

NEWTONNEXT

2026 - 2036 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

NEXT STOP, NEXT CHAPTER

Acknowledgments

Thank you to all participants in the planning process. Your time, technical expertise, and guidance were critical to the development of the Newton Next Comprehensive Plan. Your investment in this Plan is valued.

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NEWTONNEXT

To our Newton Community,

I'm proud to introduce Newton Next, our new Comprehensive Plan. It lays out a vision for a stronger, more vibrant Newton, built through months of community meetings, open houses, surveys, and reviews. Thank you to everyone who contributed. Your engagement made this plan better. Newton is on the edge of real growth. It's on us to make sure that growth benefits our residents and businesses and protects the character that makes this community what it is. This plan covers housing, transportation, economic development, and parks, and it will guide our decisions for the next 10+ years. Reaching its goals will take all of us.

Newton's best asset is our people: residents, businesses, nonprofits, faith communities, and local leaders. Together, we're building a beautiful, innovative, welcoming, safe place to call home. I look forward to growing alongside you in the years ahead.

Sincerely,



Rich Stinnett

Mayor



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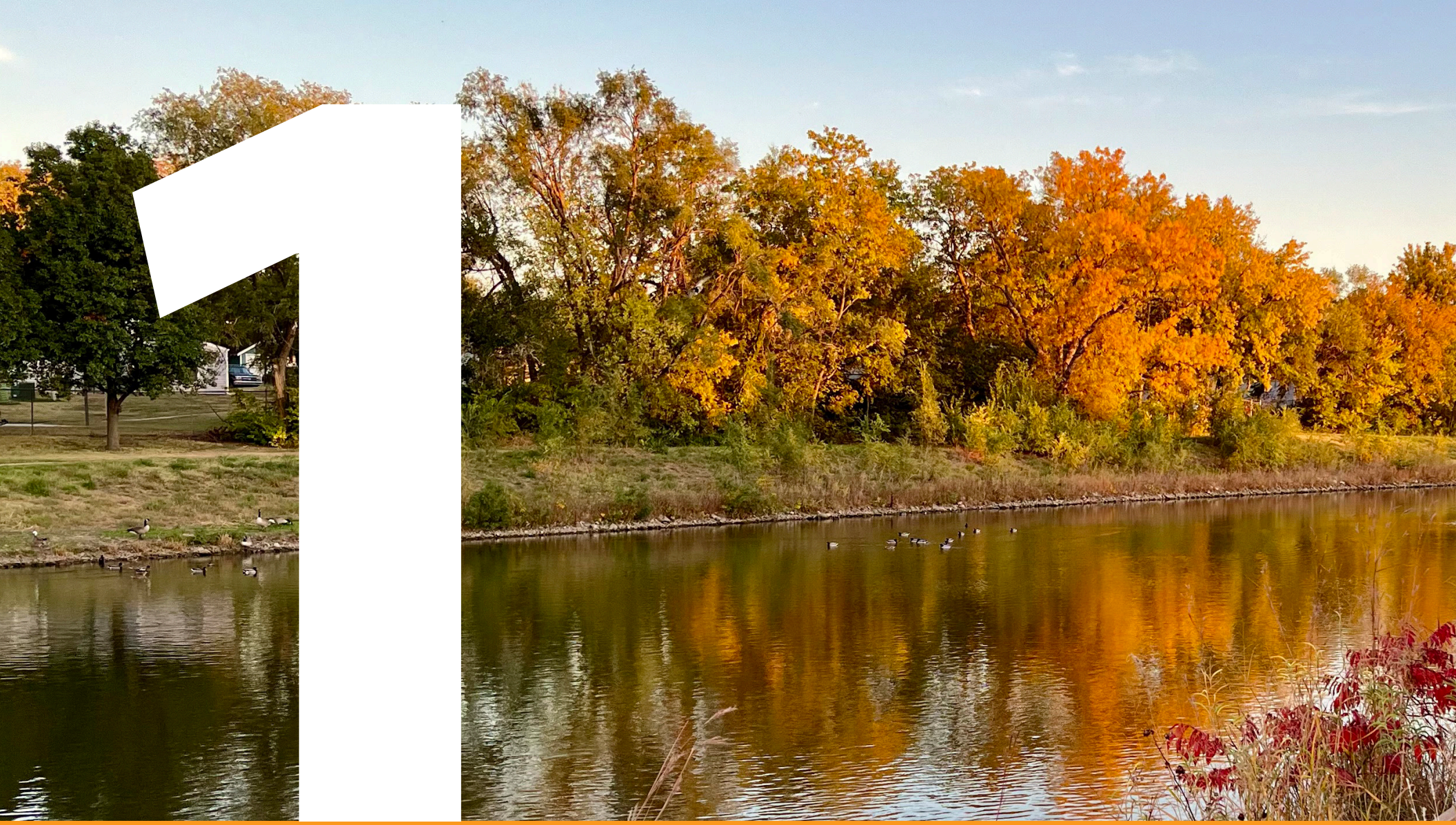
Appendix A | Existing Conditions & Plans Assessment

Appendix B | Statistically Valid Survey

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1 Introduction



This section provides the foundation from which the comprehensive plan (Plan) is based. This section sets the scene for the Plan and answers why this planning process and resulting document is necessary, how this document is used, and what the planning process entailed.

SECTION 1 CONTENTS

Plan Overview

Community Context

Plan Overview

Newton Next serves as a guide for stewarding Newton's public and private investments and driving implementation of key community initiatives. This Plan is rooted in Newton's values and points the community in the direction of its shared goals using a variety of tactics. It addresses critical topics that will shape how Newton evolves, including future land use, placemaking, urban design, growth, mobility, and economic development. The planning process culminated in this integrated document that reflects the needs and desires of the community and guides future decision making related to the strategic and sustainable growth of Newton. The Plan provides a policy framework for growth, future land use, mobility and transportation, and quality of life.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan—sometimes referred to as a general plan, master plan, or land use plan—is a vision for the future on a community scale. Comprehensive plans are created by and for the community to record shared goals and desires for themselves and their fellow community members. A comprehensive plan examines what a community is, where it came from, and crafts a coordinated road map for the future. This road map guides the growth and development of the community for the next 10 to 20 years and is revisited often to maintain its relevance over time. Effective plans are grounded and provide measurable, achievable action items for reaching shared goals. Communities can also use comprehensive plans as a factual and objective basis to justify future decision-making and evaluate proposed changes to make sure they align with Newton's long-term vision.

Why Did We Update Our Comprehensive Plan?

Newton is known for its vibrant neighborhoods and exceptional quality of life, making it a highly desirable place to live and work. This desirability has created growth pressures that require thoughtful planning. The City's previous Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2010, and while it has been reviewed and updated over the years, a full update was needed to establish Citywide priorities and themes for the future. In addition, the City of Newton has successfully achieved the goals and actions laid out in its last Comprehensive Plan. This updated Plan was created through community engagement to define a shared vision and goals for Newton's next era. It positions the City to be proactive about growth, rather than reactive, and to consider public and private investments holistically.

What Makes Up the Comprehensive Plan?

The Plan acts as a roadmap for development decisions, zoning changes, and community improvements, each being reviewed for consistency with the Plan. This helps safeguard Newton's established goals while addressing short-term needs. Although the Plan reflects current conditions and community input, it sets a broad foundation to guide growth and reinvestment for years to come.

This Plan is used to:



The Plan incorporates key elements such as a vision, values, goals, strategies, and framework plans. It should be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect changes in economic and demographic conditions, state and federal laws, policy impacts, and new tools or resources. At minimum, the Planning Commission will review the Plan annually and may propose amendments in accordance with Kansas Statutes Annotated § 12-747(d).

Key Opportunities for Newton

The planning process uncovered key issues and opportunities facing Newton today. The following section translates overall findings of the Existing Conditions report, Housing Study, Economic Study, and public engagement into a clear set of opportunities.



Opportunity 1: Build a Housing Ecosystem that Supports Every Stage of Life and Work

Newton has a timely opportunity to align housing production and reinvestment with the needs of its current residents and emerging workforce, creating a more complete housing ecosystem that supports seniors aging in place, young households entering the market, and workers relocating for new jobs. With strong demand for entry-level ownership, extremely tight rental conditions, and growing interest in downsizing and Downtown living, Newton can respond by positioning housing as a catalyst for population stabilization, workforce attraction, and neighborhood reinvestment. Strategic public/private partnerships, targeted incentives, and infill development can help translate demand into attainable, high-quality housing options Citywide.



Opportunity 2: Modernize Infrastructure to Enable Infill, Downtown Revitalization, and Strategic Growth

Newton's historic infrastructure network provides a strong foundation for reinvestment, offering a clear opportunity to modernize systems in ways that unlock redevelopment potential while improving long-term efficiency and resilience. Newton can support new growth that strengthens community pride and makes productive use of underserved areas by prioritizing infrastructure upgrades in aging areas, such as Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. Aligning infrastructure planning with land use and fiscal strategy positions the City for smarter growth.

Opportunity 3: Leverage Economic Momentum to Strengthen Quality of Life and Place

As Newton experiences renewed industrial and employment momentum, the City is well positioned to pair job growth with investments in placemaking, amenities, and everyday experiences that make people want to stay. Downtown's historic character, walkable neighborhoods, parks and trails, and evolving cultural identity provides a strong platform for expanding dining, entertainment, housing, and recreation. Building on these assets, Newton can transform economic growth into long-term community vitality, strengthening appeal to workers, families, entrepreneurs, and employers alike.

Opportunity 4: Harness Demographic Change to Grow a More Balanced, Resilient Community

Newton's demographic profile presents an opportunity to proactively shape a more balanced community, supporting an aging population while intentionally welcoming younger households, families, and new residents. Expanding housing choices, enhancing amenities, and improving access to services can help Newton meet rising service needs while stabilizing population trends and broadening the tax base. With thoughtful planning, demographic change becomes a lever for reinvestment, innovation, and intergenerational community-building rather than a constraint.

Opportunity 5: Align Growth Patterns with Long-Term Fiscal Strength

Newton has an opportunity to refine how and where it grows, focusing development in locations that maximize public investment, reduce long-term maintenance costs, and strengthen the City's fiscal position. By emphasizing infill, redevelopment, and efficient use of existing infrastructure (while thoughtfully managing greenfield expansion), Newton can make sure that growth pays for itself over time. This shift allows the City to reinvest in neighborhoods, maintain high-quality services, and preserve a strong tax base for future generations.



Section 2

Our Vision & Values

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Section 2 Contents

Vision Statement

Guiding Principles

While not every individual viewpoint can be represented in a single document, the process emphasized transparency and consensus-building. Consensus does not mean complete agreement; it means finding common ground on what is possible and what best serves the community. From these conversations emerged the vision and values that guide this Plan, rooted in the voices of Newton.

Vision Statement:

"Newton will translate renewed economic activity into long-term community assets by aligning housing, infrastructure, and growth decisions around people, place, and resilience, ensuring the City thrives as a livable, competitive, and deeply rooted community over the next decade."



A vision statement serves as the community's "north star," emphasizing Newton's core values and aspirations uncovered through extensive engagement.


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Newton's Values



Purposeful Growth

Newton will pursue growth intentionally, with a focus on strengthening existing places while expanding incrementally and methodically. Through strategic partnerships and investments, we will support stable, well-paying jobs, strengthen critical infrastructure, and make smart, long-term decisions that expand the tax base without shifting financial burdens onto residents.



Housing Variety

Newton will support a full spectrum of housing choices that meet the needs of existing and future residents. From affordable starter homes and quality rentals to missing middle and high-end homes, we will work to create options for all ages and incomes. Housing growth will align with job creation, while also attracting and retaining residents that are connected to local economic opportunities.



Downtown Revitalization

Newton will invest in a vibrant, mixed-use Downtown that serves as both a daily destination and a regional draw. Downtown will serve as a "live-work-play" environment, offering housing, consistent business hours, diverse retail and dining, and distinctive experiences that reflect Newton's character. Events, cultural venues, and active public spaces will create reasons to visit and stay, strengthening the Downtown's role as a center of community identity, energy, and economic activity.



Balanced Mobility

Newton will create a transportation system that supports both regional connectivity and local, daily life. Streets will move people and goods efficiently where needed, while also functioning as safe, inviting public spaces where people live, shop, and gather. Newton will remain an essential link in the national rail network, supporting commerce and regional mobility. Mobility investments will be made intentionally, with context and purpose.



Full-Service Parks and Recreation

Newton will invest in a modern, well-maintained parks and recreation system that supports everyday life and community pride. From competitive sports to accessible amenities and flexible gathering spaces, parks and recreation will engage local families, attract visitors, and strengthen partnerships with community organizations.



Urban Design and Sense of Place

Newton will value quality and beauty in its built environment. Public spaces, streetscapes, and private development will contribute to a distinctive, welcoming community that reflects Newton's history, character, and aspirations, creating places people recognize, enjoy, and feel connected to.



These values serve as Newton's compass for decision-making, aligning with the philosophy of Newton Next.

Section 3

Strategic Growth

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Section 3 Contents

Citywide Goals

Framework Map & Policies

3

Framework Introduction

Newton's future will be shaped by how the community manages growth, influencing where it occurs, what form it takes, and how well it aligns with the City's long-term goals. This section provides a framework for guiding that growth with intention. These categories are not land use designations, but rather indications of anticipated levels of change over time, driven by both public and private investment.

Proactive growth does not mean growth at any cost or at any pace. Newton faces real and documented constraints, including infrastructure capacity, service delivery limits, rail-related disruptions, and long-term fiscal responsibilities. These constraints must be acknowledged and addressed, and this will shape how, when, and where growth occurs. Resilient growth in Newton means aligning development decisions with infrastructure readiness, operational capacity, and long-term maintenance obligations, while still positioning the community to capture reinvestment and economic opportunity.

Goals: Strategic Growth

Goal 3.1: Emphasize new growth where the City can already serve it well.

Focus most new development in areas with existing streets, utilities, and reliable emergency response.

Goal 3.2: Make sure the culmination of new development pays its way over time.

Avoid projects that leave the City with long-term maintenance and service costs it cannot sustain.

Goal 3.3: Use new edge-of-town growth to strengthen the rest of Newton.

When building on the outskirts happens, connect it back to the existing City and support reinvestment in the long run.

Goal 3.4: Make sure the value derived from new annexation outweighs the long-term financial obligations in infrastructure to support it.

Expand the City limits only when service delivery is realistic and the City's shape improves.

Goal 3.5: Coordinate public investment where it will do the most good.

Line up infrastructure spending, redevelopment, and revitalization in priority areas instead of scattering resources.

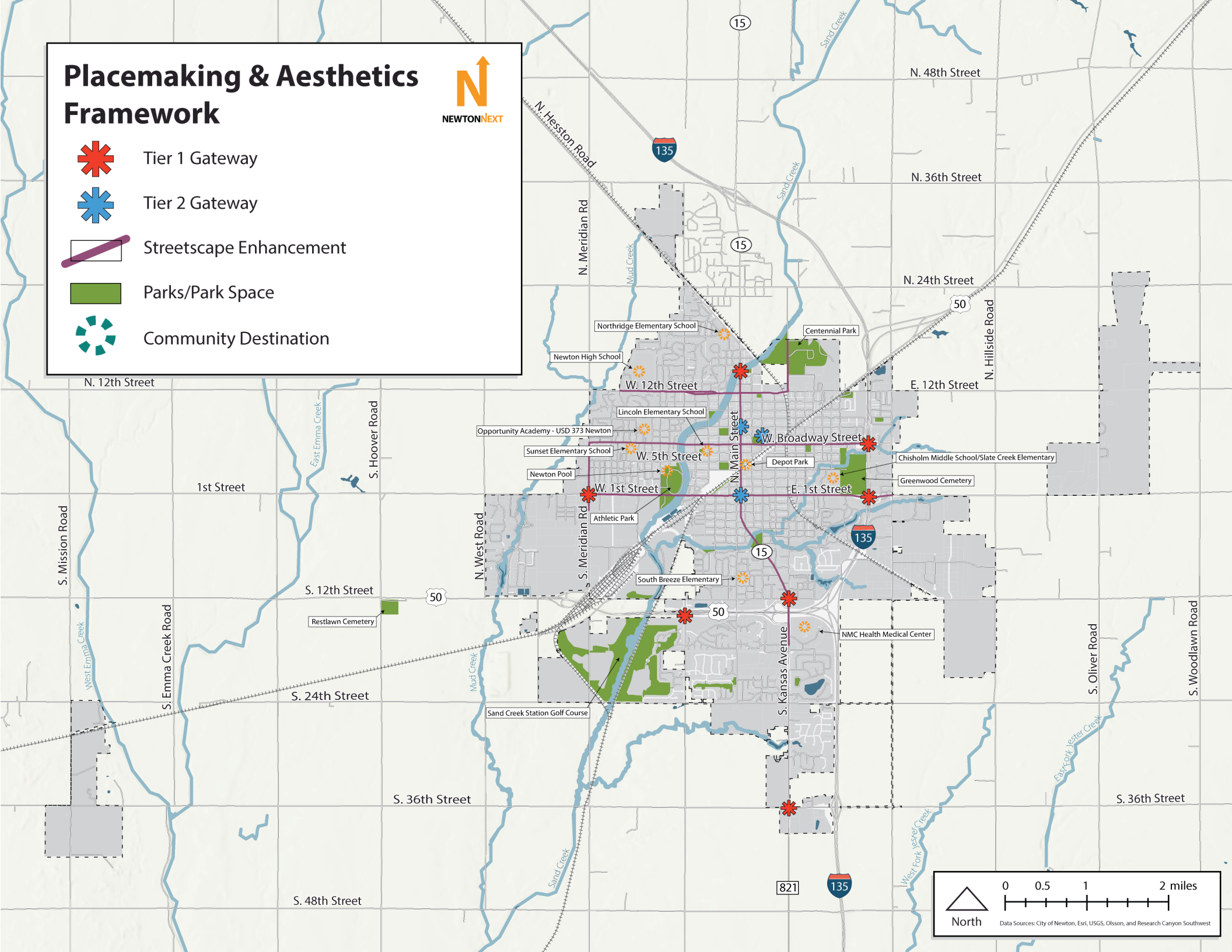
Goal 3.6: Track results and adjust over time.

Regularly check what's working, occasionally updating policies so Newton stays on a practical path.

What is a Growth Framework?

The Growth Framework provides guidance for managing change in the community, in addition to the future land use map in Section 4. Instead of focusing only on what goes where, the Growth Framework reflects both community input and best practices to describe how different areas are expected and desired to change over time, identifying varying levels of anticipated growth across Newton over the next decade. It considers both areas within the City and places just beyond its boundaries, offering a broader view of how the community may evolve. Some areas are expected to remain largely stable. These are established neighborhoods where the focus is on maintaining existing character, with incremental improvements like small infill projects, rehabilitation, and reinvestment. Other areas are positioned for more significant change. These include places targeted for revitalization or adaptive reuse, areas that may be annexed into the City, and locations suited for new greenfield development. Each category reflects a different level of investment and intensity of growth. The following chapter defines each growth type in more detail and outlines a clear policy direction for how the City should guide and manage development within each area.

