

DOWNTOWN WICHITA ACTION PLAN

Ideate & Iterate
ENGAGEMENT



On June 2nd, 2025, over 200 Wichitans came together to imagine the future of downtown.

What we heard will inform the plan's design strategies and key implementation priorities for the Align and Act phase of the Downtown Wichita Action Plan.

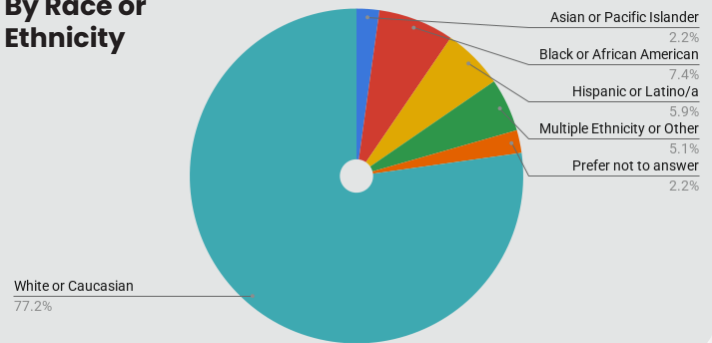
OF THE RIVER DISTRICT..

pop Up at RiverFest

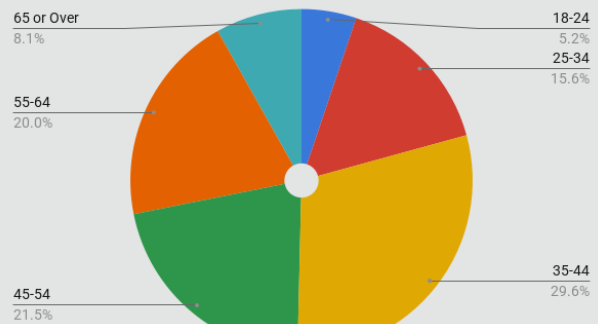


Who did we engage?

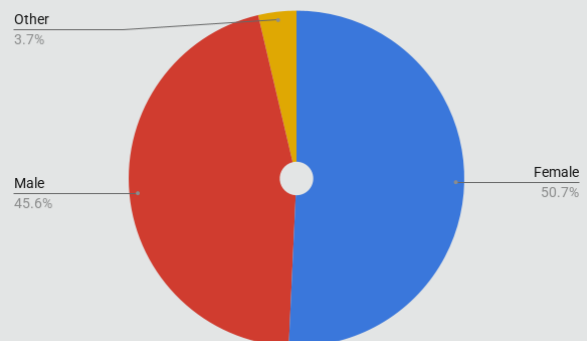
By Race or Ethnicity



By Age



By Gender



Living and Working

How can downtown become a better place to live?

Key Takeaway

Downtown Wichita can become a better place to live by creating an environment where more quality-of-life amenities like a grocery store can thrive in proximity to housing and major new developments like the Biomedical Campus. Wichitans also indicate that they'd like to see a cleaner, safer, and tree-lined downtown that engages more with the river.

Although rental housing dominates downtown Wichita's housing market today (70% of total housing), two-thirds of open house attendees indicated that they'd prefer to buy.

If you're considering moving downtown, you prioritize....

