



Kansas City

THE RAYTOWN GREENSPACE

Catalyzing Growth Downtown | Raytown, Missouri

Technical Assistance Panel | June 10-11, 2025

About

Urban Land Institute

Urban Land Institute is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 48,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. ULI's interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics. Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific regions, with members in 84 countries.

Cover photo: The greenspace in downtown Raytown serves as the city's informal gathering and festival space. (ULI)

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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.

ULI Kansas City Leadership

Audrey Navarro

ULI Kansas City Chair
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Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) Program

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 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.

About

Technical Assistance Panel

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Executive Summary

With nearly four acres of open land in its downtown area, the City of Raytown is considering how to best leverage a 3.77-acre vacant parcel to catalyze additional activity and vibrancy in its downtown.

Turning to the Urban Land Institute Kansas City District Council (ULI), the City of Raytown (the City) asked ULI for recommendations for development of the parcel, commonly referred to as the “greenspace,” paying particular attention to how the greenspace development(s) might be catalytic for surrounding development, how the City could establish an entertainment corridor to connect the Rock Island Trail to downtown, and what other additional opportunities might be worth exploring in and around the greenspace.

Using its technical assistance panel program, ULI assembled a team of real estate professionals with the expertise needed to evaluate the City’s questions, study the site and the surrounding area, and interview stakeholders. Following this information-gathering process and after incorporating its own observations and discussions, the panel delivered the following recommendations to the City.

The Greenspace as a Catalyst for Downtown

The City recently completed a citywide comprehensive planning process and shared a draft of that plan with the panel. Within that document, plan authors provided

three potential development ideas for the greenspace, each of which featured different potential configurations for the central open area at a revised scale, additional parking, commercial development, and enhanced connectivity.

Building on and refining the comprehensive plan work completed to date, the panel recommended that the following elements be incorporated into any new development of the greenspace parcel:

- A protected urban street trail to clearly connect the trailhead and downtown;
- A civic park to provide space for continued community gatherings;

- A flexible plaza and market space;
- Flexible space for community use;
- Incubator retail space(s); and
- Expanded commercial space.

Development ideas. Based on these guiding principles, the panel provided two potential redevelopment options for the greenspace.

- Concept One shifts the green space to the north end of the site, closer to the library, and features a small band shell or other covered space for performances. This design also activates the edges with retail and commercial spaces as well as a new public plaza and potential trailhead. It creates market spaces for



The Raytown greenspace is in downtown, a half-block north of East 63rd Street, and close to a trailhead for the Rock Island trail.

GOOGLE EARTH / ULI PANEL

vendors, a pull-in drive for a food truck plaza, and flexible spaces for a variety of community, commercial, and retail uses. The design also contemplates additional new commercial space at the southern end of the site.

- Concept two also shifts the green space, this time orienting it north and south on the site. This concept adds a flexible plaza space along the western edge of the parcel and envisions new commercial space again at the south end of the site. Flexible spaces would line Blue Ridge Boulevard in this design, making space for community and retail uses while also providing transitional space between the street and interior civic park.

Residential development. The development of new residential units, likely multifamily and multistory, does not make good market sense at present on the site. New residential development might best be tackled in partnership with a private landowner and on land that is close to but not on this parcel.

Timeline and steps for development. The following timeline could guide the City's actions for either development concept:

- The First Five Years: Pursue infrastructure upgrades, utility installation, connectivity improvements between the trailhead and downtown, and construction of the civic park and market spaces.
- Five to Ten Years: Develop the commercial and flex space.
- Ten Years and Beyond: Develop the new commercial building(s) at the southern

edge and work with the landowner to advance development of new residential units to the west across Raytown Road.

Community Corridor

In response to the City's question about establishing an entertainment corridor along Raytown Road, the panel shifted its focus to creating a community corridor instead, placing an emphasis on the community's use of and connections to the corridor.

Two primary principles animated the panel's evaluation of the corridor: the street can become a community gathering space and the street and surrounding development should match in scale and intended use.

Downtown subdistricts. Within downtown, three subdistricts stood out: the civic area to the north, the business core, and the entertainment district to the south. The panel also identified three primary streetscapes that line the spine of Raytown Road: the neighborhood connection moving north into the residential area, Main Street running along the study site and through downtown, and Raytown Road south to the trailhead—affectionately called “Raytona Beach.”

The Raytona Beach Community Corridor. The Raytown Road community corridor would benefit from the following improvements:

- Define space for people by adding bicycle lanes and sidewalks;
- Create downtown trail connections with placemaking, wayfinding, and painted roadways to draw people north into downtown;

- Close the wooden bridge to automobile traffic; and
- Shift Raytown Road to one-way moving south from East 63rd Street to Railroad Street, and maintain two-way traffic on all east-west connectors.

Redevelopment opportunities. There are other sites along the corridor that could be redeveloped to support a more active and vibrant district, including the Public Works building and the vacant lot at the corner of Railroad Street and East 65th Street.

Early interventions and pilots. The City can pilot street improvement ideas and make permanent those that work well including:

- Closing wooden bridge;
- Creating new biking and walking spaces with low-cost moveable materials; and
- Striping vehicle lanes and parking areas.

Additional Opportunities

The panel identified the following additional opportunities around downtown that might further support its vitality and the vitality of the broader city.

Business support. The City is encouraged to provide the following business resources in support of the work of the Raytown Main Street team, Raytown Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, and individual business owners.

- Position Raytown's downtown as something unique through branding;
- Ensure business services are visible on the City's website;

- Update the sign ordinance to include more cost-effective options;
- Explore forming a Community Improvement District (CID) to direct programming, wayfinding, and communications in support of downtown businesses;
- Provide grants for façade improvements;
- Support business incubators and their unique operational needs; and
- Host regular programming for business owners and provide frequent communications and messaging to and with this group.

Improve the bike network. The following measures will improve the trail experience and draw users into the city to explore and shop:

- Promote broader regional trail connections;
- Highlight the downtown loop;
- Improve Rock Island Trail section; and
- Consider leveraging the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority’s green corridor for off-road biking.

Infrastructure improvements. City-led infrastructure work can support more development across downtown and include:

- Turning Raytown Road into Main Street;
- Conducting a parking study to identify how and where to improve existing parking assets;
- Tackling 63rd Street improvements to reconfigure the back-in angled parking;

- Exploring a road diet on Blue Ridge Boulevard; and
- Closing the Raytown Road bridge to vehicle traffic.

Other redevelopment opportunities. There are other downtown parcels and downtown-adjacent parcels that could be ready for redevelopment. The City is encouraged to be in active conversations with landowners to know when they may consider selling. The built environment plays an important role in the health and vitality of an area and preserving the area’s historic building stock should remain a priority. Finally, building renovation is a financially strong path to pursue, and downtown is full of buildings that could be ready for a new life.

Wayfinding. Signage and wayfinding should be addressed at key entry points to and across downtown to help people navigate to and from the trail and around the district while reinforcing the city’s brand identity.

Funding Strategies

The funding for the measures recommended by the panel can come from a variety of sources. While not an exhaustive list, the following resources should be explored further.

Sources of potential grant funding:

- Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)
- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)
- The Rails to Trails Conservancy’s funding tool

- Main Street America and Missouri Main Streets
- United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) Planning Sustainable Places Grant

Formation of special taxing districts:

- Community Improvement District (CID)
- Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and Trail Oriented Development (TrOD)
- Transportation Development District

Tax abatement:

- Chapter 353 tax abatement
- Chapter 100

The City also has the ability to leverage its land and bonding capacity to support new development and redevelopment projects.

Conclusion

The greenspace in downtown Raytown has the ability to catalyze additional exciting development in this very accessible city. With careful attention to the uniquely Raytown attributes that residents cherish, City leaders can shape a path forward for the greenspace that further supports downtown businesses, provides important gathering opportunities for the community, and better leverages and connects to the incredible regional trail system that the Rock Island Trail represents.

Introduction and Background

The City of Raytown, Missouri, is a close-knit community on the east side of the Kansas City metropolitan area that has a small-town feel with easy access to big-city and regional amenities.

The city's downtown, centered around the intersection of Raytown Road and East 63rd Street, is home to a variety of locally-owned businesses, several vacant storefronts, and a 3.77-acre open green space that is used for community gatherings. This space is a half-block north of East 63rd Street and is bordered by a branch of the Mid-Continent Public Library system to the north, the Raytown Plaza Shopping Center to the east, and a large parking lot bookended by two commercial properties to the west.

The Rock Island Trail runs through the edge of downtown Raytown and will soon connect to other regional trails like the Blue River Trail to the north and the Katy Trail to the south. A trailhead for the Rock Island Trail is just south of downtown, and, while it is within a short walk of the city's core, sidewalks are intermittent and the area is dominated by cars.

