

DOWNTOWN WICHITA ACTION PLAN 2035



DOWNTOWN
WICHITA

2026



Acknowledgments

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Action Plan Project Team

Heather Schroeder, Executive Director, Downtown Wichita

Jeff Fluhr, President, Greater Wichita Partnership

Cynthia Wentworth, Executive Vice President of Strategic Communications, Downtown Wichita/Greater Wichita Partnership

Matt Hamm AIA, Vice President, Schaefer Architecture

Laurie Volk, Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc.

Christopher Volk-Zimmerman, Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc.

Sarah Woodworth, W-ZHA, LLC

Action Plan Contributors

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Organizations

Allen, Gibbs, & Houlik, L.C.

Area South Management

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Commerce

Wichita State University

Individuals

Cindy & Charlie Claycomb

Sharon Fearey

Andrea Hatton

Pete Najera

Joe Tigert

WHAT IS THE ACTION PLAN?

The Downtown Wichita Action Plan will guide the transformation of Wichita's downtown for the next decade. It intends to nurture a connected, mixed-use downtown that embraces the Arkansas River, honors Wichita's culture and heritage, and showcases innovative, high-quality urban design. It outlines both a strategic community vision and a practical plan of action for getting there.



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1

INTRODUCTION



Downtown Wichita In Context

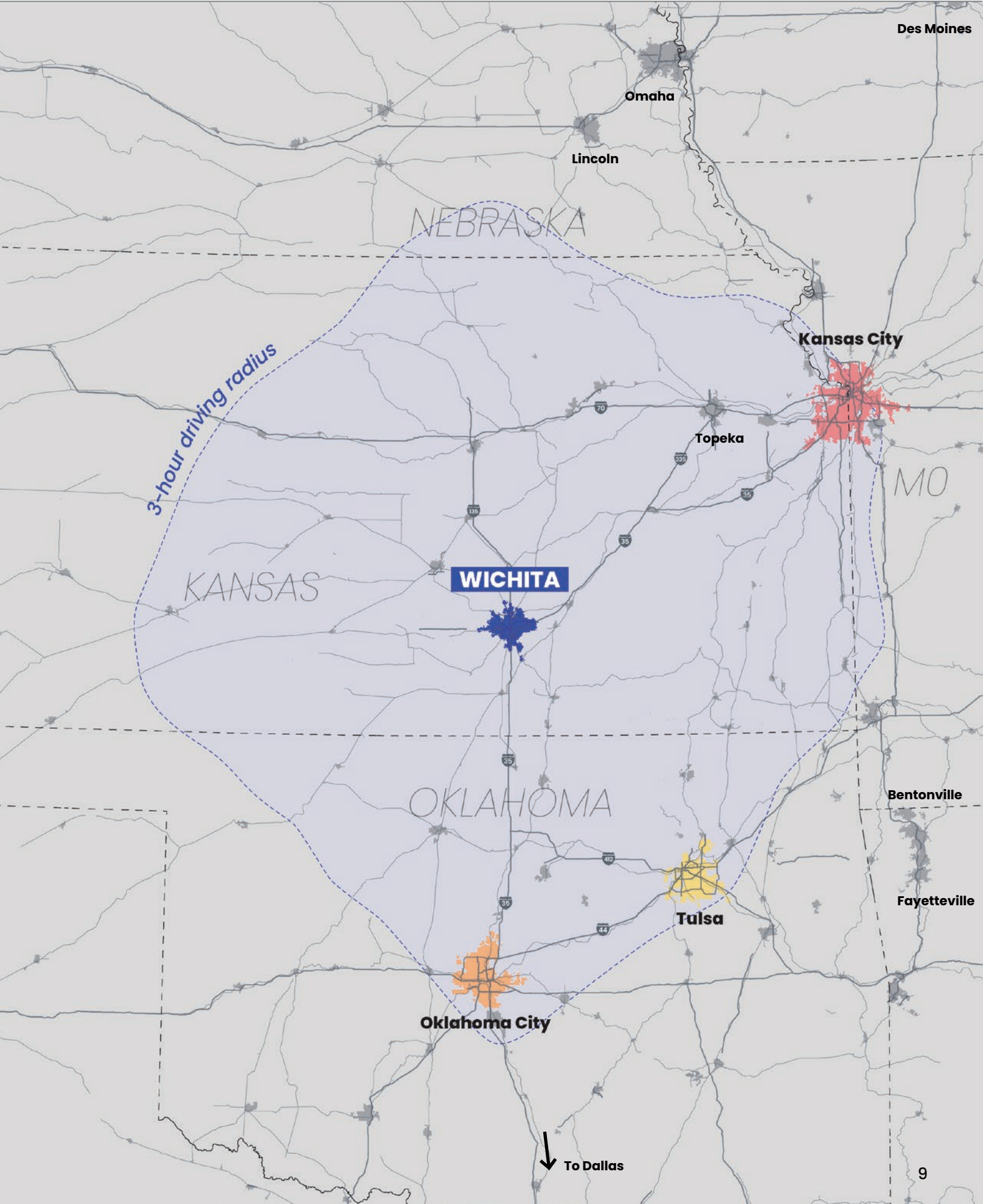
Downtown Wichita anchors a dynamic region with significant potential for growth. This potential can be unlocked with careful, coordinated investments.

Downtown Wichita is the heart of a metropolitan region with a population nearing 700,000. As the core of Kansas's largest city, it serves as an important center of commerce, culture, and innovation. The downtown area anchors a diverse regional economy that includes aerospace manufacturing, health care, energy, and education. It is home to major employers, cultural and entertainment venues such as the Orpheum Theatre and Exploration Place, key government offices, and popular festivals and special events such as Riverfest – all housed within an urban core that abuts the scenic Arkansas River and contains significant vestiges of early 20th century architecture and urbanism.

In recent years, there have been major catalytic investments in the downtown core, such as the \$300 million Wichita Biomedical Campus.

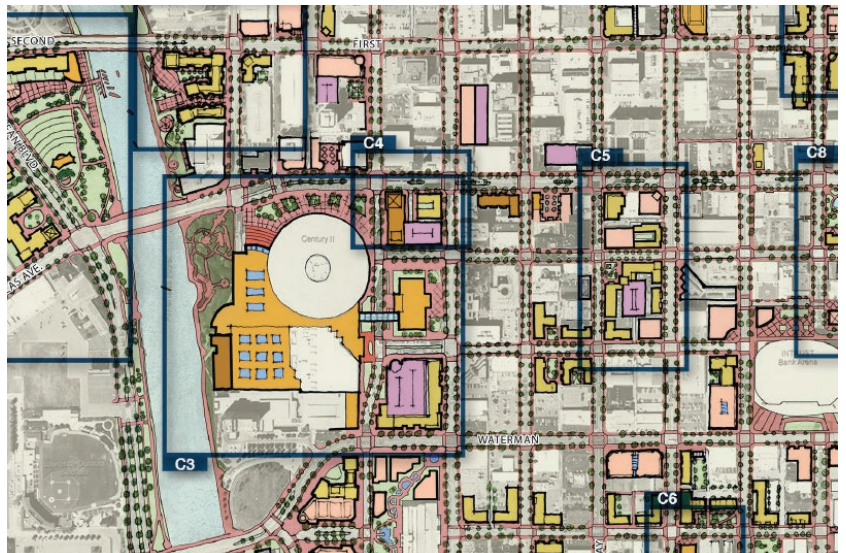
This concentration of assets creates a strong foundation for downtown Wichita's future growth.

Downtown Wichita is also part of a growing regional economic system. Through excellent regional transportation links along the I-35 corridor, Wichita is connected to Des Moines, Kansas City, Tulsa, Oklahoma City, and Dallas, with which Wichita is co-evolving and competing. In recent years, the downtowns of these nearby major cities have all seen significant growth and investment – in downtown housing development, transportation, and public realm – that are transforming their urban experience. These transformations provide positive examples for Wichita of how careful, coordinated investments and policies can make its downtown more lively and regionally competitive.



Building on the Past

Project Downtown: The Master Plan for Wichita, adopted in 2010, has been the foundation for the revitalization and growth of downtown Wichita over the past 15 years. Developed through extensive community engagement and strong public-private partnerships, the first-of-its-kind plan set a clear vision and strategies to maximize investment in the city's core.



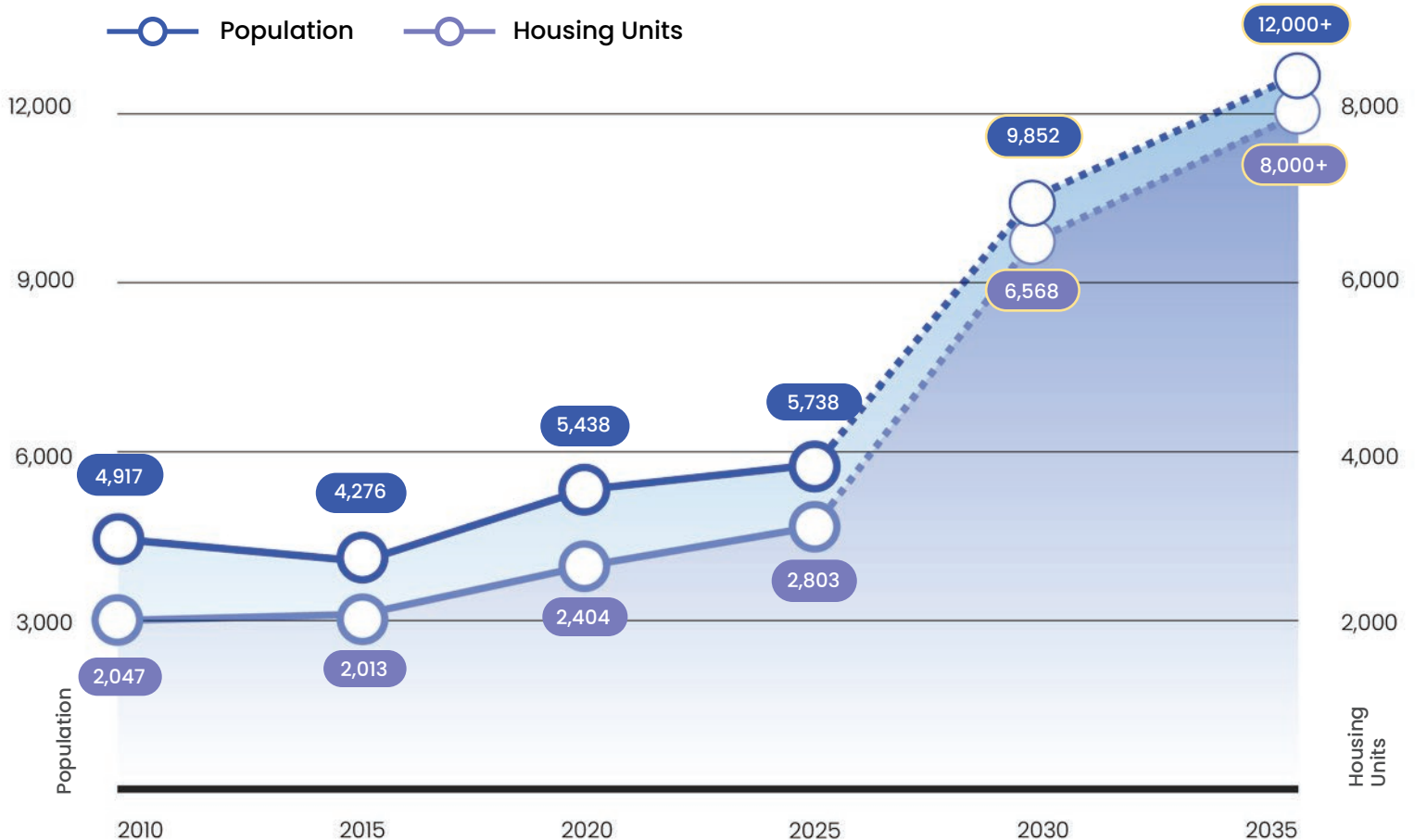
Project Downtown
2010

Building upon earlier revitalization efforts — including the 1989 RTKL plan, the River Corridor plan, and the Arena Neighborhood plan — Project Downtown advocated for connecting key assets like Old Town, INTRUST Bank Arena, and the Arkansas River corridor while promoting quality urban design, walkability, and multimodal transportation.

Since its adoption, Project Downtown has catalyzed \$2 billion in public and private investments, reshaping the downtown with new residential developments like The Flats 324 and Broadway Autopark, cultural expansions such as Exploration Place's

Destination Playscape, the revitalization of public spaces including Naftzger Park, and the burgeoning Wichita Biomedical Campus. These efforts have established downtown as a lively center for living, working, and engaging in cultural activities.

The plan guided intentional growth during challenging economic times by leveraging market-based strategies and fostering strong collaboration between public and private sectors. With 119 projects completed in 15 years, it added almost 2,000 residential units, increased retail space by 77%, added over 150,000 square feet of new Class A office space — the first in over three



decades —and expanded hospitality with 1,350 new hotel rooms. Beyond physical growth, it spurred a cultural shift by activating sidewalks, increasing pedestrian activity, and improving perceptions of safety and vitality.

Its goals to retain and attract young people, families, and jobs, boost tourism, grow the city's tax base, and strengthen Wichita's regional and national competitiveness have proven successful, as seen in downtown's rising vibrancy, economic diversity, and cultural prominence.

Project Downtown's impact laid the crucial groundwork for the current Action Plan, which builds on this legacy with renewed focus on stronger neighborhood connections, elevated design standards, riverfront enhancement, and strategic urban infill — ensuring downtown's continued vitality and growth into the future.

Population and Housing Units in Downtown Wichita, 2010–2035

Source: American Community Survey, 2010–2025; Zimmerman/Volk Housing Market Study, 2025*

*Population projections are derived using an average household size of 1.5 people per housing unit.

About the Action Plan

The Action Plan will shape the next 10 years of downtown Wichita by articulating a vision that reflects the values of Wichita residents and creating an actionable roadmap for achieving this shared vision.



ABOVE: Wichitans shared their priorities for downtown through a series of public workshops throughout the planning process.

RIGHT: Arkansas River



The Action Plan builds on the foundation established by Project Downtown, advancing infrastructure and development that bring Wichita's long-term vision for a vibrant downtown to life. It focuses on leveraging infrastructure investments and new development to strengthen

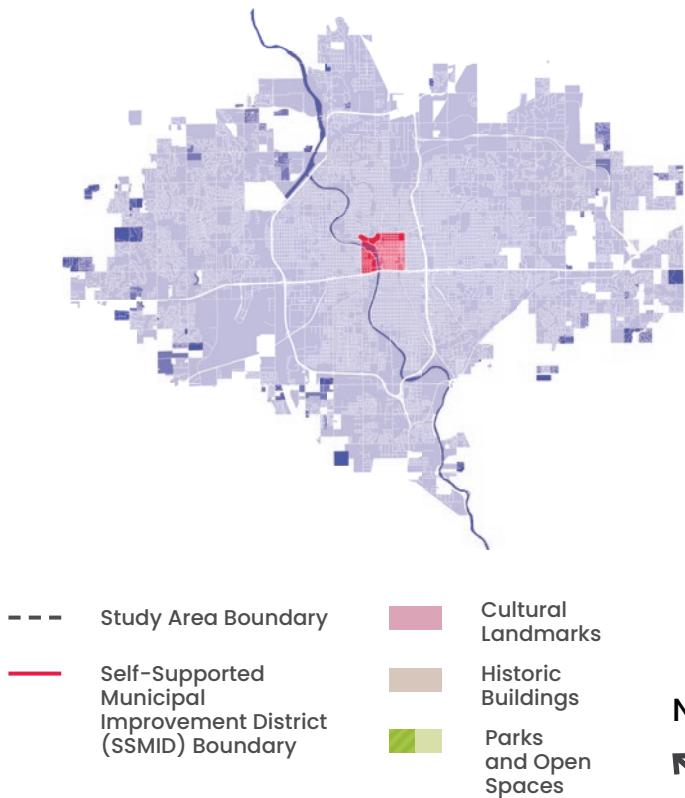
the urban experience and enhance quality of life in Wichita's core by creating more connected districts and neighborhoods, well-designed buildings and public spaces, and expanded opportunities for living and entertainment, as well as new ways to experience the Arkansas River.



Study Area

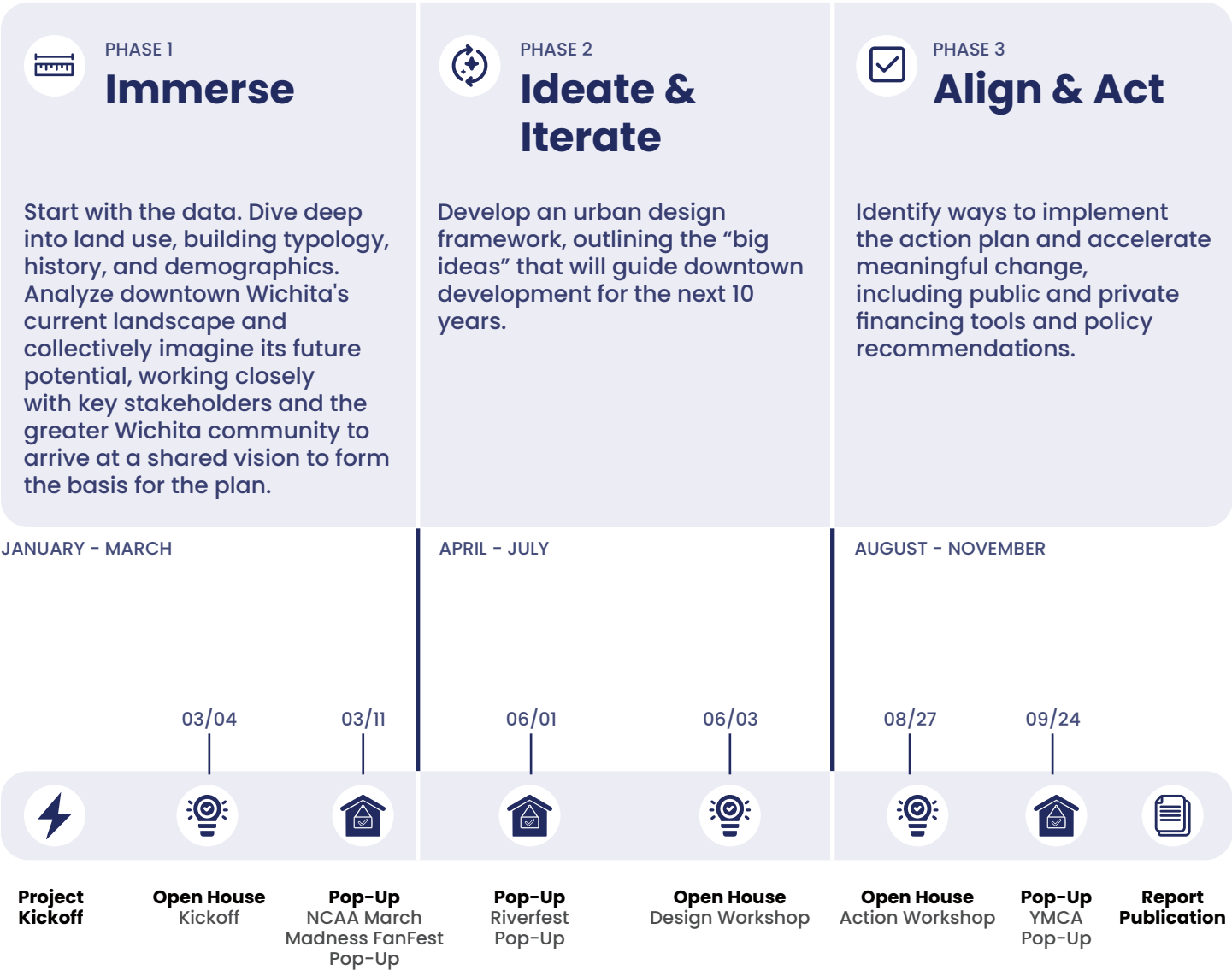
The study area for the Downtown Wichita Action Plan is defined by Seneca Street to the west, Murdock Avenue to the north, Washington Avenue to the east, and Kellogg Avenue to the south, covering approximately 1.5 square miles (960 acres). This area encompasses much of Wichita's traditional downtown, including the Arkansas River, Old Town, the Arena District, and major civic, commercial, and cultural assets.

The study area boundary extends beyond the Self-Supported Municipal Improvement District (SSMID) to include development activity occurring north of Central Avenue and west of the river. The Action Plan incorporates this broader context in Delano and up to Murdock Street to strengthen connections across the river and better integrate northern downtown.



The Community’s Plan

The Action Plan’s 10-month planning process shaped Wichita’s vision for downtown through three key phases. Together, these phases helped discover, refine, and prepare ideas for implementation. Each phase built momentum toward a shared Action Plan that connects vision, design, and action for the next decade of downtown’s evolution.



1,000+

Wichitans Engaged

Every planning phase included a large-format open house, pop-up at a high-traffic downtown event or community center, and a series of stakeholder meetings and design charrettes.



3

Open Houses



3

Pop-Ups



50+

Stakeholder Group Meetings



Open House 3 on August 27, 2025



NCAA March Madness FanFest on March 11, 2025

2

A VISION FOR 2035



SITEBOX
STORAGE
BIS SITEBOX bit.ly/sitebox

Bicycle
X-CHANGE
SHOPS
355 Highway

Your Input in Action

Wichitan input throughout this year has shaped the recommendations outlined in the Action Plan.

These recommendations aim to enhance the quality of life for everyone who lives, works, dines, shops, and experiences downtown Wichita.

Wichita's core is already a desirable destination and will continue to grow with or without this Plan. The Action Plan builds on resident aspirations, regional best practices, and emerging economic trends to create a framework that guides this growth in a positive direction—one that reflects Wichita's unique identity and vision for the future.

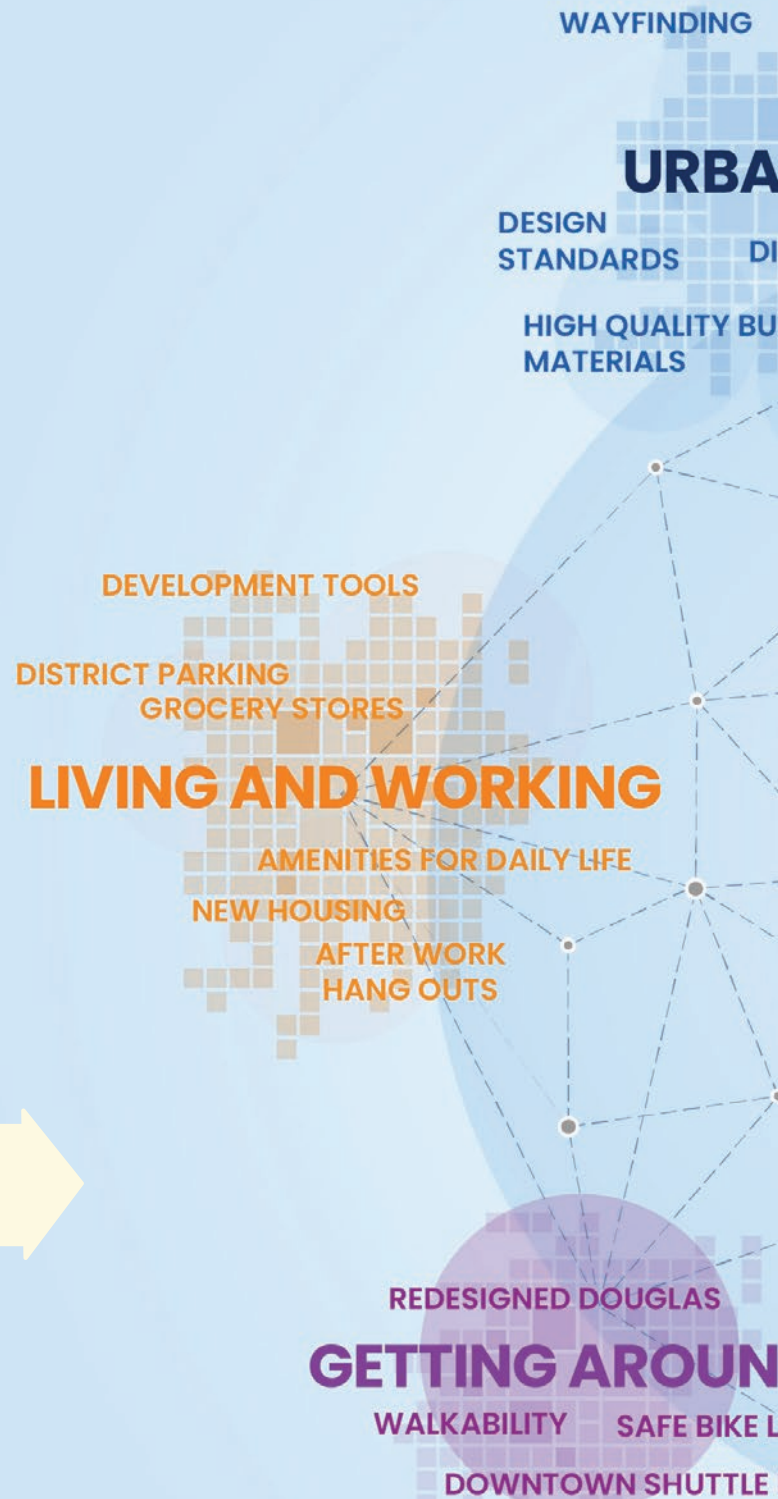
The downtown vision is articulated in this Action Plan through a series of:

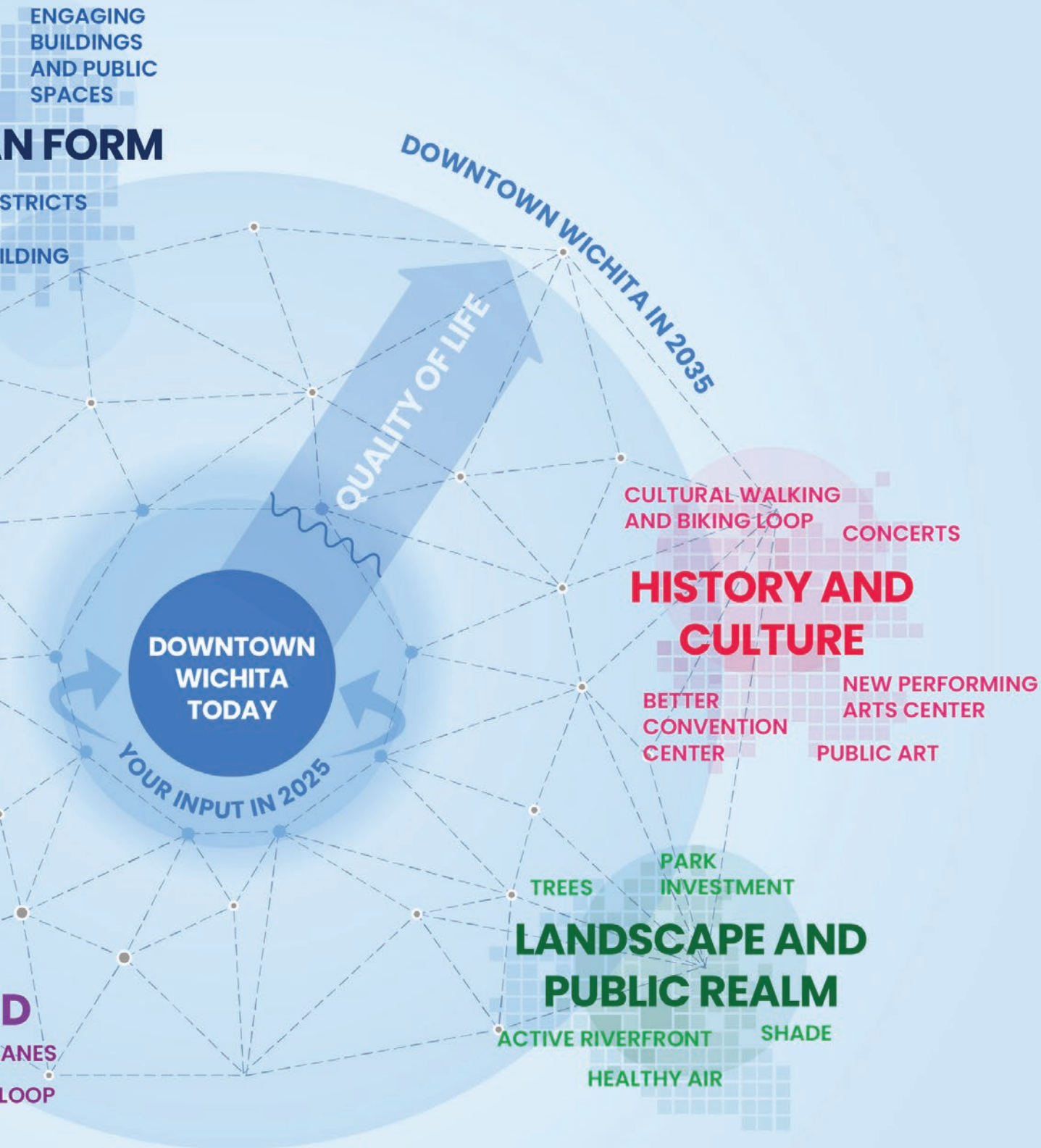
5 Themes

WHY
 **4 Goals**

WHAT
 **17 Strategies**

HOW
 **100+ Actions**





Goals

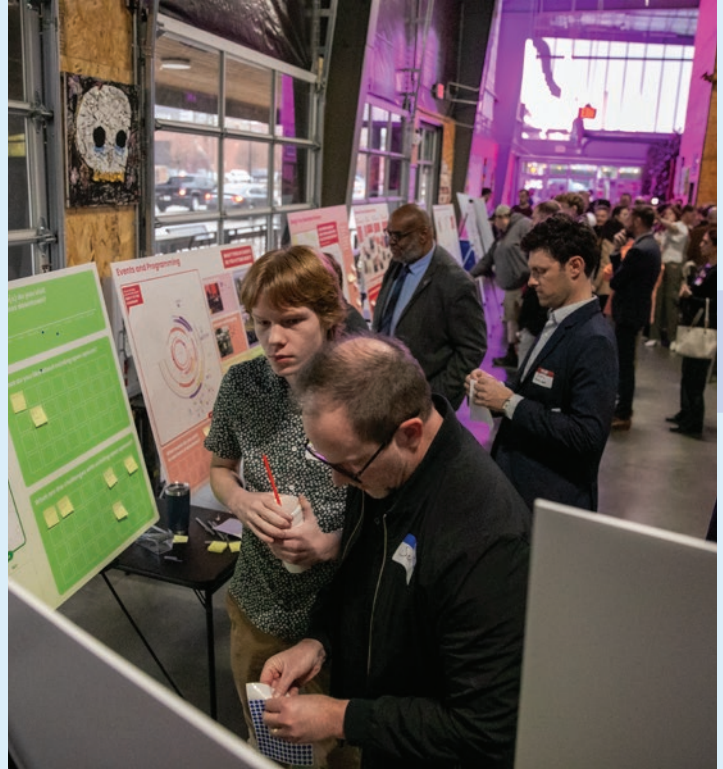
The goals of the Action Plan reflect the priorities and aspirations expressed by Wichitans throughout the public engagement process.

These shared sentiments represent the values that will shape how the future of downtown is evaluated and achieved.

Wichitans envision a connected downtown that links key points of interest together, a riverfront that celebrates the Arkansas River as the city's centerpiece, a well-designed urban environment that feels welcoming and memorable, and a full-service downtown that offers daily conveniences alongside cultural and entertainment destinations.

The Implementation Guide on p. 34 provides details on how Downtown Wichita and its partners can turn these goals into action over the next decade.

RIGHT: Wichitans provide input during open houses that provided a basis for Action Plan visions, goals, strategies, and actions.



5 Themes

WHY
4 Goals

WHAT
17 Strategies

HOW
100+ Actions



Connected Downtown

Downtown Wichita will be a connected, welcoming place where people can easily navigate to shopping, dining, and cultural attractions on foot, by bike, by car, or by transit.



Riverfront Downtown

Downtown Wichita will embrace the Arkansas River as the city's central gathering place for recreation, gathering, and the enjoyment of nature.



Well-Designed Downtown

Downtown Wichita will feature well-designed buildings, streets, and public spaces that create a safe, attractive, and welcoming environment.



Full Service Downtown

Downtown Wichita will evolve as a dense, mixed-use urban center to unlock new opportunities for living, working, shopping, and entertainment.

Goal # 1: Connected Downtown

Getting Around



Downtown Wichita will be a connected, welcoming place where people can easily navigate to shopping, dining, and cultural attractions on foot, by bike, by car, or by transit.

"Douglas is our Michigan Avenue. Let's treat it like the Magnificent Mile."

"I would never think to walk from Delano to Old Town. Not because it's long...there's just nothing to see."



Downtown Electric Cab



1

1 mile

Douglas Ave redesign, from the River to Washington St.

Wayfinding System



2

Art to Go Go Shuttle



3



new priority bike lanes on Douglas, McLean, Market, Texas, William and English



- 1 San Antonio, TX
- 2 Minneapolis, MN
- 3 Anacostia, DC



HOW WE GET THERE



Getting Around

Create a system of lively, safe, people-first streets

See more on p. 90



Getting Around

Complete and improve the bike network

See more on p. 106

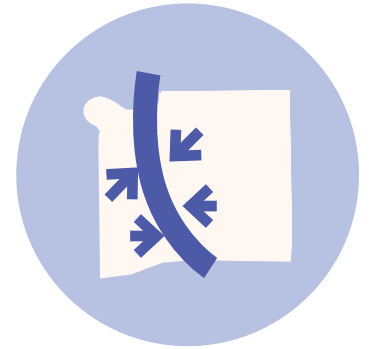


Getting Around

Start a high-frequency downtown circulator shuttle

See more on p. 108

Goal #2: Riverfront Downtown



Landscape & Public Realm

History & Culture

Demonstration Sites

Downtown Wichita will embrace the Arkansas River as the city's central gathering place for recreation, gathering, and the enjoyment of nature.

"We've turned our back to the river for so long...it's time to face it!"

"The river is downtown's lowest hanging fruit."

"Let's activate the riverfront!"

- ① Chicago, IL
- ② Omaha, NE
- ③ Cincinnati, OH
- ④ Vancouver, BC, Canada
- ⑤ Indianapolis, IN

Riverfront Redevelopment



1/2 mi

proposed
active riverfront
redevelopment

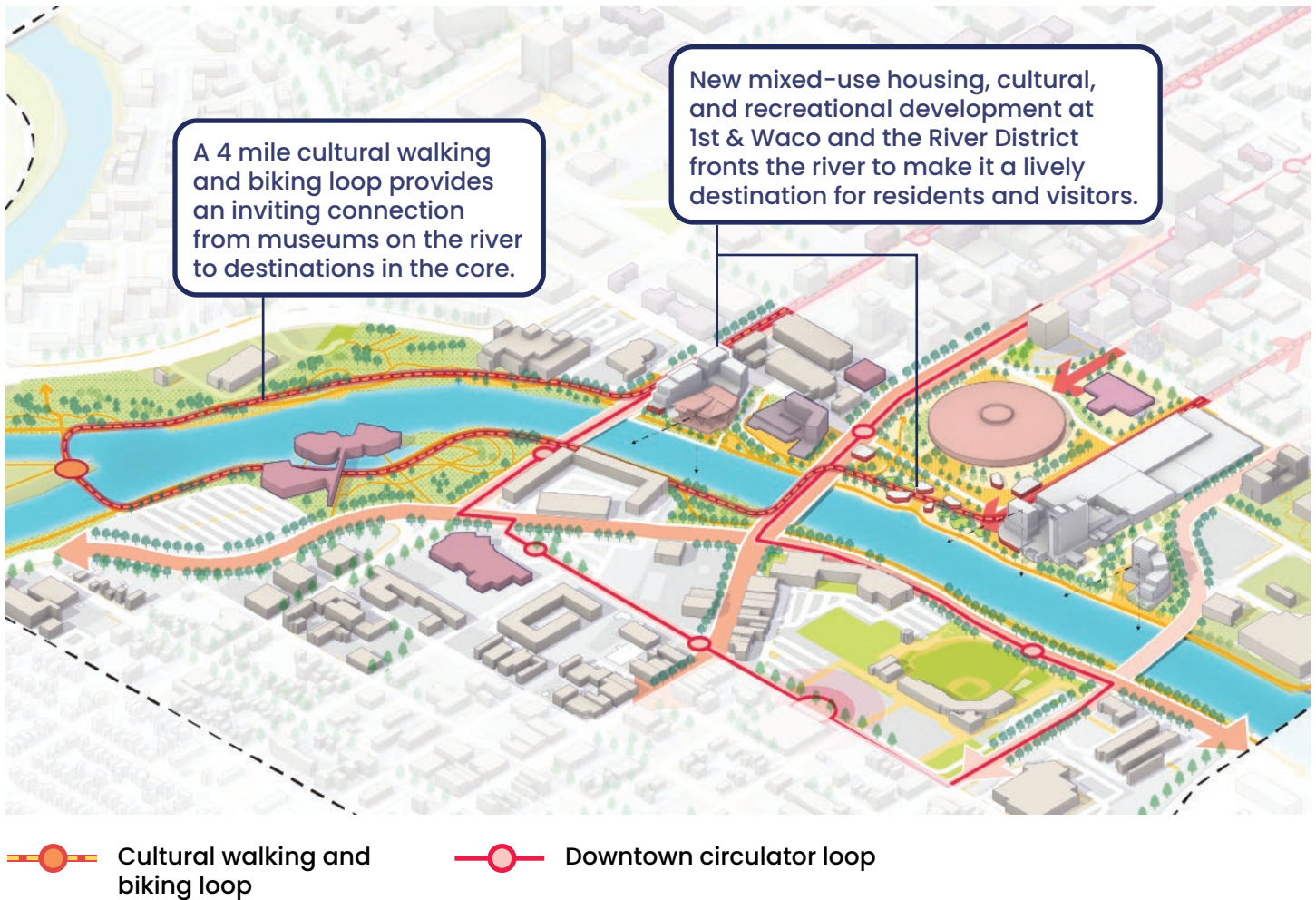


4 mi

4 mi walking and biking
loop connects museums,
entertainment, and
notable historic sites

Cultural Trail





HOW WE GET THERE



Landscape & Public Realm

Turn the river into a destination

See more on p. 122



History & Culture

Create a cultural walking and biking loop

See more on p. 134



Demonstration Sites

Prioritize the development of the River District and 1st & Waco riverfront sites

See more on pp. 148 and 160

Goal #3: Well-Designed Downtown

Landscape & Public Realm

Urban Form



Downtown Wichita will feature well-designed buildings, streets, and public spaces that create a safe, attractive, and welcoming environment.

"Broken glass and poor lighting don't make downtown feel welcoming."

"I'd love to have more places to hang out outside that didn't involve eating and drinking."

"With the Biomedical Campus coming into downtown, we'll need more nice housing for students and faculty."

- ① Minneapolis, MN
- ② Tulsa, OK
- ③ Columbus, OH
- ④ Fort Wayne, IN
- ⑤ Oklahoma City, OK
- ⑥ Houston, TX

District Identities



Downtown Open Spaces and Trees



 8

downtown districts with unique identities

 2

new green spaces

Active Ground Floors



300+

new street trees



3

full-time downtown ambassadors



HOW WE GET THERE



Landscape & Public Realm

Maintain a clean and safe downtown

See more on p. 114



Landscape & Public Realm

Invest in public spaces

See more on p. 116



Landscape & Public Realm

Plant and maintain hundreds of street trees

See more on p. 124



Urban Form

Develop downtown's public identity

See more on p. 44



Urban Form

Activate ground floors throughout downtown

See more on p. 52



Urban Form

Promote high-quality design in new development

See more on p. 54

Goal #4: Full Service Downtown

Living & Working

History & Culture



Downtown Wichita will evolve as a dense, mixed-use urban center to unlock new opportunities for living, working, shopping, and entertainment.

"Wichita's sense of community, central location, and potential for growth make it a great place to live, work, and visit."

"I would love to be able to grab a loaf of bread or a roll of toilet paper within walking distance of my apartment."

- 1 Austin, TX
- 2 Omaha, NE
- 3 Chicago, IL
- 4 Salt Lake City, UT
- 5 Boston, MA

New Housing Development



5,000

new housing units

Walkable Amenities for Daily Life



Urban Grocery Store



Performing Arts Center



2

new downtown event spaces

1+

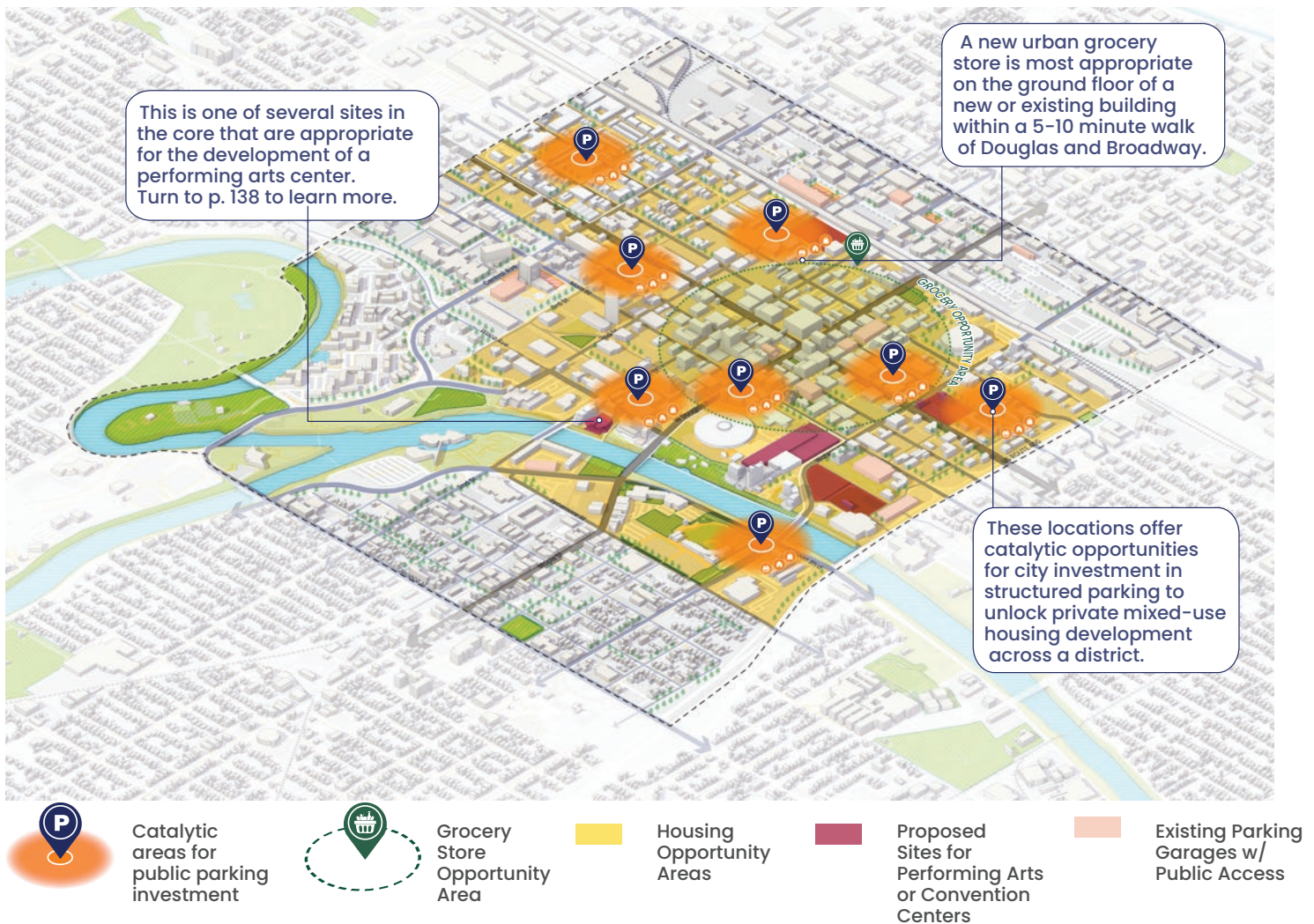
new grocery store

Repurposed Parking Lot



48%

of downtown's land is surface parking lots



HOW WE GET THERE



Living & Working

Incentivize new housing development

See more on p. 62



Living & Working

Attract missing amenities for daily living

See more on p. 80



Living & Working

Supply and manage parking to unlock development opportunities

See more on p. 82



History & Culture

Develop performing arts and convention centers

See more on p. 138

Downtown Vision

17 desired activities that stem from strategic action. Here's a snapshot of 8 of them.

URBAN FORM



Downtown neighborhoods will offer distinct experiences and their own look and feel.

(Flip to p. 44 to learn more)



LIVING & WORKING



Over 5,000 new apartments and townhomes in the next decade will provide more options for affordable urban living and support new shops, restaurants, and services.

(Flip to p. 62 to learn more)



HISTORY & CULTURE



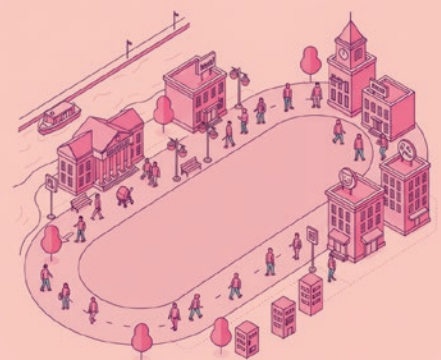
A performing arts center and new convention center will attract more visitors and showcase Wichita's rich cultural offerings.

(Flip to p. 138 to learn more)



A cultural walking and biking loop will guide Wichitans from riverfront museums to downtown hotspots.

(Flip to p. 134 to learn more)



GETTING AROUND



Douglas Avenue will have a new look that is greener, more pedestrian-friendly, and rich with activities.

