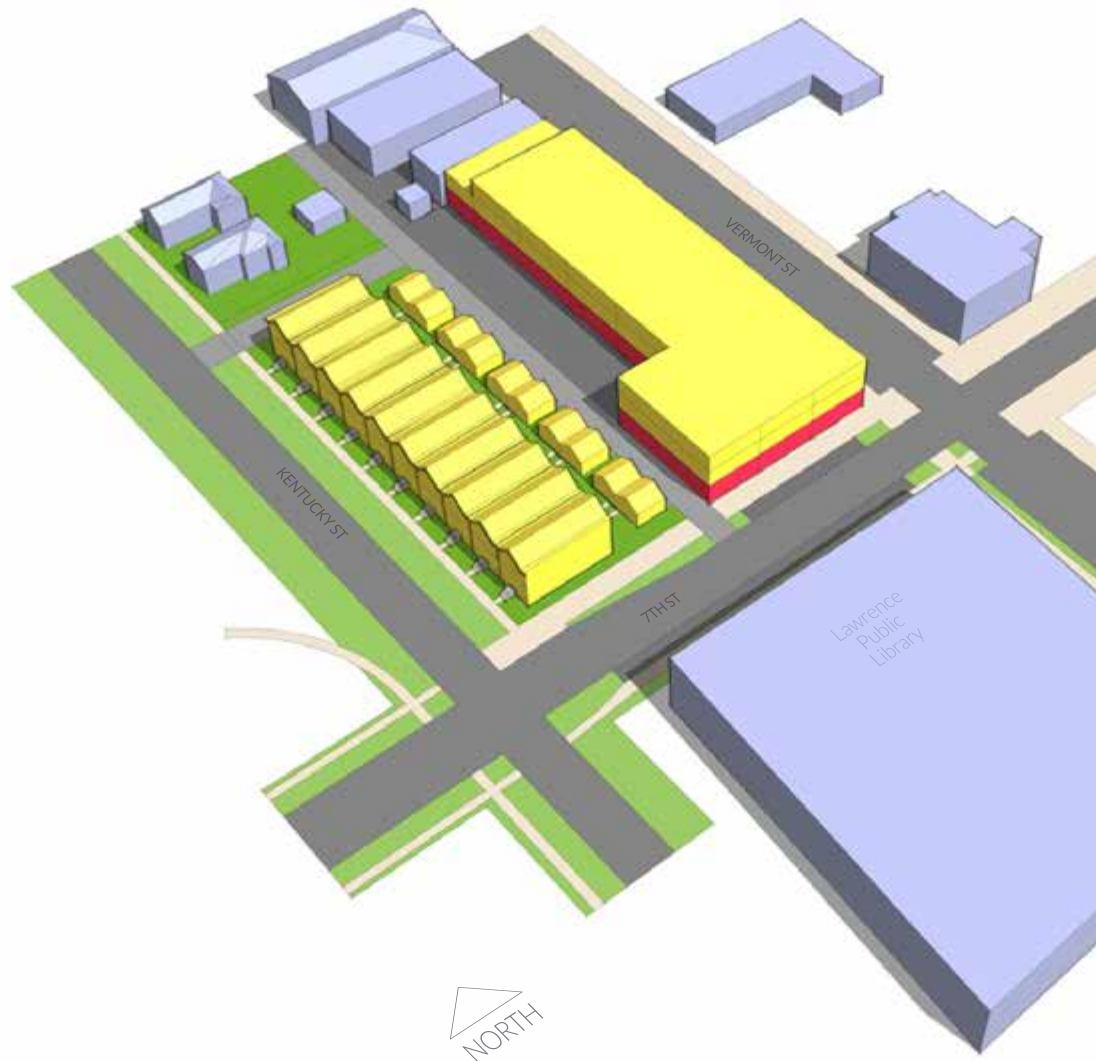
The City should utilize parking lot redevelopment as a means of accomplishing Downtown goals that are not otherwise supported by the market. This could include promoting small business ownership by establishing a business incubator or startup space as well as making Downtown living more attainable for all Lawrence residents by reserving a percent of units as affordable housing. One public lot could be used to accommodate a permanent location for the Farmers Market, as discussed in further detail on page 79. A parking lot should also be redeveloped for a safe and functional bus transfer station on Vermont Street or New Hampshire Street. This is discussed further on page 63.



Post Office

Catalyst Site Redevelopment Plan

Although a post office is a desirable use Downtown, the large footprint of the lot, lack of intensity in the development of the building, and incompatible architectural style makes this site a significant opportunity for redevelopment. Redevelopment of the eastern portion of the site should feature a multi-family residential building with limited ground floor institutional, retail, restaurant, or service uses ideally located at the corner of Vermont and 7th. Redevelopment of the western portion of the site should feature townhouses that face Buford M. Watson Jr. Park with alley-loaded parking. Townhouses on Kentucky Street would help to transition between Downtown and adjacent residential neighborhoods while adding residential density.



NOTE: Site plan and 3D model are for illustrative purposes only.



6th & Mass

Catalyst Site Redevelopment Plan

This site is comprised of the former Lawrence Journal World production building and an underutilized public parking lot. The site has the potential to be adaptively reused to accommodate new uses but could also be razed and completely redeveloped. The adaptive reuse of the building should retain its industrial nature in a manner that is compatible with Downtown through uses such as artisan manufacturing live-work spaces. The redevelopment of the site should work to better integrate the area with the Massachusetts Street subarea by maintaining the street wall; mirroring the rhythm of storefront widths, windows, and building heights; and complementing the architectural features found there.



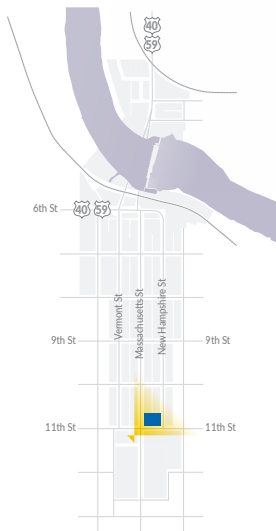
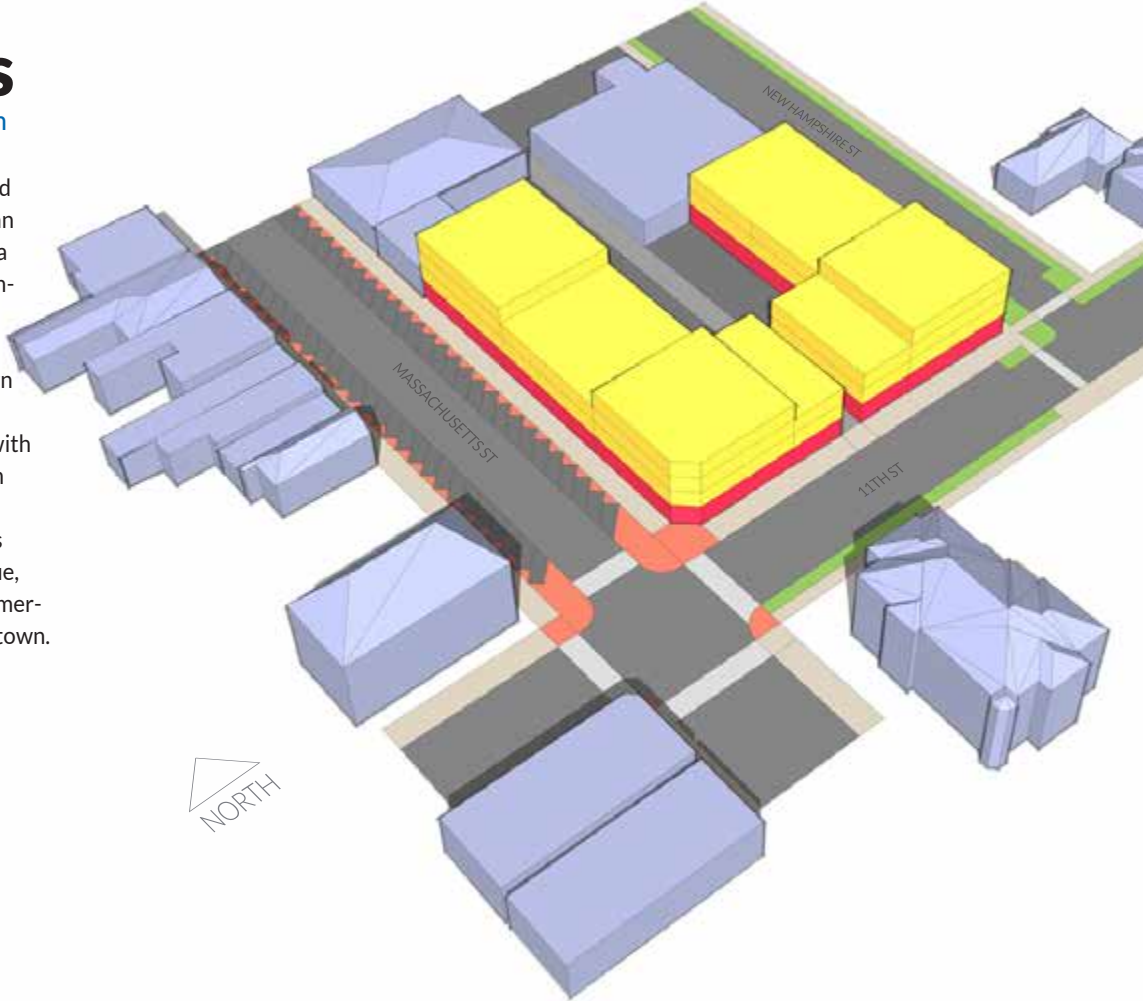
NOTE: Site plan and 3D model are for illustrative purposes only.



11th & Mass

Catalyst Site Redevelopment Plan

This site is comprised of the vacant and blighted former Allen Press building, an underutilized private parking lot, and a warehouse building utilized by a Downtown entertainment venue. The site is blighted and severely impacts the appearance and vitality of the southern end of Downtown. The site should be redeveloped as a mixed-use building with ground floor entertainment uses. Such uses would work to draw people into Downtown and capture concert-goers from the adjacent entertainment venue, serving as an exciting and unique commercial anchor on the south side of Downtown. Upper floor uses should include multi-family units or offices.



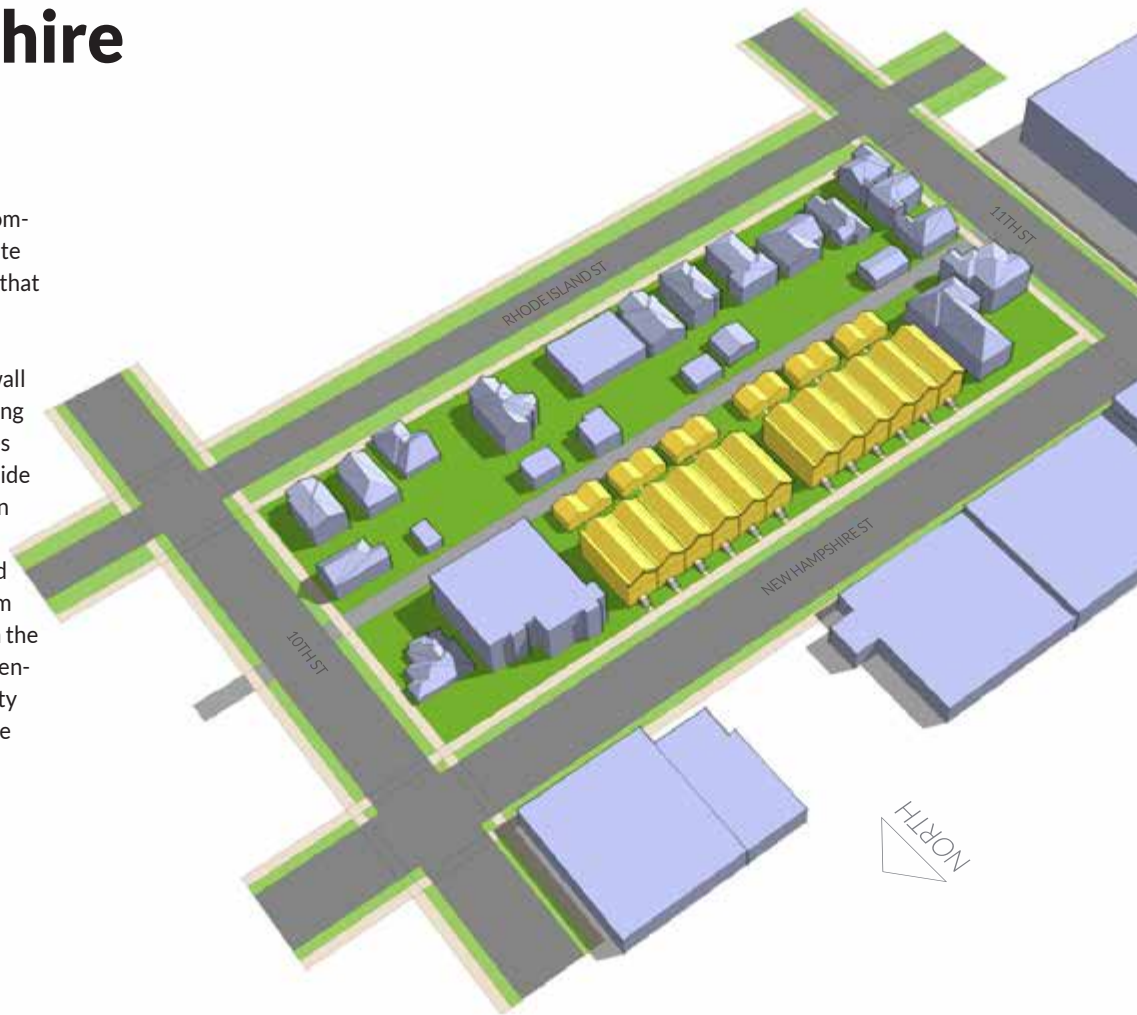
NOTE: Site plan and 3D model are for illustrative purposes only.



New Hampshire

Catalyst Site Redevelopment Plan

This site is currently a private surface parking lot associated with the large building across the street. After reaccommodating the parking elsewhere, the site should be redeveloped as townhouses that face New Hampshire Street with alley-loaded parking. Developing the parking lot would maintain the streetwall along New Hampshire Street, reinforcing the pedestrian experience. Townhomes should be four stories in height to provide additional density without infringing on the lower-density character of the adjacent neighborhood. Parking behind the townhouses will help separate them from the smaller-scale single-family on the other side of the alley. Additional residential development at an increased density could also help provide more affordable housing options in Downtown.



NOTE: Site plan and 3D model are for illustrative purposes only.



Strategic Investment

Properties identified for strategic investment include properties that need interior and exterior rehabilitation, but should not be considered for complete redevelopment. The structure and often use of the existing property is worth maintaining as long as significant improvements are made to better match the character of adjacent buildings and support the overall Functional Subarea. Fire Station #1 at the northwest corner of Kentucky Street and 8th Street is a good example of strategic investment that should be used as a best practice for the four identified sites. The four spaces identified for strategic investment include the Lawrence Riverfront Area, the Post Office, the Masonic Temple building, and the Community Building.

Adaptive Reuse

Adaptive reuse includes relatively well-maintained buildings that are structurally sound and reflect the desired character of Downtown. Reuse typically requires interior renovation to meet the needs of the new use, rather than a complete rehabilitation of the entire structure.





Activate Vacant Storefronts

The natural cycle of business in a downtown setting often involves population or economic growth causing asking rents to increase, which leads to new construction and an increase in vacancy; this then ideally results in rents adjusting downward and therefore a decrease vacancy. Although vacancy is a natural part of this cycle, chronic vacancy, where a building or property is vacant for one year or more, can negatively impact the activity and vibrancy of a downtown and lead to a perception of the area being unsafe, unkept, and uninviting. Chronic vacancy is often the result of property owners or managers preferring to leave buildings vacant rather than adjust rents to meet the market.

Updating the City's approval processes for the opening of new businesses to make them more streamlined, transparent, and user-friendly is one strategy that can be employed to encourage entrepreneurship and diversify the ownership of Downtown businesses.

Although the City cannot force property owners to decrease their asking rents in order to fill these vacancies, it can penalize the practice of leaving a building vacant in the hopes of landing a tenant who can pay the asking rent. Many communities across the nation have penalized this type of owner behavior or strategy through the establishment of vacancy fees or vacancy taxes. For example, Arlington, Virginia established its vacancy fee program in 2017, requiring the owners or managers of vacant building to register with the City and pay a \$400 annual fee for each persistently vacant storefront.

Seventeen empty storefronts were registered in Arlington Center at the beginning of the first year, and only six remained by the end of it.

The City should consider establishing a vacancy fee or vacancy tax program to address chronic vacancy Downtown. Revenue generated by the program should be combined with the revenue generated by the recommended Business Improvement District (as discussed on page 111) and utilized for Downtown improvement projects that counteract the negative impacts of chronic vacancy.

To ensure property owners and managers have the flexibility needed to fill vacant storefronts and avoid paying a vacancy fee or tax, the City should assess the required processes for opening a business Downtown. The assessment should be done in coordination with Downtown Lawrence Inc., Downtown business owners, and Downtown property owners and managers to identify areas where the City can streamline approval processes as well as make the process more transparent and user-friendly. Other communities have accomplished this by increasing the number and type of approvals that can be accomplished administratively, which in turn decreases the time and cost associated with the approval process.

Vacant buildings should not sit dormant without any hint of future reinvestment. Property owners should be encouraged to increase the vitality of their buildings by decorating the windows similar to a canvas. Possibilities include public art or the posting of signs that say "Coming Soon..." or "What Should Go Here?"





Façade Enhancement

Several buildings that exhibit the ideal built form suffer from deteriorating or altered façades that detract from the otherwise cohesive and attractive appearance of Downtown. To encourage reinvestment in building façades, the City should update its Downtown Design Guidelines and establish a Façade Enhancement Program to require façade restoration or enhancement when substantial rehabilitation is planned for a building.

The Downtown Design Guidelines should offer detailed examples of the types of improvements that should be made, such as repairing or replacing façade tile, brick, and woodwork; scraping, priming, and painting of window frames, cornices, and doors; or the repair or replacement of awnings, canopies, signs, or sign mounting hardware.

A Façade Enhancement Program would offer an incentive, such as a loan, grant, or tax deduction, using a combination of federal, state, and local funding, to property owners who make façade improvements that restore the historic appearance of the building or comply with established design guidelines. The state (25%) and federal (20%) historic preservation tax credits are two funding sources that could be utilized for the program. The program should be open to all businesses Downtown that are in need of a facelift, but should actively target businesses, such as Weavers, Jefferson's, or Brown's Shoes, whose historic façades have been covered. The adjacent map identifies those properties that would benefit from façade enhancement.





RECOMMENDED FAÇADE ENHANCEMENT

To encourage reinvestment in building façades, the City should establish a Façade Enhancement Program.

Façade Enhancement

Several buildings that exhibit the ideal built form for Downtown suffer from deteriorating or altered façades that detract from the otherwise cohesive and attractive appearance of Downtown. To encourage reinvestment in building façades, the City should establish a Façade Enhancement Program.






