

AN ANALYSIS OF THE TOPEKA KANSAS DOWNTOWN DISTRICT TO DETERMINE A
PROCESS OF REJUVENATION

by

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Abstract

This report is a reconnaissance analysis of the Topeka, Kansas downtown district to determine a process of rejuvenation. Many office buildings are established in or near the downtown core, and bring an estimated 30,000 employees to the area; however, after 5:00 PM much of the work force leaves the downtown making it difficult for retail and entertainment businesses to stay open.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the downtown district of Topeka in terms of its strengths and weaknesses, and determine the steps that must be taken before a process of rejuvenation can occur. To accomplish this, the study examines strategic data such as a workforce profile, location information, public facilities, historical and current demographics of the city, along with specific information on the downtown area such as past and present plans for renovation. This analysis also includes current plans in the downtown and how they might impact the future physical development of the central core of downtown Topeka such as the potential realignment of Interstate 70.

The key to making any downtown project a success is to acknowledge the weaknesses and threats of the area and to recast them as potential opportunities and strengths for the area. This is why the study has a building survey and a S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Strengths) analysis.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

The City of Topeka has endeavored to revitalize the downtown area since it became a victim of urban sprawl in the 1960's. Many state office buildings are established in or near the downtown core , and bring an estimated 30,000 employees to the area. After 5:00 PM much of the work force leaves the downtown area making it difficult for businesses to stay open past 5:00 for shopping, eating and entertainment. Downtown Topeka, Inc. and the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce are aware of the issues and are in the process of making much needed changes in the hopes of drawing people back to the city core , especially during the weeknights and weekends. Other attempts at revitalization have achieved minor successes in the past, but the community's needs are driving the effort this time and broad community support is very evident.

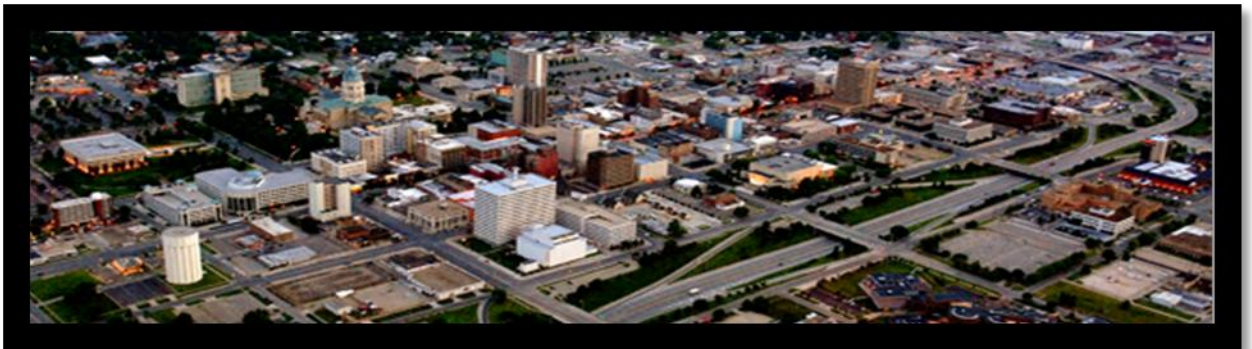


Figure 1-1 View of downtown Topeka

The purpose of this study is to analyze the downtown district of Topeka in terms of its strengths and weaknesses, and develop a strategy for taking steps for a process of rejuvenation to occur. To better understand the study area, a brief history of the city as a whole will be examined. This will include information such as a social profile, location information, public facilities, historical and current demographics of the city, along with specific information on the

downtown area such as past and present plans for renovation of the downtown. The study area will consist of approximately two miles which includes both commercial and residential buildings as seen below in figure 1-2.

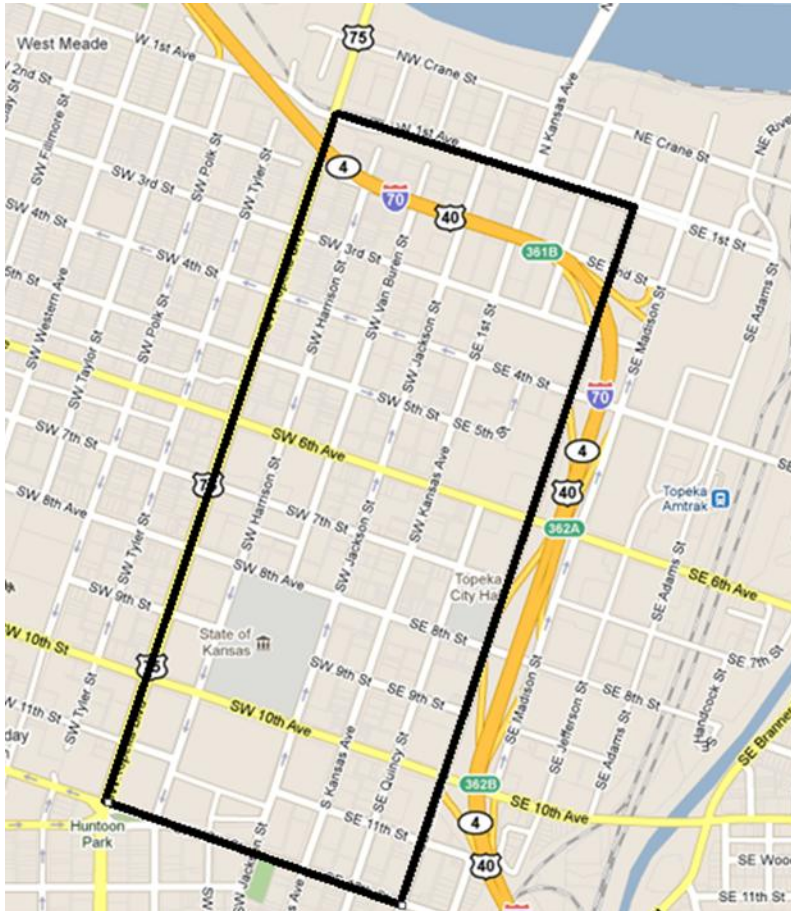


Figure 1-2 View of study area.

This project will include a building survey, which has not been done in previous revitalization attempts and is integral in identifying blight and in directing future planning projects. In addition to the building survey an S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Strengths) analysis was performed. This is important to the area because the key to the success of the downtown is to acknowledge the weaknesses and threats of the area and make them potential opportunities and strengths. Following the S.W.O.T. analysis, the study will then

proceed to suggest future directions for development and investments in the downtown Topeka area. Infrastructure will also be addressed. This will focus on what can be done to enhance the proposed Interstate 70 re-alignment project for downtown, in addition to a closer look at infrastructure as a whole in the area.

Chapter 2 - History of Topeka

History of Topeka

Founded in 1854, Topeka was officially named a year later by one of the city founders, F. W. Giles. Giles claims that the name was chosen because he liked the composition of three consonants alternating with three vowels; it was easy to pronounce and the name was not listed with the United States Post Office. The Kansas territory was admitted to the Union and became the 34th State in 1861. In 1862 Topeka became the capital of Kansas (Burgess, Barbara).

The word Topeka originally comes from the Native American Iowa, Omaha, and Kansa tribes. “To” means potato, “pe” means good, and “okae” means to dig in these languages. Topeka literally means a good place to dig potatoes" (Burgess, Barbara). The area was established as a point where the Oregon Trail crossed the Kansas (Kaw) River. “Three French-Canadian brothers founded a ferry on the Kansas River, for many years a major crossing of the broad river on the Oregon trail” (Bird 1985, 17). This prompted several ferry boat services in the area and the population began to take hold and grow.

Transportation, as a business would become a trend and fuel the growth in Topeka. Later the new military road would cross Topeka on its way from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Riley which has been documented as far back as 1864 (Bird 1985, 16). In addition, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad would make a crucial stop in the area making Topeka a commercial hub in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

During the 1930s, much of the Midwest suffered a series of dust storms that were caused by massive droughts. This along with the great depression forced many farmers to leave their land. “Thousands of families lost their farms or businesses [...] when they became unable to

make payments on their mortgages” (Bird 1985, 78). This caused an influx of farmers moving to the cities to find work. As a result, Topeka experienced population growth.

1940 marked the completion of the Topeka Performing Arts Center (TPAC) and Town Hall building. Located between Seventh and Eighth Streets, and Quincy and Monroe, the building was part of the Federal Public Works Agency. "The building, which took three years to complete, used over one mile of bricks, steel weighing two million pounds, concrete to pave five and a half miles of highway and enough plaster to cover seven blocks" (Topeka Performing Arts Center). The building was renovated in 1985 from a municipal auditorium into a performing arts center.



Figure 2-1 Topeka Performing Arts Center

Topeka, just like the rest of the United States experienced a large population growth from mid-1940 to the mid-1960s following World War II. Coined as the "boomers", this population growth would double the size of Topeka. It was during this time that the city became the first to issue revenue bonds to construct a Macy's store, which was located at 800 Kansas at a cost of four million dollars (Macy's History).

In 1964, White Lakes Mall was opened on the south side on Topeka Boulevard, less than six miles from Forbes Field Air Force base. "White Lakes Mall, so-named because it was built on the site of White Lakes Country Club, opened in 1964 and was anchored by an 85,000 square foot Sears – with attached auto center – and 52,300 square foot J.C. Penney" (Hall, 2009). This makes the first shift away from the downtown Topeka area. In 1974, the Forbes Field Air Force base closed (Castaneda, 2003) causing a decrease in population and another shift in the development of the City of Topeka. This new shift began with the opening of the West Ridge mall in 1988. This new development on the west side of town would hamper the business at White Lakes Mall and further hurt the downtown area (Today the Mall has been dropped from White Lakes and it has now become an office building.) What has survived downtown relies heavily on the 9:00 to 5:00 traffic from state agencies.

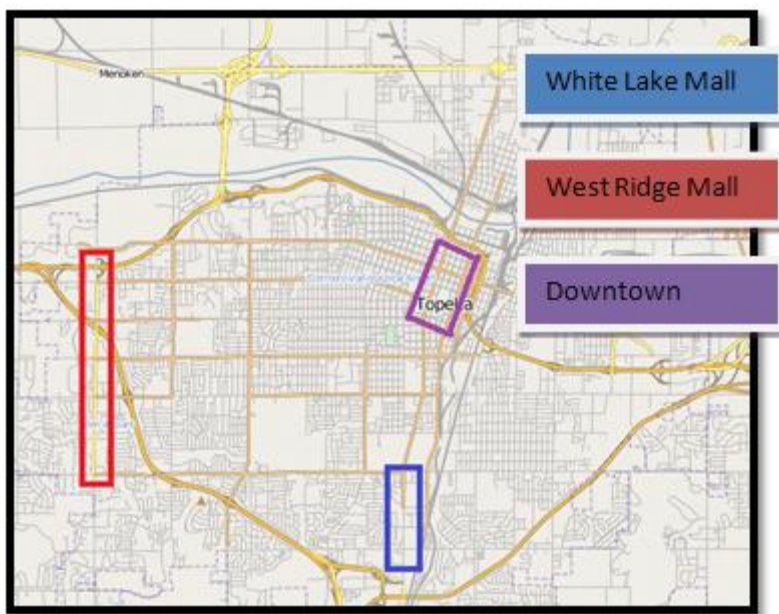


Figure 2-2 Shift in shopping district

Historical Timeline

- 1843- Pappan's Ferry crossing is established.
- 1854- Col. Cyrus K. Holliday came to "Topeka, Kansas Territory". Holliday was a founder of Topeka and promoter of the Santa Fe Railroad.
- 1854 - Nine men met on the banks of the Kansas River at what is now Kansas Avenue and Crane Street. The men drew up an agreement, which later became the basis for the Topeka Association; the organization was mainly responsible for the establishment and early growth of Topeka. The nine men were Cyrus K. Holliday, F.W. Giles, Daniel H. Horne, George Davis, Enoch Chase, J.B. Chase, M.C. Dickey, Charles Robinson and L.G. Cleveland (Figure 2-3)

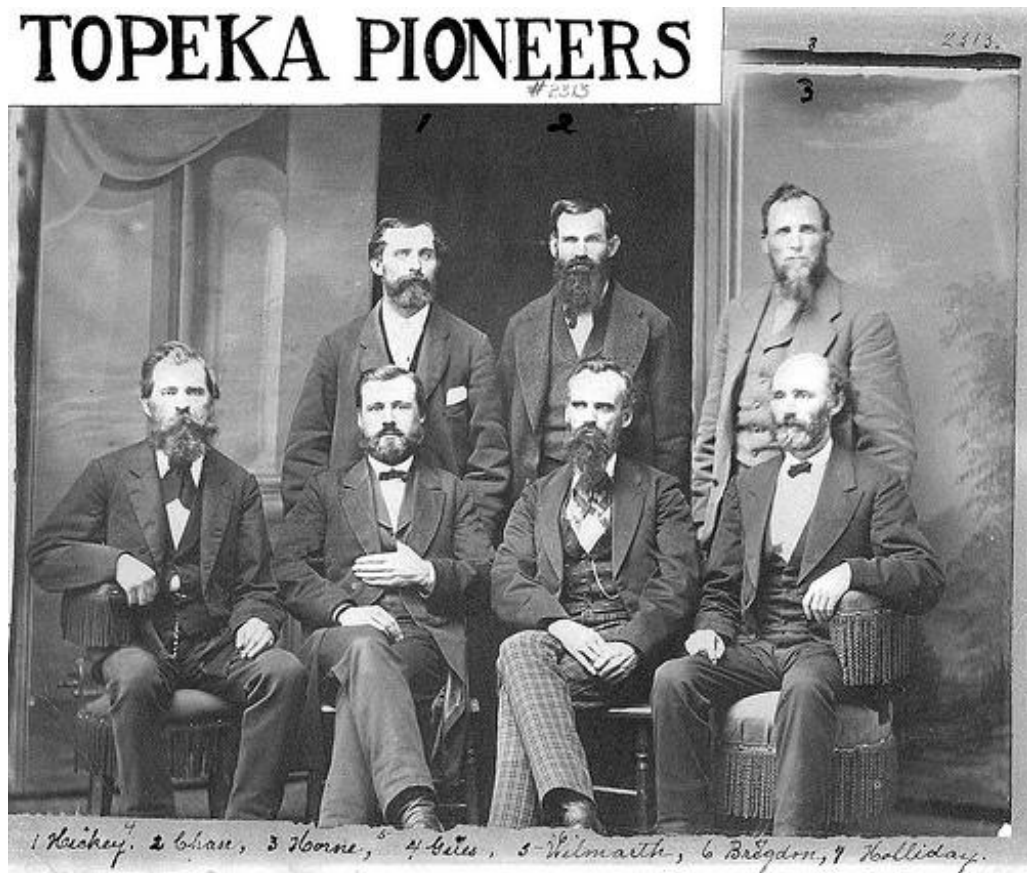


Figure 2-3 Topeka Pioneer Business men

- 1855- Beginning of construction of Constitution Hall
- 1858 - A privately built bridge was constructed across the Kansas River connecting Topeka with the community of Eugene, now known as North Topeka

- 1860 - Birthplace, of Vice President Charles Curtis; part Kaw Indian, the only Native American to reach so high an office (Figure 2-4).



Figure 2-4 Charles Curtis

- 1861 - Kansas was admitted to the Union as the 34th state
- 1862 - Cyrus K. Holliday donated a tract of land to the state for the capitol building
- 1865- Lincoln College, now Washburn University, was established
- 1866- Construction of the East wing of the State Capitol Building
- 1867- First Shawnee County Court House is opened at Fourth and Kansas
- 1869 - Offices and machine shops of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad system were established in Topeka
- 1879 - Topeka's first City Hall
- 1881 - Electric trolleys begin to service Kansas Avenue
- 1900 - New City Hall and Municipal Auditorium is built at Seventh and Quincy
- 1903 - The Kansas State Capitol building in Topeka was completed. It was constructed over a period of 37 years from 1866 to 1903 and cost a total of \$3.2 million. The French Renaissance style is constructed of native limestone.
- 1909 - With an increase in automobiles, Topeka adopted a speed limit of 9 mph in the downtown and 18 mph outside of the downtown
- 1925- Gas Powered buses were put into service
- 1931 - Topeka High School opened, the first million-dollar high school west of the Mississippi River
- 1944- Forbes Air Force Base was established
- 1944- Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company opened a plant
- 1951- The worst flood in Kansas history hits Topeka
- 1954 - Docking State Office Building is opened and is the first high-rise state office building

- 1954 - Landmark Supreme Court decision, Brown V. Board of Education of Topeka
- 1957 - Highway route announced, which would later become Interstate 70
- 1964 - Downtown Topeka Inc. created
- 1964 - Hallmark announced plans to build a \$2 million facility in downtown
- 1964- White Lakes Mall opens
- 1966 - A F5 tornado struck the city, leveling houses and businesses (Figure 2-5)



Figure 2-5 Destruction of 1966 Tornado

- 1974 - Forbes Air Base closed
- 1987 - Kansas Avenue Streetscape project begins
- 1988 - Parking meters removed from Kansas Avenue
- 1988 - West Ridge Mall opens
- 1989 - Heartland Park, a dirt track, road and Drag Racing Park opened
- 2003 - Brown V. Board of Education of Topeka National Historic Site

Significant Buildings in Downtown

Jayhawk Complex, Hotel and Theater

Built in 1926, the Jayhawk Hotel was built at the corner of Seventh and southwest Jackson. This is not the typical opera house for its time. The building is a complex that contains a hotel, walkway, and theater. The “L”-shaped building which has come to be called the Jayhawk Complex was constructed of steel and concrete. The hotel originally had 300 rooms, and four private dining rooms. Currently, the hotel has been converted to office space. The building is 12 stories tall and sits 96 feet wide along Jackson Street and 150 feet long facing Seventh Street. Attached to the south end of the tower by the Jayhawk Walk, is the Jayhawk Theater. "The theater itself measures 74 x 125 feet on ground plans and has two balcony levels. The stage is located at the extreme southern end and the opening for it measures 30 feet high by 38 feet wide" (National Register of Historic Places in Kansas). A renovation of the theater is currently planned; however funding has been an issue.



Figure 2-6 Jayhawk Theater

The Curtis House

The Curtis house is located at 1101 Topeka Avenue, and was the home of Charles Curtis who became a United States Senator in 1907 and would later go on to become Vice President from 1929 to 1936. Curtis is the first and only Native American to date to hold such a high office in the United States government. The building itself was built just prior to 1879 where evidence of its presence begins to surface on the tax records. The structure is tied to architect Seymour David, who most likely did not design the building but made alterations to the structure in the 1890s. (National Register of Historic Places in Kansas) The house is currently a Museum dedicated to Charles Curtis. It is listed on both the national and state register of historic places and the Topeka landmark register and is open on the weekend for tours.



Figure 2-7 Charles Curtis House

The Thacher Building (1888)

Designed by Architect John G. Haskell, the Thacher Building was constructed in 1888 for Timothy Dwight Thacher. Thacher used the structure for a Hall and O'Donald Lithographing company. The building would be taken over in 1890s by Crane and Company which would occupy the space from 1890 to the late 1980s. During this time the building was used as a printing and publishing house. "The Thacher Building is one of the very few Topeka commercial structures whose façades have survived basically unaltered from the boom and expansion years of the 1880's"(National Register of Historic Places in Kansas). Currently this building is being renovated by Gizmo Pictures.



Figure 2-8 First floor of the Thacher Building

Constitution Hall

This building was originally constructed as a commercial building. The building is 44 feet wide by 60 feet deep. Currently there is a temporary wall that faces Kansas Avenue. The wall has a mural which depicts the historic dispersion of the Free State Legislature. The building

around Constitution Hall would become known as State Row and housed the Kansas Statehouse from 1863-1869. The building name comes from its use as the Topeka Constitution Convention in 1855, when the building allegedly served as the Free State capital. "Constitution Hall from which the bogus legislature was ejected, is believed to be the oldest permanent stone structure in Topeka" (Bird 1985, 22). The building also housed religious, social and town meetings in addition to being a stop on the Underground Railroad (National Register of Historic Places in Kansas).

