


# Thriving Urban Core

Downtown Wichita leads community efforts to create and build fun, temporary "pop-up" spaces where workers, residents and visitors can interact, connect and experience downtown in a new way, energizing the sidewalk and increasing pedestrian activity.

Placemaking projects contribute to the identity, character and culture of downtown by serving as an activator and catalyst for continued growth. The goal of these placemaking efforts are to spark a change in perception that is critical to the redevelopment potential for downtown. Enhancing vibrancy through placemaking and programming is one of the Downtown Wichita organization's key areas of focus.

# Current Placemaking Projects


Gallery Alley


Alley Doors


Flowers on Douglas


History Trail

# Previous Placemaking Projects

**Front Porch, 2022-2023**
The Front Porch project united six Wichita-based creatives and six local business owners to create outdoor extensions of

their establishments. The porches debuted on July 1, 2022, during the First Friday art crawl and ended on June 30, 2023, offering business owners the option to retain their porch creations. Inspiration for the project came from the idea of the Midwestern front porch - a space that is crucial to community, family, identity and conversation. The project aimed to foster safe environments as visitors and patrons returned to our urban center following the pandemic. Explore the Front Porch projects, the creatives and the porches here.



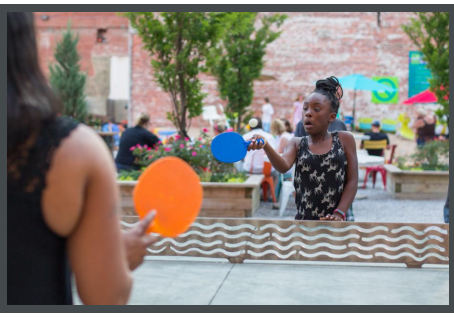





**Pop-Up Park, 2015-2020**
The Pop-Up Park was located on the South side of Douglas Avenue, our main thoroughfare, between Main and Market Streets. The park was built to fill in an abandoned parcel of land that had become a well known eyesore often referred to as "The Hole." Bokeh Development acquired the land in 2015 and partnered with Downtown Wichita to transform it into a temporary community gathering space. The park was constructed through a grant from the Knight Foundation Fund at the Wichita Community Foundation and with the help of many community partners. The space consisted of vibrant art, planters filled with flowers and foliage, festoon lighting, a ping-pong table and space for food trucks. The park quickly became a beloved destination to spend time with friends or coworkers and served as a venue for a wide variety of events and at one point even included a Pop-Up Beach.

After five years, the partners who built the park decided to reimagine the space. The Knight Foundation Fund at the Wichita Community Foundation partnered with Harvester Arts to create the Chainlink Gallery Place at the site of the former Pop-Up Park. While Downtown Wichita is now focusing on activating different areas of the district, the organization continues to share updates on placemaking and programming happening at the Chainlink Gallery Place. Learn more >

