



CHAPTER FIVE
**TRANSFORMATIVE
STRATEGIES**



TRANSFORMATIVE STRATEGIES

This chapter outlines the specific Transformative Strategies that will bring the Plan to life. **These strategies will shape decision-making, prioritization and investment** and will guide the work of the Downtown Council, City and their many partners and collaborators. They respond to the COVID-19 impacts without losing sight of Downtown’s momentum and incredible potential in the coming years.

The recommendations in this chapter are all based on extensive community and stakeholder engagement, as well as best practices from across the country and world. They are anchored by the following criteria:

- **Actionable:** The recommendation comprises a tangible step or series of moves to advance the Plan’s vision and goals.
- **Measurable:** The recommendation is specific, with clear quantitative and/or qualitative metrics to benchmark and track progress.
- **Implementable:** The recommendation is politically feasible and has broad stakeholder and community support.

- **Interconnected:** The recommendation applies, supports, or advances ideas in other plans, specifically the City’s Greater Downtown Area Plan (GDAP).
- **Consistent:** The strategy or recommendation is aligned with and is supportive of the Plan Guiding Principles for an Equitable, Inclusive, and Vibrant Downtown KC.

The Transformative Strategies include:

- A. Mosaic of Neighborhoods
- B. Housing for All
- C. 21st Century Jobs, Economy, and Recovery
- D. A Green, Beautiful, and Vibrant City Center
- E. Seamless Mobility
- F. Smart and Healthy Infrastructure



A Mosaic of Neighborhoods

Foster complete, robust, distinct, and connected Downtown neighborhoods, each with a healthy environment, a strong sense of place and community, and exceptional quality of life.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The unique neighborhoods of Downtown complement each other and weave a distinctive urban mosaic. Each neighborhood has a unique history, character and sense of place that should be celebrated, protected, and enhanced. Collective actions should foster a shared sense of collaboration and inclusion. Strategies that develop and leverage the assets of each neighborhood will strengthen the entire community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A1 IMPLEMENT INCLUSIVE BRANDING AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES.

- A1a** Review branding and communications materials to underscore that Downtown is inclusive of all adjacent neighborhoods.
- A1b** Extend Downtown Council expertise in advocacy, grant writing, and communications to Downtown neighborhood organizations to help them to implement their goals.
- A1c** Implement outreach strategies that accommodate neighborhood organizations that are primarily volunteer-driven.
- A1d** Provide support from the Downtown Council neighborhood liaison to help neighborhood organizations participate in collective action.
- A1e** Explore partnerships with neighborhood non-profit organizations and local institutions such as churches and service providers.





A Mosaic of Neighborhoods

RECOMMENDATIONS

A2 CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION AMONG DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS.

- A2a** Establish a forum or communication network where Downtown neighborhoods can share ideas, solve problems, and develop plans to act collectively.
- A2b** Offer online tools and technology that provide a variety of ways to participate in all Downtown neighborhood meetings.
- A2c** Explore a partnership with the City to officially support the Downtown neighborhood collaboration effort.
- A2d** Encourage representation from all neighborhoods in future planning efforts.

A3 DEVELOP JOINT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES WITH NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERS, CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS, AND THE CITY.

- A3a** Advocate for economic development projects in all Downtown neighborhoods.
- A3b** Set up regular meetings with neighborhood economic development organizations to share priorities and projects.
- A3c** Work with partners to develop programs to support Downtown neighborhoods in their efforts to recruit needed businesses and services, like grocery stores and childcare.





Housing for All

Create diverse housing opportunities Downtown, with a range of types for people at all income levels, life stages, and family circumstances.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Downtown KC has a wide range of housing options for all incomes, and many neighborhoods retain older affordable single-family homes and apartment buildings. To keep Downtown healthy and diverse, the Downtown Council, the City, and partner organizations need to provide leadership to continue to preserve existing affordable housing and create additional rental and owner-occupied affordable housing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

B1 DEVELOP NEW FUNDING SOURCES TO SUPPORT AFFORDABLE HOUSING, COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING, SHARED PROSPERITY, AND REDUCE DISPLACEMENT.