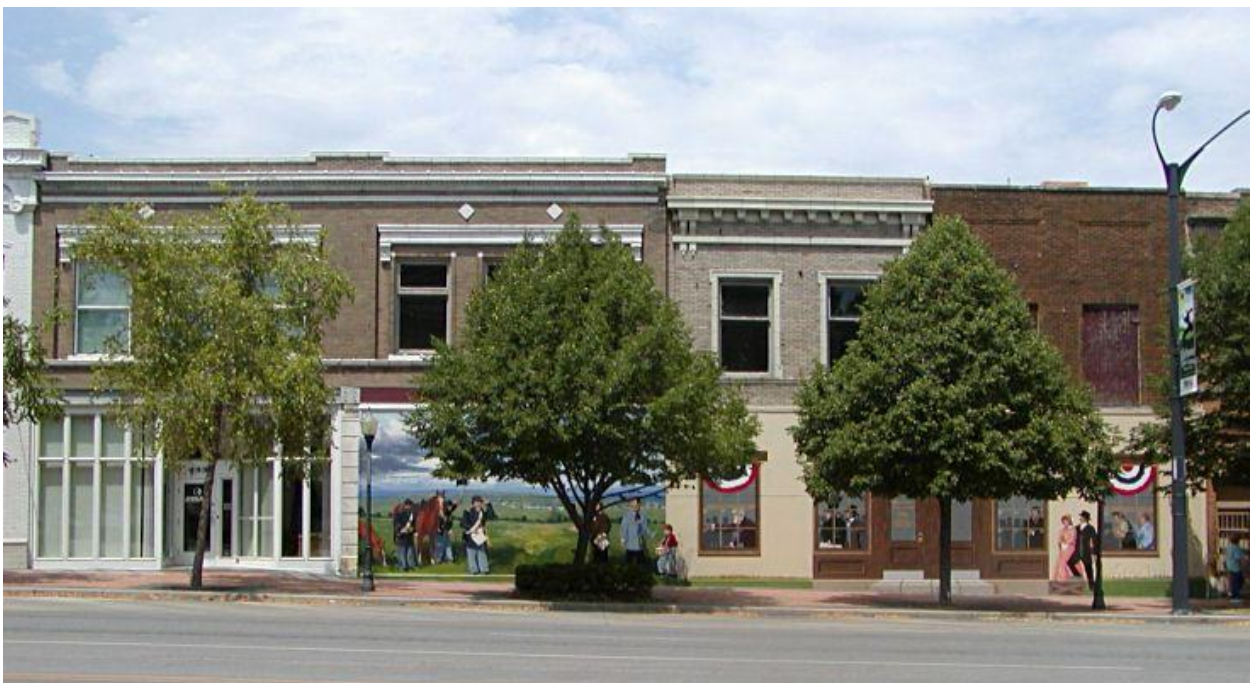


Figure 2-9 Constitution Hall

The State Capital building

The Capitol was constructed on 20 acres of donated land. Construction began in 1862. The native limestone building is constructed in four wings, which are tied together by a center lobby that supports the iconic copper dome. The building was finished in 1903, and had a total of eight state architects that served during the years of construction. At the top of the building

sits a bronze statue of the Kansas Warrior Ad Astra. The statue was placed on top of the dome in 2002, which required the building to have additional support renovation in order to accommodate the weight of the statue. Currently the capital building is being renovated and is expected to continue over a nine year period. This renovating includes repairs to the crumbling limestone exterior, and the marble and wood trim in the interior of the building. The dome of the building is also being improved by repairing roof leaks and cleaning the copper metal. The basement was also renovated to make way for offices, a cafeteria and windows (Kansas State Capitol, Renovation).



Figure 2-10 Capital Building

The Crawford Building

Constructed in 1888 for Governor Samuel J. Crawford, the building was designed by architect Seymour Davis. Costing \$60,000 - \$75,000 during construction, the building was occupied by U.S. Vice president Charles Curtis. The building is home to the first Topeka newspaper, and George M. Stone Art School. Placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975, the building hasn't been altered since construction with the exception of a renovation project. Renovated by Don Kern the building has kept the large windows and brick façade. This renovation began in 1986 and was completed in 1994; it is currently used as an office building. This building is an example of what buildings in the downtown area could become if renovated properly (National Register of Historic Places in Kansas).



Figure 2-11 Crawford Building

Fire station 2

Fire Station 2 is the former fire department headquarters which was constructed in 1927. Located at Eighth and Van Buren, the building was a working fire station until 1979 when the building became home to Topeka Emergency Communication Center. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002. Currently the building is owned by the Kansas Association for Justice and has been restored and renovated. In addition to office space for the Kansas Association for Justice; it is also used for banquets and meeting rooms (National Register of Historic Places in Kansas).



Figure 2-12 Fire Station, current home of the Kansas Association for Justice

Past Plans that Fell Short

In 1921, the city commission hired Harland Bartholomew, to prepare a city plan for Topeka. This implemented the first zoning ordinance which divided the city into use, height and area districts. Harland Bartholomew helped lay the groundwork for modern day comprehensive planning. Some of the suggestions of his plan were implemented in the city, however others were not. Years later Bartholomew would revisit Topeka and discuss the zoning he had attempted to implement. “This district [...] contains multiple dwellings that resulted from the conversion of older, single-family homes. Practically no new apartment buildings have been provided in this more outlying district. This results in an unwarranted depreciating effect upon the remaining single-family homes” (Holiday Park Neighborhood).

In 1926 there was a proposed civic center on west Eighth Street that would have faced the State House seen in figure 2-13 (Proposed Civic Center on West Eight Will Face State House Square, 1926). At the time of conception, three of the buildings were existing with two buildings and a high school being proposed. The high school would have been situated west of the square across Harrison Street. A fountain would have been placed in the center of the square. Among the buildings proposed was a City Library. A high school was built in 1931 which was located west of Kansas Avenue on Tenth and Polk Street; this is most likely because of the land needed to accommodate the high school size. The Library would also be relocated from the capitol grounds to Tenth and Washburn, again most likely because of land needed to build the building and proximity to Washburn University.

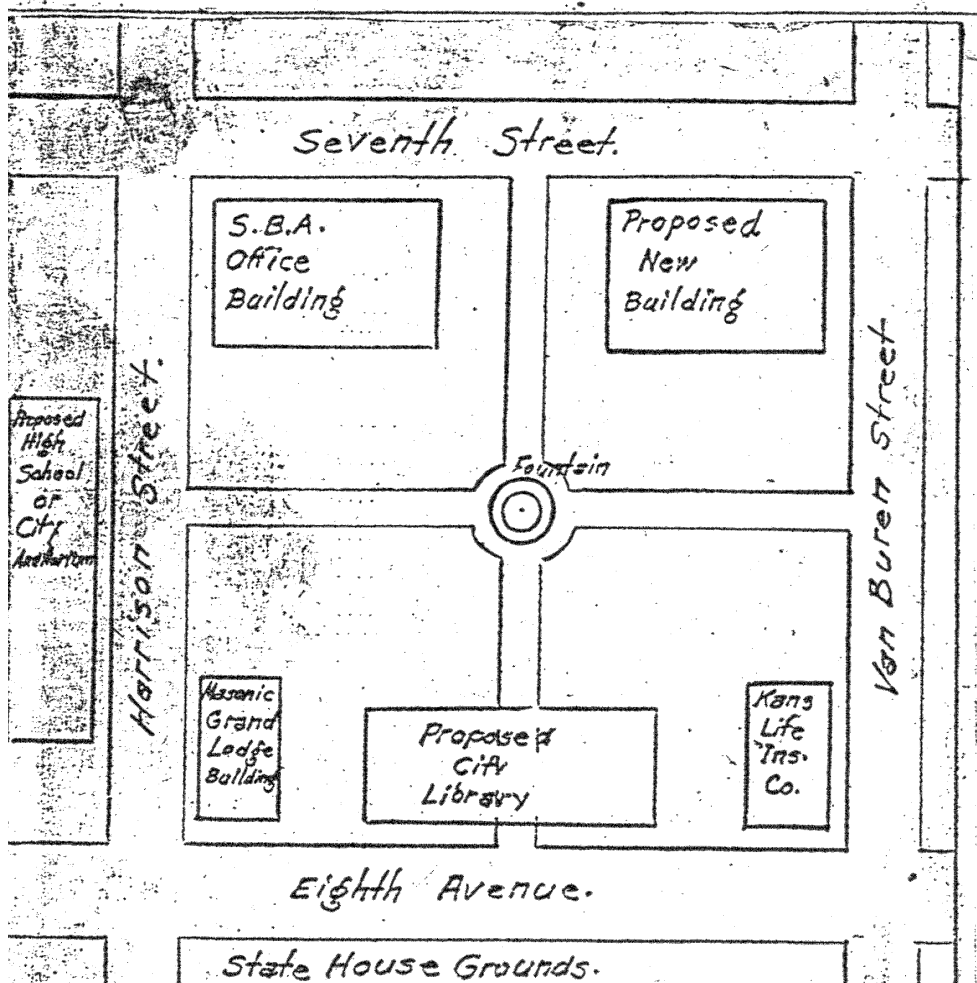


Figure 2-13 Proposed Civic Center South of State House 1926

The idea of the civic center expanded in 1934. This new civic center would expand from one block north of the capital building to the capital building being the center of a large hub of government buildings (Figure 2-14). The new design was to mimic the design of the national mall in Washington DC which would encompass green space and multiple government buildings. "Starting with the state house, going west, we could place the town hall on the block between Harrison and Topeka and Ninth and Tenth on the next block north there is room for a library the KERC building [Municipal Building] and the Presbyterian church, and woman's club, the two blocks between Topeka avenue and Tyler, and Eighth and Tenth could be used for a

beautiful memorial something like the Munn memorial and parking space"(Civic Center Proposed From the State House West to High School, 1934). While this new plan did utilize some of the existing buildings it also called for the removal of others which included the Kansas State Teachers building, an orphanage, residences, two filling stations, and apartment buildings. This could be part of the reason that this proposed civic center was never built.

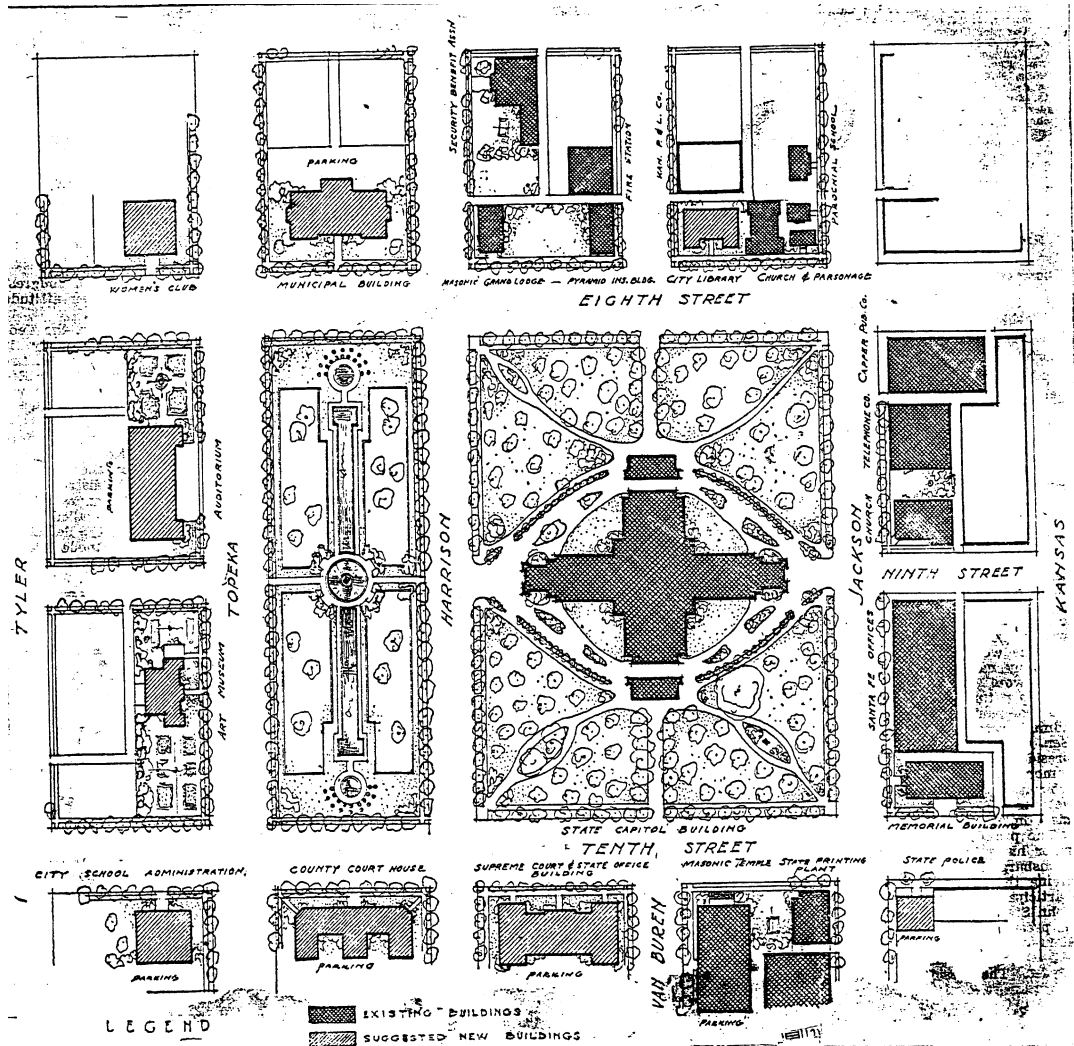


Figure 2-14 Proposed multiple government buildings 1934

1956 is the first of many proposals for a large downtown shopping center. The 1956 plans called for the redevelopment of a two block area in downtown Topeka. This would have included a shopping center with underground parking for 1,500 cars. The area would have occupied the "entire area bounded by Fifth, Sixth, Kansas Avenue and Monroe and extend across Monroe one-half block east". The project would have been similar to Denver's Cherry Creek Shopping Center, which would have included a one million dollar department store, motel, drive-in bank, new business buildings, carwash, recreation center with ice skating and bowling and full service gas station (Huge Downtown Shopping Center is Proposed Here, 1956). Land requirements would have necessitated condemnation of existing buildings in order to construct the project. This is the same year that Mayor George Schnellbacher initiated the Urban Renewal projects which began a demolition and reconstruction of many buildings in the downtown area. Funds may have been diverted from the above proposed project to the Mayor's Urban Renewal projects (Revitalizing Downtown).

In 1957 the Topeka Urban Renewal Authority proposed an underground parking garage, having a parking capacity of 1,000 to 1,500 cars. The garage would have spanned from Kansas Avenue to Van Buren along Fourth Street (Hall, 1998). This parking idea expanded the next year when a three story structure covering Kansas Avenue was proposed with retail shops on the first floor and the upper floors being used for parking (Hall, 1998). This is the same time that Interstate 70 was placed in downtown Topeka. Again, funding could have been an issue. In 1965, there was a proposal for a covered mall with an ice skating rink which would have been located between City Hall and the courthouse on east Seventh street.

In 1970, there were plans to build a Topeka version of Kansas City's Crown Center Plaza (Hall, 1998). The plan was downsized due to cost, and then renamed the Pioneer Center; this

was eventually defended in a public vote. The need for a larger civic center would later be answered when the abandoned Mid-America Fairgrounds became the site for the Kansas Expocentre in 1974 (Kansas Expocentre - History).

In 1985, the development of Heritage Proposal, also known as the Watertower Place, was planned (Figure 2-15). The plans called for a retail mall, high-rise office towers, condominium buildings, hotel, parking garage and low rise apartment (Hall, 1985). By 1993 the Watertower Development Group missed several development deadlines; the city canceled its agreement with the developer. A lawsuit would follow with the ruling being in the city's favor in 1997. After the lawsuit the project would be handed over to JDN Development Co. (Revitalizing Downtown). Located southeast of Tenth and Kansas, ultimately, funding and competition from other developments may have put an end to this project.

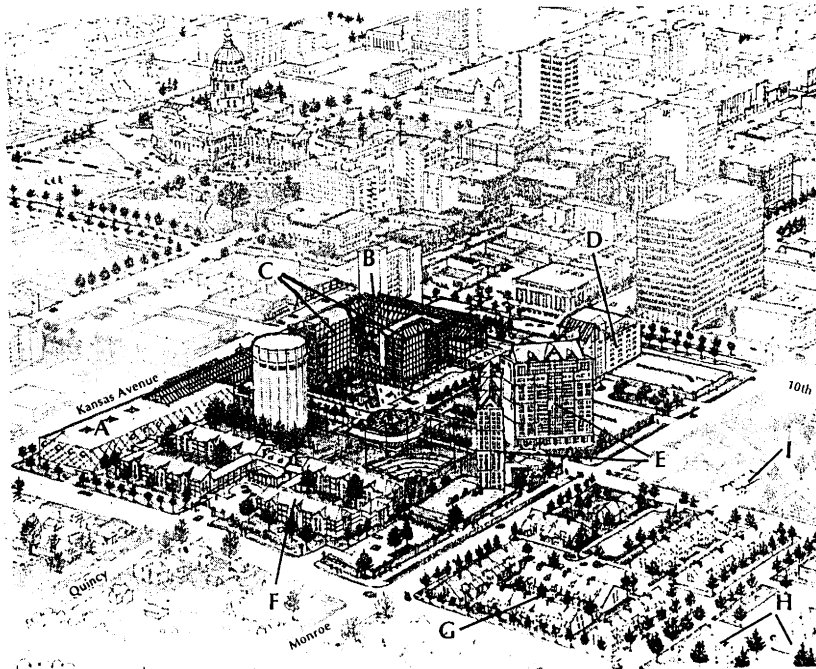


Figure 2-15 Watertower Place Development

Currently the City of Topeka is attempting to implement a 2000 Downtown Redevelopment Plan which includes ideas like the Eighth Street Corridor and the Waterfront

Development. Parts of the plan are currently being implemented. The building façade program is one idea that has taken hold in the downtown area. Since 2000, there are visible improvements in building façades and store fronts, along with the addition to new parking facilities and designs. This includes façades and remodeling. Examples of this can be seen at 705-707 S. Kansas Avenue where the existing steel windows are restored and re-glazed. The steel was stripped and primed, then painted to match the building. The limestone is treated or patched to match the existing color.

With some of the ideas implemented, other areas such as the waterfront development have not taken hold. The waterfront development focuses on the Kansas River. The Kansas River is currently isolated from downtown Topeka by a levee system that was constructed in the 1950s. The area which was once a city park is located on the south side of the Kansas River and sits across the river from the Great Overland Station and Veterans' Memorial (located in North Topeka). The plans are a combination of Trails, the Riverfront Park and a pedestrian plaza. The pedestrian plaza would be located on Van Buren Street and would connect the Capitol Building to the Riverfront Park. In addition to the 2000 Downtown Redevelopment, a proposal has been made to develop Eighth Street into a kind of Gateway Street leading from Interstate 70 to the Capitol Building.

Why many of these projects were never constructed is unknown, though speculation points to three factors. These factors are, funding, public support, and turnover in city officials. Funding is most likely the reason many of these projects were never implemented. To fund some of these projects, the City of Topeka would need to raise taxes, issue bonds, or use money from other areas within the city budget, none of which would likely be favorable among tax payers. The turnover of city officials has been documented in the Eighth Street Corridor project.

The project was voted in during the 2004-2005 fiscal year. “Over the two year period 2004-2005, \$1,880,000 was provided for this project. The 2005 amount of \$1,000,000 is financed by \$750,000 from GO [general obligation] bonds and \$250,000 from excess quarter-cent sales tax from 2002. The project will provide enhancements to the Eight Street corridor from I-70 to Topeka Boulevard, including replacement of the existing sidewalks with brick-stamped concrete, new curbs and gutters, pedestrian lighting and a landscaped median”(Capital Improvements Budget). This was overturned following an election for city council which changed seats and allocated the funding to a new project.

Grant Program

The City of Topeka has several incentive programs which include industrial revenue bonds, economic development exemption programs, tax increment financing and tax credit incentives which could be applied to the downtown area. However there is only one grant that applies solely to downtown. This grant program is run by Downtown Topeka Inc. (DTI) which is a nonprofit organization contracted by the city to administer the program. The program is used to encourage residential and commercial improvement to buildings in the downtown district. These grants are made on a first-come, first-served basis. “The Downtown Topeka Incentive Grant Program has a 74% rate of return, has incentivized over \$14 million in private investment, and recoups 100% of the invested public funds within four years” (Downtown Topeka Inc.). The grant is applicable for permanent improvements and only if the business fails or moves, then the amenities must remain with the building and the grant may require repayment (Figure 2-16).

900 Kansas LLC



Dibble Building



Figure 2-16 Before and After examples of buildings

This program has made some positive changes in the downtown area. The issue with the organization is that it is underfunded, and the budget continues to be cut. An example of this is the grant program recently having a fourth of its grant money cut reducing it from a \$100,000.00 program to \$75,000.00 for the next fiscal year.

In addition to the grant money, Downtown Topeka Inc. also gives business and property owners a voice, vision and direction for the downtown area. This portion is mostly funded through the Capital City Downtown Business Improvement District Advisory Board (BID). The focus of this funding is to “achieve excellence in the quality of life as a center of government, commerce, cultural, historical and recreation activities” (L. Leamon, personal communication, 2010).). The program is involved with economic development, advocacy and maintenance for downtown, and working with other organizations to promote the area. Examples of this includes the organization of events such as: St. Patrick’s Day parade, 99.3 the Eagle Downtown Classic Cruise Night, Mexican Fiesta Celebration and Nighttime Lighted Parade, Hullabaloo Sidewalk Sale and Party, Labor Day Parade, Mexican Independence Day Celebration and Miracle on Kansas Avenue Evening Lighted Parade. In 2009, parades such as St Patrick’s Day brought some 45,000 people to the area (Downtown Topeka Inc.).