The Growth Framework was informed by several sources. Housing and economic market analyses prepared by Research Canyon Southwest (Appendices C and D) provided insight into future development opportunities and market conditions. Extensive community and stakeholder input helped shape growth priorities, concerns, and aspirations, as documented in Appendix E. The framework also builds upon the existing conditions assessment and plan review (Appendix A), findings from the statistically valid community survey (Appendix B), and professional evaluation of infrastructure capacity, fiscal considerations, development trends, and community needs. Together these sources create a framework that balances community vision with market realities and provides a coordinated roadmap for guiding growth and investment throughout Newton.


Placemaking & Aesthetics Framework
NEWTONNEXT
Tier 1 Gateway
Tier 2 Gateway
Streetscape Enhancement
Parks/Park Space
Community Destination
N. 48th Street
N. 36th Street
N. 24th Street
N. 12th Street
E. 12th Street
W. 12th Street
W. Broadway Street
W. 5th Street
W. 1st Street
E. 1st Street
1st Street
S. 12th Street
S. 24th Street
S. 36th Street
S. 48th Street
N. Hesston Road
N. Meridian Rd
N. Hillside Road
N. Main Street
N. West Road
S. Meridian Rd
S. Hoover Road
S. Mission Road
S. Emma Creek Road
S. Kansas Avenue
S. Oliver Road
S. Woodlawn Road
Sand Creek
Mud Creek
East Emma Creek
West Emma Creek
East Fork Jester Creek
West Fork Jester Creek
Northridge Elementary School
Centennial Park
Newton High School
Lincoln Elementary School
Opportunity Academy - USD 373 Newton
Sunset Elementary School
Newton Pool
Athletic Park
Depot Park
Chisholm Middle School/Slate Creek Elementary
Greenwood Cemetery
South Breeze Elementary
NMC Health Medical Center
Restlawn Cemetery
Sand Creek Station Golf Course
15
50
135
821
North
0 0.5 1 2 miles
Data Sources: City of Newton, Esri, USGS, Olsson, and Research Canyon Southwest

Revitalization and Adaptive Reuse

This category applies to Newton's established areas where reinvestment is desired, with a primary focus on Downtown and older commercial districts. These areas offer opportunities to drive reinvestment through rehabilitation, reuse, and infill rather than outward expansion. Because these opportunities exist in established areas, reinvestment should be guided to preserve character and context while enabling each place to evolve thoughtfully.

Growth Readiness - Conditional or Ready: This type of growth is dependent on available water pressure and fire flow, wastewater conveyance and treatment capacity, stormwater system capacity, and reliable street access.

Policy Direction:

- Downtown infrastructure (water, sewer, and storm drainage) largely dates to the late 1800s and requires coordinated, district-scale upgrades to support additional intensity.
- Public investment should be targeted where private redevelopment is desired, and increased intensity should be aligned with confirmed, funded upgrades.
- Rail activity affects emergency response and access; redevelopment should account for access redundancy and response reliability.
- Use adaptive reuse and infill as primary growth tools in these areas.



Greenfield Development (Within City Limits)

This category applies to undeveloped or lightly developed land within Newton's current boundaries. Greenfield development inside City limits is preferred over annexation because it can use existing systems and services more efficiently. However, new developments should be prioritized where long-term maintenance costs can be sustained.

Growth Readiness - Conditional or Ready: Highly dependent on water capacity (pressure and fire flow), wastewater conveyance and treatment capacity, stormwater and floodplain constraints, and street connectivity. Greenfield strategies may require the private sector to fund complete or partial upgrades to facilities serving the property. Emergency access and response reliability are critical.

Policy Direction:

- Plan connected street networks that align with topography and support coordinated, long-range development through appropriate block and lot patterns.
- Require street connections to adjacent properties at regular intervals to promote network connectivity, except where natural features, drainage needs, or regional transportation facilities justify limited connections.
- When street connections are not feasible, prioritize pedestrian connections and design blocks to minimize cul-de-sacs by using alternatives such as loops, closes, eyebrows, and courtyard layouts.
- Design blocks and lots to avoid hazards and constraints, including steep slopes, unstable soils, flood-prone areas, and natural drainageways, while ensuring all lots have functional access to the road network through local streets, alleys, shared drives, or internal access ways.
- Integrate stormwater and grading at a system-wide scale, aligning streets and blocks with existing topography to reduce drainage impacts, improve sustainability, and lower long-term lifecycle costs.
- Incorporate planned trails, parks, and open space identified in adopted plans, with clear provisions for ownership, maintenance, and long-term management through public dedication, homeowners or leaseholder associations, or non-profit entities.
- Use street design to reflect context and support adjacent land uses, while managing access along major roadways and coordinating access points with neighboring properties.
- Coordinate public facilities and infrastructure with development impacts, ensuring adequate capacity for streets, utilities, stormwater, and services before approval, and promoting fiscally responsible growth through verified capacity, funded upgrades, and public-private partnerships.

Annexation Possibilities

These areas represent long-term growth opportunities for Newton that are not currently located within City limits. Future annexation areas may provide more space for development to occur, which can expand tax revenue, support housing growth, and enable job growth. Annexation should be intentional, phased, and capacity-driven, occurring only when infrastructure, services, and long-term funding are in place. Growth should extend the City logically, avoid leapfrog patterns, and protect existing residents from unfunded service obligations.

Growth Readiness - Future: Dependent on extension of water capacity (pressure and fire flow), wastewater conveyance and treatment, stormwater management, street connectivity, and emergency access.

Policy Direction:

- Annex only when the City is ready. Annexation should occur only when infrastructure, services, staffing, and long-term funding are in place or clearly committed. Market interest alone is not sufficient.
- Require clear service and fiscal planning. Annexation proposals should demonstrate how utilities, transportation, emergency services, and maintenance will be provided and funded without shifting long-term costs to existing residents. Annexation proposals should be based on an analysis of both qualitative and quantitative impacts.
- Phase growth based on infrastructure capacity. Annexation and development should proceed incrementally, aligned with verified infrastructure capacity and fiscal impact, rather than speculative or premature expansion.
- Grow outward in a logical, connected way. Annexed areas should function as natural extensions of the City, with connected streets, utilities, and development patterns that avoid leapfrog or isolated growth.
- Plan infrastructure for today and tomorrow. New development should extend streets, utilities, and drainage systems in a way that supports future growth. Where larger, planned facilities are needed, costs should be shared fairly between the developer and the City based on actual impacts.
- Make sure development pays its fair share. Growth should include funding mechanisms, such as impact mitigation, benefit districts, or developer participation, to cover the full cost of new infrastructure, operations, and long-term maintenance.
- Coordinate transportation and access early. Projects with significant traffic impacts should address roadway capacity, access coordination, and connectivity as part of annexation and development planning.
- Protect and integrate natural systems. Stormwater management should be planned at a system level, using streets, open spaces, and natural drainageways to reduce flooding, protect water resources, and support long-term resilience.

- Certify the availability of basic services before building. Development should not proceed until adequate water supply, fire protection, wastewater service, stormwater management, streets, and utilities are available or funded and scheduled for delivery.
- Plan for long-term utility needs. Major infrastructure investments, such as future wastewater treatment capacity associated with southward growth, should be considered early and tied to annexation decisions.



Maintenance and Stewardship

This category applies to stable, built-out neighborhoods and areas where the primary objective is ongoing upkeep rather than increased development intensity. These areas form the backbone of the City and require consistent reinvestment to prevent long-term decline.

Growth Readiness - Ready: Existing areas where infrastructure, housing, and public assets should be maintained and renewed on a regular cycle.

Policy Direction:

- Code enforcement should support basic upkeep and property maintenance.
- Property owners are expected to reinvest as needed to maintain housing quality.
- City investment should focus on routine infrastructure maintenance and replacement.
- Targeted programs – such as grants, tax abatements, or repair assistance – may be used to support continued reinvestment.

Section 4

Land Use & Development

4





Section 4 Contents

Citywide Goals

Framework Map & Policies

4

Framework Introduction

Newton's existing land use pattern is anchored by a walkable historic Downtown and surrounding traditional neighborhoods, with more auto-oriented commercial and industrial development concentrated along key corridors and at major intersections. The following framework provides definitions of specific Place Types to reinforce existing patterns and to provide policy guidance on how they might evolve over time and be applied in potential growth areas. Because reinvestment feasibility varies across Newton, particularly in older areas with aging utilities, Place Types and future land use recommendations should be coordinated with infrastructure planning and redevelopment tools to make sure desired intensity is achievable.

Goals: Land Use & Development

Goal 4.1: Protect neighborhood character while encouraging reinvestment.

Support upkeep, repair, and new infill that fits the look and feel of existing neighborhoods.

Goal 4.2: Expand housing choice by enabling a range of housing types throughout the City.

Make room for a wider range of housing types through infill and well-planned new neighborhoods.

Goal 4.3: Use new housing areas to create smooth transitions between places.

Avoid abrupt changes by designing edges that step down in size, activity, and intensity.

Goal 4.4: Use large-scale development to connect new and existing places to the rest of the City.

Make it easy to get to schools, parks, Downtown, jobs, and services without having to drive for every trip.

Goal 4.5: Integrate amenities that support daily life in walkable proximity to neighborhoods.

Support neighborhood-scale services and parks, and link them together so they work as a Citywide network.

Goal 4.6: Reduce vacant buildings and underused lots.

Bring empty properties back into productive use and encourage redevelopment before building new elsewhere.

Goal 4.7: Improve corridors by upgrading places, not just extending them.

Prioritize reinvestment, better building sites, safer access, and curb appeal, so corridors feel like assets that reflect the character of Newton.

Goal 4.8: Guide campus growth to be a good neighbor and a community benefit.

Support long-term campus flexibility while improving nearby streets, sidewalks, trails, and public spaces.

Goal 4.9: Put industrial and logistics growth in designated locations and support quality.

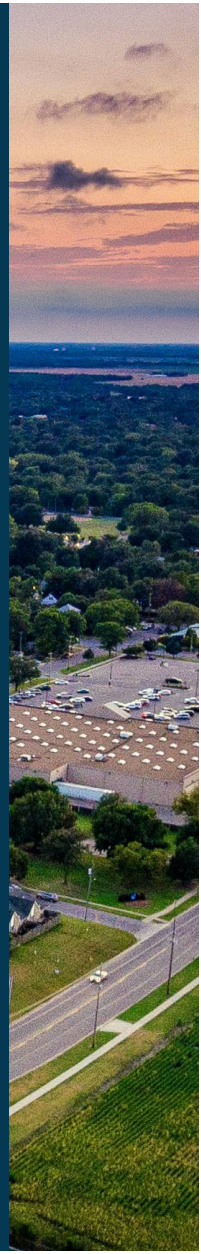
Direct these uses to well-served areas, require safe and durable site design, and limit noise, traffic, and other impacts on nearby homes and businesses.

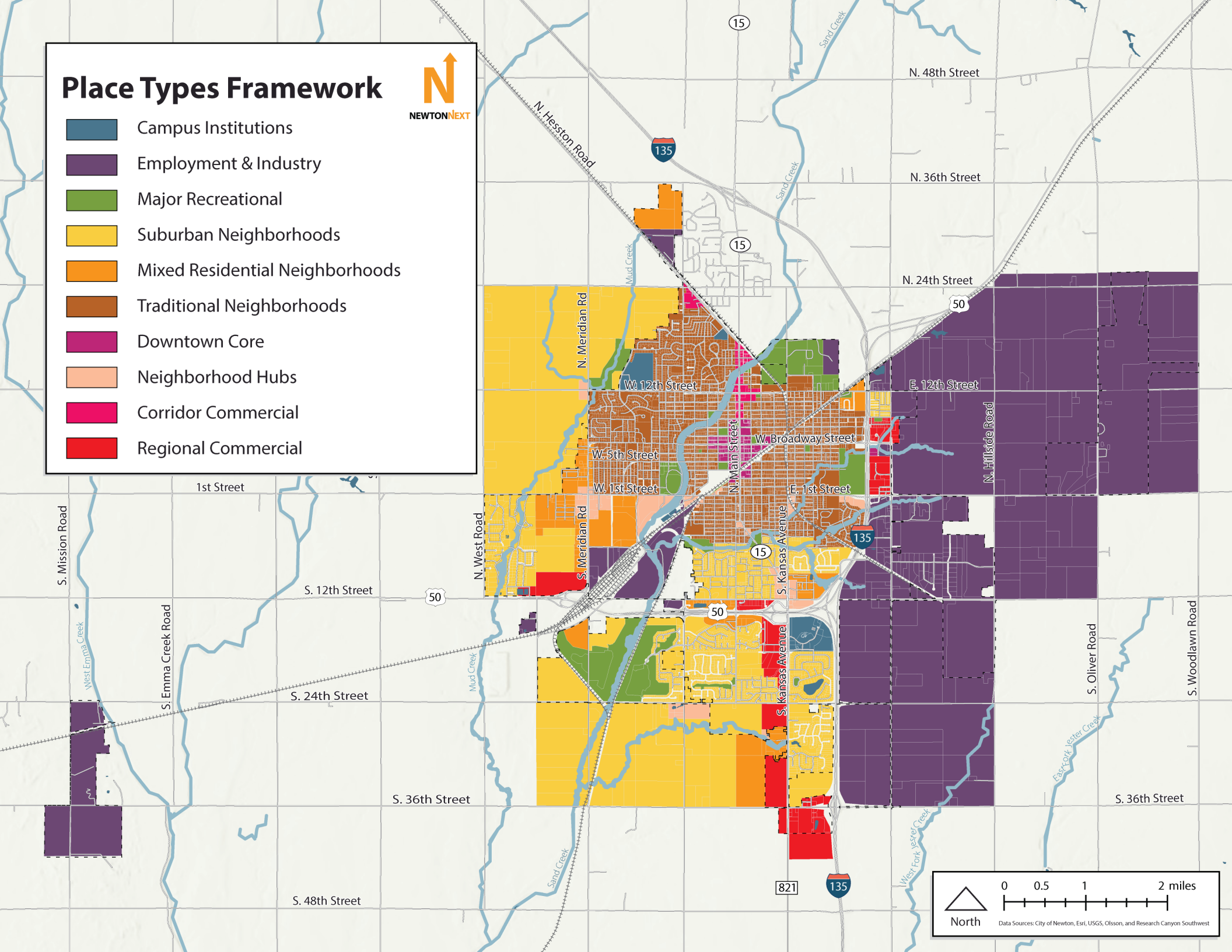


What is a "Place Types" Approach?

Place Types are a framework for defining the context and character of different areas in Newton. This approach separates historic, walkable neighborhoods from auto-oriented zones and distinguishes spaces focused on community from those geared toward business, jobs, or recreation. By combining land use with factors such as design, street layout, natural features, and amenities, Place Types help guide land use and development patterns in a clear, organized way.

This method gives Newton a common language to evaluate development, coordinate infrastructure, and align policies. It supports the City's goals for creating memorable and people-friendly environments, showing that Newton's future depends on both where and how growth happens. As Newton invests in its neighborhoods, revitalizes Downtown, adds housing, and manages development near major corridors and job centers, Place Types balance change with preservation. They recognize the City's unique areas and make sure that new growth strengthens community identity, offers more housing, boosts the economy, and improves quality of life.




Place Types Framework
NEWTONNEXT
Campus Institutions
Employment & Industry
Major Recreational
Suburban Neighborhoods
Mixed Residential Neighborhoods
Traditional Neighborhoods
Downtown Core
Neighborhood Hubs
Corridor Commercial
Regional Commercial
N. Hesston Road
N. 48th Street
N. 36th Street
N. 24th Street
E. 12th Street
W. 12th Street
W. Broadway Street
W. 5th Street
W. 1st Street
E. 1st Street
1st Street
S. 12th Street
S. 24th Street
S. 36th Street
S. 48th Street
N. Meridian Rd
S. Meridian Rd
N. Main Street
S. Kansas Avenue
N. West Road
N. Hillside Road
S. Oliver Road
S. Woodlawn Road
S. Mission Road
S. Emma Creek Road
Sand Creek
Mud Creek
West Emma Creek
East Fork Jester Creek
West Fork Jester Creek
15
50
135
821
North
0 0.5 1 2 miles
Data Sources: City of Newton, Esri, USGS, Olsson, and Research Canyon Southwest

Campus Institution

Campus Institutions include large public or private facilities such as educational, medical, or civic destinations. These campuses consist of clusters of specialized buildings with internal circulation systems, designed to accommodate long-term growth and focus on community service functions.

Form and Character

- Development is organized as a coordinated campus with multiple buildings connected by internal streets, drives, sidewalks, and open spaces.
- Growth is often accommodated through master-planned layouts that anticipate future buildings, parking, and circulation needs.
- Prioritize safe, clear access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, service vehicles, and emergency response.
- Orient primary building entrances toward internal streets, plazas, or public-facing edges to create legible arrival points.
- Maintain building scale and massing that transitions sensitively to adjacent neighborhoods, using setbacks, landscaping, and building orientation.
- Use durable, high-quality materials and consistent architectural themes to reinforce campus identity while allowing variation between buildings.
- Integrate landscaping, courtyards, and open spaces as defining campus elements that support gathering, wayfinding, and comfort.





- Screen parking, loading, mechanical equipment, and service areas from public view through building placement, landscaping, or structured parking where appropriate.
- Provide clear wayfinding for vehicles and pedestrians, including signage, lighting, and visible circulation routes.
- Support shared parking, internal connectivity, and multimodal access to reduce redundant infrastructure and improve campus efficiency.



Land Use Compatibility

Primary Uses:

- Educational institutions (e.g., K–12, colleges, training centers)
- Medical and healthcare facilities
- Government and civic facilities
- Institutional offices and administrative buildings

Supporting Uses:

- Research, laboratories, and specialized support facilities
- Structured or surface parking
- Cafeterias, childcare, fitness, or wellness facilities serving campus users
- Open spaces, plazas, and civic gathering areas

Discouraged Uses:

- Stand-alone retail or entertainment uses not directly related to campus functions
- Heavy industrial or freight-intensive activities
- Auto-oriented commercial uses that disrupt campus circulation or character
- Residential uses incompatible with institutional operations (e.g., high noise, traffic, or service demands)

Employment and Industry

This Place Type encompasses areas dedicated to light and moderate industrial activities such as warehousing, distribution, manufacturing, and employment centers. These areas are characterized by larger buildings, freight-oriented infrastructure, and operational layouts designed for efficient movement of goods and employees. Employment and Industry areas play a critical role in supporting job growth, economic resilience, and the City's tax base.

Form and Character

- Encourage flexible building footprints and site layouts that can accommodate a range of industrial, institutional, and logistics uses over time.
- Design sites to support efficient truck access, loading, and service operations while maintaining safe internal circulation for employees and visitors.
- Promote durable, low-maintenance materials and construction practices appropriate for industrial operations and long-term use.



Platte City, MO: (Source: Olsson) – Industrial facility with landscaped buffer around its perimeter.

- Use buffers, screening, and thoughtful site design to limit impacts on adjacent neighborhoods.
- Screen loading docks, service areas, mechanical equipment, outdoor storage, and utility infrastructure from public streets and adjacent uses through building placement, landscaping, or walls.
- Support consistent architectural quality and coordinated site design across large campuses to reinforce identity and cohesion.
- Orient primary building entrances toward internal streets or shared access drives, with clear pedestrian connections from parking areas to entrances.
- Provide adequate lighting, signage, and wayfinding to support safety, visibility, and operational clarity without creating visual clutter.

