Downtown Parkway District

The Healthy Community Vision for Downtown Kansas City, Kansas

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In addition to the numerous people that participated, special thanks goes to our advisory and technical committees that provided the leadership and expertise to address the issues identified and the preparation of an implementable plan.

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DOWNTOWN PARKWAY DISTRICT

VISION

The Downtown Parkway District Plan is a **redevelopment strategy** for downtown Kansas City, Kansas that envisions a **model for healthy communities**, including:

- A full range of the goods and services essential to a healthy lifestyle in downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods; and
- A network of streets, paths and parkways that encourage walking and biking and other active modes of transportation to connect people to these goods and services and to one another, supporting the goal of recreating the area as a great place to live and work.

ATTRIBUTES

Live	Create a place that all people are proud to call home, first and foremost.
Use	Create a place where goods and services are available to support the needs of its residents.
Health	Create a place providing access to healthy foods and supporting wellness.
Active	Create a place designed to promote personal activity in daily life.
Connect	Create a place where people can access, physically and economically, their daily needs.
Opportunity	Create a place that provides economic opportunities and inspires people to be successful and contribute to the success of the place.

A HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

This implementation plan for the Downtown Parkway District is just a milestone along this journey to be a healthier and more sustainable community. While this implementation plan's genesis can be seen in the Downtown Master Plan and the development of the Infrastructure Action Team of Healthy Communities Wyandotte, it will be the active involvement of the community in the coming years that will see the plan come to its full fruition.

As this plan outlines, residents regardless of income deserve and require access to healthy foods, to wellness opportunities, and to a whole range of accompanying goods and services. The Big 11 Lake Park area, including the adjacent John F. Kennedy Recreation Center, has traditionally provided the surrounding communities with a portion of these things such as low- and no-cost sports, recreation, and educational activities. While access to these things obviously needs to continue, there is just as obviously the need to expand opportunities to a much broader and much more dynamic range of recreation, wellness, education, and community involvement activities. Toward that end, the Unified Government in conjunction with the Kansas City Kansas Public Schools and the YMCA of Greater Kansas City have already established an on-going Access Team to address how all of the investments anticipated under this implementation plan can best reach all the residents of the community, regardless of age or income. Over the coming months, this Access Team will use the continuing input of the various stakeholders to reach consensus on how best to provide access for all.

As this plan starts to identify, broad leadership is needed for implementation in order that those groups upon whom this plan will have direct impact are included. However, leadership must also be very focused on what is required to accomplish all the plan's goals – not just a specific goal such as a new community center or a new grocery store.

This plan describes a whole series of available implementation tools that can and should be utilized. Success of the Downtown Parkway District plan keys on necessary and continued economic development, but this plan has the unique opportunity to involve the health-care and wellness philanthropic community in achieving that economic success. Pairing these new community health and wellness partners with traditional development partners creates the potential for game-changing downtown revitalization. As stakeholders in the successful outcome of this plan, all partners could serve the plan well by creating some kind of early "seed fund." Such an initial endowment or series of endowments could then be utilized to jump-start such initiatives as creating innovative new neighborhood reinvestment programs, funding the first years of a semi-independent Executive Director position to oversee Downtown Parkway District implementation, and even various promotional collateral.

Success in building and maintaining community engagement in this broad endeavor will depend upon continuing promotion of the Downtown Parkway District concept, particularly in the early months when the community isn't yet able to see the changes. Use of every avenue to promote and advertise the concept will be required, not only through social media and links on a wide variety of web sites, but even to specific advertising and marketing efforts such as newsletters and the presence of plan advocates on radio and television and in print. Engage a broad cross-section of the larger community by meeting with a host of neighborhood and civic groups, such as:

- Liveable Neighborhoods; Neighborhood Business Revitalization (NBR) organizations
- United Way; social service agencies; chambers of commerce; employee meetings of larger employers; government employees
- Service organizations, neighborhood associations, church groups
- Schools and their parents, teachers, staff members, and students

By capitalizing on the opportunity to engage the average citizen in these early stages, in the future there will be a ready base of active project participants promoting and advocating for the success of the Downtown Parkway District. As downtown is "everybody's downtown," there's every reason to promote the very real whole-city aspects of the Downtown Parkway District. It can and should serve as a model for a healthy and sustainable community for the rest of the city, the county, the region, and beyond.

CONTEXT

Aerial of Study Area

HEALTH RANKING

The 2009 Kansas County Health Ranking ranked Wyandotte County 105th out of 105 Counties. Based on these factors a community dialogue was started around the idea of improving the community's health. Healthy Communities Wyandotte was created in 2009 with the intent to "mobilize the community to improve health and well-being in Wyandotte County through increased communication, coordination, and culture change." Healthy Communities Wyandotte is led by a steering committee comprised of community leaders from education, health, housing, business, government and community organizations. Its work is planned and executed by five action teams – communication, education, infrastructure, and nutrition and health services. Their work over the past four years has led to specific recommendations to address the health of the residents of Kansas City, Kansas and Wyandotte County.

Today, Wyandotte County remains near the very bottom (96th out of 98 Counties reporting) in terms of overall health outcomes. The Health Outcomes for the County are comprised of a variety of measures that affect health such as diet and exercise, alcohol and drug use, access to and quality of healthcare, education, employment, income, and housing and transit, as examples. The county ranks last in the state for Health Behaviors – smoking, obesity, food environment, inactivity, drinking, etc. as well as in Social and Economic Factors – high school graduation, unemployment, children in poverty, crime, etc. and near the bottom in all other measures.

