

# A

## East-West Connections

### OVERVIEW

Improving East-West Connections is at the core of the Plan. For decades, major economic growth and economic opportunities in Downtown were contained within the loop of the I-35/I-70/I-670 highways. In recent years, change and development expanded north to the Riverfront area and south to the Crossroads Arts District, creating a concentration of investment activity from the Missouri River to the south end of the UMKC Health Sciences District. However, historic and culturally vibrant neighborhoods to the east and west of this corridor have not experienced the benefits of Downtown's recent growth and evolution. This is due to many factors, including physical constraints, historic racial policies and biases, and generational patterns of disinvestment.

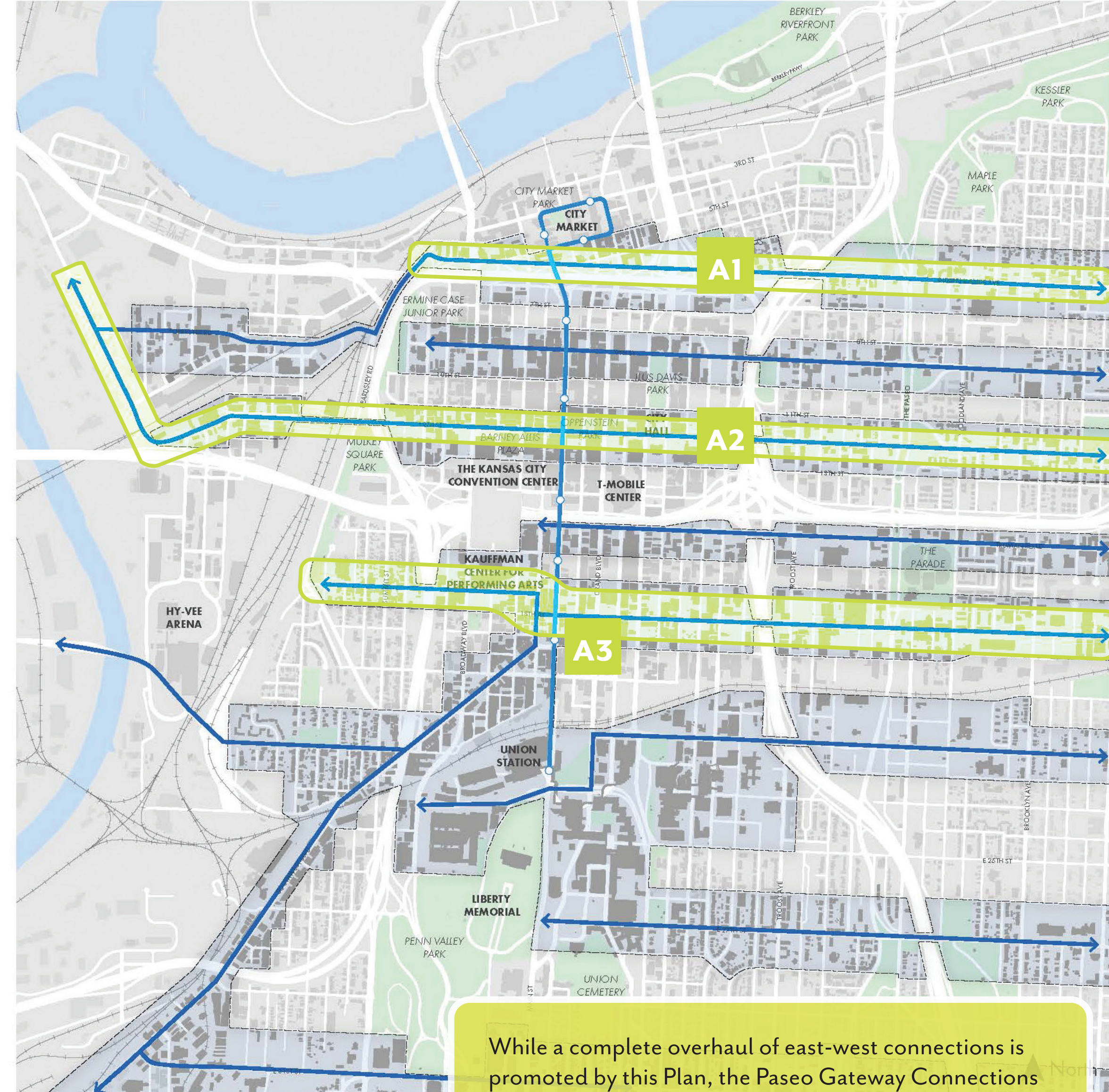
Improving physical East-West Connections is critical to the success of this Plan and will have meaningful, positive impacts on the city center's overall resiliency, trajectory, and economic opportunities. It will be critical to engage neighborhood organizations, residents, and local businesses in the planning, design, and development of these infrastructure improvements and investments.

