

# SOUTH DOWNTOWN BROWNFIELD STUDY Final Report

FLINT HILLS  
REGION

City of  
Manhattan  
Kansas

 Stantec





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND STUDY PURPOSE

## 1. Introduction and Study Purpose

### 1.1: Introduction

The South Downtown Brownfield Study (SDBS or Study) was conducted as part of the Flint Hills Regional Council (FHRC) United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfield Assessment Coalition grant in which the City of Manhattan (City) is a coalition partner. The grant funds property inventories, environmental site assessments, cleanup, and reuse planning activities that support (and promote) brownfield assessment, cleanup, and revitalization.

Starting in mid-2023 and continuing through January 2024, the City, Stantec (FHRC's selected consultant), and community stakeholders embarked on a brownfield study with the following objectives:

- Identify owners who would volunteer their property to serve as catalyst sites.
- Inform property owners and business operators about the (SDBS).
- Interact with stakeholders to explore current conditions and future visions for potential stabilization or redevelopment.
- Integrate the findings to reflect support for 1) stabilization where applicable, 2) investment where identified, and 3) improved connectivity.

Community participants shared concerns and provided ideas for how brownfield properties within the SDBS Area (Study Area) could serve as "Areas of Stability and Maintenance" or "Areas of Change and Improvement" in relation to the downtown, surrounding neighborhoods, and adjacent corridors. This Final Report summarizes the process, highlights engagement feedback, provides development concepts, and presents next steps.

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*It is important to note the difference between a study and a plan, which would rely on a study for framing, but occur on a larger scale with increased community engagement and over a longer timeline.*

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### 1.2: Correlation to the Beyond Tomorrow Downtown Plan

The SDBS was completed as a sub-study of the Beyond Tomorrow Downtown Plan (BTDP or Plan), which was concurrently underway.

The BTDP focuses on the traditional downtown defined by a highly walkable grid with established commercial land uses, including retail and professional services, and civic spaces. The Plan also recognizes adjacent "Auxiliary Areas" as opportunities for community desired improvements stemming from the planning process.

The intent of the SDBS was to explore in detail some of the conditions and opportunities for the geography located to the south and southwest of the more developed downtown, and on the "dry side" of the levee. In the BTDP, a reader will find the Study Area included in the "Riverfront" sub-area.

Early in the BTDP process, the City convened a Steering Committee with stakeholders representing key organizations, sectors/industries, non-profits, etc. and liaised by City staff. This committee extended their initial task of the larger BTDP area to specifically review and provide input on the SDBS.

### 1.3: Brownfields and Site Reuse Planning

The EPA provides funding and technical assistance to local communities addressing historical and current "brownfield" conditions and to explore redevelopment activities on sites, neighborhoods, and corridors.

Brownfield is defined as “a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.” Former automobile service stations, abandoned properties, and structures with hazardous building materials are included in the EPA definition of brownfields.

Historically, brownfield sites remain abandoned (or underutilized) due to uncertainties of the property conditions and cleanup requirements and create prolonged challenges to neighborhoods. The presence of the environmental liabilities can complicate the redevelopment of these sites, as well as result in significant added costs (and delays) for abatement, demolition, and environmental investigation and cleanup. Proactive planning, studies, and strategies can help position brownfields for new community-serving purposes.

Site reuse planning is an eligible activity under the EPA Brownfield Assessment Coalition grant program allowing property owners and stakeholders to explore redevelopment options that align with neighborhood needs, market demands, as well as environmental and economic goals. At the voluntary discretion of a property owner, site reuse plans allow the landowner, businesses, and communities to examine existing site conditions and impediments, engage in feedback exercises, hear from professional advisors, and start exploring concepts that could lead to a more complete planning process.

#### 1.4: Study Area

The SDBS Area (Study Area) generally described as south downtown is a commercial and industrial district mostly south of Ft. Riley Blvd., with a small portion north of the Blvd. It is surrounded by the core downtown to the north, the Kansas River and a wooded area to the east and south, and residential neighborhoods on the west.

The Study Area was selected because of its strategic location – encompassing commercial and industrial uses; its proximity to

residential neighborhoods, various transportation modes, parks and trails; and its position between the downtown and the riverfront.

This area was identified for a brownfield study because of its potential to improve the quality-of-life status and environmental conditions, while increasing its economic potential and community resiliency for residents, property owners, and businesses.

Within the Study Area, two brownfield sites were volunteered by property owners to serve as Catalyst Sites for conceptual redevelopment.

Those sites were:

1. Midwest Concrete Materials (MCM) 701 S 4th St.
2. Be Able Community Center (Be Able) 432 S 5th St.



Figure 1.1. SDBS Area, BTDP Area, and Auxiliary Areas

## 1.5: Study Process

The SDBS will be integrated into the BTDP review and approval process and, therefore, followed a similar industry approach for consistency. Generally speaking, a study or plan process typically involves the following six steps.

**1: Trigger:** An event occurs highlighting the need for a study.

*The Flint Hills Regional Council is a recipient of an EPA Brownfields grant. As a member community of the FHRC, the City of Manhattan has access to these funds for the purposes of identification and reuse planning for brownfield sites and their surrounding areas.*

**2: Initiation:** Identify key issues impacting land use and a framework for future development conversations.

*Through the initiation of the Beyond Tomorrow Downtown Plan, the City identifies a need to further study the South Downtown area in greater detail. Due to the existence of brownfield sites (based on historic land use) this area meets the qualifications of the EPA Brownfield grant.*

**3: Research:** Explore influential existing conditions. Review existing materials, including other communities' case studies, best practices, and national, state, and local reports.

*Leveraging the research compiled by the City for the BTDP, Stantec reviews existing conditions and visits with local stakeholders to better understand and review the study area.*

**4: Synthesis:** Analyze research and create a strategy.

*Stantec assembles the research into a planning framework, exploring redevelopment scenarios, and generating implementation strategies to address issues and highlight future possibilities to inform a full planning process/project for the Study Area.*

**5: Confirmation:** Present deliverables.

*Stantec creates supporting documents and completed materials throughout the process, including this Final Report for City staff, the BTDP Steering Committee, government officials, property owners, and community stakeholders to review.*

**6: Implementation:** Identify implementation actions.

*Stantec recommends priorities to move work forward. Upon approval and of the BTDP, these actions could be implemented by necessary parties.*

## 1.6: SDBS Timeline and Deliverables

The SDBS followed the BTDP schedule to align research efforts, stakeholder engagement, and shared milestones. Throughout the Study, Stantec took direction from the BTDP to ensure consistency in messaging, to avoid confusion in mistaking the two projects as independent efforts, to provide clarity on community feedback, and to ensure coherent connection where applicable.

**Figure 1.2** shows the project timeline and deliverables.

The SDBS deliverables included the following:

- **Community Engagement:** Stakeholder meetings, door-to-door neighborhood outreach, 1-on-1 conversations with property owners and business operators, and a BTDP Steering Committee focus group were conducted.
- **Existing Conditions Analysis:** Stantec prepared this document based on secondary research, including the BTDP Background Report, with an ADVO Analysis. This is included as Appendix A to the Final BTDP Report.
- **Concept Development:** Chapter 4, Development Goals and Strategies, speaks to this deliverable providing district characteristics, concepts, renderings, and comparative images in relation to sub-areas and catalyst sites within the Study Area.
- **Reporting & Handoff:** This Final Report with supporting materials is provided to City staff for inclusion in the BTDP timeframe.

