

Chapter 6

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

Why did road building become a national enterprise? Surely, they were designed to move people from place to place.

But our roads and road networks, from the National and Cumberland Roads to the Lincoln Highway, from Route 66 to Route 69, were also built to develop areas – to increase access, open countryside, and help cities and towns grow.

A CORRIDOR FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Why did road building become a national enterprise? Surely, roads were designed to move people from place to place. But our roads and road networks, from the National and Cumberland Roads to the Lincoln Highway, from Route 66 to Route 69, were also built to develop areas – to increase access, open countryside, and help cities and towns grow.

Promoters of roads and the communities and regions that they serve have understood the relationship between transportation and economic growth. The famous Lincoln Highway of the 1920s grew out of an effort to knit existing and planned segments of road through the middle of the country into a cohesive route, moving people to and through communities along the way to help them grow. The present-day US Highway 69 promotes improvement of the road that is the subject of this plan for exactly the same reason.

This document and the planning process that produced it envision the highway as a corridor for community development and renewal, addressing mobility, economics, design, recreation, history, and culture and the complex relationships that these aspects of the city have with one another. When the US Highway 69 corridor interacts with the rich fabric of Fort Scott, we find the potential to create a unity that is exciting in its scope, yet within the means of the city to accomplish.

PROGRAM FOR DEVELOPMENT

The vision begins by establishing a development program, much like the architectural program for a building project. This program, developed with the input and insight of Fort Scott citizens who participated in the planning process, identifies the ingredients of development – the amount of space that markets can absorb, present and future community needs, current projects that are pending, and other opportunities. The program includes three separate agendas: development, community, and functional, together expressing the different roles that US 69 has and can have in the community.

THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

- **Attracting commercial development to existing commercial areas.** Assuming a return to a normal retail economy, Fort Scott has the potential to absorb 66,000 square feet of new retail space during the next ten years. This development should be one of the three major districts in the US 69 study area: Downtown, the South National Area or the South Main corridor. Assuming a suburban floor area ratio of 0.15, this corresponds to about 10 acres of new commercial land. For planning purposes, land use planning for the study area should designate a minimum of 20 acres of commercial land.
- **Building about 206 new housing units in the next thirty years.** The plan considers a 0.25% Compound Annual Growth Rate resulting in a 2040 population of 8,514, or an increase of about 600 people. About 106 acres should be designated for new housing development.
- **Completing development of the Fort Scott industrial park.** Based on the methodology presented in Chapter 5, the city will generate a demand for acres for industrial land. Existing vacant land in the Fort Scott Industrial Park can accommodate much of this demand. However, population-based methodologies can be unreliable because industrial location decisions are made on the basis of other considerations, such as transportation facilities and available workforce. Completion of US 69 to Kansas City and continued improvement south to I-44 could increase industrial demand in the Fort Scott area.

- **Redeveloping underused property.** While most of the corridor and its business districts are built up, opportunities for redevelopment still exist. These opportunities include vacant or underused sites, obsolete commercial uses, unnecessarily large parking lots, and declining residential structures. A thoughtful development concept can guide the reuse of these sites, and help ensure that reinvestment produces results that are both rewarding and advance the interests of the city.

THE COMMUNITY AGENDA

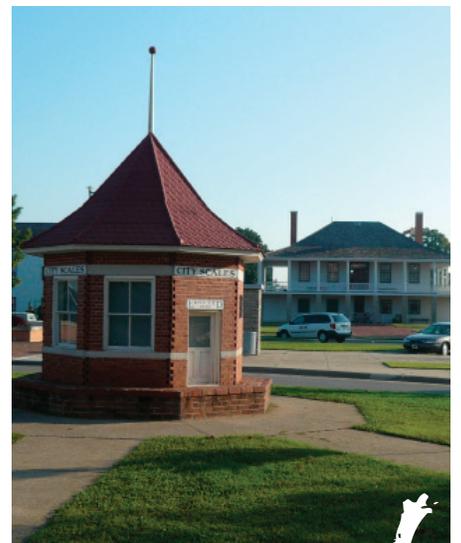
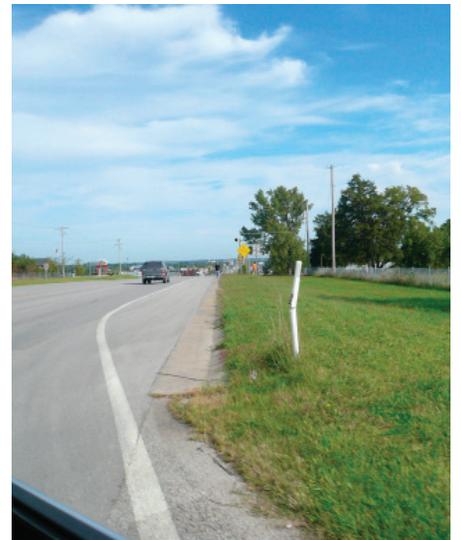
- **Creating a distinctive community image and experience.** As it competes for residents and investment, Fort Scott must become a stronger destination, offering distinctive experiences and an attractive setting to customers. Each context along the US 69 corridor present important opportunities. The traditional downtown and Fort Scott offer enormous architectural and historic treasures, but will remain undiscovered without a strong physical connection to the highway. South National relates to the National Cemetery and has a scale and business variety that appeal to both residents and travelers, but is not yet a coherent business district that customers find easy and attractive to use. Finally, the South Main corridor provides large-scale retailing and services, but should be more than a generic “strip” as alternative business areas grow. The highway corridor should provide both a positive sense of this historic city and should showcase these important districts along the way.
- **Connecting the business districts to neighborhoods.** While the highway is a linear connection among Fort Scott’s commercial and industrial districts, the road/railroad corridor also divides the eastern and western parts of the city. Many of the city’s major destinations, including businesses, services, the high school, and the community college are west of US 69, and good physical and circulation linkages from the east improves access and unifies the city.
- **Expanding business and private investment.** Development concepts should lead to actions that significantly improve the district’s business and investment climate. The

program should stabilize existing businesses, and reward desirable new investments that strengthen the district. Public realm investments can create conditions for desirable private responses that will preserve and increase property values, increase sales tax revenues, and attract new businesses.

- **Increasing visitor activity, especially at the Fort Scott National Historic Site.** From a downtown business and visitor perspective, the historic fort is a great attraction, with both great historic value and economic potential. As more people travel along an improved US 69, the number of potential visitors and customers increases. By presenting a stronger presence from the highway and offering a more pleasant relationship to the historic downtown, the fort can attract more people and generate more economic activity in the community.
- **The Fort Scott National Historic Site is not the city’s only important historical and cultural attraction.** The city itself is a museum of superb commercial and residential architecture. The Gordon Parks Center for Culture and Diversity and the Gordon Parks photography gallery at the community college, along with the National Cemetery are important assets. US 69 should be a conduit to these and other features, and greater awareness of them generates more visitors and more demand for local goods and services.
- **Developing a community greenway that integrates the Marmaton Riverfront with other community resources.** Fort Scott’s public and private sector have joined forces in an ambitious effort to increase public access and use of the riverfront from Gunn Park to US 69. The highway corridor itself is a green corridor, including a significant drainageway, tree cover, and major features as City Park, Frary Field, and Fort Scott High School. A coordinated effort can extend the benefits of the riverfront project to all parts of the city.

FUNCTIONAL AGENDA

- **Improving traffic circulation and safety.** US 69 should present a safer transportation environment for all users. Current problems include friction between local and through traffic, frequent and conflicting driveway cuts, conflicting left turn movements, abrupt changes in the character of the roadway, excessive speeds, poor pedestrian access, and, in some places, a substandard street section. An important outcome of the transportation system in the overall US 69 study area should be safe and smooth operations for a variety of users.
- **Increasing access for all users.** The study area’s transportation system should move motor vehicles smoothly and comfortably, and encourage active transportation modes. Pedestrian and bicycle transportation is sustainable, healthy and pleasant, and ideally suited to many trips within Fort Scott. “Complete corridors” safely and efficiently accommodate all transportation modes, including motor vehicles, transit, and pedestrian and bicycle transportation.
- **Better local traffic circulation and alternative routes.** Relatively poor street connectivity south of 18th Street directs most Fort Scott residents to US 69 for access to businesses, industries, and employers along the South Main corridor. Better local access, including an improved circulator street network, can decrease dependence on a single roadway, contribute to safer traffic operations, and encourage new development.
- **Environmental sustainability.** The high percentage of impervious coverage in road and commercial corridors such as US 69 complicates stormwater management, creates heat islands, and has other negative environmental impacts. This corridor can become “green” in many ways by effectively managing stormwater, preserving vegetation and local habitat, encouraging alternative transportation, and improving community wellness.



THE US HIGHWAY 69 STUDY AREA: A UNIFYING VISION

The development, community, and functional agendas presented above address the contributing roles that US 69 can have in fulfilling an overall vision: to create an effective and safe transportation corridor that is also an engine for economic development and a delight for Fort Scott's citizens and visitors. The specific development objectives that will move toward completing this vision are to:

- Build a strong community brand for Fort Scott by making US 69 through the city a memorable travel corridor.
- Knit separate parts of the city into a unified, mutually reinforcing whole through improved transportation and pedestrian networks.
- Add new energy to Fort Scott's established business districts as neighborhoods and as renewed retail, service, and civic centers.
- Expand markets by investing in features and amenities that make Fort Scott's commercial districts both convenient and delightful.
- Increase activity and investment in tourism, housing, retail, and office development.
- Create interconnected centers of activity that add value to the experience of living in Fort Scott.
- Assure that development in new redevelopment areas reinforces the business and investment climate of Downtown and South National.
- Improve safety, comfort, and access for all user groups along the US Highway 69 corridor.