### PROJECTS

**A1 PASEO GATEWAY CONNECTIONS  
(INDEPENDENCE AVENUE)**

**A2 18TH STREET CORRIDOR**

**A3 12TH STREET CORRIDOR**



↔ Enhanced Connection

○ Catalytic Project

While a complete overhaul of east-west connections is promoted by this Plan, the Paseo Gateway Connections (Independence Ave), 18th Street Corridor, and 12th Street Corridor are identified as priority streets that are best positioned to create impactful change.



# East-West Connections

The Paseo Gateway Transformation Plan is a catalyst for the balanced, sustained revitalization of the Paseo Gateway District in Kansas City and its three neighborhoods of Pendleton Heights, Paseo West, and Independence Plaza. This plan creatively harnesses Downtown revitalization—while simultaneously improving the lives of all residents.

The Paseo Gateway includes Paseo West, Independence Avenue/Boulevard, and the adjacent neighborhoods. Independence Avenue is a major east-west thoroughfare that connects Downtown with the Historic Northeast area – Kansas City’s most culturally diverse corridor. Independence Avenue formerly connected eastern neighborhoods directly into the River Market neighborhood, but a barrier between neighborhoods was created with the construction of Highway 9. Additionally, the current use of the corridor as a high traffic volume

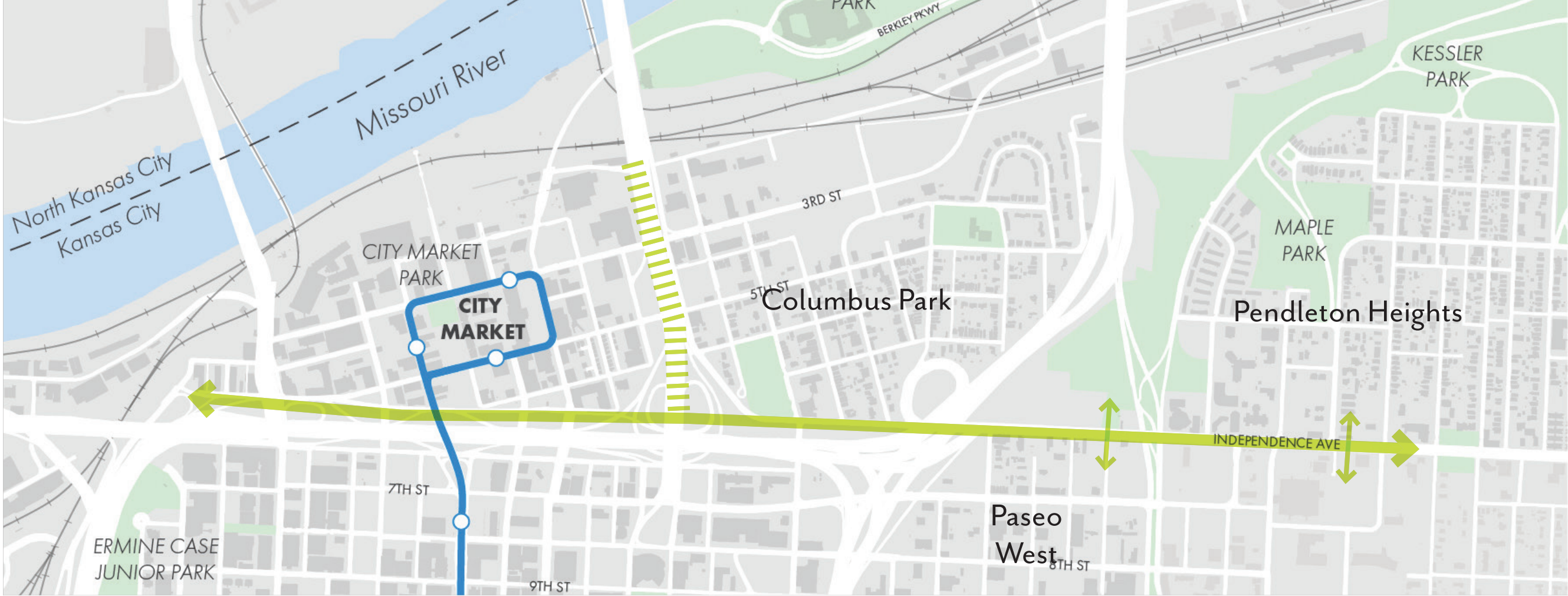
## A1 PASEO GATEWAY CONNECTIONS

arterial has exacerbated connectivity issues, creating a barrier to pedestrians, cyclists, and micro-mobility users.

In conjunction with the efforts to rethink the North Loop and the potential to bring Highway 9 back down to grade (per the Bridging Park and Market Project feasibility study), the Kansas City Area Transit Authority (KCATA) has completed a concept design for integrating a future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service along a redesigned Independence Avenue to provide fast and frequent service into Downtown. There is an opportunity to promote the continuity of Independence Avenue and reconnect and strengthen the many different neighborhoods served by this important corridor.

