

# DOWNTOWN TOMORROW

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## A REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN, KANSAS

*A Part of the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan  
for the Manhattan Urban Area and the  
City of Manhattan, Kansas*



*Community Development  
April, 2000*

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*This project was funded in part with a Community Capacity Building Grant from the  
Kansas Department of Commerce & Housing.*

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Community Development Department  
1101 Poyntz Avenue  
Manhattan, Kansas

April 2000



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Ed Klimek  
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Brad Fenwick	Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board
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# DOWNTOWN TOMORROW

## INTRODUCTION

### **Background**

The continuing stability and vitality of Downtown Manhattan as the regional commercial, office, governmental and cultural center for the City and surrounding region, has long been an important community goal (Figure A). The importance of the Manhattan downtown area to the image and long-term physical, economic and social well-being of the community is reflected in planning, redevelopment and rehabilitation initiatives that have been developed over the past 20 years.

In 1983 the City Commission and Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board adopted the *Central Business District Redevelopment Plan*. The redevelopment projects identified in this plan were designed to stimulate private investment through public action and commitments. This \$60 million downtown redevelopment project included a private/public partnership to construct Manhattan Town Center, a 350,000 square foot regional shopping mall. Other components of the plan included a \$1.2 million streetscape project; construction of Colony Square, an office development; and the implementation of a Main Street Program.

The Downtown property owners, merchants, and the City, have created numerous partnerships to conserve and rehabilitate the existing retail area adjacent to the Manhattan Town Center. Other efforts to improve the existing retail area have included building rehabilitation; the establishment of a Historic District area with tax credit incentives for building rehabilitation; the creation of a Business Improvement District; low interest loan programs; and instituting the Manhattan Main Street program.

### **Need for Plan Update**

Since the adoption of the *Central Business District Redevelopment Plan* in 1983, traffic patterns have been significantly influenced by the K-177 bridge connection into the Downtown. Residential and commercial zoning boundaries, as well as traffic and pedestrian movement in the Downtown area need to be re-evaluated. Plans for the adjacent neighborhoods need to be updated. In 1996, the City created a second Tax Increment Financing District (also see section on Financing Tools) on the southern edge of the downtown, for which redevelopment projects must be identified. Redevelopment plans need to be developed for each proposed redevelopment project within the Tax Increment Financing District.

Recognizing this need for an extensive reevaluation of the Downtown area, the City has initiated this Downtown Tomorrow planning initiative. To help cover some of the project costs, a *Community Capacity Building Grant* of \$10,000, from the *Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing* was approved for this planning initiative, with an additional \$5,000 contribution in matching funds from the City General Fund.

### **Plan Purpose**

The purpose of the Downtown Tomorrow Plan (Figure B) is to insure continued vibrancy and economic stability of the downtown by reviewing the goals, objectives and land use assumptions of the 1983 Redevelopment Project for downtown Manhattan, as well as developing and implementing programs to address changing needs and issues.

### **Project Outline**

#### Project Management

Overall direction and oversight for the Plan was provided by a Steering Committee comprised of representatives of key stakeholder groups within the study area. The Committee met regularly throughout the planning process to define the project purpose, provide input into the project goals and objectives, evaluate alternatives and refine the final plan proposal for the downtown area.

The Community Development Department staff was responsible for the technical input and preparation of the plan. Additional expertise was invited from other City departments, agencies and individuals, when specific technical input was required.

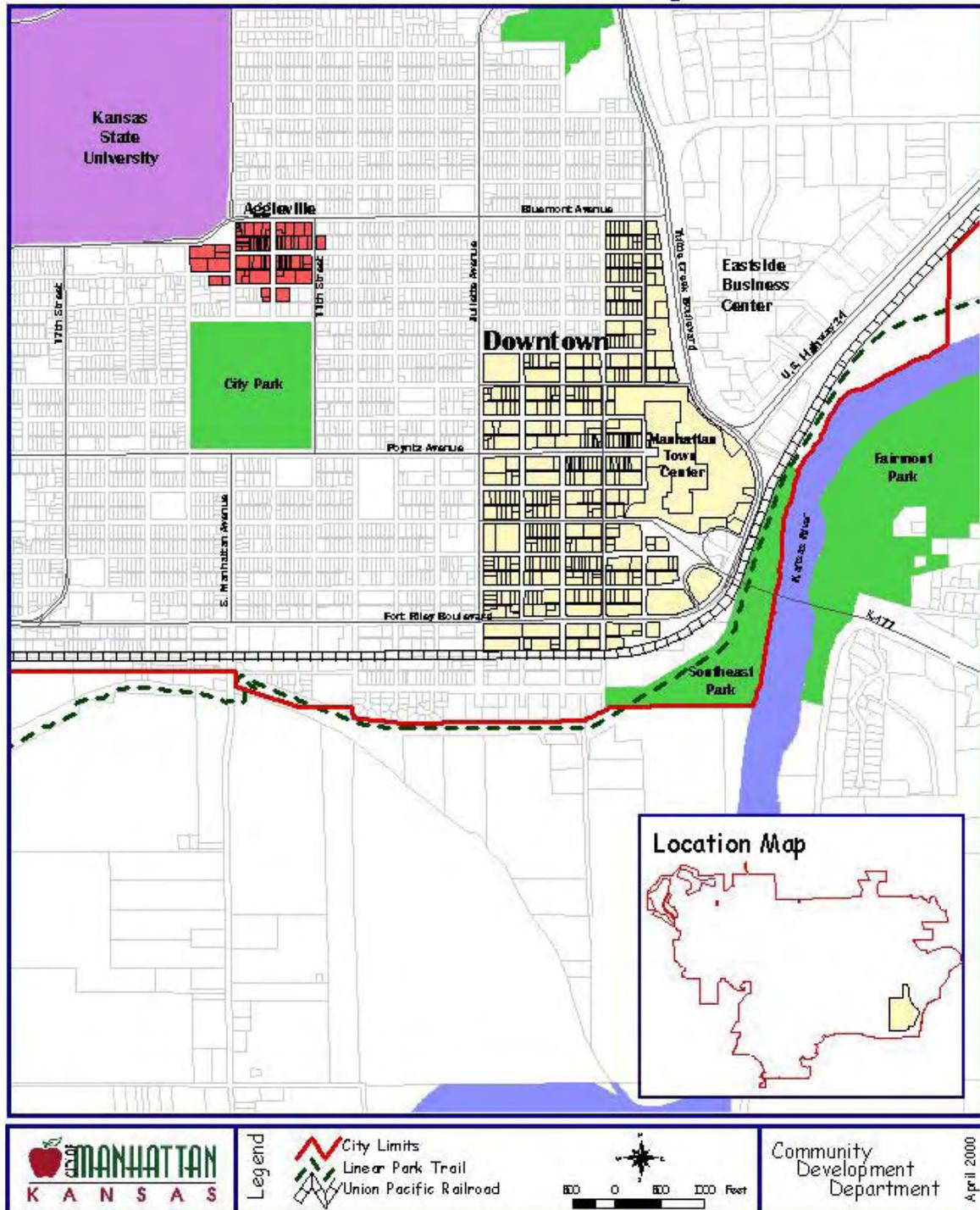
#### Consultation and Participation

Community consultation is founded in the firm belief that, wherever possible, citizens must have a voice in change that affect their lives. Ongoing public involvement was considered key and critical in building community consensus, and in helping to ensure effective implementation of preferred strategies. The project included several elements aimed at keeping citizens informed and provided opportunity for public participation.

Early in the plan development process the project purpose and objectives, as initially identified, were reviewed to ensure that all relevant issues were considered. Involvement of affected property owners, merchants and local residents in this early review process, helped to confirm the project purpose and objectives, and identified additional issues of importance.

A variety of methods were used to convey information to the public and create opportunities to contribute to the process. In addition to public focus group meetings at key points during the planning process, an information document was prepared to explain the project and outline the study purpose and objectives. To communicate information, report on the status of the project, and to solicit input, a newsletter/questionnaire was distributed to some 12,000

Figure A:  
Downtown and Surrounding Area



property owners. Information was also distributed through various other means, such as the City's web site, media coverage, and through the communication networks of other interest groups such as Manhattan Main Street.

The citizens participation program also attempted to reach specific interest groups. A mailing list was developed with names and addresses of all citizens that inquired about, or expressed an interest in, the planning of the downtown area. They were provided with notices of public meetings and other relevant information. Focus group meetings were held to get specific input on issues dealing with downtown housing, and those affecting downtown merchants and businesses. Third grade students from the Lee Elementary School participated by identifying the types of uses that they would like to see downtown.

Staff from the Community Development Department made presentations on the Downtown Tomorrow project to citizens and civic groups.

The draft alternatives, and preferred implementation strategies for achieving the agreed-to project objectives, were presented to the public through an open house forum.

### **Plan Objectives**

This section defines the results that are expected, and describes the scope and limits of the plan.

#### General Objectives

1. Establish a public/private partnership for the oversight, development and implementation of the plan.
2. Formulate planning principles and design guidelines for a sustainable downtown.
3. Identify and prioritize programs, projects and opportunities for the downtown area.
4. Formulate plans and programs for redevelopment, revitalization, restoration and preservation projects in the downtown area.
5. Gain broad based community support and endorsement from the Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board and City Commission for the Plan.

#### Specific Objectives

1. Identify potential redevelopment projects in the Tax Increment Finance District.
2. Coordinate and merge the Tax Increment Finance District project initiatives with other downtown redevelopment projects.
3. Functionally incorporate the historic Union Pacific Depot into the downtown, and occupy the structure with an appropriate use.
4. Identify public use alternatives for the Riley County Jail Site (600 Colorado Street).
5. Improve public facilities in the downtown.
6. Create an attractive gateway to the city and the downtown area.
7. Functionally link the downtown and surrounding historic, recreational and open space features.

## *Downtown Tomorrow*

8. Encourage residential growth in and around the downtown area.
9. Reassess the boundaries of commercial development.
10. Reassess the different zoning districts within the downtown study area.
11. Assess the need for development and redevelopment design standards in the downtown.
12. Analyze and improve traffic and pedestrian access and movement.
13. Establish a program to promote and market the downtown and its amenities and features.
14. Encourage commercial and office growth through policies and programs which offer incentives to invest and locate downtown.

## **Financing Tools**

### **Capital Improvements Program**

The City's Capital Improvements Plan establishes priorities and scheduling of capital improvements over a six year period. This reflects the City's vision for future capital improvements and funding sources. The capital improvement usually involves an investment in land, buildings, roads or other public works which produce public services or benefits. The City of Manhattan's plan also includes expenditures for large, long-lasting pieces of equipment and studies or surveys done by consultants. Funding decisions for individual projects rest with the City Commission, and priorities still have to be determined through the annual budgeting process.

