



Brownfields 2025

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AUGUST 5-8, 2025 | CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Creative Minds for Communities: A TAB and University Partnership for Brownfield Reuse Visioning

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Often collaborating with:



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Kansas State University



Overview of TAB & K-State Partnership

Projects and partnership structure

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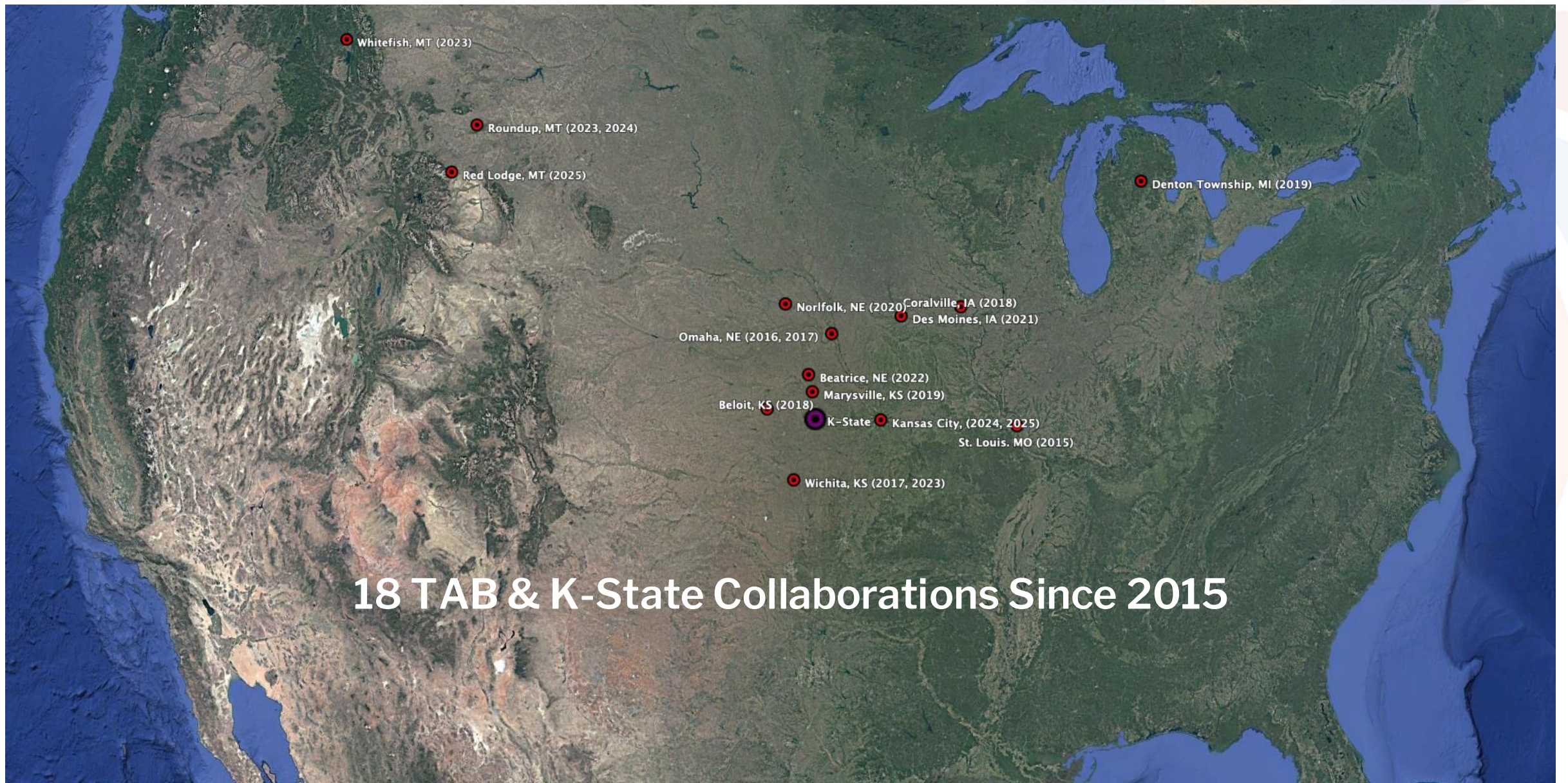


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18 TAB & K-State Collaborations Since 2015

Blake Belanger. 2025. Base map: Google Earth.

