

EMPORIA MAIN STREET

Downtown Design Guidelines



September 2008

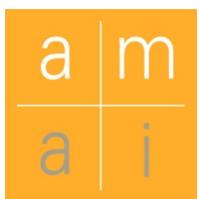
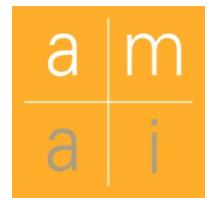


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INTRODUCTION



VISION

The Emporia Main Street Downtown Design Guidelines presents a vision for a sustainable downtown Emporia through place-specific design recommendations. It aims to promote healthy growth and continued reinvestment in the context of downtown Emporia's existing historic fabric.

PURPOSE

These guidelines seek to ensure that mixed-use development is compatible with, and contributes to, the character of the street, the Downtown, the University and adjoining neighborhoods. Its intent is to serve as a guide for residents, property owners and developers, the City and the University, in making good land use, design and development decisions.

PROJECT AREA

- 12th Avenue on the north
- South Avenue on the south
- Congress Street on the west
- Market Street on the east

PROCESS

A number of meetings and presentations took place to gather information, ideas, concerns and visions for the revitalization and development of downtown Emporia. Together with representatives from Emporia State University, the Community Initiated Development group and other community, educational and business stakeholders, the following goals were identified:

- Define the boundaries of the project area.
- Identify key components of the existing downtown area that are vital to the future health and growth of the district.
- Identify missing business types and amenities that would help create a more vital downtown, to serve residents and attract future Emporia State University students and visitors.
- Identify specific "use districts" within the project area in an effort to create more distinctly focus areas.

The result of this initial process was a land "use" plan map. The map illustrated potential opportunities for "use districts", with regard to entertainment, retail, and civic functions. From there, these Downtown Design Guidelines were developed; taking into account the initial process of identifying the "use districts" and folding that work into larger development segments which encompass additional urban design and planning principles.

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

HISTORIC URBAN FABRIC



As one of the city's oldest developed areas, the Emporia Main Street Downtown is home to a number of historic structures. These buildings add to the districts sense of place, improve its livability and quality of life, and help Emporia establish its identity.

The number and quality of the historic buildings in the Downtown area are among its chief assets. Some are irreplaceable such as the Granada Theater, but many are less noteworthy. However the latter still make significant contributions to the quality of the urban environment. These contextually significant buildings help to maintain a continuity of pattern and texture throughout the city. All of these historic buildings also contribute

to Emporia's continual connection to its past, and to its quality of rootedness in place and time.

The contribution of buildings such as the Kress Center, White Auditorium, the Bank of America Building, the Emporia Gazette, the Capitol Federal Savings Building, the Moore's Block Building and the Lyon County Historical Museum cannot be overstated.

- **Development Patterns**

At a city scale, development pattern can refer to districts, corridors, and neighborhoods. At a more localized scale, development pattern can refer to block massing, street grid and architectural detailing.

- The historic grid pattern that defines downtown Emporia, reflects the smaller scale of both streets and blocks of older cities that make significant contributions to their pedestrian friendliness. This existing street pattern and layout should be maintained. Closure of existing streets and/or alleyways should be discouraged.

- **Historic Structures**

The history of the Downtown area as the city's genesis and center is a fundamental characteristic of its identity. It has a distinctive image that results from the interaction of the landscape, social history and the built environment.

- While few buildings in downtown Emporia have registered historic designation, many contextually significant buildings exist that help define the historic context of the downtown area. These historic structures should be carefully analyzed before any recommendations are made for their removal.

- **Adaptive Reuse**

Downtown Emporia affords exceptional opportunities for rehabilitation and adaptive use of historic properties. Many of the buildings exhibit architectural styles, building materials, craftsmanship, interior spaces and other character-defining features that have become rare or unusual, and therefore are now of considerable value.

Adaptive reuse projects should strive to achieve the following design principles:



- Rehabilitation and adaptive use that proudly “showcase” character-defining features, both interior and exterior, of the structure’s historic building fabric.
- Rehabilitation and adaptive use that are deliberately responsive, and therefore contribute, to character-defining and character-enhancing features of the urban setting, such as streets, alleyways, and passageways.
- Rehabilitation and adaptive use that emphasize interaction and “transparency” between the private and public realms, achieved visually and, as appropriate, physically.
- Rehabilitation and adaptive use of buildings with classic “Main Street” storefronts that put a premium on retention, repair and maintenance of original building materials, architectural ornament, entries, transoms, display windows and other distinctive features.
- Rehabilitation and adaptive use that increase density without sacrificing integrity of the historic structure’s character-defining features.
- Rehabilitation and adaptive use with new additions and materials that are compatible with, but clearly differentiated from, basic design elements and use of materials belonging to the historic structure.
- Rehabilitation and adaptive use that avoid creating a false view of history, such as use of conjectural features or architectural elements that belong to other buildings, places, styles or periods.
- Rehabilitation and adaptive use that avoid gratuitous schemes, wherein a fragment of a former historic building (in most cases, the front façade) is tacked on to an entirely new structure.

- **Infill Construction**

Infill construction should strive to simultaneously achieve two interrelated goals:

- Compatibility with character-defining features of buildings and objects identified as historic;
- Development that enriches the district and adds to life on the street, with quality of design, materials and finishes clearly befitting the downtown core of the city.

Infill construction should strive to achieve the following design principles:

- Infill construction should respond to, but not attempt to imitate a historic style or period of architecture.
- Infill construction should respect general height, massing, scale, materials, and composition of neighboring and nearby historic structures.
- Infill construction structures should be decidedly oriented to street frontages, and "second" frontages, such as alleyways. Corner buildings should also address side streets.
- Infill construction should have storefronts, openings and upper-floor fenestration that are transparent and inviting, and therefore, contribute new spirit and animation to life on the street.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT



The architectural context of the built environment are the components that set the scale and articulation of an area.

Many recommendations concerning these components can be found in the Emporia Main Street, Inc. – Design Guidelines.

Emporia Main Street, Inc. is part of the National Main Street Program designed to bring economic revitalization with an emphasis on restoration and preservation of historic shopping and business districts.

While the Emporia Main Street, Inc. – Design Guidelines are intended to be used for restoration and preservation, they contain many useful suggestions and insights that are applicable for these design guidelines as well.

- **Architectural Character and Material**

Architectural character and material refers to the overall design type and detailing of structures, including construction materials.

Architectural character and material should provide consistent design elements to visually organize an area with commonalities in features and materials to form relationships between buildings. Architectural character will also harmonize with, and have some elements in common with other structures in the vicinity to visually organize and give human scale to an area or project.

