



DOWNTOWN
WICHITA

2024 - 2025 ANNUAL REPORT





MISSION

COMMERCE AND CULTURE AT THE CORE

Downtown Wichita is a private 501(c)(3) non-profit that amplifies the energy, capital and growth of downtown by empowering residents, visitors and businesses to explore the possibilities of our city's core.

Founded in 2002, our mission is to cultivate opportunities that revitalize and enhance Wichita's urban core. We collaborate with stakeholders to stimulate investment and interest in downtown.

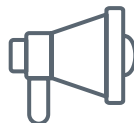
Downtown Wichita provides collaborative leadership to strengthen downtown as:

- ▶ The heart of the city for all citizens.
- ▶ An active and prosperous place for businesses and employees.
- ▶ A center for artistic and cultural experiences.
- ▶ A vibrant urban environment for residents, workers and visitors.

The organization works to achieve this mission through three key areas of focus:



Developing
Downtown



Marketing
the District



Enhancing
Vibrancy

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

As I reflect on Downtown Wichita's progress over the past year, it's evident that we are at a pivotal moment in our city's history. The transformation unfolding in our downtown is not just a physical one but a dynamic shift that reflects our community's collective vision, hard work and commitment to making Wichita a destination for talent, innovation and growth.



At the heart of this transformation is the development of the Downtown Wichita Action Plan, a roadmap for the next decade that will redefine our urban core. In collaboration with global planning firm Sasaki, we are setting the path forward to revitalizing key areas downtown, building stronger neighborhood connections and encouraging strategic, high-caliber urban infill development.

As we plan for the next 10 years, it's important to acknowledge the impactful projects of 2024. Construction on the Wichita Biomedical CampusSM is well underway, anchoring downtown's emerging biomedical corridor. More than 20 new businesses opened downtown last year. With the development of new residential units, the grand opening of the Wichita Foundation Amphitheater and continued construction on Exploration Place's EP2 Initiative, downtown Wichita is alive with activity.

It's not just about buildings; it's about the people. We are creating a vibrant, diverse and inclusive environment where people of all backgrounds can thrive. Local initiatives such as Somewhere Fest and the attraction of national events like the NCAA Men's Basketball Championship are bringing even more energy downtown.

Looking ahead, we are filled with anticipation for what's to come. Thank you to our board members, partners and every individual who has contributed to Downtown Wichita's success. Together, we are building more than just a downtown; we are creating a city of opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Surmeier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joe" being more prominent.

Joe Surmeier
Downtown Wichita Chair

MEET THE TEAM



HEATHER SCHROEDER
Executive Director



CYNTHIA WENTWORTH
Executive Vice President of
Strategic Communications



NICOLE SWAYNE
Office Manager



EMILY BARNWELL
Public Relations Manager



ANNA LAURIN
Social Media Manager



ISSAC VILLELA
Project Graphic Designer

2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Joe Surmeier, Chair
Professional Engineering
Consultants, P.A.

Dr. Tiffany Masson, Vice Chair
KHSU-KansasCOM

Mark Schmelzle, Finance Chair
Allen, Gibbs & Houlik, L.C.

Natalie Gosch, Immediate
Past Chair*
Cargill Protein

BOARD MEMBERS

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Trans Pacific Oil

Sharon Fearey
Downtown Property Owner

Nicole Howerton
Howerton+White

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Adams Brown, LLC

Jeremy Hurt
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Alex Breitenbach
JE Dunn Construction

Chad Hanson
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Jeff Jamison
IMA Financial Group

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Jessie Hartke
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Downtown Property Owner

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The Hive

Joel Kelley*
Cablecom, Inc.