Understanding that there is development potential at the downtown greenspace and that the proximity of the trailhead is an important community asset, the City of Raytown (the City) turned to the Urban Land Institute (ULI) for assistance in re-envisioning the greenspace as a more impactful community asset and catalyst for greater economic development and vibrancy downtown.

ULI, using its trusted technical assistance panel (TAP) program, assembled a team of real estate professionals with the expertise needed to help guide the City in its redevelopment considerations. The panelists' expertise included real estate development, architecture and urban design, engineering, construction, and finance. Throughout the TAP process, the panel studied briefing materials provided by the City, toured the site and the surrounding areas, interviewed community stakeholders, and deliberated the best course of action for the redevelopment of the greenspace and catalyzing additional development and activity in the area.

Insights from Stakeholder Interviews

The interviews with community stakeholders included conversations with elected officials, civic leaders, business owners, real estate owners and brokers, and leaders of business organizations and civic boosters. The following themes arose from those interviews.

Insights about Raytown as a community:

- It is a small community with a big heart where everyone knows you.
- Raytown is an independent and hardworking community.
- People work well together across the community.
- There is a strong sense of pride in the community.

TAP Questions

1. What is the best possible way to develop the greenspace and utilize it as a catalyst to establish a vibrant downtown district that will also generate the highest revenue?
2. What is the most efficient and effective plan to create a cohesive entertainment corridor that connects the downtown district to the Crane Brewing/Rock Island Trail area?
3. Are there additional opportunities for redevelopment, financing and/or other projects within or near the subject area?



- There is great connectivity to the Kansas City metro area, and a 15-20 minute drive can get you just about anywhere.
- There is good affordability of housing and services in town.
- Raytown has a lot of potential.
- The city needs an identifying vision or theme.
- Downtown does not feel inviting or well-defined.
- The city needs restaurants (beyond fast food), entertainment destinations, and places for people to gather and linger.
- Local businesses may need support (signage, marketing, operating hours, parking, accessibility).
- Residents need better communication about City activities.
- There is a need for improved connectivity within Raytown.
- There is some sense of apathy combined with untapped energy in some of the residents and business owners.

When asked about what new uses might be needed or make good sense for the community greenspace, the stakeholders provided the following ideas:

- Mixed-use (residential and retail).
- A community center or other similar civic space.
- Amphitheater.
- Farmer's market.

- Park with athletics facilities for pickleball, basketball, or other sports.
- Town square.
- Institutional use such as healthcare.
- Hotel.
- Destination with entertainment and play opportunities.
- Connectivity to the trail system.
- Food truck parking.

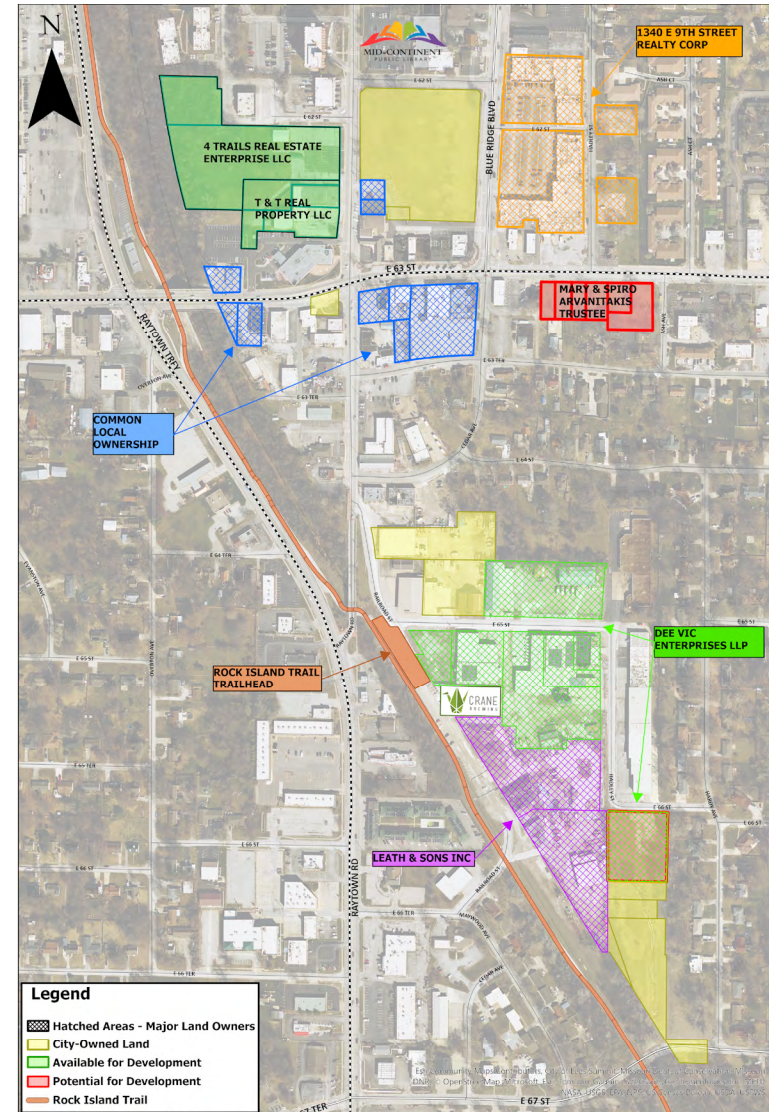
Stakeholders also indicated that the following uses or characteristics would not be welcome at the site:

- Franchises or non-local chains.
- Temporary uses.
- Uses that would require impractical City funding.

Building on Good Work

The City of Raytown is in the midst of a citywide comprehensive planning process. Although the plan is still in the process of review prior to formal adoption, City leaders shared a draft with the panel as a function of the panel's briefing materials. The following principles were distilled from the information in the draft comprehensive plan and the insights from the community and business stakeholders further informed the panel's recommendations.

- Amplify the pillars and strategies identified in the draft comprehensive plan.



City leaders provided the panel with a map outlining City-owned land, key downtown land assemblies, land potentially available for development, and the Rock Island Trail.

- Build on Raytown’s existing assets such as its transportation access, trail access, authentic approachable character, and committed local business owners.
- Provide visioning ideas for the downtown district that place the greenspace—rebranded as Raytown Green—at the heart of the city’s activity.
- Position public investment as a catalyst for private investment. The City will need to make early investments in improvements that will provide a solid foundation for further development. This will also send a signal to the private market that the area is worthy of investment.

- Promote walkability, bike-ability, safety, and wayfinding to encourage exploration by visitors and support residents’ enjoyment of the city’s amenities.
- Focus on gathering spaces and opportunities for community connectivity.

Ultimately, the panel sought to provide the City with actionable short-term steps that would help create a vision for and momentum toward the long-term goals of catalyzing development and supporting further economic vitality in Raytown.



The City is in the midst of a comprehensive planning process that helped inform the panel’s thinking on the greenspace redevelopment.



Downtown Raytown is a charming area with a rich history and is full of locally-owned businesses.



The Greenspace as a Catalyst for Downtown

From the City's draft comprehensive plan: *The long-vacant Downtown Green Space presents the best opportunity to reestablish downtown Raytown as a strong commercial center. Expanding on previous designs, the planning team developed three concepts for the site. Each concept envisions mixed-use development that includes retail commercial, housing (multifamily apartments or townhomes), and open space.*

The three design options presented in the comprehensive plan and illustrated on this page offer the City an exciting new vision for this central development site. In its review of the designs, the panel offered the following observations on elements that should work for the redevelopment of the site:

- **Revised scale.** Each of the three designs revised down the scale of the current open space and incorporated multiple uses. This revised scale would help tighten the city grid, making the district more walkable and better connected east and west.
- **Central greenspace.** Even with the new development considered for the site, the design team retained a central green and open space, ensuring that the community can continue to gather and play downtown.
- **Additional parking opportunities.** Parking is a critical asset for downtown Raytown. In addition to creating new parking to serve potential new development, the plan's designs also

considered how new parking spaces could be added to the southern edge of the site, along the back side of the businesses lining East 63rd Street, further supporting existing and new downtown commerce.

- **Commercial development.** Each of the potential designs incorporates a certain degree of new commercial development, which could help strengthen the economic vitality and pull of downtown.
- **Connectivity.** The block the greenspace sits on is quite large and separates the businesses along Blue Ridge Boulevard from any potential activity on Raytown Road. By connecting through the site and re-establishing the street grid, movement between these important streets and along the development interior to the site can be better supported.

In addition to these foundational aspects of the potential greenspace designs, the panel identified the following additional opportunities they recommend the City pursue, which could further bolster downtown connectivity, commerce, and vitality:

- **More connectivity from the Rock Island Trail.** In addition to the trail connection and current trailhead to the south, the panel considered how additional connectivity directly west from the greenspace might benefit the community and downtown businesses. It might be worth considering an additional trailhead at this new western connection.



