

SEARCHING FOR THE “CROWN JEWEL”: A QUALITATIVE EXAMINATION OF THE  
UTILIZATION OF MULTI-USE SPORTS VENUES FOR DOWNTOWN  
REDEVELOPMENT IN WICHITA, KS

A Thesis by

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Bachelor of Arts, Wichita State University, 2017

Submitted to the Department of Sociology  
and the faculty of the Graduate School of  
Wichita State University in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

May 2019

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The following faculty members have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts with a major in Sociology.

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family and friends that have supported me along the way. To my husband, Nathan, and my kids, Peyton, Connor, and Ellie for accepting the time it took me to complete this and for loving me anyway. To my brother, Jeremy, for planting the seed for the idea that led to my thesis and for always engaging me in interesting political and sociological conversations. Finally, to the greatest friends that I could have asked for during this experience, Shelby and Jensen. Your support (and coffee supply) have meant the world to me and I am incredibly grateful that I have you both in my life.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis chair, Dr. Chase Billingham. Thank you for your support, not only throughout the thesis process but also during most of my time back at WSU as an undergrad. You are directly responsible for getting me to believe in myself and find my path in sociology. Regarding this thesis, having you not only allow me, but encourage me to attempt something new for this department because you saw how much I valued the topic, and then to trust me enough to run with it was an invaluable (albeit sometimes frustrating) experience. I appreciate you taking the time for this project despite your own overflowing plate and I am incredibly grateful to have been your first thesis student. I look forward to having future conversations about downtown development with you and would be happy to be another “Wichita No.” Save the date for opening day 2020.

I would also like to thank to Dr. Twyla Hill. As an undergrad, I didn’t know how much I would grow to fully appreciate your snarky sense of humor or how much it and your kindness would help me survive grad school. I know that I would not be where I am right now if hadn’t come into my life. You have made me realize how much I desperately need a cat, how much I enjoy statistics, and how much I love funnel cake (topped with bacon, of course). Thank you for everything you have done for me and I look forward to future adventures.

Finally, thank you to Dr. Charles Koeber and Dr. Jay Price being on my thesis committee. I appreciate the time you spent reading my incredibly long thesis and providing feedback. To the rest of the sociology department: thank you providing an atmosphere that I was able to consider a second home during my time back at WSU. The experience has been incredible, and I will sincerely miss being on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Lindquist every day.

## ABSTRACT

Multi-use sports venues, such as stadiums and arenas, have become an increasingly popular tool used in American cities to spur redevelopment in their downtown areas. These facilities are often promoted to communities as facilities that will generate economic growth within the city. However, previous research has revealed these claims to be largely overstated. Additionally, prior literature has also shown that sports facility developments are often promoted by the city's growth machine to increase the wealth and power of its members without providing many benefits to the community. This study provides a qualitative analysis of the utilization of these venues as a catalyst for downtown development in Wichita, KS. Further, this study examines the existence and structure of a growth machine within the city of Wichita.

This research presents a comparative case study of four different multi-use sports venue projects that have been conceived in Wichita since the early 1990s; The Wichita Ice Center, The Dynaplex, Intrust Bank Arena, and a new baseball stadium that is currently still in the development process. This study utilizes a content analysis of 643 articles from the city's two main local newspapers; *The Wichita Eagle* and *The Wichita Business Journal*, to examine statements made by community members and potential members of the city's growth machine regarding the development process of each facility. The findings of this research suggest that Wichita does have an active growth machine, whose members have varied over time, which has facilitated the potential development of three of the four projects in this study. The Wichita Ice Center is presented as an outlier that was initially sought and developed to fulfill a community need.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

As American cities have worked to rebuild their once bustling downtown centers, multi-use sports venues have become a popular tool to spur economic development and intangible benefits such as civic pride in these areas (Agha and Coates 2014; Delaney and Eckstein 2003; 2006; 2007; Eckstein and Delany 2002; Mason 2016; Mason, Washington, and Buist 2015; Misener and Mason 2006; Rosentraub 2006). Often centered around professional sports leagues, such as Major League Baseball and the National Football League, the development of these facilities has been on the rise since the 1980s – with the most dramatic increase occurring in the 1990s (DeMause and Cagan 2008; Delaney and Eckstein 2003). Previous research from the fields of economics, sociology, and sport management has examined the economic impact of multi-use sports venues on the cities in which they are built. This research, as well as literature regarding Minor League Baseball, consistently shows that growth generated by the development of a new sports venue is typically minimal (Austrian and Rosentraub 2002; Baade 1996; Baade and Dye 1990; Baade, Baumann, and Matheson 2008; Harger, Humphreys, Ross 2016; van Holm 2016; 2018; Johnson 1995, Siegfried and Zimbalist 2000).

New sports facilities are often financed through a mechanism of public funding—money that comes from residents of the development area or other individuals that come to the development area and spend their money there (Alakshendra 2016; Gans 2010). Cities’ reliance on community members to pay for these venues has sparked an additional, related body of research that examines the public benefits of these projects in the context of their financing methods (Alakshendra 2016; DeMause and Cagan 2008; Delaney and Eckstein 2003; Gans 2010;

Swindell and Rosentraub 1998). A key focus of much of this research is the process by which public support is generated for the use of new sports venues to spur downtown development or boost economic growth within a city. An examination of who tends to promote these structures as being beneficial to their communities reveals that it often is not team owners or players that are the biggest boosters for their new venue. The development of new sports venues is frequently facilitated by a group of local advocates that together form a “growth coalition” (Delaney and Eckstein 2006; 2007; Rosentraub and Helmke 1996). Their main interest is producing economic growth within the city and they view projects such as multi-use sports venues as a viable way to achieve it (Delaney and Eckstein 2006; 2007; Rosentraub and Helmke 1996).

The idea of growth coalitions stems from research conducted by Sociologist Harvey Molotch (1976) on what he termed the “growth machine.” This research was later expanded by John Logan and Molotch (2007). The growth machine thesis suggests that influential coalitions of “land entrepreneurs” or “elites” form among cities with a shared objective of investing in city projects that will generate benefits for those within the coalitions (Molotch 1976; Logan and Molotch 2007). Logan and Molotch (2007) consider land entrepreneurs to be those who have an interest in urban development related to their ability to profit from the use of the land. City elites are considered those who have a high level of influence on public policy and land use either because they hold office within the city government or can influence government officials. The elites may be members of the media, land developers, business owners, real estate executive, bank executives, or other prominent individuals in the public or private sector. Individuals may be members of both groups simultaneously and coalitions of these individuals wield far more power than coalitions of average city residents to pursue projects that will be beneficial to their group members (Logan and Molotch 2007; Molotch 1976).

Much of the work regarding the development of sports facilities in the United States focuses on cities such as Cleveland, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and Minneapolis that host multiple professional sports teams from the highest levels of competition in the United States (Baade 1994; 1996; Baade and Dye 1990; Baade, Baumann, and Matheson 2008; Coates and Humphreys 2008; DeMause and Cagan 2008; Delaney and Eckstein 2003; Harger, Humphreys, and Ross 2016; Propheter 2012; Rosentraub 2006). That includes teams in the National Football League, National Basketball Association, and Major League Baseball, however, these situations happen in smaller cities across the country with lower level professional teams as well (Agha 2011; Agha and Coates 2014; van Holm 2016; 2018; Johnson 1995). The process for acquiring new multi-use sports venues is similar regardless of city size and league affiliation and community members are impacted by these decisions each time they take place (DeMause and Cagan 2008; Johnson 1995). Due to the influx of sports venue developments in the United States it is important for the public to understand how these decisions are made and how their daily lives may be impacted by them.

In this research, I examine the role of multi-use sports facilities within the context of downtown development in Wichita, KS. This city, with a population of 390,591 as of 2017 (U.S. Census Bureau n.d.), experienced the urban decline that many other urban centers in the U.S. did as suburbanization took hold in the 1950s (Miner 1988; Price and Wondra 2013). Through the 1980s and 1990s Wichita's economy suffered as a result of the decline of the aircraft industry and downtown Wichita in particular suffered from the hollowing out of the urban core that accompanied suburbanization and sprawl within the region (Cox 1993; Higdon 1993; Trincia 1990). From the 1960s through the 2000s various strategies for generating growth in the city's core were developed, including the incorporation of multi-use sports venues in plans for

Wichita's downtown revitalization (Billingham 2017; Cross 1989; Finger 1989; Goody Clancy 2010; RTKL Associates 1989).

Even though Wichita has not been home to a team in one of the "big leagues" previously mentioned, the city has had a consistent professional sports presence for decades, specifically regarding baseball (Rives 2004). Wichita boasts a rich history of baseball, from the earliest stadium, Association Park on South Main Street, to Island Park (Ackerman Island) in the Arkansas River, to the opening of Lawrence Stadium in 1934 (Rives 2004). A series of Minor League and independent league baseball teams called Wichita home over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, and high-profile events like the annual National Baseball Congress tournament brought notoriety to the city's baseball tradition (Driefort 2001; "History of the NBC" n.d.; Rives 2004; "Wichita Aeros" n.d.; "Wichita Aviators" n.d.; "Wichita Pilots" n.d.; "Wichita Wingnuts" n.d.; "Wichita Wranglers" n.d.).

Since 1996, two sports venues have been successfully developed in downtown Wichita. First, in 1996, a new ice center (The Wichita Ice Center) opened and in 2010 a new multi-purpose arena (Intrust Bank Arena) opened. The Ice Center has hosted peewee hockey, recreational ice skating, served as a practice facility for the local professional hockey team, and hosted professional ice skating events (360ideas n.d.). Intrust Bank Arena has been the game location of the local indoor football team and local hockey team as well as hosting concerts, college basketball games, and conventions (360Wichita n.d.). Prior to the successful development of Intrust Bank Arena, there was an arena initiative that began in 2001 for a facility labeled the Dynaplex (Mann 2001). However, this proposal did not generate a new sports facility at that time and Wichita did not gain a downtown arena until the opening of Intrust Bank Arena.

In 2016, The Wichita City Council voted to expand a tax district in the downtown area to

finance improvements to its baseball stadium, Lawrence-Dumont Stadium (Lefler 2016a). As the conversation surrounding these improvements continued from 2016 to 2018, the plan began to shift from upgrading the existing stadium to developing a new stadium (Lefler 2016b; Lefler 2017; Lutz 2016; Seminoff 2018). The rhetoric surrounding the proposal of a new stadium included the possibility of luring a new baseball team that would be affiliated with a Major League Baseball team (Lefler 2016b; Lutz 2016). This raised questions about the outlook for the team that was already playing at Lawrence-Dumont Stadium, the Wichita Wingnuts, as well as how a new stadium would be financed (Lefler 2016a; Lefler 2016b; Lefler 2018b; Lutz 2017). By the end of 2018, a new team had agreed to relocate to Wichita, the deal for a new baseball stadium was sealed, and the Wichita Wingnuts had announced they will not be playing in 2019 (Horwath 2018b; Lefler 2018c). A groundbreaking ceremony for the new baseball stadium occurred in February 2019 and construction is to be completed by 2020 (Lefler 2019). The promise of a new stadium in the downtown area attracted the AAA affiliate of the Miami Marlins, the New Orleans Baby Cakes, and they are slated to begin play in Wichita in 2020 (Lefler 2018c; 2018d).

This research seeks to add to the growing body of literature related to multi-use sports facilities built in mid-size cities to serve as a catalyst for downtown redevelopment. Additionally, this study provides insight into the structure and existence of a growth coalition within the city of Wichita and couples that with their involvement in the development process for potential sports facilities within Wichita. It is important for citizens to know who these individuals and organizations are and to be aware of the power members of a growth machine possess to influence public policy decisions that impact the entire community (Chilton and Jung 2018; Logan and Molotch 2007). At a time when Wichita is working to redevelop its downtown

(Finger 2018; Lefler 2018b; Neil, 2018a; Stumpe 2018), it is important to understand how projects like the Wichita Ice Center, the Dynaplex, Intrust Bank Arena, and local baseball stadiums come to fruition, who benefits, and how that information can be used for future decision-making.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Conceptual Framework

##### 2.1.1 The Growth Machine

The conceptual framework for this research draws on the model of the growth machine that was developed by Sociologist Harvey Molotch in 1976 and expanded by Molotch and John Logan in 1987 (Logan and Molotch 2007; Molotch 1976). At its core, the growth machine thesis provides a basis for understanding the political processes that underlie urban development. The actors that are considered part of a growth machine are often deemed “elites” due to the power they hold within their city to influence public policy and decision-making. These individuals and organizations are often very diverse in nature and may not agree on any other issues, but they agree that growth within a city is important because it is their source of wealth and power (Logan and Molotch 2007; Macleod 2011). As Molotch states, “the city is, for those who count, a Growth Machine.” (Molotch 1976: 310). Molotch uses the growth machine metaphor because the land within a city functions as a machine with the sole purpose of generating the product of growth.

For Molotch, growth was not simply a measure of increased population but a sequence of events including “initial expansion of basic industries followed by an expanded labor force, a rising scale of retail and wholesale commerce, more far-flung and increasingly intensive land development, higher population density, and increased levels of financial activity” (Molotch 1976: 310) Logan and Molotch (2007) refer to Karl Marx in their growth machine research and, in fact, Marx’s ideas of use value and exchange value form the basis of the growth machine

concept. Logan and Molotch (2007) argue that members of the growth machine are only interested in the land within an urban area for its exchange value—the profit that can be made from the land’s usage. On the other hand, the residents of the community are interested in the land’s use value – the use of the land for living, working, and recreational activities. For Logan and Molotch (2007), these opposing interests create a constant battle over land use and who should benefit from it.

The “elites” that typically make up a growth machine are the local media, chambers of commerce, financial institutions/banks, professional sports teams, large corporations or privately held companies, city booster organizations, real estate organizations and land developers, as well as local political leaders (Chilton and Jung 2018; Grooms and Boamah 2017; Logan and Molotch 2007; Molotch 1976;). Growth is a high stakes game for these members because their collective ability to create an environment that is conducive to growth has an impact on wealth and power for the actors involved (Logan and Molotch 2007). To accomplish their goal, elites can influence public officials to channel necessary resources (like funding) toward projects that are important to the local growth machine (Logan and Molotch 2007). That level of influence exists due to the members’ social capital, or connections to these public officials, as well as their power to impact the political careers of these elected officials. Wealthy growth machine members can donate to campaigns of those willing to help create a favorable environment for growth (e.g., a supporter of tax subsidies for businesses), promote these individuals as candidates among other elites, or vote to maintain their position in office (Logan and Molotch 2007).

Political influence from the growth machine can result in favorable environments for the elites to pursue community projects that they hold important, but that may not be beneficial for most people or may not be viewed as being important by other community members (Logan and

Molotch 2007; Molotch 1976). Residents and small community groups, even if they do not support the projects set forth by local growth machines, are often not highly involved in the planning process. These community members often struggle to get involved either because they do not know how or because they do not wield as much power as the local growth machine actors (Chilton and Jung 2018; Grooms and Boamah 2017; Logan and Molotch 2007; Molotch 1976).

### **2.1.2 Related Theories of Urban Growth**

There are other theories of that attempt to explain the processes behind urban development. The pluralist approach that Dahl (1961; 1978) and others (Lipset 1959; Truman 1968) have taken to urban development operates under the assumption that those who are the most politically active within a community and wield the most influence over public policy function in a state of conflict (Dahl 1978). Conflict in a pluralist society revolves around the distribution of power between and within multiple small groups working independently to influence public policy (Dahl 1978). Members can belong to multiple groups simultaneously and each may have the power to influence policies in different ways based on their access to different political resources (Dahl 1961; Mollenkopf 1989). Pluralists also reject the idea that there is any single issue, such as growth, that could cause a coalition to develop. In a pluralist model of urban power, coalitions are built around any societal matter, are short-lived, and vary in structure based on the issue at hand (Dahl 1961; Mollenkopf 1989). Growth does not play a major role in the pluralist approach to urban development as it does in the context of the growth machine (Dahl 1961; 1978).

Growth is an important topic for public policy within the City of Wichita, especially regarding the downtown area. The desire for growth has prompted a large amount of money to be invested into multiple development projects in downtown Wichita (Cross 1995c; Horwath

2017; Rengers 2017; 2018; Voorhis 2017; Wilson 2010). Several of the projects within this area of the city have involved multiple actors from diverse sectors of the community offering their support for – or even actively promoting these developments (Downtown Wichita 2018; Howerton White n.d.). Regarding the Wichita Ice Center, the Dynaplex, Intrust Bank Arena, and the new baseball stadium, I would expect to see these same trends. Based on previous research examining the use of sports facilities to spur downtown development in cities across the United States, a coalition of pro-growth entrepreneurs often plays a leading role in the success of the project (Delaney and Eckstein 2003; 2007; Sapotichne and Smith 2011). These factors indicate that using the concept of the growth machine as opposed to a pluralist framework is appropriate for analyzing the development of multi-use sports venues in Wichita, KS.

Other concepts for describing patterns of urban growth have been developed in the fields of urban politics and political economy. In urban politics, corporate welfare theory suggests that relationships between local governments and wealthy business owners result in concessions for the benefit of the businesses such as new buildings (Delaney and Eckstein 2007). Regarding sports facilities, team owners themselves turn to local governments for subsidies to pay for new venues. One way owners can do this is by invoking a fear of competition with another similar community. To keep up with or to prevent their city from falling into the perilous state of a city similar to their own, proponents argue that a new sports facility must be built (Mason 2016). While this explanation of the politics behind the process of venue developments might be useful in situations where team owners are heavily involved in the decision-making process, often these individuals are only minimally involved or completely remove themselves from the situation. In the case of the multi-use sports facilities in Wichita, team owners have not typically been heavily involved in the process of planning or building these structures.

Political economy yielded another concept for examining urban growth that shares similarities with the growth machine thesis developed by Molotch (1976). Urban regime theory suggests that there is a “regime” or collection of business leaders within a municipality that wields power over policy makers and are successful in having resources directed toward projects that the regime finds valuable (Elkins 1987; Stone 1989; 1993). As with a growth machine, there is a group of individuals or alliances that influence public policy to increase growth within their city. However, within the framework of an urban regime, political leaders are not acting solely based on the potential for personal power or wealth from the projects being promoted, but instead are acting under pressure from outside actors to maintain the image of their city (Elkins 1987; Stone 1989; 1993). In the case of multi-use sports venues, this theory would suggest that team owners create pressure on local political leaders using tactics such as threatening to move their team to another city if their demands are not met (Delaney and Eckstein 2007; Elkins 1987; Stone 1989; Stone 1993). City leaders do not want to risk losing their team and thereby damaging growth potential, so they are willing to channel public resources toward the development of new venues to keep the team owners content (Delaney and Eckstein 2007). Like corporate welfare theory, urban regime theory is useful for examining sports venue developments where team owners play a significant role.

### **2.1.3 Origins of the Growth Machine**

The growth machine approach for explaining urban development draws on research from the area of human ecology, specifically from the Chicago School. Research in human ecology from the Chicago School suggests that humans are in constant competition for space (land) within the context of a larger area, so possibly a specific part of a city. In an ecological approach, the competition between various types of land users is largely considered benign and results in

users being in the location where they can best adapt and live (Burgess 1925). In this system of urban development, Logan and Molotch claim, the ability for humans to freely compete for land must be assumed and the “supply” of buildings and land is expanded by entrepreneurs based on the “demand” of the consumer (Logan and Molotch 2007). Ultimately, those with the most money acquire the most expensive and useful properties and the city is divided into a hierarchical order based, at least partially, on income. This is also viewed as a benign and inevitable outcome within the human ecology school of thought (Burgess 1925).

Despite disagreeing with the assumption of free competition for land in human ecology research, Logan and Molotch (2007) build on its concept of “land markets” and spatial relations within cities and consider “place” to be a commodity. The two researchers posit that the key factor left out of the ecological model of city development is human culture (Logan and Molotch 2007). In their growth machine research, Logan and Molotch (2007) view the land markets as being a result of the cultures within which they exist. Their decision to take this view stems from the market connection to the human interests of wealth, power, and affection (Logan and Molotch 2007). Humans are responsible for determining how the markets function, prices for the commodities (land/buildings), and what the social reaction to the prices will be. Further, land is considered a commodity within a growth machine with the primary purpose of producing power and wealth for the land owners (Logan and Molotch 2007).