This section includes recommendations and concepts that build on the special features and resources of Fort Scott to meet these objectives, and use the opportunities created by this important regional corridor to full advantage.

THE GREAT CIRCLE: US 69 AS PART OF A COMMUNITY NETWORK

As an overall public space vision that unifies several major community initiatives, the US 69 Corridor Management Plan proposes a Great Circle for Fort Scott, a sequence of three "arcs" that, when complete, connect most of the city's cultural, commercial, and natural environments. The concept of a "circle route" or connected park network has been a tradition in American open space planning and has produced some of the nation's greatest urban environments. Examples are George Kessler's boulevard system for Kansas City and St. Joseph, Horace W.S. Cleveland's Grand Rounds in Minneapolis, and Frederick Law Olmsted's Fenway system in Boston. The Great Circle idea, derived from these urban park systems but adapted to Fort Scott, can also have important economic and quality of life benefits.

The three arcs include:

A **"red" or community arc** that follows the highway and the adjacent creek and public space greenway between the river and Jayhawk Road. The character of this arc and its roadscape are considered in this section.

A **"blue" or river arc** that would implement current plans for the Marmaton River greenway, from east of US 69 past the historic fort and continuing to Gunn Park, the city's great public open space.

A **"green" or cultural arc** that continues south from Gunn Park and through the Fort Scott Community College and Bourbon County Fairgrounds.

The components of the Great Circle would have the common thread of a multi-purpose pathway and a consistent graphic and wayfinding system. Yet, within this overall unity, the arcs could have different areas of concentration, depending on their contexts. The "red arc," links the city's places of commerce – Downtown, South National,

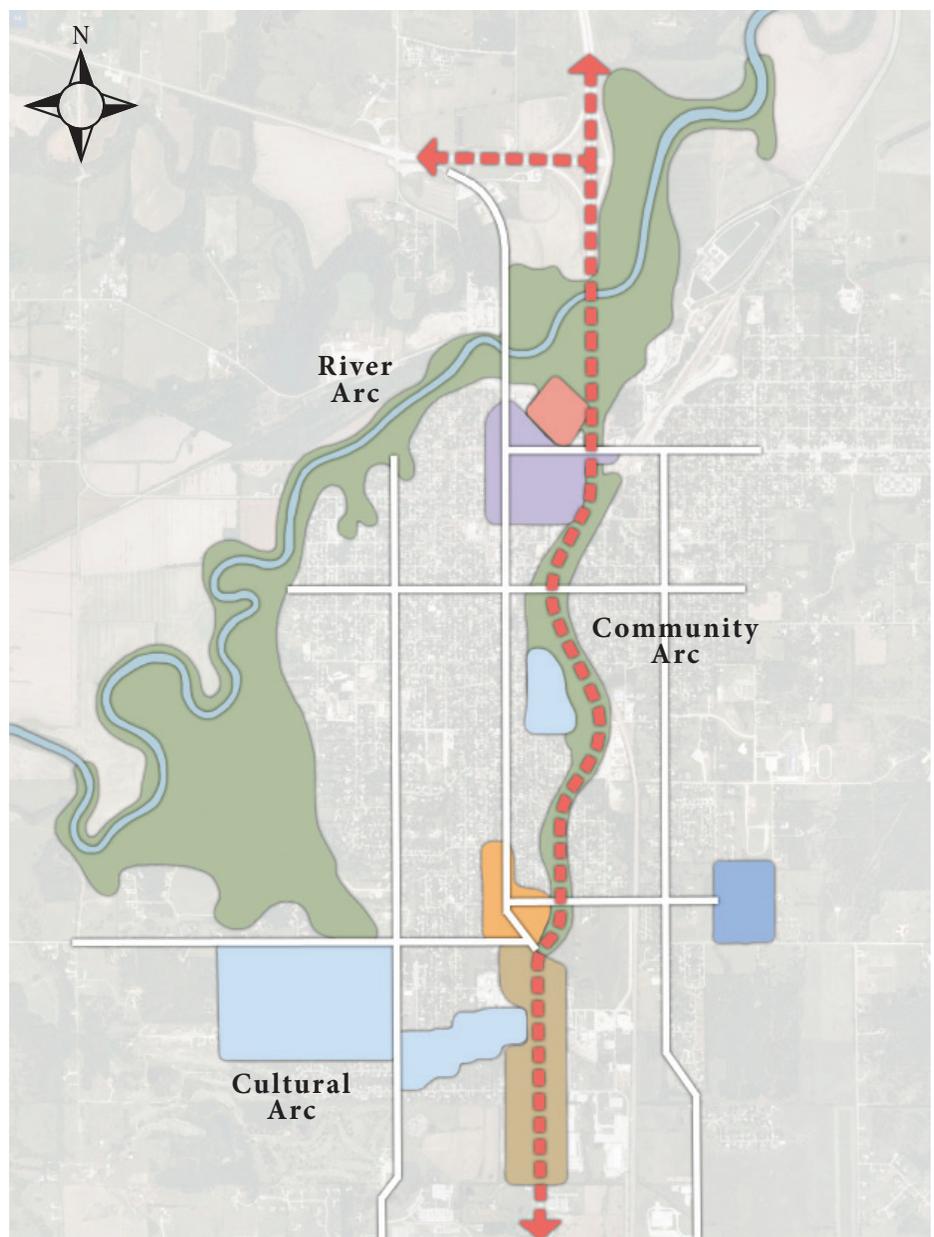


Figure 6.1 The Great Circle

and South Main – along with many of its civic and historical features. The “blue arc,” along the river, celebrates the natural environment and the beauty of Gunn Park. The “green arc” links the community college and the Gordon Parks Center with the fairgrounds and its connection to agricultural life in Bourbon County. Connections off the circle lead to other community features, such as the National Cemetery.

This document, of course, focuses specifically on the highway and its surrounding context between Horton and Margrave. Concepts that implement this community arc include:

- The immediate US 69 corridor itself, visualized as both a roadscape and greenway.
- The business districts served by the highway.
- The supporting systems that enhance mobility for all users throughout the larger planning area.

US HIGHWAY 69: THE HIGHWAY AS ROADSCAPE

The US 69 roadscape concept conceives of the corridor as both an environment in its own right and a feature that markets the entire community. Because the highway provides both a first impression for visitors and a lasting image for residents, it may influence a “brand” for the city. Community branding is sometimes confused with the design of a logo or composition of a slogan; in truth, brands are essentially a set of expectations, and cities, like products, have them for better or worse. In a community setting, community brands actually can guide critical individual decisions – whether to stop at a museum, stay overnight, or invest in a house or business.

Thus, an unattractive or poorly maintained corridor may establish a set of expectations, spread by word of mouth, which may contradict the real quality of a place. For example, New Jersey is a surpassingly beautiful state that richly deserves its slogan as “the garden state.”

However, talk show hosts rarely fail to get a laugh when they deride New Jersey, based largely on chemical plants, salvage yards, and the visual appearance of the Interstate 95 corridor near New York City.

Fort Scott has a few moments to begin to tell its story to travelers along US 69, and the corridor has a critical marketing role to play. Making US 69 a more attractive urban corridor is an intrinsically good thing – citizens want to have pride in their place. Even more importantly, though, it is sound economic strategy, recognizing the importance of product enhancement in a competitive environment. Successful roadscape design and theming approaches emerge from the city’s special characteristics, culture, and history.

This section presents an urban design program designed to a strong brand for both the corridor and the city. It proposes a family of signage, public art and site furniture elements that provide a coherent design image and community brand, in turn encouraging economic revitalization and investment.

CASE STUDY: Coralville, Iowa



Coralville, IA - Highway 6 before enhancements.



Coralville, IA - Highway 6 after enhancements.

Highway 6 project changed the face of Coralville’s commercial strip, formerly an extremely harsh environment with no pedestrian accommodations, with unattractive signage, and with marginal development. The project, completed as part of a roadway-widening effort, included a streetside trail, landscaping, lighting, and new graphics. The effect has been dramatic, resulting in a substantial upgrading of neighboring development and causing the city to tout this once-disdained commercial corridor as “a classy strip [that’s] worth the trip.”

Guiding Principles

The following overall principles and criteria guide the design of site elements illustrated here.

Theming. Themes and icons express the values and history of a community, and should be expressed clearly but subtly along the corridor. Potential community themes in Fort Scott include:

- Native American culture
- History of the Fort
- Fort Scott National Cemetery and military history
- Natural history of the region
- Railroad
- Gordon Parks and other supremely talented local residents
- Photography and its role in the community

Placement. Careful location of site elements can establish nodes and rhythms along the corridor and can even calm traffic by providing detail and texture. Site elements make the experience of routine travel along a highway more memorable, and further help to establish a community brand.

Materials. Local and regional material choices express the nature and geology of the place, consume less energy to transport to the site, and support the local economy. The use of local limestone and brick reinforces precedents in Fort Scott architecture and public spaces.

Speed and Scale. Site elements should reflect the speed at which people will experience them. Small features with fine details designed for pedestrian scale will be lost in a high speed vehicular environment. On the other hand, pedestrians along a trail have the leisure and desire to enjoy human-scaled features.

Components of the Concept

Architectural Markers & Public Art.

Architectural markers provide visual interest and rhythm in medians and key locations along the greenway. Along with other roadscape elements, the placement of markers help signal to drivers that they are approaching an intersection. The regular placement of features can also establish focuses and pools of light along the way, reflecting the scale and presence of the surround-

ing city. This can be especially useful between 6th and 12th Streets, or north of 3rd Street, where the freeway feel of the road can cause crashes when motorists unexpectedly encounter signalized street intersections.

Public art in the study area creates landmarks and celebrates the corridor's identity. Public art may be integrated with the markers or designed as stand-alone pieces. Its design could be influenced by the fort's stone columns, poetry and quotations, photography, or local vernacular architecture.

