



Kansas City

DOWNTOWN SHAWNEE, KANSAS

Redevelopment Opportunities for Wonderscope and Beyond



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ON THE COVER: Downtown Shawnee, Kansas.
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About ULI Kansas City

As the preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among local, national, and international industry leaders and policymakers dedicated to creating better places. The ULI Kansas City District Council brings together real estate professionals, civic leaders, and the Kansas City community for educational programs, initiatives impacting the region, and networking events, all in the pursuit of advancing responsible and equitable land use throughout the region. With 310 members locally, ULI Kansas City provides a unique venue to convene and share best practices in the region. ULI Kansas City believes everyone needs to be at the table when the region's future is at stake, so ULI serves the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines – from architects to developers, CEOs to analysts, builders, property owners, investors, public officials and everyone in between. Using this interdisciplinary approach, ULI examines land use issues, impartially reports findings, and convenes forums to find solutions.

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Joe Perry

Vice President of Development, Port KC
District Council Chair, ULI Kansas City

Audrey Navarro

Managing Partner, Clemmons Real Estate
Chair of Mission Advancement, ULI Kansas City

Colby Clifton

Assurance Partner, Ernst & Young
Treasurer, ULI Kansas City



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Since 1947, the ULI Advisory Services program has assembled well over 700 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for complex land use challenges. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's advisory services. National and international panelists are specifically recruited to form a panel of independent and objective volunteer ULI member experts with the skills needed to address the identified land use challenge. The program is designed to help break through obstacles, jump-start conversations, and solve tough challenges that need an outside, independent perspective. Three- and five-day engagements are offered to ensure thorough consideration of relevant topics.

An additional national offering is the project analysis session (PAS) offered at ULI's Fall and Spring Meetings, through which specific land use challenges are evaluated by a panel of volunteer experts selected from ULI's membership. This is a conversational format that lends itself to an open exchange of ideas among diverse industry practitioners with distinct points of view. From the streamlined two-hour session to the "deeper dive" eight-hour session, this intimate conversational format encourages creative thinking and problem solving.

Learn more at americas.uli.org/programs/advisory-services.

ULI Advisory Services identify creative, practical solutions for complex land use and development challenges.

Technical Assistance Program (TAP)

Urban Land Institute harnesses its members' technical expertise to help communities solve complex land use, development, and redevelopment challenges. Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs) provide expert, multidisciplinary, unbiased advice to local governments, public agencies, and nonprofit organizations facing complex land use and real estate issues in the Kansas City region. Drawing from its professional membership base, ULI Kansas City offers objective and responsible guidance on various land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The sponsoring organization is responsible for gathering the background information necessary to understand the project and present it to the panel. TAP panelists spend two days interviewing stakeholders, evaluating the challenges, and ultimately arriving at a set of recommendations that the sponsoring organization can use to guide development going forward.

Technical Assistance Panel and Project Staff

Panel Members

Craig Scranton

Panel Co-Chair
BNIM

Brittney Swartz

Panel Co-Chair
Burns & McDonnell

Virginia Dobesh

Edgemoor Infrastructure & Real Estate

Gunnar Hand

Unified Government of Wyandotte County
and Kansas City, KS

Matt Ledbetter

Grayson Capital

Kassie Murphy

Newmark Zimmer

Godfrey Riddle

Civic Saint

Mark Sherfy

BHC

Matt Tapp

Griffin Riley Property Group

Chip Walsh

Mercier Street CRE Consulting

Travis Willson

Veritas Architecture + Design

ULI Project Staff

Katherine Carttar

Executive Director, ULI Kansas City

Samantha Moores

Manager, ULI Kansas City

Kelly Annis

Technical Writer, Branch Communications

Acknowledgments

ULI Kansas City is grateful to [insert key contacts from the city and EDC], for their leadership, assistance, and support of the information gathering critical to the success of this study. Additionally, ULI Kansas City would like to thank Kevin Pinkowski, who leads ULI Kansas City's Technical Assistance Panel work, and the rest of the TAP committee who were instrumental in working with the sponsors in the formation of this study.



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The former Wonderscope Children's Museum sits vacant in downtown Shawnee and represents a compelling redevelopment opportunity.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Shawnee, Kansas, a bustling city of 70,000+ people, is enjoying a downtown resurgence. Far different from the high-rise downtowns of other Midwestern cities, Shawnee's downtown is a rich mixture of small-scale historic buildings interspersed with new buildings of similar scale, civic amenities, and community landmarks. The city was founded on land at the intersection of Johnson Drive and Nieman Road and is considered the heart of downtown Shawnee today. As such, the blocks immediately surrounding this intersection have become the focus of both public and private sector interest.

The northwest quadrant of this historic intersection is of particular interest to the City of Shawnee (the city) as a significant piece of property is currently for sale. The property, the former location of Wonderscope, a children's museum, sits on 1.74 acres and features a vacant building and associated parking lot. Recent development proposals for the site have failed to take hold, leaving the property owner and the city with questions as to the best next use for that site.

Turning to the Urban Land Institute Kansas City (ULI Kansas

City), the city and the Shawnee Chamber of Commerce requested assistance in determining the highest and best use for the Wonderscope site as well as guidance in further activating this northwest quadrant of downtown. ULI, using its trusted technical assistance panel (TAP) program convened a group of real estate professionals for an intensive two-day study of the site, including a walking tour and stakeholder interview stakeholders, ultimately arriving at a set of recommendations that the city can consider as it works to encourage and spur development at this important downtown site.



Downtown Shawnee, centered around the intersection of Johnson Drive and Nieman Road, is experiencing slow yet steady growth.

The Big Vision

Small town feel... big time draw. This phrase came to mind for the panel and quickly became a guiding principle in its work and recommendations for further activating the northwest quadrant of downtown. Shawnee residents love the feeling of living in a small town. At the same time, the city consistently provides the types of experiences and amenities of a much bigger city. As Shawnee leadership considers future land uses across downtown, care should be taken to support both the small town nature of the city, including walkability and locally-owned shops, and the types of amenities and gathering spaces needed for larger community celebrations. Placemaking efforts can support this small town community culture, adding to the love residents feel for Shawnee, as well as create yet another draw for those visiting the city and downtown specifically.

Follow the Achieve Shawnee plan. To support this balance of small town and big draw, the city is encouraged to follow the initiatives outlined in Achieve Shawnee, the city's current comprehensive plan. The recommendations are good and forward-looking in a manner that will support the city and its residents as the city grows. The comprehensive plan guidance that addresses the downtown district specifically are good steps in the right direction to support downtown activation and should be put into action.

Hire a downtown champion. Downtown Shawnee would benefit from the efforts and attention of person hired to champion downtown specifically. From curating an appealing downtown business mix to courting new organizations to provide programming downtown, a staffer dedicated to the health and wellbeing of downtown Shawnee would be an important investment in and by the community.

The District

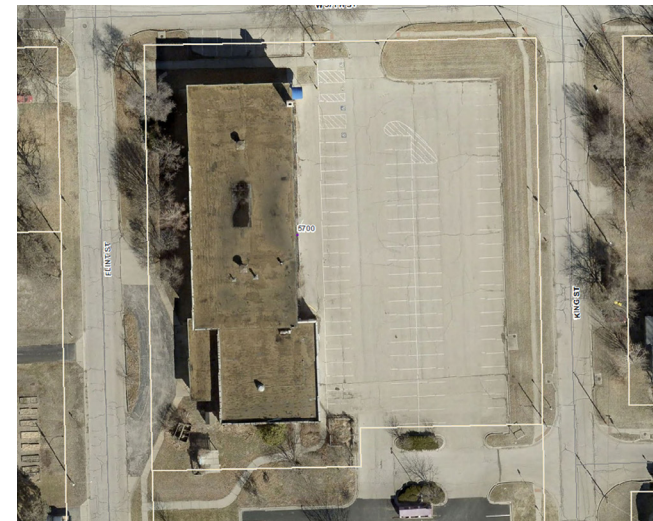
Land use across the downtown district has evolved over the city's history, resulting in a random assortment of land uses along the downtown corridors. Knowing that shifts in land use will require time and patience, the city is encouraged to reconfigure land uses with an eye toward maximizing the visibility and retail and economic potential of parcels fronting Nieman Road and Johnson Drive.

Prioritize retail and support walkability. Prioritizing retail along these street frontages will help activate the downtown streetscape in ways that the presence of civic uses cannot. To support this activation, the city should consider implementing the Nieman Now! streetscape improvements across downtown and narrowing Johnson Drive by removing one traffic lane in each direction. This roadway update will continue to provide adequate passage for commuting traffic while greatly improving the pedestrian experience. If the downtown streetscape is to align with and support the city's small-town feel, residents and visitors should feel comfortable walking between destinations and across downtown streets. Narrowing the roadway will make improve the pedestrian experience considerably.

Encourage incremental infill development. Incremental infill development should be encouraged across downtown. Aligning land uses downtown with the city's comprehensive plan will help ensure that commercial enterprises continue to line Johnson Drive and Nieman Road and keep residential parcels tucked into the surrounding blocks or above the main street businesses.