### TO MOVE THIS PROJECT FORWARD

- A1a. Support implementation of the Independence Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line as recommended in the 2018 KCATA study and make it a priority project.
- A1b. Support completion of the Paseo Boulevard/Independence Avenue intersection realignment.
- A1c. Initiate environmental and economic impact studies for removing the North Loop and for bringing Highway 9 down to grade.



Independence Ave Corridor Highway 9 to grade (see project E3)



Paseo Gateway Connections envision enhanced connectivity through new BRT facilities to provide direct access to River Market and other centrally-located neighborhoods in the Downtown.





# East-West Connections

## A1 PASEO GATEWAY CONNECTIONS

- A1d. Identify strategies for redevelopment that fit within the context of the neighborhood(s); fill identified needs for housing, office, and commercial uses; support existing businesses and housing; and prevent displacement. For example, the Chouteau Court site provides an infill opportunity that could help connect existing neighborhoods, as identified by the ULI-KC Chouteau Court Sites Redevelopment Report, September 2020.
- A1e. Implement a Complete Streets approach to the redesign, including protected bicycle lanes, narrowed vehicular lanes with a center turn lane, new transit and micro-mobility amenities, wider sidewalks with enhanced streetscape amenities, and on-street parking to support the existing and proposed commercial and mixed-use development. Support place-making improvements currently being planned for the 8th & Woodland area.
- A1f. Identify opportunities to enhance the existing Independence Avenue bridge over I-29/I-35 for pedestrian/bicycle safety and as a gateway into the Downtown Loop from southbound I-29/I-35.

Upgrades to the existing bridge over I-29/I-35 can be an opportunity to serve as both a safe pedestrian and bike connection while also creating an iconic gateway into the Downtown Loop.



Connectivity will be further enhanced via Complete Streets infrastructure and amenities to create walkable and bikeable environments. These well-designed streets, combined with BRT, will help catalyze infill development and greater Downtown connectivity.