### **Tax Increment Financing**

#### **Tax Increment Finance District**

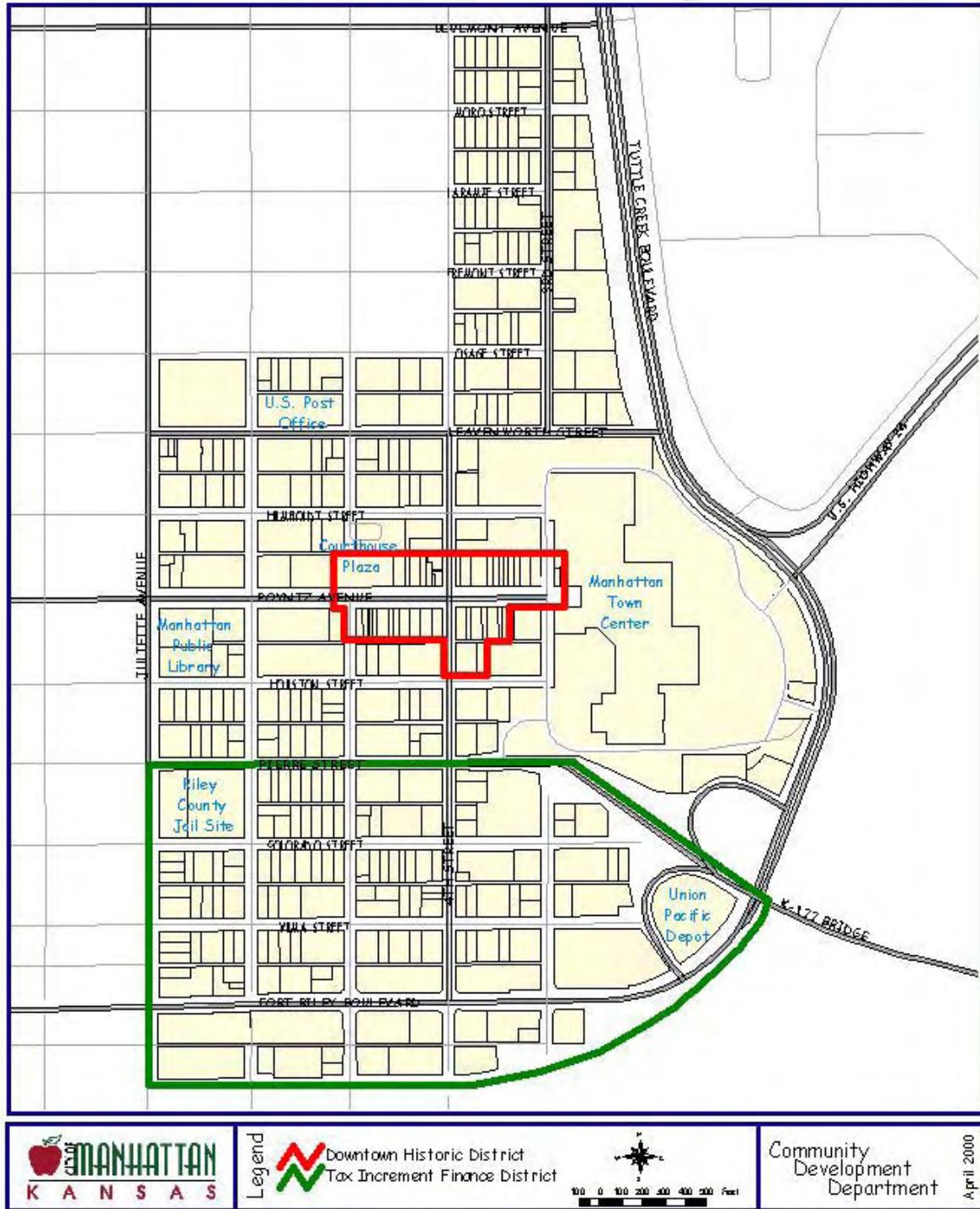
The Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District is located in the southeastern portion of the city (Figure B). The exact borders are Pierre Street on the north, Juliette Avenue on the west, the Union Pacific railroad tracks on the south and Fort Riley Boulevard on the east.

This area was chosen because there are a number of properties within these boundaries that are still undeveloped or substantially underdeveloped. In addition to the potential for redevelopment the strategic location of this area, adjacent to the downtown core and the previous redevelopment district, is also very important.

#### **Tax Increment Financing(TIF)**

This is a financing tool created by State Statute to assist in redevelopment activities. TIF provides for City financing of site acquisition and certain public improvements in a redevelopment district to complement investment by a private developer in the district, which will result in increased economic activity and tax revenue from the redevelopment. The public investment in a project is recovered from the stream of future increased property tax revenue in the redevelopment district.

### Figure B: Downtown Tomorrow Study Area



**Tax Increment Financing(TIF)**

An increment (increase over a base value) in real estate taxes is generated from a defined geographic area (Redevelopment or Tax Increment Financing District). Upon establishment of a TIF or Redevelopment District, the total assessed value of all taxable real estate within the district is determined. This valuation is designated as the base. Property taxes attributable to the district's base are collected annually and distributed by the County Treasurer to the appropriate city, county or school district and any other applicable taxing jurisdiction in the same manner as the other property taxes. Every year, reevaluation of property occurs, resulting in a natural increase in property values. The increase over base is known as the increment. Upon the establishment of a Redevelopment District, the increment is captured by the City and utilized to fund various redevelopment projects within the District. This special fund can be used for the payment of the cost of the redevelopment project, including the payment of principal and interest on any special obligation bonds or full faith and credit tax increment bonds issued to finance such projects.

A redevelopment plan has to be developed for each of the redevelopment project areas including a feasibility study. On adoption of a redevelopment plan the City may, under certain conditions, acquire property which it considers necessary in order to implement the redevelopment plan. Any such property may be leased or sold to a developer in accordance with the redevelopment plan. Tax Increment Funding may be applied towards:

- Acquisition of property within the project area;
- Payment of relocation assistance;
- Site preparation;
- Sanitary and storm sewers and lift stations;
- Drainage conduits, channels and levees;
- Street grading, paving, graveling, macadamizing, curbing, guttering and surfacing;
- Street lighting fixtures, connection and facilities;
- Underground gas, water, heating, and electrical services and connections located within the public right-of-way;
- Sidewalks, and pedestrian underpasses or overpasses;
- Drives and driveway approaches located within public right-of-way;
- Water mains and extensions;
- Plazas and arcades;
- Parking facilities
- Landscaping and planting, fountains, shelters, benches, sculptures, lighting, decorations and similar amenities; and
- All related expenses to redevelop and finance the redevelopment project..

Financing is not allowed to be used for the construction of buildings or other structures to be owned by any developer.

**Neighborhood Revitalization Act**

In 1994, the Kansas Neighborhood Revitalization Act (KSA 12-17, 114) was adopted. This statute enables cities to designate neighborhood revitalization areas within which property owners may receive property tax rebates. Rebates may be granted for all or a portion of the incremental increase in property taxes paid as a result of higher assessed valuation due to improvements made to the property. The basic intent of the tax rebate program is to encourage new private capital investments in areas of the city facing physical deterioration, population loss and economic decline - investments that otherwise might not occur.

**Neighborhood Revitalization Act**

In structuring any type of economic incentive program under this act, the first step is to identify the specific goals and objectives that the community wishes to accomplish. In general, communities that have used this tool to encourage reinvestment in neighborhoods, have used the following criteria to initiate this type of program:

- Designate a revitalization area that show signs of physical deterioration and economic decline and therefore warrants community assistance to regain vitality;
- To preserve the community's heritage and culture so as to enhance the quality of life for the current and future generations;
- Create a positive environment for population growth as well as business expansion in order to maintain the balance needed for vibrant neighborhoods; and
- Encourage private investment in business activities which strengthen the local economy and create viable employment opportunities for neighborhood residents.

Revitalization programs are scheduled to run for a specific period of time (normally 3 to 5 years) and approved proposals are eligible to receive tax rebates for 10 years. In addition to meeting specific eligibility requirements minimum investments for residential and commercial properties are specified as a rule to qualify for tax rebates (\$5,000 for residential and \$10,000 for commercial). The taxpayer is eligible for a rebate on the increased taxes paid as a result of improvements made to an eligible structure. The percentage of the increased taxes which is returned to the taxpayer is established by the governing body.

## **PLAN PROPOSALS**

This section of the Downtown Tomorrow Plan introduces the context within which the different development options for Downtown Manhattan was considered. This is followed by specific plan proposals for the study area. For the purpose of discussion and recommendation the downtown study area has been divided into smaller sub-areas that generally have associated issues and opportunities.

### **Planning Context**

#### **Sustainable Downtown**

Planning for a vibrant downtown is a major step towards sustainable development in a community. Encouraging appropriate commercial and office investments in downtown rather than on the community fringe, fosters sustainable land use and use of public infrastructure. This awareness was the basis for the visionary decisions made by the community during the late 1970's and early 1980's, to commit to the redevelopment of the Manhattan downtown. This resolve has resulted in:



***Poyntz Avenue***

- Adaptive use of existing buildings and infrastructure;
- Preservation of historic buildings and neighborhoods;
- Preservation of prime farmland;
- Deferring or eliminating the need to extend infrastructure; and
- Fostering high density commercial and residential development rather than lower density development at the fringe of the community.

#### **Unique Experience**

Many downtown areas have experienced decline in recent years as a result of competing shopping centers and changing consumer habits. Manhattan's downtown and its continued viability and ability to compete with new suburban commercial centers has long been a concern in the community. Physical barriers and geographic constraints have had a major influence on Manhattan's urban structure. This has led to an asymmetric development pattern, with the center of residential gravity shifting to the west relative to downtown. For this reason there is, and will continue to be, increased pressure for commercial development closer to the residential areas in the western part of the community.

Rather than putting all effort into strategies to protect the downtown from the potential threat of competing suburban commercial development, the adopted approach was to recognize that the

## *Downtown Tomorrow*

pressures for suburban commercial development will remain and that the focus should be on a strategy for the continued vitality of downtown. This recognizes the inherent opportunities and advantages of the downtown and concentrates on building and strengthening these qualities to create a destination that is special and provides a singular experience not provided by suburban commercial centers.

Downtown Manhattan provides a broad mix and range of goods and services. Its unique historical character, the presence of the Manhattan Town Center, and its accessibility at the convergence of five major roads (K-177, US Highway 24, Fort Riley Boulevard, Tuttle Creek Boulevard and Poyntz Avenue) give it a distinctive advantage over any other commercial center in the community. People enjoy shopping in unique environments that offer value, quality, and a high level of personal service - assets that downtown Manhattan has. Its traditional buildings make it special. The degree of craft inherent in the downtown buildings represents a level of quality unmatched elsewhere in the community. And, because its commercial buildings reflect the community's history, the traditional downtown environment makes shoppers feel at home. By taking advantage of these characteristics, the revitalization program should position the downtown as a shopping environment that offers qualities and services no suburban shopping center can provide.

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*"A downtown's sense of place was not created at a single point in time. It has evolved to represent multiple generations." Kent Robertson, Main Street News, September 1999.*

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Manhattan needs to reaffirm its commitment to the historic and economic core of the community. Public and private resources should be brought together to develop creative strategies for revitalization and to build a positive identity for the downtown. Identifying, and creating a unique and realistic economic niche for which the downtown can become known for, and through which it can successfully co-exist with commercial giants, should be the economic goal of the enhancement effort.

### *Barriers and Opportunities*

The community, as well as business and political leaders, recognize that outward growth threatens the health of downtowns, which is critical to the overall economic vitality of the city. Communities can capture the economic efficiencies of redeveloping areas with established infrastructure, rather than building new infrastructure required to develop in new locations. Businesses are able to gain competitive advantage by developing in downtown. Location advantages and ease of access to major thoroughfares, goods and services, provides not only opportunities for businesses, but also creates a desirable housing environment that does not exist in any other part of the city. The downtown is particularly suitable for the special housing needs of those who have limited mobility, and need to be close to a broad range of services.

In most cases the balance is still shifted towards new development areas because of the complexity of development in established communities. Barriers to redevelopment in downtown are a perceived lack of timeliness and predictability of development approvals in already

developed areas and anticipated delays caused by having to deal with surrounding property owners.