Consider a new civic center. The placement of City Hall and Splash Cove, while convenient for resident access, consume two important parcels within Shawnee's downtown core. City Hall sits at the northwest corner of the most important intersection downtown and is fronted by a large parking lot; neither land use location (the building or its parking lot) support the city's goal of activating downtown. By relocating City Hall and potentially Splash Cove to a new civic center, perhaps in the Shawnee Town footprint, the city can create a new civic center and similarly-accessible downtown location for these municipal services and amenities. These relocations would open both sites for more active and intentional commercial and retail befitting an active downtown streetscape.

Create connections and reconnections. In addition to enhancing downtown's walkability through a better pedestrian experience along Johnson Drive, connections throughout downtown should be enhanced for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Specifically, 57th Terrace and 58th Street should be reconnected downtown, re-



The former Wonderscope building, seen here from above, sits on approximately 1.74 acres in downtown Shawnee.

establishing the historic street grid. Not only will this provide improved movement and access around downtown, it will also open additional development sites for potential new uses, further activating this section of the downtown core.

Wonderscope Site

In considering the future for the former Wonderscope site, the panel evaluated the market conditions, neighborhood context, and the city's goals, ultimately arriving at two possible scenarios to consider and potentially pursue via a request for proposal to the development community.

Scenario one: multifamily housing (new construction).

Understanding the need for additional housing in and around downtown Shawnee, the panel evaluated the opportunity to raze the current building and replace it with a three-story, multifamily building housing approximately 90 residential units. While this size and scale is likely acceptable to the surrounding residents, the financial constraints—environmental remediation, high interest rates, and high construction costs—make this scenario highly unlikely and financially problematic without significant public sector participation.

Scenario two: townhomes (new construction) and boutique hotel (adaptive reuse).

The potential adaptation of the existing building into a new use could provide a developer with access to additional financial tools that could be leveraged to make the redevelopment possible as well as fund additional development at the site. Specifically, the panel evaluated the opportunity to redevelop the building into a boutique hotel. This new use could qualify for New Markets Tax Credits, which, when leveraged with potential Historic Tax Credits, could make a project on the site financial viable. In fact, the viability of the potential hotel development, using a conservative projected income, could become the springboard for the development of additional housing, potentially in the form of low-density, two- to three-story townhomes at the site. Street-facing, townhomes could help activate this quadrant of downtown and provide important missing middle housing for Shawnee's workforce and young professionals.

The City of Shawnee is rich in history, is blessed with passionate residents, and should be proud of its municipal professional staff who are working diligently every day to make Shawnee the wonderful city it is today. While the long-term land use recommendations set forth by the panel should be addressed over time and with ample advance notice, work can begin today to lay the foundation for a newly organized civic space and thereby open up important parcels for future commercial uses that will better activate downtown, support a vibrant business district, and serve the city and its residents well, financially, into the future. These changes will take political will and resident support, but with the Big Vision in its sights, the City of Shawnee can and soon will reap the benefits of this challenging work.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

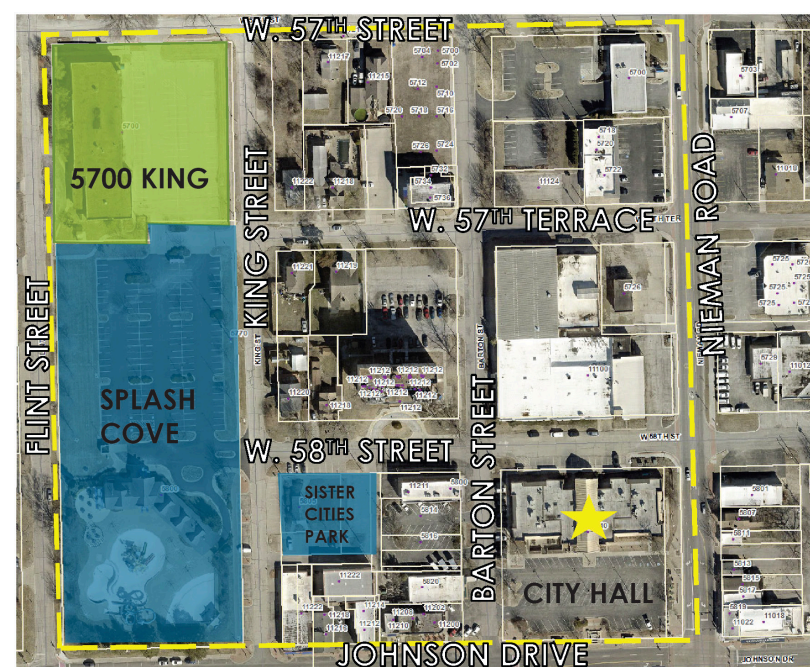
The City of Shawnee, Kansas, is enjoying a downtown renaissance. Centered around the intersection of Johnson Drive and Neiman Road, downtown Shawnee is marked by some historic buildings, independent brew pubs, and a few eclectic local commercial establishments that are finding growing success in this Kansas City suburb. With an eye on the future, Shawnee’s civic leaders are envisioning an even more active downtown landscape and sought guidance from ULI Kansas City to help plan for the real estate needs of a future downtown Shawnee.

At 5700 King Street, just one block north and west of downtown’s primary intersection, a vacant building sits on approximately 1.74 acres. The building and land, the former location for Wonderscope, a family-centric museum and play experience, presents a compelling redevelopment opportunity given its close proximity to downtown Shawnee. The property owner is interested in potentially working with the City of Shawnee (the city) in the redevelopment of the property, and the city is working to understand the best possible reuse for the site.

The Wonderscope site is surrounded by a variety of land uses, some long-standing and others rather new. To the east of the site and along King Avenue sit two blocks of

single-family residential properties. Directly south is a parking lot and Splash Cove, a small, city-run water park that operates May through August and is a big summer draw for families with young children. To the north, more single-family homes line West 57th Street. Finally, in the block to the west, the First Baptist Church of Shawnee, Herman Laird Park, and Shawnee Town complete the block.

The land uses across downtown Shawnee vary widely—commercial (retail, office, and entertainment), light industrial, and single-family and multifamily residential, the latter marked by the Bluejacket Lodge, a seven-story apartment building one block from the former Wonderscope site (the study site).



The TAP study focused on the 1.74 acres and building at 5700 King Street, yet the broader context and land use of downtown Shawnee, primarily the intersection of Johnson Drive and Nieman Road, were also considered by the panel as the success of the study site will be heavily impacted by the success of and land uses around downtown.

Questions for the Panel

1. What is the highest and best use of the building and/or site located at 5700 King Street taking into consideration surrounding real estate uses, market influences, and neighborhood hesitation towards change?
2. How is the northwest quadrant of Downtown Shawnee best activated and connected to activities on Johnson Drive and Nieman Road?
3. Additional opportunities for development financing for this or other suggested projects.

To better understand the potential opportunities at the study site and how any use might best complement the city’s vision for downtown, the city turned to ULI Kansas City to study the site, evaluate the opportunities, interview related stakeholders, and deliver a set of recommendations that the city can consider in its future plans and actions.

Using its trusted technical assistance panel process, ULI Kansas City convened a group of ULI members to study the issues at hand. The TAP panel, comprised of real estate professionals, included architects, urban planners, finance professionals, developers, and those with public sector experience. Following a tour of the site and interviews with over 40 stakeholders, the ULI panel applied their professional knowledge and experience to the questions posed by the city.

The stakeholder interviews provided Shawnee residents, business leaders, and municipal elected leadership and staff with an opportunity to share their thoughts, concerns, and hopes for downtown Shawnee and the former Wonderscope site specifically. Through those interviews, the following themes emerged:

- **Small town feel.** People love the small town feel of downtown Shawnee and the presence of locally-owned retail establishments.
- **Big city draws.** Shawnee provides a number of big-city attractions, including the Aztec Theater, multiple craft breweries, and the annual Old Shawnee Days festival.

- **Passionate residents.** Residents are invested in the city and passionate about its past, present, and future.
- **Shawnee Town investments.** There has been focused investment in the development and expansion of Shawnee Town, which is adjacent to the study site.
- **Desire for more retail.** Residents would like to have additional shopping and retail options in and around downtown.
- **City Hall growth.** City Hall, which is at the northwest corner of Johnson Drive and Nieman Road, is quickly running out of space to meet the administrative needs of the growing city.



City Hall sits at the corner of Johnson Drive and Nieman Road and is at capacity with no room for additional municipal employees.

- **Commercial corners underutilized.** City Hall sits on one of the most valuable commercial corners in downtown Shawnee. Its parking lot fronts the building, closest to the intersection, and the commercial opportunities at this corner are lost due to the municipal use currently in place.
- **Building height sensitivities.** Although a seven-story residential building sits within the downtown core, residents are largely opposed to additional buildings of a similar scale. City leadership, in response, is sensitive to potential building heights outside of the primary commercial corridors.
- **Wonderscope building ambivalence.** The Wonderscope enterprise was a welcome addition to the community, but now that the building is empty few residents have strong feelings about preserving the structure.
- **Need for more daytime foot traffic.** All of the business owners and operators interviewed expressed a need more daytime foot traffic to support their operations downtown.
- **History is important.** Community members and business owners expressed an interest in the city's history and are generally supportive of historic preservation efforts through design and renovation efforts that reflect or embrace the area's history.
- **Nieman Road improvements are working.** Recent roadway improvements on Nieman Road, including a road diet and streetscape improvements, are working well for the community and the commuter traffic that moves through Shawnee.