# East-West Connections

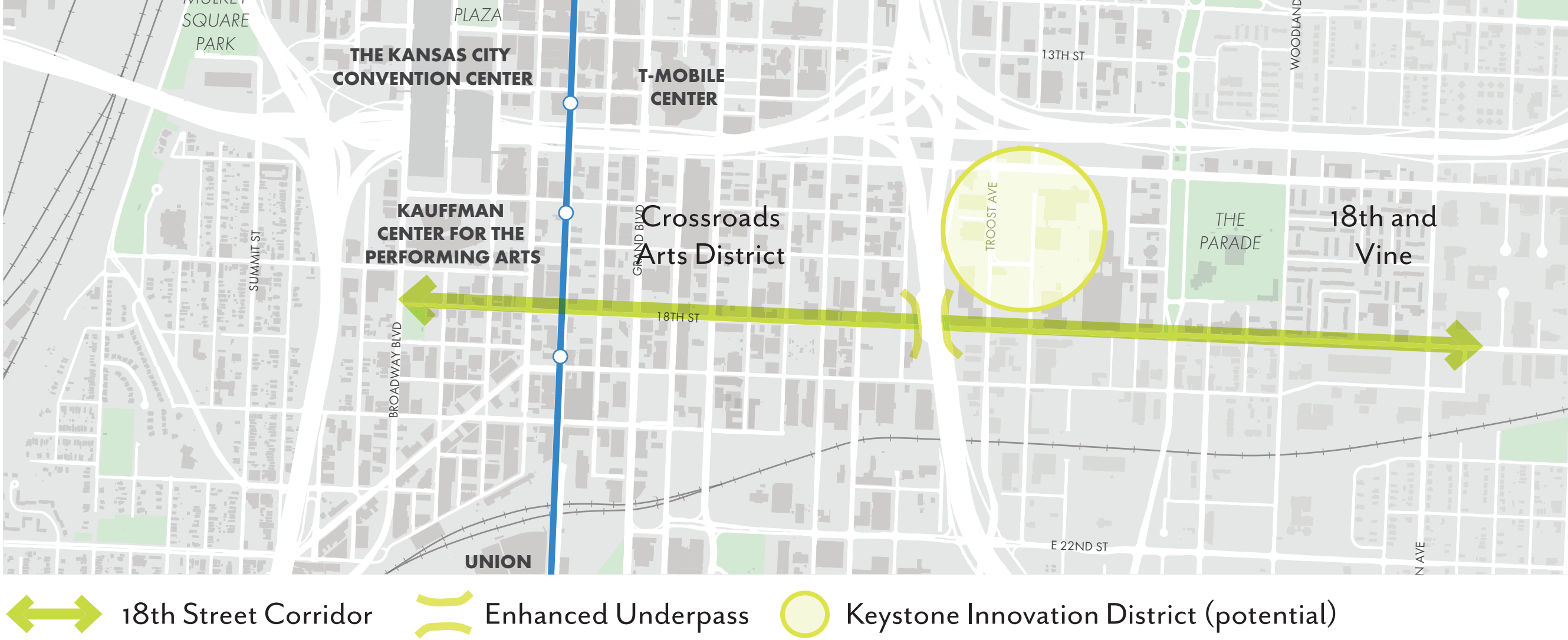
18th Street is a major east-west connecting corridor between the Crossroads Arts District, Crossroads East, and the 18th and Vine neighborhoods. Importantly, 18th Avenue is the “Main Street” for the Jazz District and is a major spine of retail and dining within the Crossroads Arts District, with the First Friday gallery walks taking place along the corridor. However, the 18th Street corridor suffers from difficult walking and biking conditions, and the Highway 71 underpass creates an uncomfortable experience.

## TO MOVE THIS PROJECT FORWARD

- A2a. Develop a cohesive design strategy for streetscaping elements that celebrate the unique heritage and qualities of the 18th and Vine neighborhood, the Crossroads Arts District, and Crossroads East.
- A2b. Encourage the Keystone Innovation District along the 18th Street corridor to support innovative pilot project approaches for new streetscaping elements, transit amenities, and art to reconnect the neighborhoods.
- A2c. Identify a strategy for the enhancement of Highway 71 overpass aesthetics to minimize the negative effects the overhead infrastructure has on the pedestrian experience. This space should be viewed as an opportunity for public art, dynamic lighting, and other creative design elements.

## A2 18th STREET CORRIDOR

18th Street must be a priority for mobility improvements to connect the major employers and cultural institutions in the Crossroads Arts District with the American Jazz Museum, Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, the Black Archives of Mid-America Kansas City, and other cultural facilities and visitor attractions in the 18th and Vine neighborhood.