(Flip to p. 92 to learn more)



A downtown circulator shuttle will connect one end of downtown to the other every 10-15 minutes.

(Flip to p. 108 to learn more)

LANDSCAPE & PUBLIC REALM



Downtown will feel greener and cooler with hundreds of new street trees.

(Flip to p. 124 to learn more)



The Arkansas riverfront will be home to enhanced parks, trails, and playgrounds, as well as more concerts, special events, housing, and dining options.

(Flip to p. 122 to learn more)



3

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE



IMPLEMENTATION 101

Action Plan Overview

The Implementation Guide is the roadmap for putting the Action Plan into motion. It lays out the community's to-do list for the next decade, organized around **5 themes** that connect goals, strategies, and actions.

5 Themes

WHY
 **4 Goals**

WHAT
 **17 Strategies**

HOW
 **100+ Actions**

 **7 Toolkits**
 Each theme includes at least one toolkit, which provides an in-depth understanding of how to turn strategies into action.

★ 5 Demonstration Sites

URBAN FORM

Why? Wichitans agree that downtown should grow and densify.

Flip to p. 40 to learn more.

-  01 Create a clear **sense of identity for downtown** to help guide future growth
-  02 Promote an **active ground-level** experience
-  03 Encourage **high quality design and materials** in new developments

LANDSCAPE & PUBLIC REALM

Why? Wichitans strongly desire more parks, open spaces, and trees.

Flip to p. 110 to learn more.

-  10 Maintain a **clean and safe** downtown
-  11 Invest in downtown **public spaces** to improve their design and programming
-  12 Turn the **river into a destination**
-  13 Develop a **street tree planting** and stewardship framework
-  14 Create a nature-based **stormwater management** strategy

LIVING & WORKING

Why? Wichitans want to live and work downtown.

Flip to p. 58 to learn more.

- 04 Deepen **development tools** to spur downtown housing development, especially in key districts and corridors
- 05 Attract **missing residential amenities**
- 06 Supply and manage **parking infrastructure** to unlock development

HISTORY & CULTURE

Why? Wichitans want to celebrate downtown's history and culture in its public realm.

Flip to p. 130 to learn more.

- 15 Create a **cultural walking and biking loop**
- 16 Encourage the development of functional new **performance and event spaces** downtown
- 17 Promote downtown **cultural happenings** and destinations

GETTING AROUND

Why? Wichitans want to get out of their cars and walk around.

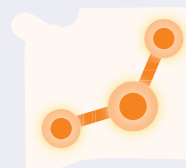
Flip to p. 86 to learn more.

- 07 Create a network of lively, safe, and **people-first streets**
- 08 Complete and strategically improving the **bike network**
- 09 Develop a high-frequency **downtown circulator** that connects The Hub with key points of interest

Goals

Present an overarching vision for how downtown Wichita will look and feel by 2035. They reflect the community's priorities and aspirations, as identified throughout the planning process.

In 2035, Wichita will have a:



**Connected
Downtown**



**Riverfront
Downtown**



**Well-Designed
Downtown**



**Full-Service
Downtown**

IMPLEMENTATION 101

User Guide

How Will Downtown Stakeholders Use the Plan?



The Developer

The Action Plan will show developers how to identify priority sites for high-quality mixed-use housing that can most effectively support a clean, safe, and full-service downtown.

The Action Plan's **Housing Toolkit** provides a quick snapshot of appropriate housing types, incentives, and development sites to spur new housing downtown.



The City Employee

The Action Plan will establish a framework for helping city staff make smart decisions about investing in downtown—improving streets, parks, and public buildings to set the stage for private investment.

When deciding how to invest in downtown streets, City staff can use the Action Plan's **Streetscape Toolkit**, which outlines key street design priorities.



The Business Owner

The Action Plan will connect business owners with city resources to enhance storefronts. It will support improvements to streets, parks, and public facilities, making the core cleaner, safer, and more welcoming.

The Action Plan's **Urban Form** section will help business owners learn how to activate ground floors, facades, historic structures, and landscapes to spur business activity.

How To Read The Plan

The Action Plan is designed to be easy to navigate and understand. Here's how it's organized:



Each **theme** includes 3–6 strategies that work together to make progress on key priorities for downtown.



Each report spread focuses on one **strategy** – explaining what it is, why it matters for downtown Wichita.

Within each strategy you'll find:



A short overview of the **strategy** and why it matters for downtown



A list of related **goals** that the strategy helps accomplish



An **action matrix** showing specific action items and execution details



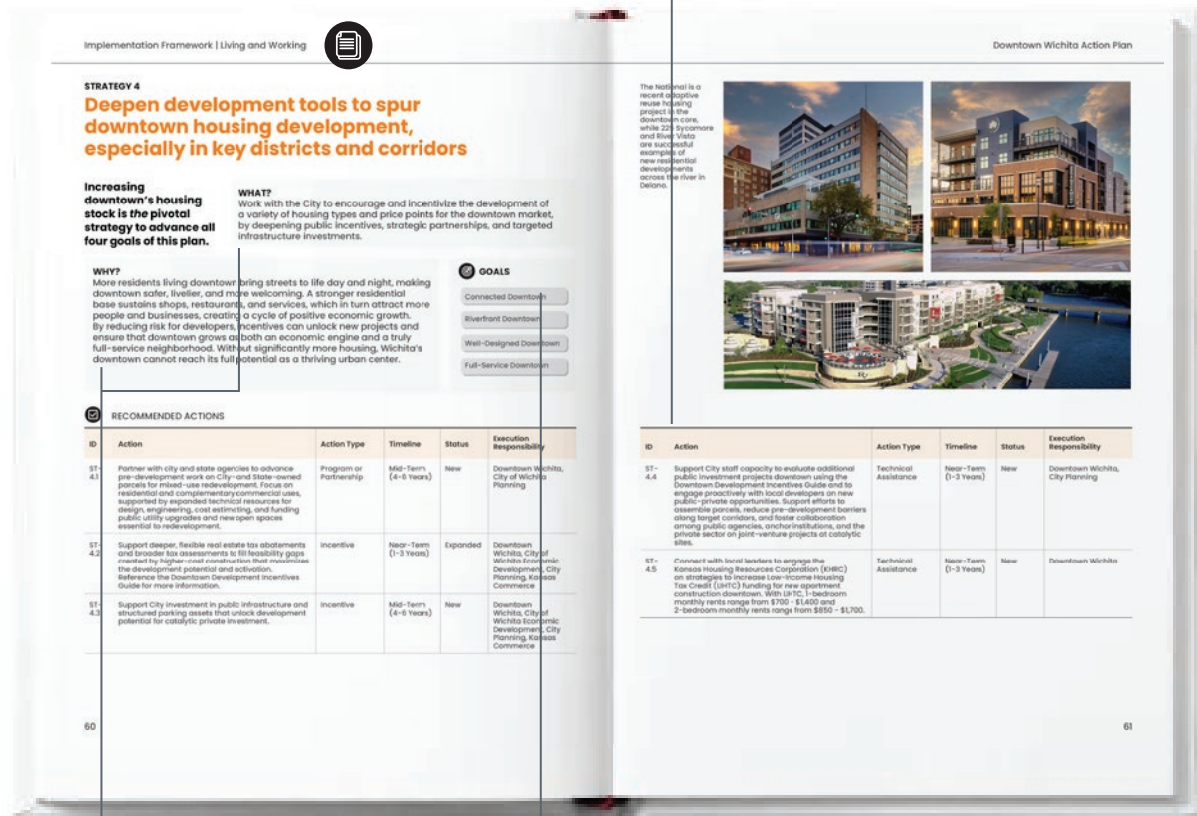
STRATEGIES

are arranged by five themes: Urban Form, Living & Working, Getting Around, Landscape & Public Realm, and History & Culture.



ACTIONS

provide a detailed to-do list for Downtown Wichita and partners over the next 10 years to accomplish each strategy.



WHAT & WHY

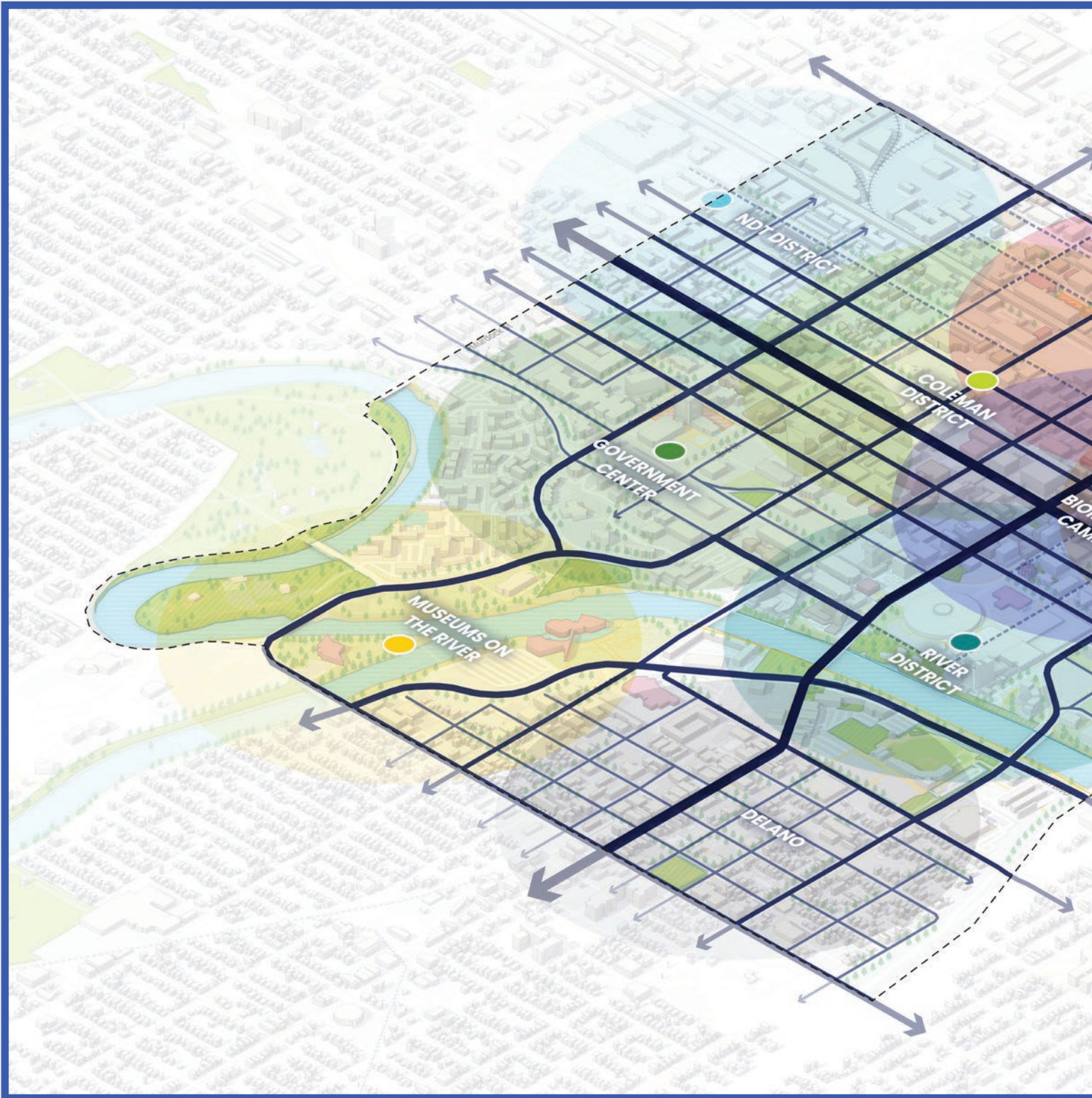
provide more detail about the strategy and why it's a good idea for downtown Wichita.



GOALS

let you know which of the Action Plan's four goals each strategy helps accomplish.

Urban Form





How does downtown achieve this vision?

1. Create a clear sense of identity for downtown to help guide future growth
2. Promote an active ground-level experience
3. Encourage high quality design and materials in new developments

State of Urban Form

Wichitans agree that downtown should grow and densify.

To encourage more development downtown, Wichitans told us that these challenges need to first be addressed:

- Too many surface parking lots
- Insufficient public transit connecting downtown to the suburbs
- Limited access to the river

Downtown Wichita boasts an impressive collection of historic architecture, including the Kress Building, and features a varied skyline of both high- and low-rise structures. However, surface parking lots occupy about 48 percent of the downtown land area, inhibiting vibrancy of the urban core.





Highlights

Historic Buildings

Downtown Wichita features an impressive collection of historic buildings that play a vital role in defining the area's identity while offering significant opportunities for adaptive reuse.

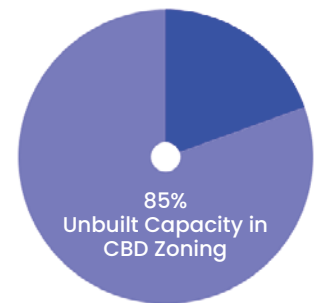
"Wichita's sense of community, central location, and potential for growth make it a great place to live, work, and visit."



Development Capacity

Extra capacity is embedded into CBD zoning, with only 15% of gross floor area currently utilized in existing building stock downtown.

Zoning Capacity in Downtown Wichita



No Minimum Parking Requirement

Absence of parking minimums in CBD zones is a significant development advantage.



Lowlights

Surface Parking

48% of downtown is dedicated to surface parking lots, most of which is privately owned. This presents barriers to creating vibrancy downtown if left in asphalt.

Surface Parking Lots in Downtown Wichita



Scattered Investment

Investment across downtown is fragmented, resulting in a lack of cohesion and connectivity.

Indistinct Identity

District identity can be confusing: e.g., does the Design District exist? Where does downtown end? Are these distinctions still meaningful?

"We need to take some risks as a development community to provide for future markets."



STRATEGY 1

Create a clear sense of identity for downtown to help guide future growth

WHAT?

Align on a downtown Wichita place brand and wayfinding system that support and enhance district identities within the core.

WHY?

Downtown Wichita lacks a clear place identity, narrative for its future, or wayfinding system, undermining efforts to attract residents, businesses, and visitors. Leaning into district identities will help break up the 100-block district into manageable components, while offering opportunities for clusters of new activity.



GOALS

Connected Downtown

Riverfront Downtown

Well-Designed Downtown

Full-Service Downtown



RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

ID	Action	Action Type	Timeline	Status	Execution Responsibility
ST-1.1	Work with the City to update the downtown wayfinding program, using the following hierarchy: - Gateway markers — large-scale signs/art at major entry points. - Vehicular directional signs — discreet, high-contrast typography to key parking and districts. - Pedestrian finger signs — walking-distance markers with icons and distances in minutes. - Storytelling panels — interpretive signs highlighting local history, culture, or quirky “only in Wichita” facts. As part of this process, conduct design charrettes with key district users like the Wichita Biomedical Campus, Old Town Association, etc. to ensure design and materiality of wayfinding reflects desired user experience in each district.	Program or Partnership	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	Expanded	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita
ST-1.2	Identify 4-6 high-activity nodes (e.g., Old Town Plaza, Riverfront promenade, Douglas & Broadway) for district branding pilots with concentrated signage, banners, and branded street furniture.	Capital Project	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita
ST-1.3	Launch new downtown wayfinding in concert with district branding so that residents learn the new identity while experiencing it. Messaging on signs, banners, and kiosks should be inspired by core messages identified in Action Plan workshops, such as: State of Flow, Confluence, Expect the Unexpected, with more detailed guidance in Downtown Identity Toolkit on p. 48.	Capital Project	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita



Downtown Identity Toolkit

Downtown's identity can be shaped through a series of visual, editorial, and communications choices that, together, project a consistent public identity. Over the course of the planning process, Wichitans expressed ideas and aspirations for the evolution of downtown Wichita's identity.



Districts

Districts are the building blocks of downtown Wichita's future, each shaped by its own mix of destinations, character, and activity.

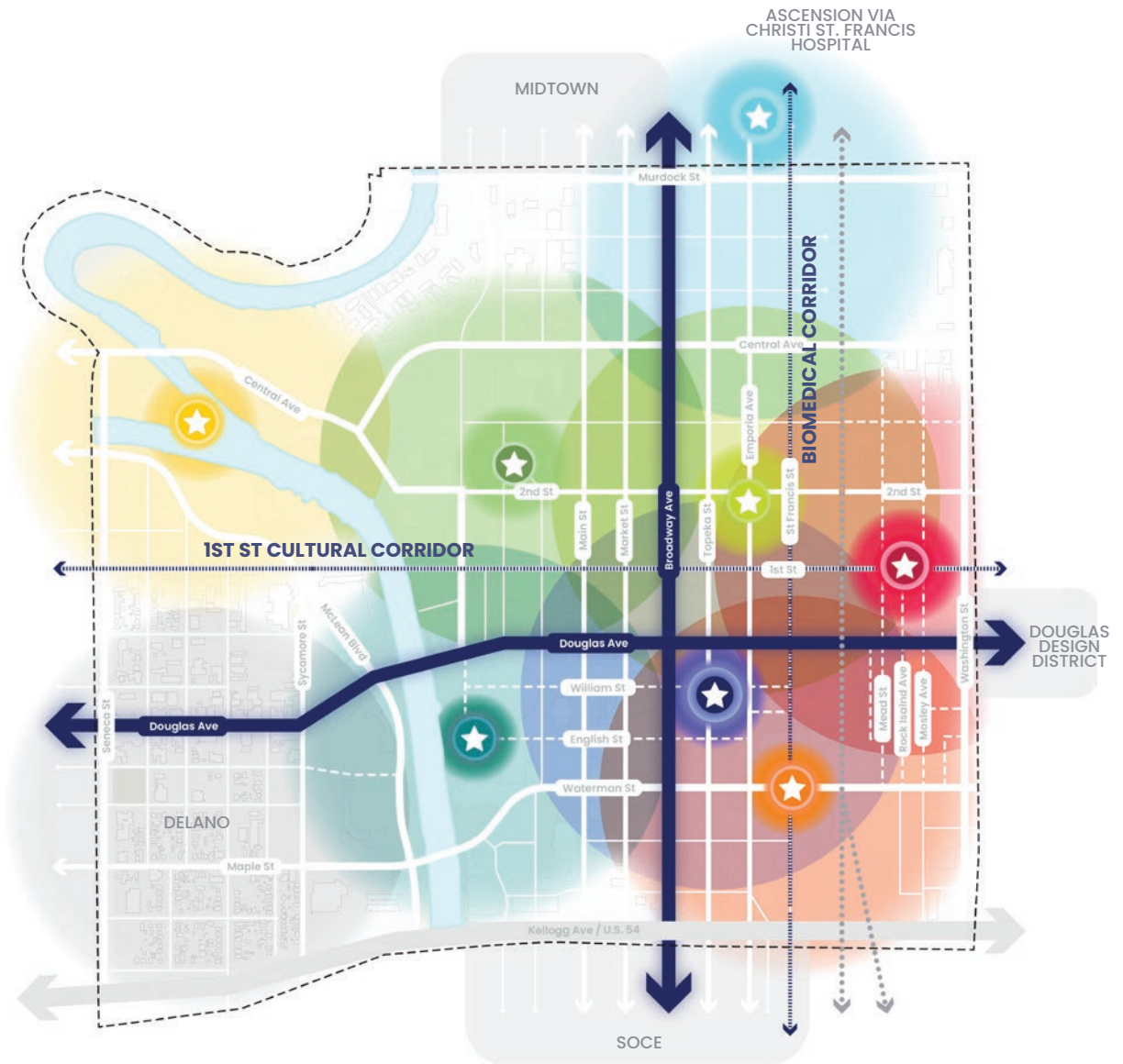
Place Branding

Place brand is the shared identity that expresses what makes downtown unique, uniting its history, culture, and community energy into a visual story.

Wayfinding

Informed by the place brand, wayfinding is the visual system that guides people through downtown, linking key places with clear, consistent cues.

Districts



What are districts?

Districts are the building blocks of downtown Wichita's future. Each of the **eight districts** represents a unique area shaped by its own mix of destinations, character, and activity. Rather than having strict boundaries, these areas grow outward from central "**nodes**"—places like major intersections, parks, or landmark buildings where people naturally gather. As new investments build on these centers of strength, the districts will expand and connect, creating a downtown that feels cohesive, vibrant, and easy to explore.

Districts

- Arena District
- Biomedical District
- Coleman District
- Museums on the River
- Government Center
- Old Town
- River District
- NDT District

Node



ARENA DISTRICT

Lively, entertainment-focused area anchored by the INTRUST Bank Arena.

Status: Emerging
Materials: Brick, Glass, Steel
Node: INTRUST Bank Arena
Key Streets: William, English, Waterman, Emporia

**BIOMEDICAL DISTRICT**

Innovation-focused area in downtown's core for wellness & education.

Status: New
Materials: Glass, Steel
Node: Wichita Biomedical Campus
Key Streets: William, English, Broadway, Emporia

**COLEMAN DISTRICT**

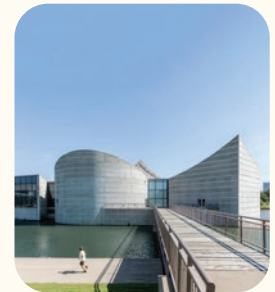
Music and arts hub forming near the former Coleman lantern factory.

Status: New
Materials: Brick, Glass, Steel
Node: 1st & Emporia
Key Streets: 1st, 2nd, Topeka, Emporia, St. Francis

**MUSEUMS ON THE RIVER**

Riverfront cluster of museums and cultural attractions.

Status: Established
Materials: Concrete, Glass, Stone, Wood
Node: Keeper of the Plains
Key Streets: McLean, Arkansas Riverfront

**GOVERNMENT CENTER**

Lively center of civic and government functions.

Status: New
Materials: Stone, Glass, Landscape
Node: Mayor's Pine Grove / City Hall
Key Streets: 2nd, 3rd, Central, Main

**OLD TOWN**

Shopping and entertainment district in repurposed warehouses.

Status: Established
Materials: Brick, Cobblestone
Node: Old Town Plaza
Key Streets: 1st, 2nd, Mead, Rock Island, Mosley

**RIVER DISTRICT**

Lush and active riverfront area with recreation, culture, and housing.

Status: New
Materials: Wood, Stone, Landscape
Node: A. Price Woodward Park
Key Streets: William, English, Douglas

**NDT DISTRICT**

Wellness-oriented live-work district supporting hospital patients and staff.

Status: New
Materials: Glass, Steel, Landscape
Node: Via Christi Hospital
Key Streets: Broadway, Central, Murdock, St. Francis



Place Branding

Place branding is the strategic process of building the reputation that your place truly deserves—whether it’s a city, region, or even a neighborhood.



Wichitans shared their thoughts about the downtown branding in series of workshops throughout the planning process.

It goes far beyond visual identity or catchy slogans; it’s about identifying, conceptualizing, communicating, and nurturing an image or sense-of-place. Multiple messages and channels work in concert to reshape perceptions, highlight key competitive advantages and cultural differentiators, and drive a compelling regional identity.

Throughout the planning process, the team hosted place identity workshops to begin a conversation about the evolving brand of downtown Wichita. Through candid dialogue, attendees surfaced both celebrated and contested elements of downtown’s identity, while also beginning to map the reputational assets and actors across sectors that contribute to the community’s image.



The Good

- **Creative spirit and innovation:** Wichita is home to makers, doers, and engineers—a legacy of innovation and entrepreneurship that continues to shape its future.
- **Unexpected vibrancy:** Downtown offers more than meets the eye—activities for all ages, walkable destinations, and a cultural scene that surprises and delights visitors and locals.
- **Sense of belonging:** For many, Wichita feels like home. Arts and culture foster a strong emotional connection, with pride in the city’s growth over the past 15 years.
- **Readiness for growth:** There’s a sense that Wichita is poised for its next chapter, with optimism that its best years are still to come.



The Bad

- **Identity and perception gaps:** Wichita struggles with a lack of confidence and clarity about its identity—caught between nostalgic and progressive visions.
- **Underleveraged assets:** Natural and cultural assets are not fully activated, maintained, or connected into a cohesive experience.
- **Engagement disconnect:** A gap exists between who uses and values downtown’s offerings and who controls the narrative.
- **Quality-of-life barriers:** Concerns about cleanliness, walkability, food options, and parking diminish the downtown experience and feed a perception of mediocrity.

Drawn from ideas and aspirations voiced by Wichitans in a series of workshops, the downtown Wichita place brand is now ready for its next iteration.

The below scenarios illustrate how various ideas—contributed by stakeholders and culled from research and observation—hang together in conceptual clusters. The three scenarios aren't incompatible with one another; rather they show how differentiating qualities of downtown Wichita can find editorial and emotionally resonant expression.

State of Flow

Kinetic, dynamic, changing, evolving

A place in motion, of creative emergence, of possibility. Perpetually open to new people, who find themselves contributing to the flow—and directing its channel. Where other cities treat innovation as an outcome, here it is an underlying condition. Just as one cannot step into the same river twice, this place is ever renewed.

The flow state comes easily: “going with the flow” is as natural as everyday life.

Confluence

Converging, overlapping, intersecting

Multiple desire lines, multiple networks come together in this place. The paths may appear as logistics, or as transit modes: trains, planes, rivers. Yet the confluence is more profound, marked as a gathering place, ceremonial and sacred.

Now, new confluences emerge, bridging East and West and bringing entrepreneurs, builders, seekers, dreamers to downtown.

Expect the Unexpected

Surprising, spontaneous, ever-changing

A landscape of daily encounters with friends and with strangers. Around every corner, with each new day, a new discovery. A place that feels familiar without losing its power to spark serendipity. Newcomers express surprise—“this is Wichita?”—but so do longtime residents.

Expecting the unexpected is a community practice, a way of life.

WHAT'S NEXT?

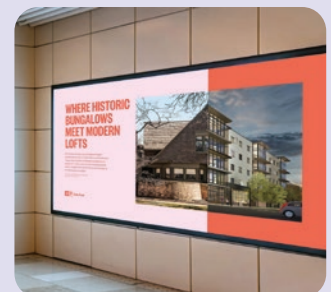
See ST-1.1 thru 1.3 for recommended next steps to formalize the brand scenarios into a cohesive wayfinding and district package for downtown Wichita.



LOOKING TO...

Oak Park, IL

The Oak Park civic rebrand defined a common language for the neighborhood with vibrant colors and surprising visual mashups to reposition the community's identity for a new generation while honoring its legacy.



Wayfinding

Informed by the place brand, wayfinding is the visual system that guides people through downtown, linking key places with clear, consistent cues.

Like any downtown streetscape, the environment of downtown Wichita is visually textured: street signs and sandwich boards, trash receptacles and transit shelters, planters and sculptures. Especially along main streets, the density of these environmental cues can be overstimulating – and potentially confounding to the user.

Consider that some city blocks contain as many as a dozen

benches, two different types and sizes of planters, public art installations, an information kiosk, a parking gateway, and a district marker on the street – in addition to storefront signage and displays.

While many of these streetscape elements may be helpful and well-loved, the overall current condition is too cluttered for easy navigability and legibility at the pedestrian scale.

Inconsistent wayfinding contributes to visual clutter in Old Town.



A downtown district's wayfinding shouldn't just point the way — it should communicate the district's personality.

This means aligning signage design, colors, typography, and materials with the district's brand position, essence, and identity so that every sign reinforces a shared narrative. The goal is to ensure residents feel they've arrived in a place with its own character, not just a location on a map.

Anchor wayfinding in brand essence

A district's wayfinding shouldn't just point the way — it should communicate who the district is. This means aligning signage design, colors, typography, and materials with the district's brand position, essence, and identity so that every sign reinforces a shared narrative.

Create a clear messaging hierarchy

District wayfinding should follow the four-tier messaging system: identification, direction, information/interpretation, and regulatory. Each layer in this system is visually distinct but stylistically linked. Pedestrian signage should focus on direct, plainspoken nomenclature, high-contrast typography, and walk-distance maps, while other identity tools (art or lighting) deliver emotional and cultural cues.



LOOKING TO...

Philadelphia, PA

SEPTA established a simplified and consistent visual vocabulary, clear hierarchy, and unique color scheme for each transit line to eliminate confusion and strengthen system identity.



WHAT'S NEXT?

See ST-1.1 thru 1.3 for recommended next steps to develop a downtown wayfinding system. Individual districts within downtown can be layered into the overall downtown wayfinding system.

STRATEGY 2

Promote an active ground-level experience

WHAT?

Encouraging activity at the ground level of downtown buildings through shops, dining, or art displays.

WHY?

Downtown Wichita has many empty or unattractive spaces at street level, like surface parking lots, garages, and buildings with dark or covered windows. These ‘dead spaces’ make downtown feel less lively, less inviting, and less safe.



GOALS

Connected Downtown

Riverfront Downtown

Well-Designed Downtown

Full-Service Downtown



RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

ID	Action	Action Type	Timeline	Status	Execution Responsibility
ST-2.1 	Partner with the City to expand the Façade Improvement Program, offering small matching grants to property owners for upgrades, with priority given to riverfront buildings and key corridors such as Douglas Avenue.	Incentive	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	Expanded	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita Economic Development
ST-2.2	Partner with owners of vacant buildings, local artists, creatives, and community groups to develop partnerships that activate vacant or underused spaces through art installations, murals, and temporary pop-up events—similar to the Gallery Alley and Alley Doors projects.	Program or Partnership	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	Expanded	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita Planning
ST-2.3	Support and incentivize local businesses with programs such as “Adopt a Block” to encourage stewardship and pride in storefronts and streetscapes. Provide small business resource guides and liaise with business development teams for recruitment and retention focused on diverse and inclusive businesses that attract a broad audience.	Program or Partnership	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita
ST-2.4	Work with the City to develop clear standards intended for City departments for the public realm in the right-of-way, inclusive of elements like better lighting, shade, and seating; clear walk zones; and window transparency to create a more comfortable pedestrian experience.	Toolkit	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, Public Works

Many downtown streets feature blank walls, tinted windows, and sky bridges that take people off the streets.

Downtown Wichita's Winter Wonderland helps bring downtown windows to life. Artist Paris Jane Cunningham adds her touch with a beautiful hand-painted display.



LOOKING TO...

Alpena, Michigan

Alpena's Downtown Development Authority has awarded over \$140,000 in matching grants, up to \$10,000 per facade, to support exterior improvements in its historic downtown.

The program funds transformative projects such as brickwork restoration, window and door replacement, signage, and awnings.

Impact:

These grants have spurred more than \$2 million in total investment, revitalizing downtown storefronts, enhancing historic character, and attracting new businesses and customers.



- ① Awnings add texture and shading
- ② Lighting improves visibility at night
- ③ Art in the window provides an interesting temporary use

- ④ Transparent glass and bright paint make the facade more visually attractive
- ⑤ Restored cornice aligns to historic character of this street

STRATEGY 3

Encourage high quality design and materials in new developments

WHAT?

Encourage all new downtown buildings to be well-designed with high-quality architecture, durable materials, and attractive landscaping.

WHY?

High-quality design makes downtown safer, more beautiful, and more inviting for residents, businesses, and visitors — helping to boost community pride, attract investment, and ensure downtown Wichita's long-term success.

**GOALS**

Connected Downtown

Riverfront Downtown

Well-Designed Downtown

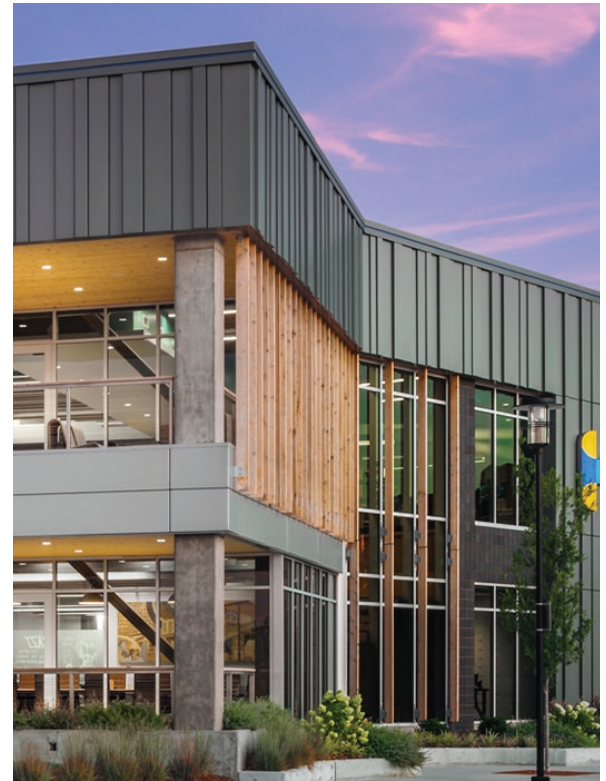
Full-Service Downtown

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

ID	Action	Action Type	Timeline	Status	Execution Responsibility
ST-3.1 Regulate: Build clear design guidelines and standards into the land use and development review process. Apply formal reviews through a revamped Downtown Design and Innovation Center (DDIC) process. DDIC is a entity of downtown stakeholders convened by Downtown Wichita that reviews and provides resources to support downtown redevelopment plans.					
ST-3.1.1	Provide design guidance for developments that receive public development tools through the Downtown Design And Innovation Center (DDIC) process.	Design Review	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	Expanded	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita Economic Development, DDIC
ST-3.1.2	Once the DDIC process is formalized, adopt a clear development and public space design rubric to influence the quality, accessibility and maintenance standards for private development that receives public incentives.	Policy	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita Planning, City of Wichita Economic Development
ST-3.1.3	Advocate for revised tax policy that disincentivizes the demolition of downtown buildings by taxing vacant lots at a higher rate.	Policy	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita
ST-3.2 Guide: Promote awareness of best practices in design and construction by providing developers with direct guidance, technical assistance, and resources that help elevate project quality from concept to completion.					
ST-3.2.1	Develop a Downtown Design Standard and Material Guidance Booklet that promotes durability and aesthetics while balancing cost, expanding on the Action Plan's Housing Development Toolkit on p. 64.	Technical Assistance	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita Planning
ST-3.2.2	Launch a technical assistance program that pairs developers with local design professionals to elevate project quality from concept to construction.	Technical Assistance	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita Planning
ST-3.2.3	Develop an online resource center offering model plans, best-practice case studies, and a database of approved materials to support developers.	Technical Assistance	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita Planning
ST-3.3 Educate: Celebrate and promote good design through public-facing initiatives such as awards programs, open house events, and partnerships that engage the community in shaping the future of downtown.					
ST-3.3.1	Establish an annual downtown design awards program to recognize excellence and innovation.	Program or Partnership	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita
ST-3.3.2	Host public open house events or "preview tours" for new developments to generate excitement and community engagement.	Program or Partnership	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita Planning

The renovation of the Broadway Plaza into the AC Hotel Wichita Downtown is an excellent example of historic preservation in a downtown redevelopment.

Hutton's new Delano office building is built to last using eco-friendly mass timber, concrete, and metal.



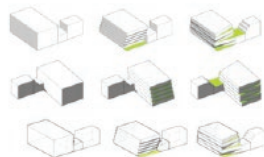
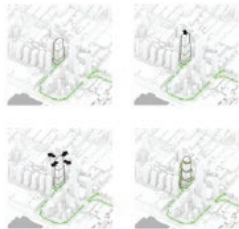
LOOKING TO...

Nashville, Tennessee

GUIDELINE 08

DEMONSTRATE A CLEAR AND COHERENT ORGANIZING DESIGN CONCEPT IN THE PROJECT MASSING AND SITE LAYOUT.

- Make architectural concepts clear, compelling, and consistent to their own guiding logic. Consider and design building massings with attention to solar orientation, access to open spaces, street adjacencies, and existing fabric. Shape buildings to respond to the surrounding context, through setbacks, fenestration patterns, horizontal details, and other key visual relationships.
- Design sites, building massing, pathways, and the approach to respect existing view corridors and create new viewpoints from public streets and spaces where feasible. Take note of which viewpoints are visible from different vantage points and design with those in mind, including from major thoroughfares and open spaces.
- Create a complementary relationship between structures (new, existing, and approved) with clear attention to views from all sides and approaches. Buildings should be spaced apart, avoiding long, uninterrupted building lengths. The building footprints should be carefully shaped and laid out on site to support these views and access to light on all frontages.
- Design buildings that relate to the human scale – carefully consider the proportions of the base of the building in relation to the pedestrian and creating an active pedestrian realm. Refer to Guidelines under Goal 2 – Human-Oriented Design.
- Consider the transition between the design of the base and the design of upper floors to be visually cohesive and comfortable, through material and facade separation, treatment, and proportions.



The Nashville Downtown Code Design Guidelines provide design-based guidance for development in the Downtown Code (DTC) zoning district.

Developed to complement DTC's zoning regulations, the guidelines serve as a tool for applicants to clearly demonstrate how development proposals meet four overarching design goals through narratives and illustrative materials. Though the DTC remains the regulatory framework, these guidelines establish design expectations for projects undergoing review, encouraging context-sensitive, high-quality development.

Impact:

By offering consistent feedback and clarity to developers, the guidelines support growth that enhances downtown's architectural and public space standards.

Nashville Downtown Code Design Guidelines

A 10-Step Downtown Urban Design Guide

These urban design guidelines help new buildings fit thoughtfully into downtown.

Consider the impacts on downtown's public realm — such as streets, parks, plazas, and gathering places. Prioritize high-quality, durable designs to enhance downtown's character and long-term vitality.



1. Step building massing back from the street edge after the 3rd or 4th floor.

Why? This keeps the street feeling open and prevents tall buildings from overpowering people at ground level.



2. Arrange massing and heights on site to respond to adjacent building heights.

Why? This helps new buildings fit in better with their surroundings.



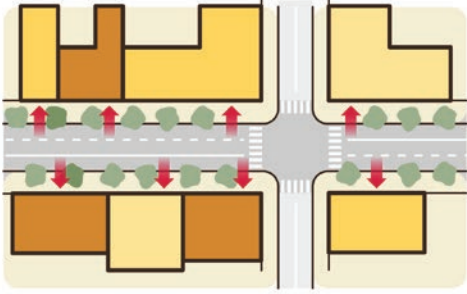
3. Adaptively reuse or incorporate significant or historic facades and features in new developments.

Why? This helps preserve downtown Wichita's historic buildings and reinforces community pride.



4. Minimize setbacks in the core of downtown to establish a strong relationship with the street.

Why? Keeping buildings close to the street makes the area feel lively and inviting for pedestrians.



5. Position building entrances on major streets.

Why? Entrances on busy streets make it easy for people to find and access businesses and services.



6. Activate ground floors with public uses along major streets.

Why? Shops, cafes, or other public spaces at street level encourages activity and makes downtown safer.



7. Orient active building edges to adjacent public and open spaces.

Why? Foot traffic near open spaces makes them feel more connected and well-used.



8. Break down development massing to create a more interesting walk.

Why? Smaller building segments feel friendlier and more comfortable for people walking nearby.



9. Screen all street-facing parking garages with art or architectural screening.

Why? Covering garages improves how the area looks and makes walking more pleasant.



10. Consider pedestrian comfort by limiting sun exposure and planting street trees.

Why? Trees and shade make walking and hanging out outdoors more enjoyable.

Living and Working





How does downtown achieve this vision?

1. Deepen development tools to spur downtown housing development, especially in key districts and corridors
2. Attract missing residential amenities
3. Supply and manage parking infrastructure to unlock development

— High
— Medium, and
— Low
 Density housing opportunities

State of Living & Working

Wichitans want to live and work downtown.

But living and working downtown can face several challenges:

- Lack of amenities, such as a grocery store
- Limited public investment in public space
- Insufficient transit options
- Shortage of housing

To invite current and future Wichitans to live and work downtown, downtown needs:

- More daytime and nighttime amenities (sidewalk cafes, rooftop bars, outdoor performance spaces)
- Support for small businesses
- Inviting gathering spaces
- More housing

Set to open in 2027, the Wichita Biomedical Campus is redefining downtown as a center of innovation and collaboration. The area thrives as a hub for corporate offices, such as the Ruffin Building, and for dining destinations like Lotte.



Highlights

Transformative Economies

The Wichita Biomedical Campus is expected to diversify and attract new talent, which will directly impact the housing market. This presents a wide range of development opportunities for various product types, drawing in a broader array of developers with different scopes and capacities.

Projected Housing Growth

Demand for housing downtown is expected to increase, with 3,765 new units projected by 2030 per Zimmerman/Volk. Rental production in the 80–120% AMI range is expected to increase, but there is also a healthy demand for for-sale options like condos and townhomes.

“Downtown has changed a lot over the last 15 years.”



Projected Demand for New Housing Units, 2025–2030

 **3,765**

Housing Types in Demand, According to Wichitans



Town-homes



Mixed-Use Buildings



Courtyard Apartments

Lowlights

Lack of Amenities

Open house attendees overwhelmingly shared their need for a grocery store in the downtown core. They also emphasized a demand for additional shopping, dining, and cultural, nightlife, and wellness amenities.

Low Retention and Feeling of Belonging

Many Wichitans emphasize the need for more “community living room” spaces that aren’t centered around food & drink.

“My job is the only thing keeping me here.”



Amenities in Demand, According to Wichitans



Grocery Stores



Shopping



Dining, Museums, and Art Galleries

“What if cheap wasn’t the only thing that made it good?”



STRATEGY 4

Deepen development tools to spur downtown housing development, especially in key districts and corridors

Increasing downtown’s housing stock is *the* pivotal strategy to advance all four goals of this plan.

WHAT?
Work with the City to encourage and incentivize the development of a variety of housing types and price points for the downtown market, by deepening public development tools, strategic partnerships, and targeted infrastructure investments.

WHY?
More residents living downtown bring streets to life day and night, making downtown safer, livelier, and more welcoming. A stronger residential base sustains shops, restaurants, and services, which in turn attract more people and businesses, creating a cycle of positive economic growth. By reducing risk for developers, development tools can unlock new projects and ensure that downtown grows as both an economic engine and a truly full-service neighborhood. Without significantly more housing, Wichita’s downtown cannot reach its full potential as a thriving urban center.

 GOALS

- Connected Downtown
- Riverfront Downtown
- Well-Designed Downtown
- Full-Service Downtown

 RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

ID	Action	Action Type	Timeline	Status	Execution Responsibility
ST-4.1	Partner with city and state agencies to advance pre-development work on City- and State-owned parcels for mixed-use redevelopment. Focus on residential and complementary commercial uses, supported by expanded technical resources for design, engineering, cost estimating, and funding public utility upgrades and new open spaces essential to redevelopment.	Program or Partnership	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita Planning
ST-4.2	Support deeper, flexible real estate tax abatements and broader tax assessments to fill feasibility gaps created by higher-cost construction that maximizes the development potential and activation. Reference the Guide to Downtown Development Tools on p. 76 for more information.	Incentive	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	Expanded	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita Economic Development, City Planning, Kansas Commerce
ST-4.3	Support City investment in public infrastructure and structured parking assets that unlock development potential for catalytic private investment.	Incentive	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita Economic Development, City Planning, Kansas Commerce

The National is a recent adaptive reuse housing project in the downtown core, while 225 Sycamore and River Vista are successful examples of new residential developments across the river in Delano.



ID	Action	Action Type	Timeline	Status	Execution Responsibility
ST-4.4	Support City staff capacity to evaluate additional public investment projects downtown using the Guide to Downtown Development Tools on p. 76 and to engage proactively with local developers on new public-private opportunities. Support efforts to assemble parcels, reduce pre-development barriers along target corridors, and foster collaboration among public agencies, anchor institutions, and the private sector on joint-venture projects at catalytic sites.	Technical Assistance	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, City Planning
ST-4.5	Connect with local leaders to engage the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation (KHRC) on strategies to increase Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) funding for new apartment construction downtown. With LIHTC, 1-bedroom monthly rents range from \$700 – \$1,400 and 2-bedroom monthly rents range from \$850 – \$1,700.	Technical Assistance	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita

Determining Development Opportunity

Findings from Zimmerman/Volk Associates 2025 downtown residential market forecast indicate strong opportunities for housing growth in the next 5 years. The research suggests that downtown Wichita is poised for continued residential expansion, with an anticipated absorption of **3,130 to 3,765 new housing units over the next five years** (626–753 units annually).

Downtown Wichita
Housing Market
Study Takeaways



3,765

PROJECTED
DEMAND FOR
NEW HOUSING
UNITS, 2025–2030



10%

RENT
PREMIUM FOR
DOWNTOWN
UNITS

Hutton is building
3-story rental
apartments on a
vacant lot near the
ballpark



The downtown housing market can be characterized by the following trends:

- **The market for middle-income housing remains strong** (earning 80% to 120% of Area Median Income, or AMI), with a weighted average base rent of \$1,315 per month.
- **The vacancy rate has dropped;** for new developments, occupancy is at or above 95%, which represents functional full occupancy.
- **A limited number of luxury market-rate units can be supported**, with rents starting at \$2,000 per month. The drivers of this emerging market are an increasing proportion of residents moving to Wichita from affluent counties across the U.S.
- **New middle-income housing development will likely require development tools**, as incomes have not increased as much as construction costs.
- **Location, walkability and proximity to downtown amenities (e.g., entertainment and retail) matter**, providing an up to 10% rent premium for well-situated developments.
- While downtown has not experienced new for-sale housing development since 2009, **there is demand for for-sale condominiums and townhouses**. Market research suggests developers “start with small projects to test the market” and attract new households to Wichita.

To identify the most suitable sites for new housing downtown, the Action Plan applies a **parcel-level evaluation process**. This method ensures vacant and underutilized land is systematically assessed for its development potential and aligned with appropriate housing density.



1 Inventory Vacant and Underutilized Parcels

Compile a comprehensive dataset of all downtown parcels that are either vacant or contain less than 10% built structure. This inventory includes both publicly and privately owned properties, with the majority currently functioning as surface parking lots.

All Vacant or Underutilized Parcels



2 Categorize by Lot Size and Configuration

Classify each parcel into standardized categories based on physical dimensions and arrangement: single-row lots, multiple-row lots, medium-sized parcels, and large consolidated sites. These categories help identify which housing typologies are most feasible on each parcel type.