The Wonderscope building, vacant now for several years, is beginning to show the impacts of vacancy (overgrown landscaping, graffiti, etc.). It is time to identify the next great use for the site, one that will be additive to the community and to downtown Shawnee and align with the property owner's goals for a sale.



Many of the businesses lining Johnson Drive in downtown Shawnee have embraced the historic elements that originally graced the buildings' facades.



Single-family homes dot the landscape around the study site.



Streetscape and roadway improvements along Nieman Road have positively impacted vehicular speed and improved pedestrian safety.

THE BIG VISION

The City of Shawnee is marked by a downtown that has an inviting small town feel. Businesses and breweries line the streets, neighborhoods and homes are in close proximity, and visitors get the sense that residents know one another. At the same time, Shawnee is hosting attractions and events like Old Shawnee Days that are providing a regional draw. This powerful combination prompted the TAP panel to note that Shawnee possess a "small town feel... a big time draw."

Leveraging this "small town feel... big time draw" concept, the panel outlined a vision for the city that draws on key concepts and initiatives outlined in the city's current comprehensive plan and amplifies further the attributes that draw new residents and visitors to the city and its downtown. The city has created a landing place in downtown, using its streetscape, City Hall parking lot, and even the downtown streets directly, as a gathering place and central hub for celebration throughout the year. The Moonlight Market, Old Shawnee Days, and the St. Patrick's Day Parade each make ample use of downtown as a landing spot and place of celebration.

The city's current Achieve Shawnee Comprehensive Plan addresses the downtown district specifically and makes note of several initiatives that the panel believes are steps in the right direction for further downtown activation.

- **Placemaking.** The plan calls for additional placemaking, destination creation, and leveraging existing assets to cultivate a sense of place. With its colorful crosswalks and selfie stations, the city is taking great steps in this direction and should continue with these placemaking endeavors.
- **Branding.** Marketing efforts, featuring a unified brand for downtown Shawnee, will support economic activity downtown and amplify individual business owners' efforts to attract visitors and shoppers to downtown. A unified brand will also support community efforts to market current and future programs and events organized to draw people to Shawnee.

- **Housing.** The comprehensive plan calls on the city to utilize vacant or underutilized properties to increase housing opportunities and add variety to retail, entertainment, and dining uses. Downtown should be a place for people to shop, dine, work, and live—leveraging underutilized properties for housing will add households to downtown and reduce the number of under-performing properties across the city.

Placemaking in Downtown Shawnee

Creating spaces people want to visit and linger is an art but it is also a proven economic driver used by communities across the United States and beyond. In addition to the placemaking initiatives noted in the city's comprehensive plan, the panel recommends the following steps.

Focus on curation and activation. Placemaking requires curation of the visitor experience. From selecting the artist(s) for art installations and murals to selecting the types of street furniture that will invite visitors to rest or play, careful attention should be paid to the creation of these community spaces. Activation is also key to placemaking efforts. Few new spaces can stand alone upon completion or installation without initial or even ongoing programming. Actively programming spaces—through the addition of regular events, reasons to come/see/gather/return—will be important to introduce the community to the spaces, demonstrate potential engagement activities, and create reasons for visitors to return over time.



The heart sculpture in downtown invites visitors to take a selfie and share the image on social networks.

For Shawnee, placemaking will help amplify Shawnee’s small-town history and values to support a sense of community and belonging.

Incorporate key placemaking elements. Although it is not required that each placemaking endeavor include all of these elements, successful placemaking installations leverage many of the following key elements:

- Walkability. Is the area being activated easy to access and move around on foot or outside a vehicle?
- Connections. Are there easy-to-find/see connections between placemaking efforts and other areas of interest? Do the installations or programs build and lead visitors to find/enjoy another experience?
- People. Are people invited in, encouraged to linger, and feel like they belong in the new space?
- Activation. Does the space require frequent activation? Who is managing those efforts and supporting ongoing success?
- Public art. What role does public art play in the space?

The Impacts of Placemaking

Through placemaking activities, communities can begin to see the following returns on investment:

- **50%** increase in foot traffic
- **53%** increase in people self-identifying with the place
- **74%** increase in likelihood to share information about the place and experience
- **77%** likelihood to recommend the place

—Dr. Louis-Etienne Dubois
Associate Professor, Creative Industries
Toronto Metropolitan University
ULI Art in Place Global Forum, 2023

How is the public invited in to experience and interact with the art?

- Historic preservation. Do the placemaking elements draw from or build upon historic elements of the area? Are there measures that can support historic preservation in the area?
- Context. Do the placemaking elements or installations have context in relation to the surroundings that is apparent and easily understood?
- Branding. Are there elements of the placemaking that could be leveraged into a branding campaign that would raise the visibility of the experience and add visual connections between the marketing and branding materials and the location of the experience?

Creative Placemaking Supports

There are a number of options for municipalities seeking funding and/or technical assistance to support creative placemaking activities, district rebranding, and even the ongoing maintenance needs of placemaking installations.



The mural on the former Wonderscope building could spark additional placemaking around the study site.

Consider national resources. The National Endowment for the Arts provides at least two separate grants to consider:

- [“Our Town” grants](#) (award range: \$25,000-150,000). Although the 2024 application window has closed, the August application deadline might be worth considering in the 2025 funding cycle.
- ArtWorks grants (award range: \$25,000-150,000).

Explore regional resources. Across the region, there are several philanthropic foundations that are committed to supporting the arts and access to the arts across communities. The following foundations in particular may be of interest to Shawnee leadership and should be explored further.

- [Muriel McBrien Kauffman Family Foundation](#)
- [Sunderland Family Foundation](#). While this foundation tends to support capital projects, arts and culture projects are one of its four key funding categories and might provide some avenues of support to the city or a related organization focused on placemaking efforts in Shawnee.
- Hadley Foundation.



Lighting can play an important role in creating a sense of place and an inviting atmosphere in which people want to linger.

- [Mid-America Arts Alliance, Regional Touring Program](#). This organization has a rolling application deadline that extends through June 30, 2024, and supports efforts to bring regional guest artists to a venue.

Leverage local resources. Within the Kansas City metropolitan area, there are grant opportunities to support artistic endeavors by locally-focused family foundations that might be interested in supporting placemaking in Shawnee.

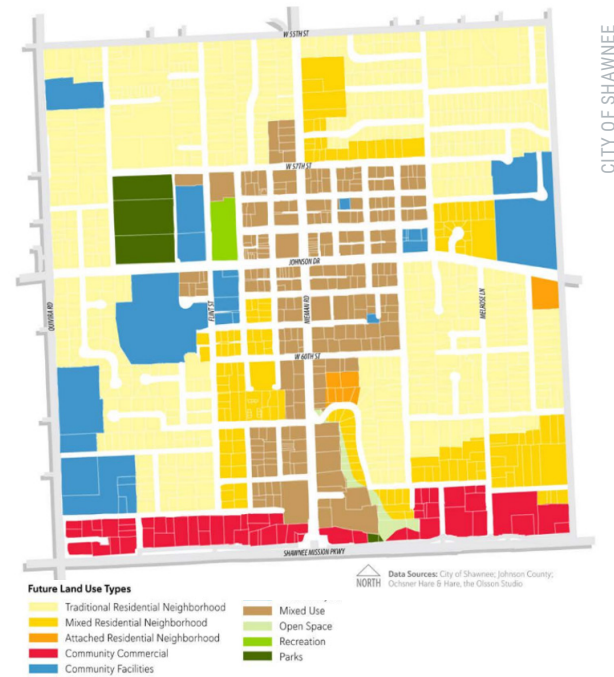
- [ArtsKC Project Grants](#). Dedicated to supporting public-facing and publicly accessible programming, these smaller grant opportunities can help fund individual installations. The application window closes February 5, 2024.
- Family foundations. Individual, Kansas City-based family foundations, such as the [DeBruce Foundation](#), the [Bloch Family Foundation](#), the [Hall Family Foundation](#), and the [Francis Family Foundation](#) might also provide additional funding opportunities for placemaking downtown.

Building on a Good Start

The city has put tremendous effort into the Achieve

Shawnee Comprehensive Plan, which outlines intended future land uses in the downtown district. Building on a core of mixed-use building types at the intersection of Johnson Drive and Nieman Road and radiating out a block or two in each direction, the intention of the comprehensive plan is to center mixed-use activity (primarily commercial, retail, and multifamily residential) at this important downtown intersection. Supporting the downtown businesses in the surrounding blocks are a mix of both traditional and mixed residential neighborhoods.

