

TOPEKA RIVERFRONT VISION PLAN



**BOLTON
& MENK**



Acknowledgements

Credit for this report goes to the Topeka Riverfront Advisory Council members, past and present, and the Bolton & Menk design team who have worked diligently to develop an implementable plan to create a vibrant riverfront for the City of Topeka. Special thanks to the Greater Topeka Partnership, the City of Topeka, Shawnee County, and State of Kansas for their involvement and support.

Riverfront Advisory Board

Greg Schwerdt, Board Chair.....	Schwerdt Design Group
Kevin Holland, Chair-Elect.....	Cook, Flatt & Strobel Engineers
Brent Boles.....	Schendel Lawn Landscape
Cody Foster.....	Advisors Excel
Katy Nelson.....	Topeka Area Building Association
Dawn Buehler.....	Kansas Riverkeeper/Friends of the Kaw
Craig Heideman.....	Kaw Valley Bank
Thomas Underwood.....	NOTO
Missy Hiestand.....	Corefirst Bank & Trust
Michelle Simon.....	Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation
Jennifer Kirmse.....	Azura Credit Union
Cleotha Daniels.....	University of Kansas
Matt Charvat.....	KBS Construction
Jason Schwartz.....	Evergy
Eric Purcell.....	Clayton Wealth Partners
Brad Loveless.....	Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism
Billie Hall.....	Sunflower Foundation
Marlou Wegener.....	Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas
Mike Schirmer.....	Bettis Companies
Sarah Morse.....	Federal Home Loan Bank of Topeka
Amanda Thompson.....	Chavez Restoration
Jennifer Woerner.....	Dirty Girl Adventures
Karen Hiller.....	City of Topeka City Council
Bill Riphahn.....	Shawnee County Commissioner
Tim Laurent.....	Shawnee County Parks + Recreation
Rhiannon Friedman.....	City of Topeka
Ken Scott.....	Capitol Federal/DTI Board Member

Supported By

State of Kansas
City of Topeka
Shawnee County
Visit Topeka
Greater Topeka Partnership
Bolton & Menk

Greater Topeka Partnership

Matt Pivarnik
Michelle Stubblefield
Ashley Gilfillan
Jessyca Moreno
Kate Garren

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....4

Project Location.....5

Outdoor Recreation Economy.....6

Project Goals.....7

Visioning Process.....8

Project Timeline.....9

Project Area.....10

Public Engagement.....14

Final Concept Plan.....18

Space Programming.....36

Permitting and Regulatory Process.....39

Zoning.....40

Phasing & Next Steps.....41

Appendix.....43

 Funding Strategy

 Cost Opinion

 Engagement Reports

Executive Summary

Topeka is blessed with a multitude of natural and cultural resources, a thriving arts district in NOTO, a downtown in the midst of a resurgence, access to a highly skilled workforce, and so much more. And we're not done yet! In 2022, local partners developed a plan to move the region forward, Momentum 2027, of which a "21st Century Riverfront" is a key initiative. The Topeka Riverfront Vision Plan is an important next step in the process to reimagine and reinvest in this historic district.

Under the leadership of the River Advisory Council (RAC) and with extensive public feedback, an aspirational vision has been created that will serve as a roadmap for the establishment of an active riverfront park and future development opportunities within the district. Key plan goals and associated amenities include:

- **Foster Connections to Nature:** The Kaw River is one of our nation's iconic river systems. However, as industrial uses have transitioned and evolved over time, the connection to the river has waned. This project aims to change that and reconnect the community to the river through a series of overlooks, river access, green stormwater infrastructure to improve water quality, native plantings, nature-based play features, and interpretive programming.
- **Support Economic Development:** Access to trails and other public spaces are consistently near the top of this list of amenities people seek when choosing where to live and work. A key component of the plan includes opportunities for redevelopment of the district. Though conversations with developers are ongoing, it is anticipated that the district may include a mix of restaurants and entertainment venues, retail, residential, outfitters for outdoor gear and equipment rentals, and others. Additionally, the project will complement ongoing economic development initiatives that will be of benefit to Topeka and the region.
- **Improve Recreational Opportunities:** City and County partners are leading efforts to expand the regional trail network and enhance safety. This project will provide connection points to the existing trail network and nearby amenities. In addition, river access for on-water recreation and emergency response is a priority as well as flexible seating options

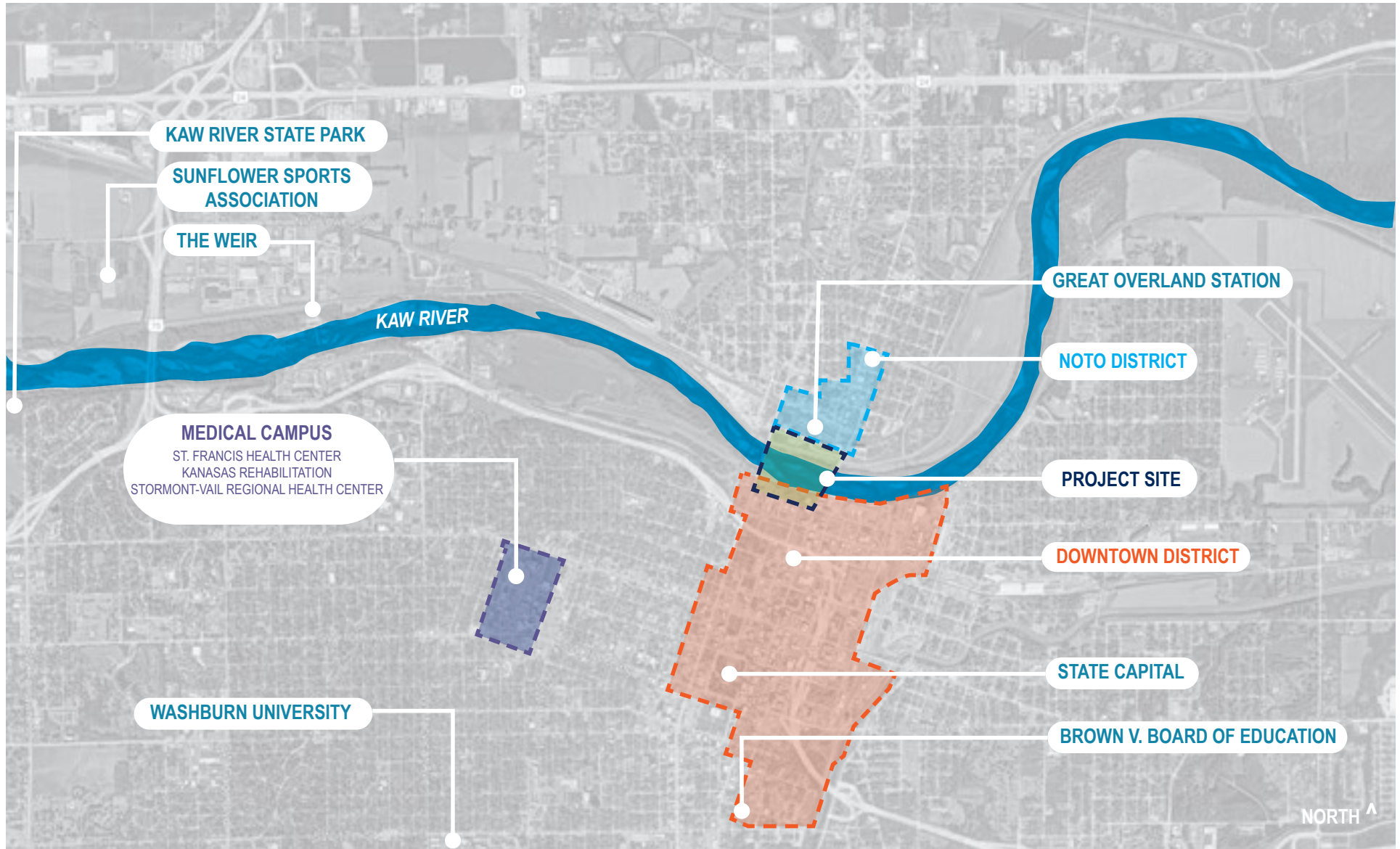
and stone outcroppings for anglers and other users. This work being done as part of this project will be part of larger, regional efforts to support recreation and ecotourism along the Kaw River.

- **Enhance Quality of Place:** The project will create dynamic public spaces that embrace the community's cultural, historical, and natural heritage while also creating a unique vision for the future through art, interpretive programming, park amenities, lighting and other safety considerations, streetscape improvements, and a host of other site features. Not only is the riverfront district intended to serve as a destination for locals and visitors alike, it is also meant to serve as a "third place", a location that isn't home or work, but where people connect with each other through flexible use spaces, casual gathering places, cafés and coffee shops, and programming for families.
- **Promote Pedestrian-Friendly Routes:** Currently, it is difficult to get from downtown to the river and then to NoTo as a pedestrian or cyclist. This project includes recommendations to reduce travel distance and enhance safety and accessibility for pedestrians by creating a loop trail that connects the levee trail to the bridges on Kansas Avenue and Topeka Boulevard as well as improvements to sidewalks and other infrastructure. In addition, an iconic pedestrian bridge will serve as an anchor focal point for the district and community. It will also provide the most direct route from NoTo to downtown.

In the coming months, the project team and community stakeholders will continue moving the initiative forward with ongoing coordination underway among decision makers, agency staff, business leaders, and other community stakeholders. Furthermore, the RAC continues to lead efforts to develop a funding mechanism for project implementation, create an organizational structure for management and maintenance, and pursue further studies and design development that is needed to fully realize the vision for the riverfront district. As the project progresses, community input will continue to be a high priority so please follow along and join us at MyTopekaRiverfront.com for project updates and to be a part of this catalytic, once in a generation initiative.

Project Site Location - Context

The project spans the Kaw River and is in the heart of Topeka. The site connects the northern and southern sides of the city and is both a passageway and stopping point for those recreating on the river. The site location is in close proximity to a budding downtown district and the Kansas State Capitol to the south and adjacent to North Topeka Arts District (NOTO) and the Great Overland Station to the north. The project site is also in close proximity to other significant parks, institutions, and cultural amenities of Topeka.



Outdoor Recreation Economy

There are a multitude of benefits that quality of place initiatives, such as parks and trails, provide communities. In addition to the mental and physical health benefits, these amenities also make good economic sense. In fact, studies show that proximity to trails and other public spaces increase adjacent property values, are a top consideration when picking where to live and work, and have a robust return on investment. Furthermore, the Outdoor Industry Association provides a snapshot of the impact the outdoor economy has for each state, with the 2022 data for Kansas provided below. These numbers show not only how outdoor recreation benefits Kansans now, but also highlights how strategic investments will support a thriving Topeka in the future. As part of the visioning process, we led a collaborative effort to develop an implementable roadmap that will enhance the region's core through diversified live-work-play env



Source: Outdoor Industry Association

Project Goals

Topeka is an exciting place to be, with a number of catalytic projects that have taken place in recent years or are currently underway. Reimagining and reinvesting in the riverfront will build upon, and complement, those efforts in moving the region forward.

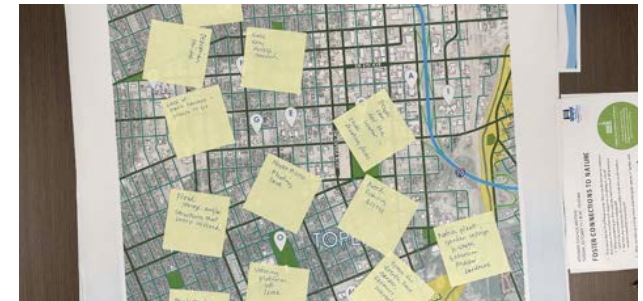
As part of the visioning process, the team led a collaborative effort to develop an implementable roadmap that will enhance the region's core through diversified live-work-play environments, connected communities, and improved quality of place. Working collaboratively with business and community leaders, we identified aspirational big picture goals for activating the riverfront, while also prioritizing ways to enhance what already makes the community great. Highlighted below are key goals and considerations that drove the larger vision for the Kansas River in the heart of Downtown Topeka as well as throughout the region.