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Variety of Brownfield Challenges

- **Size ranges from a 5-acre site to 24,000 vacant parcels in St Louis**
- **Urban downtowns, neighborhoods, corridors, and industrial areas**
- **Rural community redevelopment**
- **Vacant, abandoned, or underperforming sites**
- **Post-industrial reuse**
- **Waterfront redevelopment**
- **Historically significant sites and districts**

Community

Leadership, stakeholders, residents



K-State TAB

Leadership and staff



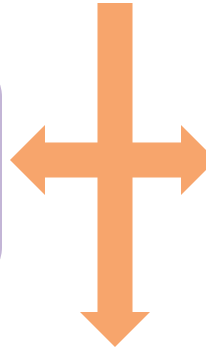
K-State LARCP

Professor(s), often with students



Other partners as needed

Such as economic development specialists



Deliverables

Community engagement facilitation, report, book, poster exhibit, ArcGIS StoryMap(s), resources roadmap, and/or other deliverables

Typical design studio process



Background research



Fieldwork



Community Advisory Panel meeting(s)



Stakeholder and resident meeting(s)

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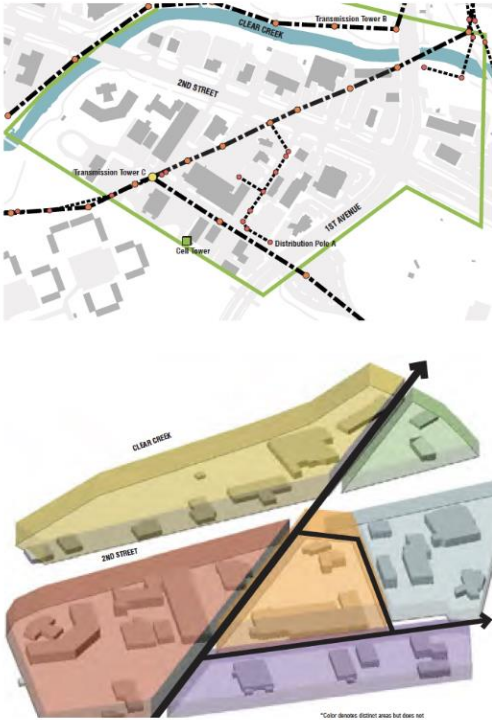


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Photos by Blake Belanger. Drawings by K-State landscape architecture students.

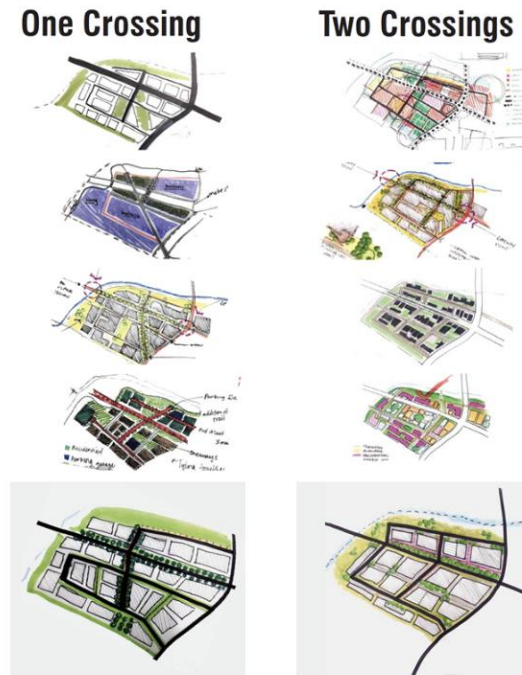
Typical design studio process



Mapping, inventory, and analysis



Concept development



Community progress review



Final proposals

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Typical design studio deliverables



Large format posters



Poster exhibit at a public open house



ArcGIS StoryMaps

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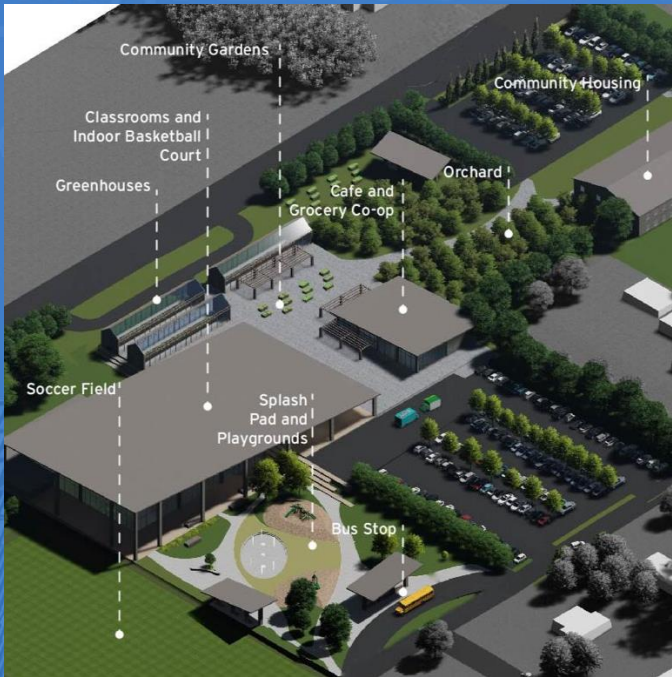


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Photos by Blake Belanger. Drawings by K-State landscape architecture students.