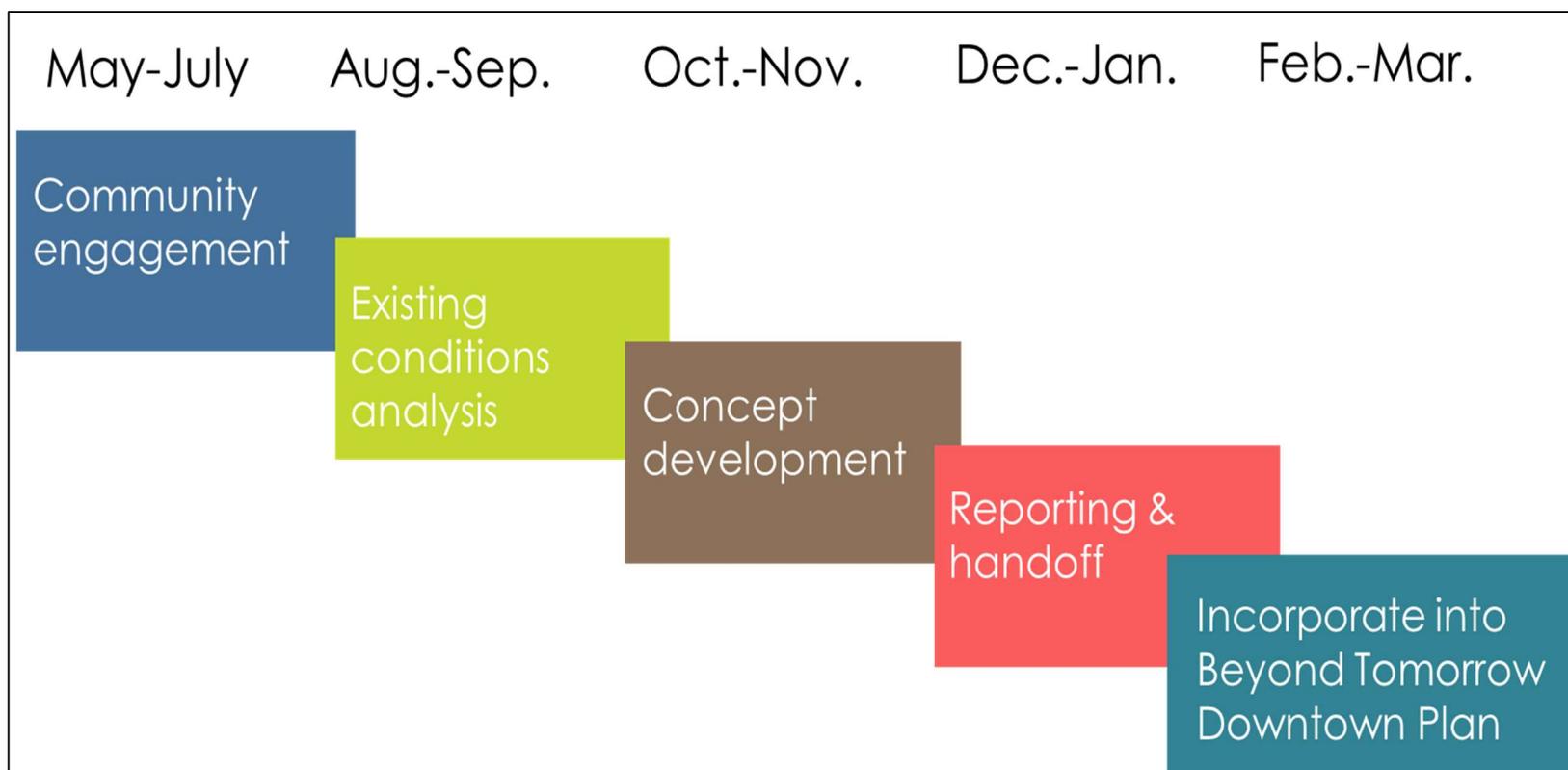


Figure 1.2. Project Timeline and Deliverables

# CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## 2. Community Engagement

### 2.1: Classification of Stakeholders

Additional motivation for examining the south downtown area in addition to the ones previously mentioned (1.4, pg.8), comes from past and current conversations on investment in the riverfront as seen in other communities across the country.

Results of the 2019 City of Manhattan Community Survey showed '74% of citizens "support" or "strongly support" development of the Kansas Riverfront'. This recommendation has been voiced in every downtown plan since at least 1979. The community has long recognized that prime development in this area could serve as a local quality of life asset and a regional attraction.

While broader community sentiment indicates strong support for revitalization, it should also be noted that others, including residents, business operators, and property owners within and adjacent to the Study Area have expressed concern for unintended consequences of revitalization, including gentrification, displacement, increased rents, current lack of zoned land for commercial and industrial uses, etc.

Throughout the process, it was reinforced that the concerns and visions of these stakeholders should be evaluated concurrently. The two groups have been named external (those who work/live outside of the Study Area) and internal (those who work/live inside of the Study Area).

The BTDP Steering Committee were aware of, informed on, and served as a sounding board for the contrast between the two groups ensuring integration into the larger downtown vision.

Common issues, shared by both internal and external stakeholders, were identified as key guiding visions for the recommendations.

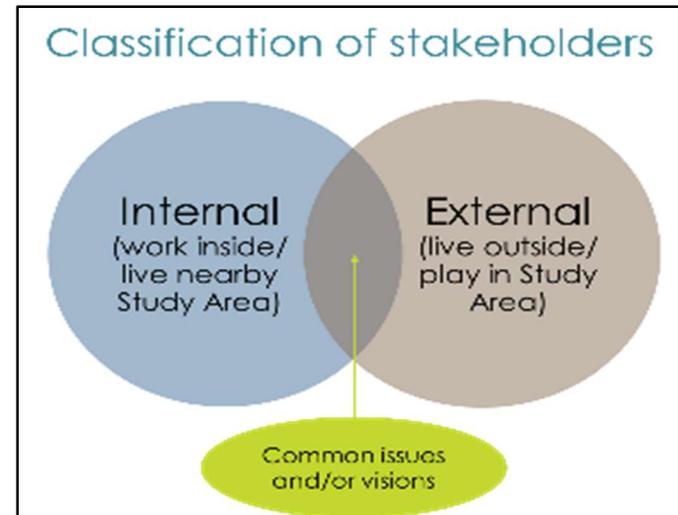


Figure 2.1. Classification of Stakeholders

#### Internal stakeholder concerns:

- Truck traffic from industrial properties
- Displacement/gentrification
- Permittable workspaces for current land-uses
- Logistical efficiencies

#### External stakeholder concerns:

- Better impression of Riverfront
- Riverfront access
- Connection to Downtown
- Support growth

#### Shared concerns and/or visions:

- Not forcing out existing businesses
- Better access to Linear Trail
- Middle income housing stabilization and added units
- Bike-Ped amenities complimentary to residential uses

## 2.2: Community Engagement Activities

The process provided engagement activities to introduce the project and seek input on concerns, ideas, and long-term vision for the Study Area, including:

- Five (5) business operator and property owner listening sessions
- Two (2) neighborhood/resident listening sessions
- Two (2) door-to-door neighborhood outreach sessions
- Two (1 each) visits to Catalyst Sites
- One (1) BTDP Steering Committee focus group
- One (1) open house activity in conjunction with BTDP outreach efforts



Photos 2.2, 2.3, 2.4: BTDP Steering Committee focus group.