Larry Weber*
Garvey Center

Brian Davidson
Meritrust Credit Union

Tracy Hoover
Groover Labs

Chrissy Robben
Hexcode Marketing, LLC

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City of Wichita

Dalton Glasscock
Wichita City Council, District IV

Stacey Olden
Orpheum Theatre

Susie Santo
Visit Wichita

Maggie Ballard
Wichita City Council, District VI

Brandon Johnson
Wichita City Council, District I

Shelly Prichard
Wichita Foundation

Scott Wadle
Wichita-Sedgwick County
Metropolitan Area
Planning Department

Ryan Baty
Sedgwick County Commission

Joe Johnson, Emeritus*
Schaefer Architecture

John Rolfe
Wichita Regional
Chamber of Commerce

Debra Fraser
Old Town Association

Pete Najera
United Way of the Plains

*Denotes Past Chair

2025 SSMID ADVISORY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BOARD MEMBERS

A.J. Boleski
INTRUST Bank Arena

Chad Hanson
Emprise Bank

Joel Kelley
Cablecom, Inc.

Don Sherman
Everygy

Debra Fraser
Old Town Association

Joe Johnson, Chair
Schaefer Architecture

Mark Schmelzle
Allen, Gibbs & Houlik, L.C.

Joe Surmeier
Professional Engineering
Consultants, P.A.

Natalie Gosch
Cargill Protein

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

Troy Anderson
City of Wichita

Jeff Fluhr
Greater Wichita Partnership

LETTER FROM THE NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

What a remarkable first nine months it has been as the executive director of Downtown Wichita! From launching the Downtown Wichita Action Plan process to transforming vacant storefronts into vibrant public art during the NCAA tournament, we've already made a meaningful impact — and this is just the beginning.

Relocating from New York state to Wichita to take on this role in 2024 was not only exciting but deeply meaningful. From the moment I arrived, I felt an entrepreneurial energy — the feeling of possibility and turning ideas into action. Wichita has a rich history, a thriving downtown and passionate advocates. With nearly \$2 billion in investment since 2010 and the capacity to grow our downtown population by 125% over the next five years, it's clear that Wichita is one of the most dynamic cities in the Midwest.

As we continue building on past successes, it's imperative that we think strategically about how we shape downtown's future. The plans we make today will guide investment over the next decade, connecting areas of growth, enhancing urban design and ensuring that downtown remains a place where people want to live, work and make memories together.

We also have a tremendous opportunity to learn from best practices in other cities and bring more of what makes downtowns thrive. This includes more food options, more culture and entertainment, and more economic opportunity. At the same time, we must leverage our greatest assets, including our waterfront landscape and the impressive talent within our community, to continually improve and innovate.

We're seizing the momentum and leading downtown Wichita toward its bright future. Thank you for your continued support as we work together to make our city's core stronger, more vibrant and more connected than ever before.

Sincerely,



Heather Schroeder
Executive Director
Downtown Wichita



DEVELOPING DOWNTOWN

From 2010 to 2025, the Project Downtown master plan shaped Wichita's growth, driving \$1.73 billion in completed investment and more than \$760 million in the project pipeline. As this chapter closes, Downtown Wichita looks ahead with the creation of the new Downtown Wichita Action Plan, a vision to guide the core's next decade.

A FOUNDATION FOR OUR FUTURE: PROJECT DOWNTOWN

\$1.73B

Investment Since 2010

\$760M+

Estimated Pipeline Total

SSMID INVESTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

\$1.15B+

Public and Private Investment
Since 2010

\$962M

Private Investment
Since 2010

\$48.2M

Annual Investment in 2024
31% Public/69% Private

\$187M

Public Investment
Since 2010

REAL PROPERTY VALUE

+13.6%

Appraised Property Value
in 2024

+10.62%

Assessed Real Property Value
in 2024



Scan on your mobile device to view the latest market studies, analyses and economic data documenting the transformation occurring in downtown Wichita.

THE DOWNTOWN OF TOMORROW

The Downtown Wichita Action Plan (Action Plan) is a strategic 10-year roadmap for the continued revitalization and transformation of Wichita's urban core. It is an update to the 2010 Project Downtown master plan, which drove \$1.73 billion in completed investment and more than \$760 million in the project pipeline.

The Action Plan will focus on attracting development and cultivating strong place identities by amplifying cultural assets, building strong neighborhood connections and encouraging strategic, well-designed urban infill.

