

I. INTRODUCTION

WaterWalk, Century II, Old Town, the Arkansas River, an ice skating facility, the Boathouse, Lawrence Dumont Stadium, an arena and much more create a framework of individual destinations within Downtown Wichita. These and other tremendous assets, as well as the amount of recent private and public investment in Downtown, have established a foundation for placing Downtown at the forefront of community development in Wichita for years to come.

This plan is the result of forward thinking related to existing assets, potential opportunity, and leveraging the catalyst of a Downtown Arena for Wichita – Sedgwick County. It is not about the continuation of existing trends, or merely planning for development or facilities that will support arena events, activities or patrons. Instead this plan is about vision and maximizing significant public and private investment. Furthermore, this plan is about the creation of a vibrant successful place where people come to enjoy an evening, attend a conference, go to work, experience something new or unique, or spend a portion of their life residing in this neighborhood within Downtown Wichita.

THE ARENA NEIGHBORHOOD REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

- Vision Driven
- Long Range
- General
- Physically Oriented

The plan vision can only be achieved if the strategies and recommendations in the plan directly address community issues and goals. This plan ties issues and goals to proposed policies, strategies and recommendations for the future.



A. Building the Plan

Ever since the discussion of an arena in Downtown Wichita began, everyone has known that there would be a number of hurdles to overcome. Community leaders and citizens invested themselves in the idea of a downtown arena through a great level of community and individual commitment. Much discussion and debate went into the decision to build a Downtown Arena. This debate culminated in a vote by the citizens of Sedgwick County to make the investment of a new arena in the southern portion of Downtown Wichita.

The community commitment of building a downtown arena is a bold step toward further downtown revitalization. As the County focuses upon the task of finding an arena site and designing a venue, the City focuses on maximizing an opportunity: an opportunity to not just accommodate a large public facility, but instead to envision the future based on both public and private investment in the area around the Arena.

It is recognized by the City that downtown redevelopment is a complex and difficult task that will take a series of proactive steps in order to achieve success over a long period of time. Building the arena alone is not sufficient to ensure that the public and private investments made in the area are maximized or to support the market potential for redeveloping the entire neighborhood area. In fact, without a plan market forces could lead to an undesirable mixture of uses and the underutilization of land in the form of surface parking lots or second-tier commercial activities.

Additionally, the City understands that the need for a plan that envisions an effective public-private partnership approach toward redevelopment is critical. The creation of such a partnership, guided by a plan, does not mean that the ultimate redevelopment will look or occur exactly as the plan envisions. Instead it means that private market interests are able to see the preferences and desires of the “public” at the time the plan was adopted. Changes in the marketplace over time will influence what and when redevelopment projects will take place in the Arena Neighborhood area and if redevelopment will occur in the manner envisioned or in some other manner. Thus, the need for the Arena Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan was identified, and a planning process that invited further public participation was developed to set the tone for envisioning the desired

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Since early 2006, the participants involved in the Arena Neighborhood planning process have been following a sequence of steps to develop this plan.

These steps include:

- Issues Identification
- Data Gathering & Analysis
- Vision / Goals Development
- Formulation of Alternatives
- Plan Development & Adoption

This process will be continuous in nature as the plan is implemented and evaluated, and conditions change.

future, establishing a public-private partnership approach to redevelopment and providing guidance on appropriate tools and actions for successful plan implementation.

The accompanying diagram (*Figure I-1*) illustrates the planning process utilized for the development of the Arena Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan. This plan was developed through a community participation process and led by a project Steering Committee comprised of citizens and community leaders. The Steering Committee gave ongoing advice concerning the planning process, development issues, and plan direction. Subsequently, the process incorporated the utilization of arena public forums, a community survey, one-on-one interviews and small group discussions, and public open houses to set the basis for receiving input, testing draft vision and goals statements, and analyzing proposed future development alternatives. Throughout this process, the City Council was kept apprised of major issues addressed by the plan, and their feedback assisted in providing direction to various plan components and recommendations.

Within this process existing conditions and trends information has been gathered and analyzed as a basis for verifying public input, understanding the evolution of the Arena neighborhood area and creating the plan. A summary of the existing conditions findings, including a market analysis report, is provided in the Technical Supplement.

Overall, the community's concerns and desires have been considered, and a variety of competing factors have been weighed. The resulting plan reflects much time and effort of those who took the opportunity to participate in the process of "plan building" utilizing a series of principles for creating successful places as a foundation for the vision of the Arena Neighborhood.