TOP QUARTILE		UPPER MIDDLE QUARTILE		LOWER MIDDLE QUARTILE		BOTTOM QUARTILE	
RANK	COUNTY	RANK	COUNTY	RANK	COUNTY	RANK	COUNTY
1	Gove	27	Douglas	53	Morton	80	Greenwood
2	Sheridan	28	Washington	54	Wallace	81	Osage
3	Johnson	29	Edwards	55	Stafford	82	Neosho
4	Greeley	30	Stanton	56	Sumner	83	Sherman
5	Logan	31	Graham	57	Kingman	84	Grant
6	Pottawatomie	32	Rooks	58	Rice	85	Sedgwick
7	Mitchell	33	Gray	59	Cloud	86	Cowley
8	Nemaha	34	Trego	60	Phillips	87	Brown
9	McPherson	35	Clay	61	Republic	88	Wichita
10	Jewell	36	Marshall	62	Linn	89	Hamilton
11	Kiowa	37	Miami	63	Saline	90	Seward
12	Lane	38	Haskell	64	Rush	91	Finney
13	Riley	39	Ottawa	65	Harper	92	Chautauqua
14	Smith	40	Butler	66	Doniphan	93	Anderson
15	Chase	41	Cheyenne	67	Russell	94	Allen
16	Scott	42	Ellis	68	Lyon	95	Elk
17	Wabaunsee	43	Clark	69	Reno	96	Atchison
18	Decatur	44	Stevens	70	Franklin	97	Crawford
19	Rawlins	45	Barber	71	Jackson	98	Cherokee
20	Meade	46	Morris	72	Pawnee	99	Wilson
21	Harvey	47	Ness	73	Pratt	100	Bourbon
22	Hodgeman	48	Jefferson	74	Dickinson	101	Woodson
23	Thomas	49	Coffey	75	Kearny	102	Geary
24	Comanche	50	Leavenworth	76	Ford	103	Labette
25	Marion	51	Norton	77	Osborne	104	Montgomery
26	Ellsworth	52	Lincoln	78	Shawnee	105	Wyandotte
				79	Barton		

2009 County Health Ranking - Kansas Health Institute

COMMUNITY CENTER

In 2012, a decision was reached to relocate the local YMCA branch from their 100+ year old facility at 8th and Armstrong in Downtown KCK. This decision was made in order to provide a more comprehensive range of services and better level of service to the residents of downtown and Kansas City, Kansas than could not be provided using their current facility. When studying potential locations for a new facility, the YMCA market analysis identified the area of 10th Street and State Avenue as the preferred location to serve the area.

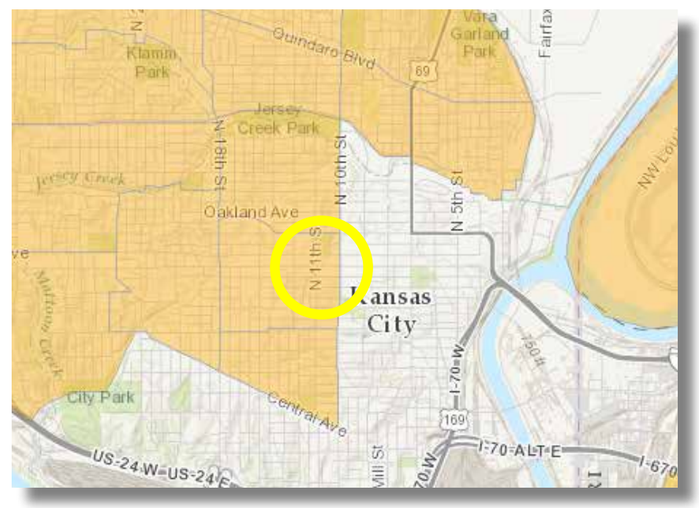
HEALTHY FOOD

In an attempt to address the lack of healthy food options in the urban core of Kansas City, Kansas, a feasibility study was conducted. That study identified the 10th and State area for the location of a future grocery store. Subsequently, a solicitation for a new grocery store was distributed by the Unified Government to potential development teams. This solicitation resulted in the identification of a developer/operator team that would build a full service grocery store, similar in scale and scope to those recently developed in Wyandotte County. The selected team confirmed 10th and Minnesota Avenue as a best location to build their facility.

HEALTHY CAMPUS

The identification of the 10th Street and Minnesota Avenue / State Avenue area for redevelopment, in conjunction with the existing amenities of Big 11 Lake Park, Waterway Park, nearby Douglass Elementary and Sumner Academy and the convergence of a traditional African–American community and an emerging Hispanic community made this area the ideal location for a big idea. In 2013 Mayor Mark Holland launched the Healthy Campus Initiative as an effort to bring each of these disparate ideas and amenities together to create something greater, and have a broader impact, for the downtown and the community. The idea of creating a Healthy Campus was to prepare a redevelopment plan for an area of Downtown Kansas City, Kansas that would be rooted in the community conversation regarding health and apply it to a specific physical redevelopment opportunity.

Existing YMCA Facility



Map of Food Deserts in Kansas City

PLANNING PROCESS

The creation of the Downtown Parkway District Plan represents 6 months of conversations with the community, including residents, neighborhoods, businesses, institutions, faith leaders, schools, banks, and health providers; with developers for the grocery store, the community center, and for housing and commercial uses; and with foundations, city staff and elected officials. These conversations have defined those elements that are important to revitalize the Downtown Parkway District area and the how they can contribute to a healthy environment.

Word Cloud from First Community Meeting

Through initial conversations several drivers began to define the plan elements. The elements that were identified as the most important by participants included:

- Access to the uses and amenities that will redevelop and revitalize the area.
- A variety of recreational amenities, including passive, active and social spaces, particularly for children.
- Healthy, local food options.
- A community center that provides recreation and fitness opportunities as well as educational, social and community space.
- Housing and services that support daily living and create community.
- Improved connections that provide physical access to community spaces – library, churches, neighborhoods, parks, community center, etc.
- Recognition of the history and culture of Downtown Kansas City and the area's contribution to the region.

Three general options identifying distinct development patterns were prepared for initial discussions. The review of these options identified a singular direction for the plan and its components. The Downtown Parkway District represents the details of that direction and the implementation measures necessary for successful redevelopment.

GOALS

The goals for this project were defined early on and included three primary pieces. The first goal was the organization of the discussion around community health and economic development. Community discussions regarding health were not only focused on actions to improve the health of county residents through programming and education, but also on how improvement to the physical environment could contribute to these discussions. The second goal for this effort was to provide a catalyst for the continued revitalization of Downtown Kansas City, Kansas. Targeting those implementation strategies that have a broader reach or influence on the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods can contribute to the current momentum of revitalization throughout Downtown. Additionally, the focus on the impact of the physical environment on community health can provide a national model for redevelopment strategies and activities to address community health issues. Finally, the strategies of LEED - ND (LEED for neighborhood development) that promote neighborhood sustainability have influenced the direction of this plan.

