



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL REPORT

# Barney Allis Plaza

**KANSAS CITY, MO**

SPONSORED BY:  
DOWNTOWN COUNCIL OF KANSAS CITY

March 28-29, 2018



**Urban Land Institute** **Kansas City**

## ABOUT ULI KANSAS CITY

ULI Kansas City is a district council of the Urban Land Institute (ULI), a non-profit education and research organization supported by its members. Founded in 1936, the Institute today has nearly 40,000 members worldwide representing the entire spectrum of land use planning and real estate development disciplines working in private enterprise and public service. As the pre-eminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among local, national, and international industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better communities.

ULI's mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI Kansas City carries out the ULI mission locally by sharing best practices, building consensus, and advancing solutions through educational programs and community outreach initiatives.

### ABOUT THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL (TAP) PROGRAM

The objective of ULI Kansas City's Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) program is to provide expert, multidisciplinary, and objective advice on land use and real estate issues facing public agencies and nonprofit organizations in the region. Drawing from its extensive membership base, ULI Kansas City conducts one and one-half day panels offering objective and responsible advice to local decision-makers on a wide variety of land use and real estate issues, ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The TAP program is intentionally flexible to provide a customized approach to specific land use and real estate issues. Learn more at <http://kansascity.uli.org/get-involved/uli-action/>.

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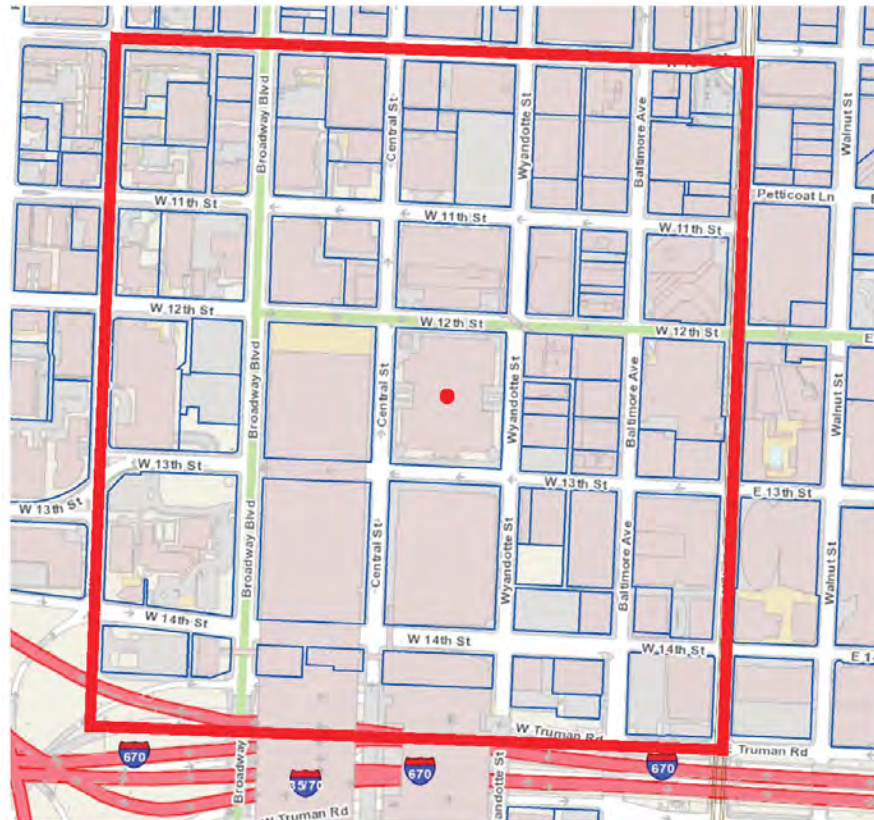
# Acknowledgments

ULI Kansas City is grateful to the Downtown Council of Kansas City for inviting this Panel to study and make recommendations for Barney Allis Plaza, both the open space and garage. This Technical Assistance Panel would not have been successful without the help and support of Ann Holliday of the Downtown Council and the students of the Kansas City Design Center who carefully and thoughtfully researched and assembled the extensive briefing documents for the Panel's review and consideration.



# Executive Summary

Map depicting Barney Allis Plaza, noted by the red dot, and the surrounding buildings and street network.



Nestled in the heart of downtown Kansas City lies Barney Allis Plaza, a one-block public green space sitting atop a three-story underground garage. Bound by two large hotels, the Municipal Auditorium, and Bartle Hall, the convention center of Kansas City, Barney Allis Plaza should be a thriving, well-loved park. It is instead a forlorn stretch of grass and asphalt with a long and narrow fountain, low evergreen trees, and over-sized pergolas. The Plaza lacks character and appeal.

Barney Allis Plaza (BAP or the Plaza), a space of great opportunity for the City, and the Auditorium Plaza Garage are poised for something better. For an answer as to what that better option may be, the Downtown Council of Kansas City (the Council) turned to the Kansas City District Council of the Urban Land Institute (ULI Kansas City). Specifically, the Council asked the following questions: (1) What is the demand for open/green space at this location and

how does Barney Allis Plaza fulfill the demand currently? What are some short-term enhancements to make BAP more desirable? (2) What is the parking demand for this area and how does Auditorium Plaza Garage parking fit into that demand? (3) If a new garage is warranted, how do we fund design, construction, and operations of a new garage, while also optimizing and programming the open space above the structure at Barney Allis Plaza?

Through its Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) program, ULI Kansas City assembled key members from the region, real estate professionals with expertise to lend to the land use issues at hand, to study the Plaza, interview surrounding stakeholders, and ultimately deliver a set of recommendations to the Council.

It was apparent from the interviews with downtown stakeholders that the demand for appropriate green space in the downtown area is greatly needed but that the current plaza does not meet those needs because of design, programming, and connectivity to grade. Following careful study, the TAP panel arrived at four distinct options for the renovation and repositioning of Barney Allis Plaza into a fully-realized open space and garage asset for the City:

- Short-term Plan – delivering a well-lit garage and minimally-improved green space for the City that should remain functional for the next 15 years.
- Full Replacement – completely replacing the three stories of underground parking and delivering a fully-renovated park space at grade level.
- Alternative Parking – providing similar parking capacity, yet delivering the spaces in a combination of below-ground and above-ground garage parking and fully-renovating the green space at grade level.
- Additional Development – providing similar parking capacity above and below grade yet also building in a residential component to provide a new housing option in this section of downtown. The green space would also be completely renovated in this scenario.

Ultimately, the City must decide how it wishes to pursue the redevelopment of the Plaza and garage – weighing the lower-cost of short-term solutions against the financial investment of a long-term solution that may prove transformative for this section of the City. While some may see the short-term solution as the fiscally conservative option to pursue, the bigger and bolder alternatives, while slightly more expensive in the short-term, may provide the City with the opportunity to re-envision this block into not only a highly-functional park and garage but also an inviting front door to those visiting the surrounding hotels and convention center. This new and exciting space could also become a welcoming ‘front yard’ for downtown residents, community school students, and office workers seeking a place to enjoy nature, recharge, and play.

# Background & Scope

Aerial map showing the key redevelopment area and current configuration of the plaza green and hardscape.



Barney Allis Plaza, built in the mid-twentieth century, is a one-block plaza situated atop a three-story under-ground garage in downtown Kansas City. The plaza is surrounded by Bartle Hall, the Kansas City Convention Center to the west, the Kansas City Marriott Downtown to the north and east, the Aladdin Hotel to the east, and the Municipal Auditorium to the south. The combined plaza and garage are frequently used by a variety of constituents and, given the 60+ years that have passed since the garage and plaza first



opened, are in serious need of significant renovation in order to provide safe parking options below and inviting recreation space above.