Legend

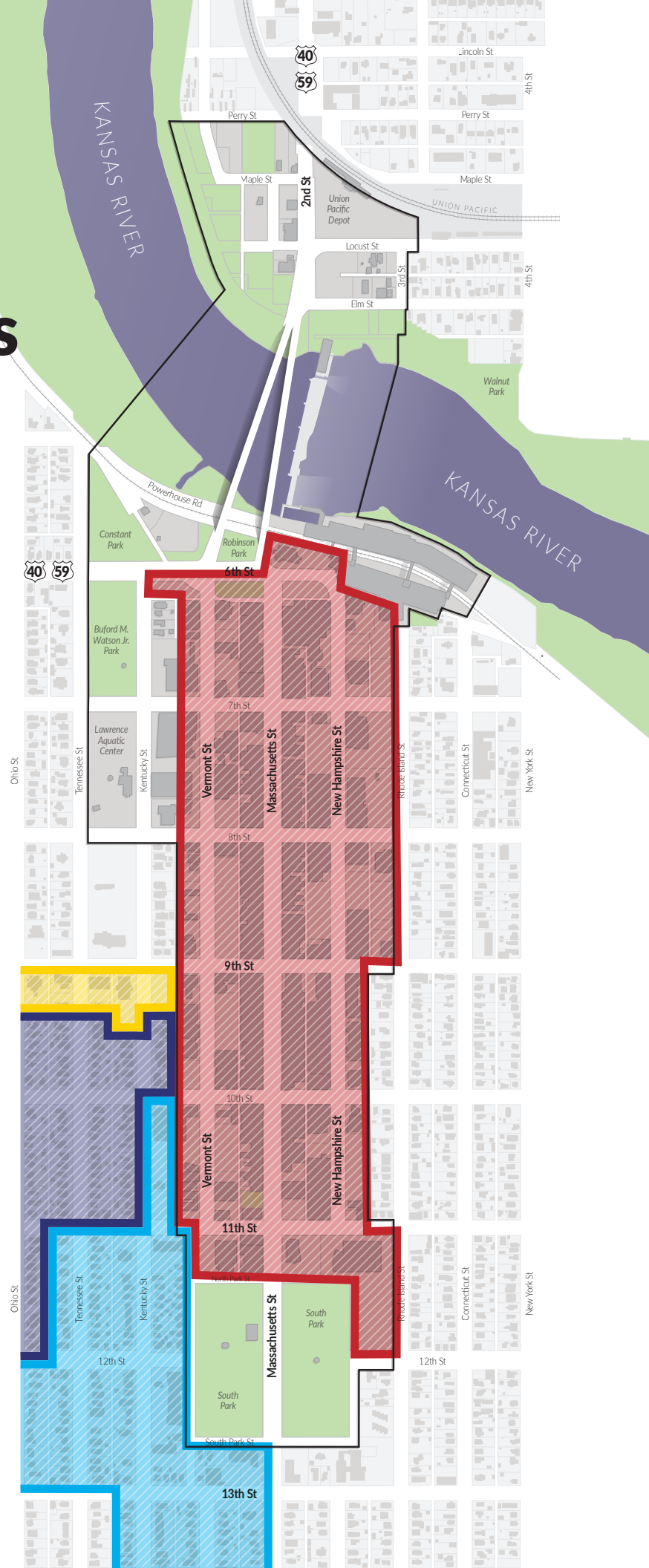
-  Study Area
-  Façade Improvement



Downtown Zoning Overlays

Legend

-  Study Area
-  Downtown Urban Conservation Overlay District
-  Oread Medium Density - UC3
-  Oread Historic District - UC5
-  Oread Commercial - UC6





Downtown Urban Conservation Overlay District

The City has established several Urban Conservation Overlay Districts to accomplish the following objectives:

- Encourage development that conforms to the size, orientation and setting of existing buildings in a neighborhood or area;
- Reduce the need for zoning variances for development
- Provide building setbacks, lot dimensions, and related physical characteristics
- Foster development that is compatible with the scale and physical character of original buildings in a neighborhood or area through the use of development/design standards and guidelines
- Conserve cultural resources, historic resources, and property values within an identified neighborhood or area

The majority of Downtown falls within the Downtown Urban Conservation Overlay District and is therefore subject to the Downtown Design Guidelines. All projects are reviewed by staff for compliance with the applicable standards for that property and project. Construction, alteration, demolition, or removal of a structure or part of a structure within this overlay may require review and approval by the Historic Resources Commission.

The Downtown Design Guidelines were adopted in 2001 and amended in 2008 and dictate required design principles, standards, and criteria for new development Downtown. The guidelines are both prescriptive and subjective, which can make compliance difficult, confusing, and time consuming and can limit the quality and creativity of infill development. To ensure that Downtown Lawrence continues to evolve and progress while also preserving its past, it is recommended that the City updates its Downtown Design Guidelines. The new guidelines should provide a range of design principles, standards, and criteria for infill development and new development based on the functional subareas identified on page 22.

Architecturally & Historically Significant Structures




Lawrence has a rich history that is evident in the architecture and design of Downtown. Downtown contains numerous structures that are architecturally and historically significant and contribute to the district's character and unique sense of place. The City currently protects 36 properties within or adjacent to Downtown through inclusion in the national, state, or local registers of historic places. Further, the majority of Downtown is located within the Downtown Historic District.

The City should continue to protect appropriate historic properties and resources within Downtown. To accomplish this, the City should work with the Historic Resources Commission to identify additional properties that should be included in the national, state, or local registers of historic places or be added as contributing buildings to the Downtown Historic District.

Historic Resources

The City and its residents have continually advocated for the preservation of these historic resources and have established and utilized several tools to do so. These tools include national and state historic registration, local historic designation, and the historic preservation ordinance. The following map identifies the total area in Downtown that is protected by the Historic Preservation Ordinance. The map reveals that a significant portion of Downtown Lawrence falls under its protection.

Legend

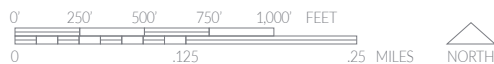
-  Study Area
-  National & Kansas Register of Historic Places
-  Lawrence Register of Historic Places

National & Kansas Register of Historic Places (Individually listed)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Union Pacific Depot | 22. Charles and Adeline Duncan House |
| 2. Consolidated Barb Wire Company Building | 27. George and Annie Bell House |
| 5. Santa Fe Depot | 28. Col. James and Eliza Blood House |
| 7. United States Post Office | 29. Dr. Frederick D. Morse House |
| 8. Eldridge Hotel | 30. Watkins Bank (Old City Hall) |
| 14. Lucy Hobbs Taylor House | 31. English Lutheran Church |
| 15. Carnegie Library | 34. Douglas County Courthouse |
| 19. Benedict House | 35. John N. Roberts House |
| 20. Plymouth Congregational Church | |

Lawrence Register of Historic Places (Individually listed)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 3. J. B. Shane Thompson Studio | 18. Social Service League |
| 4. Otto Fischer House | 21. Hanna Building |
| 6. A. J. Griffin House | 23. Hendry House |
| 9. Miller's Hall | 24. Shalor Eldridge Residence |
| 10. Octavius W. McAllaster Residence | 25. McFarland House |
| 11. R. W. Sparr House | 26. William Watts House |
| 12. House Building | 32. Parnham House |
| 13. Fire Station No. 1 | 33. Rhody Delahunty House |
| 16. Edward Manter House | 35. South Park |
| 17. Turnhalle | 36. John N. Roberts House |





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CHAPTER FOUR













Transportation & Circulation

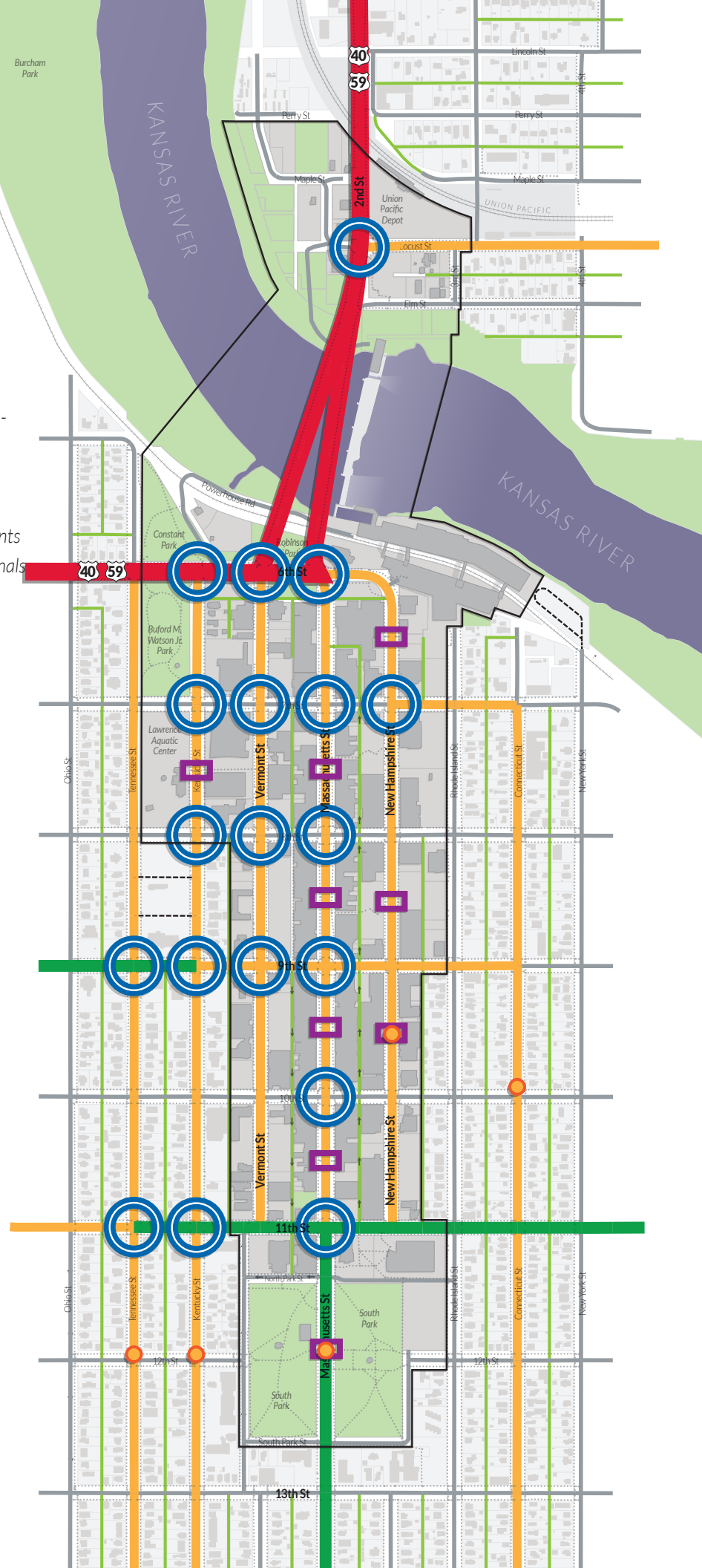
Downtowns should accommodate all modes of transportation, including walking, cycling, and public transit. Those who travel to Downtown should be greeted with an environment that makes parking and walking between multiple destinations the natural and preferable choice. This chapter provides recommendations to improve the experience of mobility throughout Downtown.

Roadway Network

The primary way most visitors arrive and experience Downtown it is through the roadway network. Whether walking, cycling, taking transit, or driving, the network shapes the impression of Downtown. This adjacent map presents Downtown's existent roadway network, highlighting elements like street classifications, signalized intersections, hawk signals, mid-block crossings, and sidewalks.

Legend

-  Study Area
-  Principal Arterial
-  Minor Arterial
-  Collector
-  Local Road
-  Private Road
-  Alley
-  One-ways
-  Signalized Intersection
-  Hawk Signal
-  Midblock Crossing
-  Sidewalks





Recent Improvements

The roadway network in Downtown Lawrence provides convenient access to goods and services, efficient vehicular circulation, safe mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists, and adequate parking for patrons, employees, and residents. The following recommendations are intended to improve the roadway experience for all travelers.

North Lawrence Access

Over 22,000 vehicles cross the bridges connecting North Lawrence to Downtown each day according to the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT). They function well but their connectivity to Massachusetts Street can be confusing, particularly for visitors. Entering traffic at the 6th Street and Vermont Street intersection should be improved with better painting and striping to clearly indicate lane direction. This should include obvious delineation of turn lanes both from the Vermont Street bridge and onto 6th Street. This will prevent confusion and the accidental turn onto the lanes heading back north over the Massachusetts Street Bridge. A redesign of the right turn onto 6th Street to help slow traffic for crossing pedestrians should also be considered.



6th & Massachusetts Street Intersection




The City recently completed a signal prioritization project at 6th and Massachusetts Streets to improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians as well as reduce confusion among drivers. This is a critical intersection as the northern gateway into Downtown. To build off this improvement the City should consider upgrading striping to help clarify direction and further limit accidents.

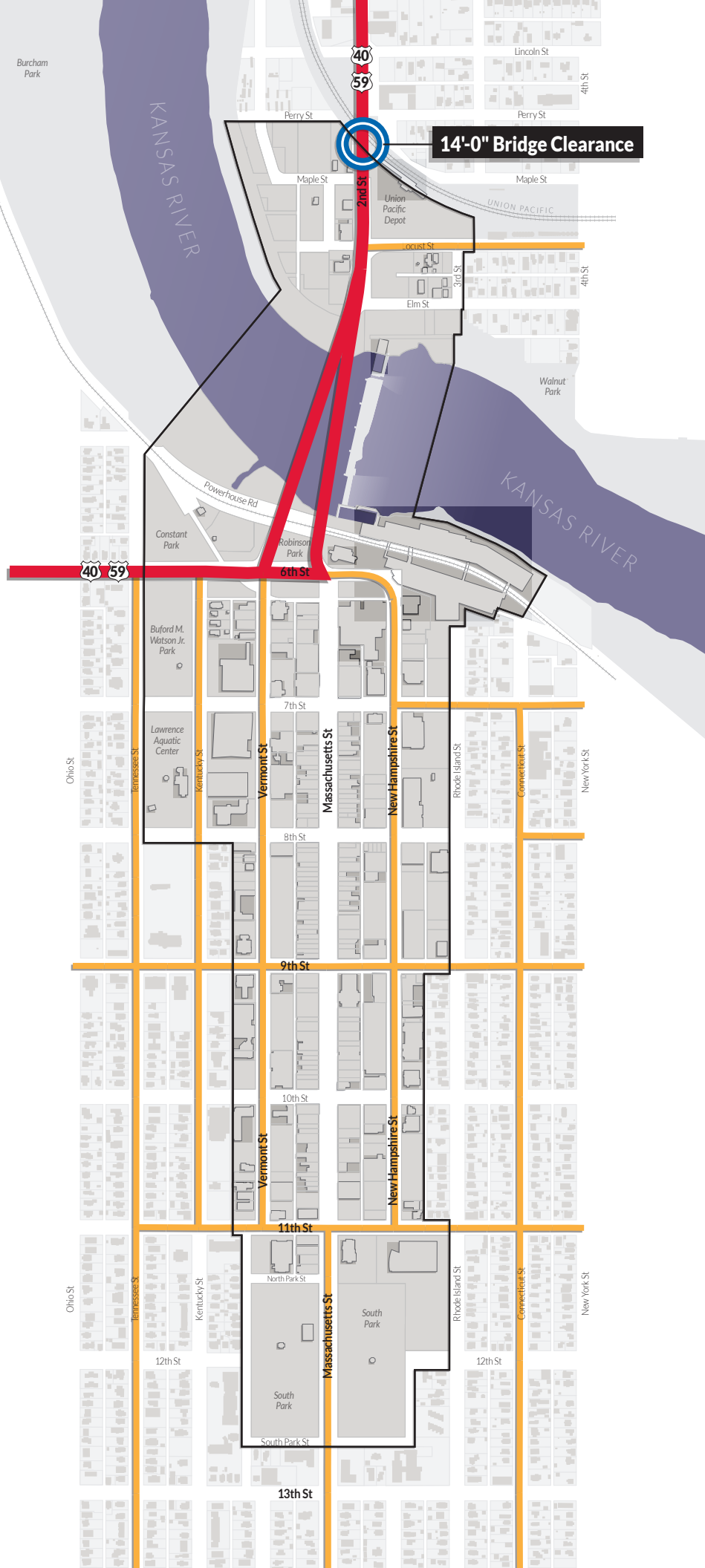


Trucks

Many Downtown businesses require materials to be shipped in on trucks for the creation and sale of their goods and services. The City should work with business owners to establish a schedule for delivery to manage the amount of trucks in Downtown and help reduce traffic congestion.

Truck Routes


-  Study Area
-  Truck Route
-  Truck Delivery Route

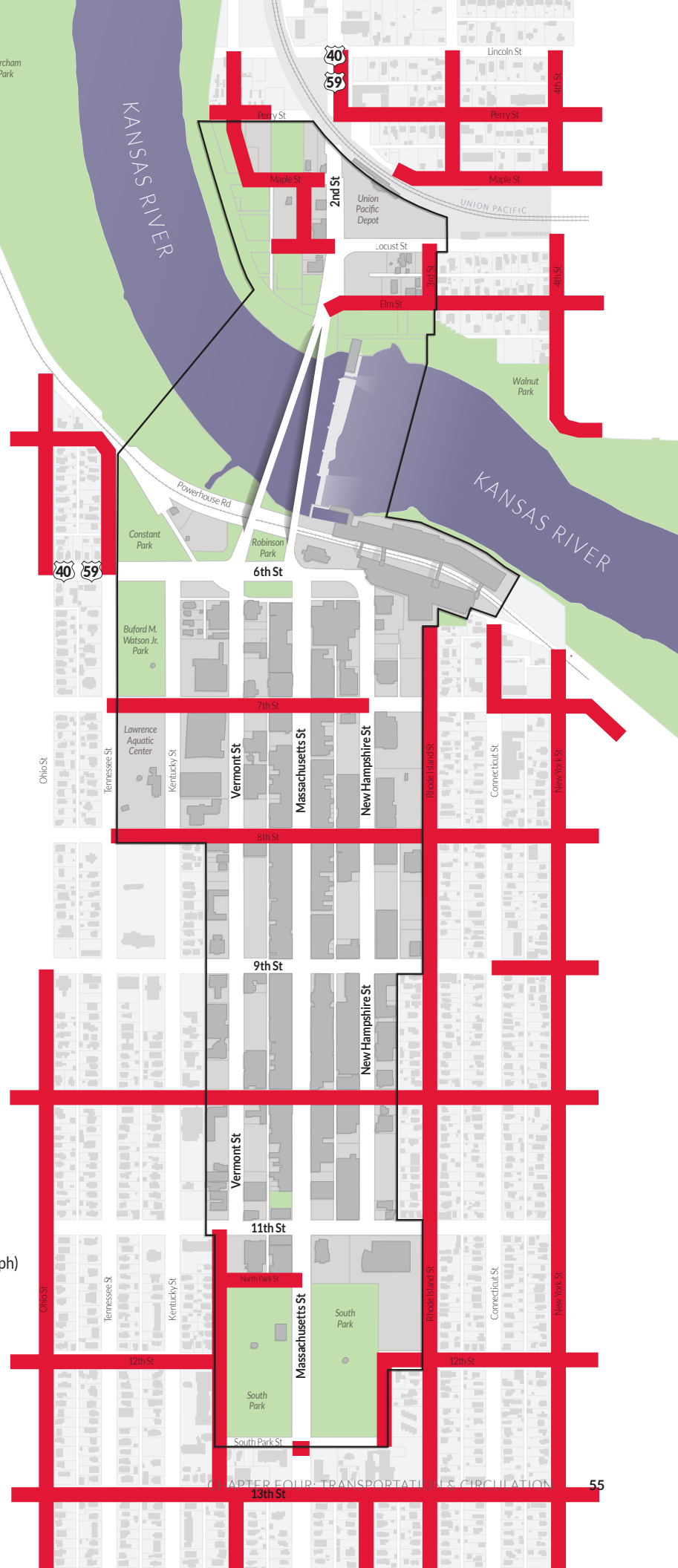


Speed Reduction

The attractiveness of Downtown as a destination in part relies upon the slowing of vehicle traffic through and around it. In January 2021, the City launched a Safer Neighborhood Speeds campaign and Neighborhood Traffic Management Program to improve safety on neighborhood streets throughout Lawrence. The former aims to do so through targeted public education while the latter is strategically reducing neighborhood speed limits from 30 miles per hour to 25. This reduction will affect 7th, 8th, and 10th Streets in Downtown. The City should complete the planned speed reduction on the streets to improve safety in Downtown and connectivity to the Old West Lawrence and East Lawrence neighborhoods.

Speed Reduction

-  Study Area
-  30 mph (Changing to 25 mph)



Access Management





Frequent curb cuts and driveways disrupt the sidewalk network and remove opportunities for elements that could enhance the appearance of the Downtown, such as buildings, decorative fences, or landscaping. As properties in Downtown are redeveloped, or should current developments no longer require their use, curb cuts should be eliminated.

The City should continue its efforts to establish continuous and well-connected parking areas to the rear of buildings and promote shared access drives, alley access, side street access, and cross-access to eliminate excessive or redundant curb cuts along the public right-of-way.

Massachusetts Street

The use of curb cuts and driveways should be discouraged along Massachusetts Street. Traffic should be directed to alleys and efforts should be made to consolidate parking lots at the rear of buildings where possible.

Breaks in the Sidewalk

-  Study Area
-  Maintain Existing Alley Access
-  Maintain Existing Curb Cut
-  Remove Existing Curb Cut





Alley/ Service Street

Alleys and service streets are their own unique place in Downtown Lawrence. They function as traditional service roads for deliveries, trash collection, and utility easements. Alleys in Downtown Lawrence are also used as pedestrian cut-throughs from New Hampshire Street and Vermont Street parking lots to Massachusetts Street or to avoid traffic on the main roadways.

The narrow right-of-way combined with their mid-block location can create blind spots for both pedestrians and drivers. The City should work to add safety measures such as stop zones, signage (e.g. “watch for pedestrians,” “watch for vehicles,” “honk when exiting,” etc.), and two-way mirrors. The City should explore establishing an alley improvement program to beautify and repurpose these previously overlooked public urban spaces. Improvements should include repaving roadway surfaces; installing lighting; incorporating clearly marked pedestrian crossings between parking lots, pedestrian cut-throughs, and rear access points to businesses; and consolidating or co-locating utility lines to improve their service function and reduce visual clutter.





