



DOWNTOWN KEARNEY PLAN

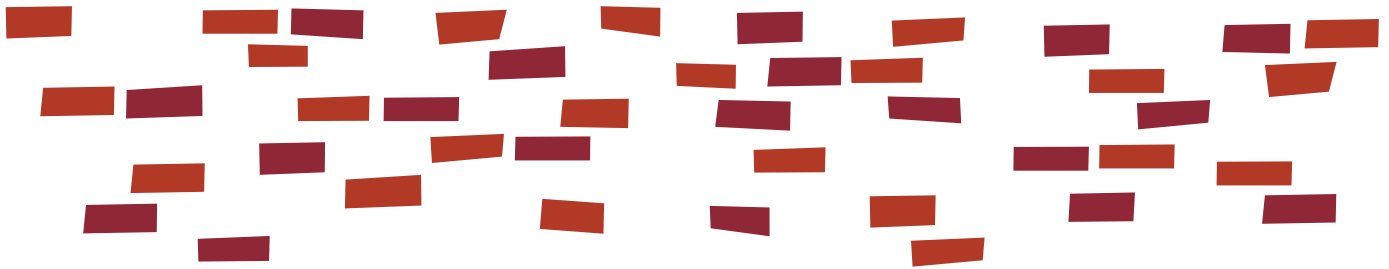


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The authors would like to thank the leadership brought to the planning process by Bobbi Pettit, Lance Lang, Peggy Eynetich, and Dick Reiter. Their enthusiasm and commitment for Kearney and its downtown will undoubtedly make the City an even better place to live and visit.

We also thank all of the members of the steering committee and people who contributed to this plan. We especially thank Larry Eggert for his countless hours that he gave to the planning process.

A stylized graphic of a city skyline in dark red. It features several rectangular buildings of varying heights. The tallest building on the right has a semi-circular top. To the left of the buildings is a large, dark red square containing a white number '1'.

1 KEARNEY MARKETS

Successful City Planning:
Public action that generates a desirable, widespread
and sustained private market reaction.

-Alexander Garvin

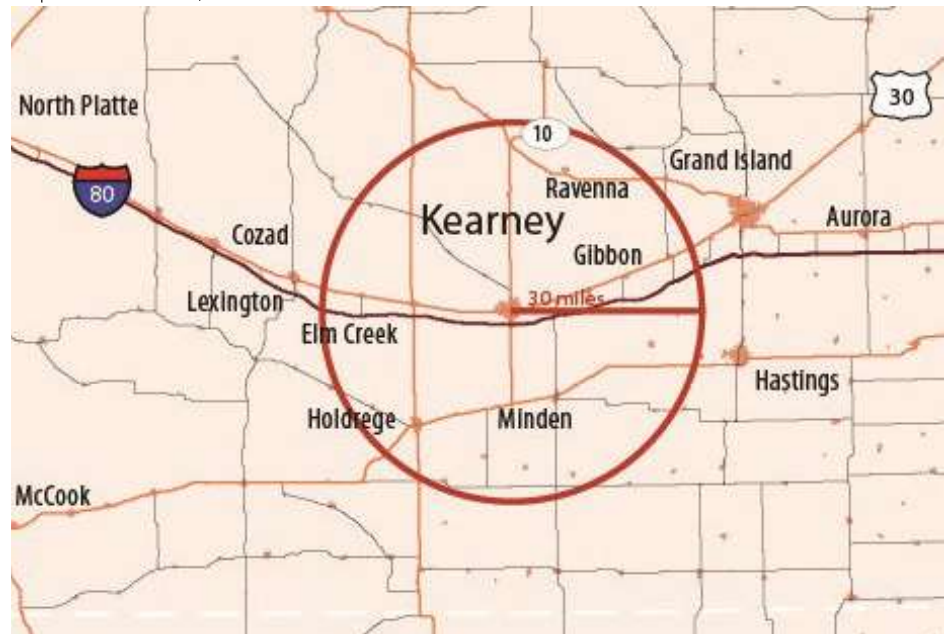
MARKET AND DEFINITION

Kearney is a major commercial hub for central Nebraska with significant mixed-use corridors and attractive cultural resources. Its downtown is one of the most discernible business districts in the region, providing goods and services to both local residents and tourists. The City of Kearney's size and diversity of attractions strengthens downtown's market reach, allowing it to pull spending from surrounding rural areas.

Map 1.1 illustrates the different geographic market areas used by this study.

- **Primary Market.** Includes the corporate limits of the City.
- **Secondary Market.** Area includes a 30-mile ring around Kearney. Residents of the city do much of their daily shopping in Kearney and view the city as a location for retail services, civic life, and entertainment.

Map 1.1: Market Areas, 2011



DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION TRENDS AND FORECASTS

- The City of Kearney's 2010 population is 30,787, an increase of 12% from its 2000 population of 27,431.
- The City's growth rate between 2000 and 2010 was 1.2% annually. If Kearney maintains moderate growth at 0.47% annually, the city will reach a population of 31,513 by 2015.
- The population in the 30-mile area decreased from 37,890 in 2000 to 37,353 in 2010, a 1% decline. This loss is expected to stabilize through 2015.
- City of Kearney's 2010 median age is 29, while the median age within the 30-mile area is 34. Both are lower than the nation's median age of 37, representing a proportionately younger population in the region.
- UNK's student population has grown at a 1% growth rate since 2000, increasing from 6,506 in 2000 to 7,100 in 2010. About 60% of the students live in Kearney, while the remaining 40% reside in the region or attend online. Their non-resident enrollment has nearly doubled in the past 10 years, increasing from 656 to 1,301 students. This increase has compensated for the declining number of high school candidates graduating in the region.

For purposes of this study, it is suggested that the city continue to improve downtown, strengthening it as a viable center for commercial development and reinvestment. There are a number of actions the city could take to stabilize its population including entrepreneurship programs, scholarship programs that encourage students to remain in (or return to) Kearney for a period of time after graduation, low interest loans for new businesses, and upgrades to the public environment.

Table 1.1: Historical Population Change, Kearney

Year	Population	Decennial Change	Decennial % Change	Annual Rate of Change
1950	12,115			
1960	14,210	2,095	17.3%	1.7%
1970	19,181	4,971	35.0%	3.5%
1980	21,158	1,977	10.3%	1.0%
1990	24,396	3,238	15.3%	1.5%
2000	27,431	3,035	12.4%	1.2%
2010	30,787	3,356	12.2%	1.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 1.2: Population Change, Kearney and Region 2000-2015

	2000 Population	2010 Population	Change	% Change	2015 est. Population*	2010-2015 Change	2010-2015 % Change	Growth Rate bw 2000/2010	Growth Rate bw 2010/2015
City of Kearney	27,431	30,787	3,356	12.2%	31,513	726	2.4%	1.22	0.47
30-Mile Exclusive	37,890	37,353	-537	-1.4%	37,638	285	0.8%	-0.14	0.15
Total	65,321	68,140	2,819	4.3%	69,151	1,011	1.5%	0.43	0.30

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; *Claritas, Inc.

Table 1.3: Growth Scenarios for Kearney

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
0.5% CAGR	30,787	31,513	32,361	33,179	34,106
1.0% CAGR	30,787	31,037	34,008	35,734	37,566

Source: U.S. Census, Claritas Inc., RDG Planning & Design



Table 1.4: Median Income for Kearney

	2000	2010	Change	%
City of Kearney	\$34,829	\$44,665*	\$9,836	28%
30-Mile Area**	\$37,419	\$46,945	\$9,526	25%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *2008-2010 Census, **Claritas, Inc.

INCOME CHARACTERISTICS

Table 1.4 presents the median household income for residents in the City and primary market area. Kearney's median income was \$44,665 in 2010 according to Claritas, Inc. This is comparable to the secondary market area at \$46,945. Increases in commodity prices have led to increased profits for many farmers, and this may be reflected in the higher median income for the secondary market. Income levels in the region are higher than the State of Nebraska at \$39,873.

Table 1.5: Work Places and Employment for Kearney Trade Areas

Business Description	City of Kearney				Secondary Trade Area (exclusive)			
	Total Establishments	%	Total Employed	%	Total Establishments	%	Total Employed	%
Industries (All)	1817	100%	29,631	100%	1,804	100%	14,437	100%
Agriculture (All)	40	2%	204	1%	181	10%	700	5%
Construction (All)	143	8%	143	0%	161	9%	1,844	13%
Manufacturing (All)	77	4%	2,733	0%	29	2%	4,119	29%
Wholesale Trade (All)	75	4%	1,464	5%	99	5%	748	5%
Retail (All Retail)	395	22%	11,301	38%	288	16%	2,295	16%
Transportation, Communications/Public Utilities	62	3%	572	2%	121	7%	1,022	7%
Finance (All)	188	10%	879	3%	141	8%	774	5%
Service (All)	761	42%	9,757	33%	608	34%	5,423	38%
Public Administration (All)	76	4%	1,613	5%	122	7%	1,125	8%

Source: Claritas, Inc., 2009

BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

RETAIL PERFORMANCE AND POTENTIAL

Table 1.5 displays the distribution of employment for Kearney. The primary market area has a comparable number of establishments as the City with 1,800 businesses, and half as many employed (15,000 versus 30,000) work outside of the City of Kearney.

City of Kearney

- Services and retail businesses account for 64% of the market's establishments and 71% of the market's 29,631 employees.
- General merchandise stores (sub-category of retail) are the largest employer for people per establishment with

over 100. Educational services (sub-category of Service) is the second largest with 35.

- The city's unemployment rate has only increased from 2% to 4.5% since 2000 (city-data.com) possibly indicating a labor shortage in some market sectors.

Secondary Market

- The secondary market area is 50% retail and service establishments and accounts for 53% (14,437 employees).
- Compared with Kearney, the primary market reflects a higher proportion of its population being employed in construction and manufacturing.
- Based on number of employees and establishments the primary market area depends on Kearney for retail and other services.

RETAIL SALES

One way of evaluating Kearney's retail role in the region is to consider its influence on spending and retail sales. Table 1.6 indicates total retail sales in each market area. In 2010 total retail sales in the primary market was about \$650 million and an additional \$350 million in the 30-mile area. Excluding sales for automobiles and parts, gasoline stations, and non-store retail, adjusts the city's retail sales to \$330 million and the 30-mile area to \$180 million.

Table 1.7 identifies the gap between consumer demand (expenditures and retail sales within each retail sector) in the primary market. A positive value results from demand exceeding supply, indicating a leakage of consumer dollars to outside markets. In other words, residents have dollars to spend but they are spending them outside of their respective market area. A negative value results from sales that exceed demand and indicates a flow of dollars into the city's retail market from the surrounding region. In 2010, the City of Kearney had approximately \$330 million in retail sales, while its current population generated a demand of \$288 million. The surplus of \$52 million in sales from the primary market area illustrates that Kearney is a center for retail trade within the region. About 25% of the primary area's opportunity gap of \$168 million is served by the City of Kearney.

Merchandise categories with strong retail sales in Kearney include:

- Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers (\$158 million in sales)
- Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, Music Stores (\$107 million in sales).
- Gasoline Stations (\$89 million in sales)
- Building Materials and Supplies (\$74 million in sales)
- Food Service and Drinking Places (\$51 million in sales)
- General Merchandise Stores (\$25 million in sales)

- Food and Beverage Stores (\$16 million in sales)

As downtowns across the nation compete for a share of the retail market, many have found success in specialty or niche markets. Downtowns that compete successfully against "big box" retailers have focused on service oriented and specialty retailing. Kearney's downtown has remained vibrant and active in part because of its strong mix of retail and service businesses. Steps that should be taken to ensure continued stability include:

- Guide new development in or near Downtown, with the possibility of redeveloping underused sites.
- Encourage the development of emerging niche markets that attract visitors.
- Strengthen the physical connection between downtown and the Interstate 80 corridor, Highway 30, and UNK.
- Restrict the linear expansion of large retailers in downtown.

Table 1.8 (next page) identifies the demand, supply and opportunity gap/surplus in the secondary market, while Table 1.9 summarizes the opportunity gap/surplus for each market area. This comparison not only illustrates where some sales may be captured from, but also provides insight into potential markets that businesses may attempt to capture. The City of Kearney does an exceptional job of attracting spending from outside of the community, and experiences few areas of notable leakage. However, the reader should note that some sales data may be withheld to the consultant to protect businesses.

- Health and Personal Care (68% capture rate)
- Miscellaneous Stores represent to potential (46% capture rate).
- General Merchandise (43% capture rate)
- Food and Beverage Stores (28% capture rate)
- Clothing and Accessories (22% capture rate)



Table 1.6: Share of Total Retail Sales, 2009 (exclusive)

	Total Retail Sales	% of Total
Kearney	\$650,062,246	65%
Secondary	\$357,407,637	35%
Total	1,007,469,883	100%

Source: Claritas Inc.



PROJECTED RETAIL SQUARE FOOTAGE

Growth in expenditures determines much of the need for additional retail space in Kearney. Downtown Kearney has smaller building footprints, limiting the types of businesses that can be accommodated, typically 3,000 to 5,000 square feet. Several of Kearney's downtown businesses are small businesses offering niche retail, such as quilting or kitchen supplies. Clustering these types of niche businesses creates a mutually supportive synergy, reinforcing the district's ability to attract patrons from a broader area and enhancing the experience of shopping in downtown. Additional retail potential is generated by two factors; increases generated by population growth and increases in market share in specific sectors.

Comparing gaps and surpluses in the Primary area to the City of Kearney indicates there is a potential to capture additional spending for several retail categories. Kearney competes for this market share from Grand Island and North Platte. As noted above, some sales data may be withheld from the consultant, thereby increasing the size of the reported gap.

- General Merchandise (city's existing gap of \$33 million + secondary market's \$44 million= \$77 million). Represents 220,000 square feet.

