

# 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Facilitate redevelopment, reuse, and reinvestment at key locations within downtown that will stimulate private investment.
2. Encourage the development of vacant parcels and the reuse of vacant buildings in line with market demand.
3. Capitalize on existing downtown resources, including Kenwood Park, Oakdale Park, the Smoky Hill River channel, unique architecture, and the established cultural and arts community.
4. Support inclusive, stable, and diverse housing types throughout downtown that serve all generations and income-levels.
5. Revitalize the eastern residential neighborhood through targeted incentives and planning efforts.
6. Draft new development and design standards for the downtown core that realize the desired mixed use vision for the area.

## RECOMMENDATION STRATEGIES

### Consolidation of Properties

*Strategy to Address Recommendations 1, 2, 4, & 5*

The consolidation of properties will be a necessary component of many of the recommended development and redevelopment strategies. Establishing larger areas of developable or re-developable land will provide the added flexibility needed by private developers to develop profitable projects, whether residential or commercial in nature. The project and parcel size must meet the minimum size and area requirements of the zoning district in which the parcels are located. This strategy may be used in accordance with the STAR Bond development projects and site-specific redevelopment throughout the Plan area.

### STAR Bond and Other Planned Projects

*Strategy to Address Recommendations 1 & 2*

The STAR Bond projects, as outlined in ***Sales Tax Revenue Bond***, under ***D. Background, Section 1.0 Introduction***, will serve as vital catalyst sites for downtown’s resurgence. The projects are shown spatially in ***Figure 5.5 Existing & Recommended Attractions & Places of Significance***, as well as in ***Figure 5.6 Development & Redevelopment Opportunities***. The map tag **X** specifically references ***Figure 5.6 Development & Redevelopment Opportunities***; all development, redevelopment, and reuse projects are shown in this figure. The STAR Bond allows the City of Salina to issue bonds to finance the development of large commercial, tourism, and entertainment areas. The sales tax from the developments can be used to pay off the bonds. Tax Increment Financing is also likely to be used.

The STAR Bond projects will draw more Salinans and regional visitors to downtown. For example, the planned capital improvements to the Stiefel Theatre are designed to expand the type of performances the Theatre can host, effectively enlarging Salina’s regional cultural and arts market area. Each of the five projects is briefly outlined as follows:

#### Fieldhouse 1

A 75,000 square foot facility that will include indoor venues for basketball, volleyball, and batting cages.

#### Five-story Hotel 2

A 114-room all-suite hotel that will include meeting space and a restaurant.

#### Entertainment Center 3

A 47,000 square foot family entertainment center that will include a 32-lane bowling center, go-kart raceway, video arcade, billiard games, concessions, and Back Alley Sports Grill.

#### Stiefel Theatre Capital Improvements 4

Improvements to the Theatre include LED exterior signage, a sound system, lighting above the stage, stage house improvements, additional restrooms, service areas for food and beverage, and a small, intimate venue for live music performances.

#### America’s Crossroads Car Collection 5

A 31,000 square foot automotive-themed visitor experience that will display an impressive rotating collection of restored antique and vintage cars, as well as exhibits and programs illustrating automotive history, technology, pop culture, and design.

In addition to the STAR Bond projects, there are several other major redevelopment projects being planned that will positively impact the future of downtown. They include the following:

#### Historic Lee Buildings 6

Conversion of the buildings into an approximate 100-unit Low Income Housing apartment complex.

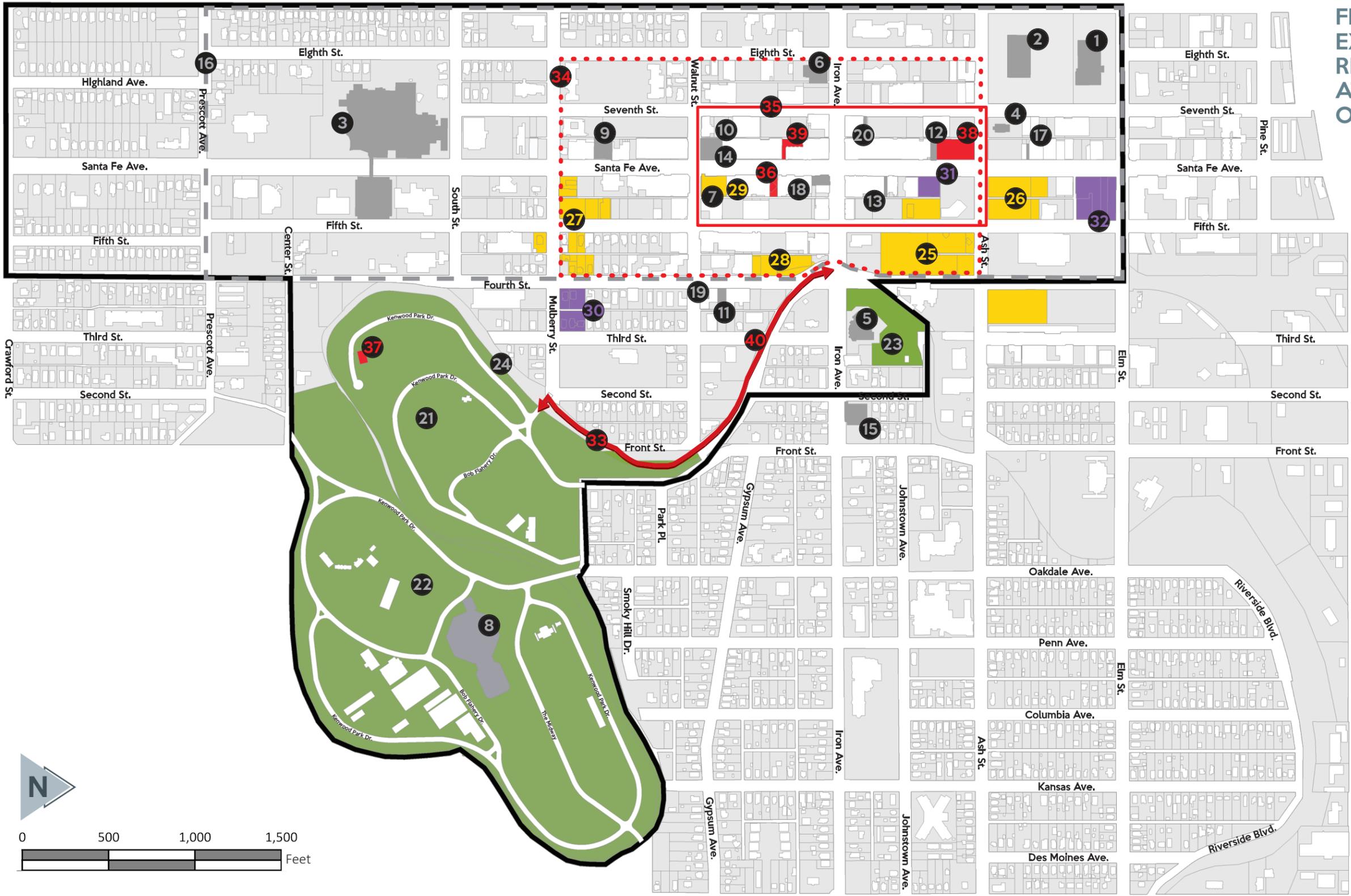
#### University of Kansas School of Medicine Building 7

Conversion of the building into a 40,251 squarefoot downtown campus, relocated from the Braddick Building.

#### Medical Student Apartments 8

A 36-unit apartment complex to the east of Salina Regional Health Center focused on housing for medical professionals.

This impressive group of projects provides a clear opportunity to capitalize on the excitement and foot traffic they will create by locating other beneficial redevelopment, development, and reuse sites (see ***Redevelopment Opportunities*** that follows) that will have a similar effect. More out-of-town visitors will generate demand for lodging, dining, shopping, and entertainment expenditures, all of which will benefit downtown businesses.



**FIG. 5.5**  
**EXISTING &**  
**RECOMMENDED**  
**ATTRACTIVE & PLACES**  
**OF SIGNIFICANCE**

- Public Institutions**
- 1 Salina Public Library
- 2 City Hall / Courthouse
- 3 Salina Regional Health Center
- 4 Salina Area Chamber of Commerce
  
- Arts and Culture**
- 5 Salina Community Theatre
- 6 Salina Arts and Humanities Commission / Smoky Hill Museum
- 7 Watson-Stiefel Theatre (undergoing renovations, see #29)
- 8 Bicentennial Center
- 9 Salina Art Center
- 10 Salina Art Center Cinema
- 11 Salina Art Center Warehouse
  
- Retail, Restaurants, and Entertainment**
- 12 Ad Astra Books and Coffee House
- 13 Blue Skye Brewery
- 14 Martinelli's Little Italy
- 15 Save-A-Lot Grocery
- 16 Downtown Core
- 17 Paramount Bar
- 18 The Market Shop Gifts & Home Accents
- 19 Prairieland Market
- 20 Cozy Inn
  
- Parks & Recreation**
- 21 Oakdale Park
- 22 Kenwood Park
- 23 Founders Park
- 24 Smoky Hill River Channel
  
- STAR Bond Projects**
- 25 Fieldhouse and Parking to Northeast and West
- 26 Entertainment Center
- 27 Hotel and Parking to the North, Southeast, and East
- 28 Automobile Museum
- 29 Watson-Stiefel Theatre Renovations
  
- Other Planned Projects**
- 30 Medical Student Apartments
- 31 University of Kansas School of Medicine Building
- 32 Historic Lee Buildings (High-Density Housing)
  
- Recommended Attractions**
- 33 Linear Park with Multi-use Trail Connector
- 34 Entertainment, Arts, & Dining Options
- 35 "Block Party" District for Festivals & Community Events
- 36 Outdoor Performance Stage & Interactive Fountain/Splash Pad
- 37 Performance Venue Renovations
- 38 Farmers' Market
- 39 Outdoor Dining Plaza
- 40 Riverfront Plaza & Overlook

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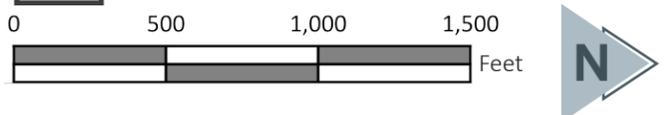
**FIG. 5.6  
DEVELOPMENT &  
REDEVELOPMENT  
OPPORTUNITIES**



This plan shows the varying types of downtown redevelopment, development, and reuse opportunity sites. Catalyst sites, because of their location or size, have a unique potential to energize downtown reinvestment. Other opportunities for redevelopment, land development, and building or site reuse are all identified.

**Map Legend**

- STAR Bond Project
- Other Planned Project
- Development Site
- Catalyst Redevelopment Site
- Additional Downtown Redevelopment Site
- Reuse Opportunity
- Proposed Parking (for STAR Bond Projects)





## Development Opportunities

### Strategy to Address Recommendations 2-4

As expected in a historical downtown such as Salina, vacant, undeveloped land is limited. **D. Land Use**, under **Section 2.0 Existing Conditions** notes only 2.7 percent of the total area within the Plan boundary is vacant. As a primary downtown revitalization strategy, the development of the following key parcels to serve downtown’s consumer-based niches will undoubtedly become increasingly attractive. Two major development opportunities exist within the Plan boundary and are outlined as follows.

#### Southeast Corner of Fifth Street and Center Street 9

This site has a strong development potential due to its proximity to Salina Regional Health Center and other medical offices, such as the Tammy Walker Cancer Center. Clustered development of medical uses is preferred by the City. As stated in **Section 3.0 Economic & Market Analysis Summary**, 16,000 square feet of medical office space is expected to be absorbed into the downtown market from 2015 to 2020. For this reason, the expansion of medical office space is recommended for this site.

Due to its location next to single family residences, higher-density residential, such as townhomes or rowhomes, should also be considered for this site.

#### Lot North of Proposed Entertainment Center 10

Due to this site’s proximity to the proposed entertainment center, fieldhouse, and retail- and entertainment-oriented uses, it is recommended that it be developed as a retail or entertainment opportunity. Other mixes of uses are appropriate, but retail or entertainment uses are most fitting. Second story residential is also recommended to further expand the resident base.

## PLANNING FOR HEALTHY FOOD, PART 1

As farmers’ markets gain popularity across the country, their function and ability to affect positive change continues to grow. Though they have always been sources for local, healthy food choices, many downtowns have begun to embrace the unique community building and economic development possibilities that they present. Per Andy Salmons, Main Street Director for Downtown Corbin, Kentucky:

*“We used our farmers’ market basically as an incubator for agricultural and artisan-based entrepreneurship. By treating it like an incubator, we’ve really been able to direct people that are growing into some vacant storefronts downtown”* (Project for Public Places Blog).

While the entrepreneurial possibilities are promising, the ability to engage the community is impossible to ignore. Farmers’ markets can be planned to include food tastings from local cooks, live performances, and a host of other cultural and educational opportunities that allow small downtowns to thrive. The connections between healthy, local food generation and economic development should be capitalized on within downtown Salina.



*For more discussion on healthy food planning, Part 2 continues on page 123.*

# 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

## Redevelopment Opportunities - Catalyst Sites

Strategy to Address Recommendations 1, 2, 4, & 5

As undeveloped land is not prevalent throughout the Plan area, redevelopment of existing properties will play a larger role than development opportunities in the full revitalization of downtown Salina. The following sites should be considered for complete redevelopment, taking advantage of downtown’s market niches.

The STAR Bond development projects are considered catalyst sites that will, in part, lead the revitalization of downtown and encourage additional public and private reinvestment. However, the targeted STAR Bond projects are not alone in their ability to affect greater change for downtown. The planning team has identified additional catalyst sites that are believed to hold a strong potential to spur downtown reinvestment, due to their proximity to prominent, heavily traversed intersections.

### Parking Lot at the Northwest Corner of Santa Fe Avenue and Ash Street 11

This site sits at the intersection of Santa Fe Avenue and Ash Street—a prominent intersection along the main commercial thoroughfare through downtown: Santa Fe Avenue. This intersection lacks appeal; the northwest, southwest, and southeast corner are parking lots and the northeast corner is the site of the proposed entertainment center, which will attract patrons of all ages. The potential for prime intersection development within downtown is limited, so utilizing them for surface parking represents a missed opportunity. Given its proximity to the planned entertainment center, this lot should be considered for mixed use development.

The Salina Chamber of Commerce, located directly west of this site, should relocate to the ground level of the new multi-story, zero setback mixed use development in order to be visible along the main thoroughfare. The current Chamber of Commerce site

should be redeveloped into off-street parking, to complement the planned corner redevelopment.

### Sunflower Bank at the Southeast Corner of Santa Fe Avenue and Ash Street 12

The layout of this site does not currently fit into the commercial core of downtown. Currently, the large setback and architecture style reflect a seemingly suburban site and building design. Ideally, a redeveloped site would locate the building closer to Santa Fe Avenue and match the scale of those to the north and south. This site, as it sits on a prominent corner, should be considered for additional mixed use development with 2nd story office or residential uses, which could be anchored by Sunflower Bank itself. While this site could serve multiple uses, retail or professional office space would be the most suitable. The intersection of Santa Fe Avenue and Ash Street has the potential to become a major retail and entertainment node.