- B1a** Work with civic partners to establish a Social Impact Fund to build workforce housing, with the financial support of local corporations, individuals, and foundations.
- B1b** Work with civic partners to develop a Community Impact Fund to provide investment capital to enable residents to invest and build equity via shared ownership in real estate.
- B1c** Partner with local non-profits to help low-income owners purchase existing affordable units to stabilize rents and enable owners to stay in their homes.
- B1d** Build a grant fund for emergency repairs and technical assistance to prevent low-income homeowners from losing their homes due to citations and fines for deficiencies they cannot afford to fix.
- B1e** Encourage the City to identify local women and minority contractors who could grow their businesses through performing emergency repair work for homeowners.



Increased opportunities for development and rehabilitation of quality affordable housing





Housing for All

RECOMMENDATIONS

- B1f** Identify displacement risks in Downtown neighborhoods, then work with the Land Bank, the City, and other community organizations to reserve sites for mixed-use/affordable housing.
- B1g** Focus on sustaining and improving the existing housing stock of affordable and extremely affordable housing to ensure it is well maintained and operated.
- B1h** Fund an Affordable Housing Trust Fund through a City Council appropriation as well as other sources.
- B1i** Pursue a companion Housing Trust Fund supported by the Kansas City's Philanthropic Community and privately administered.
- B1j** Pursue other creative financing tools like opportunity zones, Community Reinvestment Act and Community Development Financial Institutions funds to finance a broad-scale home rehab program.

B2 IMPLEMENT REGULATORY CHANGES TO SUPPORT AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

- B2a** Build on the work of the prior City Council in *A Housing Policy for Kansas City (2019-2023)* to create a comprehensive housing policy for the City to further inform subsequent inclusionary housing ordinances.
- B2b** Propose regulatory changes to allow more flexibility for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) on single-family parcels.
- B2c** Start a pilot project to allow and encourage ADU implementation in Downtown neighborhoods.

- B2d** Advocate for regulatory changes to permit commercial and mini manufacturing uses in strategic locations within single-family residential zones in close-in neighborhoods to allow homeowners to start home businesses.
- B2e** Partner with the City to fund a permit navigator to supplement the City's BizCare program and guide nonprofits, local women, and minority-owned companies, and individuals trying to develop housing projects in low-income neighborhoods to comply quickly and efficiently with City processes.
- B2f** Provide property tax relief for market-rate projects in exchange for affordable unit set-asides or a payment in lieu directed towards an Affordable Housing Fund.





Housing for All

RECOMMENDATIONS

B2g Develop regulatory tools to discourage or prevent teardowns of small homes to prevent displacement of existing residents and to retain neighborhood character.

B2h Create incentives to prioritize the creation of affordable housing along the Streetcar route.

B3 CREATE NEW PARTNERSHIPS TO DEVELOP CREATIVE SOLUTIONS.

B3a Create a private/public sector task force to research and advocate for national best practice homeless solutions, such as the By-Name processes, coordinated case management, coordinated entry, and Housing First.

B3b Support the growth of non-profit affordable housing builders and develop connections between housing non-profits and the Downtown business community.

B3c Encourage partnerships between the housing authority and the private sector to develop mixed-income projects in Downtown.

B3d Work with the Housing Authority to ensure all units under its control are available for rent.





21st Century Jobs, Economy, and Recovery

Create a diversified
economic base that provides
opportunity for all Kansas
City residents now and into
the future.