It is important to recognize the work that has already been completed by the city and the Shawnee Economic Development Council (EDC). Over the course of the past four years, downtown Shawnee has seen a strong surge of new business openings, historic buildings coming back into active use, and economic activity lining downtown's streets. This work is to be commended, particularly given the COVID-19 pandemic challenges of that same time, and efforts to support downtown's existing businesses should continue to be a top priority for the city and EDC.



The Achieve Shawnee Comprehensive Plan calls for a concentration of mixed-use land uses in the downtown district.

Is there a better way to organize civic facilities to produce a more responsive government and a more cohesive Downtown District?

—TAP Panelist



Marked with the dark pink hearts, completed projects and businesses dot the downtown Shawnee landscape.

THE DISTRICT

The northwest quadrant of downtown, bound to the east and south by Nieman Road and Johnson Drive respectively, is a mix of land uses today that have evolved over the city's long history. The mix of uses—municipal, commercial, residential, entertainment, and park space—creates a landscape of oftentimes competing interests relating to parking, sound, and access. Aligning these uses more intentionally to more directly align with the city's comprehensive plan will better serve both the commercial operations along the corridors and the residents in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Main & Main

The intersection of Johnson Drive and Nieman Road represents the intersection of Main Street and Main Street for Shawnee. It is the intersection around which the city was founded and is, today, the heart of downtown. As such, the land uses around the edges of this important intersection should pave the way for commercial success, the streetscape should support pedestrian and economic activities, and the roadway should provide safe passage for through traffic as well as safe access for pedestrians walking across the corridors to explore downtown.

Incorporate the Nieman Now! plan across downtown.

Johnson Drive and Nieman Road play important roles for downtown and impact potential future uses at the study site. Given the small town feel residents treasure in Shawnee, the Nieman Now! roadway improvements have been a success, narrowing the roadway to just one lane in each direction, slowing traffic, and providing wider and safer spaces for pedestrians. Similar attention should be paid to Johnson Drive. While historic conversations around a narrowing of Johnson Drive did not progress to implementation, roadway narrowing should again be on the table. Similar to Nieman Road improvements, narrowing Johnson Drive will help slow traffic speeds through downtown, provide space for wider sidewalks for pedestrians, and encourage more economic activity at the businesses lining the street. Implementing the Nieman Now! improvements across downtown will serve Shawnee and its downtown well.

Public Realm, Going Forward

The area around the study site contains a number of notable landmarks. The quadrant is home to City Hall, the First Baptist Church, Shawnee Town, Splash Cove, Sister Cities Park, Bluejacket Lodge, and the former Wonderscope site. These landmarks and assets are scattered across the quadrant, are at times tucked away (e.g., Sister Cities Park), and remain disconnected from one another.

As the city considers its long-term plans for the public realm in and around downtown, the following recommendations can help create a more efficient and better connected network of land use, a better positioning of land for commercial use, and create additional opportunities for future civic and economic growth downtown.

Prioritize retail frontage. The parcels fronting Johnson Drive and Nieman Road should be prioritized for retail use. The land on which City Hall sits represents prime commercial real estate that would be a prized location for retailers or restaurateurs wishing to move to downtown Shawnee and bring taxable income to that corner. Today, the corner is marked by a large parking lot fronting City Hall, which does nothing to activate this important commercial intersection. As the city's administrative needs grow and more room is required within City Hall, civic leaders should consider moving City Hall operations to another site and free this location for more active commercial uses.

Encourage incremental infill development. Scattered throughout the northwest quadrant are a few vacant parcels and vacant buildings. As property comes on the market, the city should consider the levers it can use to encourage the type of incremental infill development that will create more activity downtown. Shifting parcels along commercial corridors from residential to commercial, as called for in the city’s comprehensive plan, or encouraging a shift from a one-story office building on Johnson Drive, for example, to a multi-story mixed-use development with retail uses on the ground floor will help further activate the streetscape downtown.

Leverage residential transitional uses to shift to single family neighborhoods. Urban planning principles embrace transitional uses that provide important gradual shifts between building types and housed activities. In the spaces between downtown commercial buildings and surrounding single-family homes cities regularly call for some form of multifamily residential development. This eventual graduation in use and scale assists with the transition between building mass and activity level. The area around downtown Shawnee should use this type of residential

transition to smooth the edges between downtown commercial and surrounding single-family residential neighborhoods.