## Fourth Street East to the River, excluding Eastern Side of Fourth Street from Walnut Street to Iron Avenue 13

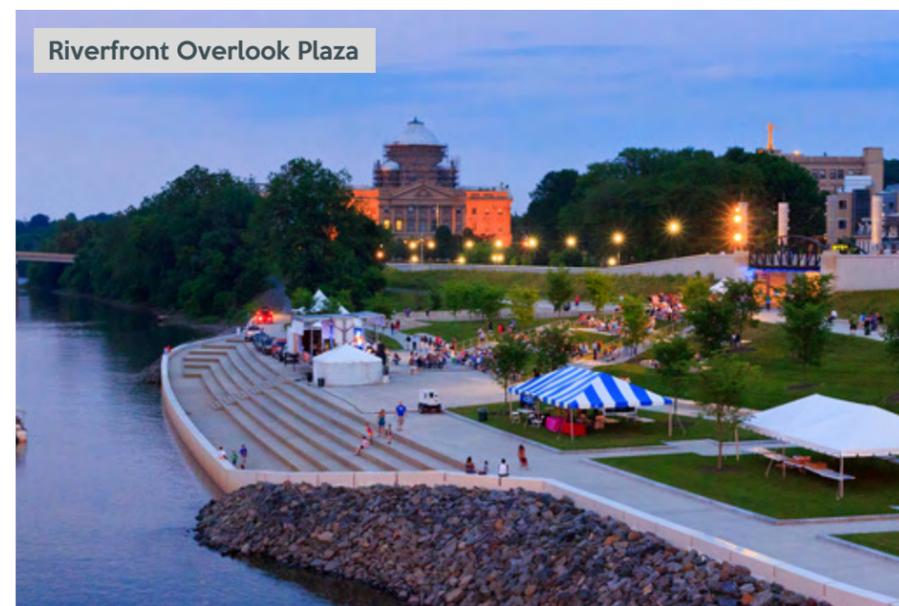
Encompassing a large collection of properties, primarily residential in nature, this catalyst redevelopment site has the potential to dramatically impact downtown. The eastern downtown neighborhood features the poorest overall quality in streets, sidewalks, and building exteriors. *The Smoky Hill River Renewal Master Plan* identified this general area as a redevelopment site and mixed use opportunity area for urban infill. Given the need for residential land uses in and around downtown, it is recommended that this neighborhood be redeveloped into a higher-density residential pocket. Residences should include some combination of apartments, townhomes, rowhomes, and condos, compatible with the historic architectural features seen in the other downtown neighborhoods. This recommendation is in line with *Live Salina: A Strategic Housing Plan*. Seventy-eight percent of the *Live Salina* survey respondents stated townhouses or duplexes were the preferred housing styles.

The redevelopment area is adjacent to the Smoky Hill River channel, which has the potential to be a valuable recreational amenity. Specifically shown in **Figure 5.12 Mobility & Infrastructure**, a linear park with a multi-use trail is proposed along the riverfront to serve as an amenity for surrounding residents. The proposed amenity will provide additional recreational and community gathering opportunities that are essential to any valuable mixed use development.

While this area should be anchored by a range of attractive urban residential options, an enhanced river channel offers unique economic development opportunities. Additional mixed use—incorporating residential, retail, office, and flex space uses—would enhance the vibrancy of downtown. **Figure 5.7 Multi-Family Infill & Riverfront Amenity Examples** offers some example imagery of the types of uses this redeveloped catalyst site might include.

## Southwest Corner of Fifth Street and Mulberry Street 14

Given the impact that the planned hotel will have on the south end of downtown's commercial core, this corner appears primed for redevelopment with a more intensive use in mind, such as a retail or food establishment.



**FIG. 5.7 MULTI-FAMILY INFILL & RIVERFRONT AMENITY EXAMPLES**

## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

### Surface Parking Lot on North Side of South Street from Santa Fe Avenue to Fifth Street 15

Due to the proximity of Salina Regional Health Center, this site should be considered for medical office redevelopment. While this site is currently owned and used by the Health Center for parking, this location presents a key redevelopment opportunity. It is recommended that the surface parking lot north of the Salina Medical Arts Building (*Additional Downtown Redevelopment Site #18*) be redeveloped into a parking garage to better suit the needs of Health Center employees and visitors, while preserving valuable development opportunities.

### Campbell Plaza and the Adjacent Building to the North 16

While this site currently serves as a small entertainment venue, the orientation of the stage and the plaza's size limits its viability as a central entertainment venue. It is recommended that this site be expanded to the north by demolishing the adjacent building. This enlarged site should include an interactive fountain or small splash pad and a stage in order to accommodate larger crowds. The site as a whole would function as the central gathering place within downtown, providing a dedicated and usable space for downtown events and festivals. The proposed plaza is detailed further in **G. Aesthetics & Character** under **Integration of New and Enhanced Green Space**.

FIG. 5.8 CAMPBELL PLAZA CONCEPT



### Redevelopment Opportunities - Additional Downtown Redevelopment Sites

*Strategy to Address Recommendations 1, 2, 4, & 5*

*Additional Downtown Redevelopment Sites* were identified in addition to the catalyst sites. While the *Catalyst Sites* offer prime redevelopment opportunities due to their proximity to prominent intersections or by their ability to fill a gap in the downtown user demand, the *Additional Downtown Redevelopment Sites* are still highly worthwhile. The following sites' size or location will provide flexibility to a private developer to create a profitable, large-scale development.

### U.S. Post Office at Fifth Street and Ash Street 17

This post office site represents a potential redevelopment site. As the U.S. Post Office and consumer needs continue to change and evolve in a digitally connected world, the mission and footprint of the post office may change, as well. While there is no current demand or plan to redevelop the site, the long term positioning of this post office location in the downtown should give way to a higher and better use. Prime mixed use/retail/destination sites are in short supply in any downtown, and this site's proximity to new major destinations, its size, the relative ease of redevelopment or adaptive reuse of the

site, and building make it an important future redevelopment site. It could be the top of the list of redevelopment sites if an alternative location for the post office could be located.

It should be noted that the post office site is an important employer and business that helps drive people and traffic downtown. In the long term, it would be better suited in a different location in the downtown or just north of downtown to capture the existing site for additional catalyst projects to further bolster the offerings in downtown.

### Surface Parking Lot North of the Salina Medical Arts Building 18

This site is currently used by the employees and patrons of the Salina Regional Health Center and surrounding medical offices. A parking garage, while a significant financial investment, would free additional land for medical office construction or internal expansion of the Health Center itself. New medical office tenants will benefit from the close proximity of additional, specialized medical uses.

### Northwest Corner of Walnut Street and Fourth Street 19

The existing buildings and the site itself are in relatively poor condition, detracting from the positive rehabilitation completed on the other side of Fourth Street, as well as the rehabilitation currently taking place directly across Walnut Street. Because of the momentum at this intersection, it is recommended that this site be redeveloped into additional flex space. The site layout must mimic the buildings to the north, as to not distract from the desired aesthetic of this mixed use area and its potential to be a unique, arts-focused pocket within downtown.

## Reuse Opportunities

Strategy to Address Recommendations 1-3

### Former Masonic Temple at the Northwest Corner of Santa Fe Avenue and South Street 20

The Masonic Temple offers striking architecture that should be preserved. While exterior alterations for aesthetic purposes are unnecessary, a reuse of the site is recommended. As a continuation of the medical uses to the south, the Masonic Temple is a candidate for administrative office space to be used by the Health Center. Depending on the need for administrative office space and the cost of interior renovations and external and internal maintenance, the structure could also incorporate upper level professional offices, a unique event space, and additional community services, such as job training or health services. This building, due to its size and current condition, will not be an easy reuse undertaking. The worth of its beautiful architecture must be balanced against the looming costs.

### Southwest Corner of Ash Street and Santa Fe Avenue 21

Though the parking lot to the north of Ad Astra Books and Coffee House may be necessary to meet the parking needs of downtown, its location also makes it an ideal reuse opportunity. One way to reuse the site without eliminating its functionality as a parking lot would be to construct a permanent, multipurpose pavilion. The pavilion, as shown in **Figure 5.9** below, would provide a covered space for a weekly farmers' market, and other community events. It could be designed in a way that would allow the existing parking configuration to be preserved, providing covered parking during times of non-use. While other parking lots throughout downtown might also be candidates for such a use, the site's location along Santa Fe Avenue and its proximity to the planned fieldhouse and the entertainment center make it an ideal fit. In addition to the flexibility of such a reuse, it would also add to the architectural character of downtown, drawing upon the best qualities of the surrounding buildings for inspiration.

### Vacant Lots on East Side of Fourth Street from Walnut Street to Iron Avenue and West of Lee Buildings 22

The first lot is adjacent to a successful arts-focused reuse project, as shown in **Figure 5.10**, and is a strong candidate for reuse as a large garden due to its size and location. Specifically, the site could serve as the location for a downtown restaurant owners cooperative, in which participating restaurants can grow and harvest fresh herbs, vegetables, and fruits to serve at their establishments. The desire for local organic food is on the rise and should be capitalized on. The integration of rain capturing trellises, also shown in **Figure 5.10**, will add to the sustainable nature of the garden itself. Depending on the structure of the cooperative, the large garden may offer some cultural, educational, or employment opportunities as well. Employees should receive training on the proper care and maintenance of the plants. This garden will also beautify the neighborhood, and fit seamlessly into the nearby creative uses.

The second lot, west of the Lee Buildings, has the potential to be reused as a garden cooperative for surrounding restaurants as well, but could also be part of a Healthy Foods Access Program that provides a seasonal source of produce for downtown residents who have limited access to affordable, healthy food choices. Such a program could be sponsored by the Salina County Health Department, located directly west of the site.

### Two Lots on West Side of Fourth Street South of Proposed Automobile Museum 23

The existing buildings on this site require extensive revitalization, but provide valuable architecture unique to downtown. The buildings across the street, including the Salina Art Center Warehouse, serve as a prime example of the architectural and site renovations appropriate for buildings of this style. This area should be a continuation of the mixed uses surrounding the downtown core by incorporating professional office space or flex space for business start-ups or creative ventures.



FIG. 5.9 FARMERS' MARKET PAVILION

## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

### United Life Building 24

This Art Deco beauty is an iconic reminder of Salina's past, and should be preserved to ensure its continued contribution to downtown. While it is currently configured for office space, it offers potential as a high-density residential use in the long-term. When the downtown residential demand increases, this building should be considered for conversion.

### Strand Plaza 25

The plaza's location and shape provides a unique re-purposing opportunity to introduce additional outdoor dining options to downtown. It should be considered for reuse as an outdoor dining patio, as shown in **Figure 5.11** and **Figure 5.20**, possibly shared by multiple businesses occupying the adjacent buildings. Lively uses, such as a dining plaza, must be interspersed throughout the downtown core. For further exploration of this concept, see **G. Aesthetics & Character** under **Enhancement of Public Areas**.

### Targeted & Incentivized Neighborhood Stabilization Strategy to Address Recommendation 4 & 5

The current downtown residents serve an important role in the revitalization of downtown. They provide, in part, the critical mass necessary to sustain a lively mixed use environment. Additionally, they may act as the downtown advocates, work force, users, and eyes on the street—those persons who will champion redevelopment and community building efforts. For these reasons, it is important to invest in and stabilize the downtown neighborhoods. Such a stabilization process should include the following components:



FIG. 5.10 GARDEN COOPERATIVE CONCEPT WITH RAIN CAPTURING TRELLIS



FIG. 5.11 STRAND PLAZA CONCEPT

### Neighborhood-Specific Improvement Plan

The downtown neighborhoods are unique assets within the community of Salina and should be treated as such. A specific downtown neighborhood plan, guided by downtown residents, is a necessary next step for neighborhood revitalization and community building. Each neighborhood within the City varies in strengths and needs; there is no one-size-fits-all program or policy that will sustain and build up a neighborhood. A specific neighborhood-level plan should be continuously updated as market and demographic data become available. A collection of neighborhood-level plans for the entire City will help prioritize City funding and services to neighborhoods with the greatest

need and the highest chance of successful revitalization. The downtown neighborhoods' physical integrity should be improved through streetscape enhancements to further safety, neighborhood identity, and quality of life, as described in **G. Aesthetics & Character**. The integrity of neighborhoods can also be enhanced through social events, such as picnics or block parties, which strengthen the sense of community within the downtown neighborhoods. While social enhancements such as these may need to be formalized through the City or separate organizations at first, it is the hope that residents will start to interact and naturally organize events on their own.



A variety of medium- and high-density housing options should be encouraged in the *Downtown Neighborhood - Mixed Use* and *Downtown Core - Mixed Use* districts.

### Code Enforcement

Consistent, proactive, and streamlined code enforcement will play a key role in the revitalization of the downtown Plan area. Strictly enforced regulations with associated fines can be a strong motivating factor for continual property maintenance. As properties deteriorate, surrounding owners have less incentive to maintain their own properties to the highest level, which decreases civic pride and discourages neighborhood growth and private investment. While the residential building conditions throughout downtown are not overly troublesome, improvements are necessary to bolster the perception of downtown residences. An anti-bligh campaign consisting of beautification efforts, demolition of unsightly structures, and citywide code enforcement will assist in the stabilization of downtown neighborhoods.

### Property Maintenance Incentives & Programs

Property deterioration can be a function of housing cost burdens, absentee ownership, or lack of neighborhood investment confidence. Incentives are often necessary to begin combating these issues. Financial incentive programs that spur property owner investment are recommended for the downtown neighborhoods. The targeted incentives should be guided by eligibility and improvement review requirements. Funding sources may include an annual commitment from the City or federal or state grant assistance. Additionally, multiple avenues for investment should be explored during the neighborhood planning stage, including: tax abatement, facade rehabilitation programs, TIF, Community Improvement Districts, and property maintenance assistance programs, such as providing seniors with reduced lawn maintenance costs or snow removal. Existing or new community/neighborhood groups should be leveraged to provide equipment or scheduling assistance.

### Equitable & Diverse Housing Stock

As stated in **Section 3.0 Economic & Market Analysis Summary**, there is a severe shortage in Salina of both affordable owner-occupied units priced under \$125,000 and housing renting for less than \$400 per month. The demographic study revealed that downtown residents' income is not increasing at the same rate as the rest of the City's. At the same time, over a quarter of downtown homeowners pay 35 percent or more of their monthly household income on housing. To fill this demand and aid the housing cost burdens, the City should incentivize developers and non-profits to construct or rehabilitate existing buildings to provide renter- and owner-occupied low-income housing options. Additionally, the City should partner with organizations focused on helping low-income and minority populations obtain fair home financing.

## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS



Aksarben Village in Omaha, Nebraska master planned using development and design standards

### Development & Design Standards

*Strategy to Address Recommendations 3 & 6*

Downtown Salina's historic architecture is one of its primary assets, and should be maintained, enhanced, and rehabilitated as necessary. In fact, preservation and restoration of the building architecture was widely cited during community and stakeholder engagement as an important part of the revitalization process. Current funding sources cannot revitalize every frontage. Therefore, updated standards that reflect the new vision for downtown must be developed, adopted, and implemented as possible.

To be clear, downtown is not entirely made up of historically significant structures. Both outdated and contemporary development styles are sprinkled throughout; their place within the district must be considered as well.

*Design Guidelines for Downtown Salina*, created by the Lee District Design Review Board in 2008, currently guide rehabilitations, alterations, new construction, demolitions, relocations, and the streetscape. The guidelines seek to enhance the image of downtown and encourage the reuse of historic structures. With a changing vision for downtown, the regulations must be updated and the regulatory boundary revisited to ensure the proper balance of new and old.

### **Design Guidelines for Downtown Salina Update**

*The Design Guidelines for Downtown Salina* currently guide any new development and improvements to the downtown buildings and streetscape within the Lee District, but recent changes in the business environment, demographics, and level of reinvestment within downtown are transforming its future outlook. The current *Guidelines* recognize Salina's unique history and cultural heritage. However, they must be infused with the creativity and flexibility necessary to create a vibrant, mixed use district that attracts visitors, new businesses, and the local community. While the existing *Guidelines* have proven beneficial, they must be reexamined as a new vision for downtown is being cast.

The Design Review Board should continue to uphold the updated *Guidelines*, as the *Guidelines* are ultimately intended to establish a level of design that fully realizes **The Vision**.