Logan and Molotch’s (2007) research is also heavily influenced by a Marxian approach to city building. Their focus on land as a commodity, exchange values, and use values comes from Marx’s work *Capital* (Marx, Engels, and Tucker 1978). Marx discussed exchange value in the context of human labor in the following excerpt from *Capital*: “We see then that that which determines the magnitude of the value of any article is the amount of labour socially necessary,

or the labour time socially necessary for its production” (Marx, Engels, and Tucker 1978:306). According to Marx, the exchange value of any commodity (object) is determined by the amount of human effort it takes to produce it, so any two objects that require the same amount of labor to produce have the same worth. Worth could be in terms of money or of a different object all together. Use-value for Marx referred to the usefulness of the commodity produced. Logan and Molotch (2007) apply this Marxian framework to land within the concept of the growth machine. Within a city, land is considered a commodity which has a use value that is often of primary interest to community members: that is a place to live, work, and carry out all daily activities (Logan and Molotch 2007). In the growth machine framework, the exchange value of land is of primary concern for members of the growth coalition. However, as previously mentioned, the competing interests regarding land use often creates conflict between those concerned about use-value (citizens) and those prioritizing exchange value (the growth machine) (Logan and Molotch 2007).

#### **2.1.4 The Growth Machine and Multi-Use Sports Venues**

As Delaney and Eckstein (2003; 2006; 2007) suggest, local growth coalitions hold the development of multi-use sports venues in high regard as a tool for promoting growth within downtown areas of cities. These facilities provide a highly visible way to project the well-being or success of a community and can indicate to tourists that it is a place worth visiting. Increased tourism ideally leads to increased revenue for the area surrounding the venue, as well as the rest of the city, which benefits the project’s stakeholders – growth coalition members. However, these development projects require a large amount of money, and over the last three decades, multi-use sports venues have increasingly relied on public subsidies (Delaney and Eckstein 2003; 2006; 2007; Mason 2016). As the use of public funding to build sports facilities has become increasingly common, it has also become increasingly controversial (Delaney and Eckstein

2003). Supporters of developing new sports facilities, such as members of local growth coalitions, tout the benefits of these developments in order to increase public support for the projects (Austrian and Rosentraub 2002; Chapin 2004; Coates and Humphreys 2003; DeMause and Cagan 2008; Delaney and Eckstein 2006; Friedman and Andrews 2010). However, previous research has shown that economic benefits from new sports facilities tend to be minimal, if not non-existent, and that intangible benefits such as civic pride are hard to quantify (Baade and Dye 1990; Mason 2016; Mason et al. 2015). These two factors have contributed to the controversy of publicly funded sports venues. If most community members will not benefit from one of these developments, why should they have to pay for it? That is a question that boosters from growth coalitions must address when seeking support for their desired development projects, including multi-use sports venues.

Evidence regarding the construction of multi-use sports venues suggests that those that tend to benefit the most from them are members of the local growth coalition and the teams, not other members of the community (Delaney and Eckstein 2003; 2006; Eckstein and Delaney 2002; Harger, et al. 2016; Johnson 1995; Mason, et al. 2015; Misener and Mason 2006). Citizens are often led to believe that a new sports venue will create new jobs (which is a key driver of the growth machine), create more sources for entertainment, increase community pride, and generate new revenue for the city. However, research on the development of new multi-use sports venues has consistently shown that those benefits are largely overstated (Baade 1994; 1996; Baade and Dye 1990; Baade, Baumann, and Matheson 2008; Coates and Humphreys 2008; Harger, Humphreys, and Ross 2016; van Holm 2016; 2018; Johnson 1995; Siegfried and Zimbalist 2000). In fact, while these projects may benefit those within the coalition, they can also exacerbate problems of social inequality within the neighborhoods where they are built (Chilton

and Jung 2018; Grooms and Boamah 2017; van Holm 2018). For example, if the new stadium produces economic benefits that do not extend beyond the growth coalition elites, community members that were already on the other end of the financial spectrum are pushed even further away from those at the top. Even so, due to the power of a strong and well-organized coalition, smaller anti-stadium community groups often do not have the means to halt the projects (Chilton and Jung 2018; Delaney and Eckstein 2003; 2006; Eckstein and Delaney 2002).

## **2.2 The Urban Context**

Before examining the utilization of sports facilities as tools for downtown development, it is useful to explore the history of urban development in the United States. The concentric zone model of development within human ecology (Burgess 1925) that informed the concept of the growth machine, provides a starting point for understanding why American cities are now redeveloping their downtown areas. Urban areas in the U.S. have gone through periods of change since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that have led to the decline of city centers. Attempts to slow or stop the decline of the American downtown have taken different forms. Cities have made efforts to revitalize their core that include the development of sports facilities and focus on adding new cultural and entertainment amenities. The decline and subsequent revitalization of a vibrant urban center provides important context to the influx of sports venue developments across the country over the past three decades.

### **2.2.1 The Development of the City**

The structure of cities and their metropolitan areas has been an important topic within urban sociology and human ecology dating back to the “Chicago School” in the 1920s (Florida and Adler 2017). It was at The University of Chicago in 1925 that Ernest Burgess developed a model of the city that was based on concentric circles (Burgess 1925). The concentric zone

model developed by Burgess (1925) was constructed from maps of the city of Chicago that had been produced by local realtors, boosters, and urban planners. Land was commodified into a grid by mapmakers who then superimposed concentric circles on top in the 19th century (Lewinnek 2009). Boosters utilized these maps of Chicago to advertise real estate for hypothetical future development. Burgess used these maps to develop his concentric model of urban growth to project future expansion of not only Chicago, but all American cities (Lewinnek 2009). At the center of Burgess's (1925) model was the "Loop" or center of the city, which contained its central business district. Radiating outward were areas of factories, warehouses, working-class residents, middle-class residents, and the most affluent residents at the outer edge (Park and Burgess 1925; Florida and Adler 2017). While there were clearly defined circles drawn in this model, boundaries between each area were much less clear on the ground. Viewers of the maps were left to determine where "suburbia" began based on the assertion by Burgess (1925) that as one travels further away from the Loop, neighborhoods would become more residential and prestigious. This vagueness was similar to that of the maps produced by the realtors and boosters of the past (Lewinnek 2009).

In the decades following the development of the concentric zone model, other city models were developed that attempted to account for some of the perceived inadequacies of Burgess's research. The zonal hypothesis of cities in the United States failed to address the agency of the individuals living in these urban areas and suggested that the pattern of concentric growth presented in Burgess's model was a natural phenomenon that was useless to resist (Lewinnek 2009). The concentric zone model has been criticized for lacking a sufficient explanation for its patterns of growth (as it relies instead on describing the spatial patterns) as well as being too simplistic; on-the-ground experiences in Chicago were much more complex

than Burgess's model implied (Harris and Lewis 1998; Lewinnek 2009). His research has been subject to expansion, and re-evaluation by other urban scholars in the fields of sociology, geography, urban ecology, etc. in the years since its introduction (Guest 1971; Harris and Lewis 1998; Hoyt 1939; Lewinnek 2009; Schnore and Winsborough 1969). Despite criticism, it was largely adopted by each of these fields as the desired starting point for describing urban growth and it has directly impacted policy decisions, such as mortgage lending and urban renewal policies following the New Deal (Burgess 1925; Florida and Adler 2017).

The development of the growth machine thesis by Molotch (1976) and the later expansion by Logan and Molotch (2007) was a response to the work of Park and Burgess (1925) and others that took the human ecologist view of city development. The idea that individuals will choose to move outward from the city center to more prestigious areas of the city as they gain wealth suggests that people are free to choose where they would like to live without political influence or other restrictions. Public policies that restricted the movement of individuals, specifically African American individuals, as well as preferences to be located near amenities such as public transportation were not viewed by Park and Burgess as being influential factors in shaping cities. The work of Logan and Molotch considers the political processes and economic influences that underly the public policy decisions within urban areas that result in things such as housing restrictions and the placement of public transportation. The growth machine thesis explains the patterns of development within cities as being the direct result of influential "elites" that are motivated by personal profit. Members of a growth machine focus their efforts on developing the areas of a city that they believe will generate the greatest economic benefits.

### 2.2.2 Urban Decline

The process of urban decline in the United States is not one that occurred all at once. In fact, it was a very gradual sequence of events that led to the increased desirability of the suburbs. Suburbs have existed dating back to ancient civilizations; however, suburbanization as a process can be traced back only to about 1815. As Jackson (1985) describes it:

Suburbanization as a process involving the systematic growth of fringe areas at a pace more rapid than that of core cities, as a lifestyle involving a daily commute to jobs in the center occurred first in the United States and Great Britain, where it can be dated from about 1815 (P.13).

In the 1800s, major U.S. cities such as New York City, Boston, and Philadelphia were beginning to show the most significant signs of suburbanization. These cities experienced incredible rates of population growth in their core areas beginning in 1815 and continuing over the next fifty years. As the city core grew more densely populated, growth was occurring simultaneously on the periphery with some of the wealthiest residents opting to build large, private homes further away from the urban center. Suburbs had largely shed their bad reputations by the 1800s and by 1875 they were becoming desired locations for the wealthy, at least in the country's major urban centers like Boston and New York City. The introduction of increased transportation options such as the steam ferry, commuter railroad, horsecar, and cable car provided more incentive for people to get away from the heavily populated centers of these cities. However, this phenomenon was largely limited to the biggest metropolitan areas of the United States until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (Jackson 1985).

Through the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the United States experienced a shift in cultural values as well as advancements in transportation and industrialization which influenced the process of suburbanization and changed the spatial structure of cities. Between 1820 and 1860, it became more common for men to work outside of the home due to the growing

manufacturing industry while women were expected to take on the domestic responsibilities of the household. As these roles developed into new cultural values in the U.S., so did owning a single-family home. Cities were becoming so densely populated that renting in the city center no longer was the symbol of wealth it once was as the most well-to-do were already moving out to the hills and shores. Owning a single-family home became a visible symbol of success and the epitome of middle-class housing (Jackson 1985).

The manufacturing jobs remained in downtown areas, requiring employees that had moved to suburbs to travel a longer distance to work each day. The expanded transportation options such as commuter railroads made this travel possible but in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the addition of more steam railroad lines led to the expansion of factory locations. The new railroad lines created new junctions away from urban centers that were ideal for new factory development due to the ease of travel, shipping, and open space. Factories began engaging in regional activity due to their proximity to the new rail lines and moved out of the city core. With the noisy, dirty factories moving out other industries moved into the downtown areas of cities. Business districts with office buildings and department stores developed and with the introduction of the trolley, began to thrive. The trolley offered extended lines out to the suburbs that ran straight into the heart of the city. The fare for streetcar travel was inexpensive and convenient for people in the suburbs as well as those in the city center and it became a great facilitator of movement to the suburbs (Jackson 1985).

In the 1920s, suburbanization was occurring at a more rapid pace and urban centers were transforming into business centers with increased office space, new skyscrapers, and increasing levels of employment (Jackson 1985). As automobile ownership increased and streets were improved their utilization to travel from suburbs to the center of cities became faster and easier

than ever. This only helped boost the development of more suburbs across the country. As a response to the struggling cities, the federal government implemented the Housing Act of 1949 (Zipp 2013). This legislation was broadly supported by community members, business owners, urban planners, and local governments alike because they believed it would reenergize their cities (Zipp 2013).

The Housing Act of 1949 provided money to cities in the United States to invest in redevelopment projects (“Provisions of the Housing Act” 1949; Zipp 2013). One of the main provisions of this law was slum clearance, which was alleged to improve the quality of life for residents and provide more adequate housing for the families living in these areas. However, the government was not required to build new housing in the same location, so often the clearance resulted in low-income, minority families being displaced in favor of new developments (“Provisions of the Housing Act” 1949; Zipp 2013). Funds from the Housing Act of 1949 were used to destroy predominantly black neighborhoods only to be replaced with housing for whites, furthering the racial segregation of American cities (Rothstein 2017). The 1949 act paved the way for segregated large-scale high rise public housing developments in cities such as Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York City (Rothstein 2017) The consequences of the Housing Act of 1949 were evident as more housing was destroyed in cities than was built, racial segregation was exacerbated, and the process of suburbanization was not slowed (Jackson 1985; Rothstein 2017).

After the passage of the Federal Housing Act of 1949, the Federal Government passed the 1956 Federal Highway Act to create more new highway systems that made transportation from city centers to the suburbs much faster and easier (Birch 2009; Kemp and Stephani 2012). To prevent further loss, city leaders sought help from civic engineers to reformat transportation in a way that would bring life back to their cities’ centers and acquired funding from the 1956

Federal Highway Act (Birch 2009). However, this effort had several unintended consequences as well. The funding allowed for new freeways to be built that would surround downtown areas as well as add parking and newly resurfaced downtown streets (Birch 2009). These developments provided easier means of travel by automobile and unexpectedly accelerated suburbanization. Affluent residents continued to move to the suburbs and department stores, grocery stores, and other retail shops followed their customers. Offices that had once occupied buildings downtown also moved out to the suburbs, leaving city centers dilapidated and occupied by lower income residents (Florida and Adler 2017; Johnson, Glover, and Stewart 2014; Kemp and Stephani 2012).

### **2.2.3 Urban Revitalization**

Nationally, the United States experienced a population surge between 1950 and 1980, but also during that time over half of large American cities experienced population loss (Rappaport 2003). Since the late 1950s, more concentrated efforts have been made to revitalize “core” downtown areas of cities in the United States (Birch 2009). Today, downtown areas do not serve as the central hub of manufacturing that they once did. In fact, these areas often do not even represent the center of employment for cities anymore (Chilton and Jung 2018). Structural changes within the United States as well as changing values have redefined the purpose of city centers. The United States has shifted from a manufacturing-oriented economy to one that has seen significant growth in the service industry (Zukin 1998). As a society, Americans have become more driven toward consumption rather than production with a desire for consumption spaces that satisfy a need for leisure activities and culture (Clark, Nichols, Lloyd, Wong, and Jain. 2002; Zukin 1998). That is not to say that consumption spaces that meet daily needs, such as grocery stores or clothing stores, are not still important, but now there are new needs that

consumers find important (Zukin 1998). These changes suggest a desire for a downtown area that could be used for multiple purposes, such as living, working, and enjoying leisure time (Ehrenhalt 2012; Zukin 1998).

Multiple different strategies, including adding more residential housing, cultural venues, office buildings, and hospitals have been used to attempt to spur this growth in downtowns (Birch 2009; Chilton and Jung 2018). Building structures is not going to create economic growth on its own, however. Richard Florida suggests that the key to growth for cities is their ability to attract members of what he calls the “creative class” (Florida 2002). The creative class is made up of individuals that are young, skilled, educated and employed in industries such as education, the arts, social sciences, and architecture. If a city can attract clusters of these talented individuals, Florida contends, it will provide incentive for companies to locate there. Florida’s “creative class” is related to what Chilton and Jung (2018) reference in their description of an innovation economy. That is an economy that heavily emphasizes technology, culture, arts, and white-collar employment.

Focusing on the amenities that attract these individuals has become an important revitalization strategy for cities. Cities have increasingly developed downtown entertainment districts that feature bars, restaurants, clubs, movie theaters, museums, art galleries, and other cultural amenities to remain competitive in attracting the most talented workforce (Chilton and Jung 2018; Florida 2002). Previous research suggests that offering a variety of quality of life amenities and focusing on entertainment centers can be an effective way to attract talented young professionals and increase urban growth (Clark, et al. 2002). However, these strategies can also negatively impact communities by aggravating social, economic, and racial inequality (Chilton and Jung 2018; Collins and Grineski 2007; Rappaport 2003).

Elected officials and civic boosters also promote numerous initiatives intended to increase tourism and drive revitalization in downtown areas. Downtown revitalization plans that rely on increased tourism tend to focus on events, services, and other amenities that are related to leisure activities (Johnson et al. 2014). The development of facilities such as casinos and sports venues, as well as hosting events such as large music festivals, is utilized to attract visitors from outside the city to downtown areas (Delaney and Eckstein 2007, Johnson et al. 2014). When tourists visit the city, they increase spending in local restaurants and hotels, while visitors from suburbs or other areas of the city could shift spending toward downtown districts (Cantor and Rosentraub 2012). However, community members who choose to spend their money in a new entertainment district instead of another part of their home city they do not create new economic activity for the city, they only redistribute it (Baade, et al. 2008, Coates 2007; Coates and Humphreys 2003).

#### **2.2.4 Multi-use Sports Venues and Downtown Development**

One tool that that is promoted and implemented as a catalyst for development in downtown areas is the utilization of multi-use sports venues. Those who promote urban development plans that include multi-use sports venues are often not the teams themselves, but instead a combination of local government officials, members of an elite corporate class, and other high-profile figures and groups within the community—that is, members of the city’s growth coalition (Delaney and Eckstein 2003; 2006; 2007; Mason 2016; Mason, et al. 2015). Sports facilities have been branded as a magnet that will physically revitalize areas of cities, specifically downtowns, by generating new construction, repurposing vacant buildings, and spurring new entertainment districts (Chapin 2004). Proponents of sports facility developments contend that events at these venues will draw a critical mass of tourists and other visitors needed

to support other new businesses such as coffee shops, restaurants, and retail (Chapin 2004; Glaeser, Kolko, and Saiz-Clark 2011).

In the 1990s, new stadium construction, particularly Major League Baseball stadiums and NFL football stadiums, in cities across the United States began to occur at an unprecedented rate (Delaney and Eckstein 2003; Johnson and Whitehead 2000; Siegfried and Zimbalist 2000). During this time, the amount of public financing utilized to fund these projects reached unparalleled levels (Delaney and Eckstein 2003; Swindell and Rosentraub 1998). In previous decades, the development of new sports venues was typically financed privately by team owners, as they were viewed as private businesses. By the early 1990s, however, 77% of all professional sports stadiums and arenas in the United States were publicly owned and considered a source of revitalization or growth for their host cities (DeMause and Cagan 2008).

The financing of sports venues with a mechanism of public funding has become a common practice among cities in the United States (Alakshendra 2016; Friedman and Andrews 2010; McClurg 2018; Propheter 2012; 2014; 2019). For sports franchises or team owners to secure public financing to build a new sports venue, proponents of such projects must strategize about how they will gain public support. This is especially true when the development of new facilities requires a referendum or public vote (Alakshendra 2016; Johnson 1995; Swindell and Rosentraub 1998). To generate community support, advocates tend to promote these projects to the public within urban areas in two different ways: as a boost to jobs and economic development and as a mechanism to increase civic pride as well as a sense of community (Agha and Coates 2014; Delaney and Eckstein 2003; Eckstein and Delaney 2002; Johnson 1995; Mason et al. 2015; Misener and Mason 2006).

### **2.2.4.1 Economic Benefits of Multi-Use Sports Venues**

The purported economic benefits derived from building a new sports venue are tangible and can be easily measured. These benefits include an increase in available jobs, an increase in the median income, a population increase, and new businesses opening around the venue. The economic impact from such projects is advertised by advocates as a key reason to support the development of a new multi-use sports venue (Baade, Baumann, and Matheson 2008; Yates 2009). From promises of new retail activity in the area surrounding the new facility to an increase in downtown development, city leaders and other proponents use purported economic benefits to sway community members into supporting their desired projects (Crompton 2014; Delaney and Eckstein 2006).

Promoting the economic benefits of a multi-use sports venue project often entails the use of economic impact studies (Coates and Humphreys 1990; Crompton and Howard 2013). The purpose of such studies is “to measure the positive and negative economic impacts of a proposed project on people and businesses in the surrounding areas” (Mills 1993:29). However, economic impact studies are often commissioned by advocates of the venue development, the sports franchise itself, or others with a vested interest in the success of such a development (Baade, Baumann, and Matheson 2008; Coates and Humphreys 1990). The results of these studies, in turn, reflect the desires of those who commissioned them and tend to predict a large economic impact on the city resulting from the new multi-use sports venue (Coates and Humphreys 1990). Economic impact studies tend to overestimate the expected effect a new sports facility will have on the city, which could make them seem more appealing to the public.

Criticism of economic impact studies extends to their inclusion of multipliers, which are used to provide an estimate of how much each dollar spent at the facility impacts the broader

local economy. However, this methodology does not tend to differentiate between gross spending and net spending related to the sports venue and also does not account for the inclusion of taxes or costs related to development (Coates and Humphreys 2000; Crompton and Howard 2013). In terms of gross and net spending, what should be considered when examining the economic impact of a new sports facility is the net spending associated with it. Utilizing net spending would only consider any new revenue that is being generated by the venue and would account for any substitution effect that may occur when visitors spend money at the sports facility that they would have spent elsewhere in the city. When spending is shifted to different areas of the city, there is no new net economic benefit. Economic impact studies do not tend to appropriately account for this, however, and generally provide estimates of any benefit associated with the new venue, leading to the overstatement of projected economic impact (Baade, Baumann, and Matheson 2008; Coates and Humphreys 2000; Crompton and Howard 2013). To gain a better understanding of how new sports facilities affect their communities economically, a significant amount of research has examined their actualized impact after the development was complete and the venue opened. This research reveals that the economic benefits that a new sports facility brings to a city do not tend to justify the amount of public investment that they require; in many cases, the construction of a new venue results in little economic change within the community (Baade 1996; Baade and Dye 1990; Collins and Grineski 2007; Harger, Humphreys, and Ross 2016; Siegfried and Zimbalist 2000; van Holm 2016; 2018).