Visioning Process

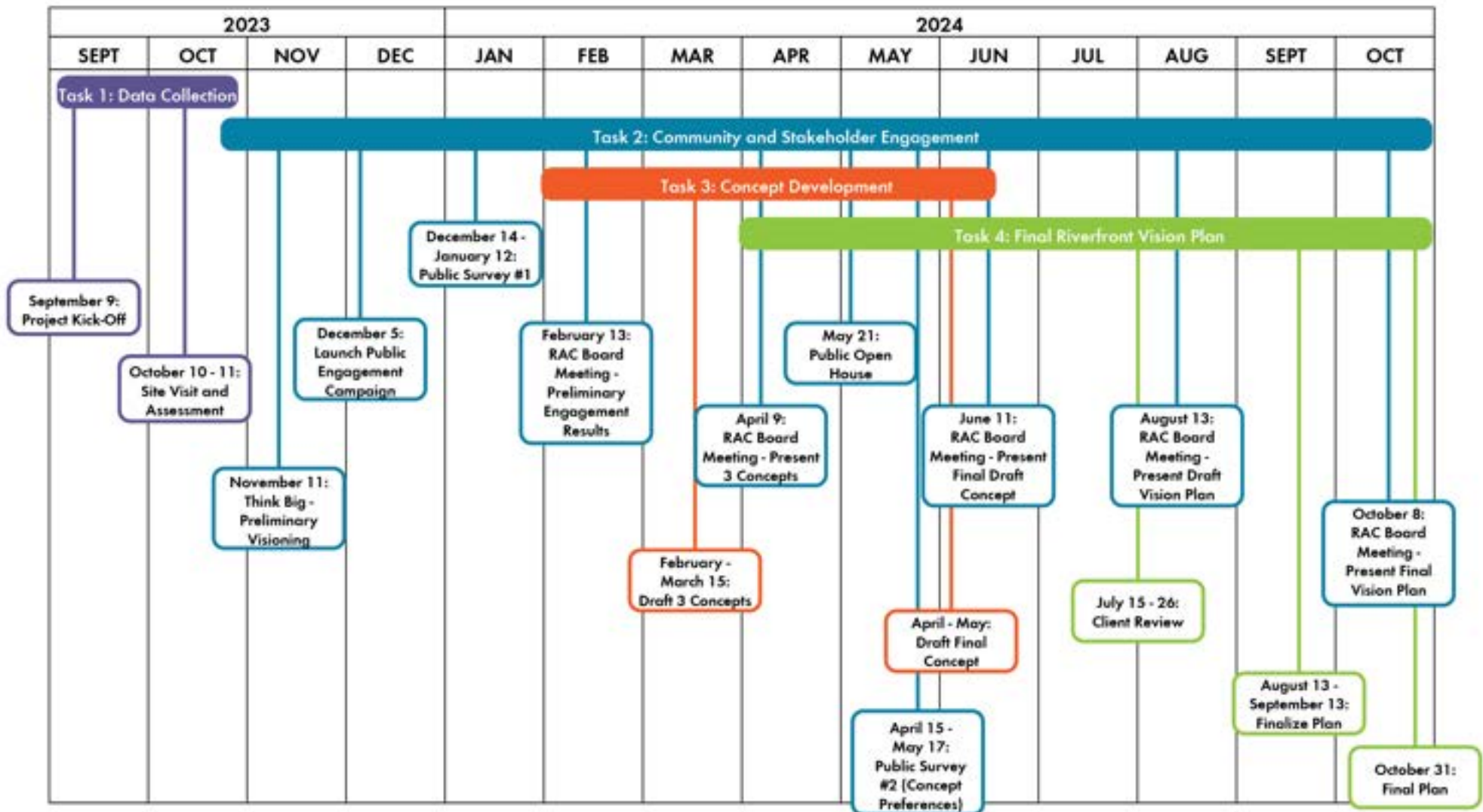
The team established a visioning process that would provide a diversity of input to guide the Topeka Riverfront Vision Plan. Over the course of the project's 13 month duration, the team:

- Reviewed of existing plans and studies to understand the history and context of previous work that other have done or are doing
- one-on-one meetings with local stakeholders and community leaders
- Group meetings with local stakeholders
- Meetings with City and County staff
- Community Open House Events
- Virtual surveys completed by the public
- Site tours with local stakeholders, business owners, and legislators
- Site visits to understand the qualities of the site and what can be improved
- Site visits to other areas along the Kaw River to understand the context of the site
- Site visits to adjacent neighborhoods to understand the unique character and identity of each



Project Timeline

The Topeka Riverfront Vision Plan occurred over the course of 13 months. The timeline allowed for four tasks with numerous meetings and milestones to develop a plan that is well-informed and provides a path forward.



Project Area - History

Kanza Bark House



Kanza People



Native Tribes of Kansas



Pappan's Ferry, Topeka



Oregon Trail crosses Kaw River in Topeka



Conestoga Wagon



1869 map of Topeka



Flood of 1951



Army Corp of Engineers Levee Map



Project Area - Built Environment

The iconic architecture of Great Overland Station



Brick paving under asphalt in downtown streets



Unique character of stone, brick, wood, and metal buildings



NoTo Arts District's eclectic character



Buildings and materials with cultural history



A beautiful brick building constructed by WPA in 1940



Historic paving at the Great Overland Station



Stockpiled stone from the Topeka area



Stone building representative of historic & geologic context



Project Area - Character

North levee maintenance path looking east



Sand bars and channels - the braided character of the Kaw



South levee and Kaw River looking east



Flats between the levee and tree line on north side of river



Topeka Shiner, a protected species



Cut and laid stone to protect the levee



View of river through trees on the north side



The dynamic beauty of a prairie river system



Native prairie grasses thriving along the levee



Project Area - Connectivity

Existing routes to get from one side of the river to the other are car-centric and lengthy. This project looks at opportunities to directly connect from levee to levee by proposing stair or path connections from the existing bridges to the levees and a potential mid-site crossing with a new pedestrian bridge.

Ramp connecting bridge to land



At-grade path connecting bridge to land



Stair connecting bridge to land



Public Engagement

The comprehensive public engagement plan included digital and in-person engagement strategies including a project website, media release, interactive comment map, two community surveys, project video, email updates, and social media content. Engagement took place between December 2023 - June 2024.

ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

50+	open house attendees
243	presentation views
421	comment map interactions
456	video views
627	social media interactions
2,024	survey responses
3,810	email/text updates delivered
4,622	website visits

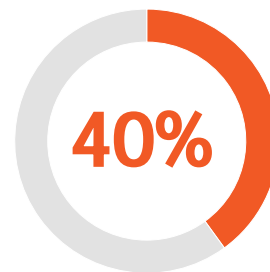
12,253+
public interactions

Community Survey #1 - Online

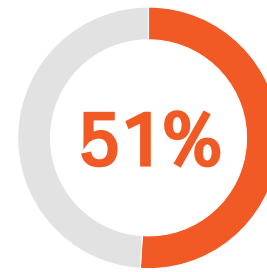
The first public survey collected feedback about general riverfront perceptions, preferred riverside activities and amenities, and project goals. This survey was promoted via a media release, social media, and email updates. It was open from December 8, 2023 - January 12, 2024 and received 1,489 responses.

General Perceptions

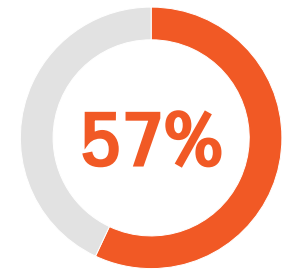
Respondents indicated to the degree to which they agreed with general statements about the riverfront.



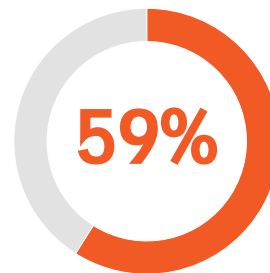
like the riverfront



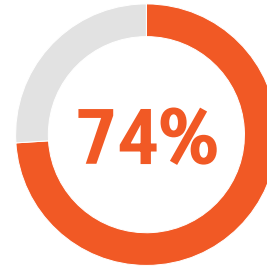
view the river as unsafe
for recreation



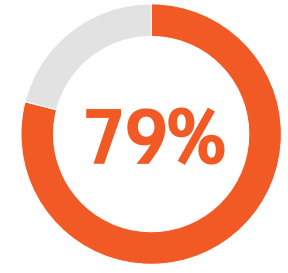
agree or strongly agree the river
is a beautiful community asset



believe the river is important to
Topeka's economy



agree or strongly agree the river
is an untapped resource



of people visit the riverfront fewer
than three times a year

Most Appealing Riverside Activities

Respondents ranked potential riverside activities, below are the top five results.



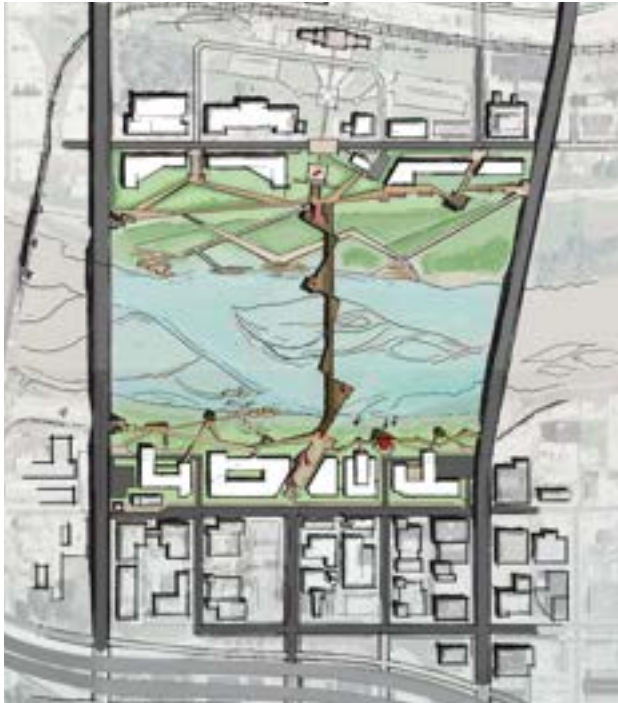
Most Appealing Riverside Amenities

Respondents ranked potential riverside amenities, below are the top five results (tie for 4th place).



Three Preliminary Concepts

Concept 1: The Confluence



KEY DESIGN FEATURES

LEVEE:

- Elevated boardwalks + naturalized landscape
- Grand staircause with elevator access to top of levee

EXISTING FEATURES:

- Fly away is rebuilt as pedestrian access to river
- Levee bank slopes remain similar to existing

BRIDGE TYPE:

- Gathering/viewing nodes over river

WATER ACCESS TYPES:

- North: One access walks/stairs to water level
- South: One access walks/stairs to water level

PLAY + PROGRAMMING:

- Rock climbing wall
- Sculptural play

ART INCORPORATION:

- Iconic bridge entrance + public art sculpture
- Sculptural boardwalks/bridge forms

PARKING:

- Public parking lots on east and west sides
- Allowing development to fill the center

Concept 2: Prairie Crossing



KEY DESIGN FEATURES

LEVEE:

- Fill between building and levee, flood wall
- Gate on north access

EXISTING FEATURES:

- Modified flyway
- Top of levee expanded to buildings or roadway

BRIDGE TYPE:

- Straight bridge with sculptural arches

WATER ACCESS TYPES:

- North: One active launch (rentals & drop-offs) + one informal water access
- South: One informal naturalized water access

PLAY + PROGRAMMING:

- Nature-based play
- Water plaza/plaza stream feature
- Amphitheater/performance area

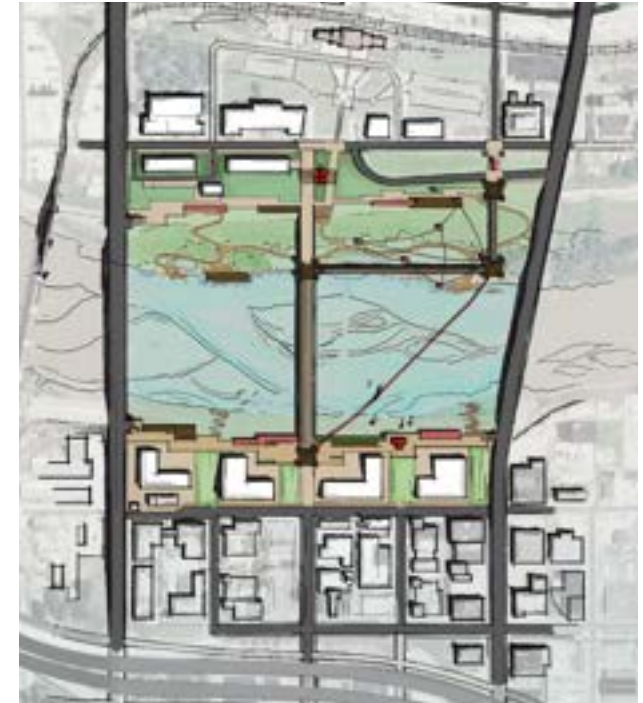
ART INCORPORATION:

- Educational panels
- Cultural art incorporation at nodes

PARKING:

- Limit to under bridges and surface lots on the north

Concept 3: City to River



KEY DESIGN FEATURES

LEVEE:

- Elevated urban edge to levee, naturalized below

EXISTING FEATURES:

- Flyway is preserved

BRIDGE TYPE:

- Vertical piers + straight with towers - tree top walk

WATER ACCESS TYPES:

- North: One active launch (stairs & ramp) + one informal water access
- South: Three informal water accesses (stairs)

PLAY + PROGRAMMING:

- Zip line/ropes course
- Sport nodes
- Fun furnished respite nodes (swings/hammocks)
- Open recreation lawn

ART INCORPORATION:

- Sculptural furnishings
- Mural/colorful themes

PARKING:

