

# GARDNER DESTINATION DOWNTOWN

A PLACEMAKING AND MOBILITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECT





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This project is supported through a grant from the Mid-America Regional Council's (MARC) Planning Sustainable Places Initiative – a regional program funded by the state-allocated Surface Transportation Program (Livable Communities Pilot) and intended to assist communities to explore transportation network improvements that enhance the quality of life and support long-term community growth.



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# 1 PROJECT UNDERSTANDING

# 1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The City of Gardner, with assistance from the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), has begun the process of fine-tuning the actionable items laid out in the 2018 Gardner Main Street Corridor Plan to ensure the future prominence, vibrancy and function of Downtown Gardner. In the Main Street Corridor Plan, a series of recommendations were developed with the intent to be implemented as funding and opportunities became available. These recommendations were categorized into four sections:

- Transportation and Corridor Function
- Economic Development
- Quality of Life
- Green Solutions

The Gardner Destination Downtown Plan focuses on elements under each of those recommendation categories and through a collaborative and multi-faceted design approach, recommends specific projects and interventions that will achieve the goal of transforming Downtown Gardner into the true heart of the City.

## PLANNING SUSTAINABLE PLACES

The goals of Planning Sustainable Places projects such as the Gardner Destination Downtown Plan include:

- Explore transportation network improvements
- Enhance the quality of life for the community
- Support long-term community growth
- Broaden public understanding and involvement of community in sustainability through partnerships
- Develop new tools, policies and practices to enhance decision making and neighborhood vibrancy
- Demonstrate new models that help transform the ways neighborhoods and communities develop
- Promote long-term physical and economic resilience

The plan is organized into six chapters including the Appendix.

### 1. Project Understanding

Provides an overall background of the plan and its relevance.

### 2. Existing Conditions

Analyzes the physical and social aspects of the study area.

### 3. Planning Process

Chronicles the public input process that took place.

### 4. Concepts

Outlines concepts for public spaces and streetscapes.

### 5. Implementation

Recommends various phasing and implementation strategies.

An Appendix is included at the end of this plan to provide supporting resources and images that were gathered during the entirety of the process.



Figure 1.01 - Main and Elm Intersection in Downtown Gardner



Figure 1.02 - Businesses along Main Street

## 1.2 PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of the Gardner Destination Downtown Plan is to form a coalition of ideas and support needed to create new dynamic public spaces and an enhanced Downtown streetscape to revitalize the central core of the City. The strategies and action steps of the plan build on the role of the corridor as a major transportation thoroughfare and facilitate its evolution to support multi-modal transportation options and vibrant public spaces that attract redevelopment and revitalization efforts. It is a high-level plan that addresses key issues in a connected way but does not provide detailed design or construction specifics. The recommendations in this plan contain both short-term and long-term phasing strategies for the public spaces and for the streetscape.

A fundamental component of the streetscape design will be the consideration of ADA compliance. Business access, ramping, crosswalk markings and signalization were all analyzed as a part of this study and a list of recommendations can be found later in this plan.



### GOALS

#### ***PUBLIC SPACES: CREATE A HEART IN DOWNTOWN***

- Define the users and program of the spaces.
- Provide a flexible and interactive commons to promote social inclusion and civic identity.
- Relate public spaces to the surrounding context and properties.
- Define the experience of the spaces.
- Honor the community's aspirations and vision.
- Respect the site and budget.

#### ***STREETSCAPES: REINFORCE GARDNER'S DOWNTOWN IDENTITY***

- Define the character of the streetscape.
- Accommodate a balance of vehicular and non-vehicular activity.
- Ensure that the design is authentic to Gardner.
- Promote pedestrian and vehicular safety.
- Recommend technically viable solutions.
- Improve conditions for those with mobility challenges in navigating Downtown.



Figure 1.03 - Character images for dynamic public spaces



# 1.3 PROJECT AREA

Gardner, located in the southwest corner of Johnson County, is poised to grow in population as the Kansas City metropolitan area continues to expand outward.

The project area for this plan includes a 9-block zone in the Downtown core. Extents include Sycamore Street to the east, Center Street to the west, Warren Street to the South and the extents of Cornerstone Park to the north.

Main Street and Elm Street represent the two most important streets in the Downtown core and the intersection of these two streets, represents the physical and historical center of the City.

Several prominent community assets are located in the study area including, but not limited to, City Hall, Gardner Elementary School, First Presbyterian Church, Cornerstone Park, the Gardner Senior Center and many small businesses. Adjacent assets include the Johnson County Fairgrounds, Wheatridge Middle School and several residential neighborhoods.

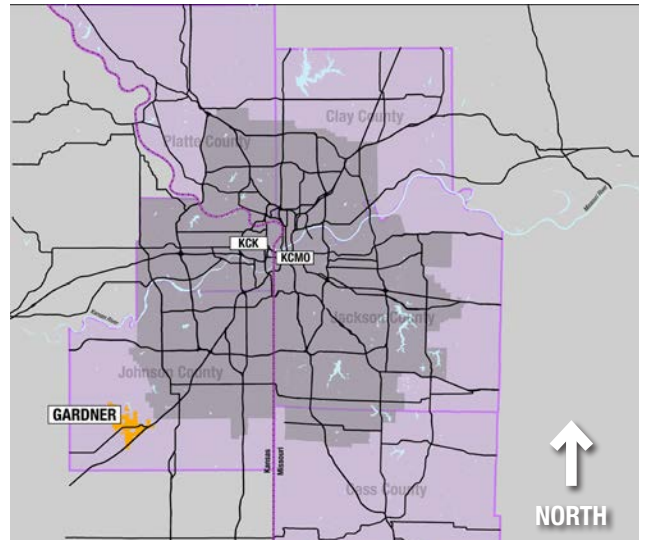


Figure 1.04 - Regional location of Gardner, Kansas

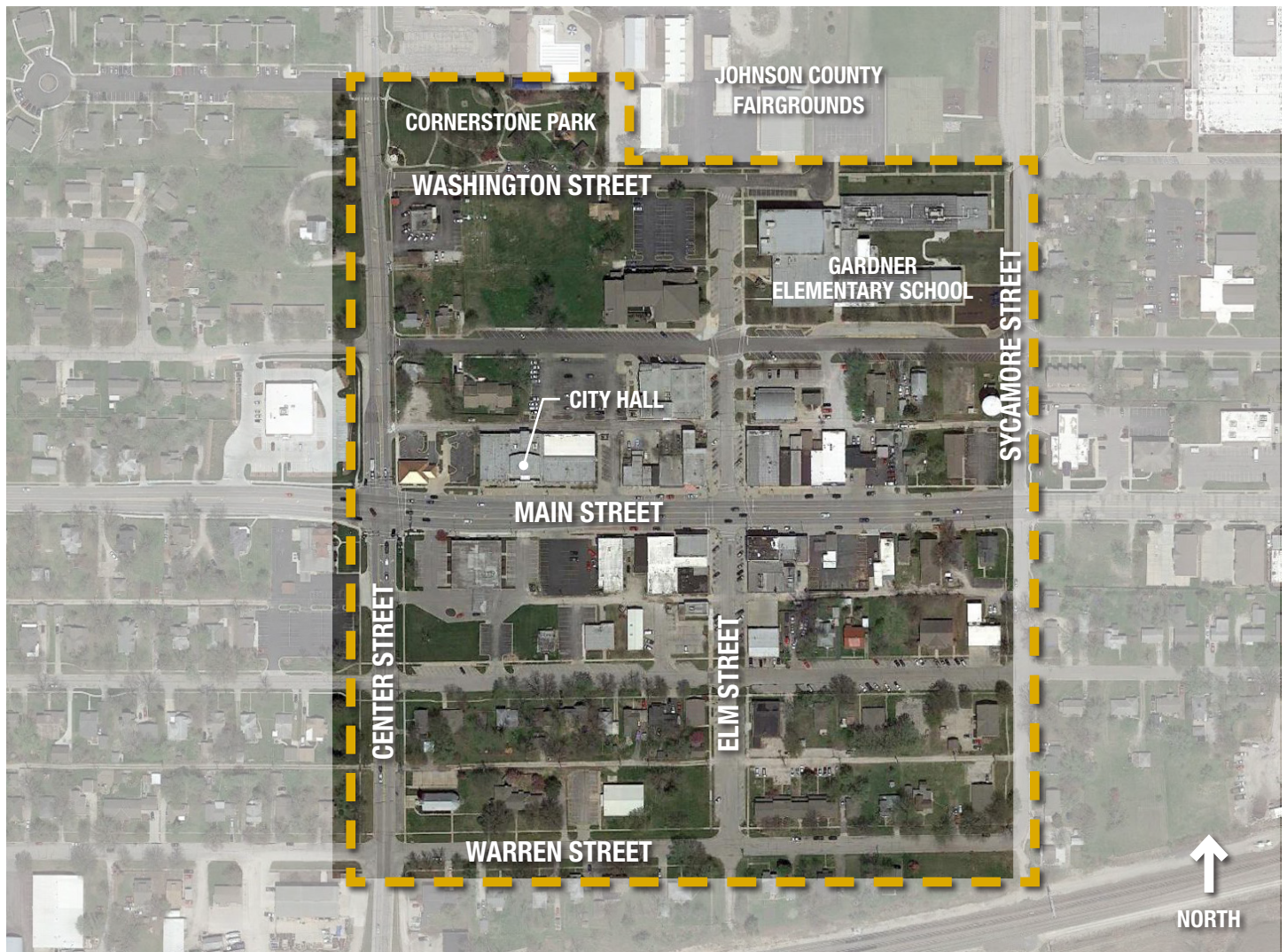


Figure 1.05 - Project Area



## 1.4 KEY ISSUES

The project team performed an inventory and analysis of pedestrian and vehicular circulation and ADA parking issues. Extensive outreach and ongoing involvement with City staff, project champions, property owners and citizens resulted in the identification of several key issues.

### PUBLIC SPACES

Fundamental to this plan is the creation of flexible public spaces in Downtown Gardner that serve as civic gathering venues, something that is currently lacking in the City. Creating these spaces will require several key partnerships between landowners and the City.

### STREETSCAPE

The streets of Downtown Gardner physically knit the community together and act as a connector between the proposed public spaces. Therefore, a second key aspect of this plan is to establish a design vision for the Downtown streetscapes that works to enhance the public realm and creates a revitalized and contemporary streetscape environment.

### ADA FACILITIES / PARKING

Accessibility for everyone in the Downtown core is of the utmost importance to City officials as well as the planning team. A comprehensive study of existing ADA accommodations was conducted, resulting in recommendations for future ADA accommodations that will ensure the proposed improvements can be enjoyed by all users.

Parking was also at the forefront of all design considerations and the planning team made it a goal to not reduce parking numbers in the Downtown core.

The ultimate vision proposes a slight increase in available public and private parking. However, parking is reorganized within the project area to support introduction of new green space and infill development. When the vision of the plan is realized, Downtown Gardner will be a more walkable and pedestrian-friendly district.

### MOBILITY HUB

The final key issue is the establishment of a mobility hub in Downtown Gardner. As Gardner continues to grow as a part of the expanding Kansas City metro, providing access to public transportation is important to assure all citizens have the ability to access all parts of the metro without the need for a personal vehicle. The mobility hub is also designed to accommodate more recent transportation options such as ride sharing, bike sharing and scooters / short distance options.



Figure 1.06 - Example of a Downtown gathering space in Gladstone, MO



Figure 1.07 - Example of traditional streetscape design character



Figure 1.08 - Example of a Mobility Hub used in Kansas City



# 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS



## 2.1 GREEN SPACES

Open air public spaces can host festivals, concerts, meetings and recreational activities and they are an important venue to have in a community as it adds great vitality and pride to the social fabric. Currently, Gardner does not have such a space that serves as the formal “heart” of the City.

**A** Cornerstone Park, located at the corner of Washington Street and Center Street, is currently the only public green space within the Downtown core of Gardner. This ~2 acre park contains playground structures, three picnic shelters, an amphitheater, restrooms, and walking trails. Located adjacent to the Gardner Aquatic Center, Cornerstone Park is most heavily used during the warmer months when the Aquatic Center is open. Despite these assets, the park is not used to its full potential and is somewhat disconnected from the central business district along Main Street.

**B** Located between Washington Street and Shawnee Street, a large underutilized green space, primarily owned by First Presbyterian Church, provides an opportunity for further investment in public spaces. This site is characterized by expansive turf, a few mature trees and powerlines crossing the site east / west. Blazer’s, a popular Gardner eating establishment, is also located directly to the west of this property.

**C** A third opportunity to create a public open space lies directly behind City Hall along E Shawnee Street. As an important civic institution, City Hall in many ways represents the center of Gardner and the space around it should respond to that prominence. Today, the site is primarily a surface parking lot for City Hall and the local Johnson County Library, who owns the majority of the property. Also located on this site is a group home, a small private residence and a commercial building at the Corner of Main and Center Street. An entrance drive from Main Street along the east side of City Hall provides accessible parking for City Hall.



Figure 2.02 - Existing underutilized Cornerstone Park amphitheater



Figure 2.03 - Large underutilized green space between Shawnee and Washington Street



Figure 2.04 - Existing surface parking lot behind Gardner City Hall and JOCO Library



Figure 2.01 - Proposed public space improvements



## 2.2 DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPES

The streetscape of Gardner's Downtown is dominated by vehicular use with ample space for driving and parking cars. Even with substantial sidewalk space along Main and Elm Street, there are very few elements that make the pedestrian feel protected from the busy highway traffic. The Downtown streetscape could provide greater potential for civic engagement and economic vitality.

Main Street, or Highway 56, is the main thoroughfare through Gardner. As the primary east/west route, and connector to larger industrial sites in the west, this road experiences a high degree of everyday traffic and a high quantity of truck traffic. Many of the parallel parking spaces along Main Street are not fully utilized because of the sense that they are unsafe with relatively high speed truck traffic occurring immediately adjacent to that zone.