TEAM

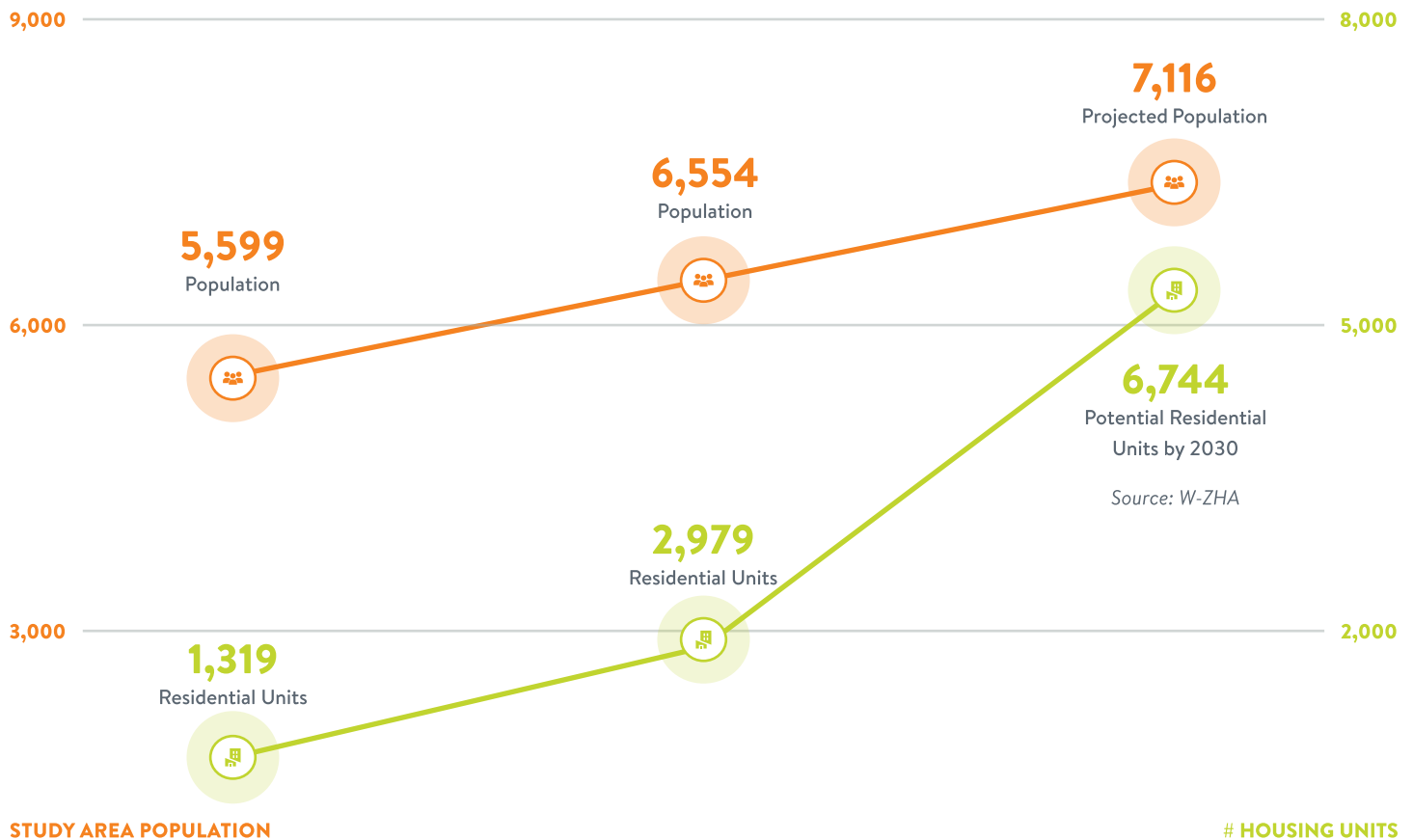
Sasaki, a global urban planning and design firm, is Downtown Wichita's project partner for the Action Plan. In late 2024, a selection committee of industry leaders, government and non-profit partners chose Sasaki from 17 national and international firms through a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process. The project team includes top experts in landscape design (MCLV), real estate and economics (Ideas & Action), walkability (Speck Dempsey), place identity (Public Sphere Projects) and community engagement (Parson + Associates) to help shape the plan's vision and implementation.