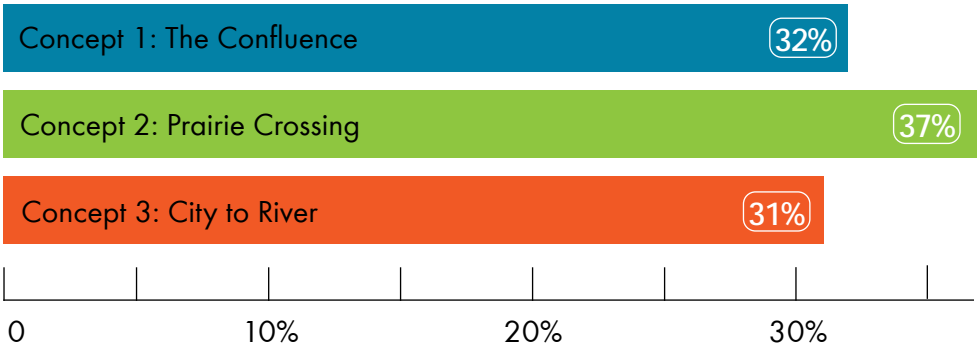
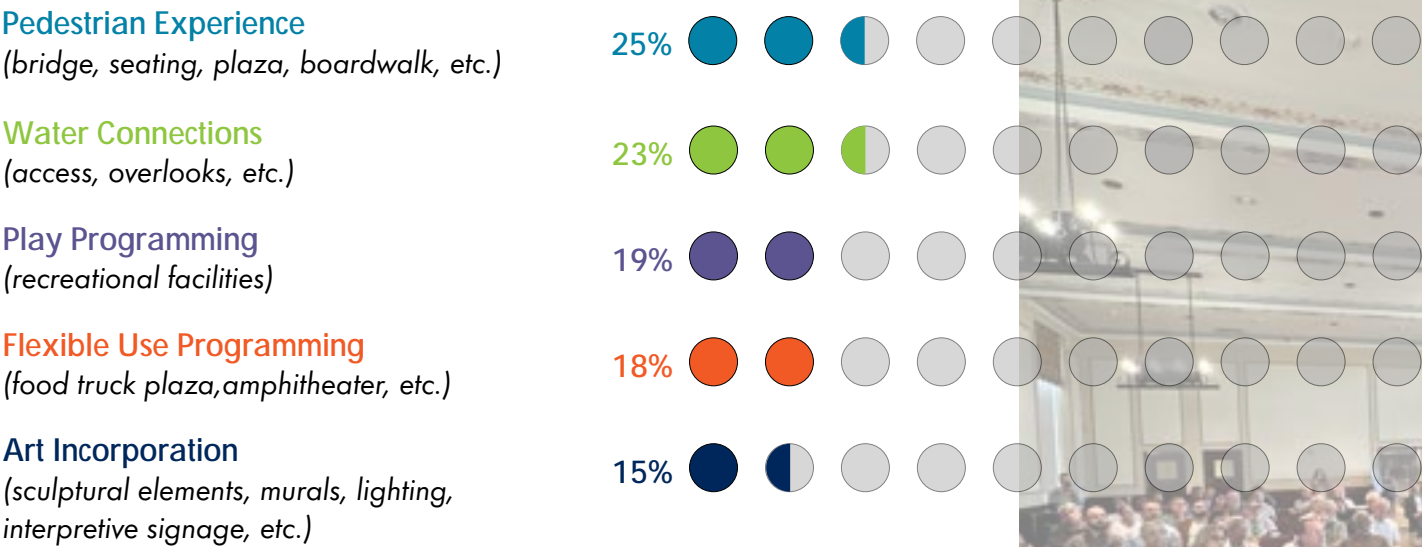
- Commercial development
- Direct road access to active launch (north)

Community Survey #2 - In Person & Online

The second public survey collected feedback about preferred design elements and concept designs. The survey was conducted via a live poll at the open house and was available online from May 21 - June 5, 2024 and received 535 responses (appx 70 in-person).

Project Priorities

Respondents ranked project priorities in order of most to least important to them.



Final Concept Plan

The vision for Topeka Riverfront Activation Plan is to be a catalyst for people to start using and enjoying the riverfront. The Riverfront Activation Plan will create opportunities related to the project goals of:

Connections to Nature

- Access to the river
- Native plantings to support wildlife
- Green stormwater infrastructure

Pedestrian Friendly Routes

- Iconic pedestrian bridge
- Multi-use trails
- Sidewalks
- Promenades

Quality of Place

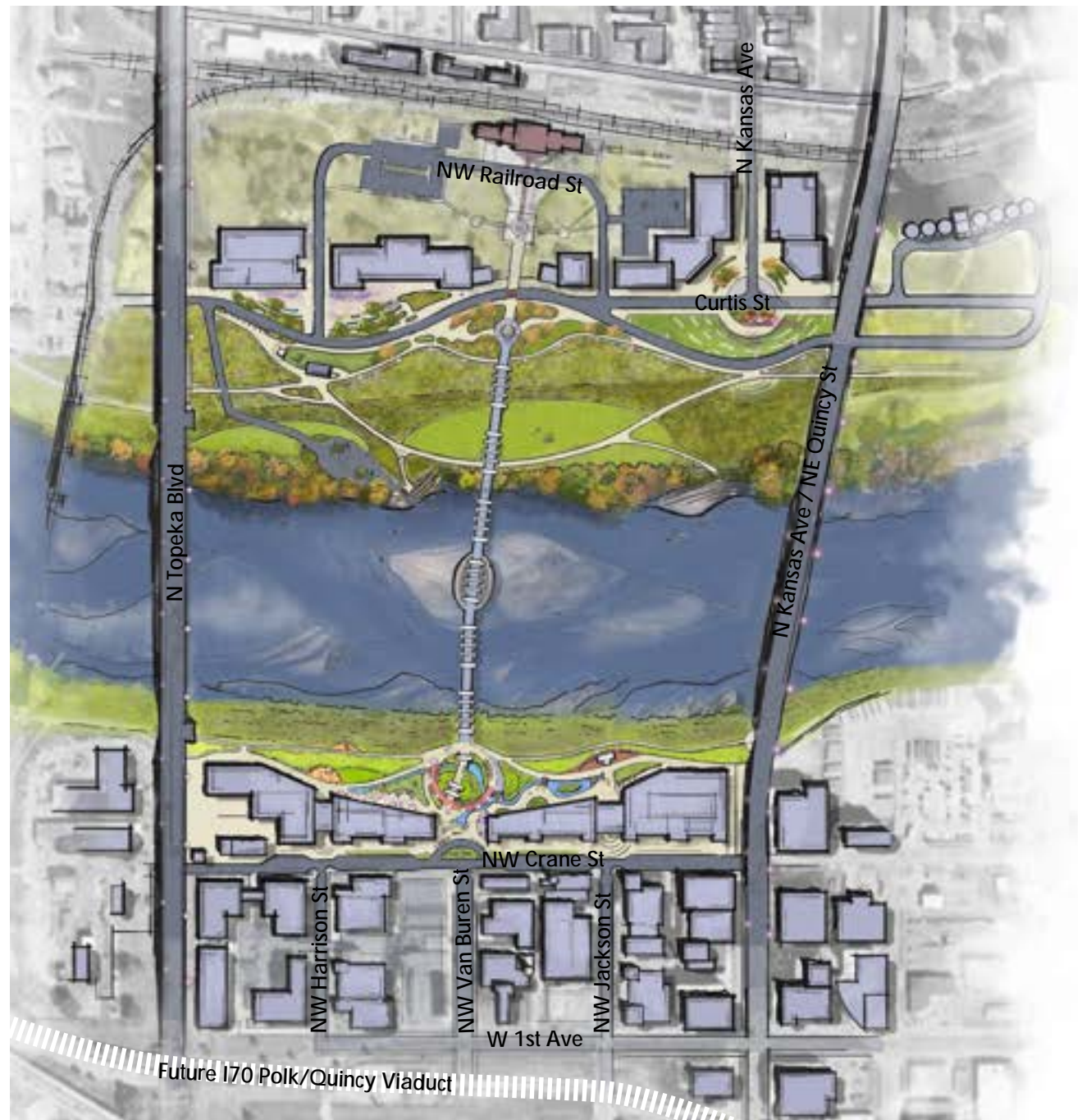
- Multi-functional design
- Markets & food trucks
- Performance
- Art
- Areas for play

Recreational Opportunities

- Trails for walking, jogging, biking, rolling
- Open space for playing
- Fishing
- Canoeing and kayaking



Economic Development

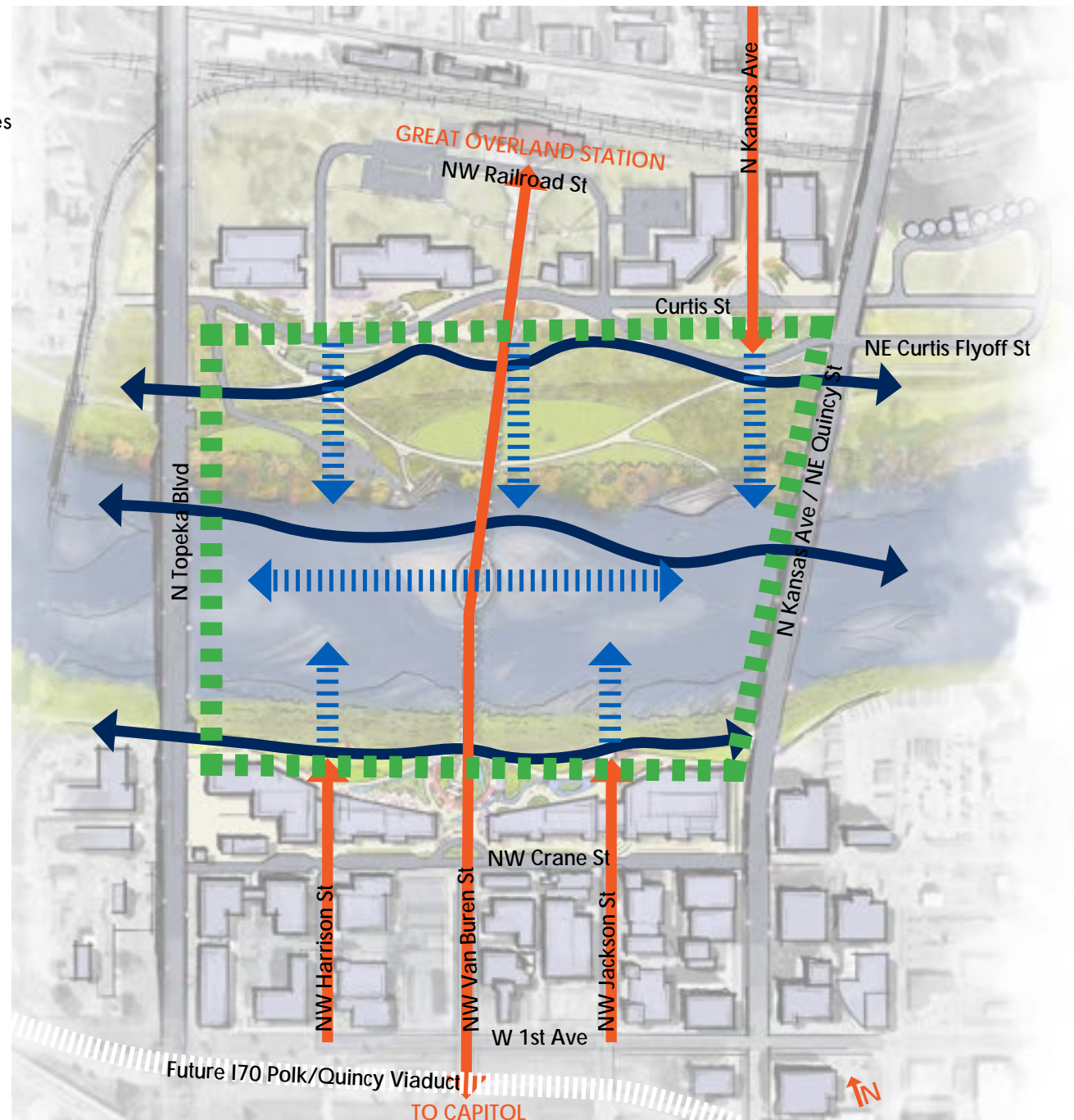
- Opportunity for new businesses
- Investment in downtown living
- Sales from programming & events
- Local and regional tourism



Final Concept Plan - Meaningful Connections

It is important to create opportunities for people to make meaningful connections with this place and the experiences of the riverfront. Part of designing place is to connect what already makes the area great, so providing ways for people to experience the vibrancy of the riverfront and it's connections to the regional trail network, NOTO, downtown along with the cultural and historical heritage of the region.

-  Connect the city to the river
-  Link to regional trail systems
-  Views of the river
-  Create a vibrant riverfront

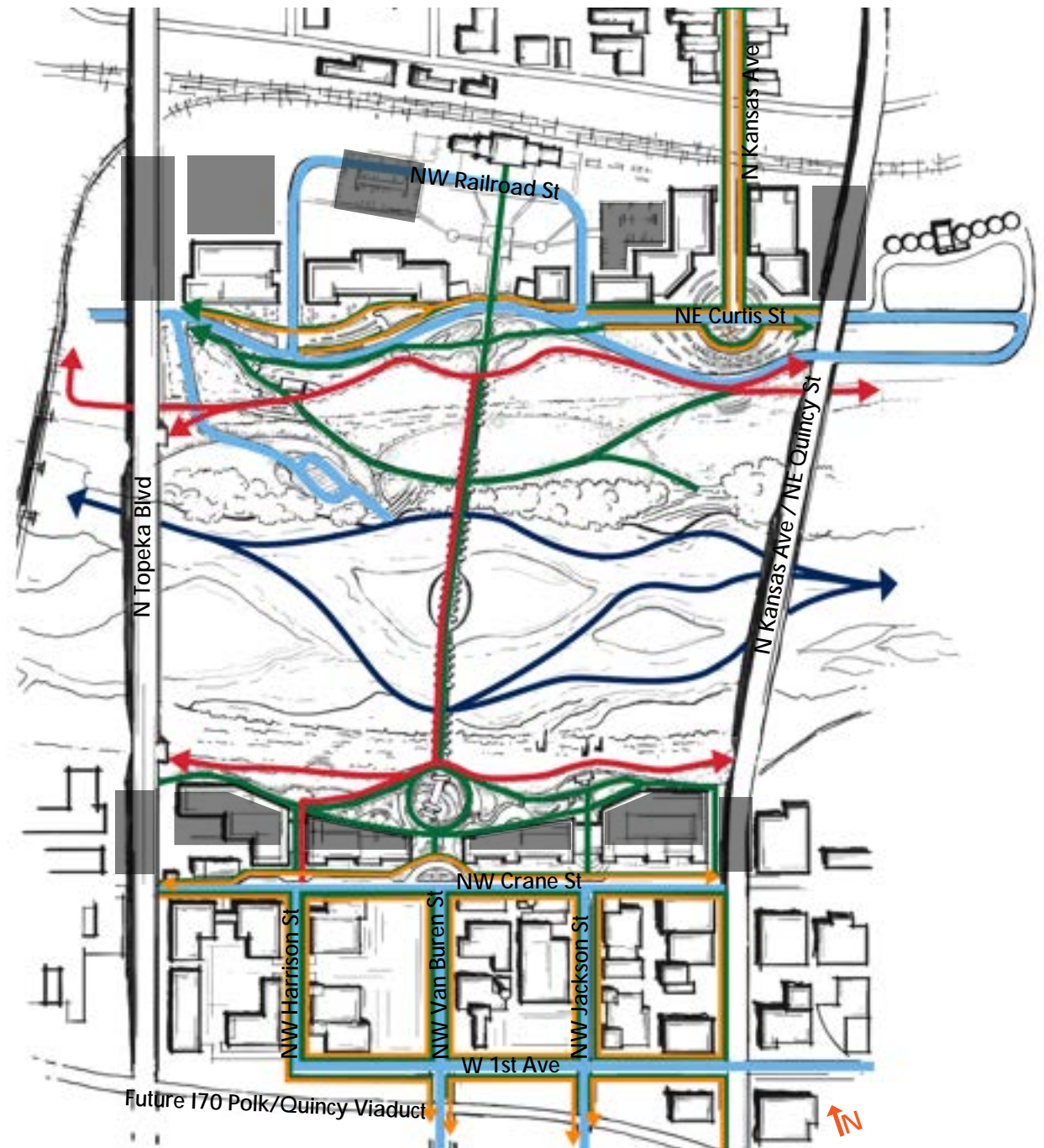


Final Concept Plan - Circulation

The proposed plan establishes a network of circulation systems that are suitable for a diverse set of needs, ability levels, and preferences to connect people from Downtown and NOTO to the riverfront and each other. The circulation system adds trails through the park space that can connect to existing and future trails for bicycles, pedestrians, and joggers. Additionally, a new and expanded network of streets and sidewalks will be incorporated to support enhanced safety, multi-modal transportation options, and ease of access for people and vehicles.