Elm Street currently retains a more pedestrian-oriented feeling with more intimate sidewalk spaces which are protected from moving traffic by diagonal parking spaces. This design also creates a more successful business climate. Nonetheless, much more can be done with Elm Street to further capitalize on its already established pedestrian quality.

It is important that streetscapes be designed with the pedestrian in mind, as they are the most important user of the space. Even though vehicles will bring people to this space, it is users on foot traveling around the Downtown core that create an active and bustling district. Therefore, elements such as seating, pedestrian lighting, street plantings, wayfinding signage and other amenities are important elements to consider for a streetscape. It is these amenities that signal who the streetscape is designed for and encourage users to come back time and time again. These spaces and features also provide an opportunity to tell Gardner's stories, furthering the unique qualities of Downtown.



Figure 2.05 - Major streets in Downtown Gardner



Figure 2.06 - Elm Street (looking north)



Figure 2.07 - Main Street (looking east)



# 3 PLANNING PROCESS

### 3.1 PROJECT TIMELINE

The project began in May 2019 and extended into the first quarter of 2020. Three main phases helped set attainable goals for public participation and results. Those three phases were Discovery (2.5 months), Ideas (4 months) and Implementation (4 months).

The Discovery phase is where the majority of the inventory and analysis process took place. Documenting existing conditions and meeting with government and regulatory officials provided a baseline understanding of future challenges and opportunities for the project.

The Ideas phase brought about concepts for the green spaces and streetscapes with many iterations discussed between the planning team, city leaders and the general public. Overtime those concepts were refined into one final concept.

Finally, the Implementation phase involved the development of this plan and a strategic approach to financial and policy initiatives necessary to make these designs come to fruition.



Figure 3.01 - Steering Committee Workshop

PROJECT SCHEDULE											
	MAY 2019	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN 2020	FEB	MAR
<b>DISCOVERY</b>											
<b>IDEAS</b>											
<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b>											
<b>PLANNING COMMISSION / CITY COUNCIL</b>											

Figure 3.02 - Project Schedule

### 3.2 MEETING GROUPS

#### STEERING COMMITTEE

The recommendations outlined in this plan were derived from an open and transparent process. The planning team coordinated a series of six meetings with the Steering Committee, largely composed of the same citizen leaders who assisted with the precursor to this plan, the 2018 Main Street Corridor Plan. However, additional citizens were engaged during the implementation exercises for this plan. Each of these meetings provided opportunities for the Steering Committee to better understand the issues being explored as part of the planning process, to ask questions and obtain additional information, and to provide their input and direction for shaping the proposed plan recommendations.

#### PROJECT PARTNERS + STAKEHOLDERS

The planning team coordinated meetings with MARC and KDOT throughout the project. Additional conversations occurred with the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA) regarding bus service in the Downtown Corridor and the planned mobility hub.

The planning team also met with multiple key stakeholders that could be directly impacted by and benefit from the project, or who had additional information about the areas envisioned for investment and the Gardner community. This included property and business owners, church officials, the Johnson County Fair Board, and local civic organizations.

These conversations provided the planning team with great insight as well as a platform for partnership and ongoing dialogue as the City moves forward.



### 3.3 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT / OUTREACH

In addition to the Steering Committee meetings, the process involved many opportunities to engage the public.

#### BENCHMARKING BUS TOUR

The first of these meetings took place on a RideKC Bus as participants toured various public spaces and streetscapes throughout the Kansas City metro. The intent of this engagement was to allow residents to see firsthand how other communities have rallied around the process of developing a public community asset and actually implemented their visions.

The locations visited included:

- Overland Park Farmers Market - Overland Park, KS
- Linden Square - Gladstone, MO
- Downtown Liberty, MO
- Uptown Market - Independence, MO
- Downtown Lee's Summit - Lee's Summit, MO
- Park Place - Leawood, KS

These locations exemplified different types of public spaces but all share one thing in common: they have made a difference by bringing about the opportunity for people to gather together and be proud of their community.

Overland Park demonstrated how a formal farmers market structure, combined with parking, can help activate the Downtown frequently.

Linden Square, a public green space and amphitheater in Downtown Gladstone, conveyed the idea of how different property owners and city officials, as well as private developers, were able to work together to implement a successful performance venue that catalyzed private development.

Downtown Liberty recently invested in a refreshed streetscape environment, and in the context of their historic Downtown, the streetscape brings contemporary touches with an overall layer of historic qualities. The streetscape design has proven to be popular with the public and only enhances their already vibrant Downtown.

Uptown Market in Independence is a market / community building structure that was recently constructed adjacent to the Downtown square of Independence. Having a building that functions for both market activities as well as festival and community events brings frequent activation to Downtown Independence.

Downtown Lee's Summit is a great example of a cohesive Downtown streetscape that blends the texture of the historic buildings and pedestrian oriented design elements. Business signage, wayfinding elements, street plantings and paving details all combine to create a warm and inviting environment.

Park Place in Leawood represented a slightly different model for the bus tour group to experience. Brought about by a private developer, Park Place is filled with higher end stores and restaurants but at its core is a green space meant for activities and passive recreation. This space is successful because of the right amount of nearby mixed-use development and the activity that it provides.



Figure 3.03 - Bus Tour Group



There were several other opportunities for the public to offer their ideas to the planning team throughout the project. Those opportunities engaging with folks at a Food Truck Frenzy + Farmer's Market in Downtown Gardner, and individual meetings with stakeholders.

In addition to those events, two online surveys were administered and distributed through various social media outlets as well as the City's website. Providing a way for Gardner residents to give feedback when it is convenient for them garners higher levels of response. In fact, the first survey had 536 responses which equals 2.5% of the entire population of Gardner. The final proposals include the preferred amenities, programmatic elements and space flexibility that the public indicated through the survey. This feedback was of value to the planning team in crafting a vision that satisfied the community at large. The complete survey results can be found in the Appendix.

Finally, over the course of the project, two public meetings were held at the Gardner Community Center. Public Meetings / Open Houses allow for citizens to come and speak directly to the planning team and city officials, better understand the project and share any direct concerns or approvals.

## PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Overall, the vision for Downtown Gardner was well received and generated a lot of excitement for what it holds for the future of the City. Concerns and challenges were voiced by the public and heard by the planning team, and over the course of the project, the initial concepts were fine tuned to address those issues. In the end, it is the belief of the planning team, the steering committee, and city officials that the vision laid out in this plan will bring positive investment and create a true heart in the City of Gardner.



Figure 3.04 - Photos from various engagement meetings / events



## 3.4 WALK & ROLL INVENTORY

On July 25th, 2019, the project team conducted a walk & roll inventory in Downtown Gardner to identify access improvement opportunities for pedestrians and mobility-impaired persons. The project team consisted of members of the Steering + Implementation Committee, city staff, teaming partner Wilson & Company, and members of the public who utilize mobility aids. The team was tasked with identifying areas where ease of access could be improved. The team primarily focused on sidewalks, curb ramps, crosswalks, building entrances, and the location of ADA parking in the Downtown study area.

The following areas were identified as needing major improvement:

- Access to front building entrances along Main Street (private property).
- Sidewalk pavement surface.
- Curb ramps surface.
- Crossing distance at crosswalks.
- Crosswalk surface.
- ADA stall distance to priority buildings.

Specific action items identified from the inventory include:

- Addressing building entrance slope and width along Main Street to allow for full ADA access.
- Interim solution: Encourage businesses on Main St. who have existing ADA access in the rear of the store with alley access to clearly indicate where and how access the building entrance (example – doorbell and a sign).
- Replace sidewalk on the south side of Park St. between Center St. and Sycamore St.
- Add sidewalk to the north side of E Washington St. east of Sycamore St.
- Investigate alternatives to the current sidewalk repair program to address thin sidewalk patching that causes debris.
- Encourage private property owners to maintain their section of sidewalk.
- Add additional on-street ADA stalls throughout Downtown, specifically van stalls with a passenger access aisle and an ADA stall in front of City Hall.
- Enhance bump-outs to all corners of Main St. and Elm St. to decrease crossing distance.
- Add a pedestrian refuge/median-cut on Main St. where pedestrians cross along Elm St.
- Asphalt repairs at all pedestrian crossings along Elm St.
- Installation of a sign at Main and Center to warn drivers of pedestrian crossing.



Figure 3.05 - Examples of accessibility challenges in Downtown Gardner





# 4 CONCEPTS

## 4.1 PUBLIC SPACES - FINAL CONCEPT

Three initial concepts were developed to garner feedback about larger design ideas as well as programmatic elements, vehicular and pedestrian circulation and general aesthetics. The greatest difference in these plans was based on concepts for the property between Washington Street and Shawnee Street. Majority owned by the adjacent First Presbyterian Church, these initial concepts explored different scenarios of how much land would be available for redevelopment. These scenarios can be found in the Appendix.

In the final concept, the vision of a strong visual and physical connection between Main Street and Cornerstone Park remains intact with many of the important features of this concept relating to that overall axis. Located directly adjacent to the City Hall on the east, a pedestrian plaza with a iconic vertical monument anchors the entire spine of public space to Main Street. The vertical monument serves two purposes; it becomes an identifiable feature in the Downtown core that draws attention to the new public spaces, and it has the opportunity to speak to the history of Gardner in either an artful or a documental way. For example, this would be a nice opportunity for a mural on the blank wall at the east entrance to the plaza adjacent to City Hall.

Within City Hall Plaza, parking, gathering spaces and a public market all work together to create a truly dynamic and active space. Because of added hardscape surfaces, stormwater capture is an important aspect for implementation to ensure this project is as sustainable as possible. The public market will now have a permanent structure. Depending on the

size of the market in the future, nearby parking stalls can also be used for vendors and merchants.

Extending across Shawnee Street, a large road table is proposed to ease pedestrian access from one space to the other and encourage lower vehicle speeds. The path leads directly into the amphitheater lawn and seating area. This space is designed to be flexible and host events of varying sizes. A small overhead structure acts as the performance space and the adjacent plaza contains a pergola structure for more cover and protection. Immediately behind these structures, a second seating area serves as an option for patrons of Blazer's which is adjacent to this public space.

Road tables once again facilitate pedestrians crossing from Washington Street into Cornerstone Park. A multi-purpose building is proposed for the western end of the park, along Center Street, adjacent to the park lawn. Designed to be unprogrammed and porous, the multi-purpose building received favorable ratings during public meetings. At the terminus of one of two main pedestrian paths, a prominent water feature is intended to be both sculptural and interactive and will appeal to families and visitors. A destination playground and picnic shelters nearby facilitate even more activities in Cornerstone Park.

Residential units are proposed along Main Street in a financially viable quantity. Furthermore, mixed-use developments at the corner of Center Street and Main Street, and along the south side of Main Street, help to fill in gaps of the corridor's business district and also increase the amount of commercial and residential tenants.



Figure 4.01 - Plan of proposed public space and streetscape improvements in Downtown Gardner. A full page view of this plan graphic can be found on page 56 in the Appendix.



**A** Directly behind City Hall, the Gardner Public Market would utilize a permanent overhead structure to increase attendance and ensure its long-term success. Located along the axis of the rear door of City Hall, the structure will anchor a larger plaza space intended to be used for community events of all sizes. While the market and events are not occurring, this area will satisfy the parking needs of City Hall and other nearby businesses. Every opportunity should be made to implement stormwater infrastructure around this plaza space so that it positively contributes to Gardner’s environmental sustainability goals.



Figure 4.02 - Gardner Public Market permanent facility directly behind City Hall

**B** West of City Hall, a public promenade alongside new redevelopment offers the opportunity for Downtown employees and visitors to meet up for lunch or other social outings. The new development at the corner of Center and Main could house a restaurant or retail with office or residences on the upper floor. Gardner could commission a mural for the west facade of City Hall, making this space even more dynamic.



Figure 4.03 - Public promenade west of City Hall

**C** Looking Northeast, the full scale of the recommended public spaces improvements in Gardner can be viewed. New Mixed-Use and residential developments along Center Street frame the western edge of the Public Market, Amphitheater Lawn and Botanical Gardens. Plaza spaces alongside City Hall extend these public spaces to the edge of Main Street and create one unified hub of activity in the center of Gardner.



Figure 4.04 - Aerial view of proposed public spaces with the Public Market structure and new mixed-use and residential developments shown in the foreground



**D** The plaza adjacent to City Hall on the east side accomplishes several goals. It extends the public spaces recommended behind City Hall to the edge of Main Street and creates visibility for the entire system of spaces. A proposed ADA accessible parallel parking stall on Main Street, directly in front of this plaza, eases access into City Hall because the handicap accessible ramp is accessed from this corner of the building. This stall should be implemented early in project phasing. The vertical monument is an excellent opportunity to speak to the history of Gardner through informational and artistic components.



Figure 4.05 - Public plaza along Main Street with iconic vertical monument

**E** Located between two parking areas, and along the axis that connects all of the public spaces together, is a small pedestrian plaza with stormwater retention gardens and a covered seating / events area. The surrounding parking areas are recommended to be at the same elevation as the small plaza with the intent that events of varying sizes can be hosted here and extend as far as they need to while also accommodating all ranges of accessibility.



Figure 4.06 - Eye-level view of green infrastructure elements located in City Hall Plaza

**F** Looking northwest, the pedestrian plaza located alongside City Hall to the east, with an iconic vertical element, is prominent in the foreground of this view. Leading to the North, a strong visual and physical connection is made through the large plaza space, amphitheater lawn and Cornerstone Park. Hardscape materials in the foreground reflect those that make the entire space feel pedestrian focused, although vehicles will still utilize parking lots and access drives.