Despite the evidence against significant economic growth as a benefit of new multi-use sports venues, these arguments among venue promoters persist. For these projects to move forward, a financing mechanism needs to be in place. Public financing tools such as state

lotteries, special tax districts (such as a Tax Increment Financing district), or municipal bonds are dependent upon the support of city and state leaders who are responsible for approving such measures (Blakely and Leigh 2013). In this regard, the potential economic benefits of the project become very important because the leaders tasked with approving these funding measures need to have reason to believe that the venue will generate enough revenue to cover required loan payments. TIF districts and municipal bonds, specifically, depend upon future revenue created by a successful venue (Blakely and Leigh 2013). If promoters of these projects are not successful in selling the economic benefits of a new multi-use sports venue to city and state leaders, at least, the funding for the desired venue may not come to fruition and the project will fail to launch.

#### **2.2.4.2 Intangible Benefits of Multi-Use Sports Venues**

City leaders and sports venue proponents have begun to rely less on the purported economic benefits of multi-use sports venues when attempting to gain community support (Delaney and Eckstein 2003; Schwester 2007). Supporters have turned toward more heavily promoting the intangible social benefits of such developments when speaking to public audiences (Agha and Coates 2014; Eckstein and Delaney 2002; Mason 2016; Mason, et al. 2015; Misener and Mason 2006). Intangible benefits include things such as increased levels of civic pride within communities and feelings of community togetherness that come from collectively enjoying the local team's success. This shift in rhetoric was caused, at least in part, by insufficient evidence to suggest that projects of this nature do much to spur economic growth within cities (Delaney and Eckstein 2003; Harger, et al. 2016). Additional research suggests that proponents of new sports venue projects may focus on the intangible benefits of these developments specifically because these impacts are harder to measure, thereby harder to discredit. (Eckstein and Delaney 2002; Johnson and Whitehead 2000).

In a series of case studies of cities in the United States, Delaney and Eckstein (2003) found that proponents of publicly financed sports venues often felt that they faced fewer obstacles in finding support from community members if they accentuated the potential social benefits of the projects and downplayed the economic aspect of them. Further, Eckstein and Delaney (2002) suggest that advocates for the development of new sports venues have adopted different methods to make these projects appeal to communities that do not utilize the promotion of economic benefits. What their research indicates is that proponents of these projects create methods of promotion based on what are deemed, through social interaction with community members, to be acceptable benefits of the proposed development. These benefits might include things like having a new gathering place to meet friends, providing a new source of family entertainment, or creating elevated levels of civic pride within the city. Eckstein and Delaney (2002) discuss this approach in the concepts of community collective conscience and community self-esteem. These concepts draw on the work of sociologist Emile Durkheim. Durkheim theorized that in every society there were shared ideas, beliefs, and moral attitudes that served to unify all within that society (Durkheim and Emirbayer 2006). Eckstein and Delaney (2002) refer to community collective conscience as “shared values, beliefs, and experiences that bind community members to one another” (p.238). Community self-esteem is broken into two categories; internal and external. Internal community self-esteem refers the way the community views itself, while external self-esteem refers to the way the city projects itself to others (Eckstein and Delaney 2002).

Interviews conducted by Eckstein and Delaney (2002) in ten U.S. cities revealed that stadium advocates intentionally manipulated the internal community self-esteem of their cities by telling opponents of the projects that their city would decline to the state of another nearby,

undesirable city if the project did not proceed. For example, people in Cincinnati, Ohio were told by stadium supporters that their city would end up like Akron (OH); in Denver, Colorado, opponents were warned that the city would just be a “colder version of Omaha (NE),” while in Phoenix, Arizona, city elites asserted that they would turn into “another Tucson.” (p. 240-241) All these warnings connote a decline in the status of the host city unless a new ballpark is built. This tactic is somewhat common in the process of promoting multi-use sports venues across the United States as it has become increasingly important for cities to differentiate themselves from each other to remain competitive (Mason et al. 2015). Stadiums and arenas are seen by their advocates as a highly visible way to convey a message of power and importance for their respective cities (DeMause and Cagan 2008; Johnson 1995; Johnson and Whitehead 2000; Mason et al. 2015; Misener and Mason 2006).

#### **2.2.4.3 Minor League Baseball**

The current literature on the utilization of multi-use sports venues for economic development in downtown areas tends to focus on Major League teams in large U.S. cities. However, in the last three decades studies have begun to examine the role of Minor League Baseball teams and their stadiums in smaller cities across the country (Agha 2011; Agha and Coates 2014; van Holm 2016; van Holm 2018; Johnson 1995; Roy 2008). These projects are often appealing for cities that do not have a large enough market to attract a Major League franchise. Most simply, market size in Major League Baseball is determined by a city’s population. However, this figure can also include a combination of the number of cable TV subscribers, and income (Druschel 2016). Market size is used in the MLB collective bargaining agreement to determine revenue sharing within the league, but the formula that is utilized for those calculations is not made public (Major League Baseball Players Association 2016;

Druschel 2016). While there is no strict market requirement to acquire a MLB team, franchise owners want to be in a place where their team can bring in revenue; a small market limits that potential.

Minor League teams are also attractive to cities because their stadiums are less expensive than their Major League counterparts. Because of the lower cost, Minor League stadiums are often viewed as being a more feasible investment by city leaders (van Holm 2016; van Holm 2018; Johnson 1995). Though these stadiums are smaller and less costly than the MLB stadiums, they are still viewed by their proponents as a status symbol. They provide a very visible way for cities to convey their importance to visitors as well as to enhance the overall image of the city (Johnson 1995).

New stadiums are not typically a standalone projects for cities. Instead the stadium is one component of a larger plan to spur economic development. Because a baseball stadium is a large, highly visible structure, it can serve as a focal point for an effort to revitalize a community. This is what Johnson (1995) referred to as a “sports strategy” (p. 59). A “sports strategy” approach considers the new venue to be a key component for development that will upgrade the status of the city to that of a tourist destination (Rosentraub 2006). This strategy uses the sports facility as a center point and relies on other attractions to develop around it to create an entertainment district as opposed to only developing a standalone sports facility (Crompton 2014). This can be seen in the concept of a mixed-use development, which is what is being developed in Wichita, KS and already exists in many other cities, including Columbus, OH, Cincinnati, OH, and St. Louis, MO (“Ballpark Village” n.d.; “The Banks -Cincinnati” n.d.; “Columbus Blue Jackets” n.d.; Rengers 2018). However, unlike Major League Baseball teams, Minor League teams generally do not attract visitors from beyond their local area and do not enhance the image of the

overall region (Johnson 1995). This is a distinction that is not often made by project advocates and local officials when attempting to justify the use of public funding for a new Minor League Baseball stadium (Johnson 1995).

Not unlike the literature on Major League teams and their venues, the body of research on Minor League Baseball stadiums examines the economic impact of the team, the social impact of the team, and the process by which their new venues are built (Agha 2011; Agha and Coates 2014; van Holm 2016; van Holm 2018; Roy 2008). While some increases in downtown development can be attributed to building a new Minor League stadium, Agha (2011) and van Holm (2016; 2018) acknowledge that it may not be enough to justify public support for these ventures. Van Holm (2018) contends that the biggest beneficiaries of these new stadiums are the politicians that promote them, and the developers tasked with building them. The developers stand to gain financially when chosen to lead a new project and they also gain notoriety if the development is successful. Politicians who promote new sports facilities boost their image amongst other city elites that are in favor of the projects and can generate funding for future campaigns based on these relationships (Delaney and Eckstein 2003; Logan and Molotch 2007). Additionally, the actual impact does not tend to compensate for the total public investment that is typically made toward these facilities (Agha and Coates 2015; Colclough, Daellenbach, and Sheroney 1994; Rosentraub and Swindell 1991).

Like Major League teams, Minor League teams only play approximately 70 days of the year in their home stadium, all during the summer (Johnson 1995). As a result, if the host city expects the new stadium to fulfill a role within their economic development plan, this means that the stadium would have to be utilized for other events for the remainder of the year (Johnson 1995). These events could potentially provide a boost to the local economy, but only if attendees

would not have spent their money elsewhere in the same area had there not been an event and if they are engaging in other activities near the stadium (Johnson 1995). There is little indication that these projects produce significant economic growth for city centers; whether they provide a boost to civic pride is uncertain (Agha 2011; Agha and Coates 2014; van Holm 2016; van Holm 2018; Johnson 1995; Roy 2008).

### **2.3 The Current Study**

The current study examines two existing multi-use sports venues in Wichita, KS the Wichita Ice Center and Intrust Bank Arena. Additionally, this research covers an arena initiative that stopped short of producing a new venue known as the Dynaplex. Finally, this study takes a critical look at the process which has led to the development of a new baseball stadium and surrounding “baseball village” that will replace the dated Lawrence-Dumont Stadium. Despite not having any Major League teams in Wichita, each of these venues is host or will be host to a professional sports team, either as a practice facility or as their home field. The Wichita Thunder, the local hockey team that competes professionally in the East Coast Hockey League (ECHL), plays its home games at Intrust Bank Arena and utilizes the Wichita Ice Center as a practice facility (ECHL n.d.; Visit Wichita 2017). Intrust Bank Arena is also the home field of the Wichita Force indoor football team, which plays professionally in the Champions Indoor Football League (Wichita Force n.d.). Finally, the construction of the new baseball stadium commenced with a ground-breaking ceremony on February 13, 2019 (Swaim 2019b). The yet-to-be named venue will be the home of the AAA franchise affiliate of the Miami Marlins. Game play is tentatively scheduled to begin in April 2020 (Tidd 2018). Aside from each venue’s sports affiliation, they are also utilized for events such as concerts, conventions, festivals, and personal recreation (360ideas n.d.; Integrated Marketing n.d.; Neil 2018b).

While there is a large body of literature regarding the use of multi-use sports venues as catalysts for downtown development in many major cities across the United States, nothing currently exists that examines this issue in Wichita, KS. I examine how the development of these projects is similar and/or different and what their purported purposes and benefits are. I also explore who the key players were in the decision-making process to pursue these ventures as part of the downtown development project in Wichita. Grounding my study in growth machine theory, I analyze the structure of Wichita's growth coalition. The study seeks not only to provide information regarding the development of sports facilities in Wichita, but also to add to the literature related to their use in mid-size U.S. cities without high level professional teams.

### **2.3.1 Research Questions**

This study is guided by five main research questions:

1. Who has promoted multi-use sports venues in downtown Wichita?
2. How do multi-use sports venues fit into the downtown redevelopment plan for Wichita?
3. How have multi-use sports venue proposals been justified to the public in Wichita?
4. What is the public benefit from multi-use sports venue projects in Wichita?
5. How can past efforts to use multi-use sports venues as a catalyst for downtown redevelopment be used to inform decisions about future projects in Wichita?

### **2.4 Thesis Organization**

This thesis is organized as follows:

- Chapter 3 provides a summary of the methods utilized to conduct this research related to the data collection and the coding strategy implemented in analysis.
- Chapter 4 details the results of this study and is organized by sports facility.

- Chapter 5 provides answers for the five research questions posed in this thesis, offers limitations encountered during the research process and directions for future research.
- Chapter 6 concludes this study.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS

#### 3.1 Data

A qualitative content analysis was conducted for this study to explore the public discourse surrounding the development process for the Wichita Ice Center, the Dynaplex, Intrust Bank Arena, and the impending baseball stadium in Wichita, KS. This analysis was intended to analyze the public comments made by local business leaders, civic leaders, local political leaders, and other proponents of these proposed Wichita sports facilities within *The Wichita Eagle* and *Wichita Business Journal*. Additionally, I included the type of article for each piece of data in my analysis, coding each article as informative or opinion - based. Based on the concept of the growth machine (Logan and Molotch 2007; Molotch 1976), I conducted an analysis of statements found within local media to explore the existence and structure of a growth machine in the City of Wichita.

The data for this research was collected from two local newspapers *The Wichita Eagle* and *The Wichita Business Journal*. These two sources were chosen because they are the two main print sources for news in the Wichita region. Articles from *The Wichita Eagle* were retrieved via Newsbank through the Wichita State University Library and articles from *The Wichita Business Journal* were retrieved directly from the newspaper's website.

I used a purposive sampling strategy to collect data from each media source related only to the Wichita Ice Center, the Dynaplex, Intrust Bank Arena, and the forthcoming baseball stadium. The first step in this sampling technique was to use search terms related to the venues for each media source. For each resource, I used the same search terms to locate articles relevant

to my research questions. To search for coverage of the Dynaplex, I only used the keyword “Dynaplex.” The terms used to locate articles for the Wichita Ice Center were “Wichita Ice Center,” “Ice skating,” and “Ice Sports Wichita”. Ice Sports Wichita was the name the center used upon opening before changing to The Wichita Ice Center. The search term for Intrust Bank Arena was initially “Intrust Bank Arena.” However, I broadened it to “arena” and “downtown arena” because there were articles written prior to the venue being named by Intrust Bank. Finally, to locate articles related to the new baseball stadium development I used the terms “baseball stadium,” “new stadium,” “new baseball stadium,” and “baseball,” but limited the articles to any that were printed from 2016 to the present. I started with 2016 because that was the year public discussions of a new baseball stadium began in Wichita.

After applying the search terms to each of the chosen media outlets, I examined the resulting articles to ensure they were related to the Dynaplex, Wichita Ice Center, Intrust Bank Arena, and/or the new baseball stadium project. If at least one of those facilities was mentioned, the article was collected for potential analysis. The inclusion of articles related to each venue was limited to the period between the time initial discussion of them began and the point that the venue opened. Because the new baseball stadium is still in progress, a search for new articles took place each week until March 20, 2019. This date was chosen as the cut off point for new article inclusion because a City Council Meeting was scheduled for March 19, 2019 to determine whether land would be sold to ownership of the incoming baseball team to be used for development. I felt that it was important to include coverage of the outcome of this meeting in the analysis for this study because it is directly related to the potential downtown development tied to the new stadium.

Using Newsbank for *The Wichita Eagle* articles allowed me to download them directly to my computer. *The Wichita Business Journal* does not allow for articles to be downloaded from its website, but they can be saved to a user's account. Initially, I saved them; after gaining access to the qualitative software program NVivo I was able to screen capture the articles retrieved from *The Wichita Business Journal*. Once the images were captured, those articles were saved to NVivo for analysis. *The Wichita Eagle* articles were saved to my hard drive and then uploaded to NVivo as .pdf files. All the data was saved in Nvivo and it was then organized into folders by source and then into sub folders by venue. This was done to keep track of how many articles were from each source and how many pertained to each venue.

Once all files were uploaded to NVivo, I reviewed each one to ensure that they would be readable and allowed for the use of NVivo's coding tools. The use of NCapture for *The Wichita Business Journal* produced some files that had ads and pictures over text portions of the articles. Capturing these files as a plain .pdf as opposed to the website image resolved the issue in most cases, and the ones that could not be fixed were not used. The keyword searches also resulted in the inclusion of articles that were about venues not relevant to this project. This included Wichita State University's current and previous arenas as well as references to an attempt to pursue a downtown arena in 1993. Any files that were not related to the Wichita Ice Center, The Dynaplex, Intrust Bank Arena, or the new baseball stadium were removed from analysis. Finally, I reviewed all files and deleted any that had been duplicated. The final data sample for this current study contained 643 files including 452 *Wichita Eagle* articles and 191 *Wichita Business Journal* articles.

### 3.2 Analysis

Before beginning the content analysis, a coding frame was developed based on the characteristics of the growth machine (Logan and Molotch 2007; Molotch 1976) and previous research regarding sports facilities and downtown development (Cantor and Rosentraub 2012; Delaney and Eckstein 2003; Mason 2016; Mason et al. 2015; Rosentraub 2006; Swindell and Rosentraub 1998). This is considered a theory driven deductive approach to analysis, and coding data in this manner is also known as hypothesis coding (Saldaña 2013). The technique starts with a list of codes that are expected to be found based on a review of literature or prior knowledge of an event. I chose to take this approach for several reasons. I was familiar with the projects in Wichita prior to beginning this study and, as I read the literature about similar projects in other cities, I determined that some topics such as “downtown revitalization” were consistently part of these developments. Initial codes, their operationalization, and examples are provided in Table 1.

**Table 1. Initial Coding Frame with Operationalization and Coding Examples**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Operationalization</b>	<b>Example of Coded Text</b>
Growth Machine	"Elite" leaders in Wichita that support the project. Also, traits of a growth machine laid out by Molotch, such as land acquisition or sales, boosterism for the desired project, and gaining community support through involvement/education, but also holding closed door meetings and debating venue details among fellow "elites," & partnerships.	The Wichita Automobile Dealers Association and the Wichita Hispanic Chamber of Commerce are throwing their support behind the \$184 million proposal for an arena in downtown Wichita.
Economic Benefits	Local "elites" claiming the venue will provide economic benefits to the community. Examples: providing an "economic boost," bringing in new revenue, increased revenue, jobs, "growth," etc.	It will provide more jobs, for construction workers during construction and for arena workers after, not to mention those who are hired to work in the new businesses around the arena.

**Table 1. (continued)**

Code	Operationalization	Example of Coded Text
Downtown development and revitalization	The new venue would help to revitalize and develop downtown Wichita by attracting new businesses as well as "cleaning up" the area.	Wednesday's decision to put the new downtown arena on Waterman between Emporia and the Santa Fe railroad tracks is a big step in the battle to revitalize retail and residential development downtown.
Intangible benefits	Local "elites" claiming there will be benefits from the project such as civic pride, creating a positive image of the city, fans identifying with "their" team, a better quality of life	We have a window of opportunity that we have not seen in the past seven years when this issue has been brought up, Mayans says. "This is an opportunity to move our city, our county into the future."
Project investment	References to ways in which the venue will be or is being paid for and its cost.	The plan includes an increase in the county's sales tax to raise the money for the \$141 million, 15,000 seat arena. Sedgwick County residents would vote on the sales tax increase in November.
Community support	Refers to the need for community support for a project as well as community members offering their support. Includes results from informal polls and official vote outcomes for the venue that show higher levels of support than opposition.	Anthony Gonzalez, an 18-year-old WSU student, supports the downtown arena. He said television commercials promoting the project solidified his opinion. It will give teens a reason to hang out downtown, he said.
Project opposition	Any statement of opposition to the proposed project from community members or organization/political leaders. Includes polling that shows a lack of support for the project.	Another disgruntled county resident, Shawn Smith, said the arena should include "a bronze statue of a forlorn taxpayer being forced to pay for a downtown arena that he or she did not vote for."

Coding the data for this research was not limited to the coding frame, however. Additionally, I utilized open coding, which is an inductive approach to coding that allows for new codes to emerge from the data itself. The addition of this technique was important to this research as it generated several new codes. These are displayed in Table 2 with their operationalization and examples of how the coding was utilized within the data.

**Table 2. Emergent Codes with Operationalization and Coding Examples**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Operationalization</b>	<b>Example of Coded Text</b>
Tourism and visitors	The venue would bring in more tourists and other visitors that would not come to Wichita otherwise.	I think the members realize, you strengthen the core of the metro area, you bring more visitors in, Lawing said. "All the communities in south-central Kansas benefit from that."
Venue revenue and attendance	References to expected revenue and attendance figures for the venue.	"We feel very strongly that the facility will pay for itself," said Ray Trail, director of the city's finance department.
Attract and retain employees and young professionals	The new venue would help to attract young professionals and new employees as well as keep existing ones from leaving Wichita.	We know that a world-class, state-of-the-art, brand-new facility is going to lend itself to attracting the finest talent that is available for that size venue, said George Fahnstock, a Wichita businessman and long-time proponent of a downtown arena.

Coding documents in NVivo involved highlighting segments of text and assigning them to what the software refers to as “nodes.” Once I completed the initial coding process in NVivo, I reviewed my results to ensure that my data was coded appropriately. Reviewing my coding allowed me to read back through my data and adjust the coding as necessary. Further, NVivo allows for the creation of “children nodes” that are essentially sub-categories for the “parent” or

main node. For example, the codes in Table 2 became children nodes to the parent node of “economic benefits.”

Once all relevant data segments were assigned to nodes, related nodes were then grouped together under a broader theme or parent node. This method created a hierarchical coding structure in which the top node represented a theme consistent in all children nodes below it. An example of this structure is shown in the following segment of the codebook for the content analysis conducted for this study. In this example, “selling the facility to the community” is the parent node and “community involvement” and “growth machine” are the children nodes. The full codebook can be found in the Appendix.

<b>Node Name</b>	<b>Description</b>
Selling the facility to the community	Different things that factor into getting the community to support the development of a new sports venue. Includes the growth machine (promoters of the projects) and public involvement. Each of those is broken into its own facets.
community involvement	Ways that the community at large was involved in the decisions for the facility developments. Includes meetings, informal opinion polling, and formal referenda. Does not include the outcome for polling or voting.
growth machine	"Elites" within the city expressing their desires for the proposed venues as being more important than the public's desires, or references to these groups/individuals as being the decision makers. Also includes sub-categories based on traits of a growth machine laid out by Molotch, such as land acquisition or sales, boosterism for the desired project, and gaining community support through involvement/education, but also holding closed door meetings and debating venue details among fellow "elites," & partnership.