Presently, Crossroads Charter Schools use the Plaza as its playground, bringing children and play equipment to the space frequently. Downtown residents and office workers can also be seen enjoying the Plaza, yet far less frequently and certainly not in the height of the summer when the intensity of the sun and lack of shade in the Plaza make the space quite uninviting. The Plaza, while level, is situated on a city block that is not; three sides of the Plaza require visitors to climb stairs to access the space. Not only is this an inconvenience to patrons who are differently-abled or families with strollers, the grade increase places the surface of the Plaza above a height easily seen by a passerby from a majority of angles. Without the visual line of sight into or onto the Plaza, the opportunities for access and recreation are not easily realized. On the northern edge of the block, the Plaza is at-grade, yet a fountain stretching along the entire northern edge effectively blocks pedestrians from entering the Plaza. Barney Allis Plaza is a plaza to walk around, not an inviting open space to enjoy.

The 975-space Auditorium Plaza Garage, on the other hand, is frequently used and is often at capacity during conferences, conventions and public shows at Bartle Hall and theatrical or other entertainment performances at the surrounding venues. This high-demand for parking in this structure was a surprise to the Panel as there was an anecdotal understanding by the TAP sponsor that the garage was underutilized. Interviews with convention and hotel leadership, however, soon made it clear that the garage is highly valued by its commercial neighbors. The convenient underground tunnels connecting the garage to the conference center and hotels make for easy passage between structures and allow patrons move between buildings without venturing out during inclement weather. The heavy demand on the structure, however, has created an environment wherein even the \$1 million spent on annual maintenance cannot keep up with the water leaks, failing lighting, and insignificant wayfinding devices. This, combined with the difficult ingress and egress to the garage and poor ventilation, makes parking there a convenient yet rather unpleasant option.

The underutilized plaza and failing garage are ready for transformation. The questions posed by the Council urged the TAP panelists to consider a wide variety of approaches to the parking and green space challenges at this site.

In studying the site and interviewing the community stakeholders, it became clear that there is a desire for something better for Barney Allis Plaza. Each stakeholder was asked the following question: In 5-10 years, what one word would you like to see used to describe Barney Allis Plaza? The responses were varied, but there was a clear wish for something much better, an aspiration that the space become a recognized feature of the City.

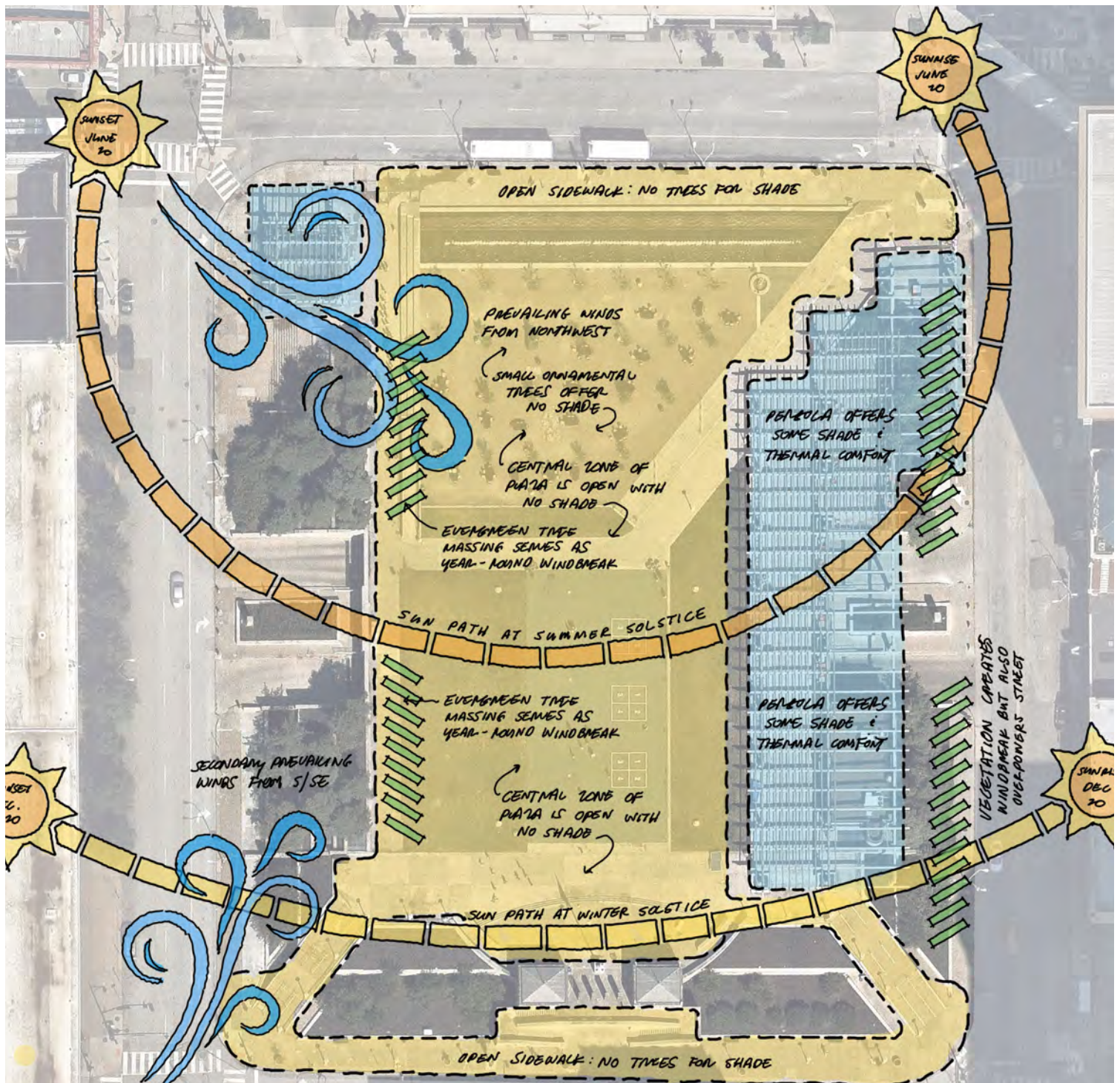
In five years, what one word would you like to see used to describe Barney Allis Plaza?

Accessible  
Activated  
Active  
Activity  
Bad Ass  
Central gathering spot  
Central park  
Concerts  
Connected  
Convening  
Cutting-edge  
Destination  
Downtown oasis  
Energetic  
Energized  
Face of KC  
Flexible  
Food trucks  
Fun  
Fun place to discover  
Green puzzle (jigsaw)  
“Here’s what KC’s all about”  
Innovative  
Interactive, perametrics  
Local  
Maze  
Multi-use  
Nationally recognized  
Nature  
Open  
Open space  
Place where we celebrate  
Programmable  
Refreshing  
Refuge  
Residents gathering in a neighborhood context  
Retreat  
Shade  
Sustainable green space  
Town square  
Unique  
Utilized fully  
Verdant versatile  
Welcoming

Through the course of its study, the Panel also considered the environmental factors and the current physical configuration of Barney Allis Plaza.