Land Use Compatibility

Primary Uses:

- Light and moderate industrial uses
- Airport and employment logistics
- Manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution facilities
- Research and development facilities
- Logistics and freight operations
- Healthcare or institutional campuses with industrial or employment functions
- Vocational, technical, and workforce training facilities

Supporting Uses:

- Accessory retail or services serving employees
- Workforce amenities such as cafeterias, fitness areas, or training spaces
- Open spaces, landscaped buffers, and stormwater facilities
- Limited recreational facilities associated with employment campuses

Discouraged Uses:

- Residential development
- General retail uses that are not accessory to employment functions
- Entertainment and nightlife venues
- Uses incompatible with industrial operations due to noise, traffic, safety, or operational conflicts

Major Recreational

Major Recreational areas include large parks, sports complexes, trails, and natural spaces that serve as community gathering places and activity hubs. These areas prioritize connectivity, access, and environmental quality while supporting a wide range of recreational experiences, from organized sports and events to passive open space and nature-based activities. These facilities play a critical role in enhancing public health, social connection, and overall quality of life.



Form and Character

- Integrate indoor and outdoor facilities with surrounding landscapes, natural features, and adjacent park spaces to create cohesive and accessible recreational environments.
- Emphasize welcoming, durable architecture that reflects the recreational, cultural, or civic purpose of the site.
- Design facilities and site layouts to support visibility, safety, and intuitive wayfinding for users of all ages and abilities.
- Incorporate complementary amenities–such as cafés, wellness services, or small community-serving retail–where appropriate to enhance activity and convenience.
- Design buildings and spaces to be flexible and adaptable to a variety of recreational, educational, and cultural uses over time.
- Use sustainable materials and design strategies that demonstrate environmental stewardship, resilience, and long-term durability.
- Prioritize pedestrian, bicycle, and trail connections within and between recreational sites to strengthen citywide access and connectivity.
- Plan for sustainable, long-term funding for maintenance and replacement of public equipment and amenities.
- Provide adequate lighting to support safety at night

Land Use Compatibility

Primary Uses:

- Sports fields and athletic facilities
- Parks and natural open spaces
- Trails and greenways
- Playgrounds and splash pads

Supporting Uses:

- Event venues and amphitheaters
- Urban agriculture and community gardens
- Cafés and outdoor markets associated with recreational uses
- Accessory retail and concessions
- Fitness and wellness services
- Cultural, educational, or interpretive destinations

Discouraged Uses:

- Incompatible commercial uses, like auto-oriented businesses
- Stand-alone residential subdivisions that do not integrate with the recreational environment

Suburban Neighborhoods

Predominantly composed of single-family homes on larger lots, these neighborhoods feature curvilinear street layouts and are generally auto-oriented. While quiet and low-intensity in character, Suburban Neighborhoods should evolve to improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and incorporate neighborhood-scale amenities that enhance livability without altering their residential identity.

Form and Character

- Build connected street networks (limit dead-ends and oversized cul-de-sac pods).
- Add practical pedestrian links (short trails, cut-throughs, or mid-block connections) to parks, schools, and nearby destinations.
- Keep buildings modest in scale (generally 1-2 stories) and oriented to streets or shared greenspace.
- Reduce garage-dominant façades with recessed, side-loaded, or visually secondary garages.
- Require sidewalks and encourage street trees and lighting to improve comfort and safety.
- Treat parks, greens, and stormwater features as intentional neighborhood amenities–not leftover space.
- Provide adequate lighting to support safety at night.



Lees Summit, MO: (Source: Olsson) – Suburban neighborhood with street trees outside Kansas City, Missouri.



Johnson, AR: (Source: Olsson) – Suburban house with an accessory unit above a detached three-car garage.

Land Use Compatibility

Primary Uses:

- Single-family detached homes
- Accessory dwelling units (ADUs)
- Townhouses designed to fit neighborhood scale and character

Supporting Uses:

- Neighborhood parks, greenways, and trail corridors
- Small civic, institutional, or religious facilities serving nearby residents

Discouraged Uses:

- Large-scale apartment complexes or high-intensity residential development
- Industrial or warehousing uses
- Auto sales, repair, or service establishments
- Wholesale retail, self-storage, and similar high-impact commercial uses
- Social services, adult businesses, pawn shops, and payday lenders incompatible with residential character



Mixed Residential Neighborhoods

This category blends various housing types and serves as transitional zones between traditional neighborhoods and areas of higher intensity. They offer moderate density with a neighborhood feel, shared open spaces, and an emphasis on providing diverse housing choices and affordability.

Form and Character

- Mix housing types, duplexes, townhomes, cottage-style homes, and small-to-medium multifamily, within a cohesive neighborhood layout.
- Keep neighborhood-scaled buildings (generally 1-4 stories) and step height/massing down near lower-intensity edges.
- Organize development around connected streets and shared open spaces like greens, courtyards, or small parks.
- Face buildings toward streets or shared spaces with clear front entrances to support walkability and safety.
- Use residential-scale architecture and materials; avoid strip-commercial design cues.
- Make landscaping, trees, and usable open space part of the structure of the place, not leftover decoration.
- Tuck parking behind buildings, in shared lots, or off alleys where possible to reduce visual clutter.
- Build strong pedestrian and bike connections through the area to nearby hubs, schools, parks, and corridors.

Land Use Compatibility

Primary Uses:

- Townhomes, duplexes, and cottage court housing arrangements
- Small-scale and medium-scale multifamily buildings

Supporting Uses:

- Duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes
- Small neighborhood parks, greens, and community spaces
- Home-based businesses and live-work units
- Limited neighborhood-serving services where appropriately located and scaled

Discouraged Uses:

- Auto-oriented commercial uses and drive-through facilities
- Industrial, warehousing, or freight-intensive activities
- Regional retail or entertainment uses that generate excessive traffic or noise



Bentonville, AR: (Source: Olsson) – Newly constructed rowhouses/townhomes along a neighborhood street.



Bentonville, AR: (Source: Olsson) – Three-story walkup multi-unit building.

What is "missing middle" housing?

Missing middle describes a range of house-scaled building types that fall between single-family homes and large apartment complexes. This type of housing once made up a big share of traditional neighborhoods across the United States, but is now less common in new construction. This includes duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, townhouses, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs). These homes are typically similar in height and footprint to nearby houses, fit comfortably on existing blocks, and blend into the rhythm of older neighborhoods. Missing middle housing expands choices for renters, first-time buyers, seniors, and small households, supports affordability through incremental growth, and allows neighborhoods to evolve over time without losing their historic character.

Traditional Neighborhoods

These neighborhoods are defined by Newton's historic residential neighborhoods surrounding the Downtown core, characterized by compact lots, a walkable block pattern, and a strong aesthetic and physical relationship between homes and the street. Features such as front porches, sidewalks, and street trees reinforce neighborhood identity and support daily social interaction. The primary focus is preserving historic character while allowing gentle, context-sensitive infill that supports reinvestment and long-term neighborhood vitality.

Form and Character

- Thoughtfully integrate a mix of housing types, such as duplexes, townhomes, cottage courts, and accessory dwelling units.
- Maintain the traditional street grid with short blocks, connected routes, and alleys where they already exist (or where feasible).
- Keep buildings oriented to the street with clear front doors, stoops, and porches.
- Match established front setbacks and spacing to preserve a consistent street edge.
- Support a range of house sizes and lot sizes to encourage affordability and incremental reinvestment.
- Reduce the visual impact of parking by placing garages behind homes, using existing alleys, or designing garages as secondary to the main façade.
- Preserve and strengthen key neighborhood elements like sidewalks, street trees, and pedestrian-scale lighting.

Land Use Compatibility

Primary Uses:

- Single-family detached houses
- Accessory dwelling units (ADUs)
- Duplexes

Supporting Uses:

- Townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings
- Home-based businesses
- Small-scale educational, religious, or civic facilities
- Small neighborhood parks and open spaces
- Corner retail or neighborhood-serving commercial uses where appropriately located and designed

Discouraged Uses:

- Large-lot or suburban-style subdivisions
- Auto-oriented commercial development
- Heavy industrial or freight-intensive uses
- Large institutional or social service facilities that are incompatible with neighborhood scale



Newton, KS: (Source: Olsson) – Traditional single-family house in established Newton neighborhood.



Lees Summit, MO: (Source: Olsson) – Traditionally styled, contemporary residential construction near Kansas City, Missouri.



Carlton Landing, OK: (Source: Olsson) – Small brick houses arranged around a courtyard with front porches.



Downtown Core

This Place Type prioritizes active ground floors, strong occupancy, and a rich mixture of dining, entertainment, housing, and civic uses to support activity throughout the day and into evenings and weekends. The Downtown Core functions as a walkable mixed-use district where people gather, linger, and return often. Downtown supports small businesses, upper-story housing, events, and cultural activity, with a strong emphasis on streetscape quality, historic preservation, and placemaking that reinforces a lively and authentic community atmosphere.

Form and Character

- Continue leveraging historic design guidelines to protect and reinforce the character of Downtown.
- Orient buildings to the sidewalk for a continuous street edge and a strong connection to storefronts and public spaces.
- Provide frequent, clearly marked storefront entrances to enhance walkability and visual interest.
- Use transparent windows on ground floors facing key streets to activate sidewalks and improve safety.
- Keep building heights between one and five stories for a comfortable, walkable environment.
- Avoid blank walls by using varied materials, architectural details, and rhythmic storefronts.
- Choose durable materials and features that reflect traditional or historic styles, like masonry and wood-framed storefronts.
- Include upper-story residential, office, or lodging spaces to keep activity going beyond business hours.
- Place parking behind or inside buildings, not along the street on busy blocks.
- Add streetscape elements like lighting, seating, landscaping, signage, and public art to create a welcoming and unique atmosphere.



Land Use Compatibility

Primary Uses:

- Retail shops and services
- Restaurants, cafés, and bars
- Upper-story residential units
- Co-working spaces and small offices
- Boutique hotels and lodging
- Civic and cultural facilities

Supporting Uses:

- Artisan or small-scale production and maker spaces
- Outdoor recreation and programmed public spaces
- Hotels designed to fit the walkable district context
- Middle-scale housing types that support mixed-use activity

Discouraged Uses:

- Auto-oriented development and drive-through facilities
- Low-density or single-use residential development
- Heavy industrial or freight-intensive uses
- Auto sales and service establishments
- Wholesale retail and self-storage
- Social services incompatible with an active retail environment
- Adult businesses, pawn shops, and payday lenders

Neighborhood Hubs

Neighborhood Hubs are small, walkable retail or service nodes that serve local residents. Typical amenities include coffee shops, small groceries, clinics, daycares, and personal services, often housed in mixed-use buildings. These hubs are designed to be bikeable and walkable, reducing vehicle trips, supporting gentle density, and providing affordable opportunities to add services and housing. They also function as local gathering spaces and are intended to bolster neighborhood vitality.

Form and Character

- Design neighborhood-scale developments that blend into residential areas.
- Promote walkability and bikeability with short blocks, frequent entrances, and direct pedestrian paths.
- Face buildings toward sidewalks or plazas to create an inviting street presence.
- Limit building heights to 1-3 stories, with upper floors for housing or offices.
- Encourage mixed-use buildings with active ground floors and residential or office spaces above.
- Include informal gathering spaces such as plazas, widened sidewalks, and outdoor seating.
- Use simple, durable materials and architectural details in keeping with neighborhood character.
- Minimize curb-cuts and use shared access to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Place parking behind or to the side of buildings to reduce its visibility from the street.
- Add landscaping, lighting, and signage that support a local, human-scale feel.

Land Use Compatibility

Primary Uses:

- Coffee shops, cafés, and small restaurants
- Small grocery or convenience markets
- Personal services (salons, barbers, dry cleaners)
- Neighborhood-scale medical or dental clinics
- Daycares and early childhood education facilities

Supporting Uses:

- Upper-story or adjacent residential units
- Small professional offices or co-working spaces
- Civic or nonprofit services serving nearby residents
- Outdoor seating, plazas, or community gathering spaces

Discouraged Uses:

- Big-box retail or large-format commercial uses
- Auto-oriented businesses such as drive-throughs or vehicle sales
- High-traffic regional destinations that generate excessive noise or parking demand
- Industrial or warehousing uses incompatible with a neighborhood setting



Fayetteville, AR: (Source: Olsson) – Small office converted from a former single-family house in a neighborhood.



Siloam Springs, AR: (Source: Olsson) – Small bakery adjacent to a neighborhood.

What is "gentle density?"

Gentle density refers to small, incremental increases in housing and activity that fit comfortably within existing neighborhoods. It's not about big buildings or dramatic change; it's about adding homes, services, and people in ways that feel familiar and human-scaled. Examples include apartments above shops, small mixed-use buildings, corner stores with a few homes attached, or additional units near neighborhood hubs. Done well, gentle density supports walkability, helps local businesses thrive, expands housing options, and strengthens neighborhood life without overwhelming the character of the surrounding area.

Corridor Commercial

Corridor Commercial predominantly consists of commercial and service-related uses composed of buildings of various scales and formats, ranging from standalone buildings to more concentrated, node-based or town-center arrangements. These areas contribute significantly to the economy and tax base by serving customers along major transportation routes, and meeting local needs. Many corridors contain underutilized or outdated properties, presenting opportunities to guide reinvestment toward modernization, improved site design, and targeted placemaking.

Form and Character

- Reinforce auto-oriented commercial development patterns while supporting modernization and improved site design.
- Encourage reinvestment and redevelopment of underutilized or aging properties rather than outward corridor expansion.
- Support compact, walkable nodes with internal streets or shared circulation at key intersections or redevelopment sites, rather than continuous pedestrian-oriented frontage.
- Allow flexibility in building formats, ranging from standalone buildings to coordinated multi-building sites.
- Orient buildings toward major streets, internal drive aisles, or shared spaces, with clear pedestrian connections from parking areas to entrances.
- Maintain a moderate building scale, generally one to four stories, appropriate for corridor visibility and transitions to adjacent neighborhoods.
- Use architectural features, façade articulation, and durable materials to establish a distinct identity and reduce the visual impact of large buildings.
- Require transparent windows and active façades along street-facing elevations and pedestrian areas where feasible.
- Minimize long, uninterrupted blank walls through changes in materials, articulation, landscaping, or liner uses.
- Locate parking to the side or rear of buildings when possible, or visually screen large parking areas from the corridor.
- Encourage monument signage and coordinated wayfinding that enhance visibility and navigation while discouraging pole signs and visual clutter.



Lenexa, MO: (Source: Olsson) – Retail commercial surrounded by landscaped parking area.

Land Use Compatibility

Primary Uses:

- Retail and service uses
- Grocery stores and daily needs commercial
- Offices and professional services
- Fitness, health, and personal service establishments
- Mixed-use buildings with residential or office uses above ground-floor commercial in appropriate locations

Supporting Uses:

- Government, civic, and institutional facilities
- Social and nonprofit services
- Educational and training facilities
- Light industrial or employment uses compatible with corridor traffic and access patterns
- Auto-oriented services designed to minimize visual and operational impacts

Discouraged Uses:

- Low-density residential development not buffered from corridor activity
- Agricultural uses
- High-intensity manufacturing or freight-dependent industrial uses incompatible with corridor context



Edgewood Farms, MO: (Source: Olsson) – Retail commercial uses adjacent to multifamily housing along a corridor.

Regional Commercial

Regional Commercial places are auto-oriented commercial districts that serve the broader region. These areas typically include big-box stores, shopping centers, restaurants, and service businesses located on larger parcels with high traffic volumes and direct access to major streets and highways. While these areas are defined by regional access and visibility, they also present opportunities for reinvestment, outparcel development, and improved site design that can enhance functionality, appearance, and long-term value.

Form and Character

- Accommodate large-format retail and service uses on sizable parcels with direct access to major streets and highways.
- Organize development with clear internal circulation that safely supports vehicles, pedestrians, deliveries, and service access without relying on a traditional main-street pattern.
- Encourage reinvestment and site modernization that improves layout, circulation, and appearance over time rather than outward expansion.
- Orient primary building entrances toward public streets, shared drive aisles, or internal pedestrian zones to improve visibility, wayfinding, and site legibility.
- Provide safe, direct pedestrian connections between buildings, parking areas, transit stops, and public sidewalks.
- Maintain a low- to mid-rise building scale, generally one to two stories, consistent with regional retail formats and market demand.
- Use architectural variation, façade articulation, and durable materials to reduce the visual impact of large buildings and create a cohesive site identity.
- Support outparcel buildings and pad sites that improve site efficiency, activate street edges, and enhance the overall character of large retail areas.
- Locate parking to the side or rear of buildings when feasible, or visually screen large parking fields from primary frontages.
- Use monument signage and coordinated wayfinding to improve visibility and navigation while discouraging pole signs and excessive visual clutter.

Land Use Compatibility

Primary Uses:

- Small- and big-box retail
- Wholesale and warehouse-style retail
- Restaurants and food service establishments
- Gas stations and travel-oriented services
- Automobile-oriented retail uses

Supporting Uses:

- Garden-style apartment complexes where appropriately buffered
- Light, consumer-facing industrial or service uses

- Social and support services compatible with commercial settings
- Automobile repair, service, and sales

Discouraged Uses:

- Low-density residential subdivisions
- Vertical mixed-use buildings requiring pedestrian-oriented main-street environments
- Missing-middle housing types better suited to neighborhood-scale contexts



Ankeny, Iowa: (Source: Olsson) – Suburban-style commercial uses surrounding a large intersection of two arterial roads.