Table 1.7: Primary Market Area's Demand, Supply and Opportunity Gap, 2010

	2010 Demand (Consumer Expenditures)	2010 Supply (Retail Sales)	Opportunity Gap/Surplus
TOTAL RETAIL SALES INCLUDING EATING AND DRINKING PLACES	\$441,991,817	\$650,062,246	(\$208,070,429)
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	83,195,316	158,714,994	(75,519,678)
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	8,354,957	6,411,969	1,942,988
Electronics and Appliances Stores	10,255,331	22,846,407	(12,591,076)
Building Material and Garden Equipment Stores	41,084,083	74,307,121	(33,223,038)
Building Material and Supply Dealers	37,251,317	58,719,111	(21,467,794)
Lawn/Garden Equipment, Supplies Stores	3,832,766	15,588,010	(11,755,244)
Food and Beverage Stores	58,528,117	16,301,980	42,226,137
Health and Personal Care Stores	24,542,054	16,809,613	7,732,441
Pharmacies and Drug Stores	21,152,232	14,958,254	6,193,978
Cosmetics, Beauty Supplies, Perfume Stores	856,931	465,896	391,035
Optical Goods Stores	992,132	450,560	541,572
Other Health and Personal Care Stores	1,540,759	934,903	605,856
Gasoline Stations	39,761,016	89,855,220	(50,094,204)
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	19,485,026	4,424,761	15,060,265
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, Music Stores	9,338,019	107,416,727	(98,078,708)
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Inst Stores	5,910,203	82,548,914	(76,638,711)
Book, Periodical and Music Stores	3,427,816	24,867,813	(21,439,997)
General Merchandise Stores	57,765,500	25,086,887	32,678,613
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	11,908,622	5,564,089	6,344,533
Non-Store Retailers	30,692,137	70,564,862	(39,872,725)
Foodservice and Drinking Places Restaurants	47,081,639	51,757,616	(4,675,977)

Table 1.8: Secondary Market Area's Demand, Supply and Opportunity Gap, 2010 (exclusive)

	2010 Demand (Consumer Expenditures)	2010 Supply (Retail Sales)	Opportunity Gap/Surplus
Total Retail Sales Incl Eating and Drinking Places	542,411,869	357,407,637	185,004,232
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	106,992,248	93,319,723	13,672,525
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	10,277,323	1,734,203	8,543,120
Electronics and Appliance Stores	11,145,347	5,483,279	5,662,068
Building Material, Garden Equip Stores	51,984,048	48,276,930	3,707,118
Building Material and Supply Dealers	46,730,169	33,760,363	12,969,806
Lawn, Garden Equipment, Supplies Stores	5,253,879	14,516,566	-9,262,687
Food and Beverage Stores	72,776,741	42,510,959	30,265,782
Health and Personal Care Stores	33,683,599	19,219,680	14,463,919
Pharmacies and Drug Stores	29,078,591	18,299,514	10,779,077
Cosmetics, Beauty Supplies, Perfume Stores	1,200,269	50,364	1,149,905
Optical Goods Stores	1,279,657	151,775	1,127,882
Other Health and Personal Care Stores	2,125,081	718,027	1,407,054
Gasoline Stations	49,827,631	78,415,564	(28,587,933)
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	22,087,308	955,135	21,132,173
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, Music Stores	9,595,437	10,109,545	(514,108)
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Inst Stores	6,682,026	9,390,203	(2,708,177)
Book, Periodical and Music Stores	2,913,411	719,342	2,194,069
General Merchandise Stores	70,570,622	25,967,507	44,603,115
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	14,539,626	4,153,296	10,386,330
Non-Store Retailers	36,349,136	4,992,241	31,356,895
Food service and Drinking Places (Restaurants)	52,582,805	22,269,573	30,313,232

- Food and Beverage Stores (city's existing gap of \$42 million + secondary market's \$30 million= \$72 million). Represents 205,000 square feet.
- Clothing and Accessories (city's existing gap of \$15 million + secondary market's \$21 million= \$36 million). Represents 100,000 square feet.
- Food and Beverage Stores (city's existing surplus of -\$5 million + secondary market's gap of \$25 million= \$20 million). Represents 70,000 square feet.
- Health and Personal Care (city's existing gap of \$8 million + secondary market's \$14 million= \$22 million). Represents 62,000 square feet.
- Miscellaneous Stores (city's existing gap of \$6 million + secondary market's \$10 million= \$16 million). Represents 45,000 square feet.

If Kearney and its primary market area were able to maintain its current population it would result in little if no change in future retail demand, yet the City could continue to capture the primary market's retail leakage to other market areas. Downtown's low vacancy inhibits capturing the additional market gap. Also, the relatively positive balance of service and retail space limits options for converting underused space. New commercial development on the periphery of downtown may prevent office uses from appearing along Central Avenue and encourage the conversion of storefronts currently used as offices back to retail use.

Capturing 100% of the gap of a certain segment of retail is unlikely. However, if downtown could capture 5% of the gap for general merchandise (220,000 x 5%=11,000 SF), clothing (100,000 x 5%=5,000 SF), and miscellaneous stores (45,000 x 5%=2,250 SF), it would generate 18,250 SF of additional space.

A stylized white skyline graphic featuring several building silhouettes, including a prominent one with a dome and another with a tall spire, set against a dark red background.

2 DOWNTOWN TODAY

If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do, and how to do it.

- Abraham Lincoln

Having been originally named Kearney Junction, the City owes their origin and early development to the railroad industry. The confluence of the Union Pacific and the Burlington and Missouri Railroads placed Kearney in a strategic position for development. Downtown emerged as a major center for commerce as the city's reputation as a "cattle town" became more prevalent.

Downtown Kearney became even stronger and well-positioned for future growth with the alignment of the Old Lincoln Highway bounding the northside of the district. The presence of both the railroad and highway, now Highway 30, became the bookends for serving customers by car and rail.

Highway 30 changed the dynamic of commercial construction from being centralized to more linear development. The opening of Interstate 80 continued to change development patterns, forcing downtown to compete with businesses at the interchange and along 2nd Avenue. Yet, despite this growing competition, Downtown Kearney endures as the heart of the community full of retail, restaurants, bars, and other activity. Downtown remains as one of the most identifiable destinations in the community, along with the major museums.

Kearney is a vital and economically strong community with a solid employment base, a growing population, and such educational and cultural resources as University of Nebraska at Kearney, the Museum of Nebraska Art, and the Great Platte River Road Archway Monument. The railroad remains the city's defining feature and greatest obstacle as it creates a physical division that separates Kearney into two (Downtown and Old Town), with each having individual qualities, strengths, and challenges. This chapter investigates the structure and physical characteristics of Kearney and provides the basis for a strategic program to create a unique, united central district for Downtown.



Central Avenue in 1889, looking north from Railroad Street.

STUDY AREA

The original study area includes the blocks north of the railroad tracks to 26th Street and between 3rd Avenue and Avenue C. During the planning process, the boundaries of the study area expanded to consider downtown's relationship to the UNK campus to the west, county facilities to the south, and Good Samaritan Hospital.

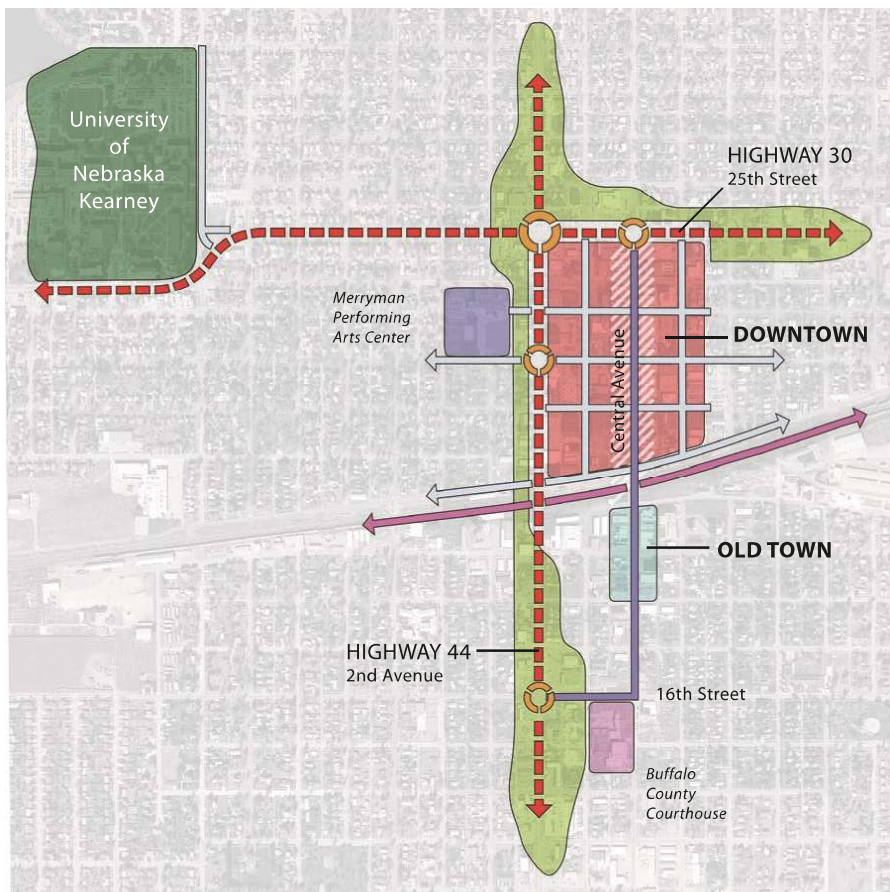
SUBAREAS

Downtown Kearney's size lends itself to individual characteristics, resulting in emerging districts that are reinforced by like uses and help describe the character of each district.

- Highway Development
- Downtown on the Bricks
- Old Town on the Bricks

Map 2.1: Subareas

-  Highway Development
-  Downtown on the Bricks
-  Old Town on the Bricks



HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT

Defining Characteristics

- Auto-oriented free-standing buildings with surface parking lots. Unlike Central Avenue, people stopping do not typically visit more than one business.
- Traffic moves rapidly through the district.
- Substantial mainstream retail and services uses, including grocery, fast-food, and auto-service.
- Highway 30, west of 2nd Avenue, successfully uses graphics, banners, and street lighting to announce the approach to UNK. Meanwhile, Highway 30 east of 2nd Avenue has only moderate decoration announcing the arrival to downtown or UNK.

Issues

- Traffic speeds along highways and proximity of the sidewalk next to the street make for uninviting and unsafe pedestrian pathways.
- Improvements to the public environment are functional, but do not fully express the assets, civic values, and aesthetic characteristics of the city.

DOWNTOWN ON THE BRICKS

Defining Characteristics

- Central Avenue is the spine of the downtown district.
- Streetscape elements including sidewalk detail, streetlights, and furniture have held up well since their installation in 1984. Street trees are full and mostly healthy. Sidewalks have been well-maintained.
- Emerging sub-districts include the "Downtown Core" for properties adjacent to Central Avenue, "Financial District" institutions clustered along 1st Avenue, and "City Services" clustered along Avenue A.
 - Downtown Core is a traditional business district fronting Central Avenue, lined by one and two-story buildings built to the property line. First floors



typically house retail, service, hospitality, and office uses, with commercial and residential uses on upper levels.

- City Services includes the area to the east and has City Hall, Law Enforcement Center, Fire Department, and public parking. Another cluster of City Services is in the southwest, which includes the Public Library and Parks & Recreation building.
- Financial District has an auto-oriented character. Common elements include bank buildings and drive-thru tellers, set back from the street by private surface parking. The Platte Valley State Bank and Trust Company is a contemporary three-story office building with traditional architectural elements, including brick facades and details with historic references. Surface parking is located on the balance of the site.

- Traffic signals do not appear to manage traffic efficiently. Also, signals are setback from the field of view to be recognized and can be missed.

- Wide streets.

Issues

- Despite downtown being maintained as a park, it lacks a significant gathering space for special events.
- Streetscape is becoming outdated.
 - Streetlights need to be replaced as hardware and replacement parts for the original lighting are not available.
 - Style of street furniture (benches and trash bins).



OLD TOWN ON THE BRICKS

Defining Characteristics

- Frequent stacking of cars near the railroad tracks. Businesses south of the railroad tracks benefit from the crossing as vehicles stack up as the train passes, thereby allowing the motorist an opportunity to see their storefront.
- Area is often perceived not to be part of downtown, yet has several viable businesses and urban character.
- Condition of the buildings is inconsistent.
- Small pocket park for watching trains.
- Brick streets with concrete parking lanes.
- Numerous underused properties available for development.
- County services clustered near 16th and Central Avenue.
- 16th Street is a wide and modestly designed street despite being the primary approach to the County Courthouse.

Issues

- Incomplete streetscape with sidewalks showing evidence of trees that were once planted but have been removed and filled. Street lighting and furniture do not match those in Downtown on the Bricks.
- Gaps in the building fronts fragment the urban character of the district.
- Poor connectivity between Old Town and Downtown.
- Area is part of a BID, making properties ineligible for some local and state benefits and programs.
- Poor safety and mobility for vehicles at 16th and Central Avenue.

- Efficiency and quantity of parking supply serving the commercial core, and lack of wayfinding to parking lots.
- Insufficient bicycle and pedestrian connections between the city's trail system and downtown.
- Improving physical connections between Central Avenue and peripheral blocks. More importantly, improving mobility between the north and south sides of the tracks.
- Stabilizing the neighborhood to the east, as the condition of the houses and property are struggling. Managing the transition between commercial and adjacent residential uses along the corridor to prevent encroachment of non-residential uses into neighborhoods.
- Increasing development intensity along the street, consistent with downtown environments.
- Determining the transition and character of the area between the neighborhood and Downtown.
- Façade and building reinvestment and more readable business signage.
- Continuing the precedent of street-oriented contemporary development throughout the district.
- Enhancing the scale and character of 1st Avenue with improved parking lot landscaping.
- Upper-story vacancies.

BUILDING USE

Maps 2.2 and 2.3 identify building use and condition. Table 2.1 presents building use information for the Downtown study area, compiled individually for the primary study area. These calculations exclude the area south of the railroad tracks and concentrate on buildings in the core downtown area. Gross floor area in Downtown is about 883,000 square feet, with about 632,000 square feet at street level. Key findings include:

- Retail and services represent about two-thirds of the street-level space. Retail uses represent about 30% of the total floor space, while services represent 16% of the total space. Upper-story retail space is associated to furniture stores.
- Civic uses are limited to non-profit organizations. Examples include the Museum of Nebraska Art (MONA), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Fraternal Order of Eagles (FOE), and the KCHS Foundation. Unlike many communities, Kearney is not experiencing storefronts converting to civic use or religious organizations.
- Public uses cluster along Avenue A (City Hall, Fire Station, and Law Enforcement Center) and near the southwest area near the viaduct landing (Library and Parks and Recreation Building).
- Restaurants and bars in the downtown are scattered throughout the district. None of them have a significant sidewalk presence for outdoor dining, although some have private patios.
- Vacancy rate is low on street level. Street level vacancy averages less than 4% (or 22,000 square feet), while upper-story space experiences a higher vacancy rate of about 44% (or 100,000 square feet).
- Upper-story spaces account for 251,000 square feet, of which nearly half is vacant. Most of the buildings along Central Avenue are unoccupied or used for storage.



Table 2.1: Kearney's Downtown Building Use, 2011

Use	1st Floor	%	2nd Floor	%	3rd Floor	%	Overall Total	% of Total
Civic	28,628	5%	13,423	6%			42,051	5%
Residential	-		6,034	3%			6,034	1%
Office	98,898	16%	44,585	19%	6,139	28%	149,623	17%
Public	43,217	7%	10,108	4%			53,325	6%
Restaurant/Entertainment	57,903	9%	9,980	4%	9,901	45%	77,784	9%
Retail	239,986	38%	17,834	8%			257,821	29%
Service	137,755	22%	7,434	3%			145,189	16%
Storage	3,778	1%	18,711	8%			22,489	3%
Vacant	22,700	4%	100,921	44%	5,726	26%	129,347	15%
Total	632,865	100%	229,030	100%	21,767	100%	883,662	100%

Source: Claritas, Inc.

Map 2.2: Existing Building Use, 2011



HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Kearney's rich community history is reflected by a significant number of historically significant commercial buildings along Central Avenue. Many of Downtown's commercial buildings are excellent examples of late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial vernacular architecture, many of which have experienced significant alterations. While some structures have been modified, continued investment, guided by the city's Main Street Program, has produced a visually appealing and pleasant district.

Highway 30 is the path of the Old Lincoln Highway, otherwise known as the Great Platte River Road, and was the country's first coast-to-coast highway. The location of the City of Kearney marks the halfway point between Boston and San Francisco, and will host the national centennial celebration in the summer of 2013.