Three case studies

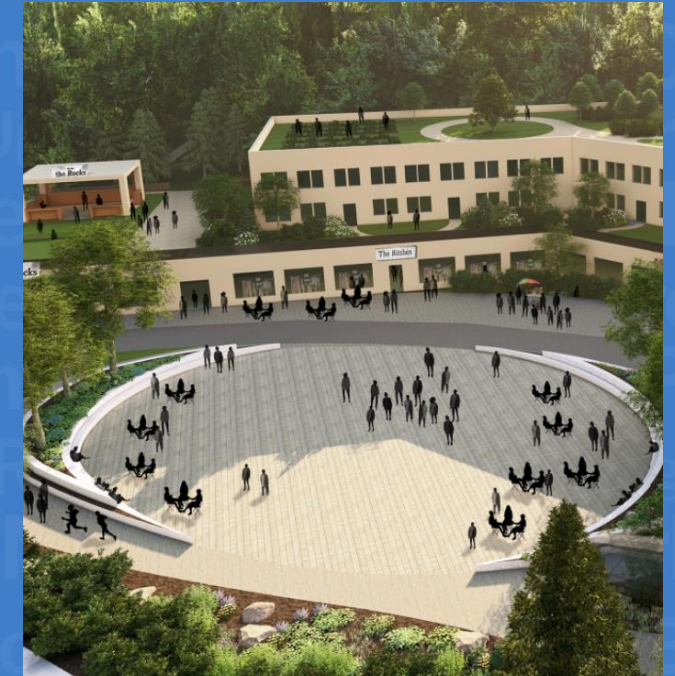


Reuse planning for **five vacated school sites** in a rural community

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Redevelopment concepts along an **auto-centric highway in a disadvantaged community** in a mid-sized city



Repurposing **industrial land adjacent to a historic African American neighborhood** in a major city.



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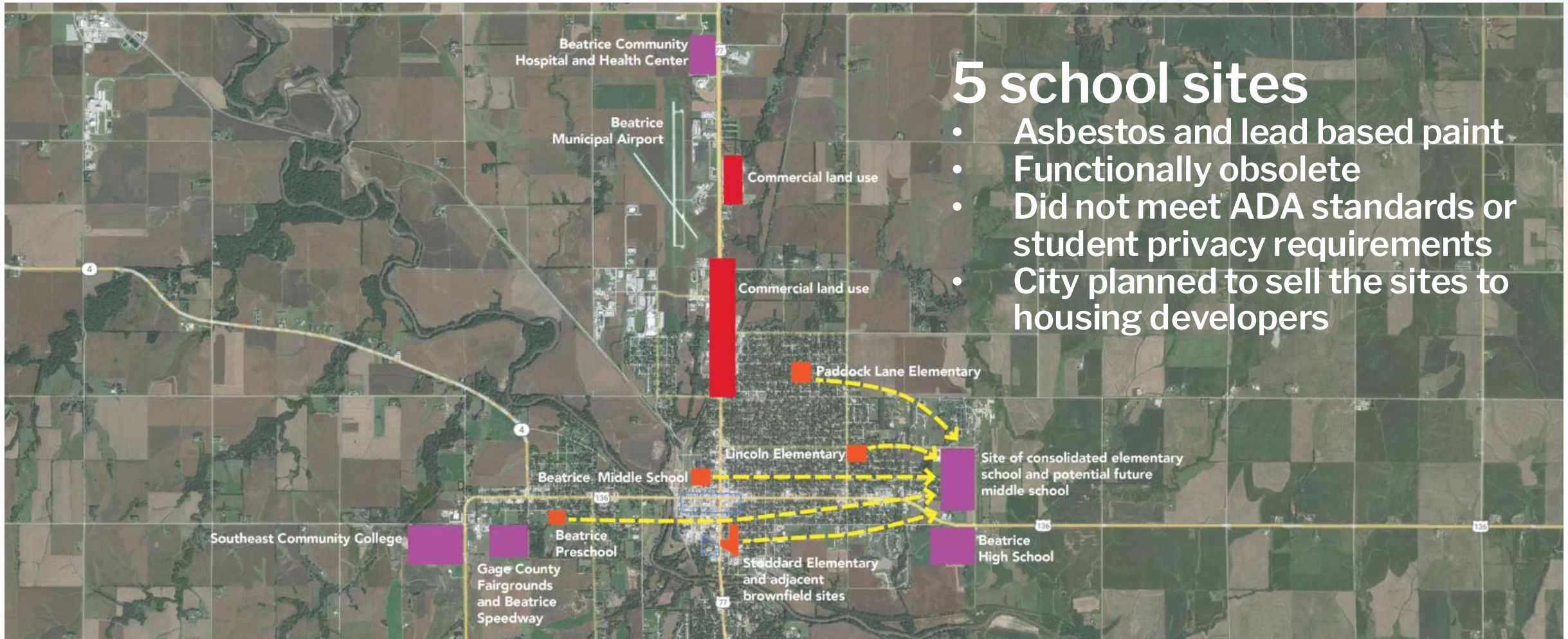


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Drawings by K-State landscape architecture students.