Section 5

Mobility & Transportation

5



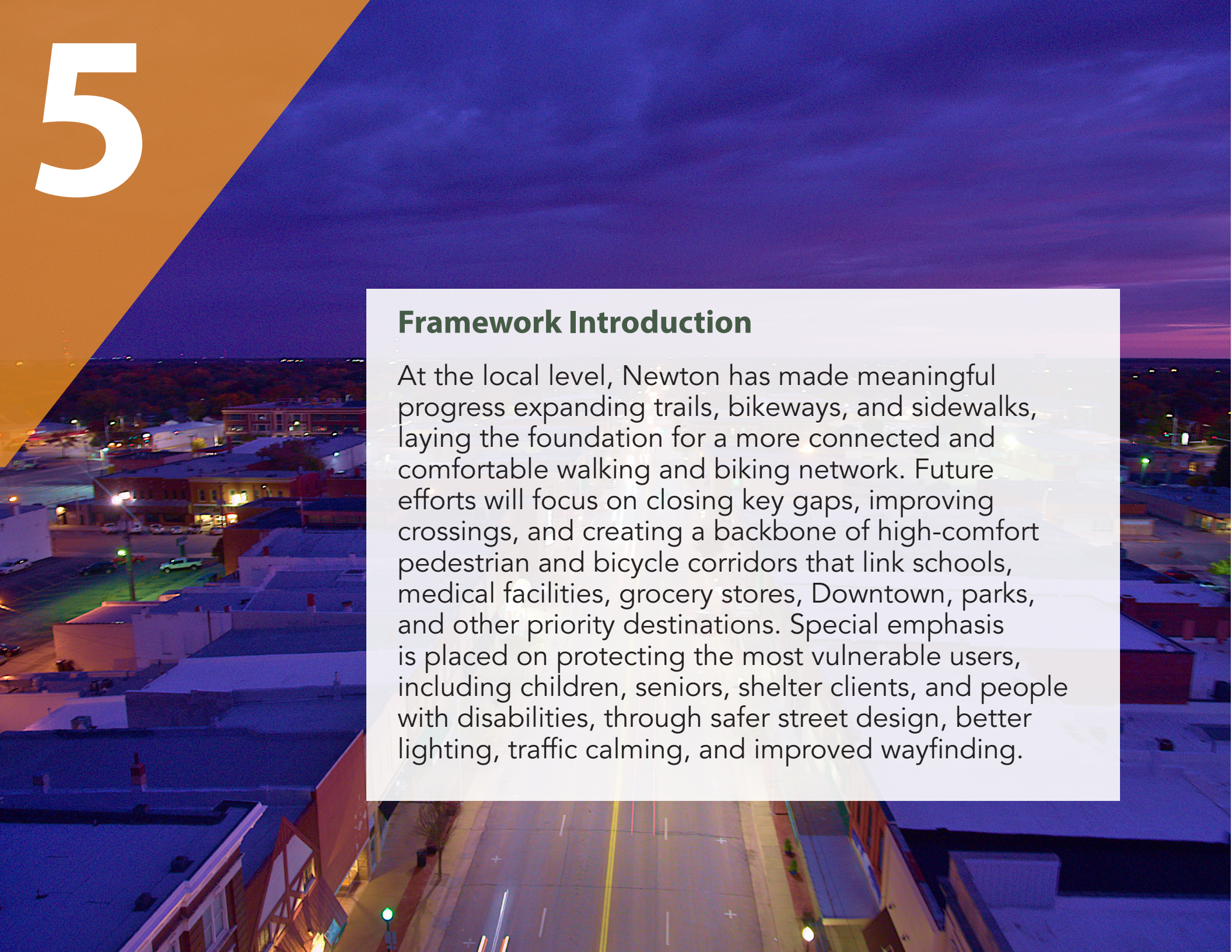


Section 5 Contents

Citywide Goals

Framework Map & Policies

5



Framework Introduction

At the local level, Newton has made meaningful progress expanding trails, bikeways, and sidewalks, laying the foundation for a more connected and comfortable walking and biking network. Future efforts will focus on closing key gaps, improving crossings, and creating a backbone of high-comfort pedestrian and bicycle corridors that link schools, medical facilities, grocery stores, Downtown, parks, and other priority destinations. Special emphasis is placed on protecting the most vulnerable users, including children, seniors, shelter clients, and people with disabilities, through safer street design, better lighting, traffic calming, and improved wayfinding.

Goals: Mobility & Transportation

Goal 5.1: Improve coordination and public education around rail-related issues.

Create a process to communicate and document issues with BNSF, and provide clear direction and expectations to the public.

Goal 5.2: Make sure key destinations have at least one comfortable walking and biking route.

Prioritize safe connections to Downtown, schools, parks, major employers, and community services.

Goal 5.3: Fix gaps in the current walking and biking system.

Maintain what exists, fill missing links, and make routes easier to follow.

Goal 5.4: Build and maintain a few priority "spine" routes for a high-comfort pedestrian and bicycle network.

Start with the corridors that connect the most people to the most places.

Goal 5.5: Reduce serious crashes on priority streets using quick, practical fixes.

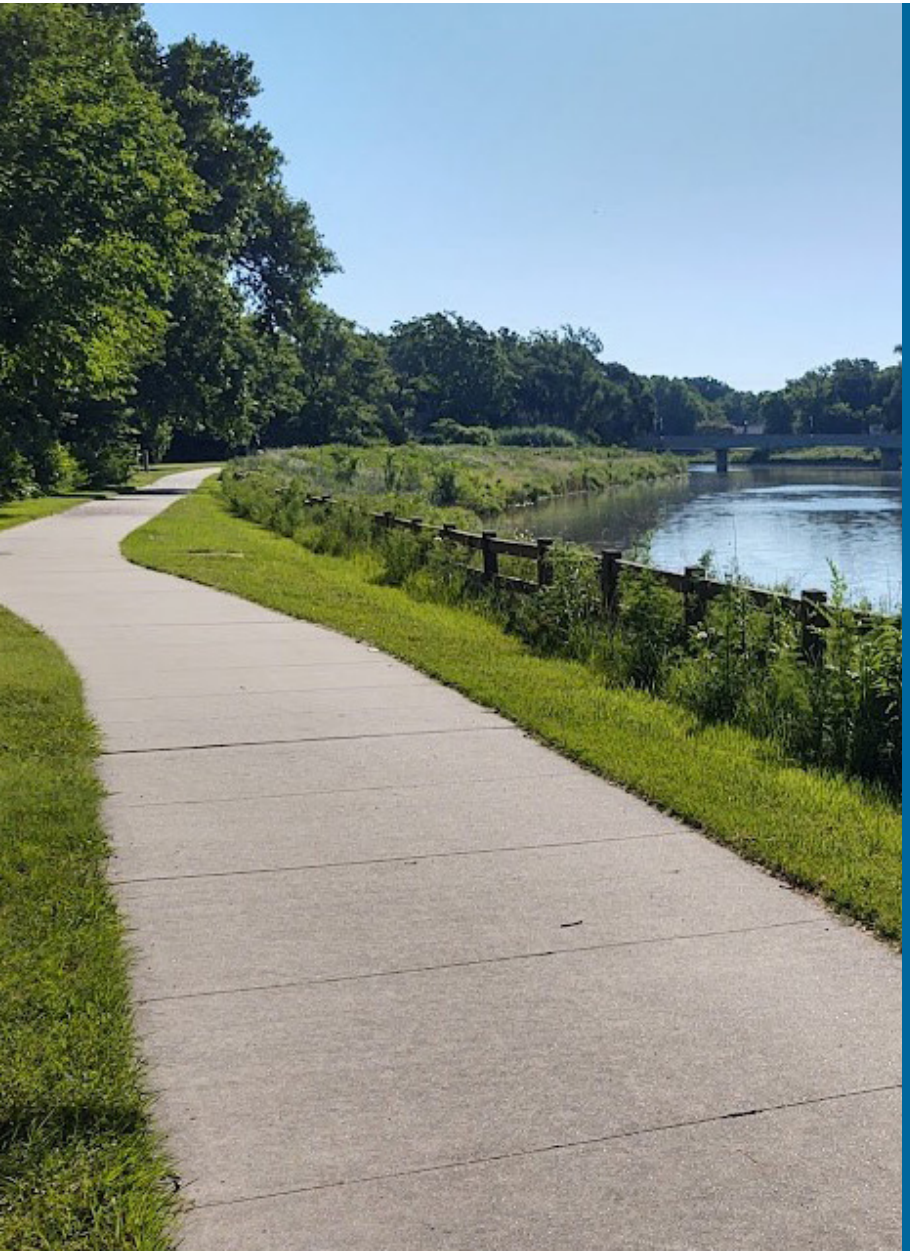
Use fast, low-cost improvements now, then upgrade to permanent designs over time.

Goal 5.6: Make travel safer for the people most at risk.

Improve access and crossings for kids, students, seniors, and people walking to essential services.

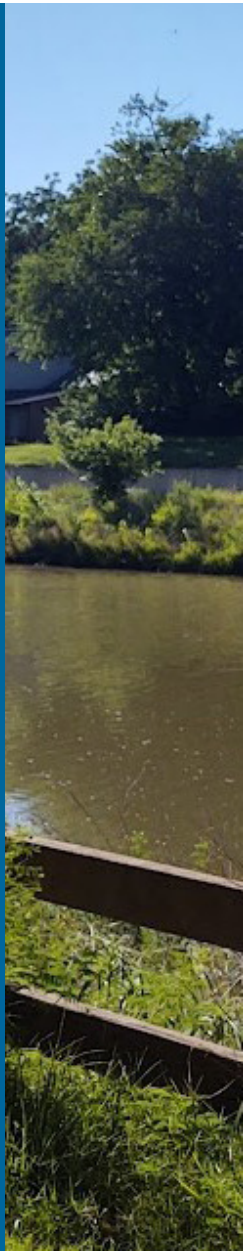
Goal 5.7: Use major highway/interchange work and future charging opportunities to improve local access.

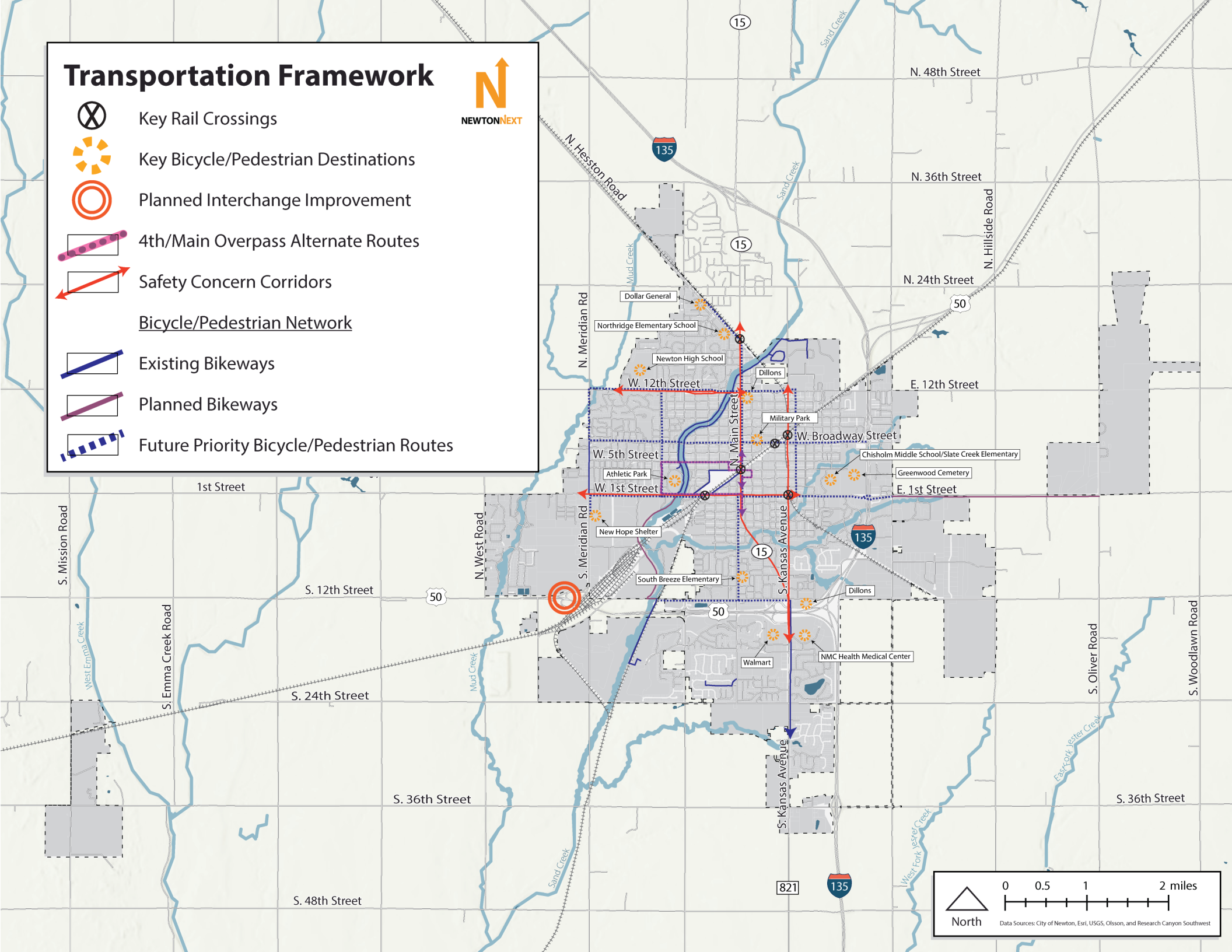
Leverage bigger transportation projects so they support Newton's local circulation and economy beyond just through-traffic.



How is a Transportation Framework used?

Newton's transportation strategy emphasizes practical, coordinated investments that deliver near-term safety benefits while supporting long-term growth and change. This includes leveraging planned interchange improvements for multimodal access, using quick-build safety treatments on high-risk corridors, maintaining existing facilities to a high standard, and providing clear, reliable detours around train stoppages. The framework also prepares the City for evolving mobility trends–such as expanded public transit awareness, school travel demand management, electric vehicle charging readiness, and new technology–while strengthening coordination with partners like Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF), K&O Rail, Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), Harvey County, and USD 373. Together, these efforts position Newton to move toward a transportation system that is connected, predictable, and responsive to community needs.




Transportation Framework
NEWTONNEXT
Key Rail Crossings
Key Bicycle/Pedestrian Destinations
Planned Interchange Improvement
4th/Main Overpass Alternate Routes
Safety Concern Corridors
Bicycle/Pedestrian Network
Existing Bikeways
Planned Bikeways
Future Priority Bicycle/Pedestrian Routes
N. 48th Street
N. 36th Street
N. 24th Street
N. Hesston Road
N. Hillside Road
N. Meridian Rd
E. 12th Street
W. 12th Street
W. Broadway Street
W. 5th Street
W. 1st Street
E. 1st Street
1st Street
N. Main Street
S. Kansas Avenue
S. Meridian Rd
N. West Road
S. Mission Road
S. 12th Street
S. Emma Creek Road
S. 24th Street
S. 36th Street
S. 48th Street
S. Oliver Road
S. Woodlawn Road
Dollar General
Northridge Elementary School
Newton High School
Dillons
Military Park
Chisholm Middle School/Slate Creek Elementary
Greenwood Cemetery
Athletic Park
New Hope Shelter
South Breeze Elementary
Walmart
NMC Health Medical Center
Mud Creek
Sand Creek
West Emma Creek
East Fork Jester Creek
West Fork Jester Creek
15
50
135
821
North
0 0.5 1 2 miles
Data Sources: City of Newton, Esri, USGS, Olsson, and Research Canyon Southwest

Key Rail Crossings

Several rail crossings stand out for their high impact on local traffic conditions. In particular, the following crossings experience the most significant operational challenges, contributing to delays and requiring drivers to use long detours to cross to the other side of the tracks:

- *Main Street and 4th Street*
- *1st Street and Ash Street*
- *Broadway and Walnut Street*

Rail Crossing Overpasses And Alternative Routes

To address recurring traffic disruptions caused by trains blocking the 4th Street and Main Street crossing, two alternative routes have been proposed that would utilize a new grade-separated overpass to bypass rail stoppages. One option would incorporate an east–west overpass along 4th Street, while the other would rely on an east–west overpass at 1st Street. Both alternatives would offer significantly shorter, more direct detours than the existing routes, which require drivers to use I-135 or US-50, helping reduce delays and improve overall network reliability.

Railroad Communication Standard Procedures (Not Mapped)

There is currently a lack of clarity around how to request or pursue improvements to rail operations, including addressing issues such as uneven crossing pavement, excessive train horn noise, and limited information about train schedules. Establishing a clear, standardized process for communicating with BNSF and K&O is an important first step toward effectively evaluating concerns, coordinating responses, and exploring potential operational or infrastructure improvements.

Key Bicycle And Pedestrian Destinations

Key community destinations, including schools, grocery stores, parks, the New Hope Shelter, and NMC Health, were identified as destinations for people walking and biking in Newton. The Future Priority Bicycle and Pedestrian Route Network was developed to connect these destinations with high-comfort walking and biking infrastructure, improving access, safety, and mobility for residents of all ages and abilities.


637
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SANTA FE


NEWTON NEXT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Bicycle And Pedestrian Network

Newton's bikeway system includes a mixture of existing, planned, and future priority facilities designed to support safe and convenient walking and bicycling.

Existing bikeways consist of shared-use paths and on-street bike lanes, including the Sand Creek Bike Path, the shared-use path along Kansas Avenue south of SE 14th Street, and bike lanes/shared lane markings on Meridian Road between 1st Street and Broadway Street.

Planned bikeways–currently in design or under construction–include an extension of the Sand Creek Bike Path from 1st Street to SW 14th Street and a proposed shared-use path along 1st Street from Spencer Road to Oliver Road near the airport.

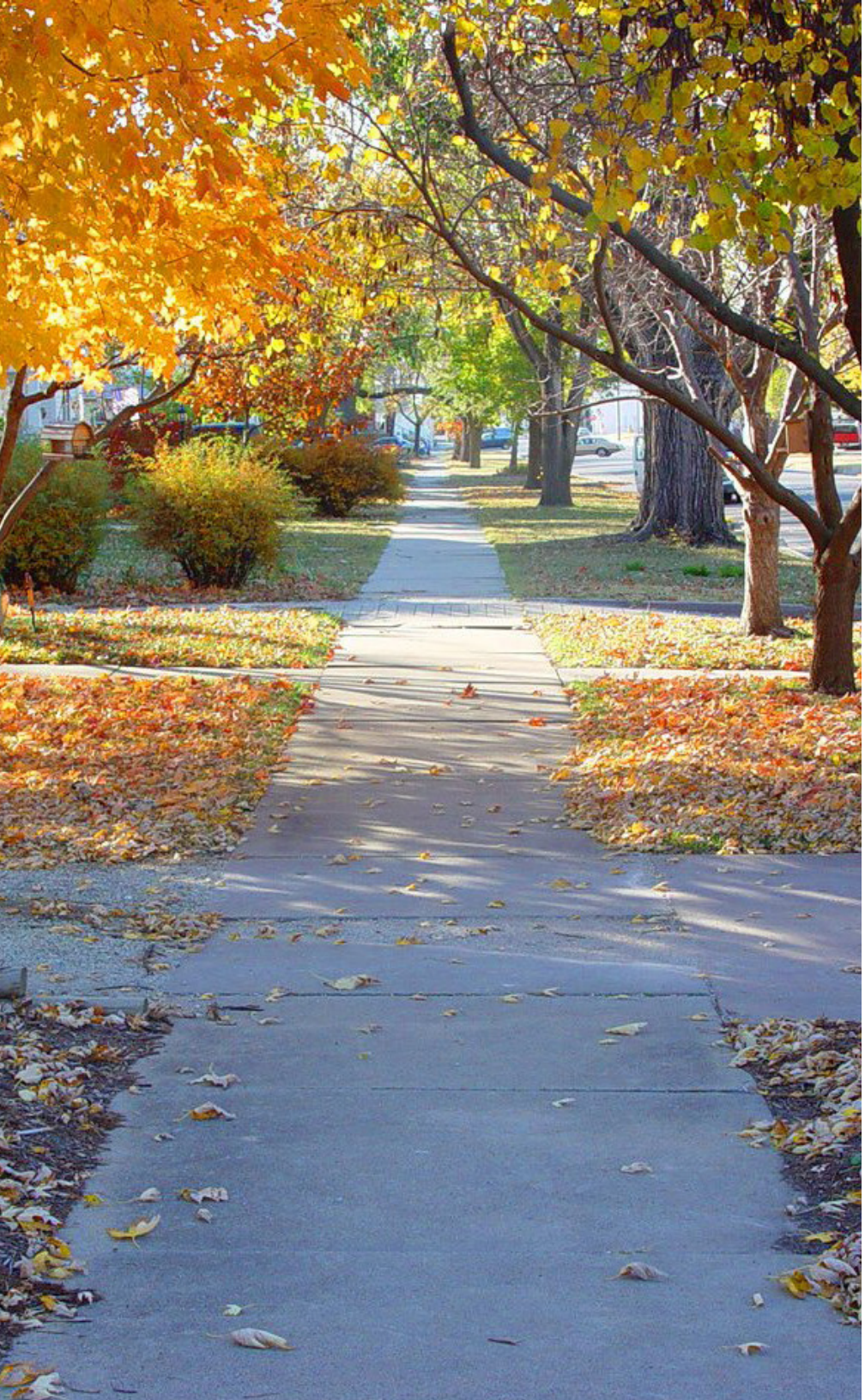
The Future Priority Bicycle and Pedestrian Route Network, which connects key destinations throughout Newton, is built on the backbone of existing and planned bikeways and existing sidewalks. Infrastructure improvements along these corridors are intended to be prioritized to establish high-comfort walking and biking routes, with primary north–south corridors including:

- Meridian
- Grandview
- Main
- Old Main
- High Street
- Old 81
- S. Kansas

Future east–west corridors include:

- SW 14th Street
- 1st Street
- Broadway Street
- 12th Street.