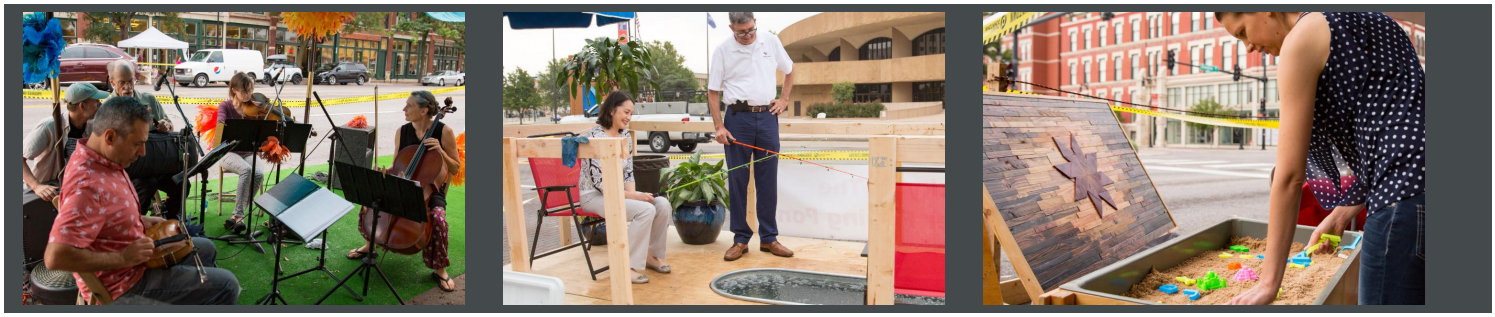




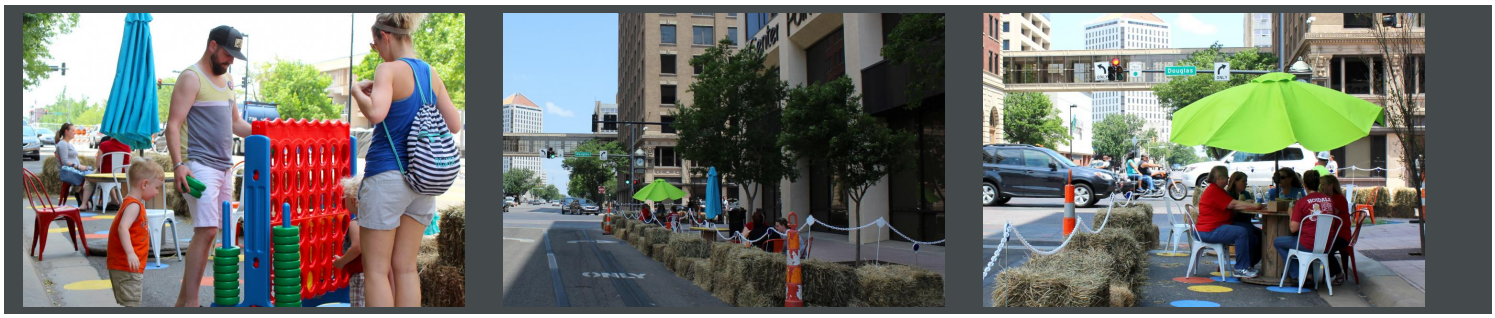


**PARK (ing) Day, Fall 2017**
PARK(ing) Day is an annual worldwide event that seeks to activate existing parking spaces as a site for creative experimentation, artistic expression and unscripted social interaction. The initiative recognizes the need for new approaches that help shape the urban landscape – by converting small segments of the automobile infrastructure into places for people. In 2017, Downtown Wichita organized the local PARK(ing) Day event with multiple groups and businesses participating. Prizes were awarded to the participating businesses and organizations.



**People First Design Project, Summer 2016**
The People-First Pilot Project was designed to decrease the street footprint, increase the pedestrian right of way and add vibrancy to Downtown Wichita through the addition of temporary seating, barriers and painting. A volunteer group coordinated efforts to install the pilot project along Main Street between the Douglas and William intersections near High Touch Technologies and INTRUST Bank in Downtown Wichita. This pilot project was funded by the Knight Foundation Fund at the Wichita Community Foundation; other project partners include Health ICT, Bike Walk Wichita and the City of Wichita. The pilot was up during the annual River Festival, which exposed many visitors and Wichitans to the impact that temporary interventions in streetscape can have on design perception.

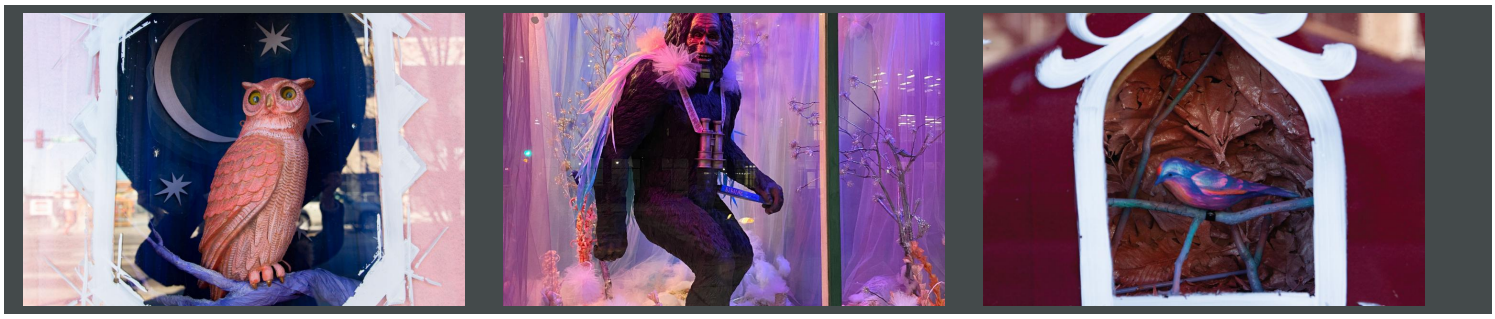


# Previous Programming

**Bigfoot Brian: The Winter Birdwatcher, Winter 2020**
To spread holiday cheer and enhance vibrancy during the holiday season, Downtown Wichita commissioned local artists Hallie Linnebur and Meghan Miller to construct an art installation. They created a whimsical, colorful installation entitled Bigfoot Brian: The Winter Birdwatcher in the windows of the building at the southwest corner of Douglas Avenue and Emporia Street. In 2019, the Downtown Wichita organization introduced Bigfoot Brian, a 7-foot tall Bigfoot statue that frequently visits downtown hotspots and local businesses to create awareness and drive foot traffic. Bigfoot Brian served as the centerpiece of the installation.