PARTNERSHIPS

This plan is the result of partnerships. The healthy campus idea was built on the concept of bringing people together to improve the health of the community. It is understood that the continued partnerships and collaboration will be necessary to implement the plan and its components. The health of Kansas City, Kansas and Wyandotte County is everyone's responsibility. Special appreciation goes to the Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC), the REACH Healthcare Foundation and the Greater Kansas City Health Foundation for funding the Downtown Parkway District Plan, and to numerous partners that have expressed their desire to participate in the implementation of the plan.

Minnesota Avenue from 11th Street to 10th Street

Big 11 Lake

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Downtown Kansas City, Kansas has long struggled to regain its stature as a center of commerce for the community and region. Since the bypassing of the Downtown by I-70 in the 1950's, the retail and services that once defined the Downtown began moving out. Again, in the 1970's Washington Boulevard was connected to the Interstate system and designed to move traffic around the core of Downtown. The majority of the jobs and services remaining were those of government at the local, state and federal levels. As the people and jobs left the Downtown the adjacent neighborhoods also began to lose population, resulting in dilapidation and vacancies of structures and property. Today the area continues to suffer from disinvestment and disinterest.

To support the community outreach, the planning process began with an assessment of the current assets and challenges of the downtown and surrounding community. The assessment includes the following findings:

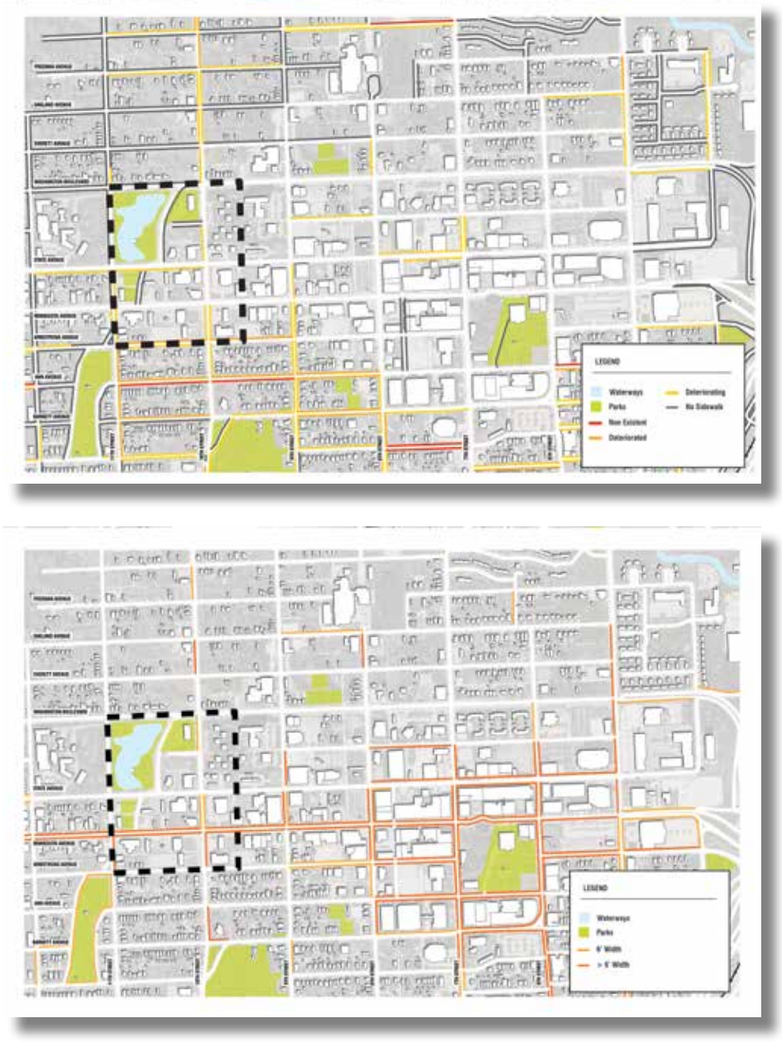
- The institutions including the churches, schools and service agencies provide a level of comfort and recognition for the Downtown through their community involvement and services and create a destination within Downtown.
- There are jobs and services provided within downtown, including government and service jobs and specialty retail that is successful. Many of these jobs and services can be found on or in proximity to Minnesota Avenue.
- The immediate proximity of adjacent neighborhoods allows easy access to the Downtown.

- A significant amount of vacant, public owned and tax delinquent land exists within the Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. Much of this land lies in the area north of Washington Boulevard.
- The grid street system provides a connectivity network with redundant access throughout Downtown, and supports an improved transit system along Minnesota Avenue.
- Several public park spaces exist but are poorly connected. The connection of these assets was identified by the community as a core desire during the Sidewalk and Trail Master Plan Process completed in 2011.
- Minnesota Avenue provides a consistent sidewalk spine for Downtown, but sidewalks throughout the area are generally in disrepair, disconnected or missing altogether. The recently completed Sidewalk and Trails Master will provide guidance to upgrade and connect those facilities.
- The surrounding neighborhoods have plans in place to encourage the contextual redevelopment and improvement of their neighborhoods and improvements that enhance the connectivity and public spaces.
- Planned improvements to the area include the implementation of bicycle lanes on 10th Street and Minnesota Avenue, as identified in the UG's recently adopted Sidewalk and Trails Master Plan and promoted by the Healthy Communities Wyandotte Infrastructure Action Team.