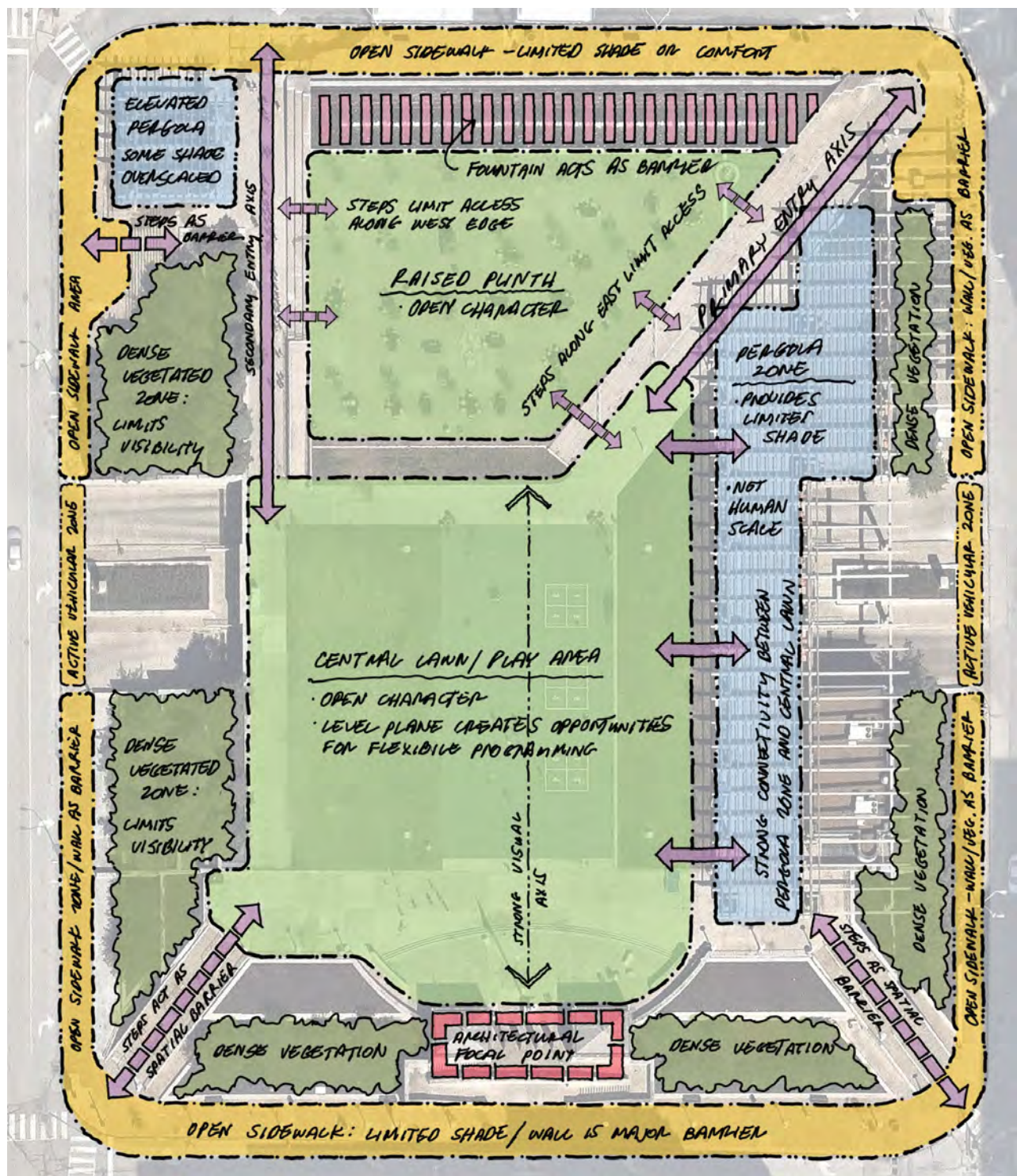
As mentioned previously, there is generous sunlight that finds the Plaza through all seasons. During the summer months in particular, the sun shines brightly on the Plaza for a significant portion of the day, yet the current condition of the Plaza – low evergreen trees, small ornamental trees, and oversized pergolas – does not provide the shade needed for patrons to rest and recharge in a cooler, shaded zone.

The additional physical barriers created by the surrounding stairs and current plantings not only limit easy access to the Plaza but also limit visibility in a number of areas, lessening a patron's feeling of safety and security. The northeast and northwest corners of the plaza are the only vantage points where passersby can enjoy easy physical and visual access to the Plaza.



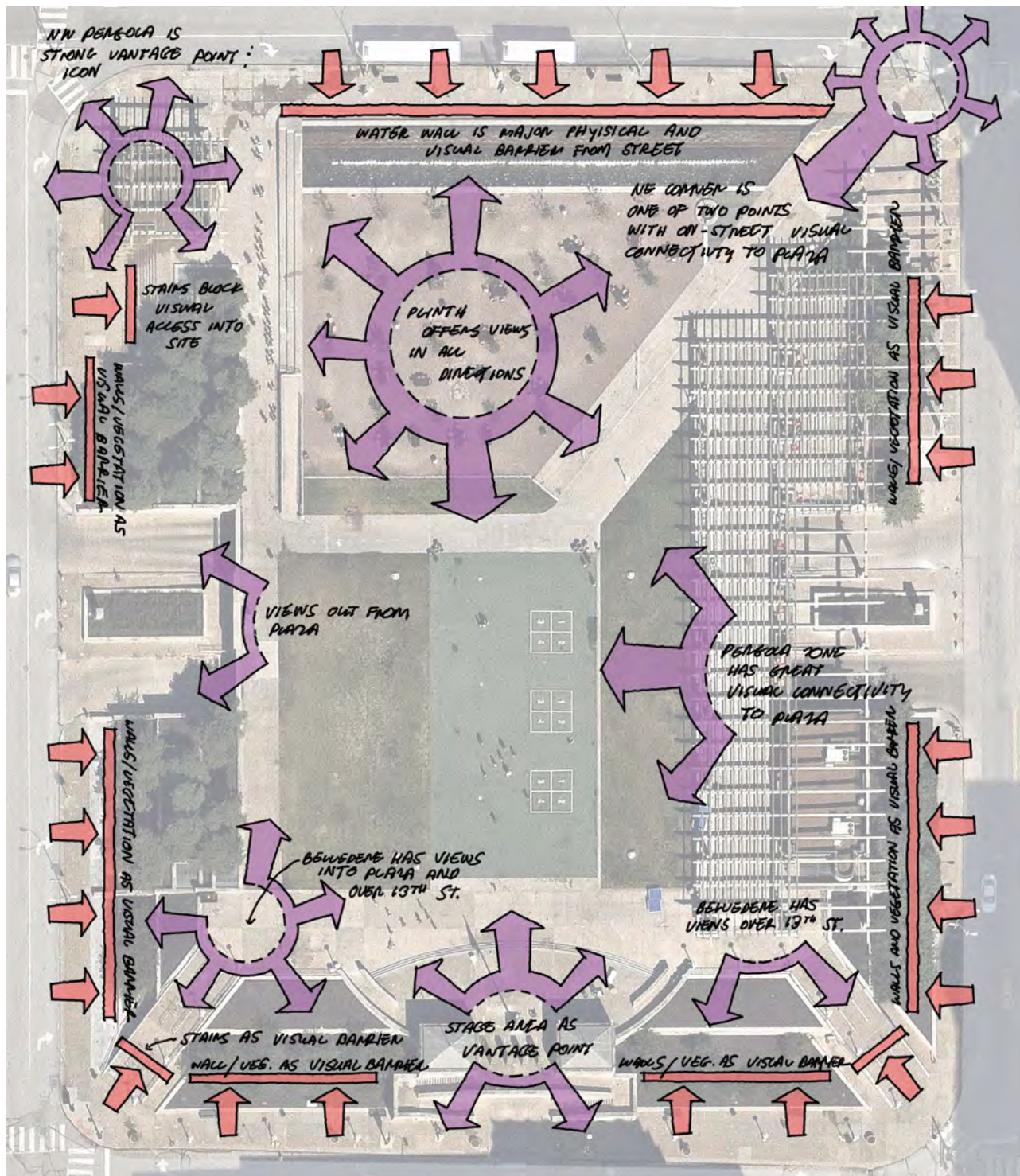
Environmental studies by the Panel depict sun and wind patterns on the Plaza today.