Another barrier to locating business and housing downtown is the difficulty of acquiring and assembling suitable land parcels, buildings and parking that meet business needs. Often land parcels are fragmented and owned by multiple public and private owners. The additional problems of asbestos, lead, and other contamination can make business location on existing urban sites difficult or unprofitable. Failure to maintain existing infrastructure and the uncertainty of the cost of retrofitting these areas present a further disincentive.

The City and its public partners can do a great deal to help overcome these real or perceived barriers. Providing such benefits as accelerated zoning approvals, and delivery of infrastructure, as well as financial and other support for the location of a business and facility, can serve as an inducement to locate in downtown.

## **Design, Pedestrian and Transportation Improvements**

### *Gateway and Streetscape*

The overall improvement of access and visual quality will determine the ultimate character of the environment of downtown Manhattan. The approaches and gateways to the downtown area are extremely important in providing an opportunity to announce the arrival into and a lasting image of an exceptional downtown environment. Gateways should convey to residents, visitors and travelers alike that they are entering into a very special part of the community. These areas should be treated with a program for signs, landscaping, banners, lighting, and architectural elements to enhance a sense of place.

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*“Signage systems are assuming new roles in downtowns nationwide. Once viewed exclusively as a navigational aid, ‘wayfinding’ programs now are seen as a way to market an area’s resources, alter negative perceptions, evoke a sense of a downtown’s history and character, and improve the streetscape”* Way to Go, Karen Finucan, Planning, American Planning Association, November 1999.

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“Identity” streets are the streets within the downtown area that announce the downtown commercial/office district. These streets should serve as the primary paths for activities and vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle movement (Figure C).

## *Downtown Tomorrow*

Poyntz Avenue has served as Manhattan's "Main Street" throughout the City's history. The section of Poyntz Avenue within the study area includes many of the most significant structures and landmarks of Manhattan. They include the Wareham Opera House, the Riley County Courthouse, St. Paul's Episcopal Church and First United Methodist Church. The Manhattan Town Center anchors the east end of the corridor while the County Courthouse, Annex building, and Courthouse Plaza serve as a central landmark to this area. The Downtown Historic District is located east of 5th Street along both sides of Poyntz Avenue. The Manhattan State Bank (Otto Building) at the northwest corner of 4th Street and Poyntz Avenue is on the Register of Historic Kansas Places. The Carnegie Library at the corner of 5th Street and Poyntz Avenue is on the National Register of Historic Places.



***County Courthouse & Wareham Building***

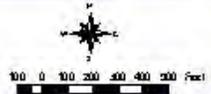
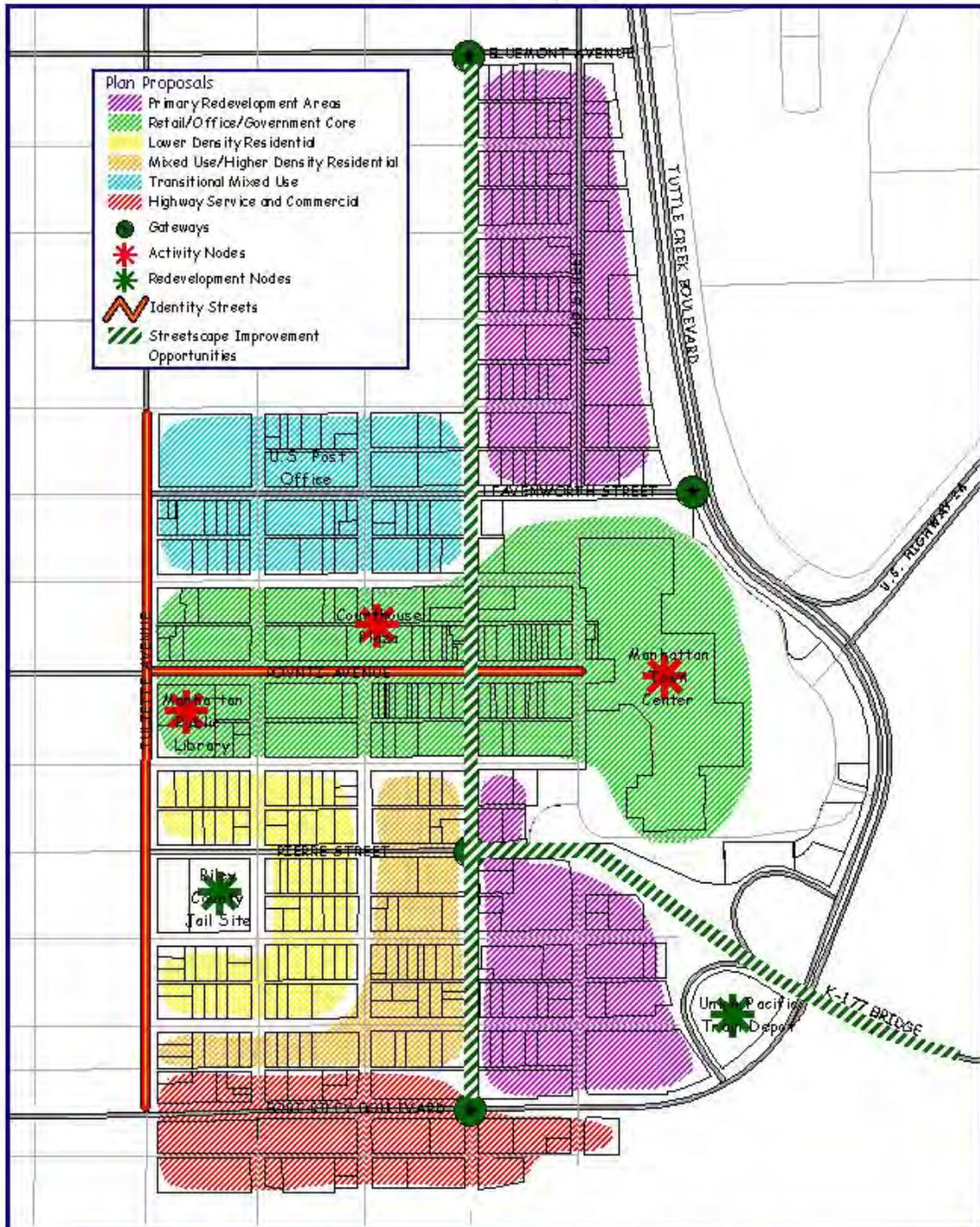
The *Poyntz Avenue Corridor District Plan*, adopted on February 1, 1994 was initiated by the Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board, following the adoption of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan in 1991. *"The intent of this District Plan was to analyze the Corridor's past and present conditions to determine its strengths and weaknesses, and identify actions which may promote and build upon positive features of the corridor."* The plan was intended to provide a more focused set of goals, objectives and implementation strategies for the Poyntz Avenue Corridor.

The perception is that parking is insufficient if it is not available in front of the building to be visited. However, longer walking distances appear to be acceptable at shopping centers. Visually stimulating surroundings between parking and destination could ease the demand for directly adjacent parking.

In addition to the public streets, larger public open spaces and plazas provide visual relief, a place for vegetation, and a place to gather for events and celebrations. Special walkways, such as alleys and promenades create public-realm open space opportunities.

Alleyways and rear areas could be cleaned up to serve as pedestrian connections between businesses and short term parking areas. Rear entrances to stores and shops could be improved. Although these rear areas must continue to accommodate service vehicles and parking, minor landscaping, lighting, graphics, and streetscape improvements could make them highly usable for pedestrians.

### Figure C: Plan Concepts



Community Development Department  
April 2000

### **The Poyntz Avenue Corridor District Plan**

The Poyntz Avenue Corridor District Plan “Action Statements” applicable to that section of Poyntz Avenue within the study area:

- Continue to utilize Poyntz Avenue as a focus for civic and cultural community events including holiday decorations, parades and game day flags.
- Review the Sign Ordinance as it affects the C-4, Central Business District. (Consider encouraging ground signs as opposed to pole signs.)
- Encourage residential uses where appropriate.
- Explore the issue of off-street parking for residential uses in the Central Business District and determine the appropriate number of stalls per dwelling unit and investigate parking strategies.
- Continue enforcement of zoning and building codes and identify resources which can assist property owners with maintenance and repairs.
- Monitor pedestrian, vehicular and bicycle circulation patterns. Identify changes and plan accordingly.
- As infrastructure improvements are made, require compliance with all State and Federal accessibility standards.
- Develop guidelines for landscaping representative of the different use areas along the Corridor.
- Continue tree planting along the Corridor to ensure species diversity.
- Continue street tree management activities along the Corridor.
- Identify and conserve locally significant areas.
- Encourage property owners to repair sidewalks where needed.
- Develop recommendations for a coordinated streetscape, for each of the five sub-areas, which consider the integration of trees, sidewalks, special effect lighting, landscaping and other applicable elements.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Streetscape improvements especially at the gateways not only invite potential visitors into the downtown but also create a lasting impression of the community. The City’s *Comprehensive Parks Master Plan* contains recommendations for improvements to primary entryways and entry corridors to the city. In particular it recommends improvements to the K-177 Bridge Area. In addition to providing a positive first impression of the community, streetscape improvements reflecting a particular design theme, can serve to define the downtown area.



***Sign Confusion - K-177 Gateway to Manhattan***

## ***Downtown Tomorrow***

Poyntz Avenue continues to be Manhattan’s Main Street. The Poyntz Avenue Corridor is the focal point of many of Manhattan’s professional and governmental offices. The corridor also provides locations for religious, educational and cultural life, and serves as a place for special events and the City’s route for parades.

As part of the 1983 Central Business District Redevelopment Plan, a Benefit District was formed to complete streetscape improvements along Poyntz Avenue and adjacent side streets. These improvements were along Poyntz Avenue from 6th Street to 3rd Street, and one block north and south on 3rd and 4th Streets. The project included street trees, lights, streetscape benches, trash receptacles, flower urns and brick paving of sidewalks. The Public Plaza at the east end of Poyntz Avenue at the entrance to the Manhattan Town Center was created to “*bring the city’s rejuvenated streetscape right to the mall’s front door. It provides a unique public space for community activities as well as a focal point for the existing downtown and new development*”.

This Plaza serves to anchor the downtown and accommodate community events (the most notable being the annual *Purple Power Play on Poyntz*). The use of common design elements help to successfully unify this area. Opportunities should be seized to further strengthen the role of the Plaza as a major link between the Manhattan Town Center and the Poyntz Avenue businesses. The Manhattan Town Center has significant pedestrian traffic which needs to be encouraged to walk out the west entrance and explore the public plaza and Poyntz Avenue. This could be achieved through the



***Manhattan Town Center Plaza***

introduction of design features which emphasizes pedestrian comfort, access and movement, and creates a more seamless transition from the Manhattan Town Center, out across the plaza and down Poyntz Avenue. Covered walkways, outdoor café seating with parasols, street cart vendors and benches on the public plaza would benefit both the Poyntz Avenue corridor as well as the Manhattan Town Center.

In addition to Poyntz Avenue, the 4th Street corridor, from Fort Riley Boulevard to Bluemont Avenue can become a primary identity street in the downtown area. The streetscape program should be extended along this corridor to create a complementary and integrated system.

Creating the pedestrian friendly environment for all ages throughout the downtown area, such as adding trees and some landscaping in these areas, will not only enhance the downtown experience but will also encourage people to relax, linger and spend more time in the area, and use more downtown activities and services. Improving public property, such as the enhancement of the public parking areas, could set an example for the private sector.