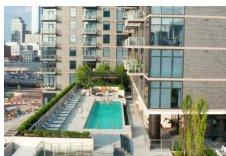
Amenities



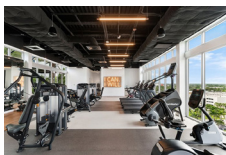
1) Rooftop



2) Parking



3) Pool



4) Gym

Proximity To



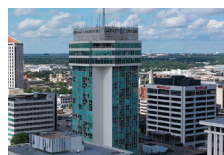
1) Shops and Dining



2) Transit



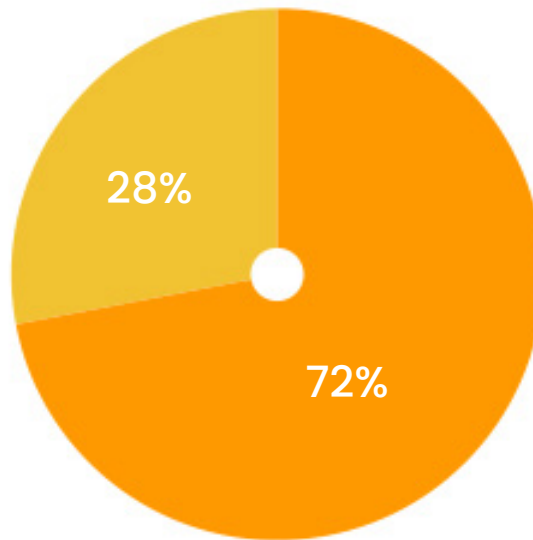
3) Open Space



4) Jobs

Would you rather rent or buy?

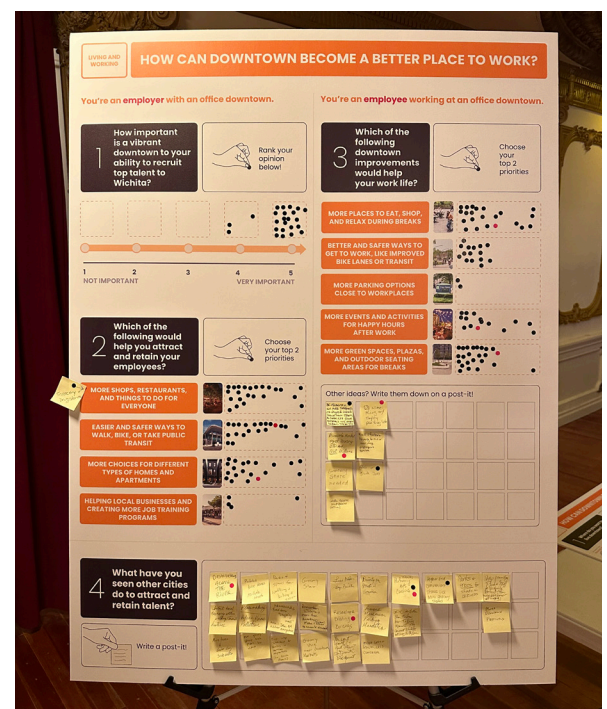
Buy
Rent



How else would you improve living in downtown Wichita?

Other Priorities:

- Trees and shade
- River access
- Elimination of pedestrian walk buttons
- Engage new buildings with river
- Bring back basic amenities like a grocery store near biomed
- Prioritize clean and safe improvements like taking care of homeless
- Work on infilling 1st Street east of the river



How can downtown become a better place to work?

Key Takeaway

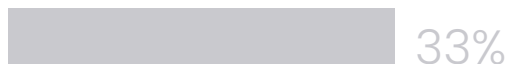
Downtown Wichita can help employers attract and retain candidates by providing high-quality and well-located amenities, transit services, and housing choices.

Employees indicate that they need additional “third spaces” like parks, plazas, or cafes to eat or relax before, during, or after work. More events and activities after work and better ways to get to work would also be welcomed.

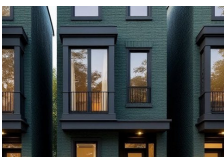
To attract and retain employees, the action plan should prioritize the following:



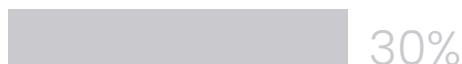
More shops, restaurants, and things to do for everyone



Easier and safer ways to walk, bike, or take public transit



More choices for different types of homes and apartments



Helping local businesses and creating more job training programs



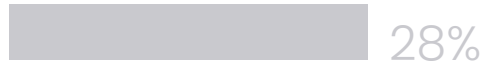
For employees, the following downtown improvements would help work life:



More green spaces, plazas, and outdoor seating areas for breaks



More places to eat, shop, and relax during breaks



More events and activities for happy hours after work



Better and safer ways to get to work, like improved bike lanes or transit



More parking options close to workplaces



How else would you improve working in downtown Wichita?

Grocery and Market Access

- Local grocery or market options x6
- Higher end convenience stores like mini grocery stores

Public Spaces and Recreation

- Parks and spaces for walking, biking, and exercise
- More trees and shade along sidewalks
- Destinations along the river
- More downtown festivals
- Turn empty parking lots into open spaces

Bike Lanes

- Protected bike lanes

Land Use

- Engage new buildings with the river

Affordable Housing

- Need affordable housing for minimum or lower wage employees and families

Getting Around

How would you improve the pedestrian experience and transit connections?