Infrastructure features of this network may include curb extensions, refuge islands, raised crosswalks, and improved intersection design.



Safety Concern Corridors

To address concerns related to crossings, traffic speeds, lighting, missing sidewalks, and overall safety, key corridors have been identified where the City of Newton should evaluate a range of signage, striping, and infrastructure improvements. Potential intersection improvement strategies include enhanced crosswalk markings, rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs), speed tables, and roadway design measures such as narrowing travel lanes, all aimed at improving safety and comfort for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists alike.

Planned Interchange Improvements

Two highway interchanges are currently in the design or construction phase to improve traffic operations and safety. Improvements are underway at the US-50 and Meridian interchange, and improvements to I-135 and 36th Street interchange have been completed. Both projects are expected to enhance connectivity, reduce congestion, and support long-term mobility needs.

Marketing Of Harvey County Public Transportation Services

Harvey County currently provides Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible transportation within Newton for all county residents, supporting trips for medical appointments, shopping, and recreational activities.

School District Busing Zone Challenges

Newton USD 373 currently provides bus transportation only for students who live 2.5 miles or more from their assigned school. As a result, many students either walk or are driven to school, contributing to increased congestion and more conflicts during drop-off and pick-up periods. Reducing the eligibility distance to 1.5 miles and expanding bus service could help alleviate these impacts by decreasing vehicle traffic and improving overall safety around school campuses.

Electric Vehicle Readiness

Newton currently has a single public Level 2 electric vehicle charger located at Evergy, near the intersection of 1st Street and Plum Street. Given the City's proximity to I-135 and US-50, Newton is well-positioned to support future charging locations as part of upcoming phases of KDOT's National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program. Proactive planning to identify strategic locations for charging infrastructure will improve project readiness and help the City capitalize on future funding and implementation opportunities.



Section 6

Placemaking & Aesthetics

6





Section 6 Contents

Citywide Goals

Framework Map & Policies

6

Framework Introduction

This section builds on Newton's existing assets, including its network of parks and trails, walkable street grid, historic buildings, and emerging activity areas. Placemaking elements such as signature gateways, streetscape improvements, public art, gathering spaces, and enhanced landscaping can reinforce a sense of arrival, improve comfort and safety, and encourage people to spend time in the places where community life happens.

Strengthening Newton's public realm also means investing in the details that shape daily experiences: clear and inviting wayfinding, human-scale design, attractive corridors, and activated public spaces that support social interaction. These improvements contribute not only to aesthetic appeal but also to economic vitality by supporting businesses, attracting visitors, and making Newton a more desirable place to live and work.

Goals: Placemaking & Aesthetics

Goal 6.1: Make entrances and Downtown arrival feel like "Newton."
Use gateways, wayfinding, and design cues so people know when they've arrived somewhere special.

Goal 6.2: Grow and protect Newton's tree canopy.
Expand street trees and preserve mature canopy where possible.

Goal 6.3: Turn underutilized alleys and overlooked spaces into useful public places.
Support small improvements that make these spaces safer, more active, and more inviting.

Goal 6.4: Improve lighting and comfort in public spaces.
Upgrade lighting where people gather and walk so spaces feel safer and stay active longer, working with Evergy and property owners when needed.

Goal 6.5: Use art and cultural features to tell Newton's story.
Support public art and creative installations that strengthen identity and draw activity.

Goal 6.6: Keep Downtown active beyond the workday.
Support programming, events, and business activity that brings people Downtown evenings and weekends.

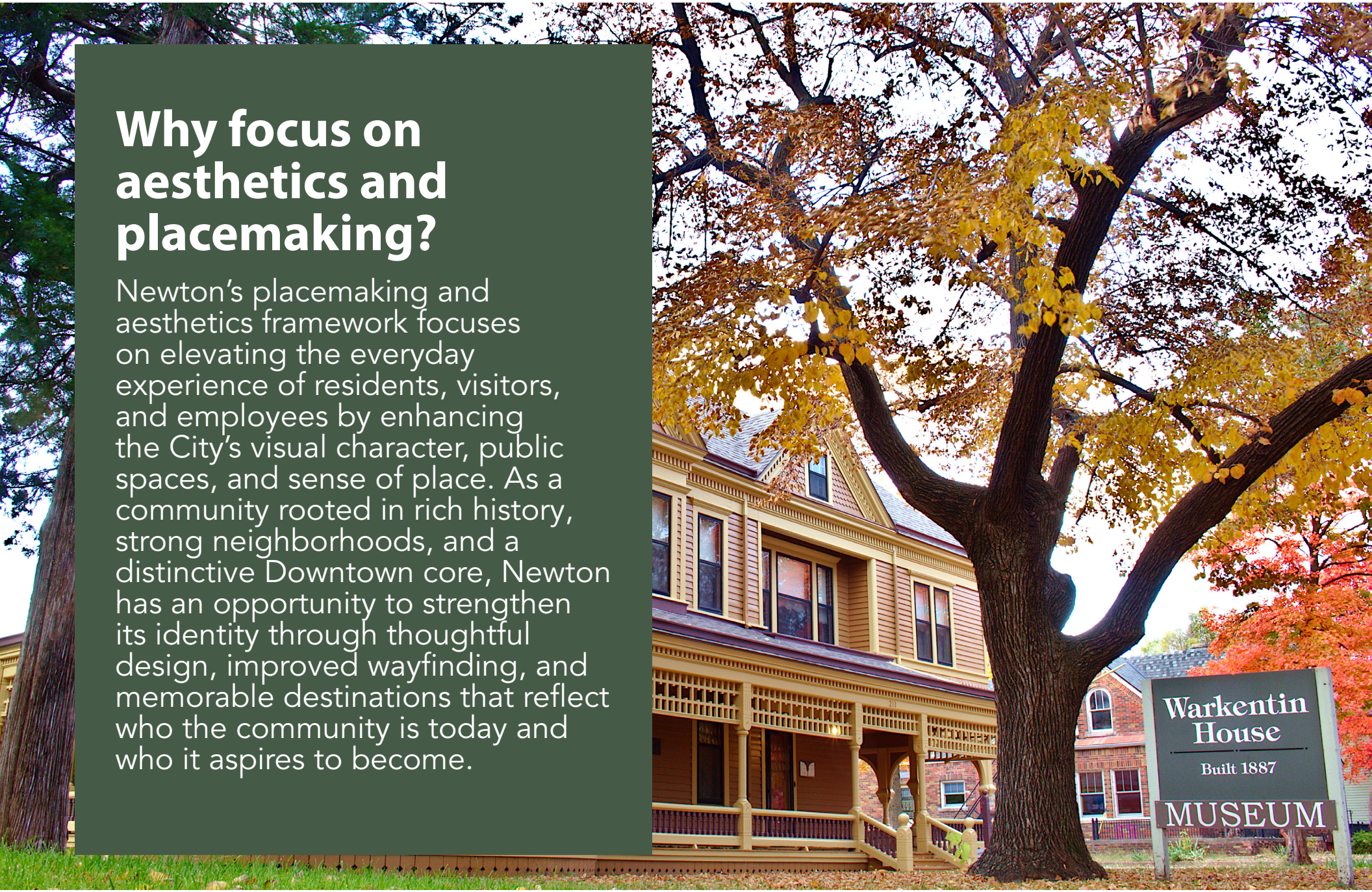
Goal 6.7: Make walking near key destinations more comfortable.
Improve crossings, shade, sidewalks, and streetscape details where foot traffic is most important.

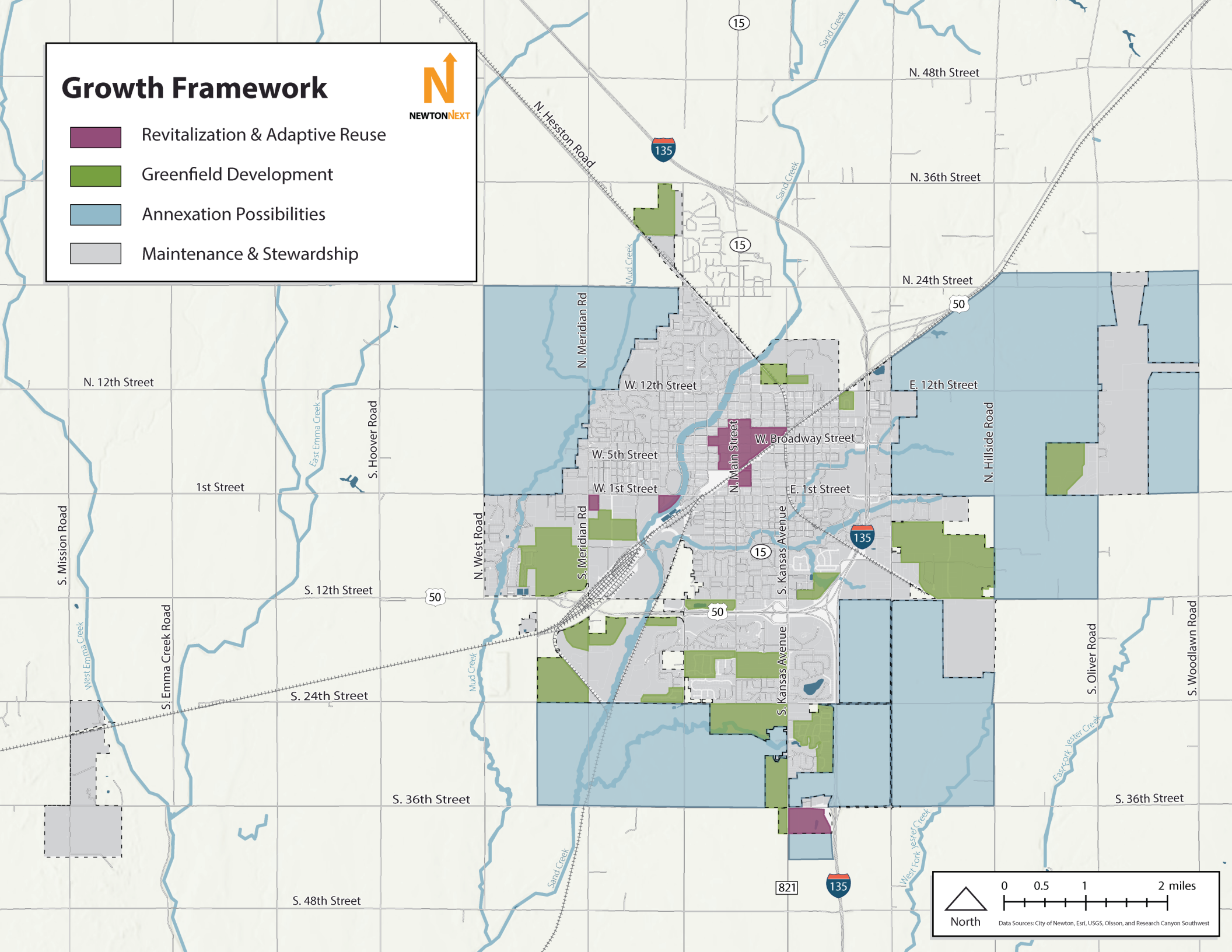
Goal 6.8: Protect and improve natural areas, including the Sand Creek corridor.
Continue investment in trails, habitat, and access that supports recreation and long-term resilience.

Goal 6.9: Leverage parks and recreational facilities as an economic development tool.
Establish a cohesive, multi-partner strategy to sustain and expand parks and recreation to support existing residents, make Newton a competitive place to live, and support visitors.

Why focus on aesthetics and placemaking?

Newton's placemaking and aesthetics framework focuses on elevating the everyday experience of residents, visitors, and employees by enhancing the City's visual character, public spaces, and sense of place. As a community rooted in rich history, strong neighborhoods, and a distinctive Downtown core, Newton has an opportunity to strengthen its identity through thoughtful design, improved wayfinding, and memorable destinations that reflect who the community is today and who it aspires to become.




Growth Framework
NEWTONNEXT
Revitalization & Adaptive Reuse
Greenfield Development
Annexation Possibilities
Maintenance & Stewardship
N. 48th Street
N. Hesston Road
N. 36th Street
N. 24th Street
N. 12th Street
W. 12th Street
E. 12th Street
N. Meridian Rd
W. Broadway Street
W. 5th Street
W. 1st Street
E. 1st Street
N. Main Street
N. Hillside Road
S. Hoover Road
1st Street
S. Mission Road
N. West Road
S. Meridian Rd
S. Kansas Avenue
S. 12th Street
S. Emma Creek Road
S. 24th Street
S. 36th Street
S. Oliver Road
S. Woodlawn Road
S. 48th Street
Sand Creek
Mud Creek
East Emma Creek
West Emma Creek
East Fork Jester Creek
West Fork Jester Creek
15
50
135
821
North
0 0.5 1 2 miles
Data Sources: City of Newton, Esri, USGS, Olsson, and Research Canyon Southwest

Gateways

Gateways are often prominent features at specific locations within a community, serving as entrances to a City or as transitional points to a district. These gateways help create a strong first impression and can include monuments, signage, bridges, sculptures, arches, or other architectural features. These features not only provide a point of architectural or artistic interest but also reinforce community pride and express a shared sense of space by incorporating a community's colors, logos, motifs, or even historic themes. The Placemaking and Aesthetics Framework identifies two gateway tiers.

Tier 1 Gateway

These gateways are located at major entry points on the north, south, east, and west edges of Newton. Situated along high-traffic highways and arterial roadways, these installations help establish a sense of arrival in Newton, reinforcing community identity and making a positive first impression for visitors. These Tier 1 monuments may include overhead archways, prominent "Welcome to Newton" signage, or large-scale sculptures. The City should consider partnering with Newton Murals and Arts Project to coordinate art installations at the designated gateways as a means to highlight local artists.

Signage and monumentation located at interchanges should be oriented to be visible to traffic from multiple directions, with consistent lighting to capitalize on



visibility at all times of day. Additional improvements to entry points at highway interchanges could include decorative lighting, murals, or applied motifs along retaining walls, adding visual interest as vehicles transition from highway speeds into the City. Existing landscaping should continue to be maintained to keep a clean appearance.

Tier 1 Gateway Sites:

- K-15 and 14th Street – this location serves as a northern gateway into Newton for travelers coming from North Newton and for those heading south along Route 15. The transition from adjacent communities and rural areas into the City makes this a natural point to mark entry into Newton.
- Broadway and I-135 Interchange – The Broadway and I-135 interchange functions as a major eastern gateway for regional traffic traveling north and south along I-135. As one of the most heavily traveled entry points into Newton, this location creates a critical first impression for visitors. Existing "Welcome to Newton" signage provides a foundation, but additional signage serving all travel directions, enhanced lighting, decorative treatments on retaining walls, and reinforced landscaping would strengthen its visibility and sense of arrival.
- 1st Street and I-135 Interchange – Similar to the Broadway and Interstate I-135 Interchange, the 1st Street and I-135 interchange serves as another key eastern gateway for travelers entering Newton from the interstate. This location provides direct access to City streets and is a frequent entry point for both visitors and residents. Expanding existing welcome signage to serve all directions of travel, adding consistent lighting, and incorporating decorative motifs and enhanced landscaping would reinforce its role as a gateway.
- 1st Street and Meridian – The intersection of 1st Street and Meridian serves as a natural entry point into Newton for travelers moving east along 1st Street. A small monument or "Welcome to Newton" sign at this location would help clearly signal arrival while remaining appropriate to the surrounding context and scale.
- Anderson and US-50 – Located on the southern edge of Newton, this intersection serves as a key gateway for east–west regional traffic. The existing large, landscaped roundabout creates a strong opportunity for a prominent gateway feature.
- S Kansas Avenue and 14th Street – This highly visible intersection functions as an important southern gateway into Newton for travelers heading north along Kansas Avenue and for those entering the City from the I-135 interchange. It serves as a primary access point to major retail and commercial destinations and to the NMC Health Medical Center, making it a frequent first impression for visitors.
- Kansas Avenue and 36th Street – A major southern entry point to the City from the Wichita area.

Tier 2 Gateway

While Tier 1 gateways welcome the community into Newton, Tier 2 Gateways serve as transitional entrances to specific areas within the City, namely Downtown Newton. These gateways help reinforce the Downtown identity and guide visitors into the City's core. This type of gateway should be marked with monumentation, such as plaques, medium- to large-sized roadway signage, archways, and landscaping improvements. These monuments can tie into the Citywide branding and design, or take on a more distinctive style to distinguish the Downtown district from the rest of the City.

Tier 2 Gateway Sites:

- Main Street and 1st Street – Located just south of Downtown Newton, this intersection serves as an important transition point for motorists traveling north toward the Downtown core. A monument or gateway sign placed at the northern corners of the intersection could announce arrival into central Newton.

- Broadway and Pine Street or Broadway and Oak Street – Either intersection could function as a gateway marking the transition from eastern neighborhoods and the Ardent Mills area into Downtown Newton. This block is anchored by key civic and open-space assets, including the Newton Public Library and Military Park. Gateway signage or other placemaking elements at this location could reinforce the transition and further enhance Military Park's presence and visibility.

- 8th Street and Main Street – Immediately north of Downtown Newton, this intersection already exhibits visual cues of transition, such as wider sidewalks and street trees. These existing characteristics make it a natural gateway location. A gateway arch or sign positioned along the southern corners of the intersection could further emphasize entry into the Downtown area and strengthen the sense of arrival.

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Streetscape and Aesthetic Enhancements

Streetscape and aesthetic improvements are intended to support Downtown vitality and Citywide connectivity and cohesion. These improvements should reinforce walkability, enhance safety, and create a more welcoming and engaging public realm. Streetscape improvements should encourage people to slow down, linger, and connect in public spaces. Descriptions and examples of placemaking and streetscape elements are provided as follows.