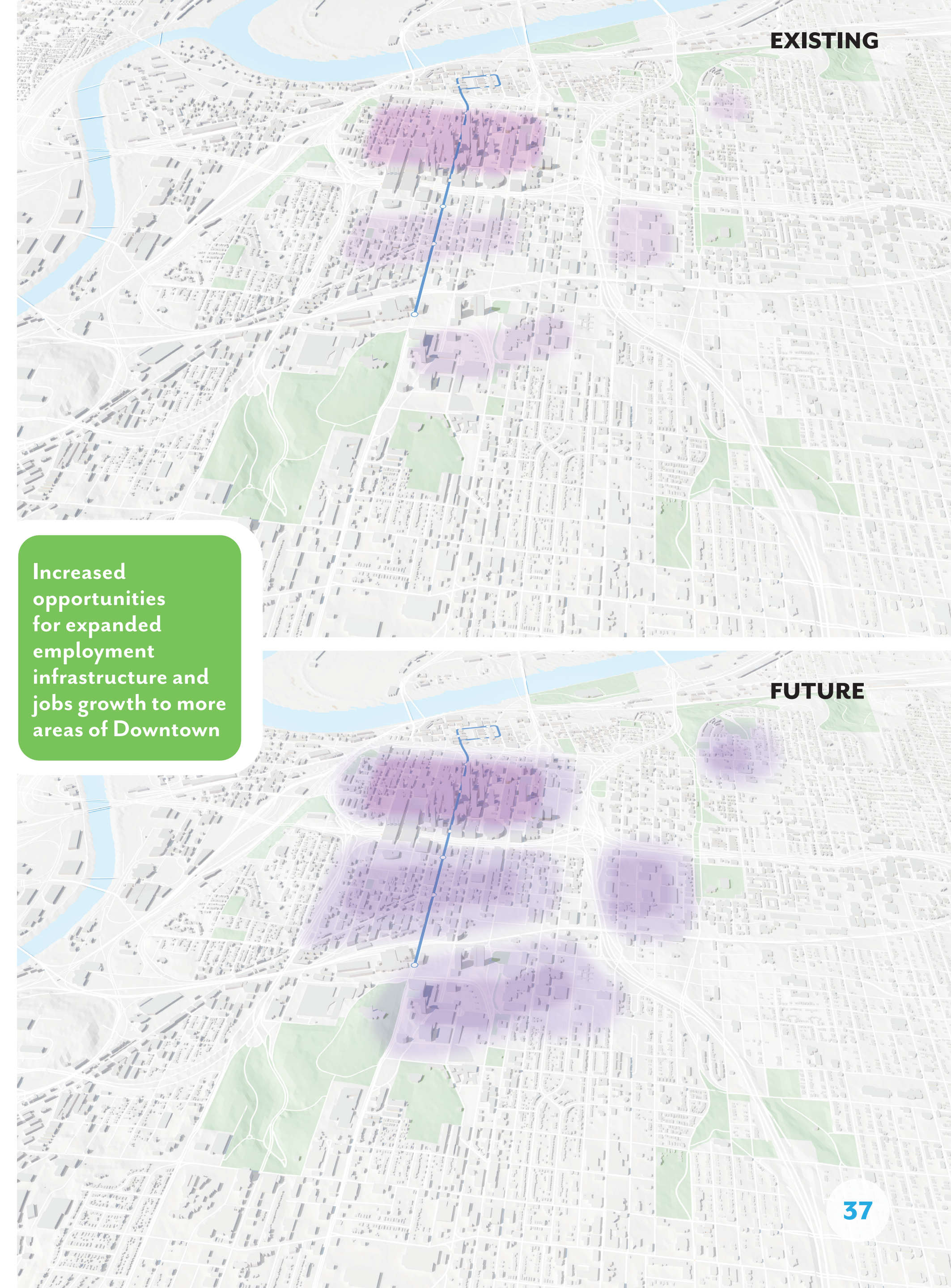
THE OPPORTUNITY

Downtown KC has a diversified economy. It includes cool shopping streets, a base of large employers including Hallmark, H&R Block, Kansas City Southern, Evergy and a growing national reputation as a technology center, with high-speed fiber, an expanding medical research cluster, a strong concentration in the digital creative field, and an exciting Innovation District in early planning stages. However, this economic opportunity is not evenly distributed. Downtown leadership must help catalyze job growth, workforce development, education and skills training, and entrepreneurship opportunities to create a diversified economic base that provides opportunities for all in Kansas City.

RECOMMENDATIONS

C1 FOCUS ON HELPING RETAIL BUSINESSES AND RESTAURANTS TO DEVELOP STRONG REOPENING STRATEGIES.

- C1a** Continue communications and marketing strategies to encourage people to patronize Downtown businesses and restaurants.
- C1b** Work with hotels, the Convention Center, the T-Mobile Center, and arts and cultural organizations to include information about local retail and restaurants as part of their reopening promotions.
- C1c** Advocate for retaining the flexible COVID-19 permitting process for outdoor dining and load zones for Downtown retailers and restaurants.
- C1d** Continue to offer expertise on local business support and financing (including COVID-19 relief) programs and how to access them.





21st Century Jobs, Economy, and Recovery

RECOMMENDATIONS

C1e Act as an advocate to help re-opening businesses navigate the City permitting processes.

C2 PARTNER WITH ARTS ORGANIZATIONS TO PROMOTE THEIR RE-OPENING STRATEGIES.

C2a Support the ArtsKC Recovery & Resiliency Plan, a long-term marketing, communications, and PR campaign aimed at reviving the post-pandemic KC arts industry.

C2b Promote Downtown arts through outdoor public performances, activated streetscapes, and new programming.