- **Façades**

- **Front Façade**

Most facades downtown are two stories in height with commercial space located at ground level and offices or storage above. Visually, this arrangement divides the facade into two basic parts: the upper facade... and the storefront...¹

Large, open views into the commercial space at the storefront level enhance the pedestrian experience by providing a visual connection to the use inside the building. On upper levels, windows should continue the aesthetics of the building while serving the occupants' need for privacy.

¹ Emporia Main Street, Inc. – Design Guidelines

- Most facades consist of an architectural framework designed to identify individual storefronts. Each storefront should respect this architectural framework and not extend beyond it.
- Storefronts' design should be in keeping with a building's overall design. Storefront elements -- such as windows, entrances, and signage -- provide clarity and lend interest to facades. It is important that the distinction between individual storefronts, the entire building facade, and adjacent properties be maintained.
- Whenever possible, a building's original window pattern should be retained. Avoid blocking, reducing the size, or changing the design of windows.
- Primary entrances should be clearly marked and provide a sense of welcome and easy passage from exterior to interior.

- **Rear Façade**

The rear façades of buildings are often a neglected and forgotten resource downtown. The rear facades, along with the alleys, offer many buildings potential customer and service entries. By being able to enter directly from a parking lot, via an attractive entry, the customer is made to feel welcome. The visibility of the rear facade from the alley increases the need to revitalize these surfaces. Like the storefront, the rear entry requires identification and should be made attractive and inviting.²

- Original doors and/or window openings which are now blocked should be reopened to their original dimensions and filled with appropriate doors and/or windows.³
- Appropriate signage should be installed to identify the business, on or near the entry, and service entries should be clearly marked to avoid confusion.⁴

- **Building Detail and Ornamentation**

- Intact original ornamentation and architectural detailing should be maintained and preserved. If original detailing is presently covered, exposing and restoring the features should be encouraged.
- Intact original cornices should be repaired rather than replaced, should not be removed unless it is determined to pose a safety concern, and if replacement is necessary, the new cornice should reflect the original in design.
- New construction should provide for a variety of form, shape and detailing of individual cornice lines.

² Emporia Main Street, Inc. – Design Guidelines

³ Emporia Main Street, Inc. – Design Guidelines

⁴ Emporia Main Street, Inc. – Design Guidelines

- **Awnings**

The use of awnings is encouraged as a means to enhance the pedestrian experience, promote retail and street activity, and increase visual harmony.

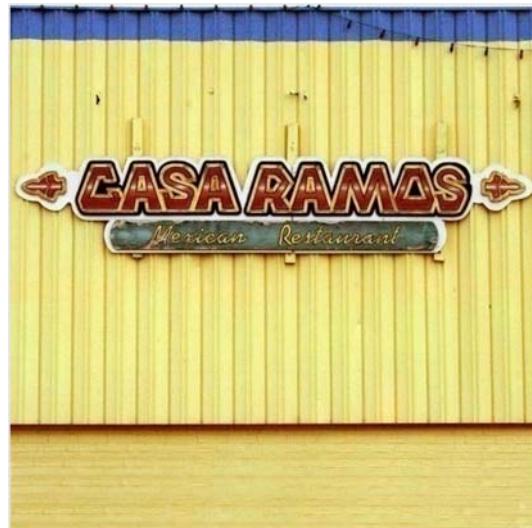
- *Cloth or canvas awnings were traditional on most buildings downtown... When canvas awnings are used on both upper and lower facades, they should be of compatible color, material and design.⁵*
- Awnings should be mounted in locations that respect the design of the building, including the arrangement of bays and openings.
- Awnings should be designed to project over individual window and door openings and not be a continuous feature extending over masonry piers or arches.
- Retractable awnings, or those that appear to be retractable, are preferred.
- Metal (or glass) canopies may be appropriate on some buildings if they are compatible in scale and overall design. Canopies should be simple in design and not obscure architectural features.

- **Signage**

Throughout downtown Emporia, signage plays a major role in creating a visual image for the City.

Signage should make a positive contribution to the general appearance of the street and commercial area in which it is located. A well-designed sign can be a major asset to a building.

Signage in the Downtown area should provide a clear, interesting, understandable, coordinated method of identifying and giving directions to places that is complementary to, and not in conflict with, adjacent uses.



- Pylon signs and billboards shall not be allowed.
- Pedestrian oriented signs should be included.
- Signs should be made of durable materials and be complementary to materials used in the building.
- Signs should be simple, clear and legible.

⁵ Emporia Main Street, Inc. – Design Guidelines

- Signs should be in keeping with the overall scale of the building or storefront which they are attached to.
- Temporary signage shall be allowed for only a limited time while permanent signage is being obtained.

- **Build-To Lines and Setbacks**

Build-to lines are lines to which a designated façade of a building or buildings must be built.

Setbacks lines are lines that designate the minimum distance between a reference line (usually a property line) and a building, or portion thereof.

The intent of build-to lines and setbacks are to provide a cohesive development pattern along Commercial Street. Build-to lines typically help to define an urban development character and setbacks typically help define open space or pedestrian areas.

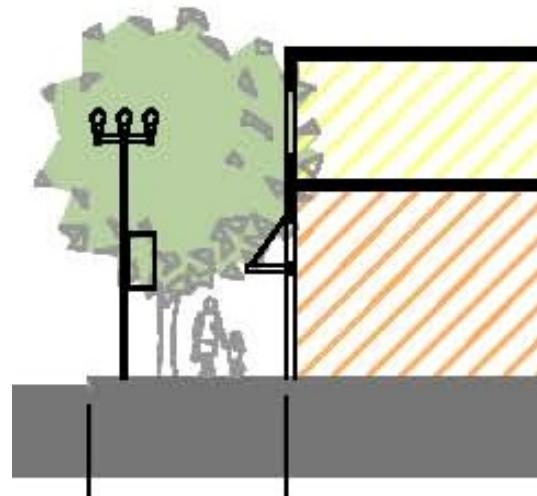
- Where a street wall exists, consisting of building fronts aligned with only a minimum setback from the street, infill buildings should be generally consistent with the existing setback.
- The design of developments or redevelopments should create a consistent, pleasing, urban-style street frontage by providing the maximum amount of building face or approved screening along a frontage build-to line established at the minimum setback from the property line.
- Buildings located on corner sites should be considered anchor buildings and their form should reflect this designation. Anchor buildings are typically larger in scale and massing, and are often more ornate than adjacent infill buildings. In addition, anchor buildings have both primary and secondary façades; relating to the streets that they face.

- **Height & Density**

Height refers to either the height of the building in feet, or the number of stories.

Density is measured in dwelling units per acre and is further defined in Floor Area Ratio [FAR] which is the ratio of gross square footage of building to total gross square footage of land area. Density can also refer to the massing of the building on the lot.