The City's draft comprehensive plan contemplates three potential redesigns for the greenspace, each retaining the central gathering space while adding new uses.

- **Direct connection to Main Street.** The panel envisioned Raytown Road as more of a walkable Main Street for the city. As such, a direct connection from the central greenspace to this Main Street would be a welcome addition to the area.
- **Active uses along the edges.** All sides of the central greenspace should be lined with active uses that draw the community and visitors to the space and give them something to do, see, and experience.
- **Opportunities for flexible spaces.** Creating spaces that can be used for multiple purposes—such as community gathering, retail, or some other use identified as a need in Raytown—would be a welcome addition to downtown.
- **Opportunity for a coffee shop.** A coffee shop would be a great addition to downtown and to the area around the green space in particular.
- **Opportunity for a market and stage.** The greenspace is already home to Raytown Live, one of the community's largest parties. By providing some basic infrastructure at the site, in the form of a stage and covered spaces along the edges, future festivals, performances, and market-style events would be easier for organizers to produce and an easier lift for participating vendors.
- **Alternative location for mixed-use development.** There are opportunities to develop new mixed-use buildings at the



CITY OF INDEPENDENCE PARKS AND RECREATION



CITY OF INDEPENDENCE PARKS AND RECREATION

The Uptown Market in Independence features retail space for local vendors as well as open space for community events.



The Essex Market in New York City is a hub for small businesses, offering fresh, high-quality food and services.

site, which could house some of these retail and flex spaces as well as provide potential future housing opportunities for Raytown residents.

- **Optimized parking.** Parking is critical for downtown businesses and there is a great opportunity to add new parking and optimize existing parking here and around downtown. An evaluation of space usage can reveal how spaces could be shared over the course of a day, e.g., lighter daytime demand for residential parking could be calibrated with the needs of downtown businesses during their highest-traffic hours.
- **Short-term vs. long-term options.** Given its size and the potential complexity of the development vision, phasing development at the site will likely be needed. In the short term, buildings and spaces can be developed to provide welcome amenities while also laying the foundation for other uses that will require more time to develop.

Key Urban Design Questions

As the panel considered the designs from the comprehensive plan, evaluated the stakeholder feedback, and layered in their own professional observations and expertise, they raised the following urban design and usability questions. Each of these questions helped stimulate thinking and creativity and helped the panel arrive at a series of design ideas that make the most of work to date and

sharpen ideas in a manner that should better serve the community.

- How should a new pedestrian or commercial street be developed through the site from east to west?
- How large and where should the new central greenspace sit and what precedents might help inform this decision?
- Is there a “quick win” for the community, such as a food truck court or flexible plaza site? Should it be on this site?
- How can new uses at the site leverage and amplify the presence of the library and its resources?
- How can the design of the site maximize public and on-street parking for on-site uses as well as surrounding buildings as needed?
- Where does the flexible space—the “community center” or similarly civic programmable facility—sit?
- How should the parcels along Raytown Road (“Main Street”) and Blue Ridge Boulevard help shape development at



JEFF MITCHELL FOR ZONA ROSA



GOOGLE EARTH

The Zona Rosa Town Green in north Kansas City features a performance pavilion, gathering space, and central water fountain and is surrounded by retail establishments.

the site, and how should the greenspace development influence the streetscapes along those thoroughfares?

Key Elements

Based on a review of studies completed to date, information provided by community stakeholders and City leaders, and following its professional evaluation of the site, the panel recommends that the following elements be incorporated into the new greenspace development.

- **Urban street trail.** This new “Main Street” for Raytown will help connect residents and visitors north along the greenspace, provide complementary retail and commercial establishments, and encourage Rock Island Trail users to venture north into downtown to explore.
- **Civic park.** The community should retain its ability to gather in large numbers, play, and relax on a greenspace in the center of the city, but there is also an opportunity to bolster the park as a place for everyday amenities and activities of multiple scales—from intimate to large.
- **Flexible plaza and market space.** Adjacent to the civic park, a flexible space should be included to hold space for vendor markets, a public plaza, and/or performance space.
- **Community flex space.** Flexible sheltered space—under cover and climate-controlled—is needed.



Pop-up spaces can provide small and new business with space in which to nurture a new product or service.

- **Incubator retail space.** The built environment should include incubator spaces for Raytown's budding entrepreneurs to help them grow and move into larger downtown retail spaces.
- **Expanded commercial space.** More commercial spaces will help bolster the economic activity, character, density, and walkability of downtown Raytown.

Development Ideas

With these elements as guiding forces, the panel outlined two potential ideas for the redevelopment of the greenspace.

Concept One

Shift the greenspace. The first concept repositions the green and open space to the north end of the site and closer to the library. The space remains large enough to accommodate events of 250-500 people and could feature a band shell or other covered space with permanent electrical connections for performances.

Activate the edges. This design envisions active edges of the greenspace featuring retail and commercial opportunities as well as a new plaza and potential new trailhead. Connecting directly west to the Rock Island Trail could provide a great connection to downtown and encourage more trail users to detour into the area to explore. This connection could also create a fun trail loop through Raytown,

pulling bikers and walkers into downtown from the north and south, connecting them along Raytown Road and back out onto the trail.

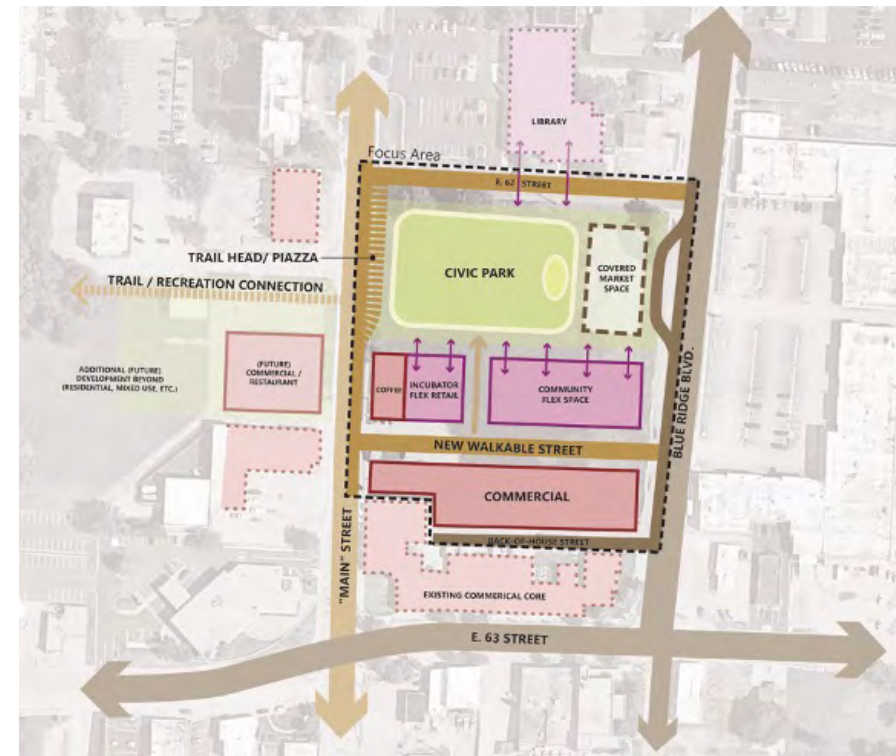
Create market spaces. The eastern edge of the site could be activated with built spaces, open but covered, for market vendors. A pull-in drive could assist with loading and unloading and could also double as a food truck plaza.

Create flex spaces. Running through the middle of the site, the panel envisions buildings that could remain flexible for a variety of community, commercial, and retail uses. Similar to the Uptown Market in Independence, Missouri, a building of this nature could house both revenue-generating retail bays as well as open space that could be used for rentable functions and community activities. Along the flex space close to Main Street, a coffee shop could serve downtown shoppers, employees, residents, trail users, and greenspace visitors.

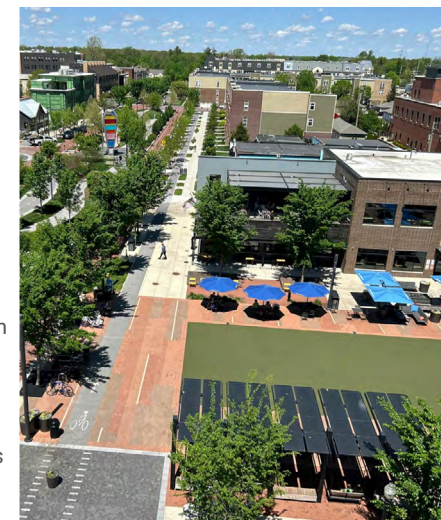
Add new commercial spaces. Finally, the panel envisions new commercial

(right) The Monan Trail in Carmel, IN, is an urban street trail that balances the movement of cars and pedestrians. These urban blocks in particular prioritize trail access and movement.