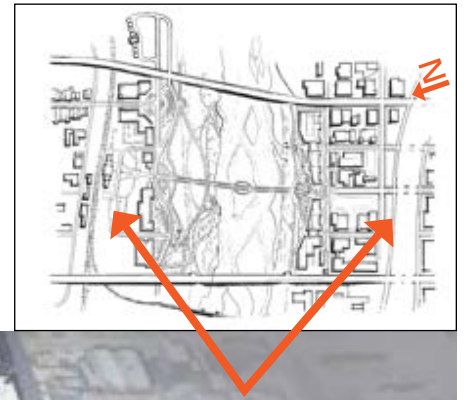
- Water trails
- Enhanced Sidewalks
- Pedestrian Path / Sidewalk
- Shared Use - Bike/Pedestrian Path
- Vehicular Road
- Parking

Proposed Topeka Bikeways Master Plan



Final Concept Plan - Birdseye View

This view is looking east, with NOTO to the left and downtown to the right. It illustrates the intent to activate the riverfront, give people access to the river through park spaces, trails, and a new iconic pedestrian bridge to connect the two sides. Also shown is the potential for new development and plaza spaces that are river facing to create vibrancy year round.



Final Concept Plan - Downtown Riverfront

The downtown riverfront will be a place about daily life. It's a place where people can live, work, and play. It's a place to gather and celebrate. Sitting atop the levee is a place for all ages and backgrounds to enjoy while looking out over the beautiful Kaw River.



Final Concept Plan - North River Access

Access is crucial for people to be able to experience the joy of the Kaw River safely. With ample space between the levee and Kaw River, opportunity exists to establish a boat ramp for canoe & kayak launch, staging area, and places to sit along the river.



Final Concept Plan - North Passive Park & Pedestrian Bridge

Using the existing flat area between the levee and the river, will be places for people to informally recreate and enjoy plantings of native grasses and flowers. It will be a place to be immersed in nature, but in the middle of Topeka.



Final Concept Plan - Pedestrian Bridge

The proposed 1,100ft long pedestrian bridge is located approximately where the Oregon Trail crossed the Kansas/Kaw River and is on axis with the Kansas State Capitol to the south and the Great Overland Station to the north. The design aims to provide safe and inspired connection between downtown Topeka and NOTO. The bridge design is inspired by it's physical and historical context: the braided river, covered wagons, and fish and birds of the area.



Architectural significance that is rooted in context



Unique lighting that is inspiring and safe



Create places and views to enjoy the river

South Bank - Downtown Levee District

The downtown levee district will utilize the space located between Crane St and the levee. A series of shared use open spaces connect directly to the existing Topeka street grid creating gathering nodes that expand the urban fabric to the river. These open spaces are linked together via a park that sits atop and behind the existing levee, creating a vibrant riverfront that stretches from the Kansas Ave bridge to the Topeka Blvd bridge.



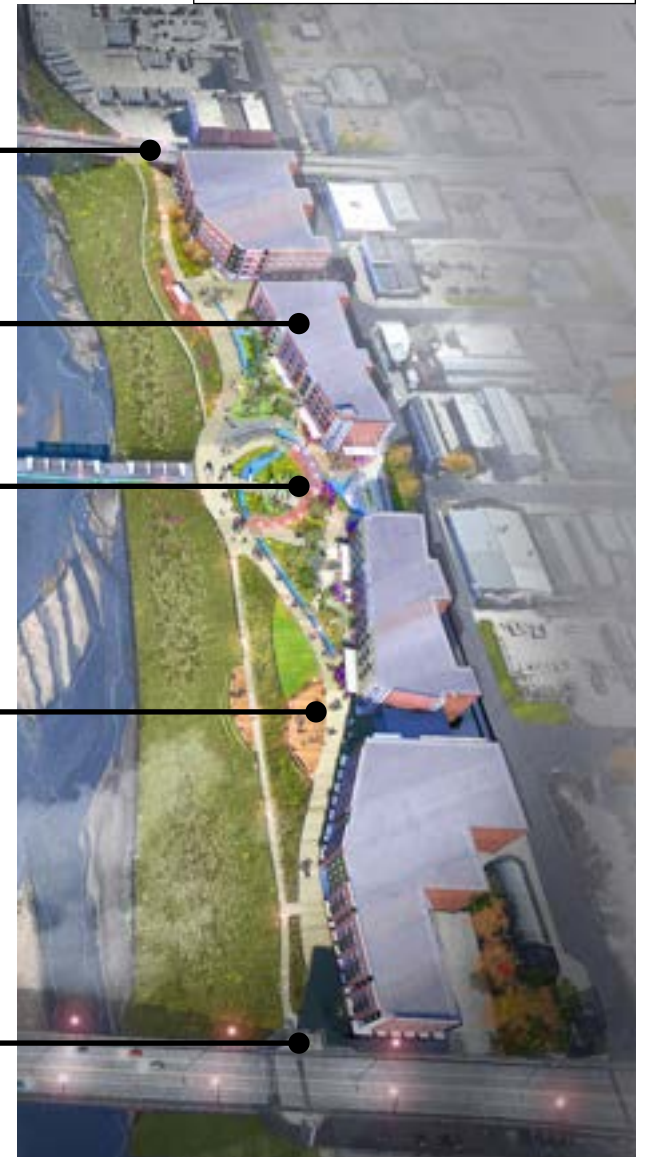
KANSAS AVE CONNECTOR

RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

DOWNTOWN RIVERFRONT PLAZA

KAW RIVER OVERLOOK

TOPEKA BLVD CONNECTOR



South Bank - Kansas Ave & Riverfront

At-grade bike/ped path connecting park & bridge



Lush plantings and seating



Pedestrian Plaza for markets, retail, and connection



Integration of nature, water, and seating



South Bank - Downtown Riverfront Plaza

Active cafe & retail space at park edge



Shade structure with swings



Plaza with plantings, seating, play elements, & lighting

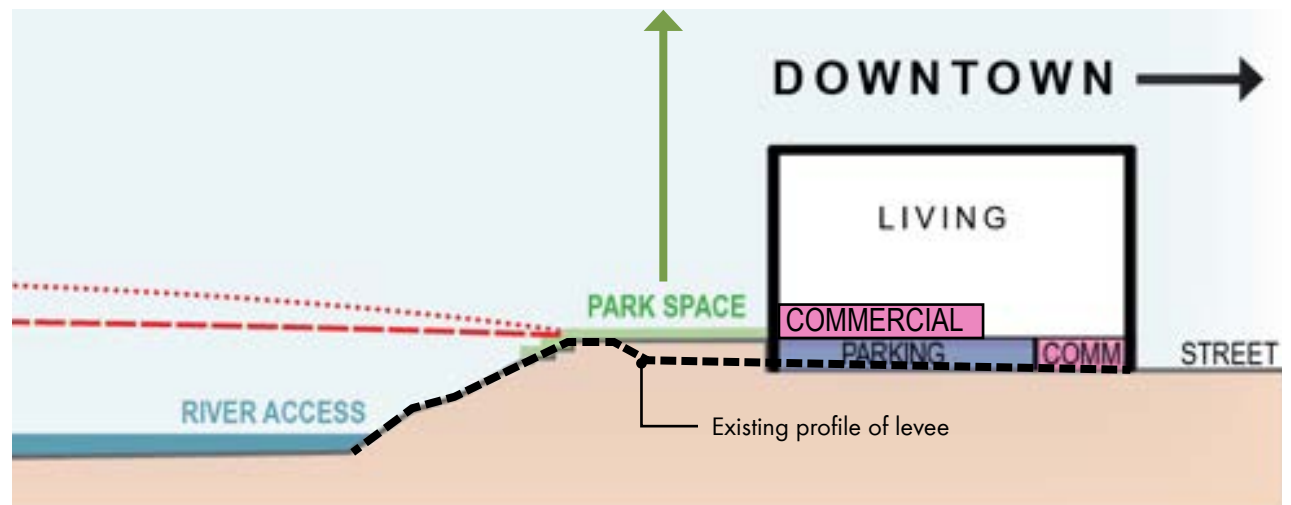


Welcoming space flanked by active commercial space



South Bank - Expanded Park Space

The park space along the south downtown levee district bank maintains an open path along the top of levee and then fills in behind the levee to bring the park up to top of levee grade. This will allow for views from the park out to the river. The design creates the opportunity for riverfront developments to have two floors of commercial space - on the north side the buildings second floor is at-grade and faces the river and park space, and on the south side, the ground floor commercial space opens out to street level. This design approach allows for parking to be tucked into the ground floor of the building.



South Bank - Kaw River Overlook

Maintain existing laid stone & native plantings



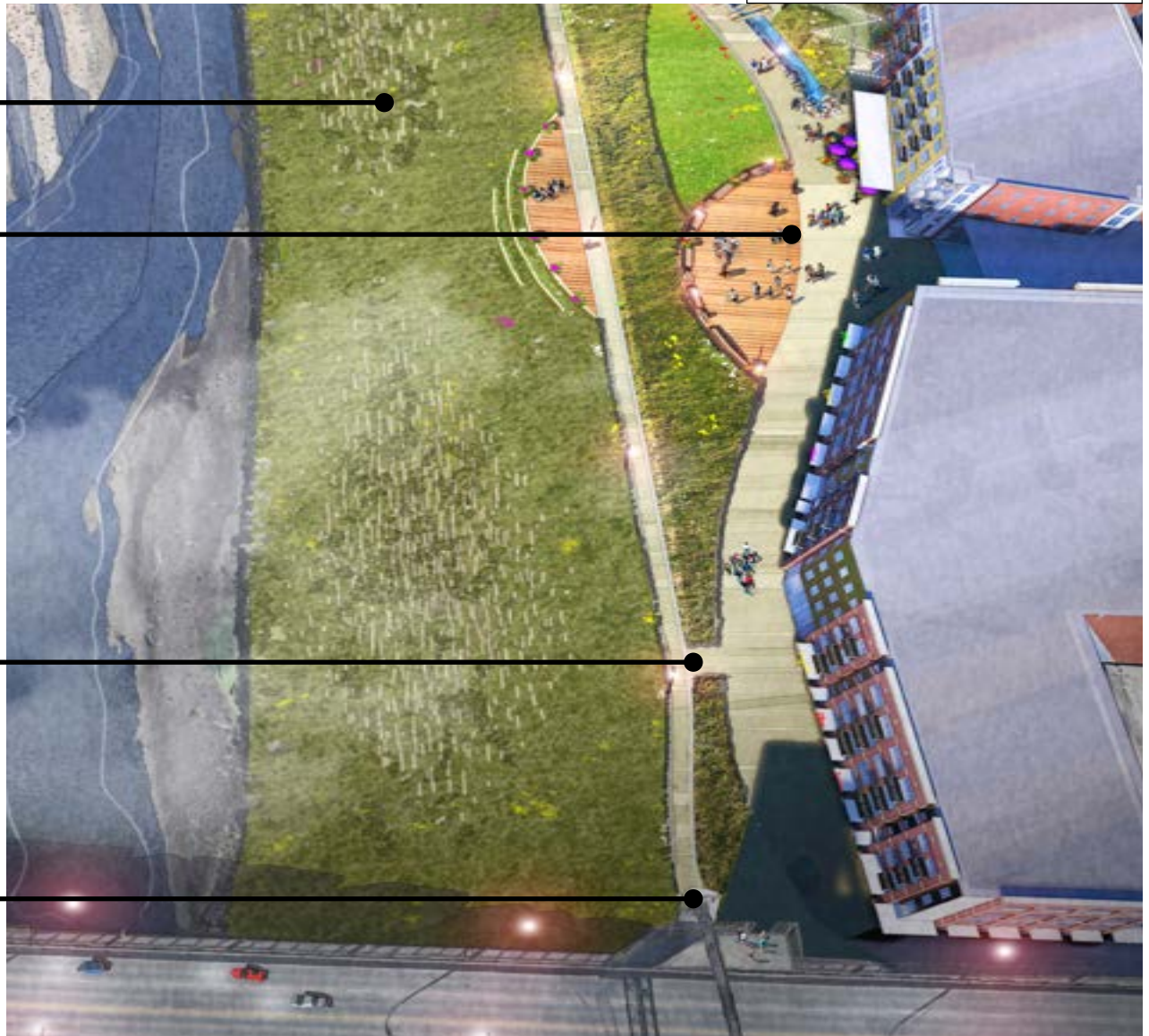
Active cafe & retail space at park edge



Path and Promenade for pedestrians & cyclists



Pedestrian Connections to Topeka Blvd Bridge



North Bank - NOTO District

The north bank of the Kaw River and NOTO District creates opportunities for new developments along the north side of Curtis Street leaving substantial open space between Curtis Street and the Kaw River for public open space to activate the riverfront.