Figure 2-17

Chapter 3 - Socio and Economic Analysis

The purpose of the social and economic analysis is to provide a profile of the City of Topeka by looking at historic and current demographic patterns within the community. This portion of the report will focus on Topeka as a whole to better understand the downtown area. Component sections that will be considered include: Topeka Location Information, Public Facilities, Historical and Current Demographics, Economic Profile, and Downtown.

Location Information

Utilities

The City of Topeka operates the water treatment facility which includes the sanitary sewer collection system and wastewater treatment run by the public works department. The garbage and recycling is handled by Shawnee County. The Shawnee County Refuse department has three levels of service depending on the amount of trash that the household generates. The recycling program includes collection of plastics, newspaper, mixed office paper, metals, glass, cardboard and magazine stock at 24 pick-up locations. Electricity is handled by Westar Energy which is the largest electric energy provider in Kansas with more than 684,000 customers (Westar Energy - Doing whatever it takes to keep the lights on). The gas is provided by Kansas Gas Service which also services to much of the region.

Transportation

There are several major highways that serve Topeka. I-70, I-35 and I-470 encompasses the city with US 24, US-75, US-40 and K-4 feeding into the city and the Interstate system.



Figure 3-1

Topeka’s air travel is served by the Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority, which includes Forbes Field and Billard Airport. Billard Airport is located less than ten minutes from the downtown area. Forbes Field – once the Forbes Field Air Force base – is located on the south side of Topeka and is less than six miles from downtown.

The Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority provides bus service for the City of Topeka. The bus system operates on regular routes throughout the city, with the main hub located in the downtown area. Amtrak also makes a stop in Topeka. The station is located in the downtown area.

Government

Until 1985, Topeka was a commission based system with five individuals. Since 1985 the city has changed to a strong-mayor-form of government. This system is comprised of a

mayor, and the elected counseling government. This system gives the mayor the power to veto, budget, and administer other city decisions. Within the last ten years the mayor system has shifted, from the strong-mayor form, to a weak-mayor form. The weak-mayor model consists of a mayor who is elected by the voters much like the strong-mayor form: this position has little real political power. The weak-mayor system is largely ceremonial and is in some degree involved with the city council. Currently, the city manager has taken over these duties of the strong-mayor.

Climate

Topeka has four distinct seasons, so much that it has been named in Forbes magazine as the second leading city to have the widest variations in temperature, precipitation and wind. The summers are hot and humid with cold, dry winters. “Summers are usually hot, with low humidity and southerly winds; periods of high humidity and oppressively warm temperatures are of short duration. Winter cold spells are seldom prolonged; winter precipitation is often in the form of snow, sleet, or glaze. Severe or disruptive storms occur infrequently” (Topeka: Geography and Climate: City: City Guide, weather and facts galore from Answers.com). Topeka also has its share of severe thunderstorms which can produce lighting, hail and tornadoes.

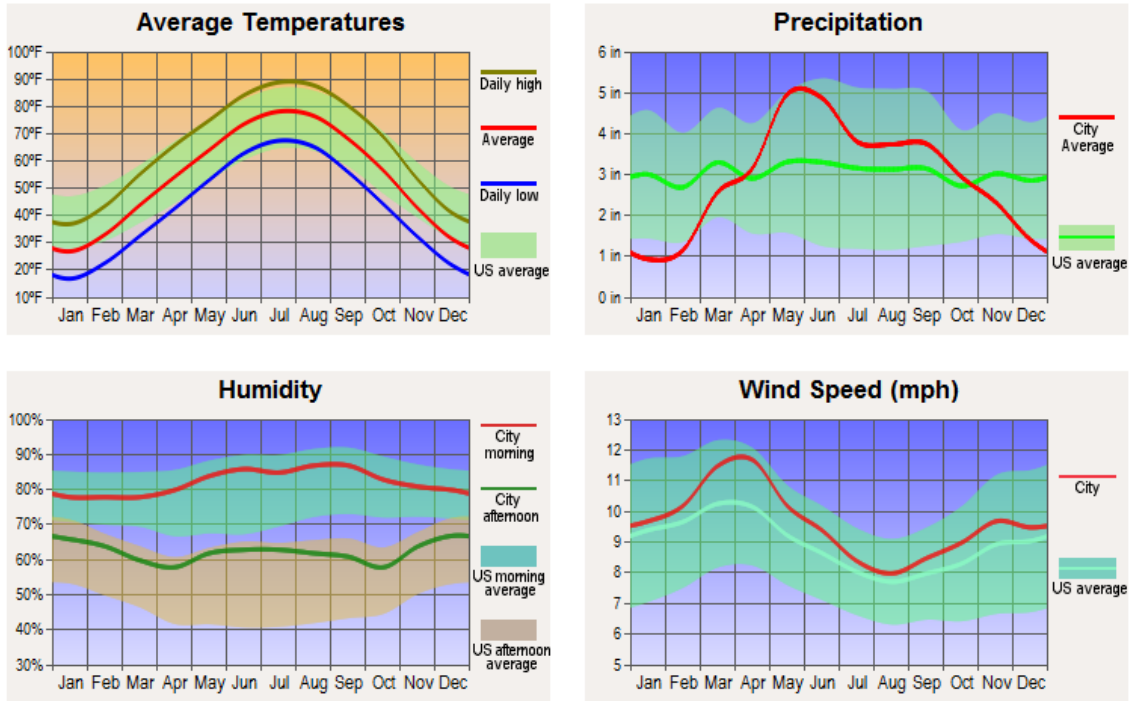


Table 3-2

Topography

Topeka is located approximately 60 miles west of Kansas City, Kansas along Interstate 70 in Shawnee County (Topeka, Kansas (KS) profile). The land is referred to as central lowlands which were formed by glacial activity during the Ice Age. The Kansas River, Soldier Creek, and Shunganunga Creek run through Topeka. The city is 56 square miles and has an elevation that ranges from 876 feet to 971 feet above sea level (Topeka: Geography and Climate: City: City Guide, weather and facts galore from Answers.com).

Public Facilities

Schools

The City of Topeka has four public school districts: USD 345 Seaman, which is located in North Topeka and also includes some of rural Shawnee County; USD 437 Auburn-Washburn boundaries include the rural west and southwest area of Topeka; USD 450 Shawnee Heights serves the rural area east and southeast of Topeka; and USD 501 which serves the majority of the urban area of Topeka. Topeka also has several private schools which include Catholic, Lutheran, and Collegiate schools.

Washburn University is also located in Topeka and is the only municipally owned university in the country. Washburn programs include a well-known law and nursing program, and a technical school. In addition to Washburn, there are also several university outreach programs that include schools such as Kansas State University, Kansas University, Allen County Community College, and Highland Community College.

Fire Department

The Topeka fire department consists of 12 fire stations, which house 18 companies. Each company consists of 4 individuals. The overall department is a scalar structure, meaning the organization structures have an uninterrupted series of steps, or a chain of authority (Stowell 2007 p. 236). The span of control has one individual that supervises a limited number of subordinates; the Topeka fire department has a span control of 7. There are approximately 250 staff members, “This includes a staff of eight that perform administrative, clerical and fleet functions. The remaining personnel are paid professional firefighters, of which 220 are State certified Emergency Medical Technicians trained to

render aid in emergency situations; and Boomer, an Accelerant Detection canine trained to detect ignitable liquids used to set and/or accelerate fires” (City of Topeka - Topeka Fire Department).

Police

The Topeka Police department is also a scalar structure, like the fire department. The goal of the Police department is “accomplished through providing excellent services and positive interaction with this community; ensuring equality of services; partnering with neighborhoods and community organizations; enforcing laws fairly and equally; recognizing individuals as persons of worth that deserve the highest quality of police service; ensuring professional and diverse representation and recognizing the priorities and needs of the community by incorporating them into the department's operations” (City of Topeka - Code Enforcement Unit). The units and programs in the police department cover such things as animal control, bicycle unit, k-9 team and community polices. Each area of Topeka is broken down into six zones. Currently the city of Topeka’s violent crime is down slightly for last year, however property crimes have risen 12.6 percent this last year (Editorial: Crime numbers frustrating). Much like any city, Topeka faces its share of challenges, yet the downtown does not have as high of a crime rate as is normally associated with downtown areas.

Historical and Current Demographics

According to the Topeka Chamber of Commerce, there are 122,113 (2006 estimate) individuals residing within the city, making this the largest city in Shawnee County which has a population of 174,709 (2006 estimate). Topeka’s population saw a steady increase

between 1860 and 1940. In the 1950s, a sharp increase in population could possibly be attributed to the “baby boom” which happened as a result of World War II. This was followed by a decrease in population in the 1970s which is most likely due to the closing of Forbes Air Force Base in 1974.

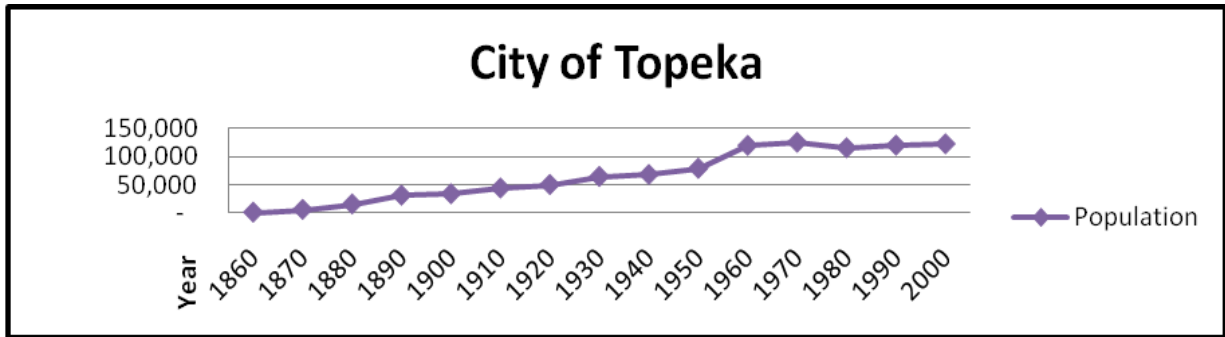


Table 3-3 Population growth of Topeka

In 2003, the Topeka Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) was expanded to include Shawnee, Jackson, Jefferson, Osage, and Wabaunsee County. This changed the Topeka MSA population to 229,619 individuals.

Topeka’s MSA distribution shows that 61% of the population is considered working, with 39% considered dependent or non-working populations. This is separated further to show that 13% is youthful, or under the age of 20, and the retired or 65 years and older comprises 26% of the population.

The total households in the Topeka MSA is 89,600 (2007) with a median household income of \$48,050 (2007). This is one of the benefits to living in Topeka, the cost of living. In a study conducted by the 2010 ACCRA averaged 314 areas and used 100 as the median, Topeka had a cost of living index of 92.5 overall. This means that the cost of living in Topeka is more affordable than other places. “Topeka ranked 91.4 in grocery items, 83.4 in

housing, 85.6 in utilities, 96.6 in transportation, 91.7 in health care, and 101.8 in miscellaneous goods and services”(Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce - Topeka Lifestyle - Community Information).

To be considered a major employer, the companies need to exceed 499 employees. Government is the highest employer in the Topeka area. Shawnee County’s major employer is the State of Kansas, followed by Stormont-Vail Health Care. A large majority of these employer groups are located in the downtown area. The State of Kansas, Shawnee County, City of Topeka and United States Government all have offices located in the downtown. In addition to the government a large number of private companies are located in the area such as Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas, BNSF Railroad, Hallmark Cards Inc. and Westar Energy.

Company	Category	Employees
State of Kansas	Government	8,612
Stormont-Vail HealthCare	Medical	3,100
Topeka USD #501	School District	2,270
Blue Cross Blue Shield of KS	Insurance	1,855
St. Francis Health Center	Medical	1,837
Payless ShoeSource	Manufacturing & Distribution	1,735
City of Topeka	Government	1,735
Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.	Manufacturing & Distribution	1,700
United States Government ¹	Government	1,482
Washburn University	Education	1,455
BNSF Railroad	Transportation	1,100
Jostens Printing & Publishing	Manufacturing & Distribution	1,060
Shawnee County	Government	1,014
Colmery-O'Neil VA Hospital	Medical	885
Wal-Mart	Retail	882
Frito-Lay, Inc.	Manufacturing & Distribution	849
Hill's Pet Nutrition, Inc.	Manufacturing & Distribution	801
Auburn-Washburn USD #437	School District	800
Dillon's Grocery Stores	Retail	761
Hallmark Cards, Inc.	Manufacturing & Distribution	754
Westar Energy	Utility	729
Target	Distribution Center	593
Seaman USD #345	School District	580
Kansas Neurological Institute	Medical	571
Reser's Fine Foods	Manufacturing & Distribution	565
Security Benefit Group of Co's	Financial	539
Shawnee Heights USD #450	School District	539
AT&T	Utility/Telecom	500

Table 3-4 Employers in the Topeka Area

Downtown Topeka

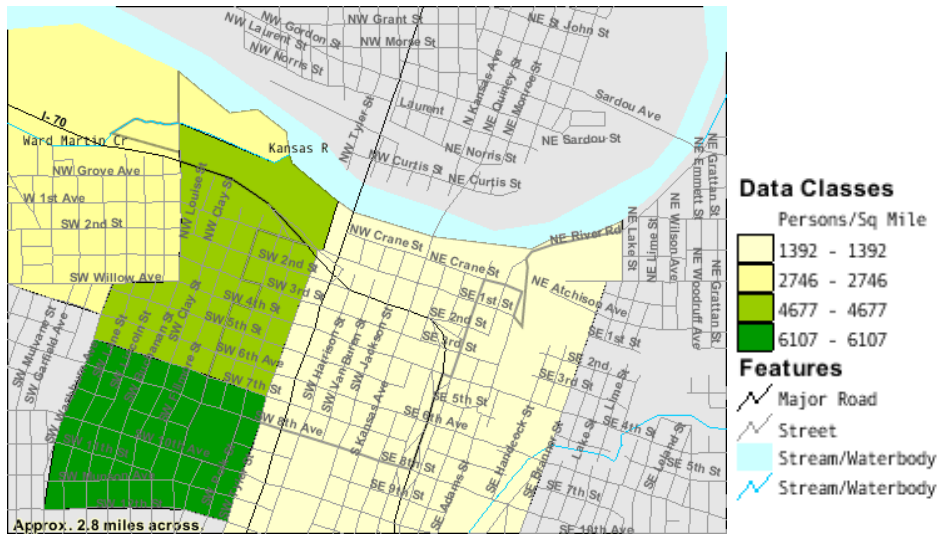
Downtown Parking

According to Evelyn Arins, the City Parking Manager in the Division of Facility Management, the downtown or Central Business District, has a total of 2,331 on-street parking stalls, with 32 outside of this central business district. This breaks down to:

- Normal stalls, 2,180
- Disabled Stalls 25 (placard)
- Disabled van stalls 30 (placard)
- Motorcycle stalls, 18 (only motorcycles and mo-ped)
- Permit stalls 28 (special Hang tags)
- Reserved stalls 50 (law enforcement vehicles)

Downtown Population

The Population living in downtown is relatively low; there are roughly 1392 persons per square mile in the downtown area (Topeka city, Kansas - Fact Sheet - American FactFinder). This is in contrast to the 30,000 to 35,000 people that work in the downtown area. This shows that the downtown area relies more on the employed in the area, rather than the population that lives in the area.



Geography: Census Tract 40, Shawnee County, Kansas
Value: 1,392 Persons/Sq Mile
(universe = 2,921 persons)
Source: 66603 5-Digit ZCTA, 666 3-Digit ZCTA by Census Tract
- TM-P002. Persons per Square Mile: 2000.

Figure 3-5

Conclusion

The City of Topeka has adequate utilities which include schools, fire department and police. This system is all managed by a weak-mayor, city manager system. It also has ample access to the highway system and has become a transportation hub. While the climate has a wide variation in temperature, the cost of living is much lower than the rest of the country making the city an appealing place to live. The city population is beginning to level off, with little growth, but no decline. The downtown population centers mainly on the number of persons working in the area with the employed number in the 30,000 range. This is in contrast to the number of individuals living in the downtown which is roughly 3,480.

Chapter 4 - Building Analysis, Downtown Topeka

This chapter contains a building survey which is an assessment of the conditions of the building structures and the surrounding environs within the study area. Higher quality housing conditions often result in higher real estate values for those districts. Community pride is also reinforced through maintaining positive neighborhood environmental conditions.

Boundary of Survey

The area in which the building survey is being conducted begins at the Southeast corner of 12th and Monroe Street, and then runs northeast along Monroe Street to 1st Street. From this intersection, the area continues northwest along 1st Street to the intersection at Topeka Boulevard. The area then follows Topeka Boulevard southwest to 12th Street and northeast along 12th Street back to the beginning intersection.

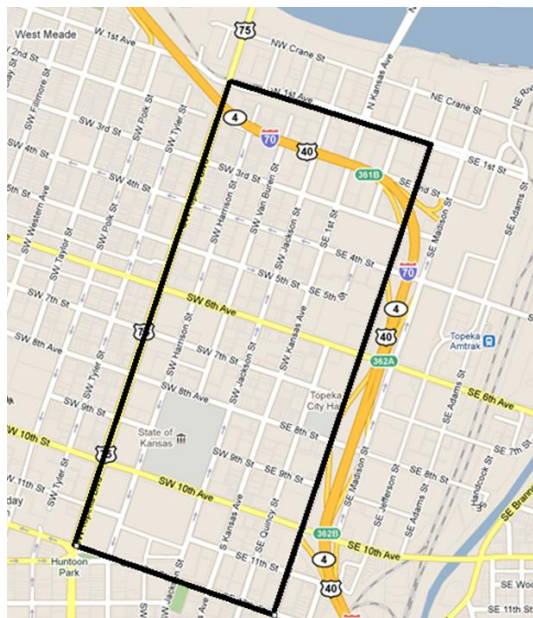


Figure 4-1 Study area

Characteristics and Zoning Ordinance

There are Federal, State and Local government offices located in the downtown area, consequently making it the government core district. Other businesses that deal with the government or supplying government offices are also located throughout the downtown. These include restaurants that provide lunches for downtown employees as well as law offices, and charities.

Remnants of older brick and limestone buildings scattered throughout the downtown stand testament to the once thriving downtown area of the late 1800's to mid 1900's. Some of these buildings are being renovated while other buildings have not been so fortunate. "While its wealth of old buildings represents assets, with their appealing architecture and human scale, many have also been neglected. Outdated floor plans and mechanical systems, deferred maintenance, and code compliance issues have kept much of the available space downtown under-utilized for years" (City of Topeka - Downtown Planning 2000 p9).