(far right) This Asheville, North Carolina, Makers Market features convertible streetscape kiosks that are activated for events.



The panel's Concept One places the civic park near the library and envisions a new walkable street new potential new commercial spaces to the south. Community flex space and flexible market spaces help further activate the area.



spaces at the southern end of the site, backing up to existing downtown commercial and fronting a new walkable street connecting across the site from east to west.

Concept Two

Shift the new greenspace. The second concept features the same elements found in the first concept but orients most of the uses around a civic green that is shifted into a north and south orientation.

Add flexible plaza space. The western edge of the site opens to Raytown Road and could be used in the near term as plaza space with the goal of eventually building this area out into more structured market spaces. This plaza would connect with a potential new trail to the Rock Island Trail.

Add new commercial spaces. The new commercial spaces remain at the south end of the site, along the north side of the existing downtown commercial spaces lining East 63rd Street.

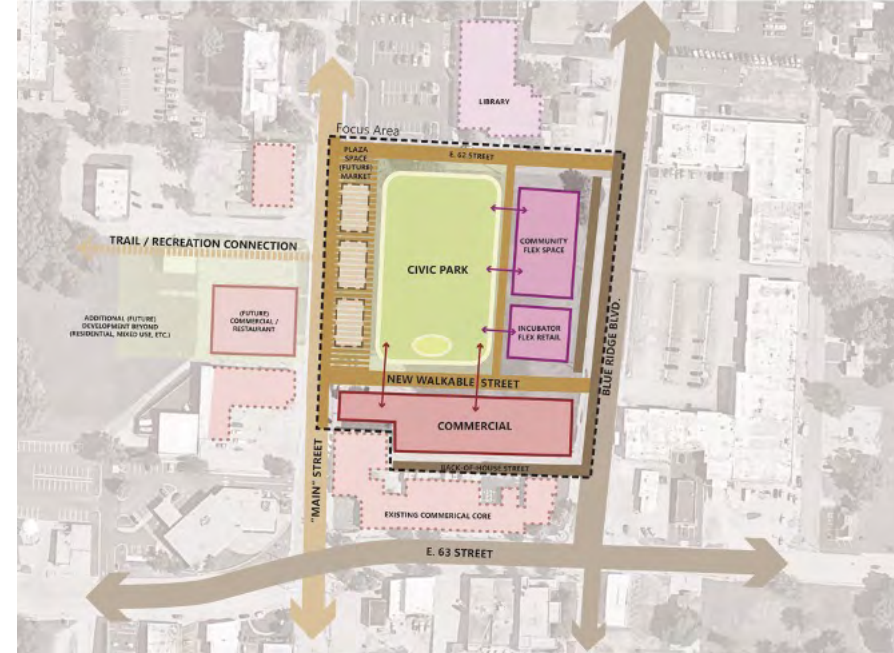
Create flex space along Blue Ridge Boulevard. In this second design, the flex space for community and retail uses reorient north and south along Blue Ridge Boulevard, helping to activate that street front while also providing a transition space between the street and green space interior to the site. These flexible retail spaces could house the next great space for

businesses launching in downtown's new business incubator or could provide some of the Raytown high school academies with space in which to explore their entrepreneurial ideas and pursuits.

Residential Development

In both of its design concepts, the panel envisioned the greenspace transforming into new and improved community space with additional retail and commercial uses for downtown. The current market does not support construction of new multifamily residential in this location, so new residential development pursuits might be best addressed at a later date and close to but not on the site. Through the course of its conversations with stakeholders, the panel learned of a landowner to the west who is interested in supporting the City's downtown investments. This additional land, which sits between the greenspace and the Rock Island Trail, might be a good location for new multi-family mixed-use development, leveraging the proximity to Main Street and the new amenities envisioned for the greenspace.

Urban trails, community gathering and play spaces, and convertible retail shops can bring activity, entertainment, and other welcome amenities to otherwise empty spaces.



Concept Two places the community flex space along the eastern edge and the flexible market spaces along the western edge to help activate the respective streetscapes and create a more intimate protected gathering space between.



Timeline/Steps for Development

Development of the greenspace is something that can take place over time, with early actions providing exciting new amenities for the community while also laying the foundation for the development that lies ahead.

The First Five Years

Early work on the site should include the infrastructure development and upgrades needed to increase present-day connectivity and support future building activities.

Create a new pedestrian street. The new east-west street that will connect Raytown Road to Blue Ridge Boulevard should be tackled early.

Install utility infrastructure. Electric and water service should be laid at the site to accommodate the near-term food truck activities and anticipated future built structures.

Connect to the Rock Island Trail. To enhance and expand connectivity to this regional asset, the panel explored two options. One option creates a loop through downtown, and the other contemplates a direct westerly connection to the trail, which would require

further study. Tackling these connectivity improvements early will facilitate movement around downtown and create more awareness of the activities at the green space.

Construct covered market spaces and stage.

The covered market spaces—for farmers markets and market fairs—and a stage or performance space for Raytown Live and other community festivals and events would provide an early boost to activating the space and make event production easier for all. These spaces should also be constructed with associated utilities.

Buildout of green space. A city park, particularly one that is so central to a community, is hard to give up. Early work at the site should include the redeveloped and upgraded greenspace and civic park for the community, ensuring that public use and access remain as uninterrupted as possible.

Five to Ten Years

Develop the commercial and flex space. As the activity at the site continues to center around civic uses, work should deepen to include the development of the commercial and community flex space. The addition of

a coffee shop at this point or the building of the incubator flex retail space(s) can offer the community more to see and do downtown and help generate additional revenue for the business operators and taxes for the City.

Ten Years and Beyond

The longer-term development of the new commercial building(s) at the southern edge of the site may take time. The additional activity at the site brought about through the developments noted above, should help bolster the downtown market and support the case for new businesses and additional retail downtown.

Development of mixed-use and/or multi-family. The development west of the site, across Raytown Road, will likely be a longer-term venture and generally out of the City's control. Conversations with the property owner, however, should take place in the near term to share a vision for the site and a potential path forward for residential development and a mix of uses at the site. With an agreed-upon vision, the City can help support development through any necessary rezoning and entitlements, and the property owner can begin to make development plans.



The Raytown greenspace at the time of the study, with commercial buildings in the distance.



Community Corridor

The second question posed by the City of Raytown asked the panel to consider how to create a cohesive entertainment corridor connecting downtown to the Rock Island Trail where trail users meet, park, and often gather at Crane Brewing. This energy and visibility would translate well into downtown Raytown, yet the corridor connecting the two areas of activity needs improvement.

Through its study, the panel shifted the focus of this corridor question to creating a community corridor rather than just an entertainment corridor. This shift places more emphasis on the community's use of the corridor, the connections throughout the area, and the alignment of infrastructure, buildings, and uses to create a Main Street spine along which Raytown businesses can thrive.

Two primary principles animated the panel's work on this quandary.

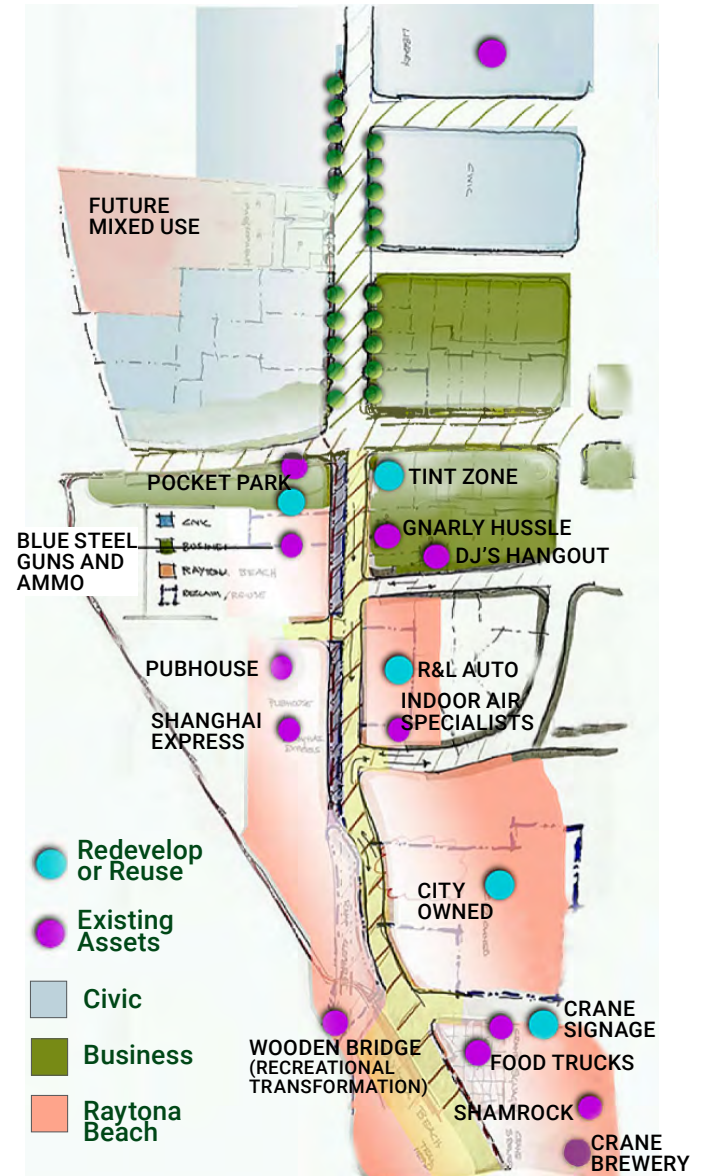
Streets can be gathering spaces. In addition to serving the community's transportation needs, streets can become welcoming spaces

in which the community can gather, celebrate, and recreate. The spaces surrounding the street should be built for people and the street infrastructure itself—the pavement, the crossings, curbs, and more—should allow for easy movement outside of cars. The existing infrastructure, including the width of the street and sidewalks, should be leveraged further, taking advantage of the paved areas to create generous gathering spaces when the street is shut down for events.