1. Reimagining Vacated School Sites (Beatrice, Nebraska)

Conceptual design proposals for repurposing five obsolete school properties into community assets



Blake Belanger. 2023. Base map: Google Earth.

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Creative concepts addressed community needs

All proposals were informed by existing site conditions, the surrounding neighborhood context, input from community members, and the rich history of Beatrice



Local food hub and education center



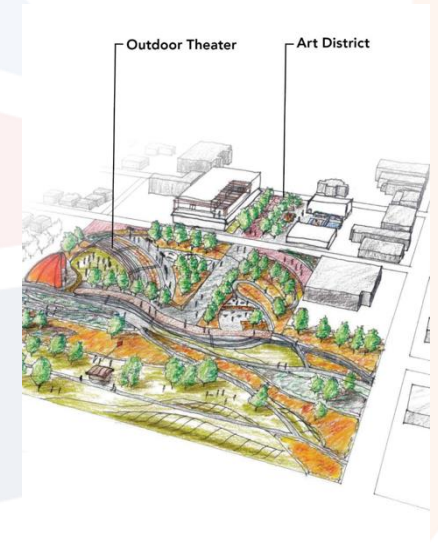
Innovation campus, housing, retail



Housing, ice rink and public park

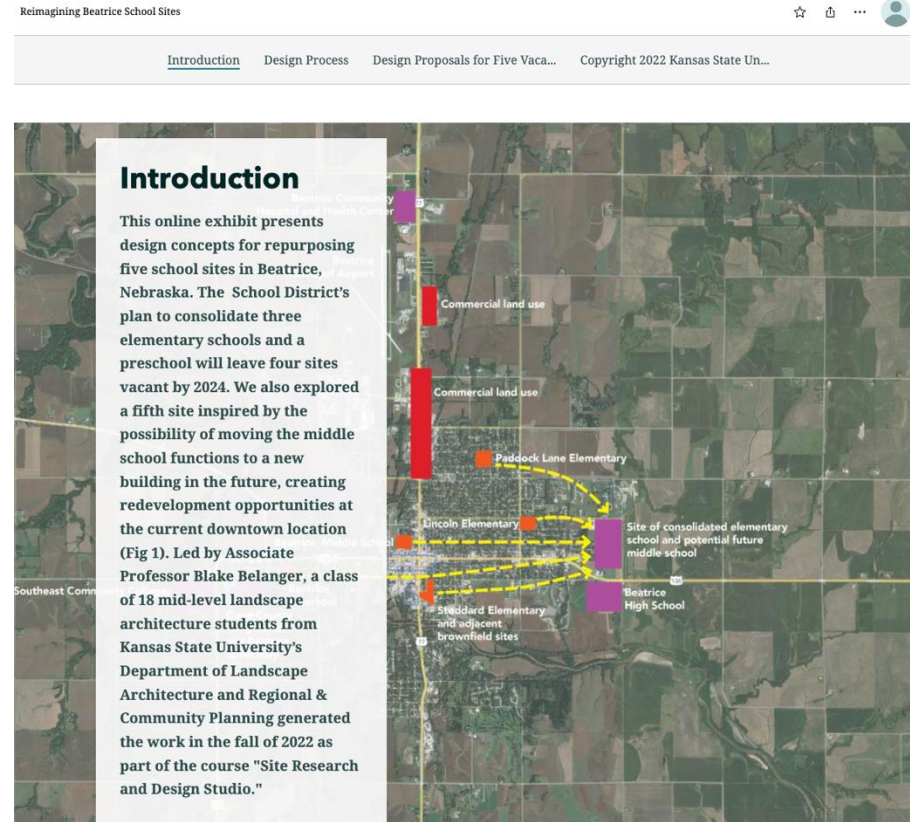


Community center, daycare, and public park



Music venue, art district, and festival grounds

Proposals were shared with the community in a public open house and on ArcGIS StoryMaps



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Photos and StoryMap by Blake Belanger.

Outcomes: Redevelopment is in progress

Improved redevelopment program

Instead of selling the sites to developers to construct generic spec housing as originally planned, the school district transferred the properties to the city for creative redevelopment with a community focus