Parcels by Lot Size

	Small Single		Medium
	Small Row		Large

3 Overlay with Density Corridors and Generate Housing Opportunity Map

Evaluate each parcel's location in relation to downtown's designated density corridors. Align lot categories with appropriate housing density levels—low, medium, or high—based on corridor designation and surrounding land use context.

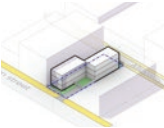
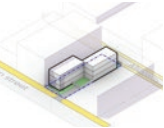
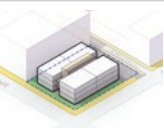
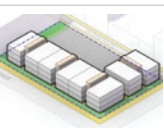
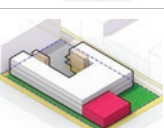
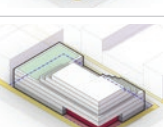
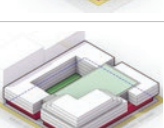
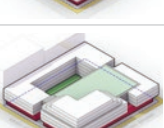
Housing Opportunity Map

	Low Density
	Medium Density
	High Density

Development Opportunity Lot Guide

Step 1. Find your parcel type

Step 2. Determine your density corridor

	Typology	Tenure	Lot Type	Lot Size (Acres)	Density Corridor	# of Floors	Gross Floor Area (sf)	Floor to Area Ratio	Parking Solution
	Townhome	For Rent	A	0.07	Low	2-3	4,400	1.40	Driveway
	Townhome	For Sale	A	0.07	Low	2-3	4,400	1.40	Driveway
	Rowhome	For Rent	B	0.36	Low	2-3	36,000	2.30	Tucked Driveway
	Rowhome	For Sale	B	0.36	Low	2-3	36,000	2.30	Tucked Driveway
	3-Story Walkup	For Rent	C	0.59	Low	3	21,000	0.82	Surface Parking Lot
	3-Story Walkup	For Rent	B	1.39	Low	3	49,500	0.82	Surface Parking Lot
	Single-Loaded Apartments	For Sale	B, C	0.67	Medium	3-4	25,000	0.86	Ground Floor + Surface Lot
	Single Egress Apartments	For Sale	B, C	0.34	Medium	3-6	25,000	3.42	Ground Floor + Surface Lot
	5 over 2 Apartments	For Rent	B, C, D	2.75	High	5-6	170,000	1.42	Ground Floor + Surface Lot
	Texas Wrap Apartments	For Rent	B, D	2.44	High	6-7	212,500	2.00	Structured Parking
	Texas Wrap Apartments	For Sale	B, D	1.21	High	6-7	105,600	2.00	Structured Parking

	Ground Floor Retail	Unit Count	Avg. Unit Size	Parking Spaces	Parking Ratio	Devt. Cost per Unit	Devt. Cost per SF	Avg. Rent / Sale Price	Households in Target Market / Yr	Priority
	No	2	2,200	4	2.00	\$450,000	\$205	\$3,300	197	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)
	No	2	2,200	4	2.00	\$505,000	\$230	\$545,400	24	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)
	No	20	1,800	40	2.00	\$370,000	\$206	\$2,880	341	Near-Term (1-3 Years)
	No	20	1,800	40	2.00	\$405,040	\$225	\$437,443	95	Near-Term (1-3 Years)
	No	25	840	31	1.25	\$242,750	\$303	\$1,600	550	Long-Term (7-10 Years)
	No	60	825	75	1.25	\$242,750	\$303	\$1,600	550	Near-Term (1-3 Years)
or ot	No	25	1,000	37	1.50	\$320,625	\$321	\$346,275	101	Long-Term (7-10 Years)
or ot	No	50	1,000	75	1.50	\$306,875	\$307	\$331,425	101	Long-Term (7-10 Years)
or ot	Yes	200	850	240	1.25	\$287,563	\$338	\$1,913	552	Near-Term (1-3 Years)
	Yes	250	850	375	1.50	\$343,475	\$404	\$2,125	407	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)
	Yes	80	1,100	140	1.75	\$449,500	\$409	\$485,460	34	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)

Downtown Housing Types

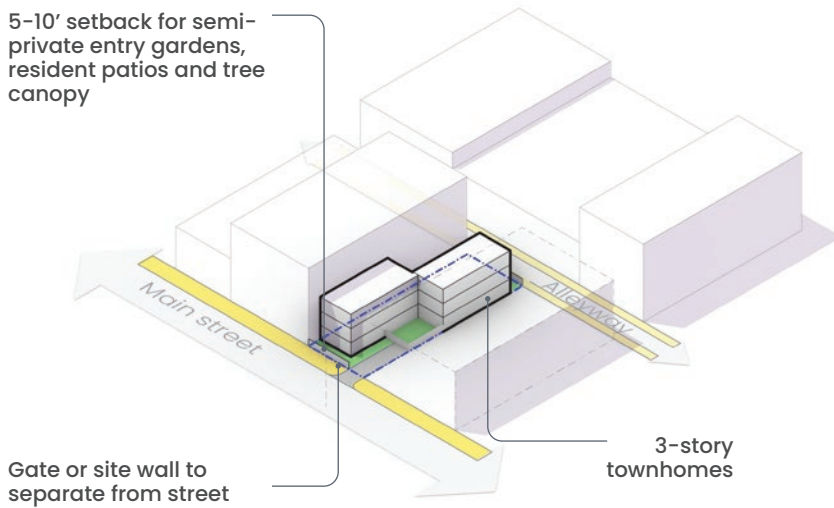
Townhomes

A townhome is a multi-level home designed for one household, typically sharing one or more walls with neighboring units while having its own separate entrance.

DENSITY:
Low

LOT TYPE:
A

5-10' setback for semi-private entry gardens, resident patios and tree canopy

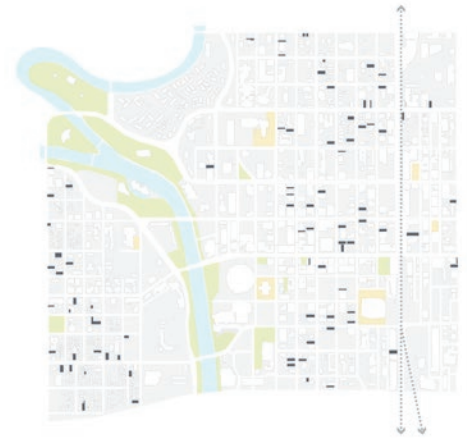


LOOKING TO...



Westside Duplex, Charleston, SC

The **Westside Duplex** is a strategic infill project in downtown Charleston that reimagines the city's historic façades and materials through a contemporary lens. Its design engages the streetscape while incorporating setbacks for parking, landscaping, and privacy, balancing urban presence with residential comfort.



DEVELOPMENT PROFILE

Market Opportunity

- » **Strong Demand:** Over 3,100 new housing units are projected in the next five years, showing steady growth potential.
- » **High Occupancy Rates:** Current rates above 95% indicate strong market absorption, especially for rental townhomes.
- » **Desirable, Walkable Location:** Properties in walkable areas can command up to a 10% rent price premium compared to less accessible locations.
- » **Broad Appeal:** Townhomes attract both local residents and people relocating from other areas, expanding the potential buyer and renter base.

Challenges

- » **High Construction Costs:** Building costs are elevated, which may require financial incentives or partnerships to make projects feasible.
- » **Unproven Downtown Market:** The area has limited recent housing development, so a pilot project could help demonstrate demand and guide future investment.

User Mix

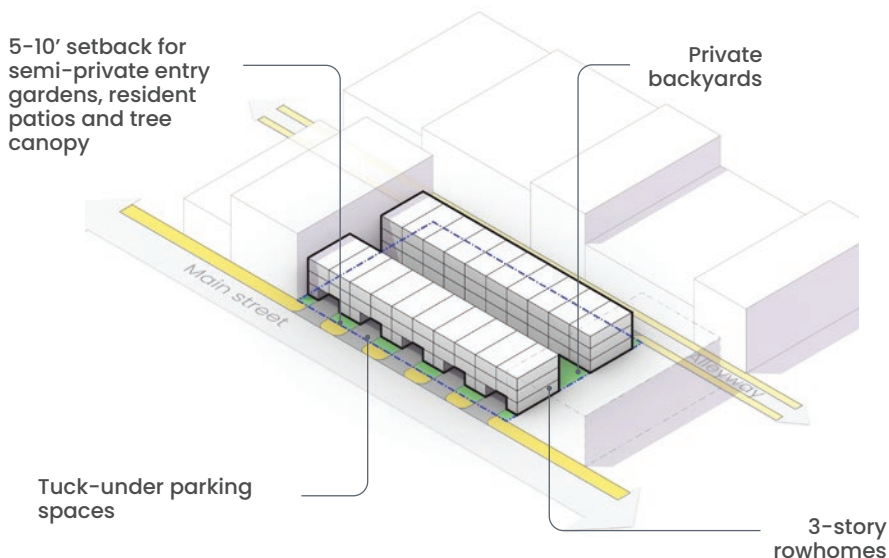
- » Singles, young families, retirees
- » Moderate to higher-income households (100-120% AMI), aligned with biomedical sector growth

Rowhomes

A rowhome is a single-family townhome that is part of a connected row of similar houses, sharing walls with neighbors on one or both sides, and featuring its own private entrance.

DENSITY:
Low

LOT TYPE:
B

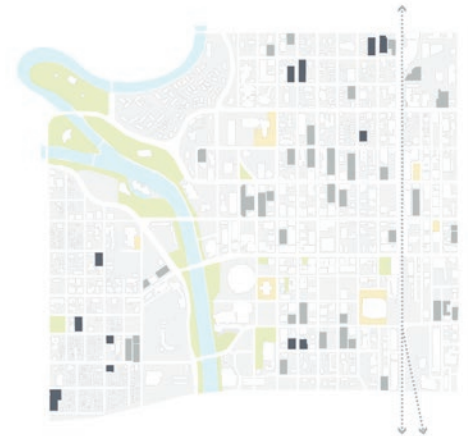


LOOKING TO...



Trailhead Mews, Bentonville, AR

Trailhead Mews in Bentonville, Arkansas engages the community with street-facing entrances and patios adjacent to public right-of-way, hiding private vehicular parking behind with a central alley for service access. Trailhead Mews uses a simple design that ensures windows face public spaces and streets to ensure resident observation of the public realm.



DEVELOPMENT PROFILE

Market Opportunity

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- » **High Occupancy Rates:** Current rates above 95% indicate strong market absorption, especially for rental townhomes.
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Challenges

- » **High Construction Costs:** Building costs are elevated, which may require financial incentives or partnerships to make projects feasible.
- » **Unproven Downtown Market:** The area has limited recent housing development, so a pilot project could help demonstrate demand and guide future investment.
- » **Parcel Assemblage:** Pre-development assemblage may be required on adjacent parcels with different owners.

User Mix

- » Singles, young families, retirees
- » Moderate to higher-income households (100-120% AMI), aligned with biomedical sector growth

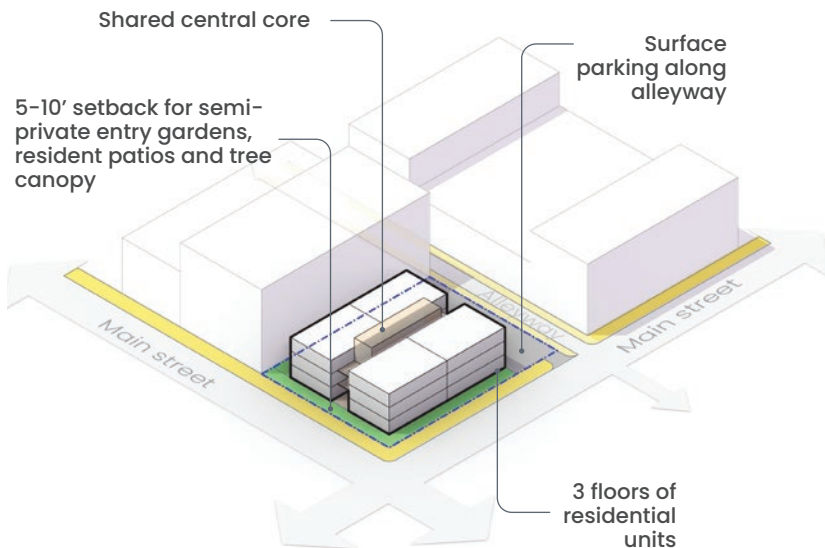
Downtown Housing Types

3-Story Walkups

A 3-story walk-up is a multi-story apartment building without an elevator, where residents use stairs to access upper floors.

DENSITY:
Low

LOT TYPE:
B

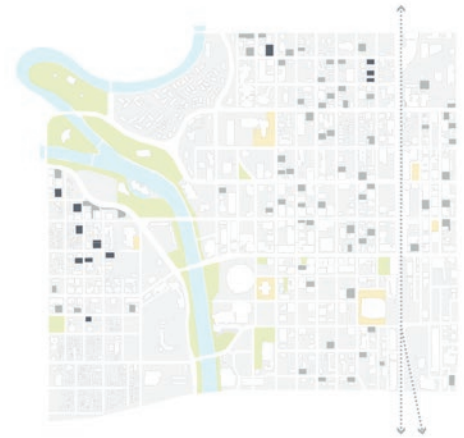


LOOKING TO...



Soleil Apartments, Portland, OR

Soleil Apartments in Portland, Oregon uses a 3-story walk-up design to maximize space on a small lot near downtown. The building also includes an active ground floor with floor-to-ceiling windows and a modern industrial facade to complement the area's history.



DEVELOPMENT PROFILE

Market Opportunity

- » **Cost-Effective Construction:** 3-story walk-ups are simpler and cheaper to build compared to elevator buildings, supporting affordability and faster development.
- » **Strong Demand in Medium-Density Neighborhoods:** Suitable for urban and suburban locations with growing populations looking for mid-density housing options.
- » **Appeals to Renters Seeking Affordability:** Popular among renters who want apartment living without elevator costs reflected in rents.
- » **Scalable Development:** Allows for relatively high unit counts on flat sites, supporting efficient land use.

Challenges

- » **Limited Accessibility:** Lack of elevators may deter some tenants, including seniors or those with disabilities.
- » **Market Perception:** May be viewed as less modern or desirable compared to taller buildings with more amenities.

User Mix

- » Predominantly younger singles and couples seeking affordable, central living
- » Smaller share of empty nesters and moderate-income families

3-Story Walkups

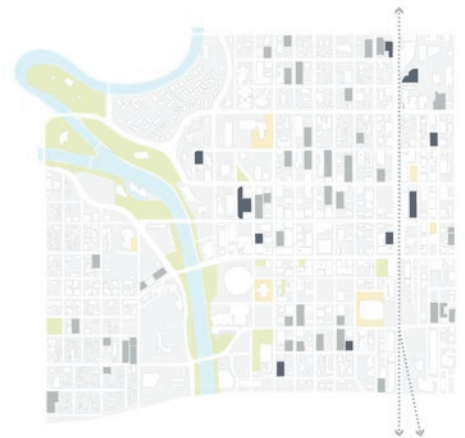
A 3-story walk-up is a multi-story apartment building without an elevator, where residents use stairs to access upper floors.

DENSITY:

Low

LOT TYPE:

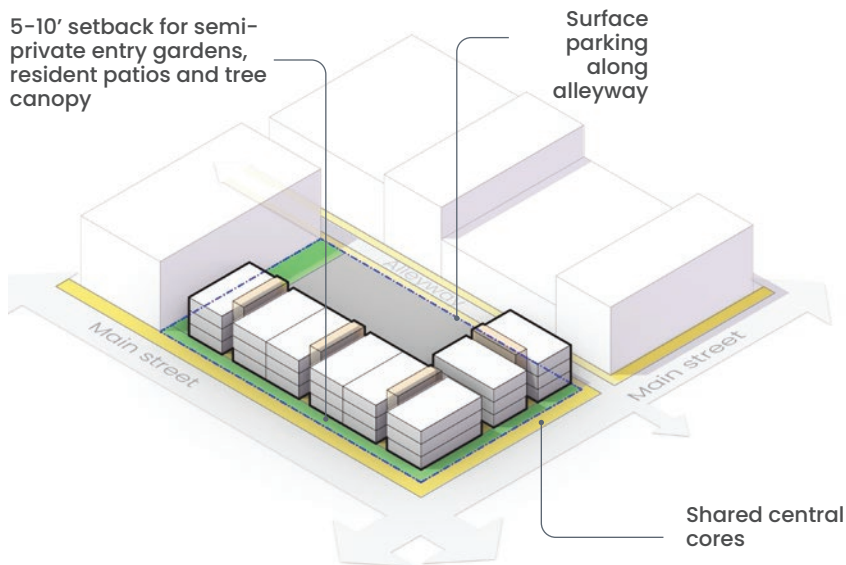
C



DOWNTOWN SPOTLIGHT



Corner 365 Apartments, Wichita, KS



LOOKING TO...



Railyard Flats, Sioux Falls, SD

Railyard Flats is the South Dakota's first modern mass timber residential building, blending sustainable construction with nods to Sioux Falls' rail and industrial heritage. Exposed glulam beams and timber ceilings create warmth and durability, while a hybrid structure supports three stories of lofts above ground-floor commercial space.

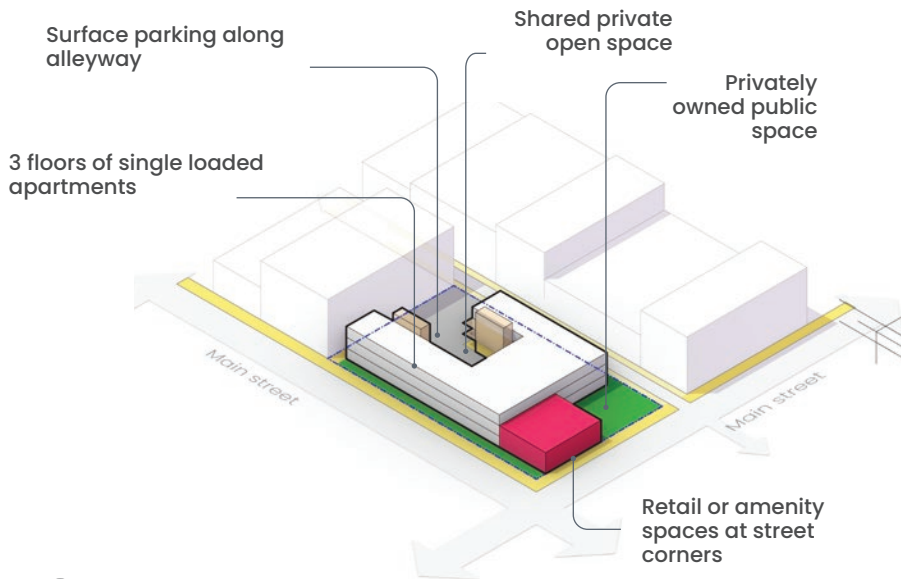
Downtown Housing Types

Single-Loaded Apartments

A single-loaded apartment is a building where all units are located along one side of a hallway, with each unit having windows that face outdoors for natural light and ventilation.

DENSITY:
Medium

LOT TYPE:
C

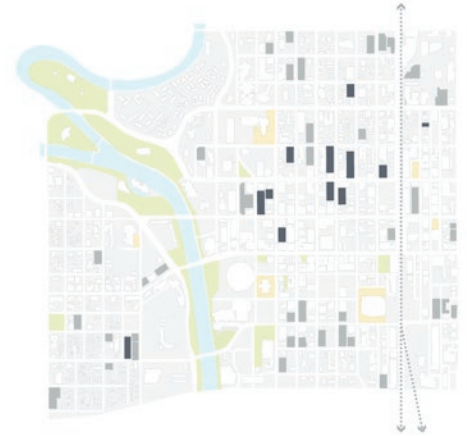


LOOKING TO...



1221 Broadway, San Antonio, TX

1221 Broadway in San Antonio, Texas converts a former industrial site into a mixed-use riverfront community with over 300 living units, office, and retail. Designed by Lake Flato, its single-loaded corridor maximizes light and air for loft-style units, while ground-level retail and landscaped courtyards create a lively, pedestrian-friendly environment.



DEVELOPMENT PROFILE

Market Opportunity

- » **Maximizes Natural Light and Ventilation:** Single-loaded design provides desirable unit layouts with windows on one side, increasing tenant satisfaction.
- » **Appealing in Walkable Neighborhoods:** Ideal for locations where views and outdoor access matter, attracting renters and buyers valuing quality of life.
- » **Moderate Density with Privacy Benefits:** More private than double-loaded corridors, balancing density with comfort.

Challenges

- » **Site Width Requirements:** Requires wider sites to accommodate single-loaded corridors, which can limit location options.
- » **Potential Higher Land Cost per Unit:** Because of lower density compared to double-loaded designs, efficiency may be affected.

User Mix

- » Attracts renters prioritizing natural light and privacy
- » Popular among couples, single professionals, and some families
- » Suitable for mid-rise developments with moderate density



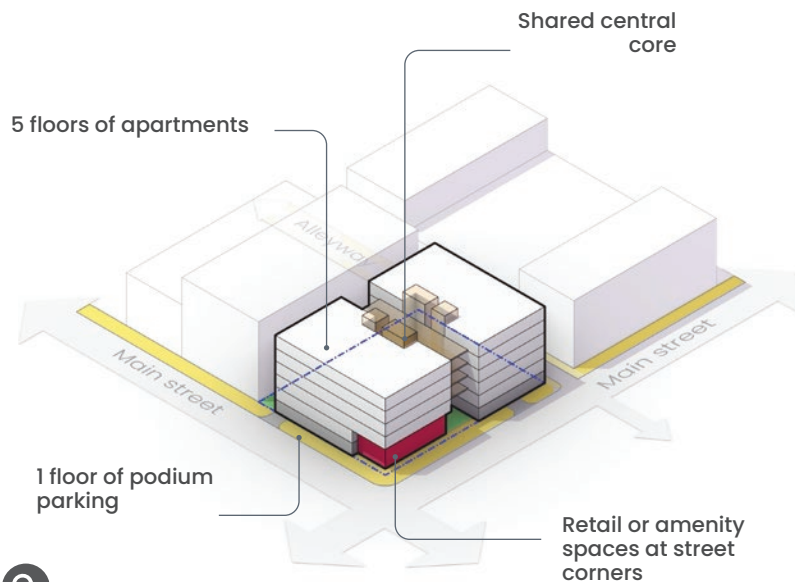
River Vista Apartments, Wichita, KS

Single Egress Apartments

A single-egress apartment is a residential building designed with one primary stair serving all units, offering an efficient and cost-effective layout for smaller multifamily housing.

DENSITY:
Medium

LOT TYPE:
B

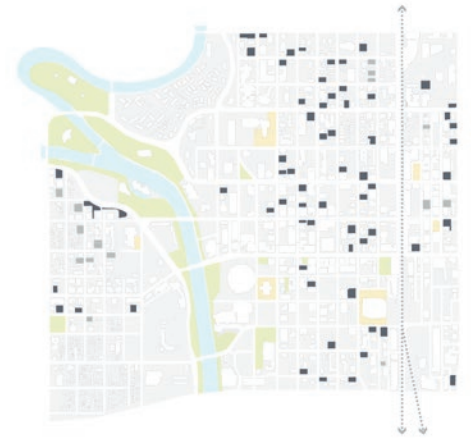


LOOKING TO...



Ashram Apartments, Austin, TX

Ashram Apartments is the first three-story, single-stair project permitted in Austin since the city updated its building code. Its modern facade features large windows and clean lines to maximize outdoor living.



DEVELOPMENT PROFILE

Market Opportunity

» **Lower Construction Complexity and Costs:** Single-egress buildings can be simpler and less expensive to construct in small-scale projects.

Challenges

» **Safety and Code Compliance Issues:** Single-egress designs are limited by fire and safety regulations, restricting marketability and scale.

» **Insurance and Financing Restrictions:** Potentially higher insurance costs and difficulty securing financing due to perceived risks.

User Mix

» Popular among couples, single professionals, and some families

» Suitable for mid-rise developments with moderate density

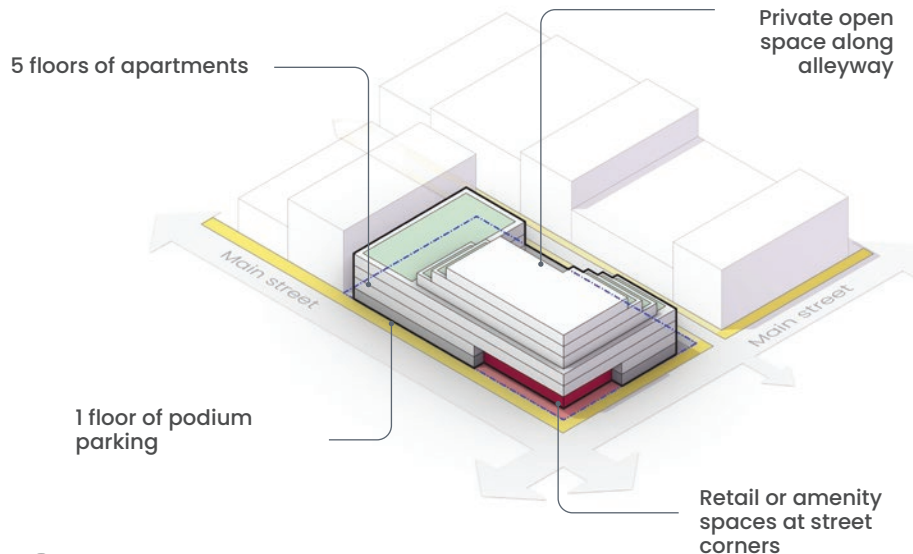
Downtown Housing Types

5-Over-2 Apartments

A 5-over-2 is a building with five stories of wood-frame residential units constructed above two stories of concrete or steel structure, often used for parking or retail spaces.

DENSITY:
High

LOT TYPE:
B

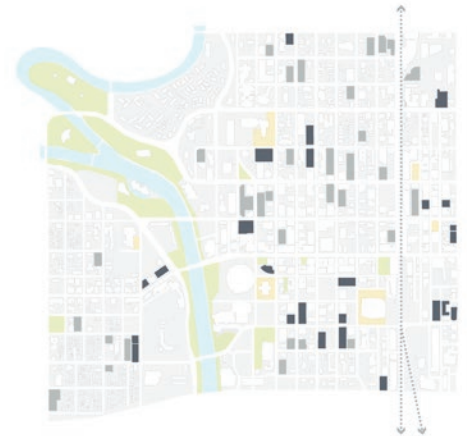


LOOKING TO...



Rye House, Baltimore, MD

Rye House in Baltimore applies contemporary design standards rooted in the area's industrial heritage. Brick facades, steel detailing, and large windows reference historic port warehouses, while setbacks allow for ground-level retail, landscaping, and enhanced resident privacy.



DEVELOPMENT PROFILE

Market Opportunity

- » **Popular Urban Typology:** Combines cost-efficient wood-frame residential floors over durable concrete/steel podiums for parking or retail.
- » **Supports Mixed-Use Development:** Podium can include commercial space, retail, or parking, enhancing site amenities and walkability.
- » **High Demand Among Renters and Owners:** Common typology in urban infill sites appealing to those wanting mid-rise living with amenities.

Challenges

- » **Higher Construction Costs:** Podium construction increases costs, requiring sufficient pricing or incentives.
- » **Zoning and Height Restrictions:** Site-specific regulations outside of the Central Business District (CBD) zoning district may limit the ability to build full 5-over-2 structures.

User Mix

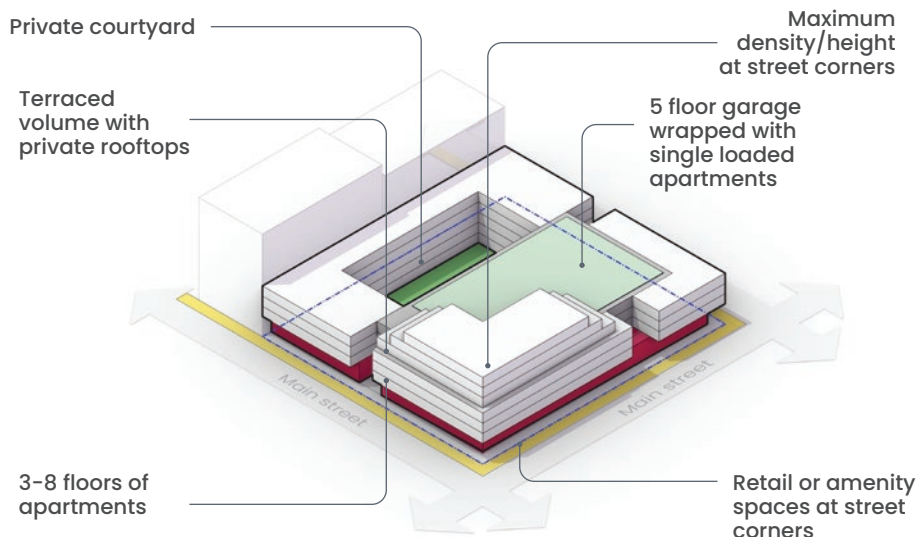
- » Attracts young professionals, small families, and empty nesters
- » Appeals to renters and condo buyers seeking urban amenities and walkability

Texas Wrap Apartments

A Texas Wrap is a residential building design in which apartment units surround a multi-level parking structure, creating a wrapped configuration that maximizes the site.

DENSITY:
High

LOT TYPE:
D



LOOKING TO...



Western Supply, Tulsa, OK

Western Supply in Tulsa provides an active ground floor with ample room for pedestrians. Vegetation provides comfort and adds to the value of the property, but maintains clear sight lines to entries and commercial use. The design character is rooted in the place through the use of materials and native planting.



DEVELOPMENT PROFILE

Market Opportunity

- » **Maximizes Land Use:** Wrapping residential units around parking structures creates efficiencies in land use and increases unit count.
- » **Popular in Sunbelt Markets:** Well-suited for warmer climates where parking structures protect cars from weather.
- » **Supports Large-Scale Developments:** Common in large urban developments with parking demand.

Challenges

- » **Higher Complexity and Costs:** Requires detailed structural coordination between parking podium and residential units, raising costs.
- » **Market Suitability:** Rent levels must align with local incomes to ensure absorption.

User Mix

- » Younger singles and couples seeking amenities
- » Significant interest from empty nesters and retirees preferring maintenance-free lifestyles

Guide to Downtown Development Tools

Strategic Public Investment to Unlock Housing Downtown

The Downtown Development Feasibility Gap

In downtown Wichita, like many cities and towns throughout the U.S., the cost to develop new buildings is more than most prospective residents and commercial tenants are willing to pay.

As a result, many downtown lots remain vacant or underused as surface parking, rather than being redeveloped into housing and commercial space that could activate streets, draw new residents, and strengthen downtown retail and cultural life.

It's a Catch 22: vacant lots undermine downtown's appeal for residents and tenants, reduce what they are willing to pay, and further exacerbate the financial feasibility gap that hampers new development.

Without Development Tools, Housing Construction Will Not Occur

Cities and towns in Kansas and throughout the U.S. have successfully escaped the downtown Catch 22 with strategic early-stage public incentives and investment.

These public investments and incentives help bridge the gap between the cost of construction and what tenants will pay in the short term, and leverage private investment to jumpstart development activities on vacant lots. In doing so, they increase the vitality and appeal of downtown, and create more favorable conditions for development in the longer term.

RIGHT: A Illustration of the financial feasibility gap for new housing development in downtown Wichita today, and how public investment and incentives could help close it

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

Property Tax Exemption

The City can reduce or pause property taxes on new housing to make projects more affordable to build.

City Parking Infrastructure Investment

The City can build or help fund shared parking to help offset large upfront development costs.

City Land Contribution

The City can provide public land at a reduced cost to help jump-start housing development.

Special Tax Assessment

The City can create a special tax district where citizens help contribute to a fund for public improvements to support new housing.

Federal and State Tax Equity

Developers can use state and federal tax credits help offset costs of, for example, repurposing a historic building or building affordable housing.

This example illustrates the feasibility gap in developing a hypothetical 200 unit apartment building in downtown Wichita.

● Cost of Development

Besides **hard costs** (the direct “brick-and-mortar” cost to physically build the building), **the cost to build parking is the next biggest cost item.**

● Project Funding Sources

A development project is funded by **mortgage debt** (typically borrowed from the bank, repaid over time with interest with income from the building) and **equity** (cash that the developer and/or their investors put in).

The funding available is largely determined by prevailing rent levels.

For example, the higher rent, the higher income from the building, the more the developer can take on mortgage debt.

In downtown Wichita, prevailing rent levels leave a significant funding gap.

● The Feasibility Gap

This funding gap assumes an average monthly rent of \$2,000 per unit.

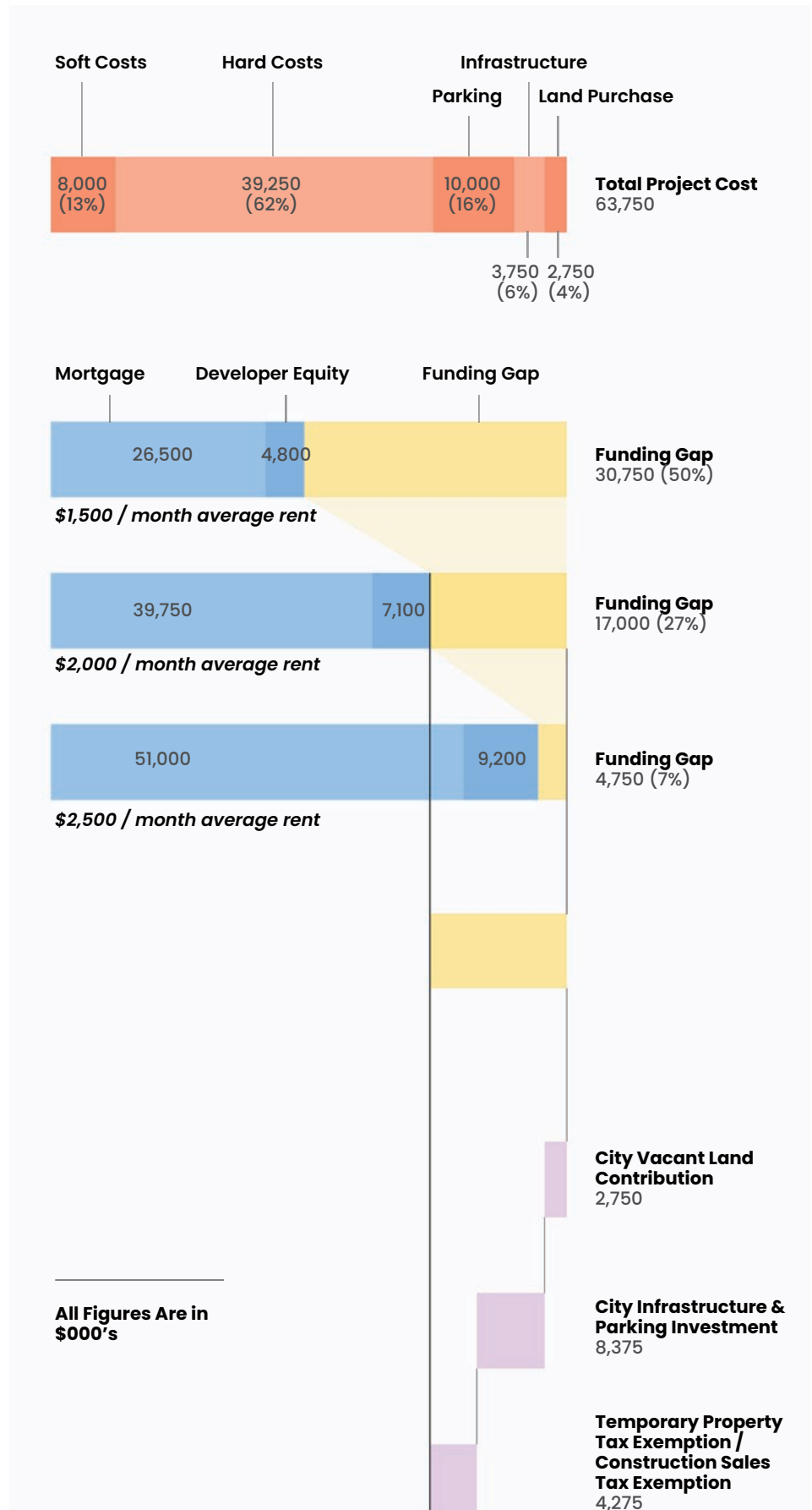
● Public Investments & Incentives to Close the Gap

City vacant land contribution removes the cost of purchasing land from the project.

City-provided parking infrastructure offsets one of the biggest components of project cost.

Temporary property tax exemption and/or construction sales tax exemption further close the feasibility gap.

These public investment and incentives are instrumental for the project reaching financial feasibility.



Public Investment & Incentives Have a Successful Track Record in Wichita

Wichita is following the examples of cities in the region and across the U.S. with the successful implementation of public incentives and investment to unlock new development downtown, making impressive progress with construction projects like the Wichita Biomedical Campus, 225 Sycamore, the Cargill Protein headquarters, and the new EPC Ballpark apartments.

In each case, a relatively modest public contribution has unlocked private-sector funding that paid for the majority of the

project. The benefits unlocked by this approach are myriad:

- Future tax revenue that far exceeds what a vacant lot can generate
- Job creation related to building construction and operation
- New housing and job opportunities and retail amenities
- Increased vitality that increases downtown's appeal to residents and tenants and shrinks the future development feasibility gap

Program Category	Wichita Incentive Programs	Wichita Project Examples		How It Works
Property Tax Exemption Programs	Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRB), Economic Development Exemptions (EDX)		HiTone Lofts	• City agrees to delay property tax assessment increases that would result from new construction on vacant properties. • Developers use property tax savings to help finance new construction. • City increases its future property tax base after exemption period as the real estate value increases from new construction.
City Parking Infrastructure Investment			Cargill Headquarters, Wichita Biomedical Campus, EPC Ballpark Apartments	• City invests in new structured parking assets that support the viability of new adjacent construction projects. • Developer purchases and owns valuable newly constructed parking assets.
City Land Contribution			Wichita Biomedical Campus, EPC Ballpark Apartments	• City contributes vacant, underutilized land to support a construction project that will increase the property's real estate value and future City tax revenues.
Special Tax Assessment	Community Improvement District (CID), Self-Supported Municipal Improvement District (SSMID)		225 Sycamore	• City creates a supplemental sales tax (usually up to 2%) to a district, earmarked for public realm and infrastructure improvements to support development. The CID may last up to 22 years and can support commercial, industrial, or mixed-use ventures.
Federal & State Tax Credit Equity	Kansas Housing Resources Corporation (KHRC)		Union at Purple Heart Trail Apartments	• Federal funding for the construction of new apartment construction with 1-bedroom rents ranging from \$700 – \$1,400 per month and 2-bedroom rents ranging from \$850 – \$1,700 per month.

Recommendation: Strengthen Wichita's Strategic Public Investment Tools

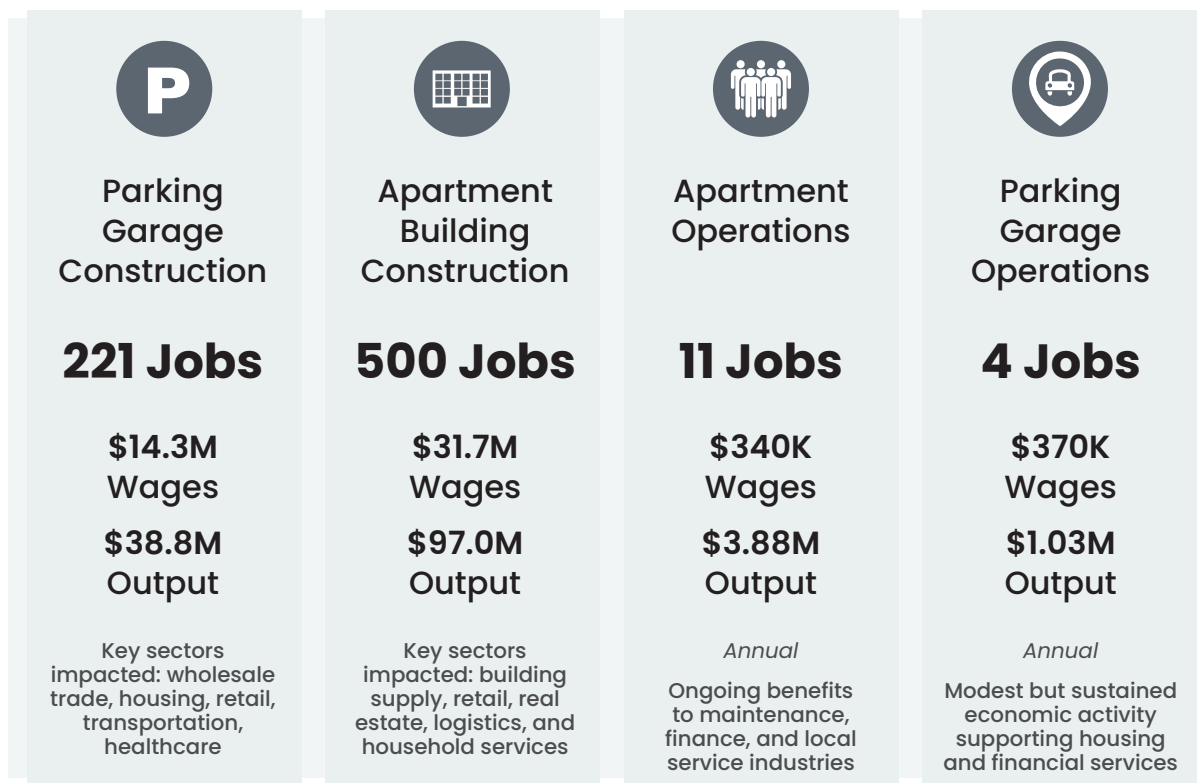
Many successful projects that came out of the 2010 Downtown Plan were made possible by the strategic deployment of public investment tools. But the city has farther to go before downtown vitality – and what residents and businesses are willing to pay for it – can up with the cost of new construction and close the feasibility gap.

Implementation of the downtown plan will require continued public support for Wichita's strategic public investment tools:

- Support for City investment in structured parking assets that unlock development potential and feasibility for catalytic private investment
- Support for flexible real estate abatements to fill feasibility gaps created by higher-cost urban construction
- Support for increased technical support resources for design, engineering, cost-estimating and funding for public utility infrastructure upgrades and new public open space needed to support redevelopment
- Support for City staff resources to analyze more public investment projects Downtown, and proactively engage with local developers on more public-private development opportunities
- Support for local leaders' engagement with the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation (KHRC) on strategies to increase Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) funding for new apartment construction downtown. With LIHTC, 1-bedroom rents range from \$700–\$1,400 per month and 2-bedroom rents range from \$850–\$1,700 per month (2025).

LEFT: Overview of how past deployment of public investment has spurred development in Wichita

RIGHT: A CEDBR Economic Impact Analysis evaluated a potential \$23 million City investment in a downtown Wichita parking garage supporting a new 250-unit apartment project. The study found that over the first 10 years, the investment would generate more than \$230 million in economic impact—a return exceeding 10 times the initial investment.



STRATEGY 5

Attract missing amenities to enhance daily life

WHAT?

Identify and attract a range of residential amenities currently lacking downtown, such as a grocery store, pharmacy, and dry cleaners, to enhance convenience and livability for residents.

WHY?

Downtown's growth depends on filling key amenity gaps that enhance residents' quality of life. Attracting these missing full-service amenities through strategic partnerships and incentives supports local businesses and increases convenience of downtown living.

**GOALS**

Connected Downtown

Riverfront Downtown

Well-Designed Downtown

Full-Service Downtown

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

ID	Action	Action Type	Timeline	Status	Execution Responsibility
ST-5.1	Target a diverse mix of shops, eateries, and entertainment venues for both existing and new ground-floor retail locations throughout downtown to expand offerings beyond what is available today. Next steps: 1. Conduct a retail market study to identify specific gaps in goods, services, and experiences desired by current and future downtown residents. 2. Cultivate a tenant prospect list and proactively market available ground-floor sites to operators that meet identified gaps (e.g., cafés, casual dining, live music venues, makerspaces). 3. Incorporate amenity requirements into Downtown Design and Innovation Center (DDIC) project reviews to encourage new development to include quality-of-life uses on the ground floor.	Plan or Study, Outreach, Design Review	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, City Planning, Economic Development
ST-5.2	Collaborate with downtown colleges and universities to recruit businesses, events, and gathering spaces that meet student needs — such as affordable eateries, late-night cafés, and cultural venues — within walking distance of the Wichita Biomedical Campus and Kansas College of Osteopathic Medicine.	Program or Partnership	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	Expanded	Downtown Wichita, Wichita State University, WSU Tech, University of Kansas, K-COM
ST-5.3	Create a Downtown Revitalization Fund to provide grants, low-interest loans, or tax incentives for businesses relocating to or expanding within downtown. Prioritize projects that fill missing amenity gaps, activate ground floors, and serve as anchors for nearby development.	Funding Stream	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, City Planning, Economic Development
ST-5.4	Continue efforts to attract an urban grocer to downtown. Next steps: 1. Develop a “Downtown Growth & Opportunity” factsheet highlighting residential growth, workforce size, and demographics, along with a shortlist of viable sites. 2. Design a tailored development tool package (e.g., TIF, public land disposition, tax abatements, public-private partnerships in mixed-use districts) geared toward grocery operators. 3. Conduct targeted outreach to regional and specialty grocers, building on prior expressions of interest and emphasizing mixed-use co-location opportunities.	Program or Partnership	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, City Planning

Amenities in Demand



**Retail and
Pharmacy**



**Wellness
Services**



**Gathering Spaces
Parks & Plazas**



**Grocery
Store**



**Bars &
Nightlife**



**Shaded
Recreation Areas**



How does downtown attract a grocery store?