The coding process led to the development of three themes that captured the most important aspects of the data related to the research questions. The emergent themes were selling the facility to the community, community buy-in, and the downtown development and revitalization.

An additional step in the coding process was to assign business leaders, civic leaders, and local government officials to “cases.” Cases are a type of node in NVivo that represent a unit of observation which can include things such as events, places, or people. I chose to assign individuals who seemed to be mentioned frequently within the data to cases. I then assigned those to parent cases that represented the organization the individual represented. Quotes from these individuals were coded to their corresponding cases during this process. After my initial coding was complete, I conducted a query of all *Wichita Eagle* and *Wichita Business Journal* articles to find each reference for the cases created. This allowed me to see how many times an individual was mentioned within the data. Table 3 provides one example of the case construction employed in this coding and data organization process.

**Table 3. Case Construction**

Case	Files	References
Greater Wichita Sports Commission	104	234
Bob Hanson	57	102
George Fahnestock	54	109
Bob Knight	27	31
John Nath	18	21
Joe Johnson	10	11
Steve Shaad	7	13
Bill Livingston	6	7
Howard Sherwood	7	8
Jerry Harrison	5	8
Roger Scholfield	2	2
Mike Michaelis	1	2
John Moore	1	1

Table 3 represents the greater Wichita Sports Commission and members that were mentioned within the data analyzed. The sports commission was mentioned in 104 unique *Wichita Eagle* or *Wichita Business Journal* files and they were referenced within those files 234 times. The same interpretation can be applied to each individual member of the organization. For

instance, Bill Livingston was mentioned in six unique media files and referenced seven times within those files. Doing this allowed me to keep track of individuals and organizations that were most heavily involved in the development process for the Dynaplex, the Wichita Ice Center, Intrust Bank Arena, and the future baseball stadium.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

In analyzing the articles from *The Wichita Eagle* and *The Wichita Business Journal* three themes emerged from the data: selling the facility to the community, downtown development, and community buy-in. The results detailed here include the analysis of these three prominent themes as well as the cases that were generated in the coding process to represent members of Wichita's growth machine. The case results will be used to identify the key players involved in the development of each sports facility. In addition, findings from the most dominant categories within each theme are discussed in-depth. Regarding downtown development, as previously stated, it does not include any sub-categories. The sub-categories related to selling the facility to the community that will be discussed are growth machine (boosterism), community involvement, and article type. The community buy-in subcategories that will be detailed are community support, community concerns, and project investment. After providing an overview for each theme and sub-category, the results from each venue are then discussed in detail.

#### **4.1 Downtown Development and Revitalization**

Downtown development and revitalization is a theme within this study because it is represented in the data across each venue. Additionally, it has been a salient theme in urban development regarding the city of Wichita for several decades. The coding in the downtown development and revitalization theme includes specific references to "downtown development" and "downtown revitalization." This theme also includes segments of data that suggest the new sports facility would help to revitalize and develop downtown Wichita. This coding includes references to things such as the venue attracting new businesses, cleaning up the area, or

attracting new housing facilities. The downtown development theme is present in 30.8% of articles analyzed in this study.

#### **4.2 Selling the Facility to the Community**

Multi-use sports facilities often require community support to come to fruition, but that endorsement is not just generated organically (Alakshendra 2016 Johnson 1995; Swindell and Rosentraub 1998). The theme “selling the facility to the community” emerged during analysis by capturing the codes that spoke to how communities are sold the idea that they will benefit from developing a new multi-use sports venue. The three main categories in this theme are growth machine, community involvement, and article type. The growth machine category is based on characteristics that Harvey Molotch (1976) laid out in his work on growth machines, including their use of boosterism to convince the public to support a project that is important to those that are part of the coalition. Other characteristics include members of the city’s “elite” – prominent business leaders, political leaders, civic leaders, developers, bankers, etc. -- coming together in support of the venue proposal. Getting the community involved in the planning process for the development of sports venues is important for gaining broad support. This includes providing community members opportunities to become informed about the proposed facility, invitations to share their opinions on different facets of the development, and ultimately being asked to participate in a referendum to vote on the issue.

Any data that was coded to either the growth machine category or community involvement category was then coded into the “selling the facility to the community” theme. Because all articles were coded as a specific type of article, the article type category was not aggregated to the “selling the facility to the community theme.” To get an accurate depiction of

how pervasive this theme was within the data, the number of articles coded to “article type” had to remain separate.

The “selling the facility to the community” theme is especially pervasive in the data used for analysis. This theme is present in 77.9% of the articles analyzed for the Wichita venues. The results in this theme suggest that Wichita does include a growth coalition that has helped promote and “sell” the Wichita Ice Center, the Dynaplex, Intrust Bank Arena, and the new baseball stadium to the community. However, the findings also reveal that growth machine involvement has varied with each facility, possibly based on the level of need for their efforts related to the specific project.

## **4.2.2 Growth Machine**

### **4.2.2.1 Boosterism**

Proponents of multi-use sports venue developments typically rely on two different types of benefits to “sell” their desired project; economic and intangible (Agha and Coates 2014; Baade and Dye 1990; Delaney and Eckstein 2003; Eckstein and Delaney 2002; Johnson 1995; Mason 2016; Mason et al. 2015; Misener and Mason 2006; Roy 2008). The purported benefits, both economic and intangible, of building the venue are divided into multiple sub-categories. These are codes that emerged during the coding process that identify specific examples of each type of overall public benefit. The tables in this section include the number of references within the data analyzed for each purported benefit. The number of references in NVivo refers to the number of times that code appears in the data. For example, when looking at the Ice Center, Intrust Bank Arena, and the new baseball stadium together, there are a total of 17 instances where segments of data are coded as “attract and retain talent” which is classified as an economic benefit. The number of references for the economic benefits category (327) pulls in each

reference from the sub-categories, as well as anything that is coded simply as “economic benefits.” When broken down by venue, the references refer to the number of times a specific code appears in data that is also coded to that venue. For instance, within all pieces of data coded to Intrust Bank Arena, there were 13 references to “attract and retain talent” and 156 “economic benefits” references.

#### **4.2.2.2 Community Involvement**

Community involvement refers to instances where community members were encouraged to take online polls, attend public meetings, vote in a referendum, or otherwise participate in the development of the proposed venue. Also included are instances where information has been provided by the local media or venue proponents to make the community aware of upcoming events regarding these venues, such as meeting times, without the element of encouragement to participate. Additionally, any other mentions of public meetings or hearings in the context of discussing their outcome are included in this category. The data analysis for this study reveals there are no references to community involvement related to the ice rink and 28 references regarding the baseball stadium. In comparison, there are 85 community involvement references for the Dynaplex and 327 for Intrust Bank Arena. Community involvement is represented in 68.6% of the total number of articles collected for this study.

#### **4.2.2.3 Article Type**

The “article type” category is utilized to identify whether each newspaper article collected for this study was an opinion article or an informative article. Every piece of data collected was coded as one or the other. Opinion articles include editorials, op-eds, opinion articles from newspaper staff, and compilations of reader opinions. Informative articles included

pertinent information regarding the sports facilities such as meeting times, polling results, and investigative reports. Table 4 details the article type by source.

**Table 4. Article Type by Source**

	Wichita Eagle		<i>Wichita Business Journal</i>		Total	
	Number of articles	Percentage of articles	Number of articles	Percentage of articles	Number of articles	Percentage of articles
Informative	305	67.5%	177	92.7%	482	75.0%
Opinion	147	32.5%	14	7.3%	161	25.0%
Total	452		191		643	

### 4.3 Community Buy-In

The existence of a growth machine, or the fact that boosters for sports venue developments try to convince the public to support, them does not necessarily mean that the community will “buy-in” to or support these ideas. The community buy-in theme includes coding related to indicators as to whether community members believe that these facilities will be beneficial. Four main categories make up this theme, including community support, community opposition, community concerns, and project investment. Each of these categories is a topic that was included in newspaper coverage of the Wichita Ice Center, the Dynaplex, Intrust Bank Arena, and the new baseball stadium. Results from each of these four categories indicate how much the Wichita community bought-in to each of these proposals. The community buy-in theme is coded in 60.7% of the articles.

#### 4.3.1 Community Support

These findings suggest that community support was covered in the data at a slightly lower rate than community opposition or the potentially negative impact that developing these facilities could have on the Wichita community. Discussions related to these three items has been

limited regarding the Ice Center and the new baseball stadium but occurred more extensively regarding Intrust Bank Arena. These results are more revealing when put into the context of public referenda. Intrust Bank Arena was the only venue of the four that was subject to voting by the community. In that regard, these findings suggest that requiring a referendum increases the necessity of community buy-in or believing in the merits of the proposed project. In situations where “elites” such as city or county leaders are responsible for making the decision to pursue a new multi-use sports facility, having a supportive community is less imperative.

Community support was covered much more extensively for the Intrust Bank Arena proposal than for the ice rink, the Dynaplex, or the new baseball stadium. In total, 72.2% of the references to community support were related to this arena while 16.7% were related to the Ice Center, 10.4% were related to the Dynaplex, and only 0.7% were related to the new baseball stadium. This large variance between facilities could be associated with the county-wide referendum held for Intrust Bank Arena. However, it should be noted that a lack of media coverage regarding community support does not necessarily indicate on its own that the projects have not been supported by citizens. It could simply mean that coverage of this issue was not deemed important by the local print news outlets utilized in this study.

#### **4.3.2 Community Concerns**

Members of the Wichita community have expressed concerns related to the development of multi-use sports venues in downtown Wichita. Having concerns about the potential impact of the proposed facility did not necessarily mean that citizens were opposed to the venue but that, at least in some cases, they had questions or issues that they had hoped would be addressed. Within the data utilized for this study, the conversation surrounding public concerns has largely centered on Intrust Bank Arena.

### **4.3.3 Project Investment (Public Funding)**

One reason it is important for project proponents to get communities to buy-in to the benefits of sports facilities is increasing reliance on public financing to fund their development. The Wichita Ice Center, Intrust Bank Arena, and the forthcoming baseball stadium have all been financed through mechanisms of public funding. The specific financing choices made by City and County officials have determined the need for a public referendum on the proposals. I will focus on the results of the public funding sub-category of project investment. Public funding includes any reference to a financing mechanism utilized for these four venues that would require the use of public funds. The public funding sub-category of project investment is present in 35.3% of the articles.

## **4.4 The Wichita Ice Center**

### **4.4.1 Key Players in the Development Process**

A small group of local proponents was actively involved with the development of the Wichita Ice Center. This included members of two local skating organizations, Kansas on Ice and the Wichita Figure Skating Club, along with President of Kansas on Ice Mickey Leiter, Wichita Thunder manager Bill Shuck, Thunder owner Horn Chen, and County Commissioner Dave Bayouth (Cross 1993; Finger 1989; Stratton 1989; Stratton 1992). Leiter and Bayouth seemed to be the most active proponents in the preliminary stages of the ice center proposal, though the Wichita City Council was supportive of the idea. City Manager Chris Cherches became more actively involved in the development of a downtown ice rink as the project progressed and financing plans changed. However, there was no broad public push for this venue that was conducted by a local growth coalition.

The ice rink was initially pursued in 1989 by a group of local ice-skating enthusiasts – Kansas on Ice, led by Mickey Leiter with the support of County Commissioner Dave Bayouth (Finger 1989; Stratton 1989). Kansas on Ice formed in the late 1980s, at least in part, to persuade the Wichita City Council to pursue a downtown ice-skating facility (Stratton 1992). The effort by Kansas on Ice and Leiter to bring a rink to Wichita seems to be in response to what they perceived as a public need after the closing of the city’s previous indoor rink in 1983 (Stratton 1992). The development of an ice center in downtown Wichita also had the approval of the city council. In fact, in 1989, the city council voted unanimously to endorse the development of an ice-skating facility (Lynn 1991b). However, the council also requested that City Manager Chris Cherches attempt work on an agreement with Kansas on Ice to tie the construction of this venue to the ability of the group to raise enough funds to cover the facility’s operating expenses (Lynn 1991b). Ultimately, the agreement reported suggests that the city council planned to provide city-owned land to Kansas on Ice for the development of an ice-skating venue.

The agreement between Kansas on Ice and the City of Wichita was purportedly based on the condition that the non-profit organization would raise \$8 million over the course of two years to pay for the construction and operation of the facility (Finger 1989; Stratton 1989). The reported provisions of this agreement are interesting because they indicate a certain level of support from the Wichita City Council for the development of a downtown ice center, but they also seemed unwilling, at the time, to consider financing one. The results of this study do not provide a clear answer as to the reason for this, but there are indications that it may have been because it was not a high priority project for city officials between 1989 and 1991. During this period, the council and Mayor Bob Knight were considering multiple different downtown development projects including a children’s museum, an expansion to the science center (the

Omnisphere), and a children's theater, as well as proposals to improve downtown streets and building facades (Finger 1989; Lynn 1991a). In this context, Mayor Knight stated, "I don't want to see us pitting one interest against the others," and "To me, the linchpin to a successful future is pulling together." (Finger 1989:1D). Knight was referring to the development of an ice center and his reluctance to commit land to it because of the other facilities already on the table (Finger 1989). Additionally, a risk of high operating costs associated with the proposed ice center and skepticism regarding the community's ability to support such a facility may have caused city officials to be hesitant to undertake this project (Lynn 1991a; 1991b).

In 1993, a new avenue for pursuing a downtown ice facility opened when Wichita Thunder owner Horn Chen purportedly offered to enter into a public-private partnership with the City of Wichita to help fund the venue (Cross 1993). Thunder manager Bill Shuck stated, referring to Chen's proposal, "He's prepared to offer fairly substantial backing," and "Basically, we're looking to build it and run it." (Cross 1993:1A). At the time of this proposal, the Wichita Thunder did not have a permanent practice facility in Wichita and the venue they utilized was not always available because it was a multi-use arena shared by other tenants (Cross 1994d). In that context, the financing of a new ice center, in part, by the team made sense because it would provide a place in Wichita for the team to practice.

Additionally, Elma Broadfoot, Bob Knight's mayoral predecessor, seemed to be supportive of the idea for the venue and was open to entertaining the public-private partnership with Chen. Broadfoot stated, "I think it [the ice center] would be a nice addition to the city," and continued, "But we're just in the exploratory phase right now." (Cross 1993:1A). Despite Broadfoot's seeming gesture of support for the prospect of an ice center, she cautioned that there were decisions to be made not only about a skating rink, but regarding multiple downtown

development projects. Broadfoot stated, "We've got some decisions to make on things like the ice rink that are not now part of the budget for the downtown core," adding "Right now I really don't know where we stand with regard to all those dollars and all those projects. I just need some more information to be able to make an informed decision." (Cross 1994f:1A). The Mayor's statement indicates that as with Mayor Knight, pursuing a downtown ice center may not have been a high priority for city leadership.

Chen worked with city leaders for months to negotiate a path forward for a new ice center (Cross 1994b; 1994e) before the City Council unanimously voted to move forward with the process and officially attempt to make a deal with the Thunder owner in July 1994 (Cross 1994f). If the Mayor did not consider this project a high priority for downtown development that could provide some insight as to why negotiations with Chen reportedly lasted for nearly a year, seemingly without much progress. However, the public-private partnership with Chen was abandoned in favor of pursuing a partnership with Canlan Investments, a Canadian development company that owned and operated approximately 20 ice rinks in Canada at the time (Cross 1994h). Bob Gordon Jr., a Texas businessman who was working to build a similar facility in Texas, was a business partner with Canlan. He heard that Wichita was looking to build an ice center as well. Gordon allegedly put Canlan representatives in touch with Wichita City Manager Chris Cherches while ongoing negotiations were happening with Chen (Cross 1994h). When asked how long Cherches and other Wichita city officials had been talking to Canlan, Gordon responded, "'Oh, months" (Cross 1994h:1A). Ultimately, Cherches and the city council chose to pursue the development with Canlan instead of Thunder owner Chen. Cherches provided two reasons for preferring the deal with Canlan beyond claiming that it might have just been a better proposal. Cherches said, referring to this proposal being better than Chen's: "Better because they

probably would be prepared to put more money into it than Chen was," adding "That's number one" (Cross 1994a:1D). Additionally, the city manager stated, "There could be more amenities than Chen's facility would have," adding "They are talking about a facility that may cost \$4 million plus" (Cross 1994a:1D). If city leadership, including Cherches were involved in a discussion with Canlan while still negotiating with Chen, this could also provide an explanation as to the length of time this development appeared to be at a standstill for several months (Cross 1994f).

These findings suggest that the Wichita Ice Center may not have been the product of a local growth coalition. Initially, the project was pushed by two groups of local ice skaters and their leadership and drew some support from local government officials. Further, there is no strong evidence to support the involvement of other local businesses or civic organizations in the development of the Wichita Ice Center. However, public officials seemed to be reluctant pursue this facility until the owner of the city's hockey team reportedly offered to finance a portion of the venue's costs. The decision to strike a development deal with an out-of-state company instead of the owner of Wichita's professional hockey team further suggests that the Ice Center facility was not the result of an entrenched Wichita growth coalition.

#### **4.4.2 Downtown Development and Revitalization**

The downtown development and revitalization theme was related to 11 of the 40 files analyzed for the Wichita Ice Center. This number accounts for 27.5% of the articles for this facility. Within these articles there were 20 references to the theme of downtown development and revitalization. Out of the 20 references, only two provide direct suggestions for ways in which a downtown ice center might facilitate further development within the downtown area of the city. These results suggest that the Ice Center was not largely viewed to be a catalyst for

downtown development in Wichita. Rather, that the facility would simply be part of the downtown environment.

According to *Wichita Eagle* reporter Jim Cross, City Manager Chris Cherches suggested a new ice rink would contribute to downtown development by providing a new attraction to an area being developed as a “cultural, educational, and recreational center” (Cross 1994c: 1A). This was not a direct quote from Cherches, however, but a recounting by the article’s author of comments supposedly made by Cherches. Marvin Krout, director of the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission in 1995, made the following comments in reaction to a housing development being pursued for land that was cleared as part of the ice center development: "We thought the site could contribute more to life along the river corridor, being next to an ice rink and a baseball stadium and right across the street from the boathouse," adding "There is really an entertainment district developing there already" (Cross 1995a:1D). Krout was a member of a six-person committee that recommended that city officials turn down an offer by an outside developer to build an apartment complex next to the new ice-skating facility. These were the only two references that directly related to describing how the Ice Center might impact development and revitalization in downtown Wichita.

#### **4.4.3 Selling the Facility to the Community**

##### **4.4.3.1 Economic Benefits**

Proponents of the Ice Center did use potential economic benefits in discussions covered by the local newspapers. However, the prevalence of coding related to economic benefits generated by the Ice Center was low; 8 files (20%) and 12 references. These numbers indicate that there was not a substantial effort made by proponents to utilize economic benefits to gain community support for this venue. In one instance, City Manager Chris Cherches was describing

how the city would pay for the facility. "This will be a money-maker," he said. "There will be enough revenues, using very conservative estimates, to pay off the debt on a \$3.5 million facility" (Cross 1994d:1A). Mayor Elma Broadfoot claimed, "I think most of us feel this will be a revenue generator and it will increase tourism and add definition to downtown as a center for family activities" (Cross 1994d:1A). Finally, another key advocate of the facility, the president of Kansas on Ice Inc. Mickey Leiter, stated: "This rink will pay for itself; we are thoroughly convinced of that" (Ranney 1995a: 3D). Taking these statements out of the context of the larger picture of the development of the Ice Center would suggest that these individuals were actively trying to sell the community on the value of the facility based on potential economic benefits. However, if we refer back to who *The Wichita Eagle* and *The Wichita Business Journal* indicated the key players for this facility were, along with the seeming reluctance of city leaders to take on this project, lack of evidence to support the involvement of a growth machine, and the lack of evidence that the Ice Center was meant to spur growth downtown, we start to see the potential for a different story developing. While it is possible that these statements were made to generate community support for the project, it is also possible that these comments were made based on the level of interest Cherches, Broadfoot, and Leiter saw within the community for the Ice Center (Cross 1994c; Lynn 1991a; Ranney 1995a; Stratton 1989; Woodward 1993).