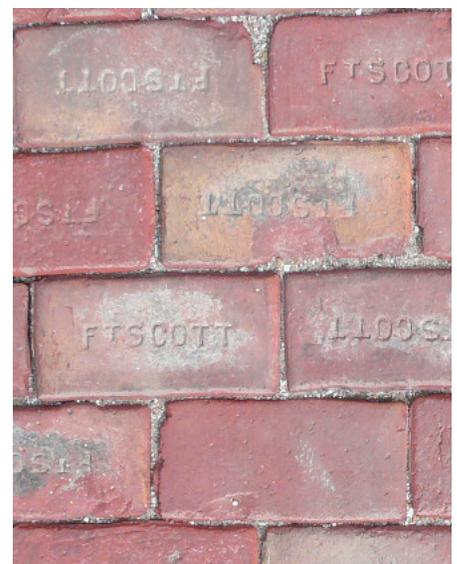
Trail Markers. Trail markers announce the location of the greenway where the trail intersects roads or key nodes. Trail markers should be designed to match the style of the architectural markers.

Walls. Limestone retaining walls, planter walls and seating walls can be integrated into the corridor where appropriate. Walls should be terraced at appropriate intervals.

Interpretive and Wayfinding Signage. Interpretive signage, generally scaled to non-motorized pathway users, can celebrate the history, present culture and future possibilities of the city and corridor. The locations of these features may be focused along the greenway, but also may be used throughout the study area and city. The interpretive elements may come in the form of either traditional interpretive panels, but also may incorporate "discovered interpretation." Discovered interpretation pieces are elements that are located just off the beaten path and may come in the form of a poem by a past or current area resident that is located just off the trail or on the side of a pedestrian bridge.

A wayfinding system, also reflecting community themes, should also be designed to lead visitors (primarily motorists) from arrival points to destinations. Wayfinding systems should be attractively designed, but should be clear and understandable to motorists who are making quick decisions. Pedestrian scaled wayfinders may include a higher level of art and detail.

Site Furniture. Other site furniture elements such as benches, lighting and trash receptacles should be selected intentionally for their durability, quality and to coordinate with other site features.



US HIGHWAY 69: THE HIGHWAY AS GREENWAY

US 69 between the river and the South National intersection is a both a greenway and a transportation corridor as it parallels Buck Run. Trees and vegetation mask the surrounding city environment, which includes Downtown, City Park and pool, the high school, community center, stadium, and commercial and residential development. Developing this greenway as a public space can connect Fort Scott's residents to the town's history, culture, and natural environment. The US 69 greenway will encourage users to connect with a restored Buck Run; discover historic features; walk, run, or bike along the greenway; and learn from elements that may interpret the history and ecology of the area through images and words. The greenway concept also has transportation functions by providing safe pedestrian and bicycle access to destinations in the South Main commercial district south of a redesigned 18th Street intersection. Components of the greenway concept include:

The Buck Run Greenway Trail. A multi-use pathway and promenade would run along US 69 and Buck Run, typically using existing level areas to provide a continuous route between the riverfront and South Main, completing the community arc portion of the Great Circle concept. The trail will be both a transportation and recreation facility that connects the downtown district, community center, public parks, residential neighborhoods, schools and the South US 69 commercial district. The trail would connect with the proposed riverfront trail on the east side of the highway, with a connection to Downtown and the historic fort using a largely disused railroad right-of-way that passes under US 69. The main trail

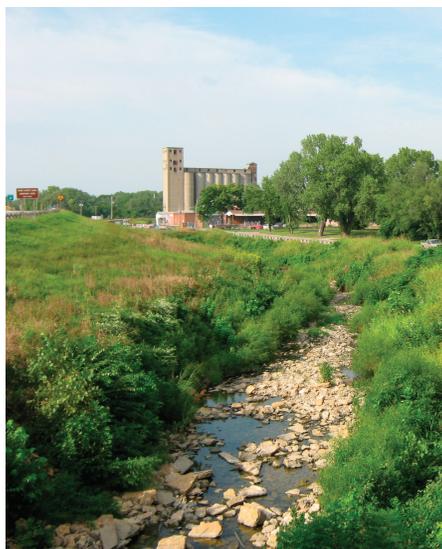


Figure 6.1a Greenway Map - North

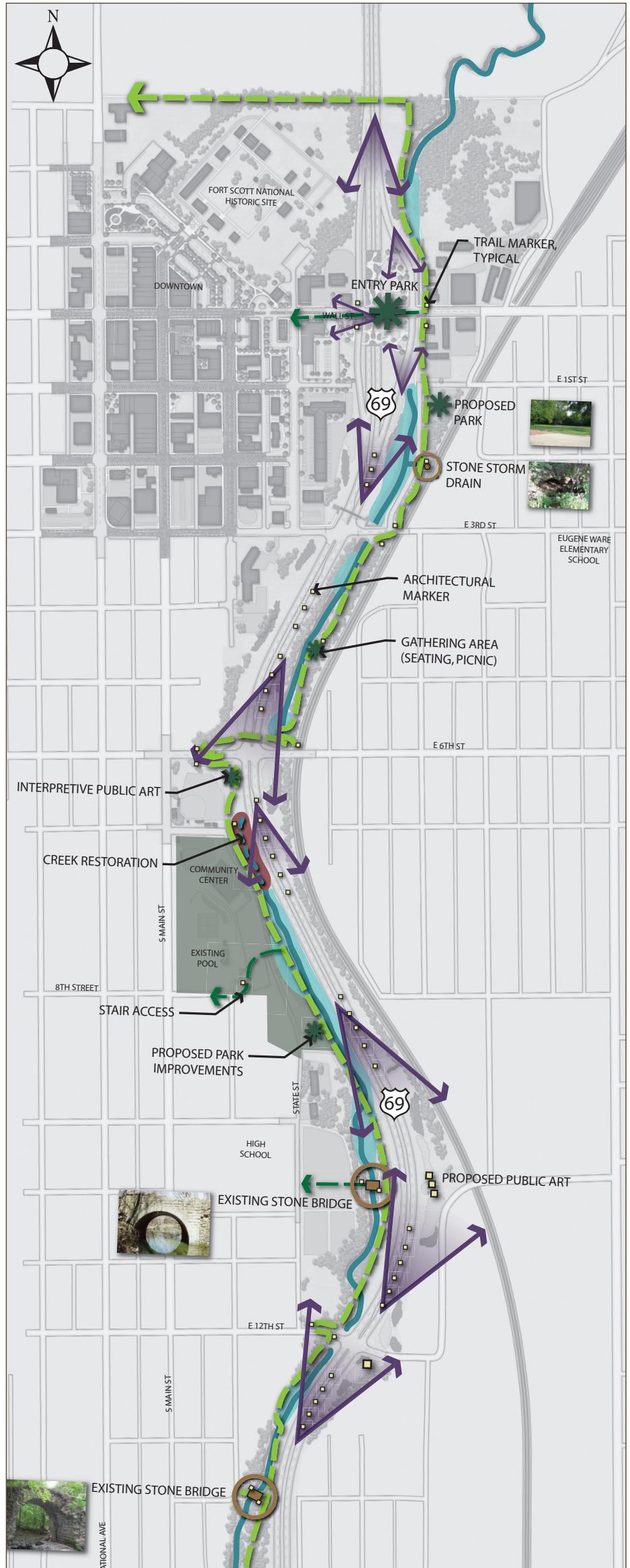
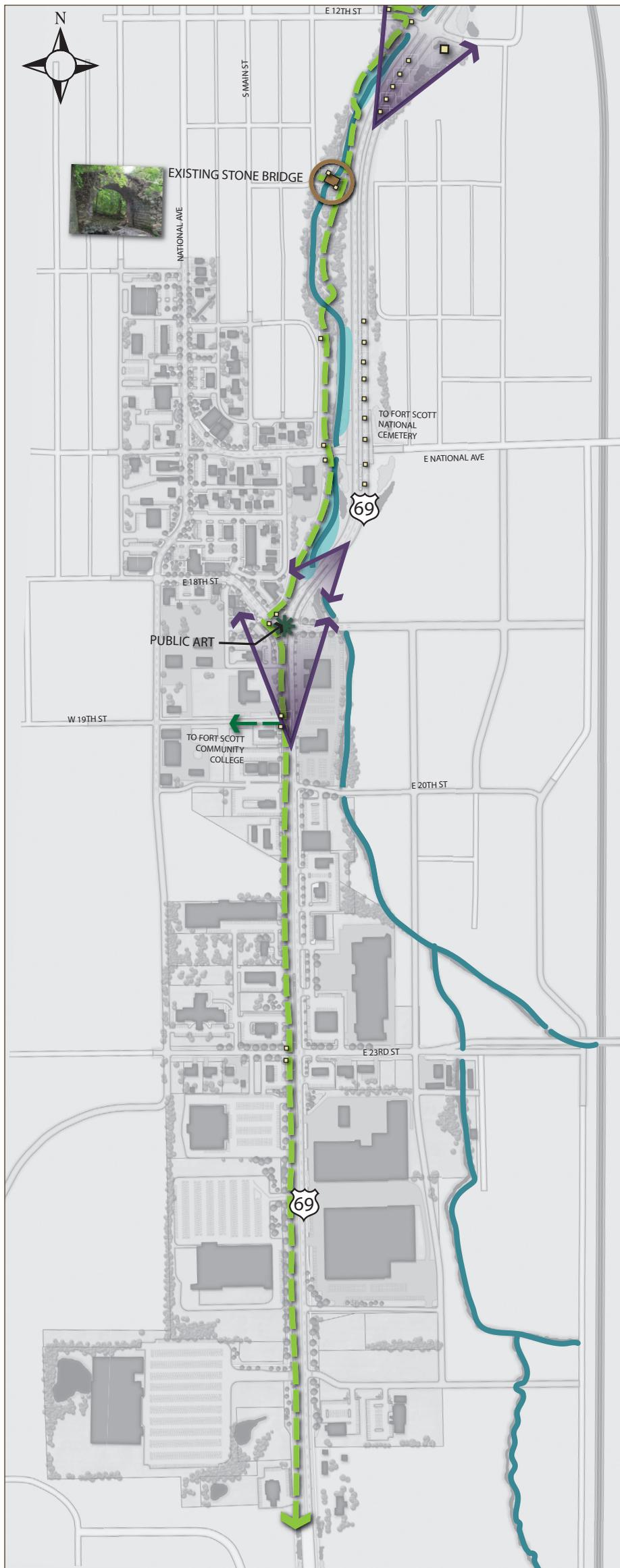