Most grocery stores require a nearby population of at least 10,000 residents to support a downtown location.

Downtown Wichita is currently about 3,000 residents short of that threshold, but ongoing housing development and the opening of the Wichita Biomedical Campus in 2027 are expected to close this gap in the coming years.



Dillon's, ALDI, and Larcher's are the only markets within a 10 minute drive. There are no walkable grocery stores downtown.

How can Downtown Wichita help recruit a grocer downtown?

1. Develop a "Downtown Growth & Opportunity" factsheet highlighting residential growth, workforce size, and demographics, along with a shortlist of viable sites.
2. Design a tailored development tools package (e.g., TIF, public land disposition, tax abatements, public-private partnerships in mixed-use districts) geared toward grocery operators.
3. Conduct targeted outreach to regional and specialty grocers, building on prior expressions of interest and emphasizing mixed-use co-location opportunities.



LOOKING TO...



Cosentino's, Kansas City

For the first time in more than 50 years, downtown **Kansas City** gained a full-service grocery store when Cosentino's opened in the Power & Light District, serving 10,000–15,000 residents. The project succeeded through a strong public-private partnership: the store was integrated into a new mixed-use development, supported by a district parking plan, financed with tools like TIF and city-backed bonds, and secured through a long-term tenant commitment.

STRATEGY 6

Supply and manage parking infrastructure to unlock development

WHAT?

Partner with the City to identify key downtown locations where new public or shared parking could encourage private investment and development.

WHY?

Downtown currently has more than enough total parking, but much of it is in the wrong form — from surface lots that break up the urban fabric to underutilized private spaces. By reconfiguring this supply into well-located shared facilities and managing it to match actual demand, the city can free up valuable land for development, make the environment safer and more walkable, and create a more dynamic street life that supports business, housing, and public life.

**GOALS**

Connected Downtown

Riverfront Downtown

Well-Designed Downtown

Full-Service Downtown

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

ID	Action	Action Type	Timeline	Status	Execution Responsibility
ST-6.1	Strategically invest in new public parking facilities to reduce barriers for new development downtown. Prioritize structured garages in strategic locations to free up land for active, higher-value uses.	Capital projects	Long-Term (7-10 Years)	Expanded	City Manager, Public Works, Economic Development, City Planning w/ Downtown Wichita
ST-6.2	Using findings from the previous Parking Study, conduct a shared parking study for downtown to measure current demand and identify opportunities for shared facilities.	Plan or study	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	New	City Planning w/ Downtown Wichita
ST-6.3	Establish a shared parking district that can formalize agreements and make it easier for private property owners to share parking.	Program & operations	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	New	City Manager, Economic Development, City Planning w/ Downtown Wichita
ST-6.4	Offer tax incentives for businesses that provide parking spaces for shared or public use.	Incentive	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	New	City Manager, Economic Development, City Planning w/ Downtown Wichita
ST-6.5	Develop clear policies for how new structured parking facilities are financed, operated, and maintained.	Program & operations	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	Expanded	City Manager, Economic Development, City Planning w/ Downtown Wichita
ST-6.6	Implement modern parking management tools (e.g., pricing policies, smart meters, real-time availability information) to improve efficiency and user experience.	Program & operations	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	Expanded	City Manager, Public Works, Economic Development, City Planning w/ Downtown Wichita

Parking Pain Points



Inefficient use of space

- Almost half (48%) of downtown Wichita's land is used for surface parking, leaving less space for housing, parks, shops, or workplaces.
- Large parking lots break up downtown blocks and create long, inactive stretches that feel empty, especially outside of peak hours.
- Many lots sit unused at night or on weekends, which makes downtown feel less lively and walkable.



High cost of structured parking

- Adding parking inside buildings or in shared garages makes better use of space and helps connect downtown areas. This approach frees up land for new homes, green spaces, and destinations that attract more people downtown.
- However, building structured parking is expensive—often more than \$30,000 per space—and creates a major cost hurdle for developers. Finding smarter ways to share and size parking will help make new projects possible and keep downtown active throughout the day.



How can the city help make it easier to park downtown?



1. Strategically invest in public parking structures to drive new development opportunities



2. Facilitate shared parking management, making the use of existing lots more efficient



LOOKING TO...

Omaha, Nebraska

Park Omaha's parking management system has helped address downtown parking challenges by balancing parking rates and promoting shared parking. This approach reduced the perceived parking shortage, decreased circling for spots, and improved walkability, which together supported new private investments.

Omaha also incentivized the building of new parking decks through public funding mechanisms like Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts, leveraging public-private partnerships and bonds. These efforts helped fund parking garages to complement transit systems and support downtown development, enabling an integrated approach to managing parking supply alongside growth.

Impact:

Since implementation, downtown Omaha has seen nearly 7,000 new housing units and a population increase of over 3,000, fueling economic growth and revitalization efforts.



Amenity Opportunities for Living & Working

Based on recent market analysis, downtown Wichita could see more than 5,000 new housing units added by 2035. As more residents move downtown, questions arise — where will they park, and where will they shop?

Strategic city investment in public parking structures at the center of key housing districts can make new projects more feasible. These investments not only support new housing but also help create a more vibrant downtown, where everyday amenities like grocery stores, dry cleaners, and pharmacies can thrive within walking distance.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR:

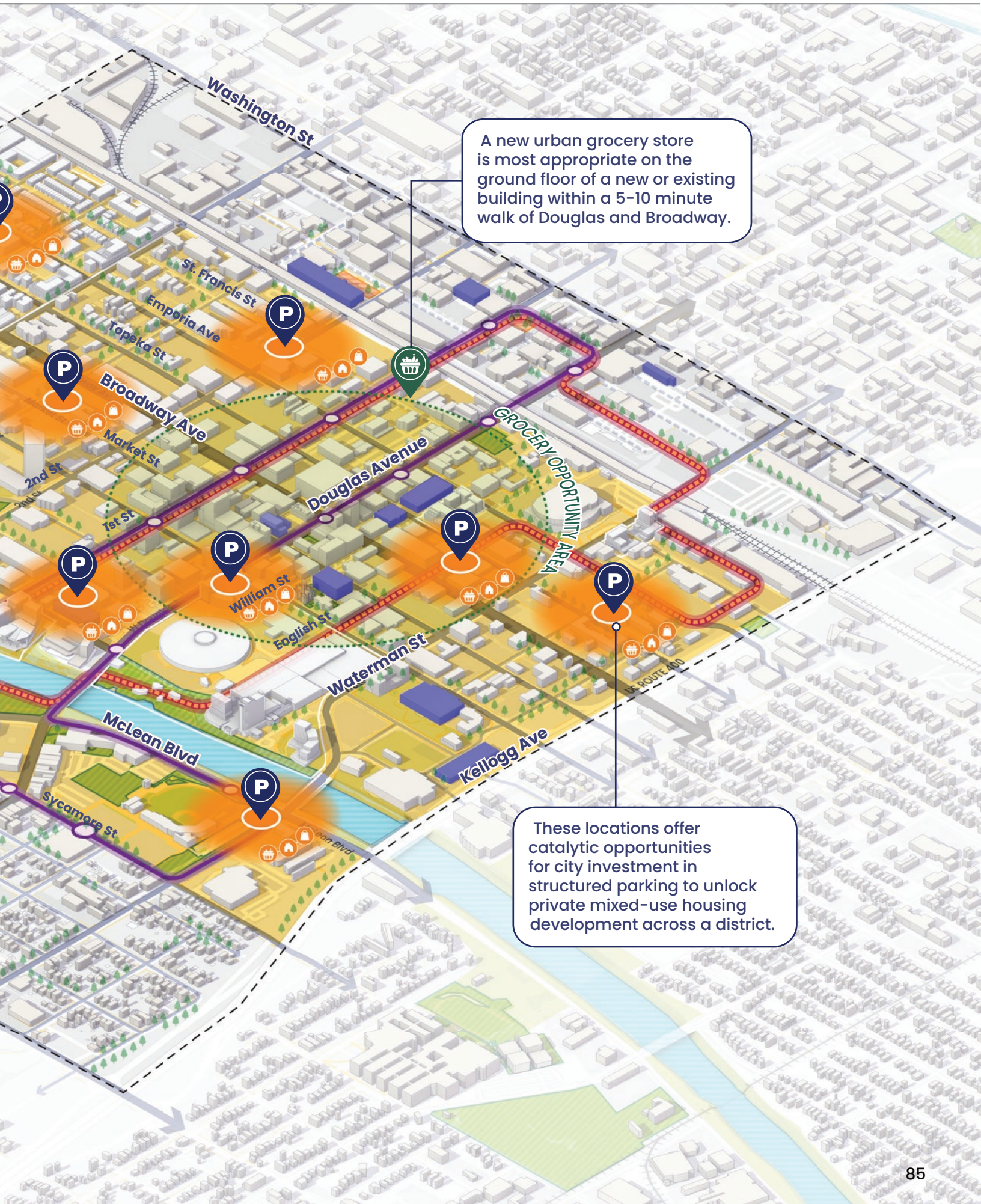


District Parking Opportunity Area



Grocery Store Opportunity Area

-  Housing Opportunity Areas
-  Existing Parking Garages w/ Public Access
-  System of people-first streets
-  Downtown circulator loop
-  Cultural walking and biking loop

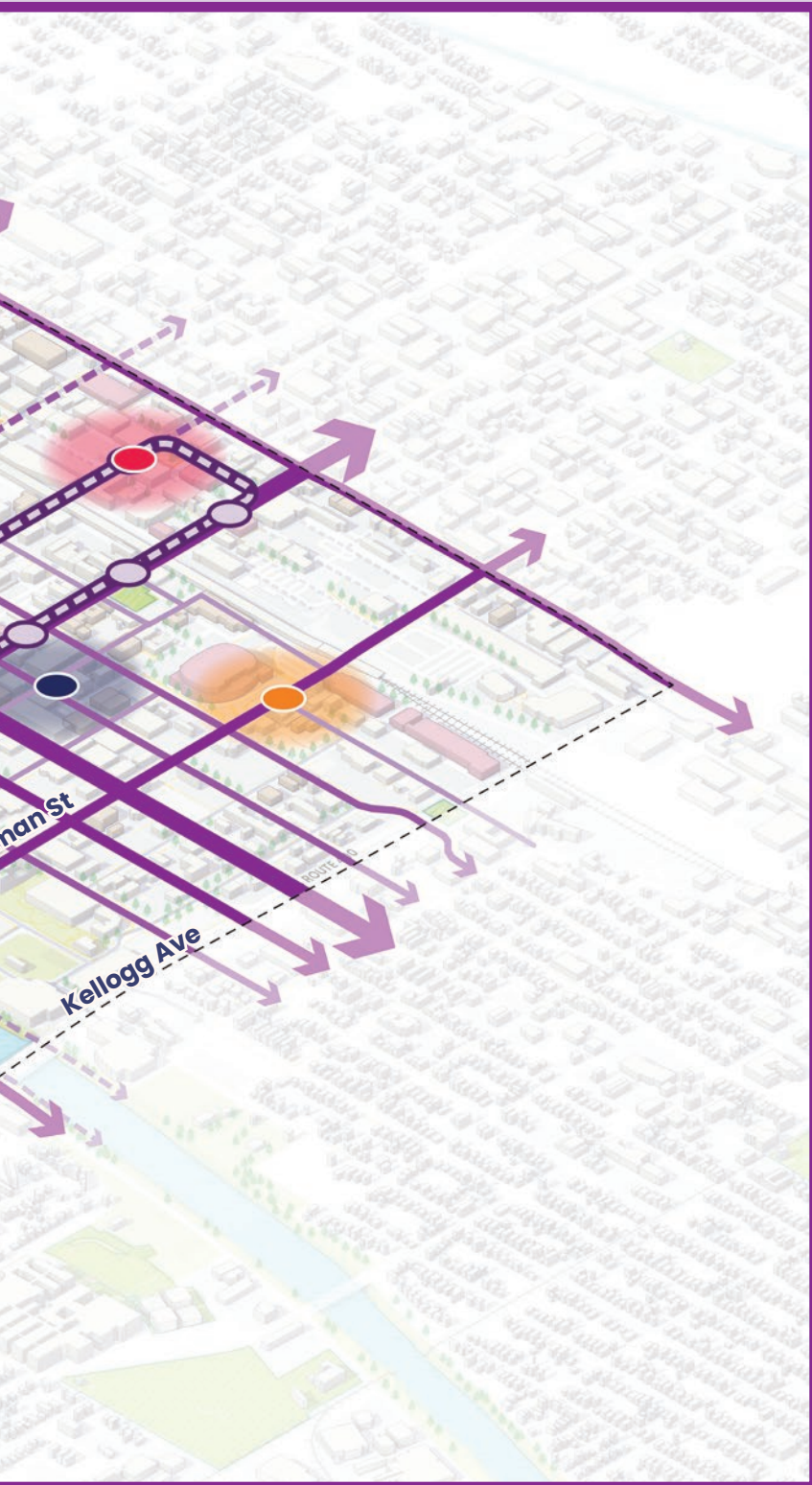


A new urban grocery store is most appropriate on the ground floor of a new or existing building within a 5-10 minute walk of Douglas and Broadway.

These locations offer catalytic opportunities for city investment in structured parking to unlock private mixed-use housing development across a district.

Getting Around





How does downtown achieve this vision?

1. Create a network of lively, safe, and people-first streets
2. Complete and strategically improving the bike network
3. Develop a high-frequency downtown circulator that connects The Hub with key points of interest

- System of people-first streets
- Downtown circulator loop

State of Getting Around

Wichitans want to get out of their cars and walk around.

We heard that you have a growing interest in:

- Walking around downtown
- Using public transit options like buses or a streetcar system

But you face challenges to biking and walking around downtown today:

- Destinations aren't connected by safe, well-maintained, and interesting walks

Douglas Avenue serves as the main east–west thoroughfare through downtown.

The City of Wichita is developing The Hub, a new transit center in Delano, to replace the existing facility in the downtown core.

The riverfront trail along the Arkansas River is a popular route for cyclists.



Highlights

Walking in Demand

Although Wichita's transportation culture is car-dominated, open house attendees overwhelmingly expressed their willingness to walk for more than 10 minutes from their cars to their destinations.

48% of open house respondents expressed interest in switching their primary means of transit from driving to walking/other mobility options.

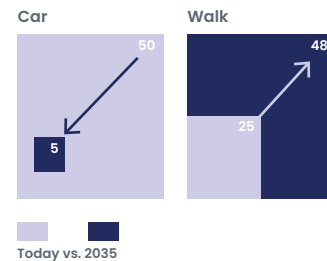
Road Capacity

Overbuilt lanes for car travel presents an opportunity to recalibrate the streets to provide a more holistic approach to mobility that includes walking, biking, transit, and driving.

Thinking Ahead

The City is prioritizing mobility by conducting road diets and transit network planning.

Kickoff open house attendees weighed in on their mode of transit today vs. how they want to get around in the future:



Lowlights

Cars > People

The transit center will no longer be centrally located in the downtown core, hindering accessibility via public transit. The streets are not pedestrian-friendly and favor car traffic over other modes of transportation.

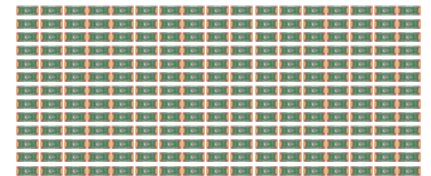
"The design of downtown is auto-oriented and not pedestrian scale."

Lack of Street Hierarchy

Current street hierarchy is unclear, leading to an incoherent and disconnected range of street-level experiences and uses.

Downtown Wichita has as much surface parking as 250 Chiefs football fields!

x 250



Boring Walk

Many streets don't have active storefronts or surroundings, discouraging people from walking.

"Douglas is our Michigan Ave. Enliven it to celebrate Wichita in the streetscape."

STRATEGY 7

Create a network of lively, safe, and people-first streets

WHAT?

Upgrade important downtown streets to improve the experience of driving, walking, biking, and scooting around the city.

WHY?

Streets currently lack the organization and vibrancy needed to foster a sense of connection and everyday livability. Many corridors feel fragmented, underutilized, and do not provide the inviting, active environments that attract businesses, residents, and visitors.

**GOALS**

Connected Downtown

Riverfront Downtown

Well-Designed Downtown

Full-Service Downtown

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

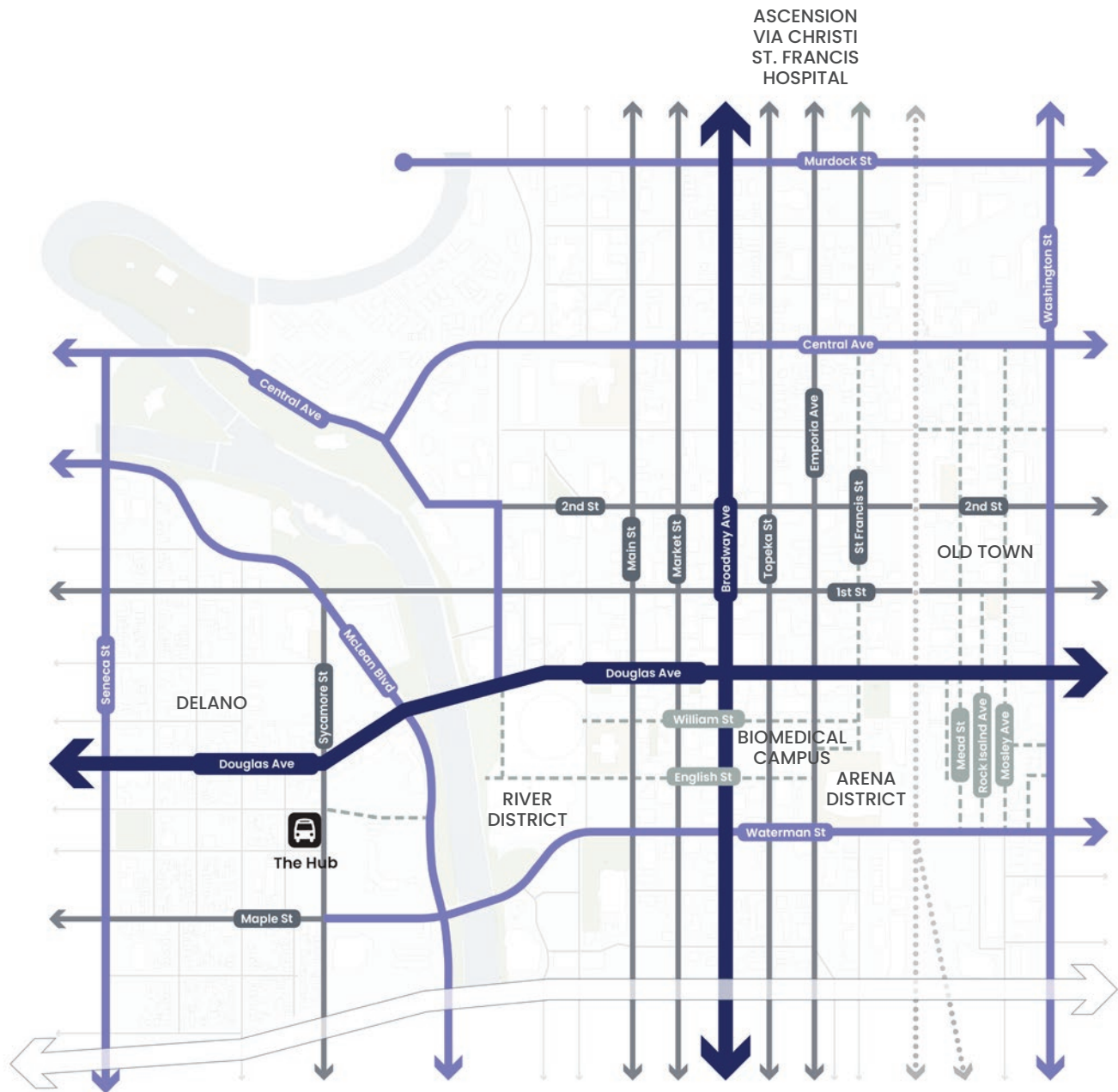
ID	Action	Action Type	Timeline	Status	Execution Responsibility
ST-7.1	Redesign Douglas Avenue (Main St to Washington St) by 2030 with a complete streets approach promoting multimodal access and placemaking. See recommendations outlined in the Action Plan's Streetscape Toolkit on p. 92.	Capital Project	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	New	Public Works, Downtown Wichita
ST-7.2	Following the Douglas Avenue redesign, direct the next phase of complete street investments toward Broadway Avenue, English Street, William Street, 1st Street, Waterman Street, and Central Street. These corridors should serve as catalytic public improvements by adding bike lanes, expanding sidewalks, and enhancing landscaping consistent with the Streetscape Toolkit on 92. Where major reconstruction is not yet scheduled, interim actions such as re-striping can deliver visible upgrades and incrementally improve comfort and safety.	Capital Project	Long-Term (7-10 Years)	New	Public Works, Downtown Wichita
ST-7.3	Work with the city to adopt a Roadway Design Policy incorporating a streetscape "kit of parts" — including recommended cross-sections, street furniture, lighting, and planting standards. Use this design policy to inform future streetscape improvements that enhance the pedestrian experience and help activate business activity on the ground floors of new and existing development.	Toolkit	Near Term (1-3 Years)	New	Public Works, Downtown Wichita
ST-7.4	Work with the city to convert remaining one-way streets (e.g., 1st and 2nd Streets) to two-way to improve traffic flow and pedestrian access.	Capital Project	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	Expanded	Public Works, Downtown Wichita

One of the most impactful steps the City can take to drive downtown growth over the next decade is to redesign the one-mile stretch of Douglas Avenue between Washington Street and Main Street, creating a more enjoyable experience for all modes of transportation.



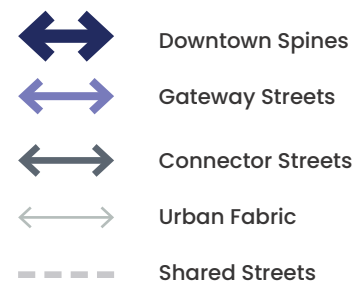
ID	Action	Action Type	Timeline	Status	Execution Responsibility
ST-7.5	Work with Wichita State University, WSU Tech, and The University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita to pilot a shared street interim activation on William Street in tandem with the opening of the Wichita Biomedical Campus.	Capital Project	Near Term (1-3 Years)	New	Public Works, Downtown Wichita, Wichita State University
ST-7.6	Partner with the City to host public design charrettes focused on reimagining key downtown gateways—such as Kellogg Avenue, Washington Street, and Seneca Street—that currently function as traffic pass-throughs. These sessions will gather community input on how to transform these corridors into welcoming, multimodal entryways.	Plan or Study, Outreach	Near Term (1-3 Years)	New	Public Works, Downtown Wichita
ST-7.7	Collaborate with the City to explore converting Santa Fe Avenue into a one-mile shared-use path and linear greenway along the railroad, linking Naftzger Park with Ascension Via Christi Hospital. This investment would create a safe, healthy living connection for walking, biking, and recreation.	Capital Project	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	New	Public Works, Parks, Downtown Wichita

Downtown Street Hierarchy



Street Hierarchy

The Action Plan establishes a street hierarchy that shapes a vibrant, accessible, and multimodal downtown core. Streets are defined by their functions—such as downtown spines, gateways, connectors, and pedestrian-oriented shared streets—creating a clear framework that enhances safety, mobility, and economic vitality.



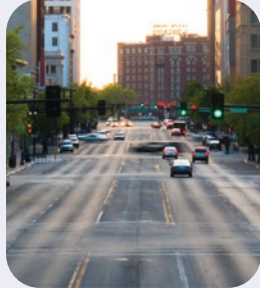
The Downtown Street Experience

DOWNTOWN SPINES

Downtown's signature streets that define the look and feel of downtown.

Streets: Douglas, Broadway

Prioritize: Complete street design with wide sidewalks, shade trees, transit infrastructure, public art, and areas for gathering



GATEWAY STREETS

Major streets that act as important paths around and through downtown.

Streets: Washington, Central, McLean, Murdock, Waterman, etc.

Prioritize: Efficient movement of many modes of transit; If by the river, invest in landscaping to tie in to riverfront

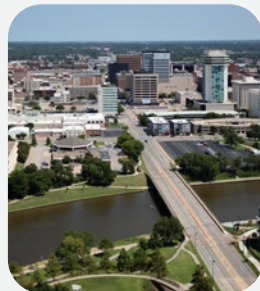


CONNECTOR STREETS

Main streets in the core that act as connective tissue through downtown districts.

Streets: 1st, 2nd, Main, Topeka, Emporia, etc.

Prioritize: Downtown walkability through tree planting, maintenance, and wayfinding



SHARED STREETS

Intimate streets that maximize the pedestrian experience.

Streets: William, English, St. Francis, etc.

Prioritize: Shared street design with fun, experiential elements like outdoor games, artistic paving, and public art

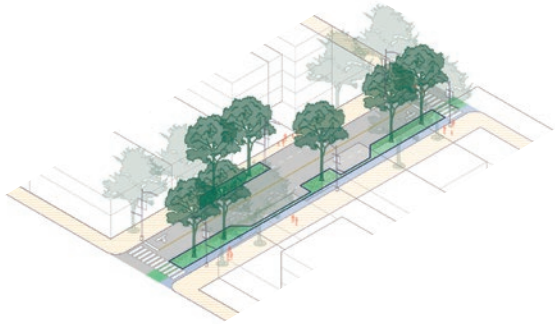


Street Design Menu

	Activate Ground Floor	Densify Development	Prioritize the Pedestrian Experience	Increase Tree Canopy and Green Infrastructure	Integrate Storytelling	Prioritize Transit Infrastructure
Downtown Spines ↔	max	max	max	max	high	max
Gateway Streets ↔	high	high	med	high	low	high
Connector Streets ↔	med	med	high	high	low	med
Urban Fabric ↔	low	low	med	high	low	low
Shared Streets - - - - -	high	med	max	max	high	med

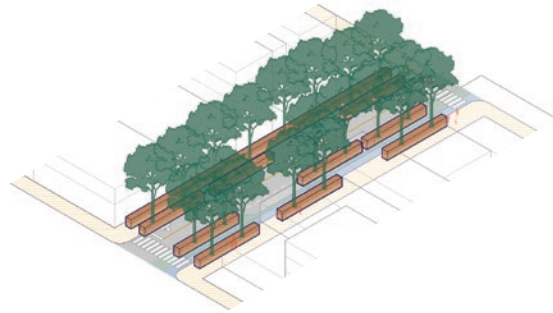
Strategies for Great Streets

These following strategies collectively help transform streets into vital green spaces that serve the community, support environmental sustainability, and promote social interaction.



1. Road Diets

Reducing car lanes and reallocating space to expand sidewalks and vegetation helps prioritize people over cars. This creates a safer, more walkable environment while encouraging outdoor activities.



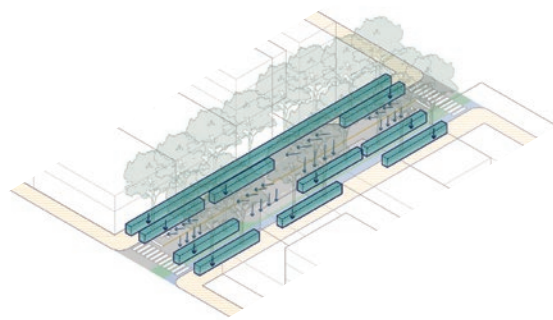
2. Continuous Tree Canopy

Providing a continuous canopy of trees enhances outdoor comfort, providing shade and cooling effects. Increasing soil volume for tree planting ensures long-term health and sustainability, helping trees grow tall and strong over time.



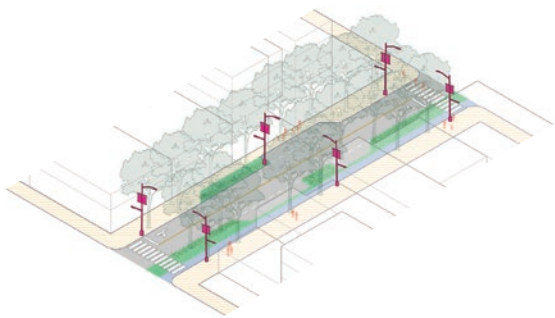
3. Diversity of Local Species

Planting a variety of native species supports biodiversity and improves environmental resilience. Adding environmental signage can help educate the public about the importance of local ecosystems.



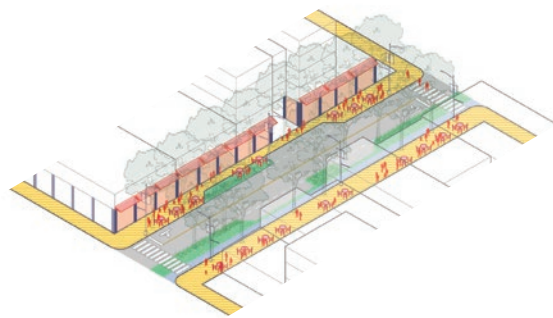
4. Green Infrastructure

Integrating green infrastructure elements like bioswales, permeable pavements, and rain gardens helps manage stormwater runoff, reduces flood risks, and improves water quality.



5. Wayfinding and Historical Storytelling

Incorporating clear wayfinding signage and markers or installations that tell downtown's history can transform streets into culturally rich learning experiences while building a stronger sense of place.



6. Ground Floor Programming

Encouraging active uses such as retail, cafes, and restaurants with outdoor seating provides opportunities for day and nighttime social engagement, contributing to the vibrancy of downtown.

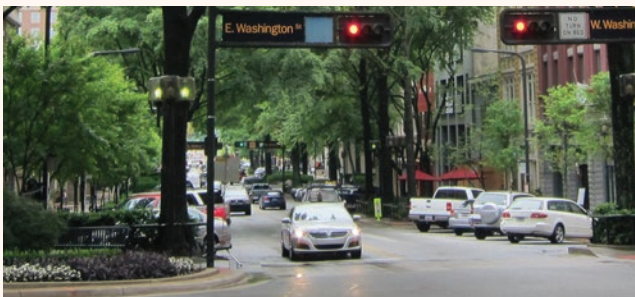


LOOKING TO...

Greenville, South Carolina



Before Streetscape Investment



After Streetscape Investment

Greenville transformed its downtown by reimagining **Main Street** as a tree-lined, pedestrian-oriented corridor anchored by public art, outdoor dining, and cultural destinations.

A series of phased investments in sidewalks, landscaping, and streetscape design helped attract new private development and reinforced the city's identity.

Impact:

The project drew hundreds of new businesses, expanded restaurant and retail offerings, and grew Greenville's tourism economy, making it one of the most celebrated downtown turnarounds in the Southeast.



LOOKING TO...

Lancaster, California



Before Streetscape Investment



After Streetscape Investment

Lancaster reinvented its downtown boulevard as **"The BLVD,"** a pedestrian-focused civic spine with plaza space, landscaping, and traffic-calming features to create a vibrant atmosphere.

The \$11.2 million investment supported new events, festivals, and community life in addition to commercial growth.

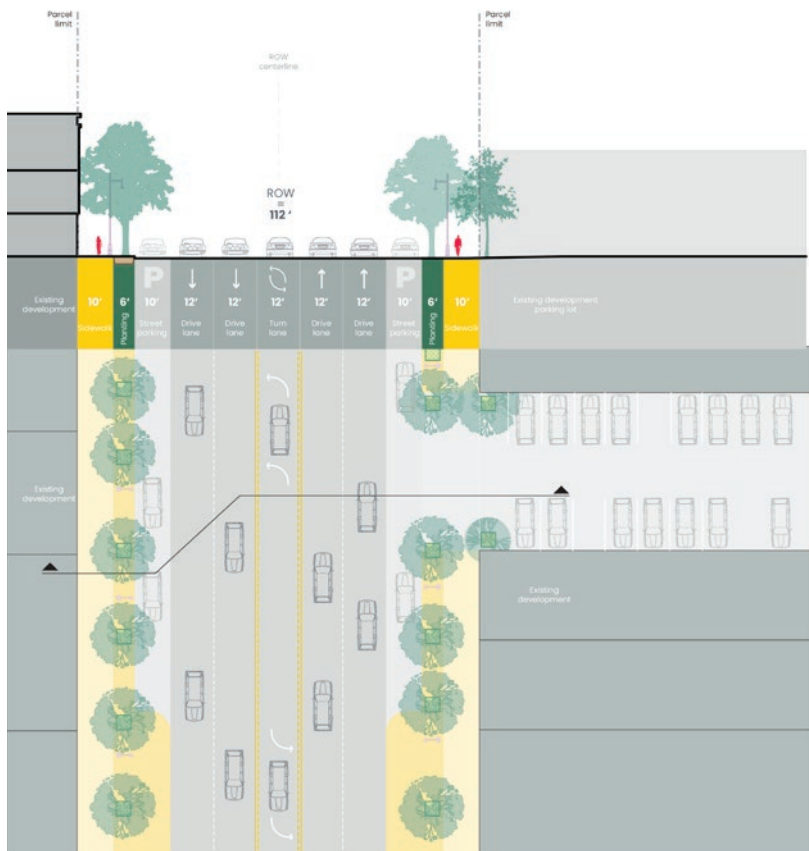
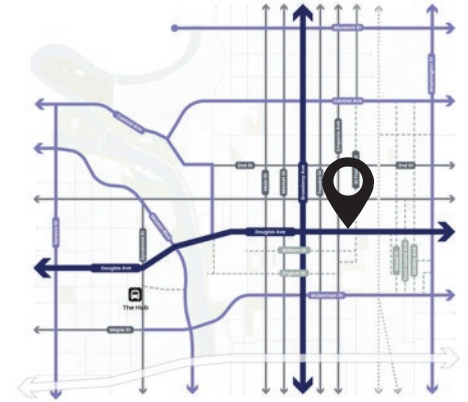
Impact:

The project generated \$282 million in economic impact, including 800 homes, 57 new businesses, 2,000 jobs, and a revitalized downtown identity as a regional destination.

Douglas Avenue

Street Type: Downtown Spine

Douglas Avenue is the heart of downtown Wichita. Its physical quality, and its success as a social space, are read by locals and visitors alike as a signifier of the city in its entirety.



Douglas Avenue, 1874



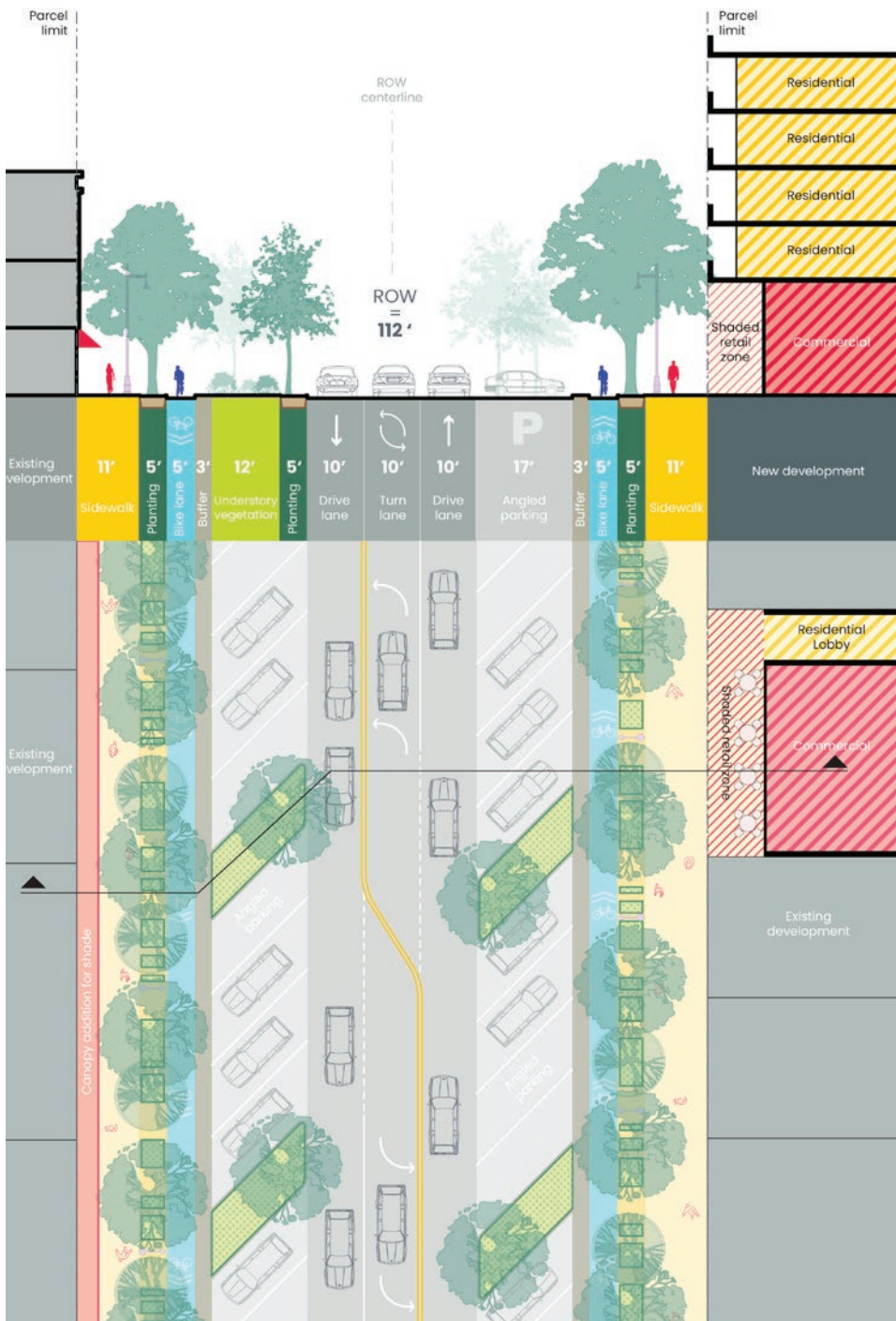
Douglas Avenue, 1919



Douglas Avenue Today

Existing Conditions

Douglas Avenue has been the central spine of Wichita since the city's founding. Today, it is a five-lane road with parking on both sides. Previous generations of Wichitans have recognized its outsized importance and made various improvement proposals. The most recent 2020 plan notes that its daily traffic of about 14,000 cars falls short of the 21,000 trips usually needed to justify more than three travel lanes.



Project 180 – Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



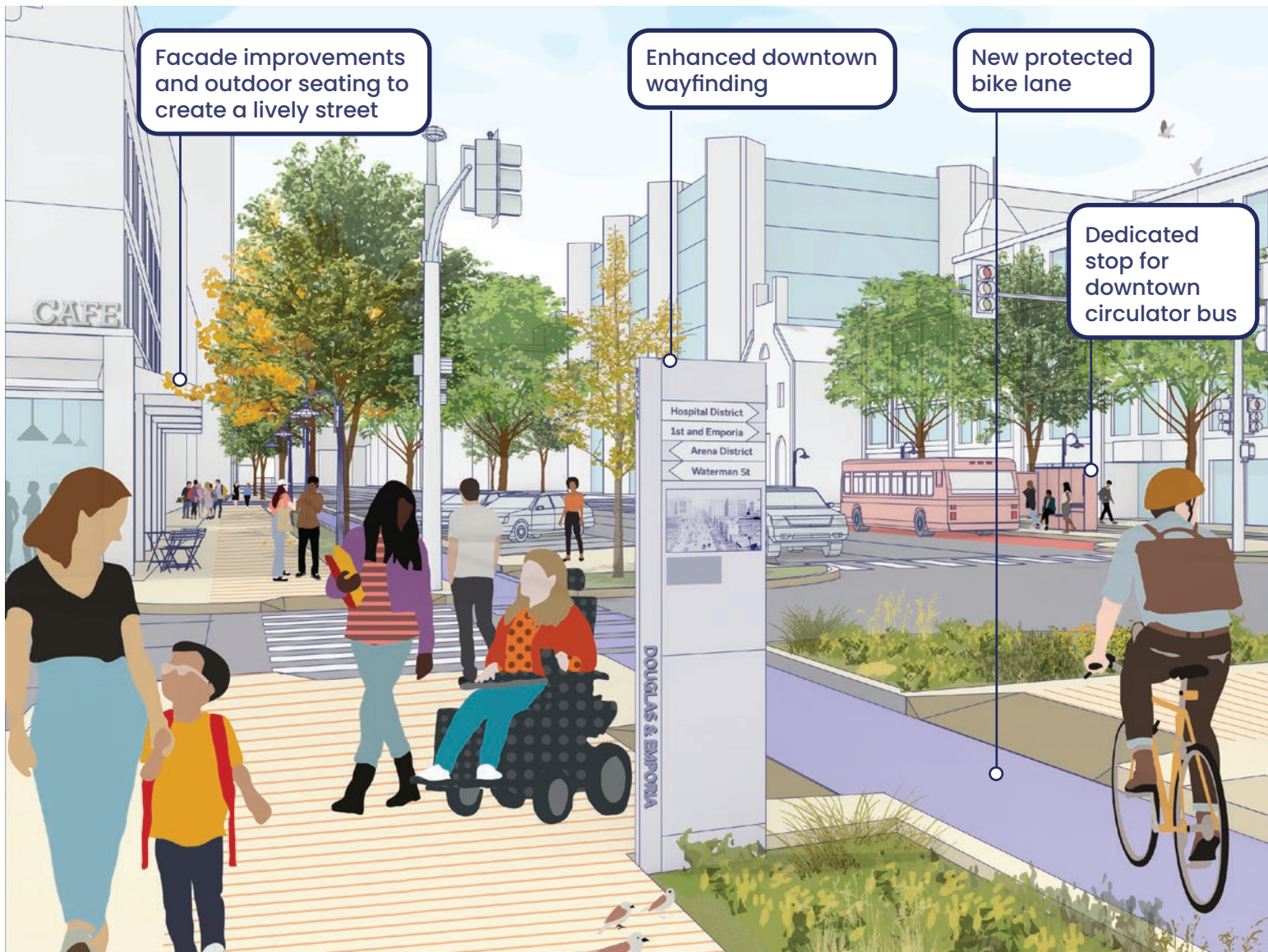
Hohman Avenue – Hammond, Indiana



Guthrie Green – Tulsa, Oklahoma

Proposed Conditions

The proposed condition presents one design solution for Douglas Avenue. It constrains the driving lanes to a width that will naturally cause drivers not to speed. It almost doubles the amount of on-street parking — central to retail viability — and it plants what will eventually become a forest of large-species native trees, with adequate root volume. It is intended for the stretch of East Douglas in the heart of downtown, but could be modified slightly to be expanded west and east of the SSMID.



Douglas Avenue, 2035

Douglas Avenue is the heart of downtown Wichita. Its physical quality, and its success as a social space, are read by locals and visitors alike as a signifier of the city in its entirety. If it doesn't look good, Wichita doesn't look good.

Conversely, a truly welcoming and beautiful Douglas Avenue has the potential to transform the reputation of the city in a powerful way. Like Greenville, SC or Lancaster, CA, Wichita could see its national status hoisted magnificently on the back of a single street.



Douglas & Emporia in 2035, Looking West

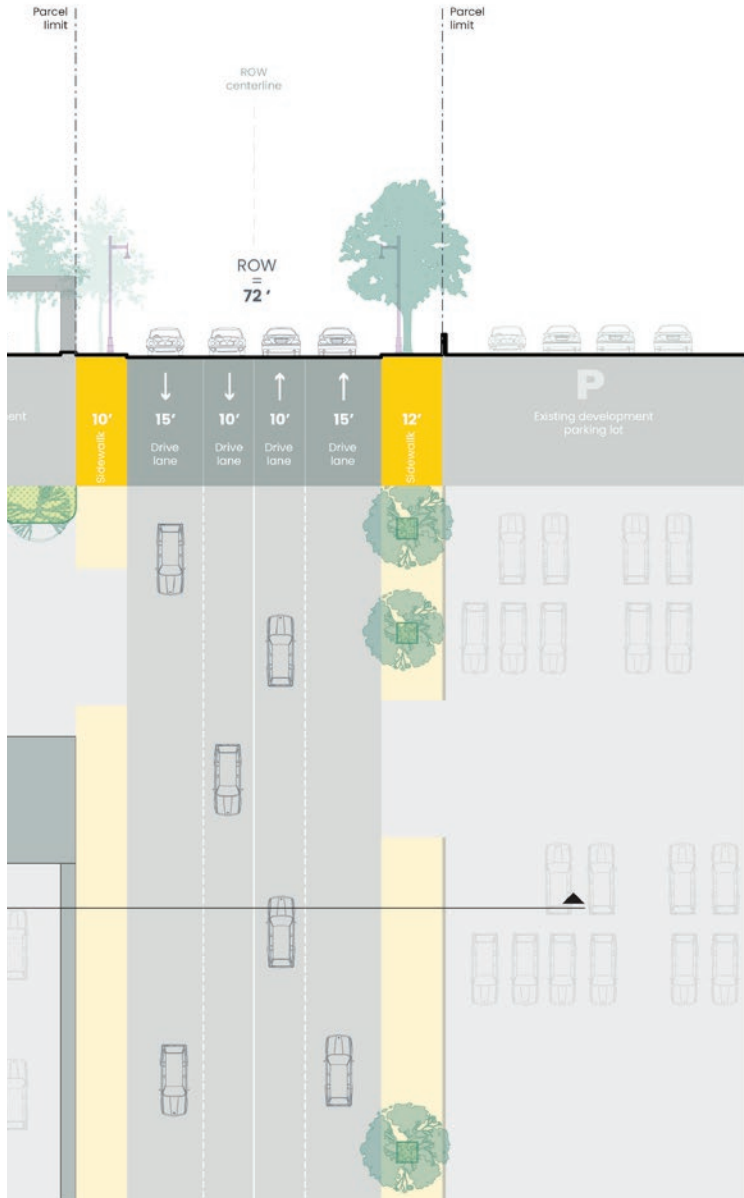


Once one of Indiana's busiest downtowns, **Hammond** has recently invested in its streetscape to attract regional housing investment. The city has transformed Hohman Avenue, its main street, from a multi-lane surface highway into a slower, more pedestrian-friendly design that functions as a drivable linear plaza.