Zoning requirements provide controls that will result in structures that are in scale with, and provide transitions to, surrounding properties and uses; that do not significantly block views of sunlight; that are of a human scale and create a sense of space; that provide the perception of public accessibility; and that provide for development at a scale that is economically feasible.



TRANSPORTATION



A vibrant and vital downtown can only exist with a lively street life. Of course, the streets that must accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists are the same that need to accommodate transit and motor vehicles. Thus, the key is to design the public street rights-of-way to balance the needs of each of these modes.

The transportation section of this document is quite focused in scope. It concentrates primarily on how to better and more safely integrate motor vehicles and pedestrians in the Downtown. The intent is not to provide a revised vehicular circulation plan for downtown Emporia or to address the integration of multiple travel modes within the vehicular travelway, but to provide guidelines for the design of City streets

that will accommodate effective circulation of automobiles and bicycles while also promoting a more walkable downtown that is safe, convenient, and comfortable for pedestrians.

- **Transit**

An effective transit system is an efficient way to help address current issues of environmental pollution and rising gas prices through fewer vehicle trips, less gas consumption, and fewer carbon emissions.

In order to encourage and support community use of transit, it is imperative that transit service and facilities reflect a care and quality that conveys its importance.

- Transit stops should be designed to provide protection from sun, wind, and rain. Transit shelters should be distinctive through strong architectural design that reflects the character of the district.
- The City of Emporia should work in cooperation with L-CAT [Lyon County Area Transportation] to design transit stops for the district that are consistent with the design style for street furnishings established by the City of Emporia's Streetscape Plan.

- **Thoroughfares**

Downtown Emporia's street system is characterized by an overall grid of 60 to 80-foot right-of-way streets, bound and bisected by 100-foot right-of-way streets, and having a 100-foot right-of-way spine. Although some variety in street design exists, the prevalent street cross-section is consistent. The function of the street system however, is clearly more varied than the design of the streets. Both Commercial Street and 6th Avenue serve as highways. They, along with Merchant Street, Mechanic Street, South Avenue and 12th Avenue, provide access to and from downtown and are corridors to other parts of the city. Others serve primarily as local streets that provide access to residential neighborhoods and carry much lower volumes of traffic.

The flowing thoroughfares shall retain their functional classification as defined in the City of Emporia's 2008 Comprehensive Plan.

- **Merchant Street**

Width 80'-0"

Principal Arterial Streets connect residential neighborhoods to major retail, office, service and industrial uses. Access along Primary Arterial Street should be limited to preserve through movement.⁶

As the only principal arterial street that provides primary access to and from the downtown, Merchant Street is currently under utilized and undefined. See District Development guidelines for recommendations as to the redevelopment of Merchant Street.

Commercial Street, South Avenue, 6th Avenue and 12th Avenue

Width 100'-0"

Parkways serve to connect Emporia's most important activity centers and destinations including large-scale retail centers, major employers and important institutional uses such as Newman Regional Hospital and Emporia State University. As such, parkways serve as the key image streets within Emporia. Therefore, aesthetic enhancements should be a priority along these corridors.⁷

Typically, the term "parkway" refers to a broad thoroughfare with landscaping that separates the opposing lanes of traffic. As such, the "parkway" aspect of Commercial Street is undefined. See District Development guidelines for recommendations for Commercial Street.

- **Mechanic Street and 9th Avenue**

Width 80'-0"

The function of Collector streets is to "collect" traffic from local streets or other collectors at a slower speed than freeways, expressways, arterials or parkways. Collector streets provide some direct access to adjacent properties.⁸

• **Alleyways**

Alleyways behind buildings historically have served as service and storage areas to support all kinds of uses, such as retail, entertainment, office and residential. Very often these service areas are irregular in plan or "footprint" and tend to be narrower in width than a local street. Alleyways, because they are less designed or controlled, often include ramps, loading docks and service doors that lend "realness" to an urban setting. In many historic urban areas, alleyways increasingly have become popular places for fashionable restaurants, bars, boutiques and other pedestrian-oriented retail uses.

⁶ City of Emporia's 2008 Comprehensive Plan

⁷ City of Emporia's 2008 Comprehensive Plan

⁸ City of Emporia's 2008 Comprehensive Plan

- **Pedestrian Linkages**

Pedestrian linkages are ground-level spaces created by open lots that encourage pedestrian movement.

Opportunities exist in downtown Emporia to further develop existing pedestrian linkages located along Commercial Street. These passageways link to alleyways and public parking located along Mechanic Street, and Reebles Country Mart located on Merchant Street.



- **Pedestrian Shed**

The Pedestrian Shed, also commonly known as Ped Shed, is the quarter-mile, 5-minute walking distance which a person will typically choose to walk over drive; it is the basic building block of walkable neighborhoods. They may be drawn as perfect circles, but in practice ped sheds have irregular shapes because they cover the actual distance walked, not the linear distance.

Downtown Emporia, from 12th Avenue to South Avenue, breaks down into three perfectly equidistant ped sheds, as reflected in the segment delineation described in this document.

- **Bicycle Paths**

Many Emporia residents are interested in walking and bicycling as means of transportation and recreation. Walking and bicycling make up about 6.4 percent of work related trips in 2002, making them the second most popular form of travel after driving. Walking and bicycling are healthy, efficient, low cost and available to nearly everyone.

Future trail connections provide an opportunity for Emporia to enhance quality of life, connect neighborhoods and amenities, as well as reduce dependence on the automobile. There is also growing interest in encouraging walking and bicycling as a way to improve public health.⁹

The City of Emporia's Comprehensive Plan includes a transportation map that proposes a future bicycle trail along 12th, 6th and South Avenue, as well as a portion of Commercial Street.

Although separately striped bike lanes are common, they are not necessary to promote bicycle travel: bicyclists can easily share travel lanes with automobile traffic. Reminding automobile traffic to safely share the road with other types of vehicles is highly recommended, and can easily be accomplished by incorporating "Share the Road" signage Downtown.

⁹ City of Emporia's 2008 Comprehensive Plan

Making accommodations for bicyclists along the proposed route supports this effort in a way that is pragmatic and adds to the public realm. Bike racks, public drinking fountains and benches for bicyclists to rest can be more beneficial than separating bicycle traffic from vehicular traffic.

- **Parking**

- **Parking Lots / Structures**

Parking lots / structures shall not be permitted to front Commercial Street unless the ground floor contains storefront uses. Existing surface-parking areas fronting along Commercial Street should be in-filled with appropriate new construction.

Parking lots / structures fronting Merchant and Mechanic Streets shall be contained within the interior of the block. The existing parking pattern along Mechanic, between 5th and 6th Avenue shall be referenced as an example.

Existing corner surface-parking areas fronting Commercial, Merchant and Mechanic should be targeted for appropriate infill.