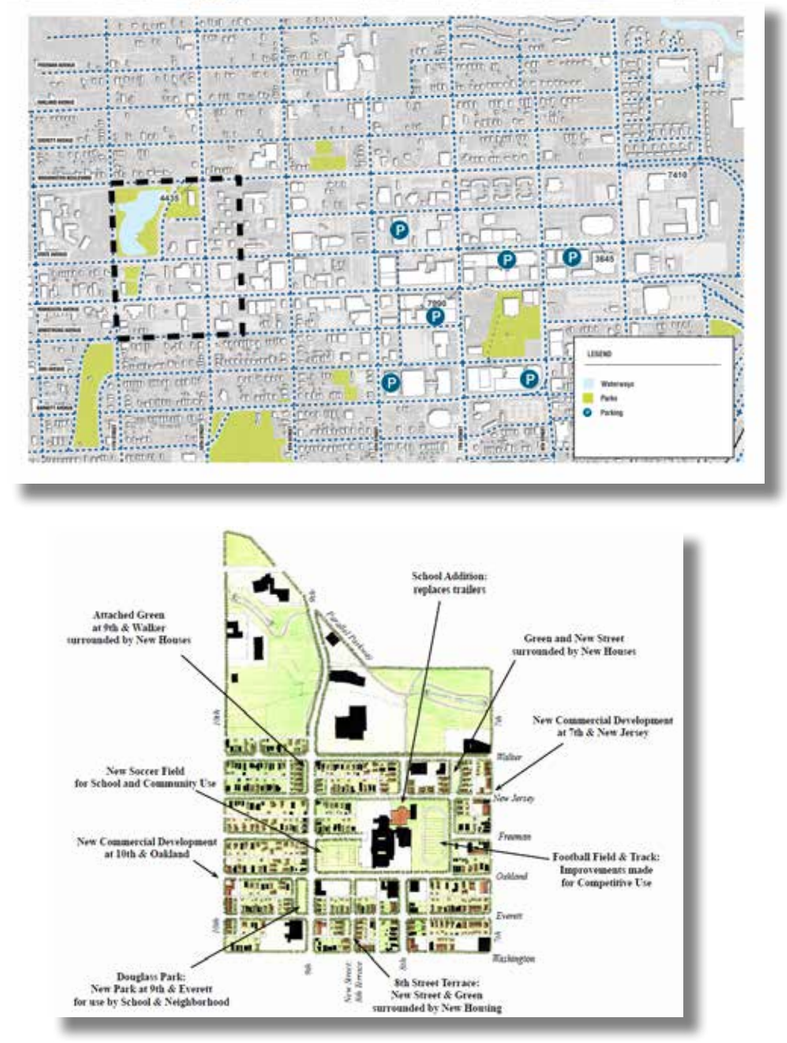
Assessment Maps

A recently completed master plan for Downtown has renewed the focus on the importance of Downtown. In recent years new investment in the Downtown has occurred, through both public and private means. A new transit center at 7th Street and Minnesota Avenue serves five major bus transit lines in Downtown, including the improved Connex line planned for future Bus Rapid Transit Service. The recent rehabilitation of the Chamber of Commerce offices in Downtown and current commercial and office space redevelopment signify renewed local business investment in the Downtown. Similarly, a number of significant organizations are working to recapture the once vital and vibrant Downtown supported by thriving neighborhoods. Continued investment in the Downtown, both public spaces and private businesses and housing will be the key to a revitalized Downtown Kansas City, Kansas, and this plan provides the starting point to implement those actions.

In addition to the assessment completed, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) completed a "Green Neighborhood Rapid Assessment" of the study area. The intent of their assessment was to identify environmentally sustainable improvements that would lead to beneficial public health outcomes to be incorporated into this plan. The recommendations identified by the NDRC focus on green infrastructure, energy efficiency, housing and economic development, a healthy core, prioritizing investment and stewardship. Several of the plan components and action respond to the assessment and recommendation of the NRDC.



Assessment Maps



Douglass - Sumner Neighborhood Plan

PLAN

Addressing the health of a community starts with identifying those elements of the community that are prohibiting healthy habits or activities. In this case those elements include a lack of supportive open space and recreational facilities, lack of healthy food choices, a lack of quality infrastructure, and extensive poverty with associated correlates. To begin addressing these issues within Kansas City, Kansas, it is important to recognize that all of these issues – including poverty – are influenced by the built environment in some way. The deterioration in the health of the people within a community, or a segment of the community, can often parallel the decline in the quality of the physical environment. Thus, one approach to address the health of the community is to focus on the improvement of the physical environment to the direct benefit of people. This plan focuses on the ability of redevelopment, and associated economic development, to provide opportunities for the residents in and surrounding the Downtown Parkway District to improve their health. The plan includes development to accommodate goods and services, expansion of open space and recreational services, and infrastructure improvements necessary to make connections within the area, the community and the region.

Aerial of Study Area

Urban Redevelopment

Historic Photo of Minnesota Avenue

Improvements at 7th and Minnesota Avenue

PRINCIPLES

The plan principles define the foundational ideas upon which the plan is constructed. These principles provide the broad guidance that will support the individual, incremental improvements and development that will occur over time.

i. Reset the Stage – The poor physical condition of the area, both the public and private spaces, discourages private investment. Changing the conditions is the first principle for redevelopment. That change starts with cleaning up the area and improving the physical appearance by improving the park and green space, repairing streets and walkways, removing brush and trash, and repairing or removing dilapidated properties to restore a visibly cared-for environment.

ii. Minnesota Avenue – As the "Main Street" for Kansas City, Kansas, Minnesota Avenue has historically been the organizing element for downtown development and activity. The once bustling commercial core of the community has been reduced to a limited destination for predominately government services. However, recent investments in the Downtown are signaling change. The new transit center at 7th and Minnesota and recent private development in the 700 Block of Minnesota point to the Avenue's continued importance to the city. This emerging momentum is critical to the future redevelopment of the Downtown Parkway District, and Minnesota Avenue has been defined as the backbone for future development of the plan components.

iii. Development Catalyst – The community is fortunate to have two important developments: the grocery store and a new community center (the redeveloped YMCA). A critical principle of the Downtown Parkway District plan is to locate these two entities in a way that maximizes their initial and on-going economic impact as engines for development within the area.

iv. Private Investment – Creating a model healthy community will only be possible through private investment. Public investments can and will provide the initial catalyst, but public investment alone is not sufficient to sustain a healthy community. All activities, in this plan and in the future, with regard to redevelopment of the Downtown Parkway District should intentionally target and encourage private investment in new and renovated housing, in business and retail services, and in wellness-related medical and healthcare services. The success of this venture will be measured by the amount of private investment and development that results.

PLAN FRAMEWORK

i. Improvements – Improvement of the public infrastructure is a necessary first step for redevelopment. The following improvements will directly impact the health of the local population including improved connectivity, accessibility and recreational amenities.