Streetscape and Placemaking Elements

- Lighting – Lighting is often associated with safety for both pedestrians and motorists, and it plays a critical role in ensuring visibility and comfort after dark. Lighting can also help establish ambiance and reinforce the character of a neighborhood, Downtown, or a unique district. Seasonal examples, such as holiday lighting, demonstrate how light can transform the experience of a street; similarly, decorative and architectural lighting can be used year-round to create a distinctive identity. Within the Placemaking and Aesthetics Framework, lighting in Downtown areas and neighborhoods should be human-scaled and pedestrian-focused, providing adequate illumination for walking while minimizing glare and light spill onto adjacent properties. Along major vehicular corridors and highways, lighting should be designed to support safe travel by clearly illuminating roadways, intersections, pedestrians, and cyclists.



Manhattan, Kansas (Source: Olsson) – Decorative string lights can help create a welcoming and festive atmosphere. These lights are used on 12th Street in Manhattan, Kansas along the plaza.



Kansas City, Missouri (Source: Olsson) – Various types of lighting can be used to illuminate a space. This image shows lighting integrated into signage, string lights, storefronts, and a water feature.



Lee's Summit, Missouri (Source: Olsson) – Lighting installations can be boldly designed to create unique spaces. This installation was designed as a part of a cohesive design near the Downtown Market Place.



DeSoto, Texas (Source: Olsson) – Metal embellishments can transform a wall along a walking path to indicate to motorists and pedestrians that they are transitioning into a different district, neighborhood, or Downtown space.

- Public Art – Public art encompasses a wide category that includes sculptures, murals, mosaics, water features, decorative paving, painted utility boxes, and unique art installations. These elements can be integrated into building façades, sidewalks, intersections, and public spaces to add visual interest. Public art can be permanent or temporary and may serve as landmarks, conversation pieces, or expressions of the local art community. Context is the most important consideration when incorporating public art, as scale, location, and subject matter should be appropriate to the surrounding environment.

- Street and Site Furnishings – This could include benches, seating walls, tables and chairs, planters, waste and recycling receptacles, and bike racks. These furnishings are essential for creating comfortable, usable public spaces that provide opportunities for rest, social interaction, and informal gatherings along streets and corridors. Furnishings also support practical needs by offering places to park bicycles or scooters and disposal of waste, helping keep public spaces functional.

- Frontage Interactions – While typically implemented by private businesses, frontage and business build out elements play a significant role in shaping the streetscape experience. Features such as awnings, canopies, planters, sandwich boards, and outdoor seating activate the edge between buildings and sidewalks, creating a more engaging pedestrian environment. These elements are designed at a human scale and contribute to the street's vibrancy and interest. Outdoor dining and patio seating not only increase visibility for businesses but also encourage social interaction and create lively, welcoming spaces for residents and visitors alike.

- Signage and Branded Elements – These elements include wayfinding signs, maps, banners, flags, district markers, and historic or interpretive panels. These elements help orient residents and visitors, reinforce neighborhood or district identity, and communicate information clearly and visually cohesively. When thoughtfully designed and consistently applied, signage can strengthen the overall character of a corridor or area while reducing visual clutter.



Louisburg, Kansas (Source: Olsson) – Landscaping with native grasses, plants, and trees softens new and older developments, creating interest and providing opportunities to incorporate sitting areas with street furniture and lighting.



Broken Arrow, Oklahoma (Source: Olsson) – Hanging baskets can add greenery to a location without a public garden or landscaped median nearby. Although maintenance and upkeep can be a concern, they often are strong indicators of a well-loved district or Downtown.



Fort Collins, Colorado: (Source: Olsson) – Allowing outdoor patios provides the opportunity for patrons to enjoy the outdoors while visiting local businesses. Potted plants, tree grates, banners, and awnings all add color and interest for pedestrians.



Fort Worth, Texas (Source: Olsson) – Color through landscaping, pavement choices, and building façades all add interest during an arts festival in Fort Worth, Texas.

- Landscaping – Landscaping includes a variety of treatments that soften the built environment and introduce texture, seasonal interest, and natural elements into streetscapes. While many landscape options exist, not every treatment is appropriate in every context. Street trees provide shade, visual continuity, and environmental benefits, while landscaped medians can enhance roadway aesthetics through understory plantings and ornamental trees. Landscape beds may be used to screen parking areas, highlight monuments or gateways, and define sidewalks or public spaces. All plantings should be well maintained and, where possible, use species native or well-adapted to Newton's climate.



Lincoln, Nebraska (Source: Olsson) – Bike racks and benches provide options for pedestrians and bicyclists to use along the street. Street trees provide shade to make walking more comfortable for pedestrians.



Erie, Colorado (Source: Olsson) – Building façades, awnings, and bright colors help make window-shopping interesting for patrons and add character.



Broken Arrow, Oklahoma (Source: Olsson) – Murals and public art can be a testament to a community's heritage, creating a tapestry of motifs and prominent figures. As a community defined by the railroad, local or regional artists could craft new art to commemorate this aspect of Newton's history.



Broken Arrow, Oklahoma (Source: Olsson) – Street banners can help advertise upcoming events with City-branded colors.

Exploring Alleyways

Unlike other places such as parks, plazas, or patios, alleyways must always retain a usability element for service and delivery. However, that does not mean they need to be dreary or dirty spaces. Underutilized alleyways can be transformed into welcoming, well-lit, and active public spaces that function as pedestrian passageways and extensions of the public realm. Improvements can include consolidating utilities, removing hazards, and addressing drainage or accessibility concerns. Placemaking enhancements can include festoon lighting, murals, painted bollards, and trellises. Clear ownership of maintenance issues is a must, especially for lighting, graffiti, and trash. When done well, alleyways can serve as mid-block connections and add to a pedestrian network.







Destinations and Park Space

Gateway features, pedestrian improvements, and streetscape enhancements should help lead residents and visitors comfortably toward community anchors in Newton, such as schools, social services like New Hope Shelter, and medical care. Investments should emphasize comfort, accessibility, and a sense of place through well-maintained sidewalks, pedestrian-scale lighting, shade features, seating, and streetscape amenities. Together, these improvements help guide people to these destinations by creating attractive, easy-to-follow routes and making it easier to move through the community and reach the places they frequently visit. When streets and paths feel welcoming and safe, people are more likely to explore nearby areas, walk between destinations, and spend more time in shared community spaces.

Destinations become truly meaningful when several types of places cluster together and reinforce each other. Downtown Newton is a good example: shops, restaurants, the library, business services, and social services are within walking distance, creating a vibrant and active center. As Newton grows and redevelops, new businesses and services should look for opportunities to build on these existing destination areas. Adding compatible uses near one another supports foot traffic, encourages social interaction, and helps create strong, thriving places throughout the City. Public input throughout this planning process consistently highlighted a desire for more community gathering spaces, such as wineries, local bars and breweries, restaurants, and farmers markets. These types of destinations create opportunities for social interaction, support local entrepreneurship, and contribute to a more lively and engaging community. Growing these kinds of destinations in Newton can help activate key areas, particularly Downtown and other emerging districts.

Parks

Newton is home to 21 parks across the City, offering open space, playgrounds, pools, sports fields, and trail access. The City's park system supports both mental and physical health by providing places for recreation, relaxation, and social gathering for residents of all ages. Newton's system of parks and trails is well-connected, supporting alternatives to vehicle transportation while also offering recreational opportunities.

The trail system largely follows Sand Creek, which runs through the heart of the City. The corridor provides bike and pedestrian access from Athletic Park through Downtown Newton, north to Centennial Park, and all the way to Bethel College in North Newton. Additional paved trails are located on South Kansas Avenue from SE 26th Street to SE 14th Street, connecting to NMC Health. Four bicycle repair stations are located along the trail, serving recreational users and daily riders.

Wayfinding improvements should complement this network by helping people confidently navigate from parks and trails to nearby destinations. Wayfinding signage along the trail should direct users to community facilities, attractions, and the Downtown, making the system easier to use and strengthening connections between recreational spaces and key places in the City.

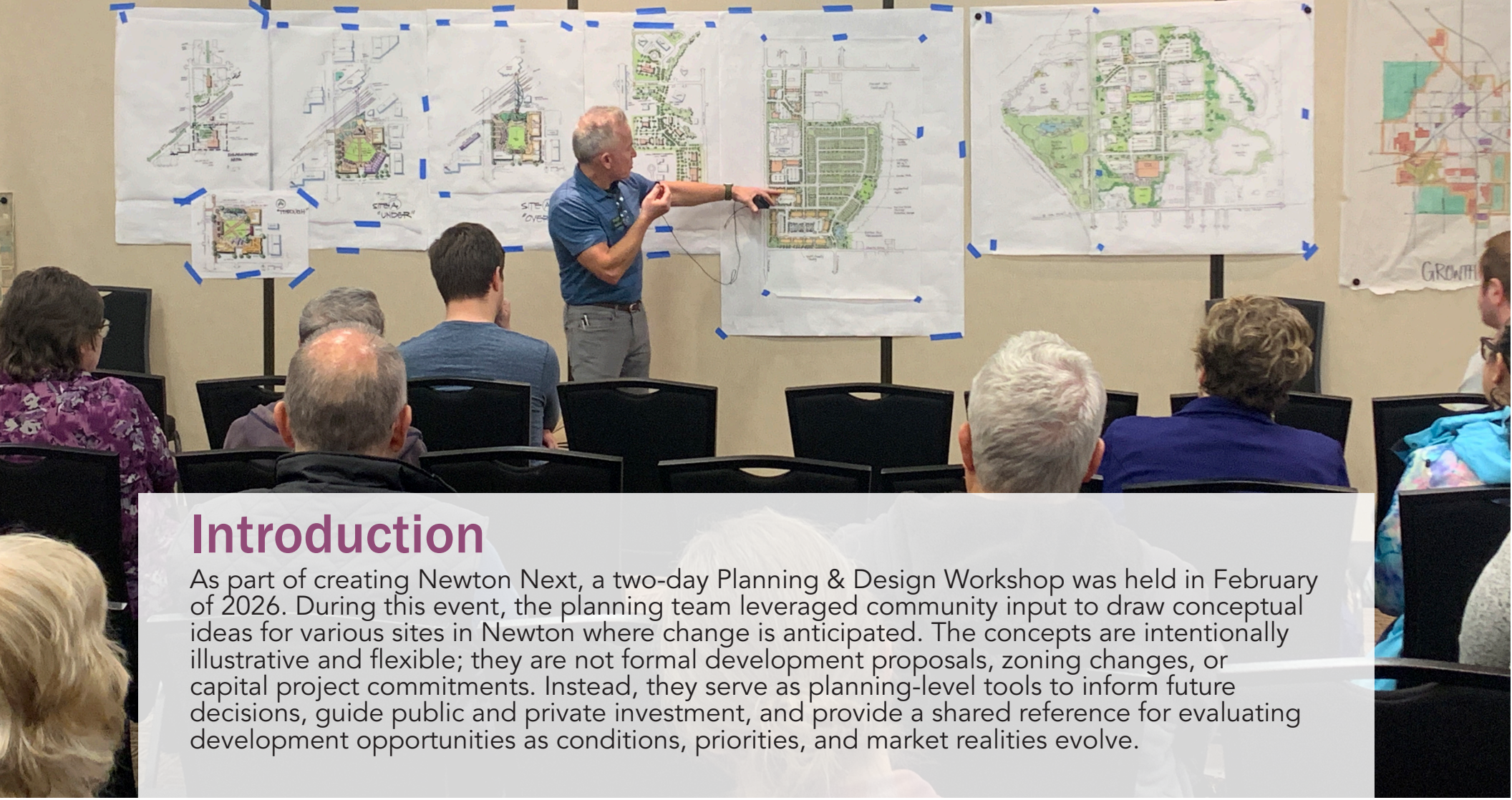
Section 7

Conceptual Site Plans

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E 12th St
N Kansas Ave
Missouri Pacific Railroad



Introduction

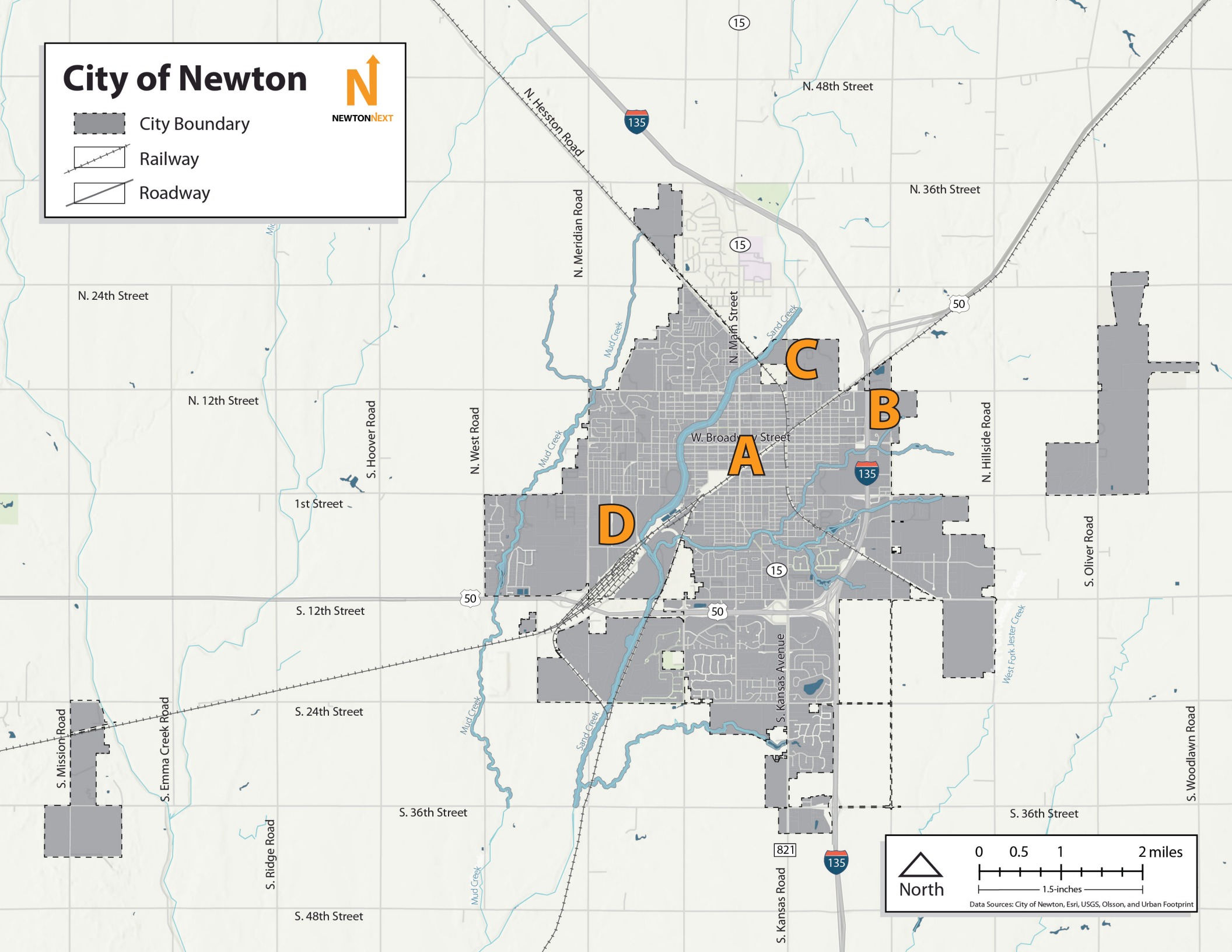
As part of creating Newton Next, a two-day Planning & Design Workshop was held in February of 2026. During this event, the planning team leveraged community input to draw conceptual ideas for various sites in Newton where change is anticipated. The concepts are intentionally illustrative and flexible; they are not formal development proposals, zoning changes, or capital project commitments. Instead, they serve as planning-level tools to inform future decisions, guide public and private investment, and provide a shared reference for evaluating development opportunities as conditions, priorities, and market realities evolve.

SITE A: 4th Street & Main

SITE B: North Spencer Road & East Broadway

SITE C: Meridian & 1st Street

SITE D: Kansas & 12th Street

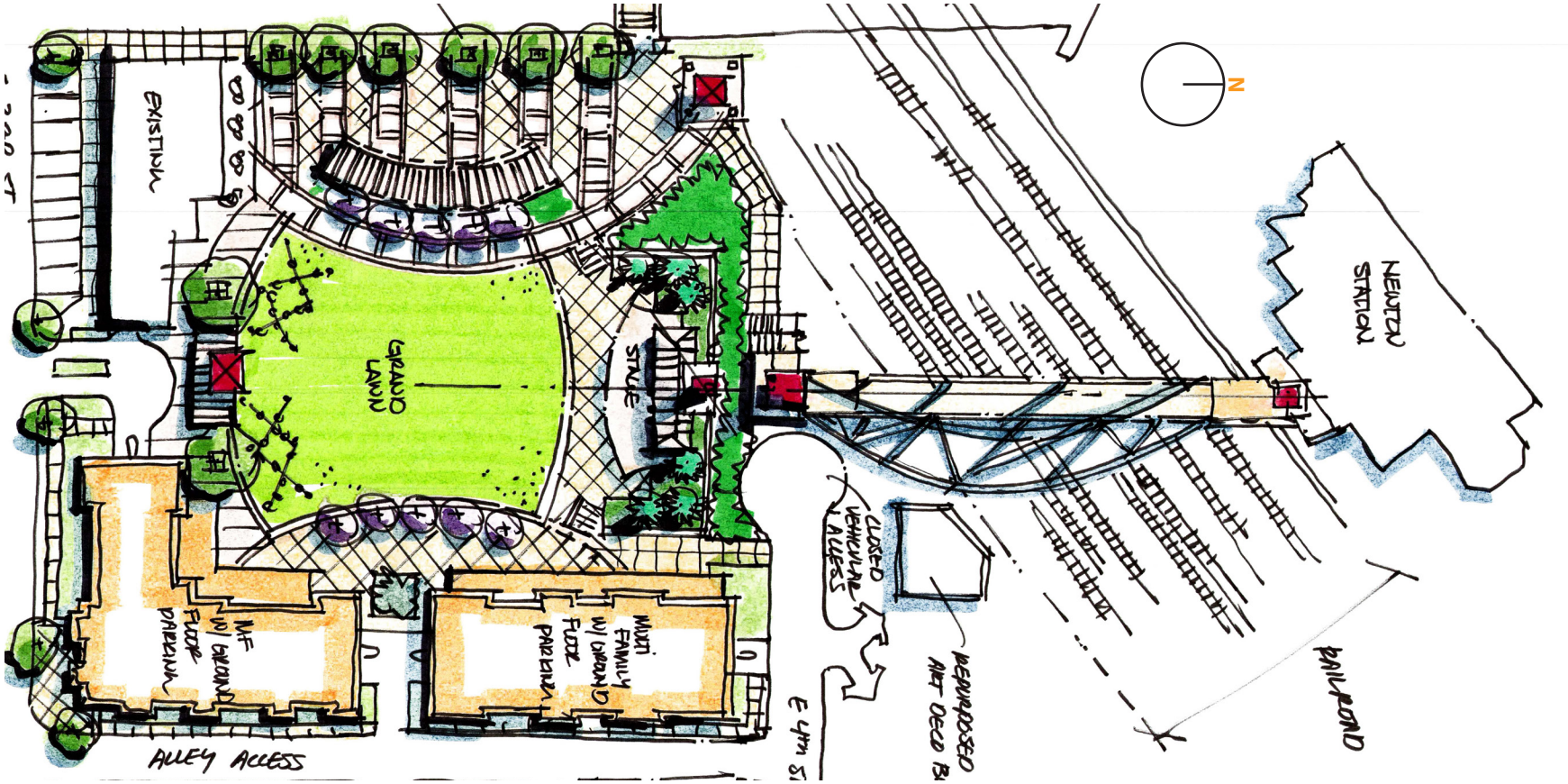

City of Newton
NEWTONNEXT
City Boundary
Railway
Roadway
A
B
C
D
N. Hesston Road
N. 48th Street
N. 36th Street
N. Meridian Road
N. 24th Street
N. Main Street
N. 12th Street
S. Hoover Road
N. West Road
W. Broadway Street
N. Hillside Road
1st Street
S. Oliver Road
S. 12th Street
S. Kansas Avenue
S. 24th Street
S. Mission Road
S. Emma Creek Road
S. Ridge Road
S. 36th Street
S. 36th Street
S. Woodlawn Road
S. 48th Street
S. Kansas Road
Mud Creek
Sand Creek
West Fork Chester Creek
15
50
135
821
North
0 0.5 1 2 miles
1.5-inches
Data Sources: City of Newton, Esri, USGS, Olsson, and Urban Footprint

Site A: 4th & Main Street

Site A represents a highly visible opportunity to strengthen Downtown Newton's identity, improve connectivity across the rail corridor, and create signature public spaces that support community life, economic activity, and placemaking. Located near the historic depot and existing cultural assets, this area has the potential to evolve into a civic anchor that better connects Downtown, adjacent neighborhoods, and recreational destinations. The concepts for Site A explore multiple long-term strategies for addressing the rail barrier while introducing flexible public spaces, redevelopment opportunities, and pedestrian-oriented improvements. Each alternative illustrates a different approach to connectivity — **under, over, and through** — each emphasizing walkability, adaptive reuse, stormwater management, and activation of underutilized land.