#### **4.4.3.2 Intangible Benefits**

The results of this study show similar results for the utilization of intangible benefits by Ice Center advocates to generate community support. This coding also appeared in 8 files related to the ice rink and included 10 references. Coupled with the results for the economic benefits, there is little indication that there was a concerted effort by a growth coalition to promote the Wichita Ice Center. Additionally, multiple references to intangible benefits focus on the "use

value” of the rink for community members. This is significant because growth coalitions are known to focus on the exchange value of development projects; that is, how these projects are profitable for growth coalition members (Delaney and Eckstein 2006; 2007; Logan and Molotch 2007). Pat Doyle, vice president for Canlan’s recreational and revenue properties, stated, "We specialize in recreational rinks as opposed to spectator rinks," he said. "Our focus is on providing rinks the community can use as opposed to rinks where they watch hockey being played" (Cross 1994b:1D). The statement by Doyle suggests the venue in Wichita was built to provide a space for community members to actively participate in a new activity within the city. City officials also suggested that they were concerned with community members finding value within the new ice rink. Council member Joan Cole stated, "I believe in this project. I think it will be very significant to families and to youth." Additionally, City Manager Chris Cherches signaled the importance of providing a new activity for young people:

But most of all, Cherches said, an ice rink would give people especially young people something new to do. "I'm talking about forming pee-wee hockey leagues and getting young people involved in skating," he said. "If we can reduce the number of kids loitering and hanging out and give them something to do instead of getting into gangs and violence, why not?" (Cross 1994d:1A).

The attention given to the “use value” of the proposed Ice Center within the results of this study provides support for the idea that this facility was pursued based on providing the city of Wichita a public good – something intended to benefit the whole community. The findings of this study indicate that the Wichita Ice Center was built due to public demand, not growth coalition desires.

#### **4.4.3.3 Community Involvement**

For the Ice Center, the data included no references to community involvement. This suggests that within the newspaper articles, there were no references to opinion polls, voting, or

public meetings arranged specifically to discuss the development of the Ice Center. There was no referendum for the development of the Wichita Ice Center, so it is to be expected that there would be no references to voting or a referendum.

#### **4.4.4 Community Buy-in**

##### **4.4.4.1 Community Support**

Multiple findings within this study support the possibility of there being a broad public support for the Ice Center within Wichita. Further, the results presented for community support also suggest that this facility was addressing a need within the community. Community support was represented in 13 files related to the Wichita Ice Center and was referenced 24 times. Among articles related to the Wichita Ice Center, 32.5% included segments coded to the community support sub-category.

One example of community support relates to the success of open skating sessions sponsored by Kansas on Ice and the Wichita Figure Skating Club. High attendance numbers at open skating sessions could be considered an indirect implication of public support for the development of a downtown ice rink. Mickey Leiter, who helped organize skating sessions for the public at the Kansas Coliseum, stated, "We are limited to only 300 skaters on the ice at any one time, so we're turning people away," and "This tells us that the market is here, the customers are here." (Ranney 1995a:3D). *The Wichita Eagle* article goes on to say that Leiter confirmed that the public skating sessions regularly drew 300 participants (Ranney 1995a).

In another instance, ice skating instructor Kenny Isely expressed what a downtown ice rink would mean for one of his young students: "Kamra skates about 30 hours a year. I can't give her any more ice time. A competitive skater skates more than 30 hours a week. With a rink she'd have a better chance to excel." Isely, a 15-year old local figure skater expressed her excitement

over a new ice rink: "I think we're all extremely excited about the ice rink," adding "It'll just give everyone a chance to be on the ice more, and get more people involved." These findings provide further support for the notion that the Ice Center was developed to fulfil a public need or desire. It seems that there was genuine public support for this facility, and it does not seem to have been generated through a campaign effort from facility advocates.

#### **4.4.4.2 Community Concerns**

##### **4.4.4.2.1 Displacement**

The development of the Wichita Ice Center did generate concerns among some community members. Two *Wichita Eagle* articles discussed the prospect of displacement related to the Ice Center. The facility proposal left residents wondering if they would be displaced from their homes to make way for the new ice rink. One elderly resident, Maxine Steele, 83, had rented the same house in downtown Wichita for 25 years and did not have a desire to relocate. "When you live in a place for that long, you get used to it," she said. "I don't like this at all, not one bit" (Tobias 1994:1A). The article went on to state that Steele was worried that finding a new home could be costly and time-consuming (Tobias 1994).

Other potentially affected residents did not share the same sentiment as Steele, however. Edith Howell suggested that she and her husband wanted to wait for their home to be condemned: "We just want to go through condemnation proceedings because that way we won't have to pay capital gains tax on the income when we sell it," (Cross 1994e:1D) In another example, Wichita resident Greg Dale was not concerned about having to move, he only wanted to get a fair amount for his house. "I'm not trying to screw the city," he said. "I'm just trying to get enough money to cover my mortgages and my moving expenses. I think if I explain the situation a judge will see my point" (Cross 1994e:1D).

#### **4.4.4.3 Project Investment**

In the case of the ice the plan for financing the facility called for the city to sell approximately \$5.3 million in general obligation bonds (Ranney 1995a;1995b). According to a *Wichita Eagle* article: “Revenues from the rink will pay off the bonds over 15 years.” (Ranney 1995a). The findings of this study do not provide further detail on the financing mechanism utilized for the development of the Ice Center. Additionally, these findings only represent what was printed in local newspapers and not any official agreement between the City of Wichita and Canlan Investments. However, if the rink was financed in a manner that would rely on revenue generated by the facility to pay off the debt, community support of the facility would be crucial. Revenue at the ice rink would come from things like admission and skate rentals – paid for by visitors to the facility. In this case, the facility would be paid for, in part, by those who chose to utilize it. Taxpayers would be at risk if the facility failed to generate enough revenue by the end of the year to cover debt payment. In such a case, Canlan would purportedly be responsible for paying half of the shortfall while the city would be responsible for the other half (Finger 1996). However, it is not clear that this would put community taxpayers at risk.

### **4.5 The Dynaplex**

#### **4.5.1 Key Players in the Development Process**

The Dynaplex proposal was first presented by the Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission in 2002. This was an initiative to build an 18,000 seat multi-purpose arena in downtown Wichita. The bulk of the push for this venue was the work of George Fahnestock and Bob Hanson. Fahnestock was a local businessman and he served on the board of the sports commission, while Hanson served as the president and CEO of the Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission. He also coached men's basketball at Hiram Scott College in Scottsbluff, Nebraska

(1966-1969), 25 years at the University of Nebraska, Omaha (1969-1994) and was the assistant men's basketball coach for Kansas State University (1994-1997). He started as an assistant men's basketball coach at the University of Wyoming, coached at Hiram Scott College, NE (1966-1969), served as a coach at the University of Nebraska, Omaha for 25 years (1969-1994), and then was an assistant coach at K-State (1994-1997) before committing to the Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission in 1997 (Garrison n.d.; Horwath 2018a). *The Wichita Eagle* ran an article detailing the overall mission and structure of the commission, and one segment referenced the level of involvement this organization had in the Dynaplex push:

This might be the first time you've heard of the Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission. But it probably won't be the last. For several weeks, members of this coalition of business and government leaders have been waging a campaign to get Wichitans to approve a half-cent sales tax increase to pay for construction of a \$140 million downtown arena. (Martell 2002b:1A)

Part of the initial phase of the Dynaplex proposal involved contacting local business leaders to solicit donations to fund the effort to promote the downtown arena to the community. The intent was not only to generate support among other business leaders, but also to obtain funding to pay for the costs associated with campaigning for the arena:

Approximately 200 businesses are being targeted in the effort, and the group has a database of more than 700 companies it can call on. The commission has sent out letters requesting meetings with area business leaders along with a letter written by Mayor Bob Knight urging them to "learn as much about this issue as you can." (Graham 2001)

About \$75,000 of the \$496,000 goal has already been raised, says Bob Hanson, president and chief executive officer of the sports commission. Hanson and sports commission leaders say the financial support of the business community in this first phase is crucial to the success of a public campaign. (Graham 2001)

The Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission gained further support for their effort to develop the Dynaplex through endorsements from other area business leaders and civic organizations. Those that publicly expressed their support for this plan included the Wichita Area

Chamber of Commerce (Arnold 2002d), The Wichita Downtown Development Corporation (Arnold 2002d), Wichita Automobile Dealers Association (Arnold 2002d), and John Clevenger, president of Commerce Bank (Graham 2001). These endorsements and the success of the fundraising effort suggest that the leaders behind the Dynaplex proposal, George Fahnestock and Bob Hanson, successfully pulled together multiple members of the city's growth machine.

According to newspaper reports, local political leaders were largely absent from key roles regarding the development of this venue as is indicated by the following excerpt: "Government has had a secondary but important role, he [Fahnestock] said. Both city and county have been involved in the planning, but it was decided early on to let the sports commission take the lead" (Lefler 2002b:1A). However, Mayor Bob Knight served on the Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission and (perhaps more importantly) was the individual that initially suggested that the referendum for this facility be delayed indefinitely (Lefler and Funk 2002). Though public officials may not have been leading this initiative publicly, it is possible they were more involved than the newspaper coverage made it seem.

#### **4.5.2 Downtown Development and Revitalization**

Proponents of the Dynaplex initiative claimed that the facility would contribute to the development and revitalization of downtown Wichita. According to *The Wichita Business Journal*, Jeff Turner, chairman of the board of directors of the Wichita Area Chamber of Commerce, issued a statement of support for the Dynaplex on behalf of the organization. Within the statement, Turner asserted, "To make the city more attractive to potential residents and new businesses, the board says, the DynaPlex is vital" ("Wichita Chamber Votes" 2002). John Clevenger, president of Commerce Bank, donated to the campaign fund for the arena and claimed, "I do think an arena has the potential to have a big impact on downtown's future

development," and "The whole community can benefit from a vital core area" (Graham 2001). Handouts made by the Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission stated that the downtown arena would be linked to "increasing visitors to Wichita and the downtown area, hosting large events and serving as a catalyst for the revitalization of downtown" (Graham 2001). These handouts were made to distribute to local business leaders during an effort by Hanson and Fahnstock to solicit funds for the Dynaplex campaign. The desire to develop the Dynaplex was linked to the idea that the venue would be a catalyst for downtown development. The statements made by Turner and Clevenger provide support for the notion that this facility was pursued with the intent of generating growth in downtown Wichita.

### **4.5.3 Selling the Facility to the Community**

#### **4.5.3.1. Economic Benefits**

Projections for the economic benefit generated by building the Dynaplex presented by The Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission were called into question after reporters from *The Wichita Eagle* began to investigate their claims:

Reporting done by *The Wichita Eagle* also showed that the campaign faced a number of issues regarding the arena's financial planning. In addition, mathematical errors were found in the estimated economic benefits that campaign supporters were using to sell the arena, causing arena backers to recalculate their figures (Lefler 2002c:1B).

The investigation by *The Wichita Eagle* led arena proponents to adjust their economic impact figures. "In Wichita's case, arena supporters revised estimates when errors surfaced, then decided their figures were too high and cut projections three times" (Lefler and Voorhis 2002a:9A). This issue was covered multiple times throughout the Dynaplex campaign as it created skepticism regarding the accuracy of The Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission's figures. According to further reports, one cut proponents of the Dynaplex made to their estimates entailed reducing a

projected \$1.25 billion impact to \$814 million. Public administration professor, John Wong, stated, "It appears (arena proponents) decided what the right number is and then backed into it" (Lefler and Voorhis 2002a:9A). These discrepancies in reporting caused questions and concerns related to the economic viability of the project ("Voters Have Last Word" 2002).

#### **4.5.3.2 Intangible Benefits**

In terms of advertising potential intangible benefits, Dynaplex supporters highlighted several different tactics to generate public approval for the venue. Ed Wolverton, who represented the Wichita Downtown Development Corporation, said the following in an editorial for *The Wichita Eagle*: "We all need to take a collective step back and consider the big picture. The DynaPlex is about a chance to move the community forward and create new opportunities for our citizens" (Wolverton 2002:11A). Further, the *Eagle* reported, "Fahnestock said he can give back to the community by running a company that meets customer needs, by creating jobs and by working to improve the city's quality of life, which he believes the sports arena will do" (Williams 2002:1A). Additionally, Joe Johnson, an architect with the firm Shaefer Johnson Cox, made the following statement when addressing the reason he joined the board of the Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission: "I didn't join the sports commission to promote a downtown facility," although he added, "it's important to build the arena for Wichita's well-being" (Martell 2002: 1A).

#### **4.5.3.3 Community Involvement**

The Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission led the charge to garner public approval for the Dynaplex project and made efforts to get community members involved in the planning process. Members of the sports commission planned to attend public meetings for multiple area organizations to facilitate discussion of the venue proposal. "Along with the new ad campaign,

the commission is putting together a team of more than 30 volunteers who will go to civic group meetings, neighborhood association meetings, churches and any other place people will listen, Fahnestock said” (Martell 2002a:1A). This finding was reiterated in a follow-up article about the Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission: “Commission members are fanning out to civic groups, neighborhood organizations, churches - wherever someone is willing to listen to their message - to talk about the arena and what their group does” (Martell 2002b:1A). The consultant hired by The Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission suggested in this excerpt from *The Wichita Eagle* that as people became more aware of the details of the initiative, they would become more supportive:

Wichita has made more information available than any of the 28 successful campaigns in other cities, he said. "The key will be to get all the information disseminated to responsible voters," he said. "The more the voters know, the more they will be comfortable with this initiative." (Martell 2002a:1A).

Commission leaders took these words to heart and intended to get details of the proposal to as many community members as possible. In further efforts to gain support, the commission also relied on traditional marketing strategies such as television ads to help “sell” the proposal, as explained in reporting by *The Wichita Eagle*: “To convince those less sure about the arena, the sports commission is running television ads and paying a national marketing firm, Horrow Sports Ventures, to help with the campaign” (Martell 2002b).

#### **4.5.4 Community Buy-In**

##### **4.5.4.1 Community Support**

There was some support within the community for the Dynaplex development. In the context of discussing an arena downtown, Wichita resident Kristi Hickey said, "That's where it needs to be," adding, “And besides, even if you fix up this place, you might be repairing something five years down the road and that costs more money. This way we get a brand-new

arena" (Branch 2002). She was also speaking of renovations to the arena that was home to the Wichita Thunder, the Kansas Coliseum, located just northeast of Wichita. Another example of community support for this facility came from community member Terry Sutherland, after hearing Fahnstock speak about the Dynaplex. Sutherland offered support by stating that "We need things to do to compete with the other cities around" (Martell 2002b). Additionally, Sutherland did not want to see an increase in property taxes to fund repairs to the Kansas Coliseum (Martell 2002b).

Both community support examples refer to the Coliseum repairs as being linked to their support of the new arena. Some community members did support the development of the Dynaplex, but these two instances also suggest that it may have been due to a desire not to pay for upgrades to the existing facility. This brings into question whether approving of the new venue was just due to the alternative (fixing the Coliseum) being less attractive and not because the Dynaplex truly seemed like a worthwhile investment for the public.

#### **4.5.4.2 Community Concerns**

Community members within Wichita cited a lack of effort to involve the public in the planning process. Opponents not only claimed that there were insufficient opportunities for community engagement, but also that citizens were being shut out of the process altogether. Evidence of this is presented in general statements from *The Wichita Business Journal* such as the following: "Many voters also complain that they didn't have an opportunity to discuss the proposal" (Arnold 2002b); "The sports commission had been criticized for its closed-door meetings on the controversial subject" ("Dynaplex Backers" 2002); and "Supporters of the DynaPlex project have been openly criticized for not including more of the community in the planning and discussion process" ("Horror Sports" 2002). Additionally, community members

voiced their opinion of the situation to the local media: “‘I felt rushed into something we didn't really know that much about,’ said Lisa Reyes, who works as a manager for non-profit agencies” (Funk, Lefler, and Middleton 2002:1A).

Community members also had the support of civic leaders such as Sharon Ailslieger from the League of Women Voters and local businessman/former state legislator Henry Helgerson. The two alleged that the public was being shut out from participating in the development process for the Dynaplex:

Data on the DynaPlex was being presented merely to selected, target groups, Ailslieger says. Helgerson agreed. "We didn't have a public hearing on it?" Helgerson asks. "That's why people rejected it. So many people opposed it because of the way it was handled. Having a proposal being handled by a sport commission where you have to give \$5,000 to become a member is not an open meeting." (“Dynaplex Opponents” 2002).

These results reveal a contradiction between the effort Dynaplex proponents felt they were making to get the community involved and how community members felt they were being included in the development process. Community members did not feel that they were being appropriately informed about the Dynaplex initiative. Additionally, we have a community leader in Sharon Ailslieger and a former state legislator in Henry Helgerson suggesting that citizens were actively being shut out of the conversation related to the arena.

#### **4.5.4.1.2 Project Investment**

Another key criticism of the Dynaplex proposal was that the tax plan developed to fund the project was too complex. The proposal for the Dynaplex included a tax plan that would have increased the sales tax in Wichita over a period of 8 years. In addition, it included a provision that would provide rebates to car dealerships within the city and another that would provide a rebate to the elderly. The rebate for car dealerships proved to be a highly controversial aspect of the financing plan for the Dynaplex as evidenced in the following excerpts from two local

newspapers: “The sales tax rebate on vehicles has emerged as a hot-button issue. The rebate defused opposition to the new sales tax by the Wichita Auto Dealers Association a few weeks ago. But now dealers in surrounding communities are calling the rebate unfair” (Martell 2002a:1A). The same sentiment was reiterated several more times in other articles (Arnold 2002c; Vandruff 2004a).

There were several factors that contributed to the demise of the Dynaplex proposal including a lack of government involvement, lack of community involvement, complex financial planning, and faulty economic impact projections. These findings call into question the efficacy of a growth coalition to put together a development deal for a multi-use sports facility in downtown Wichita.

## **4.6 Intrust Bank Arena**

### **4.6.1 Key Players in the Development Process**

Following the apparent failure of the Dynaplex initiative, a new downtown arena plan for Wichita surfaced in 2004. This venue later came to be known as Intrust Bank Arena. Regarding Intrust Bank Arena, the results of this research more clearly indicate the existence of a growth coalition within Wichita that wanted and promoted this facility. The first indication is cooperation between Wichita city leaders and Sedgwick County commissioners. In 2004, *The Wichita Eagle* reported that, “In a show of unity, Wichita Mayor Carlos Mayans put his arm around the shoulders of Sedgwick County Commission Chairman Tom Winters as the two announced they will co-chair the campaign for the downtown arena” (Vandruff 2004c). This partnership was unusual because there has been a history of a rift between the Sedgwick County government and the City of Wichita government (Arnold 2016; Lefler and Salazar 2015).

Other organizations supporting the development of Intrust Bank Arena, included the Greater Wichita Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Wichita Metro Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission and the Wichita Downtown Development Corporation... Additionally, the president and CEO of the Wichita Metro Chamber of Commerce, Bryan Derreberry, wrote an op-ed in *The Wichita Eagle* to confirm the organization's support of the Intrust Bank Arena development:

The Wichita Metro Chamber of Commerce has been involved in and supportive of the arena process since the middle of 2004. We worked alongside the volunteers from across the community. We see the long-term, positive ripple effect this will have on our community and our region. If we are serious about advancing our community, then we have to invest in it and take pride in who we are. The Sedgwick County arena can boost excitement and economic development in Wichita, Sedgwick County and the region (Derreberry 2006:11A).

Mayor Carlos Mayans held two meetings with other key stakeholders to discuss issues related to the Intrust Bank Arena proposal in May and June 2004. As reported by *The Wichita Business Journal*, the May 2004 meeting included the following individuals:

Bob Hanson, president and CEO of the Wichita Sports Commission; George Fahnestock, who chaired the effort to develop the "Dynaplex" project; Key Construction President Dave Wells; Greater Wichita Convention and Visitors Bureau CEO John Rolfe; Sherwood Construction Co. Inc. Chairman Howard Sherwood; Hyatt Regency General Manager Gerald Barrack; Intrust Executive Vice President Lyndon Wells and Fidelity Bank President Clay Bastian. (Vandruff 2004d).

Purportedly, this meeting lasted for approximately an hour and was intended to gauge the mayor's interest in a downtown arena. According to *The Wichita Eagle*, the June 2004 meeting included the following individuals:

County Commissioners Tom Winters and Dave Unruh met Wednesday with Mayor Carlos Mayans to discuss the plan. Also present from the county were County Manager William Buchanan, finance director Chris Chronis and park and recreation chief Ron Holt, along with Ed Wolverton of the Downtown Development Corp., and George Fahnestock, who led the unsuccessful campaign for the Dynaplex. (Lefler and Buselt 2004:1A).

This meeting was organized to discuss a potential financing package for the downtown arena. The article did indicate that this was a closed-door meeting and afterward, County Commissioner Winters stated, "This is one last attempt, at least for the foreseeable future, to see if there is an opportunity to have a downtown arena" (Lefler and Buselt 2004:1A). The difference between the two groups that met with Mayans should also be noted. The meeting in May to discuss the potential interest in pursuing a downtown arena consisted of local financial leaders, business leaders, and the leaders of Wichita booster organizations. In the second meeting, there were several county officials present, and the only individual mentioned as attending both meetings was George Fahnestock.