Blight study initiated

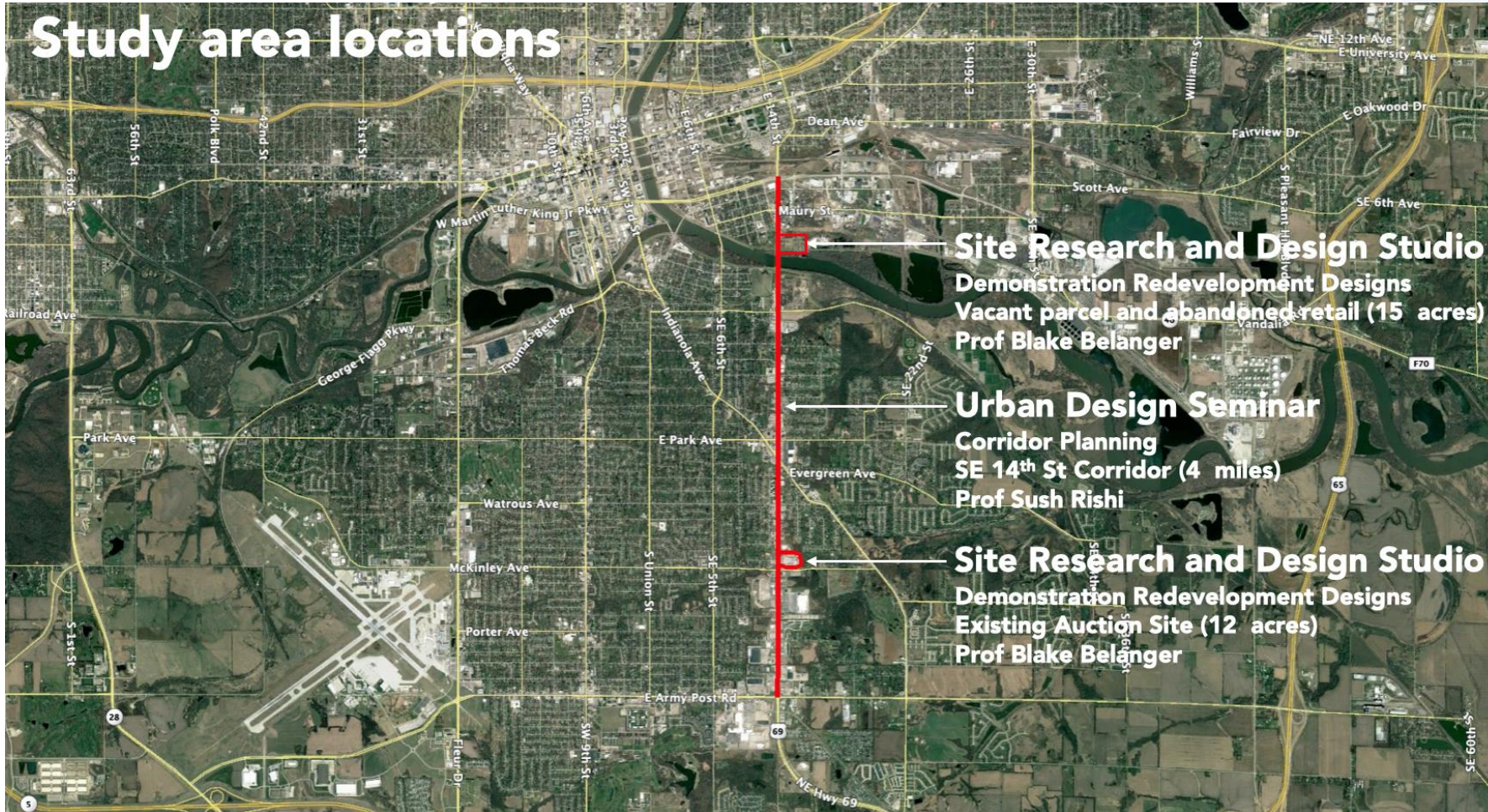
The city initiated a blight study that will provide Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to incentivize development that aligns with the community's vision.

Master planning is underway

The city hired a consultant to master plan two of the school sites, continuing the community engagement that was initiated by the K-State studio and building off the student design concepts.

2. Reimagining Brownfields on the SE 14th St Corridor (Des Moines, Iowa)

Urban design and site plan visioning for revitalization and reinvestment of underperforming sites



- 2 university classes
- 41 students
- 4 miles of highway
- 2 demonstration sites
- 1 goal: Create visions for Southside redevelopment to support the City of Des Moines

Streetside and Waterside (Des Moines, Iowa)

Redevelopment concepts for two SE 14th Street brownfield sites on the water's edge



Abandoned commercial buildings, illegal dumping, informal settlements, and flooding.