Figure 4.07 - Aerial view (looking northwest) showing all three public spaces connected by diagonal walking path



**G** This view shows a close-up view of the amphitheater lawn and adjacent hardscape plaza space. Large curved seat walls provide seating while also allowing the space to be flexible. It is intended that turf and hardscaped areas function as one space when larger events require that amount of space but that these spaces can also function separately for smaller events or day-to-day passive recreation. The nearby residential units will have prime viewing of these green spaces which will add to their market appeal.

**H** Looking south down one of the two main pedestrian paths, hardscape areas behind the amphitheater lawn and performance venue provide opportunities for large and small gatherings. Overhead shade structures help protect visitors from direct sunlight. The seating area to the right in this view is directly behind Blazer’s restaurant and could serve as a convenient and pleasant outdoor patio for diners.

**I** Looking north from Shawnee Street, this view depicts the botanical garden in the foreground, which envelops the amphitheater space and lawn. This garden could be a native exploration garden that retains stormwater runoff and therefore acts as an educational and sustainable amenity. Mounding on the ground plane provides clear sight lines for events, and the botanical garden, with its meandering paths, creates a nice buffer between the street and residential units from the more active lawn space. Removable bollards across Shawnee Street are recommended for larger events making City Hall Plaza and the Civic Green one large public space.



Figure 4.08 - Amphitheater Lawn (looking north) to be used as flexible open space



Figure 4.09 - Hardscape areas designed for small and large gatherings / festivals



Figure 4.10 - Aerial view of Botanical Garden, Amphitheater Lawn, Event Space and new residential development, north of Shawnee Street



**J** Viewed up close, the improved playground and interactive water feature together will create a place where children and families will want to spend time and hang out, which in turn will activate the entire park space. Walking paths also allow for leisurely exercising and other passive activities.

**K** A prominent feature of the redesigned Cornerstone Park is the proposed Multi-Purpose Community Building. Designed to be versatile, community events of all sizes can take place here. Garage doors on the facade allow for events to spill over into the park lawn if necessary. This facility would be a great asset to Gardner and provide regular activation to Cornerstone Park.

**L** Cornerstone Park is an important public space in Gardner but could be improved to maximize its full potential. In this view, the improvements can be seen. The existing playground is recommended to be modernized; park pavilions remain with some minor updates. The biggest change is a proposed multi-purpose community building that overlooks a park lawn. These two elements are intended to be very flexible and be utilized for events of varying sizes throughout the entire year. An interactive water feature, located in the middle of the Park and at the end of the axial connection with City Hall, becomes another iconic and playful element in Gardner. Parking capacity at the adjacent Aquatic Center can be used for events in Cornerstone Park and/or shuttles can be utilized from farther locations depending on event sizes. Coordination will be needed to make the necessary agreements.



Figure 4.11 - Playground and interactive water feature in Cornerstone Park



Figure 4.12 - Cornerstone Park Lawn designed as a flexible multi-use space



Figure 4.13 - Birds-eye view of Cornerstone Park (Looking southwest)



## 4.2 DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPES - FINAL CONCEPT

### STREETSCAPE - DESIGN FRAMEWORK

During the 2018 Gardner Main Street Corridor Plan, it was established that community members preferred a more traditional aesthetic when it came to streetscape elements. It was agreed upon that a traditional theme would fit nicely with the character of Downtown.

For the purposes of this study, we further developed design concepts for the streetscapes and a 'kit of parts' for streetscape elements based off the original feedback given in 2018.

More information on the initial concepts can be found in the Appendix.

In order to develop a design strategy for the streetscapes in Downtown Gardner, the streets were classified into three different categories; Primary, Secondary and Tertiary.

Primary Streets typically have the most traffic, commercial and civic activity associated with them. Main Street was the historic route through Gardner and is still a major east/west arterial in its current status as State Highway 56. Street trees along Main Street relate to

the spacing of the parallel parking stalls and are placed every 40'. Elm Street is also classified as a Primary Street because together with Main Street, it forms the 4-corners of the Downtown District. Street trees along Elm Street are spaced every 25'. Additionally, Elm has many small businesses along it and connects important assets such as the Johnson County Fairgrounds, Johnson County Library, and Gardner Elementary School.

Secondary Streets are important connectors within the Downtown District and form the basic street grid pattern. Secondary Streets function to circulate vehicular and pedestrian activity throughout the Downtown District but always in relation to the Primary Streets. Street tree spacing varies on secondary streets as they relate to the configuration of the on-street parking (parallel vs. angled).

Tertiary Streets typically have less activity and traffic and in the context of Gardner, are primarily made of residential land uses. Street tree spacing along Tertiary Streets is recommended to be 50'.

See Figure 4.14 to see the streetscape classifications.

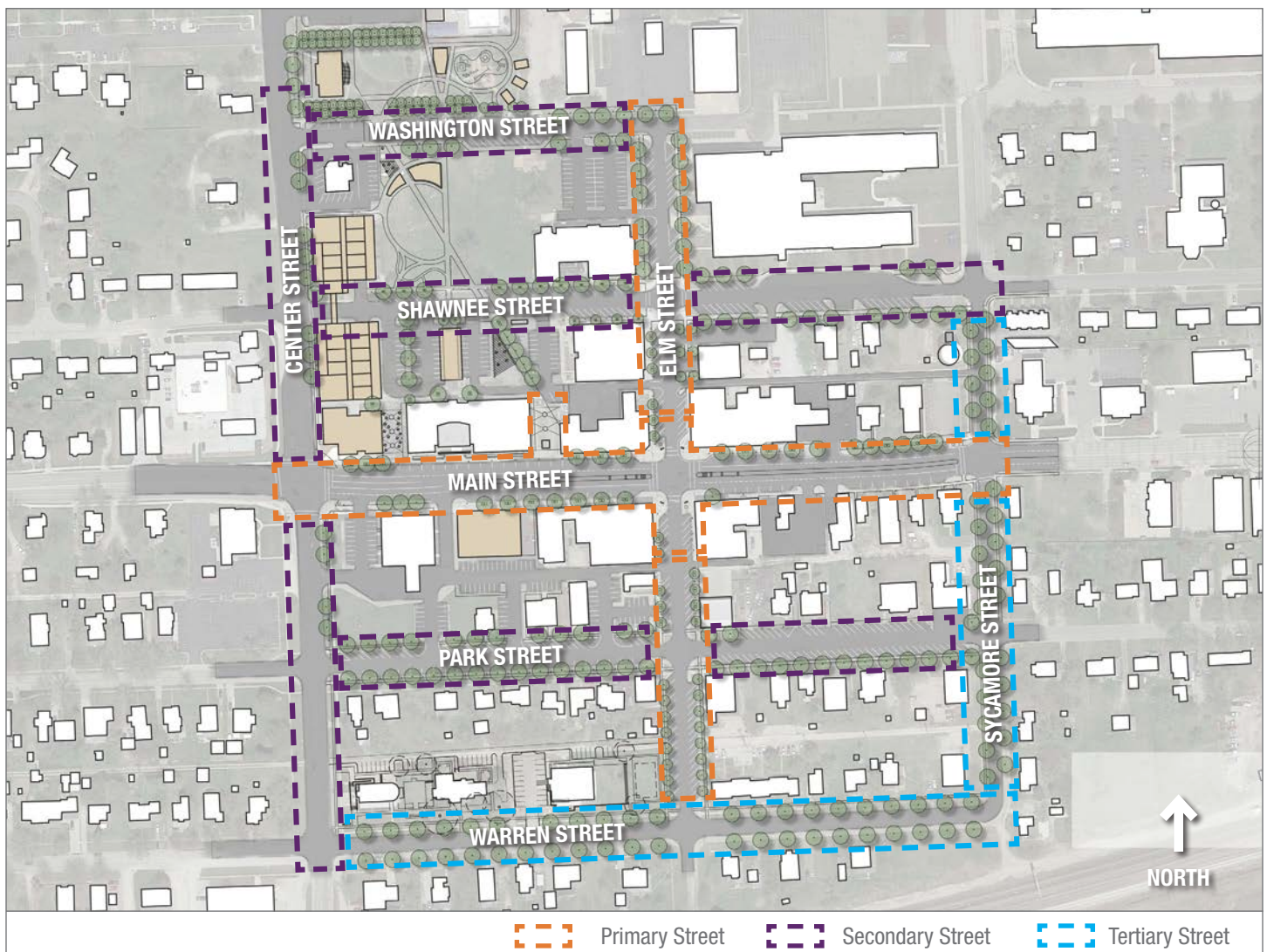


Figure 4.14 - Streetscape categories in Downtown Gardner

## STREETSCAPE - SECTIONS

This hierarchy of streets is important when considering streetscape improvements. Not all streets can receive the same level of investment, nor should they. Streetscape improvements include paving materials, bench seating, landscaping, etc. Because of their higher use and prominence, Primary Streets will receive the highest level of investment, followed by Secondary Streets and Tertiary Streets.

For this study, the streetscape categories indicate the following streetscape elements:

### Primary Streets

- Street Trees
- Decorative Pedestrian Lighting
- Site Furnishings (bench seating, trash receptacle, bike rack, etc.)
- Decorative Pavement
- Wayfinding Signage
- Light Pole Banners
- Festival Lighting
- Gateway Markers

### Secondary Streets

- Street Trees
- Minimal Site Furnishings (bench seating, trash receptacle, etc.)
- Minimal Enhanced Landscape

### Tertiary Streets

- Street Trees
- Minimal Enhanced Landscape

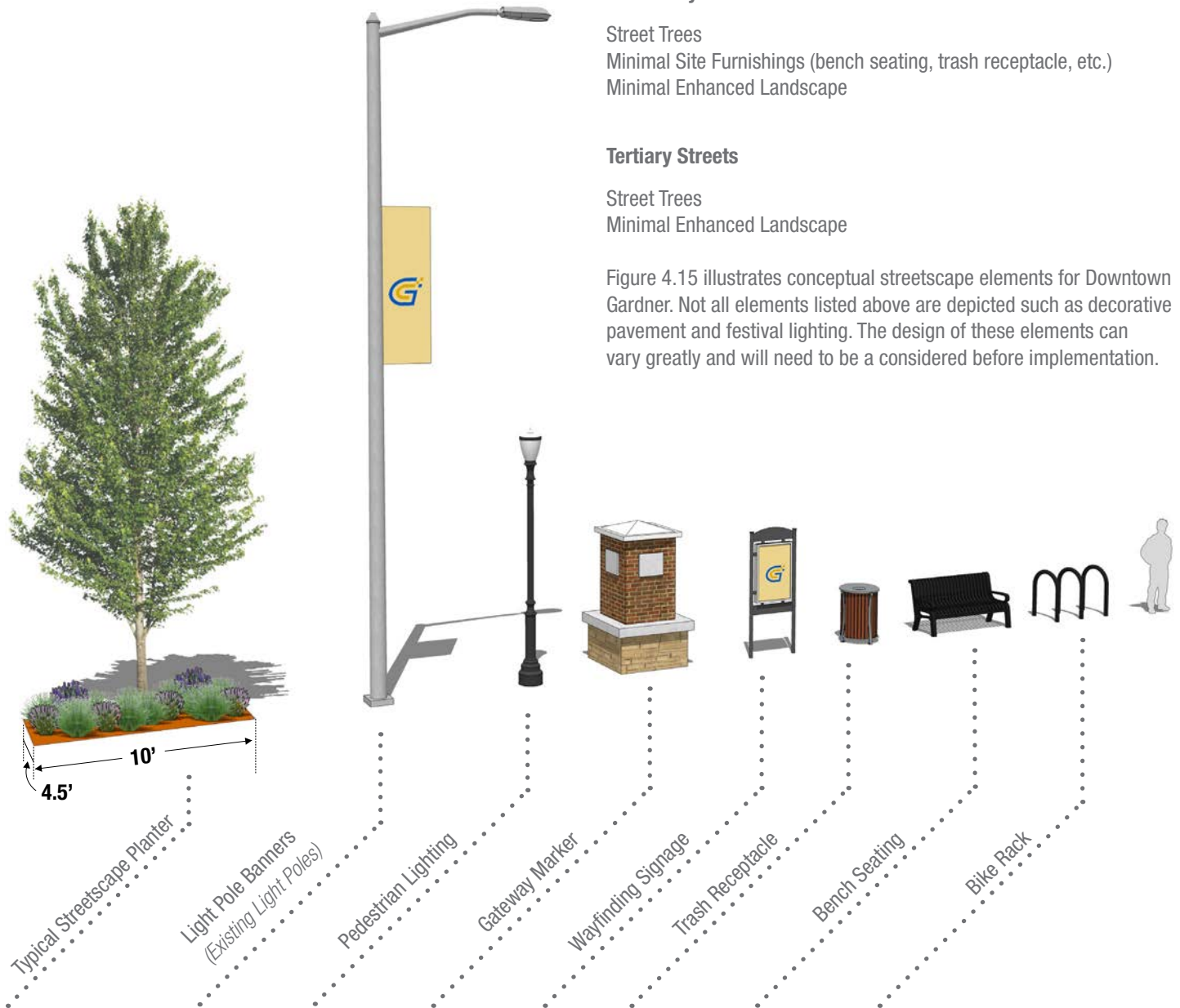


Figure 4.15 illustrates conceptual streetscape elements for Downtown Gardner. Not all elements listed above are depicted such as decorative pavement and festival lighting. The design of these elements can vary greatly and will need to be a considered before implementation.

Figure 4.15 - Conceptual Downtown streetscape elements



## STREETSCAPE - SECTIONS

Figures 4.16 - 4.19 illustrate the typical roadway section for each of the street categories: Primary, Secondary and Tertiary. Sections are depicted for both Main and Elm Streets because they have a very different feel from one another even though they are both categorized as Primary Streets.