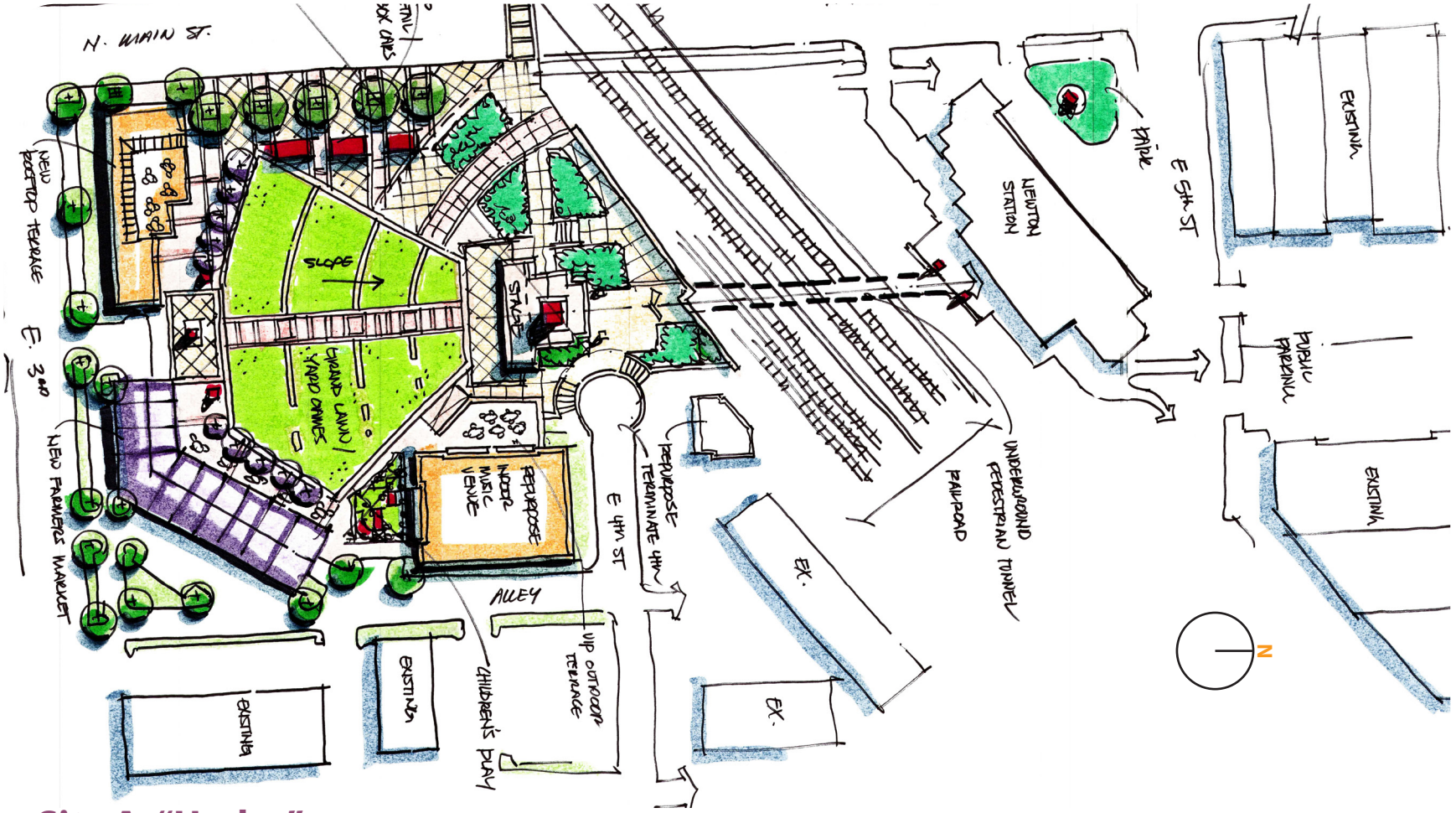


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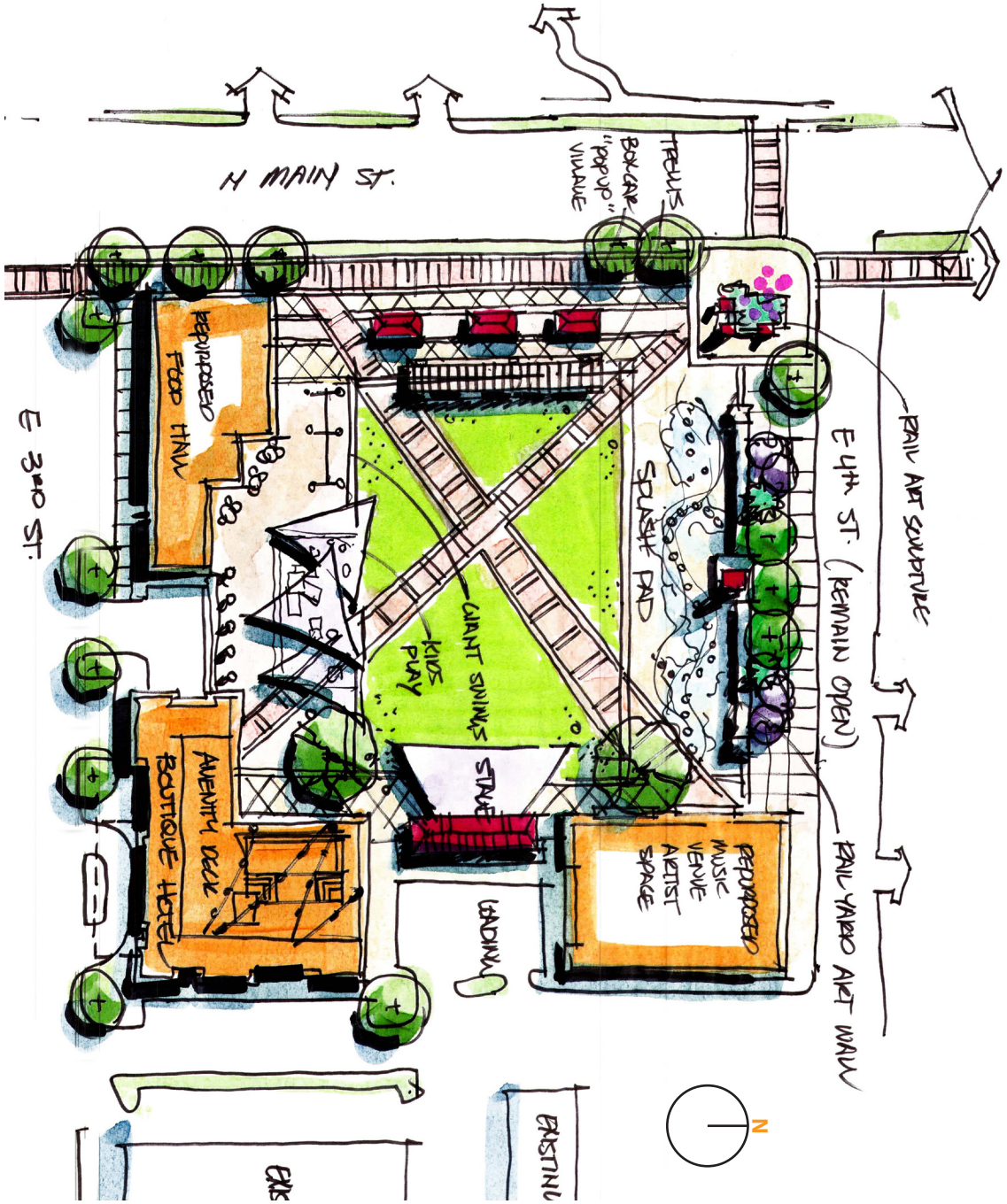
Site A: "Over"

The "Over" concept proposes a pedestrian bridge over the rail corridor as a visible, iconic connection linking Downtown, the depot, and adjacent destinations. This alternative emphasizes a strong visual gateway and clear wayfinding, with elevated views reinforcing the area's identity as a central gathering place. A large central lawn serves as the primary civic space, supporting events and informal recreation. Redevelopment opportunities include multifamily housing integrated with parking, reinforcing Downtown residential growth while supporting existing businesses. Public spaces are organized to accommodate markets, festivals, and daily use, creating an active, destination-oriented environment.



Site A: "Under"

The "Under" concept envisions enhanced pedestrian connectivity through an underground crossing beneath the rail line, minimizing visual and physical disruption to the surrounding environment. This approach allows for uninterrupted surface-level public space while improving safe, all-weather pedestrian access to the Depot and Downtown destinations. Key components include an outdoor amphitheatre to support community events, performances, and seasonal programming; adaptive reuse of existing vacant buildings for creative, cultural, or entertainment uses; and the introduction of flexible spaces such as farmers markets and pop-up retail. Streetscape and public realm improvements emphasize comfort, leisure, and extended Downtown activity while maintaining a compact development footprint.



Site A "Through"

The "Through" concept prioritizes permeability and continuous movement across the site, blending green space, cultural features, and mixed-use development. A large open park anchors the area, complemented by play spaces, an art walk celebrating Newton's rail history, and multiple pedestrian routes that invite exploration.

This concept supports higher-intensity reinvestment, including a boutique hotel, food hall, and creative commercial spaces, positioning the area as a regional draw. Flexible pop-up retail and adaptive reuse opportunities reinforce small business support while maintaining an emphasis on public access and community-oriented space.

Site B: North Spencer Road & East Broadway

The Site B concept illustrates a long-term opportunity to reinforce the North Spencer and East Broadway corridor as a welcoming gateway to Newton while supporting incremental commercial reinvestment, improved connectivity, and redevelopment of underutilized properties. Given its proximity to Interstate I-135 and role as a regional entry point, this area is well positioned to attract visitor-serving uses, corridor-scale retail, and infill development that strengthens the City's economic base.

The conceptual plan envisions a mix of hospitality, commercial, and service-oriented development near the City's Meridian Event Center. New hotel development is positioned to capitalize on the convention center and highway access to support regional visitation. Surrounding commercial infill, including restaurant, coffee, and convenience-oriented uses, is intended to serve both local residents and travellers while improving the visual and functional quality of the corridor.





Site C: Centennial Park

Site C highlights long-term opportunities to expand and enhance recreational assets, positioning parks and open space as core contributors to community health, quality of life, and regional attraction. This site builds on existing recreational functions and explores how strategic investment could diversify programming while supporting both active and passive uses. The concept prioritizes flexibility and scalability, allowing facilities to evolve alongside community needs and resources. Proposed elements include multi-sport fields, expanded passive parkland, trail systems, adventure-based recreation such as mountain biking and treetop activities, and additional park shelters to improve usability and comfort. By enhancing this site as a recreational destination, Newton can support youth sports, tournaments, outdoor tourism, and everyday use while strengthening connections to surrounding neighborhoods and trail networks. Improvements are framed as phased and adaptable, supporting partnerships and incremental investment over time.

Site D: Meridian Street & 1st Street

Site D focuses on expanding housing choice and neighborhood-serving amenities while reinforcing walkable, connected development patterns. Situated near existing residential areas, service providers, and employment corridors, this site is well-positioned to accommodate incremental growth that balances density, liveability, and accessibility. The concept emphasizes a mix of housing types to support residents of different ages, household sizes, and income levels, while integrating small-scale retail and open space to serve daily needs. Development is organized around pedestrian connectivity, internal green spaces, and transitions that respect surrounding neighborhoods.
Key elements include multifamily housing at key intersections, higher-density cottage-style homes toward the center of the site, and mixed-use infill development that activates underutilized land. Neighborhood retail is intentionally modest in scale, focusing on convenience-oriented uses that complement—not compete with—Downtown. Parks, garden paths, ponds, and community gardens reinforce environmental sustainability and neighborhood identity.






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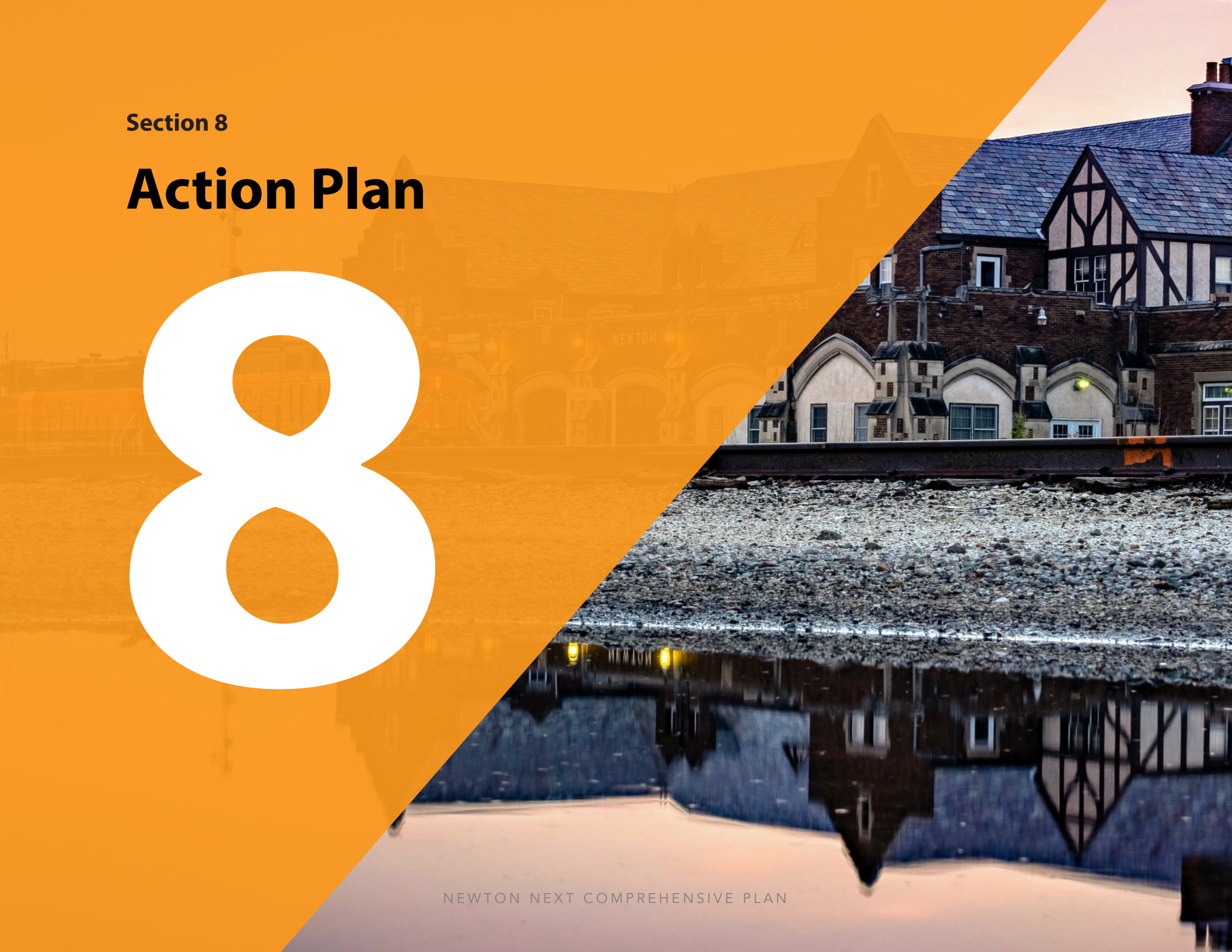



DOWNTOWN
REVITALIZATION

Section 8

Action Plan

8





Section 8 Contents

Introduction

Action Plan

8

Introduction

The research, analysis, and public engagement behind this Plan established a clear vision for Newton's future. With adoption, the focus shifts from planning to implementation. This Action Plan is intended to help the City translate that vision into coordinated, practical steps over time.

Implementation will not happen all at once, and not every action or strategy will carry the same urgency, cost, or level of complexity. Some items can begin immediately through staff coordination, policy updates, and annual work planning, while others will require partnership-building, capital programming, outside funding, or additional study. Together, these actions provide a roadmap for making steady progress toward the community's goals.

Successful implementation will depend on a few core commitments:

Use the Plan as a daily decision-making tool.
This Plan should guide decisions about land use, development and redevelopment, transportation, infrastructure, community character, public investment, and City policy.

Keep plan champions involved.
Members of the Community Voices Team, Technical Committee, City staff, elected officials, and community partners all played an important role in shaping this Plan. Their continued support will help sustain momentum, strengthen accountability, and build public confidence over time.

Communicate consistently and transparently.
Implementation should be shared clearly and regularly with staff, decision-makers, partner organizations, and the public so that progress, priorities, and next steps remain visible.

Celebrate early progress.
Small wins matter. Recognizing early accomplishments can build momentum, reinforce the value of the Plan, and help the community stay committed to long-term implementation.



What's Already Happening?

Newton is not starting from scratch. As this Comprehensive Plan was being developed, the City continued advancing a number of projects, partnerships, and implementation tools that already support the Plan's direction. These efforts provide an important foundation for action and should be coordinated with the recommendations in this section wherever possible.