Updated *Guidelines* will, in part, carry this vision to fruition. An outside consultant should conduct public engagement sessions in order to understand business owners' needs and overall plan for downtown, given the proposed development projects. Specifically, the *Guidelines* should target the expanded area defined by the **Downtown Overlay**, shown in **Figure 5.4**, and address setbacks, building orientation, building materials, parking facilities, landscaping, and signage. Public engagement will create necessary buy in from business owners within the defined area. Once the proper updates are identified and agreed upon by property owners, the standards should be applicable to every property within the boundary.

Five different subdistricts will be established in line with the boundaries defined in **Figure 5.3**. As the uses differ slightly between the subdistricts, different development and design standards are required. It is important to note that the overall character and general aesthetic of the entire **Downtown Overlay** area should be consistent, regardless of the different uses.

## F. MOBILITY & INFRASTRUCTURE

GUIDING PRINCIPLES 1 2 3 4 5 6

SUSTAINABILITY VALUES H+S L A+C ES EV

Aging populations, as well the trend toward sustainable development practices across the United States have increased the need for safe and convenient access to various destinations by users of all ages and transportation modes. Transportation and land use are interconnected and, therefore, must be planned in accordance with each other in order to ensure a connected and vibrant variety of residential, commercial, employment, and entertainment uses. Each mode of transportation—public transit, bike, pedestrian routes, and vehicles—must be carefully considered and planned for as redevelopment occurs.

This is especially relevant for downtowns that thrive on balanced uses and pedestrian activity. A mixed use area that considers the needs of its population, properly plans for future growth, and provides a strong multimodal transportation network is more likely to attract the residents and businesses that it requires to be successful.

In addition to mobility and connectivity, this subsection also explores the issues related to aging street and utility infrastructure. Coordination between public improvement projects and upgrades to street and utility infrastructure is a chief consideration for long-term cost effectiveness.

### KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

1. The population of downtown is aging, creating a gap in transportation infrastructure that seniors heavily rely on, including highly visible bus stops and safe sidewalk networks.
2. The existing sidewalks are in generally good condition, yet

significant gaps in the sidewalk network exist, which limits the walkability of downtown.

3. Many potential crosswalk locations, particularly those located along Mulberry Street, South Street, and Walnut Street, are either not marked or need to be repainted. This issue further limits downtown’s walkability and safety by creating a perception that vehicular traffic is more important.
4. Bicycle and pedestrian access is being encouraged by the City through infrastructure improvements, yet a complete network is still lacking. While the City’s Bicycle Master Plan is in the process of being implemented, secured public funding of this project is key for its ultimate success.
5. Multimodal connectivity between the downtown core, downtown neighborhoods, and Oakdale Park and Kenwood Park is not currently prioritized. Both parks serve as the main source of open space in downtown; therefore, in order to create a healthy and livable downtown, residents and patrons must have safe and convenient access to this valuable green space.
6. The CityGo public transit service provides ample downtown routes, but falls short in user convenience. As a result, CityGo is not heavily relied on.
7. Though efforts have been made in recent years, downtown is lacking a complete wayfinding network that accommodates both vehicular and pedestrian activity.
8. The engagement process revealed that the community believes there are preferred routes to enter downtown for out-of-town visitors traveling along I-70 and I-135, but the fact is that there are little to no wayfinding techniques in place to direct traffic in this way.
9. The current lane configuration of Santa Fe Avenue—the main downtown corridor—does not encourage passersby to slow down and spend time exploring downtown businesses. Santa Fe Avenue seems to be an automobile corridor, rather than a pedestrian and bicyclist friendly corridor.
10. Parking supply and convenience, while not a current issue, should be reconsidered with each planned development,

redevelopment, or reuse project, such as the STAR Bond projects. Increased parking demand may change the need for wayfinding and the amount and location of parking.

11. The railway along Fourth Street is a physical barrier that negatively affects pedestrian and bicyclist connectivity between the downtown core and Kenwood Park and Oakdale Park.
12. Throughout the community engagement process, downtown stakeholders noted the odor caused by downtown’s dated sanitary sewer system. The foul smell may be driving businesses owners and downtown patrons away, thereby reducing downtown’s viability and livability.
13. While it is not a major concern for downtown, isolated flooding does take place within the commercial core. This may act as a limiting factor for downtown economic reinvestment, as the chance of flooding or past flooding occurrences can negatively affect property values.
14. Overhead electricity lines, while not particularly burdensome, have a negative effect on the aesthetic appeal of downtown.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Maintain and grow the existing bicycle and pedestrian network, through trails, sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes in order to create a multimodal, walkable, and amenity rich downtown.
2. Develop a complete wayfinding system for all user types, directing traffic to downtown along preferred routes and identifying the attractions, amenities, and businesses that make up downtown.
3. Accommodate all ages of CityGo users by enhancing bus stops and increasing the convenience of riding the bus.
4. Dedicate City resources to utility infrastructure capital improvements, including upgrades to the storm and sanitary sewer system and burying utility lines, in order to modernize downtown and reduce long-term maintenance requirements.

# 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

## RECOMMENDATION STRATEGIES

### Create a More Pedestrian Friendly Downtown

#### Strategy to Address Recommendation 1

Walkability is a key component of any mixed use area. A perception of a lack of safety and missing and/or poorly maintained infrastructure limits the pedestrian and bike traffic in and around downtown Salina. Pedestrians and bicyclists must feel safe when interacting with vehicles and one another. Without more feet on the ground, additional retail and entertainment opportunities are limited at best. The following strategies lay out an approach for converting downtown into a true multimodal destination.

#### Infill Gaps in the Sidewalk Network

The pedestrian sidewalk network is largely in good condition. Few problem areas have been identified. Even so, filling the identified gaps in pedestrian connectivity throughout downtown should be a priority of the public street improvements. Connectivity planning is key when analyzing the impact of the proposed STAR Bond development projects, such as the proposed hotel described in **Recommendation Strategies**, under **E. Development & Redevelopment**. The STAR Bond development projects will work to create a vibrant, entertainment-focused atmosphere, but ensuring connectivity to downtown lodging, shopping, dining, and services, as well as natural, open spaces, such as Oakdale Park, are critical to the sustainability of downtown, as well.

Mulberry Street should be the main connection between the downtown core and Oakdale and Kenwood Parks. Currently, Mulberry Street lacks crosswalks and has inconsistent sidewalk connections on the north side of the street. As Mulberry Street is the only street that physically connects the downtown core to the parks, it should be prioritized for sidewalk infill. ADA

accessible ramps should be installed during infill improvements. While the downtown core should continue to be the focus of intensive streetscape improvements, sidewalks throughout the downtown neighborhood should be well-maintained and provide convenient access to residents' daily needs and desired amenities. Recommended locations for sidewalk infill are shown in **Figure 5.12 Mobility & Infrastructure**. Overall, public sidewalks should provide a clear and continuous travel way between residences, employment opportunities, and retail.

Additionally, as described in **Prioritize Multimodal Connectivity between Amenities**, a road extension is proposed to visibly connect Kenwood Park to downtown. This road extension should incorporate a new roundabout at the entrance of Oakdale Park, as well as a new bridge over the Smoky Hill River channel between Oakdale and Kenwood Park.

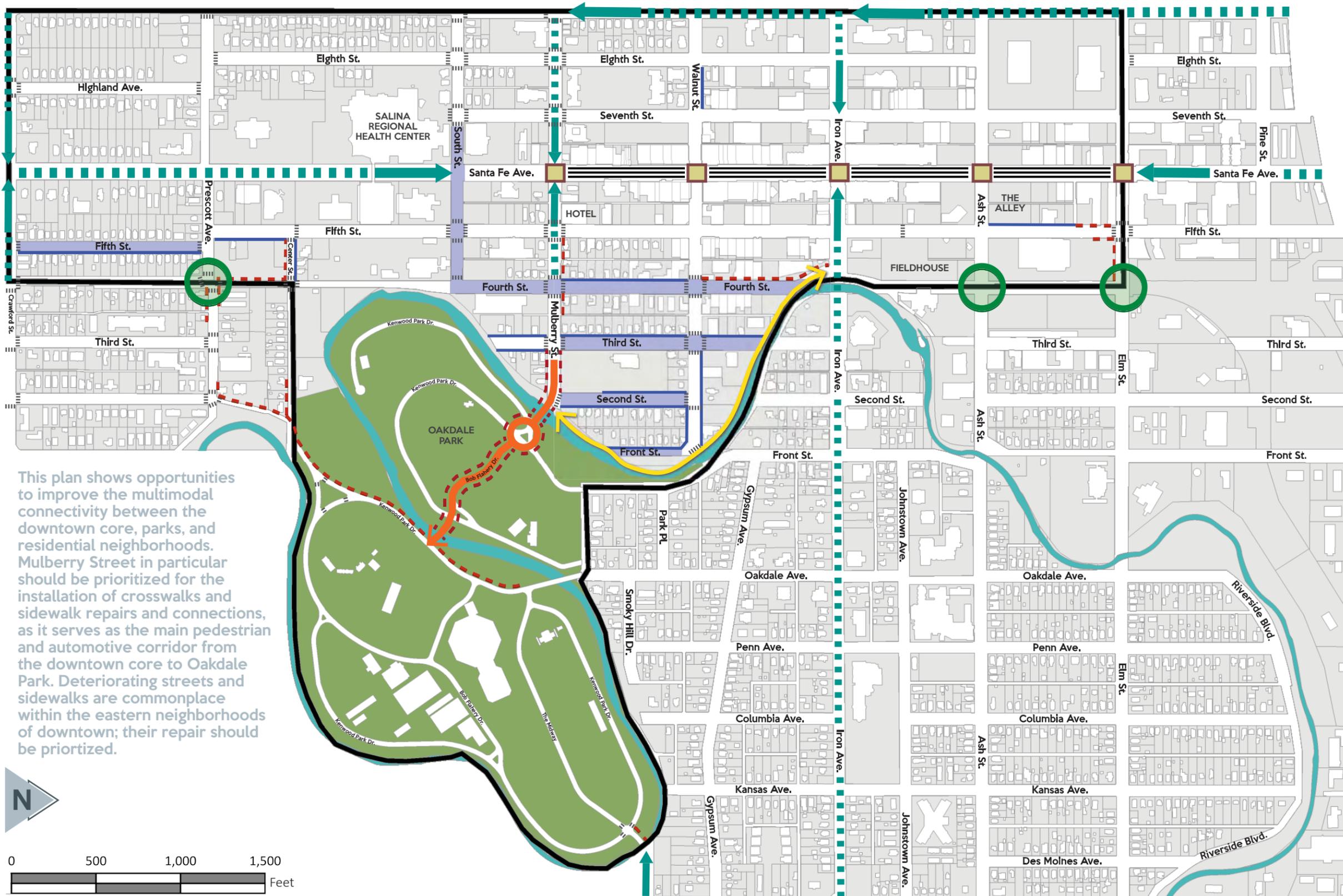
#### Increase Level of Safety & Accessibility

In order to create a multimodal friendly downtown, users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobile drivers of all ages must feel safe and planned for at all times. Lighting, accessible street crossings, and safe pedestrian railroad crossings are primary ways to achieve this desired level of safety and accessibility. While safety and accessibility are vital to a complete pedestrian network, the user experience is also an important consideration. Much of the following ideas are incorporated into **Figure 5.13 Standard Intersection Concept** and **Figure 5.14 Enhanced Intersection Concept**.

- o Pedestrian-scale lighting increases the feeling of safety at bus stops, entrances to buildings, edges of parks and other events spaces, and arcades. Although lighting's primary purpose is evening and nighttime visibility, a successful lighting plan must account for the number of users along the street. Soft, white glow lights that do not over-light a space are recommended, as they offer improved clarity and

require less wattage than other options. The pedestrian lighting upgrades to Fifth Street, Seventh Street, Santa Fe Avenue, and Iron Avenue should be extended to all portion of the mixed use area.

- o **Railroad Pedestrian Crossing Improvement Areas**, as identified in **Figure 5.12 Mobility & Infrastructure**, will direct pedestrians safely over the railroad tracks. The railroad along Fourth Street is a clear physical barrier to the pedestrian network. Prescott Avenue, Ash Street, and Elm Street lack a safe pedestrian path over the railroad tracks. Additional signage, a relatively simple, cost effective safety measure, should be considered for these intersections. As discussed in **G. Aesthetics & Character**, enlarged gathering spaces at each intersection along the railroad where space allows will provide a safe haven for pedestrians, and enhance the aesthetic appeal of downtown.
- o Crosswalks provide a clear path for pedestrian traffic and alert automobile drivers of other roadway users. While the sidewalk network is strong throughout downtown, the lack thereof and quality of the existing crosswalks is troublesome. Recommended locations for crosswalks are shown in **Figure 5.12 Mobility & Infrastructure**. Regulatory signage is recommended at higher traffic crosswalk locations without stop signs or traffic signals. Recommended crosswalk additions are concentrated along Mulberry Street, as the primary multimodal corridor connecting retail, entertainment, and residences to the natural amenities.
- o Fixed-time signals are recommended at key pedestrian intersections in and around the downtown core. Intersections where pedestrians are anticipated or desired require lower vehicular speeds. Fixed-time signals, versus pedestrian-actuated signals, provide a regularity and expectation of pedestrian traffic for automobile drivers.
- o Site furnishings, small public spaces, and kiosks or directories that offer directional information should be integrated into the streetscape, as detailed in **G. Aesthetics & Character**.

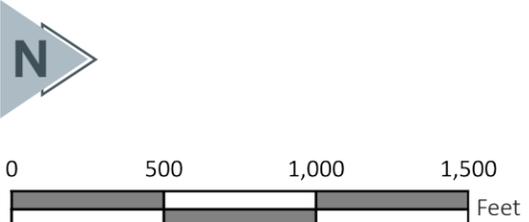


**FIG. 5.12**  
**MOBILITY & INFRASTRUCTURE**

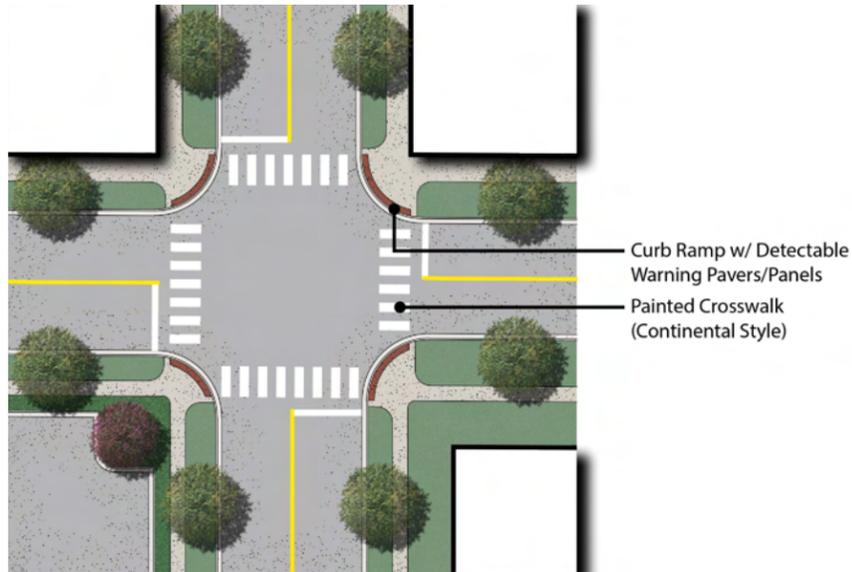
**Map Legend**

- Downtown Customer/Traffic Inflow
- Proposed Road Diet  
*Reduction to 3 lanes in accordance with Santa Fe Streetscape*
- Proposed Crosswalk  
*Incorporated into Standard Intersection Treatment*
- Proposed Crosswalk  
*Incorporated into Enhanced Intersection Treatment*
- Proposed Railroad Pedestrian Crossing Improvement Area
- Proposed Multi-use Trail
- Deteriorating Streets  
*Streets & Curbs to be Monitored & Repaired or Replaced as Necessary*
- Deteriorating Sidewalks  
*Sidewalks to be Monitored & Repaired or Replaced as Necessary*
- Proposed Sidewalk Infill  
*Fill Gaps in the Existing Sidewalk Network*
- Proposed Roundabout & Road Extension  
*Install Roundabout and Extend Bob Flaherty Drive as Connection to Downtown*

This plan shows opportunities to improve the multimodal connectivity between the downtown core, parks, and residential neighborhoods. Mulberry Street in particular should be prioritized for the installation of crosswalks and sidewalk repairs and connections, as it serves as the main pedestrian and automotive corridor from the downtown core to Oakdale Park. Deteriorating streets and sidewalks are commonplace within the eastern neighborhoods of downtown; their repair should be prioritized.