- **Shared Parking**

Shared parking between adjacent properties shall be encouraged to the greatest extent possible. Parking requirements may be reduced if adjacent property owners agree to share parking. The number of parking spaces shall be dependent upon the types of uses and sizes of developments.¹⁰

- **Streetscape and Perimeter Landscaping**

Parking lots located within the downtown area should maintain a build-to line in the form of landscaping, fencing and/or low walls. This not only helps to delineate the parking area from the pedestrian sidewalk, it continues the street wall that is characteristic of an urban area.

- Edge treatments along streets and other public spaces should visually screen parked vehicles, but not completely obstruct views into and out of the parking lot for the purpose of supporting pedestrian safety and security.
-

- **Internal Landscaping**

¹⁰ Emporia/LyonCounty Metropolitan Area Planning Zoning Regulations

- Incorporate soft landscaped areas and trees within the parking lot to define major vehicle and pedestrian routes, provide shade and break-up the expanse of paved areas.
- Define internal landscaped areas with a continuous curb to prevent damage from vehicles and snow clearance, to separate planting areas from pedestrian pathways, and to prevent soil and other landscape material from spreading over adjacent surfaces.
- **Lighting**
 - Lighting should create an identity for the parking lot, enhance adjacent streets and pedestrian environments and be appropriate to the location, context and scale of the areas being lit.
 - Select different light fixtures with a coordinated appearance to light pedestrian pathways, parking spaces, drive aisles, building and site entrances and other relevant parking lot features.

THE STREETSCAPE



Previous streetscape improvements in downtown Emporia included sidewalk replacement, new lighting and signage, seating and landscaping. These improvements concentrated trees at intersections, where they shade seating walls around planting beds and included small monuments marking the various entry points to downtown.

While these award winning improvements have had a significant effect on downtown Emporia, expanding upon them can help further define the "living room" for community life in the downtown. It is important that streetscape amenities support public use and contribute to the social and economic vitality of the downtown. In order to transform the public

streetscape from a mere transportation facility to a vibrant public open space it is important to add facilities and amenities that allow people to stop and linger, provide services and information, and engage and delight the senses.

- **Street Trees**

Just as good urban design is not just about constructing nice buildings; good urban forestry is not just about planting and trimming trees. The urban forest needs to be considered much more strategically as a contributor to the form, character and identity of the City.

Trees and plants soften a city's hard surfaces and sharp edges, not just by screening but also by adding organic forms, colors, textures, and movement to the urban setting. They also add scale to the downtown environment that people can readily relate to, and, as living organisms that grow and change with the seasons, introduce a dynamic quality that mitigates the largely inanimate character of the built environment.

Trees provide an inexpensive form of "air-conditioning" by contributing to micro-climate control during hot summer months. The shade provided by a mature tree canopy reduces the build-up of surface temperatures in paving and buildings. This, in turn, makes streets more comfortable for pedestrians and reduces air conditioning required for buildings, both of which result in reduced energy consumption and improved air quality.

- While the City of Emporia's Streetscape Plan has introduced many new trees downtown, additional trees are recommended. Existing trees are primarily located at corners; additional street trees should be encouraged all along

Commercial Street and extend east and west along 6th Avenue to Market Street and Merchant Street, to accentuate the existing entry markers in these locations.

- **Street Furniture**

Benches, trash receptacles, ash urns, bicycle racks, fencing, walls and other amenities make up the palette of streetscape site furniture. These features are both decorative and functional. The inclusion of these items in the streetscape signifies to the public that the space is designed for pedestrian use. The styles selected should complement the adjacent architectural character and be consistent with the design style for street furnishings established by the City of Emporia's Streetscape Plan.

- In conjunction with recommendations for bicycle accommodations throughout Emporia's downtown, bicycle parking should be considered a fundamental design element that needs to be integrated with those streetscape elements provided for pedestrians, cars, and transit.
- Bicycle parking within the public sidewalk should be accommodated with a number of smaller racks distributed along the length of a block, rather than one or two large concentrations of bike racks.

DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT

12TH AVENUE & COMMERCIAL STREET SEGMENT



This segment of the Emporia Main Street Downtown is largely defined by the intersection of 12th Avenue and Commercial Street – the main entrance to Emporia State University.

This segment is bounded by 12th Avenue on the north, Merchant Street on the west, Mechanic Street on the east and 8th Avenue on the south.

The 12th Avenue and Commercial Street segment encompasses what was referred to as the *Black and Gold University District* and part of *Art and Entertainment District* delineated on the land use plan map.

The vision for this segment is that of an art and entertainment area for downtown; mixing

commercial and higher density residential, with a focus on the University. As delineated in the City of Emporia's 2008 Comprehensive Plan, recommendations for this area are as follows:

Black and Gold District: Main Street should work in cooperation with Emporia State University to develop a "Black and Gold" District. This district will tie the University into Downtown and provide a venue for University-themed retail, restaurants and service. Streetscape elements within this District will be consistent with the rest of Downtown including light fixtures, poles, site furnishings and pavement treatments. However, the District will incorporate unique banners and signage to reinforce the University theme.¹¹

This segment is under-developed within the downtown study area, with many incompatible structures and vacant lots.

- **Historic Urban Fabric**
 - **Development Pattern**

The dominate development pattern that exists in this segment is full-block commercial use along Commercial Street, with full-block residential along Mechanic Street, from 12th Avenue to 8th Avenue. Though maintenance issues exist with the residences along Mechanic Street, and the commercial development along Commercial Street is under-developed, a pattern exists and should be acknowledged when looking at these blocks for redevelopment.

¹¹ City of Emporia's 2008 Comprehensive Plan

Currently, Merchant Street - from 12th Avenue to 8th Avenue - is under-developed, with large empty lots and few pedestrian amenities. As the principal arterial in downtown Emporia, special attention should be paid to this street as redevelopment occurs in this segment.

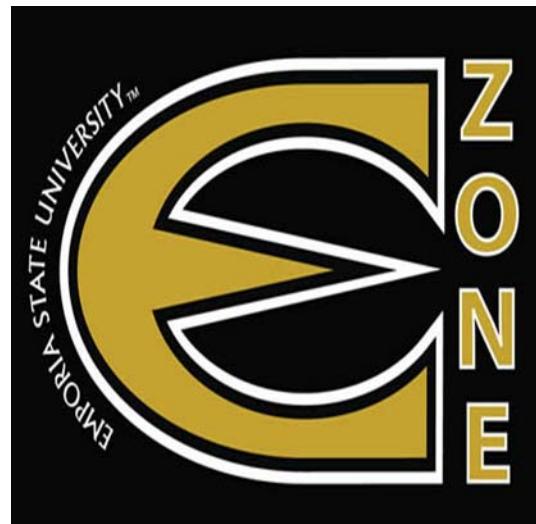
- Streetscape improvements that have occurred along Commercial Street – in the form of sidewalk replacement, new lighting and signage, seating and landscaping – should be carried over to Merchant Street as well, to improve the first impression visitors have of downtown Emporia.
- **Historic Structures**

The only remaining historic structures in this segment are along the west side of Commercial between 12th Avenue and 11th Avenue. As redevelopment occurs, these structures should be analyzed and retained as much as possible, to tie this end of downtown in with the more defined center at 6th and Commercial.