***It is recommended that:***

- ***An urban design plan be prepared, combined with a gateway element and streetscape program;***
- ***Design features be introduced to the Public Plaza which emphasize pedestrian comfort, access and movement, and creates a more seamless transition from the Manhattan Town Center, out across the plaza and along Poyntz Avenue; and***
- ***A streetscape plan be developed for improvements along 4th Street and those sections of Pierre and Leavenworth Streets that function as major entry points to the downtown area.***

*Traffic Movement*

Traffic volumes and limited access at the eastern termination of Poyntz Avenue at 3rd Street do not justify a traffic signal at this intersection. Pedestrian and automobile traffic presently have to wait unnecessarily at this traffic signal. Stop signs, with clearly marked pedestrian crossings or textured paving, could improve both pedestrian and vehicular traffic movement at this intersection. Clearly marked or textured paving should also be considered for all of the major pedestrian crossings along Poyntz Avenue to emphasize the pedestrian element of the streetscape.

Traffic movement along Poyntz Avenue, between 6th Street and 3rd Street, both westward and eastward along the right hand lanes, are restricted. This is due to the conflict between traffic movement along these lanes and the diagonal parking spaces along this corridor. Reducing the number of traffic lanes along Poyntz Avenue from four to three will not only create a safer driving environment but will also create opportunities to further enhance the streetscape.

*Conclusion and Recommendation*

Replacing the existing traffic signal at the intersection of Poyntz Avenue and 3rd Street with three way stop signs, with pedestrian crossings that are clearly marked or with textured paving, should be considered. This could help to improve both automobile and pedestrian movement at this intersection.

The potential to reduce Poyntz Avenue to three lanes, and to restripe the angled parking between 3rd Street and Juliette Avenue should be further studied. The results could increase the parking supply and make it more pedestrian friendly, without significantly affecting the traffic flow on Poyntz Avenue.

To maximize parking opportunities in the downtown and Aggieville, the *Manhattan Area Transportation Strategy: Connecting to 2020* suggests the implementation of a shuttle service. The study concludes that “*Service for the two areas would need to be convenient - every five to ten minutes - to allow people to park in one location and be provided transportation throughout downtown or Aggieville areas.*” To accommodate a shuttle service or any future public transit system, an Urban Design Plan for the downtown must make provision for a suitably designed, and centrally located, passenger pickup and drop-off facility.

***It is recommended that:***

- ***The traffic signal at Poyntz and 3rd Street be replaced with stop signs;***
- ***The number of traffic lanes along Poyntz Avenue, from 6th Street to 3rd Street, be reduced from four to three, and that the center lane serve as a left turn lane; and***
- ***A shuttle bus service and passenger pickup and drop-off facility be developed to provide greater access to the downtown businesses.***

*Pedestrian and Bicycle Access*

While vehicular access and circulation within downtown is important, it is equally, if not more important, to encourage and get people to walk between activities and services. The improvements to the sidewalks along Poyntz Avenue, as part of the Downtown Redevelopment Project streetscape improvements, have helped to affirm its status as Manhattan's Main Street.

With anticipated development and redevelopment within the study and surrounding area, several specific sidewalk improvements will be required. Although most of the sidewalks in downtown are in good to fair condition, there are sections of sidewalk along Pierre and Colorado Streets and in the two-block area between 4th and 5th Streets, from Colorado to Fort Riley Boulevard, that are in poor condition. Pedestrian access to the Manhattan Town Center from the area immediately to the south and east of 4th Street is limited due to traffic volume along Pierre Street and the lack of pedestrian crossings and connections in this area. These areas have a high potential for future development and redevelopment. As an incentive to such development or redevelopment, there should be a commitment to the improvement of pedestrian access and walkways.

The extension of sidewalks through the use of textured surfaces at major intersections would help to emphasize the pedestrian element of the downtown streetscape. Walkways, connecting rear block parking with the main commercial thoroughfares, should form an integral part of a streetscape improvement program. Encouraging walking from more distant parking, and making this a pleasant experience, will help to increase walking trips exposing a greater number of downtown businesses to potential clients.

The closure of 3rd Street at Leavenworth Street, together with landscape features introduced at this location, has limited pedestrian access to the Manhattan Town Center. Improvements at this location and/or 4th and Leavenworth Street would contribute to making the downtown generally more accessible to pedestrians from the north.

The City's *Bicycle Master Plan* recommends that a series of interconnected bicycle routes be implemented. In addition to Poyntz Avenue being designated a bicycle route, 4th Street is recommended as a north-south route as is Juliette Avenue to provide access to the Linear Park Trail. It is proposed that these streets be retro-fitted and made convenient for cyclists.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Encouraging people to walk between downtown activities and services is an important objective in improving general pedestrian access. Bicycle access to the downtown provides an alternative to automobiles and supports the goal of establishing a multi-modal transportation system for Manhattan.

***It is recommended that:***

- ***A system of downtown linear walkways and pocket-parks be developed with landscaping and rest-areas;***
- ***Funds be committed to the development and improvement of pedestrian walkways, sidewalks, and alleyways which connect rear block parking areas to the main commercial thoroughfares;***
- ***Sidewalk improvements in downtown be added to the list of projects that will be funded through the Capital Improvements Program established to fill in sidewalk gaps in the City;***
- ***All the major pedestrian crossings along Poyntz Avenue emphasize the pedestrian component of the streetscape through clearly marked or textured paving;***
- ***Pedestrian access to the Manhattan Town Center be improved at 3rd and 4th Streets at Leavenworth Street, and from the area south of Pierre Street;***
- ***The establishment of rear entrances to commercial and office buildings be encouraged behind Poyntz Avenue for ease of access from parking lots;***
- ***The City's Bicycle Master Plan recommendations to develop north-south bicycle routes along 4th Street and Juliette Avenue be implemented as part of any future street improvement program; and***
- ***Bicycle racks be provided at common destination points.***

Parking

Respondents to the Community Survey for downtown identified the lack of convenient parking as a concern. In contrast, a significant number of respondents also identified the availability and convenience of parking as a positive aspect of the downtown. This perception, that parking is readily available, is based on present condition and does not necessarily take into account parking needs created by new development.

*The Manhattan Transportation Strategy: Connecting to 2020*, conclusions regarding parking in the downtown reflect the present situation, and states in part that ...*"future conditions in the downtown area require further analysis of land use, zoning, economic forecasts and parking access to determine the most appropriate parking demand estimates."* This Strategy identified the highest parking deficit within the area that the Downtown Tomorrow Plan is identifying, as the area with the greatest potential for redevelopment.

There is evidence that the lack of parking presents a serious disincentive to redevelopment in the downtown. Not only does the provision of adequate parking affect the ability of retail businesses to establish in the downtown, but more importantly, it is a key ingredient to the success of office development. Office development, which requires substantial parking, adds a significant number of workers to the downtown area and results in many spin-off retail and service demands. Due

in part to the lack of parking, downtown has been unable to realize the benefits of office development which, in recent times, have preferred to locate or relocate to suburban areas.

**Manhattan Transportation Strategy: Connecting to 2020 project**  
**Downtown Parking Assessment.**

The study conclusions and recommendations stated in part:

“The growth in parking demand for...the downtown business district(s) is dependent on a number of factors. These include the increase/decrease of occupancy rate, growth of...downtown businesses, availability, access and cost of parking. The key to forecasting the future parking demand and corresponding adequacy is the availability of land use, parking and economic data that would affect the growth of...the downtown area(s). Collection of this data would be essential for programming any future parking facilities or policies. One of the critical issues is the willingness of the City and...downtown communities to fund the recommended improvements to achieve the level of services for the parking customers.”

“The most efficient method to provide additional parking within limited areas is constructing parking structures. This allows a large concentration of parking to serve not only an area experiencing parking deficits, but provide parking for a large area that may be fully built out. Careful consideration is required in locating these facilities due to their 30 to 50 year design lives.”

“Cost are the highest through the development of structured parking. The cost per space is typically \$8,000 to \$10,000. For the 500-space example the cost would be approximately \$4.0 to \$5.0 million. Operation and maintenance cost are approximately \$250 per space per year.”

*Conclusion and Recommendation*

The provision of parking in close proximity to the South 4th Street corridor, the area that is considered to have the highest potential for redevelopment, needs to be an integral part of the redevelopment mix for the downtown. The provision of parking presents an ideal opportunity for public investment in the redevelopment of the downtown. Assisting in the construction of off-street parking through the creation of benefit districts and the application of Tax Increment Financing can help to offset the cost of providing adequate parking for downtown redevelopment.

Consideration should be given to the possible provision of strategically located parking lots that are well landscaped or a multi-level parking facility that incorporates some retail space. The needs and preferred location should be determined through the proposed market analysis and urban design plan taking into account the development proposals of the Downtown Tomorrow Plan. Parking facilities should preferably be provided in association with downtown redevelopment projects.

***It is recommended that:***

- ***The future anticipated parking needs of downtown be determined, taking into account the development proposals contained in this Plan; and***
- ***A public/private partnership be considered for the provision of parking.***

**Downtown Promotion**

Respondents to the downtown Survey expressed overwhelming satisfaction and support of the previous physical and streetscape improvements as well as the historic preservation and restoration efforts that have taken place downtown.

The *Downtown Historic District* is comprised of approximately 9.95 acres in the Central Business District of Manhattan. The District runs along Poyntz Avenue from approximately 3rd to 5th Street. The alleys between Poyntz Avenue and Humboldt Street bound the District on the north and south, except for the Marshall Theatre and the Barber Building which front on Houston. The architecture within the District consist of buildings mostly dating from the late 1870's to the late 1920's.

In 1982 the City adopted two ordinances which address historic preservation issues. Both were adopted as a part of the activities connected with the Downtown Redevelopment Project. The first ordinance established a Historic Districts Review Board and a process for designating local landmarks and historic districts. The second ordinance established the Downtown Historic District. In 1999, an *Historic Preservation Ordinance (Ordinance No. 6065)* was adopted to strengthen the City's historic preservation activities.

