

DOWNTOWN WICHITA DRAFT MASTER PLAN

Draft vision



Hundreds of people have shared their views on downtown's strengths, challenges and opportunities.

DRAFT VISION STATEMENT

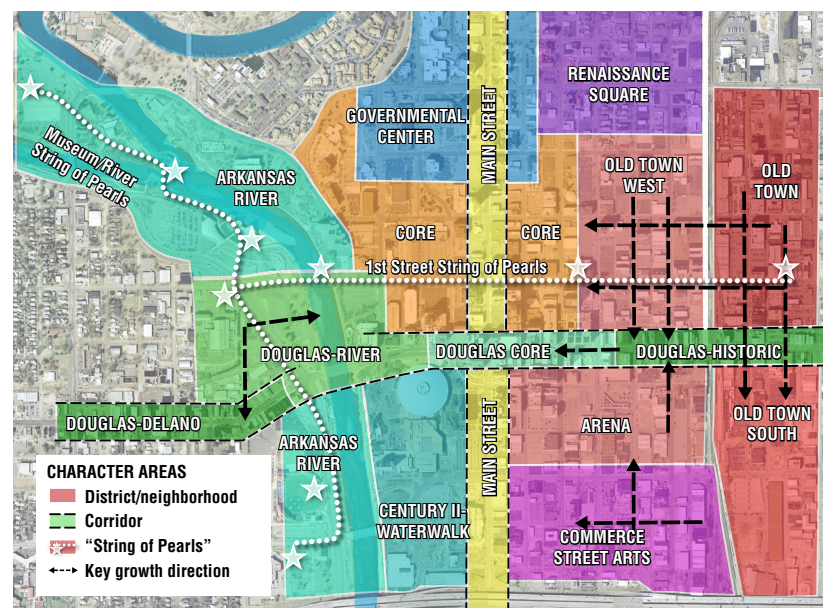
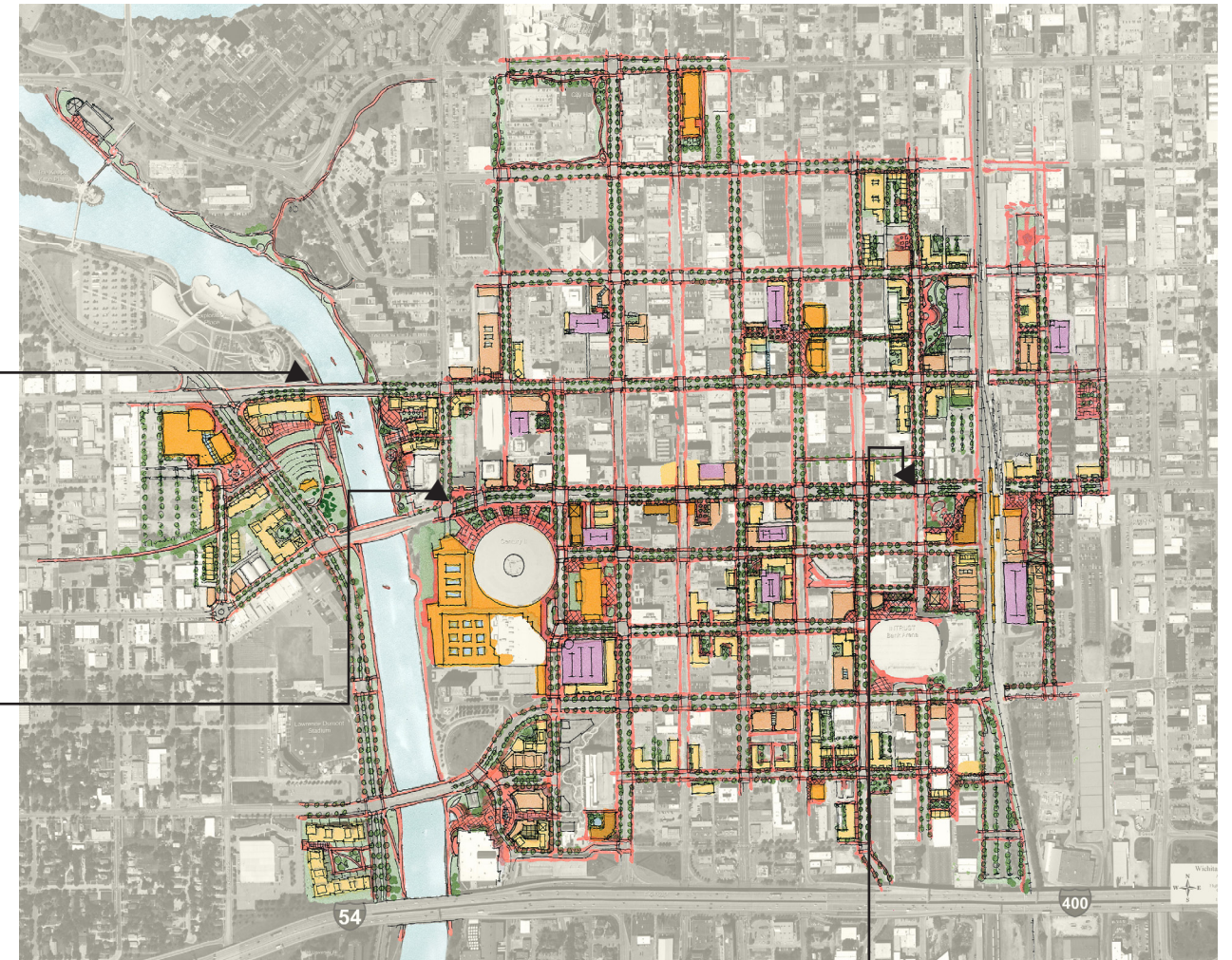
“Downtown is a place that enables people to live, work, shop, play, and learn...all within a short walk of each other. Downtown celebrates Wichita’s rich history and vibrant future, and it invites Wichitans from every walk of life to share their sense of community. 150 years after Wichita took root here, Downtown is the reinvigorated heart of a region committed to a vital future.”