Environmental studies by the Panel depict the current configuration of green space and hardscape today.





Environmental studies by the Panel depict access and viewpoints today.



# Development Options

The Panelists evaluated the development options for Barney Allis Plaza, weighing options that would provide both a continuation of the parking capacity currently enjoyed at the site and an improved open space for the surrounding community. In each design option, the Panel sought to provide the following key components:

- a safer garage environment
- improved green space and increased shade
- improved access to the plaza
- flexible plaza spaces for a variety of uses
- space for an iconic pieces of art ('Instagramable art')

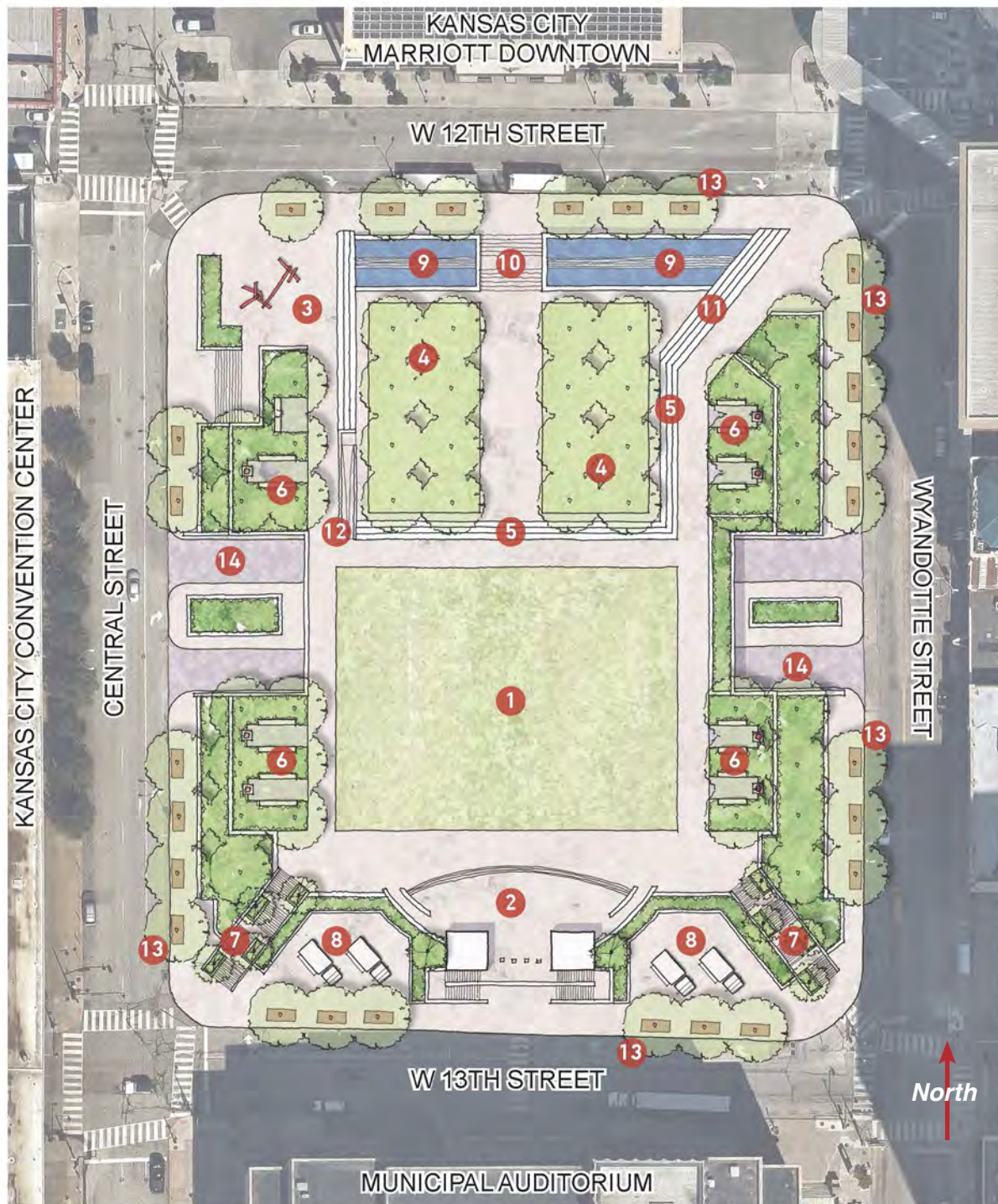
Following the stakeholder interviews, a review of the briefing materials, and extensive discussion among the TAP panelists, the panel arrived at four development options for the City to consider.

## Scenario 1 – Short-term Development Option

Based on interviews with City parking professionals and the professional expertise found within the TAP Panel, the Panelists arrived at a short-term solution for improving the parking garage, bringing it up to a minimum standard, and providing basic improvements to the Plaza.

In this scenario, the garage would remain in its current configuration, yet renovations would be made to improve basic safety and wayfinding attributes. Lighting throughout the garage would be replaced and improved to increase patrons' sense of security and limit dark corners in the subterranean structure. Signage would also be replaced and wayfinding improved to provide parkers with a critical directional cues for finding the most efficient exit from the garage.

The Plaza would likewise remain in its current configuration at and above grade. Improvements would be made, however, to provide additional opportunities for shade on the surface, including removal and replacement of the trees found on the eastern and western boundaries to utilize species that will grow up and out, and allowing visitors to enjoy shade beneath. Additional



Scenario  
1 –Short-term  
Development  
Option design  
sketch.

## LEGEND

- |                                     |                                    |                           |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 MULTI-PURPOSE EVENT / PLAY LAWN   | 7 RECONSTRUCTED STEPS WITH TREES   | 13 PROPOSED STREET TREES  |
| 2 STAGE AREA                        | 8 FOOD TRUCKS / MULTI-USE PLAZA    | 14 EXISTING GARAGE ACCESS |
| 3 ICONIC ART ELEMENT                | 9 EXISTING FOUNTAIN                |                           |
| 4 SHADED LAWN WITH FLEXIBLE SEATING | 10 PROPOSED STEPS THROUGH FOUNTAIN |                           |
| 5 RECONSTRUCTED SEAT STEPS          | 11 EXISTING SEAT STEPS             |                           |
| 6 SEATING NICHE WITH ART ELEMENTS   | 12 PEDESTRIAN ACCESS RAMP          |                           |

shade trees would also be planted in the northern one-third of the plaza where small ornamental trees exist today.

Access to and from the Plaza surface would also be improved, allowing for more mobility through the space and inviting visitors in to enjoy the Plaza. Where the northern edge of the Plaza is bounded by the linear fountain, a pathway would be cut through the fountain, allowing pedestrians mid-block access to the Plaza. Access from the southern corners of the Plaza, to the east and west, would be facilitated by alternating the traditional stairway with large steps that could also serve as seating. Providing a visual focal point at the top of these stairs would also go a long way toward drawing visitors' eyes up to the top of the Plaza and encouraging exploration.

Lastly, along the southern edge of the Plaza, at street level, two smaller plazas could be cut into the wall, carving out space for parking for food trucks at lunch time and/or during festivals.