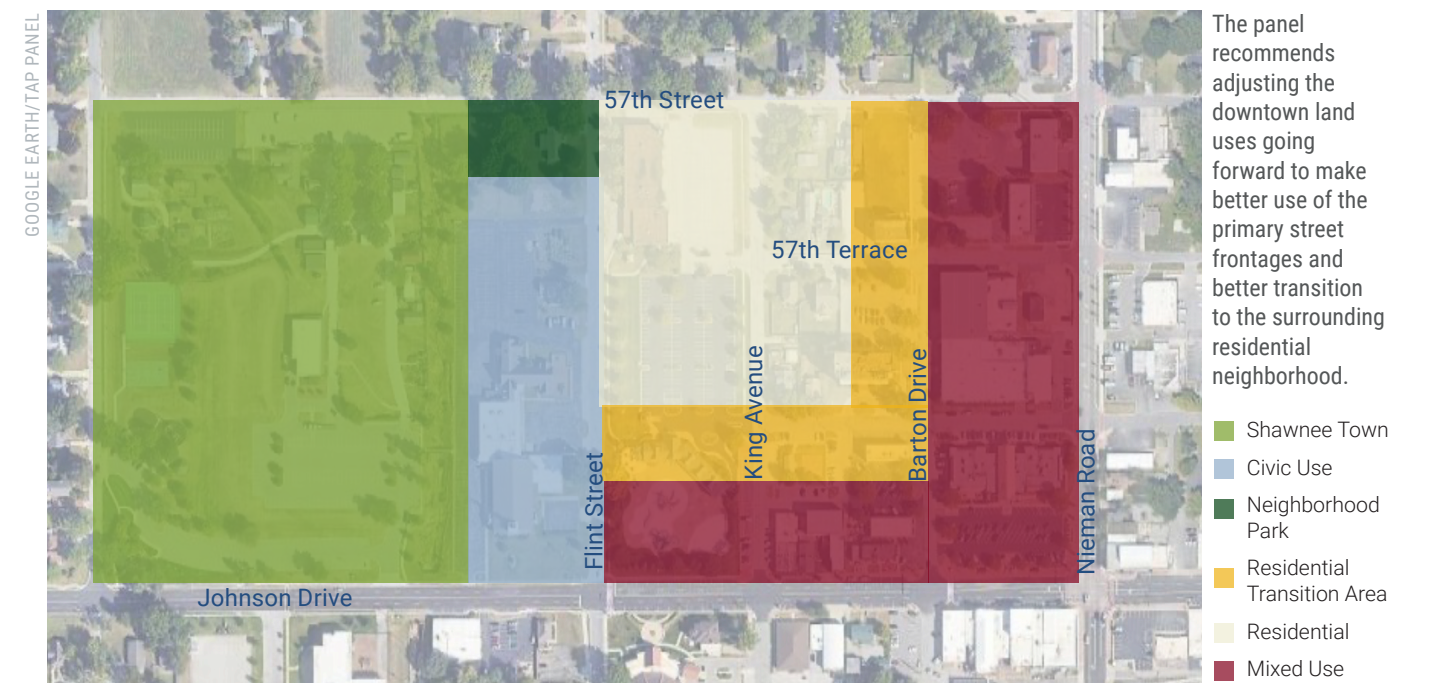
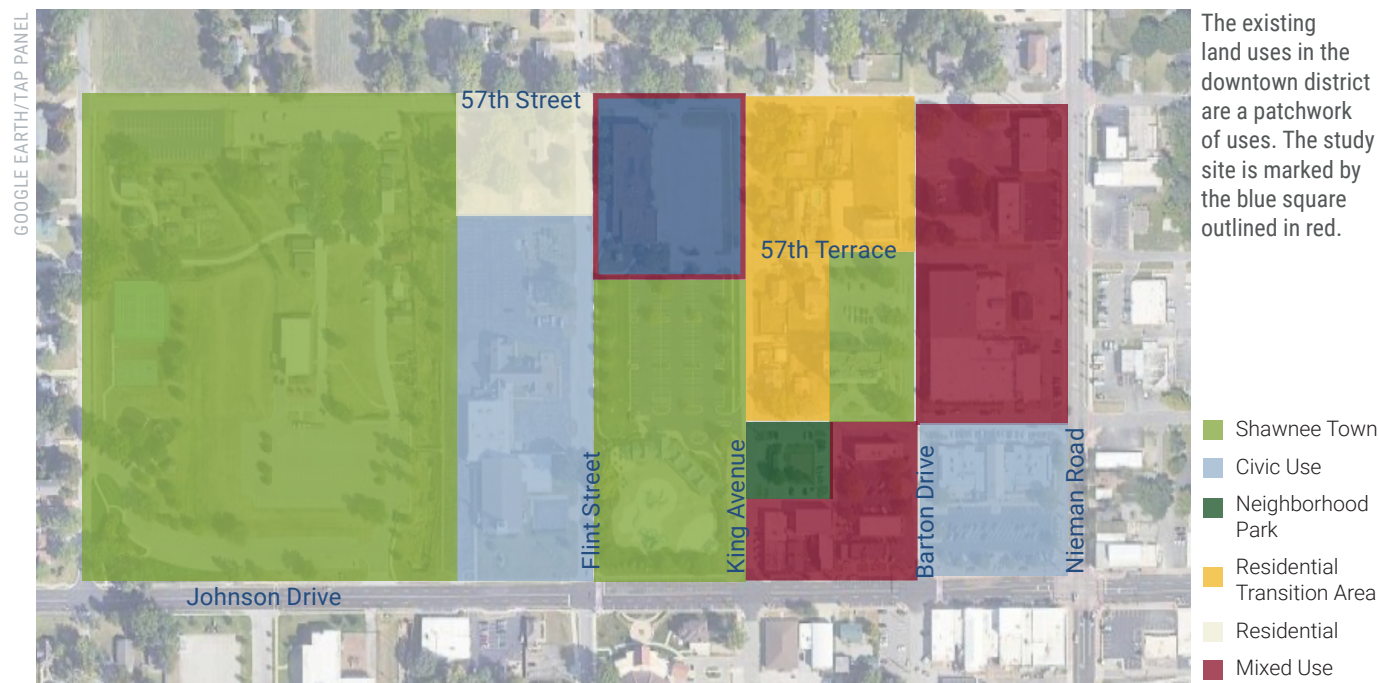
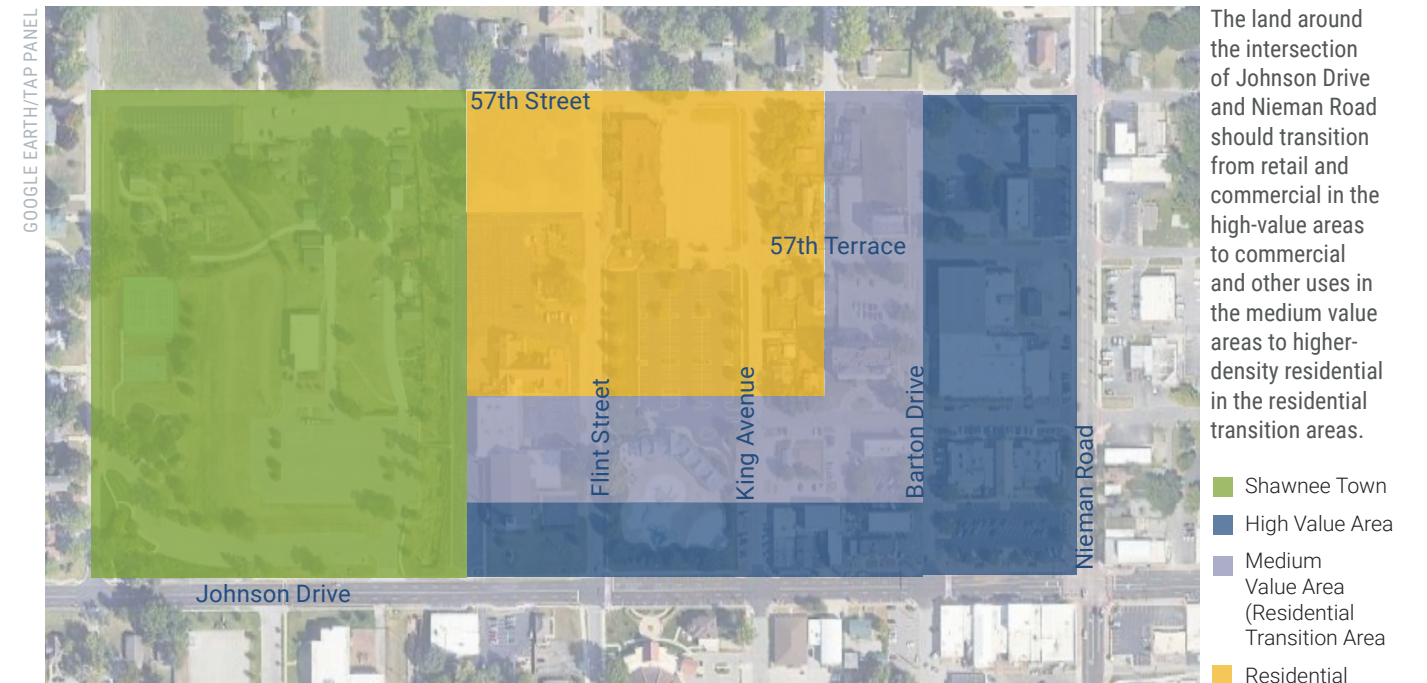
Plan for a new civic center. Within the downtown core, the city owns a significant amount of land. Much of this property is west of Nieman Road and includes the current City Hall site, Herman Laird Park, Shawnee Town, and Splash Cove. While these properties are not presently connected, with some careful planning, the city could combine these uses into one large civic center and potentially house a new and more expansive City Hall at some point in the future.

Incorporate a public facilities master plan. The consolidation of the civic uses into a centrally located area should be incorporated into the city’s public facilities master plan, which will help guide decision making today and over the years until the final consolidated civic center plan can be fully realized.

Create connections to/from downtown. The repositioning of land uses to make more efficient and effective use of the land around downtown and in the

publicly-owned areas can also provide opportunities to better connect civic assets like Old Shawnee to the downtown district. Specifically, sidewalks and pathways to/from Shawnee Town, in addition to the existing

sidewalk along Johnson Drive, will help pedestrians move more easily between civic amenities and the retail and restaurants found in the downtown core.



Leverage new development site opportunities. The consolidation of civic uses into an area west of the core will open new, high-value development opportunities at the intersection of Johnson Drive and Nieman, bringing new commercial enterprises to downtown, further activating that corner, and adding tax revenue to the city's coffers.

Embrace historic preservation. In the midst of new development opportunities, the city is also encouraged to continue to preserve and lift up the historic features that make Shawnee unique. By using landmark designations, a historic district designation, or creating conservation overlays, the history of the city and the historical facts associated with and features of downtown's older buildings and landmarks can be highlighted and shared community wide.

Clarify and enhance design guidelines. Context is important within the downtown core. As new buildings are added to the streetscape a set of enhanced—or perhaps just clarified—design guidelines for downtown will be beneficial. These guidelines should support and

complement the historic context residents hold dear while allowing new building construction and new uses to activate and energize the downtown streetscape and add to the unique character of downtown Shawnee.

Reintroduce the street grid. Looking into the future, the city is encouraged to reconnect the streets in the northwest quadrant of downtown. Over the years, 57th Terrace was decommissioned, the north/south parcels combined, and a parking lot was constructed. Today, aside from Old Shawnee Days, that lot is largely underutilized. By reconnecting the street grid through downtown, residents and visitors will enjoy better access to all of the amenities that the city and area businesses have to offer.

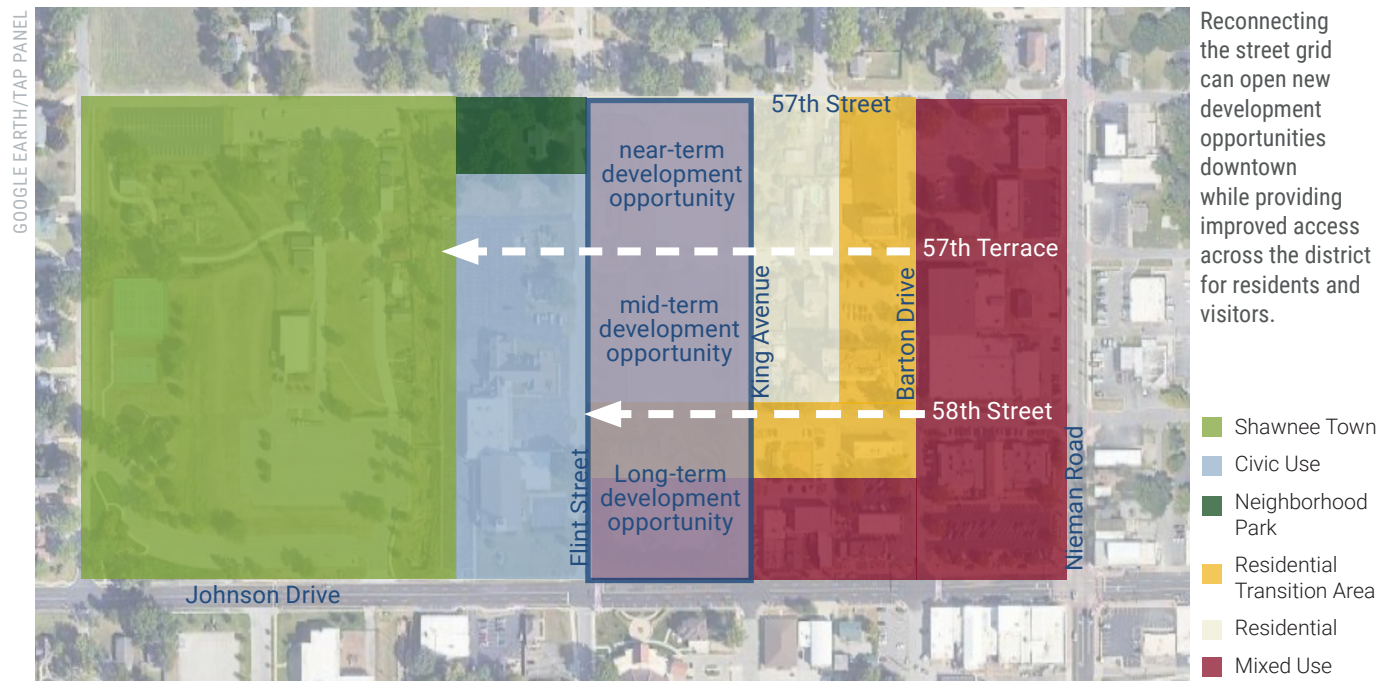
Consider the future of Splash Cove at this location. It is also worth considering, in the long term, the potential relocation of Splash Cove to a different civic area. Presently, this civic use is positioned within the downtown core, situated along valuable street frontage that it actively blocks in order to create a privacy screen for patrons in swimming suits. Were this site to be re-