PRINCIPLES FOR ACHIEVING THE VISION

1. Downtown offers something for everyone.
2. Leverage downtown’s inherent strengths to generate economic value.
3. Expand choices for people—and the region.
4. Support development that fosters walkable connections.
5. Promote downtown’s role in advancing regional sustainability.

Each of these principles has elements that speak to **culture, economic growth, community, sustainability, and design.**

Illustrative vision concepts



Market demand

Market-based development opportunity (ten years)



Market analysis determined there is solid demand over the next ten years for a rich mix of downtown uses in walkable settings:

- 1,500 **housing units**
 - > Mixed types: loft, apartment, townhouse, live/work
- 220,000–480,000sf **office space**
 - > Class A buildings, 50,000–80,000sf
- Distinctive Class B
- Convenient public parking a must
- 250-400+ **hotel rooms**, mix of products
 - > Proximity to Century II, amenities, transit
- **Retail:** real opportunity to build on successful niches and walkable concentrations
 - > Dining, nightlife/entertainment
 - > Yupsters, hipsters, students, cheap chic
 - > One-per-market, mass-market

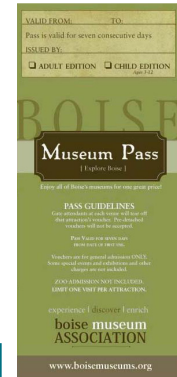


Action strategies

Creating unique downtown places

1. Reinforce downtown as the hub for arts, culture, sports and education

- A Support and strengthen formal associations** for Commerce Street Arts District, Museums on the River etc.
- B Seek expanded grant funding** for operations and facilities
- C Expand joint marketing**, ticket packages, operations etc. among Museums on the River and/or other downtown destinations to increase impact and achieve efficiencies
- D Create a Downtown Visitors Amenity Plan** coordinating pedestrian-oriented wayfinding, maps, transit services, marketing etc.
- E Create a handbook for holding downtown events**
- F Attract educational institutions**



2. Make downtown's public streets and parks places for everyone to enjoy

- A Create "complete streets"** with convenient transportation choices, dignified addresses, greenery, beauty
- B Make Douglas a continuous promenade** with interpretive signage/displays on Wichita (history, aviation, notable people etc.)
- C Ensure public spaces are safe** – and perceived that way
- D Monitor and enforce downtown cleanliness**
 - Publicize key service contacts (Police, DPW, Parks & Recreation etc.)
 - Reach out to neighborhood/business associations, confirm needs
 - Seek association/business sponsorships
- E Revitalize existing, and establish new, downtown parks and green streets** according to neighborhood goals
- F Add walking links, housing, dining, plantings along Arkansas River**