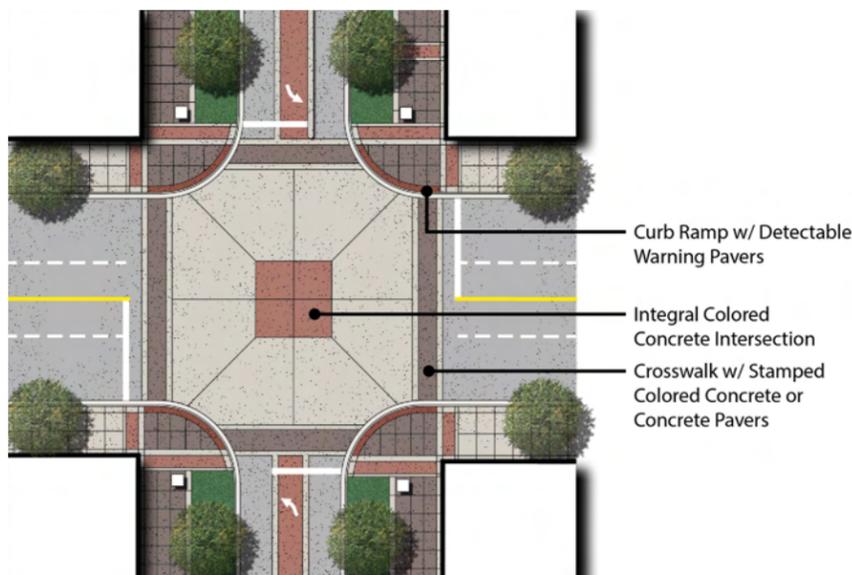
# 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS



**FIG. 5.13 STANDARD INTERSECTION TREATMENT**

The standard intersection treatment should include painted crosswalks, accessible curb ramps, and any regulatory signage necessary to ensure that vehicles are cognizant of pedestrian traffic. The enhanced option, which applies to parts of Santa Fe Avenue, should include decorative crosswalks and curb ramps that highlight the significance of downtown's commercial spine.

**FIG. 5.14 ENHANCED INTERSECTION TREATMENT**



## Prioritize Multimodal Connectivity between Amenities

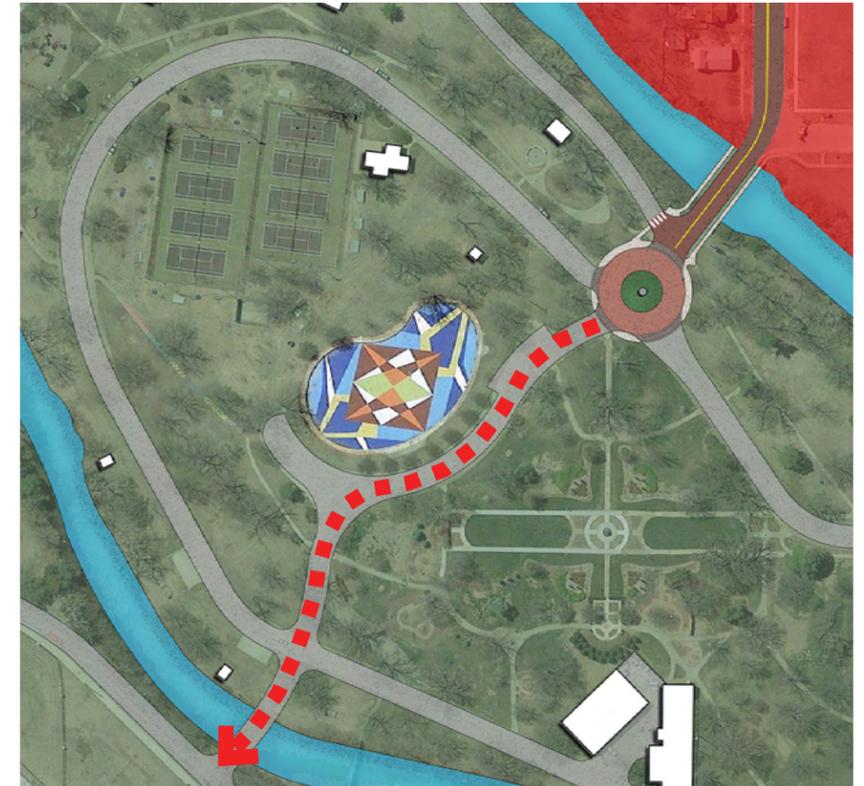
Stakeholder and community engagement prioritized multimodal connectivity between downtown amenities, businesses, neighborhoods, and green space. In an effort to increase multimodal connectivity, bus stops should be accessible by both pedestrians and bicyclists (active transportation users) and automobile users. For example, quality sidewalks should provide access to bus stops and a safe waiting area for the next bus. In this way, the more sustainable transportation—bike, transit, and pedestrian—network becomes more dependable, viable, and convenient.

Mulberry Street was identified as a key corridor, and should function as the main multimodal connection corridor between the parks and the downtown core. As such, pedestrian infrastructure improvements are prioritized along Mulberry Street.

Additionally, continual improvement of the active transportation network is necessary in order to accommodate a growing user base. High activity centers should be monitored, especially by CityGo. If current routes or bus stops are not meeting riders' needs or do not provide access to new amenities, ridership will likely decrease due to the lack of convenience and relevance.

## Road Extension to Kenwood Park Drive

Lastly, to ensure connectivity between downtown and Oakdale Park, Kenwood Park, and their amenities and destinations (e.g. the Bicentennial Center, Kenwood Cove, County fair grounds, and the location of the annual Smoky Hill River Festival), a rerouting and extension of Bob Flahery Drive in Oakdale Park to Kenwood Drive is recommended. The current connection from downtown is routed through Kenwood Park Drive to Oakdale Drive, then to Oakwood Park Drive. This route is circuitous and goes through a residential neighborhood. An extension would provide a direct connection tied to the Oakdale Park amenity.



The proposed road extension connecting Oakdale Park and Kenwood Park will increase the connectivity between the critical green space and retail, residential, and employment opportunities within downtown. The road extension will also create a more visually pleasing entrance to downtown.

## Integrate Standardized Downtown Wayfinding

*Strategy to Address Recommendation 2*

The *Comprehensive Plan* supports the implementation of a wayfinding signage system throughout downtown as a first priority (*Salina, Kansas Comprehensive Plan*, p. 3-30). Since 2003, the City has been working towards a standardized wayfinding signage system with the assistance of the Kansas Department of Transportation's (KDOT) Transportation Enhancement Program. A master plan for wayfinding signage was completed by Guidance Pathway Systems in 2005 and the design of the signs (one for downtown and one for non-downtown locations) was finalized by Ann Arkebauer and Chris Wilson of Salina.



The downtown wayfinding system should be adaptable, in order to appropriately and conveniently direct downtown patrons and visitors to the nearest amenities, as new development takes place.

The project’s scope has also changed over time; new parking lot identification signs were added to the overall project as a response to the *Downtown Parking Master Plan*, completed in 2007. Since that time, the implementation of the wayfinding signage master plan has been incremental due to varied funding availability and questions of funding responsibility between the City and KDOT. However, the downtown wayfinding installation has been completed.

Wayfinding plays an especially important role within downtown. A standardized wayfinding system is critical to a safe, accessible, and convenient transportation system. This signage, in particular, is used to inform and direct visitors to the available downtown attractions and services. As development and redevelopment projects are completed and new visitor traffic is introduced, wayfinding signage and directories must be updated to reflect the location of new attractions and features. These incremental wayfinding decisions must consider the driver, the bicyclist, and the pedestrian. While the vehicular wayfinding should address local attractions, amenities, and places of significance, the pedestrian wayfinding should focus more on walkable attractions and businesses within downtown. Larger wayfinding hubs

should be located at select activity centers within downtown, providing pedestrians with a directory maps and relevant news and information. Future design of directories and additional wayfinding features must complement the existing wayfinding in shape, color scheme, and naming conventions.

The City clearly recognizes the role of wayfinding signage and desires a complete, unified wayfinding system. The current signage is of a high quality and is adaptable to include the addition of new features and elements. However, wayfinding signage gaps do still exist. In order to best serve users of the proposed development, redevelopment, and reuse projects, new wayfinding signage locations are recommended to fill these gaps. **Figure 5.18 Public Streets Aesthetics & Character** shows the location of the existing and proposed signage locations, as well as proposed downtown directory locations. The directories’ have been located to coordinate with foot traffic patterns along Santa Fe Avenue. Proposed vehicular wayfinding signage is recommended at the following intersections:

- o Santa Fe Avenue and Prescott Avenue, sign pointing north
- o Third Street and Mulberry Street, sign pointing east and sign pointing west

- o Eighth Street and Mulberry Street, sign pointing east
- o Oakdale Avenue and Iron Avenue, sign pointing west and sign pointing south
- o Iron Avenue and Ohio Street, sign pointing west
- o The Midway and Ohio Street, sign pointing west

While these locations are focused within the general boundaries of downtown, there should also be some consideration of out-of-town visitors, particularly those arriving from I-70 and I-135. The local community clearly has preferred routes to downtown from both of these interstates, those that they deem to offer the best representation of Salina. During the engagement process, participants confirmed that the Ohio Street exit was preferred from I-70 and the Crawford Street exit was preferred from I-135. Unfortunately, these preferences are not indicated along either interstate through the incorporation of effective wayfinding techniques. To properly identify these routes, the following components should be incorporated into the City’s wayfinding system:

- o Gateway monuments should be located at each of these exits, serving to welcome visitors to Salina and directing them to the preferred route.
- o Additional wayfinding signage should be added to the existing system, directing visitors who have exited the interstate to downtown. Those exiting I-70 should be encouraged to follow Ohio Street south, before heading west on Ash Street or Iron Ave. Meanwhile, travelers exiting I-135 should be invited to take Crawford Street east to Santa Fe Avenue, where they will head north. Wayfinding along these routes should not just bring people to downtown, but rather direct them to the attractions and amenities that define it.

## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS



Burlingame Avenue in Burlingame, California serves as a prime example of a complete street (National Coalition for Complete Streets)

### Adopt a Complete Streets Policy

#### Strategy to Address Recommendation 1

The City’s *Comprehensive Plan*, which was created through a community driven planning process, currently endorses a “Complete Streets” approach. Complete Streets is a philosophy that considers all modes equally in the planning of transportation networks, including automobile, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian” (*Salina, Kansas Comprehensive Plan*, p. 2-49). This policy is especially important in a mixed use area, such as downtown. In order to ensure future development and redevelopment projects utilize Complete Streets principles, the City should mandate these principles through a policy change in the *City Code*.

Complete Streets typically work hand-in-hand with mixed use development practices. The envisioned retail- and entertainment-focused downtown must accommodate all users and be well-integrated into the surrounding area. Complete Streets will provide this necessary connectivity. Taking an incremental approach to implementation is most feasible; therefore, all new downtown development or redevelopment

projects should be required to consider and incorporate Complete Streets infrastructure, such as wider sidewalks, when creating a site plan. This should be a deliberate request of the City Commission, in line with the updated development standards integrated into the *City Code* and specifically the **Downtown Overlay** regulations. City-funded infrastructure improvements must also consider and incorporate Complete Streets infrastructure. The recent addition of bike lanes on both Fifth and Seventh Streets during normal road resurfacing, as noted in **Past Improvements, D. Background**, under **Section 1.0 Introduction**, serves as a prime example of incremental implementation of this policy. By planning for all potential users within the right-of-way, the ultimate goal of complete multimodal connectivity throughout downtown will be realized.

Santa Fe Avenue is a main candidate for Complete Streets principles. This policy, as adopted and supported in the *Comprehensive Plan*, recommends the following elements to be incorporated on collector and arterial streets:

- o Automobile lanes
- o Sidewalks and pedestrian amenities on both sides of the street and separated from vehicle traffic by a turf buffer
- o Clearly marked transit stops

The proposed Santa Fe Streetscape lane reduction is a step towards implementation of the Complete Streets policy. While major lane width reductions are not possible along Santa Fe Avenue due to the angled parking, the incorporation of a median, wider sidewalks, and the reduction in travel lanes from three to two, will allow for a more complete transportation network. Both of the proposed streetscape profiles for Santa Fe Avenue are shown on the following page, in **Figure 5.15** and **Figure 5.16**. Bike lanes on Santa Fe Avenue are not desired by the public and are not recommended. The recent lane additions on Fifth and Seventh Streets serve the needs of bicycle traffic.

Additionally, medians and refuge islands should be considered as development and redevelopment projects begin to alter the footprint and automobile and foot traffic of downtown to increase safety and aesthetic appeal. Local streets, such as those throughout the downtown neighborhoods, must provide connections to the greater complete transportation network.

FIG. 5.15 SANTA FE STREETScape WITH MEDIAN - ELM STREET TO ASH STREET & WALNUT STREET TO MULBERRY STREET



18'-0"	14'-0"	12'-0"	12'-0"	12'-0"	14'-0"	18'-0"
Pedestrian Streetscape	Angled Parking	Drive Lane	Median	Drive Lane	Angled Parking	Pedestrian Streetscape

FIG. 5.16 SANTA FE STREETScape WITHOUT MEDIAN - ASH STREET TO WALNUT STREET



18'-0"	14'-0"	12'-0"	12'-0"	12'-0"	14'-0"	18'-0"
Pedestrian Streetscape	Angled Parking/ Landscape Bed	Drive Lane	Turn/Delivery Lane	Drive Lane	Angled Parking/ Landscape Bed	Pedestrian Streetscape

## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS



Transit system improvements that will enhance user experience include updated covered bus stops and mobile transit applications, as used by Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority and Portland, OR TriMet.

### Enhance the Public Transit System

#### Strategy to Address Recommendation 3

As residents and visitors increase in numbers within downtown, so will the demand for public transit. While the current routes and frequency of the transit system are currently meeting users' needs, CityGo must plan for the needs of the new populations. The following enhancements are recommended:

#### Integrate Technology into the Public Transit System

In order to increase the convenience of taking the bus, CityGo should create a transit mobile phone application, released in two phases: (1) fixed information and (2) real-time. The first phase of the application should provide fixed information on routes, schedules, fares, and transfers. Additionally, this phase should provide riders with an opportunity to quickly share issues and concerns with their service and/or provide suggestions on future routes or locations of bus stops. The second phase—with a longer implementation period—should utilize Intelligent Transportations Systems (ITS) technologies, and specifically automatic vehicle location technologies, to provide real-time bus location updates to riders.

#### Enhance Existing Bus Stops

The existing transit stops typically include no more than a covered bench and a sign. In comparison, standard high-use transit stops typically include well-lit shelters, seating, trash receptacles, and informational displays for bus routes and schedules. While the existing transit system is meeting users' needs, it may be necessary to install said amenities at key downtown activity centers to facilitate increased utilization of the transit system.