### BEFORE/AFTER

Concept of underpass with lighting and public art





# East-West Connections

## A2 18th STREET CORRIDOR

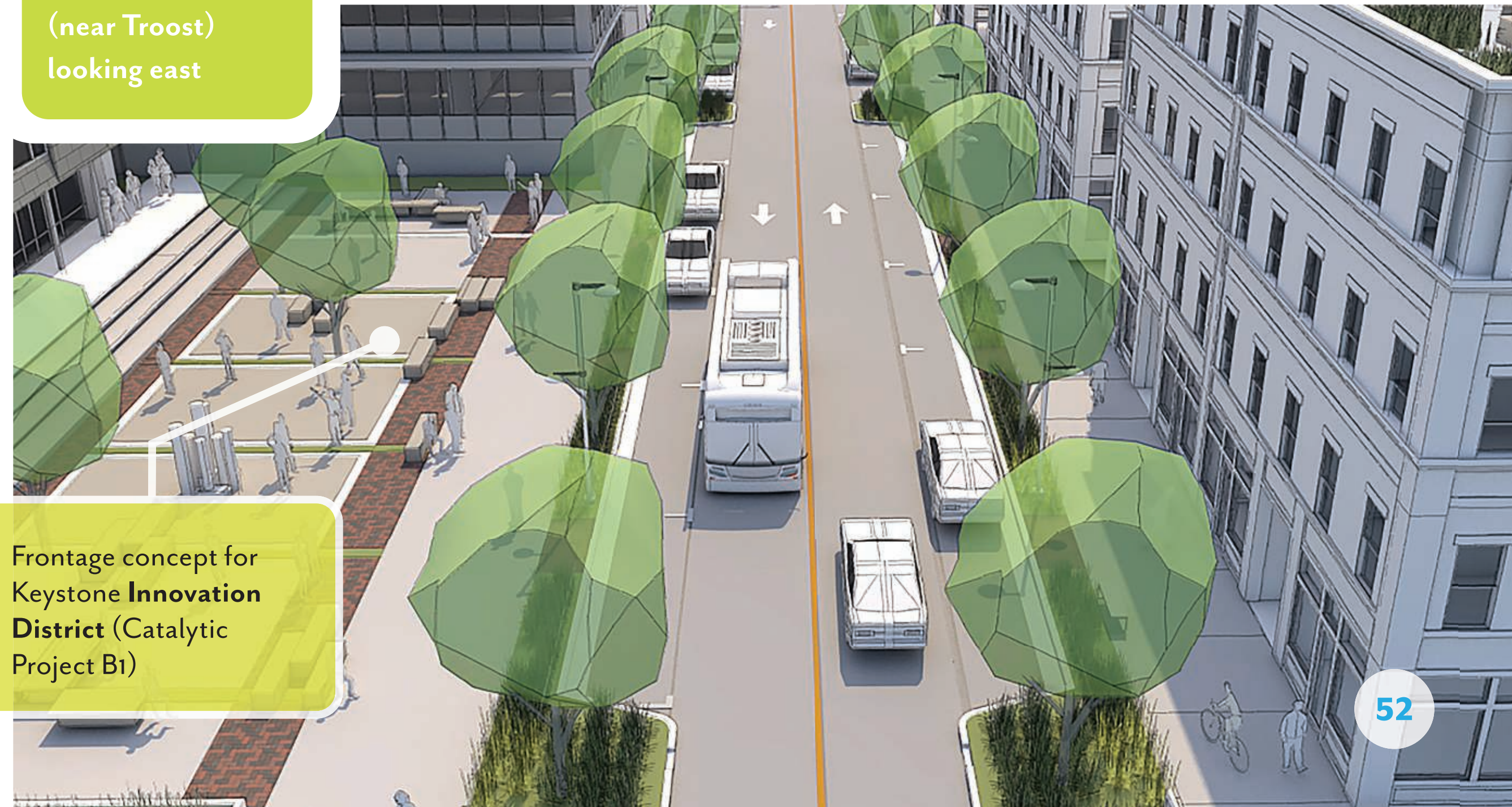


Maintaining and showcasing the unique character of the 18th and Vine neighborhood is of paramount importance and aligns with the plan's vision of an authentic Downtown KC.



### BEFORE/AFTER

18th Street  
(near Troost)  
looking east



Frontage concept for  
Keystone **Innovation**  
District (Catalytic  
Project B1)