To follow along with the Action Plan process, visit downtownwichita.org/actionplan.



THE DOWNTOWN OF TOMORROW

HOW DID PROJECT DOWNTOWN 2010 SHAPE THE CORE?



STUDY AREA POPULATION

HOUSING UNITS

2010

1% of Citywide Population

WHAT IS PROJECT DOWNTOWN 2010?

The Project Downtown 2010 plan focused on creating vibrant, mixed-use districts, improving walkability and enhancing public spaces.



Key recommendations included connecting neighborhoods, promoting economic growth through new developments and prioritizing areas for transit and pedestrian-friendly improvements. The plan aimed to attract residents, businesses and visitors while strengthening the city's appeal as a dynamic urban destination.

TODAY

2% of Citywide Population

IMPACT OF PROJECT DOWNTOWN 2010

1,660

New Housing Units

\$2.4B

Investment Downtown
(\$1.73B Completed and
\$760M+ Project Pipeline)

2035

2% of Citywide Population

WHAT'S NEXT?

Building upon the success of Project Downtown, Downtown Wichita began the next steps to cast vision through 2035. The team is committed to continually cultivating a vibrant, clean and safe core that enhances the quality of life and attracts talent for years to come.



MARKET RESEARCH

New research conducted by Zimmerman/Volk Associates and W-ZHA reveals strong opportunities for residential, office and hotel growth in downtown Wichita over the next several years. Commissioned by Downtown Wichita to inform the development of the Downtown Wichita Action Plan, the studies highlight significant market potential for new housing, modern office space and expanded hotel accommodations. With rising median incomes and growing interest from residents relocating from larger metro areas, the research underscores downtown’s increasing appeal – and the need for targeted investment to sustain its momentum.



Data as provided by consultants Zimmerman/Volk Associates and W-ZHA.

COMPLETED PROJECTS



EXPLORATION PLACE: WICHITA FOUNDATION AMPHITHEATER

\$2 MILLION | 300 N. MCLEAN BLVD.

This 1,500-capacity, open-air amphitheater is a venue for live performances, free family movie nights and viewing the nightly Ring of Fire show at Wichita's iconic Keeper of the Plains.



WASHBURN APARTMENTS

\$1.1 MILLION | 114 N. ST. FRANCIS AVE.

Nestled just west of Old Town, these newly renovated 1,800 and 1,650-square-foot apartments feature large windows, 14-foot ceilings, patios and plenty of natural light.



LEARNING LAB

\$10 MILLION | 703 E. DOUGLAS AVE.

Located in the historic Union Station Express, the Learning Lab is a co-learning space and collaborative hub for education entrepreneurs. It hosts four distinct, individualized school models under one roof as well as a maker space, kitchen, digital lab and podcast studio.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

2024 GROUNDBREAKINGS



EXPLORATION PLACE: DESTINATION PLAYScape

\$20 MILLION | 300 N. MCLEAN BLVD.

The six-acre playscape, part of a 20-acre riverfront renovation, will feature the Textron Aviation Flight Adventure, Junior League of Wichita Water Play Cascades, Rotary Sunflower Meadow and more outdoor experiences. When it opens in spring 2026, the attraction is expected to grow annual attendance at Exploration Place to one million visitors.



THE HUB

\$26 MILLION | 207 S. SYCAMORE ST.

The Hub will serve as the new terminal and transit center for city buses and shuttles. Located in Delano, west of Equity Bank Park, it will include 12 bus bays, ticketing, offices, bike parking and a new 400-space parking garage. Scheduled completion is summer 2026.



WICHITA BIOMEDICAL CAMPUSSM

\$302 MILLION | BROADWAY ST. & WILLIAM ST.

The \$302 million Wichita Biomedical CampusSM will lead to advanced medical care and R&D that will benefit the entire state. As one of the largest single investments in downtown, the transformational project has already spurred additional healthcare and biotech investments.



For a full list of projects under development, visit downtownwichita.org/development.

IN PLANNING PROJECTS



THE KANSAS AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM

\$6 MILLION | 201 N. MAIN ST.