The flat areas along the north shoreline provides opportunities to incorporate new boat access points with space for people to enjoy the river and space for people to park their vehicles after putting in their canoes and kayaks.

There is ample space and trails for people to explore nature and have passive recreation throughout the year. The mature trees along the riverfront should be maintained as they offer beauty and shade to the riverfront. This space is designed with limited amenities so it can accommodate occasional flooding that will have limit impact on use of space once flooding resides.

Spaces for programming are located along Curtis Street and the north park edge outside of the levee to create an active edge to NOTO and the river. Programming for art, markets, entertainment, and play will bring a unique vibrancy to the north bank.



KANSAS AVE CONNECTOR

NOTO PLAZA

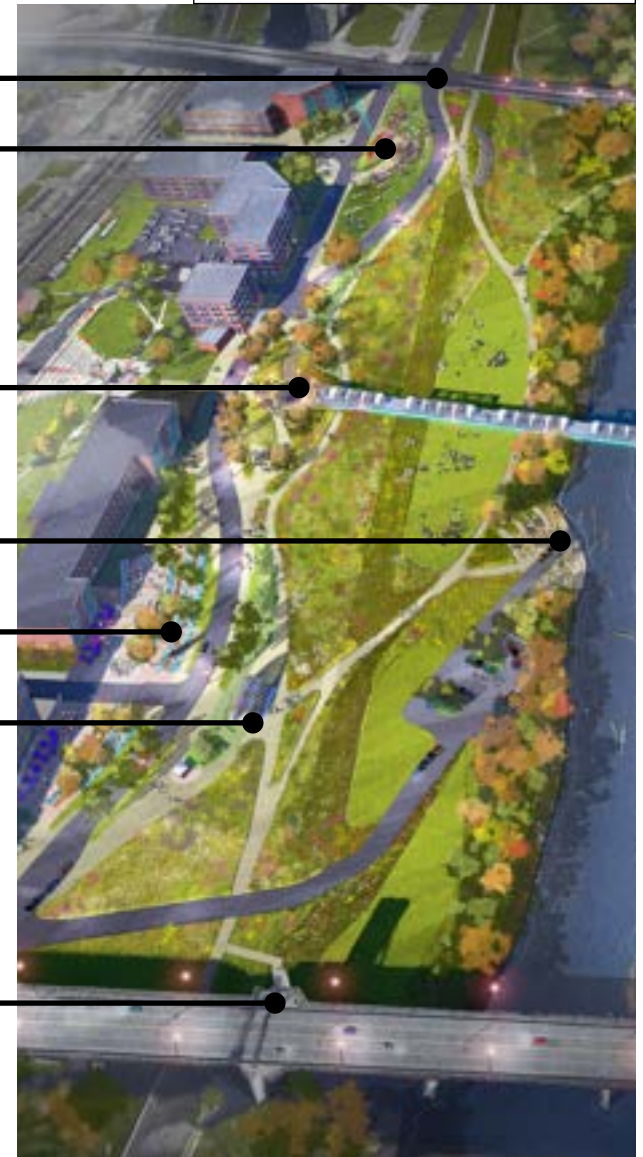
GREAT OVERLAND NOTO LANDING

KAW RIVER ACCESS

ART PLAZA

RECREATION RENTALS

TOPEKA BLVD CONNECTOR



North Bank - Kansas Ave Connector & NOTO Plaza



Integrated art/sculpture



Passive lawn becomes event space with integrated seating



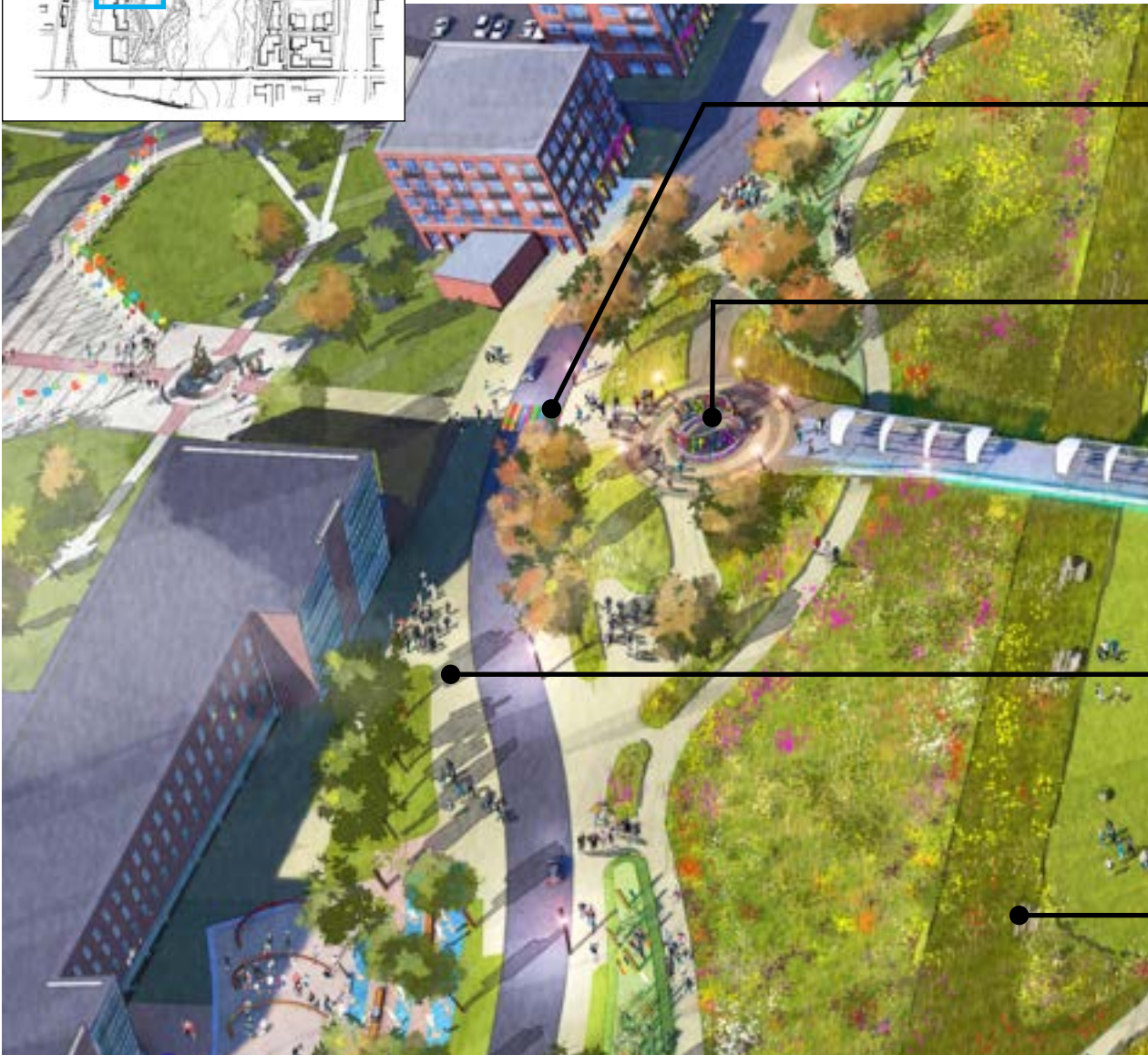
Levee recreational trails



Flexible lawn for play, leisure, and connection to nature



North Bank - Great Overland NOTO Landing



Create a strong connection to All Veterans Memorial & Great Overland Station



Sculpture as terminus to ped bridge



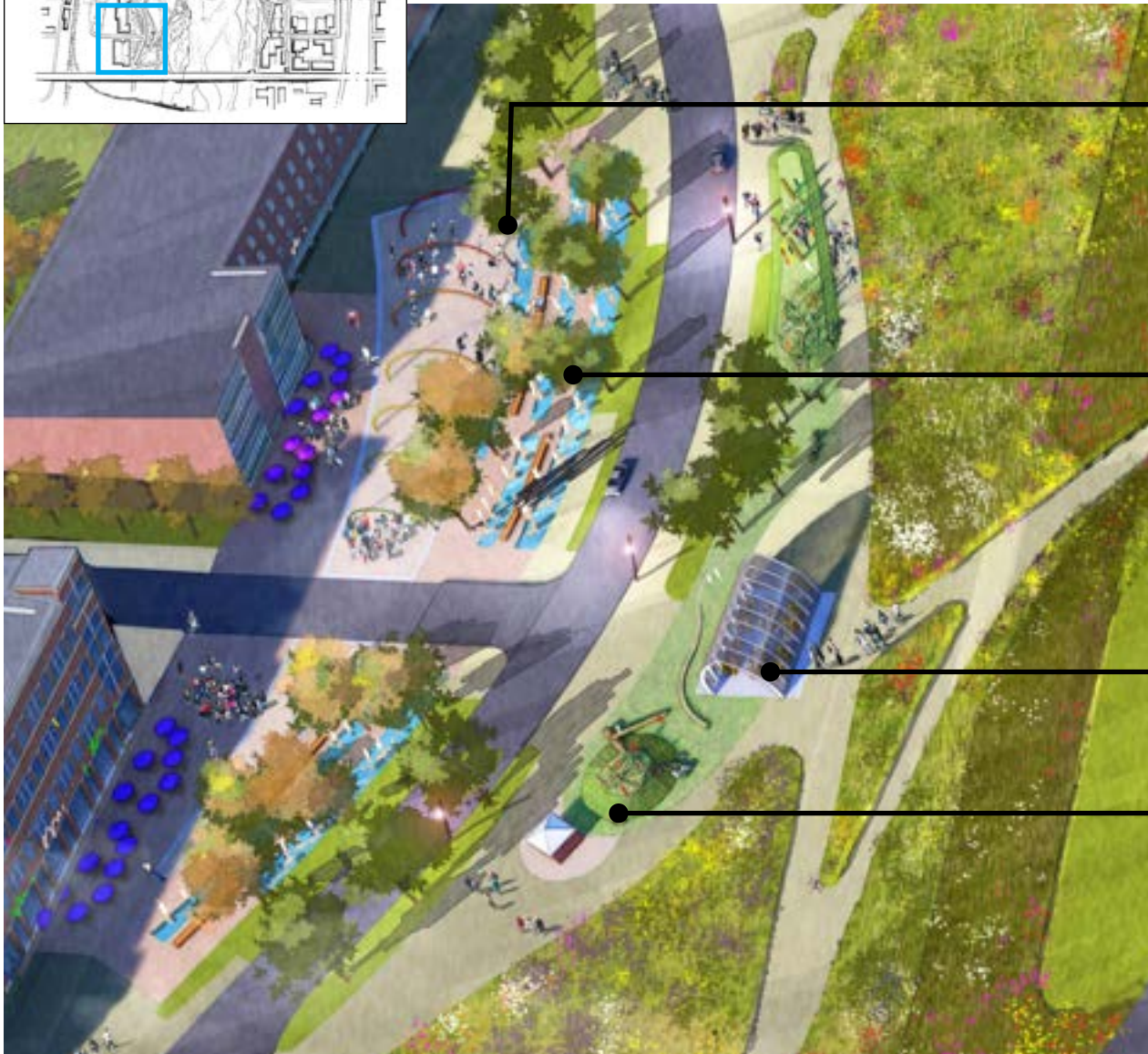
Curtis St as a parkway and promenade through the park