Key Takeaway

Wichitans are eager for investment on downtown streets to improve the pedestrian experience and transit connections. Major streets in the core – especially near the new Biomedical Campus – like Douglas, Broadway, Emporia, William, and English are top priorities for investment in streetscape improvements like shade, safe crossings, and more street-level activity.

Building from the City's Transit Network Plan, community members are also keen for downtown to be connected through higher frequency buses and the "right" routes to desired destinations.

You helped us build downtown's streetscape toolkit!

Top 5 Priorities



1) Shade



4) Lighting



2) Safe Crossings



5) Benches and Seating



3) Street Level Activity

Your Designs!

How Would You Redesign Streets?

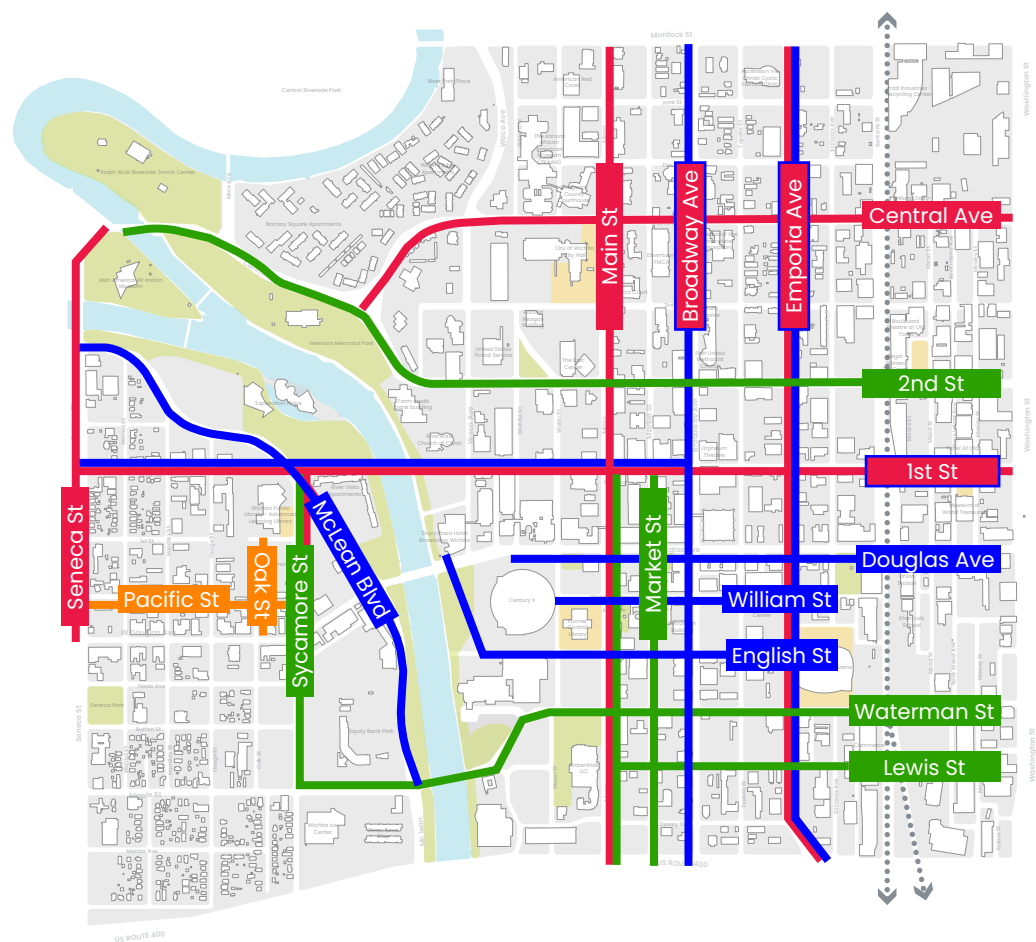


Transit Connections

Street Improvements

Shared Streets

Programmed Alleys



How can public transit become more usable?