- **Infill Construction**

Given the lack of historic building stock, the number of incompatible structures and vacant lots, this segment holds great potential for redevelopment and infill construction.

Infill construction in this segment will set the tone for redevelopment throughout the rest of downtown Emporia. As such, greater attention should be paid to the design of these projects.



All infill construction along Commercial Street should revert back to massing based on the historic lot dimensions that occur between 12th and 11th Avenues, and 9th and 8th Avenues. Large lot development should be avoided.

- **Architectural Context**

- **Height & Density**

Height and density of any new development in this segment should match the two-story building height and density found in the 6th Avenue and Commercial Street segment. Multi-story structures could be considered for corner lots, but should not exceed those found in the center of downtown Emporia.

- **Build-To Lines and Setbacks**

The street wall created by any new development in this segment should match that found along the west side of Commercial Street, between 12th and 11th Avenues, and 9th and 8th Avenues.

- **Transportation**

- **Public Transit**

According to the Lyon County Area Transportation Bus Routes and Stops map, L-CAT stops exist at 12th Avenue & Commercial Street and on Merchant Street between 10th and 11th Avenue. These transit stops, being located within the "Black and Gold" district should be specifically targeted toward university students and be designed to have a defined presence on the street.

- **Alleyways**

Existing alleyways between Merchant and Commercial and between Commercial and Mechanic Street should be retained. These alleyways act as a buffer between commercial development facing Commercial Street and residential use facing Mechanic.

- **Pedestrian Linkages**

One, almost accidental, pedestrian linkage exists in this segment. Located along the west side of Commercial, between 10th and 11th Avenue, it connects Commercial Street to the grocery store on Merchant. Ironically, this is an ideal pedestrian link in this segment, providing a direct pedestrian connection to a key asset in this area.

As this segment is revitalized, this linkage should be maintained and be enhanced with the same streetscape improvements established by the City of Emporia's Streetscape Plan.

- **Parking**

As this area is revitalized, the development pattern of the block bounded by Commercial Street and Mechanic Street, between 5th and 6th Avenue in the 6th Avenue & Commercial Street Segment, should be used as a pattern to replicate within this segment of Downtown.

- Streetscape and perimeter landscaping, internal landscaping and lighting recommendations should be applied.

On-street parking established by the City of Emporia's Streetscape Plan should be maintained.

- **Streetscape**

- **Entry Markers**

Entry markers, as part of the Emporia Streetscape Plan, are located just south of the intersection of 12th Avenue and Commercial Street. These entry markers go largely unnoticed because of the under-developed nature of this area. As

redevelopment occurs, the visibility of these entry markers should become more prominent.

- **Street Trees**

Additional street trees should be added as this area is redeveloped. They should be consistent with the landscape materials established by the City of Emporia's Streetscape Plan.

- **Street Furniture**

Bike racks should be added as this area is redeveloped, to address the student population that this segment is hoping to cater.

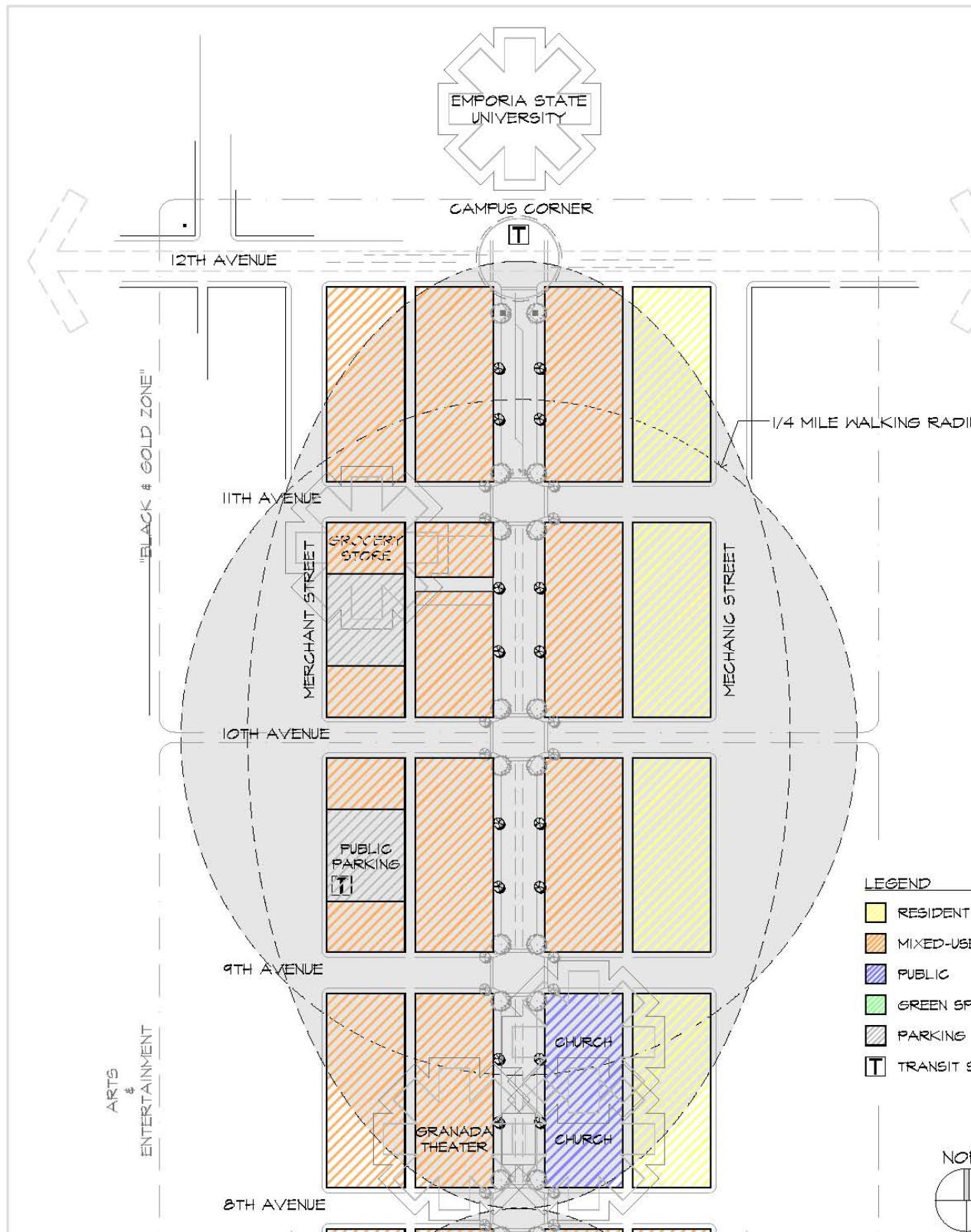
Benches should be added as this area is redeveloped, outside entertainment venues to provide overflow seating.