This is the lowest cost option for the City that will improve the current condition of the garage and Plaza. It will bring the garage up to a minimum safety standard while still providing time to evaluate the long-term impact of emerging technology on future parking demands.

At the same time, this option is a short-term solution only and will very likely result in an additional evaluation and full replacement in 15 years. This option also leaves the considerable design challenges of the site, particularly the grade issue, untouched. This minimalist solution does nothing to improve the welcoming experience that visitors to the convention center and hotel should enjoy when visiting Kansas City's downtown. As a short-term solution at the estimated expenses detailed below, this development option would not position the City as a good steward of public funds – considerable annual investments are still required and would only delay the inevitable capital investment required to completely overhaul the Plaza and garage in 15 years.

#### DEVELOPMENT COST

##### Structural Parking & Plaza Improvements:

Year One (5-Year Life):	\$ 7,000,000
Year Six (10-Year Life):	\$ 5,000,000
Year 1 Park Improvements:	\$ 5,000,000
Total:	\$ 17,000,000

Debt Service at 5%= \$1.6MM/Yr.

#### ANNUAL REVENUE AVAILABLE

300 to 450 Monthly Parkers at +\$20/mo

Raise Event Parking to \$15/event

Total \$ 1,400,000/year (net)

Debt Service minus Annual Revenue = \$ 200,000 Gap



## Scenario 2 – Full Replacement Development Option

Seizing the opportunity for a long-term, highly-effective solution, the Panelists evaluated the option of fully rebuilding and replacing the garage structure and providing a newly redesigned plaza experience above.

In this full-replacement option, three levels of parking are again placed in an underground structure. During the reconstruction, however, the City has the opportunity to level the Plaza, creating an at-grade amenity that is fully visible and accessible by pedestrians on surrounding sidewalks and bicyclists on the street. Those in automobiles passing by would now be able to see into the space and might consider visiting. This enhanced visibility and accessibility into the Plaza will increase patron useage and, without the visual and physical barriers of the steps and grade changes, better connect those moving around in this section of downtown.

The new parking structure would provide approximately 980 spaces, a number similar to the garage's capacity today. By redesigning and rebuilding the garage, there is also an opportunity to reconfigure and enhance the entrance and exit to the parking structure, providing for a streamlined and more efficient movement of vehicles, particularly at peak times.

The opportunity to rebuild the Plaza so that it exists at street grade on *all* sides may prove transformational for this currently underutilized open space. Without the walls of stairs on three sides, by being able to see into and through the Plaza space from any point on the surrounding sidewalks, visitors to this downtown neighborhood can clearly see the play, rest, and engagement opportunities and begin to envision their own experience on the Plaza.

The redesigned Plaza in this development option takes advantage of the natural rise in a central open green space to create auditorium-like setting by cutting grassy seating into the gentle slope facing a new performance pavilion to the south. Active play areas are envisioned for the northwest corner of the Plaza, incorporating adventurous play structures and nature into a space where children can enthusiastically and safely enjoy the outdoors. In the northeastern section of the Plaza, a small network of pathways is envisioned, surrounded by plantings, that encourage guests to wander, rest, and relax amid the sights and smells of an intimate botanical garden. Shade trees throughout the Plaza, grouped along the edges and bookending key gathering spaces will provide much-needed breaks from the summer sun.

In the center of the northern edge of the Plaza, the Panel recommends removing the fountain and using the space instead for small flexible buildings or kiosks for use by food and beverage vendors. Distinct from the food trucks, which would also be invited to park at the southern edge of the Plaza in this design, the food/beverage kiosks on the northern edge would provide

*Several stakeholders noted the frustration that visitors experience when faced with the considerable traffic bottlenecks upon exiting the garage following an event.*



Scenario 2 – Full Replacement Development Option design sketch.

Scenario 2 – Plan view of a newly rebuilt garage and plaza.



#### LEGEND

- |                                   |                               |                          |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 MULTI-PURPOSE EVENT / PLAY LAWN | 8 FOOD AND BEVERAGE PAVILIONS | 15 PROPOSED STREET TREES |
| 2 STAGE / PAVILION                | 9 SHADED DINING PLAZA         | 16 FOOD TRUCK ZONE       |
| 3 FORECOURT PLAZA                 | 10 ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND       | 17 PLAZA SEAT WALL       |
| 4 AMPHITHEATER STEPS              | 11 STROLLING GARDEN           |                          |
| 5 SLOPED LAWN                     | 12 SEATING NICHE              |                          |
| 6 ICONIC ART ELEMENT              | 13 PROMENADE                  |                          |
| 7 INTERACTIVE WATER FEATURE       | 14 MULTI-USE PLAZA            |                          |



semi-permanent space for a coffee vendor, sandwich shop, or other specialty item (smoothies, craft beer, etc.).

While this development option may come at a higher cost, the benefits are numerous including:

- Provides a safe, solid, and secure garage for the next 100 years
- Greatly improves the access to and functionality of the Plaza
- Allows for programming and use by all stakeholder groups (see chart, page 19)
- Provides flexibility of use throughout the seasons
- Incorporates new retail/restaurant options into this section of downtown

DEVELOPMENT COST	
New Subsurface Garage:	\$ 40-42,000,000
Park Design:	\$ 15,000,000
Soft Costs:	\$ 6,000,000
Total:	\$ 63,000,000
Debt Service at 5%= \$3.8MM/Yr.	

ANNUAL REVENUE AVAILABLE	
300 to 450 Monthly Parkers at total of \$150/mo.	
Raise Event Parking to \$25/event	
Parking Total:	\$ 2,060,000/year (Net)
\$30/SF NNN x 3200/SF:	\$ 120,000/year
Total:	\$ 2,180,000
Economic Development Tools Allocated:	
Expansion of existing TIF:	\$ 1,620,000/year
(Est. TIF Revenue Potential in Current District: \$ 2,500,000/year)	

### Scenario 3 – Alternative Parking

Given the cost of completely replacing all three levels of parking below ground, as detailed on the previous page, the Panel also considered alternative parking configurations that could provide the same parking capacity at a reduced cost. A potential solution configures two levels of parking below ground, in the southern one-third section of the site, and tops the underground parking with seven levels of parking above ground. In this scenario, the Plaza would also benefit from a complete redesign and at-grade configuration.

In this development option, the Plaza’s open space is reduced by one-third. In the remaining plaza space, the highlight is an open green lawn, now oriented at an angle southeast to the northwest through the block. Not only does this angled orientation allow for a longer stretch of green space in a tighter space, it also positions visitors on the green toward a focal point on the southeast

Scenario 3 –  
Alternative Parking  
Development Option  
design sketch.



## LEGEND

- |                                   |                                  |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 MULTI-PURPOSE EVENT / PLAY LAWN | 7 FEATURE                        | 14 ENTRY FEATURE                  |
| 2 STAGE / PAVILION                | 8 STROLLING GARDEN SEATING NICHE | 15 PARKING STRUCTURE ENTRY / EXIT |
| 3 FOOD AND BEVERAGE PAVILION      | 9 SEAT WALL                      | 16 AT GRADE RETAIL ENTRY          |
| 4 SLOPED LAWN AMPHITHEATER        | 10 SEAT STEPS                    | 17 PROPOSED STREET TREES          |
| 5 SEAT HEIGHT PLANTERS IN PLAZA   | 11 ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND          | 18 FOOD TRUCK PARKING             |
| 6 INTERACTIVE WATER               | 12 SLIDE HILL                    | 19 WALL ART ELEMENT               |
|                                   | 13 ICONIC ART ELEMENT            |                                   |

corner of the Plaza where a small performance stage would be placed. Those viewing the stage at this angle would therefore not be looking directly at the north face of a parking garage.