1) Higher Frequency

2) More Routes – “The Right Routes” to Desired Destinations

How else would you like to get around?

Public Transit Service

- A Better Q: High frequency bus, trolley, or shuttle from Delano to College Hill
- Bus rapid transit (BRT) along Central

Protected Bike Lanes

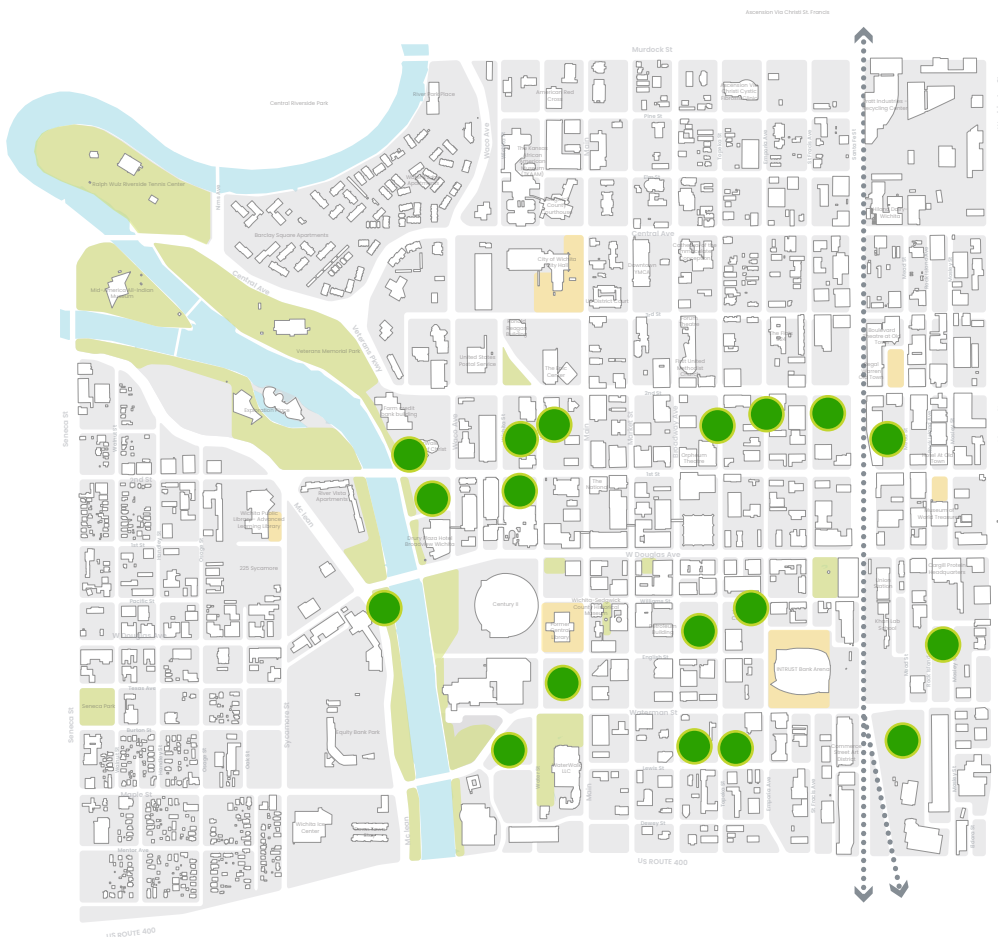
- Bike lanes should be clean and safe
- Prioritize north-south bike lanes

Landscape

Key Takeaway

Wichitans are keen to enhance the Arkansas River as downtown's defining lush and active open space, establishing walkable, bikeable, and shaded connections between the water and key assets like Century II and INTRUST Bank Arena. Open house attendees would also like to see new open spaces in many of the in-between areas or surface lots 1-2 blocks off Douglas Ave in the downtown core. Programming elements should focus on providing shaded respite areas or revenue-generating, family-friendly activities such as farmers' markets.

How would you improve open spaces or create new ones?



Many Wichitans want to see new open spaces along the river, or 1-2 streets off Douglas.

● Desire for New Open Space

Programming Priorities:

- 1) Shade and Seating
- 2) Farmers' Markets
- 3) Food and Beverage
- 4) Family-Friendly Activities



Your Designs!