Additional light fixtures should be added as this area is redeveloped. They should be consistent with the design style for street furnishings established by the City of Emporia's Streetscape Plan.

Key Development Opportunities

The southeast and southwest corner lots at 12th Avenue and Commercial are prime corner locations that can really set the tone for this area. Both lots are under-developed with structures setting back off Commercial Street as well as 12th Avenue, and surface parking lots dominating the street front.

Merchant Street holds great potential for additional re-development in this area. As the only principal arterial street that provides primary access to and from the downtown, Merchant Street is currently under utilized and undefined. As the Black and Gold Zone is developed, expansion along Merchant Street should be highly encouraged.



EMPORIA MAIN STREET Downtown Design Guidelines
12th Avenue & Commercial Street Segment - The Black and Gold Zone

6TH AVENUE & COMMERCIAL STREET SEGMENT



This segment of Emporia Main Street Downtown is largely defined by the intersection of 6th Avenue and Commercial Street – the heart of downtown Emporia.

This segment is bounded by 8th Avenue on the north, Merchant Street on the west, Mechanic Street on the east and 4th Avenue on the south.

The 6th Avenue & Commercial Street Segment encompasses part of what was referred to as the *Art and Entertainment District*, all of the *Retail District* and part of the *Civic, Professional and Commercial Services District* delineated on the land use plan map.

The vision for this segment is that of the commercial and civic center of downtown; mixing commercial, higher density residential, civic and professional office activities.

This segment is the most developed and has a unique array of activity in the downtown area, with the strongest example of a cohesive urban fabric.

- Historic Urban Fabric
 - Development Pattern

The development pattern of the block bounded by Commercial Street and Mechanic Street, between 5th and 6th Avenue should be used as a pattern to replicate within this segment of Downtown.

Full block development faces Commercial Street and continues along each side street, creating a pocket parking lot area along Mechanic Street. Alleyway access and a pedestrian linkage aids in both pedestrian and vehicular access throughout the block. The combination of on-street parking along these streets, and the parking lot along Mechanic Street, appears to adequately serve those businesses found on that block, as well as those along the east side of Mechanic Street.

This same development pattern exists to a certain extent in the blocks bounded by 4th and 6th Avenue and 7th Avenue, and 7th Avenue and 8th Avenue to the north, between Commercial Street and Mechanic Street. As these blocks are redeveloped, little would need to be done to insure this development pattern is maintained. Only the full-block development along the side streets is missing.

Currently, Merchant Street - from 8th Avenue to 6th Avenue - is under-developed as the main, with large empty lots and few pedestrian amenities. As the principal arterial in downtown Emporia, special attention should be paid to this street as redevelopment occurs in this segment.

- Streetscape improvements that have occurred along Commercial Street – in the form of sidewalk replacement, new lighting and signage, seating and landscaping – should be carried over to Merchant Street as well, to improve the first impression visitors have of downtown Emporia.

Key sites such as the US Post Office, The Emporia Gazette and White Memorial Park are all positive amenities to this street that go largely unnoticed because of the condition of the surrounding area.

- **Historic Structures**

The civic center of downtown Emporia has retained the largest number of historic buildings. While many may be considered so-called “background” buildings, others are Emporia’s irreplaceable monuments which help to define the historic context of the downtown area. All of these structures should be carefully analyzed before any recommendations are made for their removal.

- **Adaptive Reuse**

With the largest number of historic structures possessing the broadest range of architectural styles, building materials, craftsmanship, interior spaces and other character-defining features, this segment holds the greatest potential for revitalization and adaptive reuse.

Revitalization and adaptive reuse projects in this segment will set the tone for redevelopment throughout the rest of downtown Emporia. As such, greater attention should be paid to the design of these projects.

- **Basement Access**

The few basement access stairs that remain in the downtown area can become great assets for commercial uses if an accessible entry to the establishments can occur elsewhere.

- **Architectural Context**

- **Architectural Character and Material**

- **Facades**

Businesses that share a single building should have consistent façade improvements across the whole of the building front. This helps draw attention to the individual buildings which together define the identity of downtown Emporia. When several businesses share the same building, doorways and signage may contrast to give separate identity.

Rear facades hold the greatest potential for redevelopment in this area, as most open on to small parking areas and have both alley access and pedestrian linkage.

- **Awning & Signage**

Awning and signage improvements in this segment will set the tone for redevelopment throughout the rest of downtown Emporia. Given the historic building stock, greater attention should be paid to the design of these components.

- **Height & Density**

The buildings in this segment are generally characterized by two story buildings, with a few multi-story structures concentrated at the intersection of 6th Avenue and Commercial Street. Any infill projects in this area should maintain this height and density.

- **Build-To Lines and Setbacks**

The street wall along this segment of Commercial Street is very consistent and any infill projects should maintain the existing setback of adjacent buildings.

- **Transportation**

- **Public Transit**

According to the Lyon County Area Transportation Bus Routes and Stops map, L-CAT stops exist at 6th Avenue & Commercial as well as 6th Avenue & Mechanic Street. These transit stops, being located within the commercial and civic center of downtown, should be specifically targeted so they are designed to have a defined presence on the street.

- **Alleyways**

Existing alleyways between Merchant and Commercial and between Commercial and Mechanic Street should be retained. These alleyways act as a connector between all commercial and civic uses with the downtown area.

Alleyway improvements in this segment will set the tone for redevelopment throughout the rest of downtown Emporia.

- **Pedestrian Linkages**

Pedestrian linkages, located along the east side of Commercial, between 6th and 7th Avenue, and 7th and 8th Avenue, should be maintained and be enhanced with street trees and lighting.

Enhancements to these pedestrian linkages could include such things as outdoor seating / dining, benches and street trees.



Before: Existing Conditions



After: Proposed Pedestrian Linkage Improvements

- **Parking**

As this area is revitalized, the development pattern of the block bounded by Commercial Street and Mechanic Street, between 5th and 6th Avenue in the 6th Avenue & Commercial Street Segment, should be used as a pattern to replicate within this segment of Downtown.

- Streetscape and perimeter landscaping, internal landscaping and lighting recommendations should be applied.

On-street parking established by the City of Emporia's Streetscape Plan should be maintained.