Families were encouraged to visit the location and explore each intricate display to find hidden treasures in a game of "I Spy," which was available on-site and could be downloaded from the Downtown Wichita website. The installation provided a safe, socially distanced activity during the pandemic. Downtown Wichita would like to thank Venture Point Properties for their partnership in the project and for allowing the artists to utilize the building.

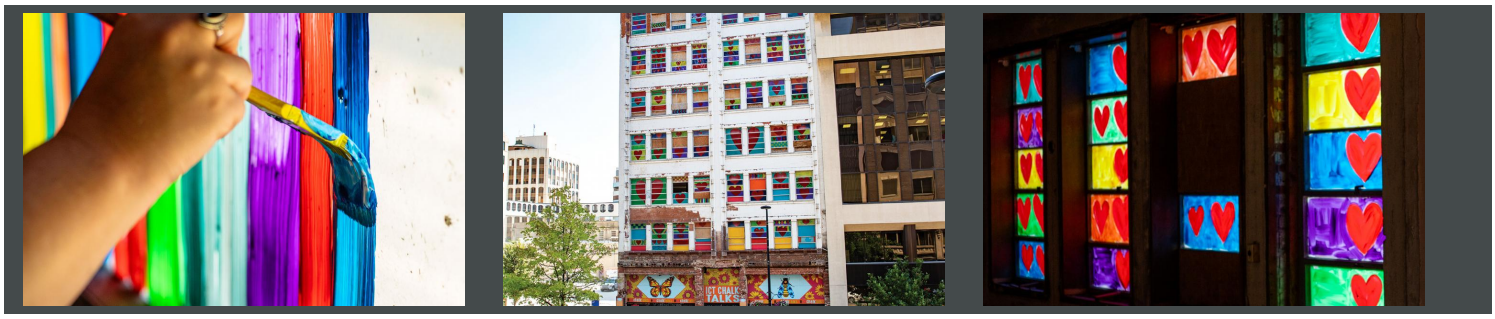


**Wichita Love Notes, Summer 2020**
In an effort to spread messages of hope and positivity during the COVID-19 pandemic, Downtown Wichita commissioned local artists to create posters that were hung throughout the district. After the initial installation, the project was so well received that Downtown Wichita commissioned a second round of designs that were funded by the COVID-19 Connection Fund at the Wichita Community Foundation. During the second phase of the project, the transit shelters along Douglas Avenue were also utilized to display the designs. Nine total artists created 31 unique designs. Over 70 posters were printed and displayed throughout the district.




**Window Hearts, Summer 2020**
The Caldwell Murdock building sits on the south side of Douglas Avenue between Market and Main Streets and is home to the Little Free Library and the ICT Chalk Talks wall. Currently unoccupied, the building provided the perfect canvas for a temporary installation in August of 2020. Over 60 north and east facing windows were painted by a commissioned group of local artists with hearts, stripes and patterns in bright colors. The cheerful windows quickly became a popular destination for photos. The artwork is still on display for residents and visitors to enjoy. The intention of the installation was to enhance perceptions by engaging the community and promoting local arts and culture.



**Little Free Library, Charter #98325, Summer 2020**
The Little Free Library program began in 2009 when a man in Wisconsin put up a little library in memory of his late mother

who was a teacher and avid book reader. Since then, over 32,000 Little Free Libraries have been constructed around the world. While numerous little libraries exist in Wichita, downtown's very first was installed by Downtown Wichita in Summer 2020. It is located near the Chalk Talk wall at Douglas Avenue and Market Street.

The intent of this particular little library was to promote literacy and hopefully provide books for all ages to those who may have trouble accessing quality reading materials. The little library also provides those who work or live nearby to swap books, pick up something new, and enjoy the feeling of leaving a gift for a community member. Opportunities for generosity at all levels, big and small, are good for the heart. As of May 2021, over 350 books have been taken from the little library. Learn more about the program.