Auto repair, auto storage, and vehicle auction site adjacent to wooded creek

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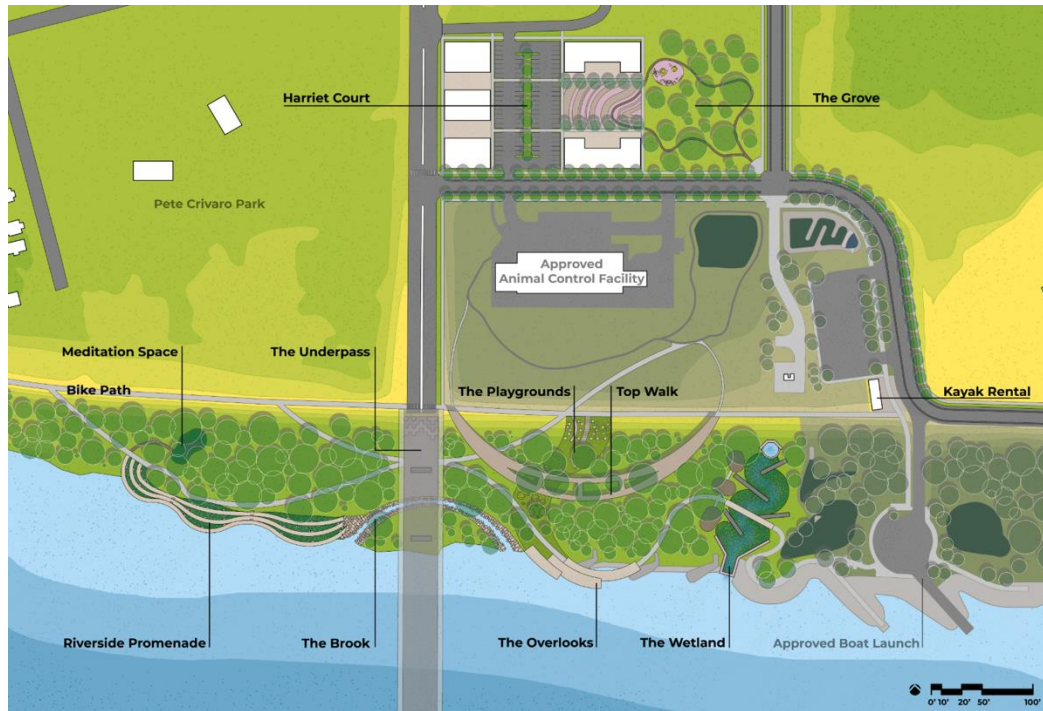


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Maps by Blake Belanger. 2021. Base map Google Earth.

North site concept proposing commercial development and a public park with river access



South site concept proposing mixed use housing and retail with community gardens, education center, and recreation



Students created ArGIS StoryMaps and delivered a Zoom Presentation to the community

Community Input Survey

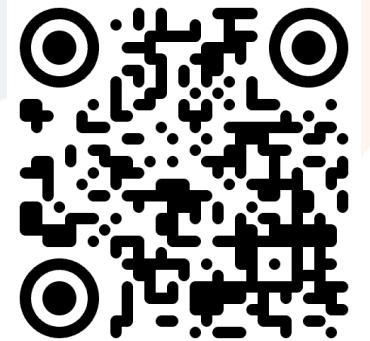
To aid the process, K-State TAB collected stakeholder opinions through a Community Input Survey. The survey asked residents of SE 14th Street corridor, as well as residents of Des Moines in general to respond to 10 questions geared towards understanding the communities' aspirations for the corridor, as well as the issues and problems they saw in the area and how they wished they would be solved. The survey was carried out using an online portal and with the help of the City of Des Moines, it was advertised on social media handles maintained by the City as well as at local businesses and other places of high public visibility, which displayed QR code poster invitations. Over 1000 people used the code to access the survey with 456 respondents answering one or more questions. K-State TAB analyzed the data and synthesized the results for the KSU LARCP faculty and students.

Des Moines Tour

Early in the process, students and faculty visited Des Moines, where representatives from IDNR and the City provided a tour of significant districts, landmarks, and destinations.



Photos by Blake Belanger 2021



Outcomes: Investments in the neighborhood

New focus on Southside

The planning department pivoted to focus on this area and created an Urban Renewal District with Tax Increment Financing

Continued Community Engagement

The city and chamber of commerce have continued engaging nearby neighborhoods

Applying EPA Revolving Loan Funds (RLF)

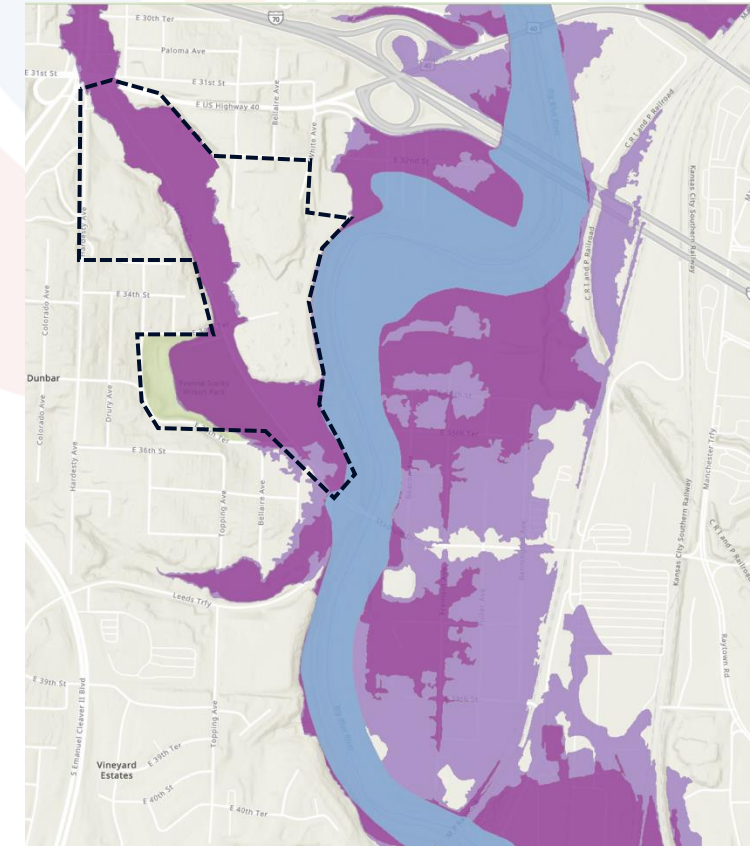
The city is using RLFs to support small businesses and developers