## 2.3: Sample Feedback

In summary, main stakeholder feedback identified:

1. A strong desire to respect the authentic and historic character of the residential neighborhoods,
2. Improved multimodal transportation connections,
3. Redevelopment of large industrial properties,
4. Opportunity to add affordable housing options, and
5. Increased connectivity between the established downtown and the Riverfront.

Additional themes included:

- Reduce conflicts from mix of land uses.
- Ensure revitalization without displacement.
- Prevent gentrification and unaffordability.
- “Is this a location for housing – workforce, 65+, other?”
- Balance vehicle access with increased transit access.
- Better pedestrian connection to the Linear Trail, Southeast Park, and Riverfront.
- “The community still has service needs [in this area].”
- “Infrastructure updates are needed.”
- Current MCM site is both ideal for MCM operations and ripe for development given certain market conditions.

# CHAPTER 3: EXISTING CONDITIONS REVIEW

## 3. Existing Conditions Review

### 3.1: SDBS Existing Conditions Review

Historical research, in-person observation, and community feedback combine to create a deliverable that identifies and frames characteristics and issues of a study area. This material is usually entitled as “existing conditions review”, “background report”, or similar term.

This step in a study or planning process acts a validation and a “jumping off point” for the preceding steps in a process. Completing this step frames future work, while giving the effort validity.

Previous studies and project-related public engagement informed the SDBS Existing Conditions Review. However, the BTDP Background Report provided most of the necessary information needed.

Additional applicable information from the BTDP process and Background Report have been reviewed and summarized in SDBS deliverables.

This grounding information constructs a planning framework to then explore development concepts, including improvements, investments, and stabilization activities.

The complete SDBS Existing Conditions Review is labeled as Appendix A in this Final Report and can be found as a separate document.

### 3.2: ADVO Analysis

The BTDP Background Report is organized into chapters covering various planning related topics. Each chapter identifies Advantages, Disadvantages, Vulnerabilities, and Opportunities (“ADVOs”) of the topic in relation to downtown.

Thus, the SDBS Existing Conditions Review follows the same flow and organization and provides an ADVO Analysis for applicable planning sectors to the Study Area (Page 16-18). This serves as a quick overview of the Existing Conditions Review for this Final Report.

The following table lists the primary ADVOs that can be applied as guiding principles for the South Downtown Brownfield Study.

	<i>Advantages: Assets or conditions already existing or established that are currently lending positively toward downtown’s continued success.</i>
	<i>Disadvantages: Assets or conditions already existing or established that are currently hindering downtown’s success or potential.</i>
	<i>Vulnerabilities: Internal or external conditions that if not addressed or planned for may negatively affect downtown’s success or vitality in the future.</i>
	<i>Opportunities: Internal or external conditions that have the potential to positively affect downtown’s success or vitality in the future if properly planned for.</i>

Table 3.1: ADVO Analysis Key

**Table 3.2: SDBS ADVO Analysis Table**

	<b>Planning Topic</b>	<b>Top Advantages</b>	<b>Top Disadvantages</b>	<b>Top Vulnerabilities</b>	<b>Top Opportunities</b>
	<b>Planning Context</b>	<p>Strategic location encompassing of commercial and industrial uses</p> <p>Access to riverfront and downtown with strong support for development</p>	<p>No current plan to direct the future potential change</p> <p>Safe access across Ft Riley Blvd and limited access across Union Pacific railroad tracks</p>	<p>Being competitive in attracting new compatible land uses</p> <p>Area historically subject to flooding prior to levee</p>	<p>Catalyst and bridge to connect downtown to riverfront and natural areas</p>
	<b>Land Use and Redevelopment Recreation</b>	<p>Proximity to downtown and access to major roads.</p> <p>High redevelopment potential</p> <p>Use existing infrastructure</p>	<p>Less compact urban form development</p>	<p>Can built environment adapt to future market models</p>	<p>Industrial/Commercial mix ideal for future innovation-flex spaces</p>
	<b>Economy and Visitation</b>	<p>Adjacent to and potentially able to be added to existing well-managed Business Improvement District</p> <p>High Occupancy rates and demand</p>	<p>Low patron loyalty</p> <p>Low availability of appropriate space</p>	<p>Spaces/structures not suited for adaptive reuse</p> <p>Changes and uncertain shifts in workforce and commercial patterns/needs</p> <p>New zoning regulations not in place</p>	<p>New businesses could be supported by activities occurring at Convention Center, and Blue Earth Plaza area and lodging</p> <p>Heritage Tourism</p>
	<b>Demographics</b>	<p>Skilled Labor force</p> <p>Anticipated population growth with new employers</p>	<p>Very little population within downtown proper</p>	<p>Population stagnation</p> <p>Low-to-moderate income population Displacement due to redevelopment</p>	<p>Redevelopment and rehabilitation programs</p>
	<b>Housing</b>	<p>Zoning accommodates dense housing</p>	<p>Land availability and high costs of redevelopment</p>	<p>Feasibility to rehabilitate/renovate aging stock</p>	<p>Feasibility to rehabilitate/renovate aging stock</p>

**Table 3.2: SDBS ADVO Analysis Table**

	<b>Planning Topic</b>	<b>Top Advantages</b>	<b>Top Disadvantages</b>	<b>Top Vulnerabilities</b>	<b>Top Opportunities</b>
	<b>Community Services</b>	<p>Proximity to client base</p> <p>Different housing and service provider models available</p>	<p>Lack of transportation options</p> <p>Low availability of health treatment providers especially mental health</p>	<p>Being priced out of space</p> <p>No cohesive vision for future locations</p> <p>Service organization clustering</p>	<p>Housing options for clients and employees in proximity</p>
	<b>Art and Entertainment</b>	<p>Existing venues and projects coming online</p> <p>Availability of spaces that could provide community desired outdoor concert and/or entertainment venue</p>	<p>Deficiency of well-known scene</p>	<p>Missing potential economic and cultural impacts</p>	<p>Branding an identity</p> <p>Development of the Riverfront and connection to Linear Trail</p>
	<b>Building and District Design</b>	<p>Low public appreciation of buildings reduces potential redevelopment conflicts</p>	<p>Areas lack a high-quality sense of place and cohesive design</p> <p>Ft. Riley Boulevard and railroad are barriers linking Study Area to the rest of downtown</p>	<p>No guidance for development compatibility</p>	<p>Adoption of design standards and/or guidelines to tie Downtown with Linear Trail and riverfront</p>
	<b>Historic Preservation</b>	<p>Pre-existing historic assets can use preservation financial incentives to rehabilitate and adapt buildings</p>	<p>Significant loss of historic resources through previous redevelopments</p>	<p>Redevelopment pressure threatening historic character and historic preservation hindering redevelopment opportunities</p>	<p>Additional rehabilitation and promotion of unique cultural identity opportunities available</p> <p>Heritage Tourism</p>
	<b>Parking</b>	<p>Existing large inventory of parking spaces</p>	<p>High number of underutilized parking</p>	<p>Ability to adapt to future transportation behaviors</p>	<p>Improving parking spaces, pedestrian experience, and parking perception</p>

**Table 3.2: SDBS ADVO Analysis Table**

	Planning Topic	Top Advantages	Top Disadvantages	Top Vulnerabilities	Top Opportunities
	<b>Transportation</b>	Adjacent highly walkable and bikeable areas	Constraints to expansion, transportation barriers, and limited access	Circulation and traffic volume issues	Improving walkability, bike-ability, and transit
	<b>Utilities and Safety</b>	A low level of safety issues in the district	Lack of stormwater capacity	Costly future utility and infrastructure upgrades	Coordination of upgrades with redevelopment projects  Improvement of CPTED principles.