The recommended conditions for Main Street (Figure 4.16) are a direct result from the work done in the 2018 Main Street Corridor Plan. Curb locations and four travel lanes remain to accommodate high levels of car and truck traffic, but lanes are reduced from 12' to 11' to encourage slower speeds and allow for a center median. The median, with brick pavers and limestone blocks, serves to slow traffic and enhance the overall streetscape of the Downtown core. 10' parallel parking lanes are maintained but now include the 1.5' gutter, which previously was not the case. The ample sidewalks remain unchanged in size but are recommended to have an amenity zone within its footprint. The amenity zone should contain street trees, furnishings, wayfinding signage and pedestrian lighting. Decorative pavers throughout Main Street will enhance the character of the street and make an enjoyable pedestrian experience.

Elm Street is smaller scale and more pedestrian focused than Main Street (Figure 4.17). Travel lanes on Elm are reduced to 11' and diagonal parking is increased by 2' on each side. This realignment allows an increase in sidewalk width on both sides of the street. Paving patterns and materials carry over from Main Street with street trees and pedestrian lighting in the amenity zone providing comfort to pedestrians. Because of spatial limitations, not as many streetscape elements can be accommodated but where possible, amenities should be included.

Shawnee Street is a Secondary Street and Figure 4.18 illustrates the general character. Lane widths of 14' work within the existing curb line and diagonal parking is located on the North side of the road. As shown in the distance, a road table allows easy pedestrian access across Shawnee Street and encourages motorists to slow down. Streetscape elements include street trees, minimal site furnishings and minimal enhanced landscape features within the amenity zone.

Figure 4.19 shows a section of Sycamore Street, which represents a Tertiary Street. Most existing conditions would remain for this category. Street trees should be added at regular intervals and minimal enhanced landscape elements, such as small beds of grasses or perennials near intersections, should be added where possible. On-street parking will remain unchanged.

Street trees are recommended to be deciduous and columnar in form with hardy perennial foundational plantings where applicable. Plants should reflect a mixture of colors for seasonal interest. Plants should have reduced heights near intersections to keep sight lines intact. Final plant spacings and selection will be defined during the design process.

Collectively, the categories of streetscape design establish a hierarchy of design in Downtown Gardner and convey to visitors and residents that Main and Elm represent the heart of the City while also enhancing all streets to be a safe and comfortable pedestrian experience.

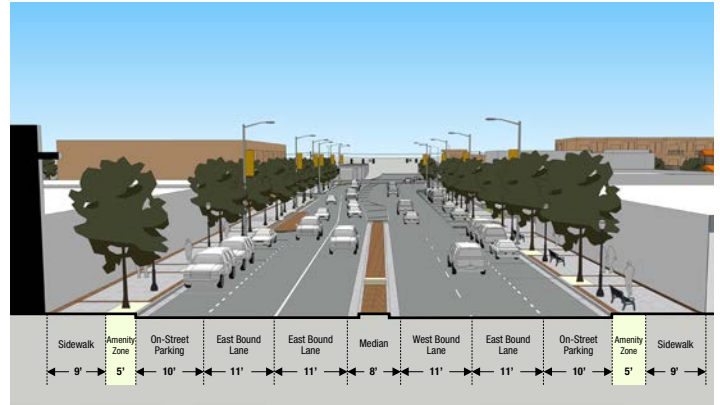


Figure 4.16 - Section, looking west, on Main Street

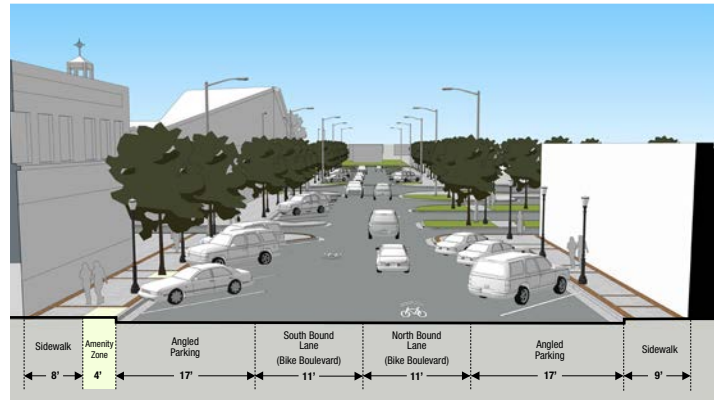


Figure 4.17 - Section, looking north, on Elm Street



Figure 4.18 - Section, looking east, on Shawnee Street

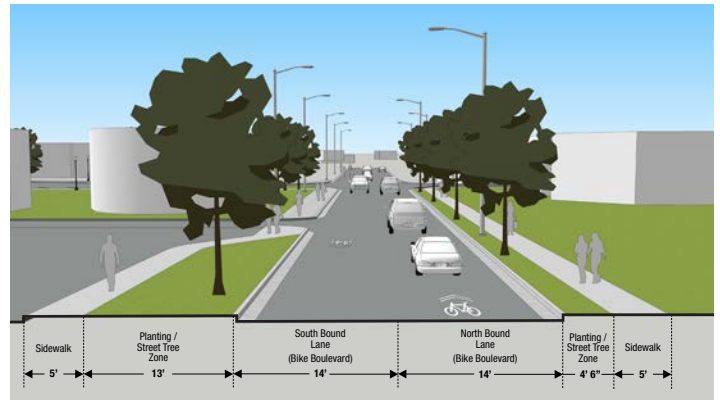


Figure 4.19 - Section, looking north, on Sycamore Street



## STREETSCAPE - FINAL CONCEPT

- A** Creating refuge moments for pedestrians along the streetscape was an important consideration in this design. An amenity zone along the curb line provides space for streetscape elements such as pedestrian lighting, seating, wayfinding signage and other site furnishings. Additionally, bump-outs at the intersections offer more space for landscape beds, gateway markers and bench seating while also acting as a traffic calming element.
- B** Looking east on Main Street, the proposed ADA van accessible stall can be seen in the foreground, adjacent to the pedestrian plaza and vertical monument. Paving details can be seen in this view with brick banding creating a nice rhythm on the ground plane and giving the streetscape a warm touch.
- C** The cornerstone of Gardner’s streetscape is the Main Street and Elm Street intersection. As the historic center of Gardner, this intersection represents the heart of the City. The recommended streetscape improvements are clearly visible in this aerial view. Brick paver details create a warm and inviting environment for pedestrians, while the amenity zone and the curbed bump-out areas soften the entire streetscape with planting beds.



Figure 4.21 - Eye-level view of Main Street streetscape with enhanced features



Figure 4.22 - Streetscape improvements along Main Street; proposed ADA parking stall



Figure 4.20 - Birds-eye view of Main and Elm intersection showing streetscape redesign



## 4.3 MOBILITY HUB

A major impetus for this study was to develop a concept for a mobility hub in Downtown Gardner. Communities continue to realize the importance of easy access to public transportation, and it is the intent of developing a mobility hub in the Downtown core that public transportation will be even more accessible and dependable for more members of the community.

Following extensive coordination with the KCATA, the mobility hub is planned on Park Street at the corner of Center Street. RideKC buses will travel west along Main Street (Highway 56) and turn South on Sycamore Street. From there, the buses will turn right (west) on Park Street.

After stopping at the mobility hub, the buses will turn north on Center Street and finally back east on Main Street towards Interstate 35 and Kansas City. This route will offer streamlined service and will not greatly impact day-to-day vehicular traffic.

The mobility hub itself is proposed to include a covered shelter for bus patrons to be protected from the elements. The shelter includes an electronic messaging board to alert riders of the bus schedule and provides the opportunity for advertising and wayfinding elements as well. Adjacent to the bus shelter, racks for bicycles (personal bicycles and bike share) as well as scooter shares will make this mobility hub work for several different modes of transportation and users of all ages. If desired, this location can also function as a formal ride sharing pick-up and drop off location for all of Downtown Gardner.

## BIKE BOULEVARDS

Based on the final recommendations of the Gardner Main Street Corridor Plan, bike boulevards should be added to Washington, Shawnee, Elm, Sycamore and Warren Street. Bike boulevards are preferred bicycle routes that parallel major arterial roads to ensure safer travel conditions for cyclists. This type of facility requires minimal street markings and signage. The implementation of the boulevards to the applicable streets is included in the anticipated streetscape improvements and the costs are reflected in the final streetscape costs, found in the Implementation chapter of this report.



Figure 4.24 - Mobility hub at Center and Park



Figure 4.23 - Proposed Mobility Hub location and bus route

## 4.4 ADA FACILITIES / PARKING

The location and availability of parking is an important factor in the success of Downtown Gardner as a walkable and sustainable place. The location of parking has been identified as a concern through various public involvement efforts. The proposed solution strives to maintain existing parking and, possibly increase parking, but this is dependent on final redevelopment solutions in the future. The location and number of accessible stalls was of particular concern and analysis. Regulations established in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) require that those with disabilities have equitable access to their destinations. In particular, Section X02.6.1 of the ADA regulations require a minimum number, location, and slope of accessible spaces. The Walk & Roll inventory conducted through this planning effort further examined the location and access to existing ADA stalls in the Downtown study area.

Several of the parking related items noted in the Walk & Roll inventory process included:

- Lack of on-street ADA parking spaces.
- Proximity of on-street ADA parking spaces to business entrances.
- Non-compliant cross-slope and quality of ADA stall pavement (Elm St).
- Lack of 36" of clear path from ADA stall surface to sidewalk.

Note that these findings were further validated and found to be important factors in ADA regulations.

Parking in Downtown Gardner can be public (such as the stalls behind City Hall) or private (Blazers Restaurant parking lot). Both private and public ADA parking must be considered in order for the Downtown area to provide equitable parking and access. While Gardner has an existing planning process for the review of new developments to include plans for ADA stalls, guidance for the placement of on-street ADA parking on existing streets is less clear.

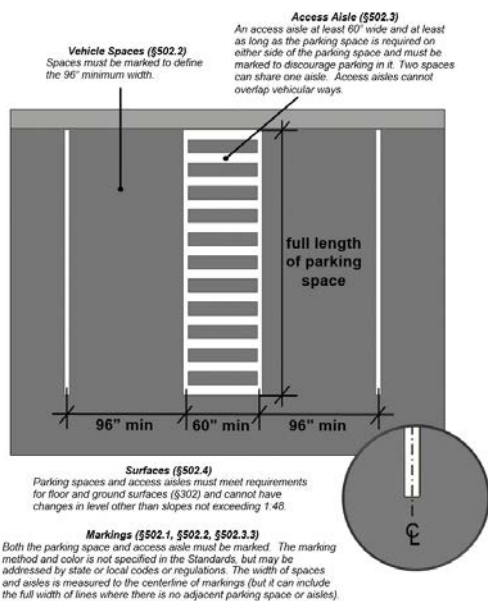


Figure 4.25 - Regional location of Gardner, Kansas

On-street parking is a valued public parking resource for those traveling into the Downtown area by car as it often provides priority access to a storefront. A review of existing regulations as pertaining to on-street parking revealed the following as important considerations when determining the type and placement of ADA stalls:

- 1 van stall needed for every 6 standard accessible spaces.
- 100 or more parking spaces require 1 van / 3 standard stalls.
- Slope should not exceed 1:48 in any direction.
- On-Street ADA van stalls are possible – 5' of clearance on the passenger side and 5' aisle needed.

Additionally, where on-street parking is provided, a required minimum number of accessible on-street parking spaces is defined by the project or project area and in accordance with ADAAG Section 208.2 (see table). Note that stalls need to be dispersed throughout the project area and provide equal access. The project area defines the number of stalls and if equal or greater access is provided, minimums can be calculated within the project area extending into adjacent parking lots or other streets.

PARKING FACILITY TOTAL	MINIMUM NUMBER OF ACCESSIBLE SPACES		
	STANDARD	VAN*	TOTAL (STANDARD + VAN)
1-25	0	1	1
26-50	1	1	2
51-75	2	1	3
76-100	3	1	4
101-150	4	1	5
151-200	5	1	6
201-300	5	2	7
301-400	6	2	8
401-500	7	2	9
551-600	9	2	11**
601-650	10	2	12**
651-700	10	3	13**
701-750	11	3	14**
751-800	12	3	15**
801-850	13	3	16**
851-900	14	3	17**
901-950	15	3	18**
951-1000	15	4	19**
1001-1100	16	4	20**
1101-1200	17	4	21***
1201-1300	18	4	22***
1301-1400	19	4	23***
1401-1500	20	4	24***
1501-1600	20	5	25***
1601-1700	21	5	26***
1701-1800	22	5	27***
1801-1900	23	5	28***
1901-2000	24	5	29***
2001 and over	25	5	30***

\* at least 1 of every 6 accessible spaces or fraction of 6

\*\* 501 - 1000: 2% of total

\*\*\* 1001 and over: 20 + 1 for each 100 or fraction thereof over 1000

Figure 4.26 - Minimum number of accessible parking spaces



A planning overlay was developed to illustrate the quantity and type of ADA stalls needed to provide equal access for those who utilize parking in the Downtown Gardner. Figure 4.27 displays the total number of standard and van stalls recommended for each block.

Numbers represent the final count of stalls needed per segment. Note that project areas can be combined to alter the minimum number of parking spaces, but only if equal access is provided. "Project Area" was defined as any segment of on-street parking between intersections and any additional parking lot in the proposed plan.

Figure 4.28 shows an ADA approved design to provide standard or van stalls in an on-street scenario. This would provide easier access to the front of City Hall – currently the only ADA accessible entrance. KDOT wouldn't view this proposed ADA stall differently than the parking that is currently along Main Street.