- Streets / Streetscape – Future improvements to streets should focus on active transportation options for residents, workers and visitors. Improvements for walking, cycling and transit should be a priority. Necessary improvements include:
  - o Maximizing of on-street parking opportunities;
  - o Improving the sidewalk and streetscape environment, addressing both alternative storm water strategies and pedestrian amenities, primarily to encourage walking throughout the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods; and
  - o Bicycle facilities that support local and commuter biking access to the area.

  Improvements should be focused, beginning on Minnesota Avenue, State Avenue and 10th Street, then building outward into the surrounding neighborhoods. Improvements to Minnesota should be targeted to the section between 11th Street and 8th Street to connect to planned improvements to the east of 8th Street.

- Parkway – The parkway creates an expanded park setting from Waterway Park on the south to the Sumner Academy campus on the north. The parkway provides expanded open space and recreational opportunities and natural connections to area destinations. The parkway will provide active and passive spaces in the form of ball fields and play courts as well as open space with amenities for small and large social gatherings. Connectivity will be provided through a trail system spanning the length of the parkway and connecting with an improved street network.

  Initial improvements should focus on providing continuous green space from Waterway Park to Sumner Academy, including:
  - o Expansion of the public space along 11th Street from Armstrong Avenue to State Avenue;
  - o Removal of 11th Street between Washington Boulevard and State Avenue to expand Big 11 Lake Park; and
  - o Expansion of green space north of Washington Boulevard to connect to Douglass Elementary and Sumner Academy and provide open space, athletic fields, playgrounds and park space.

Street Improvements

Parkway Improvements

ii. (Re)development Momentum – Redevelopment is dependent on creating a critical mass of new improvements. A recognizable new and active center for the downtown neighborhoods will redefine perceptions about this area. Building this critical mass requires orchestrating as many improvements as possible – public investments in infrastructure, private investments in new development and existing property improvements, and community investments in leadership and support – and focusing these efforts to have the greatest initial impact. Public investment is focused toward the Parkway. Private investment is encouraged within and adjacent to the parkway, particularly at the primary intersection in the study area: 10th Street and Minnesota Avenue. This intersection should be a model for redevelopment with the four corners establishing an urban pattern of mixed-use multistory development supported by the street and parkway improvements, setting the pattern for on-going development along Minnesota.

iii. Timing of Development / Improvement – Focused investments and development efforts should be sequenced in the following manner:

- Immediate Infrastructure Development – Minnesota Avenue - 8th Street to 11th Street with a focus on the 10th and Minnesota intersection; Improvements to create the new Parkway including modifications to adjoining streets; and 10th Street - Armstrong Avenue to Washington Boulevard.
- Intermediate Public and Private Development – Finishing of east-west street and sidewalk improvements (State - 11th Street to 8th Street); development of the blocks adjacent to the expanded Parkway, north and south into the neighborhoods (residential infill / redevelopment)
- Long-term Development – Continued infill and redevelopment east and west along Minnesota and State; continued residential infill and redevelopment within the adjoining neighborhoods.

Housing and Support Service Locations

PLAN COMPONENTS

Through the planning process, specific components have been identified as necessary to the success of redevelopment and the overall place-making desired for the Downtown Parkway District.

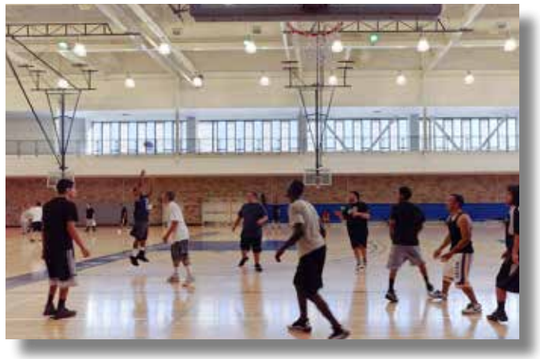
i. Access to Healthy Foods – The downtown and surrounding neighborhoods currently exist within a "food desert" in which few quality, healthy, basic food options are available. The access to these types of food options within Downtown was a primary issue for participants. The plan contemplates three critical pieces to address access to healthy foods.

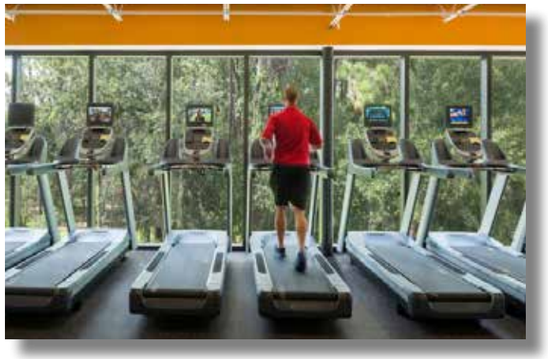
- Grocery Store – The grocery store is designed to be a full-service destination that provides a wide-variety of fresh foods. The development location of the grocery store allows prominent street presence and on- and off-street parking to support operations, while contributing to the urban development pattern desired along Minnesota. The location on Minnesota Avenue will also provide easy pedestrian access. Operational traffic occurs at the rear of the store away from Minnesota Avenue. Opportunities for the grocery store to be part of a mixed-use building should be explored with the developer.

Grocery Store Location

Farmer's Market & Urban Agriculture Locations

- Farmer's Market – The development of a central farmer's market location will provide an additional destination to obtain fresh, local produce. The farmer's market should include a permanent pavilion space. The structure should be designed (height, width, roof structure) to accommodate other uses throughout the year, including festivals, events, performances, competitions and the like. The farmers market is proposed at 11th and Minnesota Avenue to engage the market with the adjacent urban gardens as well as the expanded Parkway.
- Urban Agriculture – Including land for urban agriculture will provide opportunities for new crops such as orchards, as well as a greenhouse facility to extend growing times. Providing this land along the Parkway will increase its visibility to both the local neighborhoods and the greater community. Access to water for irrigation is an essential amenity.