3. Bring street fronts to life

- A Map storefront space availability, size, location, access, contacts etc.** for potential tenants
- B Prioritize target locations and types of retail**, other active ground floor uses
 - Sites needing immediate improvement
 - Incremental growth of walkable retail environments
 - Strategic locations for pioneer tenants
- C Phase efforts:**
 - Near-term: work with owners to fill priority locations with arts etc.
 - Longer-term: manage retail tenant mix (capable master lease program)
- D Recruit/cultivate pioneer tenants:** arts, restaurants, business entrepreneurship center, colleges
- E Target "work/live" or "live/work" space** in areas like Commerce Street
- F Target façade improvement incentives** in walkable development focus areas



4. Explain how downtown Wichita makes a difference – in the region, nation and world

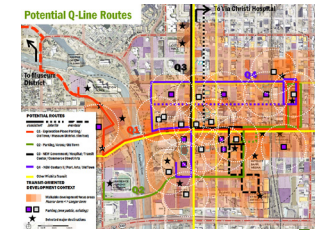
- A Maintain data base on downtown buildings**
- B Track data on downtown's impact**
- C Commission periodic market studies**
 - Use results in recruitment, retention efforts and to promote downtown
 - WDDC lead, partner with Chamber, GoWichita, GWEDC etc.
- D Target distinct audiences:**
 - City, region, nation, world
 - Businesses, developers
 - Conventions, festivals
 - Tourists
 - Target workforce



Expanding transportation choices

5. Locate parking to improve access and stimulate re-investment

- A Implement the Downtown Parking and Mobility Management Plan** to improve utilization
- B Prioritize parking in places where it:**
 - Serves multiple uses 24/7 (achieving highest cost/benefit)
 - Unlocks "refill" opportunity for significant buildings lacking parking
 - Expands development opportunity on prime sites through efficient land use
 - Promotes walkability
- C Based on this, invest in public parking structures** as crucial downtown infrastructure
- D Institute transportation demand management** and improve walking, transit and biking options to reduce future parking demand
- E Provide on-street parking**



6. Improve walking, transit and biking choices

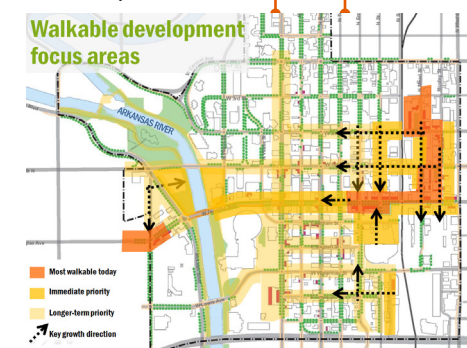
- A Make walking safe, easy, enjoyable** with more visible crosswalks, links across large blocks, wayfinding signage, interpretive signage/displays, public art
- B Expand convenient transit** servicing key downtown destinations and corridors
 - Visible and permanent: defined stops, attractive shelters/vehicles
 - Reliable, frequent, timely service
 - Coordinated with regional transit routes/schedules
 - Information/incentive programs with key destinations
- C Make downtown bikeable** with defined streets/lanes linked to regional networks, bike parking
- D Apply specific roles and streetscape design** to each street to **improve function for all access modes**



Enabling development

7. Foster development with new tools

- A Designate a go-to center** for aspiring development, with information on
 - Master Plan goals
 - Downtown market opportunity
 - Incentives, including New Market Tax Credits, CIDs, low-interest loan funds
 - Zoning, design review process
 - Partnership opportunities
- B ...and summarize this in a Downtown Development Handbook**
- C Proactively connect people** who offer complementary skills and opportunities (housing + office; local + national; etc.)
- D Reduce the historic environs law impact radius**
- E Update zoning** to enable high-value walkable development: change LI zones to CBD, enable heights over 55' along west bank of the Arkansas River, revise Urban Renewal District setbacks
- F Pursue means to address cumbersome ground leases**



8. Set criteria for public/private development incentives

- G Create plans for more specific initiatives** that advance the Downtown Plan (Convention Center expansion, Commerce Street Arts District, First Street String of Pearls etc.)
- H Invite development proposals on strategic sites** under public/quasi-public control, per defined plan goals.
- A For the developer:**
 - Past performance, appropriate expertise, capitalization
- B For the project:**
 - Appropriate use(s) per location
 - Design supporting walkability, downtown character (transparent facades along sidewalk, historic compatibility etc.)
 - Priority community benefits as defined by district (river access, public parking, park enhancements etc.)
- C Establish design guidelines** for walkable development focus areas (Old Town and Delano precedent)