Streets need to match the surrounding development. For the study area, the very human scale of the downtown buildings is somewhat dwarfed by the wide streets connecting them. Pulling the streetscape in closer, slowing traffic, and making the area more welcoming and walkable will support downtown businesses and make the downtown experience one to linger in and enjoy rather than rush and move through.

Downtown Subdistricts

The panel considered downtown as a group of subdistricts that leverage and elevate the



The panel identified three subdistricts in the downtown neighborhood: the light blue civic subdistrict to the north, the green commercial core in the middle, and Raytona Beach in the pink-shaded area to the south.



(far left) The incoming traffic from the wooden Raytown Road bridge creates a confusing environment for motorists. (left) Looking north from the trailhead, it is not evident that a bustling downtown district is nearby.



existing unique identities of particular areas and draw additional complementary uses to downtown. This subdistrict concept helps align area uses and encourages people to come downtown, park once, and explore the area without having to move their car.

The panel identified three primary subdistricts in downtown: the civic area to the north, the business core running along both sides of East 63rd Street, and the entertainment district to the south.

Within these subdistricts, the panel also identified three primary streetscapes that line the spine of Raytown Road and could be amplified to the city's and downtown's benefit:

- Neighborhood connection.** This portion of Raytown Road starts at the northern edge of the greenspace and moves further into a very residential area. It connects to and dead-ends at City Hall and the Police Department on East 59th Street. (Raytown Road actually veers 90 degrees west and takes over East 59th Street for two blocks before connecting with Raytown Trafficway.) This neighborhood connection is marked by a quieter and calmer streetscape and is dominated by single-family homes lining both sides of the street.
- Main Street.** This section of Raytown Road runs through the civic area, the heart of Main Street, along the study site, and through downtown. This heart of Main Street is marked by the gathering space, community events, and locally-

based retail enterprises. It is a section of the streetscape that could be closed off, turning the entire roadway into a community plaza or festival space for events. The street is generously wide through this section of downtown and could easily accommodate two-way traffic, a middle turn lane, angled parking, bike lanes and sidewalks on each side, and a planting buffer to help separate and

protect pedestrians and bicyclists from the auto traffic.

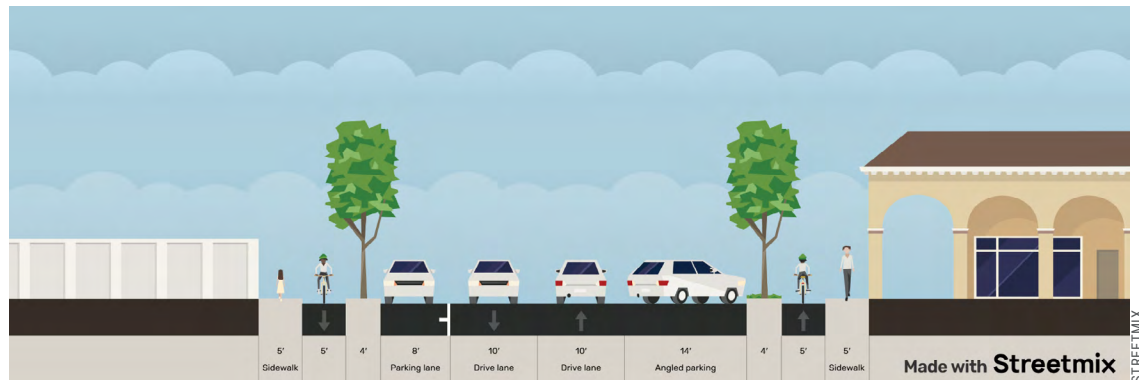
- Raytona Beach.** This portion of Raytown Road is the entertainment segment between the trailhead and downtown. This is the rowdier corner of downtown, a place where fun is unleashed, where the music plays a little louder, and where local favorites like Gnarly Hussle shine. This area also provides a fun and unique



The neighborhood streets north of the greenspace would benefit from bike lane/sharing signage.



This street can easily transform into additional gathering space when the green is full during special events.



Along the western edge of the greenspace, Main Street could be redesigned to provide two lanes of driving, angled parking, parallel parking, protected bike lanes, and sidewalks, all of which would support a more vibrant commercial environment.



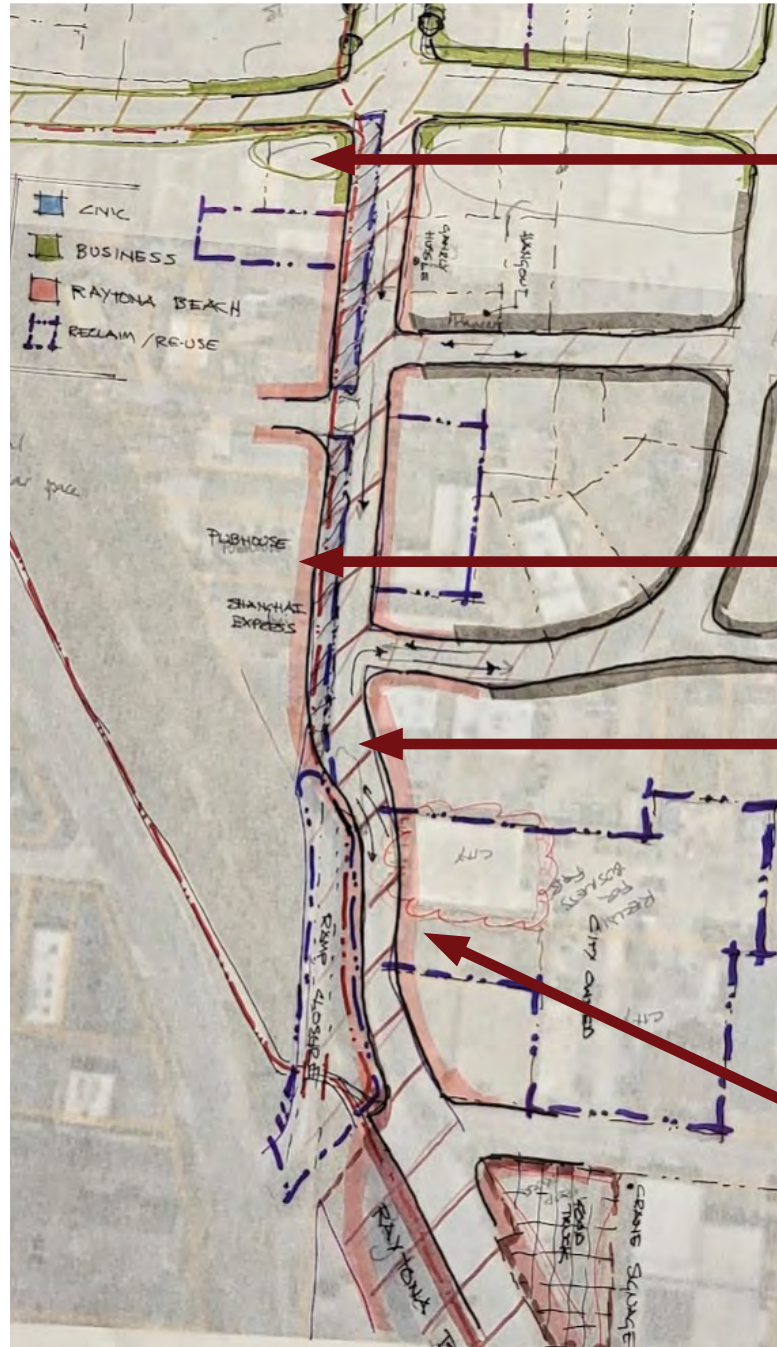
Gnarly Hussle personifies the Raytona Beach vibe of downtown's southern subdistrict.

entrance to Raytown for those coming into town at the Rock Island Trail trailhead. The name "Raytona Beach" was raised during a stakeholder interview and hearkened back to former fun branding activities and events in the area. The panel found the moniker charming and befitting this special subdistrict.