**Photo 3.3:** Existing View along 3<sup>rd</sup> Street looking North across Fort Riley Boulevard

# CHAPTER 4: DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES AND GOALS

## 4. Development Principles and Goals

### 4.1: Redevelopment Potential

#### 4.1.1: Redevelopment Potential Factors

Plan areas must be assessed to gauge if they are serving the highest and best use, what potential they have, and how market and development conditions may highlight them for potential redevelopment.

The BTDP utilized several factors for understanding if properties within the district and sub-areas were serving the highest and best use, what impact market forces might apply to them, and highlight conditions for potential redevelopment. For more information, see Chapter 2 Land Use, Redevelopment, & Recreation of the BTDP. These factors include, but are not limited to:

Intrinsic Redevelopment Factors	Extrinsic Redevelopment Factors
Building value	Land value
Structure age and condition	Adjacency to sensitive or supportive uses
Ownership extent	Local, regional, and national economic conditions
Building permit history	Zoning and development factors
Vacancy	Historic protections

Table 4.1: Redevelopment Factors

In addition to these examples listed above, the background report of the BTDP provides further examples of factors that influence redevelopment potential.

#### 4.1.2: Redevelopment Analysis Applied to the Study Area

The SDBS reviewed some of the more significant redevelopment factors.

##### Building-to-Land-Value Ratio

Per the BTDP, ‘the higher the building value in relation to the land value is reflective of the extrinsic market assigning a higher value to property in relation to what is built on that property. What is built reflects how the location value of a property has been leveraged, since a higher building value typically means a higher quality of space to conduct business or house people.

This is adjacent to the concept of “highest and best use” of a property and indicates stability. On the other hand, a lower building value in relation to the land value indicates an opportunity for redevelopment due to a lower market barrier in terms of cost of acquisition and demolition.’

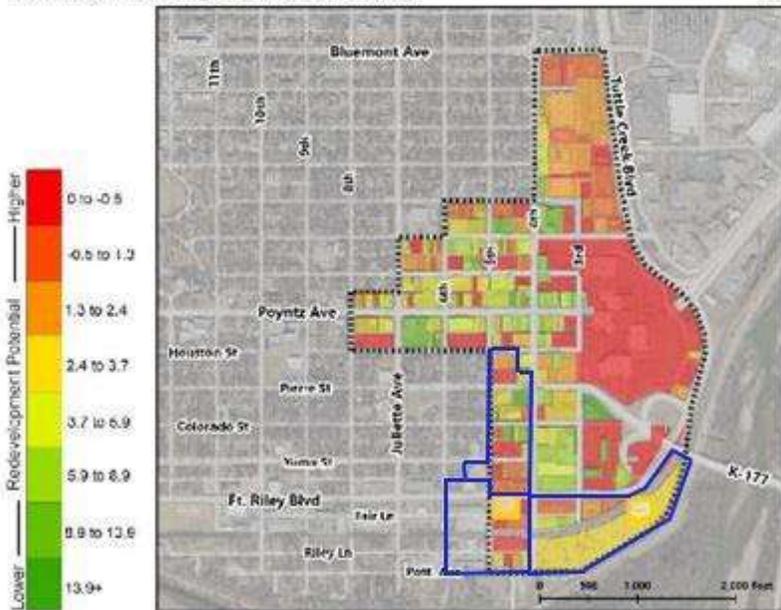
Based on an evaluation of Building-to-Land-Value ratios in the BTDP, properties in the South Downtown Study Area have a medium to high level of redevelopment potential.

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***Based on an evaluation of Building-to-Land-Value ratios, properties in the Study Area have a medium to high level of redevelopment potential.***

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### Downtown Building-to-Land-Value Ratio



Source: Riley County Parcel Data, 2023

Figure 4.2: Downtown Building-to-Land-Value Ratios (study area delineated in blue)

Additionally, respondents to the BTDP business survey selected the South Downtown Study Area as one of the top locations in downtown where redevelopment for businesses is supported.

In the BTDP community-wide survey, the Study Area was not the highest selected choice, but was identified as a key location for development that would support activation of the riverfront. *\*refer to the BTDP background report for a full overview of survey results.*

## 4.2: Community-Level-Interest Development

Through previous projects, the BTDP, and the SDBS effort, there was consistent feedback from the community on five topics.

1. Improved and additional connections to the Linear Trail, riverfront, and natural environment.
2. Extension of the urban fabric and high-quality built environment from existing parts of downtown, especially the Blue Earth Plaza sub-area, extended into the Study Area.
3. To balance the urban form, the community also would like more dedicated green/open/public space, such as parks, streetscape, and outdoor activity venues in downtown.
4. The MCM headquarters and batch plant property is an obvious catalyst site for creating conditions 1-3 listed above.
5. Southwest of the Downtown Core (400 blocks between Colorado Street and Ft. Riley Blvd) house a mix of uses and sensitive transitional forms providing mixed-use of residential and commercial servicing both the neighborhood, the Manhattan Conference Center, and Blue Earth Plaza.

## 4.3: Development Principles and Goals

The ADVO Analysis along with the priorities and concerns received through community engagement, set the tone for key development principles and goals for the Study Area.

1. Acknowledge and be mindful of impacts on adjacent existing residential neighborhoods, while coordinating shared concerns and potential solutions between land uses inside and outside of the Study Area.
2. Using the BTDP as a guide, identify relevant sub-areas, districts, and catalyst sites and reflect recommendations.
3. When applicable incorporate distinct characteristics of the sub-areas and districts into conceptual work.

4. Continue to house current businesses but also make room for additional growth.
5. Build in flexibility for changes in the economy.
6. Support a range of economic sectors as identified within the Comprehensive Plan.
7. Tie into existing quality-of-life factors, such as the Linear Trail.
8. Serve as a connector between residential neighborhoods, the more established Downtown sub-areas, and the Kansas Riverfront.
9. Explore opportunities for institutions to leverage the area.
10. Don't directly compete with existing Downtown sub-areas, rather be complementary of adjacent ones and supportive of the whole district.

#### 4.4: Conditions for Development

Whether for a study or a plan, it is important to recognize truths, identify limitations and responsibilities of various parties, and acknowledge conditions that would need to be present or occur for development to happen.

The City cannot prescribe change, nor serve the role of private developer or investor. The City can facilitate dialogue and host a collection of information and ideas. In addition, it can provide incentives and make public realm improvements, such as streetscaping, bicycle/pedestrian connections, greenspace, transit, and utilities.