DOWNTOWN PARKING APP

The City of Lawrence Parking Operations Office is in the process of implementing a mobile payment application for Downtown parking. The app will allow Downtown visitors to pay for metered and garage parking spaces completely through the app. The app will also notify visitors when their paid for time is running low and allow them to add funds and extend their stay. It will include two vendors, Passport and Park Mobile. The University of Kansas currently uses Park Mobile and the City has added it to create consistency for students. The mobile app will also include a merchant account that allows business owners to pay for their customers parking if they so choose, like a digital parking validation.

In conjunction with the parking payment app, the Parking Operations Office will also be introducing license plate recognition (LPR) technology to replace the current parking enforcement process of chalking tires. The new enforcement technology will not only make the process more efficient; it will also provide the City with occupancy, length of stay, and other parking utilization data. Initially, this data should be utilized internally to guide the location of short- and long-term parking spaces as well as the duration of the permitted stay, helping to right-size Downtown's parking supply with visitor demand. Going forward, the City should explore opportunities to develop a public facing application utilizing the LPR data that informs visitors where available parking spaces are located in real time.

Parking

According to the 2017 Parking Operations and Development Plan, Downtown Lawrence has 3,180 public parking spaces distributed between off-street lots, parking decks, and on-street parking spaces. Downtown also has 193 private parking spaces in both off-street lots and parking decks. Based on the City's household size of 2.37 (2017 American Community Survey 1-year estimate), the existing supply could accommodate roughly 7,500 visitors.

It was discussed during outreach that many Downtown visitors, residents, and employees perceive parking as difficult. These visitors often prefer to park right outside of their desired destination, as they would be able to when visiting an auto-oriented business such as a strip mall or big box store. This preference has led to a belief that there is not sufficient parking Downtown, when in fact the issue is more likely attributed to the location and visibility of existing parking.

Given the pedestrian-oriented nature and fabric of Downtown Lawrence, it is not feasible or desirable to accommodate parking in a manner that would allow all users to park in such close proximity to the shop or restaurant they are visiting. Instead, the City should continue to foster a "park once" approach, where it is easy to park in strategic locations and then walk on foot from location to location rather than drive. It should be expected that parking may not be available directly in front of the desired location. Walk appeal, fostered by an interesting streetscape with things to see and do along the way can assist in encouraging people to make the short two or three block walk.

Downtown Parking Options

One strategy to help mitigate the perception of a lack of parking is the use of signs that efficiently and easily direct drivers to available parking. Additionally, streetscaping can make the walk from the parking space to the destination more attractive and enjoyable. The City has already installed signs identifying each public off-street lot and deck, however there are few signs to direct people to the parking areas or to identify where parking is available. To more effectively communicate to visitors about the location and availability of parking, it is recommended that the City:

- Develop a more prominent identification system for parking facilities, including advance-notice signs for motorists and location signs for pedestrians. The City should explore the feasibility of a system that would provide the ability to improve advance-notice signs with a real-time count of available parking spaces.
- Install real-time parking count signs at the entrance to parking decks.
- Link existing parking lots and decks with the remainder of Downtown through streetscape elements (further detail provided on page 95).
- The City should continue to dedicate on-street parking spaces for curbside pick-up.




Off-Street Pay Stations

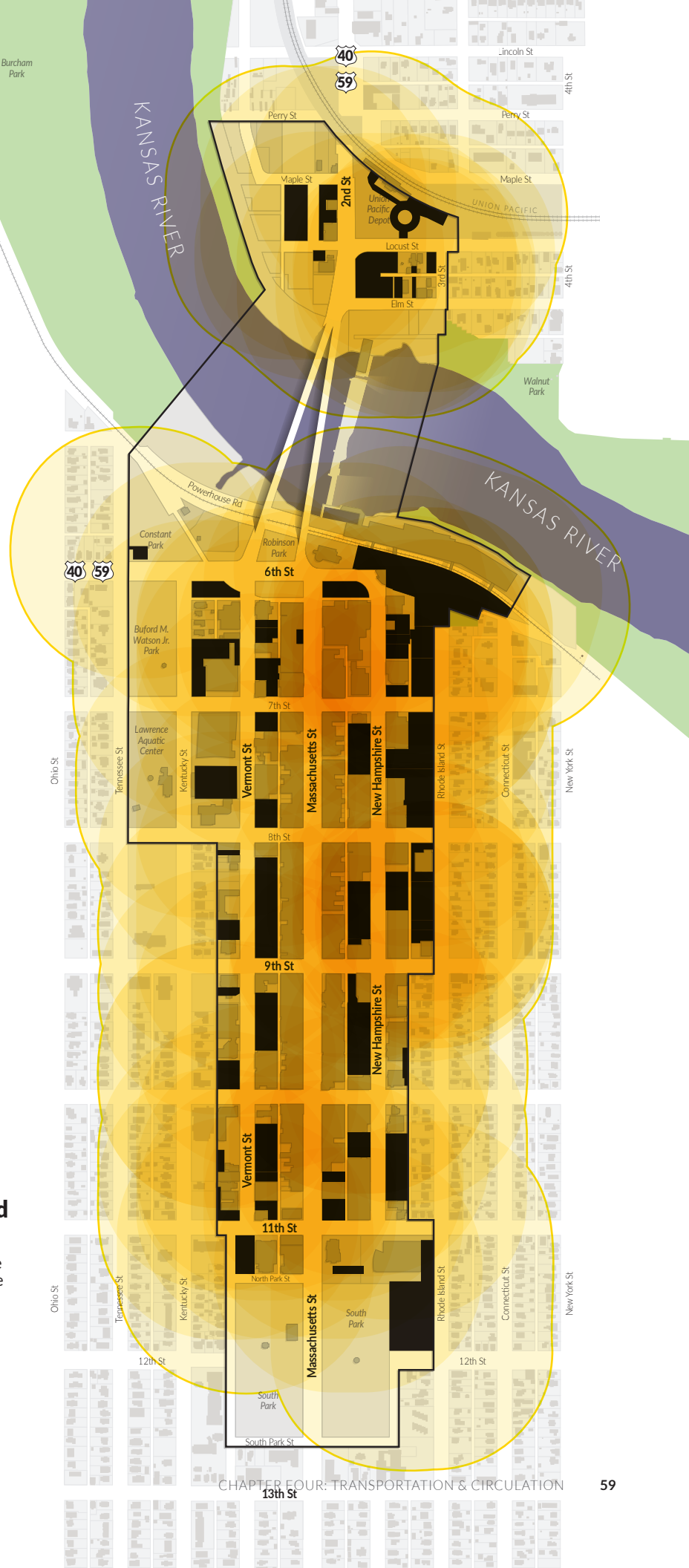
Existing pay stations in Downtown parking garages and some lots are in the process of being replaced with new payment kiosks. The kiosks will allow multiple payment options and help simplify parking operations. On certain lots, the new kiosks will replace single-space meters, helping to remove clutter and cleanup the streetscape.

Off-Street Parking Walkshed

Downtown Lawrence is well supplied with parking; however the location of parking lots and decks has led to the perception that parking Downtown is confusing and difficult. By fostering a “park once” culture, the City can help to combat these concerns and make visiting Downtown a more enjoyable experience for all users. To accomplish this, the City should include walk times on wayfinding signs. As this map illustrates, opportunities for shopping, dining, and entertainment are all available within a two minute walk of a parking lot or deck. Effectively communicating this short walk time can help encourage people to park in a lot or deck rather than circle Massachusetts Street looking for an on-street space.

Off-Street Walkshed

-  Study Area
-  Off-Street Public/Private Parking (does not include on-street parking)
-  2-Min Walkshed





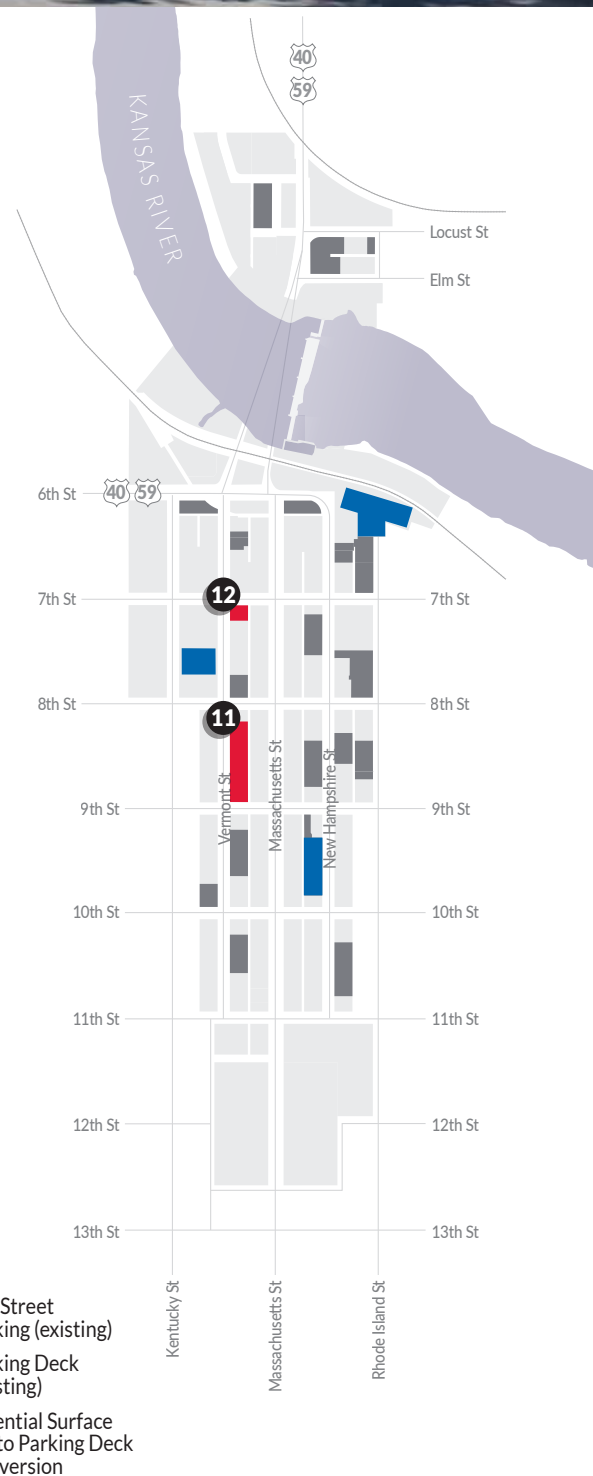
Parking Lot to Deck Conversion

As Downtown Lawrence develops, and new residential and nonresidential uses locate in the area, the existing parking supply will be strained. To proactively combat this, the City should begin planning and budgeting to convert existing surface parking lots in strategic locations into parking decks. The conversion of surface lots to decks will also help to offset parking spaces that are lost as a part of parking lot redevelopment as discussed on page 37. The following map preliminarily identifies the surface parking lots that the City should prioritize for conversion. Prioritization is based on peak utilization of the parking spaces in each lot as detailed in the 2017 Parking Operations and Development Plan. Lots 11 and 12 present the greatest initial opportunity for conversion to a deck. The prioritized lots are at least 90 percent occupied during both the am and pm peak parking periods, as detailed in the table below. Proximity to existing parking decks was also considered in the prioritization analysis.

Lot #	AM Peak Utilization Rate	PM Peak Utilization Rate
2	54%	56%
3	34%	60%
4	73%	79%
5	64%	83%
7	71%	58%
8	83%	90%
9	19%	87%
10	83%	82%
11	100%	89%
12	96%	96%
14	64%	81%
15	86%	78%
16	70%	14%
17	40%	40%

Downtown Garages

NH	63\$	72%
RF	30%	46%
VT	53%	57%





Parking Regulations

The majority of Downtown Lawrence is governed by the CD Downtown Commercial Zoning District. This district is exempt from the requirement to provide off-street parking due to the unique characteristics of the area. Although it is common practice to exempt non-residential uses in downtown settings from providing off-street parking, most communities continue to require residential uses to do so to ensure that public parking is not overwhelmed by resident needs. As more residential units are developed Downtown, the exemption will continue to strain existing parking facilities and could result in a greater influx of parking in adjacent residential neighborhoods.

To prevent this, it is recommended that the City revises section 20-901(f) of its Development Code to only exempt nonresidential uses from the requirement to provide off-street parking spaces. The number of parking spaces for residential uses should be as detailed in the following table. The recommended requirements are lower than what the City requires for attached dwellings, multi-dwelling structures, and non-ground floor dwellings in other parts of the City since the people who live in Downtown settings tend to own fewer or no cars and utilize alternative modes of transportation at a higher rate.

The City should require that a certain percentage of spots be accommodated under or above ground level. To ensure that this requirement does not over burden developers, the City should offer the option of a fee-in-lieu of providing the parking for a maximum of 20 percent of the required parking spaces. The remaining 80 percent would be required to be provided for onsite through a combination of ground level and under/above ground level spaces. Alternatively, the City could offer developers the option of replacing more than 20 percent of required parking with an increased fee. The fee increase should be based on a sliding scale that increases with the amount of parking that is offset. This option should only be considered if the City has established plans for the conversion of surface parking lots to parking decks as discussed previously in this chapter.

An as-of-right reduction to required parking for deed restricted affordable housing units can help make the City's zoning regulations more equitable by ensuring that the cost of parking is not passed on to low-income individuals who own cars at a lower rate.













Use Category	Market Rate Unit	Deed Restricted Affordable Unit
Attached Dwelling	1.5 spaces per unit	1 space per unit
Multi-Dwelling Structure	1 space per unit	.75 spaces per unit
Non-Ground Floor Dwelling	.75 spaces per unit	.5 spaces per unit

The City should also consider allowing for an as-of-right reduction in required parking if a certain percent of the units in the building are deed restricted affordable housing, as shown in the following table. Low-income individuals and households tend to own cars at a lower rate than even the average downtown resident. Since developers often pass on the cost to provide parking to tenants, outsized parking requirements can cause rental rates to increase. Alternatively, the City could allow for a reduction or exemption of the amount of parking that is required to be provided under or above ground—lowering the cost of providing required parking.

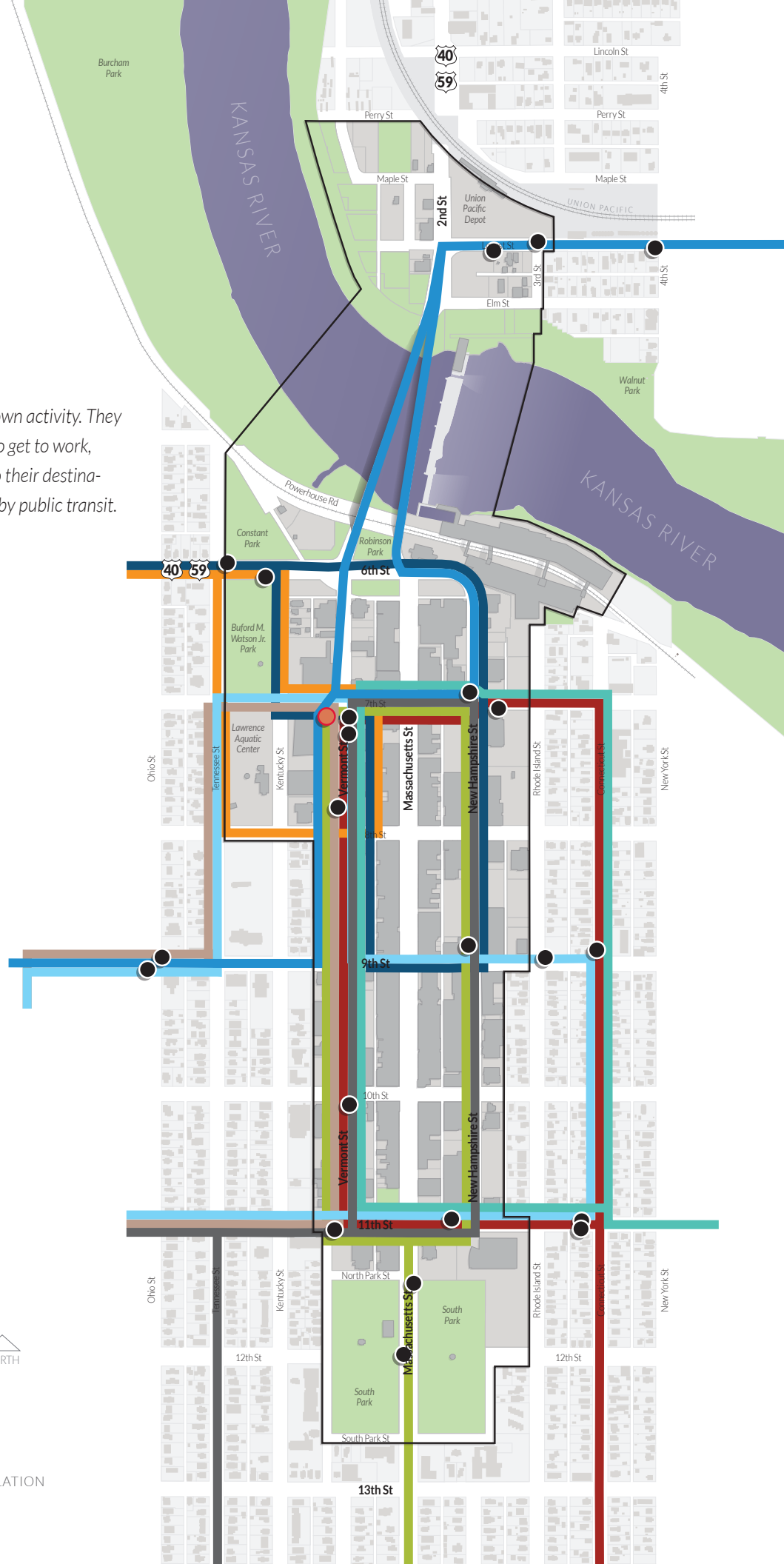
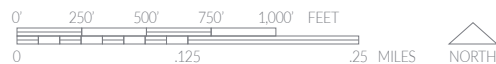
Public Transit

Public transit options are important to Downtown activity. They are used by residents to get home, employees to get to work, locals to get to businesses, and visitors to get to their destination. Downtown Lawrence is locally accessible by public transit.

Legend

-  Study Area
-  Bus Route 1
-  Bus Route 3
-  Bus Route 4
-  Bus Route 6
-  Bus Route 7
-  Bus Route 10
-  Bus Route 11
-  Bus Route 15
-  Bus Route 44
-  Bus Stop (Lawrence Transit System and KU on Wheels)
-  Greyhound Pickup/Dropoff

2019 Lawrence Transit System Route Data





Public Transit

Lawrence Transit System and KU on Wheels operate bus services in Lawrence with eight routes in Downtown. The two organizations also maintain T-Lift and JayLift respectively, a door-to-door paratransit service.

The City recently completed a Bus Transfer Location Analysis to identify potential locations for additional transfers in its public transit system. The City of Lawrence is designing a primary bus transfer facility at Bob Billings Parkway and Crestline Drive with construction set to begin in 2022.