Much like the full-replacement option, this design scenario creates an adventure and play space for kids as well as a nature walk for those seeking a quieter natural experience. Shade trees abound and a water feature provides visual interest and ambient sounds along the northern edge. Rounding out the improvements to the northern edge of the Plaza would be an opportunity for a small cafe and/or pavilion, again providing shade, seating options, and retail/restaurant options.

With the bulk of the parking now taking place in a lower-cost, above-ground structure, this development option is more cost-effective than the full-replacement option detailed previously. The Plaza is also now at-grade and will have fewer design restrictions without the parking structure lying below. There is also potential to repurpose the garage structure in the future, reconfiguring the space into residential or office use, should the neighborhood's parking needs change.

There are a few challenges with this design, however, that must be noted. First and foremost, the new parking structure will significantly impede the view of the Municipal Auditorium from the Plaza surface as well as from the upper floors of the surrounding buildings. The current tunnel system, accessed on all four sides of the Plaza today, will no longer be available to the hotels as the space would instead be filled in with dirt to support the Plaza above. Lastly, this design delivers back to the community a plaza with a smaller footprint.

#### DEVELOPMENT COST

New 9-Story Garage	\$ 30-32,000,000
Park Design + Fill:	\$ 15,000,000
Soft Costs:	\$ 6,000,000
Total:	\$ 53,000,000
Debt Service at 5% =	\$ 3,400,000/Yr.

#### ANNUAL REVENUE AVAILABLE

300 to 450 Monthly Parkers at total of \$150/mo.

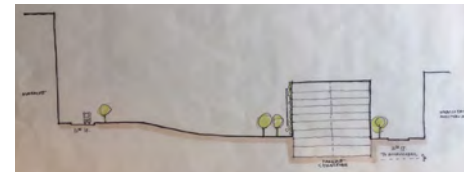
Raise Event Parking to \$25/event

Parking Total:	\$ 2,060,000/year (Net)
\$30/SF NNN x 1600/SF:	\$ 60,000/year
Total:	\$ 2,120,000

Economic Development Tools Allocated:

Expansion of existing TIF: \$ 1,280,000/year

(Est. TIF Revenue Potential in Current District: \$ 2,500,000/year)



Scenario 3 – Cross-section of the newly configured garage, below and above ground and the at-grade plaza.



## Scenario 4 – Alternative Development

The Panel evaluated one additional development option for Barney Allis Plaza, one which addresses the redevelopment of the garage, re-imagines the Plaza's open space, and also delivers a new housing product to downtown Kansas City.

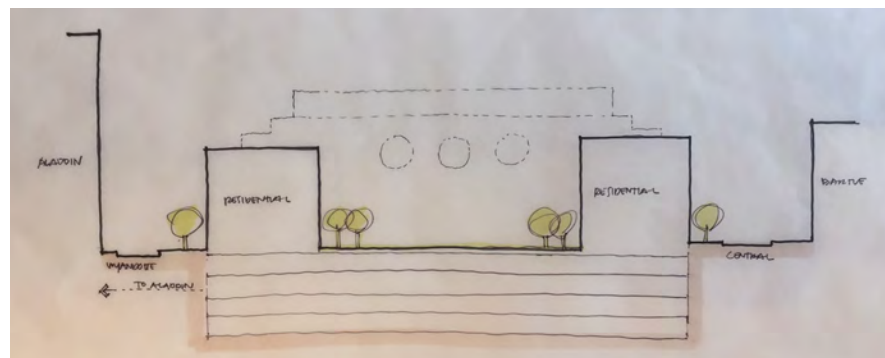
In this alternative development scenario, all parking would again be placed below-grade, completely rebuilding the structure and delivering approximately 980 spaces back to the neighborhood.

The Plaza would make use of the general layout presented as a part of the 'Full Replacement' development option noted earlier, with one key difference: the placement of two three- or four-story apartment buildings on the eastern and western edges of the Plaza.

The addition of apartments, specifically micro-apartments, to the development mix provides a number of benefits to the site, including a financial benefit from apartment revenue, increased activity on the Plaza during non-peak hours, and new housing at an accessible price point for downtown. Micro apartments have also shown to have low parking demands, which should not then impede significantly on the current parking demands in the neighborhood.

Much like the development option before ('Alternative Parking'), the construction of above-ground structures on the site will also pose a few challenges. The new buildings in this scenario will also obstruct views across the Plaza from the surrounding streets and buildings and deliver a smaller plaza footprint, reducing the green space and play opportunities. There may also be some confusion as to the use of the plaza's amenities – are the amenities a community benefit or might the apartment residents view the plaza space as belonging to the apartment development? Finally, while the micro-apartments will have a low parking demand, that is not the same as no parking demand. This slight up-tick in parking needs in the neighborhood might increase parking scarcity during peak hours.

Scenario 4— Cross-section of the newly rebuilt garage, the at-grade plaza, and the two apartment buildings.



## DEVELOPMENT COST

New Vertical Construction Cost (\$210K/SF):	By Developer (\$36.75M)
New Subsurface Garage:	\$ 40-42,000,000
Park Design + Fill:	\$ 15,000,000
Soft Costs:	\$ 6,000,000
Total:	\$ 63,000,000

Debt Service at 5%= \$3.8MM/Yr.

## ANNUAL REVENUE AVAILABLE

300 to 450 Monthly Parkers at total of \$150/mo.

Raise Event Parking to \$25/event

Parking Total:	\$ 2,060,000/year (Net)
\$30/SF NNN x 1600/SF:	\$ 60,000/year
50% of Net Profit From 300 MicroApts (assumes 300 units at \$1000-\$1350/mo)	\$ 600,000/yr
Total:	\$ 2,720,000

Economic Development Tools Allocated:

Expansion of existing TIF:	\$ 1,080,000/year
(Est. TIF Revenue Potential in Current District:	\$2,500,000/year)



Scenario 4— Alternative Development design sketch with apartment footprints noted by red-dashed lines. See page 16 for map legend.



# Operations & Programming

As the Panelists deliberated the development options and related financing considerations, they also spent considerable time evaluating the programming, positioning, and ultimate operations of the Plaza and garage going forward.

## The Plaza

### Branding

Today, Barney Allis Plaza is a park, a plaza, a parking garage, an asphalt playground, a fountain, a struggling grassy space, and an under-valued 'front door' for visitors to Kansas City. The Plaza has a rich history and one that should not be ignored. At the same time, the history is relatively unknown and the name remains a bit unwieldy as a point of reference. The Panel encourages the City to consider renaming the Plaza, honoring and positioning it for something greater, something more in-keeping with the surrounding landscape and growing downtown energy. While a deeper brand exploration is warranted, one that honors the Barney Allis history, a powerful option to consider is **The Yard at Barney Allis**, or simply '**The Yard**.' The Yard could begin to truly serve as Kansas City's front yard, welcoming visitors and encouraging residents and downtown office workers to connect, relax, play, and recharge.

### Programming

In considering the programming of the Plaza, or The Yard, the Panel first conducted an environmental scan of the current and potential uses and the intersections of those uses with potential visitors. With such a wide array of potential programming and potential users, The Yard could easily become overwhelmed or cluttered. Through careful consideration of the stakeholders' opinions, however, the Panel carefully narrowed the programming 'must-haves' to a short list of five items, items which will provide the infrastructure and foundation for a number of uses and assist The Yard in remaining a flexible and capable space for events, recreation, personal enjoyment, and nature.