Integrate native prairie and riparian plantings



North Bank - Art Plaza & Recreation Rentals



Integrated art/sculpture



Streetscape & plaza integration



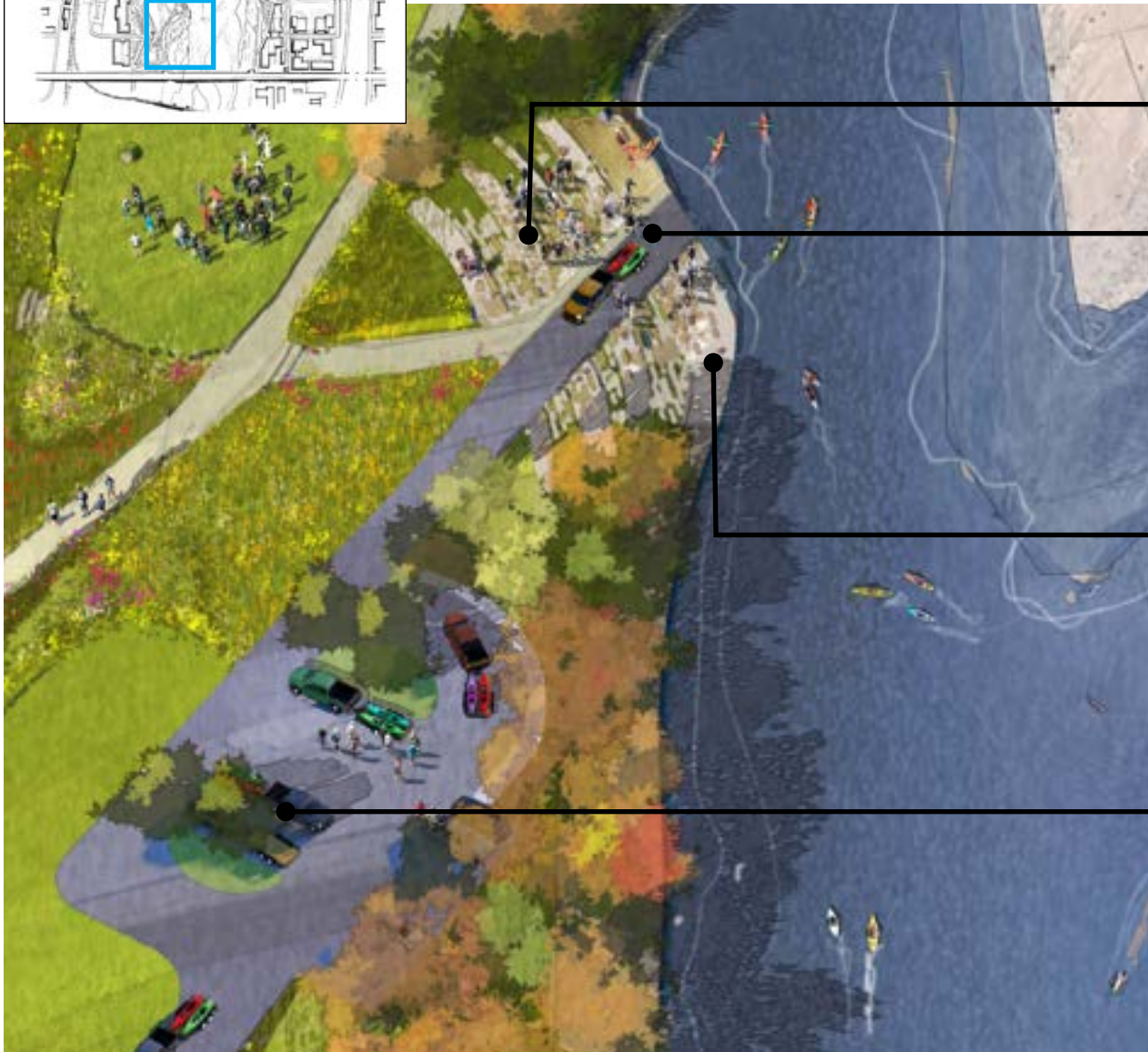
Kayak/Canoe/Bike rental kiosk



Immersive Nature Play Areas



North Bank - Kaw River Access



Stone seating and observation area



Boat launch accessible for vehicles with trailers



Space to beach kayaks & canoes



Parking lot for boater's vehicles



Space Programming - Yoga and Flexible Use

Programming of public space is one of the best ways to get a diverse audience of people using spaces and supporting local businesses.

BENEFITS OF PROGRAMMING

- Can engage with people of all communities
- Support local businesses by giving them the opportunity to contribute (food trucks, artists & makers, yoga, dance studios, performers)
- Generates more traffic for brick & mortar shops & restaurants
- Creates multi-generational interest
- Creates vibrancy

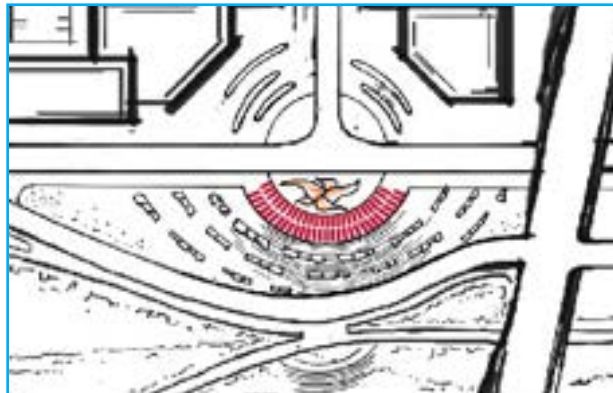
Yoga on the Overlook - 18 mats



Yoga on an overlook



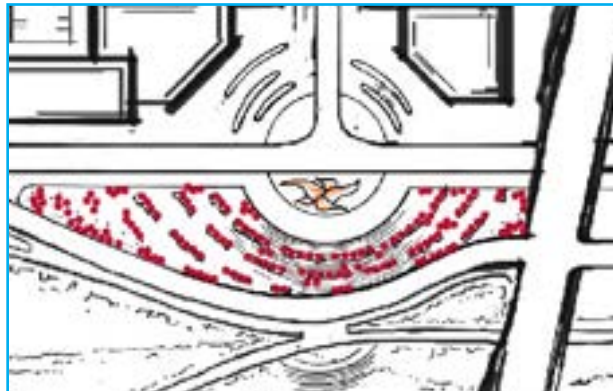
Yoga in NoTo Art Plaza - 56 mats



Yoga in an art plaza



Flexible use outdoor space - 1,200 people max

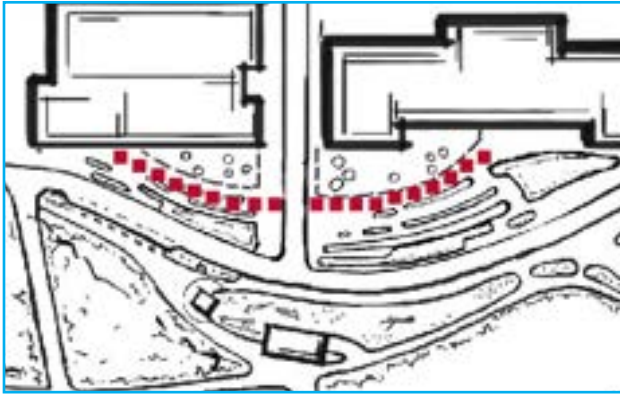


People in a flexible use outdoor space

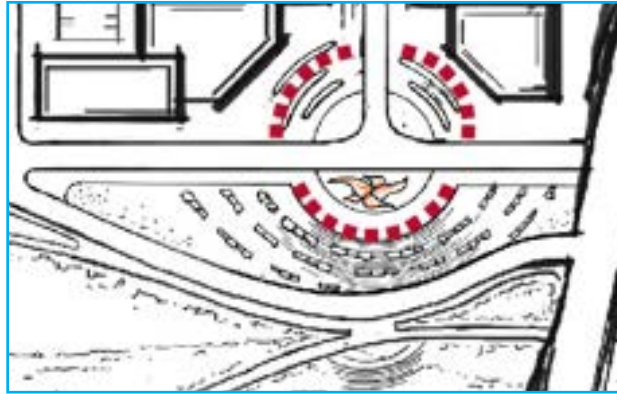


Space Programming - Market Tents

Tents set up along North Bank Arts Plaza - 20 Tents



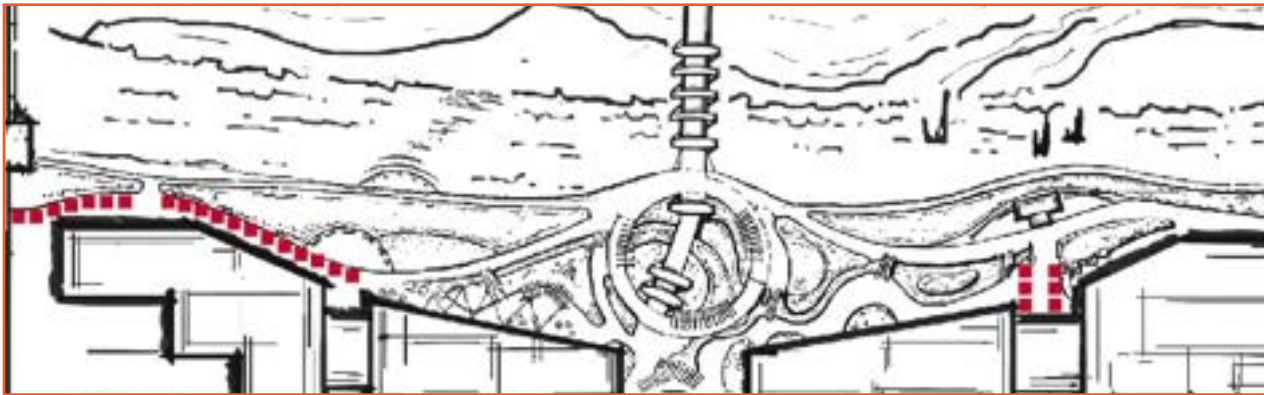
Tents set up on NoTo Plaza - 21 Tents



Market tents on a plaza



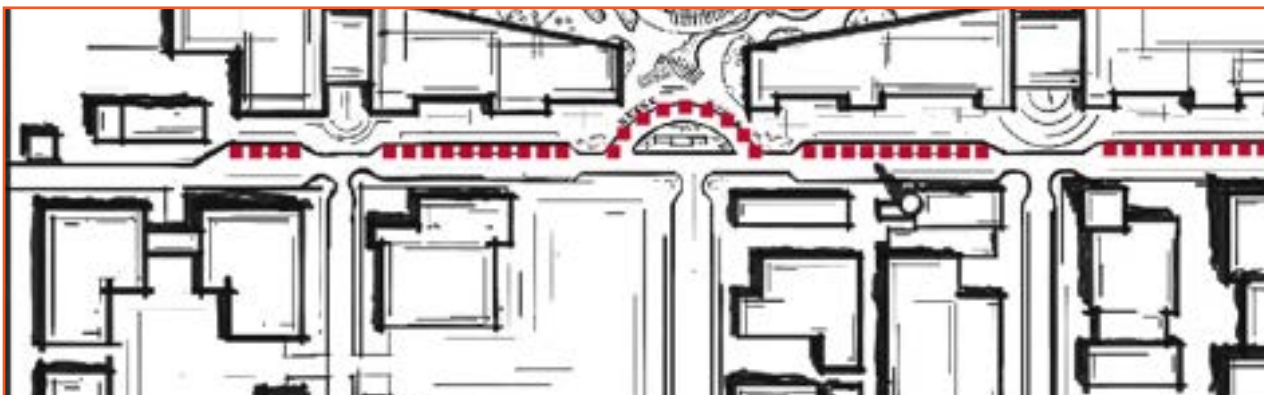
Tents set up along South Bank Levee District - 26 Tents



Market tents on a promenade



Tents set up along Crane St - 42 Tents

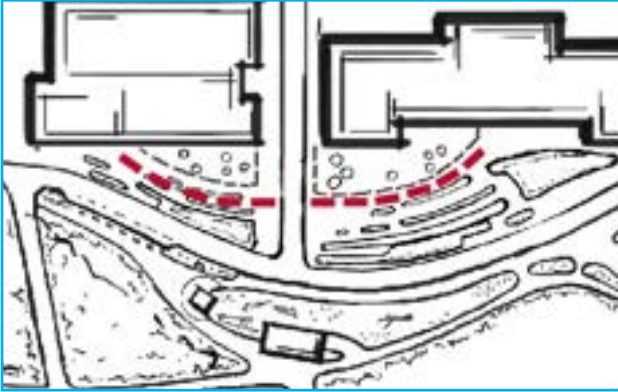


Market tents on a street

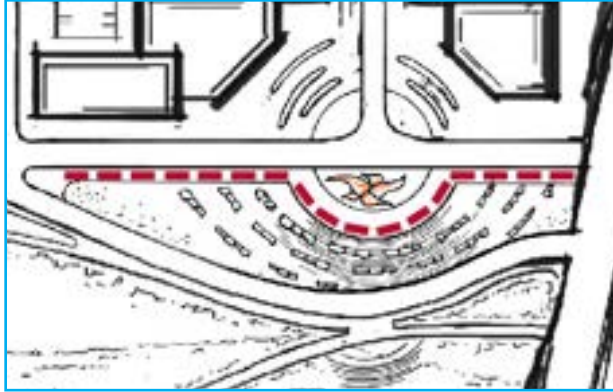


Space Programming - Food Trucks

Food trucks in North Bank Plaza - 11 Food Trucks



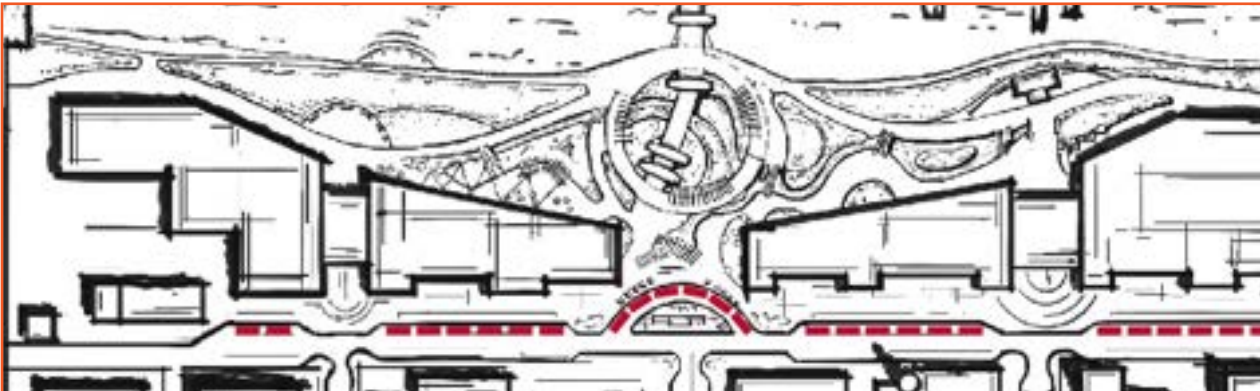
Food trucks in NoTo Plaza - 14 food trucks



Food Trucks in boat ramp parking lot - 8 Food Trucks



Food Trucks along Crane St - 26 Food Trucks



Food trucks on a plaza



Food trucks in a parking lot



Food trucks on a street



Permitting & Regulatory Process



Working in sensitive natural areas, like riparian corridors, are complex and require coordination with, and approvals from, several local, state, and federal agencies to ensure design is in compliance with regulatory requirements. We anticipate the following permits and approvals:

Federal Requirements

- Section 404/401: Under the Clean Water Act, permits must be secured for projects impacting Water of the United States, such as rivers and jurisdictional wetlands. Where impacts are above the approved threshold, impacts must be mitigated. In addition,
- Section 401 compliance must be secured through the appropriate agency or tribal entity for any project that may have a discharge into a federally regulated waterway.
- Section 408: For projects impacting federal infrastructure, such as a levee, approvals must be granted through the Army Corps of Engineers and the Section 408 process. This process ensures that the proposed riverfront development project does not negatively impact the levee or its intended function
- NEPA: For projects receiving federal funding, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) must be followed and requires that study for environmental and cultural impacts. Projects may fall within three categories, a Categorical Exclusion, Environmental Assessment, and an Environmental Impact

Statement. Depending on the designation, further evaluation and study may be warranted.