How Would You Connect Open Spaces?

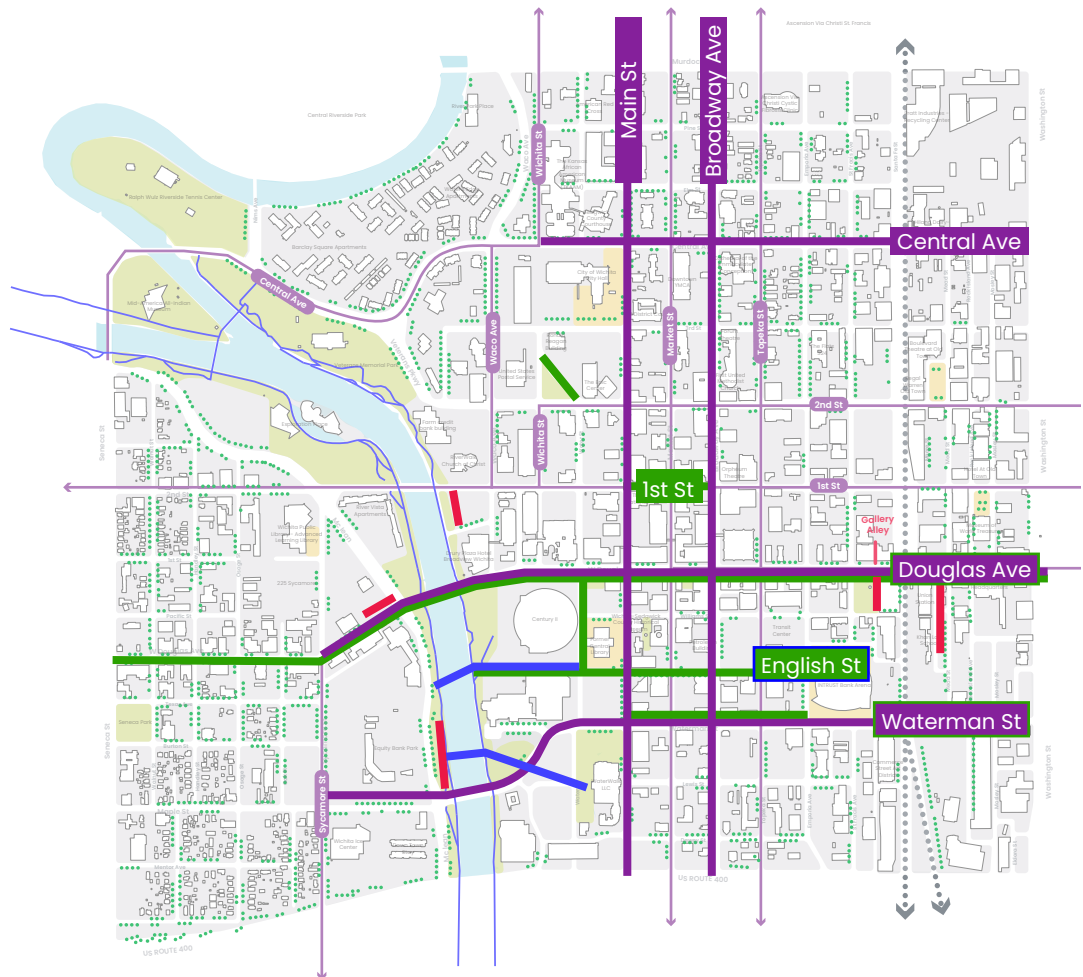


Bike Lanes

Street Trees

Trails

Commercial Activity



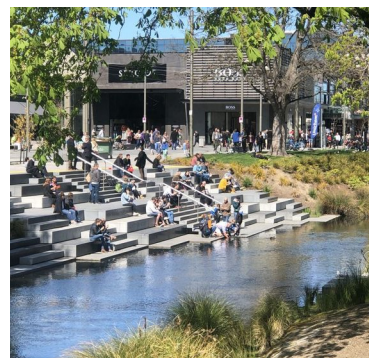
Activating the River

What uses would you like to see on the river?