C2c Work with arts and culture organizations to create affordable opportunities to participate in and experience the arts. This could include audience development, perception management, new corporate programs, and pricing.

C2d Develop specific initiatives and promotions to reintroduce the Downtown arts and culture opportunities and experience to the community.

C3 DEVELOP AND BUILD AWARENESS SUPPORT PROGRAMS FOR ENTREPRENEURS.

C3a Identify and promote awareness of existing programs and training centers for women and minority entrepreneurs.

C3b Provide access to capital and coaching skills on all aspects of business from successful strategies with lenders, negotiating with vendors, and interacting with the business community power structure.

C3c Explore opportunities to work with local colleges to link students with local businesses to aid with developing online strategies, adopting new payment systems, and installing new technologies to be competitive in the digital age.

C3d Continue to support LaunchKC, which partners with Kansas City corporations, State of Missouri, and philanthropic organizations to help small tech businesses grow and continue to make Downtown a startup hub.

C4. SUPPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS.

C4a Support Downtown neighborhood goals to develop partnerships between community institutions and local merchant associations with the goal of providing accessible training and support to existing and start-up small businesses.

C4b Support the creation of training and mentoring programs to assist Downtown neighborhood development corporations to access capital for their projects.

C4c Partner with neighborhoods on wealth-building strategies.

C4d Develop policies to link the use of public funds in private development projects with community goals such as inclusive procurement, hiring, and contracting.





21st Century Jobs, Economy, and Recovery

RECOMMENDATIONS

C5 CONTINUE EFFORTS TO EXPAND AND STRENGTHEN THE OFFICE SECTOR IN DOWNTOWN.

- C5a** Retain existing large employers and work to recruit new headquarters to Downtown.
- C5b** Continue support for the Downtown Council's business attraction initiative "Place Matters" to become "prospect ready" so that when an employer is considering locating Downtown, the relevant data, materials, and local leaders/peer employers are prepared and ready to be mobilized.
- C5c** Identify priority locations for clusters of new commercial office development to leverage positive impacts of concentrated locations and increase the attractiveness for potential relocation prospects.
- C5d** Identify a strategic middle ground in office development, targeting lower-scale structures and mixed-use projects with well-designed public amenities in districts outside the core to extend the Downtown business energy to other areas.
- C5e** Continue the Downtown Council's annual Office Summit to raise awareness of Downtown opportunities.





A Green, Beautiful, and Vibrant City Center

Invest in great design, activation, and abundant landscaping for parks, plazas, and sidewalks throughout Downtown.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Kansas City has a long and proud history of investment in boulevards and parks and is known as the City of Fountains. Unfortunately, not all Downtown neighborhoods shared the benefits of these historic investments. Existing parks and plazas are not used to their full potential and they suffer from a lack of activation, pedestrian access barriers, outdated design, and deferred maintenance. A green and walkable Downtown is necessary to attract and retain residents, workers, and visitors, and high-quality, well maintained, and programmed parks are needed by residents of all ages for play and relaxation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