Topeka zoning ordinances divide the city into fourteen zoning categories which include commercial, multi-family, historic and office. The following classifications come directly from the Topeka Municipal Code Book under the purpose-intent of each zone:

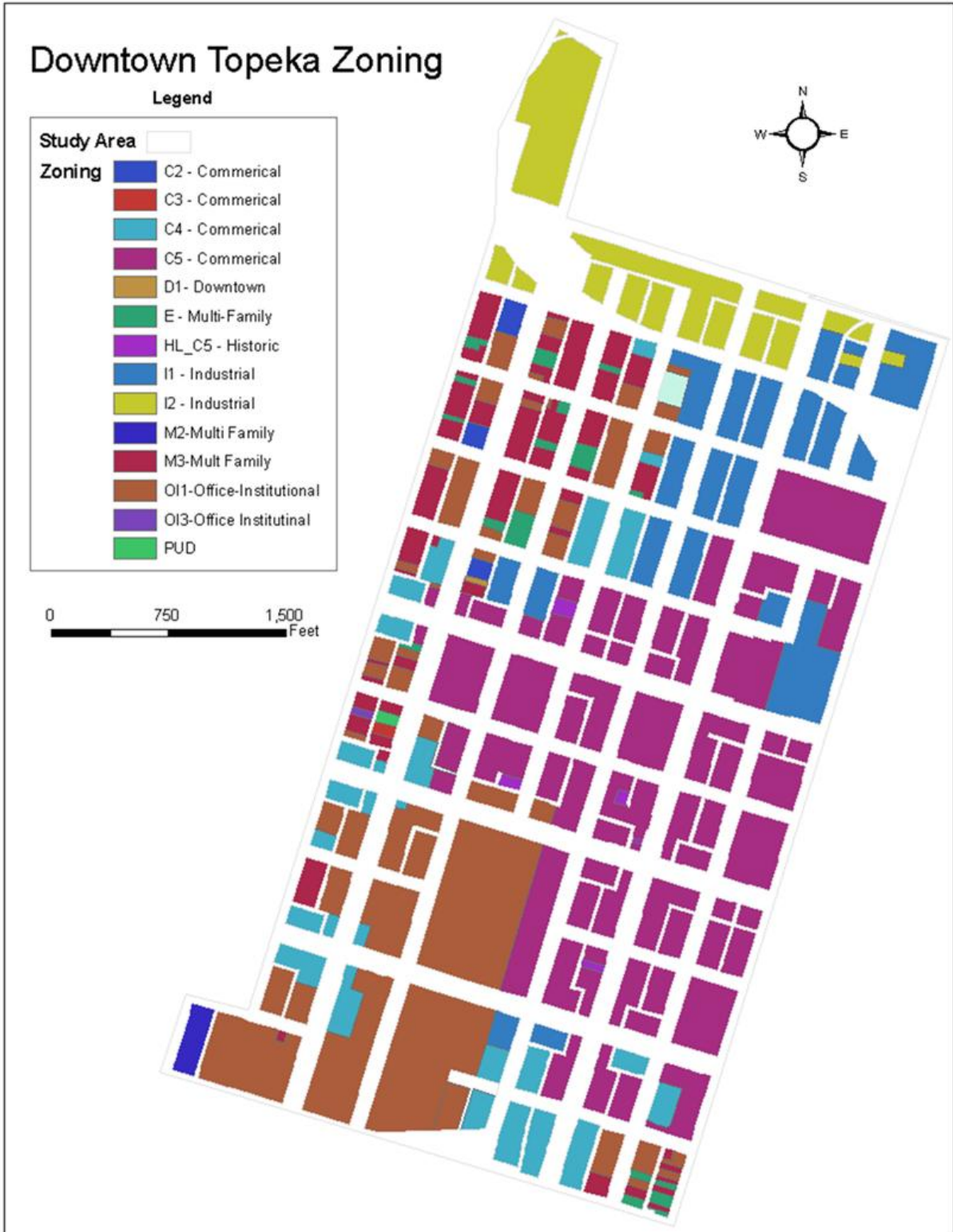


Figure 4-2 Downtown Topeka Zoning

C-2 Commercial District – This district is established to provide for those commercial activities which serve a major segment of the total community population. In addition to a variety of retail goods and services, these centers may typically feature a number of large traffic generators that require access from major thoroughfares. The extent and range of activities permitted are in the moderate to medium intensity range with a ground floor area limitation. (Chapter 18.145)

C-3 Commercial District – This district is established to provide for those commercial activities which serve a major segment of the total community population. In addition to a variety of retail goods and services, these centers may typically feature a number of large traffic generators that require access from major thoroughfares. The extent and range of activities permitted are in the moderate to medium intensity range. (Chapter 18.150)

C-4 Commercial District – This district is established to provide for commercial uses and activities which are intended to serve as community or regional service areas. Uses and activities permitted are typically characterized by outdoor display, storage and/or sale of merchandise, by repair of motor vehicles, by outdoor commercial amusement and recreational activities, or by activities or operations conducted in buildings and structures not completely enclosed. The extent and range of activities permitted are highly intensive and therefore special attention must be directed toward buffering the negative aspects of these uses upon any residential use. (Chapter 18.155)

C-5 Commercial District – This district is established to provide for a wide range of commercial activities which are contained in the central business or core area of the community. The extent and range of uses permitted are to provide for high efficiency of land

use and to encourage a broad mix of commercial, office and residential uses. (Chapter 18.160)

D Downtown Districts: D-1 District – The purpose of this district is to facilitate a compatible mixed use activity center within the core area of downtown Topeka. The district is predominately composed of state offices, as well as local and federal facilities, commercial and retail uses. The district includes compatible residential, office, civic, and commercial retail/service uses which complement and support a high density of activity and facilitate pedestrian usage. (Chapter 18.200)

E Multiple-Family Dwelling District – The purpose of this district and the regulations herein is only to retain this classification on individual properties that are undeveloped until such time as new development occurs. Thereafter, such district classification shall be converted in accordance with TMC 18.50.030(g)(2) and (3). (Chapter 18.115)

I-1 Light Industrial District – This district is established to provide for a wide range of uses except specified uses which are obnoxious or offensive by reason of odor, dust, smoke, gas or noise. The extent and range of uses are highly intensive. Residential dwellings are not permitted in this district except for on-site caretakers or watchmen or correctional placement residence or facility, limited or general. (Chapter 18.165)

I-2 Heavy Industrial District – This district is established to provide for the use and location of all other uses excluded in other districts except for residential dwellings. The intensity and use of land as permitted by this district is intended to facilitate the total range of industrial uses. (Chapter 18.170)

M-2 Multiple-Family Dwelling District – This district is established to provide for the use of attached dwelling units containing three or more dwelling units, designed and intended

for individual dwellings, group or community living facilities, congregate living facilities, and including townhouse, condominium or cooperative division of ownership. The location of this district is further intended to provide a transitional use between the districts of lesser and greater intensity. (Chapter 18.100)

M-3 Multiple-Family Dwelling District – This district is established to provide for the use of attached dwelling units containing three or more dwelling units, designed and intended for individual dwellings, group or community living facilities, congregate living facilities, and including townhouse, condominium or cooperative division of ownership. The location of this district is further intended to provide a transitional use between the districts of lesser and greater intensity, and where there are adequate public facilities to accommodate higher intensity of use. (Chapter 18.105)

O & I-1 Office and Institutional District – This district is established to provide for a limited range of nonresidential and noncommercial uses such as general purpose office, professional, or administrative operations. The district shall not permit those uses and activities pertaining to retail product display, installation, service, repair, or maintenance unless specifically provided for within the chapter. Among others, an objective of this district is to provide for a transitional buffer between the districts of lesser and greater intensity; and to restrict the intensity of use to a low to moderate range and to encourage a compatible design with the adjacent use and development. (Chapter 18.125)

O & I - 3 Office and Institutional District – This district is established to provide for a wide range of nonresidential and noncommercial uses such as general purpose office, professional and service, or administrative operations, research, testing and development. Among others, an objective of this district is to provide for a high intensity of use of

considerable magnitude and located on a sufficient land area to accommodate the factors of employment, transportation and other land use considerations. The district shall permit uses and activities pertaining to product showrooms for the display, demonstration, training, selection and sale of goods not for delivery on the premises. Product installation, service, repair and maintenance is not permitted in the district. (Chapter 18.135)

PUD Planned Unit Development District – This district is established to permit greater flexibility and more creative, innovative and imaginative design for the development of areas that are generally possible under the strict application of the regulations of the other districts. It is further intended to promote more economical and efficient use of the land while providing for a pleasing and harmonious development and environment, including opportunities to provide for a high level of urban amenities, and the preservation of open spaces. The regulations of this district are intended to encourage the use of this district in order to integrate multiple uses into the development; to adapt the proposed use(s) to meet the conditions of the site; and to affect certain economics in public facilities. The requirements contained herein are set forth to provide for such development on other than a lot-by-lot basis. Due to the nature and implications of a district zone which provides for such a broad spectrum of land use and a more challenging responsibility of the delivery of public services, considerations and quasi-judicial deliberations relating to the compatibility of the district to a particular site shall permit greater discretionary review and broad latitude in applying conditions and limitations for a permitted development. The compliance with all standards set forth in this division and the submittal of all specified documents and data shall not entitle an applicant to this district classification. (Chapter 18.190)

Methodology for Building Survey

The building survey was conducted by looking at six elements of each property. These elements included the physical building condition, if the building was in use, the storefront or façade, ground condition, improved surface, and street lighting. These elements were be assigned a number accordingly and then summed to give the building an overall building rating. The rating system is as follows:

1 = Dilapidated – Meaning partly ruined or decayed, especially as a result of neglect.

2 = Distressed – An old or worn appearance, building that have been damaged or used and not repaired.

3 = Deteriorating – Showing beginning signs of distress but could be repaired if addressed quickly.

4 = Standard – A level of quality that is accepted as the norm. This would show signs of being used but is in no way deteriorating.

5 = Excellent – In high quality: These would be newly remolded or newly built buildings.

The six elements are as follows:

Condition: To better evaluate a building's physical condition, each floor of the building was be visually examined individually. A rating was assigned using a scale of 1 to 5: 1 = dilapidated, 2 = distressed, 3 = deteriorating, 4 = standard, 5 = excellent.

Occupancy: To determine if the floors are being utilized, the following rating system was applied: 2 = occupied, 1 = vacant and 0 = unusable or dilapidated. The ratings for multiple floors was averaged to give the occupancy rating of the building.

Storefront or Façade: The exterior of the building, especially the front was examined. Is this building important from a design standpoint, does it complement the downtown area. A value of 1 to 5 was assigned: 1 = dilapidated, 2 = distressed, 3 = deteriorating, 4 = standard, 5 = excellent.

Ground Condition: The ground condition includes the sidewalk or yard around the building. A rating of 1 to 5 was assigned: 1 = dilapidated, 2 = distressed, 3 = deteriorating, 4 = standard, 5 = excellent.

Improved Surfaces: Has the building visibly been improved, such as new signs, windows, and repair of the outside of the building. Improved surfaces was assigned a rating of 1 to 5: 1 = no visible improvements, 2 = little to no visible improvements, 3 = some improvements, 4 = standard improvements, 5 = excellent improvements.

Street Lighting: Is there street lighting on or around the building. A rating was assigned from 1 to 5: 1 = no lights, 2 = little to no lights, 3 = street lights only, 4 = street lights with one building light, 5 = street lights and building lights.

Address : 608 SW JACKSON ST				Are there multiple address on this parcel:			
				yes	No		
Structure Profile:				91 - Green Space			
Single-story building				92 - Parking Lot			
Two floors				93 - Open Lot			
Three floors				94 - Parking Garage			
Four Floors				99 - Government			
Five Floors							
Six floors or more							
3.666667				2			
Storefront/façade	Ground Conditions	Improved Surfaces	Street Lights				
0	0	0	0	0			
1	1	1	1	1			
2	2	2	2	2			
3	3	3	3	3			
4	3	4	4	4			
5	5	5	5	5			
Not applicable				Not applicable			
Un-rateable				Un-rateable			
3				4			
				4			
				3			
				Total:			
				19.66667			

Figure 4-3

The outlined rating system is applied in the example from the spreadsheet above (figure 4-3) which shows the first floor rated as a 3, second floor as a 4 and third floor as a 4, giving the condition of the building a 3.66. Each floor on this building is in use, so the occupancy average is a 2. The rating for the façade, ground condition improved surfaces and street lighting is then added to give the overall condition of a 19.666.

Depending on the total points that a building is assigned defines the overall condition of the building using the following scale:

0 to 10 = dilapidated or distressed

11 to 17 = deteriorating

18 to 27 = standard or excellent

Lots that do not have buildings are assigned a number to determine what the area is being used for. A value of 92 is assigned for parking lots. A value of 93 is assigned for an open lot which could be an abandoned lot or unused lot and a value of 94 is assigned for parking garages, or parking structures. To track government buildings, the number 9999 was assigned. Government buildings include any city, county, state or federal buildings.

The collected data was first compiled in a spreadsheet with only the building address and parcel identification available. The information was then transferred into a geographic information systems (GIS) to map the rating. Full data can be found on appendix A.

Building Survey

There are a total of 435 lots in the downtown area, of these 121 properties were either parking lots, open lots, parking garages or government buildings which were not examined in the building survey. If a building contained both parking and office space, the office space took priority and the property would fall under the building survey. It needs to be noted that

there was one park in the downtown area, but the park is located on the southeast end of the judicial building lot so it was counted as a government building rather than a green space.

This survey subsequently shows that there is no green space in the downtown area. The survey shows that of the 121 lots that are not included in the rating system, there are 47 lots that are parking lots, 39 open or abandoned lots, 7 parking garages and 28 government buildings.

Open or abandoned lots in the downtown area raise a number of issues. An example of this is in the southeast study area. Here there are a number of large lots which were abandoned after the deadly 1966 tornado tore through Topeka. Formerly a residential area, after the tornado many of the houses were never rebuilt, leaving many of the lots unoccupied. The next area which we see issues with open or abandon lots is along the east side of Topeka Boulevard, located on the northwest portion of the study area. This particular neighborhood looks like the open lots could be due in part to a deteriorating neighborhood.

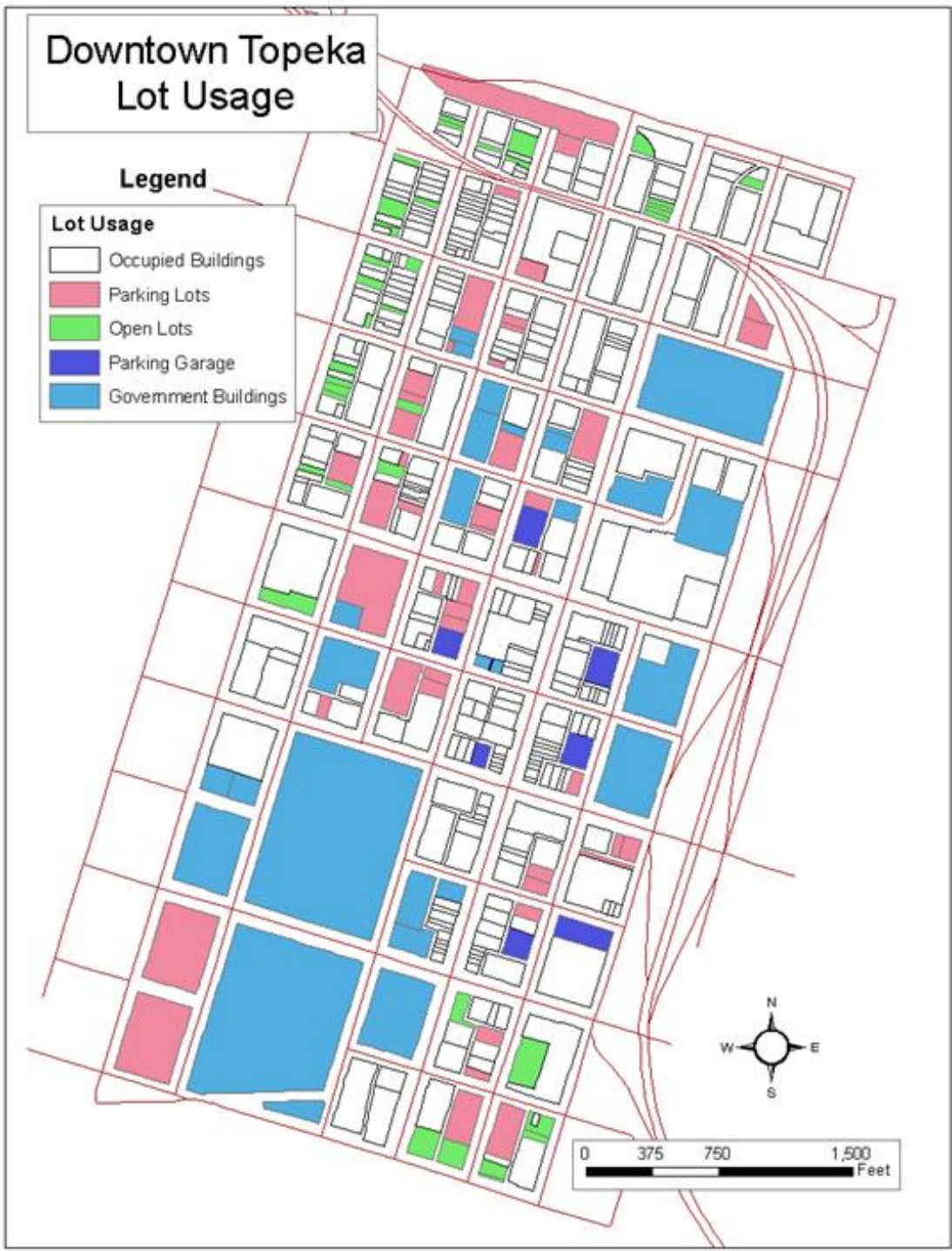


Figure 4-4 Topeka Lot Usage

Building Conditions

A rating will be was assigned to establish the condition of the building. Values range from 1 to 5: 1 = dilapidated, 2 = distressed, 3 = deteriorating, 4 = standard, 5 = excellent. There are only a handful of buildings in the study area that fall in the range of 1 – 3. The Downtown Topeka Redevelopment Incentive Program may be the reason for the good condition of the buildings. There has been \$101,346,201 of private investments put into the downtown between 2001 and 2010. "In regards to the DTI [Downtown Topeka Inc.] Grant Program, the monies are spent for infrastructure improvements only. In some instances, there was actually more private made not tied to the grant program" (Investment Downtown Since 2001). If grant money is tied to the building, the improvements to the building must remain in place if the business relocates or fails, even if private money is tied to the project. This keeps the investment in the downtown area. This is evident when you look at the buildings between 9th and 6th Streets on Kansas Avenue and along 8th Street between Jackson Street and Quincy Street.

On Kansas Avenue, the buildings that are in distress or dilapidated are on the northeast corner of Kansas Avenue and 10th Street. These buildings have remained vacant throughout the year in which this study was conducted. There has been little to no maintenance performed on these buildings which becomes apparent in the cracked windows and crumbling brick. Currently the owner is deciding the fate of the buildings. Within the next year either these building are going to be remodeled or demolished to make room for a parking structure. The importance is that these buildings will soon experience changes due to redevelopment by the owners.

The northwest portion of the study area is zoned multi-family with spots of commercial zoning. The bulk of these homes are older residential buildings, with a large number of them distressed. There are also a high number of open or abandoned lots around the distressed housing.

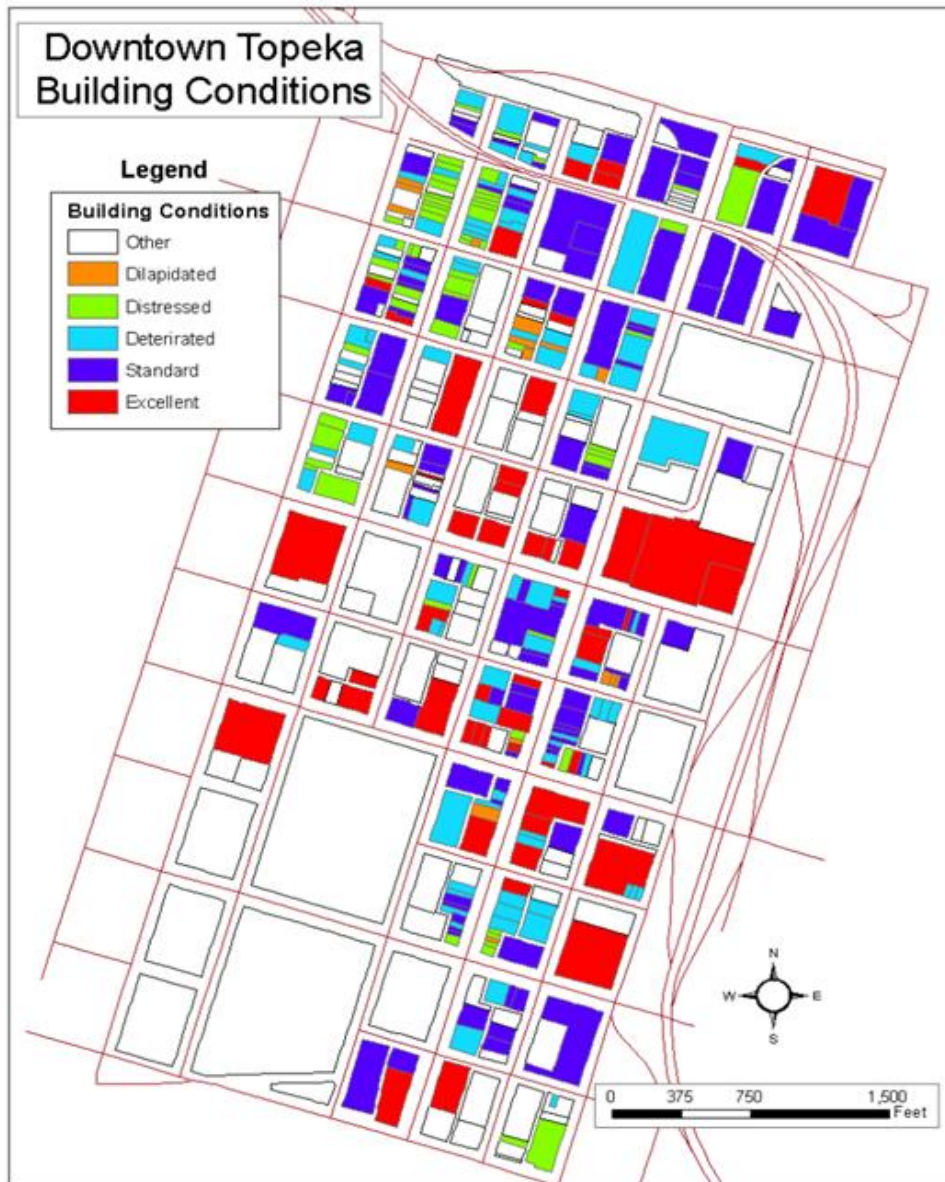


Figure 4-6 Building conditions

Occupancy

To determine if the floors are being utilized, the following point system was applied: 2 = occupied, 1 = vacant and 0 = unusable or dilapidated. These were averaged to give the overall condition of the building. If the upper two floors are unusable, but the lower floor is occupied, the vacancy rate would be averaged between a 2, 0, 0 which would equal a .666 and fall into the vacant area of the study. If the average equaled above a 1, then it would be partially occupied. If the building has a number of 2 then it is fully occupied. Most buildings are occupied, in the downtown area. The buildings with partial occupancy had tenants in the first floor, with upper floors unoccupied.