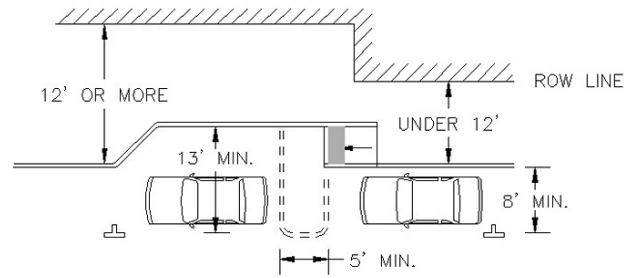


Figure 4.28 - On-Street ADA approved Van accessible stall

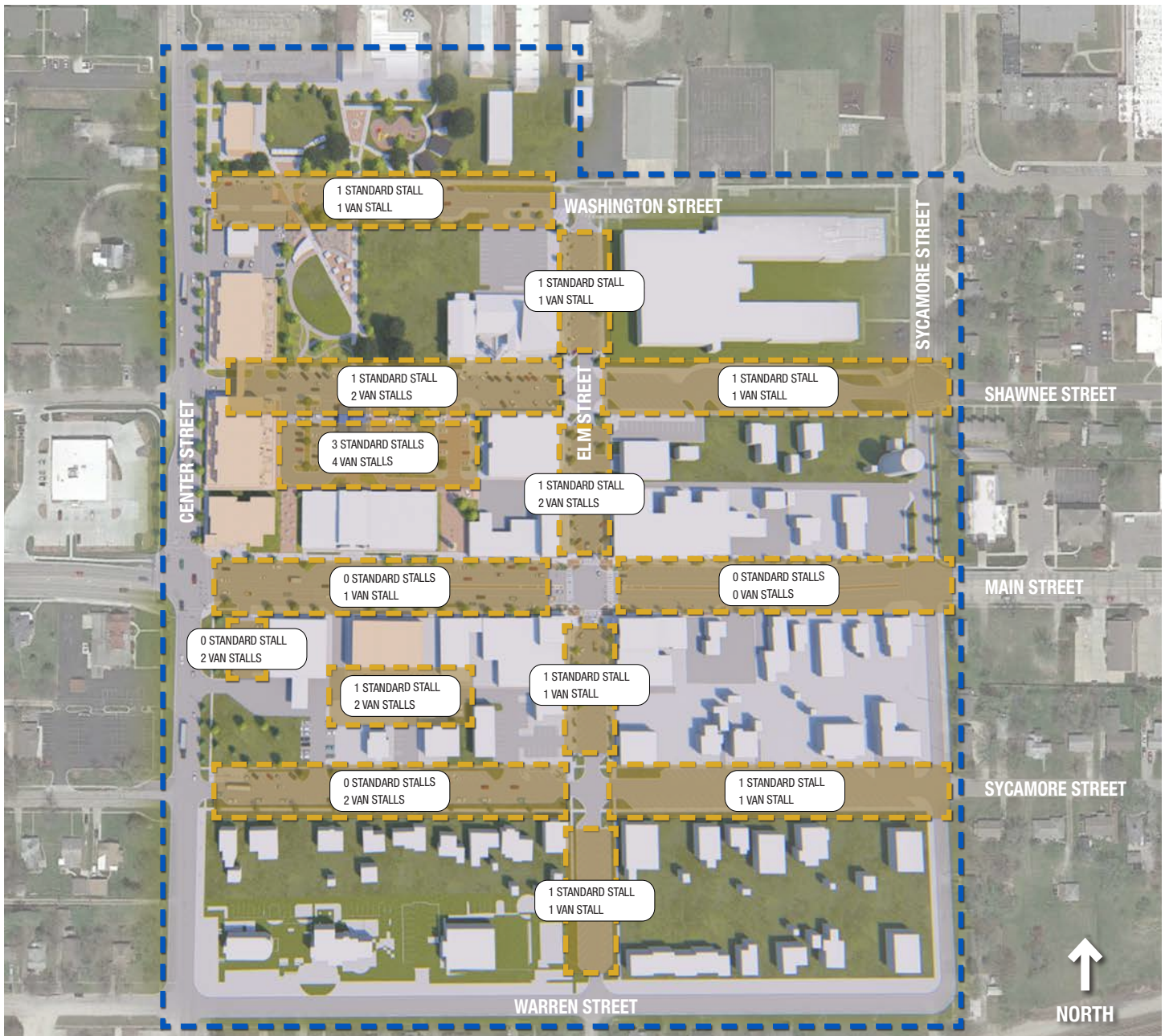


Figure 4.27 - Required standard and van ADA accessible stalls for streets and parking lots in Downtown Gardner





# 5 IMPLEMENTATION

# 5.1 IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

The following section outlines the projects that comprise the Gardner Destination Downtown vision and details the primary components of each project and the cost associated with those improvements. Also shown are potential funding sources and participating entities responsible for implementing the improvements. A more detailed matrix for the public spaces and streetscape improvements can be found on the following pages.

## PUBLIC SPACES

### 1 CORNERSTONE PARK

#### 1A. Multi-Purpose Community Building

*Approximately 3,400 SF, The size of the multi-purpose community building can vary to accommodate final program.*

#### 1B. Park Improvements

*Pathway realignment, revamped inclusive playground, interactive water feature, enhanced landscape, park pavilions.*

### 2 CIVIC GREEN

#### 2A. Property Acquisition

*Area TBD.*

#### 2B. Park Construction

*Pathway construction, amphitheater performance structure, overhead trellises, hardscape plazas, botanical gardens, site furnishings.*

### 3 CITY HALL PLAZA

#### 3A. Property Acquisition

*Area TBD.*

#### 3B. Plaza Construction

*Parking lot construction, green infrastructure, hardscape plazas, enhanced landscaping, site furnishings.*

#### 3C. Public Market Shed

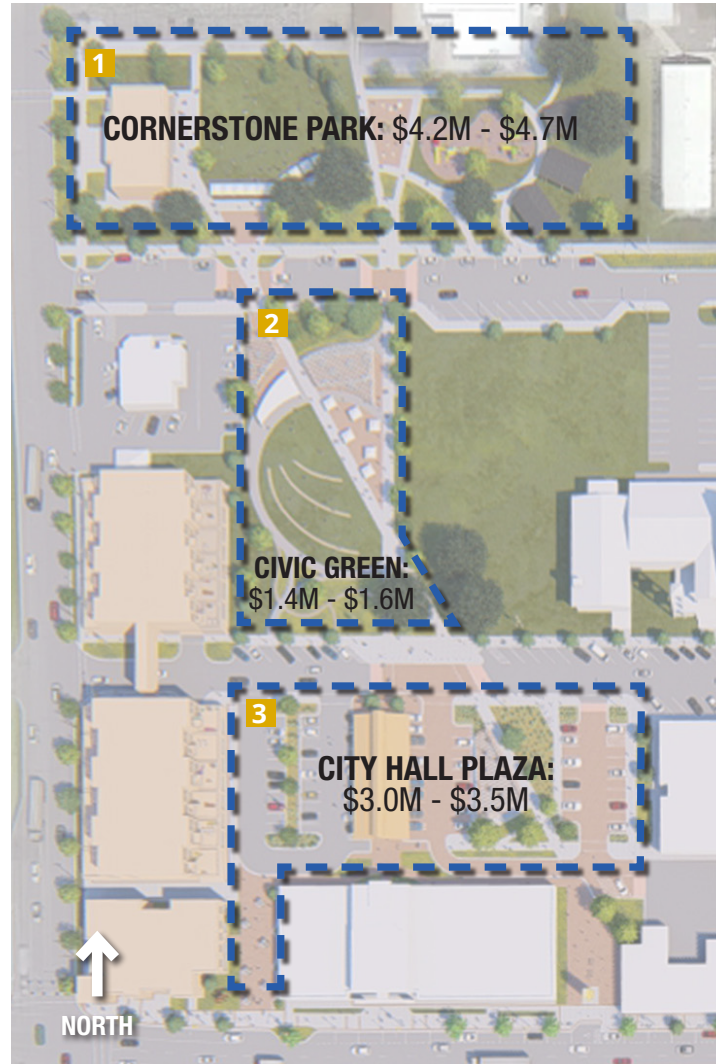


Figure 5.01 - Public Spaces estimated costs



Figure 5.02 - Proposed City Hall Plaza, looking south



PUBLIC SPACES				
PROJECT		EST COST*	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES**	PARTICIPANTS
<b>CORNERSTONE PARK</b>				
<b>1A</b>	Multi-Purpose Community Building	\$1.7 - \$2.0 M		City or Private
<b>1B</b>	Park Improvements	\$2.5 - \$2.7 M	ED, AARP	City
<b>CIVIC GREEN</b>				
<b>2A</b>	Property Acquisition	TBD		Public / Private Partnership
<b>2B</b>	Park Construction	\$1.4 - \$1.6 M	ED	City or Public / Private Partnership
<b>CITY HALL PLAZA</b>				
<b>3A</b>	Property Acquisition	TBD		City or Public / Private Partnership
<b>3B</b>	Plaza Construction	\$2.2 - \$2.6 M	ED	City / JoCo Library
<b>3C</b>	Public Market Shed	\$850K - \$1.1 M	ED	City

Figure 5.03 - Public Spaces Implementation Matrix

\*Estimated costs are based on 2019 values and should be updated routinely to account for inflation and other economic factors.

\*\* For definitions of potential funding sources, see Figure 5.04, below.

IMPLEMENTATION KEY			
TA	Transportation Alternatives: Transportation Enhancement	Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals.	80% Federal / 20% Local (20% minimum)
ED	Economic Development	Funds transportation improvements to recruit new businesses and encourage growth of existing businesses.	25% minimum local match preferred
AM	Access Management	Promotes safe, efficient traffic flow on the Kansas State Highway system while allowing for reasonable access to adjacent properties. This program includes access planning and construction components.	Access Planning - 33.3% minimum local match preferred. Construction Program - Construction phase of selected projects at 100%, up to a maximum of \$2,000,000. Other associated costs are not eligible for reimbursement.
CCLIP	City Connecting Link Improvement Program - Surface Preservation	Intended to address deficiencies in or extend the life of the driving surface.	Minimum local match 0 - 25% depending on the size of the City. Maximum state share for Surface Preservation: \$300,000.

Figure 5.04 - Implementation matrix key terms

## STREETSCAPES

### 1 MAIN STREET

Street improvements (Center to Sycamore). Where necessary, Main Street is recommended to be reconstructed and raised to alleviate ADA accessibility issues into Main Street businesses and address current sidewalk / ramp conditions that do not meet ADA standards.

\*Installation of Primary Street streetscape elements.

Installation of center median.

Construction of vertical monument east of City Hall.

### 2 ELM STREET

2A. Street improvements (Washington to Main). Where necessary, Elm Street is recommended to be reconstructed and raised to alleviate ADA accessibility issues where possible.

Reconfigure widths of driving lanes, diagonal parking and sidewalks. Application of bike boulevard street markings and signage.

Installation of Primary Street streetscape elements.

2B. Street Improvements (Main to Warren). Improved sidewalks and installation of Primary Street streetscape elements. Application of bike boulevard street markings and signage.

### 3 PARK STREET

3A. Mobility Hub.

3B. Street improvements (Center to Elm). Improved sidewalks and installation of Secondary Street streetscape elements.

3C. Street improvements (Elm to Sycamore). Improved sidewalks and installation of Secondary Street streetscape elements.

### 4 SHAWNEE STREET

4A. Street improvements (Center to Elm). Improved sidewalks and installation of Secondary Street streetscape elements. Installation of road tables at pedestrian crossings. Additional diagonal parking spaces along north side of street. Application of bike boulevard street markings and signage.

4B. Street improvements (Elm to Sycamore). Improved sidewalks and installation of Secondary Street streetscape elements. Application of bike boulevard street markings and signage.

### 5 WASHINGTON STREET

Street improvements (Center to Sycamore). Improved sidewalks and installation of Secondary Street streetscape elements. Installation of road tables at pedestrian crossings. Additional diagonal parking spaces along south side of street. Application of bike boulevard street markings and signage.

### 6 CENTER STREET

6A. Street improvements (Washington to Main). Improved sidewalks and installation of Secondary Street streetscape elements. Installation of off-street bike facility.

6B. Street improvements (Main to Warren). Improved sidewalks and installation of Secondary Street streetscape elements. Installation of off-street bike facility.

### 7 WARREN STREET

Street improvements (Center to Sycamore). Improved sidewalks and installation of Tertiary Street streetscape elements. Application of bike boulevard street markings and signage.

### 8 SYCAMORE STREET

8A. Street improvements (Shawnee to Main). Improved sidewalks and installation of Tertiary Street streetscape elements. Application of bike boulevard street markings and signage. On-street parking will remain unchanged.

8B. Street improvements (Main to Warren). Improved sidewalks and installation of Tertiary Street streetscape elements. Application of bike boulevard street markings and signage. On-street parking will remain unchanged.

### 9 BLOCK IMPROVEMENTS (SOUTH OF MAIN ST.)

9A. Parking lot consolidation improvements.

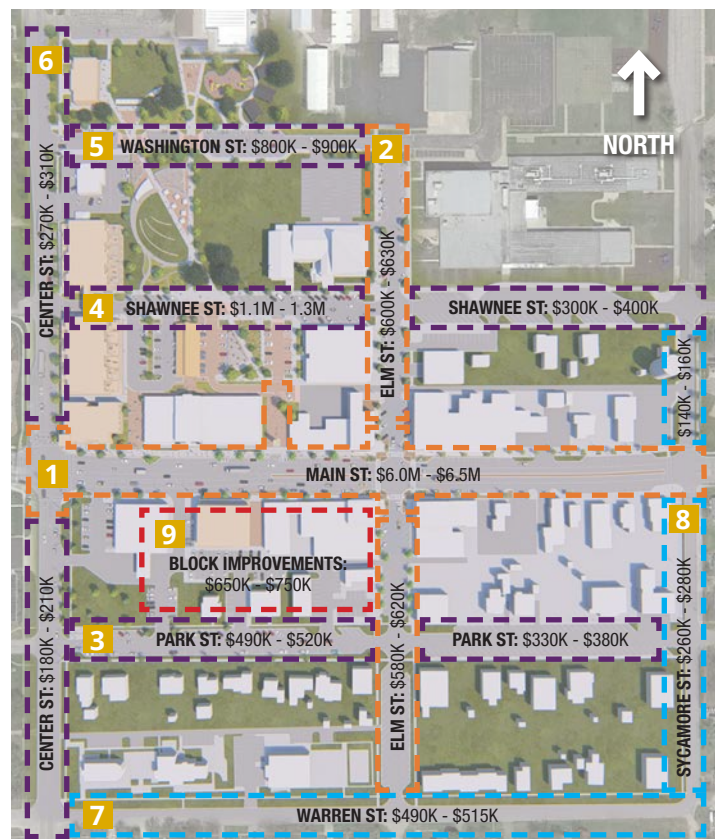


Figure 5.05 - Streetscapes estimated costs

\*Refer to Page 27 to see complete list of streetscape elements.