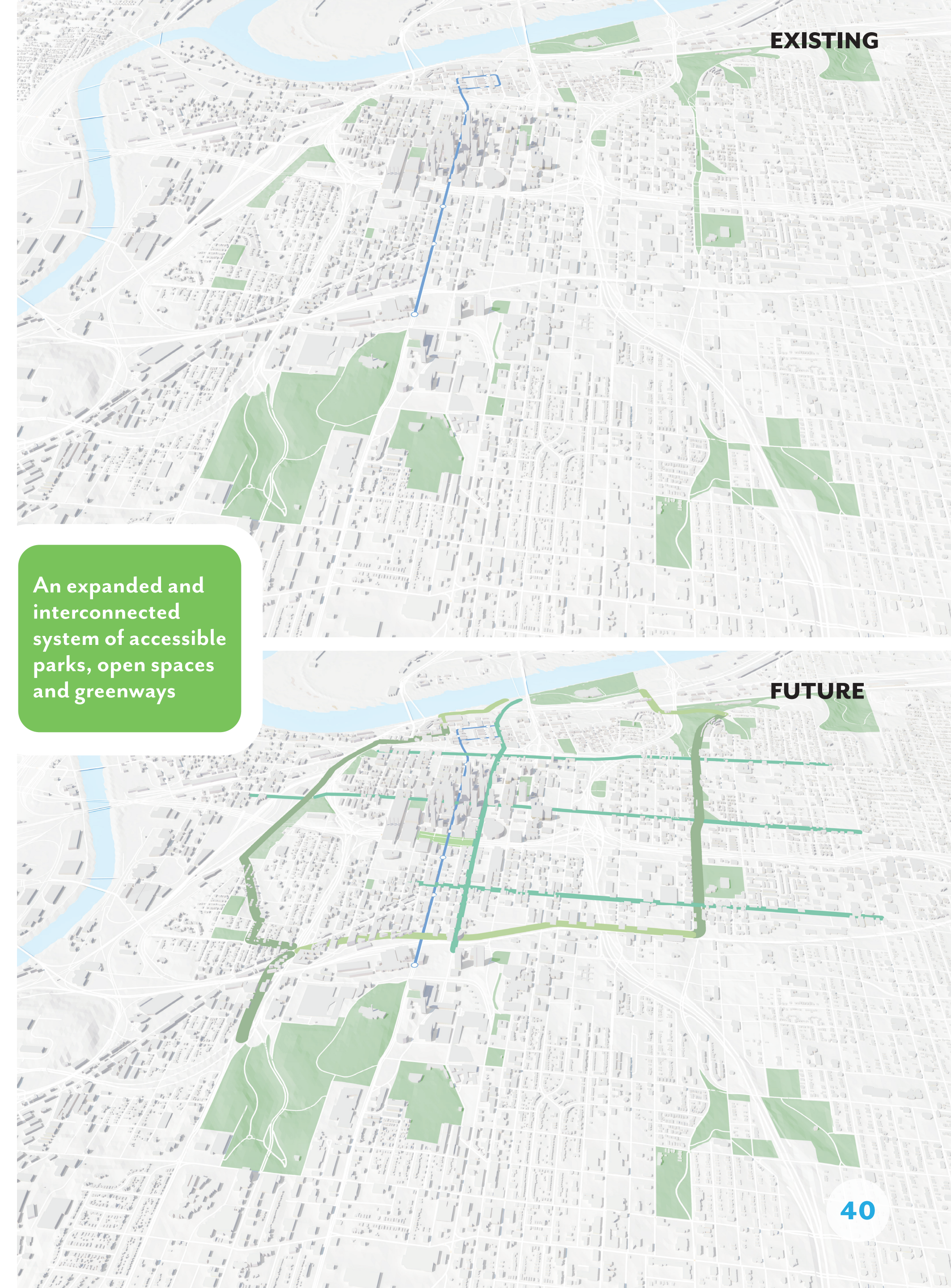
D1 PLANT MORE TREES AND FLOWERS.

D1a Continue implementation of an aggressive tree planting and tree maintenance program in Downtown neighborhoods through close working relationships with the Kansas City Department of Parks and Recreation and non-profits like Bridging the Gap.

D1b Encourage property owners to plant trees in front of their buildings and help them to navigate City regulations.

D1c Start a hanging flower basket program.

D1d Partner with the Community Improvement District, within its boundaries, to maintain trees and flowers.





A Green, Beautiful, and Vibrant City Center

RECOMMENDATIONS

D2 PRIORITIZE RENOVATING PARKS IN UNDERSERVED NEIGHBORHOODS.

D2a Support neighborhood improvements to public spaces, parks, and landscaping in every Downtown neighborhood. Review and contemporize the Greenspace plan developed by the Kansas City Design Center.

D2b Prioritize eliminating pedestrian access barriers and increasing walking and bicycle access to neighborhood parks in the City capital budget.

D3 DEVELOP ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AND FUNDING FOR PARK ACTIVATION AND MAINTENANCE.

D3a Plan for the development of a parks conservancy that would support the revitalization, activation, and maintenance of Downtown parks, plazas, and open spaces and the creation of new green spaces.