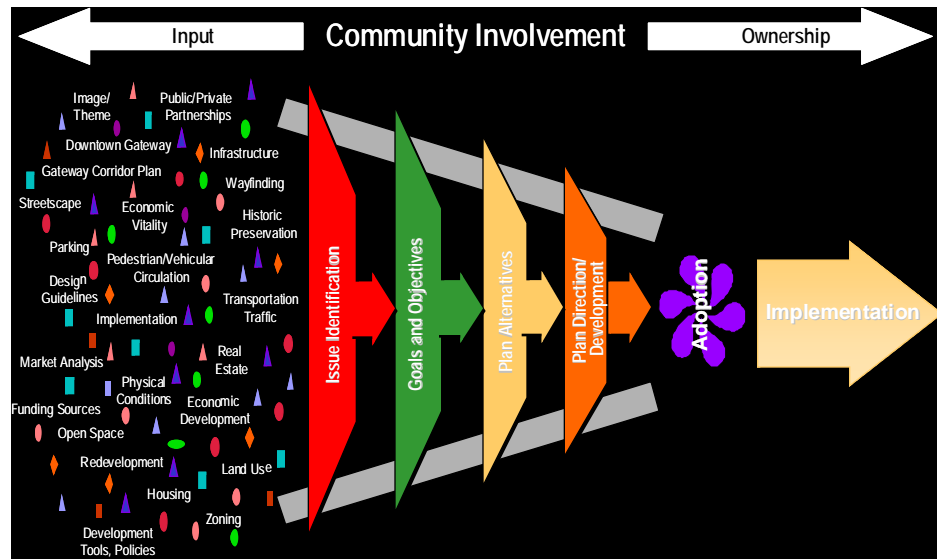


FIGURE I-1: PLANNING PROCESS
SOURCE: GOULD EVANS ASSOCIATES

PRINCIPLES FOR CREATING SUCCESSFUL PLACES

- Create an Organizing Structure
- Foster a Distinctive Identity
- Encourage Variety and Interest
- Ensure Visual and Functional Continuity
- Maximize Convenience
- Provide for Comfort and Safety
- Emphasize High Quality
- Provide Mixed-use Development

These principles from Chapter I work hand-in-hand with the plan vision to guide future investment decisions in the Arena Neighborhood.

B. Principles for Creating Successful Places

The following principles include both physical and perceptual items that assist in defining a successful place. Along with the vision and goals of the plan, these principles serve as guides for future development in the Arena Neighborhood. Specifically, the principles that follow and the vision in *Chapter II* form the foundation for the recommendations found in *Chapter III: Neighborhood Plan*.

Create an Organizing Structure

The organizing elements for the Arena Neighborhood are the physical elements that define both private and public spaces. The primary elements of organization addressed in this plan are streets, blocks, buildings, open space and streetscape.

Foster a Distinctive Identity

The potential for redevelopment that is present in the Arena Neighborhood also offers an opportunity to establish an identity for the area. This plan is intended to foster a distinctive, yet complementary, identity that will establish this area as a vibrant part of the Downtown.

Encourage Variety and Interest

Redevelopment in the Arena Neighborhood will be based upon a variety of experiences that are interesting and inviting to people. The plan promotes and encourages a mixture of uses and development patterns or styles within the area to draw a variety of people to the area.

Ensure Visual and Functional Continuity

The design criteria for public and private improvements have been prepared to encourage creativity and flexibility, yet promote the distinctive identity for the area and continuity within the Downtown. Additionally, public elements such as streetscape and park/open space features will support a visual and functional continuity throughout the area.

Maximize Convenience

The ability to move throughout a place, as a motorist, as a pedestrian and by other modes of transportation is important. The intent of this plan is not only to maximize convenience in support of the arena, but

also in support of everyday activity in the area. The mobility framework establishes connections and linkages to allow for convenience and movement of people in the neighborhood.

Provide for Comfort and Safety

The comfort of a place makes it a useable and desirable place to be. To make a place comfortable, people must feel safe and have a reason for experiencing the place. The recommendations in this plan are focused upon providing safe and comfortable experiences and giving people reasons for staying in the area for extended periods of time.

Emphasize High Quality

Successful places are most often places that have enduring qualities that last for long periods of time. Quality development will define the place and ensure long-term viability of the neighborhood.

Provide Mixed-use Development

Mixing uses within an area promotes efficiency and economy in everyday activities. The provision of mixed-use development within the Arena Neighborhood provides the opportunity to live, work, shop and play, all within this portion of Downtown Wichita.

THE PLANNING AREA

The Arena Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan addresses a portion of Downtown Wichita. This area is bounded by the Central Rail Corridor on the east, Kellogg on the south, Main on the west and extends ½ block north of Douglas.