- Safe Streets for All Action Plan underway with Harvey County, with completion expected in 2026.
- Sand Creek Bike Path extension moving forward with major grant funding and a defined local match and bonding approach.
- Capital Improvement Program and five-year long-range financial planning already being used to manage capital priorities and debt timing.
- Existing parks governance and partnership structure involving the City, NRC, and PBC, along with continued reliance on grants and partners for park improvements.
- Downtown redevelopment momentum, including City marketing of depot-area sites and interest in a master developer process following completion of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Existing local economic development tools already familiar to Newton, including RHIDs and CIDs, with this Plan also recommending continued use of TIF/CID/RHID tools where appropriate.
- Planned bicycle and pedestrian improvements beyond the Sand Creek extension, including a proposed shared-use path along 1st Street near the airport.
- Prior Downtown planning work, including the Downtown Master Plan, which continues to provide a useful foundation for redevelopment, walkability, and public realm improvements.

Funding Toolbox

Implementation will rely on a blend of local operating and capital funding, district-based economic development tools, state-administered programs, federal discretionary grants, and partner contributions; the acronyms below define common funding agencies and sources that may support the Action Plan.

Local / Municipal Funding Tools (Newton)

GF — General Fund — Newton's primary operating fund supported by taxes, fees, and transfers; used for staff time, professional services, and eligible program costs.

CIP —Capital Improvement Program — Newton's multi year capital planning and prioritization process; used to program major projects, identify financing options, and coordinate outside funding partners.

General Obligation Bonds (GO bonds) — municipal bonds backed by property tax (debt service) typically used for large public capital improvements.

Enterprise Funds — utility funds supported by user fees, including Waterworks and Wastewater (and other enterprise operations); commonly used for planning, design, and construction of utility infrastructure.

Special Highway Fund — transportation-related revenues (including state receipts) used for local street/traffic activities and eligible maintenance/operations.

Special Assessments / Special Receipts — local assessments used to finance growth-area infrastructure and repay debt incurred for eligible improvements.

CVB — Convention & Visitors / Tourism-related revenues — local visitor-economy revenues that may support eligible destination, wayfinding, and event-related investments.

Local Economic Development Tools (District-Based Financing)

TIF — Tax Increment Financing — a redevelopment finance tool that captures incremental tax revenue growth within a defined area to fund eligible improvements.

CID — Community Improvement District — a district tool used to finance eligible public improvements and services within a defined area (often supported by a district revenue stream).

RHID — Reinvestment Housing Incentive District — a housing/reinvestment finance tool.

State (Kansas) Funding & Programs

KDOT — Kansas Department of Transportation — state transportation agency administering multiple local funding opportunities and grant programs.

TA / TAP — Transportation Alternatives (Program) — KDOT-administered federal funding for walking/biking infrastructure and related eligible projects (including certain Safe Routes to School and trail conversion categories).

HSIP — Highway Safety Improvement Program — a federally funded program managed by KDOT to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries on public roads through data-driven safety investments.

NEVI — National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (Formula Program) — KDOT's "Charge Up Kansas" program using federal funds for public DC fast charging along designated corridors, with local/private match requirements.

KDHE — Kansas Department of Health and Environment — state agency administering water and wastewater infrastructure loans and grants (including State Revolving Fund-related assistance).

SRF — State Revolving Fund (Kansas) — subsidized loan funding (through KDHE-managed programs) for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure planning/design/construction.

KWO — Kansas Water Office — state agency administering State Water Plan Fund-related grant programs, including HB 2302 grants.

HB 2302 Grant Programs — Kansas Water Office programs created under Senate Substitute for HB 2302, including Technical Assistance Grant Fund and Water Projects Grant Fund.

KDWP — Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks — state agency administering outdoor recreation grant programs used for parks, trails, and related public recreation investments.

LWCF — Land and Water Conservation Fund (Kansas-administered) — a program administered in Kansas by KDWP providing matching grants for acquisition/development of public outdoor recreation facilities.

RTP — Recreational Trails Program — a trail funding program administered by KDWP supporting eligible trail and trailhead projects.

Federal Funding & Programs

USDOT — U.S. Department of Transportation — federal transportation agency administering national discretionary grant programs, including SS4A.

SS4A — Safe Streets and Roads for All — USDOT competitive grant program to prevent roadway fatalities and serious injuries; supports Planning & Demonstration activities and Implementation of projects/strategies tied to a safety action plan.

FHWA — Federal Highway Administration — USDOT administration partner for federal-aid highway programs and SS4A implementation guidance/resources.

FAA — Federal Aviation Administration — federal funding partner for eligible airport infrastructure.

CDBG — Community Development Block Grant — a federal community development funding source commonly used by local governments for eligible public improvements and community development activities.

Common Partner / Leveraged Funding (Non governmental)

Philanthropy / Foundations — charitable grants or donor-advised funds supporting public amenities, pilot programs, and match contributions.

Corporate Sponsorships — private funding for events, wayfinding, programming, and amenities.

Institutional / Employer Partnerships — cost sharing or hosted improvements tied to major institutions (healthcare, schools, major employers).

Common Funding Source Combinations

Policy, staffing, process, planning, and coordination actions: GF

Major public infrastructure projects: CIP + GO Bonds + Enterprise Funds

Redevelopment / district reinvestment: TIF + CID + RHID

Transportation safety: SS4A + HSIP
Sidewalks, trails, bike, active transportation: TA/TAP + RTP + LWCF

Stormwater / water / wastewater: KDHE / SRF + KWO HB 2302

Downtown activation / placemaking / tourism: CVB + CID + Sponsorships + Philanthropy

Housing / neighborhood reinvestment: RHID + CDBG

Action Plan

The following matrix outlines the major actions and supporting strategies needed to advance the vision and goals of Newton Next. It organizes each action by the relevant Planning Frameworks — **Strategic Growth, Land Use & Development, Mobility & Connectivity, and Placemaking & Aesthetics** — and identifies the departments and partners best positioned to lead implementation. The matrix also includes an estimated timeframe to help guide sequencing, coordination, and accountability.



1 Strengthen Newton's economic development strategy and designated leadership

Designate economic development leadership within Administration to execute priority initiatives; adopt a reinvestment financing toolkit with clear cost-sharing rules (e.g., RHIDs, TIF/CID where applicable, grants); prioritize and execute capital reinvestment in established neighborhoods and commercial districts; track growth outcomes annually (development activity, capacity, fiscal impacts); coordinate annexation criteria and outcomes review with capacity and service delivery standards.

Strategic Growth	Land Use & Development	Mobility & Connectivity	Placemaking & Aesthetics	Lead	Partners	Timeframe
✓				Administration / Economic Development	Finance; Law; Building, Zoning, Planning; Public Works; Communications; City Clerk	Near-term (0-2 years)

2 Streamline development approvals

Stand up a single online permitting/development portal (intake, routing, status tracking, payment links); publish a step-by-step permitting guide with standard timelines; create a pre-application option and clear submittal checklists; assign a "development concierge" point of contact; implement an expedited review pathway for infill/adaptive reuse projects that meet defined plan criteria; track turnaround times and publish quarterly performance dashboards.

Strategic Growth	Land Use & Development	Mobility & Connectivity	Placemaking & Aesthetics	Lead	Partners	Timeframe
✓	✓			Building, Zoning, Planning	IT; City Clerk; Communications; Public Works	Near-term (0-2 years)

3 Make Downtown a regional destination and active local hub

Launch a vacant storefront activation program (pop-ups, short-term leases, temporary exhibits) with a simple application and clear eligibility; continue to coordinate the Downtown events calendar and marketing plan; provide small business technical assistance (business planning, tenant fit, permitting navigation); pilot parklets or seasonal outdoor seating with ADA/safety rules; leverage the Meridian Center to attract meetings/events that generate Downtown foot traffic; align funding with grants, sponsorships, philanthropy, and local incentives.

Strategic Growth	Land Use & Development	Mobility & Connectivity	Placemaking & Aesthetics	Lead	Partners	Timeframe
✓	✓	✓	✓	Administration / Economic Development	Choose Newton; Newton Main Street; Communications; Meridian Center; Building, Zoning, Planning; Chamber; Property Owners	Near-term (0-2 years)

4 Promote small-scale and incremental reinvestment

Develop rehabilitation and small-home repair programs (grants/low-interest loans) targeted to older housing stock; streamline permits for rehabs and small infill; build small-developer and homeowner capacity through training and technical support aligned with priority sites; coordinate reinvestment blocks with street/utility maintenance schedules to reduce repeat disruption and improve redevelopment feasibility.

Strategic Growth	Land Use & Development	Mobility & Connectivity	Placemaking & Aesthetics	Lead	Partners	Timeframe
✓	✓			Administration / Economic Development	Building, Zoning, Planning; Communications; Public Works; Neighborhood Groups; Developers	Near-term (0-2 years)

5 Continue focused industrial and employment growth

Continue to advance priority employment areas east of I-135 and around the Airport/Kansas Logistics Park; create a site-readiness work plan (utilities, access, stormwater, rail/truck circulation) and pre-application/pre-permitting approach for target sites; align incentives, marketing, and entitlement processes to shorten deal timelines; coordinate utility upgrade sequencing to support major users while protecting neighborhood service levels; pursue partnerships to attract logistics, light manufacturing, aviation suppliers, and food processing aligned with regional strengths.

Strategic Growth	Land Use & Development	Mobility & Connectivity	Placemaking & Aesthetics	Lead	Partners	Timeframe
✓	✓			Building, Zoning, Planning	Building, Zoning, Planning; Airport; Public Works; State/Regional Economic Development Partners; Utilities	Near-term (0-2 years)

6 Create a parks and recreation strategic plan

Prepare a Citywide Parks & Recreation Plan defining/verifying roles, service levels, and cost allocation (O&M vs capital); create a phased facility and programming strategy (including competitive sports) tied to realistic funding; align joint-use agreements with schools and partners with clear responsibilities; identify near-term maintenance and safety needs and set performance targets; coordinate marketing and event programming with Communications and the Meridian Center where appropriate.

Strategic Growth	Land Use & Development	Mobility & Connectivity	Placemaking & Aesthetics	Lead	Partners	Timeframe
✓			✓	Parks & Cemeteries	Administration; Finance; Communications; Schools; Nonprofits; Youth Orgs; Meridian Center	Near-term (0-2 years)

7 Expand Citywide housing options and affordability

Update zoning and development standards to allow "missing-middle" housing types (accessory units, duplex-fourplex, cottage courts, townhomes) in alignment with Place Types; support adaptive reuse of underutilized buildings into housing; implement optional incentives (faster review, fee adjustments, targeted infrastructure coordination) tied to desired outcomes; coordinate with housing partners to increase income-restricted units and expand rental assistance options; support entry-level ownership and moderate-cost rental development where market demand is strongest.

Strategic Growth	Land Use & Development	Mobility & Connectivity	Placemaking & Aesthetics	Lead	Partners	Timeframe
✓	✓			Building, Zoning, Planning	Administration / Economic Development; Housing Agencies/Nonprofits; Developers; Major Employers; Property Owners	Medium-term (2-5 years)

8 Track, prioritize, and advance vacant and underused properties

Maintain a mapped inventory of vacant/underused properties (ownership, condition, constraints) and update it regularly; identify a short annual list of high-priority catalyst sites and assign a project lead; run technical assistance for priority sites (e.g., ULI technical assistance panels) to define feasible reuse concepts and public improvements; create transparent incentive eligibility rules (vacancy duration, location, project outcomes) and standardize offers (fee adjustments, expedited review, targeted infrastructure support); coordinate proactive owner outreach and code enforcement for chronically vacant/derelict properties.

Strategic Growth	Land Use & Development	Mobility & Connectivity	Placemaking & Aesthetics	Lead	Partners	Timeframe
✓	✓			Building, Zoning, Planning; Administration	Public Works; Communications; ULI (or similar); Incremental Development Alliance (or similar); Property Owners; Neighborhood Groups	Medium-term (2-5 years)

9 Modernize corridor roadway design

Adopt corridor access management standards (shared driveways, cross-access, safer internal circulation) to apply to development and redevelopment; launch a corridor retrofit program for priority segments; identify candidate streets for lane reconfiguration and pilot via striping/quick-build with evaluation measures; adopt a streetscape kit-of-parts (trees, lighting, seating/shade, durable materials) to be considered in major street projects; coordinate corridor construction phasing and access management to maintain emergency, freight, and local access.

Strategic Growth	Land Use & Development	Mobility & Connectivity	Placemaking & Aesthetics	Lead	Partners	Timeframe
		✓	✓	Public Works	Administration; Schools; Police; Fire/EMS; Communications; KDOT	Medium-term (2-5 years)

10 Promote traditional mixed-use building typologies

Prioritize ground-floor commercial uses that generate pedestrian activity (retail, restaurants, customer-facing services) with office/residential above; review and consider national reforms enabling point access block (vertical shared access) buildings of up to three stories; establish a clear, consistent City policy for enabling mixed-use in legacy storefront buildings, including an internal checklist for code pathways and common building upgrades; review zoning and parking standards in targeted mixed-use areas to reduce barriers while maintaining context-sensitive expectations; provide a predictable approval pathway for mixed-use projects that meet adopted design intent; coordinate with Fire/EMS early on life-safety considerations for adaptive reuse projects; engage technical assistance as necessary.

Strategic Growth	Land Use & Development	Mobility & Connectivity	Placemaking & Aesthetics	Lead	Partners	Timeframe
	✓		✓	Building, Zoning, Planning	Administration / Economic Development; Public Works; Fire/EMS; Law; Developers; Property Owners; Communications	Medium-term (2-5 years)

11 Integrate open space and green infrastructure into development and public projects

Adopt and enforce open space dedication standards with context-based typologies and design guidance; obtain legal review for fee-in-lieu options and fee structures; require development to respond to topography and waterways and incorporate resilient stormwater best practices; require usable parks/open space in new subdivisions (not leftover land), integrating trails and stormwater amenities where appropriate; adopt tree canopy targets and street tree standards and implement a neighborhood tree program and inventory.

Strategic Growth	Land Use & Development	Mobility & Connectivity	Placemaking & Aesthetics	Lead	Partners	Timeframe
	✓	✓	✓	Building, Zoning, Planning	Parks & Cemeteries; Public Works; Legal; City Administration; Developers	Medium-term (2-5 years)w

12 Implement a Citywide placemaking and identity strategy

Use the Placemaking & Aesthetics framework to complete a gateway audit and select priority entry locations; bundle gateway upgrades with corridor improvements (lighting, medians, sign cleanup) to reduce piecemeal work; adopt a Downtown streetscape priority list focused on ADA access, lighting, shade, and durable materials; adopt a public art policy/ordinance and maintain an art inventory; advance a Sand Creek multi-benefit corridor concept/phasing plan that is grant-ready and includes wayfinding and interpretive elements.

Strategic Growth	Land Use & Development	Mobility & Connectivity	Placemaking & Aesthetics	Lead	Partners	Timeframe
		✓	✓	Public Works, Main Street	Communications; Administration; Parks & Cemeteries; Local Arts Orgs; Tourism Partners	Medium-term (2-5 years)

13 Advance practical interventions to mitigate rail impacts

Publish a public "rail mitigation" guide explaining reporting steps and City/railroad roles; establish a formal coordination and escalation structure with BNSF with one City point of contact; adopt a rail disruption management plan with pre-planned detours, signage, and communications; track crossing delay/queuing/safety risk using scalable data sources; define thresholds and a feasibility workflow for considering grade separation projects when sustained impacts warrant it.

Strategic Growth	Land Use & Development	Mobility & Connectivity	Placemaking & Aesthetics	Lead	Partners	Timeframe
✓		✓		City Administration	Communications; Public Works; Police; Fire/EMS; Law; KDOT; BNSF	Medium-term (2-5 years)

14 Diversify and enhance commercial corridor development

Prioritize Kansas Avenue and key nodes for retail/office growth; develop a corridor reinvestment standard that applies when sites expand, reinvest, or redevelop (cross-access, shared driveways, internal circulation, pedestrian links, landscaping/screening, signage expectations); package repeatable retrofit fixes for priority segments and coordinate with resurfacing/utility projects; recruit missing retail categories and services to reduce leakage; encourage redevelopment of obsolete sites (including large-format retail) into mixed-use or right-sized commercial formats; improve wayfinding and corridor branding to support visibility.

Strategic Growth	Land Use & Development	Mobility & Connectivity	Placemaking & Aesthetics	Lead	Partners	Timeframe
✓	✓	✓	✓	Administration / Economic Development	Public Works; Communications; Building, Zoning, Planning; Property Owners; Developers; Chamber	Long-term (5-10 years)

15 Establish and maintain a complete multimodal network

Build sidewalk, trail, and bike connections that link schools, parks, Downtown, employment areas, and key services; complete a destination-based barrier assessment and adopt a backbone network map with phased expansion; require connected street grids and safe pedestrian/bike links in new subdivisions; install wayfinding and network branding so routes are easy to follow; maintain a system inventory and condition rating for sidewalks/trails/bike facilities to prioritize repairs and upgrades.

Strategic Growth	Land Use & Development	Mobility & Connectivity	Placemaking & Aesthetics	Lead	Partners	Timeframe
		✓	✓	Public Works	Choose Newton Main Street; Parks & Cemeteries; Schools; Communications; MPO; Developers	Long-term (5-10 years); Ongoing

16 Improve transportation safety for all users

Implement the recommendations of the Safety Action Plan, leveraging federal implementation grants. Establish a quick-build safety program (striping, curb extensions, refuge islands, raised crossings) while advancing permanent designs through the CIP; deliver a vulnerable-user safety package focused on routes to schools, healthcare, senior housing, shelters, and essential services; maintain a standard menu of safety countermeasures for consistent design; use routine resurfacing/restriping projects to deliver incremental upgrades; create a process for partnering with neighborhoods and residents who request traffic calming measures; track outcomes using defined safety measures.

Strategic Growth	Land Use & Development	Mobility & Connectivity	Placemaking & Aesthetics	Lead	Partners	Timeframe
		✓	✓	Public Works	Administration; Schools; Police; Fire/EMS; Communications; KDOT; Neighborhoods	Long-term (5-10 years)

17 Direct growth to serviced areas

Adopt growth phasing standards that prioritize development in infrastructure-ready areas (including south Newton) and require contiguous, efficient service delivery; encourage build out of existing subdivisions before major greenfield expansion; discourage new residential zoning requests more than 1/4 mile from existing water/sewer/stormwater infrastructure unless a funded extension plan is provided; integrate growth phasing with CIP and utility master plans; use the same standards to guide annexation timing and voluntary annexation incentives.

Strategic Growth	Land Use & Development	Mobility & Connectivity	Placemaking & Aesthetics	Lead	Partners	Timeframe
✓	✓	✓		Building, Zoning, Planning	Public Works; Fire/EMS; Administration	Ongoing

18 Align growth with infrastructure capacity

Require a capacity sign-off (or funded upgrade plan) before approving rezonings, major subdivisions, or large developments; require lifecycle cost estimates and a staffing/service impact memo for major growth proposals; align development review decisions with adopted utility master plans and the CIP; coordinate water, wastewater, stormwater, and street replacements by district so reinvestment projects are not torn up repeatedly; formalize utility coordination with developers to support additional intensity while minimizing neighborhood impacts.

Strategic Growth	Land Use & Development	Mobility & Connectivity	Placemaking & Aesthetics	Lead	Partners	Timeframe
✓	✓	✓		Building, Zoning, Planning	Public Works; Finance; Fire/EMS; Police; Law; Administration / Economic Development	Ongoing

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2026 - 2036 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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NEXT CHAPTER