HISTORIC DISTRICTS

The Nebraska Historic Buildings Reconnaissance Survey, published in 1993 indicates, "the potential for a historic district in the fifteen block area was limited due to a considerable lack of historic integrity and encroachment of non-contributing buildings. However, the concentration of buildings on Central Avenue between N. Railway Street and 25th Street merited further study."

Downtown Kearney. The Reconnaissance Survey surveyed 116 buildings in downtown (from 25th Street to Railway Street between 2nd Street and Avenue A), 32 buildings were considered contributing and 84 were non-contributing. The ratio of contributing (28%) to non-contributing (72%) buildings does not meet National Register criteria. Continued rehabilitation of buildings in the district may allow the district to become eligible in the future. Listing on the National and State

Registers of Historic Places make substantial investment tax credits available to developers and owners. Federal tax credits are typically directed to income producing properties, while state credits are also available to individual owners, including owner-occupants. Being certified as a district for historic preservation is part of a downtown development strategy.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Downtown Kearney and immediately adjacent areas include six National Registered Buildings, including:

National Register Buildings

- **St. Luke's Protestant Episcopal Church.** Built in 1908 and designed by Chicago architect John Sutcliffe in the Gothic Revival style. St. Luke's Protestant Episcopal Church was listed on the National Register in 1986.
- **Former St. James Catholic Church.** Built in 1909, this brick building retains architectural elements, such as the mission style roof parapet and corner bell tower. The church was listed on the National Register.
- **Former U.S. Post Office** (now Museum of Nebraska Art). Built in 1911, the building is an excellent example of Neo-Classical Revival style designed by architect James Know Taylor. The former Post Office was listed on the National Register in 1981.
- **Masonic Temple and Theater Building.** Built in 1927, the large four-story brick theater and lodge building retains its historic integrity and continues to experience reinvestment. The theater is being rehabilitated and is expected to reopen in 2012.
- **Fort Theater (now Dental Office).** Built in 1924, the two-story brick theater was originally called the Empress Theater. With its signature awning and marquee, the theater was a significant destination for entertainment and social functions in the 1920's. The building was listed on the National Register in 2006.

- **National Guard Armory.** Built in 1936, exhibits the aesthetics and make-work ethos of the New Deal Era. Constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Kearney National Guard Armory is significant for its association with military history in Nebraska and as a community gathering place for local residents. The building was listed on the National Register in 2009.

Buildings Eligible for Listing on the National Register

Central National Bank Building
Lowe Building
Henline Building
Cunningham-Journal Building
Buffalo County National Bank
City National Bank
W.L. Nash Building
Williams Building

BUILDING CONDITIONS

Map 2.3 identifies the condition of structures throughout the downtown district, tabulated in a survey conducted during the Fall of 2011. Structures were placed into one of four categories, including:

- **"Excellent" or "Good".** New or rehabilitated structure with no or few discernible deficiencies. The building is well-maintained.
- **"Fair".** Structurally sound building with minor repair or rehabilitation needs.
- **"Poor".** Structure with at least one major deficiency and minor non-structural needs. Typically these buildings are deteriorating and show evidence of significant rehabilitation needs.

Map 2.3: Building Conditions, 2011



The evaluation considers the condition of the foundation, exterior walls, fascia and eaves, windows, and doors. In general, the building stock within the traditional downtown is in good to moderate condition, although some buildings require rehabilitation. The survey is intended only to suggest patterns for rehabilitation needs.

Overall, the conditions of the buildings appear to be good. In some cases, modifications to facades, such as modern siding, tile, or stucco, conceal the genuine state of the building. In these situations, further investigation is required to determine building needs for complete rehabilitation. Most of the upper-stories are vacant and require modifications including new plumbing, additional ingress and egress routes, and sprinklers to conform to building fire code and permit residential use. Often, upper-story windows are boarded up or covered by facade modifications.

Major findings include:

- Buildings with repair needs, vacancy, and/or covered upper-story windows influence the perception of the district negatively. Improving the function and appearance of these buildings is important, especially for corner buildings.
- City's facade grant has resulted in numerous upgrades, improving the appearance of the buildings and district. FanciThat!, is an example of proper facade enhancement, exhibiting a new awning, lighting, graphics, and windows. The master plan includes prototypes for facade improvements that could be modeled for other facades.
- Alterations to facades to preserve the integrity of the building are acceptable. Excessive alterations from the original design diminish the building's contribution to the character of the district.
- Lack of interior infrastructure hampers the development of upper story spaces

CIRCULATION

This section summarizes key patterns for motor vehicles, transit, and pedestrian and bicycle transportation in and around downtown Kearney.

TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

The regional road network links Kearney to communities in central Nebraska.

- **Interstate 80, US Highways 30 and 44.** These routes provide regional access to Kearney and connect the City to North Platte, Grand Island, Lincoln, and Omaha.
- **Major intersections.** Major intersections into the district are signalized at 22nd Street and 2nd Avenue and 25th Street and Central Avenue.
- **Signalized Intersections.** Traffic signals located at intersections along Central and 1st Avenues appear to be overcompensating for the traffic volumes. The low volumes and unbalanced stacking of vehicles do not appear to support the need for signalization.
- **Railroad Crossing.** Central Avenue is at an at-grade crossing, connecting Downtown to Old Towne. Artificial horns and cross bars announce the arrival of trains. The 2nd Street viaduct connects the community north and south of the tracks.
- **Central Avenue's Bricks.** Downtown is known as "The Bricks." Preserving the bricks is critical to the character of the district and its reputation. Streets with bricks parallel to Central Avenue or on side streets do not share the same level of importance as Central Avenue.
- **26th Street.** 26th Street's lower traffic volume and direct connection to UNK make it a logical alternative route to walking or riding a bicycle along Highway 30. The median at 2nd Avenue prevents vehicles from crossing 2nd Avenue, but allows for pedestrian and bicycles to cross. However, the narrow median is inadequate refuge for pedestrians crossing the street.

- **Trail Connections.** Downtown lacks convenient access to the city's trail system or wayfinding to the trail.

PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE ACCESS

Safe, pleasant, and seamless pedestrian access is vital in human-scaled business districts like Downtown Kearney. The combination of the railroad and traffic flow on the highways creates significant issues and obstacles to smooth and comfortable pedestrian access.

- **Crossing Highway 30 and 44.** Crossing Highway 30 or 44's five-lanes is challenging for pedestrians. Traffic flow is relatively continuous with few gaps. As a result, many pedestrians rush across the street, and fear for their safety.
- **Crossing Railroad Tracks.** Pedestrians may use the overpass at 2nd Street or walk across the tracks at Central Avenue.
- **Quality Sidewalks.** The sidewalk system is in generally good condition and has limited obstructions or issues. Sidewalks along Highway 30 hug the street. These walkways become difficult to pass during winter months when snow plowed from the street covers the paths.
- **Pathway between UNK and Downtown.** Students often use 26th Street as the major east-west route between campus and downtown. Sidewalks along this corridor are considerably narrow at 3 feet. Conventional construction is now 4 to 5 feet.
- **Trail Connection.** There is no defined route between downtown and the trail system for trail users. However, many users follow Railroad Avenue to connect to the trail.
- **Bicycle Pathways.** Streets are not signed or marked for bicyclists. The City of Kearney must develop a network of pathways that connect downtown to other major destinations and neighborhoods so that bicycle transportation is a viable option.

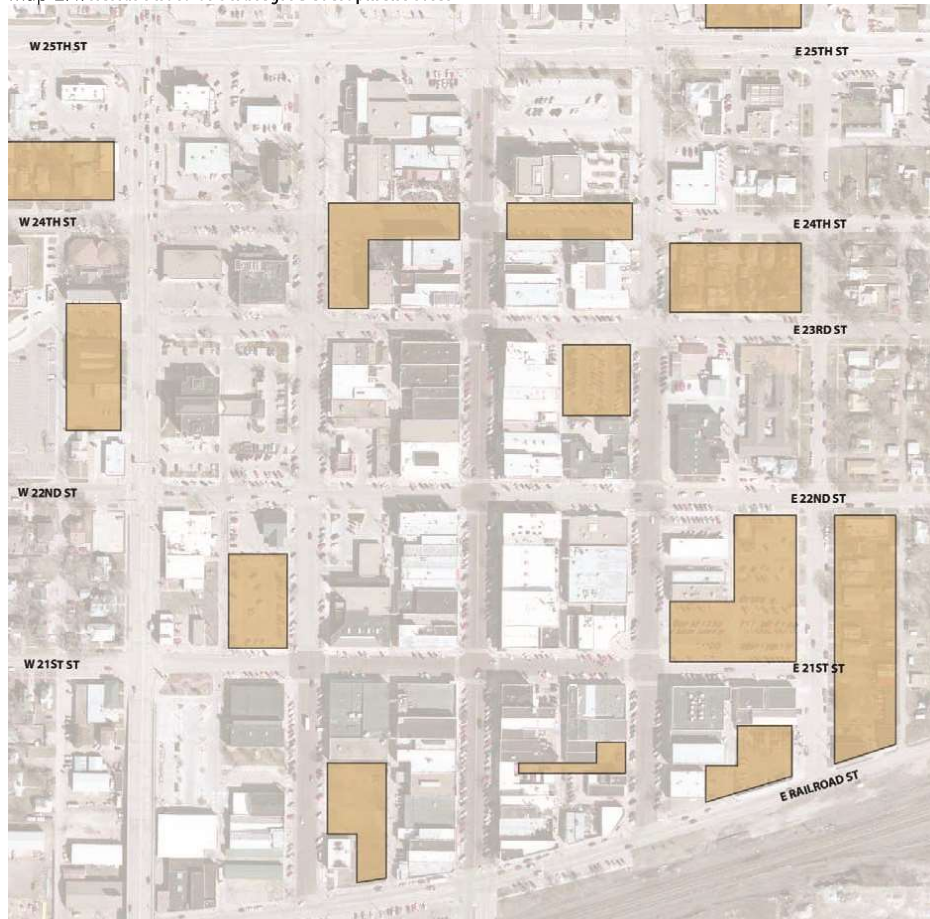
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SITES

Map 2.4 identifies key development opportunities, which are explored in more detail in Chapter Four:

DOWNTOWN ON THE BRICKS

- **Upper-story Vacancies.** The buildings along Central Avenue experience a significant amount of vacancy. Restoring these spaces to residential or commercial use would bring more life to the downtown district.
- **1st Avenue Vacant Lots.** The vacant parcels north of the Parks Building off of 1st Avenue have remained vacant since demolishing the structures on that site. Completing a development here would fill a gap across from the city's Library.
- **Bank Blocks.** The banks in the district are set back from the street and surrounded by surface parking. Improvements for these blocks should consider opportunities that strengthen the urban feel of downtown and address the overall parking deficiency for the area.
- **24th Street.** The street runs for a short seven blocks from 2nd Avenue to Avenue E. The placement of the street makes the 2300 block one of the shortest blocks in the city and creates more intersections in relatively short distance than other parts of the city.
- **Chicken Coop Parking Lot.** Developing a portion of the surface lot with new construction would increase density in the urban environment.
- **City Impound Lot.** The demand for additional commercial space and housing units in downtown combined with the convenience and ease for redeveloping the site makes this property a prime site for potential redevelopment.

Map 2.4: Aerial Photo of Strategic Development Sites



- **Avenue B Block.** The condition of buildings immediately north of the railroad tracks continue to deteriorate. Assembling the properties into a common ownership will allow for its reuse in a major redevelopment project.

- **2300 Residential Block between Avenues A and B.** The condition of some of the residential structures require repair. Also, this block of homes is surrounded by more intensive, incompatible uses.

- **McCue's Lot on Avenue A.** The buildings surrounding this lot frame the space, yet it's used as a gravel parking area.

OLD TOWN ON THE BRICKS

- **Armory Area.** The Armory building and the surrounding area along Central Avenue are underused and could be developed to provide the missing link between the County Courthouse, Old Town and Downtown.
- **Gaps.** Gaps in buildings could be developed for new commercial use.

PARKING DOWNTOWN

The supply and quality of parking is an important issue for Downtown Kearney. Parking must be available, visible, and convenient without dominating the district and compromising its scale and pedestrian quality. Parking is the most prevalent topic discussed by participants in the process.

Map 2.5 illustrates the study area's existing parking, while Table 2.1 summarizes the total parking supply for the district. The area has about 2,547 stalls. Parking is relatively evenly distributed between on- and off-street parking. The majority of off-street parking within Downtown Kearney is provided by private owners.

Map 2.5 also illustrates the parking demand by block and identifies blocks with deficiencies and surpluses. Calculations are based on demand generated by each 1,000 square feet of use. For example every 1,000 square feet of retail space generates an estimated demand for 2.5 stalls. Table 2.3 summarizes the parking ratios used for calculating total parking demand based on building use.

Map 2.5 indicates areas with surpluses and deficits between supply and demand.

- **Central Avenue Parking Demand.** Uses along Central Avenue generate a parking demand of about 788 stalls for the 359 that are available. If vacant spaces and upper-stories were reoccupied, an additional 88 stalls would add to that demand. The immediate area of Central Avenue accommodates for 40% of the demand with surrounding blocks providing overflow.
- **Chicken Coop Block (2100 A Avenue).** Despite the Chicken Coop block reporting a surplus of 171 stalls, demand for parking from surrounding blocks occupies a

significant portion of the surplus. Also, the use of the lot by patrol vehicles makes the stalls incapable of being available for public use.

PARKING ISSUES

Specific parking issues for Downtown Kearney include:

1. **2-Hour Time Limit.** The district operates under a 2-hour parking limit along Central Avenue and an 8-hour parking limits on side streets. Strict enforcement of the 2-hour parking limit has led to over 1,000 warnings and nearly 500 citations between March and July of 2011. Violations diminished by nearly 30% over the period. Patrons and business owners alike express that a 2-hour time limit and strict parking enforcement deter visitors from returning to the area, particularly if they discover a \$25 ticket.