The Kansas African American Museum will transform 201 N. Main St. into a vibrant cultural center with immersive experiences celebrating history, art and heritage — doubling its space for programming, exhibitions and research, and moving the museum onto the First Street “Cultural Corridor.”



PUBLIC RESTROOMS

\$532,000 | A. PRICE WOODARD PARK & NAFTZGER PARK

Two freestanding public restrooms, one with a hydration station, will be installed in spring 2025. The Portland Loos are designed for easy cleaning and durability. One will be located at the south end of Naftzger Park and the other at the entrance to A. Price Woodard Park.



MARKET CENTRE APARTMENTS

\$30 MILLION | 155 N. MARKET ST.

The Market Centre building is being renovated into 114 affordable apartments. The historic 11-story building will offer studio, one and two-bedroom units, enhancing access to affordable housing.



ORPHEUM THEATRE RENOVATION

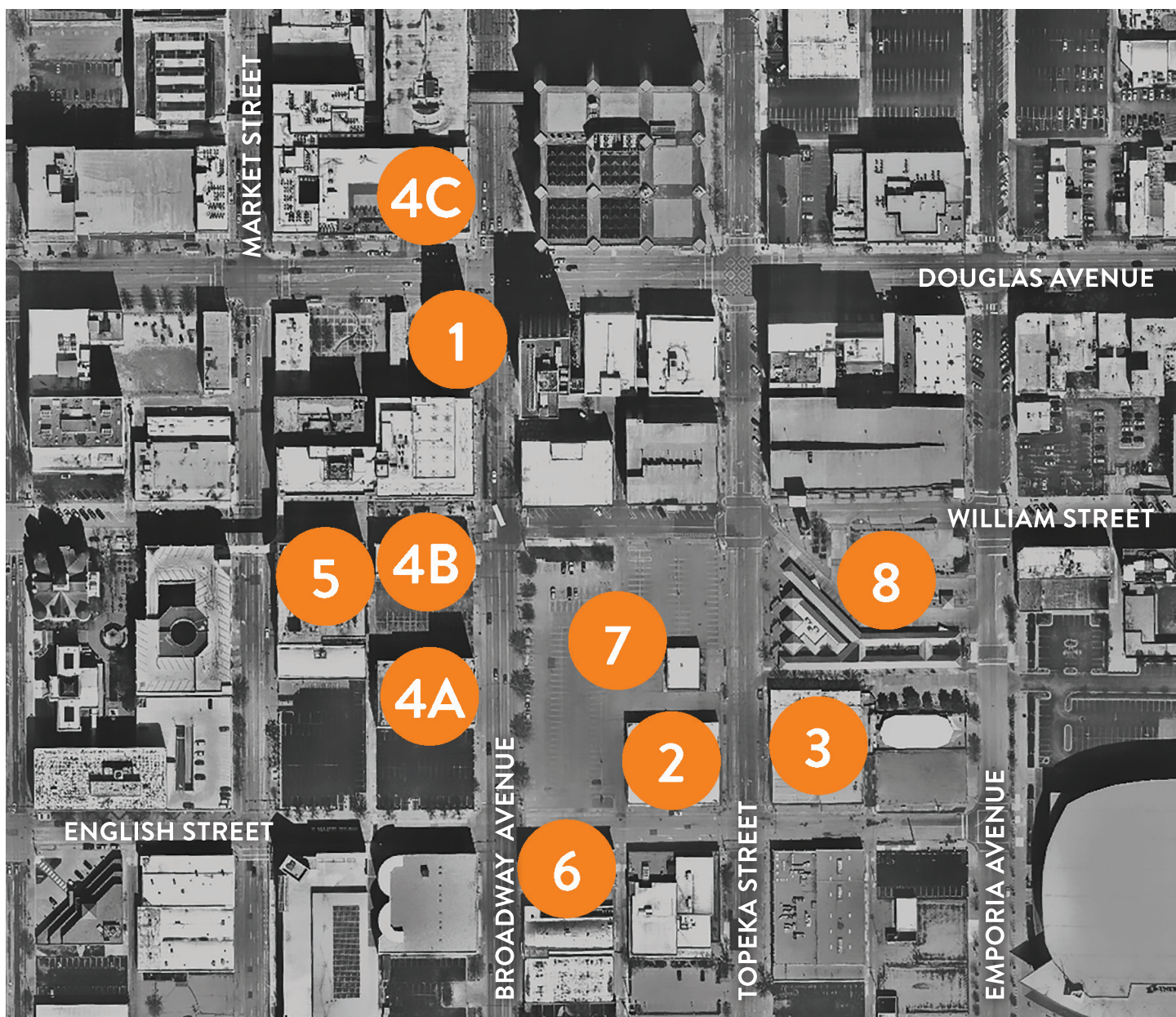
\$10 MILLION | 200 N. BROADWAY ST.