- Food & Beverage (33%)
- Recreation (27%)
- Cultural (22%)
- Retail (10%)
- Residential (6%)
- Hotel (2%)

What do you want the river to look like?



45% of open house attendees want the river to be **lush and activated**, like the Avon River in New Zealand!

History and Culture

Key Takeaway

Stories of history and culture can be told in a myriad of ways, and Wichitans are open to all of them. Open house attendees gravitated most towards creative moments and storytelling paths as ways to connect downtown's most prominent cultural assets like Century II, the Keeper, or the Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum. Residents also offered suggestions for a new performing arts center, with a clear geographic tendency to locate this potential civic asset along or near the river.

Your Designs!

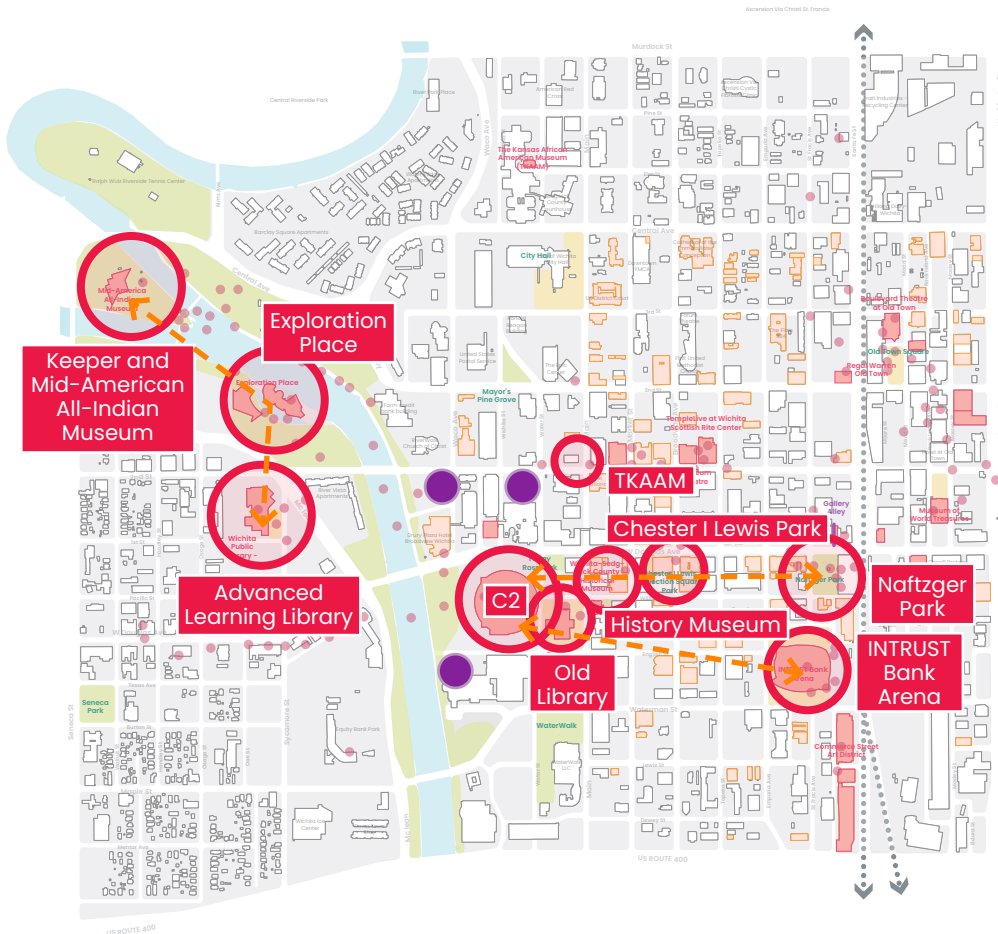
Where should stories of history and culture be told?

Open house attendees focused on creating series of connected itineraries between cultural destinations.