Broadway Avenue

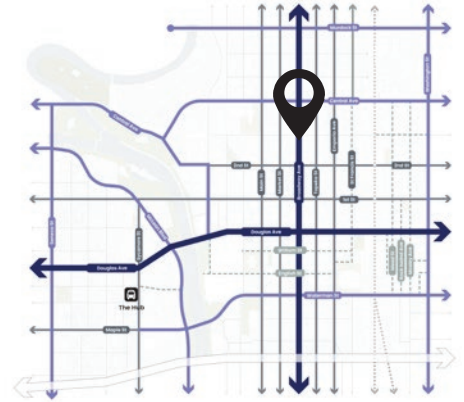
Street Type: Downtown Spine

Broadway Avenue is the distinguished North-South axis that passes through downtown, functioning as a signature corridor and key gateway that shapes visitors' first impressions of the urban core.



Existing Conditions

Broadway is a four-lane former highway with no bicycle facilities or on-street parking. The corridor is characterized by minimal tree canopy and narrow sidewalks, resulting in limited pedestrian comfort or visual cohesion.



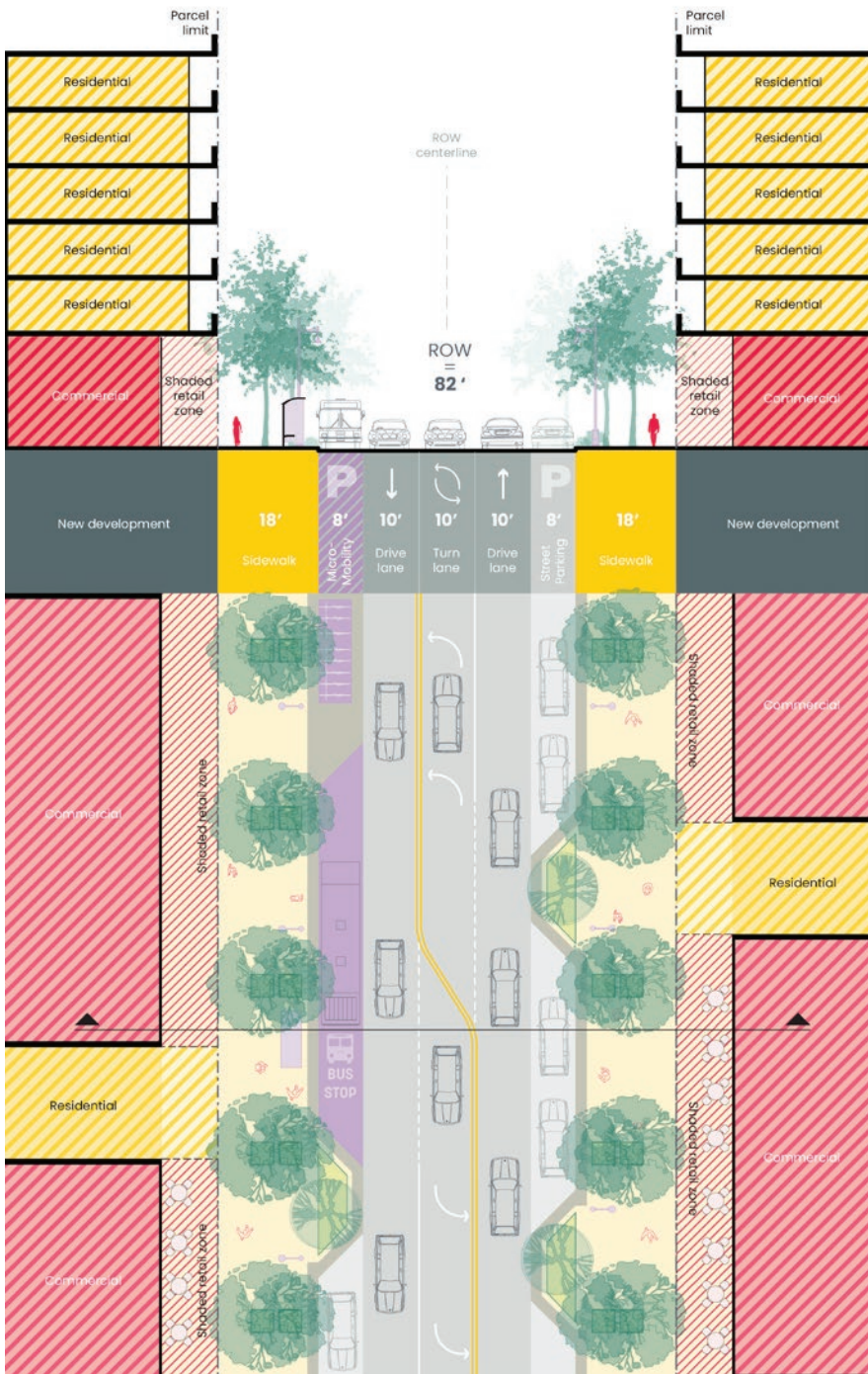
North Broadway 100 Block, 1955



South Broadway, 1972



North Broadway 200 Block Today



Project 180 – Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



Downtown Lexington – Lexington, Kentucky



20th St – Kansas City, Missouri

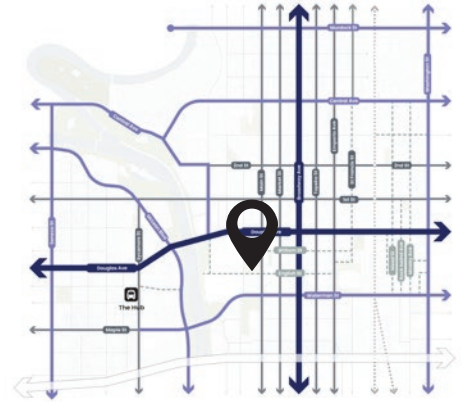
Proposed Conditions

The proposed condition of Broadway maintains its vehicular function but expands sidewalks by 6 feet to improve pedestrian circulation. A continuous street tree canopy is added along both sides of the corridor. On-street parking and a dedicated loading zone are introduced to support adjacent uses and improve access management.

English Street (and William Street)

Street Type: Shared Street

English Street is designed as an entertainment-oriented thoroughfare linking INTRUST Bank Arena with the River District and Arkansas River, creating a vibrant east-west corridor. As a curbsless street, it seamlessly merges sidewalks and roadways to prioritize pedestrians, fostering social interaction, lively atmosphere, and flexible public uses.



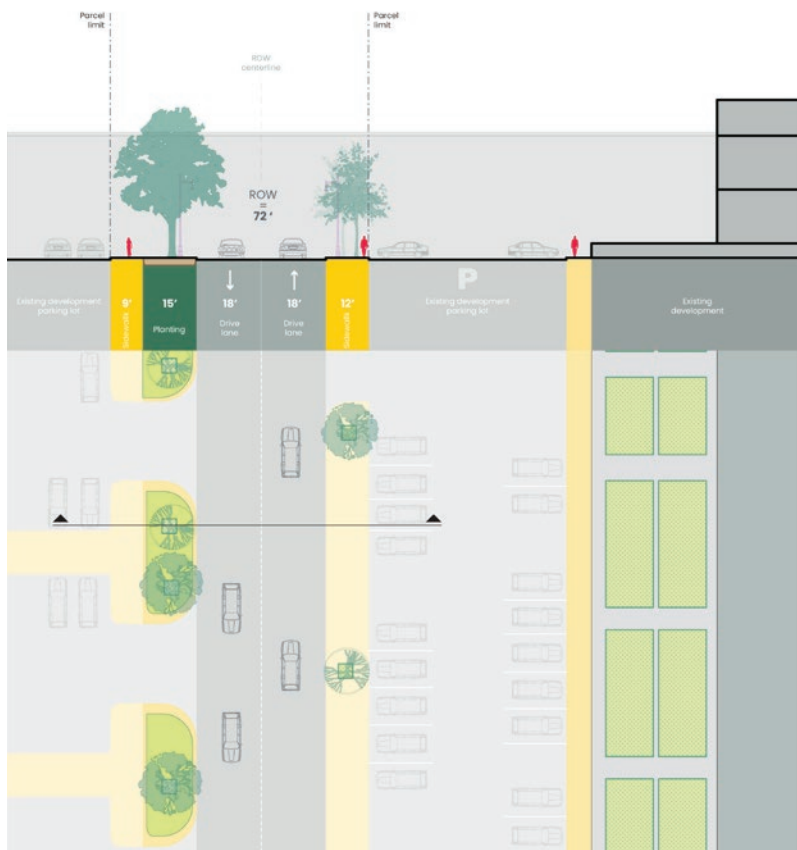
English St and Water St, 1928



English St and Main St Looking East, 1986



English St and Main St Looking West, Today



Existing Conditions

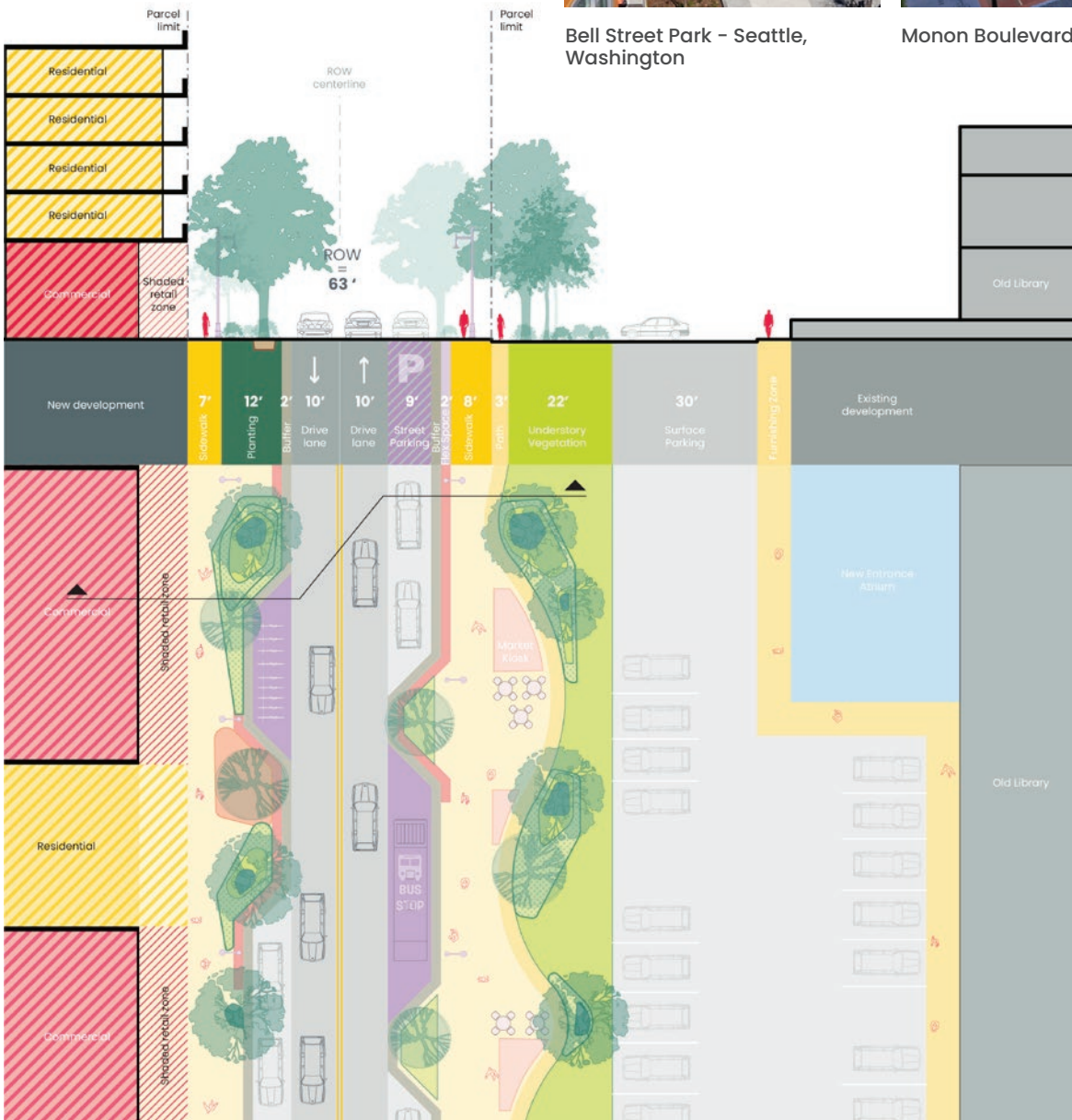
English Street is a two-lane local road that historically extended to the river but now terminates within the Century II parking lot. The street serves limited through traffic and lacks continuity and pedestrian-oriented features.



Bell Street Park – Seattle, Washington



Monon Boulevard – Carmel, Indiana



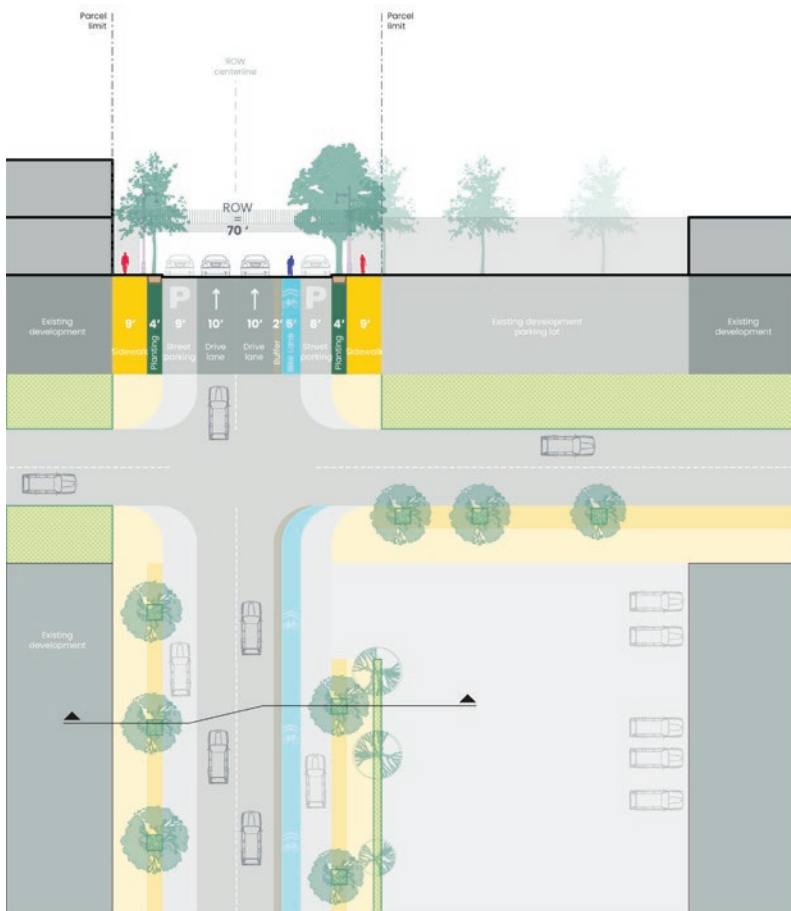
Proposed Conditions

English (and William) Streets are envisioned as shared streets where vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, and downtown shuttles operate with equal priority. The design emphasizes slow vehicle speeds, enhanced pedestrian activity, and improved connectivity between downtown and the riverfront.

First Street

Street Type: Connector Street

First Street currently functions as a one-way thoroughfare cutting through Old Town, physically and psychologically dividing the district. By converting First Street to two-way traffic and prioritizing pedestrian and bicycle safety, it is envisioned to create a vibrant, pedestrian-focused street that enhances the liveliness of Old Town.



1st St

Existing Conditions

First Street is a two-lane, one-way street with on-street parallel parking and a recently installed bicycle lane. Vehicle speeds frequently exceed posted limits, a common outcome of one-way circulation patterns.



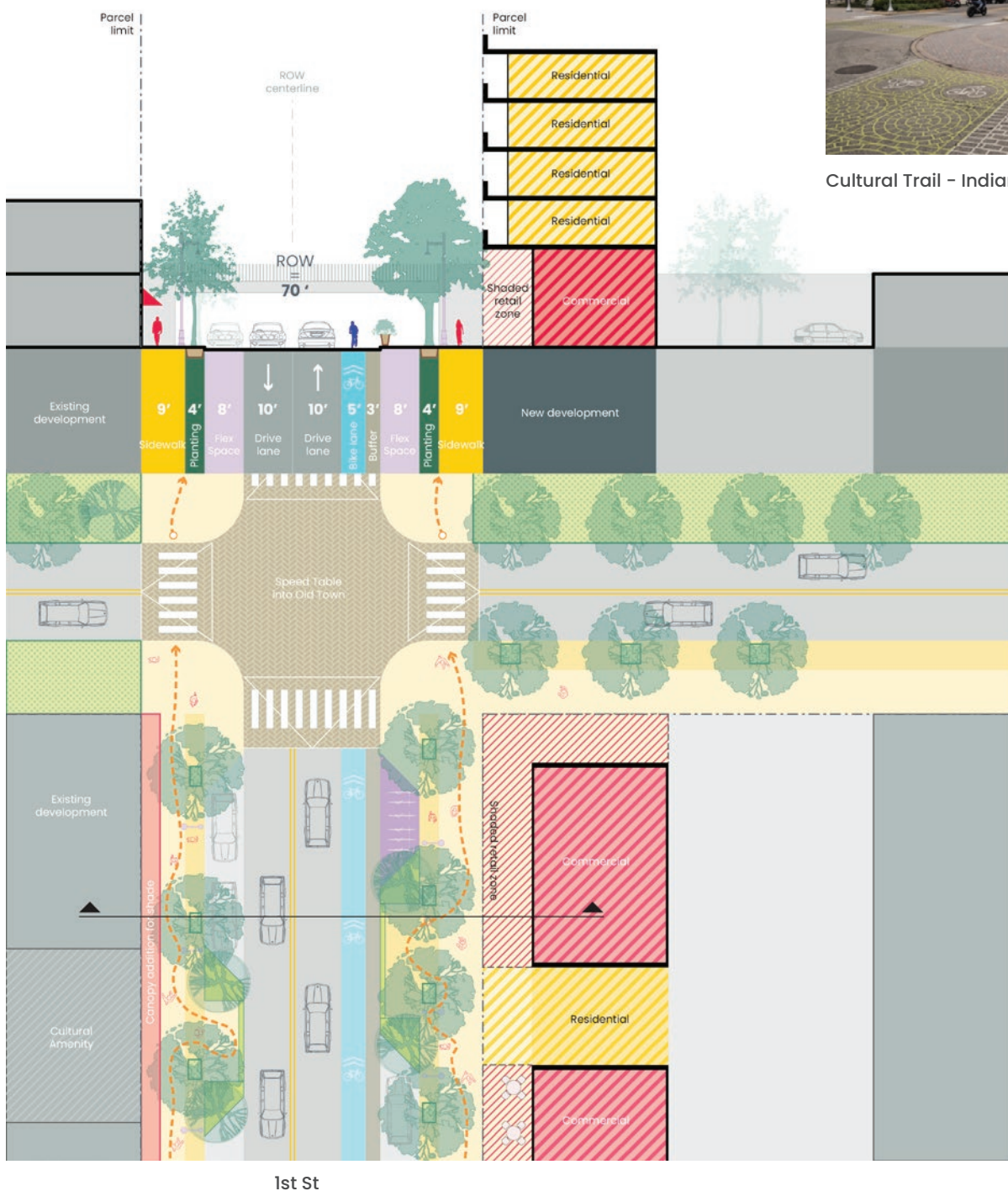
1st St and Topeka Looking East, 1937



1st St and Topeka Looking East, 2003



1st Street and Rail Looking West, Today



Cultural Trail - Indianapolis, Indiana

Proposed Conditions

First Street functions as a connector between Delano and Old Town, linking several cultural institutions along the route as part of the Cultural Walking and Biking Loop (see p. 134 for details). The proposed design converts traffic from one-way to two-way operation, along with 2nd Street, to improve circulation and manage speeds. Additional loading zones and improved sidewalks enhance safety and connectivity for all modes of transportation.

STRATEGY 8

Complete and strategically improve the bike network

WHAT?

Improve Wichita’s bicycle network by filling gaps, prioritizing safety, extending protected bike lanes, and enhancing connectivity to key destinations such as Naftzger Park, Wichita Biomedical Campus, INTRUST Bank Arena, and Old Town.

WHY?

Downtown Wichita’s flat topography and network of riverfront shared-use paths provide strong potential for a bikeable city, but many existing bike lanes are disconnected or end abruptly, limiting safe and practical bike travel.



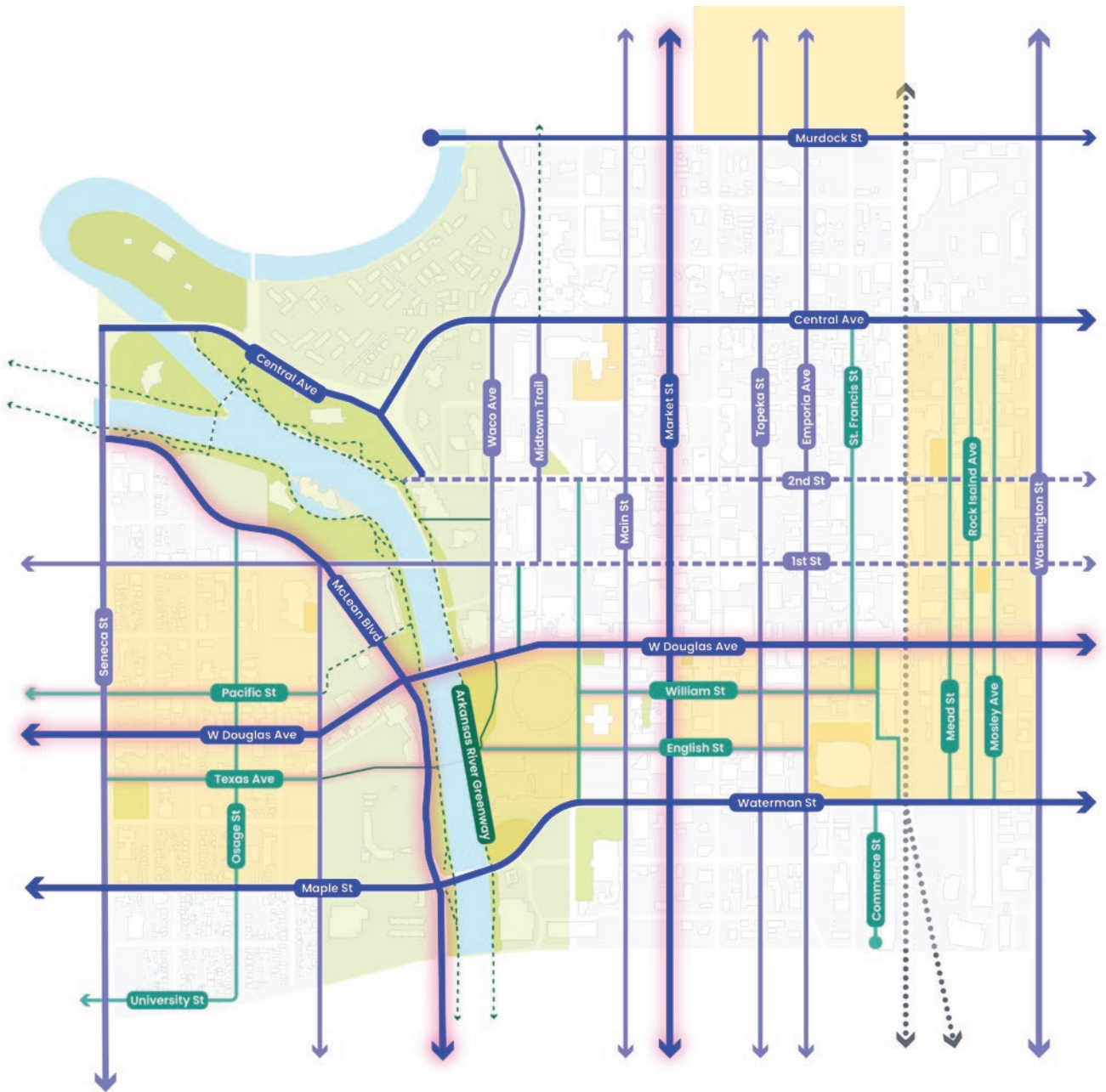
GOALS

- Connected Downtown
- Riverfront Downtown
- Well-Designed Downtown
- Full-Service Downtown



RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

ID	Action	Action Type	Timeline	Status	Execution Responsibility
ST-8.1	Collaborate with the City of Wichita to finalize and implement a comprehensive protected bicycle network downtown, including physically separated bike lanes, bike hubs, and clearly visible signage to ensure safe and convenient cycling.	Capital Project	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	Expanded	Public Works, Downtown Wichita
ST-8.2	Prioritize the design and construction of buffered or protected bike lanes on key corridors—Douglas, Central, Waterman, McLean, Main, Market, Seneca, and Washington streets—to create safe, direct east-west and north-south cycling routes through downtown.	Capital Project	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	New	Public Works, Downtown Wichita
ST-8.3	Conduct a long-term feasibility study for a dedicated bike and pedestrian bridge connecting the Delano neighborhood to the River District, to improve active transportation connectivity across the river.	Plan or Study	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	New	Public Works, Downtown Wichita
ST-8.4	Integrate bicycle-oriented wayfinding into the city’s downtown wayfinding program by installing bike-scale directional signage and maps that provide clear route guidance and distances for cyclists.	Partnership	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	Expanded	Public Works, Downtown Wichita
ST-8.5	Partner with Bike Walk Wichita to develop detailed downtown bike route maps and promotional materials, and to encourage community engagement and increased cycling through events and outreach efforts.	Partnership	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	Expanded	Downtown Wichita, Bike Walk Wichita



— Proposed - - - Existing ■ Indicates Priority

Proposed Bicycle Network

Building on the 2024 Bike Network Master Plan, the proposed Action Plan network for downtown Wichita features Grade-Separated and Protected Bike Lanes, Bike Boulevards, and Greenways to ensure safe travel and seamless connections to the river and key downtown destinations.



STRATEGY 9

Develop a high-frequency downtown circulator that connects The Hub with key points of interest

WHAT?

Establish a high-frequency shuttle operating every 15 minutes that connects The Hub transit center with major downtown destinations, providing convenient transfers from local and regional buses for reliable, easy access.

WHY?

With the main transit center relocating to The Hub in Delano and the Q Line’s frequency reduced due to funding constraints, a new connector service is essential. A dedicated shuttle will strengthen access to downtown’s economic, educational, and cultural centers, supporting economic activity, tourism, and overall downtown vibrancy.

GOALS

Connected Downtown

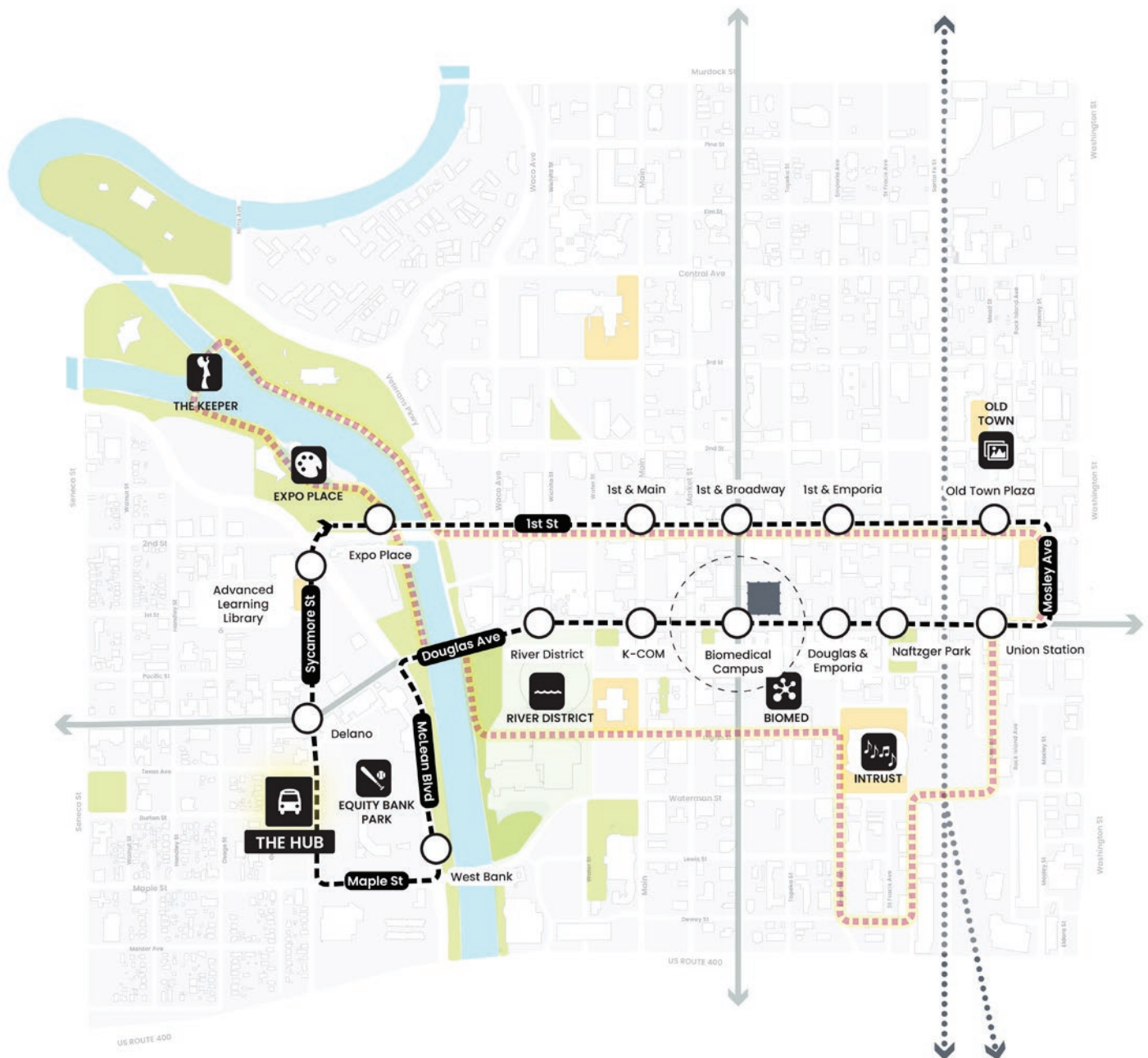
Riverfront Downtown

Well-Designed Downtown

Full-Service Downtown

 RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

ID	Action	Action Type	Timeline	Status	Execution Responsibility
ST-9.1	Launch a dedicated downtown circulator route linking key points of interest downtown (e.g., commercial, cultural, educational, transit hubs). Next steps may include conducting a data-driven routing analysis, aligning hours of operation, engaging stakeholders, developing an implementation plan, and securing long-term operation and management funding commitments.	Operation	Long-Term (7-10 Years)	New	Wichita Transit, Downtown Wichita
ST-9.2	Enhance existing and create new transit infrastructure aligned with circulator route, including installing new bus shelters along key routes and new bus-tracking technology to encourage convenient and comfortable ridership experience.	Capital Project	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	New	Wichita Transit, Downtown Wichita
ST-9.3	Conduct feasibility studies on dedicated downtown transit funding sources such as transit conservancies or special sales taxes.	Funding	Near Term (1-3 Years)	New	Wichita Transit, Downtown Wichita

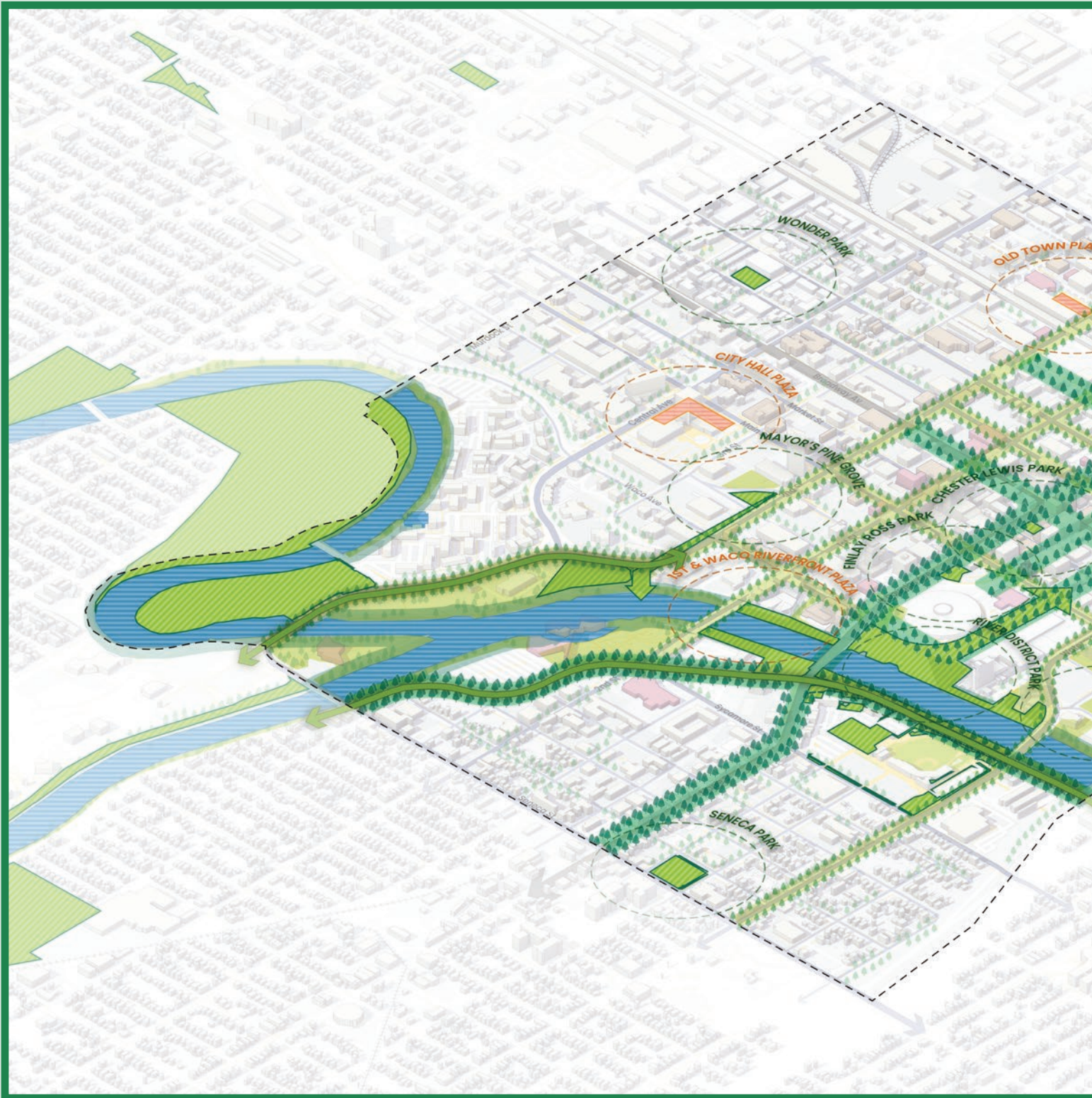


Downtown Circulator

To improve connectivity within downtown Wichita, establish a dedicated high-frequency electric shuttle operating every 10 to 15 minutes on a 2-mile loop along Douglas Avenue and 1st Street. This shuttle will directly link The Hub, the city's new multi-modal transit center, with major downtown destinations including commercial areas, cultural venues, educational institutions, and entertainment spots.

■■■ Proposed High-Frequency Transit Loop

Landscape & Public Realm



ilm



How does downtown achieve this vision?

1. Maintain a clean and safe downtown
2. Invest in downtown public spaces to improve their design and programming
3. Turn the river into a destination
4. Develop a street tree planting and stewardship framework
5. Create a nature-based stormwater management strategy

State of Landscape & Public Realm

Wichitans strongly desire more parks, open spaces, and trees.

We heard that you love the river and its bike paths, but you feel downtown lacks:

- Quality landscaping
- Proper maintenance
- Sufficient shade

To address these concerns, the Action Plan can focus on:

- Creating new open spaces throughout downtown
- Maintaining the quality of existing and future landscapes
- Adding more tree canopy

The Arkansas River serves as a defining corridor through downtown, anchored by the Keeper of the Plains at the confluence of the Arkansas and Little Arkansas Rivers on the north edge of downtown—a site of deep spiritual significance to Native American tribes. Open spaces in the area are centered along the riverfront greenway and in smaller urban parks, including the newly redeveloped Naftzger Park.





Highlights

River as Natural and Cultural Heritage

The Arkansas River has historical significance and acts as a cultural asset to the city. Many existing programs are located along the river, such as bike paths, trails and art interventions like the Keeper of the Plains.

Trail Network

Bike and pedestrian paths are popular along the river, with potential for enhancement.

Proximity to Natural Assets

Downtown Wichita is close to cultural destinations such as the Keeper, Botanica, and museums along the river.

"I love the bike paths along the river"



"More trees, cleaner river + let's use it! We need more spaces to relax near river"



Open Space Programs and Character in Demand, According to Wichitans

Programs



Trails



Public Art

Character



Activated Open Space



Pedestrian-Oriented Open Space



Lowlights

Weak City-River Connection

The public realm offers opportunities to enhance connectivity between urban open spaces and the river.

Thermal Comfort and Safety

Downtown lacks sufficient tree cover and shaded areas, limiting comfortable spaces for people to gather and rest along streets.

Sense of Belonging

There is a lack of vibrant gathering spaces and diverse programming in public areas, limiting opportunities for social connection.

"Convert surface lots into parks"



"More trees and shade, especially dedicated in the right of way"



"So much exposed concrete and wasted spaces invites crime"



STRATEGY 10

Maintain a clean and safe downtown

WHAT?

Implement coordinated programs, partnerships, and policies to ensure downtown Wichita remains consistently clean, safe, and welcoming for residents, businesses, and visitors.

WHY?

Many Wichitans cite maintenance as one of downtown’s biggest problems and a primary detractor for feelings of safety and welcoming. Investing in a consistently clean, well-lit, and safe downtown builds public confidence, attracts more people, and strengthens economic activity.

 GOALS

- Connected Downtown
- Riverfront Downtown
- Well-Designed Downtown
- Full-Service Downtown

 RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

ID	Action	Action Type	Timeline	Status	Execution Responsibility
ST-10.1	Continue to scale the Clean Team ambassador program from 3 full-time employees in 2026 to 10 by 2035. These staff conduct regular litter removal, graffiti cleanups, sidewalk sweeping, and power washing while providing a welcoming presence and giving information to visitors. Track metrics like pounds of trash collected, number of visitors greeted, number of trees maintained, miles of sidewalk cleaned for annual report-outs.	Program & operations	Ongoing	Expanded	Downtown Wichita, Block by Block
ST-10.2	Continue to organize regular volunteer clean-up days and adopt-a-block initiatives, engaging residents, schools, and businesses to participate directly in maintaining a clean, welcoming environment.	Program & operations	Ongoing	Expanded	Downtown Wichita
ST-10.3	Use field data from the Ambassador team to conduct quarterly Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) audits to identify safety risks, optimize lighting, sightlines, and signage, as well as reduce hidden or underutilized areas that might promote nuisance activity or safety concerns.	Program & operations	Near Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, Wichita Police Department
ST-10.4	In partnership with the Homelessness Task Force, Homeless Outreach Team, and non-profit partners like COMCARE, establish coordinated response and outreach programs with behavioral health teams, local law enforcement, and nonprofit partners to proactively address homelessness, mental health, and substance issues downtown, connecting people to resources while compassionately maintaining public spaces and safety.	Program & operations	Ongoing	Expanded	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita, Non-Profit Homelessness Service Providers
ST-10.5	Launch a collaborative public awareness and marketing campaign around downtown safety and cleanliness, using social media and local media to spotlight successes, set expectations, and invite ongoing community involvement.	Public Awareness	Ongoing	New	Downtown Wichita



LOOKING TO...

Kansas City, Missouri



Downtown Kansas City Ambassadors

Downtown Kansas City's Ambassador Team transformed the city's core by deploying 60 ambassadors responsible for daily sidewalk cleaning, graffiti removal, safety patrols, and outreach services.

Funded by property owners through a Community Improvement District, ambassadors maintain year-round visibility, offer hospitality and safety escorts, and work closely with law enforcement and social service partners.

Impact:

Ambassadors have helped facilitate downtown's ongoing \$10 billion renaissance, removing hundreds of thousands of bags of litter, thousands of graffiti tags, and providing a trusted public presence—all leading to a dramatic improvement in perception, business growth, and livability.



LOOKING TO...

Cleveland, Ohio



Downtown Cleveland Clean + Safe Program

Downtown Cleveland's Clean + Safe program energized the district with a dedicated team that delivers litter removal, safety escorts, and public space activation.

Ambassadors patrol on foot and bike, offer rapid responses to maintenance needs, and coordinate with safety and human services, using data to address priority areas efficiently.

Impact:

The Clean + Safe program deploys ambassadors for over 112,000 hours annually. Last year, they collected 802,000 pounds of trash, removed 3,900+ graffiti tags, completed 1,400 safety escorts, connected 850 unsheltered residents with support, and surveyed 1,300 streetlights. These efforts have helped create a vibrant, walkable downtown, with foot traffic regularly exceeding 90% of pre-pandemic levels and annual visitor spending in the billions.

STRATEGY 11

Invest in downtown public spaces to improve their design and programming

WHAT?

Enhance downtown Wichita’s public spaces by investing in thoughtful design upgrades, accessible infrastructure, and family-friendly year-round programming.

WHY?

Some downtown public spaces discourage social gatherings because they lack maintenance and engaging activities. Well-maintained, lively spaces attract people, boost foot traffic, and strengthen local businesses by creating a welcoming, connected downtown experience.

GOALS

Connected Downtown

Riverfront Downtown

Well-Designed Downtown

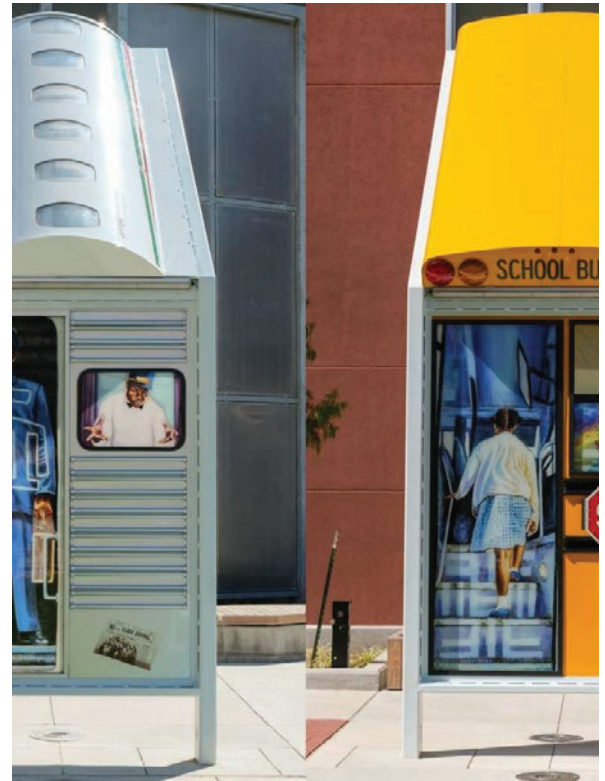
Full-Service Downtown

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

ID	Action	Action Type	Timeline	Status	Execution Responsibility
ST-11.1	Work with the City to raise awareness of and coordinate implementation on proposed actions for city-owned parks and open spaces downtown in this plan’s Public Space Evaluation. Establish regular coordination meetings and a public dashboard to track progress and encourage transparency.	Program & operations; Capital Projects	Long-Term (7-10 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita Parks
ST-11.2	Identify and work with the City to invest in public spaces that serve as neighborhood “hearts” by upgrading streetscapes, sidewalks, lighting, pedestrian-friendly design elements, and public furniture around anchor businesses or historic sites to foster community hubs.	Program & operations; Capital Projects	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita Parks, Public Works
ST-11.3	Work with the City and developers of large-scale new downtown developments (150+ units) to promote inclusion of publicly-accessible open spaces in development agreements. Encourage amenities such as seating, shade, art installations, and flexible-use areas.	Incentives	Ongoing	New	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita Economic Development, Developers
ST-11.4	Work with the City and recreation-oriented downtown partners like YMCA to maintain a consistent programming lineup that activates parks like Naftzger Park. Include outreach strategies to ensure diverse community participation and develop performance metrics to evaluate programming success.	Program & operations; Partnerships	Ongoing	Expanded	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita Parks, Recreation Providers
ST-11.5	Partner with local artists and cultural groups to integrate public art and culturally relevant programming into downtown public spaces. For example, partner with Music Theatre Wichita to host holiday productions in Naftzger Park.	Program & operations; Partnerships	Ongoing	Expanded	Downtown Wichita

Naftzger Park is a recently renovated green space near INTRUST Bank Arena featuring the Evergy Pavilion for live performances, a large digital screen, a water splash element, dog run, gardens, a public restroom, and multiple seating areas.

Chester I. Lewis Reflection Square Park, dedicated to civil rights leader Chester I. Lewis, features large-scale sculptures, interpretive art, and seating areas designed to foster quiet reflection.



LOOKING TO...

Valparaiso, Indiana



Valparaiso Central Park Plaza

Downtown Valparaiso's Central Park Plaza transformed an underused parking lot into a 2.5-acre public space with green areas, an amphitheater, pavilion, and ice rink that hosts over 240,000 visitors annually.

The park supports 15+ unique community events each year, including the Valparaiso Popcorn Festival which draws 60,000 attendees.

Impact:

Central Park Plaza has spurred local economic activity by attracting consistent foot traffic and hosting year-round programming, boosting nearby businesses and increasing social engagement. This investment was achieved without city borrowing, instead relying on grants, donations, and public-private partnerships.