The partial occupancy category was recorded to determine if the building is being used to its full potential. To demonstrate the importance of this rating, a great example is the Celtic Fox building. When the building was renovated, the upper floors were converted to apartments. These apartments now have a waiting list and the building is fully occupied. This means that the whole building is being utilized. What was found is that most of the buildings in the downtown area are fully occupied. However, the buildings that are partially occupied seem to center very close to Kansas Avenue. Most of the buildings do have the first floor occupied but many of the second floors remain unused for a number of reasons. In some cases, the upper floors have not been properly maintained, renovated or updated. Examples of this are the upper floors which may not have adequate plumbing or lighting.



Figure 4-7

Overall Condition of Properties

The overall condition of the properties included the physical building condition, if the building is in use, the storefront or façade, ground condition, improved surface, and street lighting. These numbers are then summed to give the building an overall rating. Depending on the total points assigned, this defines the overall condition of the building: 0 to 10 = dilapidated or distressed, 11 to 17 = deteriorating, 18 to 27 = standard or excellent. Other was established as the open lots, government buildings and so on. The overall condition of the properties shows that many of the properties along Topeka Boulevard are in rough shape. Unfortunately this is the first area of town that travelers see when exiting the east-bound ramp from Interstate 70. Many of the properties along this street are dilapidated, distressed or deteriorating, in addition to a high number of abandoned lots.

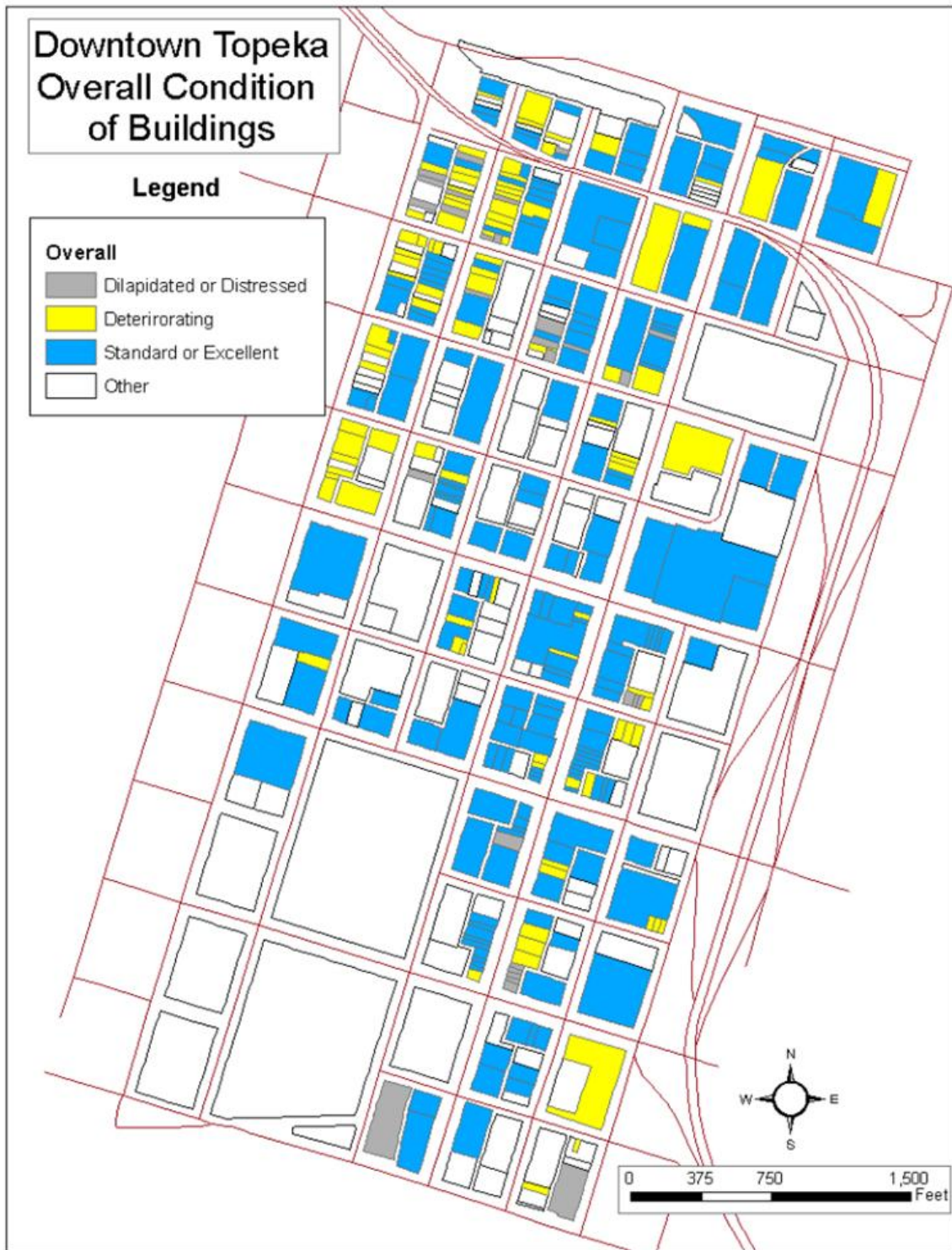


Figure 4-8

Capitol Complex Buildings

In 2009, the Kansas Department of Administration (KDOA) conducted a study of the state office buildings. Of these 12 buildings 10 are in the downtown area. These buildings include:

State Office Building	Square Feet	Year of construction
Docking Building	564,138	1956
Landon Building	362,627	1912
Curtis Building	320,721	2001
Capitol Building	317,146	1866-1903
Eisenhower Building	300,809	1965
Capital Parking Garage	216,000	2004
Curtis Building Parking Garage	200,000	2001
Judicial Center	168,096	1978
Memorial Hall	94,136	1914
Dillon House	12,362	1914

Table 4-1

The overall objective of the KDOA study was to identify the building condition. "The overall objective has been to qualify Capital Improvement Project requests that best balance an appreciation for limited funding, business continuity and life/work safety consideration, against the continued aging of buildings and key building systems, and long-term property ownership considerations." The survey determines the building condition by assessing the interior components, engineered systems, and building systems. A total sum value was given to each building to assess the overall condition: Excellent = 90-100, Good = 80-89, Deficient = 60-79, Poor = 30-59, and Unsatisfactory = 0-29.

Of the ten government buildings surveyed, three were rated as deficient meaning that the building is in need of minor repair or limited replacement of components based on performance of the building. One building was rated in poor condition, which demonstrated failure of primary components and multiple systems requiring major repair or replacement.

The three buildings that are rated deficient are Memorial Hall, Eisenhower Building and Landon Building. The Landon Building, built in 1910, requires updating of the heating and cooling systems. Currently the building is heated by a tube system which would have been installed in 1955. This system has a 20 year life span and should have been replaced during the 1970s. The air conditioning system was installed the same year as the heating, and is also in need of replacement as is other electrical equipment that was installed over 30 years ago. Memorial Hall and Eisenhower Building are also in need of repair, however because these buildings earned higher ratings in the engineering systems but lower in interior and exterior components, these buildings are not as high of a priority as the Landon Building.

The Docking State Office Building received the lowest rating of any of the state buildings in the KDOA study. The building condition index is rated at 53.9 (out of a possible 100), indicating that the building will require extensive renovating and updating, or it will be considered for demolition. The reason for the poor building condition is that there has been little or no replacement and updating of mechanical and electrical systems since the building's construction in 1956. "A majority of the building is heated and air conditioned by a perimeter fan coil system that was installed in 1955. This equipment should have been replaced in 1975 given the typical service life of fan coils is 20 years. All the electrical distribution transformers and panel boards were installed in 1955. This equipment should have been replaced in 1985". The building needs new heating and cooling systems and exterior improvements which includes work on the foundation/structure, walls, roof, and windows. Three options are being considered for the Docking Building. These include reconstruction of the existing building, or demolition of all but the existing heat plant and construction of a new building in its place. Repair of the existing Docking Building is

estimated at \$147,750,785 which will include: replacement of air handler units, HVAC Piping, ductwork, VAV boxes and controls, Statehouse chillers, fire protection systems, electrical and lighting, ceilings, carpeting, new walls and finishing, hazardous material abatement, roofing and waterproofing, exterior walls, elevators and foundation repairs.

The cost estimate for reconstruction of the Docking Building is \$77,426,276.00. This is in addition to the moving cost of \$200 per person, central monitoring relocation at \$439,200, rental rate to relocate occupants at a cost of \$16.78 per tenant and furnishing cost of \$5,000 per seat for new furniture or \$1,600 per person using existing furniture.



Figure 4-9

To avoid the cost of moving employees during the construction, the Docking Building should remain in place while the new building is constructed just south in the Docking parking lot. This will allow Docking Building occupants to remain in the building until the new structure is complete. The state currently owns parking on the north side of downtown and a shuttle should be established for the new parking area while the construction is taking place. After the construction of the new building is complete the old Docking

building should be demolished and the land should be turned into green space such as a park. The new building should include a parking garage.

New Parking Garage 1002 stalls \$19,631,224.00

New Docking Building \$77,426,276.00

Demolition Cost \$10,309,539.00

Total: \$107,367,039.00

By moving the location of the new state office building, this prevents the displacements of the current Docking Building occupants and helps with the cost. In addition, there is not much green space in the downtown area, this will allow for a park next to the capital building. With a parking garage, it would cost \$40,383,746 less to build a new building than to repair the existing Docking Building.

Conclusion

Topeka zoning ordinances divide the city into fourteen zoning categories which include commercial, multi-family, historic and office. The placement of the zones breaks down per property rather than having distinctive zone areas. For instance, zoning for the Capital Building changes mid property from commercial (C-5) to office institution (O & I-1). Consistency in zoning would improve the area. An alternative to the current zoning would be to change much of what is located around Kansas Avenue and Topeka Boulevard to a D-1 Downtown District. Topeka zoning ordinances state: “the purpose of this district is to facilitate a compatible mixed-use activity center within the core area of downtown Topeka.” The district is predominately composed of state offices, but also includes local and federal facilities, commercial and retail uses. The district includes compatible residential, office, civic, and commercial and retail service uses which complement and support a large number

of activities and facilitates pedestrian usage. Also, using I-70 as a natural barrier between the downtown and the industrial area seems like a good idea. Currently, the industrial area has functioning businesses such as Hills Pet Food, Hallmark Cards, and other businesses. A similar idea would be what the Downtown Redevelopment Plan suggested in 2000, as seen below. By changing some of the zoning it could make the downtown area more consistent.

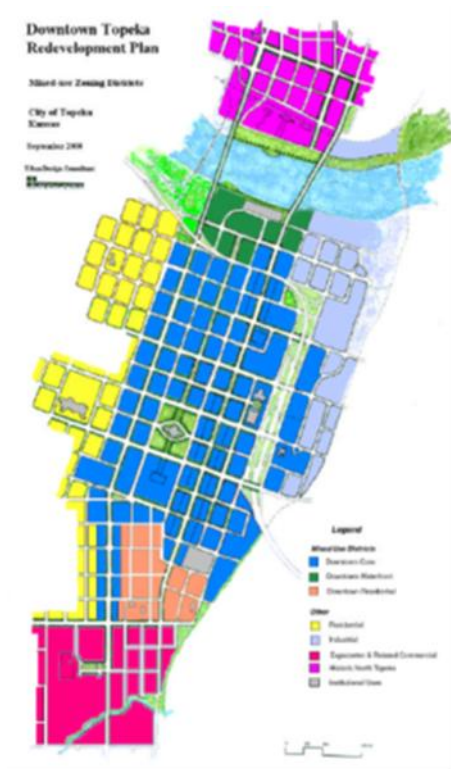


Figure 4-10 Zoning from Downtown Redevelopment Plan

The majority of buildings in the downtown study area, especially in the commercial district, are in standard or excellent condition. However, the few dilapidated or distressed buildings in the area are very visible to the public and could be causing issues for the downtown area. Some of these buildings could be considered a public health issue, especially along Kansas Avenue which is a barrier separating buildings from walkable businesses. "Topeka's Housing Code sets minimum standards for maintenance of all

occupied and vacant residential structures to protect the health and well-being of the public by correcting and preventing adverse conditions" (City of Topeka - Code Enforcement Unit). In some cases, a building clearly needs to be condemned. Condemning these buildings or undergoing extensive renovations could result in the building better contributing to the downtown area.

Encouraging buildings with similar uses in the same area would help promote more business in the downtown area. Buildings with offices or vacant spaces on the first floor of a building sometimes act as a barrier separating buildings from walkable businesses. This could be resolved by zoning or by applying a new strategy of encouraging a main dining and entertainment district. There is some growth between 7th and 10th Streets on Kansas Avenue, however, the viable businesses are hit and miss.

While the city has acknowledged that buildings are a concern and have taken steps to improve them, the infrastructure around these buildings has been largely ignored. The city needs to make the infrastructure in this area a priority. The city first needs to conduct a study to see how much needs to be improved and then needs to have a plan set into motion to improve the infrastructure. There is also a lack of green space such as parks, in the area. While some of the state buildings do have green space and trees, such as the capital building, the only park in the area is located on the southeast end of the judicial building lot.

The City of Topeka has made it a goal to reestablish the downtown area. This is apparent in the building survey. This was done by creating grant programs that insured the money stayed in the downtown area. However, with a central focus on the Kansas Avenue area, some of the surrounding neighborhoods have been neglected. Many of the residential buildings in the survey area are showing signs of aging and neglect while other buildings in

the Kansas Avenue area have clearly undergone projects that bring the building conditions up to a higher standard.

Chapter 5 - Infrastructure

The infrastructure in downtown Topeka is in need of repair, but the extent of repairs is yet to be determined. “The greatest concern was the deterioration of downtown, for despite substantial economic activity, there was an abundance of vacant space, the second stories of many buildings were empty, the infrastructure, water, gas and electric lines, are aging and showing it” (Dream of Revitalizing Downtown). Currently the city is attempting to gather funds to conduct a study. In addition to existing utilities repairs the Kansas Department of transportation (KDOT) is also changing the alignment of Interstate 70.

Infrastructure

Currently there is inadequate water, electrical conduits, underground vaults, remnants of trolley tracks in the road, and inadequate drainage. “We know that the water is inadequate in at least two blocks. It's completely non-existent in the 800 block and they have to truck in water for landscaping. The electrical conduits are completely crushed, to the point where we don't have the capability to light flags in the medians, or hang up lights in the trees at Christmas time” (Laurel Leamon, Downtown Topeka, Inc.). In addition the city has decided to not use the existing lighting system as a way to save cost on electricity. As a result, some of the existing functional infrastructure is not being utilized.

The first step that needs to be taken is to conduct a study of the existing infrastructure to understand the amount of work that will need to be done. The second step is to begin replacing the infrastructure with green technology, start to make Topeka the green capital! The City has started by creating Green Topeka (Green Topeka -moving towards a greener community), which has begun addressing issues such as flooding, erosion control, water quality, and other green infrastructure projects in the Topeka area. Many of the projects

relate to water, sewage, and stormwater drainage issues which has included projects such as the Jackson Street urban retrofit project which helped reduce flooding in part of the downtown area.

Topeka could take this a step further by implementing more Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards for buildings in the downtown area. A disadvantage of adopting greener standards is that the initial design and construction cost tends to be higher; however, the increased beginning costs can be offset by a reduced cost of more efficient systems. "While the environmental and human health benefits of green building have been widely recognized, this comprehensive report confirms that minimal increases in upfront costs of about 2% to support green design would, on average, result in life cycle savings of 20% of total construction costs -- more than ten times the initial investment" (Kats, G). By replacing existing infrastructure with LEED certified standards, this could save money for the city in the long run and help with cost issues such as the lighting.

Topeka should think about reducing some of the roads in the downtown area from four lanes to three lanes. This will create more space for sidewalks and bicycle lanes. "Basically a road diet is switching a road from four lanes to two, with a center turn lane. Engineers and planners alike have found that in high turn environments three-lane roads can carry as many motor vehicles as a four-lane road- with greater safety and efficiency for all modes of transportation" (Road Diet FAQ). Current Capital District Project is doing work similar to this, only the project calls for reducing some of the streets to two lanes with center street parking. Making sidewalks wider for cafe areas and extra walking space along streets such as 8th Street would allow businesses to expand the outdoor sitting area which is

currently limited. However, center street parking has been tried in the past and failed. The project also is concurrent with the redevelopment of Kansas Avenue, which should be looking at roads that intersect with Kansas Avenue such as 10th Street, 8th Street and others.



Figure 5-1

Establishment of I-70

The Interstate 70 improvements project is also known as the I-70 Polk-Quincy Viaduct Improvement. Originally built in the late 1950s, this section of Interstate has passed its expected duration and is now in need of repair. It does not meet current highway design standards and it is the sharpest curve of its kind on an interstate in Kansas (a 90 degree turn with a 45-mph warning speed limit). The highway was placed with such an abrupt turn as a means of removing a high crime neighborhood known as “The Bottoms”, the name coming from the neighborhood situated on river bottom land. “A large Urban Renewal Project, which, beginning in 1959, began to systematically demolish the neighborhood we lovingly called ‘The Bottoms’” (Rodriguez p. 4). The abrupt bend, lack of a properly sized shoulder, and entrance ramp leave this section of Interstate in need of an upgrade. The existing highway does not meet any of the design guidelines for interstates; therefore it needs to be fully redesigned. "Phase I of this study will recommend the preferred alignment and

improvements for the Polk-Quincy Viaduct. Phase I began in April 2009 and is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2010. KDOT has budgeted \$676,935 for the study using federal funds. Phase II, the preliminary design of construction plans, will begin upon completion of Phase I and is scheduled to be finished in 2012. KDOT has budgeted \$1,876,673 for this phase using federal funds" (I-70 Topeka Polk-Quincy Viaduct Study).



Figure 5-2 Alternative 1



Figure 5-3 Alternative 2

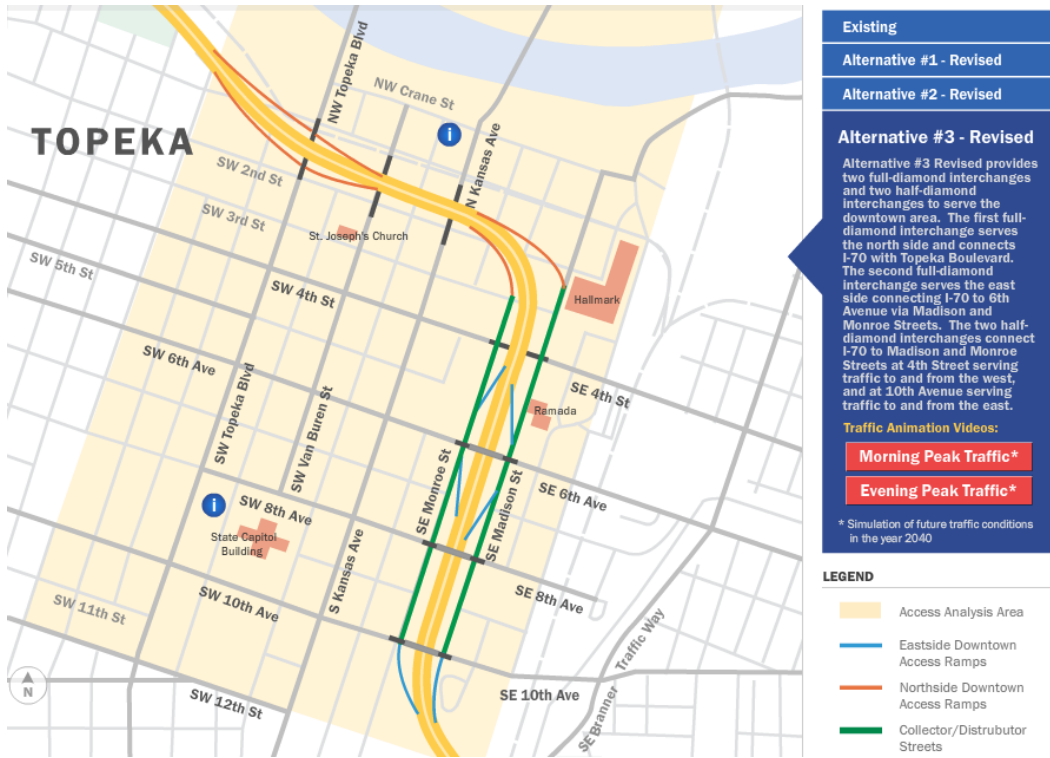


Figure 5-4 Alternative 3

This project is a joint effort by the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), the City of Topeka, and the Metropolitan Topeka Planning Organization. Currently a study is taking place to determine the best course of action for the realignment of I-70. The concept behind the study is to examine current conditions of I-70 and construct a safer I-70 in the downtown area. This study will attempt to combine highway and local road traffic with the goal of safety, traffic flow, access, economic development and aesthetics in mind.

Currently, funding is in place for the design of the I-70 Polk-Quincy Viaduct Improvement; however, the funds have not been allocated for the construction. Although the bridge is in adequate condition (scoring 84 on a 1 to 100 scale), the design does not meet current design standards. For the 2011 fiscal year, KDOT has 1.7 billion dollars to spend on projects (this is with assumed federal funds). This is about 1/3 of what KDOT needs to complete the list of optional projects for the 2011 year. The I-70 Polk-Quincy Viaduct Concept is ranked 136th on the list for potential projects. The decision on whether this project will be pursued this year will be made in March 2011.