- Streetscape

- Entry Markers

Entry markers located along 6th Street, at Merchant Street, go largely unnoticed due to their proximity to undefined surface parking lots found on both eastern corners of this intersection. Redevelopment of these surface parking lots would aide in the visibility of these entry markers.

- Street Trees

The area in front of the Lyon County Courthouse would benefit from the addition of street trees to help reduce the scale of this area, to match that found in the rest of Downtown. They should be consistent with the landscape materials established by the City of Emporia's Streetscape Plan.

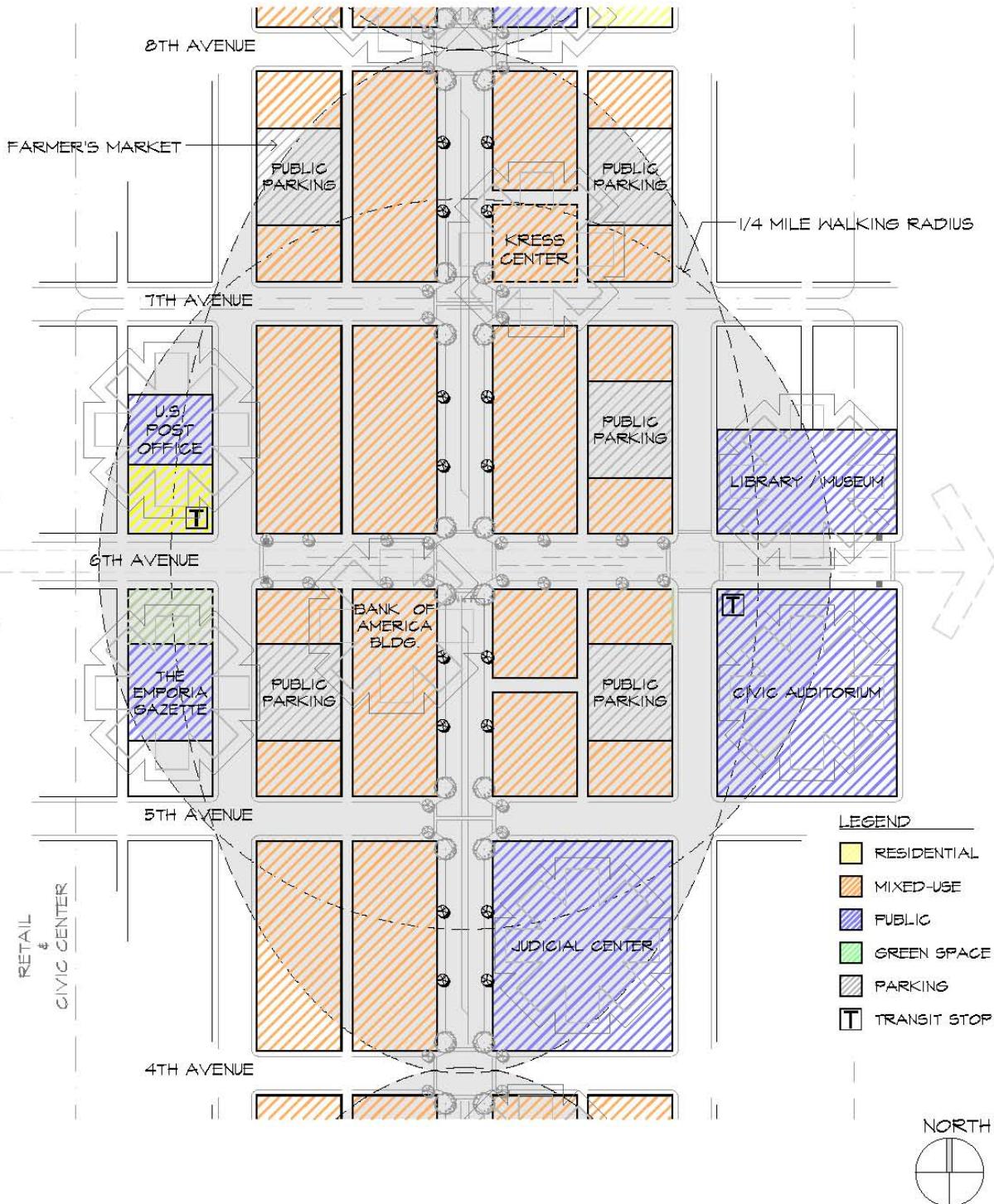
- Street Furniture

The addition of benches, trash receptacles, bicycle racks, etc. along the east side of Commercial Street, in front of the Lyon County Courthouse, would help reduce the scale of this area, to match that found in the rest of Downtown.

Small outdoor dining areas along storefronts should be encouraged with eating establishments in this area.

Key Development Opportunities

While Commercial Street in this segment of downtown Emporia is the fully developed; Merchant Street and Mechanic Street hold many opportunities for revitalization and infill construction.



EMPORIA MAIN STREET Downtown Design Guidelines

6th Avenue & Commercial Street Segment - The Civic Center

No Scale

THE RAILROAD TRACKS & COMMERCIAL STREET SEGMENT



This section of Emporia Main Street is largely defined by the intersection of the railroad tracks and Commercial Street.

This segment is bounded by 4th Avenue on the north, Merchant Street on the west, Mechanic Street on the east and South Avenue on the south.

The Railroad Tracks and Commercial Street Segment encompasses part of what was referred to as the *Civic, Professional and Commercial Services District* and all of the *Multicultural Marketplace and Services District* delineated on the land use plan map.

The vision for this segment is that of a vibrant marketplace for downtown; bringing a lively mix to the south end of downtown Emporia.

Development of this area would encompass Commercial Street from 4th Avenue to South Avenue. This segment has a strong urban fabric from 4th Avenue to the railroad tracks, but is largely under-developed south of the railroad tracks, with many incompatible structures and vacant lots. This area - from the railroad tracks to South Avenue - holds the greatest potential for growth as the downtown is revitalized.

- Historic Urban Fabric
 - Development Pattern

The dominate development pattern that exists in this segment is full-block commercial use along Commercial Street, with large warehouse uses to the east and west. Though this pattern quickly breaks down south of the railroad tracks, a pattern exists and should be acknowledged when looking at these blocks for redevelopment.

- Historic Structures

Few historic structures are left in this segment, south of the railroad tracks. As redevelopment occurs, the small number of remaining structures should be analyzed and retained as much as possible, to tie this end of downtown in with the more defined center at 6th and Commercial.

- **Infill Construction**

Given the lack of historic building stock, the number of incompatible structures and vacant lots, this segment holds great potential for redevelopment and infill construction.

All infill construction along Commercial Street should maintain the massing that occurs between 4th Avenue and the railroad tracks. Large lot development should be avoided.