STREETSCAPES				
PROJECT		EST COST*	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES	PARTICIPANTS
<b>PRIMARY STREET</b>				
<b>1</b>	Main Street Improvements <i>(Center to Sycamore)</i>	\$6.0 - \$6.5M	AM, CCLIP	City / KDOT
<b>2A</b>	Elm Street Improvements <i>(Washington to Main)</i>	\$600 - \$630K	TA	City
<b>2B</b>	Elm Street Improvements <i>(Main to Warren)</i>	\$580 - \$620K	TA	City
<b>SECONDARY STREET</b>				
<b>3A</b>	Park Street Mobility Hub	\$110 - \$170K		City / KCATA
<b>3B</b>	Park Street Improvements <i>(Center to Elm)</i>	\$330 - \$360K		City
<b>3C</b>	Park Street Improvements <i>(Elm to Sycamore)</i>	\$330 - \$380K		City
<b>4A</b>	Shawnee Street Improvements <i>(Center to Elm)</i>	\$1.1 - \$1.3M	TA	City
<b>4B</b>	Shawnee Street Improvements <i>(Elm to Sycamore)</i>	\$300 - \$400K	TA	City
<b>5</b>	Washington Street Improvements <i>(Center to Elm)</i>	\$800 - \$900K	TA	City
<b>6A</b>	Center Street Improvements <i>(Main to Washington)</i>	\$270 - \$310K	TA	City
<b>6B</b>	Center Street Improvements <i>(Main to Warren)</i>	\$180 - \$210K		City
<b>TERTIARY STREET</b>				
<b>7</b>	Warren Street Improvements <i>(Center to Sycamore)</i>	\$490 - \$515K	TA	City
<b>8A</b>	Sycamore Street Improvements <i>(Main to Shawnee)</i>	\$140 - \$160K	TA	City
<b>8B</b>	Sycamore Street Improvements <i>(Main to Warren)</i>	\$260 - \$280K	TA	City
<b>9A</b>	Block Improvements <i>(Parking lot improvements)</i>	\$650 - \$750K		Public / Private Partnership

Figure 5.06 - Streetscapes implementation matrix

\*Estimated costs are based on 2019 values and should be updated routinely to account for inflation and other economic factors.

\*\* For definitions of potential funding sources, see Figure 5.04, on Page 38.



## 5.2 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The Gardner Destination Downtown vision encompasses much of the Downtown core and has many exciting components that will transform the community. However, because of municipal financial realities, limited funding opportunities, property acquisitions, and the need for public / private partnerships, the overall vision will likely not occur simultaneously. Although the completed improvements are designed and will function as a holistic and interrelated environment, it is unlikely that the entire project could be funded and built all at once. Several factors will drive future decisions about how the plan can be implemented in phases over a period of time with varied funding sources. This plan will serve as the blueprint for construction even if staff or elected officials change over time. Implementation will require strategies for four key factors:

- Consistency of Leadership
- Funding
- Partnerships
- Phasing

### CONSISTENCY OF LEADERSHIP

The key components of the final recommended plan are designed so that parts of the project can be completed no matter what order may be the most beneficial for the City when available funding or partnership opportunities arrive. A designated staff member or department has to be responsible for keeping track of everything and the City must be ready to act decisively when opportunities arise.

The City of Gardner and the appropriate staff or department need to direct the implementation of the plan and/or its elements, including the coordination of various funding sources and the partnership relations with the surrounding property owners, many of whom are other governmental entities or not for profit organizations with different decision-making processes.

### FUNDING

Besides standard funding options through the City's Capital Improvements Plan or established Community Improvement Districts, some creative funding strategies might be possible. For instance, if a local health care facility promotes quality of life and preventive health programs, they may be interested in the public park space or in adding fitness equipment throughout the spaces, etc. Since the Johnson County Fair Board needs to make facility improvements, perhaps the County would consider a one-time investment to help fund the Elm Street improvements along with a new gateway to the Fairgrounds, or any county-oriented space for satellite services that might provide an advantage for their operations. AARP grants or Safe Walk to School grants could be explored for the ADA accessibility improvements, streets, sidewalks, etc.

### PARTNERSHIPS

There are multiple stakeholders and various property owners besides the City that have all participated in this community planning process. There have been numerous individual meetings with surrounding property owners to identify and work through their varying concerns and to develop positive ongoing communications regarding the plan, its

progress and the implementation issues. Partners have included the Johnson County Fair Board, the Johnson County Library, the Gardner School District, First Presbyterian Church, the owners of Blazer's restaurant, KCATA, the Central Bank of the Midwest and potential developers.

Partnership Agreements with these key property owners should be developed by the City regarding public use of or acquisition of property. Options might include:

- Long term leases
- Use of public easements
- Acquisition of property
- Memorandum of Understanding
- Agreements on days/weeks/ months set aside for regular or special uses and activities needed by the partner.
- Maintenance Agreements
- Notification of closed streets, temporary parking measures, signage, etc. for special events

Being alert for special partnership opportunities with other Gardner Institutions, organizations and the private sector that can benefit multiple entities will be important for Gardner to capitalize on to bring the full plan into fruition.

### PHASING

In order to provide city leaders with direction on community priorities for implementation, the Steering and Implementation Committee participated in a scenario building workshop. These four scenarios offered alternative realities that could affect the City's decision on how and when to proceed with certain projects. The results of this workshop can be found at the end of this section.

It is unlikely that the phasing of the project will happen in a linear manner, so the City should be prepared to act on whatever opportunities arise first. The components of the plan break the project into feasible sections that can help with identification of the amenities that are attractive to certain funding options and can be constructed separately, if necessary. The plan can be used as marketing to solicit outside funding. The City can also identify the components that will require public funds and develop a strategy for funding those components through the existing budgeting process, the Capital Improvements Plan or other means.



Figure 5.07 - Implementation scenario building workshop

## IMPLEMENTATION SCENARIO WORKSHOP SUMMARY

### SCENARIO 1

The City receives a grant that, along with available city investment, will fund a portion of the streetscape and intersection improvements within the Downtown plan project area.

- *Make big moves first - focus on Main and Elm intersection so that people can see beneficial change and become engaged.*
- *ADA accessible stall in front of City Hall is important - could be western extents of initial investment area (accessibility is hardest in front of City Hall).*
- *Extend the street / streetscape improvement project out from Main and Elm intersection a 1/2 block in each direction to incorporate ADA improvements.*
- *Iconic vertical element would be great to include in initial investment.*
- *2nd phase idea - continue north on Elm and do all of Washington Street.*

### SCENARIO 2

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan is concluded, and the City determines that making improvements to Cornerstone Park should be the first visible outcome of the plan. Unfortunately, the available funding that has been identified will only cover the cost to either build "Cornerstone Hall" OR the other proposed park improvements.

- *Proposed building would be exciting and a great new feature for Cornerstone Park and Parks Department. We could have numerous events from birthdays, senior events, etc.*
- *What adds the most value to the park - events (once or twice a week) vs everyday community use.*
- *Adding a new building provides event space, however, if we don't have funds for the park where would people congregate outside during events? Makes sense to update the park amenities first and add the building second.*
- *The community impact would be amazing with a truly inclusive playground and fountain area for families and kids.*
- *Playground needs to be a destination feature to draw the community Downtown and have a great synergy with the Aquatics Center.*
- *The Elementary School has a special needs program and would use and appreciate an inclusive destination playground.*
- *Everyday community impact of site improvements (playground, open space and fountain) far outweigh the weekend events in the proposed building.*
- *All Cornerstone improvements (park and building) must be done right with appropriate funds to accomplish that goal.*

### SCENARIO 3

The City concludes the space study for City Hall. The study prioritizes improvements, including changes to exterior accessibility and parking that are consistent with the vision for new public spaces adjacent to City Hall. Additionally, the Gardner Library has embraced the idea of improvements to their parking lot as consistent with the plan and has agreed to partner in implementation. However, a plan for relocating the group home to a new facility has not yet been defined.

- *Work harder to relocate group home... don't wait.*
- *ADA parking at City Hall is great.*
- *Area that is public control, need to act on this as soon as possible (1st domino).*
- *Focus on ground level improvements between group home and library - market can be in the future.*
- *Seek external sponsors and partners whos missions fit the goals of this plan.*

### SCENARIO 4

A developer has approached the City with a vision to implement a new mixed-use development starting at the northeast corner of Main Street and Center Street and continuing north to Blazer's property. They have a plan to relocate the group home to a new facility as part of this development. Moving forward with their new development is contingent upon the City making significant investments in the proposed public space and amenities.

- *This would be a good catalyst to get support for the public improvements around it.*
- *Work with developer to relocate the group home to a better location / facility.*
- *Like the mixed-use idea - would it also be possible for retail shops to have access onto the park as well as the streets?*
- *Explore CID, TIF, other special district possibilities to help pay for improvements.*
- *Is it possible to use a Downtown Impact District tool to capture revenue for a period of time where any improvement Downtown (not just here) would pay a percent into a fund that helps pay for the park improvements?*
- *Build the market structure first because the City owns most of the property already.*
- *Get something done in Cornerstone Park area right away (at least part of it).*
- *Maybe we should consider charging for parking for certain events that generates a large attendance (help to raise revenue).*





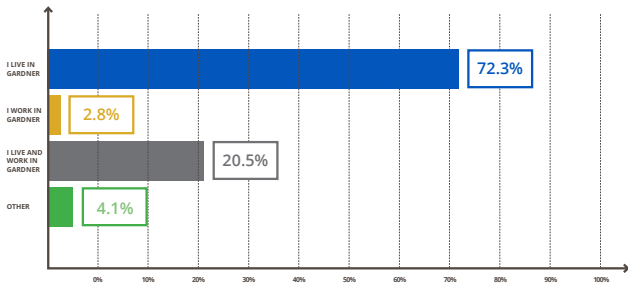
# APPENDIX

# ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

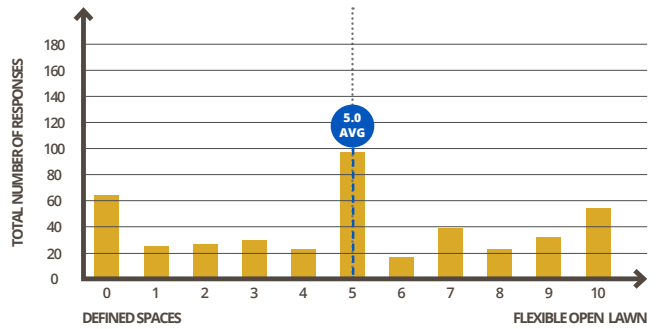
## GARDNER DESTINATION DOWNTOWN ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

**536** TOTAL RESPONSES **2.5%** OF GARDNER'S POPULATION

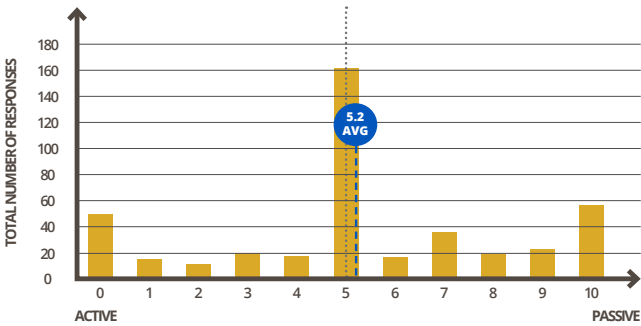
### 1 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBES YOU?



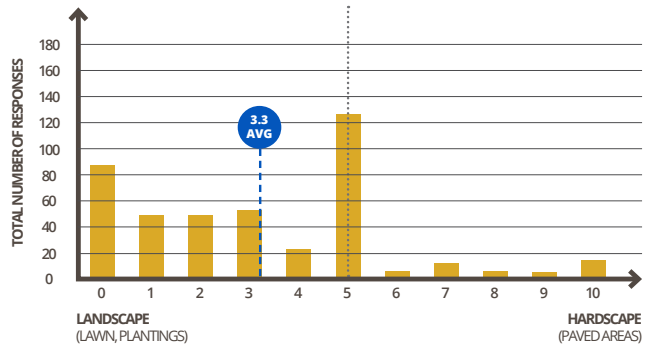
### 4 FOR PASSIVE SPACES, WOULD YOU PREFER...



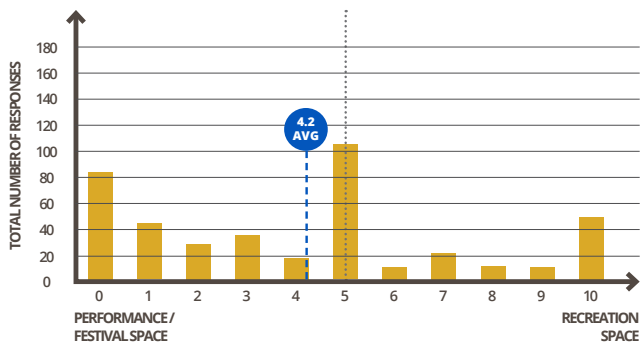
### 2 WOULD YOU PREFER PUBLIC OPEN SPACES IN DOWNTOWN GARDNER TO BE...