The placement of the highway in the downtown area has been selected but the design elements have encountered some challenges. There are two distinct elements in the design concept of this study: The first element is the grade of the highway, the second is the ramp design and placement. These two elements have three alternative designs which could be used in the reconstruction of I-70 downtown.

Design element: Grade

Options with the highway include a fully below-grade at an estimated cost of \$290 million, partially below-grade at a cost of \$250 million and above grade (new viaduct) at a cost of \$200 million. The fully below grade and partially below-grade increase cost because of the high water table. This would place the highway approximately five feet below the water table meaning that pumps would need to be installed in order to protect the highway from potential flooding. In addition to the water pumps, there are major utilities that would need to be relocated away from where the highway will be located. These utilities include storm sewers, and sanitary sewer, which could add another year to the construction of the project. The advantage to the below grade option is that I-70 is a visual barrier between the downtown area and the potential riverfront development; this would eliminate that barrier. If the City of Topeka does want to pursue the development of the riverfront district then it will be more aesthetically pleasing to use either the below-grade or partially below-grade construction option.

	Fully Below-Grade Cost \$290 Million	Partially Below-Grade Cost \$250 Million	Above-Grade Cost \$200 Million
	Strengths	Strengths	Strengths
Roadway Design	*Downgrade on-ramps help traffic entering I-70 accelerate. Upgrade off-ramps help traffic exiting I-70 decelerate.	*Downgrade on-ramps help traffic entering I-70 accelerate. Upgrade off-ramps help traffic exiting I-70 decelerate.	*Smoothest vertical profile for I-70 *Greatest sight distance *Can build 4-lane I-70 initially, viaduct could be widened in future when needed
Flooding Risk		*10' above typical water table observed in test wells	*No Pump No Risk
Utility Impact			*Minimal utility impacts
Aesthetics Community	*I-70 is not a visual barrier between Downtown and Riverfront *Aesthetic treatments will be considered	*I-70 is not a visual barrier between Downtown and Riverfront *Aesthetic treatments will be considered	*View of Downtown and Riverfront from I-70 *Opportunity to use space under viaduct *Aesthetic treatment will be considered *93% of focus group favored a new bridge

Table 5-1

	Fully Below-Grade Cost \$290 Million	Partially Below-Grade Cost \$250 Million	Above-Grade Cost \$200 Million
	Weaknesses	Weaknesses	Weaknesses
Roadway Design	*Must build to accommodate 6-lane I-70 plus ramps *Retaining walls require 30' setback *Less desirable highway profile	*Must build to accommodate 6-lane I-70 plus ramps *Retaining walls require 30' setback *Less desirable highway profile	*Longer on-ramps and off-ramps area necessary due to ramps grade
Flooding Risk	*Several pump stations required (\$2 million per station based upon US-54 plus underground storage and distribution *5' + below water table	*Several pump stations required (\$2 million per station based upon US-54) plus underground storage and distribution *KS River flow increasing	*No Pump No Risk
Utility Impact	*Major utility impacts to storm sewers, sanitary sewers and combined	*Moderate and some major impacts to storm sewers, sanitary sewers and combined sewers	
Aesthetics Community	*Limited view of city from I-70 *Physical barrier between Downtown and Riverfront	*Limited view of city from I-70 *Partial view of vehicles on I-70 from Downtown *Physical barrier between Downtown and Riverfront	*Viaduct may be perceived as a visual barrier

Table 5-2

The Kansas River is currently separated from downtown Topeka by a levee system that was constructed in the 1950s. The levees in addition to the grade of the highway will need to be taken into consideration when deciding to pursue this project. If the city wants to follow through with the riverfront plans then there needs to be a push for the below ground option. This would help visually tie the riverfront project into the capital building and the downtown. However the current area of town that the riverfront proposal is being placed is a functioning industrial area. The current above grade layout of the interstate acts as a buffer between the industrial area and the downtown area. If the area is not going to be developed into a riverfront, and stays as a functioning industrial area the above ground viaduct may be more desirable. Also, cost is another consideration; it is \$90 million more to place it below grade. In addition to an increased cost, there are flooding issues. With the grade sitting five feet below the water table, pumps would need to be placed in the below grade area with back up pumps to insure the highway does not flood.

Design Element: Ramp Design and Placement

The placement of the highway has been determined, however different designs vary on the number of entrances and exits and where these ramps will be placed. In addition to the ramps, the design alternatives also take into account construction on abutting and connecting roadways. The following three alternatives are verbatim from the I-70 Topeka Polk-Quincy Viaduct Study: KDOT Project # 70-89 KA-1266-01 study being conducted:

Alternative # 1 and Alternative # 2 Westbound I-70 to the city streets will provide three exits that serve the downtown area. The first exit serves the southeast side of downtown with a ramp that connects I-70 to 10th Ave. and serves 8th Ave. via Madison Street. The second exit serves the northeast side of the downtown area, with a ramp that connects I-70 to 6th Ave. and serves 4th St via Madison Street. The third exit serves the north side of downtown, with a ramp that connects to Kansas Ave. and serves Van Buren St. and Topeka Blvd via a connector road. Eastbound I-70 to the city streets provides two exits that serve the downtown area. The first exit serves the north side of downtown with a ramp that connects I-70 to Topeka Blvd. and serves Van Buren St. and Kansas Ave via a connector road. The second exit serves the East side of downtown, with a ramp that connects I-70 to 4th St. and serves 6th Ave., 8th Ave and 10th Ave. via Monroe St. (I-70 Topeka Polk-Quincy Viaduct Study: KDOT Project # 70-89 KA-1266-01)

Alternative # 3 Westbound I-70 to the city streets will provide three exits that serve the downtown area. The first exit serves the southeast side of downtown with a ramp that connects I-70 to 10th Ave. and serves 8th Ave. via Madison Street. The second exit serves the northeast side of the downtown area, with a ramp that connects I-70 to 6th Ave and serves 4th St. via Madison St. The third exit services the northwest side of downtown with a ramp that connects I-70 to Topeka Blvd. East bound I-70 to the city streets provides three

exits that serve the downtown area. The first exit serves the north side of downtown with a ramp that connects I-70 to Topeka Blvd. The second exit serves the northeast side of downtown with a ramp that connects I-70 to 4th St. The third exit serves the central east side of downtown, with a ramp that connects I-70 to 6th Ave and serves 8th Ave and 10th Ave. via Monroe St. (I-70 Topeka Polk-Quincy Viaduct Study: KDOT Project # 70-89 KA-1266-01)

	Alternative #1 Rev Cost \$180 million	Alternative #2 Rev Cost \$220 million	Alternative #3 Rev Cost \$210 million
	Strengths	Strengths	Strengths
Road Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Meets current design criteria *3rd St curve improved *Wider shoulders *Longer ramps *Greater distance between ramps *Additional lanes where needed *Madison & Monroe Streets improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Meets current design criteria *3rd St curve improved *Wider shoulders *Longer ramps *Greater distance between ramps *Additional lanes where needed *Madison & Monroe Streets improved *Collector-Distributor roads connect Topeka Blvd. to 10th Ave. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Meets current design criteria *3rd St curve improved *Wider shoulders *Longer ramps *Greater distance between ramps *Additional lanes where needed
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Access is provided to Topeka Blvd., Van Buren St. and Kansas Ave. serving the north end of Downtown, the proposed Riverfront Development and North Topeka *Access is maintained to 4th St., 6th Ave., 8th Ave. and 10th Ave. on the east side of Downtown. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Access is provided to Topeka Blvd., Van Buren St. and Kansas Ave. serving the north end of Downtown, the proposed Riverfront Development and North Topeka *Access is maintained to 4th St., 6th Ave., 8th Ave. and 10th Ave. on the east side of Downtown. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Access is provided at Topeka Blvd., serving the north side of Downtown and North Topeka * Access is maintained to 4th St., 6th Ave., 8th Ave. and 10th Ave. on the east side of Downtown.

Table 5-3

	Alternative #1 Rev Cost \$180 million	Alternative #2 Rev Cost \$220 million	Alternative #3 Rev Cost \$210 million
	Weaknesses	Weaknesses	Weaknesses
Road Design	*One Slip ramp *Weave distance between Adams and 10 th Ave is less than desirable.	*Three Slip ramps *Weave distance between Adams and 10 th Ave is less than desirable.	*Weave distance between the Topeka Blvd. and 4 th St. ramps is less than the desirable distance for the expected traffic volumes. *Required an additional lane on westbound I-70 from the 6 th Ave. ramp west to MacVicar. *Two slip ramps *Weave distance between Adams and 10 th Ave. is less than desirable
Access			*Indirect access is provided to businesses north of 1 st St. the proposed Riverfront Development and the north side of the river along Kansas Ave.

Table 5-4

Alternative # 1 is more cost effective and safer from an engineering stand point. However the sacrifice of Alternative # 1 is that it limits access to the downtown by only having two access points (one east-bound and one west-bound) and using a frontage road. This has the local businesses of downtown up in arms, and many of them pushing to see the development of Alternative # 3. However the increased number of access points in Alternative # 3 may cause traffic congestion issues. Alternative # 2 is a compromise of the other two, but the real issue is space to place the ramps so even this compromise has drawbacks.

RE-SHAPING OF THE DOWNTOWN (LYNCH)

This project could re-shape the downtown area. These shifts in the highway can change the districts or determine the fate of ongoing projects. To better understand how this may affect the downtown, we will use Kevin Lynch's five elements to understand how the downtown is shaped today and how this could shift. Kevin Lynch uses a program of five visual elements to assess the image of a city: Paths, Edges, Districts, Nodes, and Landmarks.

These are the dominant physical forms that are visually apparent in a city, although other social or historical meanings may also serve to communicate image. These elements will be applied to the current downtown Topeka area, and then reexamine how these elements may shift with the changing of the highway. It is important to note that some of these five elements may overlap.

DISTRICTS

Districts provide certain identifiable or unique characteristics that define them as distinct from other areas. Lynch, states that most people structure their city to some extent in this way, with individual differences as to whether paths or districts are the dominant elements. The downtown district is not easily defined. While there are specific activities that take place in the downtown, much of the area is mixed-use or developed prior to zoning leaving many of the buildings to remain through the “grandfather clause”, or existing prior to current zoning. "The mixed-use nature of these districts makes any definitive listing of permitted uses difficult and their boundaries somewhat indistinct" (Downtown Topeka Redevelopment Plan p.7). The most distinct of these districts is the Government Core District which includes local, state and federal agencies in this area. This district forms around the state capital building with other state agencies located in direct reference to the capital building. "Spaces occupied by the state, whether state-owned or leased from private owners, illustrates the importance of its role, and will form a basis for planning future development" (Downtown Topeka Redevelopment Plan p.10). These buildings then continue east from the capital building with the hub of the city buildings located between 8th and 6th street along Quincy. The federal offices are located at 5th and Kansas Avenue.

The Office District is the least distinctive of the districts. Office space is located throughout the downtown area and tends to exist around the government core district. The Commercial District is located on Kansas Ave and sits between the City and State Government districts. "Some storefronts are vacant, and others need substantial repair, but the basic fabric of a commercial core is still intact" (Downtown Topeka Redevelopment Plan p.10). Improvements to this district are visible however some buildings still sit vacant showing years of neglect. The majority of foot traffic on this street is visible during work hours.

The Industrial District is located north of interstate 70 and has a strong and visible presence. The Residential Districts have small pockets scattered throughout the downtown area. While some of the buildings are new loft developments around Kansas Avenue, most of the housing adjacent to the downtown is somewhat neglected.

A shift in the highway could make some of these districts more distinctive. All of the alternative alignments change the curve of the highway to a more gradual curve which means that adjacent property would be required for right-of-way. Depending on how the alignment is constructed, in regards to above or below grade, this could further isolate the downtown area from the industrial district. In addition to making more distinct industrial districts, the shift in ramps could change the Commercial District as well. The shift in ramps could reroute traffic on the outside exits increasing car traffic around this district. This would decrease the number of cars in the core of downtown and may make this district more pedestrian friendly possibly increasing foot traffic in the commercial district.

PATHS

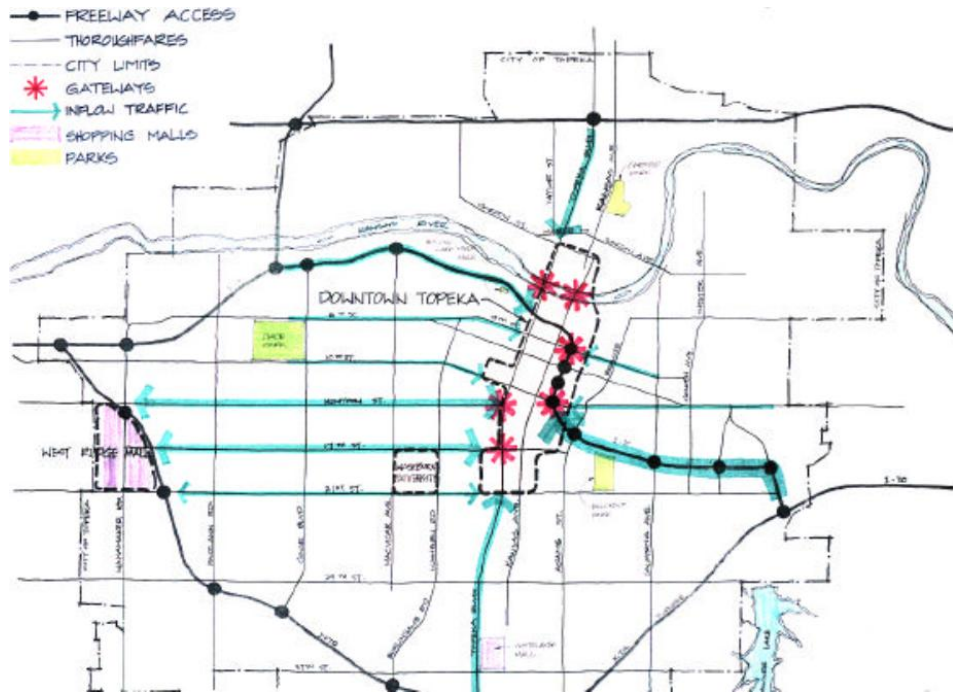


Figure 5-5

Paths are the predominant city element; People tend to think of cities in terms of topographic relationships such as landmarks in relationship to paths. Paths channel individuals through an area and can include walkways, sidewalks, streets, trails and other major or minor routes of movement. The major road way used by cars currently is Topeka Boulevard, 10th Street, and Interstate 70. Sidewalks that have heavy foot traffic center on the capital building and Kansas Avenue. The foot traffic in these areas increases around 10:00 AM, Noon, and 3:00 PM which could be contributed to break and lunch times.

It is important to understand that with the shift in the highway this could potentially shift the gateway to the city, consequently shifting the pathway of traffic for the downtown area. The large change that can occur with this realignment is that many of the alternative designs remove ramps and place a frontage road in the downtown area along the highway from Topeka Boulevard to 10th Avenue. Topeka could use this as an advantage making this

an entry point or gateway to the downtown. This could help define the downtown and make it more appealing by using good signing. Currently the only gateways or welcome signs to the downtown are located on Topeka Boulevard. One is located at the intersection of 12th and Topeka Boulevard and the other is located on the North Topeka Bridge. While these signs are very beautifully placed and constructed, they miss all of the traffic that drives in from interstate 70.

NODES

Lynch defines a node as a point that gains focus from observers as they pass through the area. He goes on to say that a node can be a junction, a crossing, or simply a place where concentration occurs as a result of condensation around a physical characteristic or popular spot. These nodes can shift depending on the day or time. During lunch hour Monday through Friday the blocks on Kansas Avenue between 5th and 10th are full of pedestrians, more specifically the intersection of Kansas Avenue and 8th street. The Farmer's Market draws lots of people making the parking lot of the Judicial Building a node on Saturday mornings during the spring, summer and early fall. The alternative alignments should not shift the pedestrian nodes of the downtown. However the driving area could change by increasing traffic on the intersection of 1st Street and Topeka Boulevard in addition to increasing traffic at 10th and Monroe Street.

LANDMARKS

Landmarks are the recognizable features of an area. An example of this is when you see the Eiffel tower; you know it is Paris, France. This object can be buildings, signs, statues, parks, mountains, or lakes that serve as a reference point. The clear landmark is the state capital building. The Capitol Building is visible throughout the city; this is in part due to an

ordinance which restricts the height that buildings can be built around the capital building. Any shift in the downtown alignment will not change the visibility of this building. The bridges that cross the river into North Topeka become a notable landmark, especially the newly redesigned Topeka Boulevard Bridge which has clocks that reach across the bridge at the entrance.



Figure 5-6 Capitol Building

EDGES

Edges are the linear boundaries between two districts; breaks in continuity according to Lynch. Though usually less dominating than paths in the eyes of the observer, these lateral references can be perceived as more or less impenetrable barriers that can serve to bound an area or restrict access to a portion of the district. The interstate around the downtown area acts as a distinct edge. 10th Street acts as the southern edge to the downtown, with Topeka Boulevard becoming the west boundary.

A realignment of I-70 may not change the edges of the downtown however it could make them more distinct. If the 10th Street ramp becomes the main exit and entrance onto the highway for the southeast side of town, this could increase traffic along the proposed

frontage road and 10th Street making a distinct edge to the downtown. Topeka could use this to their advantage and make 10th Street an entrance to the city.

Conclusion

Topeka needs to use Interstate 70 as an opportunity to enhance the access and beauty of the city. This could also be tied into the Capital District Project as a way of enhancing the entrance into the city.

The current discussion among officials shows that the city may be leaning towards Alternative #1 with an above-grade viaduct being picked for the redesign of the I-70 Topeka, Polk-Quincy Viaduct. This design places a frontage road along I-70 from Topeka Boulevard to 10th Avenue, with one major exit and entrance to the downtown. The key to making this plan work is going to be signage, and coordinating this endeavor with existing projects such as the Capital City District Project. The City should use this realignment as an opportunity to re-introduce drivers to the city. These entrances could become what Lynch would define as nodes or gateways and contribute to shaping and defining the downtown.

With the development and change that's going to happen with the realignment of the I-70 Polk-Quincy Viaduct, the City of Topeka should plan improvements around the new alignment. Rumors have indicated that design Alternative # 1 with a fully above grade viaduct will be used when building this project. It would only make sense that the City would try to build projects around these proposed plans. Therefore, the upcoming project on 8th Street would work well provided it does not get too close to the right-of-way for I-70. Also, Topeka could use this as an opportunity to enhance the access and beauty of the city. This could also be tied into the Capital District Project as a way of enhancing the entrance into the city.

Chapter 6 - S.W.O.T.

S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis is a strategic planning tool used to identify internal and external factors affecting an entity. The idea behind S.W.O.T. is to generate a large number of ideas to identify issues and appropriate responses in the downtown area. The S.W.O.T. approach is designed to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of an area, followed by identifying the opportunities and threats. While some of these ideas pertain to downtown only others may take into account the city as a whole. Additionally, some of the S.W.O.T. analyses may have overlap between categories. This is because addressing some current weaknesses could be viewed as opportunities for downtown Topeka's future.

Strengths

Center of the State's Capital City

The Federal, State, City and County government are all located in the downtown area making this a government core district. Currently the largest employer in Topeka is government with 12,843 employed. The bulk of these offices are located in this area. In addition, the Kansas State Capitol averages 50,000 visitors annually to the area.



Figure 6-1 Capital Building

Office employee base downtown is significant and growing

Currently there are some 30,000 to 35,000 employees that work in the downtown area. This high number of employees is a great market that can and should be utilized. This means that the market and potential is there to build upon.

Parking

In a parking survey conducted in 2003, downtown had an inventory of 13,924 parking spaces (Downtown Topeka Inc). This survey accounted for all public and private parking areas as well as many city-owned parking garages. Included in the downtown area are 2,331 on-street parking stalls according to the city parking manager, Evelyn Arins. Since the 2003 survey, additional garages have been constructed. In the Capital District Charente Project conducted in October 2010, the public believed that parking is an opportunity for downtown, and only the perception of parking maybe an issue. A proposed solution to this issue is to install better signage to make public parking more visible.

Access to Interstate

Interstate 70 (I-70) runs adjacent to the downtown area providing access to the highway system. "Interstate 70 is the 'main street of Kansas'" (Rex Buchanan, coauthor of *Roadside Kansas: A Traveler's Guide to Its Geology and Landmarks*). In addition, I-70 was the first interstate highway project in the United States and is a gateway between the east and west parts of the country, also being referred to as the crossroads of America. I-70 intersects with I-470, I-35 and I-335 in Topeka.

Community focus on redevelopment of downtown

The citizens of Topeka, Kansas want to see some form of redevelopment in the downtown area. Currently Heartland Visioning is holding meetings to develop and

implement a vision for the downtown. “Scores of Topekans have spent a total of 1,500 hours during workshops sharing their thoughts and ideas on redesigning South Kansas Avenue – suggesting everything from green spaces where people can gather, to more businesses and people living downtown”(Bush, A. M.). This year the city allocated \$30,000 in additional funding for the development of downtown Topeka and citizens showed their support by attending workshops to discuss options for the downtown (Hrenchir, T).