Transfer Analysis

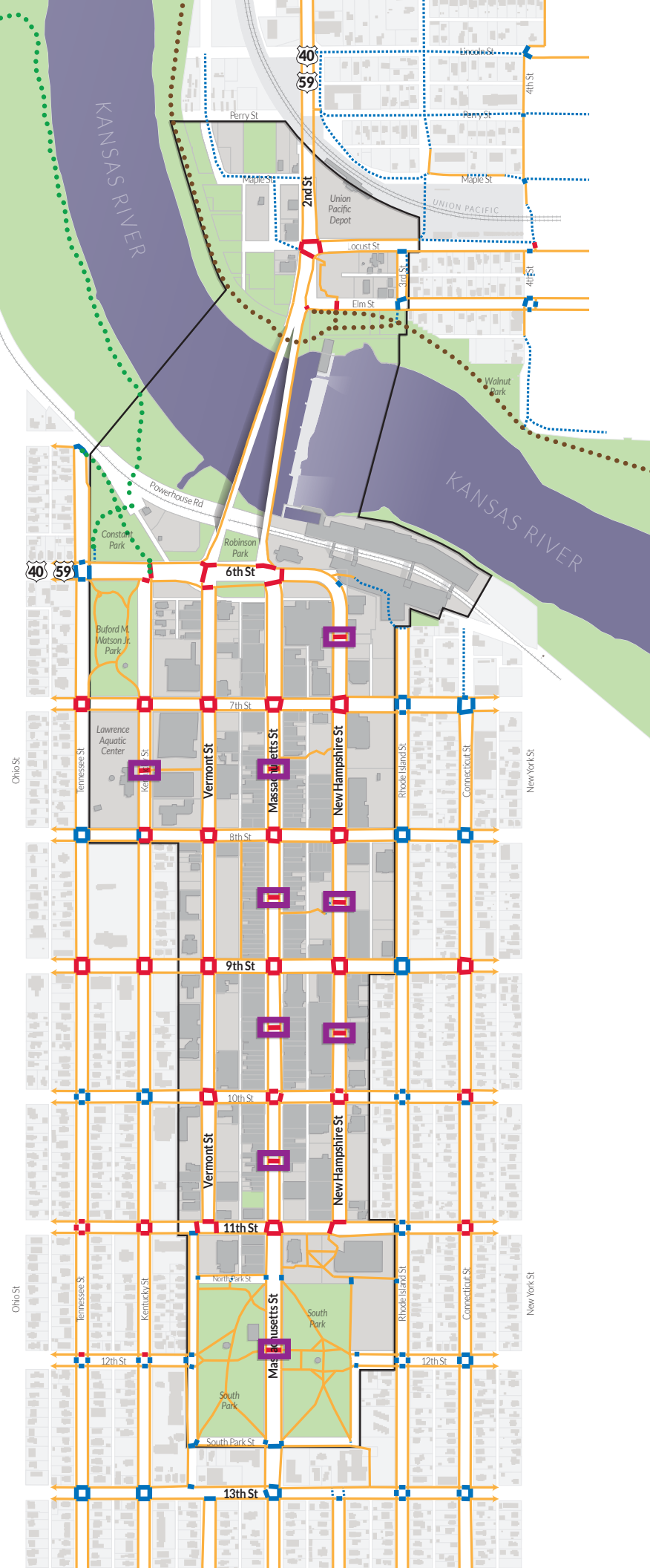
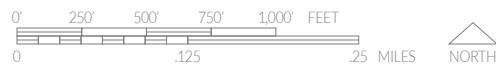
The City desires to keep the existing station Downtown to maintain accessibility to the area, however renovations may be required to do so. Lawrence is currently considering three-to-five sawtooth bus bays with a canopy that includes passenger seating underneath. This redesign would likely require some city-owned parking spaces to create the necessary footprint. A potential new location is the 800 or 900 block of Vermont or 700 block of New Hampshire. Once a location has been confirmed, design of the transfer facility is expected to be completed in 2021 with construction beginning in 2022. The City should continue its analysis of the Downtown transfer station to identify the optimal design and location for transit access to Downtown.

Walking

People are encouraged to walk when there is a safe, comfortable, and complete network of sidewalks and paths. Pedestrians should have multiple options for travel and should always have sidewalks on both sides of the street available to them. Downtown currently supports high amounts of pedestrian activity and should continue to do so.

Legend

-  Study Area
-  Existing Sidewalk
-  Existing Streetwalk and/or Connector
-  Existing Shared Use Path
-  Existing Unpaved Levee Trail
-  Improved Crosswalk
-  Unimproved Crosswalk
-  Midblock Crossing





Pedestrian Gaps & Sidewalk Maintenance

Within the Downtown, paved sidewalks are provided along both sides of streets. There are, however, a few gaps in the pedestrian system that limit mobility and cause pedestrians to walk through driveways or on the street, namely on Vermont and New Hampshire Streets. Some segments are also in need of repair, especially those connecting Downtown to the East Lawrence and Old West Lawrence Neighborhoods. The City recently developed a sidewalk prioritization system based on access to prominent destinations. This system should be used to upgrade and maintain sidewalks within and adjacent to Downtown.

Filling gaps in the sidewalk network and ensuring sidewalks are continually maintained will help to make Downtown more inclusive and accessible for people with mobility issues.

Comfort

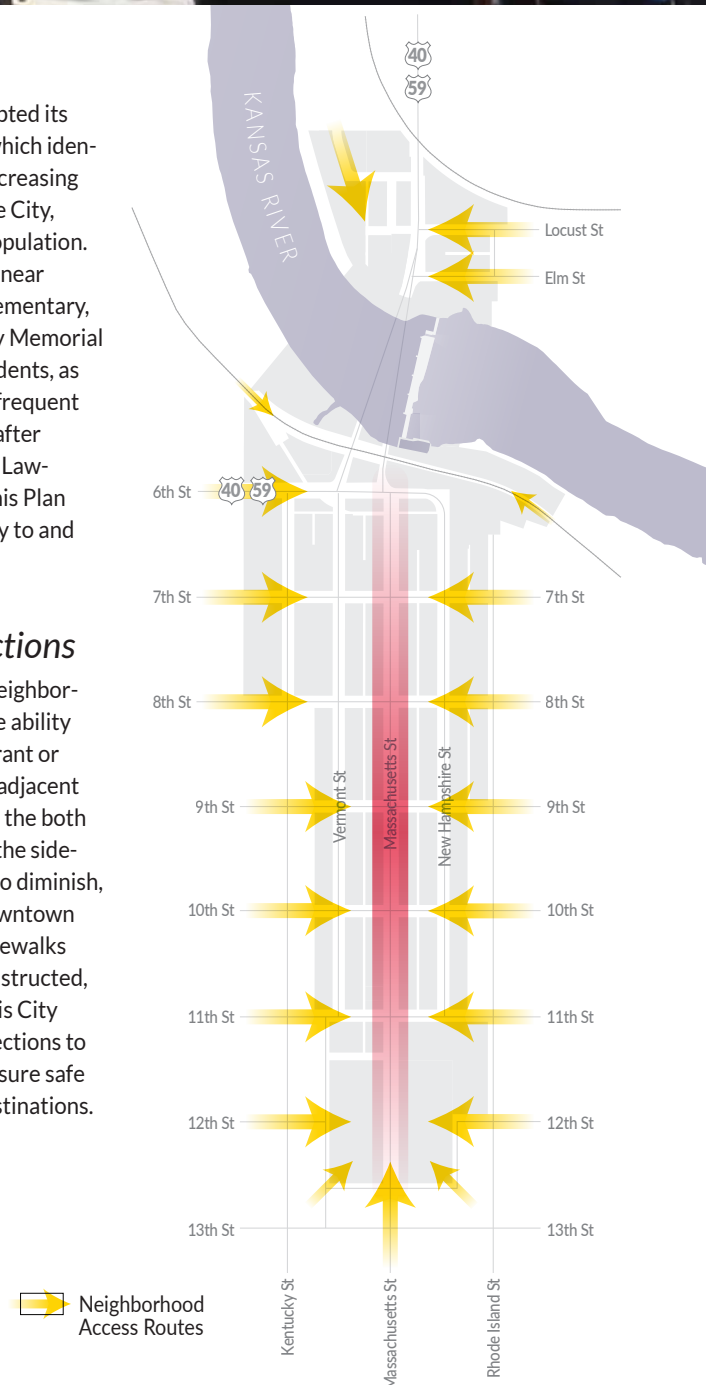
In 2012, the City partnered with the University of Kansas (KU) to improve safety for pedestrians walking between KU's campus and Downtown. The project was centered around the addition of pedestrian-scale motion-sensor lights to improve pedestrian visibility along the corridor. The City should identify other key corridors for lighting improvements, leading pedestrian intervals, and/or pedestrian prioritization at existing signalized intersections to establish safe pedestrian connections Downtown.

Be Active Safe Routes

In December 2020 Lawrence adopted its first Safe Routes to School Plan, which identifies policies and strategies for increasing walking and biking throughout the City, particularly among the student population. There are several schools located near Downtown including Pinckney Elementary, New York Elementary, and Liberty Memorial Central Middle. Many of their students, as well as those from other schools, frequent Downtown to socialize and relax after school, particularly at the Library. Lawrence should continue to utilize this Plan to improve connectivity and safety to and through Downtown.

Neighborhood Connections








One of the benefits of living in a neighborhood adjacent to Downtown is the ability to easily walk to a favorite restaurant or shop. Like the rest of Downtown, adjacent neighborhoods have sidewalks on the both sides of the street. The quality of the sidewalks in these areas is beginning to diminish, reducing the ease of access to Downtown that residents currently enjoy. Sidewalks on 9th Street were recently reconstructed, which helps address this issue. This City should continue to improve connections to surrounding neighborhoods to ensure safe and easy access to Downtown destinations.

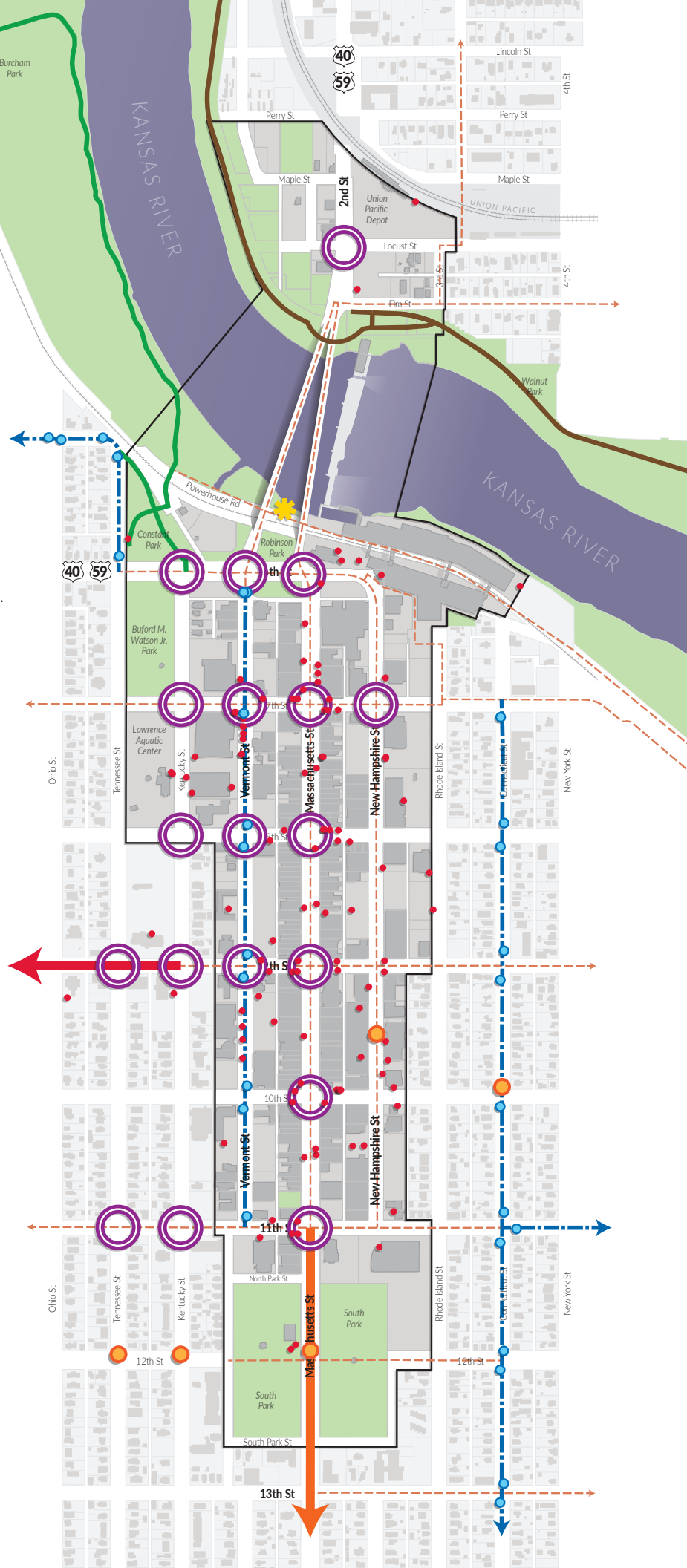


Biking

Cities strive to develop a comprehensive bicycle system to promote mobility by nonauto means, reduce traffic congestion and parking issues, and encourage an active, healthy lifestyle. The current bicycle system in Downtown Lawrence provides access to the area from adjacent neighborhoods. However, the 2019 Bike Plan identifies some opportunities for improving bike access in Downtown.

Legend

-  Study Area
-  Existing Bike Lane
-  Existing Buffered Bike lane
-  Existing Marked Shared Lane (Sharrow)
-  Existing Shared Use Path
-  Existing Unpaved Levee Trail
-  Future Bikeway (Planned)
-  Grade Separated Crossing (Planned)
-  Shared Lane Arrow (Sharrow)
-  Signalized Intersection
-  Hawk Signals
-  Bike Storage

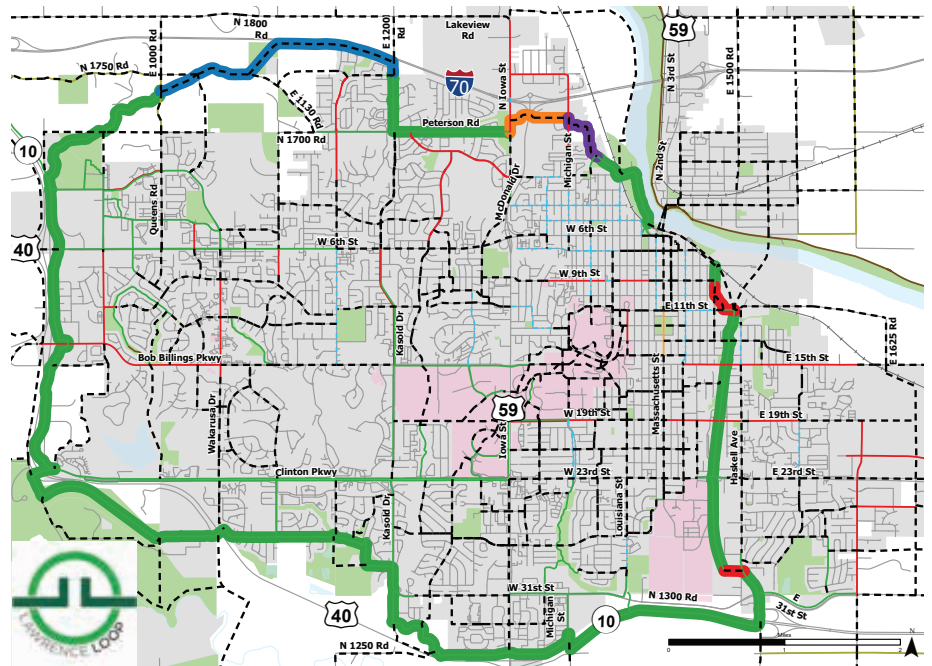




Lawrence Loop

The Lawrence Loop is a mostly 10-foot-wide shared-use path system, that will provide an approximately 22 mile continuous loop when complete. Various segments of the Lawrence Loop are under design and construction in the next few years, the segments and their alignments are shown on the attached map in red, purple and orange. A couple sections of the Loop are still incomplete, including a section running through the northern edge of Downtown Lawrence, from the end of the shared use path in Burcham Park to 8th & Delaware. The specific alignment for the section of the loop between 8th & Delaware to Burcham Park has not been determined.

The 2019 Bike Plan identified future connection routes to complete this segment, however the feasibility of the identified alignment is questionable. Recognizing the importance of completing the Downtown portion of the Loop to improving multimodal access, the City should continue to focus efforts on community conversations and additional engineering feasibility to determine the best alignment. Additionally, the Lawrence Bike Plan should continue to be utilized as plans to complete the Lawrence Loop are developed.



Existing & Planned Lawrence Loop (Stages of Development)

— Existing - 17.83 miles	- - - - - Future Bikeway
— Planned - 2.26 miles	— Bike Lane
— 2021 Construction - 0.50 miles	— Buffered Bike Lane
— 2021-22 Construction - 0.64 miles	— Gravel
— 2023 Construction - 0.53 miles	- - - - - Marked Shared Lane
	— Shared Use Path
	— Unpaved Trail



Parking & Storage

Bicycle storage is distributed throughout Downtown, with room for approximately 1,561 bicycles to be parked. Despite this high number, many participants of community outreach events noted a perceived lack of bicycle storage Downtown. City staff are currently developing an education program about proper bicycle storage as well as parking locations in Downtown. Wayfinding signage should be considered as a part of this program to help direct Downtown cyclists. The City should also consider secured storage facilities. These should be located at key destinations that also have the necessary space available such as South Park, Watson Park, Constant Park, and the public parking garage. Partnerships with local businesses to identify other places for long-term storage should also be considered.





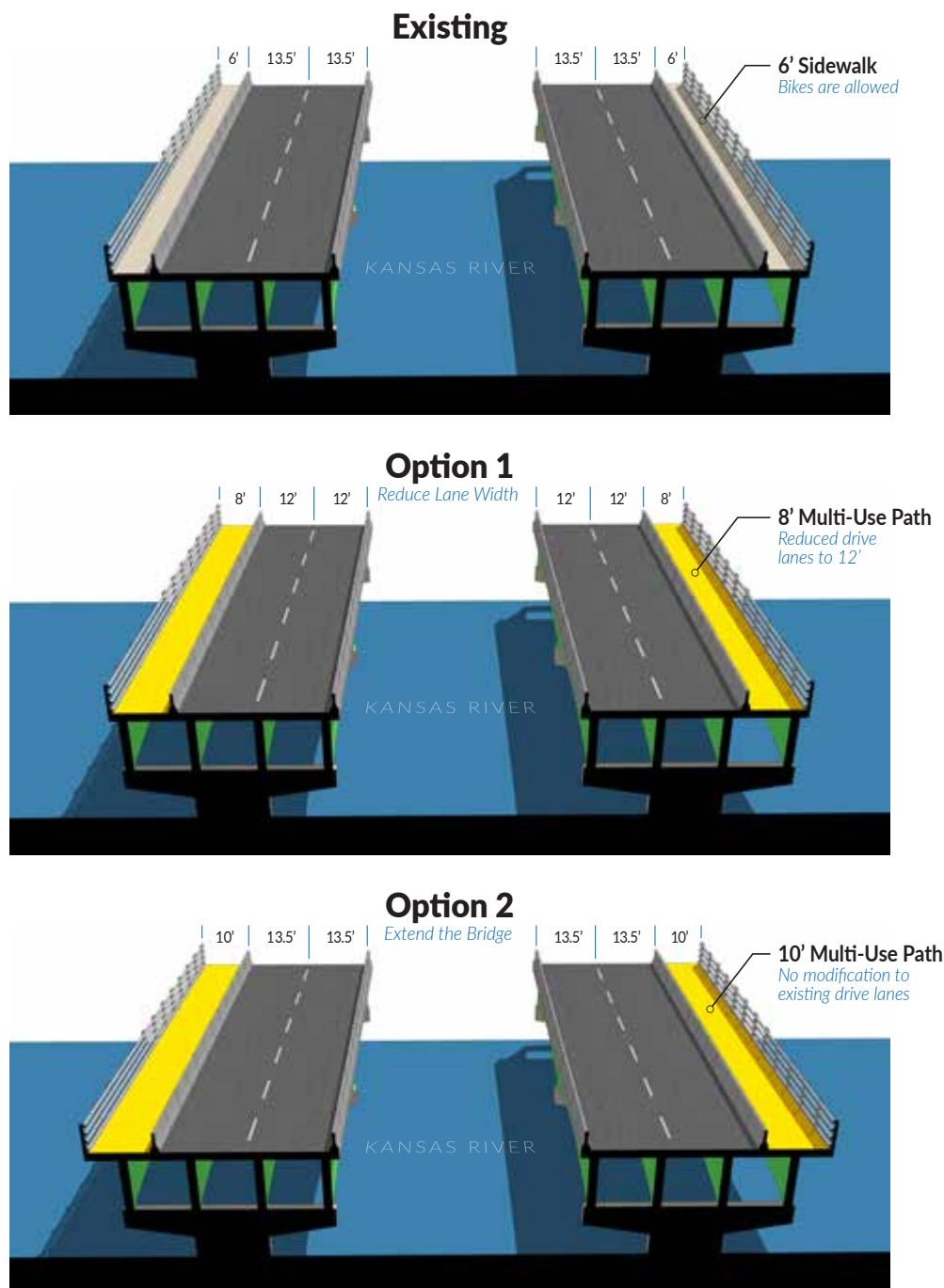
Vermont Street & Massachusetts Street Bridges

The bridges connecting Downtown to North Lawrence prioritize vehicular access. A separated sidewalk does run on the outside edge of both bridges for pedestrian access. In the 2019 Bike Plan, cyclists expressed that they experienced the least amount of comfort when crossing the bridges, with most using the pedestrian sidewalk to try and cross safely.

The City recently revised the law allowing cyclists to use the sidewalk to cross the bridge. However, the sidewalk's six-foot width does not provide any room for both pedestrians and cyclists to use it at the same time. Cyclists need their own lane to cross the River safely without using the sidewalk. The City has three viable options it should consider for improving non-vehicular access over the Kansas River, each with their own set of costs and challenges. Any option would require coordination with Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT). The City should conduct a detailed study to determine the viability of the following three options:

1. Reducing lane widths to accommodate a designated eight-foot multi-use path.
2. Extending the bridges to accommodate a ten-foot multi-use path.
3. Constructing a separate bridge for pedestrians and repurposing the existing sidewalks for cyclists.