- **Architectural Context**

- **Architectural Character and Material**



Before: Existing Conditions



After: Proposed Uniform Facade Improvements

- **Facades**

As recommended in the civic center segment, businesses that share a single building should have consistent façade improvements across the whole of the building front. This helps draw attention to the individual buildings which together define the identity of downtown Emporia.

- **Height & Density**

Height and density of any new development in this segment should match the two-story building height and density found in the 6th Avenue and Commercial Street segment. Multi-story structures could be considered for corner lots, but should not exceed those found in the center of downtown Emporia.

- **Build-To Lines and Setbacks**

The street wall created by any new development south of the railroad tracks should match that found along Commercial Street, north of the railroad tracks.

- **Transportation**

- **Public Transit**

According to the Lyon County Area Transportation Bus Routes and Stops map, L-CAT stops exist at 2nd Avenue & Commercial as well as South Avenue & Merchant Street. These transit stops, being located within this proposed marketplace for downtown, should be specifically targeted so they are designed to have a defined presence on the street.

- **Alleyways**

Existing alleyways between Merchant and Commercial and between Commercial and Mechanic Street should be retained. These alleyways act as a buffer between commercial development facing Commercial Street and surrounding residential uses.

- **Parking**

- On-street parking established by the City of Emporia's Streetscape Plan should be maintained and extended south of the tracks, as this area is redeveloped.
- Parking lot edge recommendations and parking lot interior recommendations should be applied to the Reebles Market parking lot at 2nd and Commercial.

- **Streetscape**

In general, all streetscape improvements associated with the Emporia Streetscape Plan, end at the railroad tracks. As this segment gets redeveloped, the same sidewalk replacement, new lighting and signage, seating and landscaping, concentration of trees at intersections, and seating walls around planting beds that are in place from the railroad tracks north to 12th Avenue, should extend along Commercial Street to South Avenue. This will provide continuity to the whole downtown area and strengthen the development possibilities in this segment.

- **Entry Markers**

Entry markers, as part of the Emporia Streetscape Plan, are located along Commercial Street just north of the railroad tracks. These act as defining markers of the south edge of the downtown area. As this area gets redeveloped, relocating those entry markers further south should be considered.



- **Street Trees**

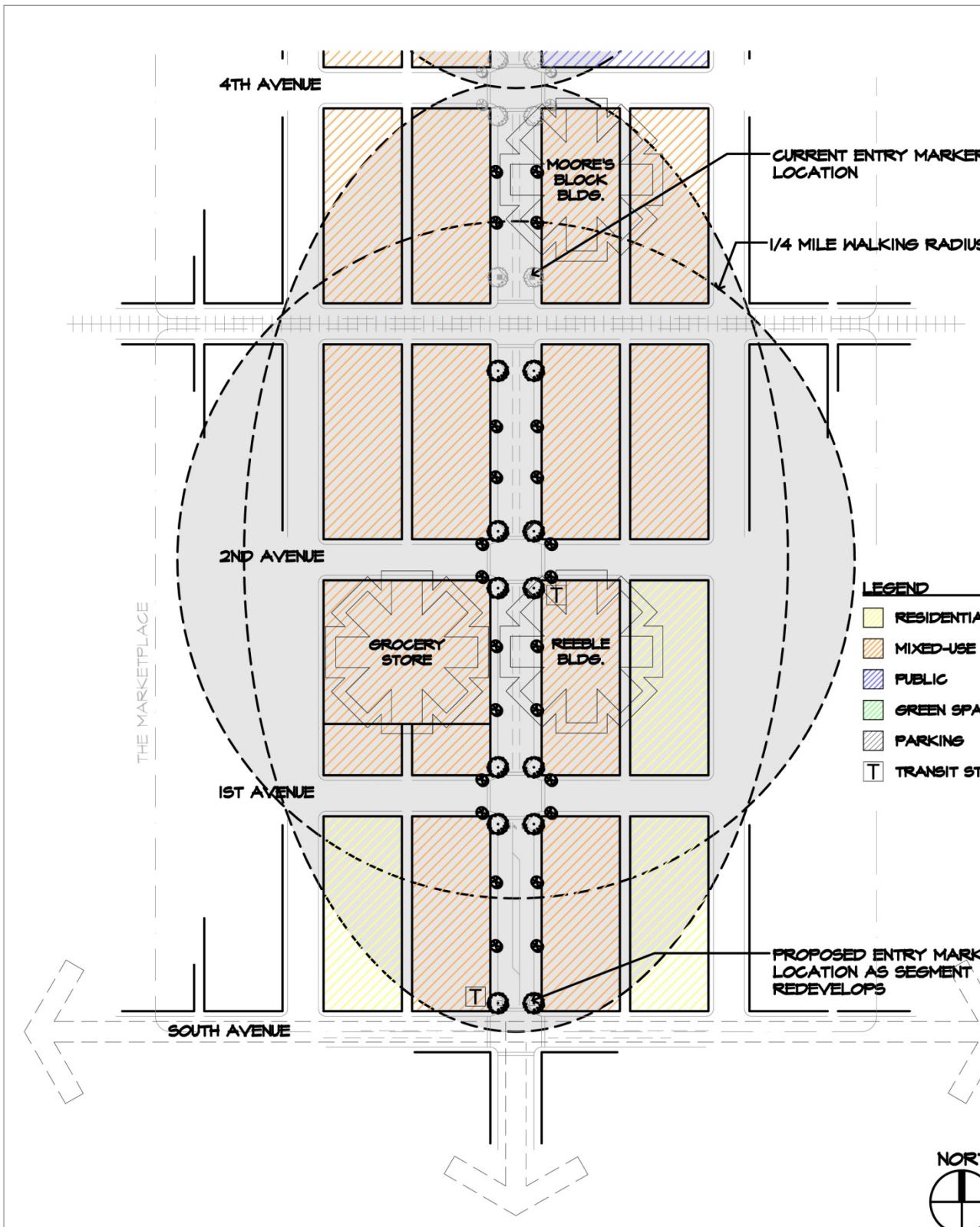
Additional street trees should be added as this area is redeveloped. They should be consistent with the landscape materials established by the City of Emporia's Streetscape Plan.

- **Street Furniture**

As this segment develops, the addition of benches, trash receptacles, bicycle racks, etc. south of the railroad tracks is recommended. Not only will it visually tie this segment to the rest of the downtown area, it will help introduce a more pedestrian friendly scale to this area and add to the festive nature of the proposed "marketplace".

Key Development Opportunities

Currently, downtown Emporia's south edge is clearly defined by the presence of the railroad tracks. Development does exist south of the tracks, but is inconsistent with the character of the rest of the downtown study area. As development and redevelopment occurs, this area offers the most growth potential for Downtown.



EMPORIA MAIN STREET Downtown Design Guidelines

The Railroad Tracks & Commercial Street Segment - The Marketplace

No So

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