Raytona Beach Community Corridor

To turn this southern section of Raytown Road into a community corridor, the panel identified several infrastructure improvements and potential land use modifications that could help tame the auto-centric nature of the street and make it more pedestrian and bike-friendly.

Define space for people. The corridor needs to have defined spaces for people moving around outside of cars. The corridor is presently designed for automotive traffic, does not feature any form of bicycle lane or facility to protect trail users traveling north into town, and the sidewalks are



Attributes of the new community corridor might include highlighting the pocket park at the north end, reinvigorating existing businesses and restaurants, redesigning the street for people, and redeveloping City-owned properties.

- The Public Works building at 6417 Railroad Street might better serve the corridor as a commercial building. The building is owned by the City and the services performed in this space could relocate elsewhere in Raytown to another City-owned property. The visibility of this building from the Rock Island Trail presents a compelling business opportunity and could help draw trail users north to explore more of Raytown.
- Similarly, the vacant lot at the southeast corner of Railroad Street and East 65th

Street could work better with an active use. A food truck court could provide a good complement to the beverages offered next door at Crane Brewery.

Early Interventions

The panel encourages the City to tackle the following improvements to the community corridor and its surrounding infrastructure, piloting these street improvements in the near term:

- Close the wooden bridge to create a safer environment for all.

- Create new and separated biking and walking spaces with low-cost moveable or temporary materials like planters, barrels, cones, buckets, and tires.
- Stripe vehicle lanes and parking areas to create clear separations between moving traffic, parking spaces, and pedestrian areas.

Once the improvements have been tested for functionality and public acceptance, the City can shift to more permanent infrastructure improvements for the corridor.



OAKS AND SPOKES - RALEIGH, NC



Additional Opportunities

After careful evaluation of the greenspace redevelopment potential and the elevation of a new community corridor, the panel turned to other potential opportunities across downtown that might support the city's economic vitality and bolster the success of its downtown.

Business Support

The addition of downtown Raytown to the Missouri Main Street network is a fantastic asset for the city as is the Raytown Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism. In addition to the work underway by these teams, there are additional business supports that could serve Raytown's business community, particularly those operating downtown.

- **Position Raytown's downtown as something unique.** Creating a unique identity for downtown that complements existing Raytown branding can help set it apart as something uniquely special and worth exploring.
- **Ensure business services are visible.** Starting with a "Business" tab on the City's website, City leaders and staff should be seen as a first resource for current business owners or those contemplating a downtown location.
- **Support incubators.** Business incubators can offer entrepreneurs a low-cost entry point on their path to a standalone space or storefront. Encourage those opening incubators and ensure that regulations are

supportive of and not a hindrance to these business pursuits.

- **Update the sign ordinance.** The City's current sign ordinance calls for signage that is expensive to produce. Rather than incur the expense, many business owners choose to operate without building signage. Revising the signage requirements to allow for more affordable options will support business vitality and help Raytown residents and visitors more easily navigate downtown's commercial offerings.
- **Explore financing options.** Using tools like a Community Improvement District (CID) can help a specified geography, like downtown, raise funds through a tax on purchases in the district. Those funds can be put to use supporting the programming, district wayfinding, and communications that will help elevate the district and support the health and vitality of the district's businesses.
- **Consider grants for facade improvements.** The City is encouraged to consider providing downtown businesses with grant funding to support facade updates and improvements. A street lined with well-maintained and attractive building facades can create a more welcoming and engaging experience for shoppers and others visiting downtown.
- **Provide regular programming and messaging.** Supported by CID funding and in concert with the Raytown Main



Trailhead Books on East 63rd Street is locally-owned and regionally loved.

Street organization, downtown would benefit from regular events, programming, and communications. Events can draw residents and visitors to the district. Downtown programming can be designed for the public or cater more directly to business owners, supporting their capacity building, networking, and resource access. Regular communications, again externally to the public and internally with the business community, can also help people discover more of Raytown’s downtown and help ensure that the business owners have access to the information they need to grow and thrive.

Bike Network

The surrounding regional bike network presents a tremendous opportunity for Raytown. With the Rock Island Trail running along the edge of downtown and eventually connecting to the Blue Ridge Trail and Katy Trail, the City can leverage and promote its connectivity and draw trail users into the city to explore, linger, and shop.

- **Promote the regional trail connections.** The City is encouraged to lean into the ability to ride from and to Raytown and Raytona Beach from all around the region via this system of protected trails.
- **Highlight a downtown trail loop.** With a few relatively easy updates and connection points, the panel envisioned a new trail loop that uses the existing trail and new community corridor to create a fun recreational amenity for

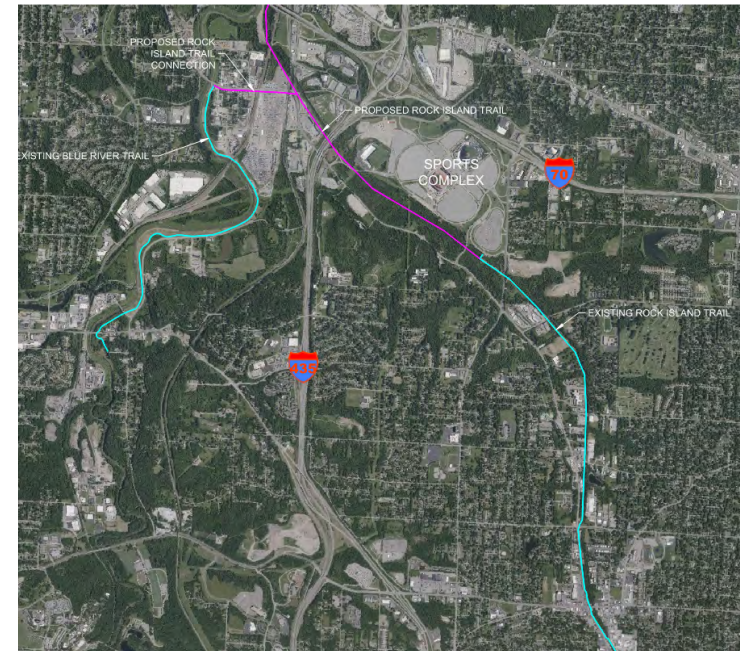
residents and a great urban bypass for outside trail users. Highlighting this downtown loop will draw more users to the trail and more visitors to downtown and its establishments.

- **Improve the Rock Island Trail section.** The section of the trail that runs along the western edge of downtown could use some improvements. From incorporating the wooden bridge into the trail and transforming it into Raytown’s own Highline, to improving the rather flat and unassuming section along Raytown Trafficway, there are opportunities to make the trail more visually and experientially interesting for residents and visitors.
- **Consider leveraging the green corridor.** The Kansas City Area Transportation Authority maintains a corridor of

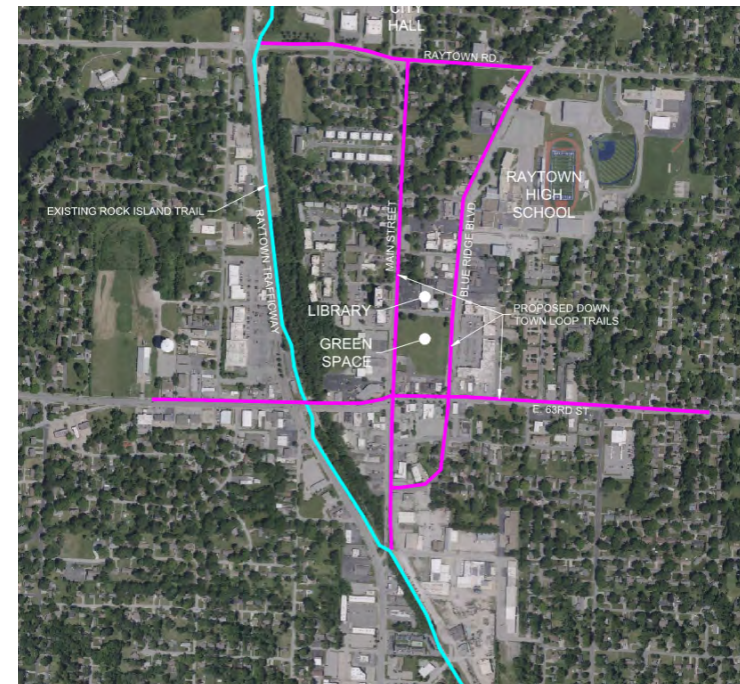


(top) The Rock Island Trail along the west side of downtown is function yet a bit of a blank canvas.

(right) The addition of on-street trail connections, noted by the magenta lines, could create fun loops connecting downtown to the light blue Rock Island Trail.