Regardless of the preferred option, the guard rails should be upgraded for safety







CHAPTER FIVE



Community Facilities

Downtowns are often defined by their businesses and general functions, but open space and public gathering areas also influence their function and character. These commonly passive areas are key components of quality of life in a community and this is definitely true for Downtown Lawrence. This chapter includes recommendations to strengthen and support these spaces in Downtown.

Community Facilities

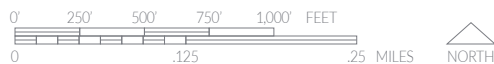
Community facilities include the various public and nonprofit services as well as infrastructure for utilities, amenities, and public services that ensure a high quality of life for Lawrence residents and businesses. Many of the City's public institutions and services are located in Downtown. Some specifically serve Downtown and the adjacent neighborhoods while others support the entire City.

Legend

-  Study Area
-  Community Facility

Community Facilities

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Union Pacific Depot | 9. Lawrence Arts Center |
| 2. City Hall Riverfront offices, including Lawrence Municipal Court | 10. Watkins Museum of History |
| 3. City Hall | 11. Lawrence Community Building |
| 4. Post Office | 12. Douglas County Courthouse |
| 5. Lawrence Public Library | 13. Douglas County Judicial and Law Enforcement Center |
| 6. Lawrence Outdoor Aquatic Center | 14. Parks and Recreation Administration Office |
| 7. Fire Station #1/Senior Resource Center | 15. William Kelly Bandstand |
| 8. Carnegie Building | |





Downtown Institutions

As the civic heart of the Lawrence, Downtown is home to several public institutions and services that are essential in attracting people to the area including:

Watkins Museum of History Located at 1047 Massachusetts Street

The historic 1888 Watkins Land Mortgage and National Bank Building opened as museum in 1975 and offers programs and public events, educational resources and activities, and changing exhibits that explore the heritage of Douglas County and connect the past with issues that affect our communities today.

Lawrence Arts Center Located at 940 New Hampshire Street

Currently in a City-owned building, the center opened in 1975 and was originally located in the Carnegie Library. The center provides contemporary exhibitions, performances, and arts education for individuals of all ages and backgrounds. In 2018, the center expanded to Studio 720 in East Lawrence to accommodate the demand for dance and theatre classes, small audience productions, and community events.

Post Office Located at 645 Vermont Street

The post office offers a wide range of services from call referral, passport appointments, duck stamps, and general carrier services.

Lawrence Public Library Located at 707 Vermont Street

The library has been continuously active in Lawrence since 1865 and moved to its current location in 1972. The library was renovated in 2014 and continues to act as a hub where the community can learn, connect, create grow through access to the library's vast collections, resources, services, programs, and staff.

Carnegie Building Located at 200 9th Street

The library was built in 1904 with a grant from Andrew Carnegie and was expanded in the 1930s to accommodate the library's growing collection. It housed the Lawrence Public Library until it was relocated in 1972, after which it became the first iteration of the Lawrence Arts Center. In January of 2011, the Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department began operating the facility, once again making it available for public use.

City Hall & City Hall Riverfront Offices Located at 6 East 6th Street

Near the riverfront, the 36,000 square foot building was constructed in 1980 and houses various local government departments, including the office of the City Manager, Human Resources, and Finance. City Hall Riverfront Offices is located at 1 Riverfront Plaza. The office houses Lawrence Municipal Court, Planning and Development Services Department, and other City Departments.

Fire Station #1 Located at 746 Kentucky Street

The station was constructed in 1951 and renovations were recently completed in 2019. The station's primary response area is Downtown, and it receives the largest call volume of all fire medical facilities in the City. The facility also houses the Senior Resource Center of Douglas County.

Douglas County Courthouse Located at 1100 Massachusetts Street

The courthouse was constructed in 1903 and was nominated for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. The courthouse houses several county departments, including Administration, Administrative Services, Appraisers Office, County Clerk, Register of Deeds, and Treasurers Office.

Douglas County Judicial & Law Enforcement Center Located behind the County Courthouse on 11th Street

It is home to several county departments, including the District Attorney and Court, Community Corrections, Emergency Communications, the Sheriff's Office, and the Lawrence Police Department's patrol and records functions until they are moved to the new police station, which is currently under construction.



Public Spaces

Public spaces are not always formally designated areas, particularly in Downtowns. Open areas with easy access and a sense of closeness can be transformed into a gathering spot. The space in front of the U.S. Bank building on the southeast corner of 9th and Massachusetts Street is an excellent example. During the Busker Festival, this area is converted into a simple stage with performances from early morning to late at night. The pedestrian cut-throughs on the east side of Massachusetts Street are another useful example. Tucked away from the main sidewalk with the concrete planters as seating, people often wait in these areas for a table at a nearby restaurant or for their friends to finish shopping in a store. The City should continue to support use of the public realm as informal gathering spaces for residents, customers, and visitors to share and socialize together. Formalized use of the public realm is discussed in greater detail in the Gathering Places section of this Plan, beginning on page 104.





Homelessness

According to service providers, the majority of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness stay in Downtown Lawrence. The issues related to homelessness do not occur in a vacuum and are largely impacted by regional and municipal forces outside of the study area. Currently, services for the homeless exist in the Downtown Lawrence area including D.A.R.E drop in day center, Salvation Army, and numerous organizations providing food resources. Recognizing the impact homelessness has on the people experiencing it and on the perception of safety and security Downtown, the City, County and all partners should strive to work together to cohesively shelter all those that want shelter and to provide services to all.

The following are example strategies that could help address some aspects of homelessness as it relates to Downtown.

Le Carillon. Each for All To improve relations between people experiencing homelessness and shop owners, a network of businesses in a commercial district in Paris organized to create 'Le Carillon,' a sticker to be placed near business' front door that they are welcoming to people experiencing homelessness. The stickers feature varying symbols to indicate what services the business is offering to people experiencing homelessness including a free meal or beverage, use of a computer, or simply a safe and climate-controlled space to spend time.

Downtown Streets Team. To help transition people who are experiencing homelessness into employment, a non-profit organization called Downtown Streets Team provides people with job experience assistance finding permanent employment. The organization offers people experiencing homelessness the opportunity to become a volunteer team member on beautification projects. Although the volunteer positions are not paid, team members receive a non-cash stipend to help cover basic needs. Dedication and accountability proven through the volunteer positions help team members build work experience and find permanent employment.

Ambassador Program. Creation of an Ambassador Program for the Downtown area could enhance safety with providing escorts to vehicles, providing directions as needed and being a presence on the streets. This program could be made up of volunteers or funded positions and could also be combined with the Downtown Streets Team.








These programs can also help to establish a relationship with those experiencing homelessness and work to help get them in touch with service providers. The City and County governing bodies recently adopted Joint Resolution No. 7373 which commits both organizations to collaborate on strategies to address homelessness. This commitment will continue to enhance the response to those experiencing homelessness in Lawrence and Douglas County, including in the Downtown area.

The City and the County should continue to work with organizations such as the Kansas Statewide Homeless Coalition and Built For Zero to explore strategies to shelter and rapidly-rehouse households experiencing homelessness and there are strong local efforts to implement housing stabilization and eviction prevention services locally, all which impact the downtown area. Other strategies that could be beneficial in the Downtown Lawrence area include additional transportation services, focused homeless outreach case management, and the use of solidarity lockers in various locations community-wide.

Parks & Open Space

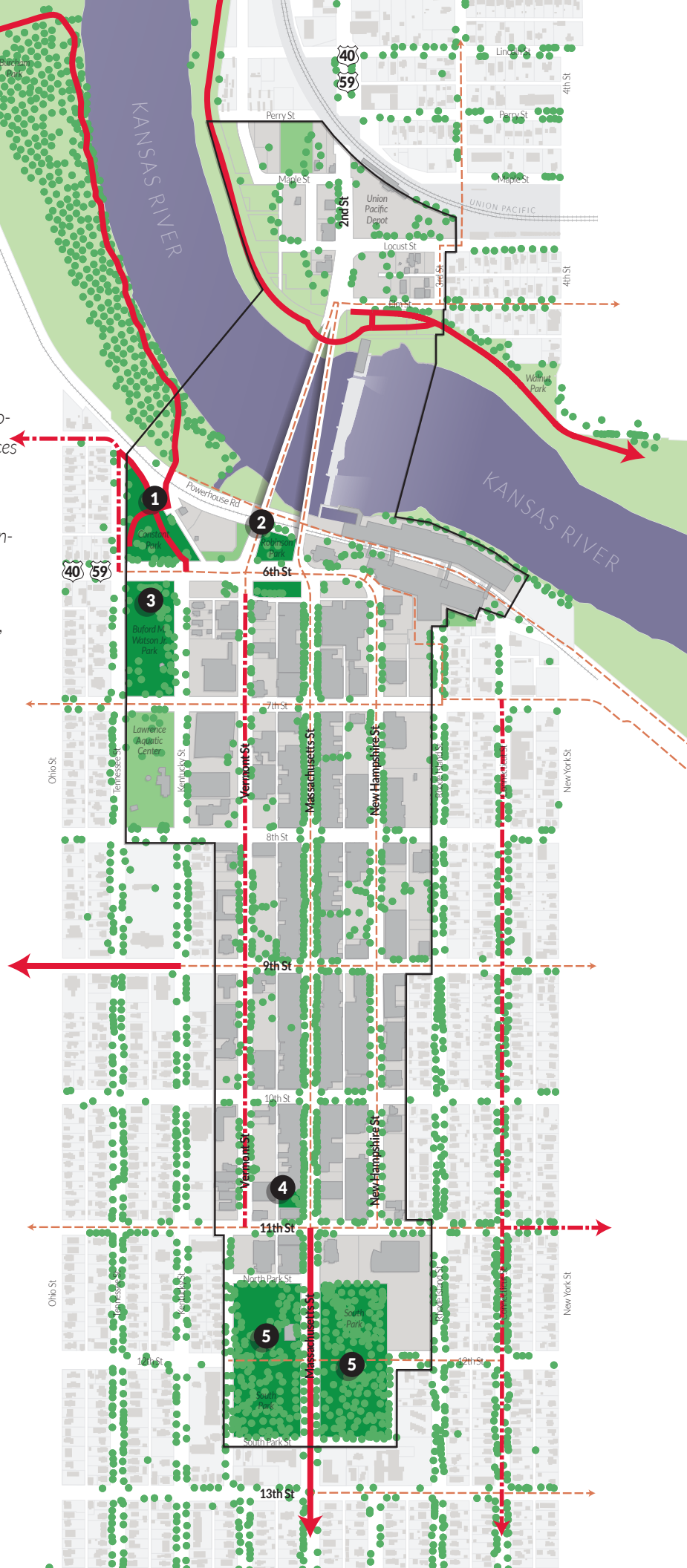
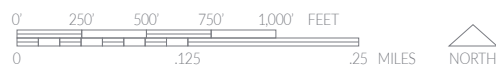
Parks, open space, and environmental features are key components of quality of life within a community. They provide spaces for residents to spend leisure time, gather with friends and neighbors, get active, and enjoy the outdoors. These include both passive and active recreational spaces, as well as environmental features which can contribute to natural beauty and sense of place. This system in Downtown Lawrence includes programmed parks, open spaces, the Kansas River, bike lanes, and planned trails.

Legend

-  Study Area
-  Parks
-  Open Space
-  Existing Bike Lane and/or Shared Use Path
-  Existing Marked Shared Lane (Sharrow)
-  Future Bike Lane and/or Shared Use Path (Planned)
-  Trees

Parks

1. Constant Park
2. Robinson Park
3. Buford M. Watson Jr. Park
4. The Japanese Friendship Gardens
5. South Park





Parks

Downtown Lawrence is home to several public parks comprising approximately 20 acres of the total land in the study area. Parks are managed by the City of Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department and include:

- **Constant Park:** located along 6th Street between the Kansas River Bridge to North Lawrence and Tennessee Street. The park features open space, benches, picnic areas with tables, views to the Kansas River, and a connection to the half-mile urban shared use path that travels along the River north to Burcham Park.
- **Robinson Park:** located between the north bound and south bound legs of the Kansas River Bridge.
- **Buford M. Watson Jr. Park:** located between 6th Street to the north, Kentucky Street to the east, 8th Street to the south, and Tennessee Street to the west. The park is home to the Lawrence Aquatic Center, an original train locomotive, playground equipment, a basketball court, picnic area, and gazebo.
- **The Japanese Friendship Gardens:** located along Massachusetts Street between 10th Street and 11th Street on the north side of Watkins Community Museum at 1045 Massachusetts Street. It was built to honor to the 10-year anniversary of Lawrence's relationship with its sister city of Hiratsuka, Japan and contains a Wisteria covered arbor walkway, an arbor house, large rocks, water, and native Japanese plants.
- **South Park:** spans the east and west sides of Massachusetts Street between 11th Street and 13th Street, and acts as the southern terminus of Downtown. The eastern portion of the park features the William Kelly Bandstand, a popular place for special events, weddings, parties, and the home of the Lawrence City Band's Summer Concert series. The east side of the park also includes the Roosevelt fountain, picnic areas, and flower gardens. The west side of the park contains playground equipment, a wading pool, and other kid friendly amenities and is home to the Parks and Recreation Administrative Offices.





Events

Downtown is home to a variety of public and private outdoor events, including the Farmer's Market, a myriad of parades, block parties, and more. These events are an integral component of Downtown identity and help to attract visitors and investment to the area. The events often require the City to close off streets, disrupting the flow of vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic and leading to concerns over event safety and security. To resolve these issues, the City should consider investing in a permanent outdoor event space to better accommodate the Farmer's Market and limit the number of on-street events and disruptions to traffic and safety.

Expanding the types of cultural celebrations hosted Downtown will help make Downtown more inclusive and diverse.

In addition to investing in a permanent outdoor event space, the City should work with its partners to expand the types of cultural celebrations hosted Downtown. Movie nights that highlight minority storytellers, block parties to celebrate Holi, or a parade to commemorate Juneteenth are just three examples of the types of events that can ensure people of all backgrounds feel welcome, invited, and integral to the vibrancy of Downtown Lawrence.

The City should continue to coordinate with the Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission to implement strategic actions and recommendations provided in the Lawrence City-Wide Cultural Plan.



Lawrence Farmer's Market image courtesy the Farmer's Market Scan (2018) page 5.



Farmer's Market

The permanent outdoor event space could be incorporated into public parking lot redevelopment opportunities, as detailed on page 37. For example, the public parking lot located at Vermont Street and 9th Street could be redeveloped with a mixed-use building that holds the corner and extends the length of the lot on the alley side. The street side of the lot could be used as a public gathering/plaza space with a permanent pavilion. The space could also be improved with access to electricity, water, and drainage and could utilize restrooms located in the mixed-use building. Parking could be accommodated at the Vermont Street Parking Garage. Similarly, the City could incentivize the integration of a similar plaza space in the redevelopment of opportunity sites as detailed on pages 36 and 37.

Alternatively, the permanent outdoor event space could be located in an existing Downtown park, such as Constant Park. Constant Park is currently underutilized and could be improved with a pavilion, outdoor concert space, and access to electricity, water, and drainage to accommodate the Farmer's Market and other outdoor events. A multi-use stage or amphitheater in Constant Park would create opportunity for an even wider variety of public events and limit traffic congestion in the Downtown core.



Strengthening Public Events

While a permanent space could alleviate most concerns around outdoor events in Downtown it cannot address all the needs of all potential events. Downtown bike races, for example, still requires the closing of streets and detailed coordination with the City and it should. Disrupting regular traffic does not mean this event should be removed from being held in Downtown in the future. Similarly, block parties, such as those hosted by the Sandbar, have an established presence and purpose in Downtown Lawrence. Not only do they provide a unique event for people to attend but they also generate significant activity.

Some businesses and property owners are against hosting events Downtown due to the perceived disruption they cause to normal businesses activity. Education about the amount of additional people these events bring Downtown for businesses to capture will help create more local support. The City should work with Downtown Lawrence Inc to develop educational materials and help inform Downtown businesses of the real benefits of hosting events.



Open Space

Open Space in Downtown is concentrated along the riverfront and offers access to the Lawrence Levee Shared Use Paths and Burcham Park Shared Use Path. Additional open space is located adjacent to the Lawrence Public Library and is often activated for events such as outdoor movie nights and ice skating. The City should utilize this open space area to serve as a successful model for gathering places and event space.



Planned Projects

The 2017 Parks and Recreation Master Plan identified the need for a plaza and event space in Downtown. The plan recommends that the plaza and event space includes a large paved area, water, power, designated restrooms, and adequate lighting. The plan identifies Vermont Street between 7th Street and 8th Street as a potential location.

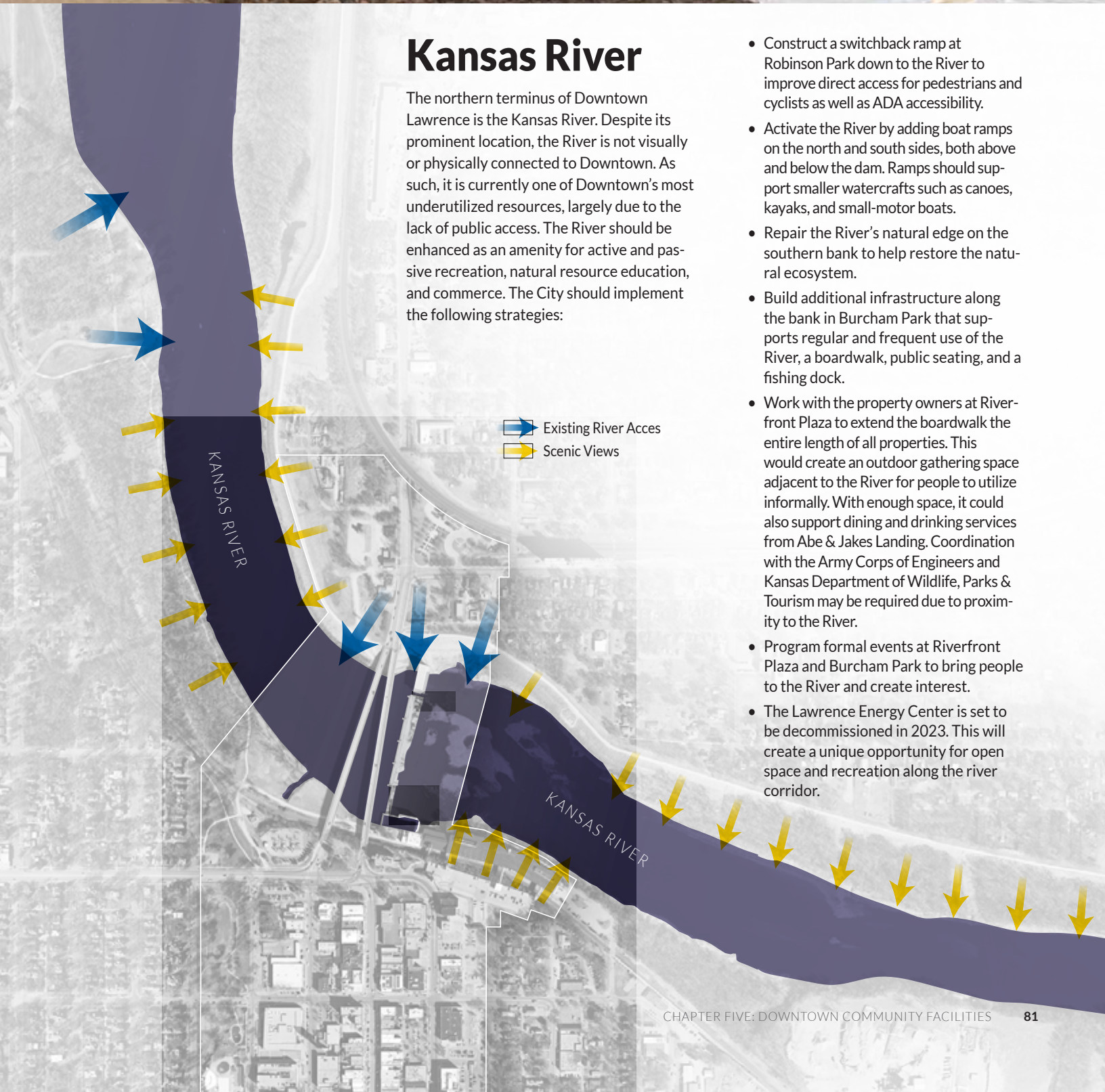




Kansas River

The northern terminus of Downtown Lawrence is the Kansas River. Despite its prominent location, the River is not visually or physically connected to Downtown. As such, it is currently one of Downtown's most underutilized resources, largely due to the lack of public access. The River should be enhanced as an amenity for active and passive recreation, natural resource education, and commerce. The City should implement the following strategies:

- Construct a switchback ramp at Robinson Park down to the River to improve direct access for pedestrians and cyclists as well as ADA accessibility.
- Activate the River by adding boat ramps on the north and south sides, both above and below the dam. Ramps should support smaller watercrafts such as canoes, kayaks, and small-motor boats.
- Repair the River's natural edge on the southern bank to help restore the natural ecosystem.
- Build additional infrastructure along the bank in Burcham Park that supports regular and frequent use of the River, a boardwalk, public seating, and a fishing dock.
- Work with the property owners at Riverfront Plaza to extend the boardwalk the entire length of all properties. This would create an outdoor gathering space adjacent to the River for people to utilize informally. With enough space, it could also support dining and drinking services from Abe & Jakes Landing. Coordination with the Army Corps of Engineers and Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism may be required due to proximity to the River.
- Program formal events at Riverfront Plaza and Burcham Park to bring people to the River and create interest.
- The Lawrence Energy Center is set to be decommissioned in 2023. This will create a unique opportunity for open space and recreation along the river corridor.