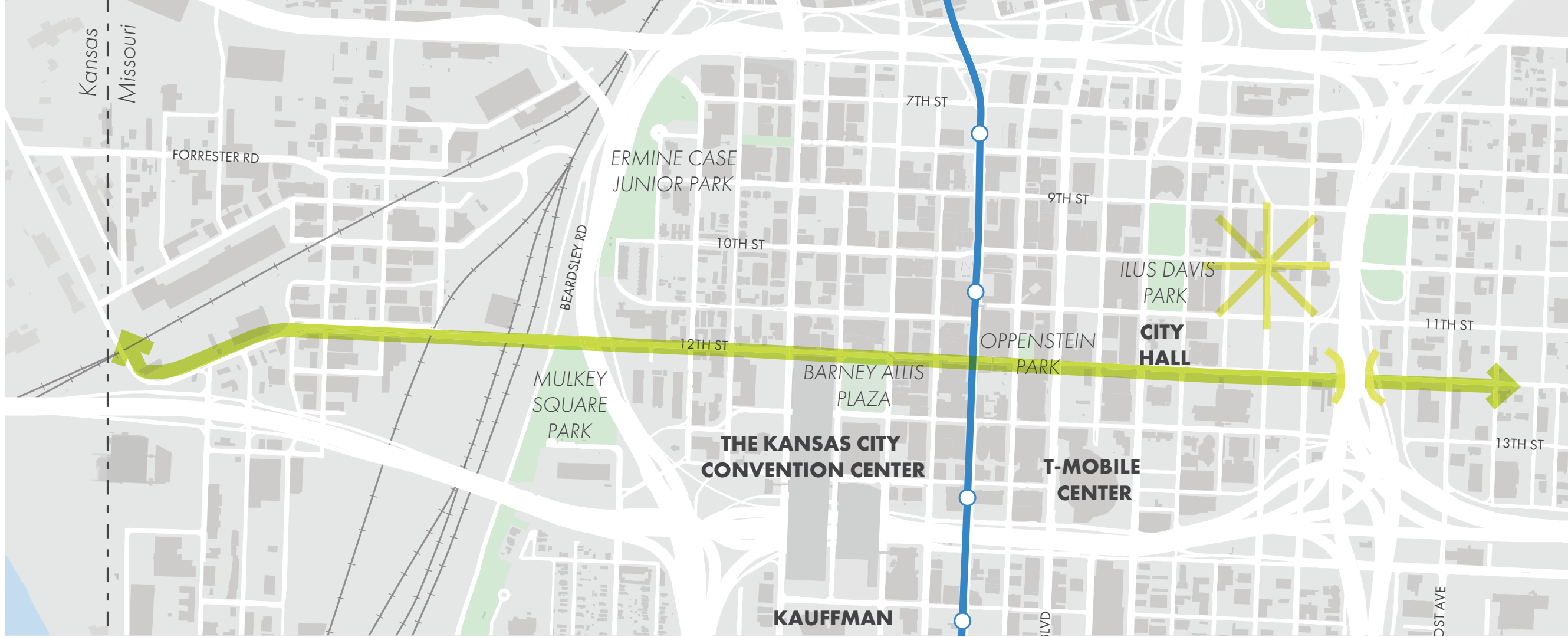


# East-West Connections

12th Street is the only east-west corridor that directly spans the entire width of Downtown, extending from the West Bottoms neighborhood through the Central Business District to Independence Plaza. 12th Street also notably connects major Downtown amenities such as the Kansas City Convention Center, Barney Allis Plaza, the government center, the East Village Transit Center, City Hall, the Jackson County Courthouse, the Bolling Federal Office Building, and several major office towers.

