The Reveal- Emporia Kansas

This map is an augmentation of the Emporia, Kansas downtown map. Let’s quickly look at assets in a real world context, and how some challenges were dealt with.
Emporia State University sits at the north end of downtown, and Flint Hills Technical College now has a presence on the western edge. County and City government buildings add an employment base.
The Reveal- Assets- 2

- The cross section of a state and federal highway provides solid traffic numbers. Dense employers and university presence adds pedestrian/bike traffic and we have a good concentration of historic buildings.
The Reveal- Housing & Missing Teeth

We had to target properties that damaged the fabric of the area and promote housing that fit anchor needs while creating density downtown.
The Reveal- Abandoned Public Buildings & High Commercial Vacancy

Large public building can become decades long eyesores if an appropriate and sustainable use isn’t found that allows for growth and continuity.
The Reveal- Lack of Incentives for Major Rehabs

- Catalyst projects can facilitate growth. Rural communities often have the same development costs as larger communities with lower returns.
The Reveal- Infrastructure did not support new development

- Upper story housing can’t be created without appropriate water systems. Parking, drainage, sidewalks and other infrastructure must support density.
The Reveal- Road configuration did not support pedestrian and bike travel

You can’t change roads (in some cases) but you can fight to change the culture within the area. Through design, marketing and amenities, alternative modes of transport emerge.
The Reveal- Lots of event spaces, but no proximate hotels

A geographical disconnect between hotels and event spaces hurts, but it also creates an opportunity for redevelopment and adaptive reuse.
Property ownership isn’t always a rational relationship. Just like incentives exist to create appropriate developments, disincentives must exist for the most egregious of property owners that hurt continuity.
The Reveal- Sprawl was exalted as “good growth”

Sprawl is often confused with sustainable growth when there is no competing example. Combining community good, profit and public relations to achieve a coherent district vision can create a viable alternative.