Private sector investment will drive development, not the City of Manhattan. Historically the finance and building sectors have responded to broad consumer demand or strong resident support to

pursue project, and this approach is expected to continue. Supporting this approach, is expected population increase, growth and recruitment of economic activity, and strong employment.

However, for all three of these conditions to be present, the community needs expanded and/or additional industrial and commercial land uses/zones, which may include expansion of the current industrial business park or a new one to support current business and attract future operations.

If the SDBS leads to a more comprehensive planning process, complete environmental and engineering studies would need to be completed prior to any development activity. This would require coordination with the EPA, Kansas Department of Transportation, Army Corps of Engineers, and Union Pacific, among other parties.

It is anticipated that any change for Study Area would occur on a 40 to 50-year timeline, and trail activity highlighted in the BTDP, which envisions some development in other Downtown sub-areas occurring within 10 to 20-years.

#### 4.5: How to Read the Rest of Chapter 4

The following pages of Chapter 4 use the same organization and terminology as BTDP for consistency in starting a conversation about the potential redevelopment of brownfield sites.

##### 4.5.1: Definition of sub-area

Sub-areas represent distinct spaces within downtown due to different characteristics and/or varying community development goals. The sub-areas can be divided into two types:

- “Areas of Change and Improvement”:  
What could work better
- “Areas of Stability and Maintenance”:
- What currently works well

While sub-areas exist on a spectrum between needing various degrees of change, improvement, stability, and/or maintenance, these two identifiers serve as a shorthand to spatially focus and direct efforts, resources, and attention where they are needed most in order to achieve the overall vision.

It should be noted, that despite a sub-area's designation into one of these two types, all areas must be open to some change or improvement and be able to contribute to the goals of creating a quality downtown environment.

#### **4.5.2: Orientation tools**

You will find the following items to help you identify the sub-areas:

- A brief sub-area description
- A map of the sub-area

#### **4.5.3: Sections that relate to development**

The following sections will help frame the development conversation for each sub-area.

2. Commentary on details of redevelopment with:
  - a. Sub-area map.
3. Sub-area considerations with:
  - a. Accompanying images and renderings for visual reference.
4. Redevelopment scenario for a brownfield site with:

## 4.6: Sub Areas



### 4.6: Sub-Areas

The three sub-areas from the BTDP make up the Study Area are:

- 4.7 West 4th Street
- 4.8 Makers Space
- 4.9 Riverfront

The review and visioning of these sub-areas were primarily based on land use, transportation infrastructure, and community and/or neighborhood context.

Figure 4.6.1: South Downtown Study Area and Associated Sub Areas

## 4.7: West 4<sup>th</sup> Street Sub-Area

### 4.7.1: Redevelopment Commentary

This sub-area is defined by 4<sup>th</sup> St. on the east and 5<sup>th</sup> St. on the west. Its north boundary is Houston St. and extend south to the northside of Ft. Riley Blvd. It also has a jog slightly west (mid-block between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> streets) along the Yuma St. corridor – the eastern entrance to Manhattan’s historical Black neighborhood.

Currently, there are no consistent defining attributes with a mix of architectural styles, land uses, and activities-commercial, office, retail, industrial, and residential.

The West 4<sup>th</sup> Street sub-area is identified as an “Area of Change or Improvement” highlighted by the following:

Complimenting the Blue Earth sub-area and its function as an outside draw to Manhattan.

- 4th St serves as a stronger commercial corridor linking the Historic Core with Blue Earth and Riverfront sub-areas.
- Significant potential for residential transitioning from higher density on the east side to lower density on the west as it evolves into traditional residential neighborhoods.
- Reflecting a smaller scale effort found in the Makers Space sub-area there are portions within West 4<sup>th</sup> to support craft, makers, and entrepreneurial spaces located on the south end of the sub- area.
- Investment in underutilized and vacant lots.
- Adaptive reuse of the few historic buildings that do provide character to the sub-area.



Figure 4.7.1: West 4<sup>th</sup> Street Sub-Area map.

#### 4.7.2 Sub-area Considerations

Future investments should reflect the following:

1. Public investments in multimodal transportation infrastructure, sidewalks (repair and new), streetscaping, and utility repairs or enhancements.
2. Relocation of the existing Union Pacific Railroad Crossing from 5th St. to 4th St.
3. Connection to the Historic Core Sub-Area via 4th Street, which can be envisioned as a stronger neighborhood-scale commercial corridor at the ground level, with professional services and multi-family residential on upper floors.
4. Enhancement of the Blue Earth Sub-Area in its function as an outside draw to Manhattan with land use and activity supporting the Manhattan Conference Center and destination aspects.
5. Its role in serving as a node to the Riverfront Sub-Area providing a cohesive downtown experience and better leveraging quality-of-life assets through conscience public utility improvements and transportation upgrades ensuring efficiency with better safety of pedestrians and bicyclists.

*\*More information on these recommendations can be found within the Beyond Tomorrow Downtown Plan (pages 29-34)*



**Photos 4.7.2:** Examples of development types that could be supported within the West 4<sup>th</sup> Street Sub Area.

### 4.7.3 Redevelopment Scenarios for Brownfield Sites

In addition to the redevelopment opportunities identified for the West 4<sup>th</sup> Street Sub-Area, one catalyst site (preliminarily identified as a potential brownfield) has been volunteered for consideration of redevelopment.

Be Able is a non-profit organization providing programs and services to unhoused members of the community. It's central location within the sub-area makes it ideal to continue these services and at the same time its proximity to existing residential neighborhoods and commercial properties also make it ripe for imagining redevelopment opportunities.

Potential redevelopment scenarios:

1. Be Able remains in the community and stays at its current site.
2. Be Able remains in the community, stays at its current site, and some of the redevelopment activity addresses their and the community's needs and wants.
3. Be Able remains in the community but relocates to a suitable site within the City that enhances their mission.

Regardless of scenarios, the following conditions should be applied to any development in this area.

- Appropriate neighborhood scale commercial activity develops along 4<sup>th</sup> St. and on the east side with major residential infill as the main development goal.
- The existing exterior stone facades of the Be Able site and the old cold storage building to the west remains and informs the redevelopment design and architectural style.
- Moving from north and east to the west, residential density is constructed on the ground floor and on upper floors of the

neighborhood commercial structures. This would serve as a transition zone from high density to low density.

- Public improvements, add or enhances the character of the neighborhood.



**Figure 4.7.4:** Location of Be Able Catalyst Site within the context of the West 4<sup>th</sup> Street Sub Area.



**Figure 4.7.5:** Rendering illustrating the redevelopment and residential infill potential of the Be Able Catalyst Site.

## 4.8: Makers Space Sub-Area

### 4.8.1: Redevelopment Commentary

The Makers Space sub-area is defined by the northern border of Ft. Riley Blvd., 6th St. to the west, Pottawatomie Ave. to the south and bleeds into 4th St. on the east. As always, these boundaries are for reference only, and are not hard or set, but can reflect subtle transitions from one sub-area to another.

Within this sub-area there are a mix of land-uses and activities, including commercial, retail, storage, and industrial. There is no residential. This area is primarily comprised of low-density development trending towards automobile centric businesses.

Currently, this sub-area has been designated in the BTDP as an area of stability and maintenance, noting, "While improvements and additional development in the area are welcomed, it is important that this area remain supportive of light industrial and service commercial uses in the core of Manhattan."