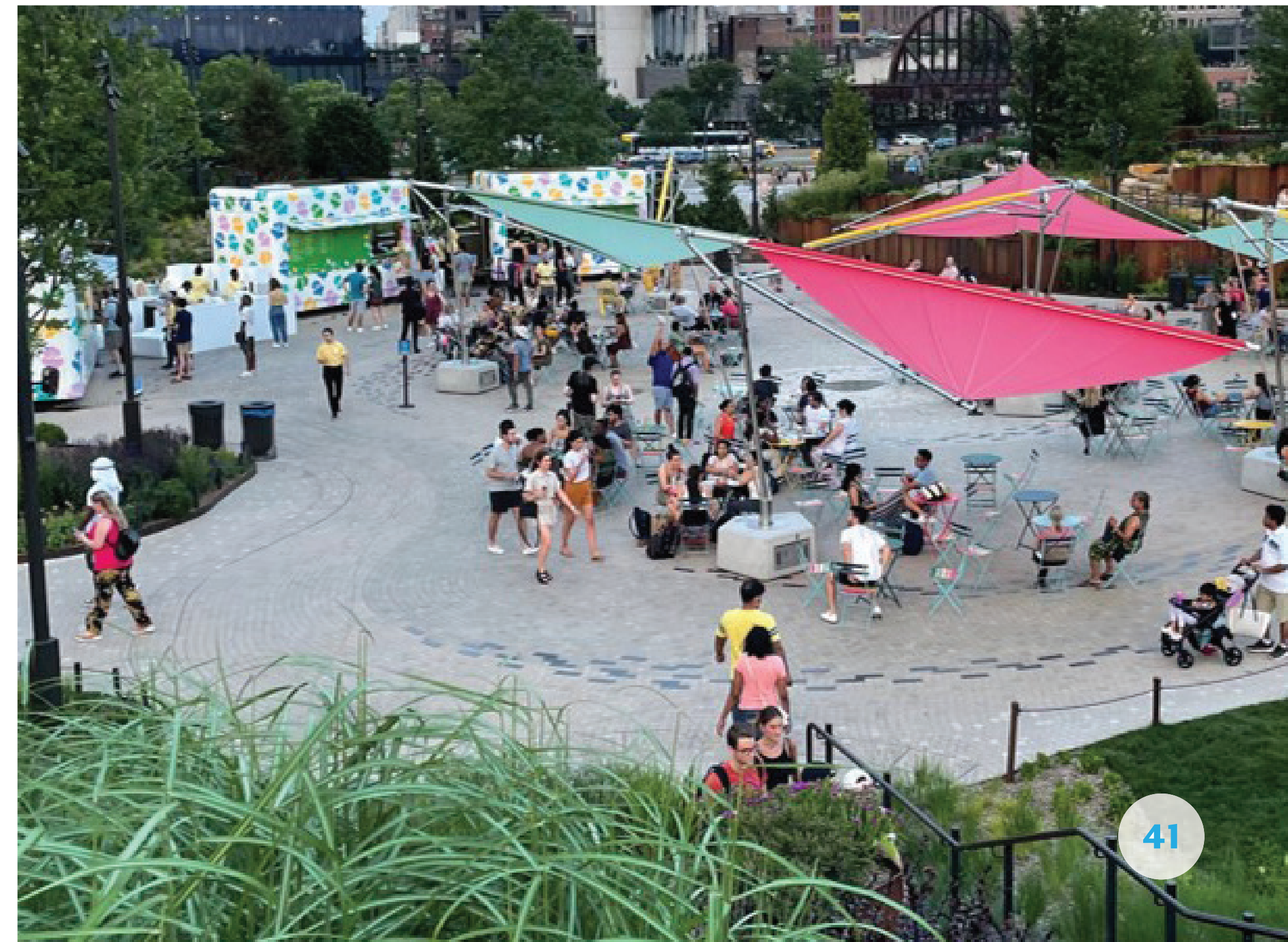
D3b Partner with Downtown residents to develop “Friends of” organizations for parks in residential neighborhoods.

D3c Support neighborhood community events by providing connections to potential sponsors and developing a Downtown-wide calendar of community events.

D4 REIMAGINE AND REINVIGORATE PARKS AND PLAZAS.

D4a Identify underutilized parks that could be locations for community gardens, wildlife habitat and ecological restoration and help communities to find funding and implement innovative new programs.

D4b Consider adding park activation and management programs to the CID business plan.





Seamless Mobility

Provide easy, seamless mobility for all modes of transportation that will make it convenient and affordable to get to and around Downtown without a car.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Kansas City has made great strides in creating a robust mobility network, including the Streetcar and its proposed expansions, the BikeKC plan, Vision Zero policies (creating safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for all), and a comprehensive plan for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service. Despite this progress, Downtown still feels car-centric, and the bus, bike, and pedestrian networks are incomplete and do not always conveniently connect, making driving an easier choice.