Community Center Location

ii. Wellness Infrastructure - Wellness options in Downtown are currently lacking. The current YMCA resides in a 100 + year old building that is not ideal for its services. The sidewalk and trail network does not encourage walking and biking. And the street network is focused predominately on efficiently moving cars, sometimes at the expense of other modes of transportation. The public and stakeholders clearly defined their desire for additional recreation amenities, in particular those for kids, and for a connected community that allows people to access different destinations by foot or bicycle. The elements of the wellness infrastructure that are focused on in the plan include:

- Community Center – The new replacement for the YMCA in downtown KCK will play a central role in the healthy community initiative. With its prominent location on the corner of 10th and Minnesota, this new community center will be an icon for healthy living. It will provide a range of facilities and programming to promote wellness, fitness, recreation, education, and social and civic engagement. A primary concern of the public was the cost of access to the services provided by a new community center. As a result an "access team" has been appointed to address this issue. In complement to the new community center, continued utilization of the JFK facility can contribute to the health of the community.

- Parkway – The parkway will be a major public amenity connecting neighborhoods within the downtown community and attracting residents from throughout the county. It will expand recreation facilities, social spaces and natural areas to provide a significant park setting, and connectivity element for downtown KCK. The parkway will also provide a development amenity for downtown that can assist in attracting housing, jobs and services.

Parkway Concept

Connectivity Network

- Connectivity – Improved connectivity provides multiple benefits to the downtown through a redundant, comfortable, multimodal network of streets, sidewalks and trails, bike lanes and transit infrastructure. This will encourage and support redevelopment, expand accessibility of the downtown to surrounding residents, workers and visitors, and in turn support businesses and improve healthy living through walking, cycling and transit, i.e. active transportation. Street improvements should be made throughout Downtown Kansas City, Kansas, however initial efforts should be made to those streets that will have the greatest impact on the place: Minnesota Avenue, State Avenue and 10th Street. Redefining these streets has the ability to not only improve the active transportation throughout the area but change the perception of the area as well.

Minnesota Avenue - Reconfigured

State Avenue (10th Street to 11th Street) - Reconfigured

10th Street - Reconfiguration

iii. A Whole Community – In addition to the amenities of the parkway, community center and grocery store, quality housing opportunities and access to a full range of goods and services is needed to make the Downtown a full service community.

- Housing – The development of a mix of housing types and costs throughout the area is desired, and supported by the NRDC assessment recommendations. This direction was affirmed by the participants of the process. Higher density housing and housing as a part of mixed-use projects is desirable near 10th and Minnesota and along the primary redevelopment corridors. Medium density housing is appropriate along the supporting corridors and lower density single family homes are appropriate within the neighborhoods.
- Support Services – Retail development should include the range of local services needed to support wellness and good standards of living. Opportunities need to be included for improving and upgrading current retail and professional support services that exist in the area, as well as broadening the scope to include appropriate destination retail such as unique full-service ethnic and organic-food restaurants. Also, improved and additional wellness-related medical services are essential ingredients in this area and should be sought, particularly through partnerships with other entities involved with development and operation of the Downtown Parkway District such as the schools, the community center, and the county's Public Health Department.

Housing and Support Service Locations

- Cultural/Historical Perspective – The history and culture of the area - Big 11 Lake Park, and the John F. Kennedy Recreation Center, and the national and international accomplishments of people from the area – are important to the residents and community. Through the public process it was quickly apparent that these legacies are a source of civic pride that should be celebrated and made visible in the Downtown Parkway District development.
- Reinvestment / Relocation – To retain current residents and business owners, relocation opportunities within the area should be encouraged to accommodate those that may be displaced through other implementation efforts of this plan.
- Outcomes-Based Evaluation - Establish key factors with measurable goals that assess development of the Downtown Parkway District for health impacts and their capacity to affect health outcomes such as incidence of childhood obesity, incidence of diabetes, and walkability.
- Environmental Awareness – Infrastructure improvements need to address current and future environmental concerns. In addition, private development needs to address appropriate energy conservation and carbon reduction goals.
  - Reconfigured Streets, Sidewalks, and Streetscapes - Maximize use of storm water best practices through the inclusion of such things as small rain gardens to filter run-off, and pervious pavements. The creation of "Complete Green Streets" is a key recommendation of the NRDC assessment.
  - Big 11 Lake and Expanded Open Space - Use various urban appropriate techniques to address storm water run-off from both paved and planted areas, with the goal of helping Big 11 lake return to a more natural state to support urban recreational fishing.
  - District Energy Generation - Plan and develop opportunities for both single-building and district-wide local energy generation, including providing photo-voltaic canopies over new community center parking and small wind-turbine power generators on rooftops or in open space.
  - New and Renovated Buildings – Encourage development that meets such standards as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program of the U. S. Green Building Council). Improved energy efficiency, as recommended by the NRDC assessment can support financial stability within the community.
  - New Housing – Target meeting such standards as those for Energy Star Certified New Homes.
  - Continued Air Quality Monitoring - Maintain a downtown air quality monitoring station within the Downtown Parkway District.

IMPLEMENT

Implementing the vision of the Downtown Parkway District will take time and resources. Numerous actions and tools necessary to assure this implementation have been identified. Many initial actions build towards future efforts and the vision. Identified tools are varied and can be applied to the different actions and development. For the implementation process, it is incumbent that the actions and tasks identified are leveraged to maximize the impact of individual projects and improvements. This approach will allow the redefinition and redevelopment of the Downtown Parkway District through sustained, cumulative activity over time.

ACTIONS

The actions that are necessary to implement the vision of the Downtown Parkway District Plan are grouped into four primary frameworks. The frameworks also provide the guidance necessary for those actions that have not yet been identified or those that change during the course of implementation. The frameworks and actions include:

i. Redefine the Place – Immediate efforts should be targeted on improving the condition and appearance of the area. Continue to change perceptions not only through physical improvements such as enhancing current community clean-up efforts and code enforcement, but also through supporting current efforts by the community and police to address social issues downtown. Making physical changes can redefine how people perceive and use the area. Specific actions for the Downtown Parkway District plan include.

- Baseline Improvements – Extend and enhance current beautification and clean-up efforts to remove unsightly debris (dying trees; trash; broken curbs, etc.) and renovate dilapidated structures or remove and replace those that are impossible to rehabilitate.
- Street Reconfiguration and Streetscape Improvements – Improvements to the streets, both the configuration and aesthetic quality, can redefine the public realm of the area. The changes as defined herein can have a dramatic impact on the quality of the built environment and support future development.