Fahnestock was the founder of a local heating and plumbing company, but he was also a very active community leader. As stated in *The Wichita Business Journal*, "One of the public voices of Vote Yea, Wichita businessman George Fahnestock, says he pitched a 15,000- to 17,000-seat arena to voters" (Wilson 2005d). He was actively involved with the Greater Wichita Sports Commission from the beginning of their pursuit for a downtown arena, once serving as the organization's president. During the campaign for Intrust Bank Arena, Fahnestock was one of the most vocal proponents, still serving on the board for the sports commission as well as being a prominent figure in the "Vote Yea" campaign. As further evidence of his involvement with this project, Fahnestock's name was referenced 38 times in the documents analyzed for Intrust Bank Arena.

Members of The Wichita Downtown Development Corporation and the Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission were involved in multiple aspects of the arena development. The president of each organization was also appointed to the Arena Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan steering committee by Wichita City Manager George Kolb (Buselt 2005a; Wilson 2005g).

The committee was appointed to work in coordination with Gould Evans, an arena project consultant, to construct a redevelopment plan for the neighborhood surrounding the facility (Wilson 2005g). According to *The Wichita Eagle*:

Members of the steering committee, the group that will guide the process, will include more than a dozen city and county employees. Bob Hanson, president of the Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission, and Ed Wolverton, president of the Wichita Downtown Development Corp., will also be included. (Buselt 2005a:1A)

The initiative for Intrust Bank Arena included a very large PR campaign proclaiming, “Vote yea!” and was headed by Steve Shaad. Shaad was also a member of the Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission and the head of Wichita Baseball Inc. Additionally, Bob Hanson was the “chairman of the Vote Yea committee” (“Voters Give Go-Ahead” 2004). He was also selected to serve on the Citizens Design Review Committee by Sedgwick County commissioners and city council members (Wilson 2005h). Hanson was one of 23 citizens assigned to the committee to “receive citizen input on the design and location of the new Sedgwick County Downtown Arena. That input will be relayed to the county's building design team” (Wilson 2005h). Hanson was also active regarding the Intrust Bank Arena initiative, in fact, his name was referenced in articles related to this venue 54 times. Together with Fahnestock, he provided substantial participation from the Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission in the development of this project.

The local newspapers also played a larger role in the development of Intrust Bank Arena than the other three venues in this study. This facility generated the highest percentage of opinion articles with 28.8% of the total articles being opinion-based. Of those articles, 95.9% were found in *The Wichita Eagle*. Key Intrust Bank Arena proponents from this newspaper included *The Wichita Eagle* Editorial Board; *Eagle* editorialists Mark McCormick, Rhonda Holman, and Randy Scholfield. McCormick, after the referendum for Intrust Bank Arena was approved, wrote

a piece discussing the facility in the context of Wichita's past. Specifically, McCormick conjures images of a "pioneering spirit" (McCormick 2004:9A) and toughness within the city that led to the following comments:

Rather, the arena is part of a vision of what we aspire to be. Too often, what we do and where we are defines us. I think our dreams and our ideas also should define us. You get a better life by aspiring to a better life. The quality-of-life advantages of the arena will be practical, as well as symbolic. Practical in the sense that good hosts tend to have a set of good china, a tea service and maybe nicer furniture in a seldom-used room for entertaining guests. And symbolic in the sense that perhaps young people who leave Wichita for greener pastures - an estimated 1,700 of the 8,500 who reach adulthood each year - will begin putting down roots instead of pulling up stakes (McCormick 2004:9A).

Additionally, Rhonda Holman stated in a column, "The action on behalf of an arena has offered the strongest signal in years that Wichita, booming fringes and all, still wants a vibrant, functional downtown. And now for the fun part: watching as the arena is sited, designed, built and put to work for Wichita" (Holman 2005: 6A). Randy Scholfield, writing in the context of downtown businesses being displaced for the new arena, stated:

But it's also a fact that the arena is going to have broad benefits for most Wichitans, making the downtown area a much more attractive place to live, visit and shop. It's not a bad thing, after all, that downtown property values are rising, along with rents. That's the most tangible sign yet that downtown is becoming a more desirable place to be and do business" (Scholfield 2006a:7A).

Scholfield stating "it's also a fact" (Scholfield 2006a:7A) regarding the benefits most in the community would experience due to the new arena seemed to be an unrealistic claim. There were no guaranteed benefits for Wichitans regarding the Dynaplex, but there were purported benefits and projected economic impacts.

These findings provide strong support for the existence of an active growth coalition working to pursue the Intrust Bank Arena development. Most importantly are several connections between this project and the Dynaplex initiative that seemingly failed in 2002. The connections between George Fahnestock, Bob Hanson, Ed Wolverton, the Downtown

Development Corporation, the Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission, the Wichita Metro Chamber of Commerce, and the Dynaplex campaign suggest that the initiative that brought Wichita Intrust Bank Arena was merely a continuation of the “failed” Dynaplex plan.

#### **4.6.2 Downtown Development and Revitalization**

The impact Intrust Bank Arena was expected to have on downtown development in Wichita was effectively summed up by Wichita architect Charles McAfee: "Wichita very slowly has a whole bunch of things already in place. Our problem right now is getting to the crown jewel that pulls all of this stuff together" (Vandruff 2004e). McAfee was speaking in the context of development in downtown Wichita and the improvements that were already taking place. His statement implies that Intrust Bank Arena would be the “crown jewel” (Vandruff 2004e) that would tie all the individual pieces together to create a vibrant downtown area.

Ed Wolverton of the Wichita Downtown Development Corporation suggested in an interview with *The Wichita Business Journal* that the arena would spur new development downtown. "First would be more of an extension of what we have downtown with individually owned mom-and-pop operations," he says. "The other thing that could happen would be a shift toward national chains in terms of retail and restaurants" (Wilson 2005e).

Additionally, *Wichita Eagle* sports writer Bob Lutz wrote an opinion column to express how important he felt a downtown arena was for development. On April 22, 2004, Lutz wrote a piece titled, “Wichita Needs Arena not Renovated Cow Palace” in which he made a plea to city and business leaders to do something to convince county leaders that a downtown arena was desperately needed (Lutz 2004). His reference to a “Cow Palace” (Lutz 2004: 1D) was related to the previously mentioned Kansas Coliseum. In Lutz’s words, “An arena is the most essential part

of the downtown puzzle. You can have your WaterWalk and your Bass Pro Shop and even your casinos, but not having a downtown arena is like missing a front tooth” (Lutz 2004:1D).

These findings suggest that Intrust Bank Arena was viewed by proponents as being an integral piece to downtown development. This venue was presented as a catalyst for the development of new retail spaces and restaurants that would connect all the already existing pieces of the puzzle together. Additionally, the comment by Lutz that compares not having a downtown arena to “missing a front tooth” (Lutz 2004:1D) insinuates that downtown Wichita would not only be missing something without a downtown arena but also that it would not be attractive unless one were developed.

### **4.6.3 Selling the Facility to the Community**

#### **4.6.3.1. Economic Benefits**

Promoters of Intrust Bank Arena dangled future economic benefits in their selling of the facility to the public. One of the benefits touted by arena proponents was job creation. “‘It's going to create a tremendous amount of jobs in the construction industry,’ says Tom Dondlinger, president of Dondlinger & Sons Construction Co. Inc.” (Siebenmark 2004). Wichita had recently been hit by job losses as well and State Sen. Donald Betts, a Wichita Democrat, suggested that Intrust Bank Arena would help prevent local talent from leaving the city despite the struggling economy. “We really need something that will keep Wichitans at home,” he said in a *Wichita Eagle* article (Painter 2005:1B).

Other economic benefits that arena advocates used to promote the Intrust Bank Arena initiative included tourism and increased land values. Keith Lawing, the executive officer for Regional Economic Area Partnership (REAP), “a coalition of 26 city and five county governments in south-central Kansas” (Painter 2004b:1A), stated, “I think the members realize,

you strengthen the core of the metro area, you bring more visitors in. All the communities in south-central Kansas benefit from that" (Painter 2004b:1A). Sedgwick County Commissioner Tom Winters, speaking about increased property values that he associated with the downtown arena prior to it being built, stated, "We're already seeing the value of property in downtown is increasing, and I would use the word 'dramatically'" (Mann 2006a:1A).

These findings reveal the use of economic benefits by arena proponents to attempt to sell the venue to the community. Promises of jobs, increased visitors (tourism), and increased property values were presented to the public as reasons to support the development of Intrust Bank Arena. County Commissioner Winters was one of the leading advocates for this facility along with Mayor Carlos Mayans. Winters's claim regarding increased property values stands out in this analysis because he claimed that the increase was caused by the arena. However, the arena had not yet been developed. What Winters was suggesting was that the discussion of the venue had already impacted property values in the area surrounding where the arena would be built. By inserting the words "we're already" and "dramatically," Winters was making this claim seem even more important to the public, potentially leading community members to believe that once the arena was built, it would cause property values in the area to skyrocket.

#### **4.6.3.2 Intangible benefits**

In the case of Intrust Bank Arena, city and county officials made several claims regarding potential intangible benefits that the arena would bring to Wichita. In some instances, the exact benefit was unclear, as explained in the following excerpt from *The Wichita Business Journal*:

But Kolb and [City councilwoman Sharon] Fearey were adamant that the developed arena area have a uniquely Wichita flavor. "We're not talking about being like Baltimore," Kolb says. Fearey agrees. "I think that in the end we're going to come up with something unique, something exciting, something everyone in Wichita can be proud of," she says. (Wilson 2006)

Council member Fearey suggested that the new arena would generate civic pride and made mention of the arena in terms of it being unique and exciting. The attempt by both city leaders to set Wichita apart from others reflected a form of status-signaling, suggesting that a new venue would provide a visible symbol of the city's progress in terms of becoming "big-league."

More blatant examples of status-signaling were provided by members of the Sedgwick County Commission, as revealed in *The Wichita Business Journal*: "'We want a world-class arena that satisfies the needs of the people of southcentral Kansas, gives us our money's worth and is something we can be proud of,' [Sedgwick County Commissioner Dave] Unruh says" (Wilson 2005i). Ron Holt, also a Sedgwick County commissioner added, "We're going to have a first-class entertainment and sports venue in downtown Wichita that will give various aspects of this community opportunities throughout the year to enjoy." (Wilson 2008). The use of terms like "world-class" and "first-class" projected a high status for the city emanating from the new arena downtown.

Other forms of intangible benefits were also touted by Wichita City leaders, specifically Mayor Carlos Mayans. After reportedly indicating that he would try to help sell the arena plan to the public, Mayans stated, "This is an opportunity to move our city and our county into the future...I thoroughly believe that it is going to happen." (Mann 2004d:1A). In another effort to promote the downtown arena, the mayor turned to the arena as being a unifying factor within the community, as revealed in a *Wichita Eagle* profile. "And he thinks the arena will unite the community rather than divide it between the rich and the not-so-rich. 'The good thing about it is, we want everybody to come,' he said" (Lefler 2006c:1A). This quote is particularly interesting because sports facility developments are often built with luxury boxes or VIP seating areas

(Baker 2018; Eckstein and Delaney 2002). These seating areas are typically expensive and popular among business executives to entertain clients, but they also encourage a separation of fans by social class (Eckstein and Delaney 2002; Schwirian, Curry, and Woldoff 2001). Intrust Bank Arena was designed to include luxury suites intended to cater to corporate executives in Wichita and provide revenue to help fund arena operations (Gruver 2009; Lefler 2006). While Intrust Bank Arena may unite some members of the community, previous research indicates that the inclusion of VIP seating only further divides the rich from the working class.

#### **4.6.3.3 Community Involvement**

Proponents of the proposal for Intrust Bank Arena made a concerted effort to get Sedgwick County citizens involved in the process for developing this facility. Arena advocates knew they would need community support to make this project successful, and they took steps to ensure the public was informed about the issue. Part of the campaign for the arena involved what supporters repeatedly called an education process. Examples of this in local newspaper articles include: “Arena proponents say they expect that to change once the education campaign begins” (Vandruff 2004a); “Supporters of an arena for downtown Wichita are ready to start the education process they hope will lead voters to approve a temporary sales tax increase” (Vandruff 2004b); “The group agreed that the private sector will create and pay for the education campaign aimed at convincing voters” (Vandruff 2004b). One theme of the pro-arena campaign was “The more you know, the more you'll like it” (Mann 2004i), indicating that the purpose of the “education” effort was to increase the popularity of the proposal for this venue.

Intrust Bank Arena proponents scheduled a series of public meetings to get community members involved in the decision-making process as well as to provide opportunities for them to

learn about all the details of the proposal. The following is a portion of the references to public meetings found within the local newspapers:

- The recommendation was based on a consensus from public meetings and other public input and feedback from advisory committees. (Mann 2006c:1A)
- The county is planning public forums and workshops this fall to gather comments on design ideas and the arena's location, said Ron Holt, assistant county manager. (Rockwell 2005:1A)
- The county has said it will hold public meetings to help determine the arena's future. (Mann 2004e:1A)
- The county will hold a meeting to get public reaction, at a time and location to be announced. (Voorhis 2005:1A)

The frequency of references to open meetings about Intrust Bank Arena throughout articles from both *The Wichita Eagle* and *The Wichita Business Journal* reiterates the effort made by backers of the proposal to be inclusive to the public.

The most obvious way the Sedgwick County residents were involved in the process of developing the arena was the utilization of a public referendum. Voters within the county were required to have the opportunity to voice their opinion on this multi-use sports venue at the polls in November 2004. This referendum was mentioned throughout the documents analyzed for this research. Some of these instances are highlighted in the following list:

- Voters in Sedgwick County will decide in November whether to increase local sales taxes for a limited time to raise \$141.5 million to build a new arena. (Shull 2004:1A)
- Voters will decide Nov. 2 if they agree with the plan. (Vandruff 2004b)

- [Sedgwick County Commissioner, Tom Winters] I hope all Sedgwick County citizens participate in the democratic process and let their voices be heard on Tuesday. (Winters 2004:7A)

These findings suggest that the promoters of Intrust Bank Arena were focused on getting community members involved in the decision-making process regarding this project. It seems that proponents considered public knowledge of the proposal details to be an important facet of garnering community support. The amount of newspaper coverage related to public meetings, the referendum, and other aspects of community involvement was much higher for Intrust Bank Arena than it was for the Ice Center or the new baseball stadium. However, coverage differentials between facilities could be related to the fact that the other two facilities did not require community approval to acquire funding for them.

#### **4.6.4 Community Buy-In**

##### **4.6.4.1 Community Support**

References to the outcome of the referendum were abundant in both *The Wichita Eagle* and *The Wichita Business Journal*. Examples from both media outlets include the following: “Voters approved a 1 percent sales tax last November for the arena” (Dinell 2005a); “Sedgwick County voters approved imposing the 1-percent tax on themselves in order to construct the long-discussed downtown arena” (Dinell 2005b); “Sedgwick County voters Tuesday approved a one cent, 30-month increase in the local sales tax to pay for a \$184 million, 15,000-seat arena to be built in downtown Wichita” (“Voters Give Go-Ahead” 2004); “County voters approved a 30-month 1-cent sales tax in November to raise \$184.5 million for the arena” (Rockwell 2005:1A); “Tuesday, Sedgwick County voters approved another 1 cent sales tax designed to raise \$184.5

million for the arena” (Painter 2004a:1A); “Downtown arena question -- Yes 80,545/52 No 75,665/48 – election results” (“Election Results” 2004:12A).

Included in the dialogue about the results of the referendum was information about the demographics of those who favored the arena proposal. One key demographic group that seemed prepared to vote for the project’s approval was young voters. According to public polling leading up to the referendum, this bloc of voters had shifted their views:

Voters between the ages of 18 and 34 made the biggest shift in favor of the arena. Two weeks ago, voters in that age group were 53 percent opposed and 45 percent in favor of the arena. In the new poll, they favor it, 60 percent to 38 percent. (Mann 2004h:1A)

Another public poll reiterated this, while also revealing some demographic information about those who opposed the proposal. “Voters age 65 and older and suburbanites continue to form the largest blocs of opposition to the measure, while young people are its largest supporters, the poll shows” (Mann 2004c:3B). The results of these polls seemed to hold true when it came time for the county-wide vote. The day after the referendum, *The Wichita Eagle* claimed, “Young voters helped put the arena issue over” (Mann and Buselt 2004:1A). The authors bolstered this claim with several stories of young people who had voted in favor of the project:

- Stephanie Davis, a 21-year-old dance student at WSU, was undecided about the arena issue. Then she started to hear pro-arena advertisements on the radio about a 30-month sales tax versus a 20-year property tax. She said she would rather have the sales tax and that a downtown arena would be more convenient. (Mann and Buselt 2004: 1A)
- Chris Norgren, a 20-year-old Wichitan, was undecided about the arena. Pro-arena television commercials persuaded him to support a downtown arena, he said, because he would rather pay a sales tax for a shorter period of time than a property tax over two decades. (Mann and Buselt 2004: 1A)
- Anthony Gonzalez, an 18-year-old WSU student, supports the downtown arena. He said television commercials promoting the project solidified his opinion. It will give teens a reason to hang out downtown, he said. (Mann and Buselt 2004: 1A)

- Trevor Cornette also supported the measure. "Looking down the road, I think it's a good idea," he said. The arena could bring new events and more money to downtown, Cornette said, adding that he'd love to see an NCAA basketball tournament in town. "Maybe we can attract something bigger and better to play in there," Cornette said. (Mann and Buselt 2004: 1A)
- Wichitan Geri Vossen voted for a downtown arena in part because it will bring more excitement to the city. "It'll make it more like the big, big cities that have lots of events downtown," she said. (Mann and Buselt 2004:1A)

In the context of the growth machine, the findings suggest that endorsement of the arena by community members was more necessary due to the public referendum. This claim is bolstered by a quote from City Manager George Kolb in *The Wichita Business Journal*: "It's critical to have public acceptance, to get them involved to make certain this thing works" Wilson (2005a). It may also be true that the campaign to generate support and excitement surrounding a new downtown arena was successful. Evidence of this can be seen in the comments of the community members above. Three of the five young voters referred to television and radio ads from the pro-arena campaign as being influential in their decision to vote in favor of the facility. Further, these individuals mentioned supporting the development of the arena because it would give them a reason to be downtown, or make Wichita more exciting, or make Wichita more like other, larger cities. As previously discussed, these are examples of intangible benefits that proponents of the arena touted during the "selling" of the proposal. Finally, in the context of downtown development and growth, these young people potentially represented what Florida (2002) referred to as the "creative class," which may provide an explanation as to why *The Wichita Eagle* chose to publish their opinions on this issue.

## 4.6.4.2 Community Concerns

### 4.6.4.2.1 Parking Concerns

Parking concerns were a common topic of discussion during community meetings about the development of the downtown arena. At one community event, *The Wichita Eagle* reported, attendees were encouraged to write their ideas for the area surrounding the new arena on Post-it notes and place them on a white board for everyone, including project proponents, to see: “The yellow Post-it notes spoke eloquently. ‘Parking is not in the correct place,’ one scolded” (Mann 2006b:3B). At the same event, one Wichita resident voiced related concerns:

“That's just a horrible oversight to have thought that available parking would work,” said Gerald Clark of Wichita, who attended the event with his wife, Barbara. Clark said he'd like to see any excess from the arena sales tax, which is bringing in more money than anticipated, go toward building several garages near the arena. (Mann 2006b:3B)

Wichita Eagle sports columnist Bob Lutz and editorialist Randy Scholfield also shared their opinions on the parking situation near Intrust Bank Arena. Lutz stated:

The parking issue makes me nervous, because there have to be enough spots within a reasonable distance of the arena. And right now, there are not. But by reasonable distance, think five blocks. Not 500 feet. Parking, inevitably, is going to become the hot-button issue of this project. (Lutz 2005:1C)

Scholfield also called upon arena proponents to address the parking issue, writing, “Arena parking issues must be addressed with sufficient density-friendly structures such as parking garages, perhaps financed through a parking district such as that in Old Town” (Scholfield 2006b:5A). These two columns are interesting when considering the influence that local newspapers can have on public policy decisions and as members of the city’s growth coalition. The results suggest that Lutz and Scholfield recognized the level of public concern related to parking issues and felt it was important enough for the success of the project to write about.

Other prominent area boosters, Sedgwick County officials, and City of Wichita officials also recognized downtown parking as an issue for Intrust Bank Arena. George Fahnestock stated, "Our understanding was we were promoting parking as a concern, whether that be a garage, satellite garages or something else" (Wilson 2005j). County Commissioner Ben Sciortino stressed the importance of this issue in comments he made to *The Wichita Business Journal*:

Parking is one of the biggest things we've heard during the educational process on the arena. We're going to insist on adequate parking downtown and staff is going to have to convince us that their plan is reasonable and correct. (Wilson 2005f)

Finally, Assistant Sedgwick County Manager Ron Holt assured the community that the parking situation around the new downtown arena would be researched and a plan to address it would be put in place:

Holt said the city's Arena Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan Steering committee will look into the parking issue and complete a study by summer. The study will help determine how much more parking is needed, he said. A comprehensive parking plan will be in place by the time the arena opens in late 2008 or early 2009, Holt said. (Mann 2005:1A)

Part of the boosterism strategy for arena proponents was to appeal to community members by acknowledging that parking was a shared concern and one that advocates would address. Access to adequate parking would have to be resolved by county and city officials. In that regard, it was important that public officials speak on the issue to legitimize the effort to address a lack of parking to the public.