If activity from adjacent sub-areas were to materialize, the Makers Space sub-area would be prime to offer additional space for industrial, commercial, craft and maker, entrepreneurial, and research/development land uses and activities.

In the foreseeable future, much of this area is set for continued support of light industrial and light commercial-service oriented businesses.

### 4.8.2 Sub-area Considerations

Future investments should reflect the following:

1. Public investments in multimodal transportation infrastructure, sidewalks (repair and new), streetscaping, and utility repairs or enhancements.
2. Relocation of the existing Union Pacific Railroad Crossing from 5<sup>th</sup> St. to 4<sup>th</sup> St.

3. Increase capacity in the **Makers Space Sub-Area** without displacing current businesses/land-uses, to include live-work, entrepreneurial, and institutional/commercial research-spillover spaces that support the larger Flint Hills regional economy.
4. Serve as a transition zone respecting existing residential neighborhoods that may also serve as a safe access to the **Riverfront Sub-Area** enhancing quality-of-life for existing and new residents and future occupants.
5. Prioritize public utility improvements, especially wastewater, and stormwater management, in coordination with private development.
6. Invest in public transportation with pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure (multi-modal paths, safe crossings, etc.), return/introduction of a traditional grid layout, and adding street trees, sidewalks, signage, etc. to create a better sense of place.



Figure 4.8.2.1: Makers Space Sub-Area Map.



#### 4.8.3 Redevelopment Scenarios for Brownfield Sites

There is no redevelopment scenario for this sub-area because it is an “Area of Stability and Maintenance”, and no catalyst site was identified to serve as a potential brownfield.

*\*More information on these recommendations can be found within the Beyond Tomorrow Downtown Plan (pages 47-50)*



**Photos 4.8.2.3 & 4.8.2.4:** Example of multimodal transportation improvements that delineate bicycle and pedestrian travel.

## 4.9: Riverfront Sub-Area

### 4.9.1: Redevelopment Commentary

The Riverfront sub-area is bordered on the east by the southern edge of the K-177 Bridge and extends westward to 4<sup>th</sup> Str. Ft. Riley Blvd. serves as the northern border and Pottawatomie Ave. defines the southern edge.

Although contrary to its name, the entirety of this sub-area falls on the “dry side” of the Army Corps of Engineers’ levee.

One final reminder, these boundaries are for reference only, and are not hard or set, but can reflect subtle transitions from one sub-area to another. For this sub-area, the one caveat is the levee.

Existing land-use is a mix of activity: commercial retail, commercial office, and industrial. Business logistics and operations, along with high occupancy rates and high utilization of space are defining elements. However, there is no single defining character or consistent aesthetic in the built environment.

This sub-area has been identified as an “Area of Change and Improvement” in the BTDP.

In this report, a conceptual exercise, “envisioned to be significantly transformed at the highest buildout scenario”. Anchored by a mixed-use, urban village development, and branded by its location and connection to the Kansas River and more evocative of the Blue Earth sub-area.

It is envisioned to contribute greatly to the gateway into Manhattan, downtown, and Linear Trail. Future development will set the stage to link to a programmed riverfront along the Kansas River.”

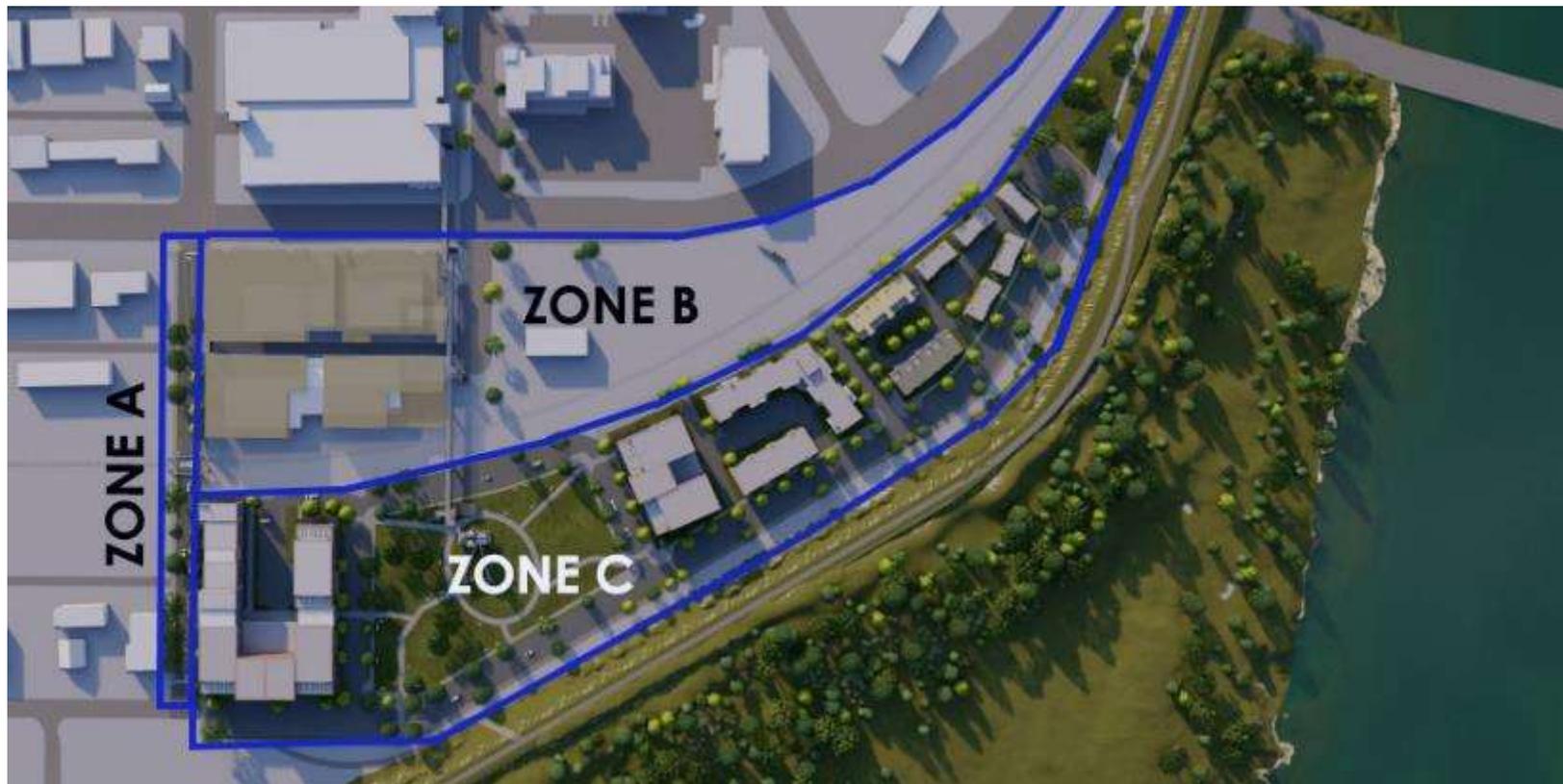
Due to its size, mix of land uses and activities, and proximity to Southeast Park and the riverfront, this sub-area was examined in this report as three different zones.