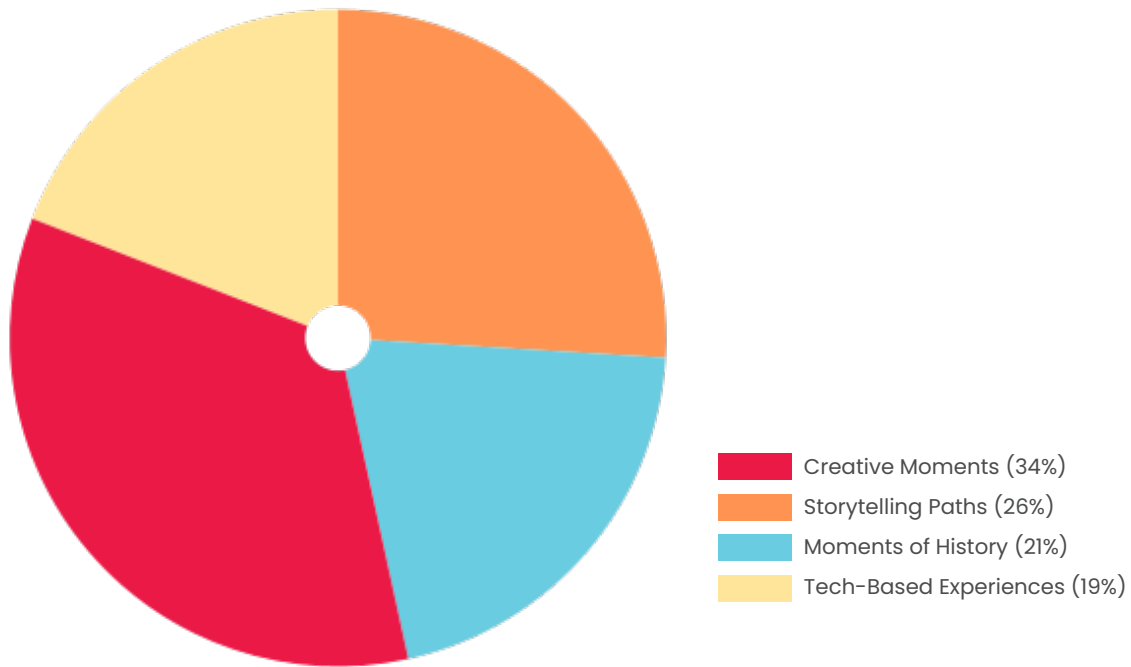
- Cultural Destination to Emphasize
- Suggested Site for New Performing Arts Center
- ↗ ↘ Enhanced Connections

BASEMAP LEGEND

- Crowdsourced Hotspots from Open House I
- Landmarks
- Historic Buildings



How should stories of history and culture be told?