#### Added Stops

In order to maximize effectiveness of the transit system, bus stops must be properly located to ensure that they coordinate with the activity and pedestrian circulation patterns within downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. While the existing bus stops are properly located, high activity centers should be monitored for changes in ridership patterns. If activity levels and locations change, additional stops may need to be added to the network, as recommended in *Create a More Pedestrian Friendly Downtown*. Adjusting to such changes is a necessary step toward increasing the user base.

#### Encourage Ridership through Incentives & Education

As transit is a more sustainable source of transportation, it should be encouraged for downtown employees and residents. A greater reliance on transit translates to a lower need for parking. Oftentimes, a lack of knowledge of the services provided by OCCK—or any smaller-scale transit provider—creates a barrier to a viable public transportation system. Education and programming opportunities should be explored to further integrate transit into the greater transportation system. For example, employer-sponsored transit incentive programs can encourage employees to utilize transit with the intention to alter long-term commuting patterns.

Additionally, as the current downtown population is less wealthy and slightly older than the City as a whole, the need for paratransit services may increase. Providing ample information through the OCCK website and informational materials in public places will help to create a greater awareness of the myriad services CityGo already offers.



Mulberry Street's poor sidewalk network does not emphasize its role as the main corridor connecting downtown and the parks.

## Create a Utility Infrastructure Improvements Plan

*Strategy to Address Recommendation 4*

Utility improvements, while costly, can dramatically alter the functionality and physical characteristics of an area. Downtown Salina is no exception. The outdated storm and sanitary sewer system (and subsequent odor), spot flooding, and overhead utility lines are each limiting factors in downtown's redevelopment. A strategic Utility Improvements Plan should be created in order to guide improvements and ensure adequate and appropriate utility improvements and upgrades as downtown develops and redevelops. The plan should be based on additional utilities analysis and design and be used to prioritize utility-related capital improvements in downtown.

While an expensive venture, burying utility lines will reduce visual distractions, modernize downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods, and decrease long-term maintenance requirements. Water and sanitary and storm sewer infrastructure should be replaced, in line with the determined priority areas.

All utility improvement efforts must be coordinated with development, redevelopment, and capital improvement opportunities as they are undertaken, like the Santa Fe Avenue streetscape, to limit downtown disturbances.

These planned and strategic upgrades could benefit greatly from the newly increased sales tax, recently approved by Salinans. The City's current .40 percent capital improvement sales tax increased to a .75 percent capital improvement sales tax for a 20-year term. The sales tax prioritizes neighborhood streets; \$2 million more is now dedicated to neighborhood street upgrades annually. As deteriorating neighborhood streets are commonplace within downtown, the plan must prioritize critical downtown neighborhood street improvement areas in order to strategically and efficiently improve the functionality and aesthetic quality of downtown, thus increasing its investment potential.

## PLANNING FOR STEWARDSHIP

"Going green" has become a popular term to describe the challenging, but fruitful task of creating sustainable places that embrace our environment's natural resources and energy systems. While this plan promotes a Sustainability Framework to help guide decision-making throughout the revitalization process, it may be necessary to take a step back and try to imagine what a "green" version of downtown Salina might look like.



From our perspective, an environmentally conscious downtown would include pedestrian and bicycle networks, a diversified housing stock, energy efficient infills and retrofits, low-maintenance landscaping, shade-generating street trees, rainwater collection systems, recycling receptacles, bike racks, plazas built with pervious pavement, community gardens run by downtown co-ops, a farmers' market, restaurants with "farm to table" menus, and more. In truth, it is not difficult to envision. Some of these aspects are already in place and others are in the works. A concerted effort to continue the greening of downtown could have long-reaching impacts on the character, quality of life, and economic viability of the district.

# 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

## G. AESTHETICS & CHARACTER

GUIDING PRINCIPLES 1 2 3 4 5 6

SUSTAINABILITY VALUES H+S L A+C ES EV

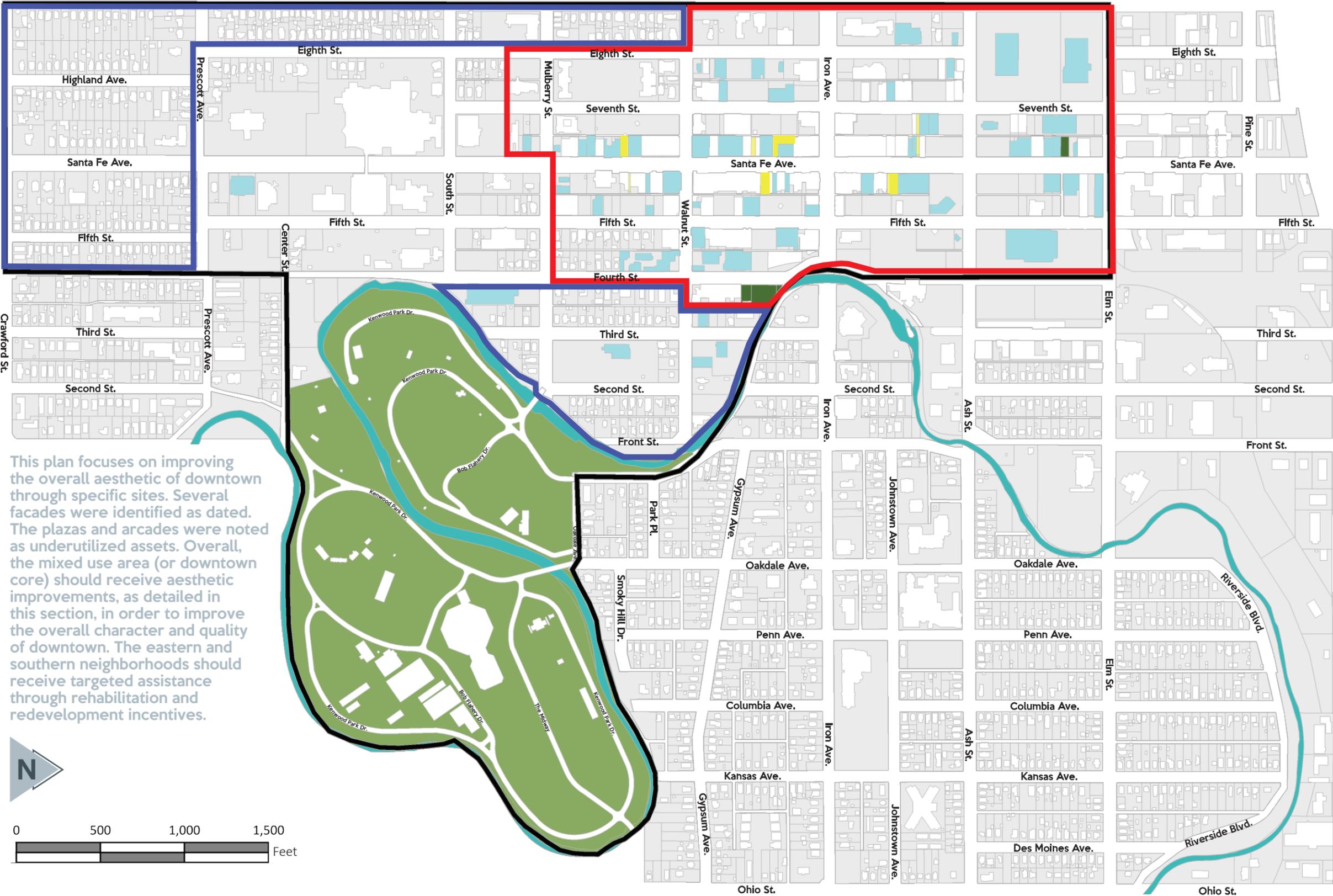
The built aesthetic of a downtown can have a direct and lasting impact on determining the public perception of character and quality of life. Downtowns with an attractive and cohesive aesthetic work to create a strong sense of place. They feel more inviting and are often more likely to retain visitors and local patrons. Elements of an attractive downtown typically include building architecture and materials, quality site design, streetscape amenities, landscaping, site furnishings, lighting, gateways, signage, wayfinding, and branding, among others. Collectively, these elements should work together to reflect both the history and desired vision of downtown Salina. Done properly, targeted aesthetic improvements will encourage additional private reinvestment within downtown and the surrounding community.

### KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

1. The character of the existing streetscape, particularly along Santa Fe Avenue, is dated and worn.
2. The current systems for branding, wayfinding, and gateways do not effectively define or guide visitors through downtown in a way that highlights all that downtown Salina has to offer.
3. The percentage of downtown residential structures that are classified as deteriorating or dilapidated, particularly in the neighborhood east of Fifth Street, indicates that further decline could deter future reinvestment in these vital urban neighborhoods.
4. There are a significant number of nonresidential facades within the downtown core that are in need of façade improvements. Their continued deterioration negatively impacts downtown.
5. Though downtown has an impressive collection of public plazas, they are mostly underutilized due to low foot traffic and outdated site designs that do not adequately address the current needs of the community.
6. Oakdale and Kenwood Parks are true assets to the downtown community, but opportunities to improve their quality and functionality still remain.
7. While downtown is largely defined by its historic, Art Deco influence, many of the new and renovated buildings around the periphery of the downtown core feature more modern architectural styles. The degree to which these styles blend and interact with one another will have a significant impact on the built aesthetic of downtown Salina.
8. Maintenance, particularly as it relates to the downtown improvements, streetscape, and public plazas, continues to be a cause of concern and priority for the community. The long-term success of future improvements, regardless of their initial impact, will be dependent upon their ability to be effectively maintained.
9. There is no sense of arrival to downtown.

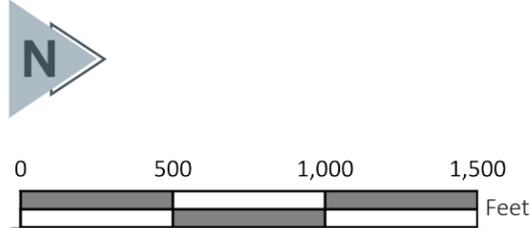
### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Design and construct a family of gateways that serve as definable entry points into downtown. The gateways should increase the visual appeal of downtown and contribute to a sense of arrival for downtown.
2. Design and construct an improved public streetscape that invites visitors and patrons into downtown, better the overall user experience, and establishes an identity that speaks to the aspirational qualities of a revitalized district.
3. Encourage façade, building, and site improvements throughout downtown, balancing the need to preserve historic integrity and respect the existing architecture without stifling the architectural creativity that successful downtowns often embrace.
4. Integrate new and enhanced green space throughout downtown. Green space may be in the form of neighborhood parks, public plazas, community gardens, or dedicated open spaces. Ensure the functionality and visual appeal of these spaces in a way that improves the quality of life for downtown residents.
5. Develop, approve, and enforce new development and design standards for the downtown core that realize the desired mixed use vision for the area, as it relates to aesthetics and character. The standards should aim to preserve the Art Deco heritage of downtown, and encourage new construction to respect, enhance, and blend with its defining architectural qualities.
6. Develop, fund, and execute appropriate maintenance strategies to ensure that public improvements are well maintained.



**FIG. 5.17**  
SITE AESTHETICS

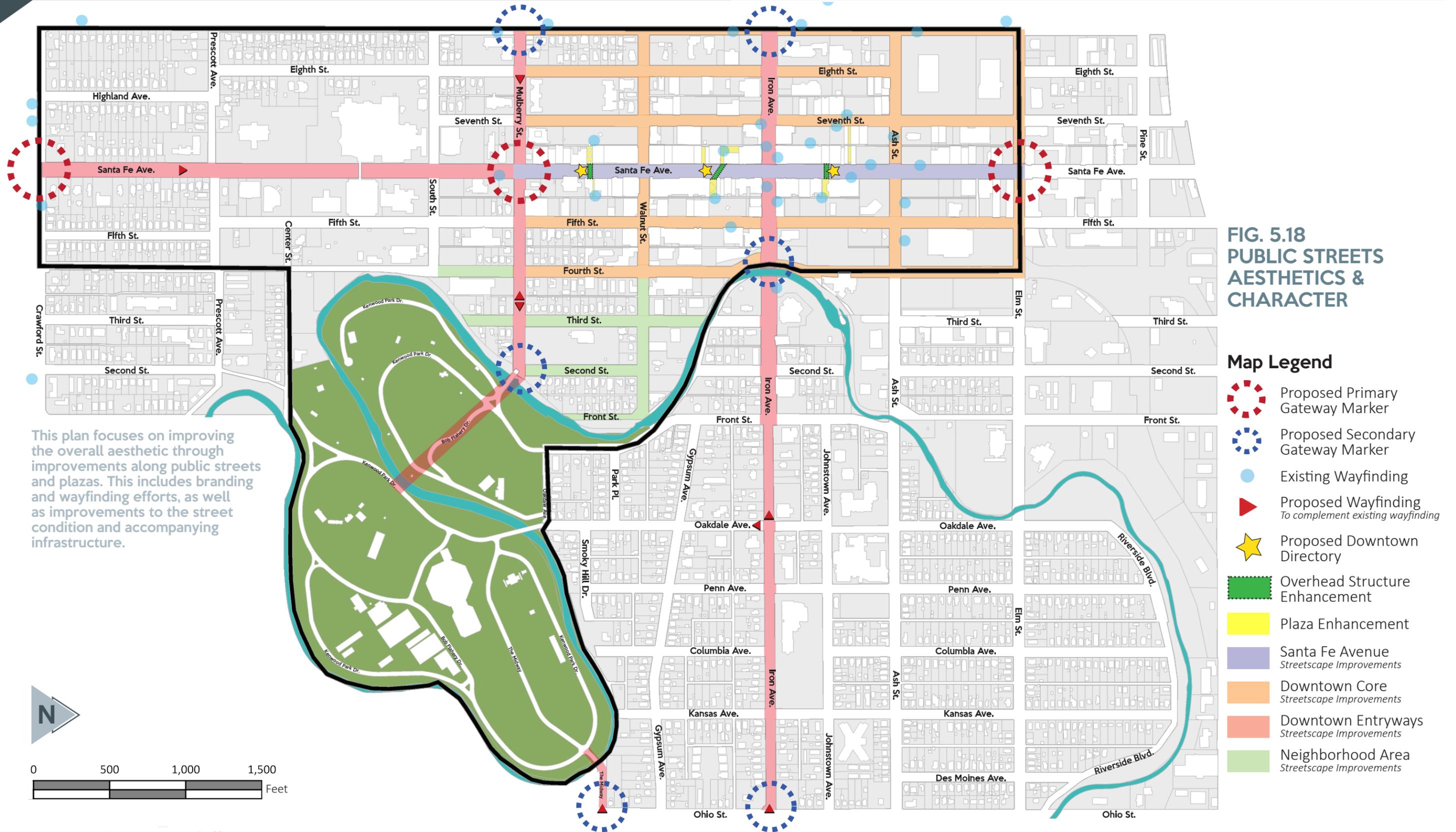
This plan focuses on improving the overall aesthetic of downtown through specific sites. Several facades were identified as dated. The plazas and arcades were noted as underutilized assets. Overall, the mixed use area (or downtown core) should receive aesthetic improvements, as detailed in this section, in order to improve the overall character and quality of downtown. The eastern and southern neighborhoods should receive targeted assistance through rehabilitation and redevelopment incentives.