The existing regional trails (light blue lines) will soon be connected with proposed improvements noted by the magenta lines to the north.



unimproved land along the east side of the trail and the west edge of downtown. Leveraging this land for a fun off-road biking experience could further enliven the area and create an additional draw for bikers while still largely maintaining the natural topography and beautiful tree canopy found along this right-of-way.

There is also an interesting opportunity to use the bike network to better connect the city's high school to other areas of town. In addition to creating a safer passage for the city's teenagers, this connectivity can help channel students to spaces where they are welcomed and encouraged to spend their time, such as the cross-country team running on the trail or students heading to the library.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure is the backbone for development and a number of infrastructure improvements are squarely within the City's control. To support more development across downtown and support the economic vitality of the district, the panel recommends the following infrastructure improvements.

- **Turn Raytown Road into Main Street.** In addition to shifting the name and branding for the street, treating the street as a Main Street, with two lanes of traffic, a turn lane, and on-street parking, can support additional business growth and trips to the area.
- **Conduct a parking study.** Through its study of the area, the panel believes there is generally adequate parking

downtown. The fact that the public generally disagrees and laments the lack of parking points to a difficulty in finding available parking, managing parking durations, and navigating the quirky back-in angled parking of some streets. By conducting a parking study, the City can get help in identifying how and where to improve its parking assets to make accessing the downtown district by car far easier.

- **Consider 63rd Street improvements.** The back-in angled parking along this stretch of roadway was of particular concern to stakeholders. Given the volume of traffic flowing through the area, in the form of commuters and visits to downtown businesses, the City is encouraged to explore other parking configurations that will allow drivers to park more quickly, safely, and with little confusion and traffic friction.
- **Explore a road diet on Blue Ridge Boulevard.** Blue Ridge Boulevard is a four-lane roadway between East 59th Street and East 63rd Street. The panel recommends a road diet, reducing the vehicle lanes to two lanes with a center turn lane. This modification will allow more room for bike lanes and sidewalk improvements along the edges, both of which will make moving between the high school, the surrounding businesses, and downtown safer for everyone.
- **Close Raytown Road bridge to vehicle traffic.** As noted earlier, closing this



Roadway improvements to segments highlighted in yellow could include a road diet near the high school and closing the wood bridge to traffic near the community corridor.

bridge to vehicle traffic can improve roadway safety in Raytona Beach and offer pedestrians and bicyclists another trail amenity in the area.

Redevelopment Opportunities

When considering development opportunities at the greenspace, the panel also considered the potential redevelopment opportunities of

surrounding parcels and how all might work together in support of a vibrant downtown. These potential opportunities can help strengthen the downtown market such that it is better positioned for the future types of larger-scale residential and mixed-use projects the City would also like to see in this part of town.

- **Explore downtown west opportunities.** There is a strong retail presence on the west side of Raytown Trafficway that should be factored into downtown efforts and activities. The Raytown 63 shopping center appears to be fully leased and could present potential out-lot development given its exposure to the busy roadway and trail beyond.
- **Watch for property acquisition opportunities.** The City is encouraged to be in active conversations with landowners in this western section of downtown. The City should know where these property owners stand relative to their long-term business and real estate plans and be ready to assist or connect them to resources when they may be ready to sell. With some thoughtful long-range planning, the City could assist with parcel assembly that could lead to additional impactful development for downtown.
- **Encourage historic preservation.** The buildings lining both sides of East 63rd west to the equestrian center are a mix of eclectic, charming, and historic structures. The built environment plays

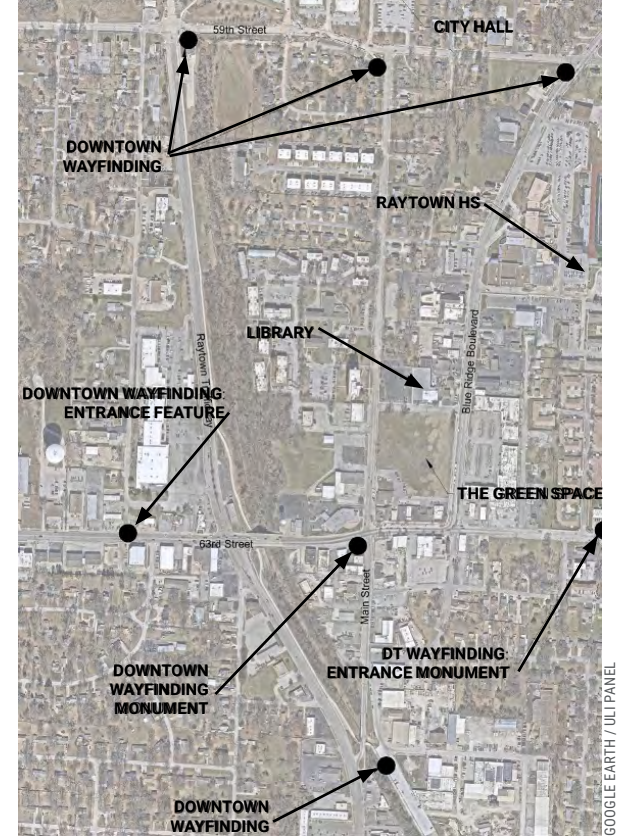
an important role in the health and vitality of an area. The City should encourage the preservation of these historic buildings and explore how the more eclectic structures can help further define and differentiate Raytown from neighboring cities.

- **Promote commercial renovation.** With costs remaining high for new construction projects, building renovation may be a more viable path for downtown properties. Downtown is full of buildings that might be ready for renovation and a new life. The City can help promote these opportunities, which, when complete, can help support the business case for the construction of the types of mixed-use buildings the City would like to see in its center.

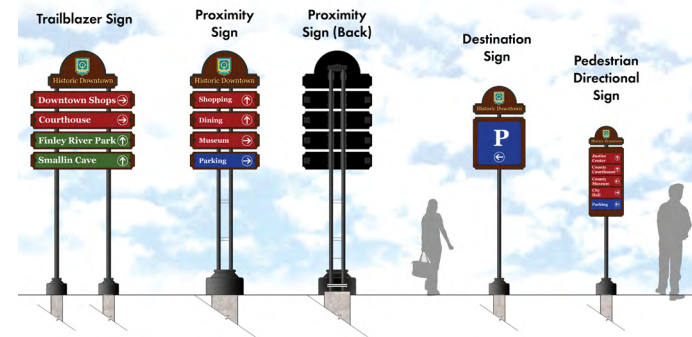
Wayfinding

Downtown Raytown needs more wayfinding and directional support. From regional directional signage at Interstate 435 and Highway 350 to more local and nuanced signage around downtown and by the trail, clear and visible wayfinding can assist residents and visitors in navigating to and around downtown. Signage at the entrances to downtown will also help provide a sense of arrival and place. Wayfinding presents the city with a great opportunity to reinforce its brand and encourage exploration of other businesses and amenities.

(middle and bottom) Wayfinding signage can be practical while also serving the community or district's branding and identity goals.



Additional wayfinding should be added to key locations around downtown.





Funding Strategies

Funding for the types of pursuits recommended by the panel can and likely will come from a variety of sources. While the City awaits word about its recent grant submission for Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) funding, the following additional resources should be explored.

Grant Funding

- [Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity \(RAISE\)](#), the City is already pursuing this Department of Transportation (DOT) program, now known as the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Program, for grants for surface transportation infrastructure projects with significant local or regional impact.
- [Safe Streets and Roads for All \(SS4A\)](#) is another DOT program that supports planning, infrastructural, behavioral, and operational initiatives to prevent death and serious injury on roads and streets involving all roadway users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, buses, motorists, and more.
- The [Rails to Trails Conservancy has a funding tool](#) that can help communities, trail organizations, and partners explore potential federal funding sources for trail-related improvements.
- The Main Street America and Missouri Main Streets organizations are aligned with and support Raytown's Main Street

work. Local Main Street staff will have a grasp of the potential funding available to support work in downtown Raytown. Generally, support can take the form of grant funding for downtown-specific initiatives and funding for technical assistance and capacity building.

- USDOT partners with EPA to provide [funding support for communities seeking solutions to transportation systems' environmental impact](#), including sustainable planning, transit-oriented development (TOD), and improvements in fuel efficiency and economy.
- The Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) Planning Sustainable Places Grant works to advance local transportation and land use planning and project development actions that support vibrant, connected, and green places. Information about broader [MARC funding is found here](#).

Special Taxing Districts

- A [Community Improvement District \(CID\)](#) is a special taxing district that collects additional sales tax revenue (generally one to two percent) within a designated boundary to pay for special public facilities, improvements, or services within that same geography.
- Positioning downtown as a location for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and Trail Oriented Development (TrOD) might help the City unlock additional funding in

which transportation access or active transportation is a priority. More information can be found in this [Transportation for America article](#).