Figure 6.1b Greenway Map - South



continues along Buck Run, crossing to the west side of US 69 at 6th Street, either at-grade or using a reconstructed overpass. The pathway would proceed through City Park and along the edge of the Fort Scott High School campus, and continue along the creek and the west side of the highway to a new 18th Street intersection. From there, the trail becomes a sidepath along US 69 through a landscaped right-of-way that serves adjacent business, connecting with the “cultural arc” of the Great Circle at the Bourbon County Fairgrounds. **Map 6.1 a & b** illustrates a conceptual alignment for the trail. Detailed study is needed to define exact alignment and determine the best locations for crossings over Buck Run. The trail would be built primarily on public land and street rights-of-way; however, land purchases or easements may be necessary in a few locations.

Specific features of the greenway trail include:

- **Markers.** Trail markers may be placed at road crossings and along the corridor. These markers should identify the trail as part of the Great Circle, provide distance information, and direct users to nearby features. In addition, mileage markers are important to help locate people needing assistance in emergency situations.
- **Interpretive graphics** relating to historic and cultural themes in Fort Scott and Southeastern Kansas.
- **Bridges.** Two historic stone bridges along the conceptual trail alignment should be preserved and restored as a part of the greenway.
- **Public Spaces.** Vacant public land at the intersection of the greenway and East 1st Street could be a trail-side park that serves both trail users and northeast Fort Scott neighbor-





Looking north along Buck Run west of US 69.



Trail improvements to Buck Run Greenway.

hoods. Use of existing parkland near the community center and along the proposed trail could be increased with new facilities such as a skate park. Other points along the trail provide nodes for seating and passive use.

Urban Pathway. An urban pathway on the west side of US 69 between Wall Street and 6th Street would connect the Greenway Trail to downtown and its sidewalk system. This pathway would use State Street between Wall and 3rd and either separate right-of-way or Scott Street between 3rd and 6th Streets. South of the proposed 18rd Street intersection, the pathway continues south along the west side of the highway, providing access to businesses along this commercial corridor. The south pathway concept is discussed later in this chapter.

US 69 Crossings. The Bush Run Greenway is designed as a resource

for the entire community and, as such, it should reduce the barrier quality of the US 69/BNSF corridor. New or better crossings of these corridors can help unify the east and west sides of the city. Specific projects include:

- A trail link along disused rail right-of-way on the Elm Street alignment, extending along the north side of the Fort to Elm and National and Maple Ridge Park on the south bank of the river.
- Improvements to Wall Street and the Wall Street/US 69 interchange, including a new boulevard section on Wall Street, redesign of the interchange, a major public art installation at the US 69 overpass and adjacent open space, and new pedestrian pathways and bicycle lanes along Wall Street to Downtown. This concept is discussed below as part of the Downtown development program.

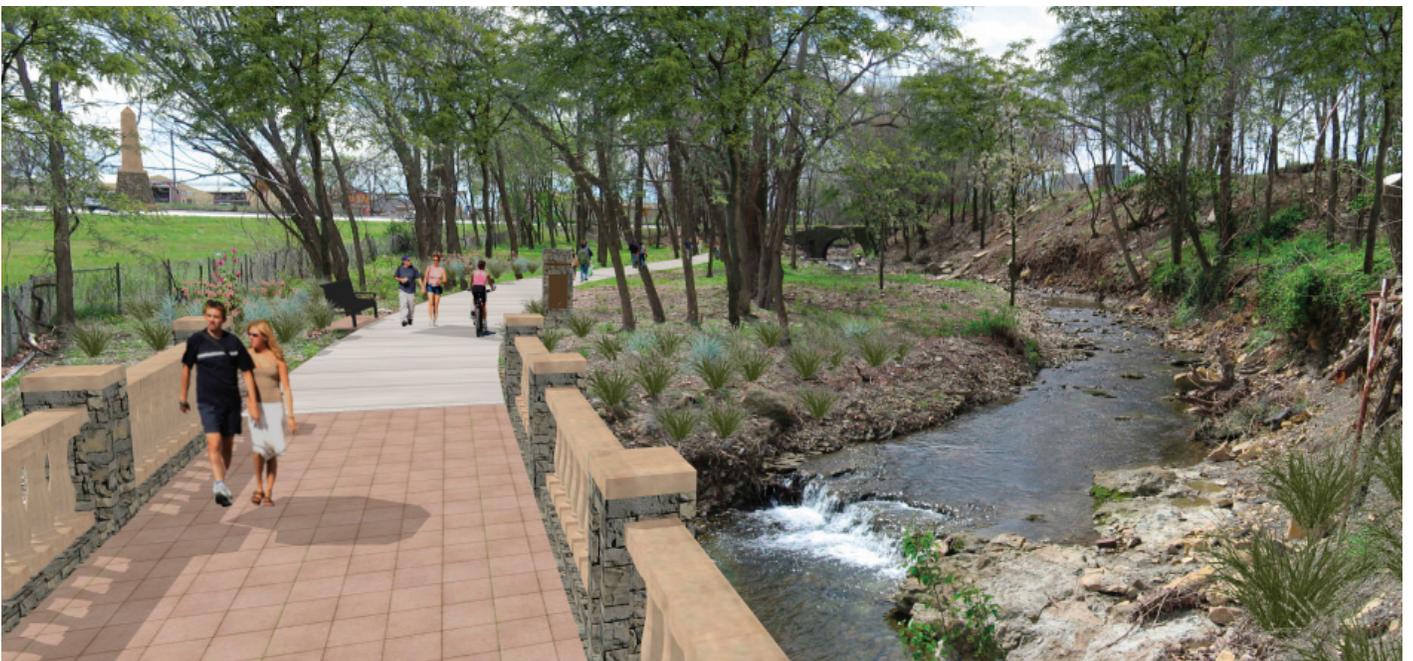
- Reconstruction or replacement of the 3rd and 6th Street pedestrian overpasses to contemporary accessibility standards. These overpasses are basic parts of the Buck Run Greenway.
- Redesign of the South National/18th Street intersection, described elsewhere in this plan.
- Construction of a 23rd Street grade separation over the BNSF tracks.

Buck Run Improvements. The Buck Run drainage corridor can be enhanced to slow, absorb and clean stormwater runoff; improve wildlife habitat; and reduce erosion. To achieve these goals and improve the visual quality of the creek environment, the plan recommends:

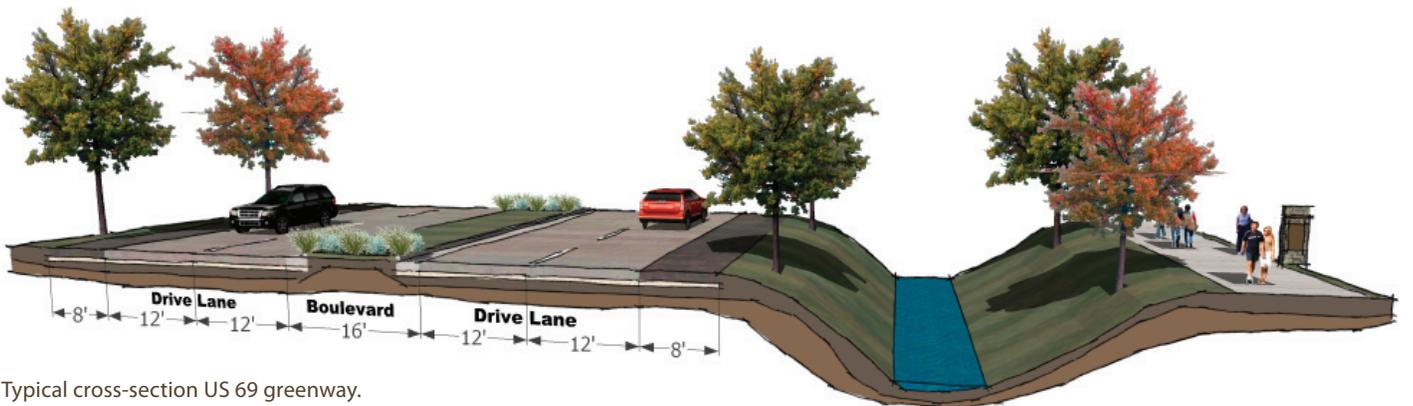
- Naturalizing areas of the creek currently lined with a concrete channel



Looking south along Buck Run west of US 69.



Trail improvement to Buck Run Greenway.



Typical cross-section US 69 greenway.

- Restoring native planting and increase species diversity
- Stabilizing streambank edges
- Utilizing filter strips, bioswales and recreated wetlands as part of a comprehensive system to improve water quality and mitigate storm-water impacts
- Engaging the public in monitoring creek health and completing improvements

These strategies should be employed where applicable throughout the length of Buck Run. **Maps 6.1a & 6.1b** illustrate specific areas in need of significant attention.