**Map Legend**

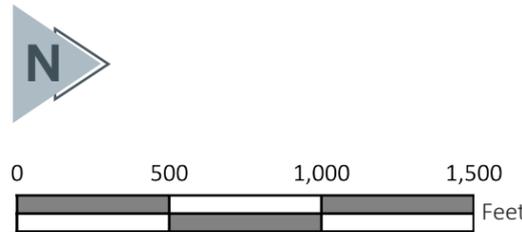
- Facade Improvements Candidate (Non-Residential)
- Proposed Plaza & Arcade Enhancements
- Downtown Garden Candidate
- Mixed Use Improvement Area  
*Use development & design standards along with targeted funding assistance programs to encourage the enhancement of buildings and sites within this area.*
- Neighborhood Improvement Area  
*Use rehabilitation incentive programs and targeted infill and redevelopment to enhance the quality of this neighborhood.*

# 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS



**FIG. 5.18**  
PUBLIC STREETS  
AESTHETICS &  
CHARACTER

This plan focuses on improving the overall aesthetic through improvements along public streets and plazas. This includes branding and wayfinding efforts, as well as improvements to the street condition and accompanying infrastructure.



Downtown Salina



Examples of gateways, such as those designed for Parkville, Missouri and Olathe, Kansas, highlight entryways into an important destination like downtown.

## Implement a System of Gateways

### *Strategy to Address Recommendation 1*

One of the most powerful ways to establish a brand or identity within a downtown district is through the incorporation of gateway elements. Gateways are a form of monumentation that are typically located at major intersections, nodes, or boundaries. Given the size of downtown, as well as its location within the Salina community and the surrounding region, one or two gateways will not suffice. Instead, a family of gateways that range in scale and significance should be developed. Though the different gateway elements may represent varying levels of importance, they should all be designed with the intent of reinforcing identity, improving first impressions, and possibly even telling a story. What follows is a synopsis of the two recommended levels of gateways, including locations for each.

### Primary Gateways

The three primary gateways should all be located at key intersections along Santa Fe Avenue, emphasizing its importance as the spine of downtown. At each location, a pair of large columns or a column/low wall combination should be installed as a part of the streetscape. See the images above for examples of each option. Designed properly, the primary gateways will create a sense of arrival that speaks to the character of downtown and the surrounding community. The three identified locations are as follows:

- o Santa Fe Avenue and Crawford Street (north side)
- o Santa Fe Avenue and Mulberry Street (north side)
- o Santa Fe Avenue and Elm Street (south side)

### Secondary Gateways

The secondary gateways should be located at downtown's other key entry points. They should be smaller in scale than the primary gateways, but have a similar design aesthetic. Though pairs of columns are preferred in these locations, space constraints may dictate that a single column be used in some instances. The six identified locations are as follows:

- o Mulberry Street and Ninth Street (east side)
- o Mulberry Street and Second Street (location TBD)
- o Iron Avenue and Ninth Street (east side)
- o Iron Avenue and Fourth Street (east side)
- o Ohio Street and The Midway (west side)
- o Ohio Street and Iron Avenue (west side)

# 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

## Streetscape Improvements

Strategy to Address Recommendation 2

Coordinated streetscape enhancements can have a transformational impact on the visual character of an aging downtown, often inspiring additional private reinvestment that was unlikely to occur otherwise. Though the level of recommended streetscape improvements may vary based on factors like land use, development density, and anticipated foot traffic, all improvement areas should have unifying characteristics that accentuate the vision for downtown. Such improvements may include some combination of street trees, landscaping, medians, sidewalks, crosswalks, site furnishings, lighting, gateways, public art, wayfinding, and branding elements.

Improvements should also address the basic functionality of the street, as necessary. For downtown Salina, improved functionality considers factors such as multimodal transportation networks, lane configuration, accessibility, and utility infrastructure. For a more in depth look at this aspect of streetscape improvements, see subsection **F. Mobility & Infrastructure**.

Streetscape improvement recommendations for downtown Salina have been broken down into multiple projects, based on location and the anticipated level of improvements. Before examining these projects, it first makes sense to briefly identify and summarize the family of elements that make up the streetscape toolkit for downtown Salina. When reviewing, understand that the **Development & Design Standards** discussed in **E. Development & Redevelopment** will use this same toolkit to define required streetscape improvements in the downtown core.



## STREETSCAPE TOOLKIT

### Street Trees and Landscaping

Landscaping is an essential component of any successful streetscape treatment, adding texture, rhythm, and seasonal color that serves to soften and enhance the surrounding built environment. While downtown Salina is certainly not devoid of landscaping, efforts appear inconsistent and uncoordinated. Furthermore, landscape maintenance is limited at best. To address these issues, recommended landscape improvements should include the following:

- o **Street trees** – With the proper species selection and spacing, street trees will provide tremendous structure and aesthetic value to the downtown streetscape without sacrificing the visual access to storefronts, front doors, and signage that business owners demand.
- o **Understory landscape beds** – Landscape beds should be used to soften wide pedestrian pathways, screen parking lots, and accentuate gateways, monuments and public art. Species should be selected for their beauty and form, but also for their ability to thrive within a limited maintenance approach.
- o **Landscaped medians** – Medians, which would be installed as part of a road diet in targeted locations, should be planted with a combination of understory plantings and

small, ornamental trees. Plants should be carefully selected to ensure that they do not block views or cause safety issues for drivers or pedestrians.

### Site Furnishings

Walkability is about more than sidewalks and crosswalks. A truly inviting pedestrian corridor should incorporate site furnishings and amenities. Such essentials include benches, seat walls, tables and chairs, trash receptacles, bike racks, directories, and bus shelters. These amenities should be primarily concentrated in high-traffic areas within the downtown core to ensure a high level of pedestrian convenience.

### Lighting

Effective lighting serves to provide access and safety, but can also be a defining characteristic of the streetscape rhythm. Downtown Salina has invested heavily in decorative lighting in recent years, and the results are impressive. Future streetscape efforts should build upon the aesthetic that the lighting has begun to establish.



### Sidewalks, Crosswalks, and Railroad Crossings

As discussed previously in **F. Mobility & Infrastructure**, developing a complete network of accessible sidewalks, crosswalks, and railroad crossings is a critical step in establishing a more pedestrian-friendly atmosphere. While sidewalk connections are mostly in place, crosswalks are not consistently located throughout downtown. Sidewalks and crosswalks in high-traffic activity centers should receive a higher level of treatment than those in the less traveled residential areas. Walks should be wider and finishes should be of a higher order, incorporating decorative paving that reacts to the surrounding architecture. Likewise, railroad crossings that are likely to encounter more pedestrian activity should be designed to include pedestrian gathering nodes that offer increased safety.

### Gateways

Gateways, which are discussed in more detail in **A Family of Gateways** should be located at the major entry points to downtown. They should serve as a visual cue to let visitors know that they are entering the downtown district. The style of the gateways should portray the desired vision of downtown.

### Public Art

Public art is clearly an integral part of Salina's downtown experience. As new streetscape improvements are made, careful consideration should be given to determining the best way to effectively plan for both permanent and temporary art installations, particularly along Santa Fe Avenue.

### Wayfinding

As its name suggests, wayfinding enhances the user experience by informing visitors of the attractions and services that a district has to offer. While vehicular wayfinding should address local attractions, amenities, and places of significance, pedestrian wayfinding should focus more on walkable attractions and businesses within downtown. Pedestrian-level kiosks or directories, located in high-traffic areas, can be extremely helpful and will often encourage people to park their cars and walk from one destination to another.

### Branding

Branding is a valuable tool for a district looking to establish or possibly reestablish an identity within the marketplace. In the case of downtown Salina, the branding message should reflect both its history and its aspirational vision of a fully revitalized downtown. Streetscape elements that may be designed to contribute to branding efforts include gateways, banners, customized site furnishings, and wayfinding.

## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Now that the toolkit has been established, it is important to understand how it may be applied to each of the recommended downtown streetscape projects.

### Santa Fe Avenue Improvements

Revitalization is largely dependent on increased investment in downtown's core assets, and Santa Fe Avenue is certainly that. It has been and always will be the spine of downtown. To this end, it is recommended that major improvements along Santa Fe Avenue, from Elm Street to Mulberry Street, be prioritized above other streetscape projects. Given its importance, this area should also receive the highest level of improvements. In addition to the road diet that has been previously discussed, improvements should include all the elements of the toolkit. Streetscape enhancements on Santa Fe Avenue should provide an updated, fresh look and feel for downtown; encourage visitors and patrons to stroll, enjoy, and experience a quality place; create a positive image of downtown; encourage private investment and risk taking on private property based upon reinvestment in the public realm; and encourage an active and lively street.

The following pages are full of images of the conceptual streetscape improvements for Santa Fe Avenue, though it is critical to emphasize that these recommendations are not final. *While the streetscape plans were vetted during the planning and engagement process, they are still just concepts and can be reexamined and adjusted during design development to properly meet the needs of the downtown community.*

### Downtown Core Improvements

The streetscape for the downtown core that surrounds Santa Fe Avenue, identified on **Figure 5.18 Public Streets Aesthetics & Character**, should receive improvements that include primary and secondary gateways, vehicular wayfinding, limited pedestrian wayfinding, and branding opportunities.

Additionally, deteriorating or missing sidewalks and crosswalks should be identified and replaced, and poorly lit areas should be addressed with decorative lighting that matches recent improvements.

### Major Downtown Entryway Improvements

Major downtown entryways that connect with the **Downtown Core – Mixed Use** District should be enhanced to establish a proper sense of arrival. In addition to resolving any sidewalk and crosswalk connection issues, improvements should include primary and secondary gateways, wayfinding, branding, and street trees. Recent decorative lighting efforts should be repeated along these entryways, as necessary and where appropriate. The downtown entryway connectors should include:

- o Santa Fe Avenue, from Crawford Street to Mulberry Street
- o Mulberry Street, from Kenwood Park Drive to Ninth Street
- o Iron Avenue, from Ohio Street to Ninth Street
- o The Midway, from Ohio Street to Kenwood Park Drive

### Neighborhood Improvement Area

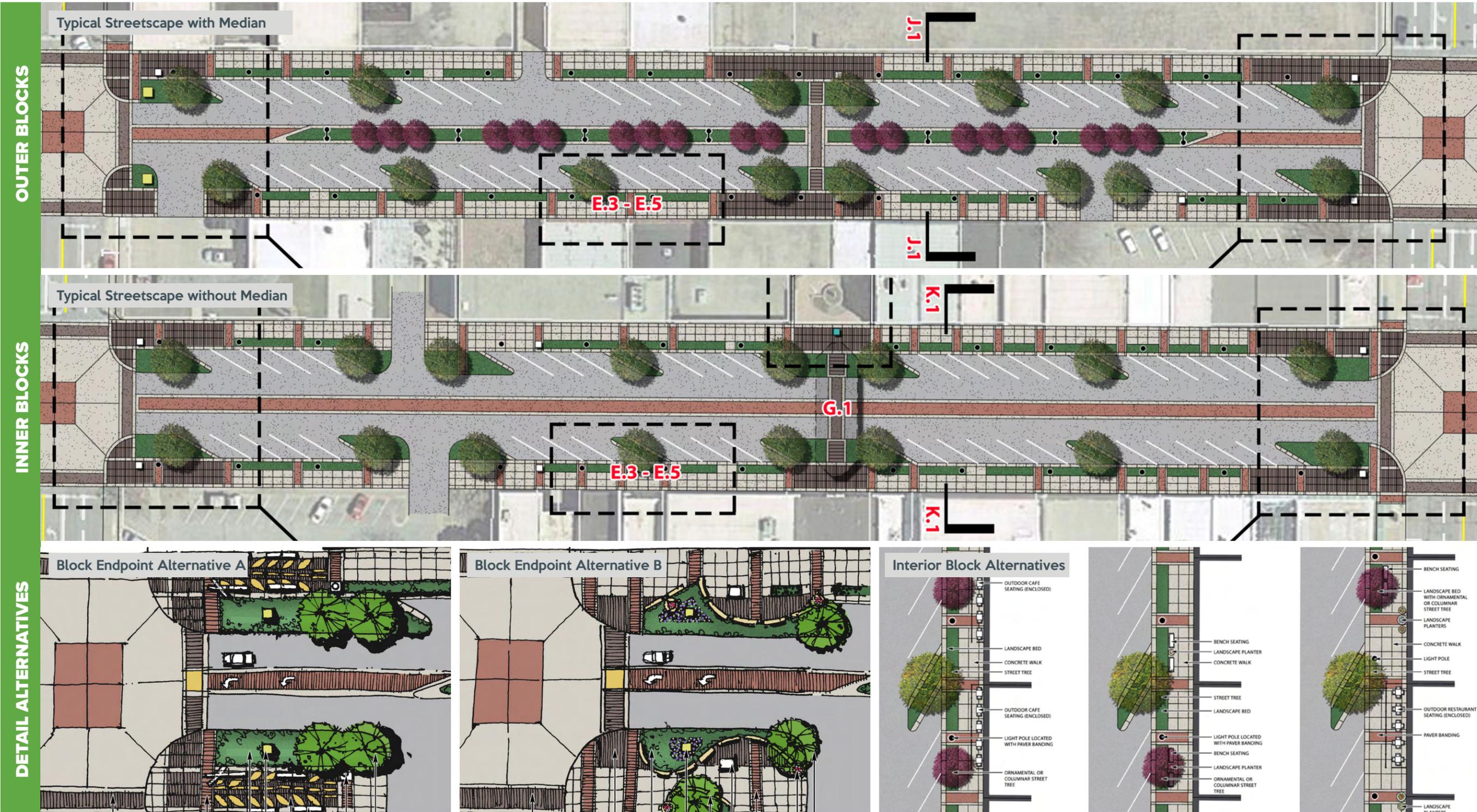
The remaining streetscape improvement project focuses on the residential neighborhood to the east of Fourth Street. While this area has been recommended for major redevelopment, that is likely a long-term project. In the short-term, the streetscape in this area is in poor condition and should be addressed in order to help stabilize the neighborhood. Improvements should include significant street, curb, sidewalk, and street tree improvements. The streets in this area could be prioritized for improvement and potentially be funded through the recent sales tax increase.

The residential neighborhood to the south of downtown is in better condition than the neighborhood east of Fourth Street. Instead of major redevelopment, rehabilitation incentives should be targeted within this neighborhood in order to preserve the valuable historic homes and sustain the health of the neighborhood.



The collection of images above and on the following pages demonstrate many of the proposed features of the conceptual Santa Fe Avenue Streetscape Plan, including a road diet, pedestrian hardscapes and community plazas, gateway monuments, light pole enhancements, overhead structure enhancements, sculpture bases, preferred material choices, and more.

SANTA FE AVENUE STREETScape PLAN



# 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

## SANTA FE AVENUE STREETScape ELEMENTS PALETTE

ELEMENTS

**Plaza Entry Sculpture**

- LED LIGHTS
- METAL SCULPTURE
- ART DECO MOTIF
- CROSS-BASE

**Sculpture Base**

**Gateway Monument**

- REPLICA LOST STIEFEL TOWER TOP
- BRICK COLUMN
- BACKLIT INLAY
- PRECAST BASE

**Light Pole Enhancement**

- EXISTING LIGHT POST W/ LED FIXTURE
- DOWNTOWN BANNER
- HANGING FLOWER BASKET
- LIGHT POST BASE

ELEMENTS

**Overhead Structure Enhancement**

**Overhead Structure Material Example**

**Curved Limestone Wall**

SITE FURNISHINGS

**Concord Collection / Landscapeforms**

**Cantena / Landscapeforms**

**MBR150 / Maglin**

**Duo / Structura**

**Contempra / Barkman**

SANTA FE AVENUE STREETScape MATERIALS PALETTE

**CONCRETE**

Grey Concrete, Broom Finish    Exposed Aggregate Concrete    Integral Colored Concrete

**PAVER BLENDS (BELGARD)**

Ashbury Haze    Bannockburn Red    Bristol Slate    Brookstone Slate

Burnt Amber    Burnt Walnut    Cotswold Mist    Gascony Tan

**PAVER TYPES (BELGARD)**

Eco Dublin Permeable    Eco Dublin Permeable    Eco Dublin Permeable    Urban Stone    Urban Stone

**WALL MATERIAL**

Dimensional, Split Face Kansas Limestone

Kansas Limestone with Cast Stone Cap

Custom Cast Stone Medallion

## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

### Facade and Building Improvements

*Strategy to Address Recommendation 3*

While development and redevelopment can be a great tool for revitalizing an aging downtown, the reality is that many of downtown's buildings have and will continue to outlive their users. The history that they encapsulate is an essential part of both the past and future successes of downtown Salina. To this end, the following rehabilitation strategies are recommended.