Strategies for Downtown's Public Spaces

Public Space	Proposed Action
1. City Hall Plaza	The City should introduce sustainable materials and plantings over time through a strategy of gradual reinvestment, showcasing its long-term commitment to climate change initiatives.
2. Mayor's Pine Grove	The City should focus on creating a more active, well-maintained civic gathering space in the pine grove.
3. Public Library Plaza	No immediate action is required; however, the space should be maintained to ensure the value of prior investments.
4. Seneca Park	The City should seek public input to identify community needs and, when funding becomes available, integrate new programs such as a dog park, picnic area, and successional tree canopy plantings.
5. Waterwalk Park	The City should sell the majority of the land for development, preserving select WaterWalk views to the river while creating an urban residential node with pedestrian alleys and courtyards, modeled after successful districts such as Portland's South Waterfront.
6. Finlay Ross Park	The City should revitalize the open space in parallel with River District investments; note opportunity to reconfigure the street grid at Water Street and William Street to improve connectivity and land use efficiency.
7. Chester I Lewis Park	This park should be activated through temporary or pop-up programming to draw people into the space and encourage ongoing use.
8. Naftzger Park	This park should be activated through temporary or pop-up programming to draw people into the space and encourage ongoing use.
9. Old Town Plaza	The public plaza should be redesigned with an emphasis on flexibility and sustainability, incorporating features such as green stormwater infrastructure, an urban tree grove, and a canopy or trellis to provide numerous benefits to the Old Town district.
10. Old Town Square	The square should be redesigned to meet 21st-century neighborhood park needs, with improvements such as an accessible lawn, playground, splash pad, dog park, and an event plaza with a canopy structure.



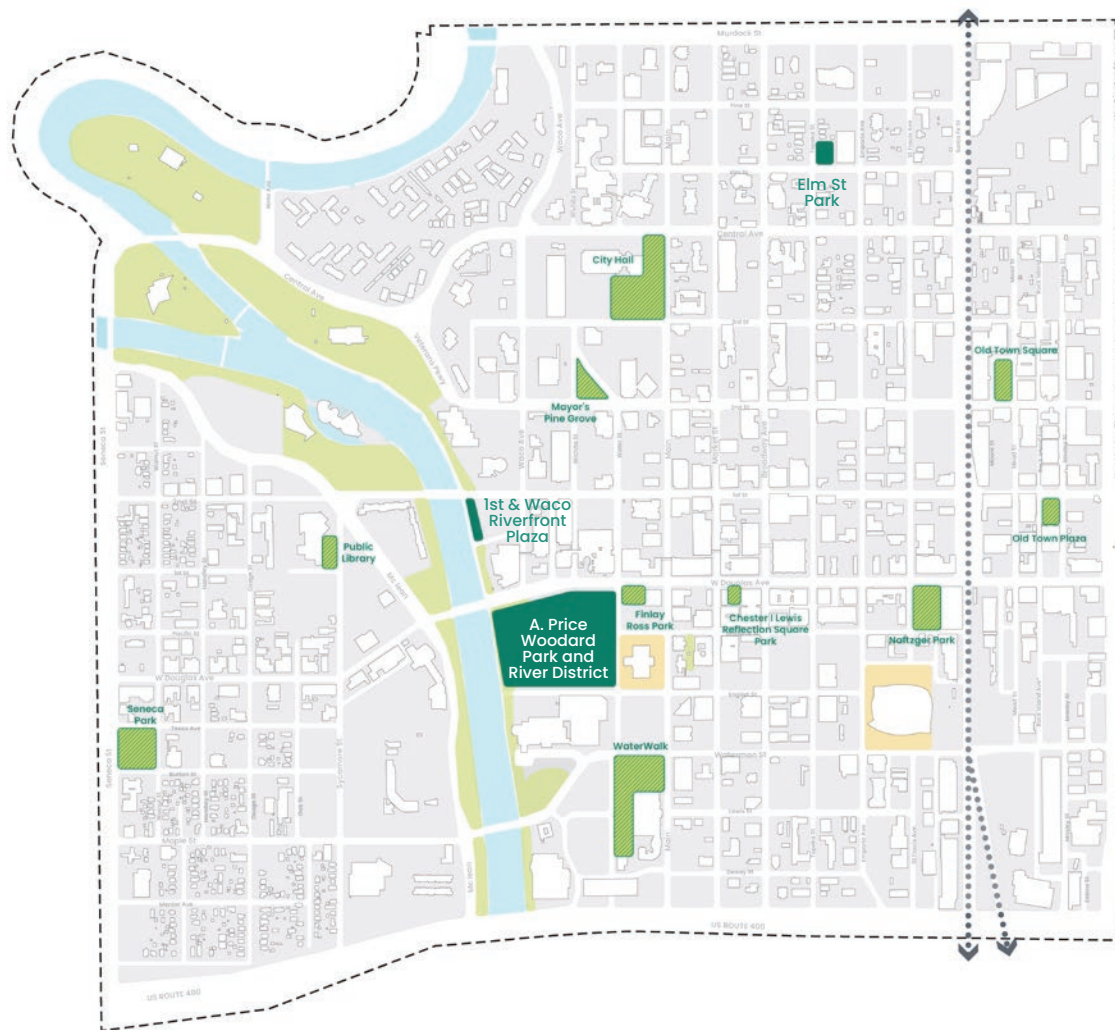
Pop-up activations like outdoor games can be effective ways to create more lively open spaces, like this game of bocce at Spruce Street Harbor Park in Philadelphia, PA.



Phoenix Farmer's Market, Eau Claire, WI



Easton Urban District Lawn, Columbus, OH



- Open Space
- Public Space
- Proposed New Open Space



Centennial Park, Lexington, KY



Splash Pad at Gathering Place, Tulsa, OK

Public Space Evaluation

Public Space	Proposed Action	Existing Conditions Evaluation
		Accessible & Linkages
1. City Hall Plaza	The City should introduce sustainable materials and plantings over time through a strategy of gradual reinvestment, showcasing its long-term commitment to climate change initiatives.	Institutional characteristics such as bollards and lack of internal pedestrian circulation create an uninviting and inhospitable space for the public.
2. Mayor's Pine Grove	The City should focus on creating a more active, well-maintained civic gathering space in the pine grove.	Lacks clear sightlines, accessible routes and is surrounded by dead or non-active edges.
3. Public Library Plaza	No immediate action is required; however, the space should be maintained to ensure the value of prior investments.	Safe (visible), clean, but wind swept, with little sense of enclosure, with a large portion dedicated to vehicular circulation. It does provide decent seating opportunities.
4. Seneca Park	The City should seek public input to identify community needs and, when funding becomes available, integrate new programs such as a dog park, picnic area, and successional tree canopy plantings.	Suitable for gathering and provides an inviting neighborhood park for the surrounding community.
5. Waterwalk Park	The City should sell the majority of the land for development, preserving select WaterWalk views to the river while creating an urban residential node with pedestrian alleys and courtyards, modeled after successful districts such as Portland's South Waterfront.	Suitable for gathering, but is designed to convey a sense of private property with a decorative perimeter fence.
6. Finlay Ross Park	The City should revitalize the open space in parallel with River District investments; note opportunity to reconfigure the street grid at Water Street and William Street to improve connectivity and land use efficiency.	Not inviting due to lack of accessibility and perceived safety. This is not a place that groups would likely congregate.
7. Chester I Lewis Park	This park should be activated through temporary or pop-up programming to draw people into the space and encourage ongoing use.	Promotes gathering and invites activity from the sidewalk.
8. Naftzger Park	This park should be activated through temporary or pop-up programming to draw people into the space and encourage ongoing use.	Promotes gathering and invites many people from different backgrounds.
9. Old Town Plaza	The public plaza should be redesigned with an emphasis on flexibility and sustainability, incorporating features such as green stormwater infrastructure, an urban tree grove, and a canopy or trellis to provide numerous benefits to the Old Town district.	Provides some infrastructure for gathering, but amenities and plantings are in need of maintenance or repair.
10. Old Town Square	The square should be redesigned to meet 21st-century neighborhood park needs, with improvements such as an accessible lawn, playground, splash pad, dog park, and an event plaza with a canopy structure.	Space promotes gathering, but lacks hierarchy of spaces for various events.

Sociability	Uses & Activity	Comfort & Image
Accessible, but edges are only active in specific areas during standard business hours.	Program uses are limited to circulation in & out of City Hall.	The space is clean and safe, but sterile in its design. Seating is limited and users are highly exposed to elements.
Space provides only a few picnic tables spread out through the park. Design lacks any clear program or purpose.	Space contains only a grouping of various trees, mostly conifers, creating no definition of spaces.	Space is clean with a few picnic tables for seating. Lack of sightlines and lighting may inhibit perceived safety.
Space is highly accessible and has relatively active edges from the Library and adjacent streetscape.	Space is designed primarily as loading zone and entry plaza for Library.	Space is suitable for gathering due to scale and is inclusive of users arriving by different modalities.
Space is accessible and provides good linkages throughout. There is moderately active edges from the surrounding uses.	Space has a few program uses between lawn, pickleball courts, and playground.	Space is clean and safe, yet provides limited opportunities for seating.
Space is accessible with various semi-private garden spaces, but mostly lacks active edges.	Space can host a variety of functions but has limited programming within design beyond passive seating spaces.	Space is clean and safe with various opportunities for seating. The northeast plaza lacks comfort and is too exposed to climatic conditions.
Space is not accessible with various level changes and limited visibility throughout.	Space is perceived as dangerous, non-visible sunken plaza with limited spaces to sit.	Space does provide a varied hierarchy of spaces. There is some ambient noise and cooling effect from water feature, but lacks winter season activation.
Space is accessible but lacks active edges from adjacent development.	Space is limited in programming but suitable for flexible activities via the central synthetic turf lawn. It may benefit from introducing additional opportunities or amenities.	Space is clean, safe, and provides various opportunities to sit; however, it lacks adequate shade.
Space is accessible and highly visible with active edges.	Space is actively programmed and designed to facilitate year-round activity.	Space is safe, clean, and provides numerous opportunities to linger and sit.
Space is highly accessible through its open layout and serves as an adequate neighborhood plaza.	Space is limited in programming and design.	Space is clean, safe, but lacks shade and does not provide opportunities to linger or sit.
Space is accessible and hosts active edges. Circulation is somewhat limiting, but is highly visible.	Space lacks variety of uses and provides lawn and a splash plaza during summer months.	Space is safe, clean, and provides numerous opportunities to sit, but lacks shade.

STRATEGY 12

Turn the river into a destination for residents and visitors

WHAT?

Invest in and maintain the Arkansas River to create a lush, active riverfront that functions as Wichita's front door.

WHY?

The Arkansas River is one of downtown Wichita's greatest untapped assets for shaping a vibrant urban center. Currently, most new development ignores the river, and it remains largely hidden within the downtown landscape — you might not even notice it unless you cross one of its bridges.

**GOALS**

Connected Downtown

Riverfront Downtown

Well-Designed Downtown

Full-Service Downtown

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

ID	Action	Action Type	Timeline	Status	Execution Responsibility
ST-12.1	Establish a Downtown River Conservancy as a philanthropic and advocacy organization to complement City efforts in funding and managing riverfront programming, operations, maintenance, and capital improvements, similar to models in Detroit and Pittsburgh. Within this framework, pursue partnerships with local cultural organizations, private developers, and nonprofit groups to co-manage programming, stewardship, and placemaking initiatives.	Non-Profit	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	New	Philanthropy, Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita
ST-12.2	Develop and adopt riverfront design and development guidelines that emphasize public access, pedestrian-friendly connections, habitat restoration, and visual engagement with the river. Encourage a mix of residential, cultural, and recreational uses and amenities such as flexible gathering spaces, public art, food service, and performance venues along the river to support diverse programming and community interaction.	Design Guidelines	Near Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita
ST-12.3	Work with the City to create and install cohesive riverfront wayfinding signage (in coordination with city wayfinding recommendation ST-1.2) and interactive maps to guide visitors to access points, parks, amenities, and cultural destinations along the Arkansas River corridor.	Program & operations; Capital Projects	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita Public Works
ST-12.4	Publish a dynamic calendar of riverfront recreation and cultural events to promote year-round activity including markets, concerts, festivals, and water-based activities.	Public Awareness	Near Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita
ST-12.5	Work with the City to ensure that all riverfront development actively faces and engages the river, prioritizing public plazas, promenades, and community benefit agreements.	Technical Assistance	Ongoing	Expanded	Downtown Wichita
ST-12.6	Work with the City and Downtown River Conservancy to prioritize habitat restoration and riverbank stabilization projects that enhance ecological functions while improving aesthetics.	Program & operations; Capital Projects	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita Parks
ST-12.7	Work with the City to enhance pedestrian and bike connections along and across the river corridor to integrate the riverfront with downtown districts, transit, and neighborhoods.	Program & operations; Capital Projects	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	Expanded	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita Public Works

The Arkansas River near the Keeper of the Plains is a hub of riverfront recreation with kayaking, biking, and hiking opportunities.

A. Price Woodard Park is the biggest public park on the east bank of the river downtown.



LOOKING TO...

Detroit, Michigan



Detroit RiverWalk

Detroit Riverfront Conservancy transformed Detroit's industrial riverfront into a 3.5-mile RiverWalk with parks, plazas, and greenways, attracting over 3 million visitors annually.

Supported by major philanthropic gifts—including a \$50 million launch grant from The Kresge Foundation and \$50 million from the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation—the Conservancy has built iconic spaces like Centennial Park, Dequindre Cut, and Robert Valade Park.

Impact:

The Riverfront attracts more than 3 million visitors yearly and supports 1,300 jobs, generating \$82 million in annual visitor spending. It has catalyzed over \$1.5 billion in public and private investment, creating a vibrant, accessible destination that reshaped Detroit's image and economy without relying solely on public funds.

STRATEGY 13

Develop street tree planting and stewardship framework

WHAT?

Establish a comprehensive framework for planting, maintaining, and stewarding street trees throughout downtown Wichita.

WHY?

Downtown Wichita has a limited tree canopy, reducing shade and comfort during warmer months. Prioritizing tree planting in high-traffic areas will provide cooling shade, improve air quality, and create a more attractive, comfortable environment for pedestrians.



GOALS

Connected Downtown

Riverfront Downtown

Well-Designed Downtown

Full-Service Downtown



RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

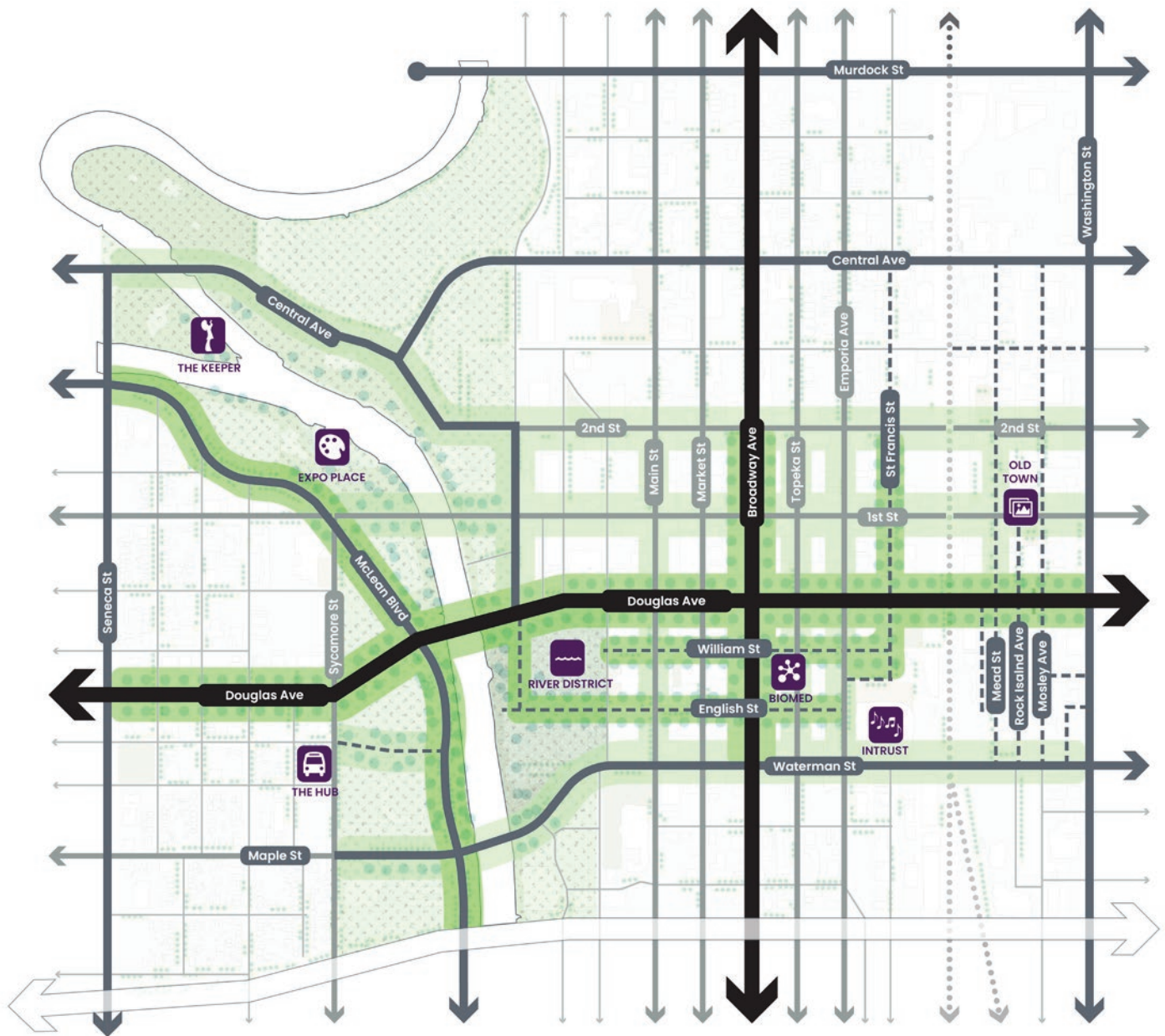
ID	Action	Action Type	Timeline	Status	Execution Responsibility
ST-13.1	Collaborate with the City of Wichita and KDOT to launch a Downtown Tree Planting Program based on the Street Tree Planting Framework. Focus on increasing canopy cover along sidewalks, public rights-of-way, and parking lots.	Program & operations; Capital Projects	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita, KDOT
ST-13.2	Using the Street Tree Planting Framework as a baseline, develop a prioritized map identifying high-need planting areas based on heat vulnerability and pedestrian activity, focusing initial efforts on blocks with lower canopy cover.	Program & operations	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita
ST-13.3	Adopt city-recommended diverse tree species and planting guidelines to ensure resilience, longevity, and aesthetic variety, with oversight from the City Arborist and Landscape Architects.	Design Guidelines	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita
ST-13.4	Implement modern planting techniques (e.g., structural soil cells) and coordinated maintenance protocols, including watering, pruning, and pest management, to support tree health after planting.	Technical Assistance	Ongoing	New	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita
ST-13.5	Establish partnerships with neighborhood groups, local nonprofits, businesses, and community volunteers to support tree stewardship, including watering and monitoring efforts.	Partnerships	Ongoing	Expanded	Downtown Wichita
ST-13.6	Engage property owners adjacent to planting areas through advance notification and educational outreach, offering opportunities to opt-out and information on tree care responsibilities.	Public Awareness	Ongoing	New	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita

The Arkansas Riverfront is home to many mature shade trees.

Downtown Wichita hosts regular planting events around downtown and manages the annual Flowers on Douglas beautification program.



ID	Action	Action Type	Timeline	Status	Execution Responsibility
ST-13.7	Develop public education campaigns and promotional events such as tree giveaways to encourage private property tree planting in identified priority areas.	Public Awareness	Ongoing	New	Downtown Wichita
ST-13.8	Integrate tree planting efforts with capital improvement projects and streetscape upgrades to maximize benefits for sustainability, shade, and pedestrian comfort.	Program & operations; Capital Projects	Ongoing	Expanded	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita
ST-13.9	Establish a data-driven monitoring and reporting system to track tree planting numbers, survival rates, species diversity, canopy growth, and program costs, with annual reporting to city advisory boards.	Program & operations	Ongoing	New	Downtown Wichita
ST-13.10	Prioritize retention and protection of existing healthy trees during construction and infrastructure projects, incorporating root zone protection and damage mitigation strategies.	Program & operations	Ongoing	Expanded	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita



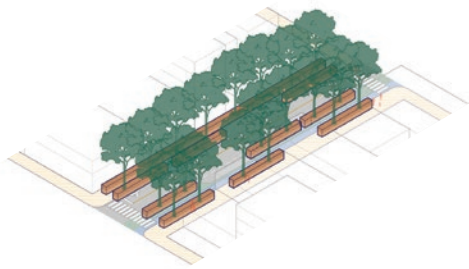
Tree Planting Priority Framework

This framework identifies near-term planting efforts along signature streets like Douglas Avenue and the riverfront. Longer-term planting is recommended for areas stemming from the core, including Waterman, 1st, and 2nd Streets. This phased approach guides strategic placement of new trees to enhance canopy coverage, improve pedestrian comfort, and support environmental benefits across downtown.

- Near-Term Planting Priority
- Long-Term Planting Priority
- Riverfront Planting Priority
- Existing Tree Canopy
- Near-Term New Tree Canopy

STREET TREE PLANTING GUIDELINES

These following strategies collectively help transform streets into vital green spaces that serve the community, support environmental sustainability, and promote social interaction.



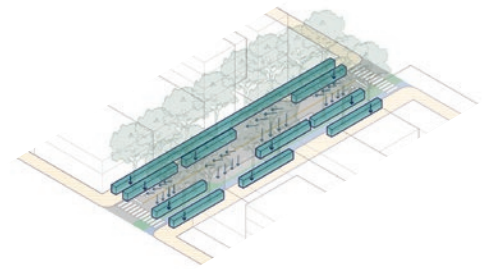
Continuous Tree Canopy

Providing a continuous canopy of trees enhances outdoor comfort, providing shade and cooling effects. Increasing soil volume for tree planting ensures long-term health and sustainability, helping trees grow tall and strong over time.



Diversity of Local Species

Planting a variety of native species supports biodiversity and improves environmental resilience. Adding environmental signage can help educate the public about the importance of local ecosystems.



Green Infrastructure

Integrating green infrastructure elements like bioswales, permeable pavements, and rain gardens helps manage stormwater runoff, reduces flood risks, and improves water quality.

RECOMMENDED SPECIES



Seedless Kentucky Coffeetree
Gymnocladus dioica 'Decaf' or 'Espresso'



Seedless Chinese Pistache
Pistacia chinensis 'Keith Davey'



Exclamation London Planetree
Platanus x acerifolia 'Bloodgood'



Swamp White Oak
Quercus bicolor



Shingle Oak
Quercus imbricaria



Chinkapin Oak
Quercus muehlenbergia



Shumard's Oak
Quercus shumardii



Bald Cypress
Taxodium distichum 'Shawnee Brave'



Lacebark Elm
Ulmus parvifolia 'Allee'



Sawtooth Oak
Quercus acutissima

STRATEGY 14

Create a nature-based stormwater management strategy

WHAT?

Develop a coordinated framework for installing and maintaining flood-resistant surfaces throughout downtown, such as permeable pavements, vegetated swales, and rain gardens.

WHY?

Softer surfaces and green stormwater features manage rainfall where it falls, mitigating runoff and protecting water quality. These elements reduce surface flooding, improve air quality, and contribute to healthier, safer streetscapes.



GOALS

Connected Downtown

Riverfront Downtown

Well-Designed Downtown

Full-Service Downtown



RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

ID	Action	Action Type	Timeline	Status	Execution Responsibility
ST-14.1 	Advocate for and help coordinate partnerships with city agencies, local utilities, and environmental groups to plan and implement permeable pavements, microclimate-appropriate vegetated swales, and rain gardens on public and semi-public spaces.	Advocacy	Ongoing	Expanded	Downtown Wichita
ST-14.2	Promote participation and investment by downtown property owners, businesses, and landlords in installing permeable surfaces and rain gardens on private lots and adjacent sidewalks to collectively reduce stormwater runoff.	Advocacy	Ongoing	Expanded	Downtown Wichita
ST-14.3	Actively monitor City drainage complaint data and work with Stormwater Management Department to prioritize nature-based stormwater management upgrades in key hotspots.	Technical Assistance; Advocacy	Ongoing	New	Downtown Wichita, Stormwater Management
ST-14.4	Develop and distribute educational materials and workshops for local businesses and residents about the benefits of nature-based stormwater management and how they can contribute.	Advocacy	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita

Much of downtown Wichita sits within the Arkansas River floodway, shaping how new development, infrastructure, and public spaces are planned along the riverfront.

The Scottish Rite Temple during a flood in the mid-1900s. Before the Big Ditch was constructed, flooding from the Arkansas River was common downtown.



LOOKING TO...

Des Moines, Iowa



Des Moines Market District

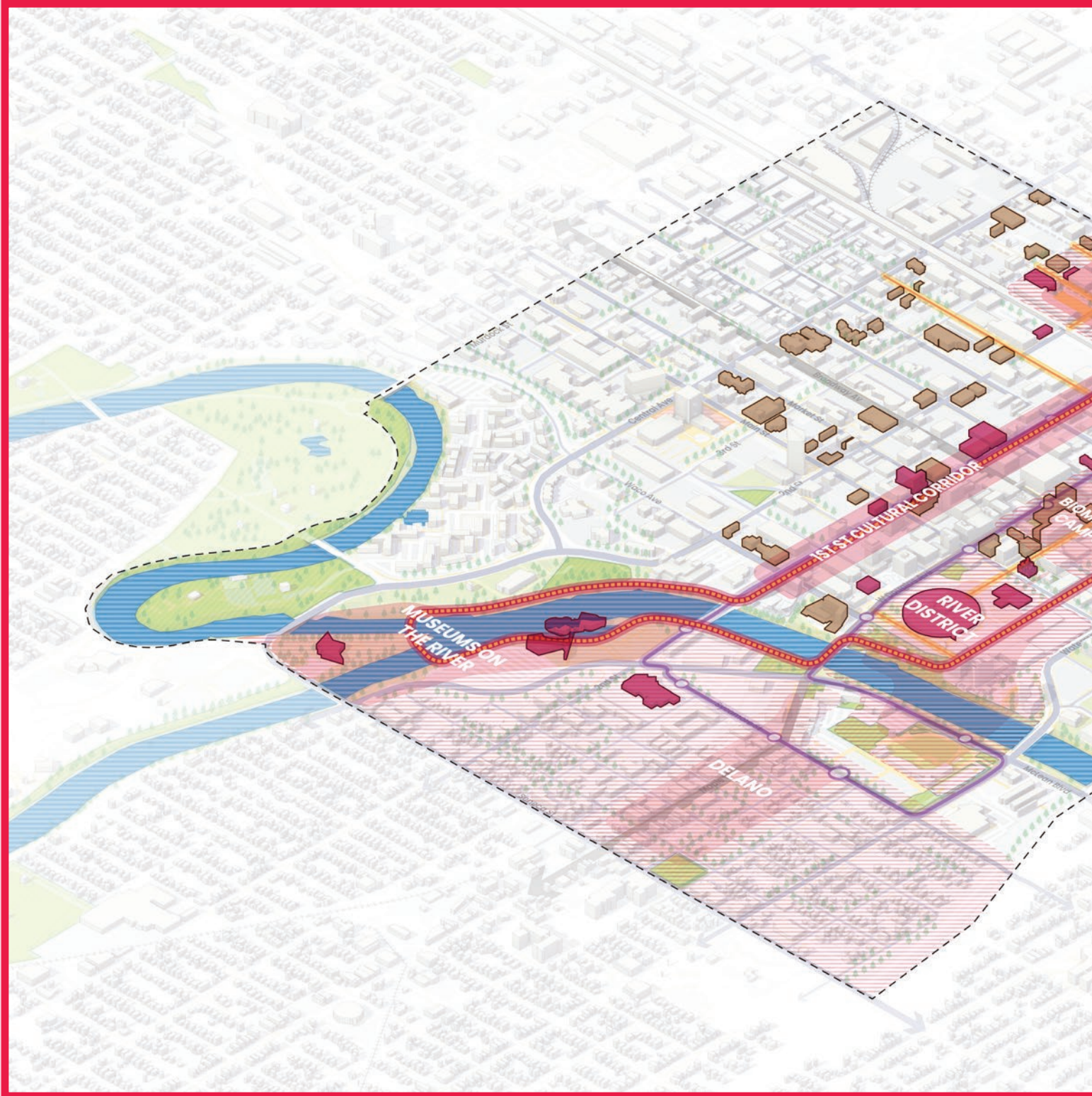
Des Moines' Market District uses over 80 rain gardens, permeable pavement, and detention basins to capture and clean nearly 20 million gallons of stormwater annually.

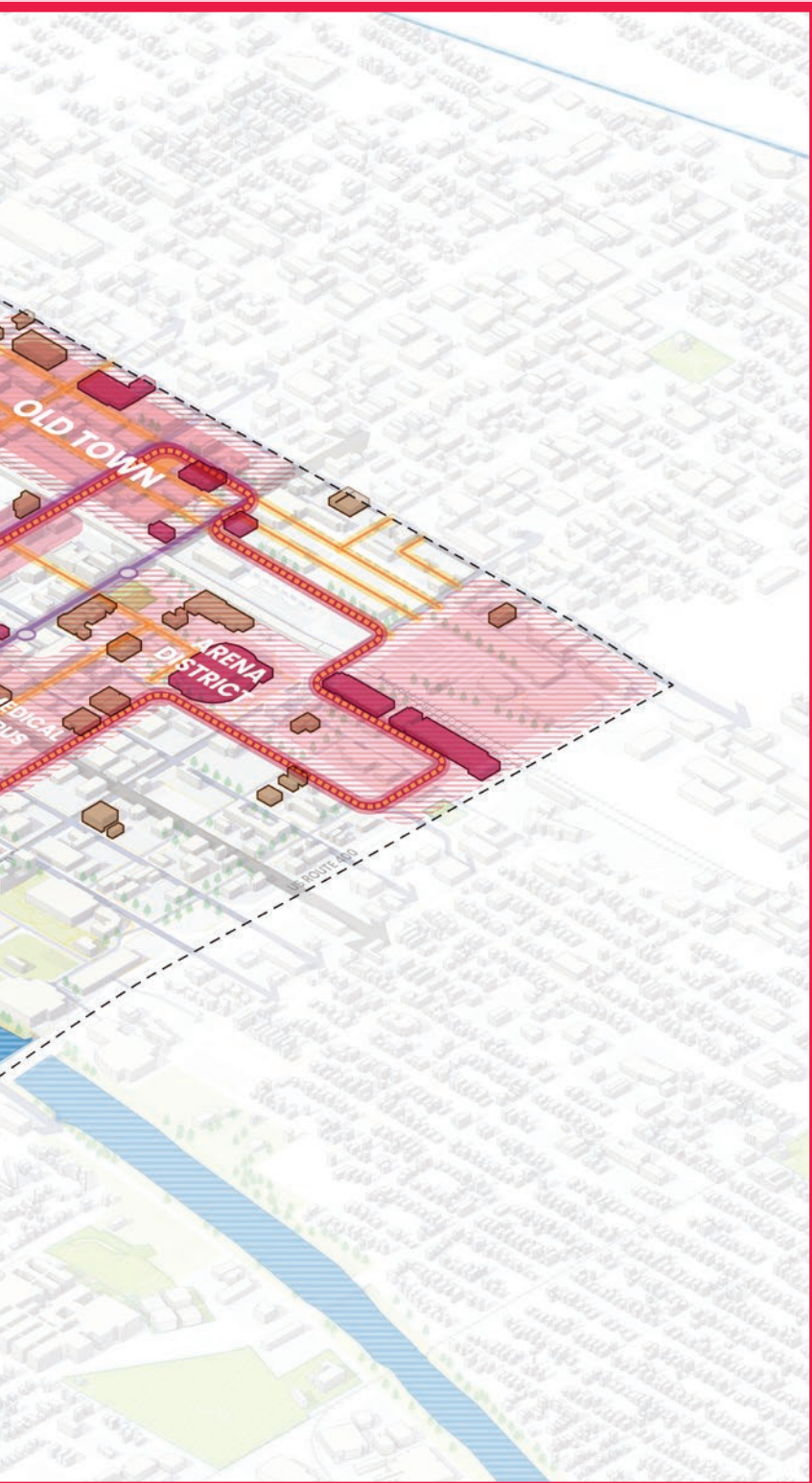
Native plants in these features help filter pollutants and reduce maintenance. The system allows water to flow visibly through curb cuts and bioswales into these rain gardens, integrating nature with urban design.

Impact:

Using green infrastructure for stormwater management has reduced the amount of runoff entering pipes, preventing sewer overflows and lowering flood damages. Studies estimate these measures avoid millions of dollars in flood-related damage over time by reducing flood peaks and improving water quality in local rivers such as the Raccoon River. Additionally, using natural systems cuts costs for developers by reducing the need for large underground detention systems and costly treatment devices.

History & Culture





How does downtown achieve this vision?

1. Create a cultural walking and biking loop
2. Encourage the development of functional performance and event spaces downtown
3. Promote downtown cultural happenings and destinations

 Cultural walking and biking loop

State of History & Culture

Wichitans want to celebrate downtown's history and culture in its public realm.

When friends and family visit downtown Wichita, locals usually suggest stops like: the Keeper of the Plains, the museums along the river, Delano, Naftzger Park, and Old Town.

However, there aren't many must-see attractions in the very heart of downtown. To enliven public life downtown, the Action Plan can recommend:

- Adding new amenities
- Connecting and enhancing destinations with historic and cultural significance
- Creating new public gathering spaces
- Improving place or district identities

Downtown is Wichita's cultural heart, featuring iconic historic venues like the Orpheum Theatre, Broadway-pipeline theatre organizations like Music Theatre Wichita, and destination museums like Exploration Place.





Highlights

Cultural Heritage

Wichita's history is written in the public realm – from native sacred sites to early rail infrastructure. These assets can shine via interpretation, programs, and streetscape.

"I love the abundance of activities for a relatively small town"



Municipal Leaders

Wichita's Division of Arts & Cultural Services is an influential partner. Its cultural plan identifies ways to strengthen and expand creativity across Wichita.

"There's so much art and culture here – we were shocked when we moved here!"



Cohort of Doers

The city's cultural leaders make up a robust network. They represent a diversity of scales and genres. And they share an ambitious vision for the city. By working together, they can shape a thriving cultural scene.

"Wichita has so much world class artistic and entrepreneurial talent"



Lowlights

Lack of Cultural Critical Mass

While anchor institutions along the riverfront attract audiences for special events, there is little visible presence of the creative community downtown.

"We need a new performing arts center!"



Visual Clutter

Public art, wayfinding signage, street furniture, planters, lights, etc. overwhelm senses without conveying a hierarchy of information.

What we have is great, but why don't others like young people and visitors think, know, and experience that?



Outdated Perceptions

Cultural leaders report a mismatch in audience perceptions: despite Wichita's arts anchors and creative industries, residents see the cultural scene as lacking energy.

"The geographical connections to points of interest could be improved."



Wayfinding

A lack of integrated signage and storytelling hinders navigation and opportunities for visitors to engage with the area's history and culture.

STRATEGY 15

Create a cultural walking and biking loop

WHAT?

Develop a continuous, walkable route that links major cultural, historic, and entertainment destinations across downtown Wichita, supported by clear signage, lighting, and engaging public art to enrich the pedestrian experience.

WHY?

Downtown Wichita is home to many cultural assets that often feel disconnected and difficult for visitors and residents to navigate. A cohesive Cultural Loop will encourage exploration, increase foot traffic, strengthen economic activity, and build civic pride by making the city's cultural story visible and accessible.

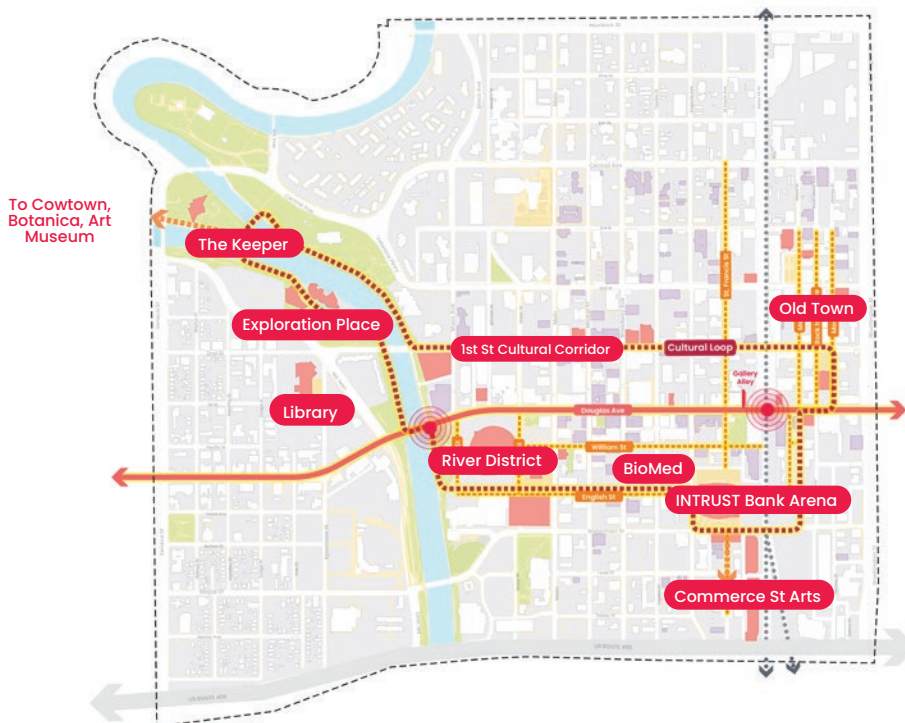
**GOALS**

Connected Downtown

Riverfront Downtown

Well-Designed Downtown

Full-Service Downtown



Exploration Place



The Orpheum Theatre



Old Town

Cultural Loop

The Cultural Loop is a mapped 4-mile route that connects key cultural and historic sites in downtown Wichita. It begins at iconic destinations such as the Keeper of the Plains and extends along the 1st Street "Cultural Corridor" and Old Town, reaching emerging areas like the Commerce Street Arts District and the River District. The loop follows

clear pedestrian and bike paths, providing easy navigation and linking important museums, Theaters, public art, and entertainment venues. This route aims to provide residents and visitors with a clear and accessible way to experience Wichita's cultural assets while supporting local businesses and encouraging exploration across downtown.



LOOKING TO...

Asheville, NC



Asheville Urban Trail

The Asheville Urban Trail is a 1.7-mile self-guided cultural and historic trail launched in 2002 as part of a long-term downtown revitalization effort.

The trail features 30 stations with sculptures — many created by local artists — and historic markers that tell the stories of Asheville’s development, eclectic architecture, and notable figures. Organized into five historical periods, the trail is designed as a “museum without walls,” connecting visitors to Asheville’s history through public art and interpretive plaques. Supported largely by private donors and ongoing city partnerships, the Urban Trail promotes downtown activation and cultural tourism.

Impact:

The Urban Trail draws tourists to local shops, galleries, and restaurants while reinforcing Asheville’s image as a cultural destination.



RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

ID	Action	Action Type	Timeline	Status	Execution Responsibility
ST-15.1	Expand on the proposed Cultural Loop route to create a detailed project framework that includes route alignment, branding concepts, street sections, funding plans, and marketing next steps.	Plan or study	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita
ST-15.2	Work with local history, arts, and education organizations to develop historic and cultural signage concepts along the route, inclusive of text, multimedia graphics, and oral histories, developed in storytelling panels or art-infrastructure (bike racks, benches, lighting).	Partnership; Program & operations	Mid-Term (4-6 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita
ST-15.3	Work with the city to incorporate the Cultural Loop in its Capital Improvements Plan within the next 5 years.	Partnership; Program & operations	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita
ST-15.4	Commission local artists for murals, sculptures, and interactive installations at key points along the loop.	Partnership	Long-Term (7-10 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, Public Art

Creating a Cultural Loop

Storytelling Paths

A curated path that is designed to tell a specific narrative of the place.

Inscription in Pavement



National Aquarium, Baltimore

Pavement Trails



Boston Freedom Trail, Boston MA

Digital Walking Tour



St Kilda, Melbourne, AUS

History Moments

Intriguing moments that spark curiosity and share the history of the place.

Plaques



Parco San Giuliano, Italy

Artistic/Interactive



Krusevac Fortress, Serbia

Informative Panels



Africville Park, Canada

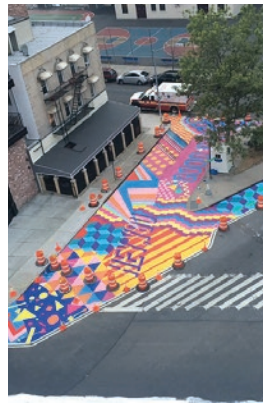
Creative Moments

Creative moments that reflect local stories and invite fresh ways to see and experience the city.

Accent Walls and Pavement



Portland Pearl District



Asphalt Activation, New York

Tech-based Experiences

Immersive experiences that add a deeper layer of understanding through playful tech tools.

AR Historic Overlay



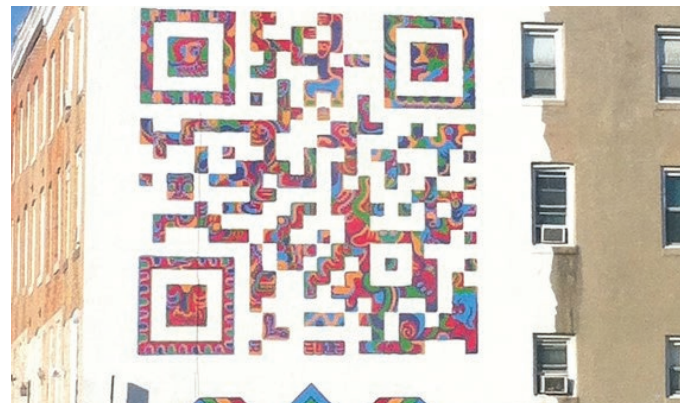
Forgotten History Trails, London

Sensorial Interventions



Musical Intervention at Valley Park, Kansas City

Digital Infrastructure



Graffiti QR Code, Baltimore

Temporary Installations



Interwoven by Atelier Cho Thompson, New York

Building Facades Activation



WERK 12, Munich Germany

STRATEGY 16

Encourage the development of functional performance and event spaces downtown

WHAT?

Support the development of a separate, modern performing arts center and convention center in downtown Wichita.

WHY?

Downtown Wichita’s event facilities no longer meet modern industry standards, limiting the city’s ability to attract major performances, conventions, and gatherings. Today’s venues are designed around specialized functions—high-quality acoustics and support spaces for performing arts, and flexible halls with connected meeting rooms, hotels, and parking for conventions. New or upgraded facilities are essential to position downtown as a competitive event destination and a stronger economic driver for Wichita.

GOALS

Connected Downtown

Riverfront Downtown

Well-Designed Downtown

Full-Service Downtown

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

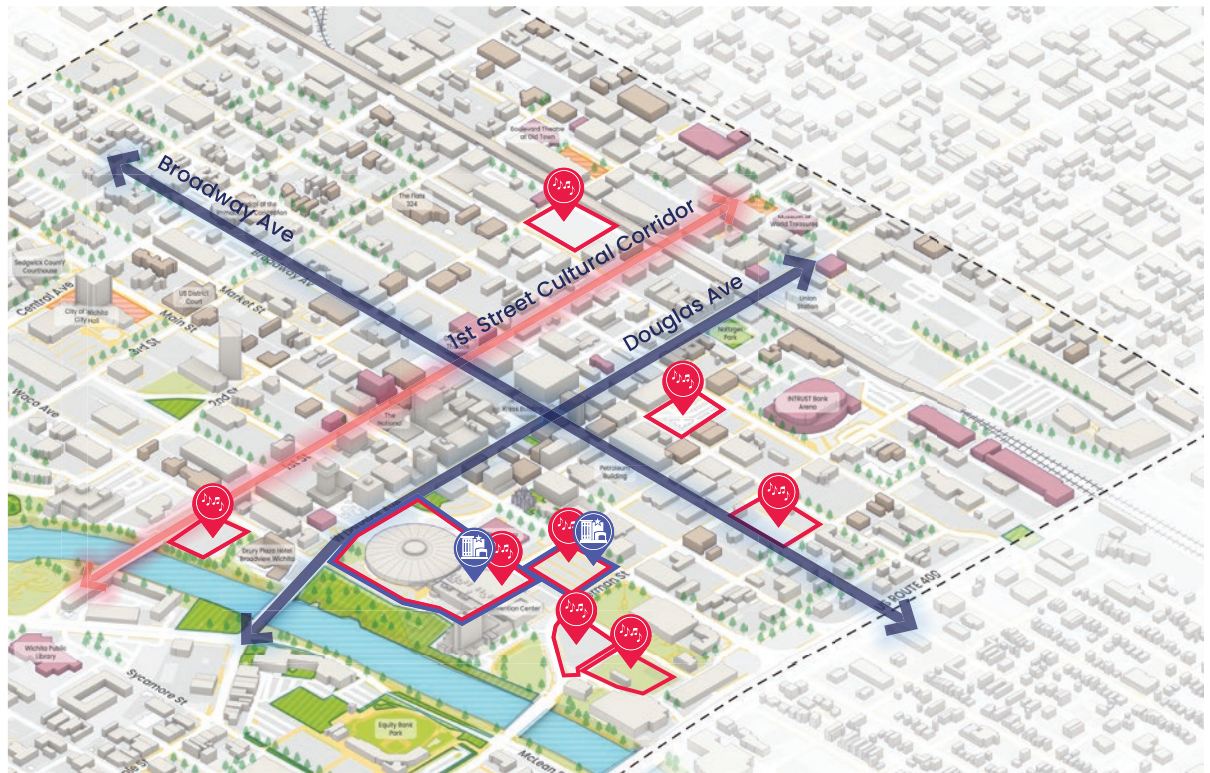
ID	Action	Action Type	Timeline	Status	Execution Responsibility
ST-16.1 Advocate for the development of a performing arts center.					
ST-16.1.1	Hire a market consultant specializing in performing arts centers to develop a comprehensive business plan for a downtown facility. This plan should ensure the proposed building envelope includes all essential components identified for operational success — such as dedicated rehearsal spaces (in-house or external), lobby areas designed for receptions and fundraisers, and other key amenities.	Technical Assistance	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita, Arts Organizations
ST-16.1.2	Hire a cost consultant to calculate total development cost based on the business plan, recognizing that similar projects today have a ballpark cost of \$160-200 million.	Technical Assistance	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, City of Wichita, Arts Organizations
ST-16.2 Advocate for the development of a new convention center.					
ST-16.2.1	Further explore optimal siting for the convention center and its relationship to the river and the existing Hyatt convention center hotel.	Technical Assistance	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	Expanded	Downtown Wichita, Visit Wichita
ST-16.2.2	Continue to advocate for a new convention center to expand downtown’s ability to host conferences and events.	Advocacy	Ongoing	Expanded	Downtown Wichita, Visit Wichita
ST-16.3 Develop a committee to determine future opportunities for repurposing Century II.					