Regional Materials. Structures such as bridges, trail heads, and wayfinding should use limestone and brick in their construction. Landscaping in the greenway and along the road should utilize native trees, grasses and forbs. These

materials maintain the lowland prairie environment and manage stormwater effectively. In addition, existing features within the greenway should be part of the design of the trail. For example, the stone bridge east of the high school campus is a little-known link to Fort Scott's heritage. Its reuse connects the trail and the high school, and preserves a small but important part of the city's heritage.





US HIGHWAY 69: THE HIGHWAY AS AN AVENUE OF COMMERCE

US 69 in Fort Scott is both a roadway and greenway, and the community development strategies described above build on these roles. The roadway enhancements are designed around the image and “brand” that Fort Scott presents to travelers along the highway, a first stop in inducing them to stop for an hour, a day, or even a lifetime. The greenway development conceives of the highway as a community environment, designed to increase public use and reimagine the corridor as a bridge rather than a barrier between east and west. But the road is also an avenue of commerce – a conduit that brings people to adjacent business districts to buy, enjoy, consume, or invest. The strategies considered here are designed to strengthen the connection between the highway and the business centers that it serves, and to improve the business and customers’ experience within those areas, shown in **Figure 6.2**, which include:

- Historic Downtown Fort Scott.
- The South National District, along South National Avenue between 15th Street and US 69.
- The South Main District, the US 69 corridor between South National and Jayhawk Road.



Figure 6.2 Fort Scott Business Centers



Typical cross-section Urban Pathway

Downtown Fort Scott



Description

Downtown Fort Scott is the traditional civic, historic, and economic heart of the community, rich in heritage, distinctive business, and architectural significance. The community and National Park Service have made major investments in and around the Fort Scott National Historic Site, restoring the fort and, through urban renewal, developing visitor parking and a boulevard between Downtown and the historic site. More recently, the city completed a street and sidewalk improvement project along Main Street between Market and 3rd Streets in 2008, and is continuing to upgrade the downtown streetscape. Downtown, with the fort, is the city's pre-eminent image center and visitor destination, but, despite its many resources, continues to struggle with building vacancy and business turnover.

With Downtown's visitor-oriented resources, increased regional tourism related to the historic fort is clearly one key to economic revitalization, making the connection to US 69 particularly important. Yet the district presents a poor entrance from the highway, and is not very visible from the road. The Wall Street interchange is unattractive and somewhat uncomfortable in feel, and Wall Street itself is not an inviting street to visitors. Traffic patterns around the historic fort are confusing to visitors, and both pedestrian and vehicular connections between the fort area and

Main Street are unclear, complicated by one-way circulation that prevents visitors to the fort from driving directly into Downtown. Concepts presented here focus on strategic actions that can most effectively build and retain local business, attract more visitors to the district and ensure that they spend time and dollars during their visit, and increase private investment opportunities.

Program

The program for Downtown Fort Scott shown in **Figure 6.3** includes:

- Creating a highly attractive entrance to Downtown from US 69, beginning with the Wall Street interchange and continuing with Wall Street between the highway and Main Street.
- Improving the space between the historic fort and Downtown with better circulation and connections, more attractive and active public spaces, and additional development.
- Reusing the strategic vacant site at Main and Wall Streets as a multi-use community space that supports other downtown development.
- Improving pedestrian and bicycle circulation throughout the district.
- Providing incentives for key new developments, including lodging and housing.



Figure 6.3 Downtown Fort Scott Development Program

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 New Potential Multi-family Development | 9 Potential Development Site |
| 2 Government Facility Renovation | 10 Wall Street Gateway & Streetscape Enhancements |
| 3 Park Enhancements with water feature & gathering space | 11 Redevelopment Site (potential Hotel site) |
| 4 Old Fort Boulevard Improvements | 12 Public Art Project/ Interpretative Walk |
| 5 Convert to two-way circulation | 13 Wall Street Interchange Improvements |
| 6 Multi-use Carscape Plaza (former burn site) | 14 New Greenway Trail |
| 7 Open Space Improvements | |
| 8 Parking Circulation and Bus Turnaround | |



Present condition, looking south on US 69 on-ramp from Wall Street



Wall Street and US 69 intersection improvement

Components of the Concept

Wall Street Interchange Improvements and Public Art Project. Visitors to Downtown (or travelers on eastbound US Highway 54) typically exit US 69 at the Wall Street interchange, and encounter the low, looming highway overpass supported by rows of concrete columns. The area under the overpass is unattractive and poorly lighted, and the very tight diamond of the ramp creates visibility problems and traffic conflicts with no room for functional or aesthetic improvement. The overall aspect creates a poor transition from highway environment to the historic district, and reinforces the barrier effect of US 69.

The Wall Street Gateway concept will transform this interchange into a gateway that befits Fort Scott and its history and culture, without extensive structural changes to the highway structure. Elements of this transformation include:

- Relocating the northbound access ramps of US 69 farther to the east, intersecting Wall Street at the present Clark Street intersection. Clark

Street south of Wall Street would be realigned to intersect Wall Street at Wilson Street. This creates a safer separation between ramps on either side of the highway, improves visibility, and provides landscaped area used for a park and gateway feature to historic Fort Scott. The major drainageway located adjacent to the northbound on-ramp to US 69 will need to be relocated or enclosed to accommodate this concept.

- A major park and public art installation using the area under the overpass and the neighboring open space created by relocating the ramps. In the concept proposed here, the ground under the overpass would be hard-surfaced, accented by pavers or color-conditioned concrete to define paths that wind around the columns. These paths would continue into the new open space, set off by planted areas of ornamental or native grasses. Free-standing columns of the same scale as the overpass supports would be

located throughout this area. Both the support and free-standing columns would be wrapped with art that reflects the community's heritage, culture, or environment. One concept for this art would apply the theme of photography, including images from the work of the great American photographer and Fort Scott native Gordon Parks and the cluster of fine photographers who continue to work in the city. These images would be set on a base of indigenous brick or limestone to reinforce the themes of local materials and to protect the installation from occasional flooding in this low-lying area. Night-lighting of the columns would de-emphasize the overpass ceiling and add to the dramatic nature of the installation.

- Continuation of the Buck Run Trail through the interchange. The proposed trail would cross Wall Street on the east side of the relocated ramps. Crosswalks using the materials of the paths through the art installation would connect the



April 2009 - west side of U.S. 69 looking down Wall Street



November 2009 - west-side of US 69 looking down Wall Street



Wall Street Boulevard Improvement west of US 69

main trail to the gateway paths, and continue west along the redesigned Wall Street into the fort area.

- *Convenient parking.* The Wall Street boulevard described below and overall interchange design should provide some public parking for travelers wanting to explore the art installation.

The Wall Street Gateway will serve the goals of the overall plan by:

- Improving vehicular and pedestrian safety at the interchange and along Wall Street.
- Creating a unique public space that will encourage exploration of both the art installation and the historic fort and Downtown district.
- Helping to unify the east and west parts of town along the critical Wall Street corridor.

Wall Street Boulevard Improvement. Wall Street is the critical connection between US 69 and downtown and

is especially important because of its visibility to regional travelers, but is a rather weak link in its current condition. This undistinguished street does not successfully bridge the short but important gap between the interchange and the Fort Scott Downtown Historic District. Instead this short segment of Wall Street should be redesigned as a boulevard that brings the quality and soul of the historic downtown out to the interchange.

The proposed street configuration would accommodate one lane of traffic in each direction with parallel parking, divided by a median that includes planting beds, thematic lighting, and enamalized metal graphic “banners”. Sidewalks set off by street trees strengthen the pedestrian environment and reinforce the link between the Buck Run Greenway and Downtown.

The proposed street configuration should take advantage of the mill and overlay project completed in October 2009. This project included an asphalt overlay and sidewalk improvements be-

tween US 69 and Old Fort Scott boulevard.

Redevelopment Site. The Wall Street project would also encourage redevelopment of a full-block site on the south side of Wall between US 69 and State Street. An excellent reuse possibility is a hotel to accommodate business and leisure travelers, with additional meeting and conferencing space. A city entrance at the State Street and Wall Street intersection would relate to the historic fort, the Chamber of Commerce office, and Downtown. The grade of the site could provide lower-level parking for a hotel or other desirable use.

Old Fort Boulevard Area. The existing configuration of Old Fort Boulevard and adjacent parking is confusing for visitors both in cars and on foot. The street includes two one-way parking drive aisles, separated by a median. The west bound drive requires motorists to negotiate a confusing group of driveways to exit at National Avenue, while access to the eastbound drive, serving adjacent businesses, is limited to Main

Street. The median between two roadways provides some green space, but is surrounded by adjacent parking and poorly connected to sidewalks. Finally, Main Street is a northbound, one-way street, making it very difficult for visitors of the fort to get to downtown businesses.

The plan proposes a complete redesign of this area which can still reuse most of the existing paving.

Features of this redesign include:

- Redesign of Old Fort Boulevard as a two-way street with head-in diagonal parking on both sides, aligning with Scott Street at its intersection with Wall Street and leading directly to National Avenue between Oak and Pine Streets.
- A companion two-way street with head-in parking, continuing along Oak Street east from National Avenue and terminating at Wall Street between Scott and Main Streets.

- A promenade park extending continuously from Scott and Wall to Oak and National, incorporating the historic block house. The promenade may have small plazas at regular intervals that include seating, public art, and historic displays. Past the block house, the promenade opens into a larger plaza, designed around a bugle-shaped water feature. This plaza would serve as a forecourt to the recently restored H.L. Stout Building at Oak and National Streets, and would connect north to a potential civic plaza and new city hall, reusing an existing utility office building.
- An improved Main Street access to the fort area, with a divided two way Main Street connecting to the reconfigured Old Fort Boulevard. This improved street connection would also include generous sidewalks and defined crosswalks, leading to a flag plaza and fountain on the Main Street axis.