zoned for commercial use, it could be shifted to a more productive, tax-generating use for the city. Additionally, 58th Street could, at that same time, be reconnected east to west, providing additional circulation through downtown and improving the development potential of the surrounding sites.

The long-term planning recommended by the panel will position downtown up for lasting future success. These are not recommendations that will be realized tomorrow, yet the planning work begun today will help prepare the city to act opportunistically when parcels enter the market and new uses are considered across downtown. This type of work will happen incrementally over time, but the framework should be established now, to increase clarity of the vision going forward and provide a roadmap for future development.



The pedestrian bridge that connects Shawnee Town to the rest of downtown passes through the First Baptist Church property.



WONDERSCOPE SITE

Using the big vision as a guide and with the district plan in sight, the panel turned its attention to the potential uses for the former Wonderscope site. The 1.74 acres is marked by a two-story building and an associated parking lot and is bordered by both civic and residential uses. The owner of the building and land is a notable Kansas City family foundation that is interested in finding a new use for the site and has been a willing partner in potential development conversations. Previous development proposals for the site did not move forward, one a multifamily residential structure of approximately 200 units failing due to resident opposition to the proposed building height and the other not achieving financial viability using a neighborhood-approved lower-density scenario featuring 24 townhomes.

Understanding the surrounding residential context and hearing that more housing is needed in Shawnee, the panel identified two potential paths forward for the site, both relying heavily on a multifamily residential component. In considering a development path, the city is encouraged to work with the property owner to issue a request for proposals to find a developer who will seek to align with the city and property owner's goals for the site.

Scenario One: Multifamily (New Construction) – Not Viable

At multiple points throughout the study, the panel heard that more housing was needed in Shawnee, particularly near downtown. Young adults who grew up in the city often have difficulties finding housing, and businesses downtown desire more daytime foot traffic. Adding housing to the downtown mix via residential development at this site will help meet some of this pent-up demand.

Development structure. In this first scenario, the panel envisioned a complete redevelopment of the site, replacing the old building with a new three-story residential structure. Positioned at the southern end of the site, the building could house roughly 30 units per floor and thus 90 across the entire building. The panel sketched out this scenario using primarily studio and one-bedroom apartments, which could be appealing to both young adults and empty-nesters.

Parking for residents would be placed at the northern end

of the parcel and be buffered from the neighboring single-family homes by a landscaping buffer and trees. Along the southern edge, 57th Street Terrace would be reconnected between King Street and Flint Street, creating additional circulation for the neighborhood and helpful vehicular access for the new residents.

Financial viability. In this new construction scenario, current market pressures make this project financially challenging. High interest rates and continued high construction costs add financial burdens to new construction not seen in the years leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the site will require substantial remediation, given the presence of asbestos and lead paint in the building, which will need to be properly removed, and significant stormwater infrastructure buried at the southeastern corner of the site will need to be addressed or likely rerouted. Even with tax abatement assumed in the financial projections, new construction at the site will require a much larger scale and higher density to drive down per unit costs and become financially viable.

Bottom line. New construction at the site will require a higher-density and taller building height than the surrounding neighborhood will accept at this time. Should market forces shift significantly in the future, a lower-density project as proposed by the panel could become financially viable and be a welcome addition to the neighborhood. The bottom line is that it will not work at the site today without outsized public subsidy.

Scenario One: Multifamily (New Construction) – Not Viable



(top left) New construction of a three-story residential building could fit well, contextually, at the study site. (top right) Images from around Kansas City provide insights into what the building could look like, drawing on historic brick construction in the area and maintaining a medium-density profile. (bottom) A birds-eye view of the potential development pictured in context with the surrounding buildings, heights, and grid network.

Scenario Two: Townhomes (New Construction) and Boutique Hotel (Adaptive Reuse) – Viable

Given the difficult market conditions, adapting the Wonderscope building into a new use and adding low-density new construction to the site is a compelling option.

Part one: adaptive reuse into a boutique hotel. In this scenario, the panel evaluated the Wonderscope building in the context of the surrounding uses, downtown’s needs, and potential market demand. While some of the more obvious ideas—an elementary school or apartments—were considered, the panel leaned into the economic opportunities associated with close proximity to the downtown core and considered redevelopment of the building into a small boutique hotel, an amenity currently missing from downtown Shawnee. At approximately 50 rooms, the hotel would be on the small side, but could make good use of the existing structure, provide rooms for those visiting town for events at Shawnee Town or city wide, and could provide a positive economic impact to the city and downtown. Walkable to downtown, businesses in the downtown core would benefit from guest foot traffic from a hotel of this nature.

Part two: new construction of low-density multifamily residential. The adaptive reuse of the building, and the financial tools unlocked with a development of this nature, could provide the additional financial leverage to make additional low-density residential development at the site, specifically townhomes along its eastern and northern edges, finally financially viable.

Placement of new buildings and parking at the site will be vital to neighborhood integration. Parking for both the hotel and townhomes would be pushed to the center of the site and away from the street edge. The townhomes should line and face the streets, helping to further activate the King Street and 57th Street streetscape with front porches, stoops, and sidewalks. At 30-40 units in two- to three-story buildings, the density of the townhomes would fit well at the site and within the surrounding context.

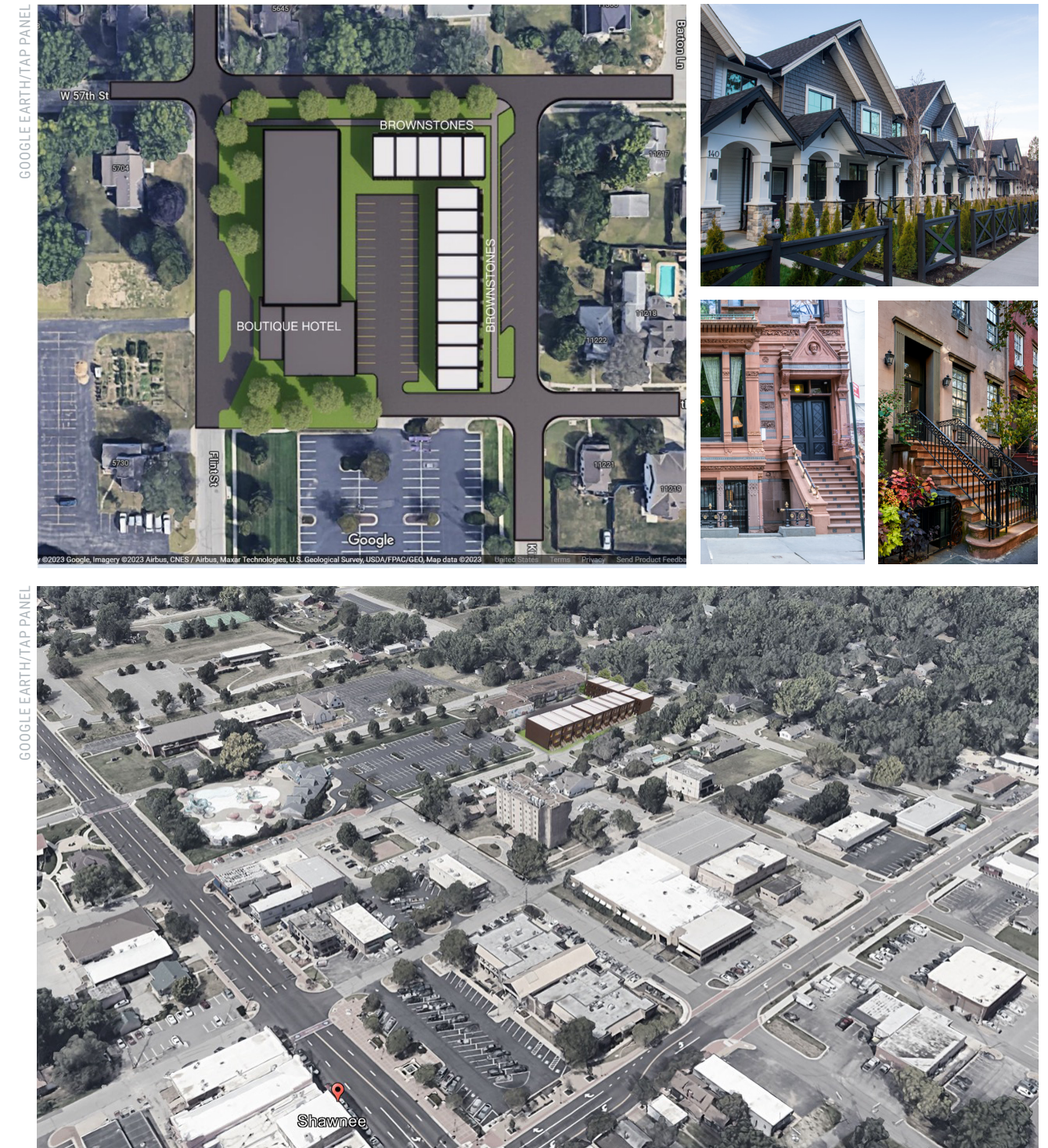
Project financial viability. Although the site comes with significant environmental challenges, specifically the environmental remediation the building will require, adaptive reuse could be supported by tax credits and other financing programs, making the project finally financially viable. This scenario would unlock access to financial tools such as Historic Tax Credits (HTC), supporting the redevelopment of a potentially historic building, and New Market Tax Credits (NMTC) due to its location within a federally-designated census tract. For the NMTC to work at the site, a portion of the development must be income-producing, with 80 percent (or less) coming from residential uses and the other 20 percent coming from some form of business activity (e.g., a boutique hotel). The study site is also located within an Opportunity Zone, which will be worth exploring as development conversations restart.