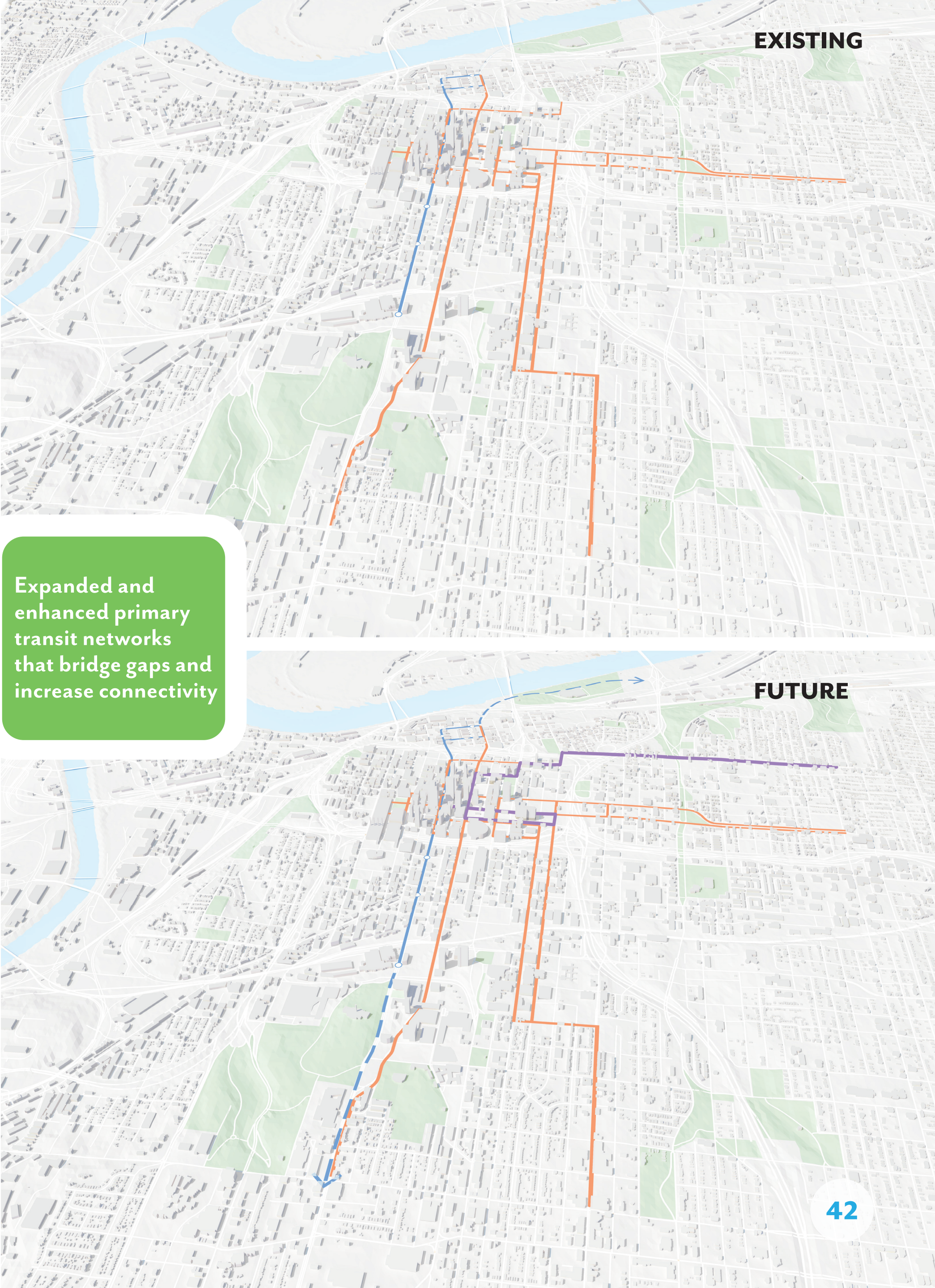
RECOMMENDATIONS

E1 INCREASE EQUITY THROUGHOUT THE TRANSIT SYSTEM.

- E1a Support funding for Zero Fare for all transit citywide and in Downtown.
- E1b Prioritize east-west routes as part of the new Ride KC Next transit route plan.

E2 INCREASE BIKE MOBILITY, ESPECIALLY ON EAST-WEST CORRIDORS.

- E2a Support implementation of bike mobility strategies identified in the Greater Downtown Area Plan.
- E2b Advocate increasing electric bike access Downtown.
- E2c Support the RideKC dock-less bikes.
- E2d Propose a shared e-cargo bike program for local business deliveries around Downtown.





Seamless Mobility

RECOMMENDATIONS

E3 IMPLEMENT VISION ZERO STRATEGIES.