- Reconfiguring parking design at the Chamber of Commerce office to a circular pattern that increases parking and provides better loading areas for the Chamber’s tourist trolleys.

Two-Way Main Street. Main Street’s relatively narrow section requires one-way northbound traffic to maintain two-sided diagonal parking. However, one-way traffic complicates circulation for visitors, and keeps people from traveling easily between the fort area and the rest of downtown. Two-way circulation on Main Street improves access to business and clarifies circulation routes, and can be accommodated with one-side diagonal parking with parallel parking on the opposite side. Providing additional convenient off-street parking with the redesign of the Fort Boulevard area, reuse of the “burn site” on the southeast corner of Wall and Main Streets and improved design and access of existing off-street parking more than compensates for the loss of on-street parking.



Present condition of plaza space looking towards Main Street from the Fort.



Proposed Boulevard Enhancements between the Fort and Downtown.

Multi-Use Carscape Plaza. The fate of the vacant site on the strategic southeast corner of Wall and Main Streets has been controversial, with some people understandably advocating new building development. However, given the large amount of available downtown commercial space, the district would receive greater benefit by restoring two-way circulation on Main and compensating for lost parking with new off-street parking on the “burn site.” However, a conventional surface lot is inadvisable because of the site’s importance in the district. Instead, this plan recommends an innovative multi-use “carscape”, designed for default use as parking, but designed to function as a public space for events such as farmers’ markets, festivals, performances, and art shows. Paving design, ideally incorporating permeable unit pavers, would use contrasting colors to define parking spaces. The edge of the lot would be defined by a permanent market shelter, continuing the building line and providing protected space for vendors and shade for downtown cus-

tomers. A u-shaped parking configuration provides back-up space for vendors and includes a small internal green that begins an alley pathway to the restored freight house and proposed State Street redevelopment site.

Alley Pathways. Pedestrians often use alleys for access to parking and short routes between two points. However convenient, alleys are primarily service areas for buildings, “landscaped” by loading docks and dumpsters. The downtown concept suggests an east-west alley pathway between Wall and 1st Streets, connecting the proposed carscape plaza and the restored freight house. This continuous landscaped pathway would preserve service access to buildings and parking lots, and provide opportunity for the development of rear facades that are very visible from downtown’s eastern approaches.

For pedestrian safety along downtown streets, alley intersections with sidewalks should be marked with caution signs that require motorists to yield to pedestrians.

Urban Townhouse and Multi-family Housing. Housing has been an important ingredient of downtown revitalization and the Downtown Fort Scott program should take advantage of opportunities for both new construction and adaptive reuse. Redevelopment of a row of deteriorated buildings along North National south of Pine Street could produce four urban townhomes or live/work units adjacent to the new “bugle park”. The northwest corner of 1st and State Street also provides an opportunity for apartment development.

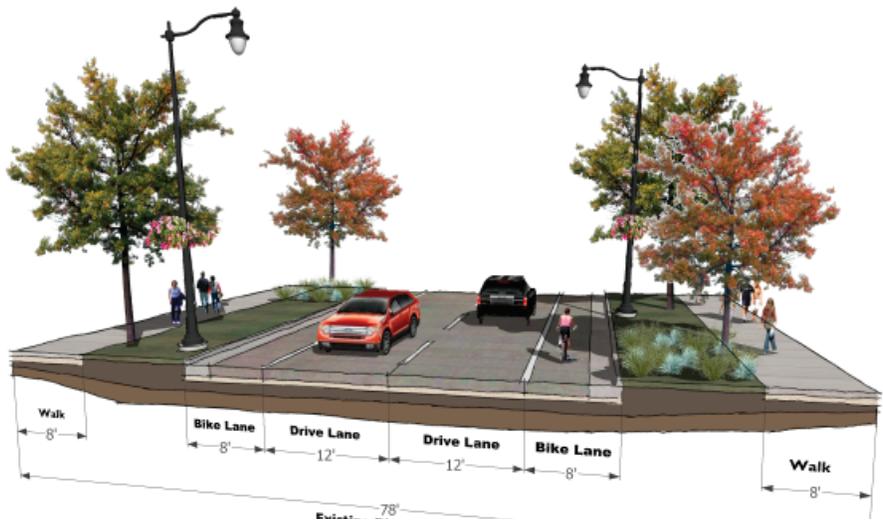
City Hall / Government Facility. Utility office buildings west of the Fort Scott historic site are being considered as a new home for city offices. The downtown concept provides an excellent setting for the reuse of these buildings for city offices and support services, including good parking support, excellent civic open space, and convenient downtown connections.



Present condition of the proposed Multi-Use Carscape Plaza at the east corner of Wall and Main Street.



Market square improvement.



South National District



Description

The South National Business District is a gateway to Fort Scott’s historic neighborhoods, and its development dates from the time when National Avenue was the route of US 69. Today, it is a cluster of retail and service businesses that serve local and traveler needs, and includes the city’s only movie theater. However, it is also a confusing series of difficult intersections, parking lots, and cross streets with no place to walk. The diagonal alignment of National Avenue across the street grid, the incremental scale of development, and the lack of landscaping or driveway definition contribute to this confusion and results in inefficient parking and site development.

However, South National could gain new economic vitality by redesign as a cohesive business district, rather than simply an unplanned cluster of businesses. In addition to serving local customers better, clarity to visitors and improved appearance will help the South National district attract customers from the nearby highway. The revitalization concept proposes safer and clearer traffic circulation, improvements to the public environment, improved business access, and new commercial development sites.

Program

The program for the South National District includes:

- Better vehicular access to the South National district from US 69.
- Better connections to the district from Fort Scott’s neighborhoods, and safer and clearer local circulation within the district.
- Increased parking created by more rational street and circulation patterns.
- Good pedestrian access through the district and to its businesses.
- New sites for commercial development.
- Clearer connections between the South National district and the National Cemetery, including strengthening the relationship between these two community assets.

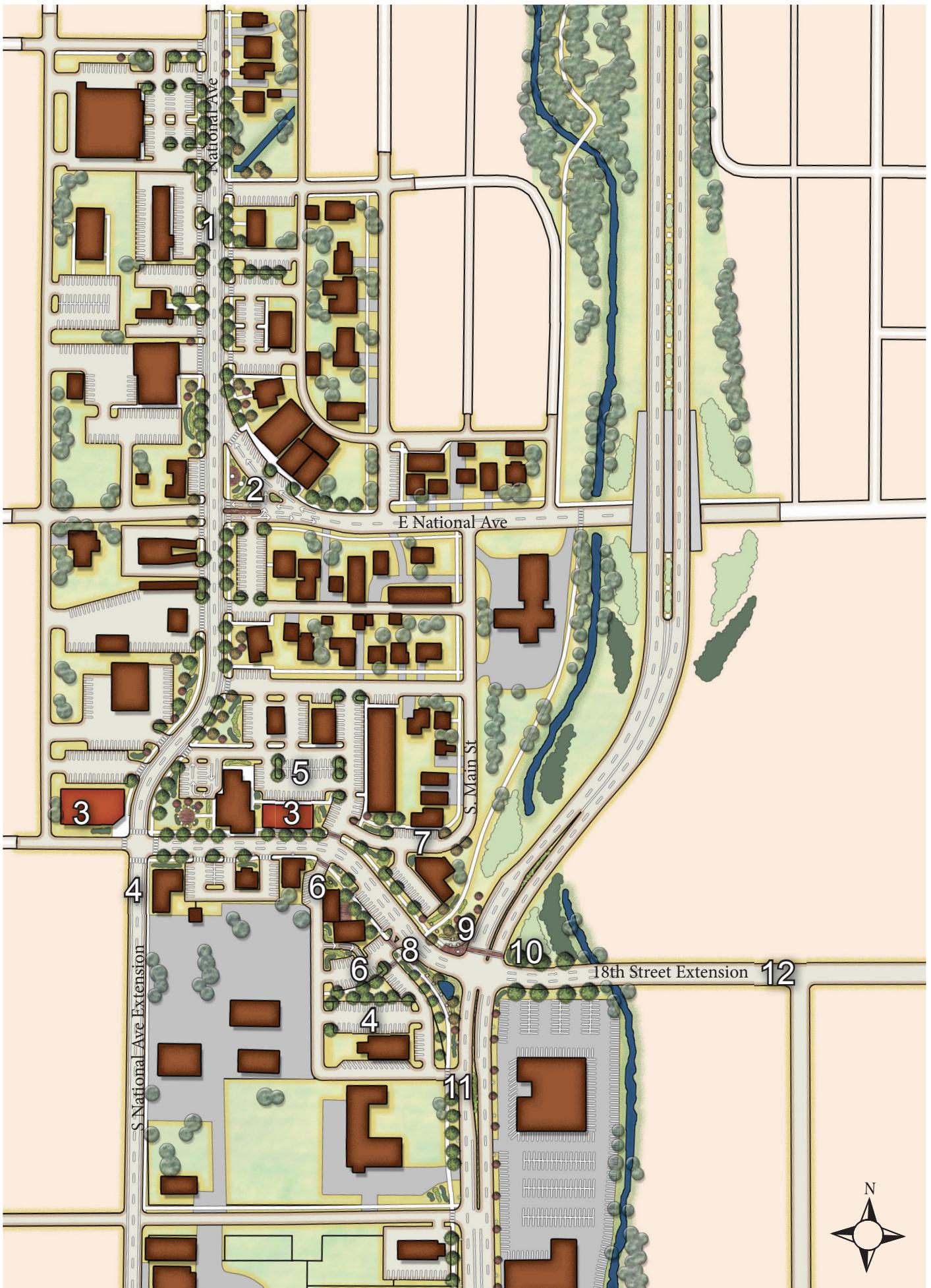


Figure 6.4 South National Business District Development Program

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1 Street Improvements and bicycle lanes | 7 Main St. Connection and Access |
| 2 Enhanced E. National Intersection | 8 Trail Crossing |
| 3 New Development | 9 Gateway Feature |
| 4 S. National Ave Extension | 10 Potential pedestrian crossing |
| 5 Parking reconfiguration and new stalls | 11 New sidewalk access |
| 6 Parking Improvements | 12 18th Street Extension |



Present conditions, south National Business District looking north.