Local and State Requirements

- Floodplain Development Permits: A floodplain development permit must be secured for any project within the FEMA-designated regulatory floodway to make sure that the proposed project does not cause a rise in floodplain elevations that would impact downstream communities. A “No-Rise” certification will be required.
- Rezoning: Local zoning sets standards for the type of development that can occur in designated areas. The project may require minimal rezoning to accommodate future uses. Any rezoning will be done in coordination with City and County staff to make sure designations are appropriate.
- Site Development Permit: Development permits are required to make sure that site design is in compliance with local code that regulates items such as stormwater discharge, plantings and other site features, parking, and ADA compliance.
- DWR: Kansas statute requires approvals through the Department of Water Resources (DWR) for projects impacting certain waterbodies and associated infrastructure such as dams and levees. The project team will work in coordination with state regulators to ensure compliance with all state code.


Zoning

The current zoning of the project area typically falls within three zoning districts: OS1, D3, and OI3. The Topeka Riverfront Vision Plan identifies multiple types of opportunities for development and activation of the Kaw River. Depending on final parcel ownership and/or development types, some rezoning may need to be implemented in order to be compatible with the final use.




See Zoning and Land Use sections in City of Topeka Downtown Master Plan, 2021.

Zoning District




Agriculture and Open Space Districts

-  RA1 - Rural Agriculture District
-  OS1 - Open Space District

Downtown Districts

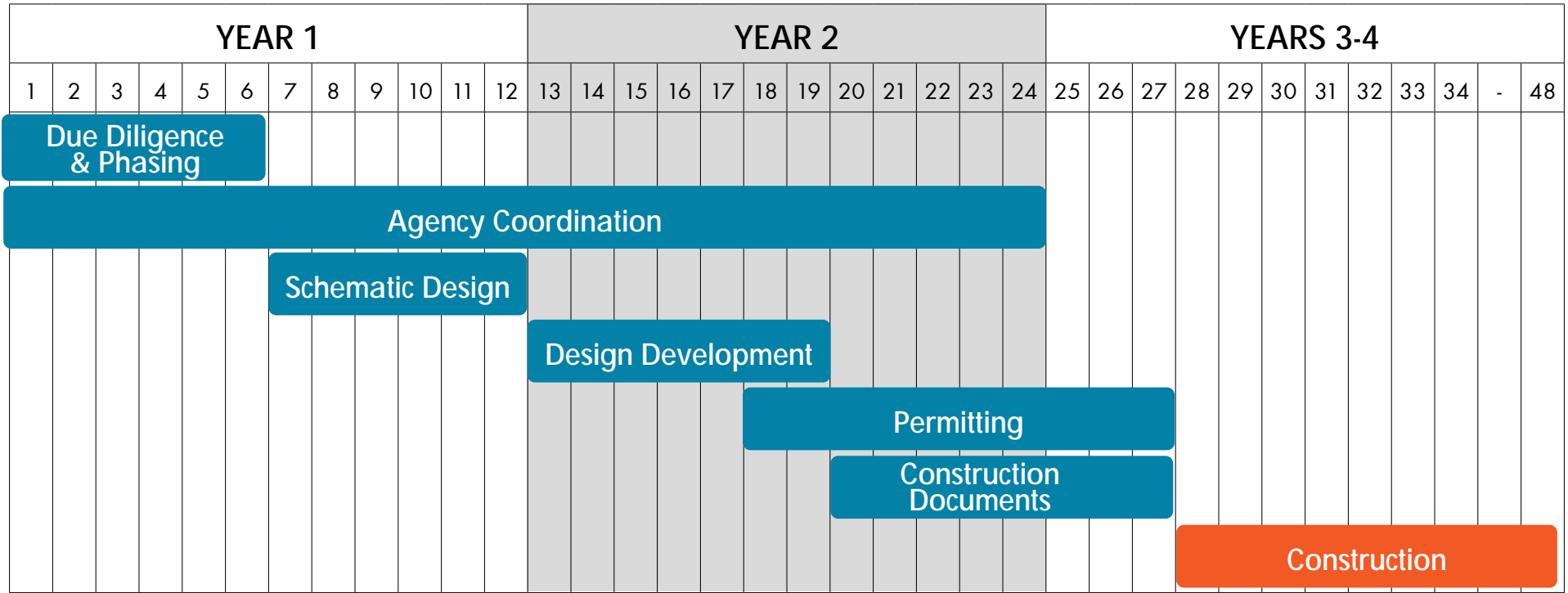
-  D1 - Downtown District
-  D2 - Downtown District
-  D3 - Downtown District

Office, Institutional, and Mixed Use Districts

-  OI1 - Office and Institutional District
-  OI2 - Office and Institutional District
-  OI3 - Office and Institutional District



Phasing & Next Steps



Due Diligence: These tasks builds upon the work done in the Riverfront Vision Plan, including concept refinement, floodplain modeling, infrastructure study to determine future need, and a small area plan with economic study to analyze the best mix of development type and scale for this project.

Phasing: A phasing plan will be created to guide the project from start to completion and will be coordinated with project priorities and funding.

Agency Coordination: Coordination with regulatory agencies will happen throughout the process to ensure a smooth permitting process. This will likely include city and county staff, state and federal regulatory agencies, and historical preservation organizations.

Schematic Design: Using the information gathered during Due Diligence, the concept will be refined and reviewed with project partners to ensure design meets regulatory requirements, meets community vision, and is buildable within budget and on schedule.

Design Development: This phase of work includes furthering design details with layout finalized, constructability determined, and a materials palette selected.

Permitting: The complexity of this project and its proximity to areas of cultural and natural significance will require several permits and approvals from local, state, and federal agencies. Coordination with agency staff will be ongoing throughout the design process.

Construction Documents: Design details will be finalized and bidding documents developed during this phase of work.

Construction: Dependent on phasing of implementation, it is anticipated that construction will take approximately 18-24 months, with weather and other factors impacting timeline.

APPENDIX



Funding Strategy

Complex and transformational projects such as this one often require multi-faceted funding solutions and a mix of both public and private investment. Project partners are exploring the funding breakdown for this project. It is anticipated to include a mix of the following sources:

Private Donations and Grants: Philanthropic organizations whose mission align with project goals will be pursued as well as a strategy for private and corporate gifts. This project's success is dependent on collaboration and community leaders investing in the vision of a vibrant riverfront.

Local and State Resources: Funding options include grants and a mix of existing and new local and state programs that support public infrastructure and incentives for redevelopment. Options such as bonds, TIF, special investment districts, and other programs will be explored.

Federal Grants and Appropriations: Partners are actively exploring options for federal grants through a variety of federal programs as well as potential support from Congressionally appropriated resources.



Cost Opinion - Topeka Riverfront

The entire project site is roughly 35 acres of land, 9 acres on the south side and 26 acres on the north side, with a new pedestrian bridge that connects the two sides. Below is a cost breakdown with ranges based projects of similar types. See reference projects provided. Cost break down does not include any building developments or associated costs for development. Park and Plaza spaces are calculated to within 10' of anticipated development sites. See Zoning and Land Use sections in City of Topeka Downtown Master Plan, 2021.



<u>North Riverfront</u>	<u>Cost Range</u>
Park/Plaza space: 6 acres	\$18m - \$52m
Trails: 4,000lf	\$200k - \$300k
River Access: 1 acre	\$1m - \$2m
Lawn: 4.1 acres	\$100k - \$500k
Restoration: 9.9 acres	\$400k - \$1.1m
Road: 4,300lf	\$4m - 6.5m
Art Allowance: 3-5	\$300k - \$1.5m



<u>Pedestrian Bridge</u>	<u>Cost Range</u>
Size: 1,200lf	\$24m - \$60m



<u>Downtown Riverfront</u>	<u>Cost Range</u>
Park/Plaza space: 3.2 acres	\$10m - \$28.5m
Trails: 1,660lf	\$100k - \$500k
Restoration: 5 acres	\$200k - \$500k
Road: 1650lf	\$1.5m - \$2.5m
Art Allowance: 2-5	\$200k - \$2m

Total (low - high)	\$24m - \$64m	Total (low - high)	\$24m - \$60m	Total (low - high)	\$12m - \$34m
--------------------	---------------	--------------------	---------------	--------------------	---------------

PROJECT TOTAL (LOW - HIGH) \$60m - \$158m

NOTE: needed utility upgrades in roadways are not included in cost

Cost Opinion - Reference Riverfront Projects



Project: Smale Riverfront Park
Location: Cincinnati, OH
Size: 45 acres
Year Completed: 2015
Total Cost: \$120m
Cost per Acre: \$2.7m



Project: Gathering Place
Location: Tulsa, OK
Size: 100 acres
Year Completed: 2018
Total Cost: \$465m
Cost per Acre: \$4.6m



Project: The Riverfront
Location: Omaha, NE
Size: 72 acres
Year Completed: 2022
Total Cost: \$325m
Cost per Acre: \$4.5m



Project: Scissortail Park
Location: Oklahoma City, OK
Size: 70 acres
Year Completed: 2022
Total Cost: \$132m
Cost per Acre: \$1.9m



Project: Tom Lee Park
Location: Memphis, TN
Size: 30 acres
Year Completed: 2023
Total Cost: \$61m
Cost per Acre: \$2.0m



Project: Louisville Waterfront Park, Phase IV
Location: Louisville, KY
Size: 22 acres
Year Completed: 2024/2025
Total Cost: \$50m
Cost per Acre: \$2.3m

Cost Opinion - Reference Pedestrian Bridge Projects



Project: Van Leesten Memorial Bridge
Location: Providence, RI
Size: 450lf
Year Completed: 2019
Total Cost: \$21.9m
Cost per linear foot: \$48.7k



Project: Iowa Women of Achievement Bridge
Location: Des Moines, IA
Size: 434lf
Year Completed: 2016
Total Cost: \$10m
Cost per linear foot: \$23k



Project: Bob Kerry Pedestrian Bridge
Location: Omaha, NE
Size: 3,000lf
Year Completed: 2008
Total Cost: \$22m
Cost per linear foot: \$7.3k



Project: Williams Crossing Pedestrian Bridge
Location: Tulsa, OK
Size: 1,440lf
Year Completed: 2023
Total Cost: \$32m
Cost per linear foot: \$22.2k



Project: Dublin Link Pedestrian Bridge
Location: Dublin, OH
Size: 760lf
Year Completed: 2020
Total Cost: \$22.6m
Cost per linear foot: \$29.7k



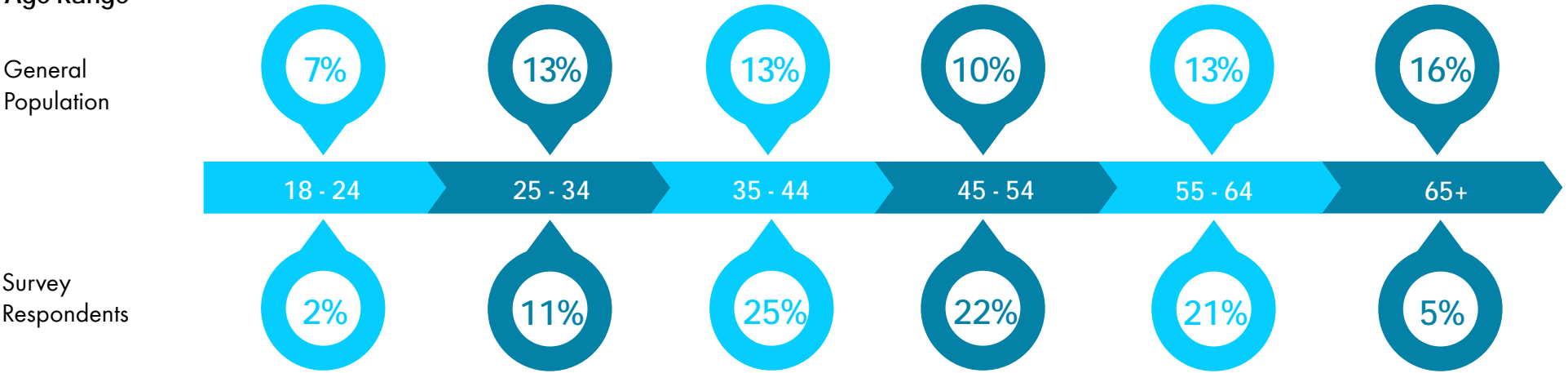
Project: RiverEdge Park Pedestrian Bridge
Location: Aurora, IL
Size: 750lf
Year Completed: 2021
Total Cost: \$4m
Cost per linear foot: \$5.3k

Engagement

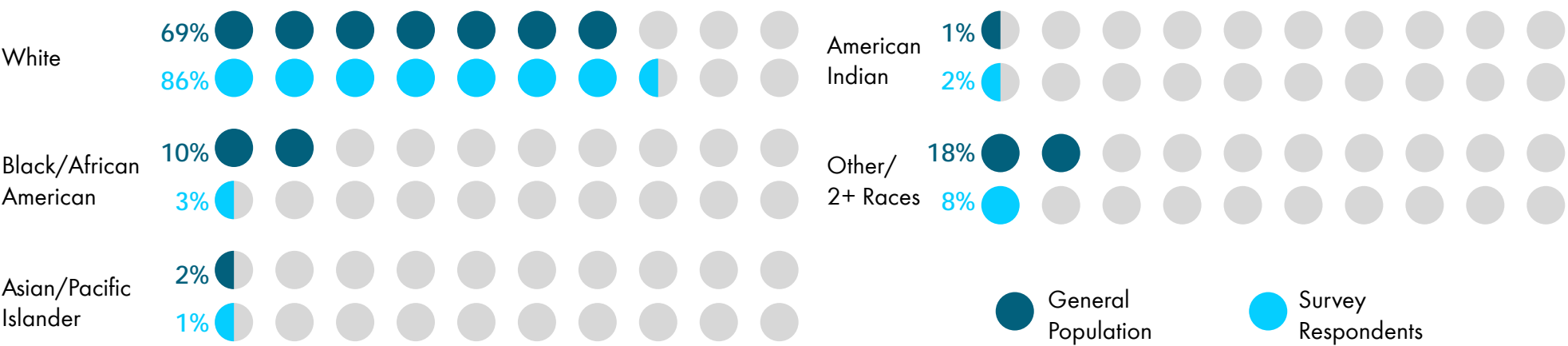
Survey #1 Demographics

During engagement periods data is collected to determine who is responding to the outreach. This helps determine who key audiences might be as well as identify any gaps where additional engagement opportunities are warranted to ensure we are getting feedback that is representative of Topeka’s population. The demographic information was collected via the first public survey.