The 102-year-old Orpheum Theatre will close in June 2025 for a \$10 million restoration, including new seating, lighting, rigging, HVAC and interior upgrades. It will reopen in May 2026 before phase two begins.

DEVELOPING IMPACT BIOMEDICAL CORRIDOR

Downtown Wichita's healthcare corridor is rapidly evolving. It is anchored by the Wichita Biomedical CampusSM, set to open in 2027, and complemented by numerous other investments.

Together with Ascension, the Kansas College of Osteopathic Medicine, and plans for various housing, office and mixed-use developments, this corridor is becoming a vibrant hub for innovation, healthcare advancements and economic growth.



1 AC HOTEL WICHITA DOWNTOWN

The historic Broadway Plaza building, located at the southwest corner of Douglas Avenue and Broadway Avenue, is currently being renovated into an AC Hotel featuring 119 rooms. Part of Marriott International, Inc., this 11-story hotel will mix modern design with historic grandeur and features a ground-floor bar that will be open to the public.

2 COMCARE COMMUNITY CRISIS CENTER

Sedgwick County will improve patient care by bringing the Substance Abuse Center of Kansas, the Sedgwick County Offender Assessment Program and COMCARE's Crisis Center under one roof at a new COMCARE Community Crisis Center. Scheduled to open in 2026, the \$15 million project at 235 S. Topeka St. includes renovation of an existing building along with new construction on two adjacent lots. The center will partner with the Wichita Biomedical CampusSM to provide students with hands-on learning.

3 HEARTSPRING

Adding to the healthcare corridor, Heartspring acquired two properties at Topeka Street and English Street to expand its pediatric outpatient services. The new multi-clinic facility will provide care for children with autism, ADHD, developmental delays and neurodevelopmental disorders.

4 THE PETROLEUM BUILDING, MCCLELLAN HOTEL BUILDING AND KRESS BUILDING

Developer Marv Schellenberg and Crain Development have partnered to redevelop these three historic buildings and are evaluating various adaptive re-use opportunities to complement the Wichita Biomedical CampusSM.

5 SUTTON HOUSING

The Sutton Place building will be renovated into student housing to complement the Kansas Health Science University - Kansas College of Osteopathic Medicine (KHSU-KansasCom). The project adds additional housing options for students and is connected to the medical school via skywalk.

6 THE ARNOLD APARTMENTS

The 1920 brick building at 333 E. English St. is being renovated into The Arnold, a \$6.2 million project with 42 apartments, a rooftop common area and 5,000 square feet of retail space.

7 WICHITA BIOMEDICAL CAMPUSSM - PHASE 1

The estimated \$302 million campus, a partnership between Wichita State University (WSU), the University of Kansas (KU) and WSU Tech, will transform Wichita's downtown into a prominent center for cutting-edge research, advanced medical technologies and highly skilled job opportunities. The campus will bring an influx of 3,000 students and 200 faculty and staff members downtown, driving increased foot traffic for local businesses, restaurants, bars and retail establishments.

8 WICHITA TRANSIT CENTER

The Wichita Transit Center at William Street and Emporia Street is slated for decommissioning when a new multi-modal facility called The Hub opens in Delano in 2026. The city-owned site is ripe for redevelopment and has attracted the attention of WSU as a potential site for a dental school.

MARKETING DOWNTOWN

Downtown Wichita is thriving thanks to bold marketing initiatives and an engaged community. From exciting events to new businesses, the energy and momentum keep growing.