Components of the Concept

Traffic Circulation Improvements.

Improving confusing and hazardous traffic patterns is a vital step toward improving the usability of the district and increasing business potential. This will be accomplished by implementing the following changes:

- *Extending 18th Street as the primary connection to US 69 and vacations of parts of South National.* 18th Street, a principal route to Fort Scott Community College, now merges into South National through a super-elevated curve that leads to a confusing intersection with National Avenue and Jersey Street. Instead, 18th Street would become the primary east-west route to US 69, continuing east from a new intersection with South National and continuing southeast to a signalized 90-degree intersection with Highway 69. The realigned 18th Street could continue east toward Liberty Bell Road and form the basis for local street system to serve potential industrial development between US 69 and the BNSF Railway. With this change in access, part of the existing diagonal South National right-of-way between Jersey Street and US 69 would be vacated, to be redeveloped with new parking for the district and a new commercial development site.

- *Extend National Avenue south of 18th Street.* If 18th Street becomes the principal access to US 69, National Avenue, now a minor street south of 18th Street that bisects the R & R Equipment site can be extended as far south as 23rd Street. The National Avenue extension would relocate the street to the west, around rather than through the R&R site, and provide better connectivity between residential neighborhoods, South Main Street, and the community college. This street extension allows local residents access to these areas without using the main highway. In addition, this realignment and extension creates a new development site along 18th Street, provides more direct access to theater, and opens a significant development site east of the fairgrounds. Additional access can be provided to the new South National Avenue by extending 20th Street across US 69.

East National Avenue Intersection.

East National Avenue is the primary route to National Cemetery #1, and merges into northbound National Avenue on a curved alignment, creating a very awkward “Y” intersection marked by a directional obelisk. A redesign of this difficult intersection will both showcase the historic cemetery and simplify access for visitors. This small but important project would:

- Extend East National directly west to create a standard 90-degree intersection at 17th and National
- Subordinate the existing East National curve as a free westbound to northbound right turn with head-in parking to serve adjacent businesses.
- Provide a left-turn from eastbound East National to serve businesses on the curve.
- Develop a median with a garden around the directional obelisk.

Parking Improvements. The proposed street system changes greatly increase the efficiency of parking lots, resulting in standard lots that also include green space and sidewalks. In addition, vacation of portions of South National adds a large new parking lot that serves surrounding businesses.

Pedestrian/Bicycle Improvements. The project should create a more pedestrian-friendly business district by:

- Establishing a curb line and defining driveway entrances.
- Providing sidewalks along all streets, setback from the curb with tree lawns and street trees.
- Establishing bicycle lanes along National Avenue.
- Connecting the Buck Run Trail into the South National district’s sidewalk system.



South National Business District improvements.



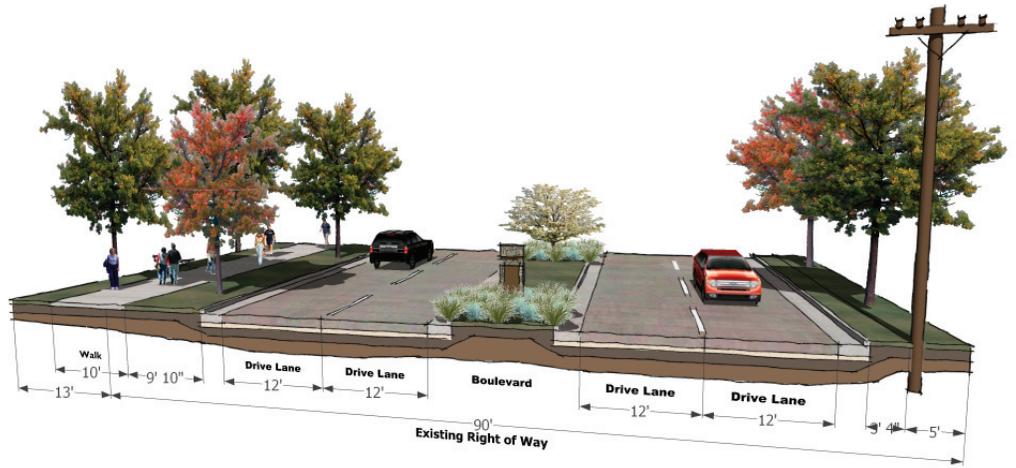
US 69 and 18th Street extension intersection improvements.

- Developing a landscaped area and district gateway at the new 18th Street/US 69 intersection.

18th Street Developments. In addition to improving traffic flow and increasing parking in the district, the street realignment creates two substantial commercial development sites along the north side of 18th Street. Further, a triangular parcel on the west side of the VFW Hall, created by the realignment of National Avenue to the west, could become a Veterans Plaza, with a central memorial feature. The design of this space may include flags, landscaping, decorative paving, and statuary to honor Fort Scott residents who have served in the armed forces.



US 69 improvements at 18th Street extension looking northwest.



South Main Corridor



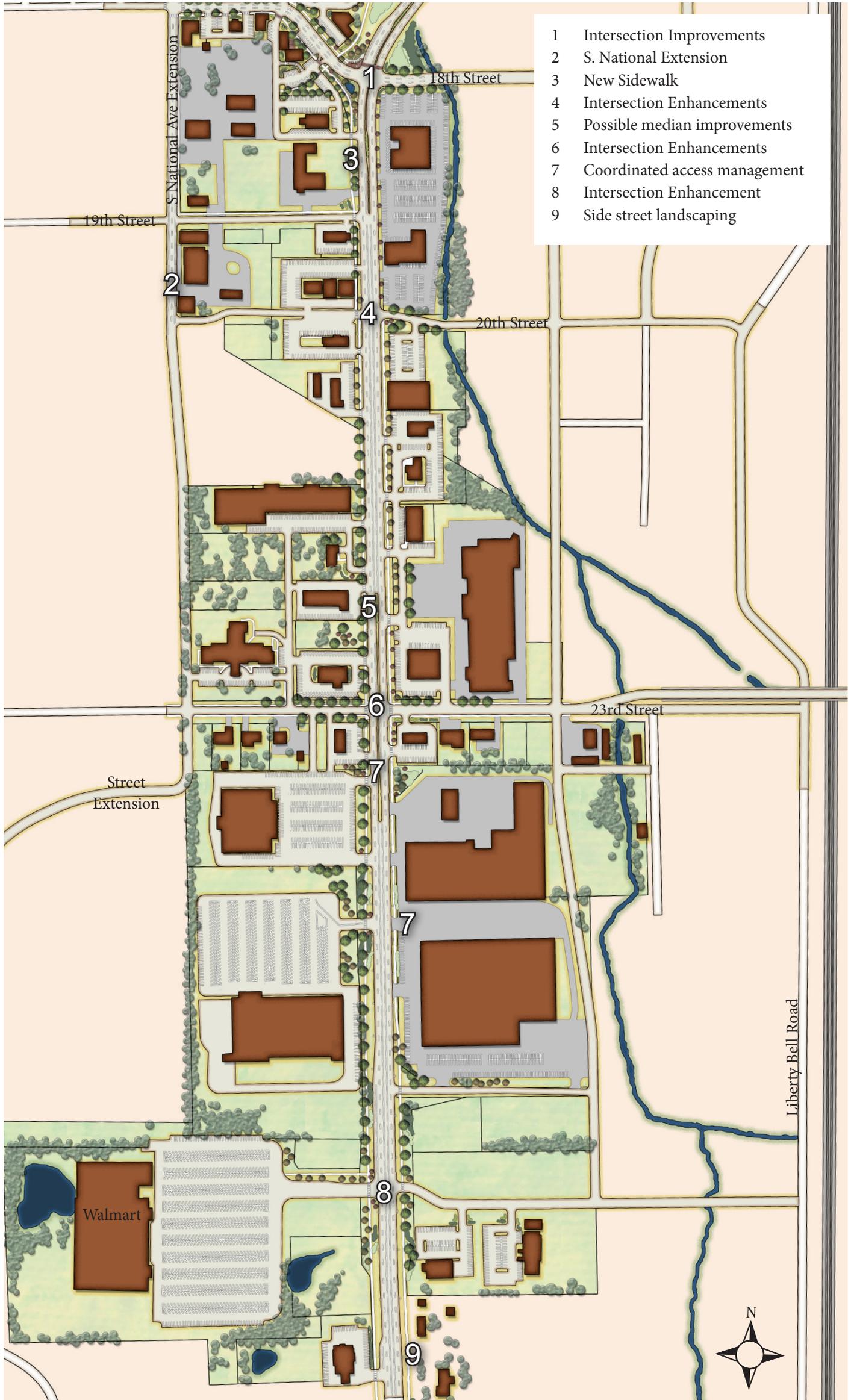
Description

South Main, (US 69 between South National and Jayhawk Road) is Fort Scott's contemporary automobile-oriented commercial corridor, including large-scale retailing, restaurants and services, Mercy Medical Center, and other office and industrial uses. Improvements are designed to improve the highway's dual function as a regional arterial and a commercial street by creating a better public environment, connecting the corridor to the proposed trail and greenway system, creating alternative routes that filter local traffic from the regional main line, and providing better use of land and development sites.