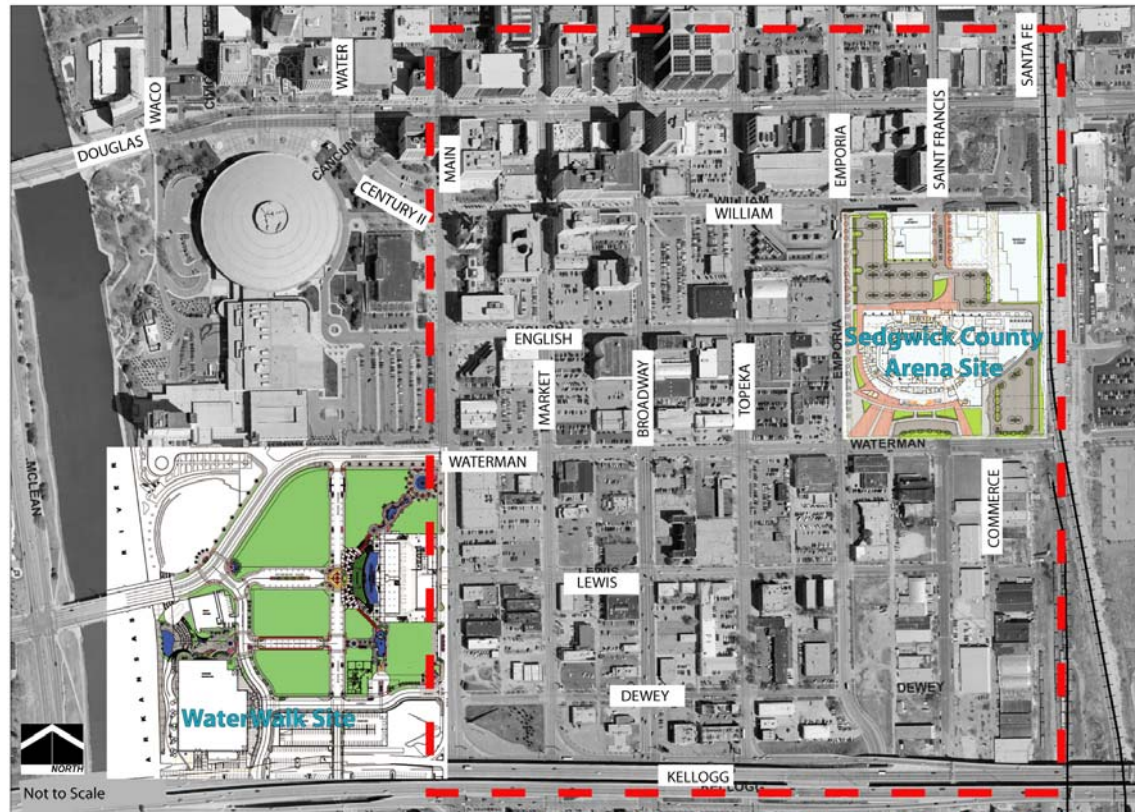


FIGURE I-2: PLANNING AREA

SOURCE: GOULD EVANS ASSOCIATES



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

Effectively implementing the Arena Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan will require constant and diligent effort by a dedicated implementation agency or group.

This group should include a champion or advocate ombudsman that is focused 24/7 on the task of redeveloping the Arena Neighborhood area.

C. Continuous Improvement

In addition to guiding principles, community commitment to continuous improvement will make a successful place. The Arena Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan is intended to guide and coordinate development, and to set the stage for restoring an urban vibrancy to this area of Downtown that will be influenced by a significant level of public and private reinvestment in the future. As such, the Plan’s policies, strategies, and recommendations are intended to be used as guides for decisions regarding land use, mobility and design.

The primary implementation tools for the plan are put in place through land use ordinances, budgetary activities, and other legal and policy actions. As the community changes and priorities shift, the plan and associated planning efforts will need to be adjusted. Thus, the planning process and the Neighborhood Plan are “living” or dynamic in nature. The intent is to ensure review and updates through continual maintenance of information, monitoring of community issues, and follow-up on decisions made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission and the City Council and County Commission. Such an approach makes the plan a viable instrument, which is flexible and adaptable to market change and unanticipated influences.

Implementation of the Arena Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan, which begins upon adoption of the plan document, must be an ongoing day-to-day process. By itself, the plan does not bring about change except by identifying issues, articulating goals and objectives, defining directions, and providing information regarding the future consequences of present actions. Implementation of the plan is directly connected to daily public and private decisions regarding the allocation of public and private resources, and the need to coordinate the actions resulting from those decisions.

Ultimately, the creation of a successful place, the Arena Neighborhood, requires a commitment toward continuous improvement through meaningful implementation efforts. To be truly successful requires a commitment to the long term vision, to listening to constant feedback from the community, to continually evaluating the performance of the plan, and to refining its recommendations as changes occur. Thus, the plan is driven by the vision of the community in an effort to create a continuously improving, dynamic and successful place.