CHAPTER SIX

Urban Design & Street Life

The success of a downtown is often defined by its quality and character. Attractive buildings, public spaces, streets, sidewalks, and pedestrian amenities alone can draw people and business to Downtown. The Urban Design and Street Life chapter provides recommendations to improve Downtown Lawrence's appearance, form, and function. Specifically, it addresses the critical relationship between people, buildings, and public gathering space.

The Urban Design & Street Life chapter examines both the public and private realm and provides recommendations to foster a comfortable, active, and attractive Downtown. These recommendations build on other chapters of the Downtown Plan including Land Use & Development, Transportation & Circulation, and Downtown Community Facilities. The Urban Design & Street Life chapter organizes its recommendations around Built Form, Intersections & Crosswalks, Streetscape, Gateways & Wayfinding, and Gathering Places.



Built Form

The physical composition of any community can have a large impact on the impression it leaves on residents, employees and visitors. This is especially true for buildings in Downtown Lawrence. Downtown is the community's focal point – the one place that provides every resident with a sense of ownership.

Creating “sense of place” for an area means creating a place that is unique, distinguishable, and memorable. Repetitive, cookie-cutter development can threaten a community's sense of place. By allowing a developer to replicate the same development or project from another part of the community or from another City compromises Downtown Lawrence's identity. To continue to distinguish Downtown Lawrence from its neighbors, the City must encourage the construction and maintenance of buildings with a high degree of architectural quality and unique details.













Downtown Massing Model

Existing building heights vary throughout the Downtown Lawrence study area. While current zoning for the Downtown permits a range of heights, most buildings remain within one to three stories. Taller buildings tend to be either residential, mixed-use, or utility. In general, building heights along Massachusetts Street remain lower due to past development practices at the time of their construction. The accompanying model illustrates the variation in height and scale within Downtown Lawrence.

Building Height (by Floor)

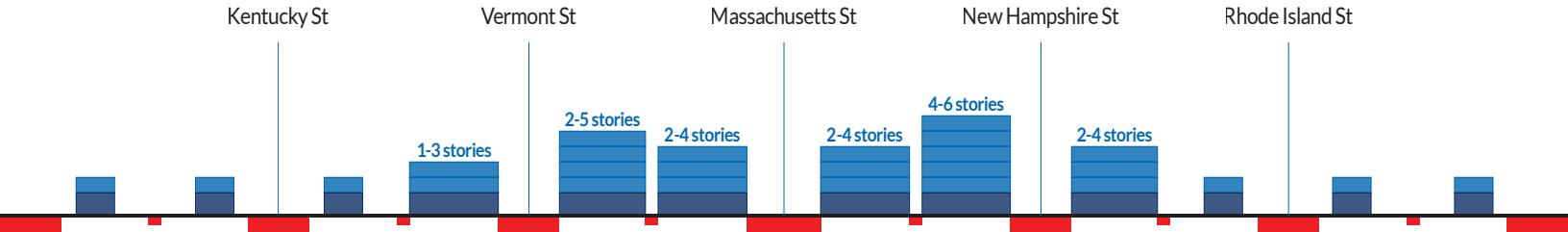
A typical Downtown features multistory buildings that create a pedestrian-friendly environment and enough density to generate regular activity. Downtown Lawrence exhibits this character as the majority of buildings are two or three stories tall. The Downtown Lawrence Master Plan has the opportunity to identify appropriate building heights in Downtown to ensure a consistent and cohesive built form as development and redevelopment occurs.

Legend

-  Study Area
-  1-Floor
-  2-Floors
-  3-Floors
-  4-Floors
-  5-Floors
-  6-Floors
-  7-Floors

The U.S. Bank building and the Eldridge Hotel are both five stories; however the U.S. Bank building is approximately 20 feet taller than the Eldridge Hotel, making it the tallest building on Massachusetts Street.





Building Height

Building heights in Downtown Lawrence are controlled by the City's Land Development Code and the Downtown Area Design Guidelines. As detailed in the corresponding table, many of the Functional Subareas (see page 22) are regulated by more than one base district as well as the Downtown Urban Conservation Overlay District. Each base district establishes a maximum building height, ranging from 35 feet in the RSO and OS Districts to 90 feet in the CD District.

Additionally, the Downtown Area Design Guidelines require that new construction within the Downtown Urban Conservation Overlay District be multi-story and relate to the prevailing heights of nearby buildings. Although these standards and guidelines may be sufficient for mid-block infill development along Massachusetts Street, they are deficient for larger scale projects like those identified as Catalyst Sites (see pages 38-41).

While many people like living and working in high-rises, approximately five floors is the height at which there is still a connection between people at the top of the building and those on the street. This is further supported through feedback from the community, which included a desire to increase density while limiting height that would compromise the character of Downtown.

The City should reexamine its regulatory approach for building height maximums to ensure that Downtown redevelopment aligns with the Functional Subareas and the vision of the Plan. Considerations should include:




- Promote density Downtown while preserving the established scale and character of Massachusetts Street.
- Anchor Massachusetts Street blocks with buildings that include prominent corners
- Building heights should be greater along Vermont Street and New Hampshire Street (this is consistent with recent development patterns)

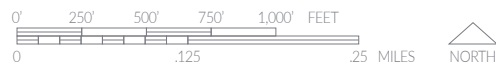


Streetwall

Maintaining a complete streetwall is a valuable component of creating an active, vibrant, and pedestrian-oriented Downtown. Massachusetts Street has a well-established streetwall with minimal interruptions, which occur at a few vacant lots, buildings setback from the property line, and pedestrian cut-throughs. The remainder of Downtown lacks a strong streetwall, largely due to the parking lots on New Hampshire and Vermont Streets.

Legend

-  Study Area
-  Urban Streetwall
-  Surface Parking Lot





Streetwall

A key design recommendation for Downtown is the maintenance of the traditional streetwall, particularly along Massachusetts Street. The term streetwall is used to describe a continuous row of buildings, side-by-side, that are located at or near the sidewalk, with little or no side yard setback. The success of Downtown can be undermined by a discontinuous streetwall with large gaps between buildings, buildings that are setback from the sidewalk, or parking areas adjacent to the sidewalk with no perimeter landscaping, fencing or screening. When a streetwall is maintained, a more inviting pedestrian environment is provided.

Although it is desirable to maintain a streetwall of buildings throughout the Downtown, it may be difficult given existing building footprints. In areas where gaps in the streetwall are unavoidable, a combination streetwall consisting of landscaping, decorative fencing, and masonry/stone walls should be implemented. These amenities will separate parking lots or open space areas from the sidewalk in an attractive manner, and maintain the pedestrian atmosphere of Downtown.





Quality of Architectural Design

The built form of a downtown describes the relationship of structures to one another, comparing size, style, and location. Traditional downtowns or “main street” areas feature a built form based on mass, density, and the creation of a continuous streetwall. Placing buildings at the property line establishes a streetwall of connected structures creating compact, walkable areas.

The quality of redevelopment and how it intersects with the public right-of-way are essential to Downtown Lawrence’s success. Redevelopment can improve the pedestrian experience, activate adjacent public space, spur economic activity, and reduce reliance on driving. The following are recommendations for private development in Downtown Lawrence.

As redevelopment occurs Downtown, the City should encourage developers and property owners to elevate the quality of architectural design. A building’s scale, siting, quality, maintenance, rather than its architectural style, are the most important factors when considering its contribution to Downtown. While architectural styles need not be the same, buildings should complement each other, at a minimum in height, proportion, and rhythm.



Connections to Past Architecture in Downtown Lawrence

Downtown Lawrence contains many architecturally rich buildings, with unique stylings, materials, and craftsmanship. These buildings contribute to a special urban fabric within Downtown Lawrence and are a connection to the past. New development should consider the architectural attributes and character of existing buildings in the Downtown.



Human-Scale & Building Massing

Consider a pedestrian’s size, comfort, and speed. Buildings should have multiple entrances to make visiting on foot easier. With rare exception, entrances should be at grade or a few steps above grade. To ensure an attractive design aesthetic that is consistent with the desired character of Downtown Lawrence, building massing should be encouraged to be consistent from ground up and built to the property line, where applicable.



Façade Articulation

Building façades should be articulated for buildings that are wider than a standard lot or taller than two stories. The façade should be subdivided horizontally into 25-foot wide bays. Each floor of the building should be expressed through window placement, balconies, or other projections.

Building façades should be attractive, built with quality materials, and well-maintained. Poorly designed or crumbling facades communicate disinvestment and are unattractive to look at. The City should continue to provide incentives for the maintenance or improvement of commercial or mixed-use building facades located Downtown.

Street-Level Transparency

Street-level transparency refers to the ability to see into buildings, such as through storefront windows, building entrances, and window displays. High amounts of transparency make for a more interesting pedestrian experience.

Awnings & Canopies

This can take the form of permanent or seasonal canopies, overhead projections such as bay windows or trellises, and trees that provide overhead protection from sun, rain, and snow.



Intersections

Downtown intersections should be improved to increase pedestrian visibility and enhance pedestrian safety. The safe and easy crossing of streets is integral to encouraging walking and creating a welcoming pedestrian experience. The City should continue to install intersection improvements including shortening roadway crossing distances (bump outs), increasing the amount of time available to cross, replacing pedestrian-activated signals with automatic ones, reducing vehicle speeds, and increasing visibility of pedestrians and accessibility by them. Some of these changes can be tested with temporary measures, giving pedestrians and drivers a period of time to acclimate to new conditions. Bicycle infrastructure and access should also be included when considering intersection improvements. The final design can be modified before substantial investments are made in permanent construction.

Intersection improvements, like the ones recommended in this section, will help to make Downtown more inclusive and accessible for people with mobility issues.





Crosswalks

The primary purpose of crosswalks is to notify drivers of the presence, or possible presence, of pedestrians. “High-visibility” crosswalks serve this purpose. All sidewalks and crosswalks in the Downtown should be outfitted with ADA-compliant ramps including longitudinal slopes maximum 5%; cross slopes in maximum 2%; and tactile surfaces. The following graphics provide a consistent look and feel for Downtown crosswalks.

Bump outs

Bump outs already occur in several locations within Downtown Lawrence. Bump outs are curb extensions that “bump out” into the right-of-way to reduce the distance that pedestrians cross, increase visibility for both vehicles and pedestrians, and slow vehicular traffic. Bump outs should be added to all Downtown intersections where traffic patterns allow.

Pedestrian-Friendly Turning Radius

The turning radius at intersections should accommodate both the intended vehicles and pedestrians crossing the street. A wide radius facilitates fast turns by vehicles, while a narrow one promotes a slower and safer turn. On truck routes designers should assume turns to and from multiple lanes. As such, the narrowest possible turning radii should be used when intersections are rebuilt in Downtown Lawrence. In the interim, narrowing can be approximated with paint, with the use of planters, and bollards to create a physical separation between the curb and street.

Mid-Block Crossings

Mid-block crossings help break up long segments of roadway between intersections, creating additional cross-access for pedestrians and slowing traffic. These crossings are prevalent on Massachusetts and New Hampshire Streets.

Mid-block crossings feature bump outs, similar to those utilized at key intersections. The bump outs are delineated with brick pavers, raised landscape planters, and pedestrian crossing signs to increase visibility and safety. The crossings themselves are also demarcated by brick pavers, which helps to calm traffic by visually and tactually signaling to drivers a transition from a vehicle-oriented space to a pedestrian-oriented space.










The City should install additional mid-block crossings on Vermont Street between 7th and 8th Streets at the Library, on New Hampshire Street, also between 7th and 8th Streets, and on Massachusetts Street between 6th and 7th Streets. The proposed mid-block crossing on Vermont Street may be determined based on the planning efforts for the existing Downtown bus transfer station. If approved, a hawk signal or rectangular rapid

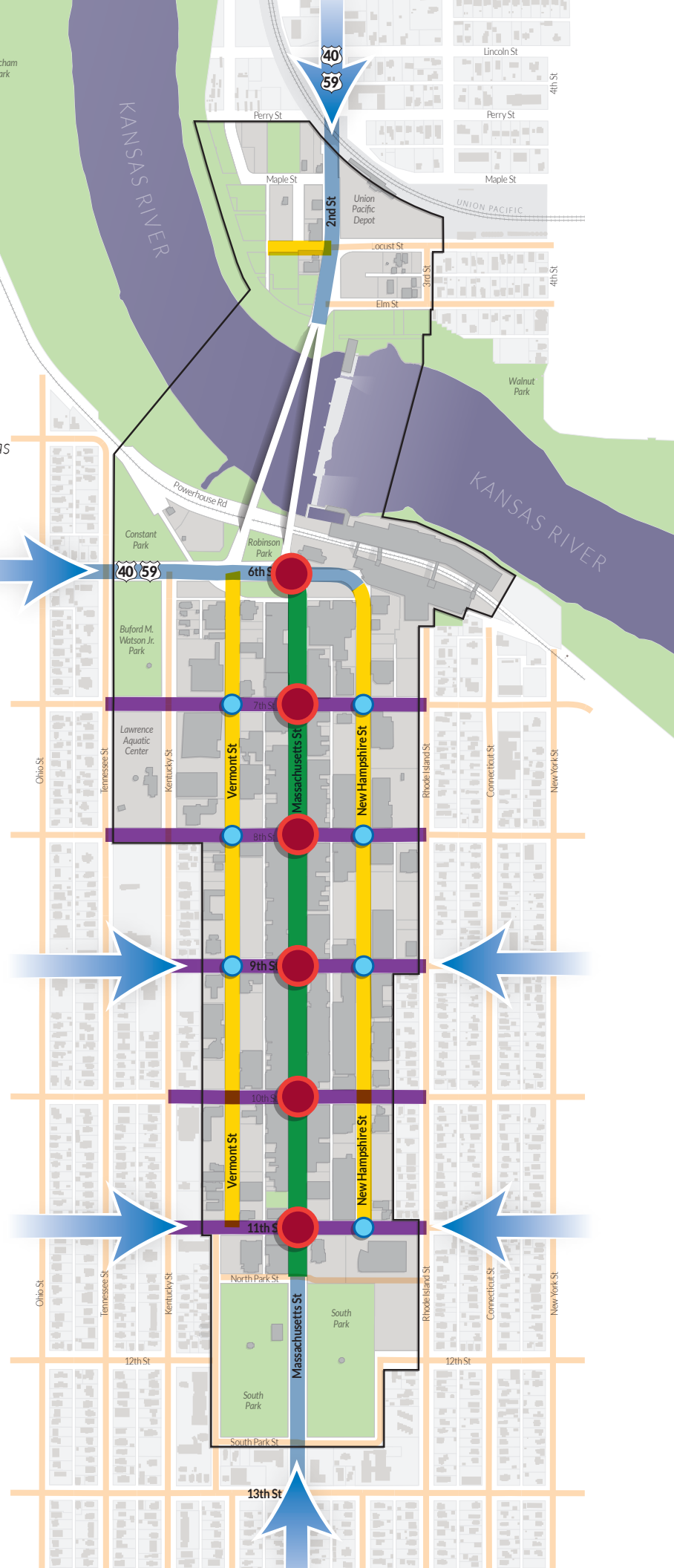
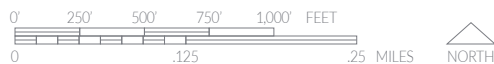


Streetscape

A number of urban design considerations, improvements, and features can enhance the character and appeal of Downtown as a shopping, business, living, and recreation environment. An attractive streetscape, public art, welcoming pedestrian furniture, and attractive gateways and approach routes should be considered in the Downtown Master Plan.

Legend

-  Study Area
-  Four-Corner Bumpout Crosswalk
-  Partial Bumpout Crosswalk (two or three corners)
-  Downtown Approach
-  Massachusetts Streetscape
-  New Hampshire & Vermont Streetscape
-  Downtown Approach Streetscape
-  7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th Streetscape
-  Neighborhood Transition Streetscape





1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

Streetscape

Significant improvements have been made in the Downtown since adoption of the updated streetscape plan in 1999. These improvements include installation of a unified pavement system along the sidewalks, a coordinated street furniture palette, street light standards, and street tree installation.

The idea of converting Massachusetts Street to a pedestrian mall was discussed during the public open house. The Plan does not recommend converting Massachusetts Street or creating a pedestrian mall.

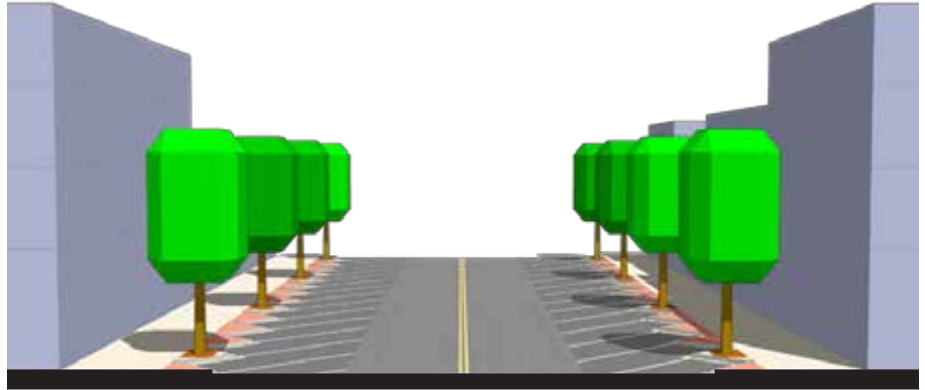
Investments in the design, construction, maintenance, and programming of streetscape environments in Downtown is a requirement for its economic and social success. Due to recent trends in online shopping and auto-oriented development, it is critical for downtowns to be attractive and engaging for retail and service uses to compete. The following section identifies recommended improvements to Downtown Lawrence's streetscape that builds on the previous streetscape plan.