Policy recommendations later in this plan indicate extending the parking requirement to 3-hours. Evidence to consider include:

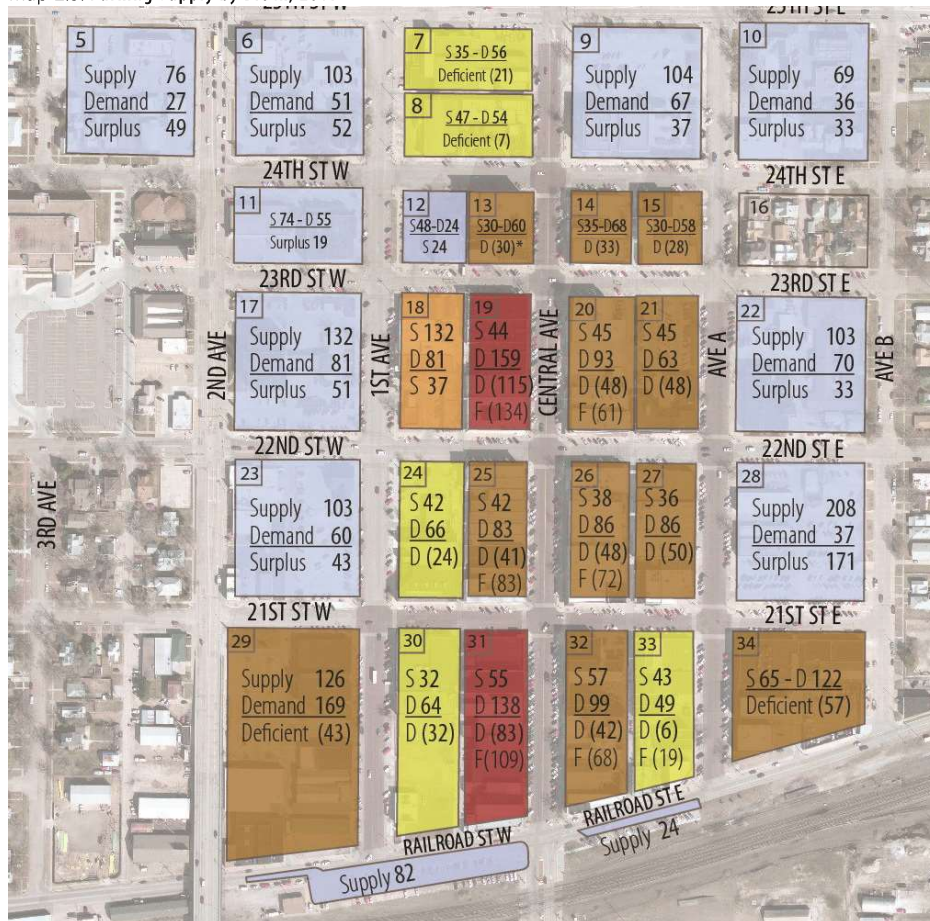
- **2-Hour Parking Deters Visitors.** Having 2-hour parking limit with strict enforcement discourages visitors from staying or returning to the district. Patrons coming to the district will often spend an hour at a restaurant and over an hour shopping the district, particularly people who are not frequent visitors. Discovering a ticket upsets customers and penalizes them for shopping in Downtown Kearney.
- **Cost of Enforcement.** The procedure of giving warnings/citations and collecting fines needs to be evaluated. Assuming 1,400 citations are given at \$25 each annually, that would result in \$35,000 in revenue for the Kearney Public School District. Costs are for patrolling the district and processing

tickets may be \$15,000 annually, resulting in net revenue of \$20,000.

This assumes 30 minutes for complete patrol with 4 visits throughout day for 250 days in the year. Assumed hourly wage and benefits for the officer is \$25. Processing for the 1,400 citations may result in an additional \$2,500 of staff time.

2. **Efficiency and Design of Surface Parking Lots.** More efficient design of public parking add additional parking in strategic demand areas, particularly for the City Hall lot. Maximizing parking in surface lots is an affordable alternative to building a parking structure at \$18,000 a stall, whereas a surface parking stall is \$3,000.
3. **Parking Competition.** Concentrations of private and public offices in the overall plan area creates high parking demands in specific areas, including City Hall, Law Enforcement Center, Joseph's College of Beauty. Also, the use of stalls next to storefronts by business owners and employees diminishes the available stalls for customers. Convenient parking should be reserved for customers.
4. **Directional Information.** Directional information and public access to parking facilities is frequently unclear. While parking lots are evenly located throughout the district, it is unclear whether they are available to the general public or restricted to specific users. Expanding the parking wayfinding system would direct visitors to publicly available stalls and help to use existing lots more efficiently.
5. **Convenience to Businesses.** Lots located on the periphery that visitors consider inconvenient become more acceptable if the routes between parking stalls and destinations feel pleasant, comfortable, and full of activity.

Map 2.5: Parking Supply by Block, 2011



S=Supply,
D=Demand,
S/D=Surplus or Deficiency,
F=Future Total Deficiency

Table 2.1: Parking Counts for Downtown Kearney

	On-street	Off-street	Total
Central Ave (24th to Railroad)	262	97	359
Total Parking for District	1,104	1,443	2,547

Source: RDG Planning & Design, 2011

Table 2.2: Central Ave Parking Supply and Demand

	Existing Parking Available	Parking Demand by Use	Reoccupied Vacant Space Parking Demand
Parking Stalls	359	788	88

Source: RDG Planning & Design, 2011

Table 2.3: Parking Demand Ratios by Building Use

Building Use	Parking Demand Per 1,000 Square Feet
Civic Uses	2.5
Office	3.0
Public Facilities	2.0
Multi-Family	1.5
Restaurant/ Entertainment	3.0
Retail	2.5
Services	2.0
Industrial	0.25

Source: RDG Planning & Design

A stylized silhouette of a city skyline in a dark red color. The skyline features several buildings of varying heights, with the tallest building on the right having a grid-like window pattern. The number '3' is integrated into the design, appearing as a large white numeral on the left side of the skyline.

3 DESIGN CONCEPTS

Make not little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized.

-Daniel H. Burnham

PLANNING PROCESS

People will often identify with one particular place within their city. Sometimes this location is a school, a park, or even one's home. More often than not however, the downtown is the place that most individuals will identify. This is because the downtown is the one constant in our memories across the important events and occasions that have occurred to us. It is where one has met up with friends and co-workers for a drink or meal, it is where one has seen their children march in the school band during a 4th of July celebration, and it is where we have lead our daily lives running errands and having chance encounters with friends and family. Downtown Kearney holds a special place in the hearts of many of the city's residents. Yet, many residents agree that the downtown is never done.

The growth of the city, new expansion of the library, restoration of the World Theatre, exceptional nightlife, and history of long-standing businesses are exhibits of a healthy and vibrant downtown. Yet the area is begging for more life and vitality that will take it far into the 21st Century. The district wants to be connected to the City's other destinations – Highway 30, UNK Campus, Old Town, and County Services Buildings. These connections offer new opportunities that unite the central core of the city and ultimately expand the limits of downtown.

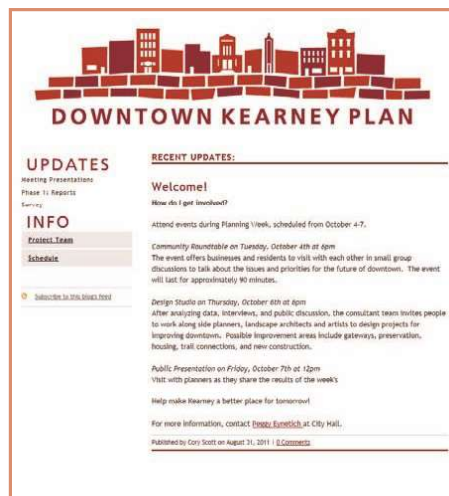


The Plan was guided by process that included hundreds of hours of investigation and design over the course of a four-month process, beginning in September 2011 and finishing in December 2011. Specific components of the process included:

- **Steering Committee.** The initiation of the project began with a presentation to a 20-plus member steering committee made of representatives from the business community, owners and city. Discussion provided guidance on emerging issues and priorities in the planning process. The committee convened at strategic points in the process to review progress and provide feedback.
- **Community Questionnaire.** A questionnaire was available for the public to respond to issues and priorities that would affect the planning process. The results are reported in Appendix A: Survey Results.
- **Plan Kearney Week.** Plan Kearney Week includes a succession of meetings to discuss strategies for making Kearney an ever better place to for work, play and live. The week-long event included:
 - **Focus Group Discussions & Individual Interviews.** Focus groups took place on October 3rd and 4th to discuss challenges facing downtown. Also, several individual interviews provided in-depth understanding of downtown issues.



- Community Roundtable.** The public participated in roundtable discussions with their peers to identify goals, issues, and aspirations for downtown on October 4th.
- Design Studio.** Following the Community Roundtable, design workshops took place from October 5th to October 7th to engage citizens, residents, business owners, and other stakeholders directly in conceptual planning for downtown. Participants shared their ideas, issues and concerns informally with the design team, and helped define and test concepts for the future of the planning area.
- Public Presentation.** At the conclusion of the week, planners and landscape architects shared concepts prepared during the week.
- UNK Workshop.** Planners met with student representatives to discuss concepts prepared throughout the planning process. Students offered ideas and suggestions for making downtown an even greater destination.
- Open House.** A public Open House occurred prior to the City Council meeting on December 13, 2011. This open house provided the public an opportunity to review and comment on the development plan before formal adoption.



Snapshot of the project website



Campaign flier inviting the public to planning events.

PROGRAM FOR DEVELOPMENT

The vision begins by establishing a development program, much like the architectural program for a building project. This program identifies the ingredients of development – the amount of space that markets can absorb, present and future community needs, current projects that are pending, and other opportunities. The program includes three separate agendas; development, community, and functional.

DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The Development Agenda is largely based on the market analysis and includes the ingredients of development for retail, office, residential, and development potential during the planning period.

- **Retail Development.** Kearney serves both local residents, and has a demonstrated ability to attract shoppers from outside the city. Downtown markets should continue to focus on the development of niche businesses that create unique shopping opportunities and experiences.

Kearney has destination businesses, including the Alley Rose, which is well known throughout Nebraska. Niche markets that are important to Downtown Kearney include antiques, furniture, kitchen appliances, beauty salons, and live music.

- **World Theater Renovation.** The World Theater at the Masonic Temple is a historic relic of the early 1900's, and is building significant enthusiasm for the downtown. Funding for the project is in part by a state grant and includes improving the marquee, replacing seating, re-designing the concession space, and upgrading the screen and balcony seating. Its reopening in 2012 will begin a revival of family activity in downtown.



- **Downtown Housing.** Residential growth has proven to be an indispensable part of downtown development. The district offers a unique living environment that is unmatched in the City. Adaptive reuse of upper-stories and new higher-density construction are opportunities for new housing.
- **Highest and Best Use for Property.** Some residential properties are surrounded or hemmed in by uses that are otherwise incompatible. These circumstances may warrant investigating uses that may be better-suited or warrant rehabilitating structures.
- **Encourage Investment.** The implementation of the development concept should encourage new investment and reward productive reinvestment in buildings. Initial investments in the public environment can create the conditions for economic growth that is unlikely to happen spontaneously. These investments will maintain property values, increase sales tax revenues, and create a district that brings new business to the city.
- **Preservation and Reuse.** Kearney has a strong stock of buildings, yet many of them have been adapted significantly over the decades. Owners should refrain from altering their buildings in a way that diminishes the building's historic integrity.



- **Public Restrooms.** This amenity provides visitors to the district with convenient access to a rest room. Often visitors seeking this amenity visit a nearby business or enter the MONA. This can be problematic, especially when businesses only make their rest rooms available to paying customers and given that many do not comply with ADA requirements.

COMMUNITY AGENDA

Recommendations that improve the image of the district and reflect participants desirable outcomes for downtown.

- **Improve Life.** Downtown should be a place for activity during the day and evenings, filled with amenities that appeal to working professionals, students, retirees, and children. The experience of visiting downtown must embed a memory that lasts a lifetime.
- **Retain and Attract Businesses to Downtown.** Improving the quality of downtown creates an environment for businesses to stay in downtown, while attracting new private investment. Recommendations should include improved access to available parking and enhancing the overall experience of visiting Kearney.



- **Public Gathering Space.** Downtown is begging for a space for people to gather for special events and regular occurrences.
- **Relationship to UNK.** University of Nebraska-Kearney's campus is a short 10 blocks from the heart of downtown, yet it's physically separated by Highway 30. Businesses, students, and professionals alike sense that the relationship between the two areas needs to have stronger physical connections. The health and life of downtown effects the experiences of students have in the City, and influence prospective students to attend UNK. However, little is done within Downtown Kearney to capitalize on this important relationship.
- **Connections to the South.** Old Town and the County Government buildings to the south are disconnected from Downtown.
- **Pigeons.** The pigeon population in Nebraska thrives, in part, by the available food in fields and grain mills. Building ledges and trees are attractive resting spots.

FUNCTIONAL AGENDA

Projects that improve the access and functionality of Downtown Kearney.

- **Gateways and Arrival.** Highway 30 and 44 are the primary routes for motorists traveling through Kearney. It is also the primary access to downtown. While the business district has some visibility to motorists, the traffic volumes make it difficult for individuals to be aware of specific businesses available. Often motorists are focusing on moving through the area safely.
- **Improve Traffic Flow and Safety.** Traffic signals throughout the district tend to unnecessarily delay vehicles at lights, causing numerous cars to stack at intersections without cross-traffic. Also, traffic signals turning from green to yellow then red, encourage vehicles to speed up at intersections where pedestrians cross, creating dangerous conditions for walkers.
- **Improved Parking.** Parking is an issue in nearly every town center across the nation, and in many cases the availability of parking can either make or break a district.

Parking demand exceeds what is currently available in Downtown Kearney, and is anticipated to become more competitive as upper-story uses become more active. This plan must show increased parking, greening existing parking lots, wayfinding, and better routes from car-door to store-door would improve the district's parking environment.

- **Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation.** Kearney's transportation network should be multi-modal, providing safe and secure routes for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists within public rights-of-way. Upgrading on-street facilities that link with trails can complete the overall transportation system, while providing bicycle racks reserves parking.
- **Capitalize on Key Business Niches.** While downtowns nationwide have struggled to preserve their traditional retail roles, successful districts capitalize on business niches that attract people to traditional business districts.

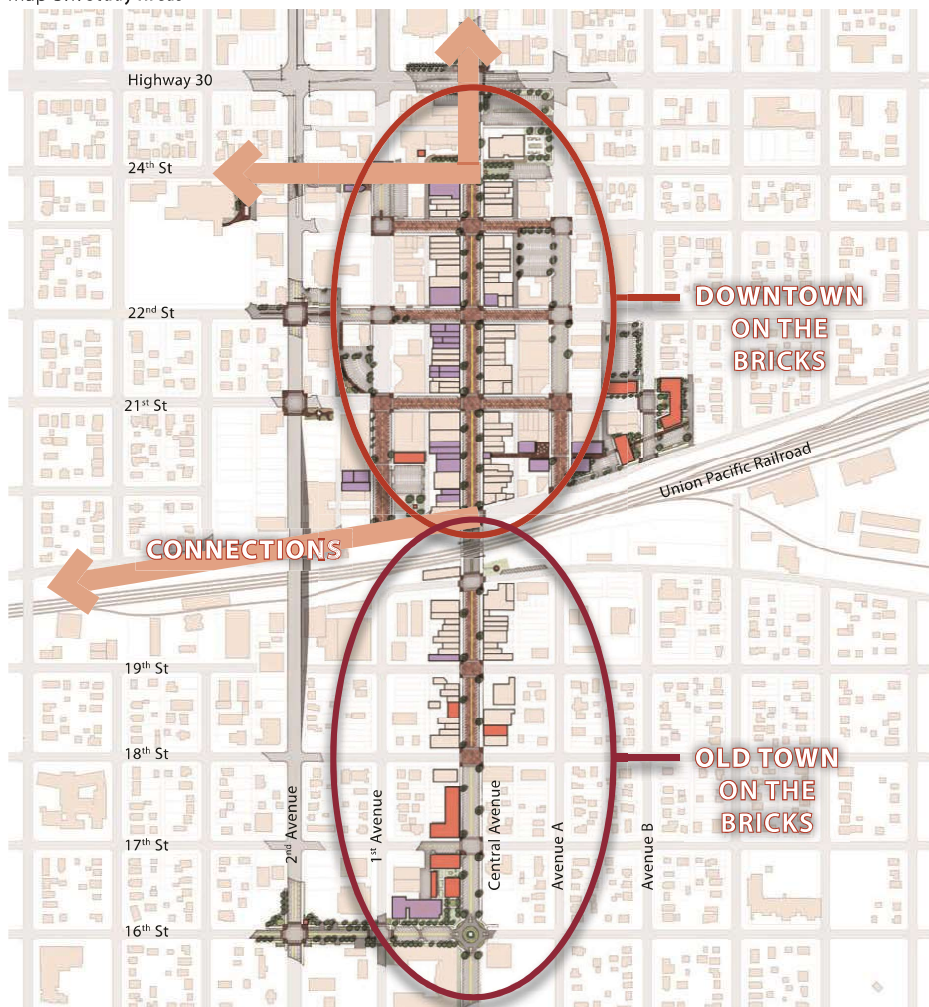
DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

The vision for the Downtown Kearney Plan emerges by following the program based on the Development Agenda, Community Agenda, and Functional Agenda. Map 3.1 shows a Development Plan that illustrates the concepts in the plan. The components of this vision include:

- **Downtown on the Bricks:** Self-contained projects that together create a transformed district.
- **Old Town on the Bricks:** Projects to stimulate investment interest in the district
- **Connections:** Investments that address the circulation that links major projects and that links the larger Kearney community.
- **Policies:** Methods to address various needs and markets are addressed and to aid in the implementation of projects, projects are implemented.