**Historic Preservation Ordinance (Ordinance No. 6065)**

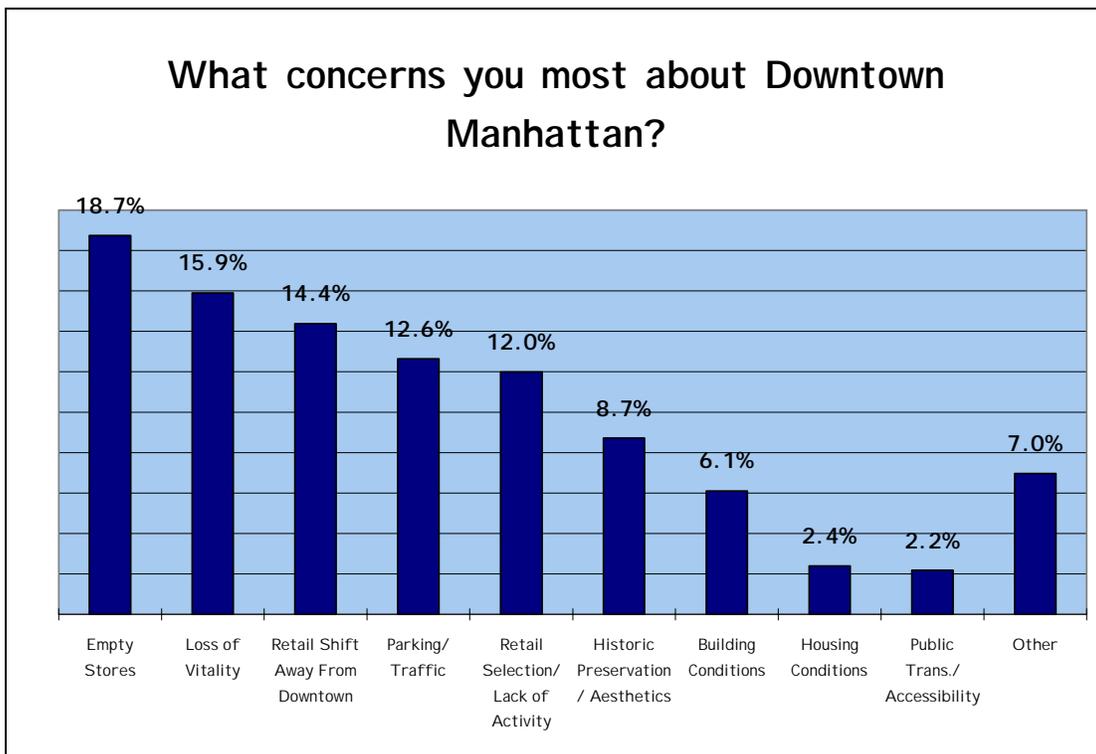
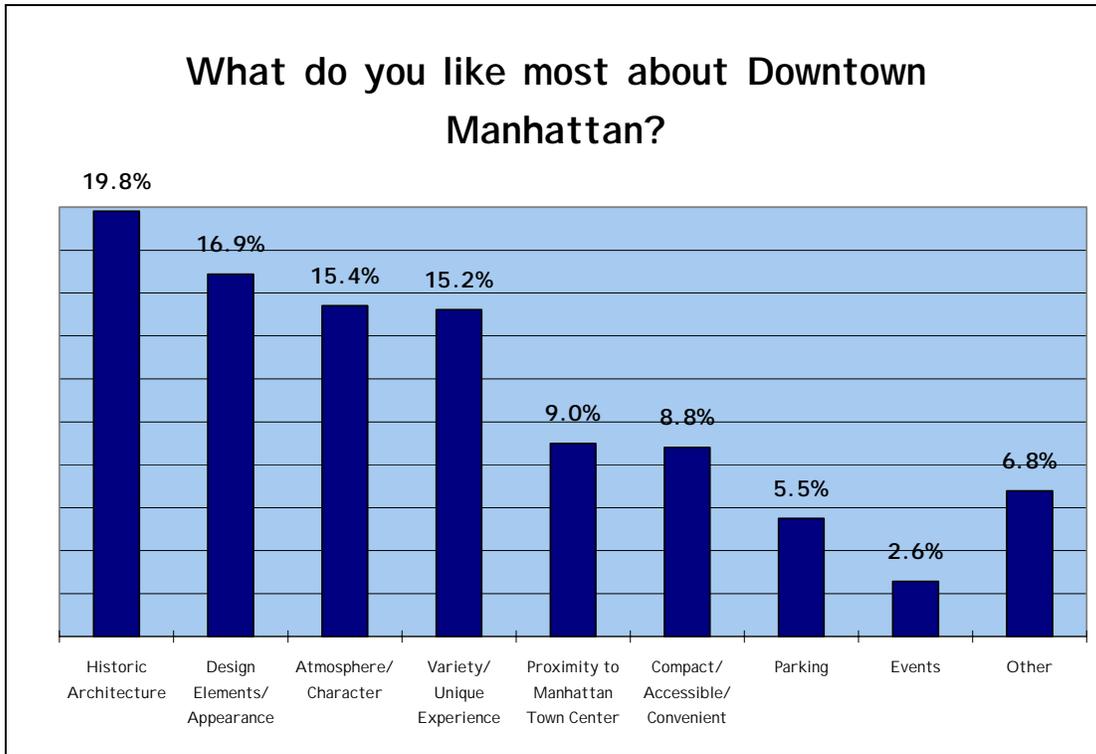
The Ordinance renamed the Historic Districts Review Board the Historic Resources Board and outlines responsibilities and procedures for its operation. It also provides a process for the designation of locally significant historic structures, sites and districts through a public process involving the Board and City Commission. The owner's consent is required before the designation process begins, although in the case of a District, the consent of the owners of 51% of the area in the proposed District is required.

Designation is established by an ordinance, which must identify significant historic features on the property. In the case of a District, this ordinance must also reference specific design standards or criteria to be used for reviews of future improvements to the property.

The Preservation Ordinance also establishes a process for the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness before any improvements can be made to significant historic features on the structure, site or buildings within a historic district. The Certificate is issued by the Historic Resources Board and the review is based on standards listed in the Preservation Ordinance, or the design criteria established in the designation ordinance.

The existing Downtown Historic District remains unchanged. Advisory reviews, for projects on contributing structures, continue to be conducted by the Board.

## Downtown Tomorrow Community Survey



February 1999  
Community Development Department

## *Downtown Tomorrow*

Clearly, the previous Downtown Redevelopment Project has established a sound foundation, stabilizing the downtown, and creating a favorable environment for growth and development. *Manhattan Main Street* reports low vacancy in the downtown along Poyntz Avenue. In the Community Survey of the Downtown Tomorrow Study, respondents provided a range of activities and physical improvements that they would like to see. Specifically, respondents are looking for a greater number and variety of activities, including evening activities. This sentiment was also echoed by visitors that were surveyed for the *Tourism and Convention Center Hotel Assessment* in 1993.

A permanent organization, to promote downtown as well as to develop activities and programs that would draw greater numbers of people to this area, is a prerequisite and obvious solution to the expressed needs of the community and visitors. Traditionally the promotion of downtown has been the responsibility of the *Manhattan Main Street* organization. The *Manhattan Main Street Program* operates as a not-for-profit volunteer organization and is a participating member of the *National Main Street Program* developed by the *National Trust for Historic Preservation*. Many towns, cities and neighborhoods have taken part and benefited from Main Street programs and its *Four Point Approach* of: *design, organization, promotion and economic restructuring*. New investment and reinvestment in physical improvements due to Main Street programs, have resulted in a net gain of new jobs and new businesses.

The Manhattan Main Street program has been functioning with limited financial resources that has allowed for only very basic and limited programming initiatives. Organization is the key to a successful downtown revitalization program. Establishing a solid organizational base, which meets the need and enjoys the support of the entire downtown business community, should be the foremost goal.

### *Conclusion and Recommendation*

Downtown has a very special significance to the people of Manhattan. This is supported by the comments in the Community Survey of the Downtown Tomorrow Study, as well as in the emotional responses to possible threats to the downtown by new outlying retail commercial development proposals. The current growth policies as well as statements in the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan recognize downtown Manhattan as the primary commercial center for the community. Ideally one would like to have the downtown to be fully self-supportive, but like in many other communities, downtown remains an endangered space that requires special support and measures to keep it viable and vital.

Out of 19 Kansas communities participating in the Kansas Main Street Program, Manhattan, together with Wamego and Clay Center are the only three cities which do not receive direct financial support from the city government. In view of the economic, cultural, historic, and political importance placed on downtowns special financial support of a formal organization, which represents and promotes the downtown, is justifiable and necessary. This organization must consist of a partnership of business, civic, residential and public sector leadership. Manhattan Main Street was created as an organization with this objective in mind.

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*“The partnership must raise a level of funds which allows the business plan to be implemented in a timely and quality fashion. Funds must come from a variety of sources in both the private and public sector and must be raised community wide - and not raised solely from Downtown interests.” How to Revitalize Your Downtown, 1999 National League of Cities/HyettPalma, Inc.*

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Revitalizing an existing organization such as Manhattan Main Street, would seem to be the most logical and preferred option. This organization, which has been largely dependent on volunteers, is in great need of a secured source of funds mainly to pay for full time staff. As in other Kansas communities, the director might be a city staff position. To revitalize Manhattan Main Street or, alternatively, to establish a new representative organization for downtown, should be a collective decision of the downtown partners.

***It is recommended that:***

- ***There be a long-term commitment and allocation of public resources to establish and sustain an organization which represents and promotes the downtown;***
- ***Incentives be established to retain and enhance existing downtown businesses, and attract new businesses; and***
- ***The historic character of Main Street be further enhanced and expanded to serve as a feature attraction to downtown.***

**Market Analysis**

There are two ways of getting more people into downtown. The most result oriented option is one where the emphasis is on promotion and the establishment of special event programs that are aimed at attracting people into downtown. The second more long-term and sustainable solution is to create increased opportunities for people to live, work, shop and be entertained in the downtown. Starting the downtown enhancement efforts with a market analysis is therefore absolutely essential.

The previous Redevelopment Project has led to significant physical improvements in the downtown area. Unfortunately the “Field of Dreams Approach”, which centers on the belief that a community only needs to undertake physical improvements for customers and investors to flock to the area, has been proven to be a myth. Physical improvements, made in isolation, do not result in renewed vitality. Physical improvements must be undertaken in conjunction with economic improvements for the revitalization efforts to succeed. Enhancement efforts must be market-driven rather than physically driven.

The elements for a successful and vibrant downtown include not only comprehensive transportation and pedestrian infrastructure, but also the right mix of office, retail, housing, entertainment, as well as activities and events such as the Farmer’s Market and Purple Power Play on Poyntz.

Understanding the customers and clients and understanding the other business forces with which the downtown businesses have to share the marketplace is key. Each initiative must be undertaken with an economic intent. There has to be a clear understanding of the economic

potential of downtown. This understanding is gained only through the completion of a market analysis. The market analysis will allow the identification of the specific actions necessary to revitalize the downtown and capture its identified market opportunities.

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*“We urge communities to begin their business improvements by doing a really good market research, by figuring out what the economic opportunities are for the district as a whole and pursuing those.” Kennedy Smith, Director of the National Main Street Center at the National Trust for the Historic Preservation, Washington, D.C.*

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### *Conclusion and Recommendation*

The most cost efficient way of ensuring a successful downtown revitalization program is through a strong, viable organization, combined with a clear, dynamic Urban Design Plan based on a comprehensive market analysis.

#### ***It is recommended that:***

- *A market analysis be undertaken for downtown; and*
- *A Urban Design Plan be developed based on a Downtown Market Analysis, as well as recommendations of this report and other relevant planning studies, such as Housing Manhattan: Planning for the Future, and the Manhattan Transportation Strategy: Connecting to 2020.*

### **Downtown Housing**

The Downtown Tomorrow Steering Committee and the community through a public participation process, identified housing as a key element of downtown revitalization. The current *Housing Manhattan* study also identified downtown housing as an area of special interest. In order to coordinate efforts, the observations and recommendations on housing made by the Downtown Tomorrow Study was considered in formulating the *Housing Manhattan* study recommendations.

Improving and stabilizing housing in existing downtown neighborhoods, and identifying and creating opportunities for new housing, is considered a high priority. In addition to stabilizing and improving the existing housing stock, housing opportunities in the downtown must be expanded. Due to its more compact urban form, downtown housing offers convenience and easy access to a wide variety of products and services. This makes it ideal for housing in general, and specifically for those with special housing needs and limited access to transportation. Creating opportunities for the greater integration of residential, commercial and office uses in downtown should be encouraged and supported. This will lead to an increase in pedestrian traffic, with a 24-hour presence of people in the area, improving the existing business environment, attracting new businesses, and providing greater security. This can be achieved through new mixed use developments and the conversion of the upper floors of commercial buildings into apartments. Retrofitting older commercial buildings, to comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the provision of parking will be important prerequisites to increasing the resident population of downtown.

Uncertainty about the long-term stability and future of downtown neighborhoods are considered an obstacle to housing development and restoration. The conversion of housing to multiple rental units, and infill redevelopment housing that is architecturally out of character with the existing housing stock, were specifically noted as factors that discourage investment in downtown housing. Difficulty in assembling land, that is sufficient in size to make it an economically viable project, also contributes to the reluctance to build homes in the downtown.