- 1) 2nd Street, 2) Locust Street, 3) Elm Street,
4) 8th Street, 5) New Hampshire Street,
6) Massachusetts Street, 7) Massachusetts
Street (through South Park),
8) Vermont Street (residential transition)

Streetscape Hierarchy

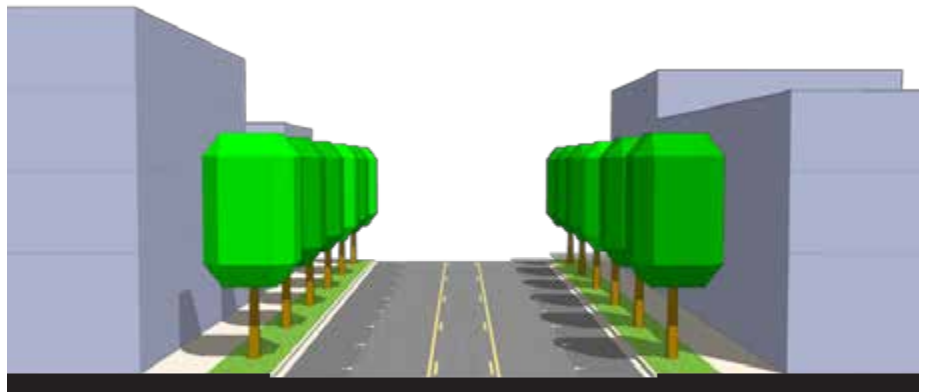
Massachusetts Street

- Primary pedestrian oriented street
- Distinct streetscape
- Sawtooth parking
- Decorative paving
- Treegrates and open planting areas
- Vegetation/planting areas
- Pedestrian lighting
- Street furniture
- Pedestrian wayfinding
- Public art



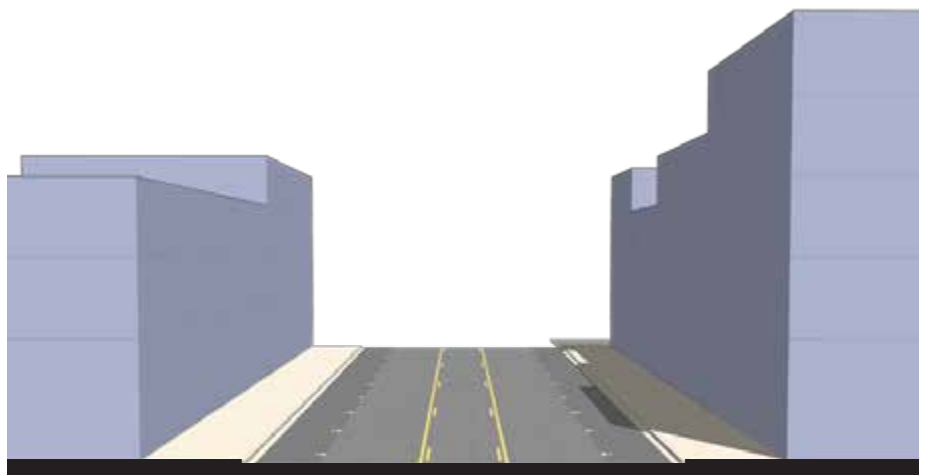
New Hampshire Street & Vermont Street

- Major vehicular movement patterns
- Reinforce Massachusetts Street streetscape theme
- Parallel parking
- Parking lot/mixed-use garage access
- Bike Lanes
- Decorative paving
- Combination of parkways open planting areas
- Pedestrian and vehicular scaled street lighting
- Street furniture



7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th

- Promote pedestrian-oriented
- Reinforce Massachusetts Street streetscape theme
- Parallel parking
- Bike Lanes
- Combination of parkways open planting areas
- Pedestrian and vehicular scaled street lighting
- Street furniture



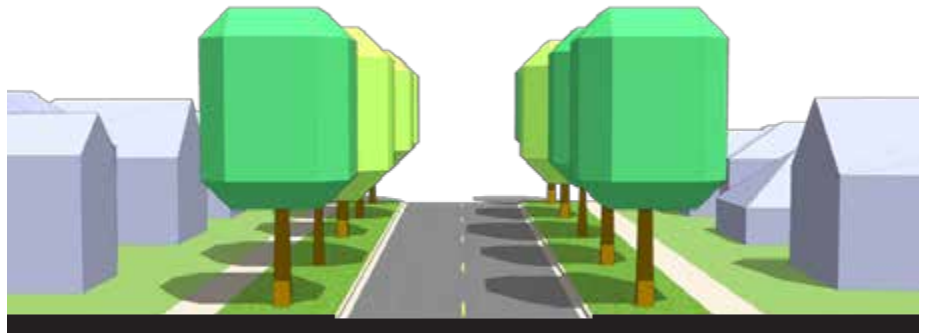
Downtown Approach

- Major vehicular movement patterns
- Reinforce Massachusetts Street streetscape theme
- Bike Lanes
- Street trees and parkways
- Vehicular and pedestrian scaled street lighting
- Gateway and Wayfinding
- Public art



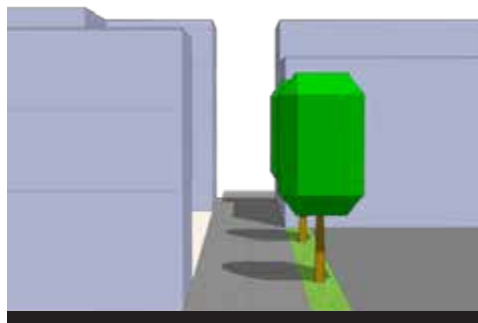
Neighborhood Transition

- Pedestrian-oriented connections
- Parallel parking
- Sidewalks
- Bike Lanes • Street trees and parkways
- Vehicular and pedestrian scaled street lighting



Alley/Service Street

- Narrow right-of-way
- Service roads for deliveries and trash collection
- Safety measures such as stop zones and signage
- Access to parking lots and pedestrian cut-throughs
- Rear access to Mass Street businesses
- Consolidate or co-locate utility lines





Pedestrian Amenities

Vibrant street life is dependent upon both areas of interest, as well as sufficient infrastructure to view and interact with these catalysts. Pedestrians should feel safe and comfortable as well as have opportunities to sit and enjoy Downtown. The City should continue to install pedestrian amenities that are complimentary in material and style of the architecture and quality of Downtown.

Street Trees

Downtown Lawrence has an abundance of street trees ranging from established and mature trees to more recently planted replacement trees. Street trees are located in raised planters at intersections and mid-block crossings, tree grates located between the sidewalk and angled parking spaces of nearly every other on-street parking space on Massachusetts Street, and planting beds, and open lawn areas. The combination of canopy and understory trees creates layers of visual interest and a sense of pedestrian comfort and shelter.

Planters

Landscape planters feature a mix of landscape elements, including canopy trees, understory trees, shrubs, native grasses, perennials, and annuals. The mix creates layers of vegetation that enhance the pedestrian environment from all viewpoints. Downtown Lawrence features two types of landscape planters, raised planters, and in-ground planters. Raised planters are concentrated along Massachusetts Street at block intersections, mid-block crossings, and pedestrian cut throughs, and act to buffer the pedestrian realm from the vehicular realm. Raised landscape planters feature a wide spectrum of landscape elements from canopy and understory trees, to shrubs and native plantings, to annuals and perennials. In-ground planters are located between the sidewalk and every other angled parking space, further delineating pedestrian oriented areas. Both raised and in-ground planters are aging and in need of modernization and/or replacement.



Street Lights

Downtown Lawrence has two types of outdoor lighting. The primary source of lighting comes from pedestrian scaled street lights with antique, acorn style luminaires and decorative poles. These street lights are meant to illuminate the sidewalk and other pedestrian oriented spaces. In many instances, the poles also hold parking meters. The secondary source comes from vehicular scaled roadway lighting with modern cobra head fixtures and standard poles. This type of lighting is meant to illuminate roadway intersections and other areas where vehicles and pedestrians share space.

Street Furniture

Attractive and durable site furnishings play an important role in creating a cohesive streetscape environment that depicts a sense of welcome and hospitality to the public. Generally the Downtown provides adequate pedestrian amenities including seating, trash and recycling receptacles, street lighting, street light banners, informational kiosks, and priority crosswalk signage.

Trash receptacles are collocated with the brick paved pedestrian bump outs at intersections and midblock crossings. Although there is a reasonable number of trash receptacles, there are few recycling receptacles. Participants of community outreach events expressed a desire for more recycling receptacles and for the City to consider composting receptacles.

Seating

There are benches and formal seating opportunities throughout Downtown. Seating includes standalone benches, seat walls, and raised landscape planters that act as informal seating. Supplying pedestrians with places to sit along the sidewalk is an additional step the City can take to enrich the pedestrian fabric of Downtown. Benches, planters, and any elevated flat surfaces can serve as places for pedestrians to sit. Pedestrians enjoy having the option of sitting along the sidewalk of a downtown for various reasons. Public seating should avoid elements such as middle armrests or sloped benches. In addition to public seating, where sidewalk widths allow, the City should encourage cafes and restaurants to provide outdoor seating for customers.

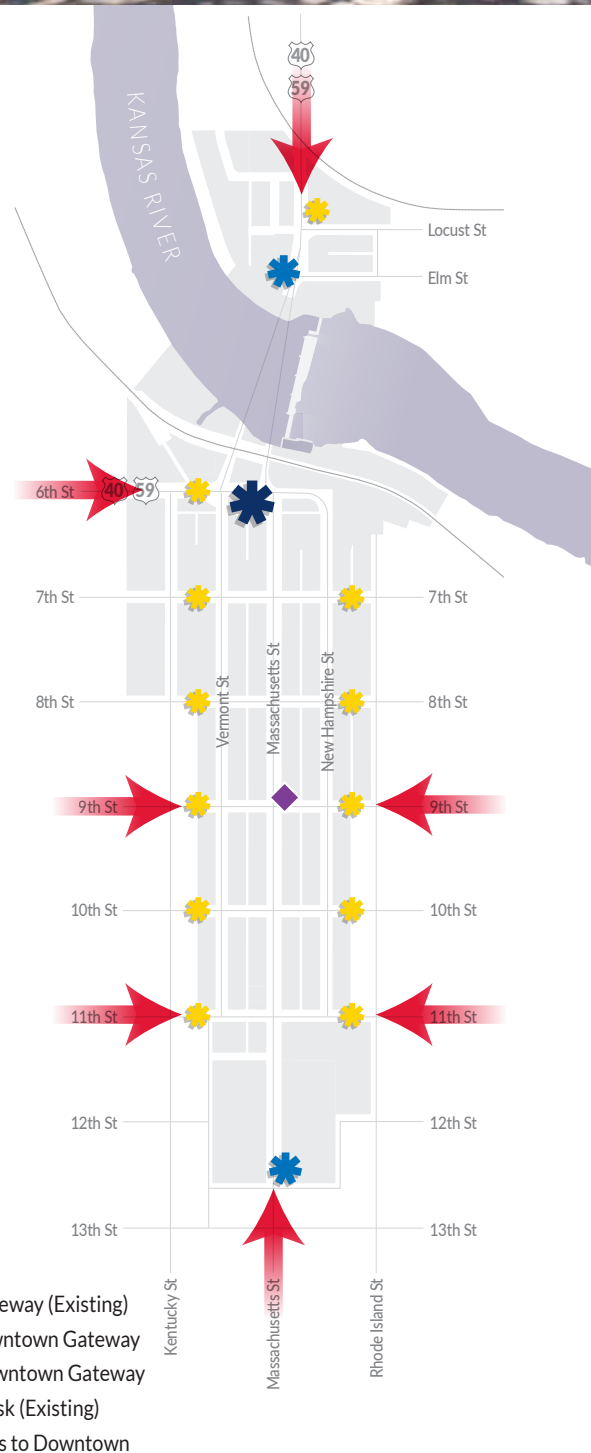


Gateways

The areas where visitors enter a downtown are called “gateway” areas. The character and appearance of these areas are important factors in determining the overall image and perception of Lawrence and the Downtown. They also help visually delineate what part of the community “is downtown” and what part “isn’t downtown.”

Gateways should be installed at key locations and transitions into Downtown and can include identification signage, architectural elements, landscaping, lighting, and similar design features. Given the importance of gateways in creating a first impression, they should be constructed of quality materials and reflect the unique identity of the City.

It is recommended that gateways be installed at key locations to announce entry into Downtown Lawrence. These gateways should include attractive landscaping, lighting, decorative paving, and other vertical design features. Pedestrian amenities should be incorporated into gateway and wayfinding installations to enhance their visibility and contribute to their prominence.





Wayfinding

Wayfinding should be largely intuitive, based on environmental cues of which we may only be marginally aware of. A coordinated system of signage should direct drivers and pedestrians to and within Downtown. Signage along nearby streets and highways should direct motorists to Downtown, and signage within Downtown should assist Downtown patrons in locating public parking facilities and key destinations such as the Public Library and City Hall.

To ensure that new wayfinding signs are inclusive and accessible to people with impairments like color blindness or dyslexia, the City should ensure fonts, font sizes, and color choices are carefully considered and tested.

The City should implement a comprehensive signage program that can better guide travelers to Downtown and more effectively direct movement within and around Downtown. It is recommended that:

- Install high quality “wayfinding” signage to better direct motorists to and from the Downtown from the surrounding community and the regional highway system. This entails the placement of signs along roadways well outside of the Downtown Study Area.
- Provide improved signage within the boundaries of Downtown to better direct drivers to public parking areas and other key destinations.
- Implement wayfinding signage to and from the Universities.
- Create wayfinding signage for cyclists.
- Install directional signs, maps, and banners to create an intuitive navigational system for vehicles and pedestrians.





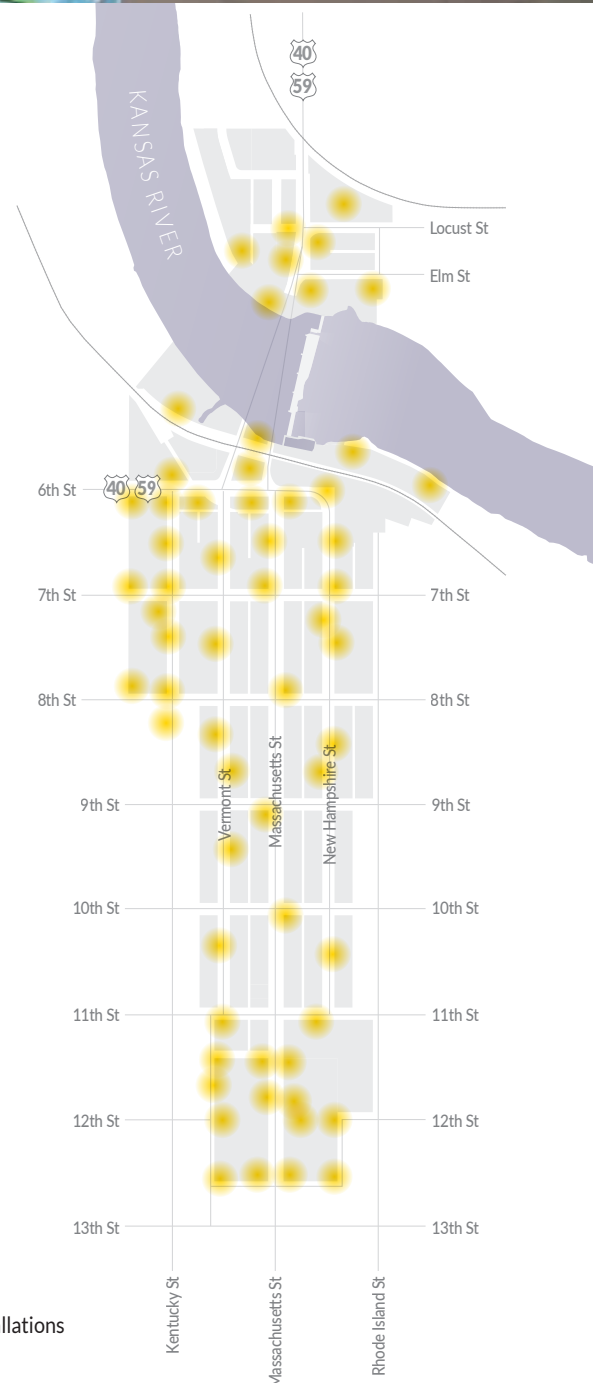
Public Art

As the cultural heart of the community, Downtown should strive to incorporate more public art in new and innovative ways. Public art can welcome individuals to the community, help facilitate social interaction, and develop a sense of community pride. Murals, sculptures, and art installations provide an opportunity to feature local artists, tell local stories, and create interactive public spaces.

Public art is disbursed throughout Downtown and includes semi-permanent sculptures and murals and temporary art installations such as the InsideOut portrait project that was displayed throughout Downtown in April 2015. The Lawrence Art Commission also operates an Outdoor Downtown Sculpture Exhibition that has been in existence for more than 30 years and highlights annually rotating sculptures selected from a juried national competition.

Public art is a great opportunity to showcase diverse voices and perspectives Downtown.

The City should continue to coordinate with Downtown partners to ensure that diverse people, stories, and talents are showcased. The City should consider temporary public art installations, where pieces are on display on a street or in a park for up to a few years, or through permanent installation of art that serves multiple functions.





Public Art Opportunities

Several unique opportunities for public art installations exist Downtown, ranging from small to large scale and from rotating, temporary, or permanent. One such opportunity is the AT&T Tower which could be utilized to display a rotating exhibition of projected art. Projected art exhibitions are becoming increasingly common in communities throughout the country and often include static images or short videos that are displayed continuously as outdoor lighting conditions permit.

Another opportunity for a large-scale public art installation is the southern wall of the Eldridge Hotel or the northern wall of 715 Massachusetts Street. These walls face an open outdoor dining and plaza space, a highly visible area and unique break in the streetwall. One of these walls could be enhanced with a wayfinding mural that not only enhances the appearance of the currently blank walls but also guides visitors to key destinations like the library, South Park, and North Lawrence.

The riverfront is another opportunity to showcase public art, especially sculpture and other 3d mediums. The Pappajohn Sculpture Park in Des Moines, IA is a great example of how art can be utilized to create a unique downtown gateway.

A smaller-scale opportunity could include a series of mosaics that build off Downtown Lawrence's historic tiled entryways. The small mosaics could be located on buildings, planters, benches, and other unexpected areas to create a scavenger hunt type experience that would encourage people to explore Downtown in a new way. The City should consider a building's historical context when identifying opportunity sites.





Gathering Places

Gathering places give people the opportunity to interact with one another within the public realm. Numerous informal plazas and gathering spaces exist along Massachusetts Street in Downtown Lawrence. These areas are collocated with pedestrian bump outs at intersections and mid-block crossings, as well as in pedestrian cut throughs. Opportunities for spontaneous congregation are also found where buildings are setback more deeply from the sidewalk than neighboring uses.

Permanent outdoor dining areas can unnecessarily restrict sidewalk widths and make it difficult for people with mobility issues and other impairments from safely navigating Downtown, making Downtown less inclusive and accessible.

Outdoor Dining

Outdoor seating should be designed in a way that doesn't impact pedestrian circulation. In some cases existing outdoor seating areas in the Downtown feel forced and do not fit the character and style of the Downtown. The roping off of the space is important, but the materials used should be consistent with the character of the Downtown.

The City should continue to provide opportunities for outdoor dining and gathering spaces that promote active and lively streetscape environments. Sidewalks greater than 12 feet wide are large enough to accommodate small dining tables without restricting pedestrian flow. The majority of businesses effectively provide outdoor dining, particularly along Massachusetts Street. Those that do not are located on numbered streets and are inhibited by existing streetscape elements. For example, outdoor dining for the Bourgeois Pig disrupts the pedestrian pathway because of the concrete planter that further shrinks the sidewalk. Revisions to the zoning code may also be required to allow outdoor dining in the public right-of-way and on-street parking spots. Any revisions should consider the materials used to create the outdoor dining space, limiting the use of structures that disrupt physical and visual connection to the surrounding area.





Public Spaces

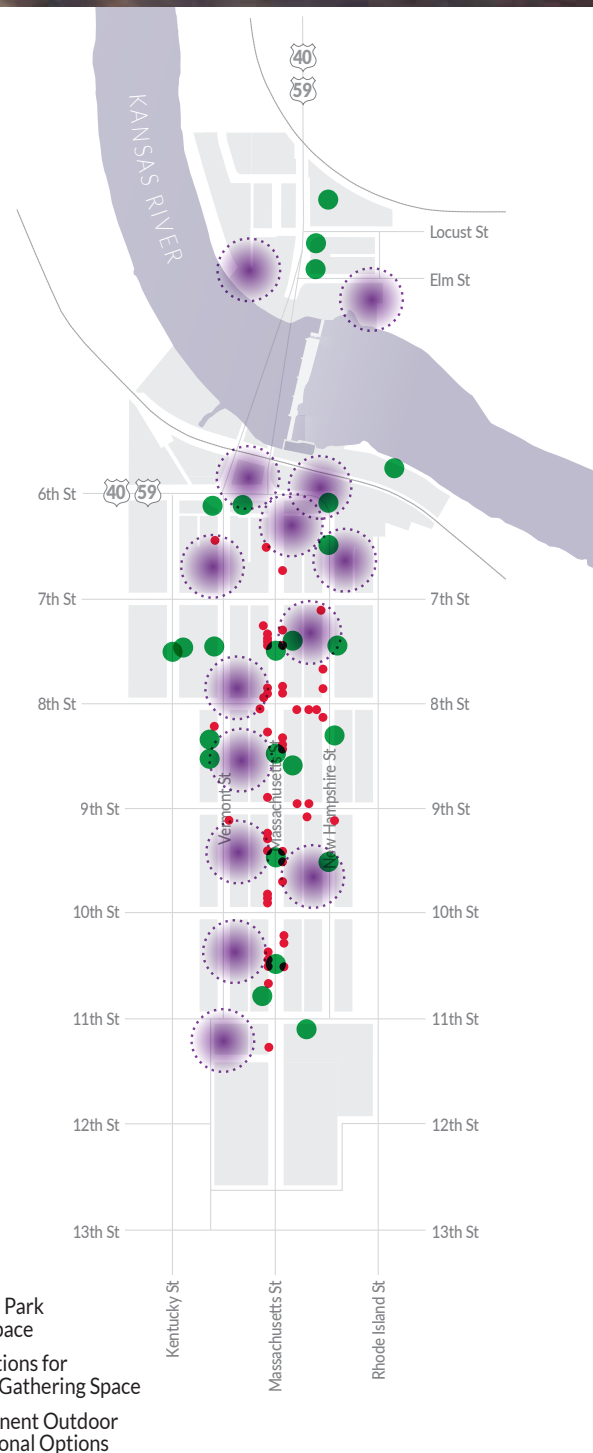
Public spaces are an increasingly valued amenity within Downtown Lawrence. The heart of every community should have places where people can gather to eat, chat, or just people watch. The City currently has locations in Downtown that can be improved to feel more like established gathering places for small or large groups depending on the available size and amenities provided.