- Zone A. 4th Street Corridor
- Zone B. North side of Union Pacific Railroad tracks
- Zone C. South side of Union Pacific Railroad tracks



**Photo 4.9.1.1:** Existing view from 3<sup>rd</sup> Street looking South toward the Riverfront Sub Area across Fort Riley Boulevard.

*“The Riverfront Sub-Area is envisioned to be significantly transformed at the highest buildout scenario. Anchored by a mixed-use, urban village development, and branded by its location and connection to the Kansas River, it is evocative of the Blue Earth sub-area. It is envisioned to contribute greatly as a gateway into Manhattan, setting the stage for a programmed and fully engaged riverfront.”*



**Figure 4.9.1.2:** Riverfront Sub-Area map showing Zone A. 4<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor, Zone B. north of railroad, and Zone C. south of railroad.

#### 4.9.2: Zone A. 4<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor

The major development along the 4th St Corridor in this sub-area would be moving the at-grade crossing of the Union Pacific Railroad from its current location on 5th St. to 4th St.

Progress along the 4th Street corridor will be aided by flanking redevelopment in an urban style on both the east and west sides of the street. This would strengthen pedestrian draw and visually reinforce the continuation of urban fabric south of Ft. Riley Blvd.

This change would facilitate the following enhancements:

- Greater connectivity from Downtown to the Riverfront.
- Create a sense of place and clear identity to the Riverfront and Linear Trail for residents and visitors.
- Facilitate safer, multi-modal crossings through introduction of a “quiet railroad crossing”.
- Provide more efficient logistics of commercial vehicles, while increasing separation between commercial and residential vehicle traffic.

Regardless, if the crossing were relocated or not, multi-modal transportation investments, especially pedestrian and bicycle transit projects should occur.

Within the Riverfront sub-area, re-organization of streets in a grid layout with dedicated paths, sidewalks, street trees, and safer pedestrian crossings should be considered to support development.

\*More information on these recommendations can be found within the Beyond Tomorrow Downtown Plan (pages 41-47).



**Figure 4.9.2.1 (above):** Rendering depicting new crossing at 4th Street, looking South.

### 4.9.3: Zone B. North of Tracks

Opportunities for improvements in Zone B. North of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks include projects providing a welcoming presence to Downtown and the broader community. Projects in this space would create a sense of place and add to quality-of-life amenities, through connection with the Riverfront and Linear Trail.

Preparation for future expansion of any pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure investments between the Downtown and the adjacent Riverfront should be taken into consideration as well.

Additional development opportunities within this zone hold high-growth potential because of its proximity to other sub-areas and its location between the Blue Earth sub-area and the Riverfront.

Projects should increase density, while matching the character and design aesthetic of the Blue Earth sub-area.

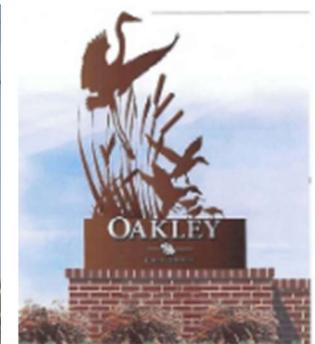
Existing businesses should be supported, and new activity should engage with the Blue Earth sub-area uses, including the Manhattan Conference Center, visitor activities, active tourists, and local recreation.

This area has an increased potential for high-density, mixed-use developments.

\*More information on these recommendations can be found within the Beyond Tomorrow Downtown Plan (pages 41-47)



Figure 4.9.3.1: Rendering illustrating view of Zone B looking west.



Photos 4.9.3.2 and 4.9.3.3: Examples of gateway markers for Zone B.

#### 4.9.4: Zone C. South of Tracks

##### 4.9.4.1: Redevelopment Commentary

Given its proximity to the Kansas Riverfront, Zone C. South of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks is a prime opportunity for high-density, mixed-use redevelopment supporting residential build-out, commercial space, retail development, civic uses, family and youth activities, and community open space.

This area currently includes all of the existing MCM headquarters and concrete plant, which has also been volunteered as a catalyst site for potential development exploration.

*\*More information on these recommendations can be found within the Beyond Tomorrow Downtown Plan (pages 41-47)*

##### 4.9.4.2: Sub-area Considerations

Future investments should reflect the following:

1. Public investments in multimodal transportation infrastructure, sidewalks (repair and new), streetscaping, and utility repairs or enhancements.
2. Relocation of the existing Union Pacific Railroad Crossing from 5th St. to 4th St.
3. A properly zoned parcel, either in an existing or a new commercial and industrial park, is secured allowing MCM to maintain business and keep the same level of operational logistics, so they remain a valuable component of the Manhattan economy and community.
4. Lean into the potential reuse of the existing concrete plant (MCM catalyst site) to support development, connect several downtown sub-areas, and drive future economic investment.

5. Investigate redevelopment scenarios for the MCM catalyst site that will enhance and support existing institutions in the community.
6. Support redevelopment activity for the MCM catalyst site that links activation of the adjacent Kansas Riverfront, which is one of the key priorities of the Manhattan community.

##### 4.9.4.3: Redevelopment Scenarios for Brownfield Sites

In addition to the redevelopment opportunities identified for the Riverfront Sub-Area, one catalyst site (preliminarily identified as a potential brownfield) has been volunteered for consideration of redevelopment.

MCM is a four generation, for-profit company providing ready mix concrete, aggregates, construction materials, and trucking and excavation services.

It's location within the sub-area is convenient for both the corporate headquarters and its operations. At the same time its proximity to transit modes, the downtown, and the Riverfront also make it ripe for imagining redevelopment opportunities. Potential redevelopment scenarios:

- A. MCM remains in the community and stays at its current site.
- B. MCM remains in the community but relocates to a suitable site within the City that maintains and/or enhances their business operation.
  - a. Cooperation among the various agencies and companies involved in this sub-area.
  - b. Review and meeting of all environmental and engineering regulations.
  - c. Introduction of mixed-use development, urban fabric reminiscent of downtown, underground parking

providing safeguard from flooding and elevating building viewsheds above the levee.

- d. Adding residential density.
- e. Neighborhood character and community amenities are added.
- f. Development provides for public utility improvements.
- g. Greater sense of place and access to existing and new community amenities, such as Linear Trail and the Riverfront.

The MCM catalyst site redevelopment concept is organized around a central spine access road, running west to east from 4th Street.

Other key attributes include:

1. Prominent entrance into the site along 4th Street.
2. Development centered around an industrial remnants park (see page 36 for existing case studies).
3. Mix of multi-family residential from medium to high density.
4. Integrated on-street parking and tuck-under garages.
5. Outdoor gathering spaces provide potential for a variety of programming.
6. Slow traffic with streetscape design prioritizing bicycle and pedestrian movements and one-way drives.
7. In addition to multi-transit transportation improvements along 4<sup>th</sup> St., introduce pedestrian-bicycle bridge crossing over the

railroad tracks on 3rd St. better connecting the downtown to the Riverfront and adding a sense of place.