Map 3.1: Study Areas



DOWNTOWN ON THE BRICKS

Downtown is one of Kearney's principle centers for commercial and civic life that has maintained a stable retail and growing office market. Downtown on the Bricks is the most distinguishable business district in Kearney, lined with early-1900s buildings, ornamental streetlights, coordinated street furniture, and, of course, its signature brick streets.

The recommendations in this plan establish a framework and vision for the district to evolve, seeking new innovations that will become case studies for other cities in Nebraska and the Midwest.

The development concept is based on an evaluation of the market and realistic economic opportunities, new access, and the distinctive character that strengthens the city's physical and economic assets, moving Kearney forward despite difficult economic times.

Map 3.2, Development Concept, identifies individual projects within the study area. The concept for Downtown Kearney envisions incremental improvements to the public environment, enhancements to the parking supply, and improved business environment, and better utilization of spaces.

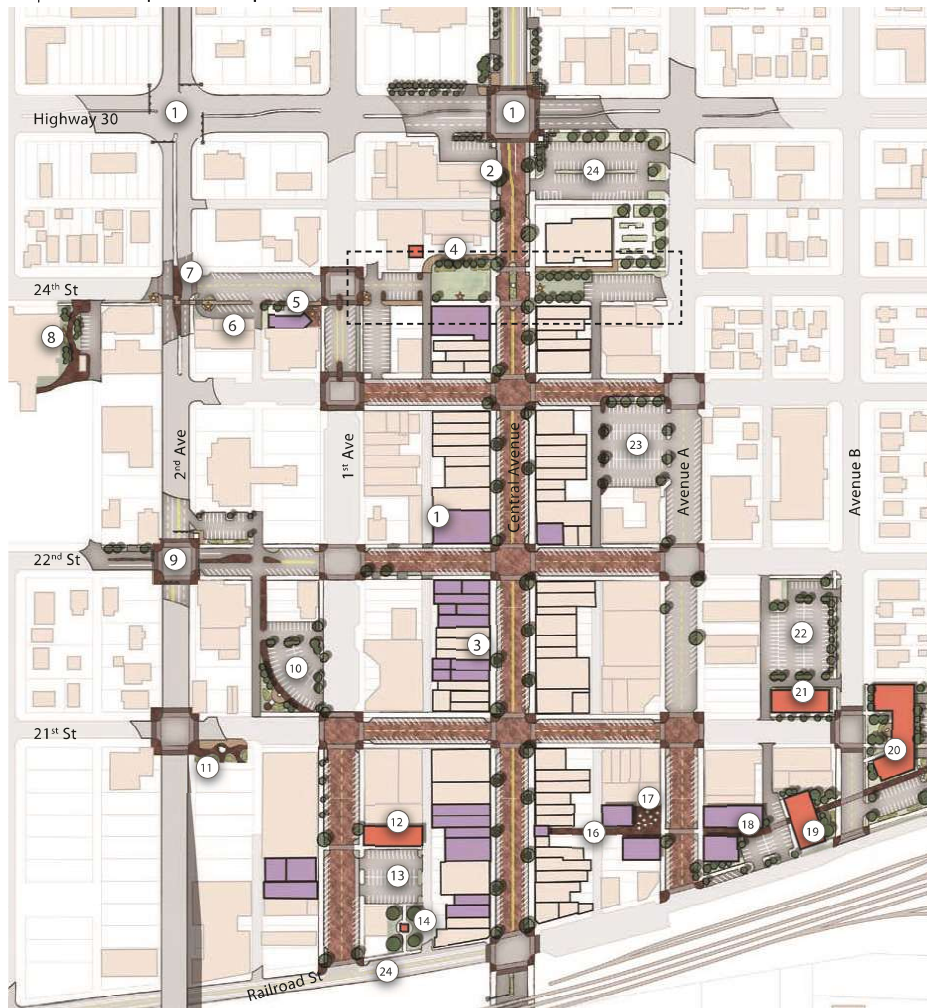
Organization

- Streetscape Enhancements
- Gateway Features
- Buildings
- Trail of the Arts
- Central Park
- Development Projects



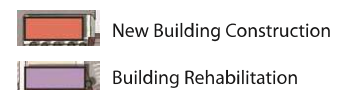
Central Avenue in 1930.

Map 3.2: Development Concept for Downtown on the Bricks



DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

1. Gateway Enhancements
2. Streetscape Upgrades
3. Building Restoration / Upper-story Reuse
4. New Central Park
5. Trail of the Arts
6. Access Improvements
7. Center Median Crossing
8. Plaza of the Arts/Connection to Merryman
9. Intersection Enhancements
10. Parking and Greenway
11. Gateway Enhancements
12. Commercial Development
13. New Parking Lot
14. Pocket Park
15. Railroad Street Trail Connection
16. Brickway Pathway
17. McCue's Development & Plaza
18. Building Rehabilitation
19. Brickway Development
20. Brickway Mixed Use Redevelopment
21. Commercial Development
22. Chicken Coop Parking Redesign
23. City Hall Parking Redesign
24. MONA Lot Reconfiguration



STREETSCAPE ENHANCEMENTS

The streetscape for Downtown Kearney should continue to evolve and refresh, providing a positive and memorable experience to attract visitors and private investment in downtown.

Minor and relatively inexpensive enhancements to the district add life to the district. For example, the planter pots at intersections are inexpensive, yet participants throughout the process praised the addition.

Features such as pedestrian lighting, trees and benches can be used to create a sense of place and human scale. Clean streets, ornamental lighting, native plantings, shrubs and community graphics can influence the impression of the corridor. Similar applications should be made to Old Town on the Bricks.

Specific Recommendations include:

- **Brick Streets.** The brick streets are Downtown Kearney's brand, its marketing image. The condition and quality of the bricks is critical to the entire district. Gaps and repairs should be handled with care. In addition to their physical and historical appeal, the rumble of the bricks, caused by motorists travelling along them, naturally slows the speed of traffic.

Preserving the bricks along Central Avenue is critical to the area's identity. Yet, preserving bricks on parallel streets is not as much of a priority. Any resurfacing of peripheral streets should harvest the existing brick for later reuse along Central Avenue.
- **Street lighting.** Downtown's existing street lighting is no longer being fabricated or supported by the manufacturer. Spare parts are unavailable, necessitating the need to consider new lighting for the district.

Similar fixtures styles to Kearney's existing light are available from Holophane (Dorchester) and Architectural Area Lighting (Dundee). However, their efficiency is significantly less than that of an LED system. Benefits of LED system include the ability to control and program the emission of the light (dim lights after 8pm or increase lighting during early snow removal), flashing lights at specific addresses for emergency response vehicles. Additionally LED lights use 5 to 10 times less wattage than traditional lights.

Alternative lighting styles should be considered with care. Considerations include the height and width of the pole, appearance and scale of the fixture, light distribution and photometry along the street, and potential attachments and electrical outlets.



- **Enclosed Seating Areas.** Figure 3.2 shows a sidewalk section with enclosed outdoor seating for restaurants and bars near the curb. Outdoor dining areas create activity along the street and expand the business opportunities in the district.

Nebraska State Law's definitions are ambiguous about dining areas serving meals and alcohol separated by a public sidewalk. Definitions include sidewalk cafe and beer garden. Regardless, areas serving alcohol should be fenced. (Chapter 2.01208 of NE Liquor Control Commission Rules and Regulations). Examples in Omaha include the Upstream Brewery (defined as courtyard) and Mister Toads (defined as beer garden).
- **Planter Beds.** Shrubs and flowers in the existing low-profile planters throughout the district struggle to

main healthy or survive. Due to their relatively small planting beds, they require routine watering, and are susceptible to salt and other chemicals leaking into them. Rather than have a number of small planting beds, the plan recommends removing the small beds and expanding the areas near trees. Also, providing more permeable space around trees will allow greater infiltration of water to the roots, and require less maintenance throughout the district. Figure 3.3 illustrates the proposed change.

- **Trees.** Downtown exhibits a strong canopy of full-size trees, offering shade to pedestrians and buildings. The Thornless Honey Locust tree is a good choice for downtown environments, having a large canopy with fine textured foliage. The leaves are small enough that in the Fall they blow away and run off in the storm sewer without clogging the system. Limbs go up and do not provide support for pigeons to roost. Most importantly, Honey Locust trees are resilient and have the ability to thrive in difficult urban growing conditions, like small planters and heat of concrete in the summer.
- **Banners and Flower Baskets.** Minor and relatively inexpensive enhancements such as flower baskets and banners add color and interest. Banners should be changed seasonally and for special events.
- **Update Benches and Trash Bins.** Seating areas should be well-defined. Benches provide space for people to sit and watch people. Trash bins should accompany benches to reduce clutter along the street.
- **Wayfinding.** Pedestrian-scale wayfinders, such as blade signs, inform and direct people to the district's various destinations, including the museum, restaurants, and retail stores.

Benches



Existing

Trash Receptacles



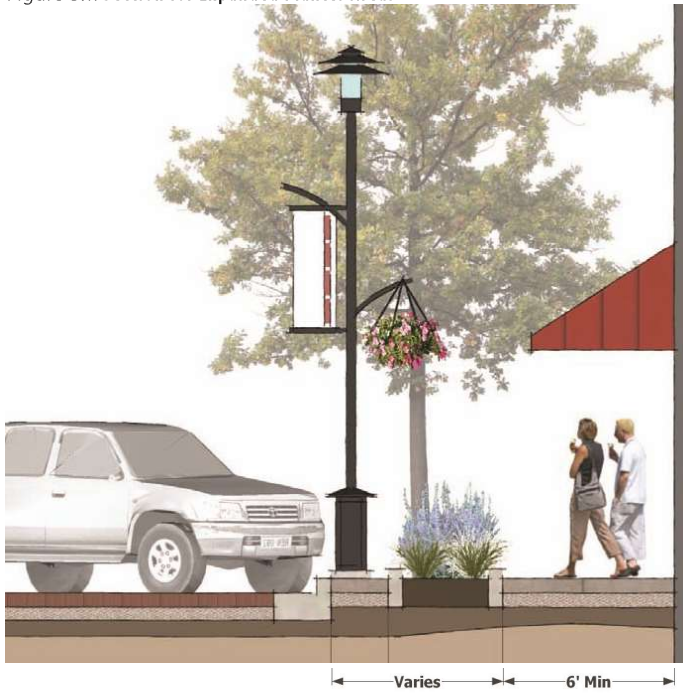
Planters



Proposed possibilities



Figure 3.1: Section for Expanded Planter Areas



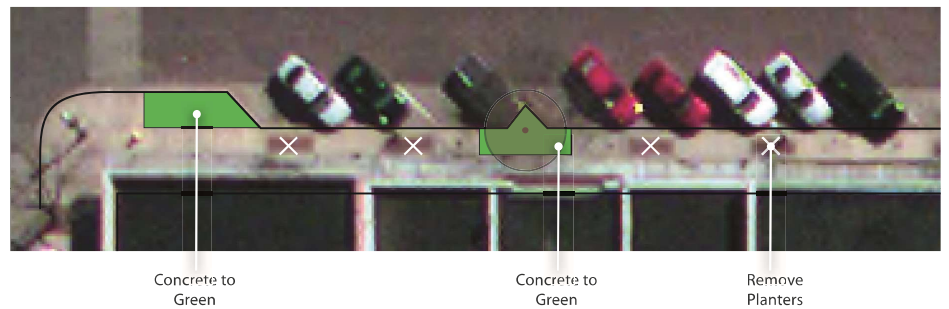
Street section showing expanded planter area and walkway

Figure 3.2: Section for Outdoor Dining Areas



Street section showing planter area being interchangeable with outdoor dining areas.

Figure 3.3: Concept for Sidewalk and Landscaping Improvements



GATEWAY FEATURES

All gateway features in Kearney should have a consistent theme that strengthens the city's overall identity. Elements of the design should consider construction material, fonts, color, and graphics. The use of brick is prevalent throughout the downtown district. Hence the district's title, The Bricks.

The concept proposes replacing the tower markers with a bolder icon that combines features of a lighthouse, bricks, and art. The marker is internally lit, making it an attraction at night. The knee walls can be placed at intersections and along parking lots to define spaces. Concepts for construction should consider iron rails, arches, and brick. Placement should be adjacent to streets and parking lots, particularly near gateway entrances at Central Ave/Highway 30 and 21st and 22nd Streets at 2nd Avenue.



Figure 3.5: Gateway Marker at 22nd Street



2nd Avenue approaching the 21st Street viaduct landing

BUILDINGS

1. **Upper-story Improvements.** The development program includes adaptive reuse of upper levels for residential and office development. Housing is a key element of most downtown revitalization programs and is important to this plan's vision of the future of downtown as a lively mixed use neighborhood. Residential development makes downtown a living, 24-hour neighborhood.

Many upper-level units may initially be rental, although some may provide owner-occupied apartments for people who live over their businesses or otherwise seek equity settings. Existing tax-driven incentives such as the Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and Historic Tax Credits are oriented to rental housing. Downtown Kearney's buildings may not all be eligible for Historic Tax Credit since the buildings in the district have experienced so much modification.

Map 3.3 identifies buildings that are candidates for upper-story rehabilitation.

Public actions and policies necessary to encourage delivery of downtown housing include preservation codes and building permit policies that encourage upper level reuse through private reinvestment.

Reoccupying the upper-story units with residential development generates a demand for about 80 to 90 additional stalls used during off-peak hours.