E3a Advocate for pedestrian safety improvements in Downtown to implement Vision Zero goals.

E3b Improve signal timing at intersections where there is high foot traffic, high speeds, and safety concerns.

E3c Work with neighborhoods on the east and west sides of Downtown to identify pedestrian safety concerns and make them a priority.

E4 INSTALL COMPLETE STREETS INFRASTRUCTURE (DESIGNED AND OPERATED TO ENABLE SAFE USE AND SUPPORT MOBILITY FOR ALL USERS) AS OUTLINED IN THE GREATER DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN.

E4a Advocate that development projects adjacent to public right of ways implement Complete Streets policies.

E4b Focus Complete Streets implementation on improving walkability and bike-ability on key east-west connections.

F2 IMPLEMENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO MAXIMIZE THE USE OF EXISTING PARKING SPACES AS RECOMMENDED BY THE GREATER DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN

E5a Require parking garages to either have street-level retail, art, creative design, or plantings at ground level to make the adjacent sidewalk safe and attractive.

E5b Reduce the number of curb cuts in new development.

E5c Encourage operators to adopt parking apps and technology so that customers have access to information for Downtown garage parking availability in real-time.

E5d Continue to develop an on-street parking management program with variable costing models and consistent enforcement.

E5e Create tools and incentives, like shared parking, that maximize the existing parking inventory and reduces the need to create new parking.

E5f Explore the feasibility of a “Parking Benefit District” to cooperatively manage the parking inventory.





Smart and Healthy Infrastructure

Invest in technology, sustainability, and wellness initiatives to create a technologically sophisticated, environmentally friendly, and healthy Downtown.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Wellness, health, and sustainability are becoming important priorities in new development, corporate culture, and people's everyday life. The City's KC Green initiative incorporates sustainability into a broader triple bottom line approach that simultaneously promotes social equity, economic vitality, and environmental quality. Downtown is an excellent laboratory to pilot new approaches to sustainability and wellness. Prospective residents and companies will be looking for locations that demonstrate these values when making location decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

F1 DEVELOP A "HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE DOWNTOWN" INITIATIVE.

- F1a** Help neighborhood groups to establish community gardens and urban agriculture projects on vacant land Downtown.
- F1b.** Encourage the development of a pilot program for recycling and composting for multifamily housing.
- F1c** Encourage local fitness clubs and yoga studios to offer outdoor classes in parks and plazas.
- F1d** Develop running trails Downtown and exercise stations that provide fitness options in local parks.
- F1e** Make Downtown fitness opportunities a new section on the Downtown Council website.

Strategic implementation of smart infrastructure installation and environmentally-sound design





Smart and Healthy Infrastructure

RECOMMENDATIONS

F1f Encourage fitness competitions like marathons and bike races to start and finish Downtown.

F1g Work with the UniversityHealth Wellness Connections program to develop Downtown employee health and wellness initiatives such as walking trails, yoga classes, or other programming.

F2 BUILD GREEN STORMWATER PRACTICES INTO INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS AS RECOMMENDED BY THE GREATER DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN.

F2a Incorporate green stormwater management into the Complete Streets program and all sidewalk, utility, and roadway reconstruction Downtown.

F2b Explore recommendations from the Beyond the Loop PEL study for the North Loop such as creating a new smart stormwater system with integrated technology that also serves as an attractive amenity and solves existing problems in the Downtown watershed.

F3 PROVIDE DIGITAL ACCESS THROUGHOUT DOWNTOWN.

F3a Encourage the City to adopt design guidelines for small-cell implementation Downtown.

F3b Require equity criteria for 5G implementation to ensure all Downtown neighborhoods have equal access to broadband resources.

F3c Improve digital access and affordability for households and small businesses throughout Downtown neighborhoods as described in the *KC Connectivity Report*.

F3d Explore digital upgrades to low-income Downtown neighborhoods as part of community benefit packages for new development.

F4 PROMOTE THE ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFIT OF PRESERVING HISTORIC BUILDINGS.

F4a Continue to encourage the reuse of historic buildings as affordable housing and creative office space.

F4b Promote Downtown historic buildings by celebrating successful historic reuse and rehabilitation projects.

F4c Encourage signs and plaques identifying historic sites and buildings Downtown.

F4d Educate the community on the environmental benefits of preservation including reducing resource and material consumption; reducing waste in landfills, and using less energy by reusing buildings instead of demolition and new construction.