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***As part of the study, MCM volunteered their property to serve as a catalyst site for development exploration. Currently content with their existing facilities, they have no plans to relocate or sell but would be willing to consider alternative locations if it suited their business and production requirements—ideally a business (industrial/commercial) park location that maintains or improves on their current operations.***

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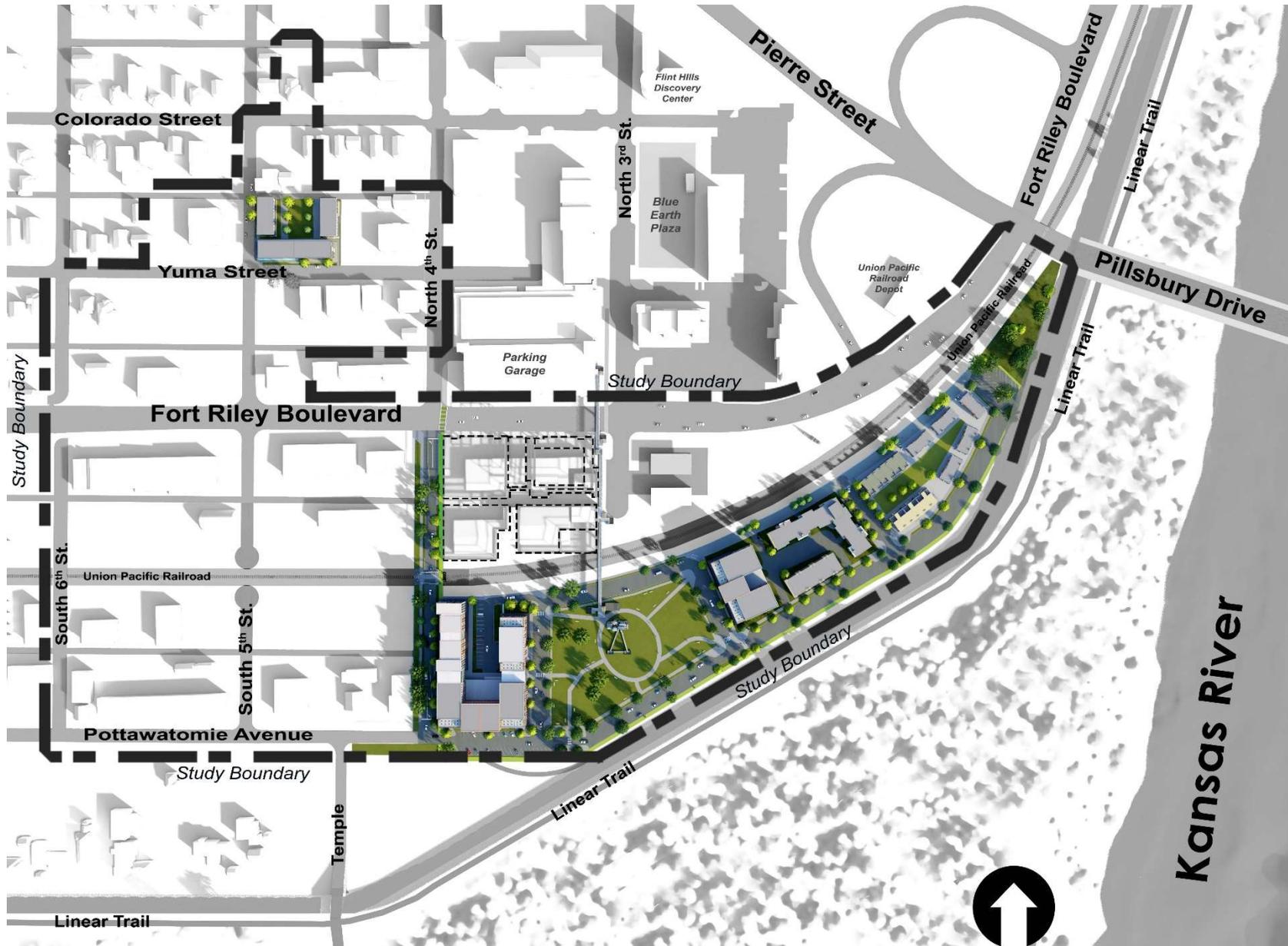


Figure 4.9.4.1: Map Illustrating Extents of Sub District 'C'.



Figure 4.9.4.2: Rendering illustrating redevelopment potential of the MCM Catalyst Site, looking northwest.

#### 4.9.4.3: Design Inspiration for Public Open Spaces



### The Silos Waco, Texas

This shopping and entertainment complex in downtown Waco features shops, food, garden, food truck and event/game lawn. The complex is named after the two 120-foot silos that were part of the former Brazos Valley Cotton Oil Company. It is owned by Chip and Joanna Gaines, hosts of the HGTV show "Fixed Upper."



### Gas Works Park Seattle, WA

The award-winning, 9.1-acre park was designed by landscape architect Richard Haag. It is built on the site of the former Seattle Gas Light Company gasification plant located on the north shore of Lake Union and features remnants of the old plant.



### SteelStacks Campus Bethlehem, PA

This is a 10-acre campus that was once the home of Bethlehem Steel, the second-largest steel manufacturer in the nation. The campus features a performing arts center, a cinema, a museum, and a public plaza, all surrounded by the towering blast furnaces and other industrial relics.



**Figure 4.9.4.4:** Rendering illustrating the public open space that could be included in the redevelopment of the MCM Catalyst Site.



Figure 4.9.4.5: Rendering illustrating the public open space that could be included in the redevelopment of the MCM Catalyst Site.

# CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5: Implementation Recommendations

These SDBS implementation recommendations will be included within the BTDP overall effort. Development will more than likely occur out of direction from the BTDP or stem from private development reacting to the downtown plan and market demand.

It should be noted that only a significant amount of private investment could initiate projects like those mentioned in this Final Report, and that public investment is not considered a viable scenario. To accommodate development, size and scope would require coordination among multiple private, public, and non-governmental organization and adherence to all relevant local, state, and federal regulations as it pertains to utilities, levee, and floodplain would inform any development approach.

However, the private sector can be incentivized through a variety of economic tools and incentive programs (existing and new) provided by the non-governmental and public sectors to off-set high costs, mitigate risks, speed up timelines, and more rapidly respond to market demands.

To move these projects forward, property owners, private developers, and public partners should complete specific actions to lay the foundation for redevelopment.

In summary, the planning process included community engagement and conceptual site planning to establish the long-term vision and programming for two catalyst sites. While there are actions that the City can take regarding land use and transportation infrastructure development, the majority of change will be dependent on private developers and property owners.

Going beyond the opportunities identified within this study, the following steps should be prioritized in the coming years to set the stage for successful development.

1. Incorporation of the SDBS into the BTDP for review and approval as an Amendment to the Manhattan Urban Area Comprehensive Plan.
2. Whether from a public or private entity, any redevelopment activity in or affecting the Study Area should stem from findings and recommendations in the BTDP.
3. Serious interest in redevelopment should initiate a full planning process, which would include:
  - a. Community engagement: City should continue to have conversations with property owners, business operators, the development community, and adjacent residential residents on current needs and long-term visions.
  - b. Built and environmental regulations: Conduct full environmental and engineering studies which are reviewed against regulations, including EPA Phase 1 review of voluntary sites.
  - c. Economic development: Perform a market demand study to determine which land uses and activities can be supported by development in the Study Area and at what cost.
    - i. Integrate in a small to medium sized business stabilization and recruitment plan.
    - ii. Understand current market demands, including youth recreation and active tourist industry sectors.
  - d. Built environment: Measure low to high growth scenarios with modeling to better understand the physical impacts of development and the community's appetite for such growth.

