

## II. VISION



### A. A Vibrant Urban Experience

Envision a place where people move about safely and comfortably. A place people want to come back to because of the experience of being there and not because they have to be there: a place you can choose to live-in or visit. The Arena Neighborhood is envisioned as that place.

Based on the principles of creating a successful place, the vision of this plan is to take advantage of the Downtown context in which the Arena Neighborhood exists. The vision for the Arena Neighborhood is not to re-create Old Town, WaterWalk or other destinations in Downtown or Wichita. Instead, the vision is to create strong links to the assets that currently exist, are being planned, or are possible, while simultaneously creating an experiential place that is economically viable and vibrant.

Accomplishing this vision will not be a short or easy task. The time frame of this plan extends out 10-15 years. Accomplishment is also not going to occur just because a new arena is being built in the area. The urban experience envisioned by this plan is much more than simply driving to the area, parking your vehicle, attending an event and going home after the

#### THE VISION

A vibrant urban experience which complements other facets of Downtown Wichita, encourages private development and investment, and maximizes the return on public investment in the area.



## ISSUES OVERVIEW

Several issues or important plan elements were raised during the planning process through the community survey:

- Parking Availability
- Safe Public Places
- Ability to get to the arena
- Easy to drive around
- Easy to walk around
- Having retail services near the arena
- Providing housing in downtown

A compilation of comments received during the planning process is provided in the Technical Supplement. Many of the comments reflected the points above.

event. It is an experience and a vision that includes the Arkansas River, the Commerce Street Arts District, walking along a street filled with storefronts and activity, living in a residential area with housing choices unlike those found elsewhere in Wichita, seeing public art and all while being within a downtown setting.

## B. Maximizing the Return on Public Investment

In support of the vision there must be recognition of the need to maximize the return on the public dollars invested. Public investment in and around the Arena Neighborhood area has taken the form of community facilities such as Century II, the arena and Lawrence Dumont Stadium. Additionally, recent public investment has involved the creation of development partnerships to “prime the pump” for further private development and investment in the future. And, some recommendations in this plan will require further public investment.

The vision for this plan takes into consideration the need to maximize the return on this public investment by identifying and promoting more opportunities and potential for the private marketplace to pursue, and indicating public improvements that need to be made to help sustain private investment in the area. Failure to take full advantage of the investment and commitment already made will mean that the return on public investment dollars will fall short of its true potential.

Much of the property in the Arena Neighborhood area is underutilized today because of existing market conditions, yet holds greater long-term value for future employment, commercial or residential uses than as surface parking lots. The vision of this plan is to facilitate the decision making that encourages property owners and developers toward a higher and better use of property in this area in the future.

## C. Balancing Issues

Throughout the planning process a variety of issues arose through citizen participation efforts. These issues reflected current perceptions and experiences related to the Downtown Wichita and the arena. Those perceptions and experiences related to the Arena Neighborhood area are going to change in the future as the arena is built and opens for events and activities, and as redevelopment occurs in the area.

Beyond maximizing the return on investment, another focus of this plan is to address the issues raised in a balanced manner as the area evolves into a successful vibrant urban place. As an example, the fact that the entire plan area is in the Gilbert and Mosley environmental remediation area has ramifications regarding City responsibilities for clean-up, restrictions on well water use, limitations on sub-grade development and the need for Phase 1 environmental reviews should not deter incremental redevelopment efforts in the long run. That means the strategies and recommendations in this plan must be oriented to the long-term vision for the area. There will be temporary or transition actions taken that will facilitate the redevelopment goal of the larger area and not just the initial operation of the arena.

For instance, parking may initially be handled through agreements with private parking providers already located in the area and the use of a transit shuttle system. Additional on-street parking may become available for use as street configurations are addressed. Also, a parking authority for the area may be created to facilitate the development of parking opportunities in new locations to better serve the arena and the redevelopment of the area. This one issue is indicative of the three stages of redevelopment that the Arena Neighborhood will go through –

**Building** - This initial stage involves the building and opening of the arena. Strategies and recommendations in this stage may be focused on the primary objective of serving or supporting the arena and other venues established in the area, but there will also be foundational policy, program and physical framework decisions that will be made in a manner that allows for flexibility and adjustment at minimal cost by focusing on later redevelopment. Some redevelopment proposals may be received during this time.

**Developing** - Once the arena is operating, it is anticipated that there will be further redevelopment that takes place over a number of years as the area makes the transition from what it is today to what is envisioned for the future. The building pattern and use pattern in the area will be in transition as development proposals and decisions will be considered. It is likely that this redevelopment will start with catalyst type projects, both

**STAGES OF REDEVELOPMENT**

Redevelopment in the Arena Neighborhood will go through three stages.