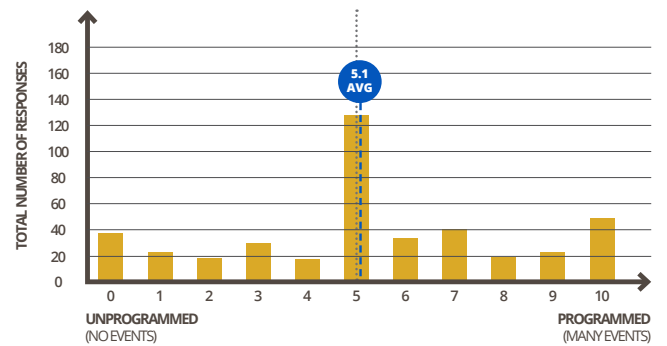
### 5 THE DESIGN OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACES SHOULD PRIORITIZE...



### 3 FOR ACTIVE SPACES, WHICH TYPE OF ACTIVITY WOULD YOU PREFER...

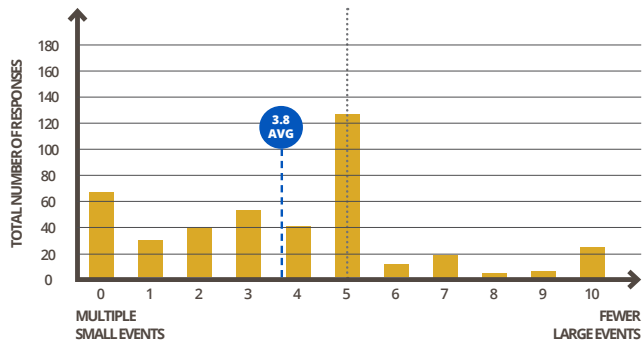


### 6 SHOULD PUBLIC OPEN SPACES IN DOWNTOWN GARDNER BE...



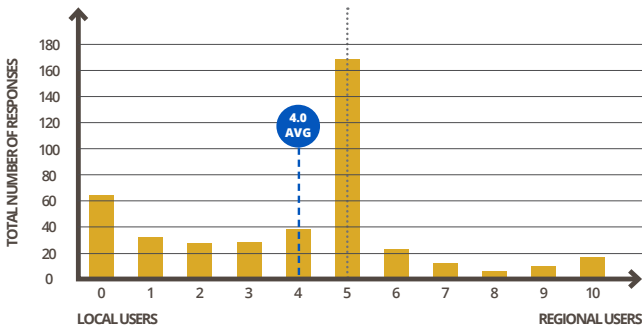
7

WHAT SIZE EVENT OR GATHERING SHOULD BE PRIORITIZED IN DOWNTOWN GARDNER...



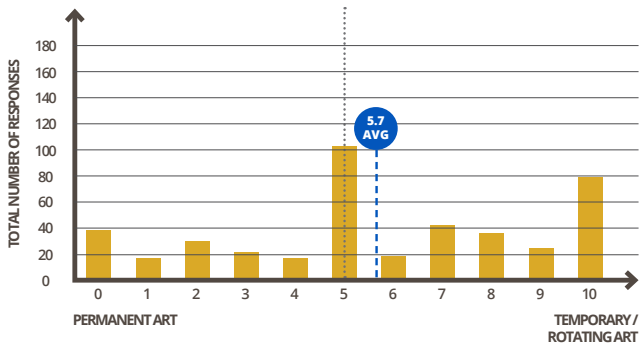
8

SHOULD PUBLIC OPEN SPACES IN DOWNTOWN GARDNER ATTRACT...



9

IF ART IS INCORPORATED INTO DOWNTOWN GARDNER'S PUBLIC OPEN SPACES, WHAT TYPE OF ART SHOULD IT BE...





# INITIAL CONCEPTS

## A INCREMENTAL CHANGE

In this concept, the least amount of land was available for development between Washington Street and Shawnee Street. A linear garden and walkway along the west side of the existing open space serves as a connector between Cornerstone Park and the area behind City Hall. Cornerstone Park sees an extensive redesign while keeping the successful features such as the playground, shelters and mature trees. The area behind City Hall transforms into a flexible open green space that can serve as a venue for festival or musical performances. Also nearby is a permanent farmers market facility and plaza area.

## B SPINE

The goal of the spine concept was to facilitate a visual and physical connection between Main Street and Cornerstone Park through a series of civic gathering spaces. The parking and entrance road immediately to the east of City Hall is removed and a pedestrian plaza featuring an iconic vertical element would bring the overall design to the forefront of the Main Street Corridor. Heading north, a Public Market is directly behind City Hall, and when not being used, the parking located here would fulfill the needs of city employees and residents alike. To the north of Shawnee Street, the spine leads into a larger open green space and amphitheater venue. Buffered by a botanical garden and plaza seating areas, this space is meant for festivals and concerts and varying sizes. Similar to the first concept, the Spine also proposed improvements to Cornerstone Park that seek to enhance this already established asset in the community. New residential townhome units along Center Street and mixed-use buildings at the corner of Center and Main and along the south side of Main Street also look to bring new residential and commercial development to Downtown Gardner.

## C PROMENADE

The Promenade achieves many of the same goals as the Spine but in a slightly different way. Leading directly out the north door of City Hall, a path extends to Cornerstone Park and ties all three spaces together. Along that path are a farmer's market, amphitheater and event lawn, nature playground, and finally a revitalized Cornerstone Park. Residential and mixed-use developments, very similar to the Spine, remain along Center and Main Street.



Figure I - Initial concept 'Incremental Change'



Figure II - Initial concept 'Spine'



Figure III - Initial concept 'Promenade'

## PUBLIC SPACES - ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

These three initial concepts were shared at a public meeting and attendees were asked to review and form an opinion on what they were observing. They were given a series of dots of varying colors and those dots represented the following:

- 1st Choice
- 2nd Choice
- 3rd Choice
- Elements You Like

The vote totals to the left reflect a combination of both the public feedback and Steering Committee input. Overall the public favored Concept 1, Incremental Change, while the Steering Committee agreed upon Concept 3, the Promenade.

The element that received the most positive feedback was the idea of a permanent farmers market structure. Currently, the Gardner Farmers Market meets on a gravel lot owned by the Johnson County Fair which is not very prominent within the context of the Downtown area. Having a permanent structure would help establish a more vibrant merchant and customer base. The public and steering committee agreed that the area immediately behind City Hall would be an ideal location for the market to establish itself.

Additionally, the idea of proposing residential development along Center Street received positive feedback as it would add population to the center of the City and provide a buffer between the public green space and its associated activity with the nearby residential neighborhoods on the west side of Center Street.

Other elements that were well received included the multi-use community building, public amphitheater space, mixed-use development and play features.

Often during a public process such as this, not all sides agree on one concept as was the case for this project. It was the mission of the planning team to hear and process all the feedback given and produce a vision that satisfies as many opinions as possible.

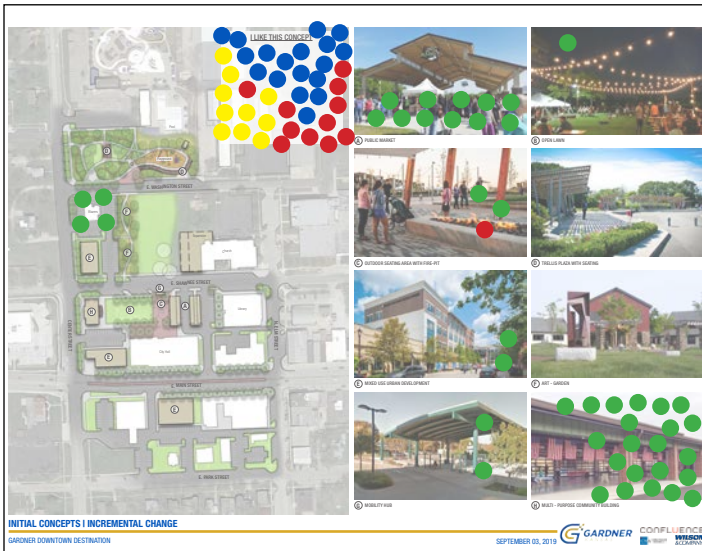


Figure IV - Initial concept 'Incremental Change' vote totals



Figure V - Initial concept 'Spine' vote totals

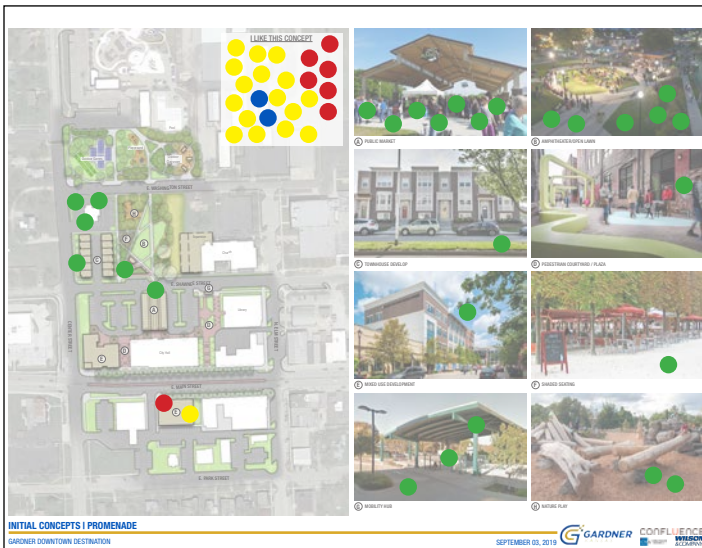


Figure VI - Initial concept 'Promenade' vote totals



## STREETSCAPE - INITIAL CONCEPTS

During the 2018 Gardner Main Street Corridor study, it was established that community members preferred a more traditional aesthetic when it came to streetscape elements. It was agreed upon that a traditional study would fit nicely with the character of Downtown.

For the purposes of this study, we further developed design concepts for the streetscapes and a 'kit of parts' for streetscape elements based off the original feedback given in 2018.

The first step in developing those concepts further, we asked Steering Committee members to pick a theme they thought best represented Gardner. The themes were 'Prairie Trails' and 'Wings and Fins', both of which represent a physical, natural or historical component that makes Gardner unique.

Overwhelmingly, the Steering Committee selected 'Prairie Trails' as the preferred theme. The general consensus was that Gardner's location on the fringe of the Flint Hills and along the historic westward expansion trails was a story that needed to be told.



Figure VIII - Traditional streetscape character image

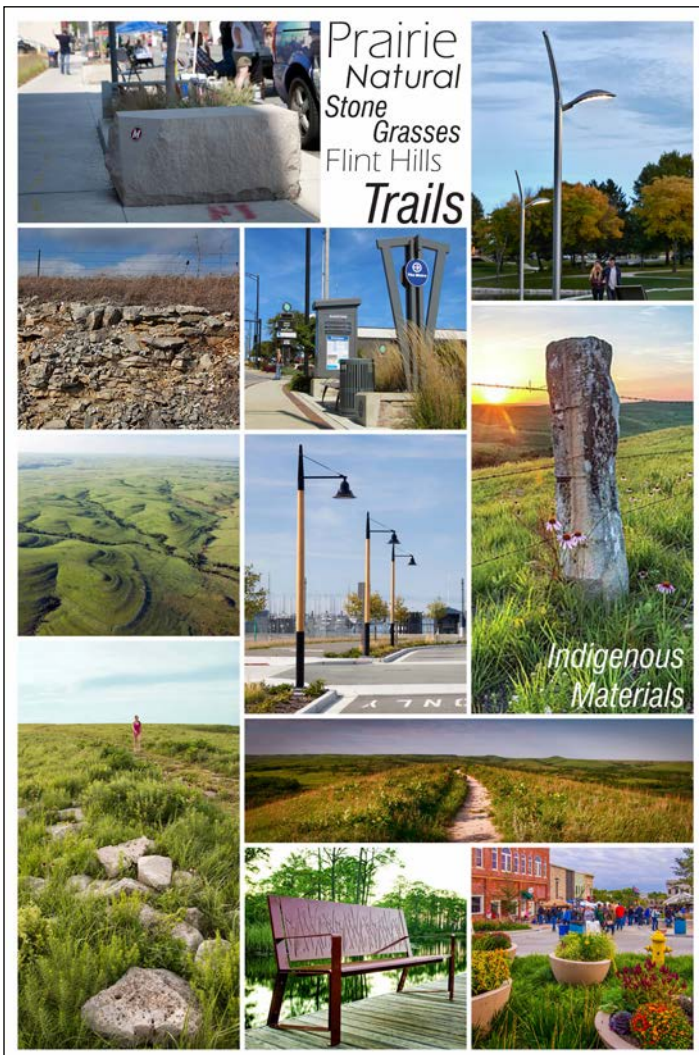


Figure VII - 'Prairie Trails' character images



Figure IX - 'Wings and Fins' character images



## TOWN SQUARE

The Town Square concept uses many of the same materials that are found in the Downtown Gardner such as brick and limestone to create a comfortable and familiar feel for pedestrians and vehicles alike. Curb bump outs allow for landscape beds, gateway markers and seating opportunities. Within the proposed median, small limestone blocks provide additional visual interest and speak to the natural elements of Kansas. This concept was selected as the preferred approach.