Figure 6-2, Columbian Building located on 6th street

Farmers Market

The downtown Topeka Farmers Market is located at Harrison and 12th Street in the Judicial Building parking lot. The farmers market in 2010 had 85 vendors and became a hotspot on Saturday mornings. "Farmer's markets are thriving throughout the U.S. and other countries, providing quality produce fresh from the field, preserving local farms, revitalizing downtown areas and creating a social opportunity for city and country folks to come

together" (About Us). The Market is open on Saturday mornings from 7:00 AM to noon and is in session from mid-April to mid-November.



Figure 6-3 Farmers Market

Price to rent or buy buildings

According to the Downtown Topeka Redevelopment Plan, the downtown is about one square mile and has a total of 806,000 square feet of commercial space with 131,000 square feet of vacancies. Lease arrangements vary from \$4.00 per square foot to \$17.00 per square foot (Downtown Topeka Inc). This makes the downtown area affordable to both rent and buy space for businesses.

Special Events

Topeka has some successful events in the downtown area. Most of these events include a parade such as St. Patrick's Day parade, Mexican Fiesta Celebration and Nighttime Lighted Parade, Labor Day Parade, and Miracle on Kansas Avenue. Other events are sales and parties such as Hullabaloo Sidewalk Sale and Party, Mexican Independence Day Celebration. There is also the classic car show which is a park and walk type event called 99.3 the Eagle Downtown Classic Cruise Night. Successes of these events can be measured by the number of participations. In 2009 the St. Patrick's Day parade brought over 40,000

people to the downtown area (Downtown Topeka Inc.). Special events such as these encourage people to visit the downtown area.



Figure 6-4 Christmas Parade

Weaknesses

Lack of entertainment and dining service

The downtown should be an area which provides a range of entertainment and dining establishments. This is currently not the case in downtown Topeka. What entertainment and dining services exist are sporadically placed throughout the downtown area. The separation of restaurants and entertainment make the downtown less attractive for visitors and as a result, the area appears to be less active. In addition, many of the hours for dining are in conjunction with the 9:00 to 5:00, Monday through Friday work group.

Under-utilized space

While the downtown is making strides to utilize the upper floors of buildings, vacant upper levels are still an issue. An area like Kansas Avenue needs to have the building as a whole used rather than using the upper floor as just storage. In addition, there is a lack of

rentable downtown living spaces which could be addressed by redeveloping these upper floors for apartments for downtown living.



Figure 6-5 Building with only first floor usage

Downturn in Economic Times

Funding is always an issue, even in good economic times. However, the City of Topeka was hit hard by the latest recession. Topeka was forced to lay off workers and still provide the same level of service to the general public. "In 2009, more than 179,000 Kansans received unemployment insurance benefits, a 76 percent increase from the previous year" (Rothschild, S). These financial cutbacks have taken a toll on downtown redevelopment programs. An example of this is the Downtown Topeka Inc. grant program which recently had its program grant money cut from \$100,000.00 to \$75,000.00 for the next fiscal year (Downtown Topeka Inc).

Infrastructure

The downtown area has issues with the infrastructure. The extent of repair that will need to take place is yet to be determined. Currently the city is attempting to gather funding to conduct a study of the infrastructure. “We know that the water is inadequate in at least two blocks. It's completely non-existent in the 800 block and they have to truck in water for landscaping. The electrical conduits are completely crushed, to the point where we don't have the capability to light flags in the medians, or hang up lights in the trees at Christmas time” (Laurel Leamon, Downtown Topeka, Inc.). In addition, the downtown area may have underground vaults, remnants of trolley tracks in the road, and inadequate drainage.

Inactivity after 5:00pm

The downtown area has difficulty keeping area employees that are here during the day to stay after work. As a result the streets are empty after 5:00. This is changing in some areas: the Boscors, the Breakroom, Celtic Fox, and The Office manage to retain some workers. However, that is only a small fraction compared to the number of individuals that work in this area during the day.

Stigma attached to Downtown

There is a cultural belief tied to the downtown area: it is dirty, there is no parking, high crime, it is dangerous, and there is nothing to do. These are just some of the responses heard at the Capital District Charente Project conducted in October 2010. Deserved or not, these ideas of what downtown Topeka is have stuck. In addition Topeka as a whole has a nationwide stigma. Topeka is known for two negative stigmas, the first is Brown v. Board of Education and the second is The Phelps family which runs the Westboro Baptist Church. In the matter of Brown v.

Board of Education, Topeka has taken the initiative in recognizing the importance of the 1954 civil rights case by making one of the buildings a National Historic Site in Kansas. While the case is a product of the time, the name Topeka is indirectly associated with segregation. The second is the Westboro Baptist Church which frequently pickets events such as military funerals, gay pride gatherings, high profile political programs and other events. This family has gained national recognition most recently by the Supreme Court case of Snyder v. Phelps (Cohen, A).



Figure 6-6 Westboro Baptist Church demonstration

Lack of Property Taxes on State and City Buildings

State, city, and county operations, public schools and churches do not pay property taxes on their buildings. "Any tax exempt entity, whether governmental, religious, or 501(c)(3) non-profit, doesn't pay into the BID [Business Improvement District] fund, as it is considered a tax assessment. So that means that city owned buildings, churches, state owned

buildings, and non-profits like “Let’s Help” don’t pay into the fund, but get services just like anyone else who does pay into it. The same goes for vacant buildings. If the building isn’t occupied, the landowner doesn’t have to pay the BID assessment. The services are still provided, but are paid for out of the general fund” (L. Leamon, personal communication, 2010). As a result, there is substantially less revenue returning to the city for the bulk of the buildings located in the downtown area.

Opportunities

Building on Specialty Shops

Topeka should try to introduce specialty shops that sell their goods and services to the downtown area and also outside of the downtown area. Hazel Hill is a good example of a specialty shop that does not rely solely on foot traffic to support their business. This could be due to the nature of their business. They provide chocolate for weddings, dinners, and other events in addition to having a store front that sells to people walking on Kansas Avenue. Topeka should recognize and build on this concept.

Jayhawk Theater

The Jayhawk Theater is a missed opportunity in downtown Topeka. "The Jayhawk Theater is a historic, cave-like structure encapsulated in a space between the Jayhawk Tower and the Modern-day Upstage Gallery in downtown Topeka" (Sewell 16). Renovation of this type of building has proven to be an asset to downtown redevelopment efforts. Topeka should use Liberty Hall in Lawrence as a model for what the Jayhawk Theater could be. Liberty Hall is used for rental space, events, and independent movies. "The big change occurred when Liberty Hall was renovated in 1980. Now, when you visit Liberty Hall, you

can see great things such as concerts, movies, plays, operas, and even movie rentals. Liberty Hall is a very unique building that helps distinguish downtown Lawrence from any other average town" (Ogunnowo, M). This gives the space as much exposure to the public as possible and enables multiple uses for the venue as well. The redevelopment of theaters or opera houses in downtown areas has proven to help bring redevelopment in to the downtown (Hefler, J.). Currently the building is owned by Historic Jayhawk Theatre Inc. which is a nonprofit organization. The renovation cost is approximately \$5.5 million. This estimate was given prior to work that has taken place in surrounding buildings. Since this time, the theater's foundation and structural integrity has come into question, so these estimates are likely to change.



Figure 6-7 Jayhawk Theater

State Capital

The Kansas State Capitol attracts an average of 50,000 visitors annually. In 2004 the Topeka Convention and Visitors Bureau claimed that Topeka has a solid tourism economy.

The study indicated that the state capital building is a key to the future development of Topeka tourism opportunities. In addition to the Capital Building, there is also the Topeka Performing Arts Center (TPAC) and the Charles Curtis House located in the downtown area. Adjacent attractions include the Brown v. Board of Education historic site, the Kansas History Museum, and the Kansas Expo Centre.

Expanding on Special Events

Currently there is a St. Patrick's Day parade, 99.3 the Eagle Downtown Classic Cruise Night, Mexican Fiesta Celebration and Nighttime Lighted Parade. This has also expanded to include events such as Hullabaloo Sidewalk Sale and Party, Labor Day Parade, Mexican Independence Day Celebration, and Miracle on Kansas Avenue. All are special events that bring individuals into the downtown area. If the community continues to expand on these downtown events, it could expose more individuals to the downtown area.



Figure 6-8 Christmas Parade

Green Building

A combination of deteriorating infrastructure and budget cuts has caused the city to stop the use of streetscape lighting on and around Kansas Avenue. If the current lighting were replaced with solar lighting or environmentally friendly lighting, this could reduce operating and maintenance costs for the City of Topeka. In addition, rain runoff is an issue in the area. Currently there is an organization called Green Topeka that is attempting to move the community toward green alternatives for addressing runoff issues. "The City provides sewage treatment and flood prevention for the community and seeks to improve surface and ground water quality by filtering stormwater runoff through native plant systems" (Green Topeka -moving towards a greener community). Examples of the work can be seen along Jackson Street where a retrofit project focused on minimizing flooding impacts on Jackson Street from 8th to 4th. The project removed a lane of traffic and parking on one side of the street to accommodate an improved storm sewer system. Native grasses and shrubs were planted in drainage swales to filter toxins from runoff water before entering the sewer and discharged into the Kansas River.



Jackson Street before

Jackson Street After



Figure 6-9

Washburn Law University

Washburn University is a municipal college which means that it is a city supported institution. Currently, the Law department is in need of an expansion. Originally located in downtown when it was established in 1903, the school has since been relocated to the main Washburn campus. “The College rented facilities for the Law School at 118 west Eighth Street. Washburn College had roots downtown, having opened in 1865 as Lincoln College at the corner of Tenth and Jackson and only later moving to its current home” (Concannon p.6). The current building is 87,000 square feet, which includes multiple additions over the years. The Washburn law department is structured into three levels of students with each level comprised of 150 students for a total of 450 students. One of the current issues is that there is not a classroom in the existing building that can accommodate 150 students at one time. Downtown Topeka could be a possible location for relocating the law department. Its successes could point to why the law school was established in the first place. Relocating the Washburn Law department back to the downtown area could bring the department back to its roots and give the students greater access to the downtown law amenities.

There are three options for where the law department could be located. The first and most ideal would be close to the Capital building. Currently Assumption Elementary School is up for sale. The building is located at 735 Jackson Street and sits just northeast of the Capital building. The challenge with this building is that major renovations would be necessary and a parking structure would also be required.

Another possibility is a property located at 800 SW Jackson Street. This location sits across the street from the original law building location where Washburn was started. The property is currently being used as office space and while it isn't for sale, it also isn't attached to any particular company. Appraised by the Shawnee County appraiser office this 16 story commercial building has a total value of \$ 5,134,700. In addition to the abundance of space, the property also has a parking garage. The lower floor, which is now sitting vacant, would be a good area for a cafeteria which could serve both the law students and provide an additional option for employees of the downtown area.

A third option for location of Washburn University Law building is to build a new structure. A property located at 11th and Kansas Avenue would be ideal for this. The site is situated just two blocks east of the judicial building and could be an asset to both the law students and downtown. This area was leveled by the 1966 tornado and has not been rebuilt. Several plans for development have been suggested for this area including the Watertower Place but nothing has materialized leaving this area vacant now for almost 50 years.

Moving the law department to downtown Topeka would be beneficial to both the law students and the downtown area. It would give the law students access and exposure to the capital, governmental proceedings, and the judicial center. For the downtown, it brings in a younger new group that may be willing to invest and stay in the downtown after graduating. This move would be a win-win for Washburn University, the students, and the downtown.

Focus on History of Downtown

The downtown has a number of historical buildings including the Charles Curtis House and Constitution Hall. These buildings and the rich history of Topeka's past could become a focal point for the downtown area. This could be conveyed by having the

downtown tell a story about the city and its growth. This could also be done by placing historical information and maps of the downtown area on kiosks in the downtown or by installing some type of signage on the sides of buildings to further identify these prominent landmarks.

Bicycle and walking paths

Topeka is currently working on a bicycle plan for the city. If the downtown could visibly tie into the established and expanding pedestrian infrastructure, this could help promote the downtown area. The key to this is to make the bicycle paths visible and safe. This would promote the usage of these trails and could decrease car traffic with an alternative mode of transportation. The increased use of these paths could also initiate more recreational use and bring more people into the downtown area. Currently the city has installed bike racks in the downtown; however these bike racks are designed to be functional art but could be mistaken for just art and thus be underused. Individual buildings have also provided bike racks, such as Ike's Bikes that sit outside of the KDOT Eisenhower building. The City of Topeka also has Shunga Trail, which is a paved recreational trail for walking, jogging, skating, and biking. The trail runs from the northeast corner of Topeka to the southwest corner.

Cost of living

Topeka has a median family income of \$50,163, which is comparable to the median family income from the rest of the United States (MONEY Magazine). However, with the median home price in Topeka at \$95,000 (MONEY Magazine), housing costs much less than the country's median home price of \$246,500 (Median and Average Sales Prices of New Homes Sold in United States). This is a key reason that Topeka has such a low cost of living.

“Compared to the rest of the country, Topeka's cost of living is 25% Lower than the U.S. average” (Best Places to Live in Topeka, Kansas). This can be one of the drawing factors to living in Topeka – families have an opportunity to own a home.

Re alignment of I-70

Currently, the Kansas Department of Transportation and City of Topeka are conducting a study of the I-70 Topeka, Polk-Quincy Viaduct. Money is allotted to make plans for realignment of the highway, but funding is not yet secured for construction. Topeka could use this as an opportunity to enhance the access and beauty of the city. The key to making this realignment work for downtown Topeka is signage. If the city can create good signing for the downtown area it could do wonders for entertainment and tourism in the area.

Threats

Public Perception

Attending Heartland Visioning meetings, citizens commented over and over again that there is a severe lack of activities in downtown Topeka. "Topeka has made some good decisions with bad results" (Anonymous). This is still the attitude of many people despite special events like parades, businesses, the farmer's market and the state capital building that are located in the downtown area.

Homelessness, mental health issues in area

Substance abuse and mental illness tend to be the primary causes of homelessness. When social services were cut back and the state mental hospital closed, the impact became evident in downtown Topeka. In addition to the location of “Lets Help” and other shelters in

the area, this has become a visible issue within the downtown. Having homeless shelters centrally located in the downtown area has both its advantages and disadvantages. Having the shelters in the downtown area allow the clients easy access to services including Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) and Let's Help Inc. With the services downtown the clients also have easy access to the bus systems, both Topeka Transit and Greyhound. The disadvantages include having some of the homeless clients loitering around local businesses as well as aggressive panhandling people in the downtown area. Many of the homeless clients are also dual-diagnosed with both mental illnesses and substance abuse which can lead to crimes against people and businesses in the downtown area" (Anonymous, personal communication, 2010).

Change of elected officials

The Topeka City Council changes seats every four years. This can cause decisions made by the previous council to be overturned or funding to be reallocated to a new project placing previous projects on hold. This can be an issue when some of the plans for downtown Topeka have a 30 year development timeline.

Funding Being Cut

Right now funding is being cut across the board – a trend that is happening across the nation. An example is Downtown Topeka Inc. which needed a grant budget of \$100,000 but suffered a 25 percent pay cut. Lack of funding for projects like this is hurting the City of Topeka as a whole.

Other Topeka Developments

In addition to having the Wanamaker corridor, Topeka is also attempting to bring to life a new redevelopment in the Washburn University district. Unfortunately, the new

development has remained more or less vacant since it was built. The lower floors of many of these buildings are designed for businesses which have not been filled. In an attempt to fill these buildings the developer began soliciting some of the established businesses in downtown. The upper apartments are now being considered as low rent apartments. In addition competing businesses in other locations have the potential to kill projects in the downtown area. If the area is going to be established as an entertainment district, it will need to compete with the area at Huntoon and Gage which is an entertainment area located in Topeka, or even Main Street in Lawrence. While Whitelakes Mall was once a shopping district, the word mall has been dropped and the space is now being used for offices.

Lack of Agreement

Heartland Vision, Downtown Topeka Inc, Fast Forward Topeka, Capital District Charente Project, Green Topeka, Chamber of Commerce and the City of Topeka are just some of the groups that are involved in some capacity with downtown. Then add into the mix the Kansas Department of Transportation with the redevelopment of I-70 and housing groups like HUD. While HUD may not give grant money every year to the downtown, there is still the potential. This brings a lot of players to the table with many different ideas and directions for the downtown. Some of these issues could be solved by better communication, better understanding of each group or committee, or consolidation of these groups. Also if some of the funds could be pooled, there is potential for budget challenges to be eased.

A case of missing identity

Manhattan has the Little Apple, Greensburg has the Green City, and Wamego has the Wizard of Oz. The City of Topeka needs to embrace and build upon the core brand. If anything Topeka should use the fact that it is a capital city, and should use this as a

foundation to build upon. Topeka should expand this into a new way of thinking, such as requiring new building standards, such as LEED certified and becoming the Green Capital. This could help attract companies like Google, which Topeka has been running a yearlong campaign to bring into the city. Not only could it help attract companies, it also provides the city a theme which gives the city and its citizens a sense of identity.

Another way to help give Topeka a sense of identity is to start recognizing the past. This should be done by adding historical signs to every block giving a bit of history on the city; after all, Topeka is a town rich in history.

Realignment of I-70

There are threats regarding the downtown realignment of I-70. City officials and downtown business owners have become so focused on the closing of ramps on the I-70 realignment that they neglected to negotiate any opportunity that could enhance the downtown area from the implication of this project. This project could negotiate better signing for the downtown area, beautification, and a more functional layout for the highway. The realignment of I-70 could play a key role in the downtown and warrants more information about the realignment; as was addressed in detail in Chapter 4.

Conclusion

While downtown Topeka does have flaws, it has a promising foundation to build upon. The building structures are present and there is growing community involvement. Downtown redevelopment is a distinct possibility for the future that could drastically improve the marketability of the area. The key to the success is to acknowledge the weaknesses and threats of the area and make them potential opportunities and strengths.

Chapter 7 - Conclusion

In conclusion the City of Topeka has a rich history and great building structure. While the city has great building structures and support from the citizens it still has some challenges before making this a high functioning downtown area. The key to any downtown project's success is to acknowledge the weaknesses and threats of the area and make them potential opportunities and strengths.



Figure 7-1

The majority of buildings in the downtown study area, especially in the commercial district are in standard or excellent condition. However the handful of dilapidated or distressed buildings in the commercial district is very visible to the public and may be problematic for the downtown area. Also, encouraging buildings with the same zoning in the same area would help promote more business in the downtown area. It is important to give the people that work in downtown a reason to stay downtown, by continuing the grant program that encourages business growth on Kansas Avenue, and redevelopment opportunities like the Jayhawk Theater. Also, it may give people a reason to go downtown and even live downtown, by moving things like Washburn Law back to the downtown area. The city needs to recognize these issues and find a

way to either redevelop these areas or offer incentive programs to help restore them to their former glory.

The downtown also has concerns with the existing infrastructure. Currently there are inadequate water services, electrical conduits, underground vaults, remnants of trolley tracks in the road, and drainage problems. Replacing these problem areas with green infrastructure could potentially help save the city money in the long run and give the city a new sense of identity. In addition, Topeka should take advantage of its rich past by placing historical signs to high pedestrian traffic areas.

Topeka should think about reducing some of the road in the downtown area from four lanes to three lanes. This will create more room for sidewalks and bicycle routes. "Basically a road diet is switching a road from four lanes to two, with a center turn lane. Engineers and planners alike have found that in high turn environments three-lane roads can carry as many motor vehicles as a four-lane road- with greater safety and efficiency for all modes of transportation" (Road Diet FAQ). The current Capital District Project is doing just this, only the project calls for reducing some of the streets to two lanes with center street parking. Making sidewalks wider for cafe areas and extra walking space along streets such as 8th Street would allow the businesses to expand the outdoor seating area, which is currently limited. However, center street parking has been tried in the past and failed. The project also is centering on the redevelopment of Kansas Avenue while it should be looking at roads that intersect with Kansas Avenue such as 10th Street, 8th Street and others.

In addition to these current projects, the Kansas Department of Transportation and City of Topeka are conducting a study of the I-70 corridor in the downtown Topeka area, called the Polk-Quincy Viaduct. Topeka could use this as an opportunity to enhance the accessibility and

beauty of the city. This could also be tied into the Capital District Project as a way of enhancing the entrance into the city.

Engineers prefer the first alternative which may be selected for the redesign of the I-70 Topeka, Polk-Quincy Viaduct to include an above-grade viaduct. This design places a frontage road along I-70 from Topeka Boulevard to 10th Avenue, with one major exit and entrance to the downtown area. The key to making this work is going to be signing and tying this into existing projects such as the Capital City District Project. The City should use this realignment to re-introduce drivers to the city. These entrances could become what Lynch would define as nodes or gateways which help shape and define the downtown area.