#### **4.6.4.2.2 Displacement**

The other concern that seemed to dominate the public conversation about Intrust Bank Arena was the potential for businesses, organizations, and residents that were already located in the four possible arena sites to be displaced. Each of the four proposed locations had the potential to cause displacement, though the impact differed by site. Property owners within each

possible arena location were unsure of their fate until the final decision about the location was made. One opponent of the arena development addressed county commissioners at a public hearing, explaining why he felt this process was problematic.

Gary Wright, who also is against the arena, told commissioners that the debate over it should begin after the particulars are known, including a specific location. "I believe it's unfair for property owners in the downtown area to not know whether they're voting to be relocated or not," he said. (Mann 2004g:1A)

Wright argued that the proposal for Intrust Bank Arena was voted on by the public prior to County Commissioners and Wichita City leaders deciding where the venue would be located. Downtown property owners were expected to vote to approve the development without knowing if they would then be displaced by it. According to an article in *The Wichita Eagle*, this point was reiterated by local real estate broker John Todd at the same public hearing. Todd called into question the motivation of the arena advocates:

"Who owns the land? Is the land for sale? Why is the property owner selling the land?" he asked. Todd also questioned the motivation of proponents. "Are they looking for work? Are they looking for design projects or some personal gain?" he said. (Mann 2004g:1A)

Both comments suggest that there was skepticism within the community as to why the vote for the arena was held before a location for it was chosen.

However, not all property owners located in the proposed sites for the new arena expressed great concern about the possibility of being forced out of their space. One business owner discussed his strategy for dealing with the potential of relocating his business:

"I'm just trying to see where I fit in, and try to adapt," said Mitch Willis, owner of the Go Away Garage on South Commerce. He doesn't think the arena and redevelopment of the area will help or hurt his business, which is flourishing in its 13th year. "I'll just have to relocate," he said. "That's the bottom line". (Mann 2006b:3B)

Other business owners recognized the possibility of being displaced and expressed their disappointment in potentially being forced from their location:

“We're keeping an eye open," said Carreen Simon, spokeswoman for Harry Hynes Memorial Hospice, 313 S. Market, which is in the site plan next to WaterWalk. "Ideally for us, we'd like to stay in our building as long as we can," Simon said. "If sometime in the future we do have to move, we want it to be because we made the choice, not because we were told to". (Rengers 2005:1A)

One prospective site for the arena included a restaurant that had become a staple for the city. Its owner and its customers were extremely concerned about the potential that the business would be displaced:

“I'd be devastated if I had to move," said Mary Wright, owner of the Old Mill Tasty Shop, 604 E. Douglas, which is in the northernmost site under consideration. Her customers would be upset, too, Wright said. One already is gathering people to sign a petition and "they're going to lay down in the front of the building" if anyone tries to close the 75-year-old restaurant, she said (Rengers 2005:1A).

Part of the concern over the Old Mill Tasty Shop, as well as some other buildings located in what was known as the “north site,” focused on their historic status. This drew the attention of the city’s historic preservation board and ultimately led to the removal of this site from the list of potential arena locations:

The wrecking ball poised over some buildings in the downtown arena site has been suspended. The group in charge of protecting Wichita's historic buildings ruled Monday afternoon that demolishing seven of 15 buildings between William and Waterman streets would encroach on, damage or destroy the East Douglas Avenue Historic District (Isenberg 2006a:1B).

This seems to indicate that those tasked with choosing the location for Intrust Bank Arena, City and County officials, had either not thoroughly considered the historic aspect of this potential site, had not thought of this location as being a serious contender, or simply did not care about the historical meaning of the buildings in question.

One key instance of displacement was the case of The Episcopal Social Services building. Episcopal Social Services is a charity that “provides counseling and job services, dispenses free food and works to turn teen offenders into productive citizens” (Lefler 2006b:1B).

The site that was selected as the location for Intrust Bank Arena included this social services center. At a rally for supporters of the service center, Reverend Steven Mues derided the idea that the county had the Episcopal Social Services building appraised as a warehouse (Laviana 2006:1B). Mues stated, "This is not a warehouse; this is not some run-down storage shed...What we have here is a recycling center, a recycling center for human beings" (Laviana 2006:1B). A member of St. James Episcopal Church, Dick Williams, stated in the same article, "We think it's important to tend to the needs of people less fortunate than ourselves...Apparently the county feels like they don't need services like this" (Laviana 2006:1B).

One reason this case stood out is that the building was appraised by a different company than several other buildings in the same area, including an old bar. As *The Wichita Eagle* reported, "The county paid \$915,000 for the building that housed Club Tabu, a bar with a history of police calls for violent and illegal behaviors. A beer-bottle's-throw away, the county offered \$500,000 for the Episcopal Social Services property" (Lefler 2006b:1A). "Although the buildings are similar in size, two appraisers, using different methods, came up with radically different property values" (Lefler 2006b:1A). This claim was supported by the following statement in the same *Eagle* article:

Episcopal Social Services building was the only appraisal in the arena site that wasn't done by the Martens group. Steve Martens said he excluded that property when he bid for the arena-land acquisition work because he had been planning to do some work for Episcopal Social Services, which would have raised a conflict of interest. (Lefler 2006b:1A)

The executive director of the charity, Sandra Lyon, was concerned by the appraisal because the amount the charity was being offered for their building would not be enough to relocate the center. In a *Wichita Eagle* interview, Sandra Lyon, said the charity needed more money to replace its building and stay downtown near the clients it served: "We're going to ask

the community to stay involved with us,' Lyon said. 'The general public has said, "We do value the services and we want (the county) to work with these people"' (Isenberg 2006b:1A). Lyon did fight the county appraisals, with the support of the Wichita community: "Episcopal Social Services fought back Friday against Sedgwick County's effort to pay \$500,000 to condemn the organization's property to make way for the downtown arena" (Lefler 2006d:1B). The county was court-ordered to have the building re-appraised. "The three-member panel decided that the building at 233 S. St. Francis was worth \$1.3 million" (Laviana 2007:1A). The displacement of Episcopal Social Services in favor of building a new arena sheds some light on the importance of these development projects for proponents – i.e. the growth machine. County leaders were portrayed as caring more about clearing the land for development than hurting vulnerable people, illustrating how growth machine members regard the exchange value of land providing further support for the idea that Intrust Bank Arena was developed according to interests of a growth coalition.

#### **4.6.4.3 Project Investment**

Intrust Bank Arena was paid for through a new county-wide sales tax. The State of Kansas requires projects that utilize this measure to be subject to a public vote. Because this proposal had to be presented to the public for their approval, it was very important for boosters to generate a high enough level of public support to pass the measure to move forward on the arena project. As demonstrated in previous sections, proponents of the arena utilized several methods to generate community support. The importance of community commitment to the arena proposal is demonstrated in the following comment from *The Wichita Eagle*, summarizing an argument made by Wichita State University public administration professor Mark Glaser: "Proponents also face the problem of convincing voters to raise taxes during a time of

uncertainty about world events and the economy, including the announcement that Boeing is likely to be sold soon, Glaser said” (Mann 2004b:1B). This also suggests a sense skepticism as to whether proponents would be able to get a community that was struggling with other economic uncertainties to support an increase in taxes to build a new sports venue in Wichita.

Several references were made in the two local newspapers to the duration of the increased county sales tax to fund the new downtown arena. The first two instances here presented by journalist Fred Mann frame the sales tax in a way that indicates the need for community support for the tax proposal: “The county is asking you to approve a 1-cent, 30-month sales tax increase to fund a new \$184.5 million facility downtown” (Mann 2004e:1A); “They are asking voters to approve a 1 cent sales tax increase that would end after 30 months” (Mann 2004i:1B). The other examples here simply explain the terms of the sales tax regarding how long it would be in place:

- The tax is due to expire after a 30-month period. (Dinell 2005b)
- The planned Wichita arena will have 15,000 seats with a total project budget of \$184.5 million. It will be funded with proceeds of a countywide 1 cent sales tax that commissioners are committed to ending after 30 months. (Lefler 2006a:1B)
- The 30-month sales tax is designed to generate \$184.5 million in revenues for the downtown arena project. It will sunset early, Holt says, if the \$184.5 million is raised before the 30-month term expires. (Wilson 2005c)

These results suggest that advocates of the proposal for Intrust Bank Arena and local media outlets were interested in keeping the public informed about the prospective sales tax increase. Statements like these that were made before the referendum occurred could also be viewed as an attempt to increase public approval of the arena proposal. By reiterating that the tax increase would end after 30 months, voters were reminded that the tax was only temporary. Seeing this and hearing this over this course of a campaign might provide an incentive for voters who were previously undecided to go ahead and vote for the venue.

## 4.7 The New Baseball Stadium

### 4.7.1 Key Players in the Development Process

The main driving force behind the proposal for the new baseball stadium in Wichita has been Mayor Jeff Longwell. One indication of Mayor Longwell's involvement in the process for developing a new baseball stadium in Wichita is the way he has discussed the proposal himself.

The following was taken from *The Wichita Business Journal*:

"I'm excited," Longwell said Wednesday morning from his sickbed, where he's been felled by a kidney stone. "Now, we go 100 miles an hour ... to get this thing going." (Wilson 2017c)

This commentary stands out because of the context surrounding it. Mayor Longwell was suffering from a medical complication, but still provided a statement to the media expressing his excitement about the project moving forward. Not only that, but he indicated that he wanted the project to proceed quickly. The Mayor expressed the same sense of urgency regarding the approval of the design team for the ballpark, stating, "We need a baseball stadium to play in very soon" (Horwath 2018c; Lefler 2018a).

Other key individuals and community organizations that previously supported the Dynaplex and Intrust Bank Arena have also spoken in favor of the new baseball stadium development. This list includes the Wichita Downtown Development Corporation (President Jeff Fluhr) and the Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission (president and CEO Bob Hanson, member and local architect Joe Johnson). Additionally, George Laham, a Wichita developer, has made his vision for the area surrounding the new stadium known, with comments such as the following: "We want to bring something to downtown, to the river, that truly takes downtown development and river development to a new level" (Rengers 2018b). Laham has formed Riverfront Partners along with the Old Town developer, Dave Burk (Marketplace Properties),

Dave Wells (Key Construction), and Jerry Jones (Jones Commercial Development) (Horwath 2018f). Riverfront Partners will reportedly only be developing one area of land near the stadium. Further, Joe Johnson, who has been a member of the Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission and has served on the citizen design review board for Intrust Bank Arena is also the senior vice-president for the Wichita architectural firm Schafer, Johnson, Cox, Frey (SJCF). SJCF is now one of the members of the design build team for the new baseball stadium (Wilson and Horwath 2018).

#### **4.7.2. Downtown Development and Revitalization**

City leaders, including Mayor Longwell and the Wichita City Council, have also prioritized development along the Arkansas River, which runs through part of downtown Wichita. According to an article from *The Wichita Business Journal*, “City leaders have told the WBJ that spurring river development is a high priority” (Heck 2016). Further evidence lies in the discussion of the financing for the new baseball stadium and the area surrounding it. The Wichita City Council pursued STAR bonds through the State of Kansas to finance a portion of the stadium development. According to the Kansas Department of Commerce, STAR (Sales Tax and Revenue) bonds utilize sales tax revenue generated by the new development of major entertainment, tourism, and commercial areas to pay off the bond debt (“STAR Bonds” n.d.). According to a 2017 article, *The Wichita Business Journal* laid out the financing plan to construct the stadium:

The Wichita City Council approved \$29.5 million in funding for the project In July. The money, including \$20 million in bonds retired by tax increment financing, and \$9.5 million for parking, would be targeted for a new Lawrence-Dumont Stadium on the west side of the Arkansas River, the initial focal point of the city's plans to accelerate development along the river downtown. (Wilson 2017a)

Mayor Longwell suggested that a new stadium and the accompanying team would be “the catalyst we believe will attract so much more along this river corridor” (Lefler 2018d). The new baseball stadium is purported to be part of a larger development along the Arkansas River. “Along with the NBC museum, there are also plans for a new pedestrian bridge across the river that will help connect people to the stadium and a surrounding ‘baseball village’ and serve as a major catalyst for continued development along the Arkansas” (McCoy 2018).

The local newspapers have also been involved in conveying how the new baseball development will fit into the downtown landscape. The managing editor for *The Wichita Business Journal*, Bill Wilson, made two references regarding the baseball stadium in terms of how it and the surrounding development will “activate the [Arkansas] river” (Wilson 2016; 2017b). *The Wichita Eagle* Editorial Board has been supportive as well (Wichita Eagle Editorial Board 2016; 2017; 2019a). However, there has been criticism over the way city leaders, specifically Mayor Longwell, City Manager Robert Layton, and Assistant City Manager Scot Rigby have handled a land deal with the owner of the new AAA baseball team (Wichita Eagle Editorial Board 2019b). *The Wichita Eagle* editorial board began an article covering a public meeting about the issue of the land sale in the following way:

Now that Wichita city leaders have voted to approve a riverfront ballpark development - despite lingering questions about the project’s investors, design and financial prospects - they want to move forward with haste. But it’s important to pause and make one thing clear: Their credibility took a hit - and rightfully so (Wichita Eagle Editorial Board 2019b).

The board went on to say, regarding the sale of land surrounding the new baseball stadium: “Wondering why the rush and secrecy? That’s just the way business is done, Longwell says. But that’s not the way it’s supposed to be” (Wichita Eagle Editorial Board 2019b).

The new baseball stadium development has had support from the two local Wichita newspapers. However, *The Wichita Eagle* Editorial board also did not shy away from pointing out that this deal between city leaders and team owners should not be conducted in ways that insinuate secrecy. This article provides an example of how local newspapers, while they may usually be supportive of pro-growth actors, can also use their space to hold public leaders accountable for their actions.

#### **4.7.3 Selling the Facility to the Community**

##### **4.7.3.1 Economic Benefits**

Boosterism for the new baseball stadium has also included the promotion of potential economic benefits that would derive from Wichita having this new venue. On May 14, 2017 *The Wichita Eagle* published an editorial in which they stated the following:

Though there is no guarantee, a new stadium might help Wichita attract a team affiliated with Major League Baseball. But it, the Century II project and other improvements also are important to attracting and retaining younger people and employees (Wichita Eagle Editorial Board 2017).

An important aspect of this article is that it was written by the editorial board of *The Wichita Eagle*. Editorial board columns are opinion-based but represent the perspective of the newspaper organization, not just the individual author. Editorial columns can be influential within the framework of the growth machine as newspapers represent a source of authority within a city, and these columns can sway the opinions of the community. Further this editorial suggests to the community that building a new stadium could not only help to attract and retain young professionals, but also might lead to the acquisition of a new baseball team. The new stadium could improve the local economy by bringing in new employees and by preventing young professionals that currently live in Wichita from leaving. A new baseball team could be viewed as providing a boost to the local economy and improving the image of the city throughout the

region. However, this is also an opinion column that does not present any evidence to support its normative argument. Readers may not be aware of these facts and may be influenced by the content of the editorial to support the development of a new baseball stadium.

In another example of economic benefits being utilized to promote the new baseball stadium the owner of the incoming AAA baseball team, Lou Schwechheimer, stated that the “ballpark and surrounding area will be a catalyst for economic growth across Wichita” (Swaim 2019e). This stands out because Schwechheimer is not only the owner of the team, but also one of the developers for a portion of the land surrounding the new stadium. While he may not currently be a member of the local growth coalition, his involvement as a developer for the area around the stadium, as well as his ownership of the city’s new baseball team, positions him well to become a member.

#### **4.7.3.2 Intangible benefits**

Intangible benefits have also been marketed as motives for the development of the new baseball stadium in Wichita. Mayor Longwell has suggested that the purpose of the new stadium is not only to provide baseball fans a new place to attend games, but also to create an atmosphere that fosters a whole “experience” for the community. This is highlighted in the following excerpt from *The Wichita Eagle*:

“The reality is today’s fans want to be able to gather at a ballpark with their friends and then someone might say, ‘Oh, I think there’s a game going on tonight,’ ” Longwell said. “It (a new stadium) creates just an atmosphere that welcomes those kinds of gatherings and includes a baseball game.” “They’re not going just for the baseball game anymore, they’re going for the entire experience.” (Lefler 2016b)

This idea was reiterated in *The Wichita Business Journal* with another quote from Mayor Longwell. When discussing how the baseball stadium would fit into the fabric of downtown Wichita, Longwell stated, “We’re not building just a baseball stadium. We are hoping to build a

gathering place for the community” (McCoy 2018). As the leader of the push for a new baseball development in Wichita, these statements insinuate that the facility is to be perceived as a gathering space while baseball is just an event happening in the background. If this is so, the justification for building this stadium as opposed to a different sort of venue, such as a park, that could easily provide a large community gathering space seems to be blurred.

The baseball stadium would not be a stand-alone facility as it would be part of a larger development along the Arkansas River, which is mentioned often in the reporting on the sports facility. Within that context, the City has made no secret of the fact that they are pursuing many “quality of life” initiatives – which include the ballpark (McCoy 2017a). Within the data related to the new baseball stadium the phrase “quality of life” appears 13 times.

#### **4.7.3.3 Community Involvement**

Regarding the future baseball stadium development, public hearings were required by the State of Kansas as part of the process for using STAR bonds to finance the project, as established by a *Wichita Business Journal* article: “A public hearing for the Arkansas River STAR bond project plan is set for May 2, the expanded portion of which would include a new stadium and has already been approved by the state as required” (McCoy 2017b).

Additional examples of public involvement regarding the new stadium development have occurred as details of a land deal between Lou Schwechheimer, Mayor Longwell, and the city became public. Citizens were not aware of a potential deal to sell public land for \$1 per acre to Schwechheimer and his development team, and city leaders had not effectively disseminated information about this potential arrangement to the public. City Council member Jeff Blubaugh acknowledged this oversight when he stated:

We should have had a much better communication plan. This came out reactive, and I think it’s really a good plan, but it’s all in the messaging and how we’re delivering

it. And that's why we're having to kind of go on the fly here, changing the council meeting (Swaim 2019a).

Blubaugh's comment "this came out reactive" (Swaim 2019a) is a reference to the information about the land and how city leaders made the community aware of the situation. Instead of being proactive and providing details before negotiations took place, the mayor and other city leaders waited until the details became public in *The Wichita Eagle* to inform the community (Swaim 2019e). After the development agreement for the land sale became public, city leaders set up a "social media town hall" to provide real time responses to questions and comments related to the development deal (McCoy 2019a; Swaim 2019a; Swaim 2019f). Additionally, city leaders agreed to move a city council meeting scheduled for 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. to allow for more members of the community to attend (Swaim 2019d).

#### **4.7.4 Community Buy-In**

##### **4.7.4.1 Community Support**

Within the data analyzed for this study, there was only one reference to community support in relation to the new baseball stadium. Marilyn Bauer, a member of the Delano Neighborhood Association, made the following comments during the City Council meeting regarding the \$1 per acre land sale: "We need to go ahead with this. This is fabulous. This is exactly what we need. I know we have some problems that we've got to work out, probably parking is one, but let's do it. Because this is the time we need to do it, to bring it forward. Everything falls into place" (Swaim and Tidd 2019). The low number of references to community support could be related to the venue not being subject to a public referendum. Another possibility is that the new baseball stadium development has not generated a significant level of public support.

#### 4.7.4.2 Community Concerns

The community concerns most associated with the development of the new baseball stadium are associated with the perception of transparency from the City Council. In a council meeting that was moved to an evening time slot to allow for more public participation, one citizen, Paul Lavender, voiced his concerns and frustrations related to the land sale to Lou Schwechheimer: “I believe this goes beyond a lack of transparency and into the realm of blatant disrespect for the citizens and the community the City Council are charged with representing” (Swaim 2019f). Another citizen and small business owner, Todd Ramsey stated:

To tear down an existing stadium and break ground on a new one, when we don’t have a signed contract, for a team that could still pull out - that kind of feels like it needs an explanation. I’m never one to say slow down or pump the brakes on this, but the city should this time. As a citizen, it feels like we’re being held hostage (Swaim 2019f).

The comments by Ramsey refer to the demolition of Lawrence-Dumont Stadium in downtown Wichita, to make way for the new development. The public was led to believe that there was already an agreement in place with the incoming baseball team when the stadium was torn down and a groundbreaking ceremony was held for the new stadium (Swaim 2019f). However, when details of the land sale began to become public, mayor Longwell stated, “If we don’t sign it [the agreement for the land sale] they’re not coming” (Swaim 2019f). It was in this context that Ramsey made the above statements.