New Construction Underway

3 brownfield properties have been redeveloped and more being planned

Transforming Dunbar's Stadium Drive (Kansas City, MO)

Community Design and Brownfield Redevelopment Along a 1-mile Corridor



Industrial land uses along Stadium Drive pose environmental hazards to the adjacent residential neighborhood and to the Blue River ecosystem.

Much of the site is in the 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard

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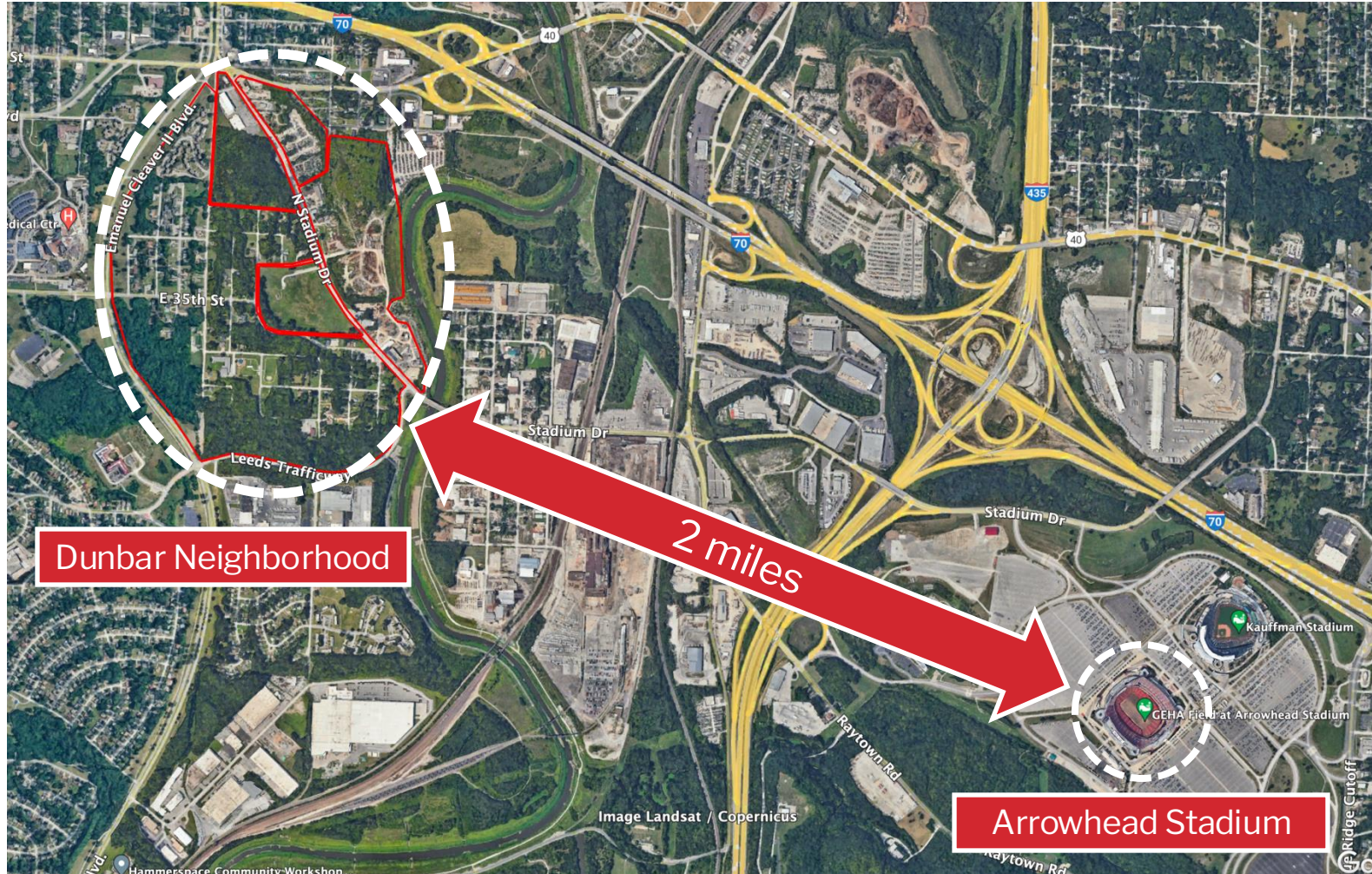


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Maps by Blake Belanger. 2024. Base map Google Earth and ArcGIS Online.