2. **Rehabilitate and Reuse Buildings.** The life and economy of downtown takes place in its buildings. Underused or vacant buildings should be rehabilitated to provide marketable space for offices and housing. Figures 3.6 through 3.9 demonstrate possible facade improvements

- **Facades.** Kearney has many exemplary cases of rehabilitation. In general, facade upgrades should restore windows to original scale, replace inappropriate storefronts, and include awnings, doors, and other features that add scale. However, diversity is important in an eclectic district, and absolute uniformity is neither necessary nor authentic.
- **Business Types.** Downtown Kearney does not have a café or community gathering space during the evening, aside from the restaurants and bars. Atmosphere, management and quality of the business will lend to its success if one were ever established.
- **Life along the sidewalk.** Downtown Kearney does not have a restaurant with outdoor seating space or the ability to see activity in the restaurant from the sidewalk. Future restaurants in the district should consider engaging the sidewalk, creating an atmosphere that is unique in downtown.

3. **Corner Buildings.** Restoring buildings that sit at intersections like the Henline Building and Masonic Temple are a strategic investment for downtown development. Establishing a reuse for these buildings continues the rehabilitation of Kearney's iconic buildings, following the trail blazed by the rehabilitation of the World Theater.

4. **Business Signs.** Desirable signage includes wall-mounted signs with individual letters, awning signs, and carefully designed projecting signs. Typically, flush-mounted cabinets, pole signs, and other "auto-strip" signs are not appropriate in the downtown district. Signs should not obscure large areas or major facade design features.

Financing incentives to encourage facade improvement and restoration should be part of the downtown program. However, these incentives work most effectively when building owners see an economic return from these investments. Often, improvements in the public environment create conditions that make these incentive-driven investments more attractive to owners.

5. **Cornice Lighting.** The cornices of buildings could be defined at night by a continuous string of lights. The installation of LED strand lighting offers a low-cost alternative to traditional string lighting that can be powered by roof mounted solar panels. Also, the LED allows city to adjust the color for different times of the year.
6. **Energy Efficiency Audits and Improvements.** Energy efficiency improvements may include insulation, window upgrades, ceiling repairs, heating and ventilation system upgrades, and lighting. NDED encourages communities to consider programs to improve the functional and ongoing use of the facility.

Map 3.3: Upper-story Reuse Candidates



Building Rehabilitation

Figure 3.6: Facade Rehabilitation Demonstration - Henline Building



Figure 3.7: Facade Rehabilitation Demonstration - Masonic Temple Building



Figure 3.8: Facade Rehabilitation Demonstration - W.L. Nash Building



Figure 3.9: Facade Rehabilitation Demonstration - Self Service Furniture



CENTRAL PARK

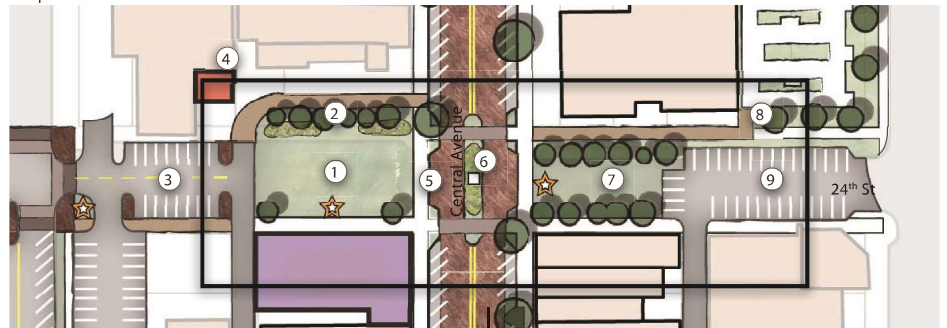
1. Central Park West. Kearney's Central Avenue was not designed around a public square or open space. Rather it was a commercial corridor that spurred from railroad activity. Downtown has not benefited from the life and activity that parks and gathering spaces offer business districts, such as Kearney.

Participants throughout the planning process advocated for establishing a public gathering space in downtown. Identifying a site for a new open space considered vacant lots, underused buildings, and parking lots as possible locations, yet none of these sites seemed logical for Kearney. Planners began looking at streets as spaces for converting them to either temporary or permanent gathering space. Closing 24th Street was introduced as a possibility since the adjacent blocks are comparably short, and 24th Street is already interrupted at Second Avenue and Avenue E.

As participants explored the concept of closing 24th Street, the concerns were more about accommodating numerous types of activities than closing a street, leading planners to explore the program for the site.

- Central Park Program. Elements of the program, which need to be refined for implementation, may include:
 - Greenspace, shade, and outdoor seating
 - Sidewalk between theater and parking lot
 - Pathway between MONA and Merryman Performing Arts Center.
 - Performance space
 - Ability to restrict access for special events
 - Ice skating rink.
 - Child-oriented (interactive)
 - Public art
 - Water feature (white noise)
 - Outdoor movies.

Map 3.4: Central Park



Testing
Program
and
Schematic
Design



CENTRAL PARK

1. Central Park West
2. Access drive
3. Parking Reconfiguration- West
4. Public Rest Rooms
5. Drop off area
6. Median with Soldier Monument
7. Central Park East
8. MONA Sculpture Park Connection
9. Parking Reconfiguration - East



Figure 3.10: Central Park Demonstration



Shenandoah, IA



Boston, MA

2. Access Drive. The drive-thru access is retained to the business on the northside of the park, although realigned to expand the amount of available park space. The drive is a brickway that replicates Central Avenue, and may act as a service drive during special events.

3. Parking Reconfiguration-West. The closing of 24th Street allows parking to be reconfigured from angled to 90 degree parking. Also, the parking lot adjacent to Cunningham's Journal has adequate space from curb-to-curb to be restriped for 90 degree parking.

- **24th Street parking reconfiguration**
Central Ave to Alley - loss of 18 stalls
Alley to 1st Ave - Change from 12 to 18 stalls
Net loss of 12 stalls
- **Cunningham Journal Lot reconfiguration**
Change from 26 stalls to 32 stalls
Net gain of 6 stalls

4. Public Rest Rooms. Several businesses allow the public to use their rest rooms, although not all businesses meet ADA regulations. The possibility of a new park adjacent to the Fraternal Order of Eagles (FOE) presents an opportunity to redesign their patio area to engage the public space and establish new rest rooms that could be used by the public. The City and FOE could establish an agreement on leasing and maintenance of the space to be mutually beneficial.

5. Drop-off. The park, downtown, and MONA are major destinations for people to visit and should have space for loading and unloading of cars and buses. A drop-off site near the park provides convenient access to all destinations.

6. Soldier Memorial. The soldier memorial was once located in the middle of Highway 30, but was later relocated next to the MONA parking lot. Its present location does not share the prominence and exposure that it once had. Relocating the monument a half-block to a new median in Central Avenue will return its historic notoriety. The median will naturally calm the speed of traffic entering downtown, establishing a stronger pedestrian quality to the district.

7. Central Park East. Phase 2 of the Central Park project includes closing 24th Street east of Central Avenue. Programming of the space should coincide with the programming of the park to the west. Possible program may include:

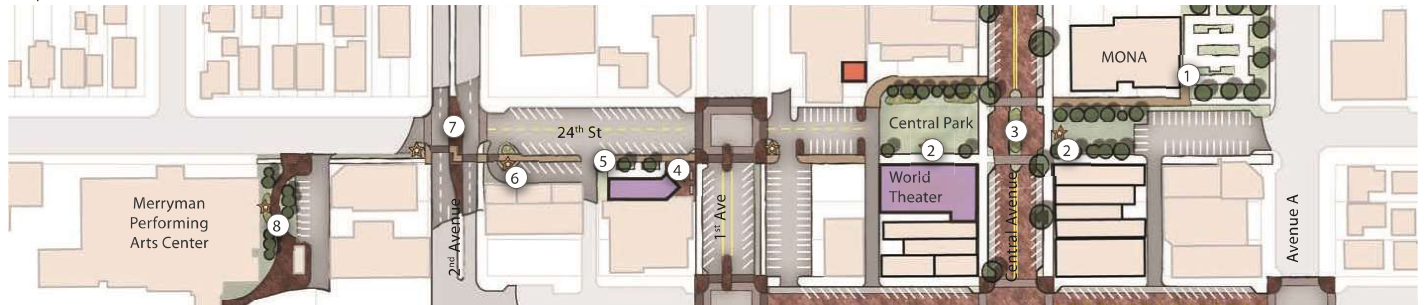
- Expansion/exposure of the MONA Sculpture Park
- Greenspace and shade
- Trailhead for the "Trail of the Arts"
- Outdoor dining space for the adjacent businesses.
- Ice skating rink.

8. MONA Sculpture Park Connection. Field inspections indicate that access to the sculpture park could have a direct physical connection to 24th Street. With the development of Central Park East, the connection should be open without restriction during business hours, although permitted to be gated in the evening.

9. Parking Reconfiguration- East. The closing of 24th Street allows parking to be reconfigured from angled to 90 degree parking.

- **24th Street reconfiguration**
Change from 41 stalls to 29 stalls
Net loss of 12 stalls

Map 3.5: Trail of the Arts



TRAIL OF THE ARTS

The City of Kearney sets at the confluence of the Oregon and Mormon Trails, and was a critical juncture for western movement. Its significance is celebrated at the Museum of Nebraska Art, which begins the sequence of cultural attractions present along 24th Street. Other attractions include World Theater, Merryman Performing Arts Center, and potential Central Park. Physical and thematic enhancements along the route will reinforce the “arts” present in the City.

1. Museum of Nebraska Art and Sculpture Park.

MONA is one of Central Nebraska’s premier cultural icons, and is downtown’s anchor tenant.

2. Central Park.

The park becomes a critical link between MONA and the Merryman Performing Arts Center. Recommendations include:

- Expanding MONA’s sculpture park into Central Park East extends the museum’s program into a public setting that can be experienced at all times. Establishing a pathway from the sculpture park to the sidewalk. The pathway could be secured by a gate that would limit access to open hours.

- Installing a trailhead for the Trail of the Arts in the park can provide orientation and history that ties into the exhibits inside of the museum.
- Sculptures, interactive art, and interpretative panels could be installed in the open space.
- Performance stage for concerts and outdoor gatherings.

3. Monument.

Relocating the soldier monument in the median announces the arrival to Downtown Kearney and the city’s commitment to art.

4. World Theater.

Restoring the World Theater is a strategic investment for downtown development because it helps the district become a center for entertainment and performing arts. This kind of arts-based programming encourages visits to the district from a younger population including college-aged adults and young families attending children’s matinees. The theater has been a recipient of several grants and is anticipated to reopen in 2012.

TRAIL OF THE ARTS

- Museum of Nebraska Arts & Sculpture Park
- Central Park
- Monument
- Plaza
- Art Walk
- Drive-thru Improvements
- Center Median Crossing
- Merryman Performing Arts Plaza



Top: Inlaid markers in Sturgis, SD
Bottom: Inlaid markers in Boston, MA



Top: Informational Kiosk in Davenport, IA

Figure 3.11: Center Median Crossing



Center Median Crossing

5. Art Walk. The sidewalk path from MONA to Merryman would be articulated with pavers or stamped concrete that leads pedestrians between the two destinations. A sequence of art installations, benches, and uniform landscaping along the walkway would reinforce the connection.

- Concrete could be stamped with footprints, wagon ruts, rail tracks, and tires to represent the evolution of Kearney's trails and transportation.

6. Art Plaza. The space in front of the building on the southeast corner of 24th Street and 1st Avenue (State

Farm Insurance) is surrounded by concrete. Designing the space as a small plaza with outdoor seating and art improves the street presence of the building and continues the sequence of art amenities along the street.

7. Drive-thru. Improving the access and circulation of Daylight Donuts drive through to improve safety and mobility.

8. Center Median Crossing. Signalized intersections provide protected crossings, but crossing within long segments between signals is difficult. These proposed crossing uses designs tested by recent federally-

funded demonstrations and European experience. Medians provide safe haven, requiring pedestrians to cross only two lanes of single directional traffic at a time. An offset path increases visibility and allows pedestrians to make eye contact with approaching motorists. Even without signalization, many experts find this configuration safer than uncontrolled intersection crossings.

9. Merryman Performing Arts Center. A plaza on the eastside of the building terminates the Trail of the Arts. A kiosk in the plaza would provide directional information to MONA and other cultural sites.

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

1. Gateway Enhancements. The viaduct landing at 22nd Street marks the arrival to the northside of Kearney and downtown. Recommendations include:

- Upgrading the gateway feature,
- Replacing lighting along 2nd Avenue to be consistent with Central Avenue
- Mounting graphics and banners to light poles
- Installing wayfinding to key destinations

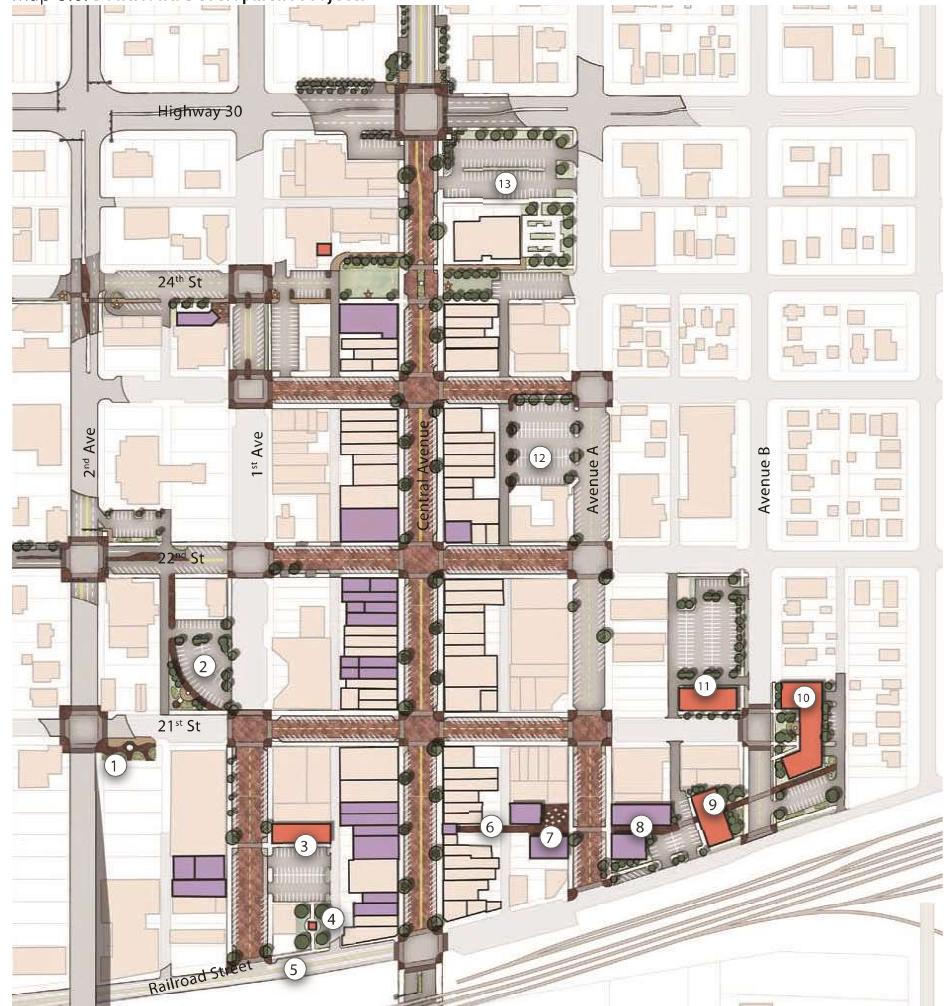
2. Greenway and Parking Lot. The library's greenspace along 22nd Street could be repeated to establish a sequence of greenspaces approaching Central Avenue. The small plaza by the library could be reflected at Great Western Bank's parking lot. Redesigning the lot will add color and interest to the district, although sacrifices 12 stalls, changing the yield from 70 to 58 stalls.