## Potential Stakeholders & Programming

Audiences	More Green Space	Food Trucks/Stalls	Art	Mobile Kiosks	Stage Area	Walking Path	Covered Civic Space	Bike Sharing	Play Equipment for Kids	Large Yard Games
Neighborhood Residents										
Families	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Millennials	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Seniors	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
K-12	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Singles	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Hotel Visitors (Small Groups or Individuals)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Conventioners (Larger Groups)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Greater Metro Residents	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Daytime Office Employees	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

The must-have items are as follows:

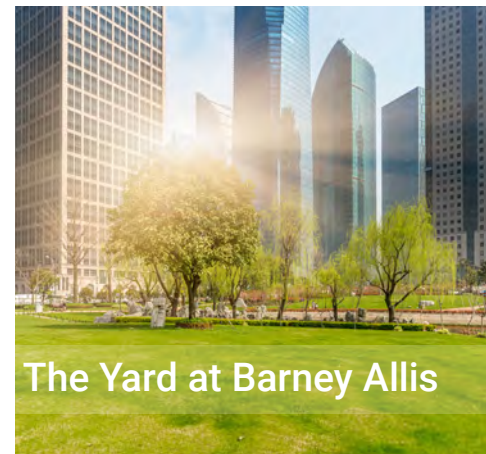
1. Infrastructure basics: water; electricity; WiFi; lighting
2. Food options
3. Diversity of activity and iconic art
4. Shade and seating
5. Accessibility: ADA; multiple points of inviting entry; signage (on-street and within The Yard)

Within the framework of those foundational items, the programming can expand and flex, providing an ideal location for a host of activities to meet the needs of the constituents listed in the Potential Stakeholder & Programming chart.

## Operations

The ongoing operation of The Yard – the programming, maintenance, and administration – would benefit from an organized body such as a conservancy to insure its continual optimal operation. The Panel recommends the establishment of the KC Front Yard Conservancy, a public-private partnership, to fill this important role. Participating entities might include: Downtown Council; partners in sport (Sporting KC, NAIA, UMKC Roo's); YMCA; corporate groups; Visit KC; Arts KC; hotel representatives; Downtown Neighborhood Association; and Parks & Rec representatives. The conservancy would be best served with one of the above entities, the Downtown Council for example, taking the lead and serving as the primary point of contact for the conservancy coalition.

The establishment of a conservancy would allow the City to step back from its role in maintaining a plaza that is not a city park and instead support a group



The Yard at Barney Allis

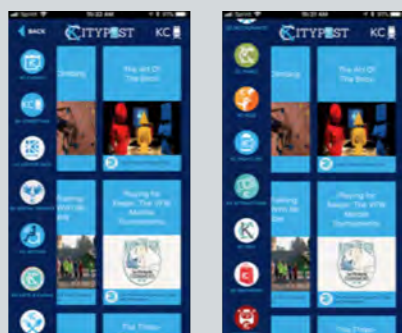
The Plaza would benefit from a new branding strategy.



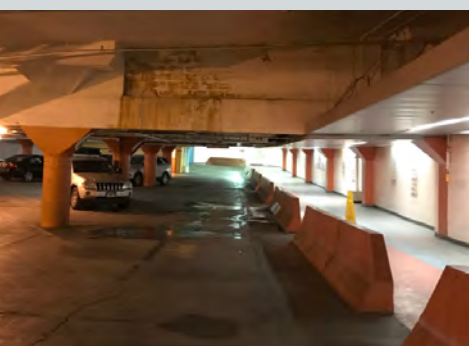
Adding iconic art to The Yard will draw visitors and create a memorable experience.



Creating a small plaza for food truck parking will provide much-needed food vending options in the neighborhood and draw visitors to the area.



Communication tools such as a park website and/or mobile app would go a long way toward informing the public of upcoming events, park conditions, and play opportunities.



The garage today is dark, poorly ventilated, leaking, and confusing to navigate.

of enthusiastic organizations and individuals to step in and lead the charge in helping The Yard thrive. The conservancy would serve as the primary point of contact for all organized uses at The Yard and would lead efforts to fundraise for continued maintenance and any future improvements. It could also contract with a private entity to coordinate and enhance the programming and events at The Yard.

## Communications

In addition to the initial naming and branding recommendations, the Panel also sees a need and opportunity for a coordinated communications function for The Yard. Cities across the country utilize discrete websites for individual parks, using the sites to post event information, host a comprehensive calendar, and provide information for or access to an event coordinator for those seeking to host an event or program in the park. The Yard could benefit from such a site as well as a presence on social media. There is also technology, via geo-fencing communications on mobile devices, that would provide real-time information for those opting in while visiting The Yard.

## The Garage

### Current Parking Experience

As noted earlier, the current garage conditions are sub-standard. The space is dark, wet, and poorly-ventilated. There is considerable deferred maintenance required throughout the structure and signage is minimal and confusing. Exiting the garage is a time-consuming and cumbersome process during peak hours, often resulting in long queues of cars throughout the structure. For those using the garage on a regular basis, they are aware of these issues and continue to park in the garage because of its convenient location. For those visiting the convention center from outside Kansas City or for theater-goers who don't frequent downtown, this is an incredibly poor representation of the City.

### Future Parking Experience

Improving the visitor's/parker's experience with the garage should be of great importance for City branding and, more importantly, for safety reasons.

- With the structural changes available with the reconstruction development options noted earlier, issues relating to ventilation and drainage should be resolved.
- Improved lighting throughout the garage would assist visitors in feeling safe and secure.
- Improved wayfinding outside the garage – using consistent parking signs around the Yard and throughout the City – will help drivers find parking



more quickly. Improved wayfinding inside the garage, including signs for exiting the garage on foot and in a car, should help alleviate congestion that builds when drivers are unsure which direction to turn.

- Additional congestion could be alleviated through the use of a dynamic payment system, utilizing automated technology and/or pre-payment kiosks. The management of payments during smaller events or in the daytime may not require the same solution as during major events or peak hours. The ability to flex is critical to managing traffic flow.

All of this could be managed and operated by a private entity, hired by the City, thereby taking the City out of the garage operations business and allowing it to focus key resources on other matters.

There is also an opportunity for the City to move to the use of City-wide signage and wayfinding. The normalization of this signage throughout the City will assist both residents and visitors in more easily finding their way around. Creating a unified communications mechanism between garage owners and managers would also provide an improved experience for all and communication with the public, via a mobile app, perhaps tied to KCityPost, will assist in locating available parking quickly and easily.



Improved signage on the garage and throughout the City will assist in navigation.



With improved lighting conditions and more efficient ventilation, the garage experience could be pleasant.

# Conclusion

The Panel encourages the City to consider all available options, yet believes it is important keep the following key points in mind.

With regard to the financing of the development options posed by the Panel, the conclusions remain as follows:

- Scenario 1, the short-term option, does not provide the City with a long-term solution and instead just kicks the problem down the road 15 years.
- Scenarios 2-4 have similar economic profiles.
- Scenario 2, the full-replacement option, provides the greatest benefit to the community as a whole and preserves the public open space to the greatest degree.

With regard to Scenario 2 in particular, the following points should be remembered:

- This development option will provide the City with a new garage solution that should last for the next 100 years.
- It also provides the City with the unique opportunity to completely reimagine the face of Barney Allis Plaza, transforming it into The Yard at Barney Allis, a flexible, shaded, accessible, and exciting green space in the heart of downtown and at the front door to the convention center and hotels.
- This newly-designed, flexible space will also provide all stakeholder groups with opportunities for rest and recreation.
- The addition of play structures, garden walks, performance space, and flexible retail/restaurant options in The Yard will also be incredibly welcome additions to this neighborhood.