## A3 12th STREET CORRIDOR

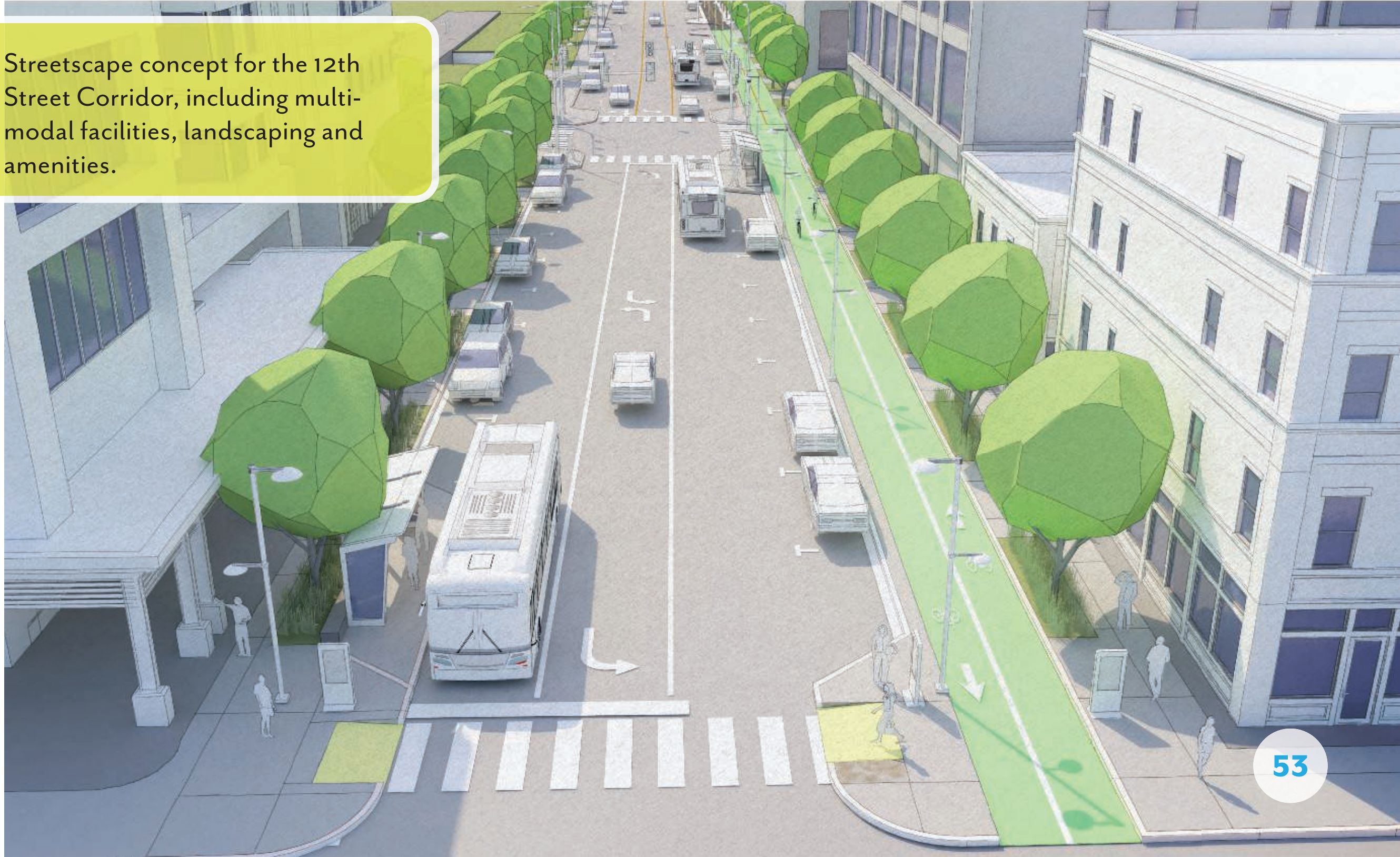
Given the importance of 12th Street, enhancements should be made to improve the aesthetic quality, safety, and coherence of the entire corridor. Priorities should include Complete Street elements such as bicycle and transit amenities, drive lane reallocation where appropriate, wayfinding signage and consistent street lighting, seating, and landscaping.



↔ 12th Street Corridor    ⌋ Enhanced Underpass    ✨ Fusion East Village (concept)

### TO MOVE THIS PROJECT FORWARD

- A3a. Engage with neighborhoods and business owners along the 12th Street corridor from the West Bottoms through Paseo West to develop a cohesive streetscape design strategy that complements the Downtown Streetscape Standards.
- A3b. Implement the two-way protected cycle track facility along this corridor as recommended in the draft BikeKC plan for Downtown. Efforts should be undertaken to promote this approach in conjunction with revitalizing the physical appearance and amenities along the corridor.
- A3c. Focus on the continuity of design elements and multi-modal facilities along the entire corridor to link neighborhoods together.





# East-West Connections

## A3 12th STREET CORRIDOR

### TO MOVE THIS PROJECT FORWARD

- A3d. Encourage the use of dynamic lighting, public art, or tactical urbanism elements to enhance the I-70 overpass(es) to minimize the negative effects the infrastructure has on the pedestrian experience.
- A3e. Promote an urban village concept that seamlessly integrates improvements and enhancements made as part of the 12th Street Corridor project.



“Fusion” is the winning submission of the 2021 ULI Hines Student Competition. Created by students from Ryerson University, York University and University of Toronto, the concept calls for: “Seamlessly fusing the East Village, Paseo West, and Kansas City’s Downtown Core, Fusion is a welcoming and affordable mixed-use development, where everyone who wishes to call it home, can. Designed around two key pillars, connectivity and resilience, this LEED neighborhood embodies inclusive and sustainable growth within Kansas City.”