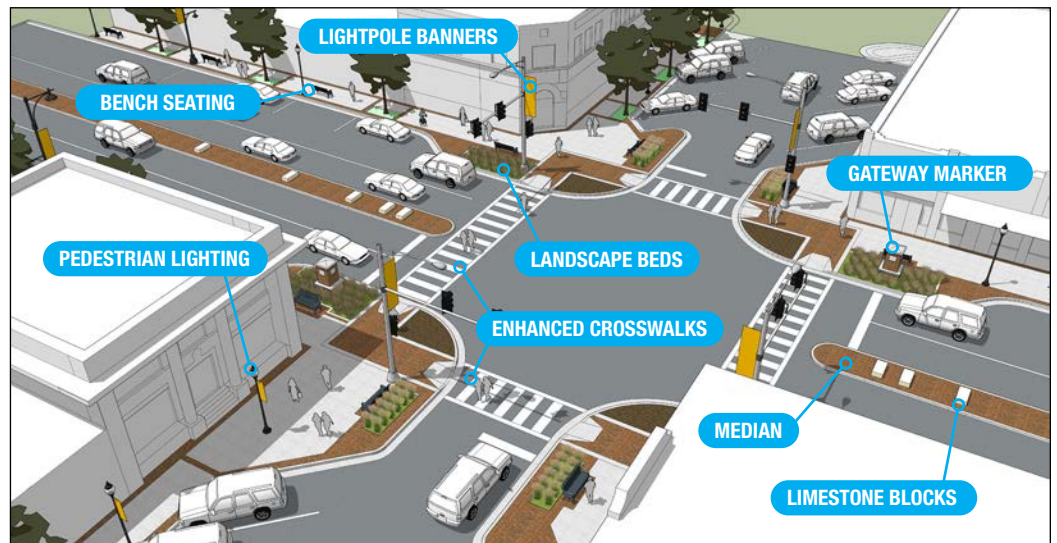


Figure X - 'Town Square' streetscape design concept

## SOFTENED CORNERS

A more contemporary approach, the Softened Corners concept, speaks to Gardner's more recent history of aerodynamics and modern transportation networks. A softer color palette and rounded hardscape features give this concept a much more fluid character. This language is also embodied in the seating elements, landscape beds and pedestrian lighting.

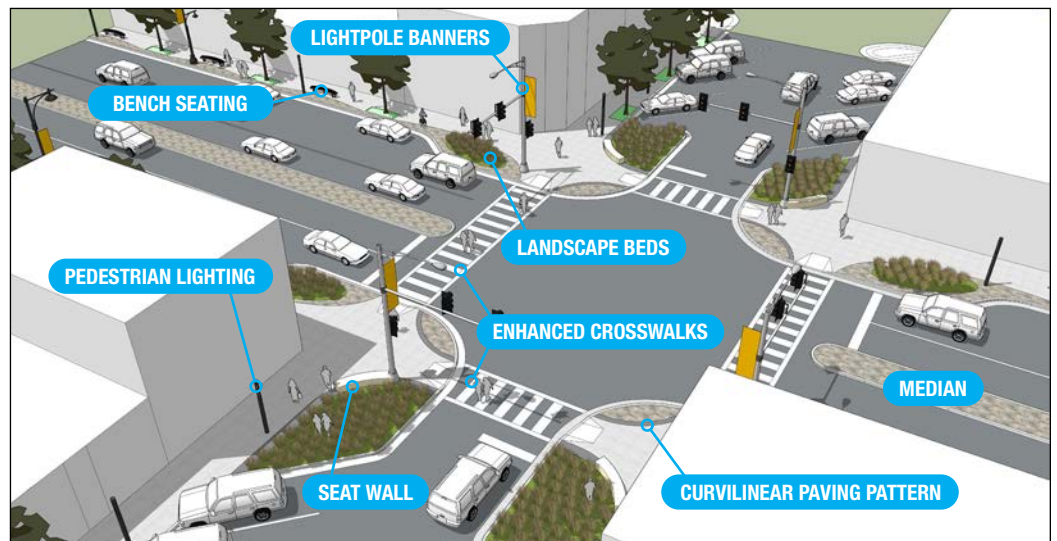


Figure XI - 'Softened Corners' streetscape design concept

## RADIATING SPACES

The Radiating Spaces concept seeks to unify the entire Main and Elm Intersection with a dynamic system of paving patterns and landscape features. This concept plays off the idea that this intersection is the historic and contemporary center of Gardner and the rest of the City radiates out from this location. Seat walls of varying sizes, as well as benches, provide ample places for gathering outside Downtown businesses.

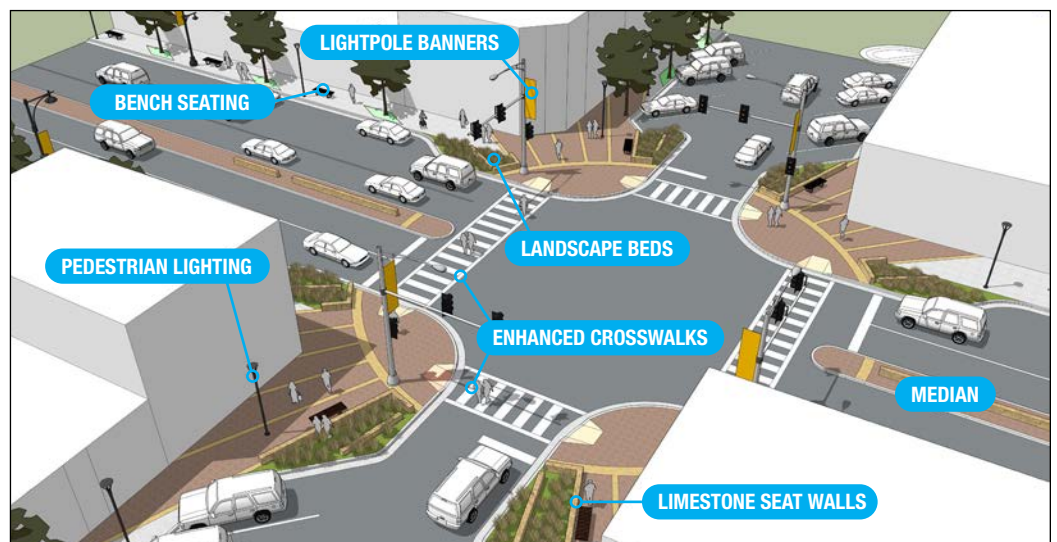


Figure XII - 'Radiating Spaces' streetscape design concept





Figure XIII - Plan of proposed public space and streetscape improvements in Downtown Gardner



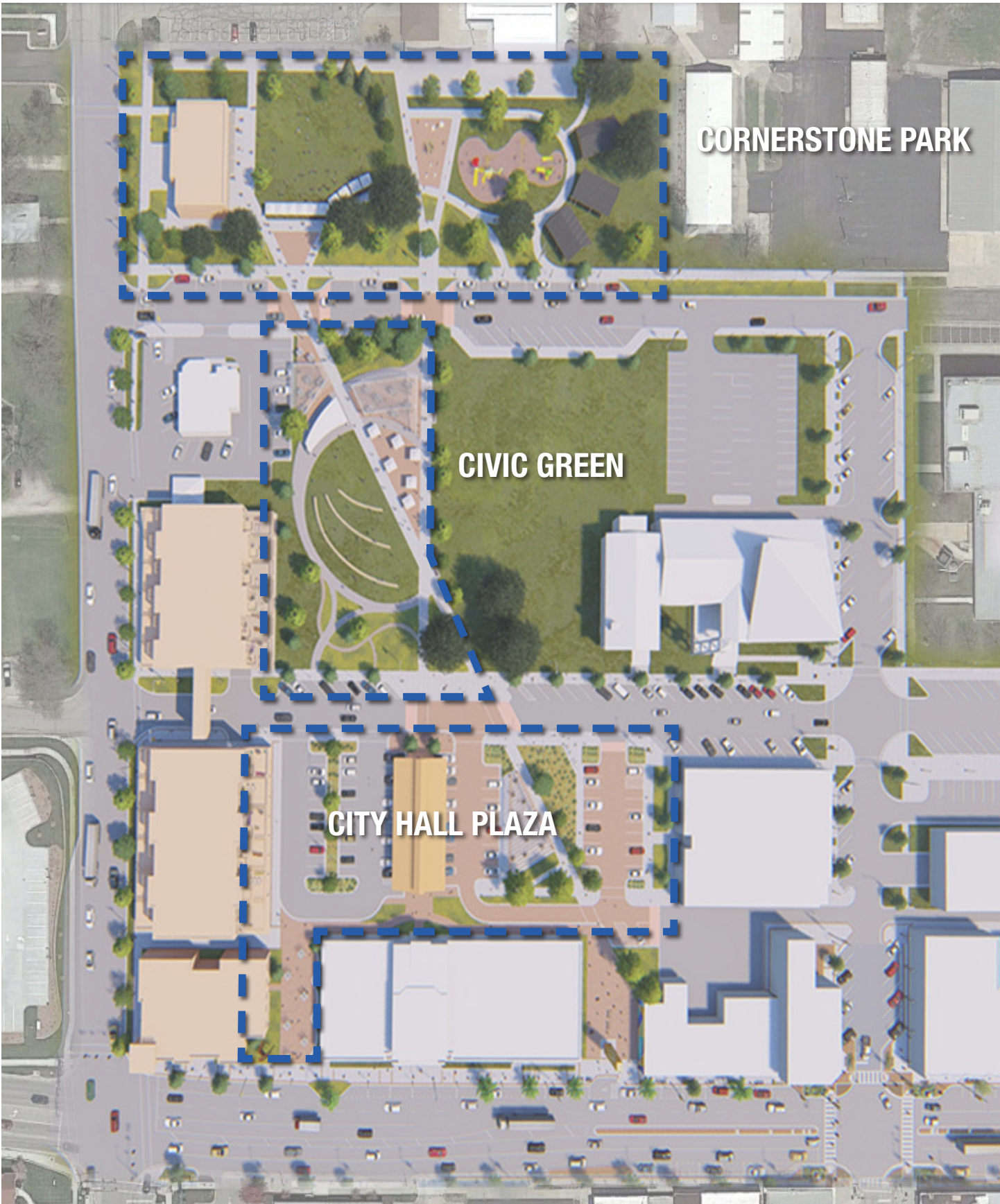


Figure XIV - Plan view of proposed public spaces in Downtown Gardner





Figure XV - Parking Inventory. Streets and lots not called out on this plan, indicate no changes in quantity of parking stalls.

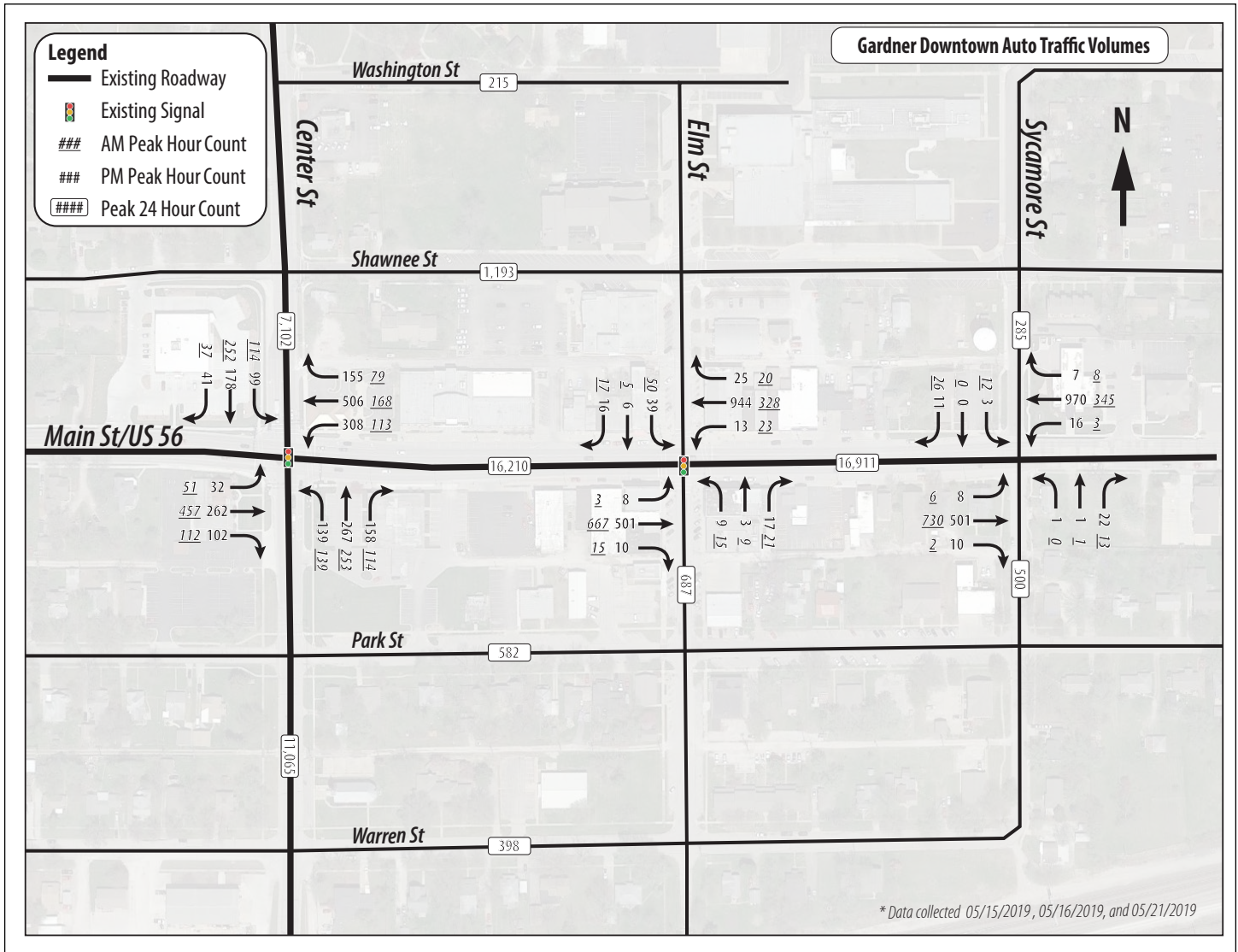


Figure XVI - Traffic analysis for Downtown streets