The panel estimated that a development of this nature, both hotel and residential units, would require \$7,000,000 of qualified equity investment. Of that total, approximately \$2,100,000 could be generated in NMTC equity, thereby leaving the development team with a need for only \$4,900,000 in debt. The benefit of the NMTC is that the credits “buy down” the total amount of debt needed to fund the development. While not a financial home-run for a developer, this scenario is potentially viable and worth exploring.

Hotel development, financial viability. Based on the existing building size of approximately 38,000 square feet, the panel estimated a hotel scenario that could deliver 48 rooms. Based on a typical sources and uses analysis, this scenario works financially as a standalone project. The initial draft pro forma, found on page 28, outlines the potential sources and uses for the hotel in this scenario.

Given the fact that the hotel is financially feasible, the developer could leverage the NMTC equity to assist with construction of the new townhomes at the site. New housing adds households to the downtown population and, as a factor of the NMTC allocation, ensures that 20 percent of the units will be financially attainable by people making 80 percent of the area median income, thus meeting the need for missing middle and workforce housing in Shawnee.

Scenario Two: Townhomes (New Construction) and Boutique Hotel (Adaptive Reuse) – Viable



(top left) New townhomes or brownstones could fit on the site alongside an adaptive reuse of the Wonderscope building. (top right) Images of townhomes and more traditional brownstone buildings could provide inspiration for the new residential construction on the site that would maintain a neighborhood-preferred low-density profile. (bottom) A birds-eye view of the potential development pictured in context with the surrounding buildings, heights, and grid network.

Downtown Shawnee Boutique Hotel

USES OF FUNDS Line Item	% of total	Cost per sf	Total Cost
Site Acquisition	6.8%	\$26.20 /sf	\$1,000,000
Project Costs (Hard, Soft Costs, FFE)	77.9%	\$301.86 /sf	\$11,520,000
Project Contingency	4.7%	\$18.11 /sf	\$691,200
Site Improvements (Landscaping + Shared Parking Upgrades ¹)	1.7%	\$6.55 /sf	\$250,000
Financing Fees (NMTC and HTC)	4.7%	\$18.34 /sf	\$700,000
Developers Fee	4.2%	\$16.33 /sf	\$623,060
TOTAL USES	100.0%	\$387.40 /sf	\$14,784,260

SOURCES OF FUNDS Source	% of total	Cash per sf	Total Cash
NMTC Lev Loan	46.7%	\$180.8 /sf	\$6,900,000
Owner's Equity	7.3%	\$28.1 /sf	\$1,073,814
HTC "Equity" ²	24.8%	\$96.2 /sf	\$3,670,946
NMTC "Equity"	21.2%	\$82.3 /sf	\$3,139,500
TOTAL SOURCES	100.0%	\$387.4 /sf	\$14,784,260

SUMMARY OF SOURCES			
TOTAL EQUITY			\$1,073,814
TOTAL DEBT			\$6,900,000
TOTAL DEBT & EQUITY			\$7,973,814
TOTAL SUBSIDY			\$6,810,446
TOTAL SOURCES			\$14,784,260

Project Assumptions

Square Footage	38,163 sf	Net Income:
Number of Rooms	48	\$1,000,000 (based on \$145 average daily rate and 65% average occupancy)
All-In Cost Per Room	\$308,005	Annual Debt Service:
Cost Per Room	\$240,000	\$585,000 (based on 7% interest rate, 25-year amortization)
NMTC Allocation	\$10,000,000	Debt Coverage Ratio: 1.7
		Return on Equity: ~3.5 years

¹ The panel recommends pursuing a share parking agreement with the Splash Cove operations. The costs associated with reconfiguration would be borne by the developer and factored into the development costs of the Wonderscope site.

² For the Wonderscope building to qualify for Historic Tax Credits, the building must be placed on the National Register of Historic Places or the neighborhood designated as a historic district. The national Historic Tax Credit program was designed to preserve and protect the nation's historic buildings in urban centers and in smaller towns like Shawnee.

NEXT STEPS

As the city considers how to best approach catalyzing development at the former Wonderscope site and activating the northwest quadrant of downtown, the following steps can be taken in the near term to support Shawnee's existing downtown businesses, encourage further economic development, and activate this quadrant of downtown.

Curate the district. Downtown Shawnee deserves a champion who will wake up every day thinking about how to best support downtown businesses, curate new businesses and experiences, and attract more people to city's downtown. This work would best be managed by a staffer whose only goal is to curate the district and be a champion for downtown, supporting events, programming, and economic development activities across municipal agencies and organizational partners.

Follow the plan. The city's Achieve Shawnee comprehensive plan was drafted with community input and delivers a strong set of recommendations and guidelines that will serve the community well into the future. The city should follow and implement the plan.

Reconsider improvements to Johnson Drive. The small town feel residents love is marred by speeding traffic along Johnson Drive. By reducing travel lanes and making more space for pedestrians and other modalities, traffic will slow to manageable rates, businesses can gain additional visibility with slower traffic, and visitors to downtown will be encouraged to park and walk between destinations.

Create a district master plan. To create a framework for a public realm vision featuring a consolidated civic center, the city is encouraged to create a district master plan. This master plan would identify where and how the public realm functions, where public facilities are located today and where they should be positioned in the future, and where and how parking facilities are placed around downtown to serve the businesses and support the public's use of downtown amenities.

Identify a development partner. Redevelopment of the former Wonderscope site will hinge on finding a development partner interested in pursuing development within the parameters set by the city, the landowner, and the neighbors. It is also highly likely that a developer will come with their own set of ideas for the site, which may not include a boutique hotel as contemplated by the panel. The city should issue a request for proposal to the development community and see what kind of interest lies within the region and what ideas they may bring to the table.

Enhance connections. As the city promotes and supports current downtown businesses and events and seeks to attract more, walkability remains a key factor for downtown. The safety of the pedestrian experience, the enjoyability of the walk, and points of connection to and between spaces can make downtown Shawnee a place for people to explore, linger, shop, and dine. Enhancing connections between destinations, be they civic or commercial, will be important as more focus is placed on the downtown experience.

Downtown Shawnee is a district that has grown organically over the years into a wonderful small-town downtown. With passionate residents and local business owners who are invested in downtown's future, the city and EDC are taking important steps today to support the community's vision for its urban core. Through careful investment and some additional intentional planning, downtown Shawnee can be shaped into an urban center that will serve residents, business owners, employees, and visitors well and well into the future.



ABOUT THE PANEL



**Craig Scranton AIA |
LEED AP**

**Panel Co-Chair
Principal, BNIM**

Craig Scranton is a Principal at BNIM with over three decades of experience who has led some of the firm's most complex projects. He is adept at working with large design and management teams and continuously leads team members to create projects that elevate design beyond what clients and building users think is possible. His previous work laid the foundation in assisting the architectural and construction industries in understanding how sustainable design can impact the environment and business costs throughout the life of a building. Craig directs BNIM's Development practice area. His project experience includes working with developers, not-for-profits, and universities. He also remains heavily involved with development of the Kansas City urban core through the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Kansas City chapter. Among Craig's recent project experience includes the adaptive reuse of the historic Lyric Theatre building in downtown Kansas City, MO, into the Kirk Family YMCA and the design of the new Kansas City International Airport Parking Garage.