The focus of these improvements should include:

- Minnesota Avenue – As the Main Street for Downtown and the image street for the area and for Downtown, it provides a visible and identifiable connectivity corridor and front door for this redeveloped area. Minnesota Avenue should be for all modes of travel and comfortable for pedestrians. Minnesota Avenue is the key public improvement in this area and we must get this right!!
- 10th Street – 10th Street provides an image and front door for the redevelopment of the area and into the neighborhoods north and south, providing primary connections for pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and private vehicles. Encouraged by the Healthy Communities Wyandotte Infrastructure Action Team and their focus on creating an active living corridor, funding is currently being pursued for planned 10th Street bicycle improvements.
- State Avenue – While State Avenue continues to be a primary through-street in the area, particularly from the west, it needs to have a different image to support future improvements and development in this area. Its reconfiguration and beautification should respond to the different setting which it passes through, including the park setting between 10th and 11th Streets, and the urban context east and west of the park segment.

Redefining Area

- Green Infrastructure Improvements – Introduce natural systems in an urban context. These include storm water changes that address CSO (combined sewer overflow) compliance in an aesthetic manner, improvement of water quality at Big 11 Lake, and possible district solar and wind energy projects.
- Parking – On-street parking should be maximized to support businesses and housing and provide a buffer for pedestrians. Off-street parking should be provided, utilizing the Downtown Master Plan's guidelines for quality design elements and landscaping, with smaller lots being provided to minimize the impact to the development pattern and form.

ii. Establish the Market – To create an environment that supports redevelopment, a new real estate market for private investment for the development of commercial and retail services, housing and supporting uses needs to be established. Development of the grocery store and community center are significant investments that will provide the impetus for further development. These new additions to the area will create new reasons for people to utilize the area for living, shopping, services and recreation.

- Grocery Store – Retail that can immediately bring people to the area, generate economic activity, and kick-start development of supporting uses.
- Community Center – Destination use that serves the community as well as brings people to the area.
- Farmers Market – Under-developed Downtown use that attracts an additional demographic to the area, both local and from outside the area.
- Parkway and Recreational Amenities – Destination for local and non-local users, which can provide support for adjacent uses as well as support for the housing market.
- Way-Finding – Signage and collaborative marketing efforts to direct people to the area, including interstate signage recognizing Kansas City, Kansas and downtown, and roadways marked to lead people to downtown via Minnesota Avenue and to connect the area within and to its surroundings.

Market Established at 10th Street and Minnesota Avenue

Strengthen Market

iii. Strengthen the Market – To ensure long term redevelopment success and growth, additional offerings for housing, goods and services, and recreation will be necessary to support a growing population in downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods.

- Housing – Residents and investment are required for the support of continued redevelopment. Continued investment of the residents, in their properties and their support of downtown businesses, will help sustain the redevelopment of the Downtown Parkway District and support expansion of services needed for future successes.
  - o Key opportunity areas: Armstrong Avenue, 10th to 12th Streets in the St. Peters / Waterway neighborhood; southwest corner of 11th and State; Housing Authority sites, southeast corner of 10th and Washington Boulevard; areas north of Washington Boulevard, particularly in the Douglass-Sumner Neighborhood
- Infill and redevelopment – Continued development of commercial and service uses – particularly focused on Minnesota, State, and 10th – supporting a residential revival will be critical for long-term growth and economic sustainability. Similarly, the continued development of housing of different types and incomes – beyond the initial key opportunity areas – will be necessary to expand the market of the area.
- Urban Agriculture – The expansion of typical urban agricultural offerings in this area adds a new dimension within the community that can be an attraction bringing people to the area. New offerings should include urban orchards and specialist plantings, such as cactus-for-food gardens and native-land foods for emerging international populations. Educational efforts can include teaching residents to plant edible landscapes.

iv. Maintain the Momentum – The progress that has been made through the previous actions will need to be maintained and expanded to recognize the full redevelopment of the area. These future actions should build off the foundation provided and continue implementing the plan vision. Continuous actions include:

- Appearance – Continue to invest in the clean, well-lit, inviting environment established through actions made to date.
- Continued Investment – Leverage existing investments and new improvements for additional development opportunities.
- Programming – Continue and grow creative programming of new spaces, to keep healthy living as an integral piece of community and daily life.

Continued Market Growth

TOOLS

To support the actions necessary to redevelop the Downtown Parkway District, there are tools to assist with implementation. Using these tools can change the physical appearance of the area, can provide financial assistance to support redevelopment and encourage redevelopment, and can provide continuity and stability to this long-term effort to implement the vision for the Downtown Parkway District. It is particularly important to leverage these tools to maximize the impact of the initial investment made. All tools should be considered in realizing and/or supporting improvements and development.

i. Physical Tools – These tools can define the environment in which we want to live, work and play. The use of these tools should encourage the physical redevelopment of the Downtown Parkway District area that creates an urban, connected, resilient community by addressing the physical elements of this place.

- Land – Provide land for redevelopment
- Infrastructure – Provide / expedite infrastructure improvements (water, sewer, storm water, roadway, etc.) to support redevelopment
- Parking – Provide for off-street "district" parking for multiple development projects; reduce off-street parking requirements for infill / redevelopment; count on street parking spaces towards parking requirements
- Trail expansion – Obtain grant funding to expand Waterway Park improvements north to and around Big 11 Lake
- Combined Sewer Replacement – Expedite improved environmental viability of Big 11 Lake and other infrastructure improvements as part of the Unified Government's combined sewer overflow (CSO) compliance projects.

Katz Building Redevelopment

Horace Mann Apartment Redevelopment

ii. Financial Tools– The use of financial assistance tools should stimulate redevelopment to build and expand housing and commercial markets and provide amenities. Priority should be given to providing financial assistance to those projects that implement the vision for the Downtown Parkway District.