Arrowhead Stadium is a 2026 World Cup Venue

KCMO anticipates 500,000 visitors from around the world



Stadium Drive is one of the primary routes visitors will follow to attend World Cup matches at Arrowhead Stadium.

The corridor is characterized by auto scrapyards and industrial recycling facilities.



Addressing community needs

Students proposed affordable housing, services, a park redesign, and community gardens in response to resident input



Drawings by K-State students. 2024.

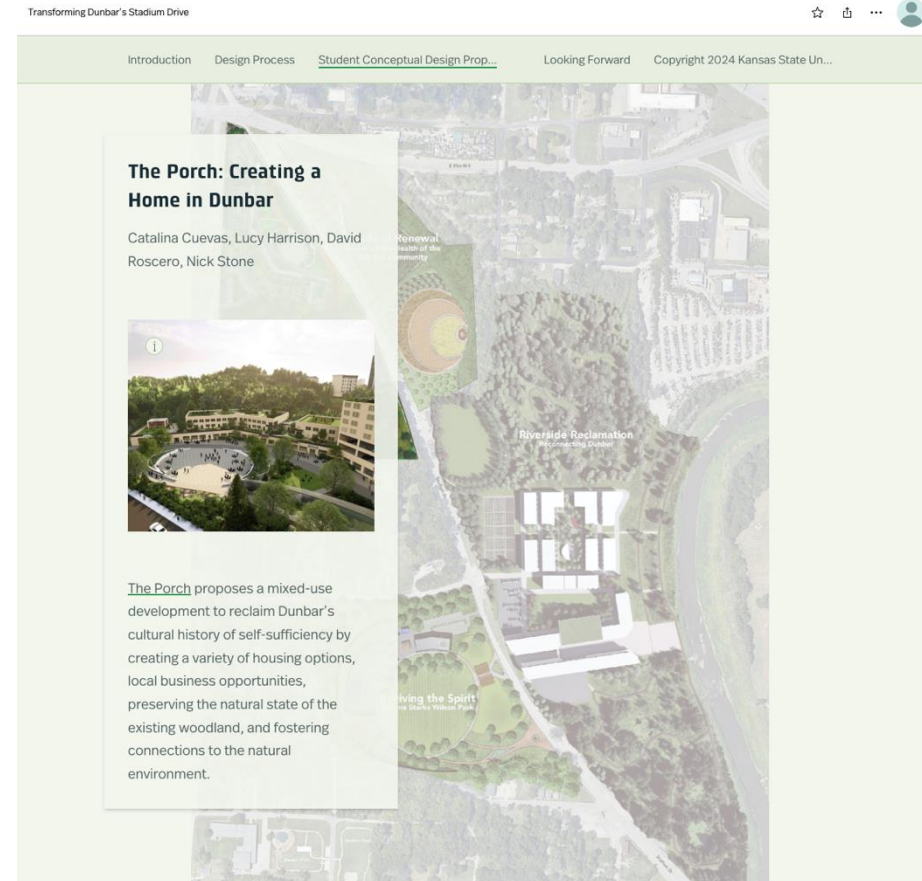
Each plan considers short-term goals to enhance the Stadium Dr corridor for the 2026 World Cup and long-range goals to bring vibrancy back to the neighborhood.

(Drawings by K-State students in LAR442 Site Planning and Design Studio Fall 2024. Base map source: Google Earth)



Map by Blake Belanger and K-State students. 2024. Base map Google Earth.

Proposals were shared with the community in a public open house and on ArcGIS StoryMaps



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Photos and StoryMap by Blake Belanger.

Outcomes: New Investments in the Neighborhood

Park Redesign is in Progress

The city hired a landscape architect to redesign Wilson Park, building on the student concepts. The park will host one of KC's "Fan Zones" for the 2026 World Cup.

Stadium Drive Improvements are Underway

The engineering drawings address flooding, include multimodal transportation, and remediate land use aesthetics. Improvements will be finished before the World Cup.

New Partners are Contributing

Professors and students from K-State and The Kansas City Design Center are continuing to support Dunbar through resilience hub and memorial designs.

Neighborhood Enthusiasm

Community leadership expresses that residents are more excited and motivated

Testimonials

“The work by **K-State helped the community to think about what redevelopment can look like**. Rather than just filling the land with houses, the City is planning to use some of the property for recreational use and stormwater management.” - Beatrice City Administrator

“There has been a mountain of movement on all fronts, and plans are all in motion. **It was very helpful to have KSU TAB be visionaries** on what could become of those elementary sites.” – Beatrice School Superintendent

“**Your work was THE reason** we held this public meeting, the neighborhood wanted it.” – Des Moines Economic Development Coordinator

**SCAN
ME!**



**LET'S
CONNECT!**

Scan the QR code to
get in touch with a TAB
team member or to
join our mailing list.



EPA

United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

ICMA

INTERNATIONAL CITY/COUNTY
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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