Brittney Swartz, PLA

**Panel Co-Chair
Associate, Burns & McDonnell**

Brittney Swartz is a landscape architect who brings exceptional skills in physical design and site planning to a broad range of projects nationally as well as abroad. Her background includes over twenty years of experience in design coordination with multidisciplinary design teams, working to integrate the client's needs and develop oppor-

tunities from individual site characteristics. Brittney's design capabilities and technical confidence guarantee projects that deliver and construct as well as they are conceived and created. Brittney's project experience encompasses a wide variety of project types, including regional and local parks; community planning; both single-family and multi-family residential complexes; commercial and retail; corporate; and sports and recreation complexes, along with a special focus on bicycle and pedestrian trail planning and design.



Virginia Dobesh

**Senior Development Manager
Edgemoor Infrastructure & Real Estate**

As a Senior Development Manager at Edgemoor Infrastructure & Real Estate, Ginny has over 18 years of experience in all aspects of real estate development. Over the past five years, Ginny was a key member of the team delivering the \$1.5 billion Kansas City International Airport New Terminal, the largest single infrastructure project in Kansas City's history. Prior to joining Edgemoor, Ginny worked as a VP, Sr. Finance Manager at International Housing Solutions, a private equity firm focused on investing in workforce housing in South Africa, and as a Project Manager for Leggat McCall Properties, a Boston-based development advisory and project management firm. She also worked as a Project Manager for Raymond Property Company, a residential property developer in Boston. Ginny holds a Master's in Urban Planning from the Harvard Graduate School of Design and a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies from Amherst College. Ginny and her family have been proud to call Kansas City home since 2015.



Gunnar Hand, AICP
Director of Planning and Urban Design
Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, KS

Gunnar Hand is the Director of Planning and Urban Design for Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas. He is a passionate community organizer who cultivated his interest in the built environment from a young age and has spent his life transforming it into action and positive change. From leading an international city design practice and founding a transit advocacy non-profit, to promoting clean energy alternatives and neighborhood empowerment on various boards, Gunnar is a problem solver. He is deeply engaged with his customers and his community, building partnerships and identifying strategic initiatives for innovative and effective implementation. Gunnar is always seeking to expand his knowledge and understanding of the built environment and civic systems in order to find new ways to make them better. As a city planner and urban designer, he understands that functional, integrated and equitable communities can foster a higher quality of life for all people. Gunnar seeks to facilitate, create and design places that have a positive and regenerative impact on society and the world.



Matt Ledbetter
Senior Project Manager
Grayson Capital

Matt is a Senior Project Manager with Grayson Capital, focused on managing and leading development projects. He currently leads both multifamily and healthcare real estate development projects locally and nationally. Matt has worked in the real estate and construction industry for over 14 years. During his tenure, he has held many different roles in a wide range of building types including ground-up development of healthcare and multifamily, large scale interior finishes, sporting stadiums, an 800+ room hotel, office campuses, healthcare fit-outs and many more. Matt has worked with a variety of municipalities and public entities, giving him valuable insight on differing city and state needs as well as a unique perspective on how to effectively structure deals in diverse markets. He currently serves on the board of the Kansas City Sports Commission Emerging Leaders, Shawnee EDC Executive Committee and is a member of ULI Kansas City.



Kassie Murphy
Associate
Newmark Zimmer

Kassie Murphy joined Newmark Zimmer in 2020 and currently serves as an Associate in the company's Kansas City, Missouri office. Her primary responsibilities include retail tenant representation assignments, as well as sales and leasing of retail properties in the Kansas City metro and surrounding areas. Kassie brings to her position a combined 11 years of experience in commercial real estate. She was previously with Newmark Zimmer from 2015 – 2018 as a Property Manager, and managed a portfolio of office and industrial properties, consisting of just over 550,000 square feet. Kassie currently represents approximately 1.5 million square feet of retail properties throughout the Kansas City Metro. She also represents retail clients ranging from local to national groups and most recently, is assisting in site selection for NAPA, Smoothie King, BLUSH Boot Camp and Sugaring NYC. Kassie is an active member of several professional organizations, including International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC), Downtown Overland Park Partnership and CREW KC. She also attends events held by various local organizations, such as ULI and MetroWire Media, and participates in major retail conferences throughout the United States, including but not limited to ICSC in Las Vegas and Dallas.



Godfrey Riddle
Founder
Civic Saint

Godfrey Riddle, MPA (he/him): artist, nonprofit executive, public speaker, and serial social entrepreneur is driven to create inspiring communities where people reach their full potential. As a visionary servant leader, Godfrey has created and managed lines of business for nonprofit organizations that have generated over \$19.4 million since 2014 and with a lifetime profitability rate of 80 percent. Godfrey founded Civic Saint in October 2020 as a protest brand offering affirming apparel and accessories to advance social justice through donations to advocate organizations. Today, informed by his life as a Black, gay man and cancer survivor whose late parents struggled with homeownership, Civic Saint pioneered a process to sustainably produce artful, affordable housing and adaptive communities for revitalization and wealth creation in redlined areas.

Our business model prioritizes the environment while eliminating the racial wealth gap through job creation, homeownership, and their ambient economic impacts. Godfrey is an Ambassador for American Cancer Society and Board Member of BlaqOut which works to improve healthcare access and social outcomes for Black queer people in Kansas City. Past honors include 2023 National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce Main Pitch Winner and Inaugural Communities of Color Pitch Winner, 2023 Power of Diversity ACE Award, INK Magazine "30 under 30", Foreign Language Area Studies Fellow, and Fulbright National Finalist. Watch Godfrey discover how to lighten his ecological footprint by imbuing his surroundings with meaning in Season 1, Episode 5 of "The Gentle Art of Swedish Death Cleaning" now streaming on PeacockTV.



Mark Sherfy, P.E.
Development Group Director – Vice President
BHC

Mark is a professional engineer with thirty years of experience in public works and private land development. Half of his career was spent with the City of Shawnee as Transportation Manager. He is currently a vice president and Development Group Director at BHC, a civil engineering firm based in Overland Park. He and his wife Mindy live in Shawnee and are proud parents of a Wildcat and a Jayhawk, although Mark still cheers loudest for Iowa State.



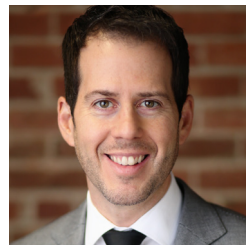
Matt Tapp
Director of Acquisitions & Entitlements
Griffin Riley Property Group

Matt Tapp has over 20+ years of experience working within the real estate development realm. Since 2000, Mr. Tapp has had the great fortune of essentially playing SimCity in real life by helping municipalities realize their goals of producing distinctive, quality-led real estate developments in their communities. Griffin Riley Property Group (GRPG) delivers all forms of commercial real estate (CRE) endeavors, typically involving residential, retail, office, mixed-use, and industrial. Currently, Matt has either finished or is actively pursuing nearly \$400M worth of development projects across the greater Kansas City metro highlighted by a new vibrant mixed-use town center in southern Lee's Summit, Missouri and a multi-faceted project featuring luxury apartments, retail, and a hotel site in Raymore, Missouri. Mr. Tapp most enjoys debunking the myths and misnomers about multi-family residential offerings and the residents who choose the freedom that come with a "lock-and-leave" lifestyle. When Matt's not on the job, he treasures spending time with his family, experiencing all the many superb microbreweries around town, and indulging his love for traveling to different locales (olá lisboa).



E.F. Chip Walsh
Founder and Principal
Mercier Street CRE Consulting

E. F. Chip Walsh is a real estate developer and consultant with 20+ years of experience across a variety of commercial real estate settings. Chip is experienced in handling numerous types of development matters and has extensive experience in tax credit financed projects, historic adaptive reuse developments and project management. He is the founder and principal of Mercier Street, a boutique CRE development consulting firm that provides dedicated, external resource capabilities to clients. He has developed (or is in the process of developing) over 500,000+ sf of adaptive-reuse projects, including four former KCPS schools: Swinney Elementary School, Westport Middle School, Westport High School, and the Ladd Elementary School.



Travis Willson

Veritas Architecture + Design

Licensed Architect with over 20 years' experience in a wide range of project types including educational, commercial, residential, religious, and urban adaptive-reuse. Travis has seen numer-

ous projects through the entire process of design and construction, leading multi-discipline teams to achieve clients' goals.

Travis' first job in an architecture firm came in 1999, working for a small company in Springfield, Missouri. By working in a small firm early in his career, Travis was able to experience all phases of design and construction and quickly ascended to the role of project manager. After nearly ten years with his first company, Travis moved the KC Metro area. Travis started Veritas Architecture + Design in 2016 to further focus on the client experience, making the process of designing and constructing a building as enjoyable as possible. Too often in the building process, the client, architect and contractor are working at odds to each other, each focused on their own agenda. Travis' unique approach to team development and client attention direct everyone's agenda to align with the client.



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Kansas City

ULI Kansas City
300 E. 39th St.
Kansas City, MO 64111

480.408.4002
kansascity@uli.org

kansascity.uli.org



knowledge.uli.org