While downtown Topeka does have flaws, it has a promising foundation to build upon. The building structures are present and there is a growing community involvement. Downtown redevelopment is a distinct possibility for the future that could drastically improve the marketability of the area. “ Topeka has a lot of selling points — low cost of living, relatively low unemployment, fine health care facilities and great educational opportunities, to name some” (Editorial: Crime numbers frustrating). The key to the success is to acknowledge the weaknesses and threats of the area and make them potential opportunities and strengths.

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Appendix A - Building Survey Data

Figure

	Overall	Condition	Vacancy
512 SW HARRISON ST	5	1	0
214 SW 4TH ST	5	1	0
230 SW TOPEKA BLVD	5	1	0
327 SW JACKSON ST	5	1	0
1122 SW JACKSON ST	5.75	4	2
218 SW TOPEKA BLVD	6	1.5	0.5
112 SW 4TH ST	6	1	1
116 SE 7TH ST	6.333333	1.666667	0.666667
318 SW VAN BUREN ST	7	1	0
216 SW TOPEKA BLVD	7	1	2
815 S KANSAS AVE	7.5	1	0.5
216 SW HARRISON ST	7.5	2	0.5
328 SW VAN BUREN ST	8	1.5	0.5
311 S KANSAS AVE	8	2	1
118 SE 7TH ST	8.333333	1.666667	0.666667
316 SW 3RD ST	8.833333	1.333333	1.5
316 SW HARRISON ST	9	2	1
205 SW HARRISON ST	9	2	1
1113 SE MONROE ST	9	2	2
227 SW HARRISON ST	9	2	2
133 SW VAN BUREN ST	9	2	2
221 SW HARRISON ST	9.5	2.5	1
928 S KANSAS AVE	10	1	0.5
112 SE 7TH ST	10	1.333333	0.666667
930 S KANSAS AVE	10	2	1
926 S KANSAS AVE	10	2	1
934 S KANSAS AVE	10	2	1
924 S KANSAS AVE	10	2	2
320 SW 3RD ST	10	2	2
329 SW HARRISON ST	10.5	2.5	1
214 SW TOPEKA BLVD	10.5	3	1.5
1124 SE QUINCY ST	11	2	1
223 SW HARRISON ST	11	2	2
124 SW HARRISON ST	11	2	2
119 SW HARRISON ST	11	2	2
314 SW HARRISON ST	11	2	2
413 SW 3RD ST	11	2	2
423 S KANSAS AVE	11.5	2	0.5

411 SW 3RD ST	11.5	2	1.5
116 S KANSAS AVE	11.5	2	1.5
330 SW VAN BUREN ST	12	2.5	1.5
306 SW HARRISON ST	12	2	2
124 SW 4TH ST	12	3	2
222 SW HARRISON ST	12.33333	2.333333	2
729 S KANSAS AVE	12.5	1.5	1
425 S KANSAS AVE	12.5	2.5	1
429 S KANSAS AVE	12.5	2.5	1
622 SW VAN BUREN ST	12.5	2	1.5
410 SW 6TH AVE	13	2	2
400 S KANSAS AVE	13	3	2
500 SW TOPEKA BLVD	13	2	2
410 SW TOPEKA BLVD	13	2	2
321 SW HARRISON ST	13	2	2
219 SW HARRISON ST	13	2	2
201 SW HARRISON ST	13	2	2
124 SW VAN BUREN ST	13	3	2
112 SW HARRISON ST	13	3	2
506 SW TOPEKA BLVD	13	2	2
312 SW TOPEKA BLVD	13	2	2
312 SW 3RD ST	13	2	2
127 S KANSAS AVE	13	2	2
213 SW HARRISON ST	13	2	2
211 SW HARRISON ST	13	2	2
106 SE 8TH AVE	13.33333	2.666667	1.666667
209 SW 6TH AVE	13.5	2.5	1
210 SW HARRISON ST	13.5	2.5	1
524 SW TOPEKA BLVD	13.5	2.5	2
409 SW 3RD ST	13.5	2.5	2
212 SW HARRISON ST	13.5	2.5	2
933 S KANSAS AVE	14	2.5	1.5
215 SE 11TH ST	14	3	2
605 S KANSAS AVE	14	3.666667	2
232 SW HARRISON ST	14	2	2
226 SW HARRISON ST	14	3	2
201 S KANSAS AVE	14.33333	2.666667	0.666667
225 SW HARRISON ST	14.33333	2.333333	2
822 S KANSAS AVE	14.5	3	1.5
216 SW 7TH ST	14.5	3	1.5
410 SW JACKSON ST	14.5	3	1.5
318 SW TOPEKA BLVD	14.5	2.5	2
214 SW HARRISON ST	14.5	2.5	2
727 S KANSAS AVE	15	2	1
101 SE MONROE ST	15	4	1
200 SW JACKSON ST	15	3	1
516 SW TOPEKA BLVD	15	3	2
300 SW HARRISON ST	15	3	2
127 SW VAN BUREN ST	15	3	2
906 S KANSAS AVE	15.15	3.5	1

730 S KANSAS AVE	15.5	3	1.5
214 SE 9TH ST	15.5	3.5	2
222 SE 9TH ST	15.5	3.5	2
218 SE 9TH ST	15.5	3.5	2
522 SW TOPEKA BLVD	15.5	2.5	2
715 SW HARRISON ST	16	3	1
623 S KANSAS AVE	16	2	1
920 S KANSAS AVE	16	3	2
1000 SE QUINCY ST	16	4	2
400 SW TOPEKA BLVD	16	3	2
308 SW TOPEKA BLVD	16	3	2
221 SW VAN BUREN ST	16	3	2
629 SE QUINCY ST	16	4	2
235 SW HARRISON ST	16	3	2
820 S KANSAS AVE	16.5	3	1.5
234 SW TOPEKA BLVD	16.5	2.5	2
200 SW HARRISON ST	16.5	2.5	2
414 SW TOPEKA BLVD	16.5	3.5	2
334 SW HARRISON ST	16.5	2.5	2
912 S KANSAS AVE	16.67	3.67	2
333 S KANSAS AVE	17	3	1
111 SE 7TH ST	17	3	2
707 SE QUINCY ST	17	3	2
212 SW 7TH ST	17	3	2
422 SW 6TH AVE	17	3	2
509 SW VAN BUREN ST	17	4	2
500 SW HARRISON ST	17	3	2
501 SW HARRISON ST	17	3	2
228 SW HARRISON ST	17	3	2
308 SW 2ND ST	17	3	2
206 SW HARRISON ST	17	3	2
115 SE 7TH ST	17	3	2
635 SE QUINCY ST	17	4	2
302 SW TOPEKA BLVD	17	3	2
813 S KANSAS AVE	17.5	3.5	1
119 SE 6TH AVE	17.5	3.5	1
724 S KANSAS AVE	17.5	3	1.5
211 SW 6TH AVE	17.5	3	1.5
115 SW HARRISON ST	17.5	3.5	2
627 S KANSAS AVE	17.83333	3.333333	0.5
235 S KANSAS AVE	18	4	1
909 SE QUINCY ST	18	3.5	1.5
809 S KANSAS AVE	18	3.5	1.5
614 SW VAN BUREN ST	18	3.5	1.5
720 S KANSAS AVE	18	3.333333	1.666667
117 SE 10TH AVE	18	4	2
120 SE 10TH AVE	18	4	2
115 SE 10TH AVE	18	3	2
325 S KANSAS AVE	18	4	2
323 SW JACKSON ST	18	3	2

309 S KANSAS AVE	18	4	2
230 SW HARRISON ST	18	3	2
213 SW JACKSON ST	18	4	2
121 S KANSAS AVE	18	4	2
209 SW HARRISON ST	18	3	2
103 SW VAN BUREN ST	18	4	2
107 SW 6TH AVE	18	3	2
208 SW HARRISON ST	18	4	2
313 SW 2ND ST	18	3	2
323 S KANSAS AVE	18	3	2
709 S KANSAS AVE			
#0404	18.25	4.5	1.75
207 SW VAN BUREN ST	18.33333	3.333333	2
913 S KANSAS AVE	18.5	3.5	1
728 S KANSAS AVE	18.5	4	1.5
632 S KANSAS AVE	18.5	4	1.5
921 S KANSAS AVE	18.5	3.5	2
812 SW JACKSON ST	18.5	3.5	2
413 SW 4TH ST	18.5	3.5	2
100 S KANSAS AVE	18.5	3.5	2
117 SW 6TH AVE	18.66667	4	1.666667
300 SW 6TH AVE	19	3	1
927 S KANSAS AVE	19	3.5	1.5
408 SW JACKSON ST	19	3.5	1.5
1101 S KANSAS AVE	19	4	2
1034 S KANSAS AVE	19	3	2
116 SE 8TH AVE	19	3	2
630 S KANSAS AVE	19	3	2
600 SE QUINCY ST	19	4	2
607 S KANSAS AVE	19	4	2
929 S KANSAS AVE	19	4	2
733 S KANSAS AVE	19	5	2
309 SW JACKSON ST	19	4	2
225 SW JACKSON ST	19	4	2
119 S KANSAS AVE	19	4	2
205 SW VAN BUREN ST	19	4	2
115 SW JACKSON ST	19	4	2
700 S KANSAS AVE	19	4	2
332 SW TOPEKA BLVD	19	4	2
722 S KANSAS AVE	19.5	4	1.5
324 SW VAN BUREN ST	19.5	3.5	2
302 SW HARRISON ST	19.5	3.5	2
217 SE 4TH ST	19.66667	0	0
716 SW JACKSON ST #3	19.66667	3.666667	2
608 SW JACKSON ST	19.66667	3.666667	2
130 SW HARRISON ST	19.66667	3.666667	2
700 SW JACKSON ST	19.83333	3.833333	2
1035 SE QUINCY ST	20	4	2
633 S KANSAS AVE	20	4	2
635 S KANSAS AVE	20	4	2

310 SW 6TH AVE	20	4	2
304 SW VAN BUREN ST	20	4	2
317 SW HARRISON ST	20	4	2
307 SW HARRISON ST	20	4	2
209 SW VAN BUREN ST	20	4	2
135 SW VAN BUREN ST	20	4	2
206 SW TOPEKA BLVD	20	4	2
128 SW HARRISON ST	20	4	2
127 SW HARRISON ST	20	4	2
125 SW HARRISON ST	20	4	2
434 SW JACKSON ST	20	4	2
434 SW TOPEKA BLVD	20	4	2
225 SW VAN BUREN ST	20	3	2
128 SW VAN BUREN ST	20	5	2
303 S KANSAS AVE	20.25	3.25	2
718 S KANSAS AVE	20.33333	4	1.333333
925 S KANSAS AVE	20.5	4	1.5
307 S KANSAS AVE	20.5	4	1.5
726 S KANSAS AVE	20.5	4.5	2
335 SW JACKSON ST	20.5	3.5	2
315 SW HARRISON ST	20.5	3.5	2
315 SW 4TH ST	20.66667	3.666667	2
915 S KANSAS AVE	21	4	1
805 S KANSAS AVE	21	4	1
401 SW HARRISON ST	21	4	1
115 SE 6TH AVE	21	5	1
1017 SE QUINCY ST	21	4	2
931 S KANSAS AVE	21	4	2
735 S KANSAS AVE	21	4	2
731 S KANSAS AVE	21	5	2
811 S KANSAS AVE	21	4	2
300 SW 8TH AVE	21	5	2
705 S KANSAS AVE	21	4	2
213 SW 6TH AVE	21	4	2
431 S KANSAS AVE	21	4	2
305 SW 5TH ST	21	4	2
412 SW 5TH ST	21	4	2
319 SW HARRISON ST	21	4	2
200 S KANSAS AVE	21	4	2
S KANSAS AVE	21	4	2
S KANSAS AVE	21	4	2
122 SW 2ND ST	21	4	2
300 SW JACKSON ST	21	4	2
716 S KANSAS AVE	21.33333	4.333333	2
123 SE 10TH AVE	21.5	4	1.5
734 S KANSAS AVE	21.5	5	1.5
114 SW 8TH AVE	21.5	5	1.5
317 SW JACKSON ST	22	0	0
800 SW JACKSON ST	22	4.17	1.83
1020 S KANSAS AVE	22	4	2

919 S KANSAS AVE	22	4	2
823 SE QUINCY ST	22	4	2
114 SE 8TH AVE	22	4	2
714 SW JACKSON ST	22	5	2
717 S KANSAS AVE	22	5	2
700 SW TOPEKA BLVD	22	4	2
117 SE 6TH AVE	22	4	2
611 S KANSAS AVE	22	4	2
435 S KANSAS AVE	22	4	2
400 SE QUINCY ST	22	4	2
313 SW JACKSON ST	22	5	2
333 SW HARRISON ST	22	4	2
234 S KANSAS AVE	22	4	2
215 SE QUINCY ST	22	4	2
200 SE 2ND ST	22	4	2
101 S KANSAS AVE	22	4	2
433 SW HARRISON ST	22	4	2
213 SW VAN BUREN ST	22	4	2
129 SE QUINCY ST	22	4	2
911 S KANSAS AVE	22.25	3.5	1.75
712 S KANSAS AVE	22.25	4.25	2
600 S KANSAS AVE	22.5	4.5	2
515 S KANSAS AVE	22.75	4.75	2
517 SW VAN BUREN ST	23	0	0
521 SW VAN BUREN ST	23	0	0
800 SE QUINCY ST	23	4	2
701 S KANSAS AVE	23	5	2
523 SW VAN BUREN ST	23	4	2
421 SW VAN BUREN ST	23	5	2
308 SW VAN BUREN ST	23	5	2
309 SW HARRISON ST	23	4	2
135 SW JACKSON ST	23	5	2
200 SE 6TH AVE	23	5	2
318 SW HARRISON ST	23.33333	4.333333	2
618 S KANSAS AVE	23.5	5	1.5
612 S KANSAS AVE	23.5	5	1.5
212 SW 8TH AVE	23.5	4.5	2
920 SE QUINCY ST	24	5	2
800 S KANSAS AVE	24	5	2
112 SE 8TH AVE	24	5	2
818 S KANSAS AVE	24	5	2
204 SW 8TH AVE	24	5	2
719 SW VAN BUREN ST	24	5	2
600 SW VAN BUREN ST	24	4	2
120 SW 6TH AVE	24	5	2
601 S KANSAS AVE	24	5	2
320 SW TOPEKA BLVD	24	5	2
227 SW VAN BUREN ST	24	5	2
129 SW JACKSON ST	24	5	2
108 S KANSAS AVE	24	5	2

400 SW 8TH AVE	25	0	0
123 SE 6TH AVE	25	4.5	1.5
825 S KANSAS AVE	25	5	2
120 SW 8TH AVE	25	5	2
817 SW HARRISON ST	25	5	2
320 SW 8TH AVE	25	5	2
220 SW 7TH ST	25	5	2
600 SW TOPEKA BLVD	25	5	2
114 SW 6TH AVE	25	5	2
830 S KANSAS AVE	25	5	2
401 SW JACKSON ST	25	5	2
335 SW HARRISON ST	25	5	2
118 SW 8TH AVE	25	5	2
220 SE 6TH AVE	25	5	2
114 SE QUINCY ST	25	5	2
900 S KANSAS AVE	25.23	5	1.25
220 SW 6TH AVE	25.66667	5	1.66667
555 S KANSAS AVE	26	5	2
200 SW 6TH AVE	26	5	2
509 SW JACKSON ST	26	5	2
513 SW VAN BUREN ST	27	0	0
1129 S KANSAS AVE	27	5	2
1100 S KANSAS AVE	27	5	2
534 S KANSAS AVE	27	5	2
515 SW VAN BUREN ST	27	5	2
820 SE QUINCY ST	27	5	2
501 SW JACKSON ST	27	5	2
728 SW TOPEKA BLVD	92	0	0
1104 SE QUINCY ST	92	0	0
1121 SE QUINCY ST	92	0	0
1039 SE QUINCY ST	92	0	0
1015 SE QUINCY ST	92	0	0
1100 SW TOPEKA BLVD	92	0	0
1000 SW TOPEKA BLVD	92	0	0
901 SE QUINCY ST	92	0	0
827 SE QUINCY ST	92	0	0
217 SE 8TH AVE	92	0	0
215 SE 8TH AVE	92	0	0
817 SE MONROE ST	92	0	0
SW VAN BUREN ST	92	0	0
619 SW JACKSON ST	92	0	0
615 SW JACKSON ST	92	0	0
201 SW 6TH AVE	92	0	0
215 SW 6TH AVE	92	0	0
110 SW 6TH AVE	92	0	0
SW VAN BUREN ST	92	0	0
523 SW JACKSON ST	92	0	0
525 SW VAN BUREN ST	92	0	0
519 SW JACKSON ST	92	0	0
516 SW HARRISON ST	92	0	0

831 SE QUINCY ST	92	0	0
500 SW JACKSON ST	92	0	0
315 SW 5TH ST	92	0	0
509 SW HARRISON ST	92	0	0
401 S KANSAS AVE	92	0	0
434 SW HARRISON ST	92	0	0
416 SW HARRISON ST	92	0	0
SW VAN BUREN ST	92	0	0
120 SE 8TH AVE	92	0	0
SW VAN BUREN ST	92	0	0
SW VAN BUREN ST	92	0	0
226 SW VAN BUREN ST	92	0	0
SW VAN BUREN ST	92	0	0
SW VAN BUREN ST	92	0	0
SW 8TH AVE	92	0	0
701 SW JACKSON ST	92	0	0
701 SW JACKSON ST	92	0	0
204 SW 5TH ST	92	0	0
408 SW HARRISON ST	92	0	0
316 SW VAN BUREN ST	92	0	0
312 SW VAN BUREN ST	92	0	0
220 SE QUINCY ST	92	0	0
100 SW VAN BUREN ST	92	0	0
200 SE 3RD ST	92	0	0
1126 SE QUINCY ST	93	0	0
1111 SE MONROE ST	93	0	0
1128 S KANSAS AVE	93	0	0
221 SE 11TH ST	93	0	0
1129 SE QUINCY ST	93	0	0
1020 SE QUINCY ST	93	0	0
1000 S KANSAS AVE	93	0	0
SE 12TH ST	93	0	0
635 SW HARRISON ST	93	0	0
508 SW HARRISON ST	93	0	0
518 SW TOPEKA BLVD	93	0	0
420 SW TOPEKA BLVD	93	0	0
424 SW TOPEKA BLVD	93	0	0
412 SW TOPEKA BLVD	93	0	0
412 SW 4TH ST	93	0	0
SW HARRISON ST	93	0	0
314 SW TOPEKA BLVD	93	0	0
412 SW 3RD ST	93	0	0
232 SW TOPEKA BLVD	93	0	0
SW TOPEKA BLVD	93	0	0
SW HARRISON ST	93	0	0
135 S KANSAS AVE	93	0	0
200 SW TOPEKA BLVD	93	0	0
131 S KANSAS AVE	93	0	0
129 SW VAN BUREN ST	93	0	0
SE QUINCY ST	93	0	0

100 SW JACKSON ST	93	0	0
109 SW VAN BUREN ST	93	0	0
SW HARRISON ST	93	0	0
121 SW HARRISON ST	93	0	0
523 SW HARRISON ST	93	0	0
422 SW HARRISON ST	93	0	0
SW TOPEKA BLVD	93	0	0
301 SW HARRISON ST	93	0	0
SW TOPEKA BLVD	93	0	0
133 S KANSAS AVE	93	0	0
129 S KANSAS AVE	93	0	0
SE QUINCY ST	93	0	0
126 SW HARRISON ST	93	0	0
215 SE 9TH ST	94	0	0
108 SW 8TH AVE	94	0	0
615 SE QUINCY ST	94	0	0
635 SW JACKSON ST	94	0	0
512 SW JACKSON ST	94	0	0
723 SE QUINCY ST	94	0	0
917 SE QUINCY ST	94	0	0
200 SW 12TH ST	9999	0	0
1100 SW HARRISON ST	9999	0	0
120 SW 10TH AVE	9999	0	0
901 S KANSAS AVE	9999	0	0
420 SW 9TH ST	9999	0	0
404 SW 9TH ST	9999	0	0
112 SW 7TH ST	9999	0	0
915 SW JACKSON ST	9999	0	0
215 SE 7TH ST	9999	0	0
122 SW 7TH ST	9999	0	0
700 SW HARRISON ST	9999	0	0
1000 SW JACKSON ST	9999	0	0
634 SW HARRISON ST	9999	0	0
503 S KANSAS AVE	9999	0	0
900 SW JACKSON ST	9999	0	0
417 SW JACKSON ST	9999	0	0
412 SW VAN BUREN ST	9999	0	0
400 SW VAN BUREN ST	9999	0	0
900 SW TOPEKA BLVD	9999	0	0
320 S KANSAS AVE	9999	0	0
335 SW VAN BUREN ST	9999	0	0
325 SW VAN BUREN ST	9999	0	0
200 SE 7TH ST	9999	0	0
444 SE QUINCY ST	9999	0	0
424 S KANSAS AVE	9999	0	0
500 SW VAN BUREN ST	9999	0	0
414 SW JACKSON ST	9999	0	0
412 SW JACKSON ST	9999	0	0