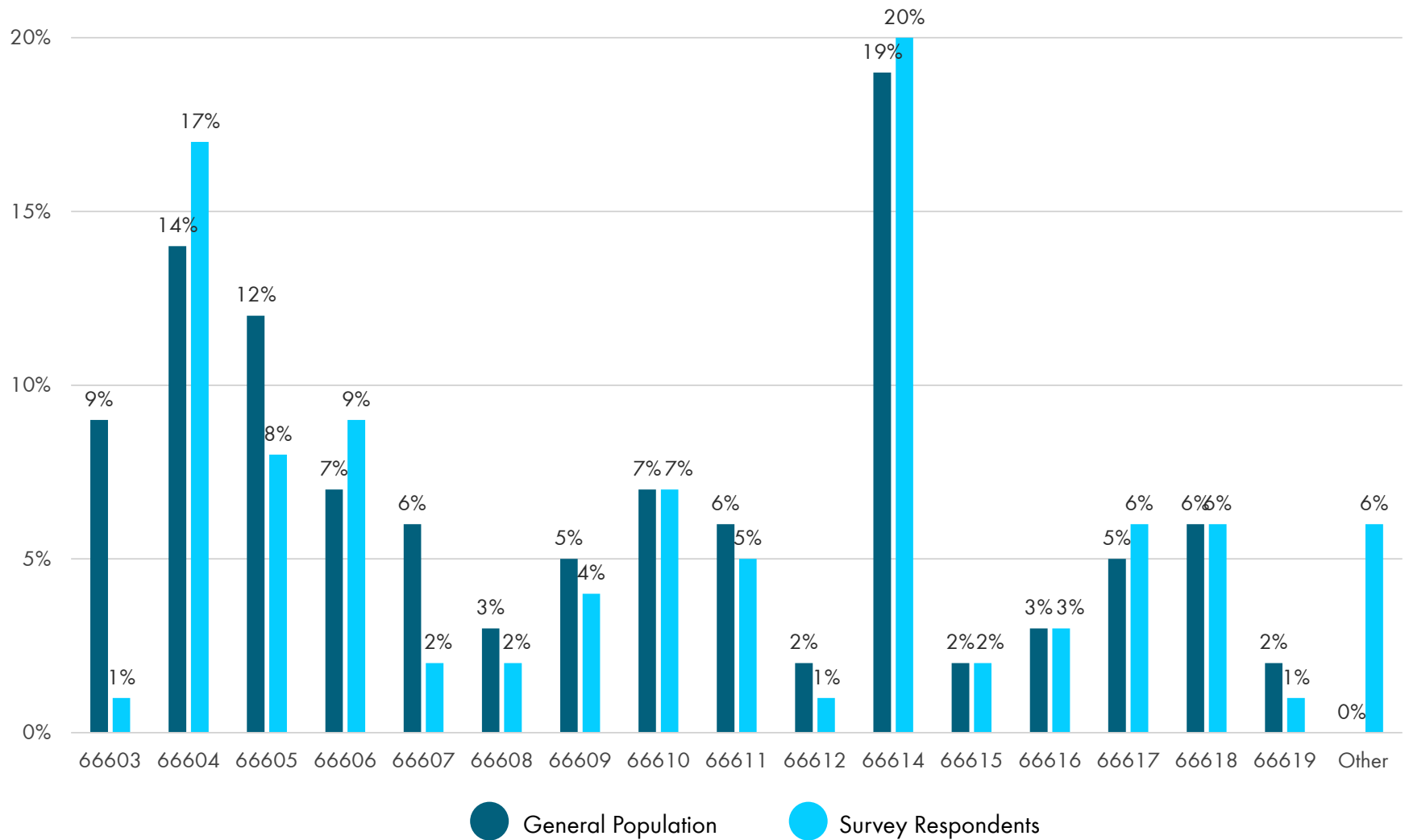
Age Range



Racial Identity



Zip Code



Engagement

Survey #1 Results

TOPEKA RIVERFRONT ACTIVATION PLAN SURVEY RESULTS

JANUARY 2024

The first public survey was active from December 14, 2023 - January 12, 2024. The survey was promoted on the Greater Topeka Partnership's social media accounts, on the project website, and sent to all email and text message subscribers. In addition to the 1,489 submissions, there were 150 reactions, 193 comments, and 75 shares on Facebook.

GENERAL RIVERFRONT PERCEPTIONS

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements about the Kansas River in Topeka:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I don't think about the Kansas River often	12%	24%	21%	25%	18%
The Kansas River is safe for recreation	19%	32%	28%	17%	4%
I like the riverfront	12%	18%	29%	29%	11%
The Kansas River is a beautiful asset for the community	9%	13%	19%	36%	23%
The Kansas River is an underutilized or untapped resource	7%	6%	12%	32%	42%
The Kansas River is important to our economy	7%	9%	26%	35%	24%

51%

view the river as unsafe for recreation

57%

agree or strongly agree the river is a beautiful community asset

74%

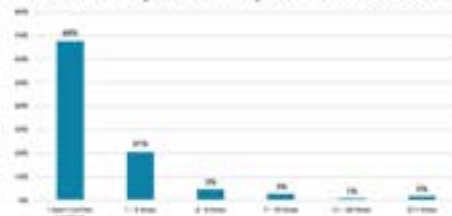
agree or strongly agree the river is an untapped resource

59%

believe the river is important to Topeka's economy

The results in the table reveal interesting information around current riverfront perceptions that will inform future messaging and the design process. They also indicate the community agrees the riverfront is ripe for redevelopment.

How often do you normally visit the riverfront for recreation purposes annually?



79%
of people visit the riverfront fewer than three times a year



RIVERSIDE ACTIVITIES

Please rate the following riverside activities that are most appealing to you with 5 being the most appealing:

	1 Very Unappealing	2 Unappealing	3 Neutral	4 Appealing	5 Very Appealing
Swimming/wading	53%	15%	16%	10%	8%
Fishing	35%	18%	22%	14%	12%
Kayaking/canoeing/ dragon boating	37%	19%	20%	14%	10%
Tubing/floating	27%	15%	20%	22%	16%
Kayaking/canoeing/ paddleboarding	21%	10%	17%	22%	30%
Whitewater rafting/river surfing	44%	17%	18%	11%	10%
Biking	22%	13%	20%	22%	23%
Walking/jogging	11%	7%	14%	26%	42%
Play features for children/ families	19%	8%	19%	24%	30%
Picnic areas	14%	8%	16%	27%	35%
Team sports	36%	17%	23%	13%	11%
Water play feature and/or splashpad	30%	13%	20%	18%	19%

MOST APPEALING ACTIVITIES

Riverside amenities that received the most 4 and 5 votes



#1 - WALKING/JOGGING

935 votes

Accessible paths for residents and visitors of all abilities to enjoy the area



#2 - PICNIC AREAS

854 votes

May include various types of tables, seating and sun cover



#3 - PLAY AREAS

743 votes

Playgrounds, interactive spaces, natural playscapes, etc.

LEAST APPEALING ACTIVITIES

Riverside amenities that received the most 1 and 2 votes



#1 - SWIMMING

924 votes



#2 - WHITEWATER RAFTING/RIVER SURFING

826 votes



#3 - TEAM SPORTS

718 votes

RIVERSIDE AMENITIES

Please rate the following riverside amenities that are most appealing to you with 5 being the most appealing:

	1 Very Unappealing	2 Unappealing	3 Neutral	4 Appealing	5 Very Appealing
Outdoor event/entertainment space	12%	6%	17%	26%	40%
Sports facilities (basketball courts, tennis courts, pickleball courts, soccer fields, etc.)	28%	18%	24%	18%	12%
Shopping options	24%	13%	24%	21%	18%
Dining options (dine-in, food trucks, outdoor, etc.)	13%	7%	16%	28%	36%
Housing options	45%	19%	20%	9%	6%
Hotel options	36%	18%	22%	14%	6%
Trails (land and water)	9%	5%	14%	25%	47%
Private recreation options (boat rentals, zip lines, challenge course, etc.)	18%	12%	23%	26%	22%
Public art	19%	14%	24%	21%	21%
Winter activities	17%	10%	22%	26%	23%
Educational exhibits (historical, nature, etc.)	13%	12%	28%	25%	23%
Pedestrian bridge connecting Downtown and NoTo	14%	7%	15%	26%	39%
Enhanced lighting and safety features	7%	2%	8%	17%	67%
Flexible vendor space (popups, markets, etc.)	11%	7%	23%	30%	29%
Pavilion(s)	13%	13%	28%	28%	19%
Dog-friendly area	22%	13%	22%	20%	23%
Natural areas/open lawns	10%	10%	21%	29%	30%
River access for on-water recreation and nature viewing	12%	8%	18%	26%	36%

RIVERSIDE AMENITIES

MOST APPEALING AMENITIES

Riverside amenities that received the most 4 and 5 votes



#1 - ENHANCED LIGHTING AND SAFETY FEATURES

1,115 votes



#2 - TRAILS (LAND AND WATER)

960 votes



#3 - OUTDOOR EVENT/ ENTERTAINMENT SPACE

870 votes



#4 - PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE CONNECTING DOWNTOWN AND NOTO

858 votes



#4 - DINING OPTIONS

858 votes

LEAST APPEALING AMENITIES

Riverside amenities that received the most 1 and 2 votes



#1 - HOUSING OPTIONS

849 votes



#2 - HOTEL OPTIONS

759 votes



#3 - SPORTS FACILITIES

601 votes



#4 - SHOPPING OPTIONS

483 votes



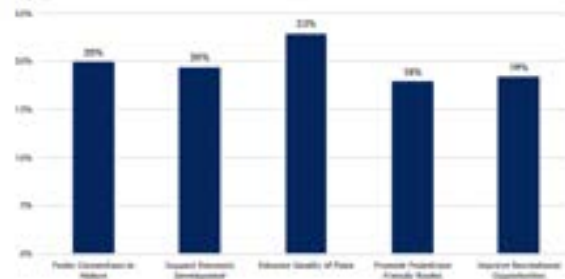
#5 - DOG FRIENDLY AREA

453 votes



GOALS & COMMUNITY IDEAS

In order of importance to you, rank the five project goals in order of most important (1) to least important (5).



Respondents also had the opportunity to list additional riverside activity ideas. The following themes emerged as community priorities:



RECREATION

Sand volleyball, 5k run/walks, pump track, UTV area, boat tours, fossil hunting, skate park, ice skating, playgrounds, paddle boats, disc golf



DINING

Waterfront restaurants, food trucks, riverboat restaurants, dining parlors, concessions



EVENTS/ENTERTAINMENT

Live music, theater performances, light show in river, fairs, seasonal carnival, ferris wheel, casino, beer gardens, dancing, waterfront bars



TRAILS

"I Spy" kids hiking trail, hiking, nature walk, mountain bike trails



RETAIL/MARKETS

Locally owned shops, gift shops, farmers market, waterfront stores



NATURESCAPES

Nature areas, scenic overlooks, quiet spaces, wildlife and/or natural grassland areas, gardens



SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

Enhanced lighting, police presence, security, clean water, controlled water access



ARTS/EXHIBITS

Sculptures, fireplaces, plaza, art/educational/historical exhibits, Oregon Trail crossing, ecotourism



OTHER

Parking, bathrooms, accessibility, shade, stargazing, historical markers, birdwatching, photography, dog park

Engagement

Survey #2 Results

Respondents also had the opportunity to provide open-ended feedback through comments. The following themes emerged as community priorities:



ACCESSIBILITY

Free parking, ADA-compliant facilities, connections to existing trails and parks



CULTURE & HISTORY

Incorporate elements of Topeka's history, culture, and heritage to foster a deeper connection to the place



DESIGN

Collaborate with local artists, incorporate native vegetation, historical elements, art installations and eco-friendly features



DINING

Diverse dining options and bars along the riverfront, food truck space



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Attractions will drive tourism and stimulate economic activity



EDUCATIONAL EXHIBITS

Local history, Native American art, Oregon Trail, ecological



EVENTS

Amphitheaters/entertainment venues, community gathering spaces



MAINTENANCE

Infrastructure should be easy to clean and regularly maintained



RECREATION

Diverse facilities, trails, water recreation, bird watching areas, seasonal activities and facilities



SAFETY

Enhanced lighting, surveillance/security, emergency phones



SUSTAINABILITY

Eco-friendly designs/materials, preservation of natural habitat/wildlife, educational exhibits about the river's history and ecosystem



OTHER

Enthusiasm for revitalizing the riverfront area, continue to keep the community involved