- A [Transportation Development District](#) might also be worth exploring.

Tax Abatements

- Using [Chapter 353 tax abatement](#), cities with Urban Redevelopment Corporations can access this incentive to help redevelop blighted areas by abating some or all of the property taxes for up to 25 years.
- [Chapter 100](#) authorizes cities and counties to issue industrial development bonds to finance a wide variety of commercial facilities and equipment, and to offer real and/or personal property tax abatement, sales tax exemption on construction materials, and sales tax exemption on tangible personal property.

City Funding

The City also has the ability to leverage its public assets to support new development and redevelopment projects. Using land contributions, land swaps, lease payments, and its ability to issue bonds, City leaders can take an active role in catalyzing new development. Each of these actions will come with very public scrutiny, so most jurisdictions use these tools with caution and proceed with the utmost care.

Conclusion

Raytown residents love their community. It is unique, edgy, practical, and approachable. City leaders embrace this civic persona and are working hard to find ways to support local businesses, encourage residential growth, and catalyze even more activity in the city's downtown.

The development opportunities posed by the nearly four acres of open green space in downtown Raytown are numerous. Proceeding with care, the City can use this unique opportunity to further activate the site and surrounding area while at the same time building a stronger foundation to support additional downtown commerce.

Although the site may not be ready for a multi-story mixed-use development that would fill the block, the site is primed to provide additional community amenities—the kind that can be accessed next month, next year, and well into the future.

By bringing structured yet flexible spaces to the greenspace and providing more structure to the civic space, the City can encourage more active use of this central community space while building a foundation for future revenue generation. Folding in enclosed community gathering spaces and additional commercial opportunities can help complete the transformation of this blank canvas into an exciting and welcoming Raytown Green.



About the Panel



Ginny Dobesh

**Panel Co-Chair
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.



Matt Ledbetter

**Panel Co-Chair
Director
Grayson Capital**

Matt is a Director 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.



Kevin Berman

**Partner
Hoefer Welker**

Kevin's focus is on community development and consensus-building.

During his tenure, which includes several building types, millions of square feet over tens of thousands of acres of development, Kevin has kept his client's vision and financial and operational objectives central to his design. His laser focus on client business objectives ensures he delivers more than a design — he delivers measurable results. His research-based approach to design enables him to graphically articulate his client's vision to inspire potential investors to bring projects to reality. Kevin is active in the Kansas City chapters of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and the American Institute of Architects (AIA).

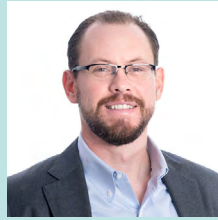


Chris Brewster

**Vice President
Multistudio**

Chris is a planner and attorney with Multistudio's City

Design studio, and consults with local governments on planning and urban design issues that need strategic implementation or legal solutions. Chris has critical insights and unique skills in analyzing urban design and development patterns, applying precedents and prototypes, and converting these to practical urban and neighborhood design guidelines and standards. He specializes in working with communities to create development codes that respond to our calling to build more sustainable and walkable places. In 24 years with Multistudio he has managed over 50 development code projects ranging from strategic amendments to city-wide rewrites of development regulations. Chris developed his passion for serving communities in prior positions as an assistant city attorney and as a public information specialist for a regional transit agency.



Wes Buckley

**Partner
Lane4 Property Group**

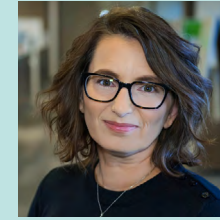
As a retail specialist with a dynamic background in law, Weston focuses

on multi-family and mixed-use development, retail leasing, tenant representation, sales, and acquisitions. Weston is currently involved in \$310 million of development projects across Kansas City including The Hudson (Kansas City, KS), The Retreat on the Prairie (Olathe, KS), and Green Street (Downtown Lee's Summit, MO).

Throughout his career, Weston has marketed some of Kansas City's most prominent shopping destinations, including Hawthorne Plaza, Twin Creeks Shopping Center, Adams Dairy Landing, Merriam Town Center, and Independence Commons. Several of Weston's notable tenant representation clients include Walmart Neighborhood Market, Dave's Hot Chicken, Prime Sleep, Blaze Pizza, Hurts Donut Company, SVS Vision, and Tiger-Rock Martial Arts.

Weston assisted in the formation of LANE4 Property Group in 2006, then left to attend law school at DePaul University in Chicago. Upon graduation, he joined The Katz Law Firm in Overland Park, KS, practicing as an attorney specializing in commercial real estate finance, acquisitions, disposition, foreclosure, and leasing. Weston re-joined LANE4 in 2015 as an Associate, and most recently became Partner in 2022.

In his free time, Weston enjoys spending time with his wife and four children, barbecuing and watching KU basketball. He loves the outdoors and is an avid fly fisher, snowboarder, and backpacker.



Shannon Buster

**Director of
Engineering
NorthPoint
Development**

Shannon Buster is

an accomplished engineering professional with extensive experience in leadership roles within the industry. Serving as the Director of Engineering at NorthPoint Development since September 2019, Shannon previously held the position of Engineering Manager. Prior experience includes a tenure as a Senior Engineer at Olsson from June 2016 to August 2019 and a lengthy role as a Project Manager at Lutjen, Inc. from August 1999 to June 2016. Shannon's educational background features studies at the University of Missouri-Kansas City from 1997 to 1999.



Sara Copeland

**Development
Management Division
Manager
City of Kansas City,
Missouri**

Sara Copeland, AICP is the Development Management Division for the City of Kansas City, MO where she manages long-range planning and redevelopment. Her plan implementation efforts have included infrastructure construction, ordinance amendments, and development projects; one demonstration project won a 2018 Missouri Municipal League Innovation Award. Her background includes nearly 20 years of experience in both the public and private sectors. Sara earned Bachelor of Science and Master in City Planning degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She is the Vice Chair of APA’s Chapter Presidents Council and the treasurer of the Missouri Chapter of APA.



Vincent Gauthier

**President
URI | Authenticity City**

Vincent Paul Gauthier is the Founder and

President of AuthenticityCity and Urban Realty Interests, Inc. based in Kansas City, Missouri. Incorporated in 2003, AuthenticityCity+URI offers targeted community development services. His firm has assisted in developing private real estate portfolios, crafting amenities for public venues, and providing leasing brokerage and consulting on incentive-based redevelopment projects. Currently, Mr. Gauthier’s passions include repositioning historic commercial spaces, EatsStreetKC.com, and working with smaller towns and cities to diagnose unique local assets that are best suited to help promote and appropriately grow such communities.

Mr. Gauthier has spent much of his career as an owner-developer overseeing the creation of strong neighborhood-focused developments.

As a sole proprietor, Mr. Gauthier has concentrated on property acquisition, contextual new construction, public/private financing, and heritage planning, all with a focus on community participation and education. Mr. Gauthier graduated from Harvard University with a post-graduate degree (MDesS Dist.) in real estate development, and retains a Missouri real estate license. He also holds degrees from the University of Tennessee and Tulane University, in urban planning (MSP) and humanities/architecture (BGS), respectively.



Matthew Macchietto

**Principal Landscape
Architect
Hoerr Schaudt**

Matthew Macchietto, Principal Landscape Architect at Hoerr Schaudt, has dedicated his career to projects that celebrate community inclusivity, placemaking, environmental resilience, and built craft. He has spearheaded the design and vision of prominent civic landscapes across the country, including Wichita’s Exploration Place Destination Playscape and Park, Sarasota’s Bay Park, Omaha/Council Bluffs’ River’s Edge Park, Baltimore’s Harborplace Development, and Birmingham’s East Side Park. His portfolio spans numerous nationally recognized parks and public landscapes that reshape how communities engage with land, memory, and each other. He holds a Master in Landscape Architecture with Distinction from Harvard’s Graduate School of Design, where he was awarded the Peter Walker + Partners Fellowship for merit and design talent. Recently, he was honored as an Alumni Master at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln– the first landscape architect to receive the distinction



Casey McBride

**Vice President
A.L. Huber**

Casey McBride's strategic influence and commitment to

business development and overall growth have not only led to the expansion of the Estimating & Preconstruction team at A.L. Huber but have also facilitated the addition of valuable members to the Business Development and Marketing departments. Beyond his internal role at A.L. Huber, Casey remains actively engaged in the community, serving on multiple boards and dedicating time to non-profit organizations throughout the Kansas City Metro area.



Chris Vukas

**Director of New
Markets Tax Credit
Financing & Advisory
Services AltCap**

Chris Vukas began

his real estate financing career utilizing New Market Tax Credits to close financing gaps in rural Native American community development projects and have been involved in over \$500 million NMTC projects nationwide. In addition, he has worked in non-profit finance navigating projects that required a layered financing approach and non-traditional capital. Chris has a passion for projects that require out of the box thinking and maximize community impact.