3. 1st Avenue Development and Parking. The vacant lot on 1st Avenue could be developed for a small commercial structure facing a parking lot with 48 stalls connected by a midblock crossing to the library. The commercial structure provides space for a downtown that experiences a considerably low vacancy rate of 3%. Alternatively, the lot could be designed entirely for parking.

4. Pocket Park. The space adjacent to the Parks and Recreation building could be a small park with a small outdoor seating space and exhibits for plant life, including various species of trees and shrubs.

5. Railroad Street Improvements. Adapting the street with bicycle lanes or "sharrows" to establish a physical connection between downtown and the Kearney trail system.

Map 3.6: Downtown Development Projects





Omaha, NE



Seattle, WA



6. Brickway Path. The Brickway is a shared pedestrian pathway that acts as a spine for redevelopment, and continues Downtown's theme of "The Bricks" into expanding areas of downtown. The Brickway begins at the McCue's building and continues east to Avenue B.

- **Building Passageway.** The project could expand to the west. The brickway would lead to the Central Avenue by converting one of the smaller storefronts into a passageway that acts as a shortcut to the Brickway Development. Public restrooms could be retrofitted into the building, along with smaller retailers. Expanding the Brickway through the

storefront should not displace businesses that are already operating in the space.

- **Green Alley.** Developing the passageway to "green alley" standards, using techniques such as bioretention basins and permeable pavers in combination with subsurface drainage systems to reduce the rate and quantity of stormwater runoff. The "green passageway" concept could be part of the identity of this area, acting as a demonstration of sustainable practice.

7. McCue's Reuse and Square. The McCue's building is a prime candidate for rehabilitating for mixed use de-

velopment. Redeveloping the adjacent vacant lot as a small public square would provide another venue for outdoor events in Downtown Kearney.

8. Building Rehabilitation. The buildings on the east side of Avenue A should be rehabilitated and reoccupied. The Brickway between the structures creates a common gathering space that connects to shared parking behind the buildings.

9. Brickway Commercial Development. The City's impound lot is a viable use, however the potential of the site to be redeveloped is critical for expanding the Brickway to the east and future development sites.

The proposed commercial development would be one or two stories with a dedicated passageway that would allow the Brickway to continue to Avenue B.

10. Brickway's Mixed Use Project. The condition of homes along Avenue B where downtown meets the residential neighborhood is inconsistent and often struggling. Redeveloping the sites near the railroad may be warranted to stimulate reinvestment of the surrounding neighborhood.

The Brickway Mixed Use project proposes assembling a series of properties for street-level commercial and upper-story residential development. Covered parking would be accessed from Avenue C.

The project would activate underused properties, create a more compatible use adjacent to more intensive uses, offer more housing options near downtown, and give 22nd Street an attractive terminus.

11. 22nd Street Development Project and Parking Redesign. Downtown Kearney's low vacancy, need for office space, and relatively poor design of the off-street parking lot at 21st Street and Avenue B makes it a strong candidate for redevelopment.

The concept shows a new commercial building along 21st Street, that defines the street edge while providing access to the parking lot. The redesign of the lot changes the parking yield from 95 stalls to 90 stalls, while accommodating the new commercial floor area.

12. City Parking Lot. The public parking lot next to City Hall is one of the most competitive in the city. Reorienting the stalls and expanding the curb improves the lot's efficiency by nearly 50%, resulting in 27 more stalls or a change from 63 stalls to 90 stalls.



Top: Minneapolis MN; Bottom: Sun Prairie, WI



13. MONA Parking Lot. The design of MONA's parking lot is relatively efficient. The curb-to-curb width is 60 feet, allowing the possibility of converting the angle parking to 90 degree parking. This change would presumably be accomplished through restriping and yield an additional 8 stalls. Additional stalls could be created by redefining the curb and expanding the parking space.

OLD TOWN PROJECTS

Old Town has historically not shared the economic investment and study as downtown, yet it has become an emerging district, experiencing new business start-ups, a rebuilt street, and growing identity with The Bricks.

In order to explore methods for joining the districts, this plan broadens the original boundaries of the study to include the area south of the railroad tracks to the Courthouse on 16th Street. It presents concepts for expanding the downtown district and includes economic strategies that unite the City of Kearney with Buffalo County and Second Avenue viaduct.

THE BRICKS

1. **Buildings Improvements.** The economy of Old Town takes place in its buildings.

- **Facades.** Downtown Kearney has numerous exemplary cases of rehabilitation that could be models for improvement in Old Town. In general, facade upgrades should restore windows to original scale, replace inappropriate storefronts, and include awnings, doors, and other features that add appeal to the building. However, diversity is important in an more eclectic district like Old Town, and absolute uniformity is neither necessary nor authentic.
- **Business Signs.** Desirable signage includes wall-mounted signs with individual letters, awning sign, and carefully placed projecting signs.
- **Corner Buildings.** The condition and use of corner buildings significantly influence the perception of the entire district. Improving these buildings must be a high priority.

2. **Streetscape Upgrades.** The Bricks, Old Town and Downtown, should have common elements that unify the two areas. Trees, street lighting, planters, benches, and graphics are physical elements that can be shared.



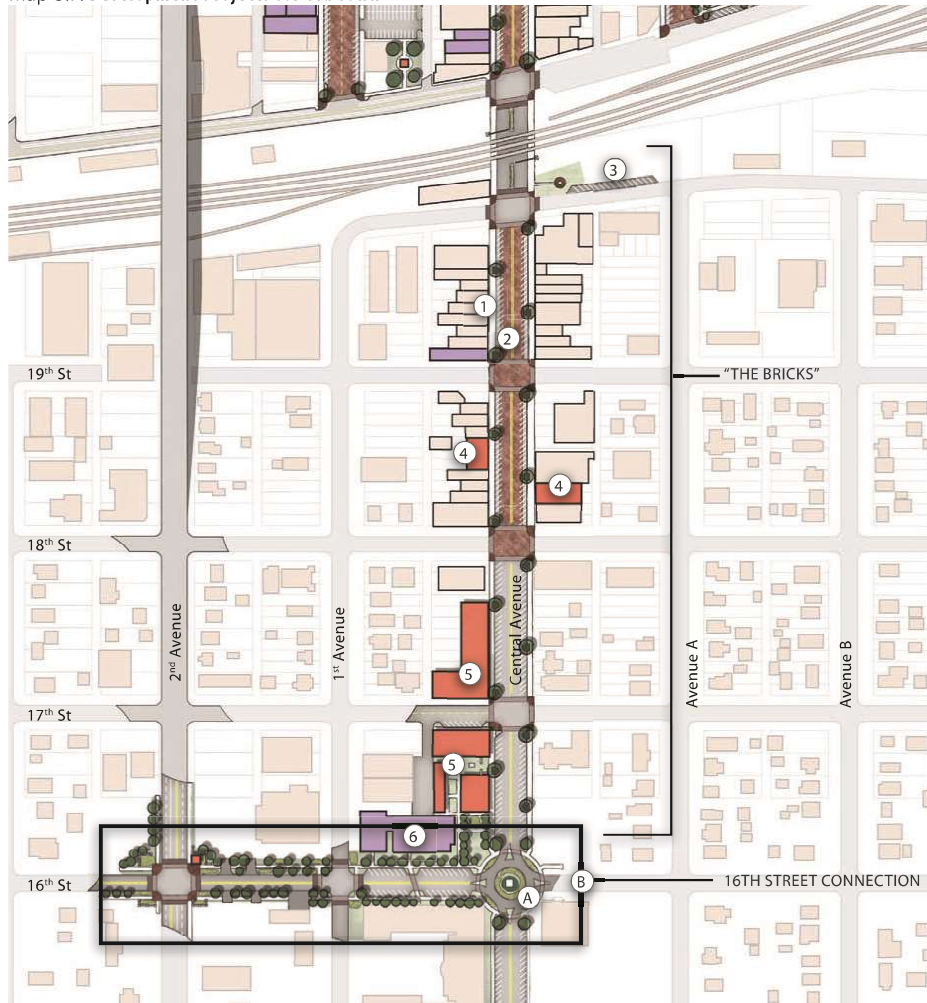
Yet, Old Town should have its own personality. The buildings could exhibit more eclectic signage or customized street furniture. Banners in the district could be designed to indicate that Old Town on the Bricks is its own neighborhood, a sibling to downtown with its own identity.

3. **Railside Parking.** The area east of Kearney Junction Park should be developed for overflow parking, similar to the design on the northside of the tracks.
4. **Infill development.** Vacant and underused sites are candidates for new development. Gaps along the street should be filled with buildings or knee walls to limit breaks along the sidewalk.



5. **Residential Development.** The vacant and under-used lots between 16th and 18th Street are candidates for new development. The plan proposes that these sites be reserved for medium- to high-density residential development, including row houses or multi-story apartments. Commercial uses should be steered towards sites north of 18th Street.
6. **Armory Reuse.** The Armory is listed on the National Register of Historic Buildings. The building should be reused as office space, possibly for Buffalo County offices.

Map 3.7: Development Projects for Old Town

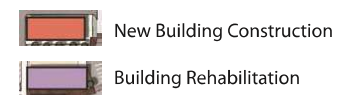


CONCEPTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

1. Building Improvements
2. Streetscape Upgrades
3. Railside Parking
4. Infill Development
5. Residential Development
6. Armory Reuse

Subarea - 16th Street Connection

- A. Monument and Roundabout
- B. 16th Street Enhancements



16TH STREET CONNECTION

Access to downtown from the south, and principal route to the County Courthouse and Old Town is from Central Avenue by way of 16th Street. The corridor completes the loop from Central Avenue to 2nd Avenue, south of the viaduct.

Concepts for improving this critical link between these destinations include:

1. **Enhancing the Intersection at 16th Street and 2nd Avenue.** Upgrading the traffic signals, street lighting, and surrounding landscaping to improve the gateway to the Courthouse and Old Town.
2. **Installing a Gateway Tower.** The shape and scale of the feature should be consistent with the gateway tower on the northside landing adjacent to downtown. The tower establishes a visual cue for travelers that the intersection begins the approach to downtown by either the viaduct or 16th Street. Also, the tower becomes a landmark for describing to visitors where to turn to access Old Town.
3. **Establishing a sidewalk on the northside of the street.** Install a new sidewalk on the northside of the street, while also planting shrubs and flowers.
4. **Creating a Promenade of Trees.** Planting trees at regular intervals adds interest and life to the street. The species of the tree should be selected with care to prevent them from growing into the power lines.
5. **Burying overhead wires.** Burying the power lines will reduce the visual clutter, and enable the selection of trees that would eventually establish a canopy over the street.
6. **Constructing a Crossing Node.** Establishing nodes at intersections narrows the field of vision for motorists, which subtly calms the speed of motorists near an

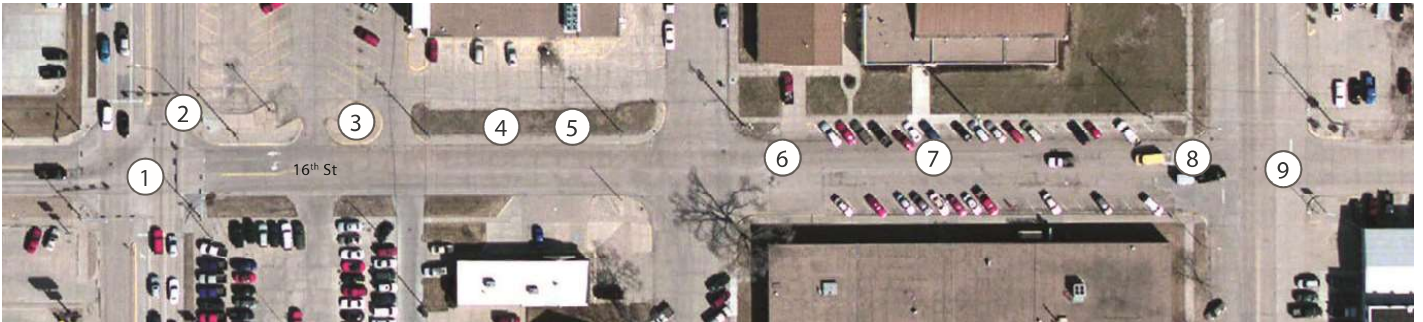
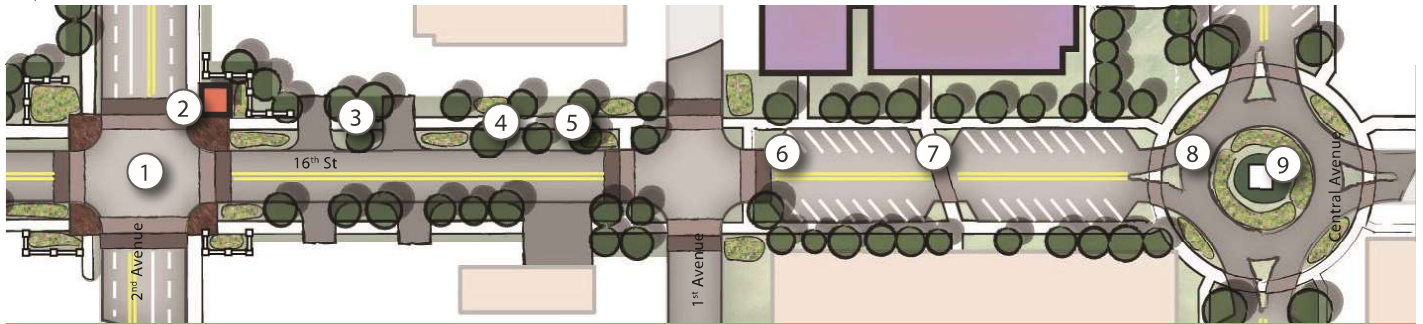
Figure 3.12: 16th Street Section and Midblock Crossing



area that often experiences people walking across the street. The node establishes a shorter crossing distance for pedestrians.

7. **Constructing a Midblock Crossing.** Establishing a midblock crossing creates a dedicated pathway between the entrance of the armory and County Courthouse.
8. **Designing a Roundabout.** The roundabout allows continuous movement through the intersection and reduces the number of points of impact for vehicles.
9. **Installing a Monument Feature.** A new monument feature in the roundabout becomes a "bookend" between downtown and the courthouse. Also, it establishes a stronger presence and relationship between Buffalo County and the City of Kearney. While many county courthouses have a grand civic space near their building, Buffalo County lacks a civic convenient nearby space. The monument could be a clock, sculpture, and other art installation.

Map 3.8: 16th Street Connection



1. Intersection Enhancements
2. Gateway Tower
3. Upgraded sidewalk and landscaping
4. Promenade of Trees
5. Node
6. Crosswalk
7. Midblock Crossing
8. Roundabout
9. Monument Feature

Coralville, IA

CONNECTIONS

Kearney successfully attracts visitors to its numerous destinations, including downtown, UNK, the Museum of Nebraska Art, Great Platte River Road Archway, and park system. Improving the relationship and accessibility between these destinations further enhances Kearney's marketing potential to attract visitors and encourages them to spend more time in the community. Also, strengthening these connections reinforces the quality of life the residents experience.