- Building
- Developing
- Sustaining



Development Framework

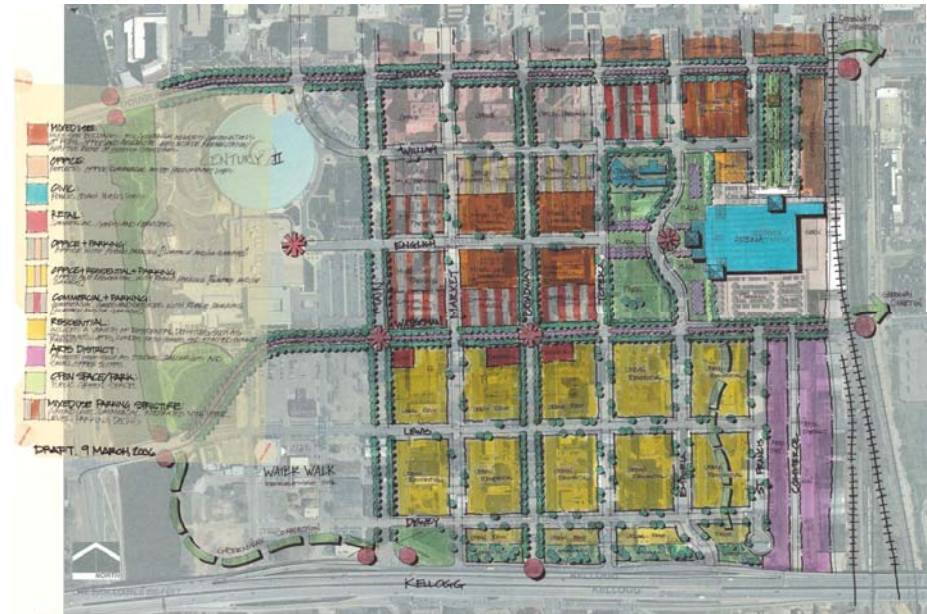
- Highlight the arena structure within the downtown as part of a larger Civic Destination theme
- Create public space(s) around the arena for functional and aesthetic purposes
- Develop areas and sites upon a framework of defined use and density districts
- Define specific parking opportunities in a concentrated portion of the area

***Downtown Neighborhood Alternative*** - The Downtown Neighborhood Alternative (**Figure II-2**) focused on Waterman Street as a strong commercial mixed-use spine. The area is anchored by a strong relationship to Century II and WaterWalk and the main entry of the arena. The arena is seen as an integrated part of downtown fabric.

Development Framework

- Extend the urban character and format of the downtown into this area
- Arena sits within the downtown development pattern
- High level aesthetic improvements along key roadways define the area
- Highway oriented commercial and support service opportunities are provided along Kellogg
- Strategic parking opportunities are located within the area along with satellite parking arrangements with shuttle circulator service

The resulting discussion generated by the review and evaluation of these alternative frameworks and concepts provided an initial foundation for the creation of a preferred plan direction in support of the vision.



**FIGURE II-1: ALTERNATIVE – CIVIC DESTINATION**  
SOURCE: GOULD EVANS ASSOCIATES



**FIGURE II-2: ALTERNATIVE – DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD**  
SOURCE: GOULD EVANS ASSOCIATES



**KEY TENETS OF NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN**

- This is an urban place.
- There are several distinct districts within the Arena Neighborhood area.
- Land use and development, mobility and design are interdependent elements of the plan.
- Mobility includes pedestrian, vehicular and transit circulation, as well as parking.
- Linkages to nearby established and planned areas must be strong.
- Implementation of the plan will require continuous commitment by a dedicated agency or group in order to be successful.

**E. Preferred Plan Direction**

Through the analysis and alternatives phases of the planning process an initial preferred plan direction became evident. The preferred plan direction has several key tenets that are incorporated in the neighborhood plan.

***This is an urban place.*** The Arena Neighborhood is part of Downtown Wichita, and as such, the development pattern should be expected to be urban in nature.

***There are several distinct districts within the Arena Neighborhood area.*** The Arena Neighborhood should be logically split into a series of districts that reflect a desired organizational pattern for future development intensity and use.

***Land use and development, mobility and design are interdependent elements of the plan.*** To effectively address issues in the long term, these elements must work together and be supportive of one another.

***Mobility includes pedestrian, vehicular and transit circulation, as well as parking.*** People coming to this area as a destination will use a minimum of two transportation modes to move about the area.

***Linkages to nearby established and planned areas must be strong.*** Once people are in the area, they should be encouraged to visit multiple destinations during their visit; thus, internal linkages within the Arena Neighborhood and external linkages to adjacent successful places need to be enhanced.

***Implementation of the plan will require continuous commitment by a dedicated agency or group in order to be successful.*** To achieve the plan vision and capture the full potential of this area will require a constant caretaker and advocate for policy, program and physical improvements within a dynamic and changing context.

The direction established by the vision, the principles for creating successful places and these tenets for the preferred plan direction create the foundation for the neighborhood plan described in Chapter III and the plan recommendations.