***Contrast between traditional and architecturally out of character infill housing***

In the Tax Increment Financing district, a commitment to allocating funding towards the provision and upgrading of services and infrastructure could serve to encourage housing development. Public/private partnerships could be useful in developing new housing, with the public role centered on improving the infrastructure. Owners of multiple residential lots are potential partners for the construction of new multiple family residential units. Such opportunities exist in the area to the west of 4th Street and on the south side of Yuma Street.

Stabilizing residential neighborhoods, by encouraging the restoration of the existing housing stock and the construction of infill housing that preserves and strengthens the architectural and historic context and integrity of the downtown, must be the keystone to any housing strategy. The redevelopment of the Riley County Jail site (600 Colorado Street) will be an important catalyst to the stabilization of the immediate neighborhood (Figure C). Many of the newer infill homes that are being introduced into downtown neighborhoods are architecturally out of character with the older more traditional homes of this area. To a great extent the residential character of the area surrounding the Riley County Jail site is still intact, with very few infill homes. Furthermore, there has been a trend to restore many of the homes in this neighborhood. This trend, and the potential for further restoration and harmonious infill redevelopment, should be encouraged.

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***“A new infill development is less likely to be successful if conditions in the surrounding neighborhood are not addressed. Code enforcement, low interest homeowner rehabilitation loans, streetscape improvements, and enhanced public services can stimulate a ripple effect that encourages private investment.” Nation’s Cities Weekly, November 15, 1999***

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*Conclusions and Recommendations*

The blocks between Pierre and Houston Streets from Juliette Avenue to 5th Street; the block between Colorado and Pierre from 5th to 6th Streets; and the block between Yuma and Colorado from Juliette Avenue to 6th Street have retained their earlier style, while only limited housing that is out of character has been introduced (Figure C). Many of the homes in this area have been or are being restored, or present additional opportunity for restoration. The Historic Preservation Ordinance provides opportunities for historic preservation in this area.

*It is recommended that:*

- *Private/public partnerships be considered for the development of new housing, with the public role centered on improving the infrastructure;*
- *Zoning changes to the Bulk Regulations of the R-M Four-Family Residential District or the introduction of a special overlay district should be considered to allow for reduced front yard setbacks;*
- *Funding be committed towards the upgrading of public services and infrastructure as an incentive to housing restoration and redevelopment;*
- *A pallet of design options for downtown housing be developed that would encourage housing restoration and construction that is sensitive to the architectural and historic context and integrity of these neighborhoods;*
- *Incentives to encourage the incorporation of quality design into the construction of new downtown infill housing be established (Neighborhood Revitalization Act and Historic Preservation Ordinance);*
- *The neighborhood surrounding the Riley County Jail Site property be consulted on the potential to designate portions of this area as an historic district;*
- *Housing development with increased density (duplexes, townhouses and courtyard apartments) be encouraged on the south side of Yuma Street, between 5th Street and Juliette Avenue, and integrated with new commercial development to the south along Fort Riley Boulevard; and*
- *A program with incentives be developed to encourage the residential use of the upper floors of commercial buildings (Neighborhood Revitalization Act).*

### **The 4th Street Corridor**

The 4th Street corridor forms a natural link between Fort Riley Boulevard in the south and Bluemont Avenue in the north providing access to the downtown and Poyntz Avenue from K-177, Fort Riley Boulevard and Tuttle Creek Boulevard (Figure C).



***South 3rd Street: Primary Redevelopment Area***

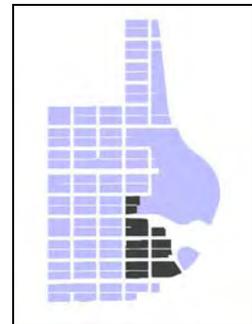


***4th Street Corridor - From Yuma Street***

### **South 4th Street (East Side)**

Due to its location and high visibility at the entrance to Manhattan, the east side of 4th Street is considered a prime future commercial/office redevelopment area. Residential development, as part of this mix, is more urgent on the west side of 4th Street as a transition between commercial/office and residential uses.

The scale and design of any redevelopment project in this area will be extremely important to ensure its integration with the overall downtown character and with the adjoining historic Union Pacific Depot. The design of buildings on both sides of the 4th Street should also be in harmony with the general character created along Poyntz Avenue.



The properties to the east of 3rd Street provide a singular opportunity to redevelop a relatively large area that is strategically located. This area is at the entrance to the Central Business

## *Downtown Tomorrow*

District, adjacent to Fort Riley Boulevard, and has high visibility from the K-177 highway. Also, there are relatively few property owners, with the major part of the land in single ownership. Redevelopment initiatives in this particular area would be a significant step in the revitalization of downtown and would encourage growth and change of not only the immediate area but also the whole 4th Street corridor. The city could play a proactive role by assisting in this process. An important first step following a market analysis and the preparation of an Urban Design Plan, would be to enter into discussions with the major land holders to explore possible options for redevelopment.

During the study process the development of a convention facility was raised several times as an option for the redevelopment of this area. A 1993 report, entitled *Tourism and Convention Center Hotel Assessment*, prepared for the Manhattan Convention and Visitors Bureau, evaluated the Manhattan tourism market and the potential market for a full service convention center hotel. It concluded that the development of a major conference facility for Manhattan would require significant effort. A variety of related issues were identified that need to be addressed.

The historic and traditional link that Manhattan has had with the Kansas River has been visually severed by the Flood Control Levee on the south side of downtown. Residents now rarely interact with the river and it is considered a flood threat to the community. Restoring the quality, character, and accessibility of the Kansas River should be a long term goal for the community.

### *Conclusions and Recommendations*

Ideally the land to the east of 3rd Street should be considered for a larger single commercial/office development or a medium sized full service convention center hotel (Figure C). To gain optimal use of the confined land space at this strategic location, an integration of uses in a multi-level structure as well as vacating public rights-of-way should be seriously considered.

Along the 4th Street corridor, potential uses that could enhance this area include an entertainment and theater complex. The area surrounding the intersection of 4th and Pierre Streets, a key gateway to downtown and the City, should be developed as a focal point.

Establishing a permanent group to enter into discussions with the major land holders would be an important step towards exploring and realizing possible options for downtown redevelopment.

A celebration of the community's river and its physical and historic association with Manhattan should be an important long term objective. Establishing a greenway that will connect Fairmont Park, the Kansas River, Southeast



*Pierre Street - Downtown Gateway*

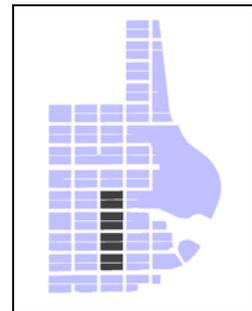
Park and the Linear Park Trail, to Downtown Manhattan would provide an important recreational link, and access to many of Manhattan's natural resources and diverse historic sites.

***It is recommended that:***

- ***Appropriate individuals be identified that could effectively initiate discussions with the major land holders, exploring possible redevelopment options and opportunities;***
- ***Design standards be formulated for the development and redevelopment of the 4th Street corridor;***
- ***The area surrounding the 4th and Pierre Street intersection be enhanced and strengthened to emphasize its importance as the Gateway to downtown; and***
- ***A greenway be established connecting Fairmont Park, the Kansas River, Southeast Park and the Linear Park Trail, to downtown Manhattan.***

*South 4th Street (West Side)*

On the west side of 4th Street a mixed land use pattern has evolved and has developed a transitional character between the predominantly commercial and office development on the east side of 4th Street, and the residential neighborhood to the west. Business redevelopment has naturally started to extend south from Poyntz Avenue along 4th Street.



It is important to ensure that the design of new infill redevelopment along 4th Street is compatible with the adjacent residential neighborhood's character, and that buildings are appropriate and harmonious with the commercial office buildings of downtown. A mix of smaller "storefront" commercial and office uses, possibly with residential uses on the upper floors, would add variety, provide convenient employment and commercial services, mirror the existing uses along Poyntz Avenue, and blend with the residential neighborhood to the west. The existing apartment complexes along Pierre and Colorado Streets have introduced a higher density residential development pattern adjacent to the 4th Street corridor that can form part of this transition from higher density mixed-use development on the east, to duplex, townhouse and courtyard apartments, to single-family residential towards Juliette Avenue on the west. Blending commercial, office and residential uses can serve as a transition between the predominantly commercial development along 4th Street and the residential neighborhood to the west. Abrupt density changes should be avoided. Commercial and office uses should be limited to the area presently zoned C-4 Central Business District, C-5 Highway Service Commercial District, and RDO Redevelopment District Overlay.

The C-4 Central Business District Zoning, from Poyntz Avenue to Colorado Street, does allow residential buildings as a permitted use. Mixed-use development with a residential component can therefore be encouraged without zoning amendments. Use Limitation in the C-5 Highway Service Commercial District, is that: "*No structure shall be used for residential purposes except for the use of the owner or operator of the business located on the premises and except for hotels*". This will affect any mixed-use development proposal which includes residential along the west side of 4th Street, one half block north and south of Yuma Street. The C-5 Highway Service Commercial District, and RDO Redevelopment District Overlay, have parking

requirements not applicable to the C-4 Central Business District. Providing adequate parking will therefore be essential, both for commercial and residential uses.

It is also important to extend the zero-lot line, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes of Poyntz Avenue along 4th Street. Commercial/office development along 4th Street should orient buildings flush with the pedestrian walkway, giving passersby maximum visibility of the stores. Scaling of commercial street design to pedestrians encourages people to walk and attracts people to these areas. At the same time, a healthy pedestrian-oriented streetscape can improve business for merchants along this commercial corridor and the downtown in general.

Convenience and services facilities, such as a grocery and a laundry, should be encouraged to establish in this area to meet the daily needs of the current and future downtown resident population.

*Conclusions and Recommendations:*

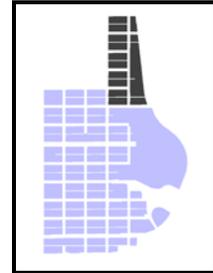
Appropriate new development will justify streetscape improvements to complement those along Poyntz Avenue and the one block section of 4th Street south of Poyntz Avenue. Improvements to sidewalks and utilities, especially water services will also be required. Park facilities that would complement the streetscape along 4th Street and provide the open space needs of the neighborhood would enhance the future development of this area.

***It is recommended that:***

- ***Zoning options for reduced front yard setbacks, that would match more closely the original setbacks of the neighborhoods, be explored.***
- ***The RDO Redevelopment District Overlay Zoning be extended to include more of the C-5 Highway Service Commercial District in order to make residential buildings a permitted use;***
- ***Tax Increment Financing be used to improve streetscapes, sidewalks and public utilities;***
- ***Opportunities be identified to establish pocket-parks to meet the needs of the existing and future residents of downtown; and***
- ***Commercial/office uses be limited to those areas on the west side of 4th Street presently zoned C-4 Central Business District, C-5 Highway Service Commercial District, RDO Redevelopment District Overlay, and LM-SC Light Manufacturing - Service Commercial.***

### **North 3rd Street Corridor**

The North 3rd Street Corridor, which is the area north of Leavenworth Street, between 4th Street and Tuttle Creek Boulevard, is also a primary redevelopment area in the downtown, due to large areas of single ownership (Figure C). Therefore, this corridor was added to the original study area. This area is a very desirable location to the north of the central business district and adjacent to Tuttle Creek Boulevard.