Frustration has developed among the public regarding what has been perceived as a lack of transparency from city officials. The concerns specifically pertain to the sale of land surrounding the new ballpark to Schwechheimer and his associates. Since the details of this potential agreement became public and Longwell suggested that this sale was necessary to acquire the new team, the question has become why these details were not known sooner. A statement in response to the criticism of city officials made by Mayor Longwell stands out as

well. Longwell stated, "The goal's always to engage the community on every opportunity that we bring forward to the Council. I know that there's a feeling it's been a secretive deal. We don't do secretive deals. Every deal that we have to consummate is done in an open meeting. We have to vote on it, we have a track record" (Seminoff 2019). His insinuation that secretive deals are not carried out because all deals must be voted on by the council in an open meeting is a bit misleading. It is true that the City Council meetings are open to the public and that votes, including the one on this land sale, occur in the open. However, that does not mean that details of these agreements cannot be worked out in "secretive deals" (Seminoff 2019). Clearly, members of the community did not feel that they were appropriately informed of the situation regardless of where the agreement discussions took place. Despite, the Mayor assuring that the meetings were not secretive, the public remains skeptical about the ways these negotiations were handled.

The results presented here provide support for the notion that the stadium development is being processed by a growth coalition. In the context of the growth machine concept, the answer as to why the public was not aware of these land negotiations become clearer. It is not necessarily a concern of the growth machine to keep the community aware of such deals; rather, the priority is to facilitate deals to promote growth within the city that will benefit the members of the coalition. In this case, if it is true that the land must be sold if the team is to move to Wichita and the objective is to obtain said team, it was in the City's best interest to strike a deal. At \$1 per acre, it would be reasonable to assume there may not be a high amount of community support. Community support was not necessary to proceed with the land sale; only a vote of approval from the City Council was needed, so it could make sense for city leaders not to inform the public about these negotiations.

#### 4.7.4.3 Project Investment

Regarding the new baseball stadium development, city officials and project advocates have been quick to state that the financing of it will not create a new tax. Statements such as “It isn’t costing you any new money” (McCoy 2016); “‘There’s no new sales tax or property tax,’ says Scott Rigby, assistant city manager with the city of Wichita” (McCoy 2016); “‘Taxpayers aren’t paying an additional tax of any kind to help build all this,’ Longwell said” (McCoy 2018); and “City Council members are adamant that the proposed project would not result in a tax increase” (Schowalter 2016) have been made in an attempt to sway public opinion regarding the financing mechanism. However, these comments are somewhat misleading.

While STAR bonds do not create a new tax (“STAR Bonds” n.d.), the entire project is not being financed through this method. The other funding mechanisms include a TIF (tax increment financing) district and two CID (community improvement district) districts – one on each side of the river (McCoy 2019b). According to the Kansas Department of Commerce, “A CID can derive revenues through special assessments, a district-only sales tax, or other funds as appropriated by the city or county” (“Community Improvement Districts” n.d.). A CID, as a district-only sales tax, would be a new tax for the community that would apply to those who spent money within the specified district. This tool differs from STAR Bonds (a type of TIF) and a TIF district in that these mechanisms do not impose a *new* tax; instead, they divert revenue from existing taxes within their specified areas to pay off debt from the development. In fact, Mayor Longwell retracted some of his earlier statements regarding the implementation of new taxes: “It’s accurate to say 100 percent of the funding is coming from the taxes. What’s not accurate to say is it’s an additional tax on the general population” (Seminoff 2019). The key portion of this statement is “on the general population” (Seminoff 2019). This part of his remark

is true, and it is significant that Longwell made this distinction. All three methods of financing apply to people who spend money within the boundaries of the specified districts and not on the entire community, as a property tax increase would. However, there has been a change in the rhetoric surrounding the financing tools being utilized to fund the development of the new stadium and surrounding 'village.'

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the process of developing multi-use sports venues in downtown Wichita, KS. Using articles from the two main city newspapers, *The Wichita Eagle* and *The Wichita Business Journal*, I conducted a content analysis of stories related to four different facility proposals that have occurred within the city since the early 1990s: the Wichita Ice Center, the Dynaplex, Intrust Bank Arena, and a new baseball stadium that is still in development. I have revealed how these projects were discussed and played out in public forums, and I have examined the role the newspapers themselves have played in each development. The results of this study reveal who the key players have been for each project, how each venue was purported to fit into the larger redevelopment plan for downtown Wichita, how these multi-use sports venues have been publicly justified, and how the community was projected to benefit from each project. Extrapolating from the information presented here about the relationships between each of these initiatives can help to inform future decisions about utilizing sports facilities as a catalyst for downtown development in Wichita.

The conceptual framework underpinning this study is the work related to the growth machine by Logan and Molotch (2007). As part of a larger body of work that examines the commodification of place, this thesis discusses urban development in terms of “use value” and “exchange value”. Logan and Molotch (2007) argue that land or space holds two values simultaneously, but each is preferred by different segments of the population. “Use value” is generally what citizens consider important as it is the value of space in their everyday lives - it is where they live, work, and carry out their daily lives. For the urban “elite” - those in positions of

political and/or economic power, it is the “exchange value” - how the space can be utilized to generate profit or enhance the power held by the “elite” that is most important. The concept of the growth machine suggests that “urban elites” will set aside other differences they may have to pursue an agreed upon project under the pretense that it will create economic growth.

As Logan and Molotch (2007) suggest, pursuing “use values” and “exchange values” at the same time is often contradictory and can become a source of conflict within the city. Further, they argue, this tension and conflict directly impacts city development, political dynamics, and even population distribution (Logan and Molotch 2007). This framework provides a means to understand how sports facilities are developed within the city of Wichita. The results of this study suggest that there have been groups of influential individuals and organizations in Wichita that have promoted these venues as tools for profitable growth within the downtown area. Further, project proponents have utilized benefits that appeal to community members’ interest in the “use value” of place to promote the Ice Center, Dynaplex, Intrust Bank Arena, and the new baseball development as valuable pieces of the city and to generate public support for these projects. Understanding how and why growth coalitions pursue certain urban development projects above others provides us with a possible explanation for development strategies in Wichita, KS.

### **5.1 Who has promoted multi-use sports venues in downtown Wichita?**

The first research question in this study asks who has been involved in the promotion of multi-use sports venue developments in downtown Wichita. The Dynaplex, Intrust Bank Arena, and the new baseball stadium have been pursued and promoted by many of the same individuals and organizations. The deep connections between key actors within the development of each of these three facilities indicates the existence of an active and entrenched growth coalition within

Wichita. This is especially clear when considering the two arena initiatives. I argue that the Dynaplex did not fail; rather, it was put on hold and later resulted in the Intrust Bank Arena development. These findings support the thesis of the growth machine and offer an indication that Wichita's growth coalition will not give up on a project due to initial rejection. If members find the proposal important enough, they will instead repackage the project and proceed (Delaney and Eckstein 2003; Logan and Molotch 2007).

I contend that the Wichita Ice Center is an outlier within this study. The local newspapers presented the Ice Center in a context that did not suggest a large coalition of actors working to promote the venue. This goes against the thesis of the growth machine (Logan and Molotch 2007) and other previous research that suggests coalitions tend to lead the development of sports facilities (Delaney and Eckstein 2003; 2006; Harger, et al. 2016; Johnson 1995; Mason, et al. 2015; Misener and Mason 2006) The results of this study suggest that the Ice Center was not the work of a growth coalition within Wichita but was intended to meet a public need.

Table 5 illustrates some of the growth coalition connections between the Dynaplex, Intrust Bank Arena, and the new baseball stadium. This table includes organizations that were found to have expressed support for each proposal in the articles that were analyzed in this research. It should be noted that the new baseball stadium does not have as many organizations listed as the Dynaplex or Intrust Bank Arena. Others in Wichita that may support the effort to build the new stadium were simply not mentioned within the articles used for this study, but that does not mean there are not more growth coalition members involved in this venue development. Additionally, the discrepancy between the stadium and arena initiatives could also be related to the difference in the number of articles available for each facility. The arena initiatives generated more newspaper articles than the new baseball stadium.

**Table 5. Connections Between Venues**

<b>The Dynaplex</b> City Officials	<b>Intrust Bank Arena</b> City and County Officials	<b>New Baseball Stadium</b> City Officials
The Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission	The Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission	The Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission
Wichita Downtown Development Corporation	Wichita Downtown Development Corporation	Wichita Downtown Development Corporation
The Wichita Eagle Editorial Board	The Wichita Eagle Editorial Board	
The Wichita Area Chamber of Commerce	The Wichita Metro (Area) Chamber of Commerce	

## **5.2 How do multi-use sports venues fit into the overall downtown redevelopment plan for Wichita?**

The second research question presented in this study asks how multi-use sports venues fit into the overall downtown development plans for the city of Wichita. The Dynaplex, Intrust Bank Arena, and the developing baseball stadium fit into the development and revitalization of downtown Wichita through their purported ability to spur surrounding growth. As proponents have promoted each facility to the public, they have touted it as a catalyst for new development of restaurants, retail centers, and offices. These findings support previous research by Crompton (2014) and Johnson (1995) regarding “sports strategies” implemented by cities to spur economic development. Additionally, the results of this study support previous research indicating that promises of economic growth flowing from downtown sports facilities are commonly used by local growth coalitions to gain support for their desired projects (Baade, et al. 2008; Coates and Humphreys 1990; Crompton 2014; Delaney and Eckstein 2003; 2006; Mason 2016; Mason, et al. 2015; Yates 2009).

### **5.3 How have multi-use sports venue proposals been justified to the public in Wichita?**

The third research question asks how the multi-use sports facility proposals in Wichita have been justified to the public. The results indicate that a mixture of economic benefits and intangible benefits were promoted to the community to justify the development of the Dynaplex, Intrust Bank Arena, and the new baseball stadium. This finding is consistent with previous literature regarding how multi-use sports facilities are typically justified to communities (Agha 2011; Agha and Coates 2014; Delaney and Eckstein 2003; Eckstein and Delaney 2002; Harger, et al. 2016; van Holm 2016; van Holm 2018; Mason 2016; Mason, et al. 2015; Roy 2008). However, the extent to which each facility was “sold” varied.

The Wichita Ice Center and the new baseball stadium did not utilize large public campaign efforts before being approved like the Dynaplex and Intrust Bank Arena did. I argue that this discrepancy was the result of two factors. The arena proposals required a public referendum before moving forward in the development process, while this was not a requirement of the other two venues. Further, while proponents of the Wichita Ice Center did discuss the potential economic and intangible benefits the facility would offer, the results suggest this was not done to generate public support. In fact, I argue that community support for an ice rink was what brought the proposal to the table, and the “selling” of this venue was an effort to get public officials on board.

### **5.4 How does the public benefit from multi-use sports venue projects in downtown**

#### **Wichita?**

The fourth research question asks how the public benefits from multi-use sports venues in Wichita. Sports facility proponents in Wichita promoted many perceived benefits that the venues would bring to the city. Whether these benefits would realistically improve the everyday lives of

ordinary citizens is less clear. The Wichita Ice Center was built to meet a public need, but the other venues have been pursued by a growth coalition interested in making profitable development investments within downtown Wichita. Multi-use sports facilities have been shown to provide valuable intangible benefits to community members, but they often do not compensate for the public investment needed to build them (Agha and Coates 2015; Johnson and Whitehead 2000; Rosentraub 2006; Swindell and Rosentraub 1998).

### **5.5 How can past efforts to use multi-use sports venues as a catalyst for downtown redevelopment be used to inform decisions about future projects?**

The fifth research question asks how past efforts to use multi-use sports venues as a catalyst for downtown redevelopment can inform future downtown development decisions. When looking at downtown development in Wichita in a broader context, the sports facilities provide a framework for examining the process by which other projects come to fruition. Ultimately, we see that sports venues may produce *some* positive economic changes for the city, but these benefits are often overstated by boosters and can depend on the size of the city (Agha 2011; Agha and Coates 2014; 2015; Colclough, Daellenbach, and Sheroney 1994; van Holm 2016; 2018; Rosentraub and Swindell 1991). Despite little evidence to suggest that sports venues provide a significant economic boost to their cities, growth coalitions continue to support and pursue their development. The time and money that public officials have spent on projects such as the new baseball stadium, that do not appear to have broad public support takes attention away from things that community members may consider more pressing needs. Public officials should view these past efforts as reasons to re-evaluate and possibly re-prioritize similar downtown development projects in the future. Community members should also consider the growth coalition involvement in the Dynaplex, Intrust Bank Arena, and the new stadium projects when

making decisions to support future development initiatives, especially in cases where the public is asked to vote on such proposals.

## **5.6 Limitations and Future Research**

It is important to acknowledge limitations to the validity, reliability, and generalizability of the findings presented in this thesis that emerge from the sources of the data. *The Wichita Eagle* has been the city's main print news source since 1872, but as the newspaper printing industry has declined so has the robustness of this paper (Johnson, Goidel, and Climek 2014; McCoy 2019c). *The Wichita Eagle* has been faced with the reduction of staff by their parent company McClatchy over the past decade (Anderson 2008; Horwath 2018g). The strains faced by a smaller staff attempting to report numerous stories could mean that important details of the facilities included in this study were not covered. This limitation is indicative of the state of print news in general (Johnson, Goidel, Climek 2014; Kirchhoff 2011).

The utilization of a content analysis in this study does present limitations for validity and reliability as well. I did not have other coders to verify the validity of my coding of the data. Intercoder reliability would have provided the opportunity for another person to use my coding scheme on a segment of the data to obtain similar results. Having another coder reproduce my own coding of the data would have helped to ensure validity within this study.

While the utilization of a comparative case study in this research provides a unique addition, the city of Wichita, to similar studies of other cities across the United States, the generalization of the results from this study should be approached with caution. Growth coalitions can differ in size and participating members but the framework this study provides for navigating the structure of a local coalition can be transferred to other cities and used for analysis. Additionally, the use of a content analysis of local newspapers to examine Wichita's

growth coalition can also be reproduced regarding other cities. The results of this study can also be utilized within the city of Wichita to inform decisions regarding future downtown development projects.

Future research on the utilization of multi-use sports venues as a catalyst to downtown development in Wichita, KS could take multiple different approaches. At the time this study was completed, the new baseball stadium and accompanying “ballpark village” were just entering the construction phase. Future studies should continue to follow this development to further examine the process leading up to its opening. Additionally, research on this venue could also explore it in a historical context by incorporating Wichita’s deep baseball history (Price and Wondra 2013; Rives 2004).

Because this study did not look at the impact these venues have had on the area after opening, future research should examine the realized economic and intangible benefits of each facility. This would allow for a more complete examination of the effectiveness of using sports facilities to spur redevelopment in downtown Wichita. To examine the economic impact each facility has had on downtown Wichita, a quantitative analysis of census tract data, financial reports for each venue, and attendance records could be undertaken. Additionally, to explore the impact of intangible benefits each facility has had on downtown Wichita, in-depth interviews and surveys could be administered to residents and key stakeholders.

Finally, future research regarding sports venues in downtown Wichita could include a more thorough examination of Wichita’s growth machine. This study included members and organizations that were mentioned in newspaper articles, but this methodology may have led to omissions of key stakeholders who were not mentioned in the press as frequently. A study utilizing network analysis would be helpful in establishing more detailed connections between

growth coalition members. This strategy may also be used to connect these developments to other non-sports-related ones that have occurred as part of Wichita's downtown revitalization effort. Making this information available would be useful to provide the public a better understanding of who is behind downtown development projects and why certain projects are pursued ahead of others.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

The intent of this study was to provide an accounting of the processes by which three multi-use sports facilities have been successfully pursued in Wichita, KS as well as how another seemingly failed. Through a content analysis of local media and a comparative case study, we can now more fully see how three of these four proposals have followed the same general patterns. The exception to this process is the Wichita Ice Center, which seems to have been built to meet a public need. However, the other three initiatives followed a very similar development sequence. First, proponents sold the facility to the community using boosterism claiming future intangible and economic benefits. (This was especially salient in the cases of the two venues that required public referenda.) Next, proponents sought community buy-in involving attempts to persuade citizens to believe the claim of future benefits that they would gain from a new sports facility. This was less important when the venue was not subject to a public vote. Finally, both steps were part of a system to achieve further development and growth in downtown Wichita. Underpinning this process is the existence of a growth coalition in Wichita (whose members have changed over time) focused on generating development downtown and along the Arkansas River.

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## APPENDIX

## APPENDIX

### CODEBOOK

Node Name	Description
Community buy-in	How much did the community believe in the facility proposals? This looks at community support, the community's investment in the projects, and opposition
Community concerns	Concerns raised about the proposed facility. Does not necessarily indicate opposition. Also includes concerns being addressed.
Displacement	Concern of businesses or homeowners being displaced by the proposed new venue.
Episcopal Social Services	Episcopal Social Services was the most notable case of displacement caused by the development of a new venue -- Intrust Bank Arena. There was a legal battle over the city's appraisal of their building and it was a place that provided important social services to members of the community.
General community concerns	Concerns about the venue raised by community members or business leaders, political leaders, or leaders of civic organizations. Also includes responses to these concerns.
Parking concerns	Concerns specifically related to parking near the facility. From community members or business leaders, political leaders, leaders of civic organizations. Also includes responses to concerns.
Community opposition	Any statement of opposition to the proposed project from community members. Includes polling that shows a lack of support for the project.

Node Name	Description
Community support	Refers to the need for community support for a project as well as community members offering their support. Includes results from informal polls and official vote outcomes for the venue that show higher levels of support than opposition.
Project Investment	References to ways in which the venue will be or is being paid for and its cost.
Private funding	The use of or suggested use of private funds to pay for issues related to the proposed venue. Includes opinions on the use of this method of funding.
Public funding	The use of public funds - money raised through a tax mechanism paid for by individuals in the community. Includes opinions on using this method of funding.
Downtown development and revitalization	Includes specific references to "downtown development" and "downtown revitalization". Also includes claims that new venue would help to revitalize and develop downtown Wichita by attracting new businesses as well as "cleaning up" the area, etc.
Selling the facility to the community	Different things that factor into getting the community to support the development of a new sports venue. Includes the growth machine (promoters of the projects) and public involvement. Each of those is broken into their own facets.
Article type	The way the media framed the information presented in each article.
Informative	The purpose of the article is to disseminate information to the public about the specific topic and does not rely on the author's opinion.
Opinion	Article is based solely on the opinion of the author.

Node Name	Description
Community involvement	Ways that the community at large was involved in the decisions for the facility developments. Includes meetings, informal opinion polling, and formal referndums. Does not include the outcome for polling or voting or regular city council meetings.
Growth machine	"Elites" within the city expressing their desires for the proposed venues as being more important than the public's desires, or references to these groups/individuals as being the decision makers. Also includes sub-categories based on traits of a growth machine laid out by Molotch, such as land acquisition/sales, boosterism for the project, and gaining community support through involvement/education, but also holding closed door meetings and debating venue details among fellow "elites", & partnerships
Boosterism	Selling of the facility to the public by stakeholders using specific benefits in their boosterism efforts
Economic benefits	Refers to the venue as providing economic benefits to the community such as providing an "economic boost", bringing in new revenue, increased revenue, jobs, "growth", etc
Attract and retain talent	The new venue would help to attract young professionals and new employees as well as keep existing ones from leaving Wichita.
Competition	References to Wichita being in competition with other metro areas
General economic impact	No reference to a specific economic benefit only that the venue would provide an economic boost to the city/area.
Increased rent, property values, home values	The venue would cause local rent, property, and home values to increase.

Node Name	Description
Jobs	The venue would create new jobs in Wichita
Larger or new events	The venue will bring in new or larger events that the city would not attract otherwise.
Tourism and visitors	The venue would bring in more tourists and other visitors that would not come to Wichita otherwise.
Venue revenue and attendance	References to expected revenue and attendance figures for the venue.
Intangible or quality of life benefits	Benefits from the project such as civic pride, creating a positive image of the city, fans identifying with "their" team, a better quality of life
Entertainment and culture	The venue would be a new source of entertainment and culture for the community.
Gathering place	The venue would be a new gathering place for the community
General quality of life benefits	References to general quality of life improvements due to the venue
Investment in the city's future	The new venue would be investing in the future of the city and making it better for future generations.
Status-signalling and pride	Claims that the venue would be a symbol of the city being "big league", able to compete with other cities, or produce community pride.
Walkable city	References to making the city more appealing as a place to walk with the development of the venue.

Node Name	Description
Business, organization, and government opposition	Business leaders, civic leaders, or public officials expressing opposition to the venue.
Business, organization, and government support	Local business leaders, organizations, and government officials giving support for venue development without outright trying to "sell" it to the community.
Fail turns to future discussions	References to the failed attempt at developing the Dynaplex as being a way to begin future conversations about an arena. Includes discussions from later projects where the Dynaplex was referenced.
Selling or acquiring land for growth	The purchase or selling of land to develop under the assumption of producing "growth" in the area.