Performing arts
center location
opportunities



Convention
center location
opportunities



DOWNTOWN EVENT SPACE REQUIREMENTS



Eccles Center, Salt Lake City

Performing Arts Center

Net Square Footage (NSF) Allocations

Programmed Element	NSF
Programmed Areas	92,425
Large Hall with 2,200 seats	44,375
Public Spaces	38,165
Administration & Building Services	5,935
Production Support	3,950
Non-Programmed Areas	53,034
Total Area	145,459

Source: Fisher Dachs Associates, 2025



Convention Center, Oklahoma City

Convention Center

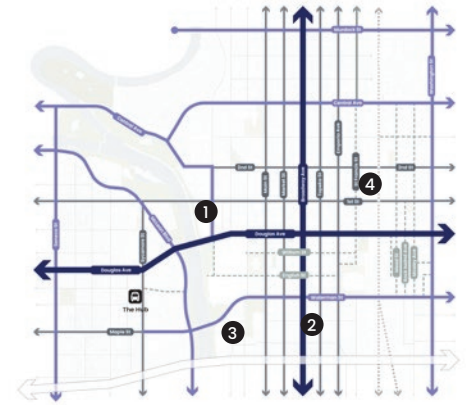
Program Requirements by Net Square Foot (NSF)

Market Supportable Program	NSF
Interior Programmed Areas	200,000
Exhibit Space	130,000
Ballroom Space	30,000
Meeting Space	40,000
Headquarter Hotel	100 Rooms
Back of House Areas	200,000
Total Area	400,000

Source: CSL, Feasibility Study of New CC in Wichita, 2023

Siting A Performing Arts Center

A number of sites within Wichita's downtown core have the potential to host a state-of-the-art performing arts center — one designed to showcase the best of the city's theatre, dance, and musical performance to wider audiences while supporting the technical needs of crews, lighting designers, and stagehands. Fischer Dachs Associates assisted in identifying several downtown locations that could accommodate such a facility — presented here as examples to inspire, rather than as an exhaustive list.



1
1st & Waco

Located at the confluence of the Arkansas River and the 1st Street Cultural Corridor, this site envisions a performing arts center that anchors downtown's growing cultural network. The location offers strong visibility and reinforces the connection between the riverfront and adjacent arts and cultural uses.



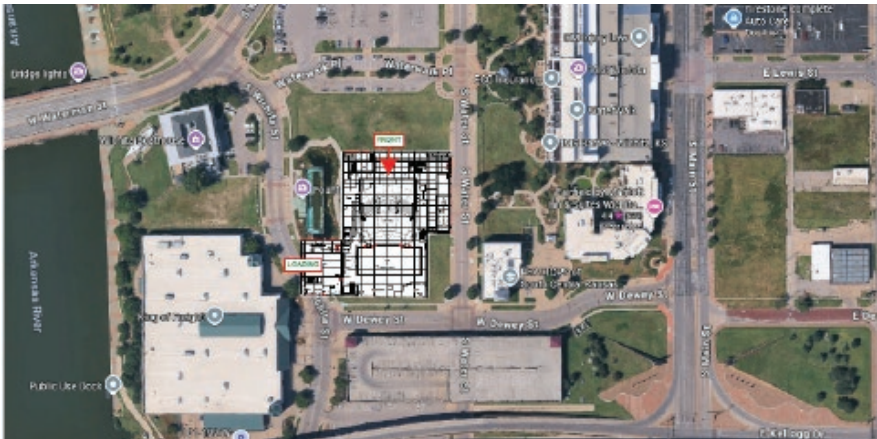
The 1st & Waco demonstration site shows how this location could come to life as a mixed-use performing arts destination. Learn more on 148.

2 Broadway & Waterman

Positioned near the Wichita Biomedical Campus and INTRUST Bank Arena, this site sits at the intersection of two major roads, providing excellent access and visibility from Kellogg. It could serve as a southern gateway to downtown, linking education, healthcare, and cultural destinations.



The Durham Performing Arts Center in Durham, NC and the Holland Center for Performing Arts in Omaha, NE both repurposed underutilized land for performing arts centers in the downtown core.



3

WaterWalk

This site repurposes underutilized space within the WaterWalk development to foster a more continuous and active riverfront experience. A performing arts center here would help anchor the south end of downtown's riverfront.



4

Coleman Lot

Situated between Old Town and other major entertainment venues, this surface parking lot offers an opportunity to create a central hub for live performance within the core. The site's proximity to existing restaurants and cultural attractions supports potential synergies with Wichita's broader entertainment district.

STRATEGY 17

Promote downtown cultural happenings and destinations

WHAT?

Coordinate marketing efforts and event programming to highlight festivals, exhibitions, performances, and cultural institutions throughout downtown, creating an annual calendar that draws year-round visitors.

WHY?

Consistent promotion and programming energize downtown by activating public spaces and supporting businesses. Making cultural offerings visible encourages participation, extends visitor stays, and creates a welcoming environment that celebrates Wichita’s year-round slate of events.

GOALS

Connected Downtown

Riverfront Downtown

Well-Designed Downtown

Full-Service Downtown

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

ID	Action	Action Type	Timeline	Status	Execution Responsibility
ST-18.1	Coordinate targeted marketing campaigns across social media, local media, local school, and tourism platforms to increase attendance at downtown cultural events and institutions.	Marketing	Ongoing	Expanded	Downtown Wichita, Greater Wichita Partnership
ST-18.2	Explore creation of a shared multi-institutional cultural pass—one ticket for multiple museums, theaters, and venues—and develop incentives to encourage business participation.	Program & operations	Near-Term (1-3 Years)	New	Downtown Wichita, Visit Wichita
ST-18.3	Establish a regular quarterly meeting rhythm and a shared data dashboard with Visit Wichita to collaboratively track, analyze, and evaluate key visitor marketing performance metrics—including event attendance, website traffic, social media engagement, and visitor spending—to continuously refine and enhance downtown marketing strategies.	Technical Assistance	Ongoing	Expanded	Downtown Wichita, Visit Wichita



4

DEMONSTRATION SITES



Demonstration Sites

What are demonstration sites?

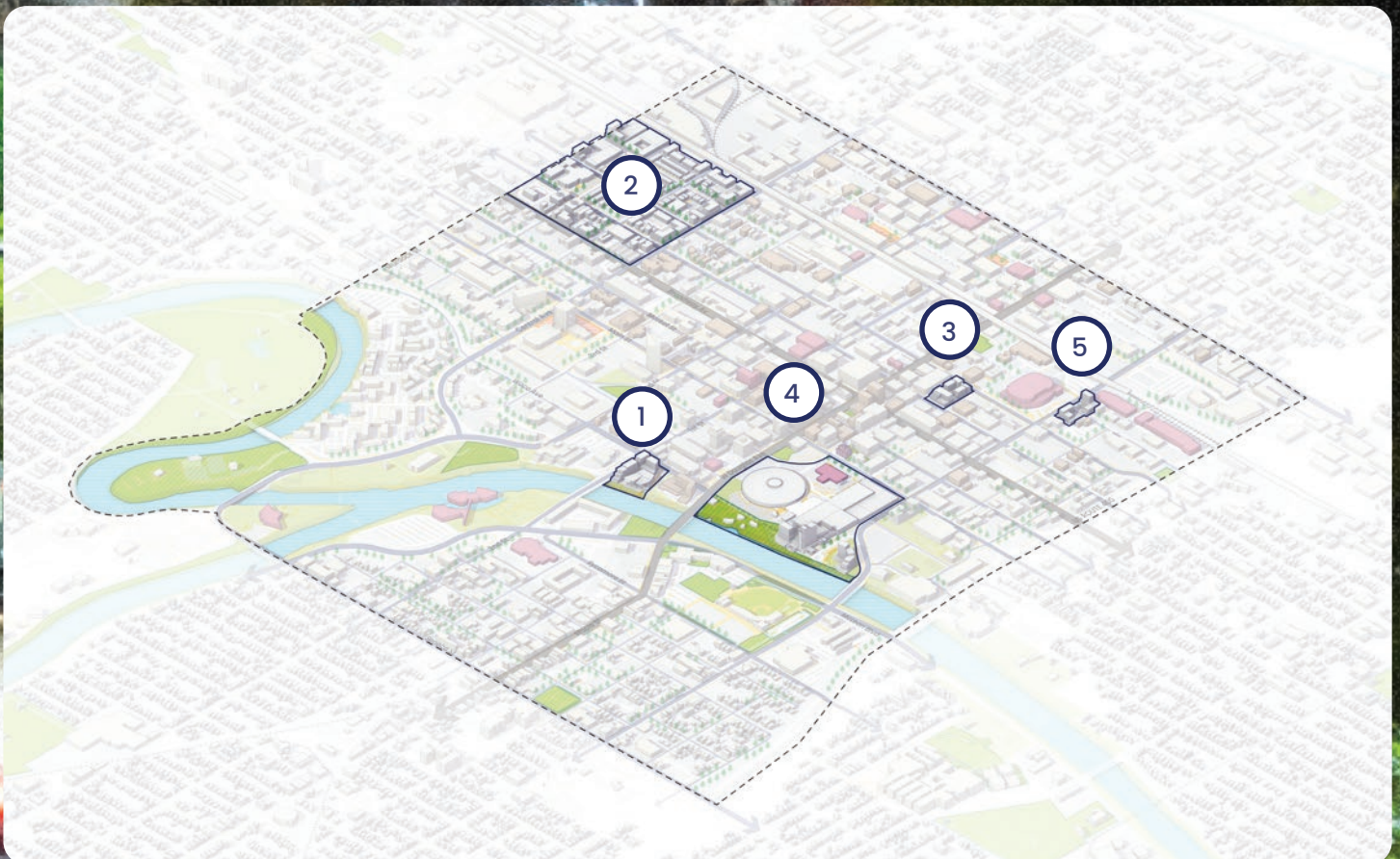
Demonstration sites are tangible, place-based examples that illustrate how the plan's implementation framework can take shape over the next decade. They are designed to cast a clear vision for the future of downtown, offering visible and actionable models of what can be achieved when strategic investments align with community priorities.

Where are demonstration sites?

The Action Plan identifies **five demonstration sites** located in catalytic areas of downtown. Each was selected for its potential to spark broader revitalization and for the capacity of its property owners or partners to move projects forward. These sites show both the possibility and pathway for turning long-term vision into reality, serving as test cases for innovation, design excellence, and coordinated action.

Demonstration Sites

- ① 1st & Waco Parking Lot *Could Become A **Mixed-Use Cultural Plaza***
- ② Northern Downtown *Could Become the **NDT District***
- ③ Transit Center *Could Become the **Biomedical Village***
- ④ Century II and Convention Center *Could Become the **River District***
- ⑤ Parking Lots *Could Become the **Arena South Entertainment District***



DEMONSTRATION SITE

1st & Waco Parking Lot Could Become a Mixed-Use Cultural Plaza



EXISTING CONDITION
Surface Parking Lot

OWNERSHIP

City of Wichita
Under Development
Agreement til 2027

SIZE

2.6 acres

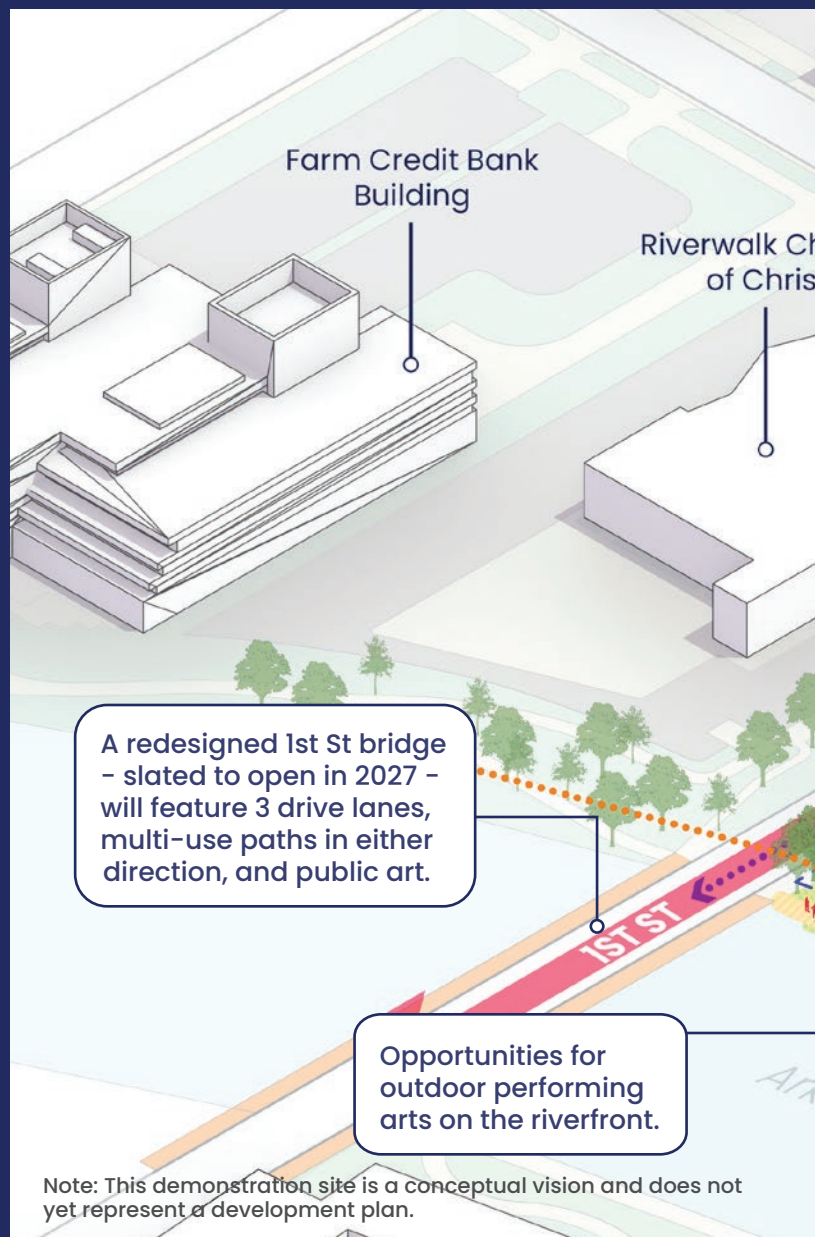
COMMUNITY DEMAND

Riverfront living, dining, and culture
for families

"Family fun area" "Green space!!" "Face the river"

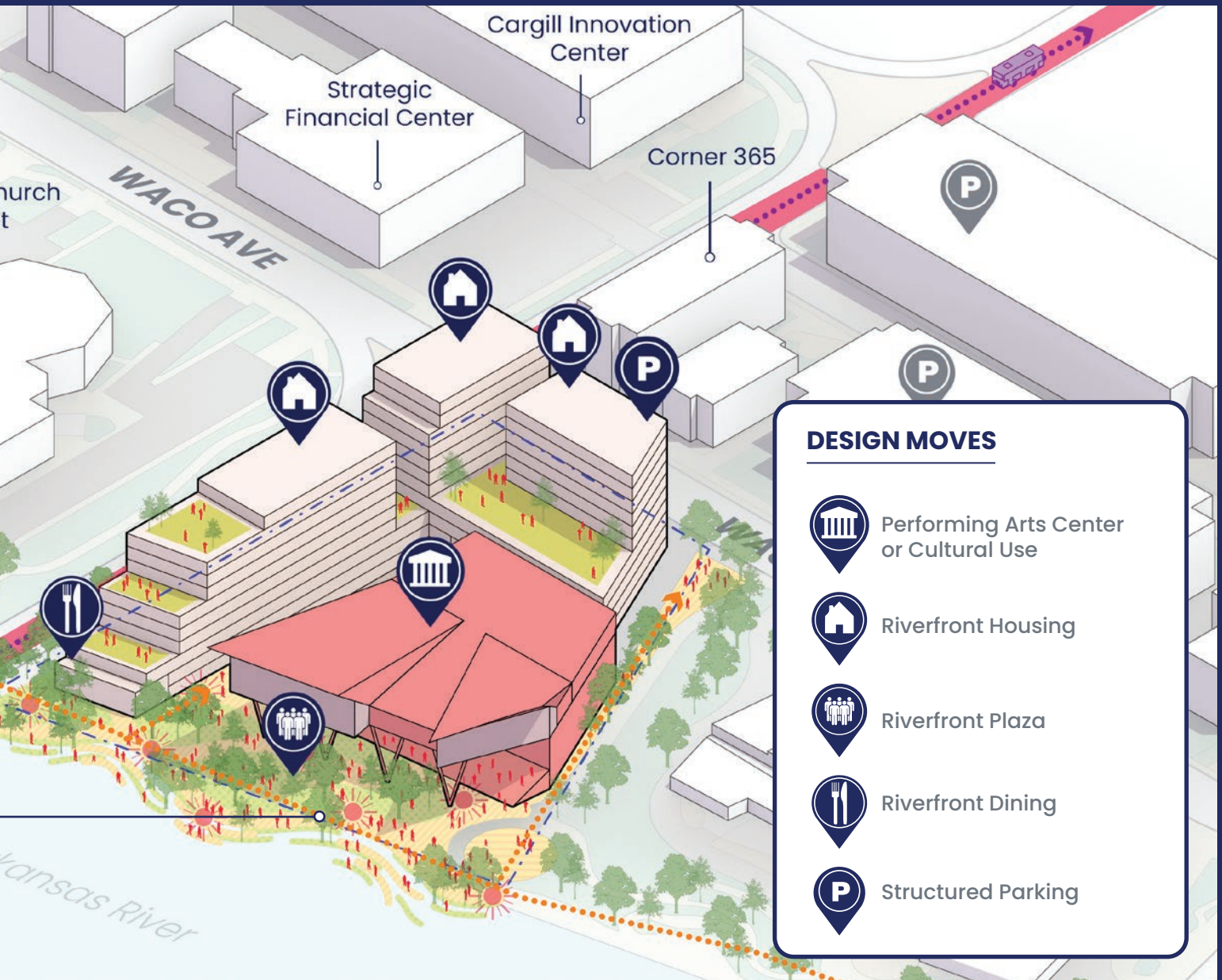
"Mixed-use green space with dining, patios, and
shopping" "New performing arts center could be here"

"Housing and hotel" "Apartments"



DESIGN STRATEGY

Transforming the 1st and Waco surface lot into a mixed-use Cultural Plaza responds to community calls for a more active riverfront with a mix of culture, public space, and housing. A 75,000-square-foot performing arts center—or comparable cultural use—engages both the Cultural Loop along 1st Street and the river, featuring transparent edges and an outdoor patio that doubles as an all-weather gathering space and amphitheater. An active river plaza extends the energy of A. Price Woodard Park northward, linking destinations from Drury Plaza to the Keeper of the Plains. Residential buildings along 1st and Waco complete the site with prime riverfront housing, while structured parking and loading functions are carefully integrated along Waco.



Institute of Contemporary Art
Boston, Massachusetts



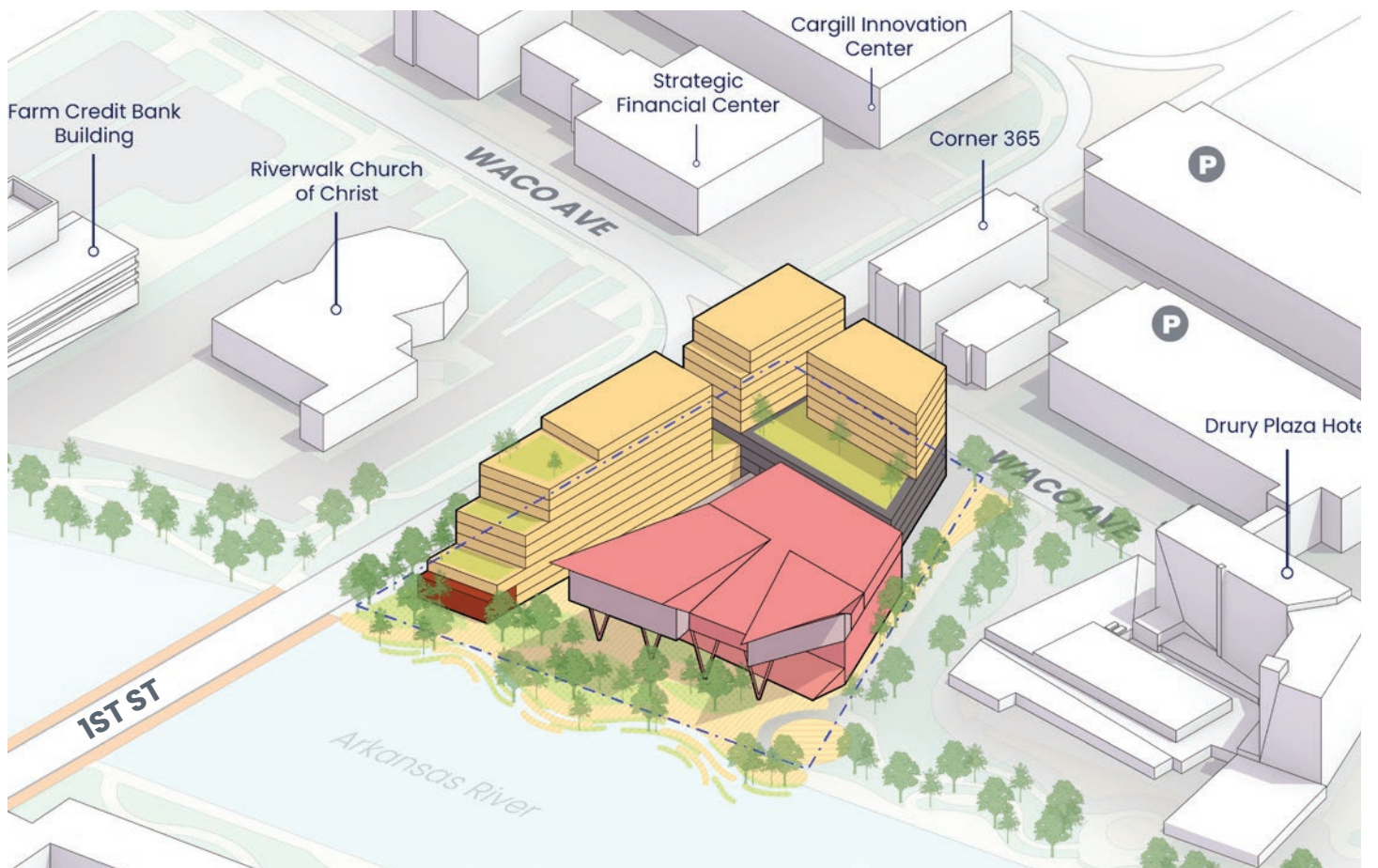
Chicago Riverwalk
Chicago, Illinois



PROGRAM

The mixed-use cultural plaza includes:

- 203** Housing Units
- 280** Structured Parking Spaces
- 75,000 sf** Performing Arts Center or Cultural Venue
- 3,000 sf** Restaurant
- 4** Rooftop Amenities
- 1** Active Riverfront Plaza



Vancouver Riverfront in **Vancouver, Canada** is a 420-unit mixed-use development on the Columbia River with an active public waterfront and cultural uses.



Art Bloc in **Waterloo, Iowa** is a 72-unit mixed-use riverfront development in downtown that overlooks an amphitheater and riverfront promenade.

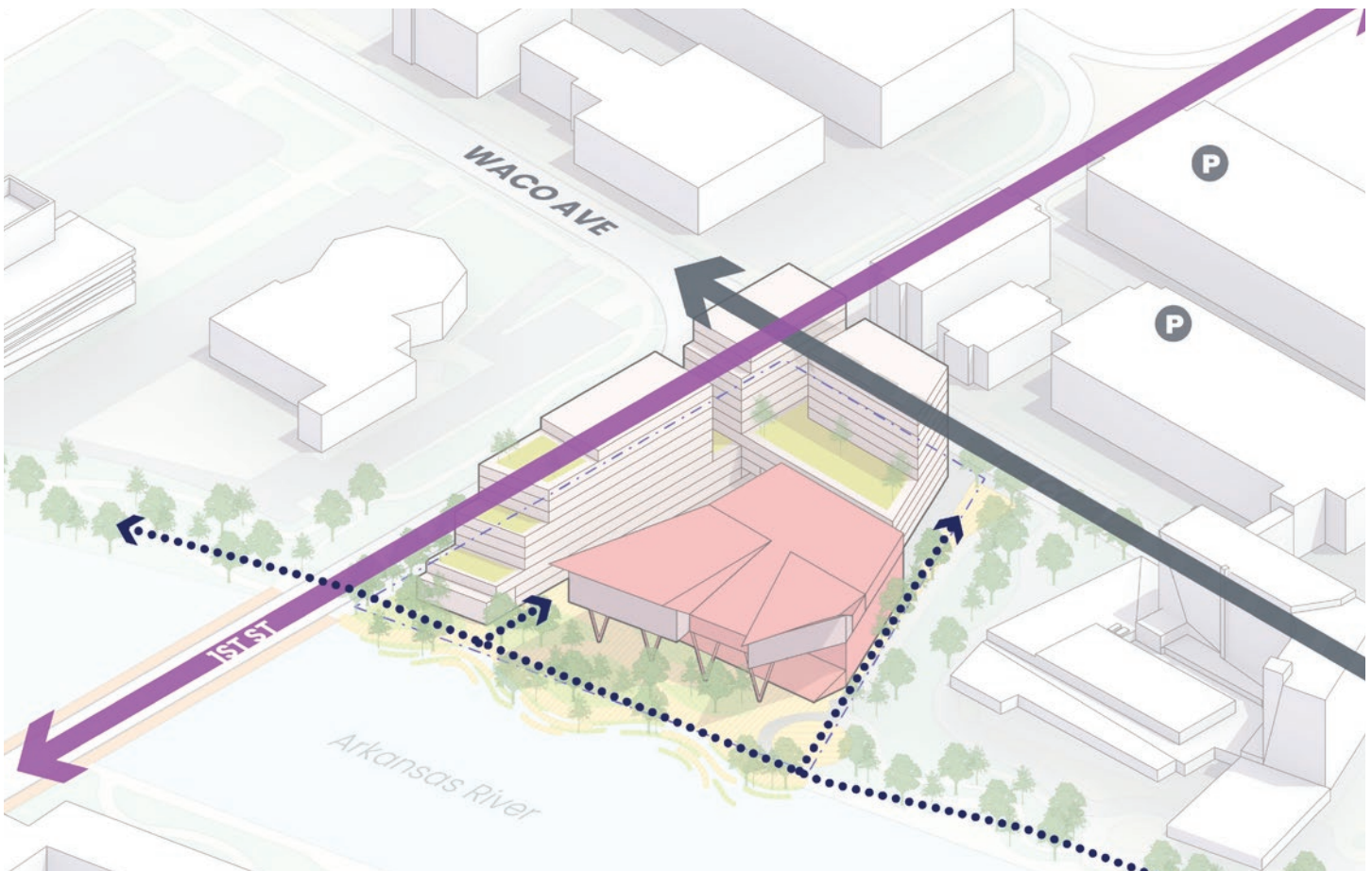
CIRCULATION

The site's circulation design opens directly to the Arkansas River, turning it into an active front door and gathering place. First Street and the riverfront frame the main entrance, anchored by a new cultural use that emphasizes the 1st Street Cultural Corridor from Exploration Place in Delano to Old Town. Waco Avenue acts as the service side, with access for parking and loading tucked out of view. Upgraded walking paths link downtown's core to

the river, encouraging everyday use and better access through the site. Planned 1st Street bridge improvements and a recommended high-frequency Transit Loop station at 1st and Waco tie the area into the broader downtown mobility network.

↔ Transit Street
↔ Access Street

↔ Pedestrian Route



CITY ROLE

1. Invests in structured parking assets that unlock development potential and feasibility for catalytic private investment.
2. Provides deeper real estate tax abatement to fill feasibility gaps created by higher-cost construction that maximizes the development potential and activation of the riverfront.
3. Provides technical support for design, engineering, cost-estimating and funding for new public riverfront plaza open space, utility, and 1st Street Bridge infrastructure upgrades needed to support redevelopment.

DEMONSTRATION SITE

Northern Downtown Could Become the NDT District



EXISTING CONDITION

Scattered Housing and Parking Lots

OWNERSHIP

Multiple Private
Owners

SIZE

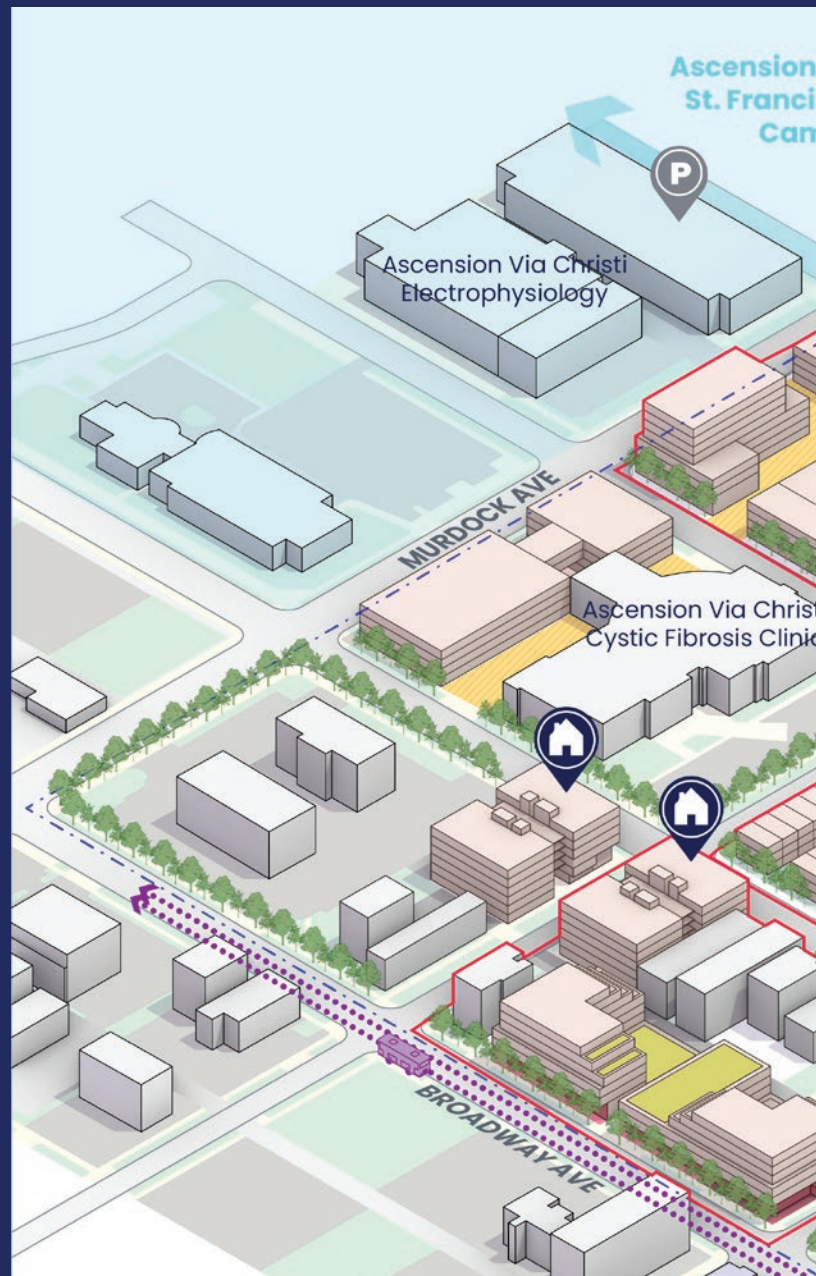
49 acres

COMMUNITY DEMAND

Mixed-use hospital district w/
housing, research, dining, and shops

"Housing Development to Drive Density" "Mixed-Use"

"Use those empty parking lots!" "More medical"



DESIGN STRATEGY

The area around Ascension Via Christi Hospital can be reimagined as a mixed-use district that serves patients, visitors, and healthcare workers while supporting the broader biomedical corridor. High-density housing along main streets provides new living options for doctors, nurses, and staff while activating the street with retail and amenities. Interior blocks allow for residential variety in townhomes. A hotel and research uses bring activity and convenience for visitors and the medical community, while neighborhood-serving businesses like grocery stores and restaurants meet daily needs. At Topeka and Elm, a new green space introduces a central gathering space and additional tree canopy to the neighborhood.



Dell Medical District at UT Austin
Austin, Texas



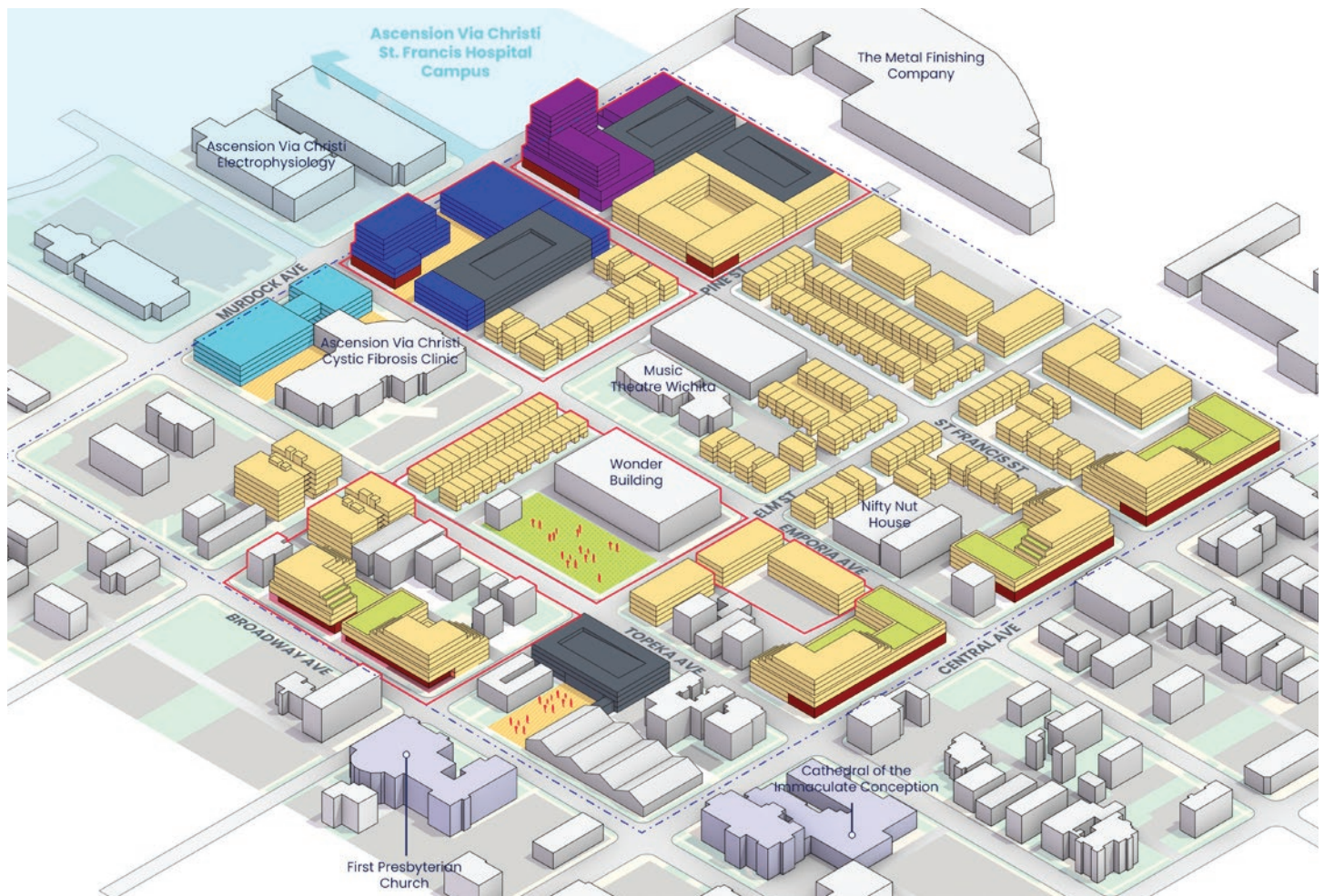
Memphis Medical District
Memphis, Tennessee



PROGRAM

The NDT District includes:

- 690** Housing Units (90 townhomes, 600 apartments)
- 400** Structured Parking Spaces
- 75,000 sf** Office
- 5,000 sf** Grocery and Retail
- 120** Hotel Rooms
- 5,000 sf** Medical Office
- 1** New Green Space



Rookwood Exchange in **Cincinnati, Ohio** is a 12-acre development anchored by a medical office that includes housing, hotels, restaurants, retail, and clinics.



Memphis Medical District in **Memphis, Tennessee** is home to 30,000 employees, 10,000 residents and 8,000 students and a mix of new housing, retail, offices, hospitals, clinics, cafes, and parks.

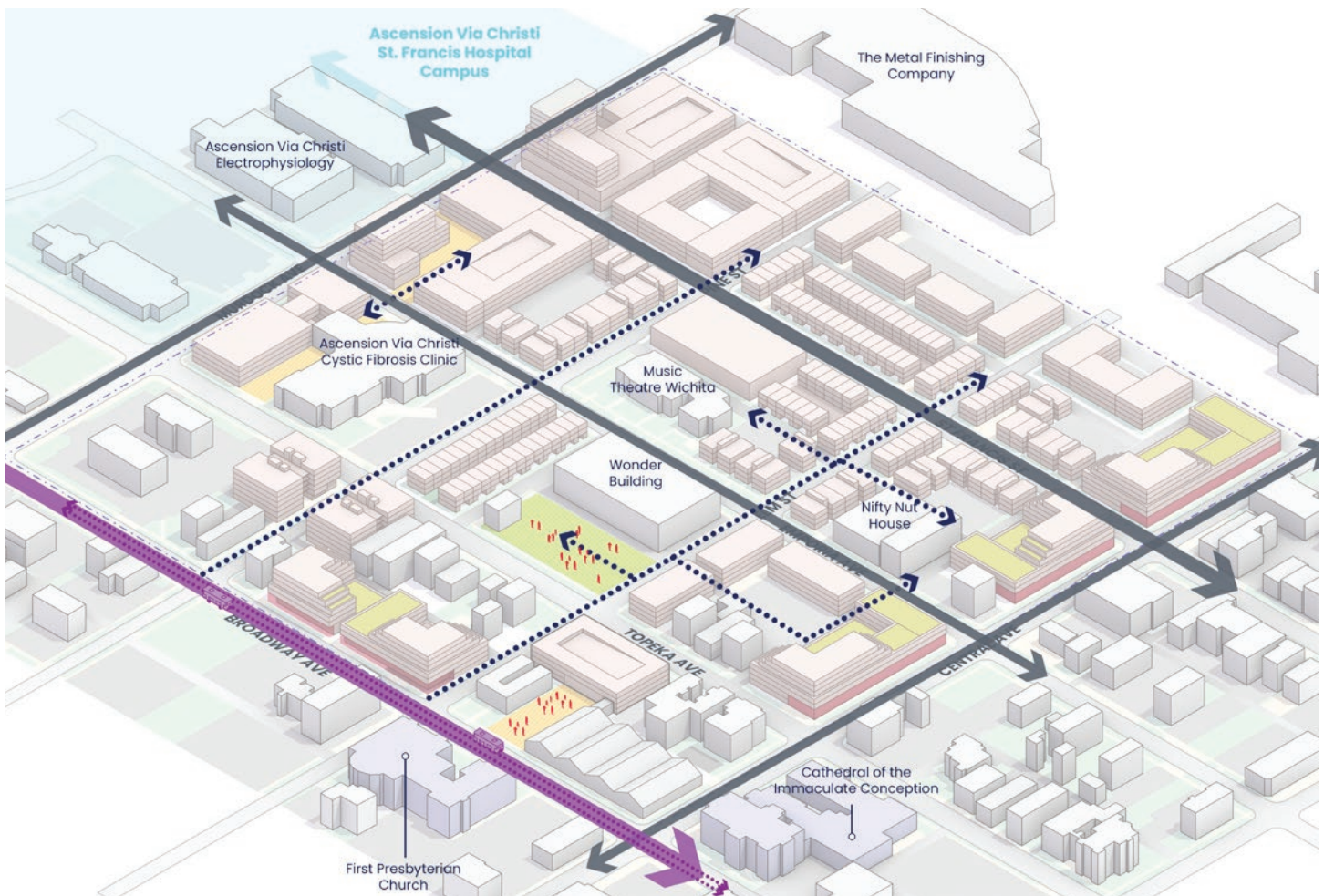
CIRCULATION

The district's circulation network is defined by Broadway, Central, and Murdock, which frame the area as its primary transit, living, working, and shopping streets. These corridors connect the district to surrounding neighborhoods and downtown destinations while supporting multimodal movement. St. Francis serves as the main gateway to Ascension Via Christi hospital from downtown, with upgraded streetscape and wayfinding elements that signal continuation

of the biomedical corridor. Within the district, Topeka, Emporia, and St. Francis form a calmer interior network dedicated to townhomes, smaller apartment buildings, and a new green space, creating a walkable residential setting that complements the active edges.

↔ Transit Street
↔ Access Street

↔ Pedestrian Route



CITY ROLE

1. Invests in infrastructure and structured parking assets that unlock development potential and feasibility for catalytic private investment.
2. Provides technical assistance to support negotiation of partnerships between landowners in the district and local developers to unlock the value of their real estate as part of a district-wide vision.
3. Provides technical support for the planning, design, engineering, cost estimating, and funding of new green space, as well as associated utility and infrastructure upgrades needed to support redevelopment through a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) structure.