With the reconfiguration of access to the southern downtown area, as a result of the new Kansas River Bridge, 4th Street has become the north-south collector in the downtown. Future redevelopment efforts in and around the downtown need to recognize and enhance the functionality of 4th Street as an attractive collector corridor from Fort Riley Boulevard all the way to Bluemont Avenue. Enhancement of the collector function of 4th Street in this manner will greatly improve the movement of traffic through the downtown area. This would eliminate the need for 3rd Street to serve in this capacity and create a more continuous and direct collector route. Relocating the collector function from 3rd to 4th Street also recognizes the opportunity to create a more viable redevelopment area between 3rd Street and Tuttle Creek Boulevard. The possibility of vacating the 3rd Street right-of-way presents the opportunity to consolidate properties on both sides of 3rd Street for redevelopment.



***North 3rd Street -From Leavenworth Street***

This area and its redevelopment potential is an ideal candidate for the creation of a Tax Increment Financing District (TIF). TIF provides for city financing of site acquisition and certain public improvements in a redevelopment district to compliment investments by a private developer. The redevelopment incentive opportunities that can be provided through the Neighborhood Revitalization Act can also be successfully applied to this area as an alternative or in addition to the TIF.

### *Conclusions and Recommendations*

Shifting the collector function from North 3rd Street to North 4th Street, between Leavenworth Street and Bluemont Avenue, would improve traffic movement through the downtown and provide an opportunity to create a larger more viable redevelopment area along the North 3rd Street corridor. The potential impact on the residential neighborhood to the west of the North 3rd Street corridor must be taken into account, when considering redevelopment options and the possible relocation of the traffic collector function to North 4th Street. Appropriate land use

## *Downtown Tomorrow*

patterns must be ensured, with effective transitional buffers and sensitive use of urban design along the east side of North 4th Street, between the existing residential uses to the west and any future commercial redevelopment.

The single ownership of the majority of the land in the North 3rd Street corridor provides an opportunity for a public/private redevelopment partnership with the potential for assembling a large tract of land for commercial uses close to the Manhattan Town Center and downtown. Any redevelopment project suitable for this area should be supported through the creation of a new TIF district or through redevelopment incentives provided for by the Neighborhood Revitalization Act.



*North 3rd Street - Primary Redevelopment Area*

### *It is recommended that:*

- *The traffic collector function of 4th Street, between Fort Riley Boulevard and Leavenworth Street, be extended to Bluemont Avenue;*
- *Incentives provided through Tax Increment Financing and the Neighborhood Revitalization Act be made available to redevelopment projects intending to establish in the North 3rd Street Corridor;*
- *A negotiating team, made up of appropriate individuals, enter into discussions with major land holders within the North 3rd Street Corridor to explore possible redevelopment options and opportunities; and*
- *Effective land use and urban design measures be introduced to protect the residential neighborhoods along and to the west of North 4th Street.*

## **Riley County Jail Site**

The Riley County Jail Site (600 Colorado Street site) and its imminent reversion back to the City, provides an immediate opportunity to initiate a redevelopment project that could enhance and stabilize the neighboring residential community and serve to encourage further development and redevelopment in this area ([Figure C](#)).



***600 Colorado Street Jail and Office Building***

The jail site was dedicated as a “public square” in the original townsite plat of the City in 1857. KSA 12-406 says, in part, that such a dedication on a plat is sufficient to convey the fee title of the land to the city *“in trust and for the uses therein named, expressed or intended, and for no other use or purpose”*. The Attorney General was requested to provide an opinion as to the uses that could be made of the jail site. The Attorney General concluded ... *“that the property must be available for enjoyment by the general public.”* This also excludes the use of the property for any particular athletic and physical activities to the exclusion of the general public. On the question of the possibility that certain private non-profit organizations would like to use the buildings to house their offices and provide services to only some members of the general public the Attorney General determined... *“that such use would not be for the public at large which would preclude the organization’s use of a building located on property that was specifically dedicated as a public square.”*

This study did not attempt to resolve this question, but considered options that recognize its historic relationship with the surrounding community and its potential to enhance the immediate neighborhood, the downtown, and the community as a whole.

## *Downtown Tomorrow*

The neighborhood considers the western portion of the site a neighborhood park and sports field that has long been used for this purpose by both the Seven Dolors School and Catholic Church. The old jail building is located on the south east portion of the site with a more recent structure on the southern portion of the site serving as office space. Further investigation is required to determine the suitability and functionality of both these structures for reuse.

### *Conclusions and Recommendations*

The Steering Committee discussed possible options, in the context of the Downtown Tomorrow Study, and in its opinion the site should be redeveloped to benefit and enhance the immediate neighborhood, and land use considerations should be limited to those which benefit residents and serve the community in general. Maintaining and enhancing the open space/park function must be central to any redevelopment of the site. The future use of the buildings on the site must be secondary and complementary to the central function of community green space. The following possible alternatives are suggested for consideration:

- The Community Park as a prime function.
- Complementary use alternatives include:
  - Youth center.
  - Sports Field for the surrounding neighborhood.
  - Indoor Sports Facility in the office structure.
  - Community Center.
  - Municipal Court.
  - An integrated unit with multiple uses at different times, including a combination of uses listed above.

To consider more comprehensively the options for the site the City, in consultation with the surrounding neighborhood and community, should initiate a public process.

#### ***It is recommended that:***

- ***A development plan process be initiated to determine the future use of the Riley County Jail site (600 Colorado Street);***
- ***Future planning initiatives take into consideration the suggested land use alternatives and recommendations of the Downtown Tomorrow Study; and***
- ***The future redevelopment of the Riley County Jail site (600 Colorado Street) have a community park as a prime function.***

## **The Union Pacific Depot**

The building has been vacant for a number of years and was under the ownership of the Union Pacific railroad until 1990 when title was transferred to the City of Manhattan. Since that time the K-177 bridge and entrance ramps were reconfigured, leaving the Depot and remaining site at the center of an entrance ramp to the bridge ([Figure C](#)). The City has secured the property from vandals, and is in the process of stabilizing and restoring the structure.

**The Union Pacific Depot**

The structure and surrounding brick platform are listed on the Register of Historic Kansas Places. The City of Manhattan has obtained two grants for planned improvements to the structure and site. A \$59,920 Heritage Trust Fund Grant was awarded to the City from the Kansas State Historical Society which is being used to stabilize of the building foundation. Grant funds are being matched with \$14,980 in City funds and \$3,000 from the Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance. A \$279,000 grant, under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA 21), from the Kansas Department of Transportation has been awarded to the City and will be matched with \$70,000 in local funds for a total project budget of \$349,000. The grant will be utilized for interior and exterior improvements to the Depot structure and surrounding site, and the provision of public utilities. The City is presently seeking proposals from interested groups and individuals for use of the Depot property.

In addition to seeking an appropriate use, it is also important to reestablish and strengthen the link and historic association that this site has with the downtown. Every effort should therefore be made to ensure that the property is functionally and physically linked to the downtown. The Union Pacific Depot must be recognized as an important redevelopment node as well as a valuable and key component in any comprehensive program to promote the historic character of downtown.



**Union Pacific Depot**

Conclusion and Recommendation

Inadequate access to the Union Pacific Depot site is considered a serious limitation to any future use of a restored depot building. Linking the Railroad Depot with the downtown, through a pedestrian underpass at the K-177 ramp, should be considered if the future use of the Depot requires improved access.

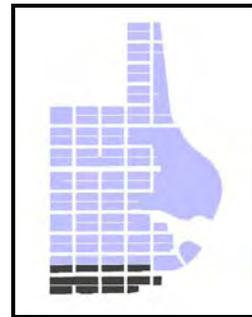
It is important to insure that the Union Pacific Depot is functionally linked to the downtown and surrounding area. The Depot is strategically located at the gateway to the City, and is among the important historical and physical landmarks in this area. The Union Pacific Depot, together with the historical buildings and sites of downtown, the Linear Park Trail, Fairmont Park, and the Kansas River, can serve as important attractions along an historical, architectural and recreational trail in this area.

***It is recommended that:***

- ***The Union Pacific Depot be preserved and potential uses explored;***
- ***The Railroad Depot and the downtown be linked through a pedestrian underpass at the K-177 ramp; and***
- ***A trail be developed that integrates the existing recreational facilities and highlights and links these with the downtown historic landmarks and sites, including the Union Pacific Depot.***

**Fort Riley Boulevard Corridor**

This area is bounded on the north by the alley between Yuma Street and Fort Riley Boulevard, and the Union Pacific Railroad on the south. This corridor and its zoning designation of LM-SC Light Manufacturing - Service Commercial District, is appropriate for the Fort Riley Boulevard corridor. The collocation of light industrial and highway service commercial activities takes advantage of the exposure to higher volumes of vehicular traffic, but also recognizes the need for access restrictions, particularly to the south.



## *Downtown Tomorrow*

### North Side Corridor

This segment of the corridor is presently a mix of commercial and commercial/industrial development, with the bulk of redevelopment having taken place along the eastern half of the corridor. The greater part of the western half of the corridor is vacant with some commercial and single family residences on the section of the corridor between 6th Street and Juliette Avenue. Commercial development should be encouraged between 5th Streets and Juliette Avenue where most of the vacant land is located. This could serve the needs of and be integrated with, the residential development to the north along Yuma Street.



*Fort Riley Boulevard Corridor*

### Conclusions and Recommendations

#### *It is recommended that:*

- ***Commercial development be encouraged that is compatible with and can serve the residential needs of the adjoining neighborhood to the north.***

### South Side Corridor

The commercial and commercial/industrial development along the south side of Fort Riley Boulevard also takes advantage of its location and exposure to higher volumes of vehicular traffic. The corridor immediately adjacent to Fort Riley Boulevard is predominantly commercial while the corridor along the railroad has more of a commercial/industrial character. The City's Public Works Maintenance Division is located in the latter corridor. This is also the site of the City's new public-access Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fueling facility.

Vehicular access to businesses along Fort Riley Boulevard is controlled and limited to 3rd, 4th and 5th Streets and Juliette Avenue. Pedestrian access to this area is severely limited due to the absence of sidewalks. Encouraging pedestrian crossing of Fort Riley Boulevard is also problematic due to high traffic volume and speed.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Traffic volume and the absence of sidewalks presently allows little or no opportunity for pedestrian and bicycle access to the south side of Fort Riley Boulevard. Limited access to the south of Fort Riley Boulevard also restricts access to the City's Linear Trail, located south of the railroad line.

In addition to being a major thoroughfare, Fort Riley Boulevard should also serve to announce the downtown commercial/office district. It is important therefore, that improvements to the streetscape design be made along this primary path for downtown activities and vehicular movement.

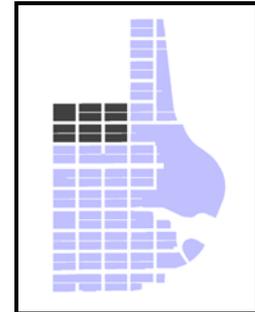
Lower property values along the railroad corridor provide opportunities for the establishment of small artisan and craft industries. Such development can provide studio space and opportunities for the local art community to develop new business ventures.

***It is recommended that:***

- ***Design guidelines be developed that meet both the highway and downtown needs and softens the streetscape of the Fort Riley Boulevard corridor; and***
- ***Small artisan and craft industries be encouraged to establish along the Union Pacific Rail corridor.***

**Leavenworth/Osage Street Corridor**

The area along Leavenworth Street and the south side of Osage Street (the northern boundary of the study area) consists of a mixture of commercial, office, public and residential uses. The area west of 4th Street contains a significant number of multiple-family units including duplexes, an apartment tower (public housing high-rise) and apartment complexes. The Riley County Seniors' Service Center, United States Post Office, Woodrow Wilson Elementary School, and the Manhattan Mercury are also located in this corridor. The area is clearly transitional between the predominantly central business uses to the south and the residential uses to the north and west.