Concepts for strengthening the connections between Kearney's destinations includes:

1. Improving mobility along Central Avenue.

- **Downtown.** Bicyclists should ride on the street when in downtown, rather than on sidewalks. Downtown sidewalks prohibit bike riding, yet bicyclists do not feel safe cycling on the street so they continue to ride on the sidewalk. Central Avenue should be marked with share-the-road signs to direct bicyclists where to ride and alert cars to the likely presence of bikers.

- **Central Ave North.** Central Avenue, north of Highway 30, is 50 feet wide with two lanes of traffic and parallel parking. The street is wide enough to be restriped for 5' bicycle lanes without affecting traffic flow. Establishing bicycle lanes to the Good Samaritan Hospital reinforces their connection to downtown and commitment to active and healthy lifestyles.

Restoring the tree canopy of this corridor will improve the overall appearance, as well.

- ### 2. Bicycle Route on Railroad Street.
- Railroad Street is one of Kearney's few east-west streets running through the community. Painting bicycle lanes or sharrows along Railroad Street would connect trail users near the underpass (near Countryside Trailer Court) into the



UNK. Approach from 26th Street.



Good Samaritan Hospital. Approach from Central Avenue.



Kearney Trail

center of the district.

The width of the street is 44-feet, which would allow for two 8' parking lanes, two 11.5' travel lanes, and one 5' bicycle lane. Alternatives may include eliminating the parking lane on the southside for a bicycle lane or painting the street with "sharrows". Sharrows, used in Omaha and other cities, are symbols painted in the street to indicate to bicyclists that they may use the full lane. Figure 3.13 illustrates the possible configurations for Railroad Street.

Building a continuous sidewalk from the trail to downtown along the southside of the street will increase the



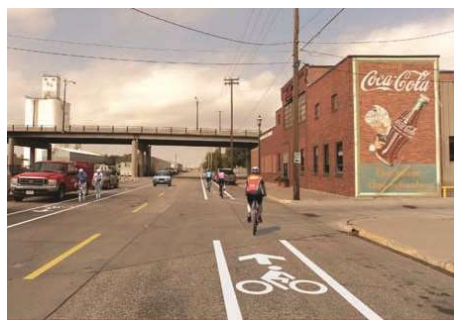
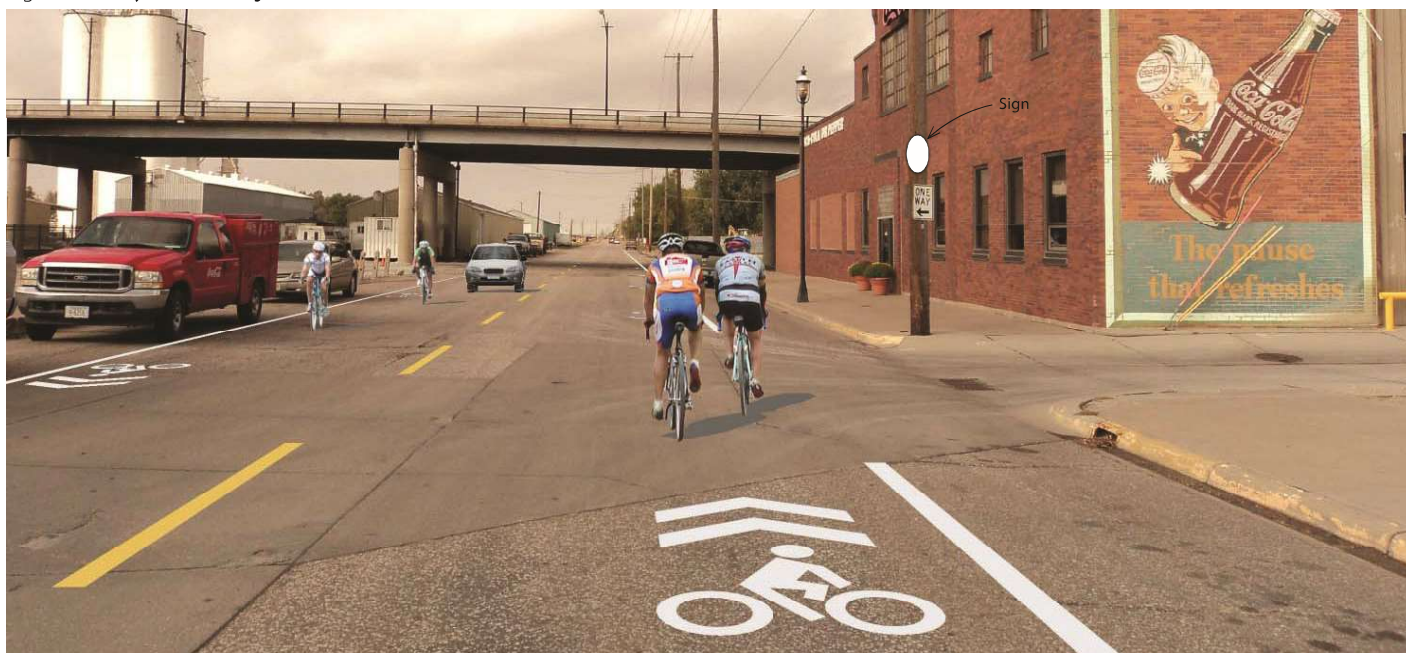
Existing sidewalk near railroad tracks

accessibility of both the trail and downtown.

- ### 3. 26th Street.
- Parallel to Highway 30 is 26th Street, which is often used by students walking between campus and downtown. The street experiences a low volume of traffic and pedestrians are often walking on the wide 50-foot street rather than the narrow 3-foot sidewalk. The narrow walkway should be replaced with a minimum of a 5' sidewalk.

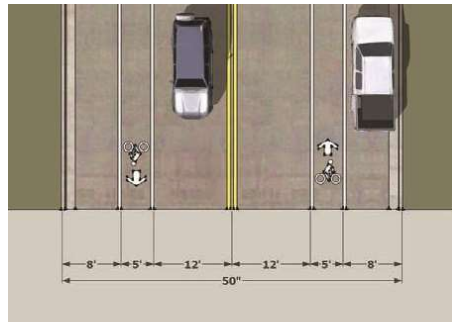
Restriping the street for bicycle lanes alerts the motorists of bicyclists, and subtly slows the speed of vehicles along the corridor.

Figure 3.13 Bicycle Lane along Railroad Street



Left: Omaha's bicycle way-finding system.

Figure 3.14 Bicycle Lane along 26th Street

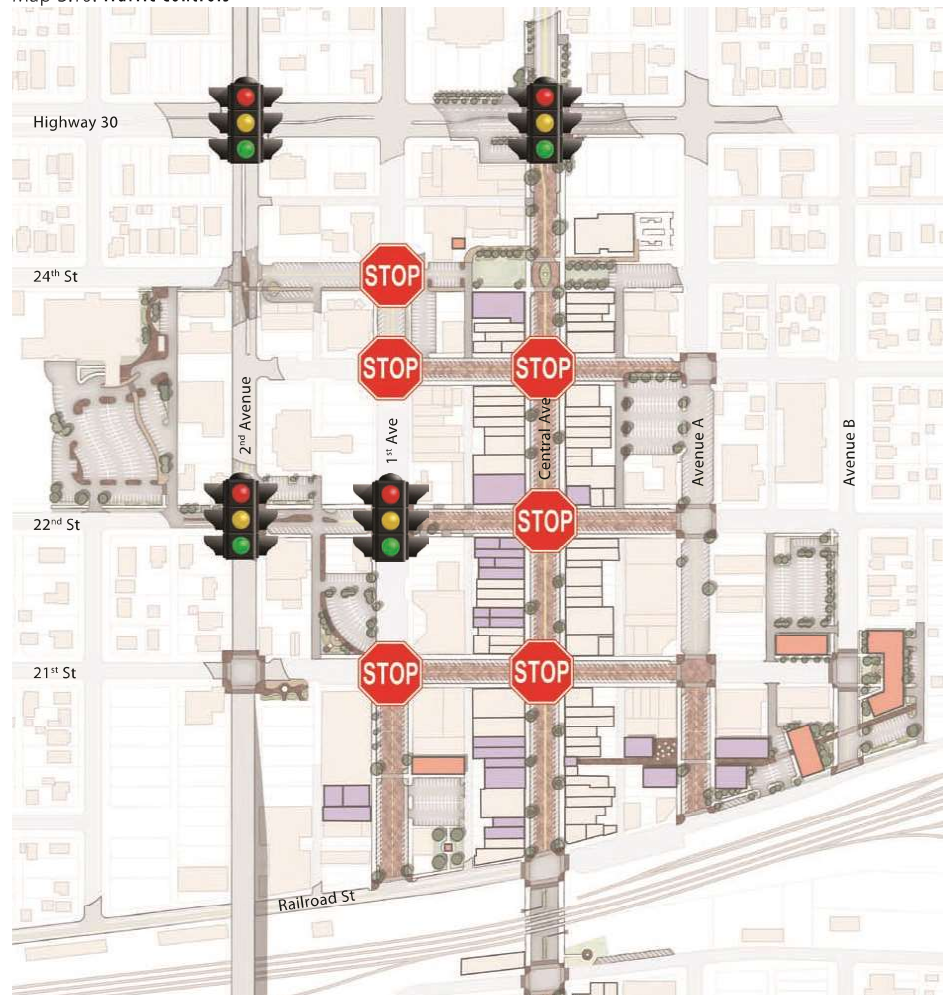


4. **Traffic Controls.** The relatively low traffic volume in the district does not appear to necessitate traffic signals at all intersections. Replacing traffic signals along Central Avenue with stop signs will improve overall traffic circulation and safety. Traffic signals also encourage motorists to speed up to beat the red light, creating dangerous conditions for pedestrians, particularly for seniors, children and people with disabilities. Removing the signals will result in a cost savings to the city without the need for power.

Map 3.10 shows identifies intersections that are likely candidates for adapting from traffic signals to four-way stops signs.

5. **Community Wayfinding.** Install directional wayfinding graphics to inform travelers of the many destinations that Kearney offers. The signage system should be a coordinated, themed three tiered system and include:
- Tier 1: Welcome signs near gateways to districts.
 - Tier 2: Vehicle-oriented. Signs that are legible for motorists to read and directing them to major community destinations, including The Bricks.
 - Tier 3: Pedestrian-oriented. Signs oriented to pedestrians walking around downtown and other community destinations. Placement should be near decision-making points for travelers in the City. Signs could include QR codes for smart phones.

Map 3.10: Traffic Controls





1. Welcome sign in Chicago, announcing the arrival to the Old Town district.
2. Historical marker sign in Old Town
3. Information kiosk in Old Town, Chicago
4. Orientation sign attached to existing pole
5. Dedication marker sign in Old Town
6. Vehicle-oriented in Downtown Des Moines, Iowa
7. Pedestrian-oriented sign in Des Moines



4 IMPLEMENTATION

We do make a difference -- one way or the other. We are responsible for the impact of our lives. Whatever we do with whatever we have, we leave behind us a legacy for those who follow.

- Stephen Covey

Table 4.1: Implementation Schedule, Downtown on the Bricks - DED Focus Area

Description	Cost Range	On-Going	< 3 Years	4-10 Years	Over 10 Years	Funding Mechanisms
Gateway Enhancements	\$80,000-\$150,000			X		Hybrid
Design Services	\$30,000					Hybrid
Streetscape Upgrades			X			Public, DTIB, NDED Phase II, Grants
Harvest brick & replace w/ concrete (300')	\$200K		X			
Replace Streetlights (\$6K-\$10K unit)	\$1.4-\$2.2 Million		X			
Seating Areas	Varies		X			
Planter areas (demo/concrete) or Tree Planter Expansion (demo/soil/plants)	\$400< each		X			
Street furniture	\$1,000 each		X			
Building Renovations	<\$20K	X				Grants, Public, PID, or NDED Phase II
Awnings (\$80-\$110 Linear Foot)		X				
Upper-story Windows (\$1,300 each)		X				
Central Park Phase 1 (Requires Programming & Design)	12% of budget		X			NDED Phase II, Main Street Funds, o.
Base (street demo, soil, turf, minor landscaping)	\$250K<, Target \$500K		X			
Band stand, interactive art, seating, landscaping	included above - requires design			X		
Public rest rooms (\$200/SF)	\$120K<			X		
Median (excludes relocation of monument)	\$100K-125K				X	City
Central Park Phase II	\$250K<, Target \$300				X	Private
Greenway and Parking Lot (Great Western Bank)	\$300K				X	City
1st Avenue Development (\$150 SF, 1-2 levels)	\$720K-\$1.5 Million			X		Private
Parking	\$265K			X		City
Pocket Park (Requires program)	\$80K-\$110K					Public
Brickway Path						Private/Hybrid
Brickway Commercial Renovation (\$100 SF)	\$420K					Private
McCue's Plaza	\$175K					Hybrid
Brickway Commercial Development (\$150 SF)	\$900K			X		Private
Shared Parking	\$170K			X		Hybrid
Brickway Mixed Use Project	\$3.4 Million					Private
21st Street Development (\$125-167 SF)	\$125-167K			X		Private
City Hall Parking Lot (variable is preserving interior)	\$175K-\$340K			X		City
MONA Parking					X	City

Table 4.2: Implementation Schedule, Old Town on the Bricks

Description	Cost Range	On-Going	< 3 Years	4-10 Years	Over 10 Years	Funding Mechanisms
Streetscape Upgrades (2 blocks)	\$300K		X			City
Streetlights, trees, graphics, planters, furniture	Pending		X		X	PID
Building Renovations	~\$20K					Private/Hybrid
Railside Parking/Junction Park Development	\$40K		X			City
Infill Development (\$100-\$120 SF @ 5,000 SF)	\$500K-\$600K	X	X	X		Private
Armory Reuse (\$90 SF @ 14,000 SF)	\$1.26M			X		Private
16th Street Intersections	\$125,000		X			City
16th Street Walkway (0.5 block)	\$4,000		X			City
16th Street Landscaping (turf, trees for 1.5 block faces)	\$15,000					City
Roundabout	Requires Study			X		City

Table 4.3: Implementation Schedule, Connections

Description	Cost Range	On-Going	< 3 Years	4-10 Years	Over 10 Years	Funding Mechanisms
Central Avenue Signage and Street Markings	<\$15,000		X			City/Hybrid
Railroad Street Bike Route	<\$15,000		X			City
Railroad Street Trail/Sidewalk 8'	Requires Study		X			City
26th Street Sidewalk and Streetside Trail	Low		X			City
Community Wayfinding System	\$1,000-\$3,000 per unit		X			Hybrid
Design services (coincide with gateway enhancements)	-		X			

KEY**City Sources.** General budget, special sales tax, KENO funds, Community Redevelopment Authority**PID.****Grants, Public.** Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and/or Visitor Bureau**Grants, Private.** MSK funding, foundations, etc.**Other (hybrid).** Local, State, Federal, Non-profit, Private Donations**Private Invesement.** Property owners and/or developers.