The City should install additional landscaping, pedestrian amenities, and site furniture in other Downtown locations to provide areas that can serve as informal gathering places. Example locations include installing amenities, such as a pavilion, at Robinson Park to create a more inviting gathering area, setting aside a few parking spaces in each of the City's public parking lots for outdoor seating and gathering, and redesigning existing cut-throughs to serve as informal gathering places (page 107).



Pocket Parks & Plazas

Pocket parks and plazas are small in scale, typically ranging from a few hundred square feet to not more two thousand square feet. Pocket parks provide aesthetically pleasing "wayside" spaces for visitors and shoppers to relax. These spaces have been designed for a quiet retreat offering shade, passive seating, and visual interest. These spaces should incorporate landscaping, decorative paving, pedestrian amenities, and wayfinding signage. Special care should be taken to reflect the character of Lawrence in the design of these spaces through public art such as sculpture, signage, planting and/or paving.





Parklets

Parklets offer a place to sit, relax, and enjoy vibrant street life activities and can be designed to be permanent and/or seasonal. To accommodate parklets, the width of the sidewalk is extended into the public right-of-way using existing on-street parking spaces to allow for additional public seating, outdoor dining, bike parking, public art, gateways/wading in, landscaping, etc. Parklets provide benefits to local businesses, residents, and visitors by creating unique public spaces that attract customers and foster community conversation. They also add more space for people to walk in congested areas.

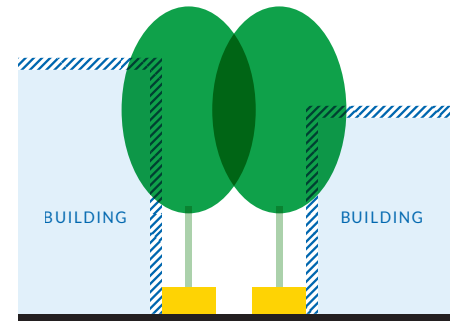
The City should continue to work with Downtown business owners to formalize permanent parklet standards to ensure they provide benefits to local businesses, residents, and visitors by creating unique public spaces that attract customers and foster community conversation.



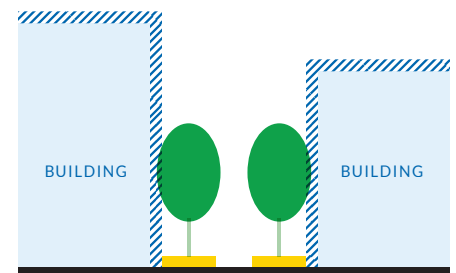


Cut-Throughs

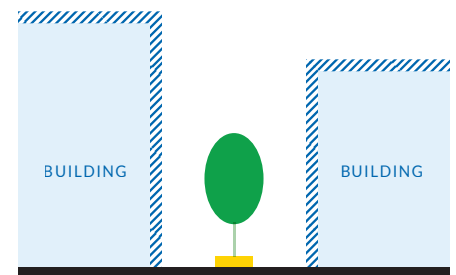
Two pedestrian cut-throughs exist Downtown and link people from the parking lots along New Hampshire Street to the businesses and activity on Massachusetts Street. Not only do they help improve access to Massachusetts Street from New Hampshire Street but they also act as informal public gathering spaces. These spaces should be enhanced with upgraded streetscaping elements including seating, signage, planters, pedestrian lighting, and public art. These elements improve the function of the cut-throughs as pedestrian walkways but also formalize them as public spaces. There is an opportunity for the public art and signage components to be combined to improve the aesthetic of these spaces while also directing people to destinations both on Massachusetts and New Hampshire Street.



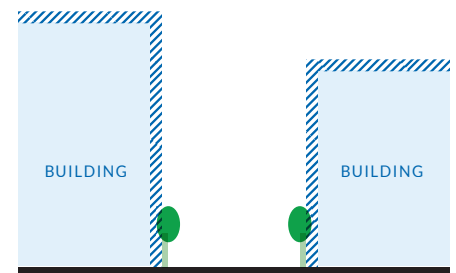
Config 2 (Existing)



Config 2



Config 3



Config 4





CHAPTER SEVEN

Implementation

The implementation process for Downtown Lawrence has just begun. In many ways, formal adoption of the Downtown Lawrence Plan is only the first step, not the last. Without continuing action to implement and update the Plan, City efforts up to this point will have minimal lasting impact. The Downtown Lawrence Plan sets forth an agreed-upon “road map” for the next twenty years. It is the product of considerable effort on the part of Downtown partners, City staff, business leaders, and residents.



Public Communication

The City should continue to regularly communicate development and businesses activity in Downtown to the Lawrence community.

The planning process for the Downtown Lawrence Plan involved a considerable amount of public outreach and communication. The Lawrence community stayed involved throughout the planning process by attending in-person community engagement events and using online resources, including a project website and interactive online tools. Building on these and other efforts already conducted, the City should ensure that the Plan's key recommendations and overall vision continue to be conveyed to the entire community. This includes regular updates, coverage of major milestones, and providing community members additional opportunities to voice their opinions. This should be communicated through a variety of mediums including the City website, newsletter (The Flame), and social media.

The City should further expand avenues through which community members can not only receive information about planning and development, but also communicate with local government. This should include ways for resident questions and concerns to be heard and addressed. In addition, the City should continue to provide accessible materials, both online and in print, that simplify and explain regular civic functions. These include informational materials that provide guidance on applying for zoning, building, subdivision, or other development related permits and approvals.

Daily Use

It is essential that the Plan be utilized by City staff, boards, and commissions on a daily basis to review and evaluate all proposals for improvement and development within the study area.

The Implementation Plan should become the City's official policy guide for land use, development, and community improvement in the Downtown area. It is essential that the Plan be utilized by City staff, boards, and commissions to review and evaluate all proposals for improvement and development within the study area. To ensure daily usage and to further educate the community about the Plan, the City should:

- Make the Plan document available online and have hard copies at City Hall.
- Provide assistance to the public in explaining the Plan and its relationship to private and public development projects and other proposals, as appropriate.
- Provide an overview presentation of the Plan for existing and future elected and appointed officials.
- Assist the City Commission and various boards and commissions in the day-to-day administration, interpretation and application of the Plan.
- Maintain a list of current possible amendments, issues, or needs which may be a subject of change, addition or deletion from the Downtown Lawrence Plan.
- Coordinate with and assist the City Commission in the Plan amendment process.

Regular Review & Update

The Plan itself should be subjected to a monitoring process and be updated periodically to continually reflect local aspirations and opportunities.

The Downtown Lawrence Plan is not a static document; the planning process must be continuous. The Plan should be monitored and updated on a regular basis. The need for Plan amendments is the result of many community influences. Most frequently these are brought about by changes in attitudes or emerging needs not foreseen at the time of Plan adoption.

Although a proposal to amend the Plan can be brought forth to the City Commission at any time, the City should regularly undertake a systematic review of the Plan. The City should initiate review of the Plan at least every two to three years but annually if possible. This review should coincide with the preparation of the annual budget and capital improvement program. In this manner, recommendations or changes relating to capital improvements or other programs can be considered as part of the upcoming commitments for the fiscal year. Routine examination of the Plan will help ensure that the planning program remains relevant to community needs and aspirations.



Partnerships

The City of Lawrence should assume the leadership role in taking action on the Plan.

For the Plan to be successful, however, it must be based on a strong partnership between the City, other public agencies, the local business community, and the private sector. The City's partners should include:

- Other governmental and service districts depending on site or issue (e.g., KDOT and Douglas County)
- Local economic development and advocacy organizations such as Downtown Lawrence Inc and the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce
- Builders and developers, who should be encouraged to undertake improvements and new construction that conform to the Plan and enhance the overall quality and character of the Downtown
- Nonprofits and public institutions that play a key role in the overall quality of life in Downtown (e.g., Lawrence Arts Center and Lawrence Community Shelter)
- Neighborhood associations including the East Lawrence, North Lawrence, Old West Lawrence, Oread, and Pinckney Associations
- Property owners and businesses who should be encouraged to improve or redevelop their property in accordance with the Plan

Resource Prioritization

The City has limited financial and staff resources. Major improvements, where necessary, should be phased in over time and prioritized by location.

The Opportunity Sites section of the Land Use & Development chapter establishes priorities for redevelopment in Downtown Lawrence: Catalyst Sites, Redevelopment Sites, and Strategic Investments. However, the City should revise priorities depending on developer interest, willingness of property owners to sell, and availability of funds for acquisition.

Funding

The City should utilize all available funding sources to assist in the implementation of important public projects and improvements.

A description of potential funding sources currently available is summarized in the following sections. It is important to note that because the following sources are subject to change, the City should continue to research and monitor grants, funding agencies, and programs to identify new opportunities as they become available. Federal, state, and foundation grants and public-private partnerships are also an option.

Capital Improvements Program (CIP)

One tool for implementing the Downtown Lawrence Plan is within the City's existing Capital Improvements Program. It establishes schedules and priorities for all public improvement projects within a five-year period. The City first prepares a list of all public improvements that will be required in the next five years. Then all projects are reviewed, priorities assigned, cost estimates prepared, and funding sources identified.

The Capital Improvements Program typically schedules the implementation of a range of specific projects related to the Downtown Lawrence Plan, particularly the restoration, upgrading, and expansion of existing utilities and infrastructure facilities. Lawrence's financial resources will always be limited, and public dollars must be spent wisely. The Capital Improvements Program would allow the City to provide the most desirable public improvements yet stay within budget constraints.

Business Improvement District (BID)

Business Improvement Districts can be used to fund improvements and programs within a designated service area. Within the State of Kansas, a city may set up and establish a boundary of a BID by ordinance. It may then assign fees to properties within the identified service area and the revenue received is channeled back into projects and programs benefiting those properties. A BID can be rejected if 51 percent of the property owners and electors within a designated area object. BID funds can be used for initiatives such as streetscape improvements, district marketing, special services and events.



Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

The purpose of TIF funding is to incentivize and attract desired development within key commercial areas. TIF dollars can typically be used for infrastructure, streetscaping, public improvements, land assemblage, and offsetting the cost of development.

TIF utilize future incremental property tax and/or sales tax revenues generated within a designated area or district, to pay for qualified expenses and further incentive continued reinvestment. As the Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) of properties within a TIF District increases, the incremental growth in property tax over the base year that the TIF was established is reinvested in that area. Local officials may then issue bonds or undertake other financial obligation based on the growth in new revenue.

Two TIF Districts currently exist in Downtown Lawrence: the Downtown 2000 District and the 9th & New Hampshire TIF District. The former was created to support the development of the 10th and New Hampshire parking garage. The latter includes two project areas, North and South, each with their own unique mixed-use development projects.

Neighborhood Revitalization Area

Neighborhood Revitalization Areas (NRA) were established by the Kansas Neighborhood Revitalization Act to promote reinvestment and revitalization of properties to spur economic improvements in a particular neighborhood. The tool provides an annual property tax rebate to a property owner based on a percentage of the incremental increase in property value from the completed improvements. The base property value is shielded from the rebate, so that during the rebate period, the city still receives at least the same amount of property tax that would have been generated by the property had it not been improved. The property at 1040 Vermont, Treanor Architects, was the most-recent NRA.

Community Development Block Grant

The Community Development Block Grant program is a flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique development needs. The CDBG program provides annual grants on a formula basis to general units of local governments and states. A grantee must develop and follow a detailed plan that provides for, and encourages, citizen participation. This process emphasizes participation by persons of low- or moderate- income, particularly residents of low-income and moderate-income neighborhoods and blighted areas.

Industrial Revenue Bonds

Kansas State Act 12-1740 allows municipalities to issue Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRB) to cover the costs of purchasing, acquiring, constructing, or equipping facilities for agricultural, commercial, hospital, industrial, natural resources, recreational development, and manufacturing for the purpose of obtaining a sales tax exemption on construction materials, or in some cases a property tax abatement.

Transportation Development Districts

Transportation Development Districts (TDD) are an economic development tool established by the Kansas TDD Act to help finance public transportation improvements. There is one TDD in Downtown Lawrence, which aligns with the 9th & New Hampshire TIF District. Revenues from the TDD went toward the 10th & New Hampshire parking garage and other public infrastructure improvements.

Historic Tax Credits

The Kansas State Tax Credit covers 25 percent of qualifying expenses related to rehabilitating buildings listed on the National or Kansas Registers of Historic Places. Projects must first be reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and can be combined with any Federal Historic Tax Credits received. The Federal Credits cover 20% of project costs for owners or developers of income-producing properties. This program has been active since 1976, and is administered through the IRS.



Incubators

Business incubators provide low-cost space and specialized support to small companies. Such services might include administrative consulting, access to office equipment and training, and assistance in accessing credit. Incubators are typically owned by public entities such as municipalities or economic development agencies who subsidize rents and services with grants. In addition to job creation and generating activity, the goal of incubators is to help businesses grow and relocate to larger spaces within Downtown Lawrence. The City should work with its partners to evaluate opportunities for further incubation.

Foundation & Specialized Grants

The successful implementation of the Plan requires realization of projects that range in scale and scope. One type of funding source that becomes increasingly significant when issue-specific projects or programs such as those related to tourism, performing arts, historic preservation, small business assistance, etc. are considered is the foundation grant. The City should dedicate resources to monitoring and exploring foundation grants as a funding tool.

Transportation

The following discussion summarizes funding programs that could be utilized by the City to make enhancements to local transportation infrastructure.

KDOT Economic Development Program

The objective of the Economic Development Program is to use transportation investments to recruit, retain, and grow businesses. The grant requires a 25 percent match, and eligible projects may include road, transit, and rail improvements. However, the program is not intended to fund improvements for the sole recruitment of business, rather projects must be shown to support job growth.

KDOT Transportation Economic Development Program

Similar to the Economic Development Program, the Transportation Economic Development Loan Program seeks to create new jobs and encourage capital investment through partnerships with local governments and the private sector. The reimbursement loan program uses incremental revenue from private investment that was spurred by the development of transportation infrastructure to pay off the bonds used to finance the transportation project. Only roadway projects are eligible for the program and would require a three-party agreement between KDOT, the City of Lawrence, and a private sector business.

Transportation Revolving Fund

The Kansas Transportation Revolving Fund (TRF) provides loan funding to local government for eligible transportation projects. Loans may be repaid through innovative transportation funding solutions such as revenues from highway fund allocations or locally raised revenue. The Kansas Department of Transportation accepts applications on an annual basis. Eligible projects include bridge, culvert, road, street, and highway projects.

Transportation Alternatives Program

Congress created the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP), which provides funding for non-motorized transportation projects. Projects range from on-street bike facilities to multi-use paths and sidewalk infill programs to Safe Routes to School projects.

Surface Transportation Program

In the past, these funds have been allocated to coordinating regional councils to be used for roadway and roadway related items. Projects in this funding category have required a local sponsor, 20 percent match, and have been selected based on a ranking scale that takes into account the regional benefits provided by the project among other factors. STP funds have been used for a variety of project types including roadway rehabilitation, reconstruction, and restoration; widening and adding lanes; intersection improvements; traffic signal improvements; and green infrastructure funding.



Parks & Open Space

The following discussion summarizes funding programs that could be utilized by the City to make enhancements to local parks and open space facilities.

Land & Water Conservation Fund Grants

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism administers federal funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for outdoor recreation projects. Funds may be used for the development and/or acquisition of outdoor public recreation facilities. Eligible projects require a 50 percent match and must meet needs identified in the 2009 Kansas Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. These include shared use paved trails, playground equipment, upgrades to existing amenities, and additional park acreage, among others.

Recreational Trails Grants

The Recreational Trails Grant, a program through the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism, provides funding for recreational trails and trail-related projects. Funds are distributed using an 80 percent match. Trail projects may be motorized, non-motorized, or diversified recreation trails or projects. The aim of the grant is to spearhead construction and application of trail projects, rather than fund administration.

Action Matrix

The Downtown Lawrence Plan includes numerous policy, project, and strategy recommendations. The following Action Matrix summarizes the key actions the City can undertake to achieve the community vision. It also establishes the anticipated time frame and partnerships of each action. The City should use the Action Matrix to assign tasks to various departments, identify potential funding sources, and explore strategic partnerships. As actions are completed and the Plan is updated, the Action Matrix should also be revised to prioritize the remaining actions and add new ones as needed.

Key Action

Key actions are capital projects, policies, or strategies that should be prioritized to lay the foundation for long-term Plan implementation. For example, a key action may include infrastructure improvements that support future investment or coordination among stakeholders to procure funding for recommended improvements in Downtown.

Time Estimate

Each key action has been assigned a time estimate for when the project should be completed. The time estimates are defined as follows:

- Short-Term (0-1 Year)
- Mid-Term (2-5 Years)
- Long-Term (5+ Years)
- Ongoing (Requires immediate action and continued attention throughout the life of the Plan)

Partners

Responsibility includes government bodies, civic organizations, private entities, and other associations that may be able to aid Plan implementation. As applicable, the City should coordinate with potential partners to explore opportunities for collaboration to complete the identified recommendation.

Action Matrix

#	Key Action	Time Estimate	Partners
1	Establish a business incubator or startup space to support small business development with a focus on women and minority entrepreneurs.	Short-term	Downtown Lawrence Inc.
2	Conduct a study to determine the feasibility of establishing a vacancy fee or tax to address chronic vacancy in Downtown.	Short-term	
3	Assess the required processes for opening a business Downtown with the goal of making approval processes more streamlined, transparent, and user-friendly.	Short-term	Downtown businesses, property owners, managers, and Downtown Lawrence Inc.
4	Conduct a comprehensive update to the Downtown Design Guidelines to improve user-friendliness, modernize standards, and provide guidance on the level of façade restoration or enhancement that should be required based on the level of planned reinvestment planned for the building, the existing state, and historic status of the building.	Mid-term	
5	Establish a Façade Enhancement Program that would incentivize façade improvements that restore the historic appearance of the building or comply with the updated Downtown Design Guidelines.	Mid-term	
6	Establish a schedule for truck delivery to manage the number of trucks Downtown and reduce traffic congestion.	Mid-term	Downtown businesses, property owners, managers, and Downtown Lawrence Inc.
7	Establish an alley improvement program to implement beautification and safety measures like improved lighting, signage, and two-way mirrors.	Mid-term	
8	Develop a more prominent identification system for parking facilities, including advance-notice signs for motorists and location signs for pedestrians.	Mid-term	
9	Install real-time parking count signs at the entrance to parking decks.	Long-term	
10	Revise section 20-901(f) of the Development Code to exempt only non-residential uses from the CD Downtown Commercial Zoning District's requirement to provide off-street parking spaces and add more flexibility for redevelopment.	Short-term	
11	Use the City's sidewalk prioritization system and Safe Routes to School Plan to upgrade and maintain sidewalks and streetscapes near Downtown.	Mid-term	

#	Key Action	Time Estimate	Partners
12	Use the 2019 Bike Plan to complete the Lawrence Loop, develop connections to the existing bike network, and create bike storage facilities in Downtown.	Mid-term	
13	Determine the viability of redesign scenarios for the Vermont Street and Massachusetts Street Bridges to better accommodate pedestrians and cyclists.	Mid-term	KDOT
14	Explore the feasibility of acquiring and improving or redeveloping existing public park space as a permanent outdoor event space to better accommodate the Farmer's Market and other Downtown and to limit the number of on-street events and disruptions to traffic and safety.	Short-term	
15	Expand the types of cultural events and celebrations hosted Downtown to ensure people of all backgrounds feel welcome, invited, and integral to the vibrancy of Downtown.	Ongoing	Downtown Lawrence Inc
16	Develop educational materials and help inform Downtown businesses of the benefits of hosting events Downtown that require street closures.	Short-term	Downtown Lawrence Inc
17	Reexamine the City's regulatory approach for building height maximums to ensure that Downtown redevelopment aligns with the Functional Subareas and the vision of the Downtown Plan.	Short-term	
18	Install additional mid-block crossings on Vermont Street between 7th and 8th Streets at the Library; on New Hampshire Street, also between 7th and 8th Streets; and on Massachusetts Street between 6th and 7th Streets.	Mid-term	
19	Develop a Downtown Streetscape Plan that incorporates the streetscape hierarchy and pedestrian amenities recommendations of this Plan.	Long-term	
20	Install high quality "gateway" and "wayfinding" signage to better direct motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists to and from the Downtown from the surrounding community, regional highway system, and universities.	Mid-term	
21	Provide improved signage within the boundaries of Downtown to better direct drivers to public parking areas and other key destinations.	Mid-term	
22	Improve the function of pedestrian cut throughs and formalize them as public gathering spaces with upgraded streetscape elements including seating, signage, planters, pedestrian lighting, and public art.	Mid-term	