Program

The program for the South Main Corridor includes:

- Improving the quality of the roadway environment.
- Providing reasonable accommodations for pedestrians and bicycles, using those modes to reach corridor destinations.
- Reducing traffic friction to maximize the capacity and smoothness of traffic operations along US 69.
- Opening new areas for economic development on the south side of Fort Scott.
- Improve traffic circulation and safety through access management and efficient design of parking lots.



- 1 Intersection Improvements
- 2 S. National Extension
- 3 New Sidewalk
- 4 Intersection Enhancements
- 5 Possible median improvements
- 6 Intersection Enhancements
- 7 Coordinated access management
- 8 Intersection Enhancement
- 9 Side street landscaping

Map 6.5 South Main Corridor Improvement Program



Present condition, looking north on US 69 South Main Business District.



Cross-sectional improvements along South Main Business District.

Components of the Concept

Road Section Changes. Other parts of this document have discussed the transportation performance of this southern urban section of US 69. Given existing traffic volumes, crash history, and adjacent land uses, this plan recommends widening the urban section to a five-lane facility with a center left-turn or, in specific areas, a raised median with protected left-turn lanes. Medians, where they exist, should be appropriately landscaped.

Access Management and Parking Lot Design. Consolidation of driveway access points to US 69 where possible can decrease traffic friction and improve safety for motorists and, with future pathway development, pedestrians and bicyclists. Additionally, access management increases the efficiency of parking lots by reducing duplicative circulation.

The South Main plan map illustrates a concept for access management and parking lot redesign. A more detailed plan, worked out individually with business and property owners to meet their access needs, should be developed as part of the design process for eventual improvements along the US 69 corridor.

Street Landscaping and Sidepaths. The US 69 right-of-way between the future 18th Street intersection and Jayhawk Road provides enough space for a ten-foot sidepath with shoulders and a generous parkway strip between the highway and the path. Utility lines, adjacent uses, and right-of-way configuration suggest that these improvements should occur on the west side of the road. Landscaping in the parkway strip should include both overstory trees and low-level ornamental landscaping.

The sidepath would connect to the Buck Run Trail system and becomes an important part of the road's multi-modal transportation function. However, careful sidepath design is critical to avoid hazards to pedestrians and cyclists at street and driveway intersections. Sidepaths should cross intersections either relatively close to the roadway to provide maximum visibility to motorists, or set back far enough to enable turning traffic to see and respond to sidepath users. Sidepath crossings should be clearly marked and warning signs employed that indicate the parallel trail facility. Lower scale lighting along the pathway and graphics establishing a city and corridor identity can also add scale and identity to the corridor as both a commercial environment and a gateway to the city.



Possible development site on northside of 18th Street.



Looking south on U.S. 69 and possible sidepath.

Alternative Routes. North-south access for local traffic to and through the South Main district depends largely on US 69. An improved local street network provides alternative routes for local traffic, dedicating more of the highway capacity to through movement and improving the service that it offers. Projects in the South Main area that build a local street network include:

- Extension of National Avenue south to 23rd Street.
- Extension of 20th Street west to Horton Street.
- With redesign of the South National street system, continuation of 18th across US 69 to Liberty Bell Road.
- A north-south “rearage” road on the east side of US 69.
- Possible continuation of the South National extension to Horton Street north of the hospital.

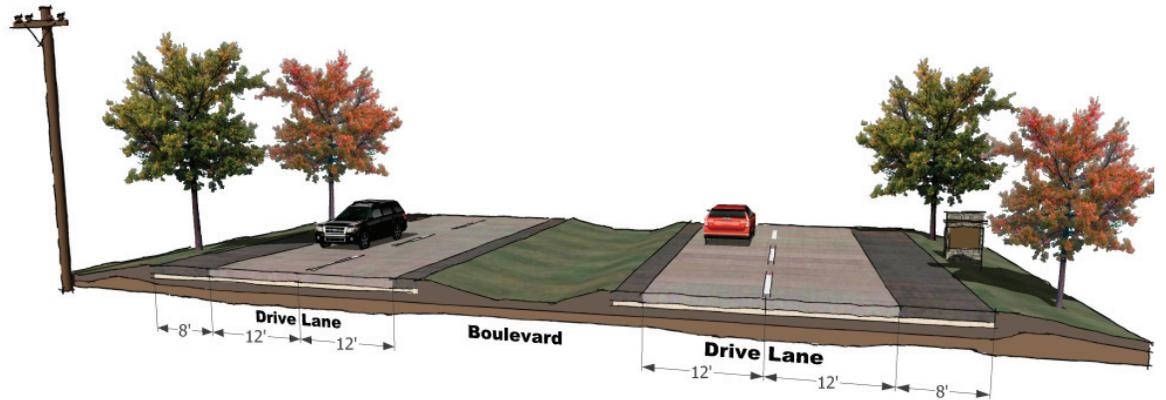
New Development Sites. The combination of better through access created by continued improvement to US 69 between Kansas City and Tulsa; a local street network; and a high-image road environment places the south corridor in a position to attract more employment-based development. Potential sites proposed by this plan for development include:

- Completion of the Bourbon County Industrial Park.
- New industrial and business park development on open land between the BNSF and a proposed rearage road between the extended 18th Street and 23rd Street.
- Commercial and mixed use development east of the Bourbon County Fairgrounds between the extended South National Avenue and US 69.

- Office and mixed use development adjacent to the Cigna campus, opened by a possible extension of South National Avenue south of 23rd Street to Horton Street.

The south corridor land use concept, presented in Chapter 5, indicates these sites and incorporates them into traffic projections and transportation planning for US 69.

Great Circle Connection. The southern arc of the Great Circle concept would connect the riverfront (or “blue” arc) with the highway (or “red” arc) through the Fort Scott Community College campus and the fairgrounds. Development between the fairgrounds and the highway or a westward extension of 20th Street should provide a greenway corridor to complete the circle.



Rural Transition



Description

The US 69 corridor's character changes as the highway enters the county. The Bourbon County Industrial Park is adjacent to the east side of the corridor south to the Highway 7 interchange, and is largely undeveloped between Hickory and Hackberry Roads. The west side of the highway has scattered industrial and commercial use (including vacant commercial buildings), is largely open. The corridor is in agricultural use south of Highway 7 to the county line.

While US 69 will be upgraded to a four-lane facility south of Highway 7, the issue of whether the road will be developed to expressway (with limited surface access) or freeway (with interchange access only) standards is unresolved. Bourbon County does not currently exercise zoning or land use control, opening the possibility of unmanaged development that may affect the quality and function of the corridor.

Program

- Provide a positive county and community image for northbound traffic entering Fort Scott.
- Manage storm water.
- Preserve the open character of the rural landscape.
- Prevent unsightly or unplanned commercial or industrial development.

Components of the Concept

Land use management. The city and county should develop a framework for development management along the highway corridor. This starts with defining desirable land use of the US 69 frontage. The plan proposes:

- A continuation of the existing industrial and business use pattern between US 69 and the BNSF within the Bourbon County Industrial Park south to the Highway 7 interchange. The industrial park has adequate infrastructure and internal access to support industrial use. Development within this planned industrial area should:
 - Orient loading and service areas away from direct highway view to the maximum degree possible.
 - Provide substantial landscaping adjacent to the highway right-of-way.
 - Continue to provide internal access to individual industries in the park, with direct access to US 69 limited to section line roads and one intermediate access, as near as possible to the half-section if an expressway section is constructed.
 - Limit industrial owners to enterprises that do not generate measurable external environmental effects (hazards, noise, odors, or light) beyond their immediate property lines. Prohibit salvage yards or other operations with exterior storage of salvage or raw materials.
 - Establish stormwater management standards that either detain stormwater from a 10-year design storm within the boundaries of an individual parcel or, alternatively, includes regional management that includes all or part of the industrial park.
- Limitation of industrial and commercial development along the west frontage of US 69 between Jayhawk and Highway 7 to parcels that have previously established commercial and industrial uses without ap-



Present condition, looking north along US 69 near Jayhawk Road.



Improved Gateway to Fort Scott, Kansas.

proval of special permits by both Bourbon County and the City of Fort Scott. Require all such commercial and industrial uses to meet the restrictions proposed above for properties in the Industrial Park.

- Restriction of adjacent uses to agriculture and accessory agricultural uses between Highway 7 and the county line.

Implementation of these guidelines requires:

- A US 69 special development district within the county jurisdiction, created by Bourbon County that includes ordinance language to identify specific use and development restrictions.
- An intergovernmental agreement between the county and city to address administration of the special development district. One option is administration of the district by the City, with approval of special permits and other legislative actions by the county board. The Kansas Department of Transportation may

also be a signatory to the agreement.

These requirements are intended to control unmanaged or premature development along the corridor. Conditions will inevitably change over time, and the special development district's limitations and guidelines should respond to these changes. For example, considerable support exists for developing US 69 to freeway standards south of Fort Scott. If this occurs, interchanges produce points of maximum access that produce unusual opportunities without affecting US 69 traffic operations.

The county and city should make appropriate modifications to the district, based on a specific area plan that addresses land use, environmental management, access, and appearance of property around the interchange.

Stormwater management. Improvements to US 69 should incorporate best practices that manage stormwater runoff within the highway right-of-way.

Techniques include bioswales in the median, permanent water features, wetlands remediation areas, and retention/detention facilities within the right-of-way and adjacent public areas.

Design Features. Design features and themes that are intensively developed in the city should be introduced in the rural part of the corridor. Specific concepts include:

- A gateway monument at the county line, using the aesthetic vocabulary of native materials used throughout the corridor.
- Similar monument markers at intersections that lead to other significant features, such as Lake Fort Scott.
- Ornamental plantings clustered at regular intervals along the roadway. These intervals would become shorter as the traveler approaches Fort Scott.