**Summer Brew Series, Summer 2019**
This series was a 6-week event partnered with some of Wichita's local breweries. Each week, a brewery was featured in a pop-up beer garden along with local food trucks and music. Community partners VibrantICT coordinated local musicians to perform at each event - ranging from bluegrass to Mariachi.




**The Blue Bench, Summer 2019**
Special guests from Oxford Senior Living came to the Blue Bench at the Pop-Up Park to engage in fun conversations with participating community members. The bench featured an oversize ten-minute timer and cards with questions to kick start the conversations. Unfortunately, ageism is experienced by many seniors. The Blue Bench provided a welcoming environment where meaningful connections could take place and brought awareness to the wisdom seniors possess.




**Pop-Up Mini Theater, Summer 2019**
Downtown Wichita teamed up with Amy Menas and her aspiring music theater students from The Studio to bring Wichita-area kids the chance to see live musical performances up close and free of charge. Kids of all ages were invited to experience fun adventures and sing along to classic Disney tunes. Snacks and tiny Adirondack chairs were provided.

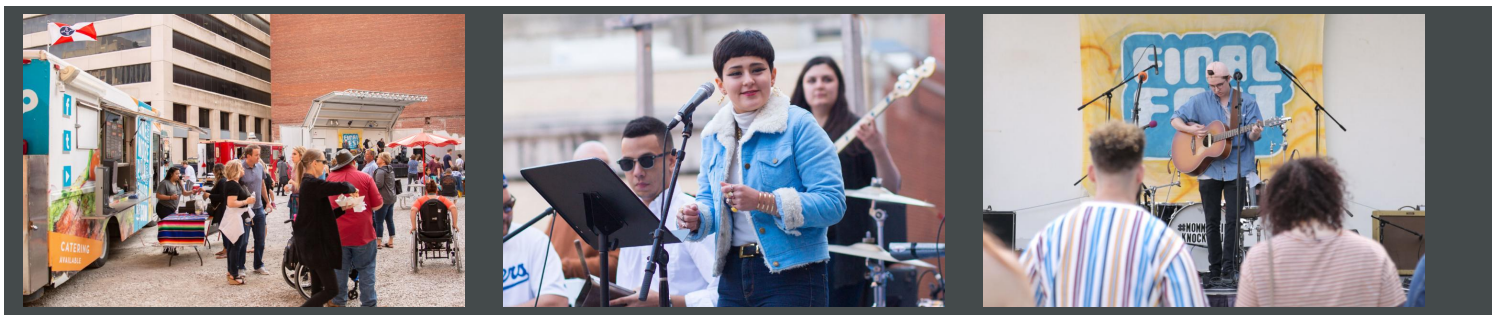





**Lazy Dog Agility Course, Summer 2019**
An obstacle course and photo booth for dogs during the annual Open Streets ICT




**Final Fest (Summer 2019) and ICT Fest (Fall 2019)**
The Pop-Up Park played host to two music festivals that featured local and regional talent. Final Fest was organized by a group of local Wichita State University students and ICT Fest was organized by a young group of local musicians. These community events also featured local visual artists, performance artists, and small businesses. In both instances, Downtown Wichita was able to offer mentorship and event facilitation by assisting with permitting, insurance, sponsorships, scheduling food trucks, and more. Both events were an enormous success and brought opportunities for a younger audience to enjoy performing and visual arts downtown.



**Gallery Alley Fringe, Fall 2019**
Downtown Wichita collaborated with Best Fringe Forever, a small business owned by two local artists, and Wichita State University students from the Intro to Community and Social Practice class to create a fringed canopy to activate Gallery Alley's vertical space.  The students assisted Best Fringe Forever in selecting the color palette as well as the construction and installation. The canopy featured bright fall colors and instantly became a popular backdrop for photos. The students were able to gain immense experience in planning and executing a placemaking project. Two students received employment from

Best Fringe Forever following the completion of the project.



**Sutton Place Artwork, Spring 2019**
The first-floor windows of Sutton Place (a vacant property located on the corner of Market and William Streets) were boarded up with plywood due to security and vandalism issues. Talented local artist Quintis Pinkston was commissioned to transform the plywood into a canvas for art. He painted beautiful patterns and bright colors on the plywood in his own unique street style. His artwork deterred vandalism and energized an inactive corner for over two years.

**Walkable Wayfinding Signage, 2018**