The closure of 3rd Street at Leavenworth, and the introduction of a hedge along the north edge of the Manhattan Town Center parking lot at this location, which were part of the original downtown redevelopment in the 1980's, creates a physical barrier for pedestrian and bicycle access to the south and to the Manhattan Town Center.

## *Downtown Tomorrow*

The suggestion to reopen 3rd Street south of Leavenworth Street for automobile traffic occasionally arises within the community. This would result in high traffic volumes at the intersection of 3rd Street and Poyntz Avenue, and along the west edge of Manhattan Town Center. This would be counter productive to the recommended efforts to remove barriers and enhance pedestrian movement between Manhattan Town Center and Poyntz Avenue, particularly in the area of the public plaza.



*Leavenworth Street - Transitional Mixed Use Area*

### *Conclusions and Recommendations*

Pedestrian access to the central business district to the south should be enhanced from the higher density residential area along the Leavenworth/Osage Street Corridor, as well as from the area further north and northwest, where a large segment of the student population resides. The landscaping barrier created at the closure of 3rd and Leavenworth Streets needs to be redesigned to improve and enhance downtown access from the north for both pedestrian and bicycle traffic. This intersection should not however, be reopened to automobile traffic, as this would not only negatively impact traffic movements at 3rd Street, Leavenworth Street and Tuttle Creek Boulevard, but would also hinder the efforts to make the downtown more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

#### ***It is recommended that:***

- ***Pedestrian and bicycle access from adjacent neighborhoods to the north and northwest be improved into the Central Business District.***

### **Revisions to the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan**

Generally, when reference is made to the downtown, it includes all the business and retail uses in and around the historic core of Manhattan. This encompasses an area much broader than that which is currently designated the CBD - Central Business District, in the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The fact that the downtown business district both physically and functionally encompasses a much larger geographic area, than that which is presently exhibited

## *Downtown Tomorrow*

in Figure 7 of the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan, should be recognized through a single overall CBD - Central Business District land use designation (Figure D).

The proposed amendment to the CBD - Central Business District designation of the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan should include the recommended primary redevelopment areas and the following additional refinements:

- The two properties located west of 5th Street, along the north and south sides of Yuma Street, are an intrusion of GC - General Commercial uses into a predominantly residential neighborhood. In order to establish a clear boundary between the commercial mixed use area east of 5th Street, and the residential neighborhood to the west, it is proposed that the GC - General Commercial designation of these two lots be amended to RMH - Residential Medium to High Density. This change in land use designation would be more compatible with, and beneficial to, the long term stability of the residential neighborhood to the west of 5th Street.
- The half block on the south side of Houston Street, between 5th and 6th Streets, is presently designated as CBD - Central Business District, in the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Despite this designation this half block has retained its predominantly residential character. The quality of the existing homes in this half block reflect the architectural style typical of this older traditional neighborhood. The current designation does not fit the general character of the surrounding neighborhood and an RMH - Residential Medium to High Density designation would be more appropriate, similar to the designation on the rest of the residential neighborhood.

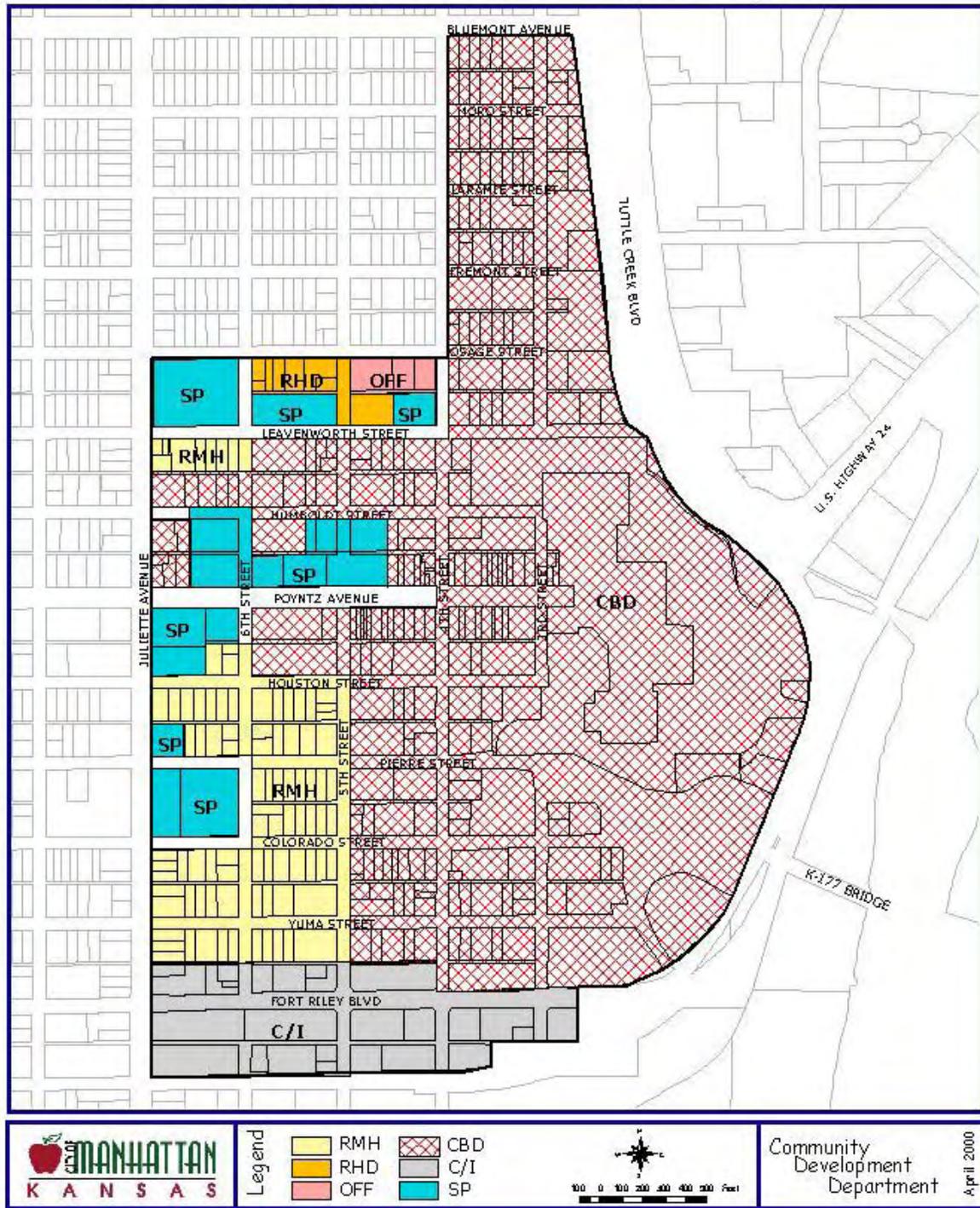
### *Conclusions and Recommendations*

The CBD - Central Business District designation as shown on Figure 7, Central Area Land Use Plan Map, of the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan for the Manhattan Urban Area and the City of Manhattan, should be enlarged to reflect the true extent of the Manhattan Downtown.

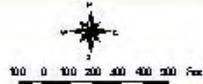
#### ***It is recommended that:***

- ***The Central Area Land Use Plan Map Figure 7, of the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan for the Manhattan Urban Area and the City of Manhattan, be amended to recognize the true extent of the downtown central business district, and the recommended redevelopment areas identified through the Downtown Tomorrow study.***

Figure D  
Amendment to Land Use Element Figure 7



Legend	
	RMH
	RHD
	OFF
	SP
	CBD
	C/I



Community  
Development  
Department  
April 2000

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Both public and private investment by the community in the downtown must continue. The Downtown Tomorrow Redevelopment Plan contains many specific proposed actions affecting different elements of the downtown. Individually and collectively these actions have as an objective the continued growth and revitalization of the economic, cultural and governmental core of the community. However, in order to implement these, a prioritization of key actions are required. It is not intended that there be strict adherence to these stated priorities; should opportunities present themselves which make lower priority projects feasible and desirable, they should be pursued. The order is intended as a general guide for directing efforts and to help focus the use of limited resources. The sequencing of the high priority projects is important, as they are a logical progression and will establish a firm basis upon which the successful implementation of the rest of the proposals of this Plan will depend.

### **Priority Actions**

#### **Action 1:**

The City, businesses and other downtown partners make a long term commitment to allocate resources for establishing and sustaining an organization (such as Manhattan Main Street) to efficiently and effectively represent and promote Downtown Manhattan.

#### **Implementation:**

- To date businesses within the Downtown Business Improvement District have been responsible for providing the majority of the funding for the Manhattan Main Street Program. Funding should be sought not just from within the downtown, but from sources community-wide.
- In order to accomplish its goals, Manhattan Main Street has determined that it would be necessary to increase its yearly operating budget from the present \$85,000 to \$140,000.
- Manhattan Main Street is suggesting that the City and County contribute a total of \$100,000 of this amount, with a suggested City share of \$80,000.
- Funding provision for the Manhattan Main Street Program should be made in the City's Capital Improvements Program.

#### **Action 2:**

The downtown partners prepare a Market Analysis to identify specific actions necessary to revitalize the downtown.

#### **Implementation:**

- If prepared professionally, estimated costs for a market analysis is expected to be between \$50,000 and \$75,000.
- The National Main Street Center has programs which can provide technical assistance in preparing a market analysis. This is the recommended preferred option, and allows the downtown partners (Manhattan Main Street) to prepare the market analysis, using the experience and know-how of the National Main Street Center. The National Main Street Center provides this service as an educational opportunity to develop local skills for preparing and updating a market analysis. The National

## *Downtown Tomorrow*

Main Street Center estimates the cost of this approach to developing a market analysis, depending on its scope, between \$30,000 and \$50,000.

- The funding of a market analysis for the downtown should be one of the first program priorities of Manhattan Main Street.

### **Action 3:**

Prepare an Urban Design Plan for the downtown area based on: the proposals of this Plan; a market analysis; the *Housing Manhattan, Planning for the Future* study; the *Manhattan Area Transportation Strategy: Connecting to 2020*; the *Bicycle Master Plan*; and the *Comprehensive Parks Master Plan*. A Gateway and Streetscape Improvement Program, which provides for a balanced, multi-modal transportation system of streets, pedestrian sidewalks and walkways, bikeways and public transit, should form an integral part of the Urban Design Plan.

#### **Implementation:**

- Joint funding options for the preparation of the Urban Design Plan should be explored, with potential funding assistance through a Community Capacity Building Grant from the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing, with matching funds from the City.
- Financing of the Gateway and Streetscape Improvement Programs is recommended through the use of Tax Increment Financing. General obligation bonds, pursuant to K.S.A.12-1771, should be issued by the City in order to increase the effectiveness of the tax increment raised in the downtown TIF District.

### **Action 4:**

Develop public-private incentives to promote redevelopment of the downtown primary redevelopment areas.

#### **Implementation:**

- Develop financing programs and incentives through the use of economic development tools, such as Tax Increment Financing and the Neighborhood Revitalization Act, to stimulate public-private redevelopment projects.

### **Action 5:**

Implement a Housing Program for the downtown, based on the combined recommendations of the *Downtown Tomorrow* and the *Housing Manhattan, Planning for the Future* studies.

#### **Implementation:**

- Develop financing programs and incentives through the use of economic development tools, such as Tax Increment Financing and the Neighborhood Revitalization Act, to stimulate private housing development.
- Downtown Housing efforts should be coordinated with the Historic Resources Board.