#### Façade and Site Improvements Program within the Downtown Core

Improvements to the buildings facades within the mixed use core should be incentivized to encourage enhancement of the district. While it is unclear who should operate this program, multiple incentives programs could fund this effort. The program should be designed to effectively leverage funding dollars for additional private reinvestment that contributes to the revitalization of downtown. Site improvements could be incentivized as part of this program, as long as they enhance the aesthetic of the greater downtown area, not just the functionality of a single property.

#### Façade & Site Improvements Program(s) within the Residential Neighborhoods

Improvements to the residential structures are equally important. While current building conditions are manageable, further deterioration could stunt progress toward revitalization. To address this problem, the City should lead a multi-pronged approach to stabilize the neighborhoods. As described in **Targeted & Incentivized Neighborhood Stabilization** under **E. Development & Redevelopment**, the stabilization approach should include neighborhood improvement plans, code enforcement, incentive programs, and the development of equitable and diverse housing. The incentive programs should address façade and site improvements, as well as maintenance.

### Integration of New and Enhanced Green Space

*Strategy to Address Recommendation 4*

Attractive, usable green space is a vital component of a sustainable downtown revitalization. As rooftops and foot traffic increase, so will the demand for the active spaces that enhance the quality of life for all user types within downtown. Specific recommendations have been organized into three distinct categories.

#### Public Plazas

Downtown Salina currently has four public plazas located directly adjacent to Santa Fe Avenue. Each is underutilized and outdated as an amenity, and thus it is recommended that each be redesigned to better address the needs of its user base. These improvements should be designed and constructed in coordination with the larger Santa Fe Avenue streetscape improvements. Final designs should consider all user types, including residents, business owners, employees, and both local and out-of-town visitors. They should also address the existing and future programming needs of downtown.

Though it is not within the scope of this document to provide final design recommendations for these plazas, there are two significant opportunities that should be considered. The first of these opportunities is located within **Campbell Plaza**. Of all the downtown plazas, Campbell offers the most potential for a centralized gathering spot. It is located in the heart of downtown, and the stage and mural that anchor it offer a great setting for smaller, outdoor performances. Unfortunately, the space feels cramped and the stage is not ideally oriented. Increased foot traffic will only exasperate these limitations.

In order to accommodate a larger plaza and amenities, it is recommended that the northern existing building be demolished and the area be incorporated into the plaza. This would open up the plaza in a way that would allow it to become a true centerpiece of the downtown experience. As shown in the example in **Figure 5.19 Campbell Plaza Concept**, a reoriented stage and amphitheater space would be capable of hosting larger performances without impacting pedestrian circulation. Furthermore, the central space could be designed to include an interactive fountain or splash pad feature that would allow the space to draw interest beyond the limitation of its use as an outdoor performance venue. The walks along the perimeter would be wide enough to include café-style seating perfect for employees and nearby residents looking for a spot to eat their lunch or outdoor dining for the adjacent buildings. The design and programming possibilities for a space like this could dramatically affect the downtown experience.

The second major opportunity exists within the L-shaped **Strand Plaza**, just south of Iron Avenue. In its current form, Strand Plaza receives limited use, in part because it feels strangely isolated from Santa Fe Avenue. One way to solve such an issue would be to create a destination that is not dependent on Santa Fe Avenue foot traffic, but rather the specific businesses that surround it. To this end, the recommendation is to redesign the plaza as an outdoor dining patio, as shown in **Figure 5.20 Strand Plaza Concept**. Of course, this concept would take some coordination as it is very much dependent on the idea that the plaza would be surrounded by restaurants and pubs that could take advantage of such a space. That said, it might also offer a unique business recruitment opportunity for downtown that does not currently exist.

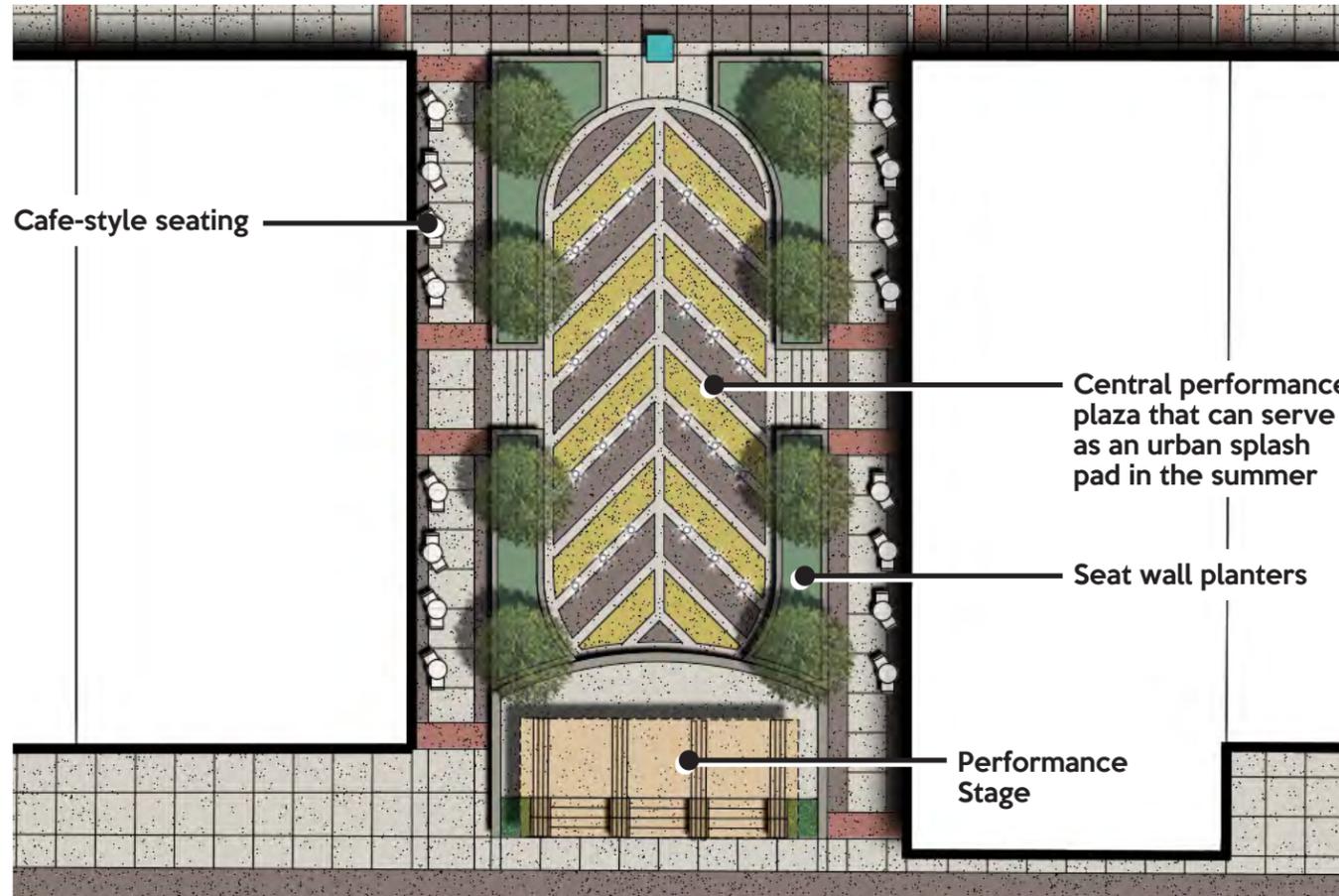
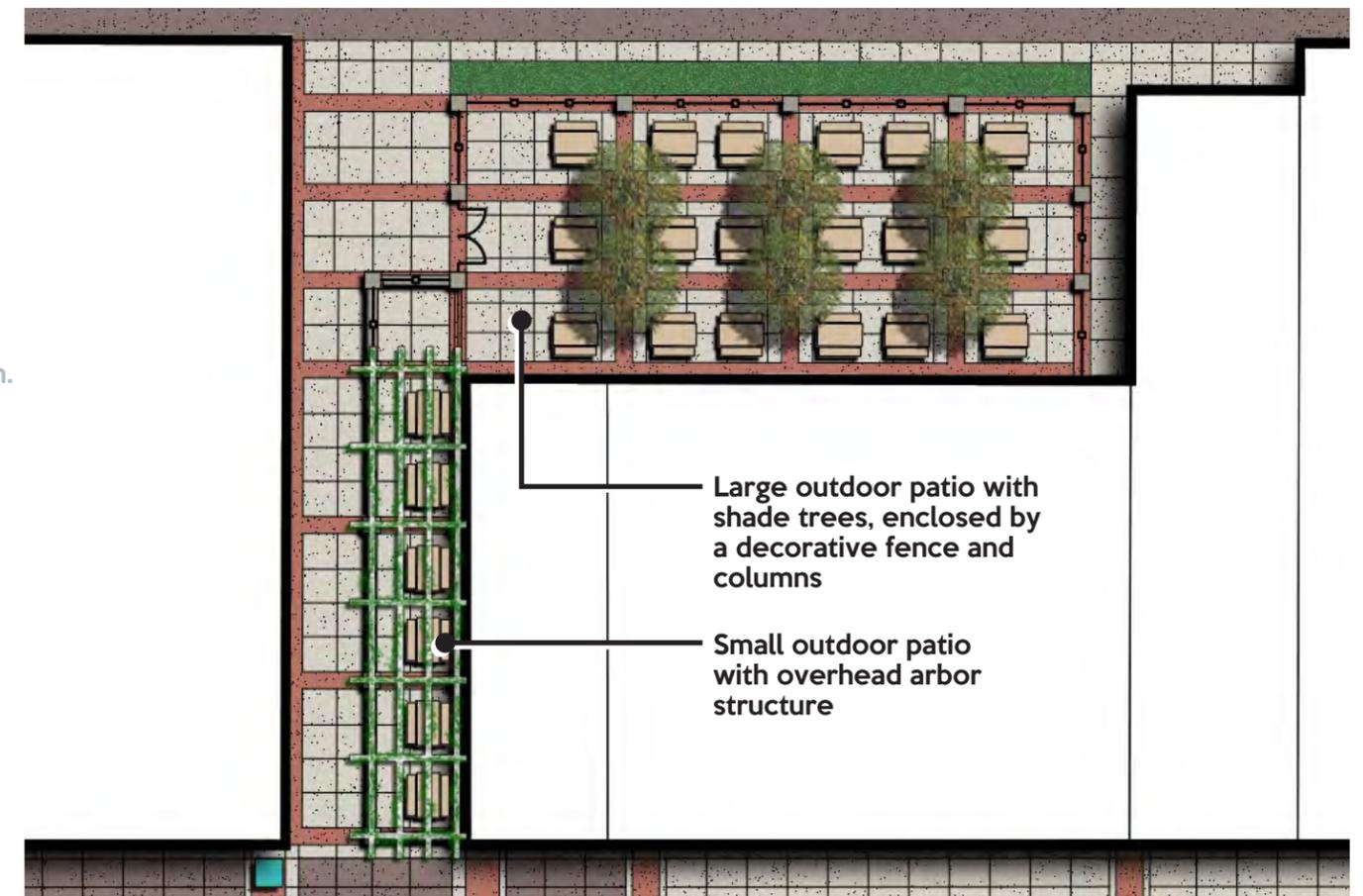


FIG. 5.19 CAMPBELL PLAZA CONCEPT PLAN VIEW

The concepts show how the Campbell and Strand Plaza could be redesigned to meet the needs of downtown users. In both cases, the proposed designs aim to encourage greater community interaction.



FIG. 5.20 STRAND PLAZA CONCEPT PLAN VIEW



## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

### PLANNING FOR HEALTHY FOOD, PART 2

Another aspect of local, healthy food systems that downtowns are beginning to embrace is the incorporation of food-generating gardens. Community gardens are often thought of by planners as a solution to vacant lots in urban neighborhoods. The gardens are maintained by local residents, who reap the benefits of their harvest.

A downtown garden however, surrounded by a mix of uses, offers a much different opportunity. The garden could serve as a food source for culinary businesses and cooks, offering fresh, locally grown produce. To make such an endeavor possible, there must be a sincere interest amongst downtown restaurant owners to participate in this “Farm to Table” approach. Furthermore, the implementation and long-term success of such a project will likely require some level of sponsorship and direction from a local organization.

Like farmers’ markets, food gardens of this nature hold the potential to foster entrepreneurial growth. Local cooks or fledgling restaurateurs could be recruited and encouraged to participate in the program, enhancing the culinary incubator programs already in place.



#### Downtown Gardens

Though the concept of community gardens has been around for years, their application within a downtown setting has really begun to take hold in the last decade. Increasingly, downtowns are recognizing that gardens offer a short-term solution for dealing with undeveloped or recently demolished property. For a downtown garden to work, someone must take ownership, as they are rarely successful with just volunteers or residents. This could be an organization, a local collective, or even an individual business owner. Regardless, the effort to grow and maintain a garden in this setting is no small task and should not be taken lightly.

The two ideal candidates for reuse as a community garden, described in **E. Development & Redevelopment**, are as follows:

- o The undeveloped lots along the east side of Fourth Street, north of the Art Center Warehouse
- o The undeveloped lot along the west side of Santa Fe Avenue, across from the Lee Buildings

The first candidate is in close proximity to a number of arts-focused uses, and the other is adjacent to the Saline County Health Department. Both seem like good fits and potential sponsors of such a garden. As previously discussed, there is also the possibility that a restaurant owner or a cooperative of owners might take on the challenge with the intent of incorporating the food that they grow into their own menus as part of a “Farm to Table” approach. This could lead to new social and cultural opportunities for downtown like a monthly happy hour or a “Locally Grown” dinner series centered around food grown in the garden. Such an approach would contribute to the sustainability of downtown and possibly establish a unique niche within the market.

Salina's culinary incubator program, supported by Kitchen 4 Hire, could also benefit from this cooperative. In fact, Kitchen

4 Hire may be the ideal candidate to organize its establishment, blending their incubator and farmers' market efforts with an opportunity to encourage local, healthy food consumption.

The benefits of such a use include low start-up costs and its ability to be easily moved or shuttered if need be. As downtown evolves in the coming years, the site may very well become a desirable location for infill development that positively impacts downtown. Using it as a garden cooperative in the short-term provides value to the community without sacrificing the ability to develop it into a more permanent use in the future.



## Parks and Open Space

Oakdale and Kenwood Park are fantastic assets to downtown and the surrounding community. While this plan addresses connectivity between the parks and the rest of downtown, the parks themselves do not require major improvements. In fact, the primary recommendations for parks and open space are simply to preserve what is already there and continue to monitor the wants and needs of the community from a parks and recreation perspective.

That said, there are three clear opportunities for enhancement of Oakdale Park that would add to the downtown experience. The first would be the enhancement of Eric Stein Stage toward the southwest end of the park. Replacing bleachers with more permanent, amphitheater-style seating would add to the aesthetic, function, and programming possibilities for this part of the park.