- Tax Credits such as LIHTC, NMTC, and HTC – Use to support rehabilitation and (re) development for housing and commercial services.
- Tax Incentives such as a Sales Tax Free Zone (local & state), TIF, NRA Tax Abatement, Improvement Districts (CID, TDD, SBD) and potentially the newly created Urban Opportunity Zone – Use to close financing gaps on projects to start redevelopment; use improvement districts to address public improvements that support development and provide an organizing and management tool for the area.
- Grants and Loans – Development assistance from non-profit entities including foundations, community development corporations and entities like LISC, Make-It-Right, Orton Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Natural Resources Defense Council, etc.; seek EPA demonstration grants for CSO compliance projects; seek HUD Choice Neighborhood Planning Grants for replacement and improvements to public housing in the area; identify appropriate incentives to encourage businesses and residents to stay and improve the area; leverage these tools against other investments to ensure the project feasibility or expand the scope, or reach, of a project that aligns with the vision.
- New Resident Assistance – Maximize financial incentive programs available to encourage new residents to come and rent, renovate, and buy homes in the Downtown Parkway District area; expand current program or identify similar program for existing residents that wish to stay, or relocate within the area.
- Land – Provide free publicly-held land for redevelopment that aligns with the vision of the Downtown Parkway District.

City Hall Lofts Redevelopment

Single Family Infill Housing

iii. Procedural Tools – Often times developers look at the entitlement processes as a deterrent to developing in urban areas, a view that often based on perception. The entitlement process should not be perceived as a barrier to the redevelopment of this area.

- Promote and make best use of existing plan approval processes, such as the Development Review Committee pre-application meetings, to encourage development within the plan area.
- Proactively expand the C-D Central Business District, eliminating the SUP approval process, or other appropriate zoning actions that promote mixed use development and that set the stage for desired development patterns within the core of the Downtown Parkway District.
- Consider a coordinated development application and review process that physically consolidates all planning / development approval functions, as suggested in the 2003 Development Analysis.

Kansas City Kansas Housing Authority

iv. Broad Ownership and Continuous Leadership – A continuous eye towards the vision of the Downtown Parkway District is necessary as implementation occurs over time. Thus, a form of ownership or leadership is necessary to maintain that long-term, consistent drive towards the vision. The leadership will be responsible to ensure that day-to-day, incremental decisions are in step with the implementation of the vision.

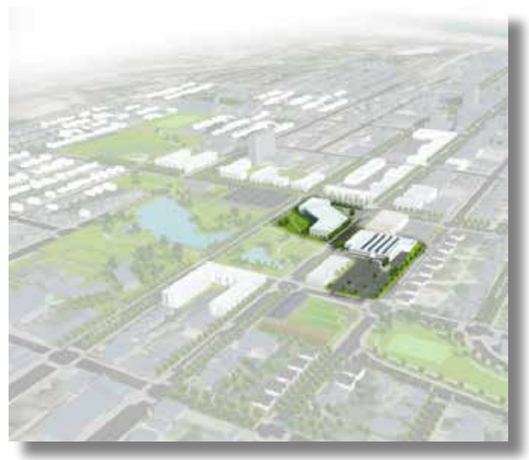
- Executive Director for Implementation – Identify a position / person to supervise and champion implementation of the Downtown Parkway District vision.
- Implementation Committee – Create a steering committee comprised of funders, businesses and neighborhood representatives to be champions monitoring the implementation of the different plan elements and associated redevelopment. Representation from the health foundations and health and wellness communities should be included in the committee structure.
- Formal Improvement District – Expand scope of existing property tax-supported SSMID ("Downtown Improvement District") and perhaps add a sales tax-supported CID (community improvement district).

PHASE 1 IMPLEMENTATION

The opportunity before us is great. The development of the grocery store and community center in and of itself would be a great accomplishment. But, to redevelop this area, make this area a great place to live, work and play, more change is necessary. To protect the initial investments that have been identified and to set the stage for additional private investment, a slate of Phase 1 implementation items have been identified. These items represent the immediate actions and projects that are necessary to accelerate the current momentum towards redevelopment of the Downtown Parkway District and Downtown Kansas City, Kansas.

- General clean-up and beautification of the area.
- Development of the grocery store. [1]
- Development of the community center. [1]
- Land assembly for parkway expansion and improvements.
- Park Improvements – Includes expanding park into community center block (10th to 11th, State to Minnesota). [2]
- Street improvements / reconfiguration – roadway, sidewalks, streetscape, pedestrian, bicycle and transit improvements. [3]
  - Minnesota Avenue – From west of 11th Street eastward to 8th Street, connecting with planned improvements further eastward.
  - 10th Street – Minnesota Avenue to Washington Boulevard, including three intersections
  - State Avenue – Reconfigure to two lanes from 10th to 11th Streets, including both intersections
  - Remove Waterway Drive – Minnesota Avenue to Washington Boulevard
  - Washington Boulevard – Calm traffic west from 10th Street, including removal of Waterway Drive intersection
  - Remove 11th Street – State Avenue to Washington Boulevard, including modifications to both intersections and accommodation for service access to School for the Blind

Existing Condition



[1] Development of Grocery Store and Community Center

[2] Parkway Improvements

[3] Street Improvements

- Storm Water Improvements. [4]
  - o Pursue EPA Demonstration Projects Grant for storm water improvements.
  - o Maximize day-lighting of existing system between Waterway Park and Big 11 Lake.
  - o Big 11 Lake improvements – Redesign and repurpose as a part of the water quality improvement.
  - o District detention plan – Coordinate parkway, lake and storm water improvements for area.
- Waterway Park trail expansion to Big 11 Lake.
- Sidewalk improvements within 1 block of development and other improvements, and into neighborhoods. [5]
- Development and implementation of a comprehensive public relations and marketing plan promoting the concept of the Downtown Parkway District, focusing initially on Phase 1 implementation and then continuing through future implementation efforts.

[4] Storm water Improvements

[5] Sidewalk Improvements

Phase 1 Implementation

10th Street and Minnesota Avenue looking West

11th Street and State Avenue looking Southeast

Downtown Parkway District
The Healthy Community Vision for Downtown Kansas City, Kansas.
Recreation Fields
JFK Center
Parking with Solar Sheds
Park Expansion
Street Improvements
Community Center
Entry / Event Plaza
Mixed Use Infill at 10th and Minnesota
Renovated Granada Theater
Grocery Store
Commercial Buildings
Multi-family Housing
Farmers Market
Urban Orchards and Gardens
Washington
Big Eleven Lake
10th Street
11th Street
State Avenue
Minnesota Avenue
Armstrong Avenue
Waterway Park
10.10.2014