NEWSLETTER

166,304

Newsletters Distributed

3,054

Email Subscribers

51

Newsletter Campaigns

EVENTS BY TEXT MESSAGES

20,965

SMS Sent

510

SMS Subscribers

51

SMS Campaigns

SOCIAL MEDIA

2.5M+

Total Impressions
Across Four Platforms

44K+

Total Followers
Across Four Platforms

242

Total Posts
Across Four Platforms

EARNED MEDIA

261

Media Mentions Across Online,
Print, Radio, TV and Magazine

2.69B+

Cumulative Audience Reach



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ENHANCING VIBRANCY



FLOWERS ON DOUGLAS

This volunteer-led beautification project features over 200 planters and hanging baskets along Wichita's Douglas Avenue. Led by volunteer Cindy Carnahan, the initiative partners with Downtown Wichita, Hein Lawn & Landscaping and master gardeners to keep downtown in bloom from March through September.

108

Planter Pots

126

Hanging Baskets



HOLIDAY PROGRAMMING

Downtown Wichita's holiday programming added festive cheer with nearly 100 new seasonal banners along Douglas Avenue and Main Street. The team also decked out transit shelters with holiday-themed graphics, bringing even more seasonal spirit to the core. Using local iconography like the Keeper of the Plains, Kansas' state bird — the meadowlark — and wheat stalks formed into snowflakes, the designs are uniquely Wichitan.



WINDOW WONDERLAND: HOLIDAY DECORATING CONTEST

In November, Downtown Wichita's first Window Wonderland contest featured 20 festively decorated storefronts. With over 1,000 votes cast by the public, The Leprechaun's Lab won the \$500 grand prize, followed by IMA Financial Group and Kansas Leadership Center. Look for an expanded Window Wonderland contest in 2025.

ENHANCING VIBRANCY

Downtown Wichita is pleased to participate in policy discussions and programming initiatives that facilitate multi-modal transportation solutions within the city's core. In spring 2025, we celebrated the completed conversion of five downtown streets from one-way to two-way traffic and spoke to the benefits of two-way streets for pedestrian safety and local economic development.



TRANSIT PLANNING

In January 2025, Mayor Lily Wu appointed Downtown Wichita's executive director to serve on the Wichita Transit Advisory Board. This board advises the city council on Wichita Transit's recommendations for bus service improvements. From 2024-2025, Wichita Transit engaged with transportation engineering firm Nelson Nygaard to assist in developing the Wichita Transit Network Redesign — a comprehensive systemwide analysis to identify transportation needs and opportunities, including revised routes and schedules. Once approved, the plan will take effect in 2026 to coordinate routes with the opening of The Hub in Delano.

PUBLIC WAYFINDING

Downtown Wichita also participates in the Wichita Wayfinding Steering Committee. The City of Wichita is undertaking a comprehensive wayfinding signage project to update both its vehicular and pedestrian signage. A newly designed, cohesive, multi-modal system will facilitate transportation among destinations within downtown, while also recognizing that many visitors begin their tour of south-central Kansas in downtown Wichita.

PARKING MANAGEMENT

Parking management plans, which require paid intervals and time limits, are essential to economic growth in downtown districts. Parking management includes signage, meters/pay stations, and both on- and off-street parking options to help visitors and daily users find convenient parking spaces.

Downtown Wichita advocated for the implementation of a parking management plan by the City of Wichita throughout the summer and fall of 2024. Following a dozen public meetings in August and September, the council scheduled their discussion of recommended changes to the plan for the Nov. 19 evening council meeting. Throughout October and November, Downtown Wichita's executive director and board members attended public meetings and spoke before the council in favor of parking management. The Downtown Wichita Executive Committee published an opinion piece advocating for the parking plan in the Nov. 13 edition of the Wichita Eagle.

On Dec. 17, the city council voted 5-2 to approve a paid parking management plan in the Self-Supported Municipal Improvement District (SSMID). Downtown Wichita will assist with public engagement and outreach to help inform downtown stakeholders about the new system, including how to select off-street lots and garages close to downtown residences, workplaces and cultural venues. The new system is expected to roll out in summer 2025.





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