

I. INTRODUCTION

Background In the fall of 1996, the North Topeka on the Move Association (NOTOMA) completed the Strategic Action Plan to Revitalize North Topeka. The area for that plan encompassed the entire North Topeka West and East Neighborhood Improvements Association (NIA) areas (5 sq. miles) with a population of 6,500 people. The Action Plan focused on business development, community improvement, and infrastructure/ housing, but did not include City Administration participation during the process. NOTOMA used the goals and actions of this plan to guide their organization’s agenda over the last several years for this broad area. The major themes of the plan involved returning stability to residential neighborhoods including “a proposal for downzoning”, the need to build upon historic assets of the community, and achieve a vibrant business district on N. Kansas Avenue.

Purpose In the summer of 1998, NOTOMA and the City of Topeka agreed to partner on a more comprehensive revitalization plan to build upon the action plan with a more specific land use and development strategy that would address a smaller geographic area involving City participation. The objectives of this new plan emerged as follows:

- An 850-acre area known as Historic North Topeka area should be assessed for appropriate **land use** and zoning implementation. This Planning Area was predominately zoned for industrial and multi-family uses even though it the neighborhoods were predominately single-family residential.
- A neighborhood-sized 267-acre focus area with 1,000 people that included the N. Kansas Avenue business district, riverfront, and surrounding residential blocks should be the focus of a more comprehensive **revitalization and development strategy**.

A joint application was made to the State of Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing’s Metropolitan Community Capacity Building Grant program for a \$15,000 grant that would be applied to graphic assistance with these planning efforts. **The purpose of the Historic North Topeka Revitalization Plan is to provide long-range guidance and feasible alternatives to the City, its agencies, residents, and private/public interests for the future revitalization of Historic North Topeka.** It establishes a 10-15 year vision with appropriate strategies and implementation measures for land use, housing, urban design, parks, commercial districts, infrastructure, and circulation. This Plan provides the policy basis from which to identify appropriate zoning, capital improvements, and programs to implement it.

Relation to other plans The Plan is a comprehensive community-based approach to neighborhood planning that constitutes an amendment to the Metropolitan Comprehensive Plan and is regularly monitored, reviewed, and updated as needed. It is intended to balance neighborhood needs with city-wide objectives and be consistent with goals of existing and future elements of the Comprehensive Plan including Downtown, Transportation, Economic Development, and Trails Elements.

Process

This document has primarily been prepared in collaboration with NOTOMA and the Historic North Topeka Stakeholders Committee (see Acknowledgements). Beginning in December, 1998, development of the plan involved a community-based process inclusive of the representative neighborhood organizations. Planning staff conducted a property-by-property land use/housing survey of the neighborhood and collected pertinent demographic data. 14 interviews were conducted by staff of identified stakeholders such as businesses, property owners, community organizations, etc. that had a stake in revitalizing Historic North Topeka. The information was shared and presented to the Stakeholders Committee to craft desired guiding principles, revitalization strategies, and implementation measures. To date 8 committee meetings were held with staff to develop the plan and 2 town hall meetings of the community were held to further refine recommendations and achieve a consensus. A conceptual description of this process is outlined below.