DEMONSTRATION SITE

Transit Center Could Become The Biomedical Village



EXISTING CONDITION
Wichita Transit Center

OWNERSHIP

City of Wichita

SIZE

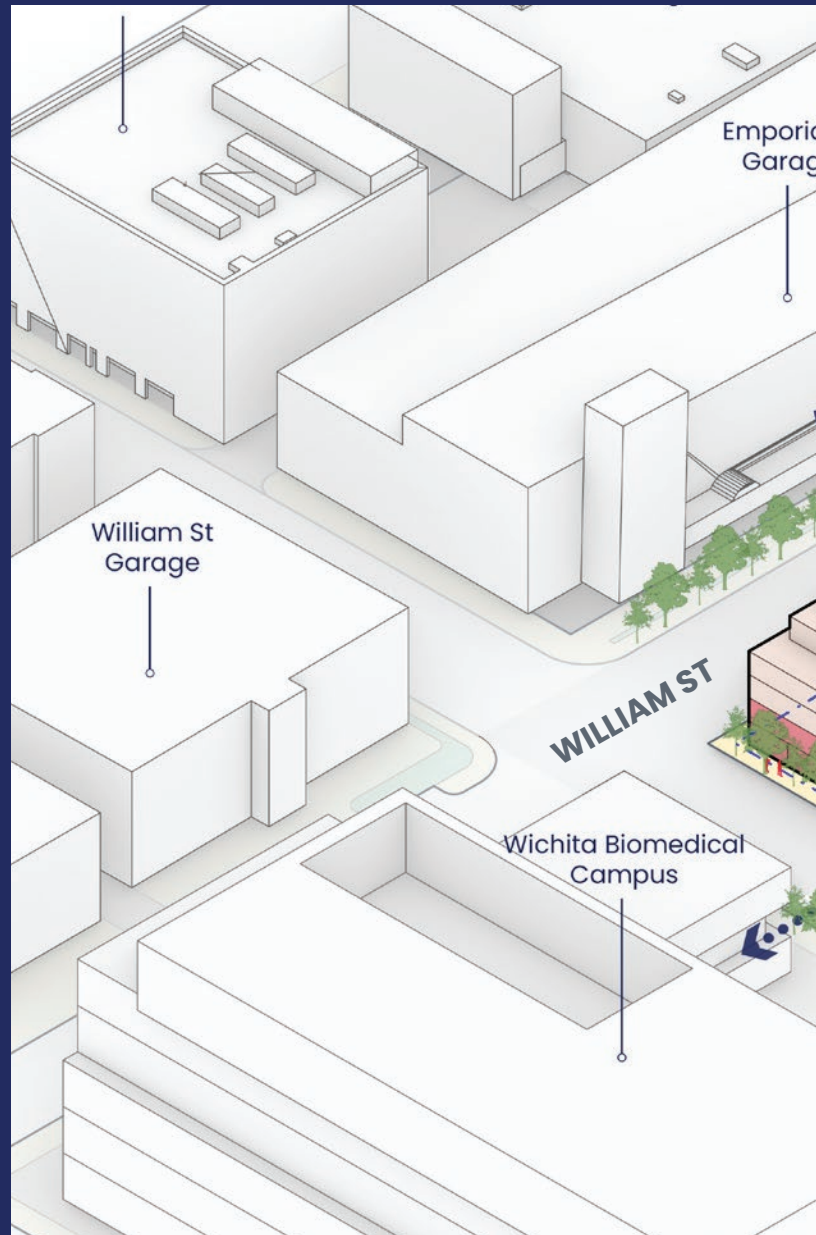
2 acres

COMMUNITY DEMAND

Biomedical Village w/ student housing, shops, parking, research, and educational space

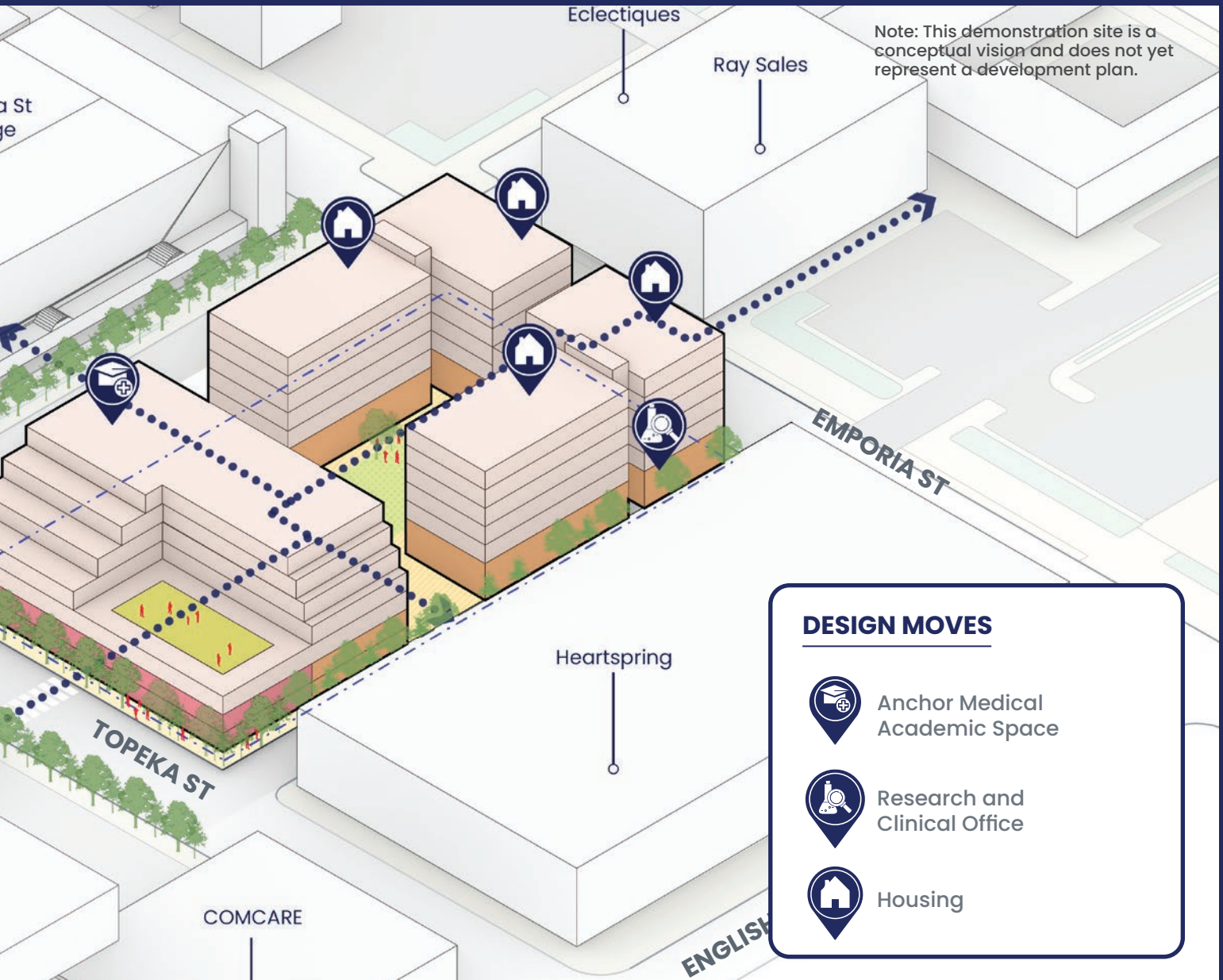
"Downtown Wichita's busiest block"

"Housing" "Shops and corner store" "More open space"



DESIGN STRATEGY

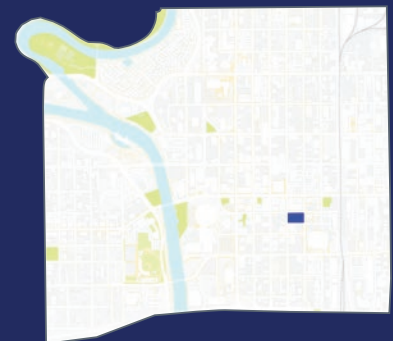
The transformation of the Transit Center site, located directly across from the Wichita Biomedical Campus, creates an opportunity for the universities to expand their downtown presence with new clinical, dental, and student housing facilities that strengthen campus life and complement nearby medical institutions such as Heartspring and COMCARE. Active ground-floor uses, including lobbies, dining, and grocery spaces, make the district more active and self-sustaining. A shared plaza along Topeka serves as the campus's outdoor living room, an inviting space for gathering and social connection that extends daily activity across the campus edge and seamlessly links to greater downtown.



UC San Diego Living & Learning
San Diego, California



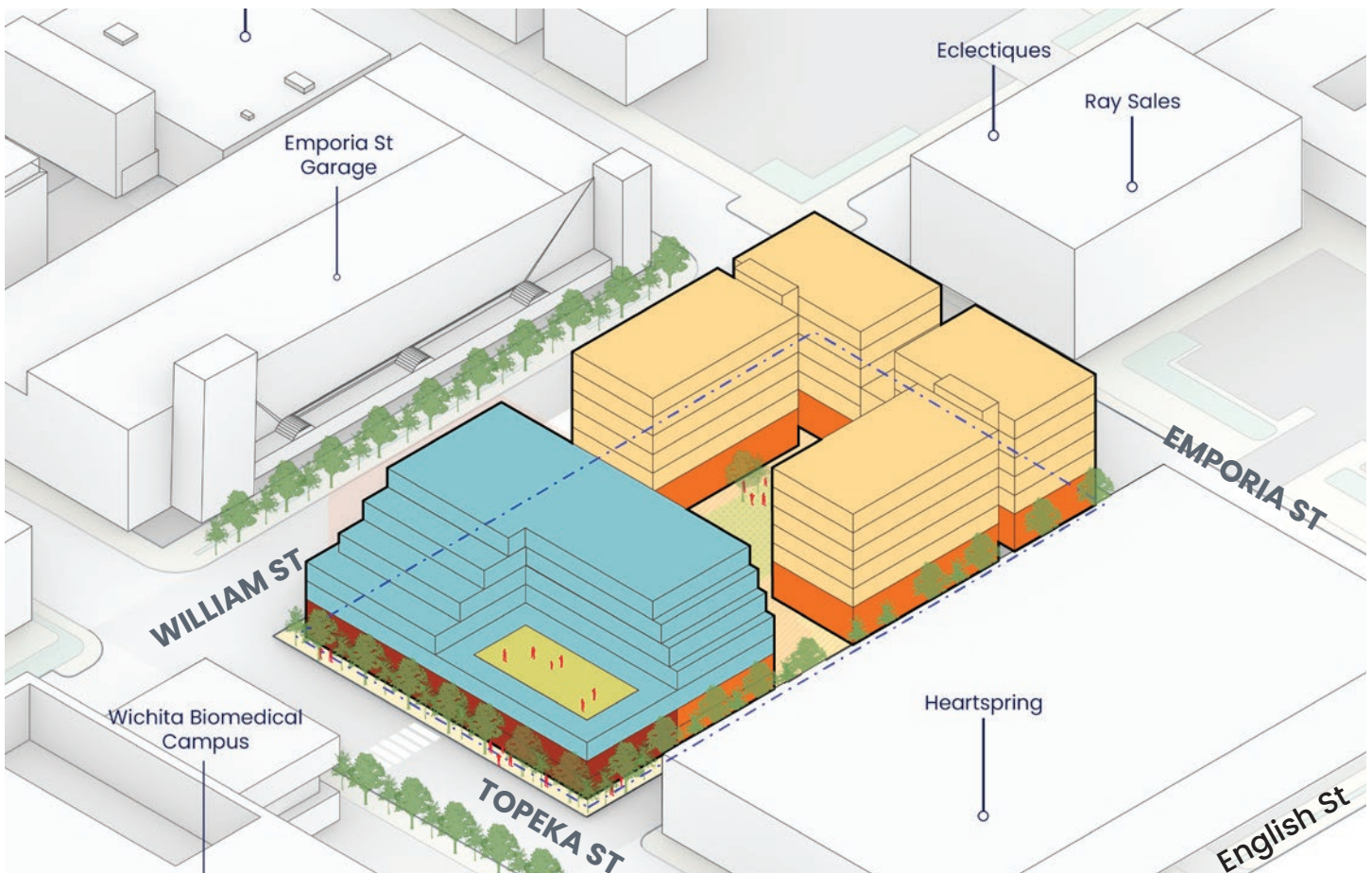
Cleveland Innovation District
Cleveland, Ohio



PROGRAM

The Biomedical Village includes:

- 90 Housing Units
- 90,500 sf Academic Use
- 22,000 sf Ground-Floor Research
- 8,000 sf Ground-Floor Retail
- 4 Rooftop Amenities
- 1 Covered Breezeway and Courtyard



Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota is undergoing a \$5 billion comprehensive redevelopment that unifies clinical, research, and patient care facilities into pedestrian-centered neighborhoods.



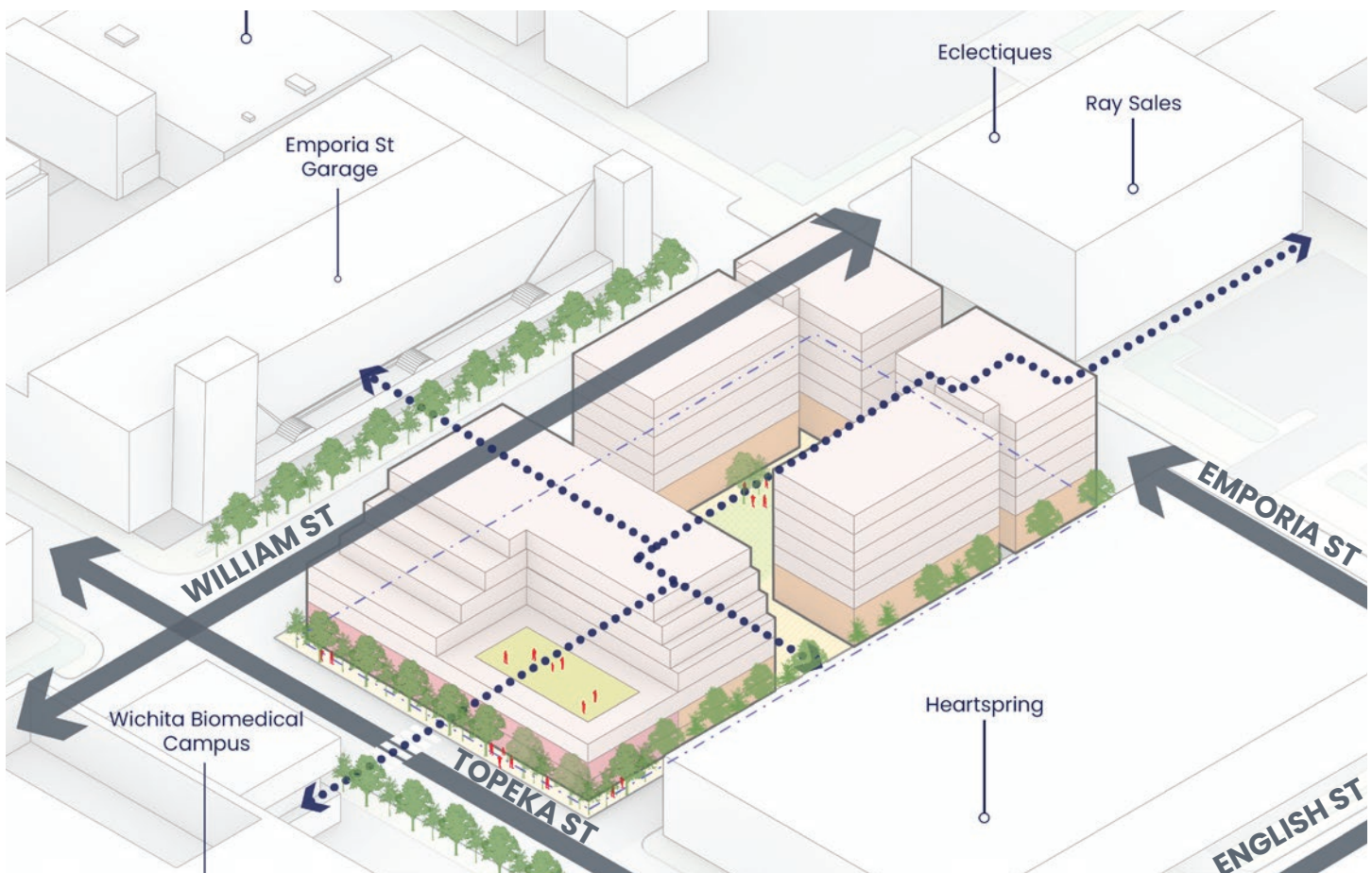
Phoenix Bioscience Core in Phoenix, Arizona brings together universities and research institutions in a campus setting that integrates biotech research into daily life in downtown Phoenix.

CIRCULATION

The plan extends the Wichita Biomedical Campus eastward, connecting seamlessly to existing facilities through a mid-block crossing along Topeka. At the center of the site, a new courtyard creates a shared square for students, faculty, and residents — an inviting space framed by housing, research, and small retail uses that support daily campus life. William Street serves as the main

front door, with both William and English shaping a welcoming pedestrian-oriented spine that connects the Biomedical Village west to the river.

- ↔ Access Street
- ↔ Pedestrian Route



CITY ROLE

1. Invests in upgrades to Emporia Street Garage and William Street Garage to support the feasibility of private investment in adjacent new housing and commercial development.
2. Provides technical support for design, engineering, cost-estimating and funding for utility infrastructure upgrades needed to support redevelopment.
3. Prioritizes street re-design projects on William and English Street, as imagined in the Action Plan's Streetscape Toolkit on 92.

DEMONSTRATION SITE

Century II and Convention Center Could Become the River District



EXISTING CONDITION
Convention Center, Century II

OWNERSHIP	SIZE
City of Wichita	39 acres

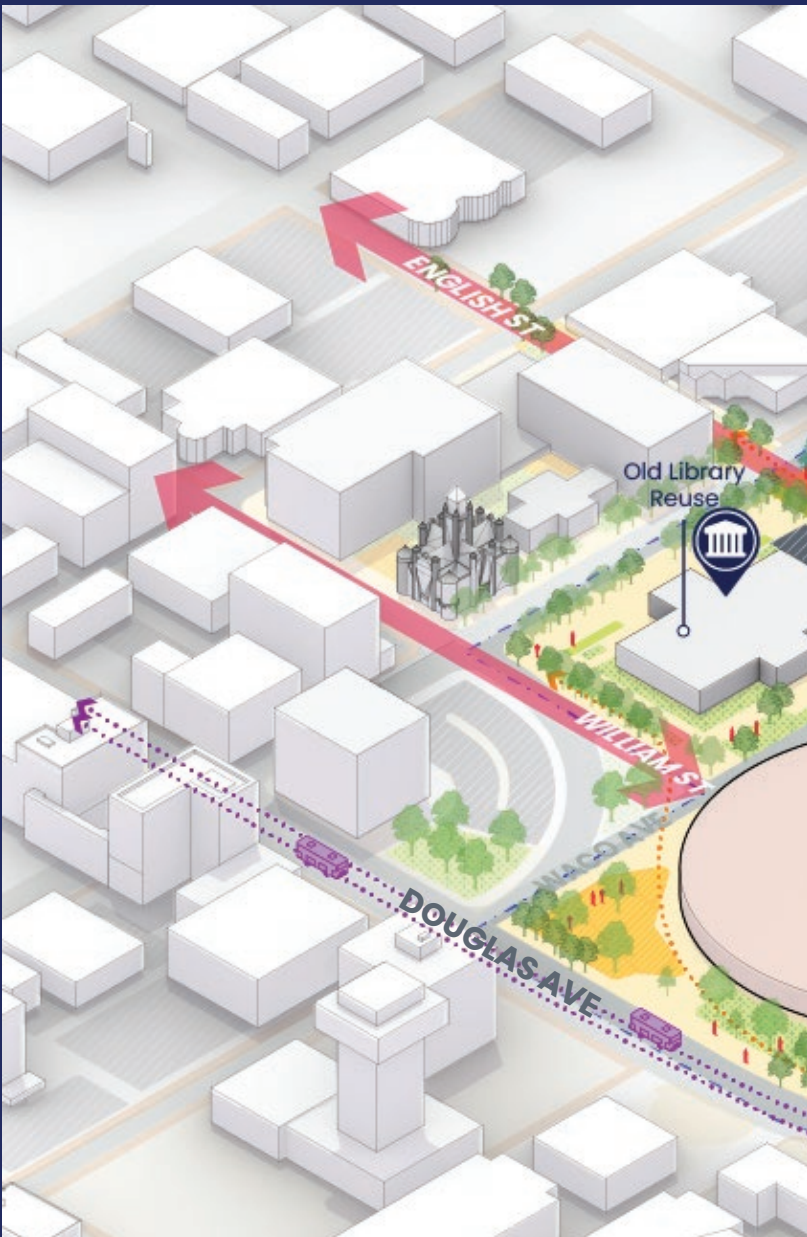
COMMUNITY DEMAND
Mixed-Use River District with Market, Food Hall, Open Space, and Recreational and Cultural Uses

“New Performing Arts” “New Convention Center”

“Interesting Opportunity for Dynamic Architecture”

“Activate All Green Space” “Old Library - Grocery Store?”

“Leave Only Edges of CII - Fill In With a Park”



DESIGN STRATEGY

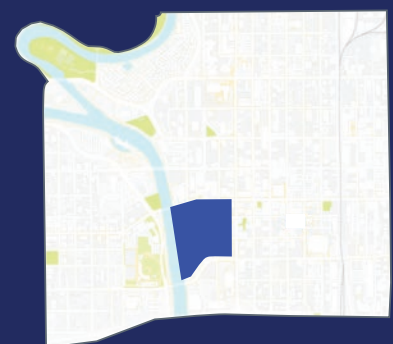
This highly visible site provides the opportunity for the City to introduce state-of-the-art civic uses that better connect downtown to the river. Re-siting the convention center along Waterman allows the street grid to re-link with the riverfront, creating a clear pedestrian connection from INTRUST Bank Arena and the Wichita Biomedical Campus along English and William. Retaining the façades of Century II and the Old Library while adapting their interiors for civic and recreational use introduces new green space and gathering areas along the river, suitable for weekday lunch hours, weekend soccer games, or community events. Complemented by new housing and hotel development, these investments amplify daily activity, strengthen the riverfront as a civic destination, and support the district’s long-term vitality.



Omaha Riverfront
Omaha, Nebraska



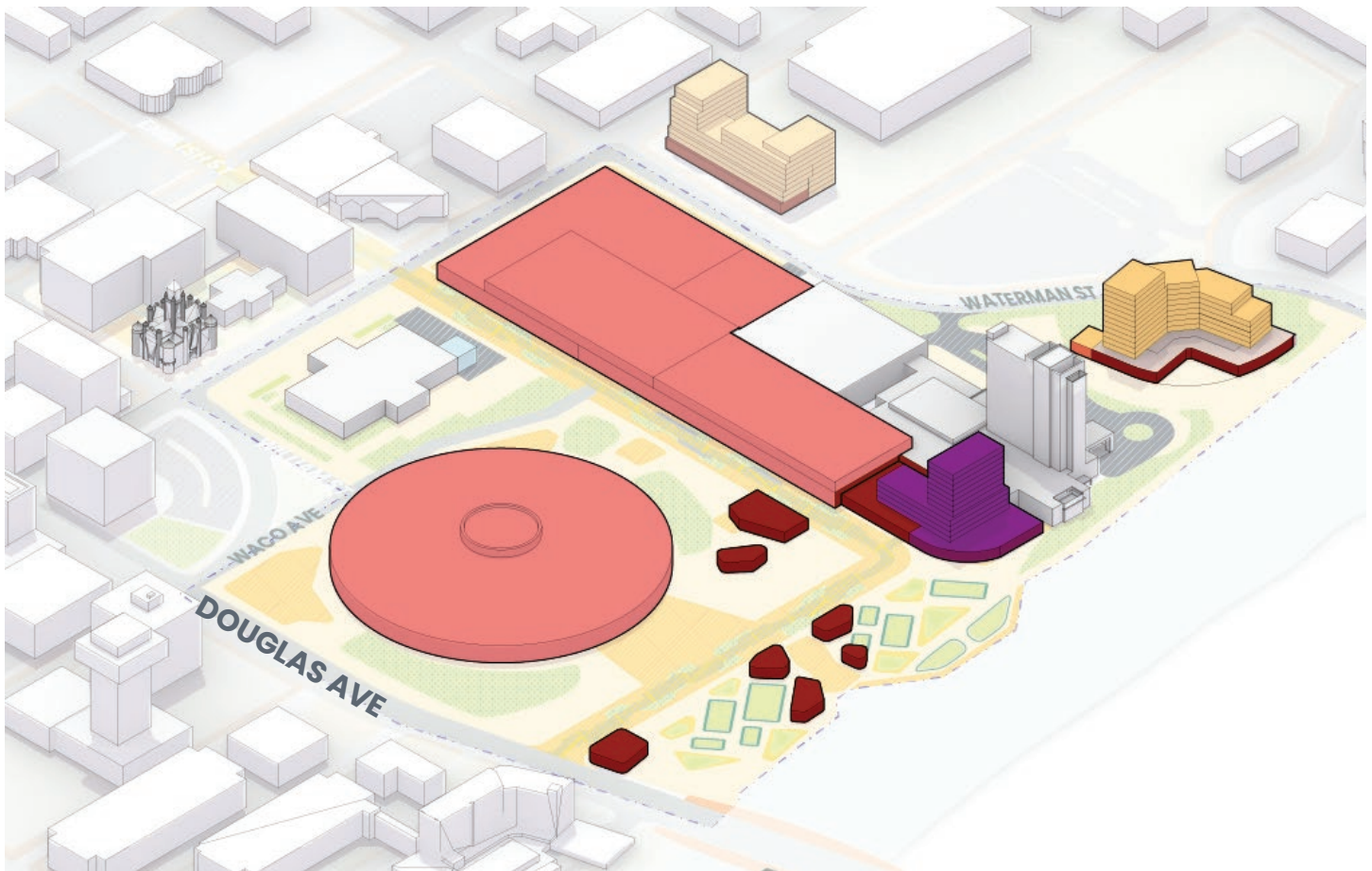
Smale Riverfront
Cincinnati, Ohio



PROGRAM

The River District includes:

- 500 New Housing Units
- 150 New Hotel Rooms
- 400,000 sf Convention Center
- 2,000 sf Ground-Floor Retail and Pavilions
- 10+ Recreation Fields or Park/Garden Space
- 2,500 Parking Spaces (Underground + Structured)



Weehawken Waterfront Park in **Weehawken, New Jersey** features active and passive recreation for people of all ages in a waterfront setting that captures views of the Manhattan skyline.



Fifth + Broadway in **Nashville, Tennessee** is a new mixed-use development on the site of the old Nashville Convention Center featuring shopping, a food hall, and office space.

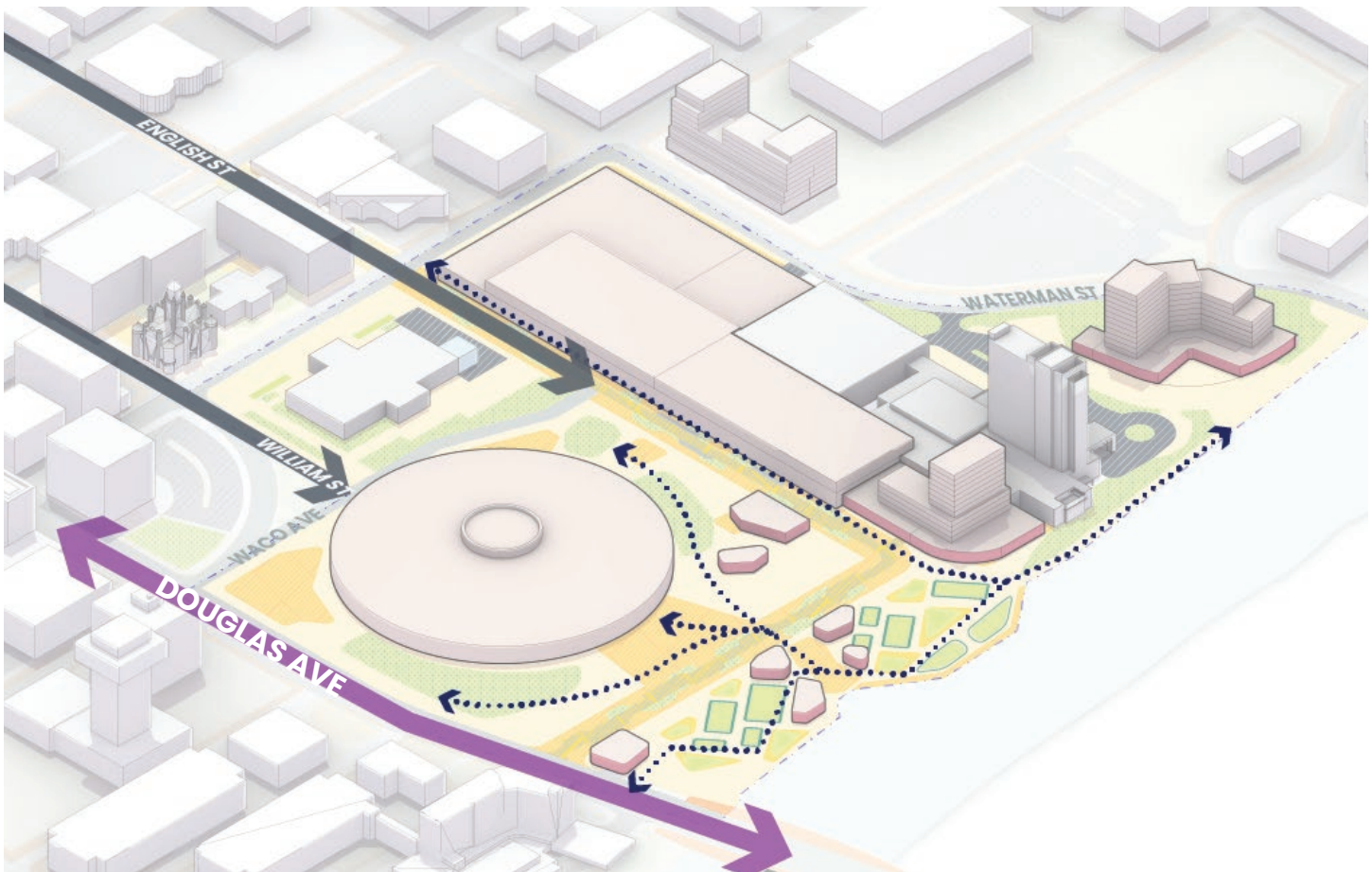
CIRCULATION

Reconnecting the street grid west from INTRUST Bank Arena to the river along English Street restitches the city's core to its waterfront, extending activity and access to the river. A more porous and active reuse of Century II preserves the landmark structure and introduces new pedestrian corridors through and around it, improving movement to parkland along the river. Loading access for the convention center is consolidated along Waterman Street, providing direct, efficient connections to nearby highways

without disrupting the pedestrian experience. By relocating performing arts to a state-of-the-art venue, we can also remove the non-original loading docks from the west side of the building—preserving the historic building's original form while freeing up land facing the river for public enjoyment.

↔ Transit Street
↔ Access Street

↔ Pedestrian Route



CITY ROLE

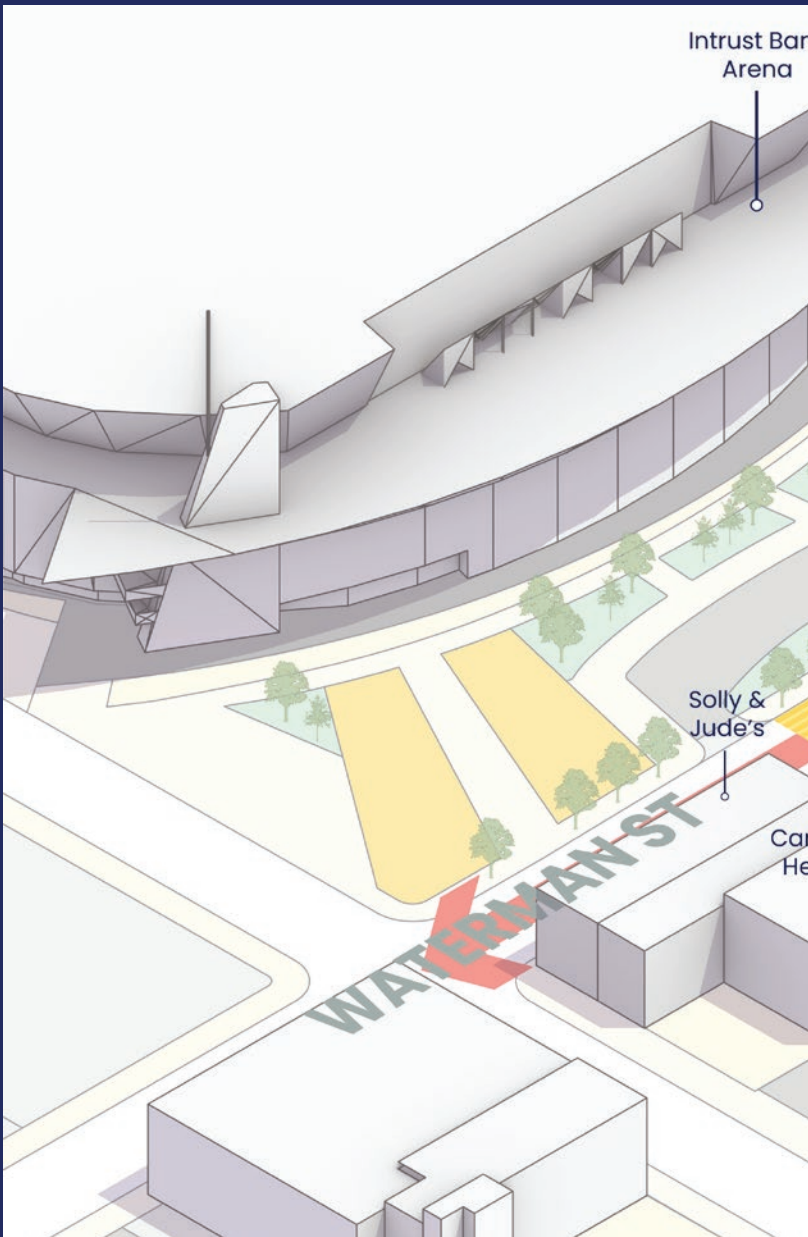
1. Invests in structured parking assets that unlock development potential and feasibility for catalytic private investment.
2. Provides deeper real estate tax abatement to fill feasibility gaps created by higher-cost construction that maximizes the development potential and activation of the riverfront.
3. Provides technical support for design and engineering, cost-estimating and funding strategy for new public community park and plaza, as well as any utility infrastructure upgrades needed to support redevelopment.

DEMONSTRATION SITE

Parking Lots Could Become Arena South



EXISTING CONDITION
Parking Lots



OWNERSHIP	SIZE
Private	1.6 acres

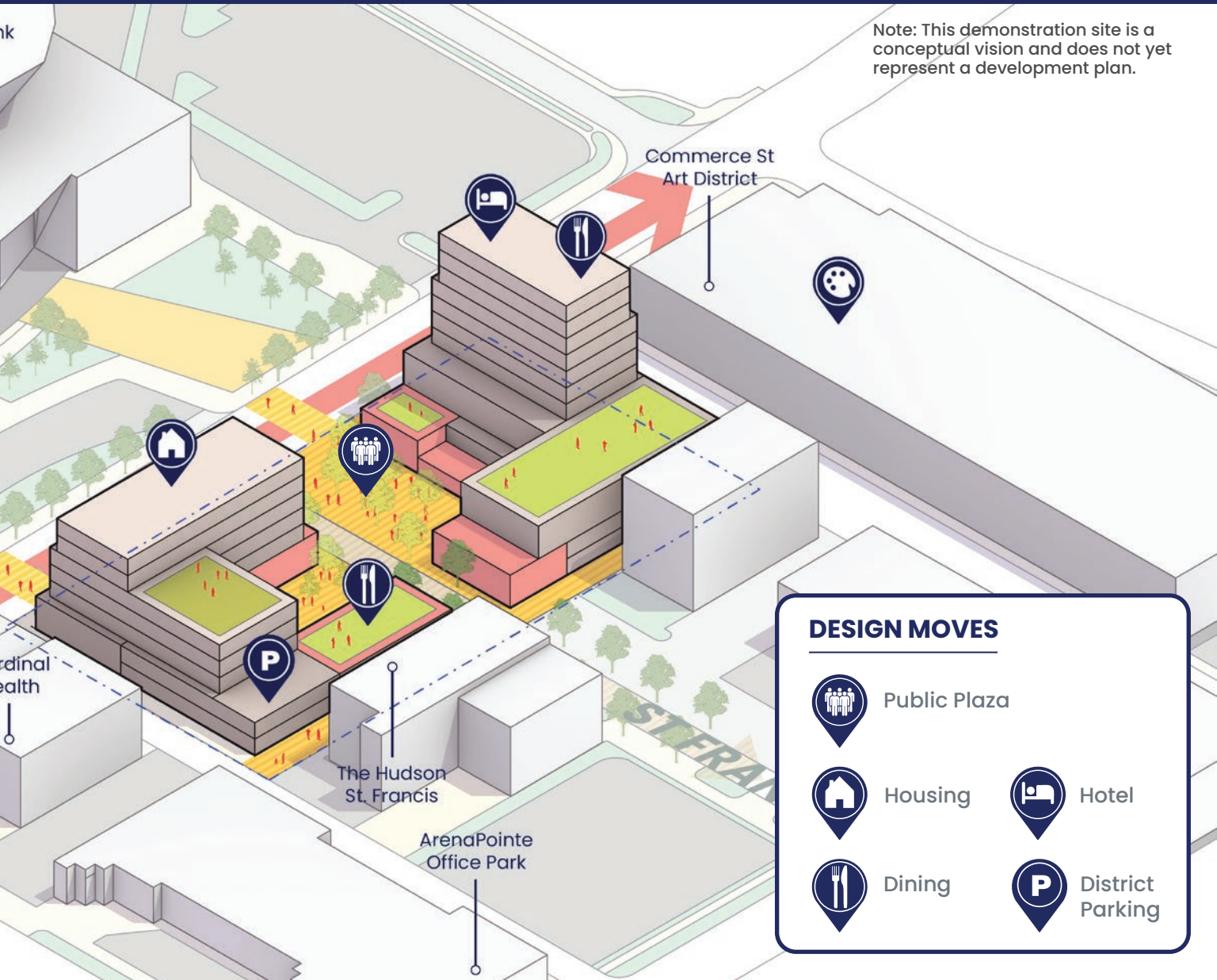
COMMUNITY DEMAND
Arena-supportive dining, shops, and hotel

“Restaurants and green space” “Outdoor dining” “Base level retail/restaurants and hidden parking garage”

“More hotels in the area” “Chili’s” “Retail or 3rd places”

DESIGN STRATEGY

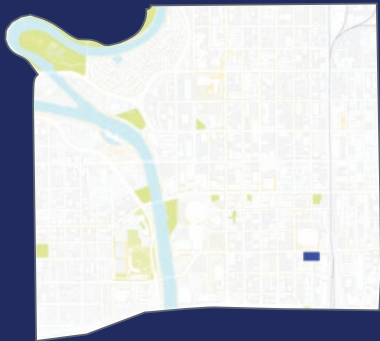
Redeveloping the surface parking lots along Waterman south of INTRUST Bank Arena creates the opportunity to establish an “Arena South” arts and entertainment district. New housing and a hotel for event-goers, paired with active ground-level uses such as restaurants, shops, and entertainment venues, bring energy and year-round activity to the area. A rooftop bar and dining options further enhance the district’s appeal and provide unique experiences tied to arena events. The district builds on the public and private investment in the Commerce Street Arts District, extending its activity and identity to blend seamlessly with the arena. St. Francis is imagined as a welcoming “front door” for the district, with landscaped plazas, shade, and downtown cultural loop integration to enhance pre- and post-event gatherings.



Arena District
Columbus, Ohio



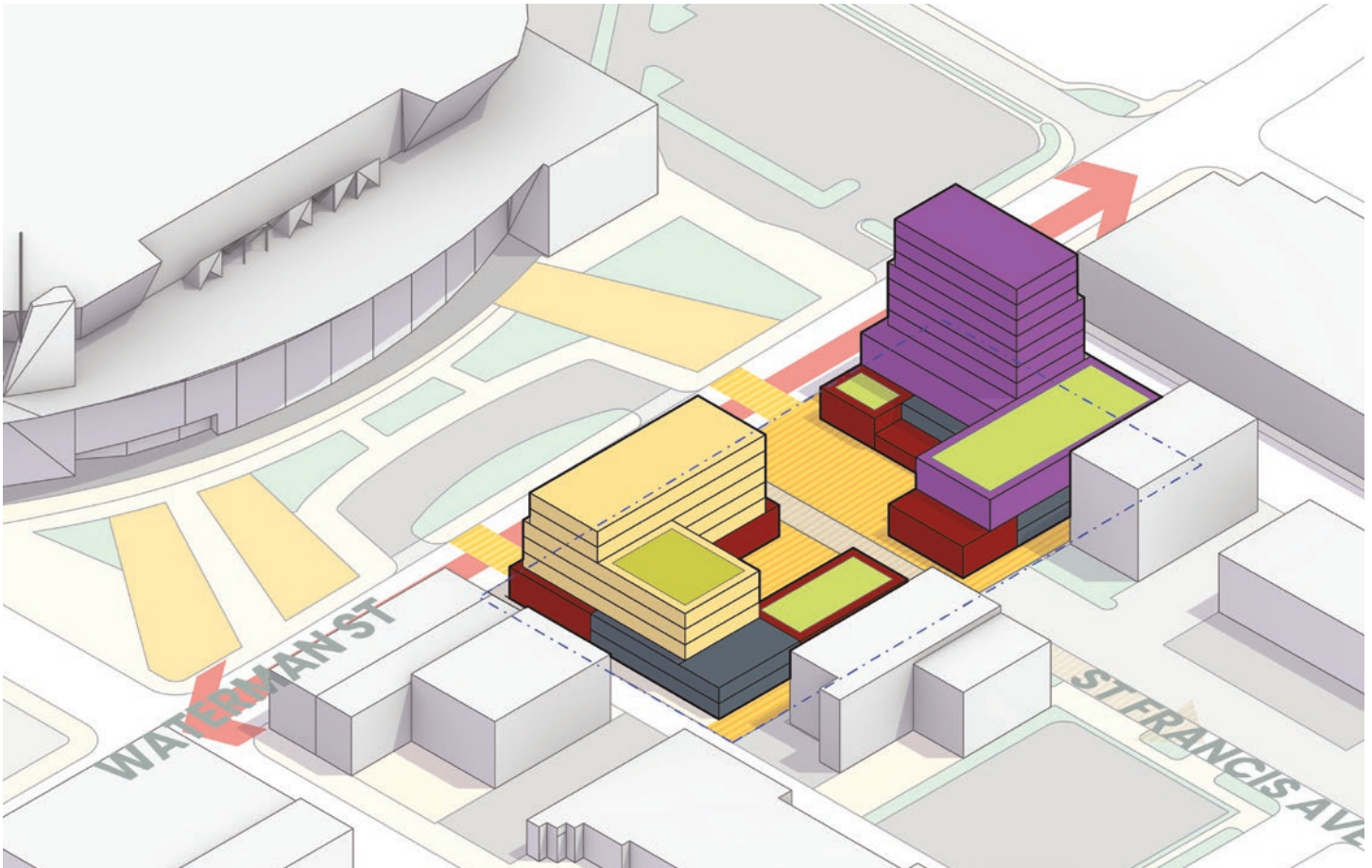
Power & Light District
Kansas City, Missouri



PROGRAM

Arena South includes:

- 45 Housing Units
- 110 Room Hotel
- 17,000 sf Ground-Floor Retail or Dining
- 80 Structured Parking Spaces
- 3 Rooftop Amenities
- 9,000 sf Public Plaza



The Arena District in **Columbus, Ohio** is a leading downtown mixed-use entertainment district around Nationwide Arena, dubbed as one of the Midwest's most successful urban redevelopment projects.

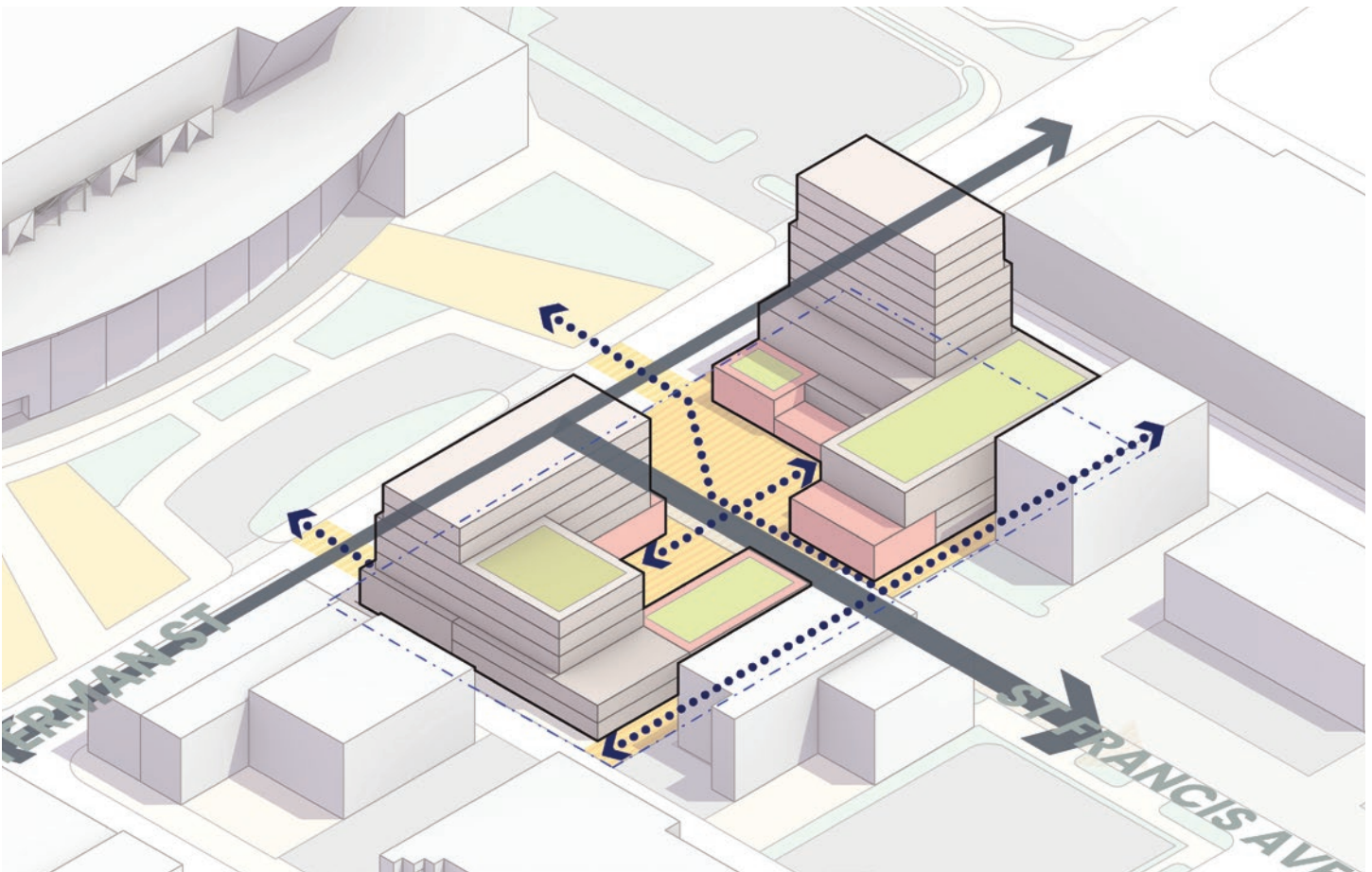


Energizer Park in **St. Louis, Missouri** uses public green spaces to improve the social gathering experience as fans move from the new MLS stadium to postgame entertainment nearby.

CIRCULATION

St. Francis is envisioned as a pedestrian-oriented entertainment corridor linking INTRUST Bank Arena to Arena South. Shared public courtyards frame the street, creating inviting spaces that connect the hotel with nearby housing, dining, and retail uses. Streetscape upgrades and safer crossings along Waterman enhance the walk from Arena South to the arena, making the overall event experience more active, comfortable, and connected.

↔ Access Street
 <·> Pedestrian Route



CITY ROLE

1. Invests in structured parking assets that unlock development potential and feasibility for catalytic private investment.
2. Provides deeper real estate tax abatement to off-set costs of higher-cost construction that maximizes the development potential and activation of a new Arena District.