# Panelists



**Audrey Navarro, Co-Chair**

Clemons Real Estate

As managing partner of Clemons Real Estate, Audrey oversees a team of brokers and as well as maintains an active role in acquisitions, redevelopment, strategic planning, and investment sales. Prior to joining Clemons, Audrey spent 12 years with Kessinger/Hunter & Co., a Cushman & Wakefield firm in Kansas City, as Director of Retail Brokerage. In her time with KH, she represented numerous ownership groups and national tenants, including Crown Center Redevelopment Corporation, Golfsmith, NorthFace, and Passco Companies.

In 2011, Audrey played a key role in repositioning Crown Center as a premier family destination in the Midwest, with the addition of SeaLife Aquarium and Legoland Discovery Center.



**Craig Scranton**

BNIM

Craig Scranton is a Principal at BNIM who has led some of the firm's most complex projects. His wide-ranging expertise includes office buildings, parking garages, civic buildings, housing, and schools. Craig is adept at working on large projects that require broad-based comprehensive design and development experience. In 2010, he received his master's degree in entrepreneurial real estate and uses this expertise to help development clients and nonprofit organizations with real estate decisions and financing options. Craig's recent

project experience includes Westport Middle School's conversion to Plexpod, now one of the country's largest co-working spaces; Washington University in St. Louis's East Campus Implementation Plan and underground parking structure; the multi-building West Bottoms Housing project; the Monogram Building historic renovation in downtown St. Louis; and several school real estate endeavors in Kansas City.



**Rob Gray**

Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects

Rob Gray, PLA, ASLA, LEED AP is a Principal at Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects where he serves as a design and thought leader within the firm. Rob has a broad range of experience spanning the fields of planning and landscape architecture, including campus and community planning, streetscape design, healthcare, public parks, botanical and zoological gardens and theme parks and resorts. Rob has developed a strong commitment to developing design solutions that evoke the spirit of a place, drawing inspiration from

both site and program to create settings that immerse the user in an enriching and memorable environment. Rob holds a Bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture from Louisiana State University and a Masters of Landscape Architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design.



## Jill McCarthy

KCADC

With more than 25 years' experience, Jill leads the business recruitment team for KCADC—working with companies and national site location consultants considering the Kansas City metropolitan area for expansion or relocation—and is responsible for the implementation of strategic initiatives directing more deal flow to the KC region. Jill works across multiple disciplines including data centers, headquarters, shared and customer service operations, as well as industrial projects. Jill drives several of KCADC's outreach and hosting events, briefings and site visits. She has worked with numerous companies, including Dex Media, Littler, Magna International, Martinrea International, OptumRx, U.S. Bank and the U.S. Marine Corps. Jill holds board positions at the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Kansas City Advisory Board, CREW KC, Parkinson's Foundation Heartland and KC Tech Council Board of Directors. Jill is involved in several other professional organizations: CoreNet Global, 7x24 Exchange, AFCOM, ACCP, IEDC as well as the state economic development peer groups, KEDA and MEDC.



## Kelley Gripple

Structural Engineering Associates

Kelley was born and raised in southeast Iowa and went on to attend Iowa State University and obtain a B.S. in Civil Engineering. Kelley worked at the Washington County Engineer's office during high school and in the summers during college. After graduating from college in 1981, Kelley accepted a job with Butler Manufacturing in the Agricultural Division designing grain storage buildings. During this time, Kelley, began taking night classes and obtained his M.S. in Civil Engineering in 1984. In 1985 he accepted an engineering position at Structural Engineering Associates and began taking night classes for his MBA in management. In 1989, Kelley became a partner at Structural Engineering Associates. He finished his MBA in management from UMKC in 1990. Kelley is licensed in 12 states throughout the United States. Kelley is a member of MSPE, PCI, and ACEC. He served as a past president and board member of ACEC for several years. During his career at Structural Engineering Associates, Kelley has worked on several notable projects such as Union Station Addition and Renovation, The IRS Service Center, The Bloch Addition at the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, The H&R Block World Headquarters, Buildings 82 & 84 at Corporate Woods, Valencia Place on the Country Club Plaza and The Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts.



## Michael Collins

JE Dunn

Michael Collins serves as vice president for JE Dunn Construction, a company founded in 1924. As vice president, Michael leads the efforts for industrial and Public Private Partnership (P3) ventures for the development of large-complex development and investment projects for manufacturing and public entity clients. Previously, Michael served as the president and CEO of Port KC where he led the quasi-governmental organization spearheading a diversified portfolio of transportation, trade, commerce and real estate development business lines. Such endeavors included waterfront development along the Missouri River; creating intermodal inland port facilities; and enhancing river borne freight along the Missouri River regionally and globally. Michael began his career as senior aide to Senator Christopher "Kit" Bond in Washington, D.C., and Kansas City, Mo. In this capacity, he was a senior advisor on transportation, economic development and commerce, financial services and appropriations policy. Michael holds a degree in political science from Park University, an MBA from Rockhurst University and attended executive education at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard.



## Kathryn Jones

Highline Partners

Kathryn began her career at VML, one of the most innovative and respected digital agencies in the world - part of the WPP network. On the account side, she helped clients like Honeywell and US Soccer navigate the brave new world of online marketing and oversaw enterprise website design/development efforts. After VML, Kathryn moved to the client-side as a Brand Strategist at Dimensional Innovations, a design/build firm, where she managed internal marketing as well as program marketing for clients. With Highline Partners, Kathryn leads the company and clients through the intricate challenge of communicating vision around real estate development, helping them (and the company) develop and deploy the right tactics at the right scale. She also serves as the Co-Chair of the ULI Communications Committee and is in her second year on The Nelson-Atkins' Museum of Art ShuttleCork Planning Committee.



## Triveece Penelton

Vireo

Triveece is a city planner and public involvement innovator. She is also the creator of the Digicate® software application for community engagement. She has worked with community organizations and government agencies at the state, county, and local levels for 17 years. The projects she manages blend planning with intensive public engagement, education, information sharing, messaging, and branding. Triveece's strengths lie in developing and executing the communication and planning processes by which groups of stakeholders are strategically brought together to discuss the opportunities ahead of them through corridor, area, and comprehensive planning efforts that use creative and innovative tools to gather meaningful input.



## Jacob Littrel

Hufft Projects

As Managing Principal, Jacob provides organizational leadership and business management at Hufft. By leveraging resources, he works to meet and exceed the company's strategic goals. A Registered Architect, Jacob has a collective fifteen years of experience in both the architecture and construction industries, giving him a unique ability to manage the diverse design, build and fabrication operation at Hufft. Jacob is passionate about the Kansas City community and currently serves on the Board of Directors for Citizens of the World Charter School.



## Gib Kerr

Cushman Wakefield

Gibson Kerr, CCIM joined Cushman & Wakefield as director of Capital Markets in Kansas City in 2013. With over 30 years of commercial real estate experience, he has closed over 250 transactions, including numerous landmark multi-family developments in Metropolitan Kansas City. Prior to joining Cushman & Wakefield, Gib served as managing principal of Sperry Van Ness in Kansas City and as vice president of Tower Properties. Previously, Gib was a principal of Colliers Turley Martin / Kerr & Company and worked as an asset manager with Wachovia Bank of North Carolina. He is a graduate of Washington & Lee University (BA) and the University of Virginia (MBA).





# Urban Land Institute

## Kansas City

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