The second opportunity is the enhancement of the Smoky Hill River channel, and the park space that buffers it. While the future implementation timeline of the *Smoky Hill Renewal Master Plan* is unclear, there is little doubt that improvements to the channel, regardless of the scope, could have a positive impact on the park and the greater downtown area. **Figure 5.2 Illustrative Downtown Master Plan** identifies the establishment of a linear, riverfront park and trail along the west side of the channel. This recommendation would be part of a large redevelopment and is flexible enough to accommodate other improvement and redevelopment solutions in this area.

The third and final opportunity addresses connectivity between Oakdale and Kenwood Park. As described in **F. Mobility & Infrastructure**, it is recommended that a road extension of Bob Flahery Drive be constructed. This extension would include a bridge that spans the Smoky Hill River Channel.

## Maintaining Public Improvements

### Strategy to Address Recommendation 6

Maintenance is not a luxury of a successful downtown; it is a necessity. All public improvements should be planned, designed, constructed, and budgeted with continued maintenance in mind. Sidewalks, streets, plazas, landscaping, and the many streetscape furnishings and amenities must all be taken care of to ensure that they survive their intended life cycle. Downtown will not achieve the community's desired vision without long-term maintenance of its substantial investments. For a closer look at the maintenance of downtown, see **H. Operations & Maintenance**.



Proposed updates to Eric Stein Stage in Oakdale Park would allow for greater flexibility in audience size and performance type.

## Development & Design Standards

### Strategy to Address Recommendation 5

As previously discussed in **E. Development & Redevelopment**, development and design standards are an important part of both preserving and enhancing downtown. They should be carefully designed to ensure that as development, redevelopment, and reuse occurs within the district, the built environment remains true to the vision for long-term revitalization. The framework for this recommendation comes in the form of a coordinated, two-part approach. The first includes the development of a **Downtown Overlay** and five accompanying subdistricts, which will apply to the entire Plan area, excluding the parks. Refer to **Creation of a Downtown Overlay**, under **Recommendation Strategies, D. Land Use & Zoning** for additional details regarding the proposed overlay and subdistricts.

The second part of the approach is to update the *Design Guidelines for Downtown Salina* and expand their regulatory area to include the entire **Downtown Overlay**. The *Guidelines* should establish standards that go above and beyond what development standards typically require. Building, site, and streetscape materials should be addressed to ensure that the vision for downtown is carried out.

# 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

## H. OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

GUIDING PRINCIPLES 1 2 3 4 5 6

SUSTAINABILITY VALUES H+S L A+C ES EV

The business community’s operations refer to the way in which business owners—individually and collectively—run their restaurants, shops, and entertainment venues on a daily basis to meet the needs and demands of their customers. A mixed use area, such as downtown Salina, requires significant coordination between businesses. Without the coordination of events, marketing, and hours of operation, it is difficult to create a successful destination. While this standardization may be difficult, it is necessary to create a lively, mixed use area that draws customers throughout the day.

Maintenance within downtown Salina is also explored in this subsection. Sustainable revitalization, no matter how ambitious or well-funded, is ultimately dependent on the ability to maintain installed improvements throughout the life of their existence. While the expense of ongoing maintenance is not insignificant, its long-term benefits can far exceed short-term costs.

### KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

1. While the initial stages of cross-marketing efforts are apparent, the potential for downtown synergy amongst the many businesses and community events remains largely untapped. Salina Downtown, Inc. is positioned to play a large role in the strengthening of joint marketing initiatives, but faces funding and staffing issues, which limits its ability to maximize collaboration between businesses.
2. Current retail and restaurant hours are inconsistent and often inconvenient for customers, especially during the week and weekends, limiting nightlife. These inconsistencies result in weak weekday foot traffic and minimal nighttime traffic.
3. The public plazas and pedestrian streetscape areas throughout much of downtown are dated, and not always well maintained, thus reducing usability and investment potential.
4. Whether real or perceived, there is a concern amongst both business owners and patrons about the homeless population and their impact on safety within downtown. This concern may be limiting downtown foot traffic and operational hours, particularly in the evenings.
5. Existing downtown events are annual or monthly, tend to be narrow in focus, and do not typically align with business hours; therefore, the diversity of attendees is limited and the event attendees do not explore and enjoy downtown before and after the event.
6. Salina Downtown, Inc. — in its current form — simply does not have the funding or manpower necessary to facilitate full-scale revitalization.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Encourage innovative and consistent co-marketing strategies between downtown restaurants, entertainment venues, retail stores, and services that aim to increase visitor retainage.
2. Establish minimum standard and consistent business hours that accommodate downtown patrons throughout the day and evening.
3. Develop a manageable maintenance plan for all downtown public streetscape improvements, community areas, and green spaces.
4. Increase the safety of downtown business owners and visitors in order to encourage increased foot traffic and an extension of business hours.
5. Anticipate technology needs in areas of high foot traffic throughout downtown in order to connect existing and future businesses and the technology-driven user groups.
6. Create, staff, fund, and empower a new downtown organization and task them with leading the advancement of the Plan.

## RECOMMENDATION STRATEGIES

### Capitalize on & Bolster Current Event Programming

*Strategy to Address Recommendation 1*

As noted in **O. Events, Programs, & Activities** under **Section 2.0 Existing Conditions**, Salina’s citizens have dedicated a significant amount of time and money to activities and celebrations downtown. Arts and cultural events are quite prominent. Other longstanding happenings, such as the KKOA Car Show, play an equally important role in downtown’s success. These large-scale events have a regional draw that benefits Salina as a whole.

Small-scale weekly or monthly activities play a different, yet still vital role in the success and appeal of downtown. In fact, the viability of downtown is arguably more dependent on these reoccurring events, as they work to establish a consistent visitor base. The First Thursday Art Rush and live music hosted by Ad Astra Books and Coffee House are examples of these critical events that must be capitalized on and bolstered in order to create a lively downtown. What follows are specific strategies to further strengthen programming efforts.

#### Joint Marketing

Though current co-marketing efforts exist, they must become increasingly targeted and widespread. Joint marketing between restaurants, cultural and arts venues, retail stores, offices, and services should be offered. For example, before or after a show at the Stiefel Theatre, a local downtown restaurant could provide coupons or specials in an effort to retain downtown patrons throughout the evening. Salina Downtown, Inc. and the Cultural Roundtable should play key organizational roles in joint marketing efforts by organizing partnerships between businesses and venues and assisting with outreach and marketing. Ultimately, downtown should be an area that a visitor can enjoy throughout the day.

Social media and technology play a vital role in marketing and outreach. While most events, venues, and businesses already have a social media presence, the events must be clearly listed and advertised from a central site that is easily accessible, brief, and all-inclusive.

#### Enhancement of Current Events

Existing events would benefit from the addition of new activities and features that aim to attract downtown visitors of all ages. For example, the reoccurring First Thursday Art Rush, while its purpose is to support and advance culture- and arts-based amenities, should be enhanced with new programming elements. These elements may attract other age groups or those simply interested in different social and dining opportunities, rather than the arts. Possible programming additions include:

- o Multiple food trucks that offer a unique dining experience
- o Live music and performance offerings
- o Lengthened retail, restaurant, and service provider hours of operation
- o Sidewalk sales
- o Activities or contests with prizes that encourage participation

#### Increased Regulatory Flexibility

The City’s regulations regarding large events should be flexible enough to allow parts of Santa Fe Avenue to be blocked off for short periods of time. Identified in **Figure 5.5 Existing & Recommended Attractions** as item number 35, reduced restrictions will facilitate a "block party" atmosphere that allows the heart of downtown to accommodate larger crowds and encourage community interaction.

## PLANNING FOR VIBRANCY

Having built-in activities and attractions are certainly important to the establishment of a successful downtown atmosphere. But sometimes, you just have to throw a big party and give people a reason to show up. Planned community events can require significant coordination by its organizers, but the rewards of a large turnout are often long lasting.



Downtown Salina offers no shortage of community events, but the results in regards to attendance and impact are sometimes mixed. While this may simply be a symptom of the larger issues that downtown is attempting to overcome, revitalization efforts could offer a cure. The conceptual Santa Fe Avenue Streetscape Improvements were designed with the thought that the two central blocks (Ash Street to Walnut Street) could be closed off from vehicular traffic for larger community events. This “block party” would open up a wide range of new possibilities for big events, including larger outdoor performances, centrally located food trucks, and more. Though the closed street approach might cause some initial angst, the benefits of community building efforts such as this are invaluable.

## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

### Establish Standard Hours & Days of Operation

*Strategy to Address Recommendation 2*

The need for standard downtown retail, restaurant, and service business hours and days of operation was widely noted during all community engagement sessions. These inconsistencies cause downtown patrons to make multiple trips to meet their needs, or drive potential downtown patrons to other areas of the City for their goods, services, and entertainment. The current hours and days of operation for the businesses do not consistently align with a typical 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. work schedule, limiting downtown traffic to weekends. Nightlife, driven mainly by entertainment venues and restaurants, is also limited in downtown because of the hours of operation; hours should extend into the evening—9 to 10 p.m.—rather than ending at the end of a business day.

Staffing and financial concerns may arise for businesses considering lengthening their business hours. Yet, with collaboration between businesses and events, lengthened hours and days of operation will be viable. In time, the short-term difficulty will turn into a long-term success for downtown. That said, the extension of hours is likely an unreasonable request for some of the smaller and service-related businesses that currently exist downtown. This is reasonable, as long as these smaller operations are balanced out by businesses interested in serving the evening crowds.

It is recommended that recruitment of businesses to existing vacancies be focused on uses that are more likely to stay open later, such as restaurant and entertainment venues. Furthermore, new downtown residential opportunities and upcoming downtown attractions (e.g., fieldhouse and entertainment center) will create increased downtown traffic, which will ease concerns about the viability of expanded hours of operation.

### Develop a Maintenance & Security Plan

*Strategy to Address Recommendations 3-4*

Continual maintenance and security funding and support, though often overlooked, will play a major role in the long-term success of downtown Salina. Regardless of the extravagance or breadth of public improvements, their effect will be short-lived without manageable and targeted maintenance strategies. Likewise, the investment in increased security measures will pay long-term benefits by relieving the safety concerns of both downtown business owners and patrons, while increasing investor confidence and improving the livability of downtown.

The maintenance and security plan should be managed by an overarching and inclusive downtown organization, and should include the following items:

- o Regularly scheduled cleaning of litter and debris from arcades, public plazas, gateways, and parking lots;
- o Irrigation and maintenance of all landscape material;
- o Regular rotation and replacement of streetlight banners;
- o Repair or replacement of damaged site furnishings and amenities;
- o Repair or replacement of damaged sidewalks;
- o Repair or restoration of all public art sculptures, sculpture bases, and murals;
- o Emptying of trash receptacles;
- o Identification of poorly lit pedestrian spaces and a plan for relieving trouble areas via the installation of pedestrian-scale light fixtures;
- o Clearing of outdated marketing materials from posting areas; and
- o Hiring of downtown attendants as employees to perform maintenance, be a presence within downtown to deter delinquent activity, and provide on-street assistance for downtown patrons.

### Plan for & Implement a Downtown Wi-Fi Zone

*Strategy to Address Recommendation 5*

The benefits of widespread Wi-Fi are multifaceted and increasingly noted by cities and towns across the Country; Wi-Fi access is an economic development tool, as it attracts new businesses and increased numbers of downtown visitors and patrons. Additionally, establishing a Wi-Fi zone creates the impression of a forward-thinking district, where new ideas and technology are welcomed. Lastly, public Wi-Fi serves as a social service; it provides the opportunity to advance those persons without Wi-Fi availability in their residences where it is cost prohibitive or internet services are unavailable.

Increasingly, a public internet connection is a connectivity tool—where people can research the closest, highly rated restaurant, browse social media, or send a quick e-mail, without using expensive cellular data plans. Aside from the casual purposes listed, a free public Wi-Fi zone increases education and digital literacy, as well as tourism and downtown promotion opportunities.

A Wi-Fi zone overcomes the Digital Divide at all hours of the day. Whereas the Salina Public Library offers free internet access, a Wi-Fi zone provides reliable, convenient access to a multitude of ages and lifestyles: students, casual visitors, or employees of downtown businesses and companies.

Tourism efforts are increasingly supplemented by Wi-Fi zones. The zone can be set up with a landing webpage centered on downtown events and a listing of local restaurants and activities. By offering a simple service—allowing someone to quickly check their e-mail—downtown patrons, visitors, and passersby will learn about what downtown offers and be motivated to visit again.

For these reasons, it is recommended that a downtown Wi-Fi zone be established that covers all or part of the area designated as **Downtown Core – Mixed Use**. Instead of simply creating Wi-Fi hotspots, a zone—or mesh system—is recommended. With a mesh system, several devices “talk to each other” and serve a larger area. Then, as a visitor walks through the downtown Wi-Fi zone, their smart phone or computer will pick up a signal continuously and seamlessly, without needing to reconnect to a new area. The implementation of a Wi-Fi zone should be incorporated into wayfinding efforts, and specifically the proposed Santa Fe Avenue Streetscape. Access points can be integrated into downtown kiosks or light poles. Appropriate signage should be displayed throughout downtown to advertise the zone.

Securing funding for a Wi-Fi zone can prove challenging, but with stakeholder and business support, it is possible. Various funding strategies exist, such as a pilot program or advertising opportunities. A pilot program can lessen initial and long-term maintenance costs associated to the zone. This period allows an area to test the effectiveness of the zone on visitor numbers. Alternatively, an internet provider could be recruited to provide widespread Wi-Fi, and simply recoup their costs through advertising opportunities.

Once the Wi-Fi zone is running, minimal ongoing maintenance is required. Troubleshooting access points or adjusting settings as the zone continues to respond to public input may be necessary.

### Create a Downtown Salina Renaissance Organization

*Strategy to Address Recommendation 6*

While Salina Downtown, Inc. works tirelessly to promote downtown and its associated business owners, the time has come to think bigger. In order to ensure the successful

implementation of the Plan, it is recommended that SDI be integrated into a larger, more-inclusive organization, capable of managing large-scale downtown marketing campaigns and developing relationships with the regional development community. The existing staff and their general roles and responsibilities should be preserved, while new staff with new responsibilities are added.

This new Organization, more robust than ever, should be tasked with advancing the Plan’s recommendations. Specifically, they should have the following responsibilities:

- o Seek funding opportunities for projects;
- o Seek potential tenants, retailers, and businesses to locate in downtown Salina;
- o Solicit developer interest in redevelopment and development projects;
- o Hold monthly or quarterly meetings with the members;
- o Implement recommendations, leveraging available dollars with larger funding sources;
- o Identify, hire, and manage consultants to assist in the process;
- o Hire and manage maintenance and security officers;
- o Track the progress of downtown revitalization efforts;
- o Purchase available properties; and
- o Actively and regularly coordinate with the City on revitalization efforts.

The Organization should be established as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, guided by both a Board of Directors and an Advisory Committee. The Board of Directors should provide corporate governance, oversight, marketing and resource identification, as well as guidance and oversight to office staff. As a key responsibility, the Board should set the annual budget. If regulatory procedures allow, the existing BID Board of Directors and the proposed CID Board of Directors should be one and the same, resulting in a more streamlined and unified revitalization process.

The Advisory Committee, comprised of representatives of the community, business groups, and downtown neighborhoods, should provide an outlet for information exchange and discussion of policy alternatives for the Plan.

Of course, this new Organization requires new funding sources. To further bolster the revenue generated by the BID — approximately \$82,000 annually — it is recommended that a Community Improvement District (CID) be formed with the intent of capturing sales tax revenue. Such a tool has proven to be quite successful in communities all across Kansas and Missouri, offering a long-term fund generator that can be used for a variety of improvements and reinvestment incentives.

For a more comprehensive look at the organizational framework and recommended funding sources for the Downtown Salina Renaissance Organization, see **Section 6.0 Implementation**.



**FIG. 5.21 WI-FI INTEGRATION CONCEPT**