Creative Moments



like interactive art



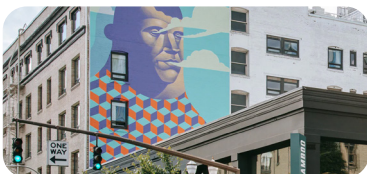
Storytelling Paths



like inscription in pavement



Moments of History



like murals



Tech-Based Experiences



like building
facade activation

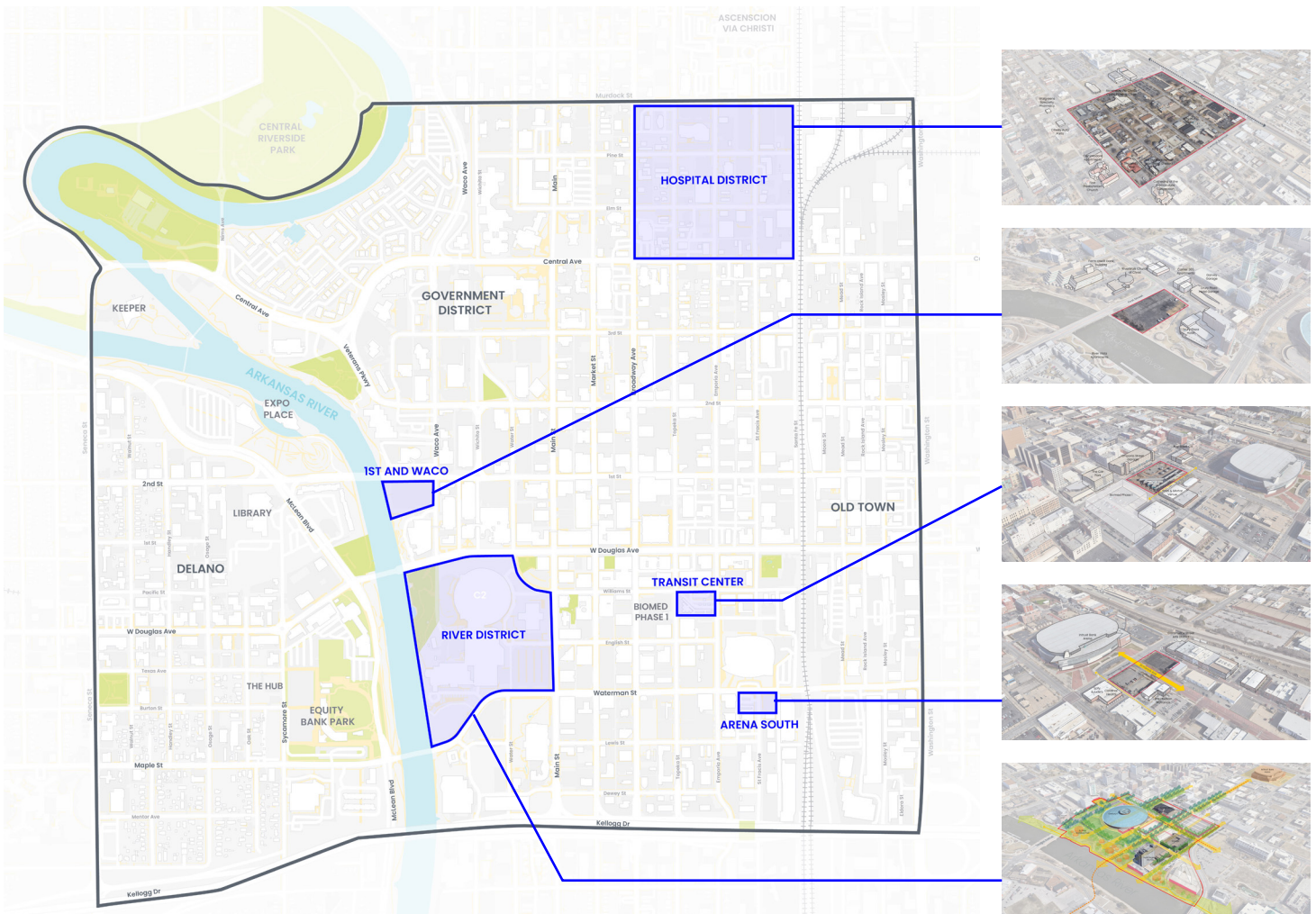
Demonstration Sites

What are demonstration sites?

Demonstration sites are key areas that can shape how the next generation of Wichitans perceives and experiences downtown. These locations have been central to public and private development discussions or are undergoing transitions where the Action Plan can ensure they reflect and respond to community needs and aspirations. As a whole, Wichitans want to see a mix of housing, retail, dining, and family-friendly open spaces on these sites to support and engage with nearby context like the river, hospital, arena, or biomedical campus.

Where are the demonstration sites?

Let's Imagine the Future of:



River District

Proposed Use

Mixed-Use River District w/ Market, Food Hall, Open Space, Recreational, and Cultural Uses

Other Thoughts

"New Performing Arts" "New Convention Center"

"Interesting Opportunity for Dynamic Architecture"

"Activate All Green Space" "Old Library - Grocery Store?"

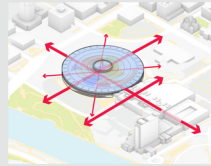
"Leave Only Edges of CII - Fill In With a Park"

Here's how you want Century II to look in 10 years:



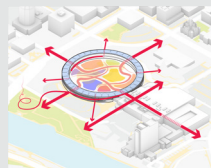
I like it the way it is!

0%



Preserve the exterior, enhance river access, and introduce new uses

25%



Preserve the facade, innovate in design and use, and enhance river access

75%

The Hospital District

Proposed Use

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

Other Thoughts

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

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

1st and Waco

Proposed Use

Riverfront living, dining, and culture for families

Other Thoughts

"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"

The Transit Center

Proposed Use

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

Other Thoughts

"Downtown Wichita's busiest private development"

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

Arena South

Proposed Use

Arena-supportive dining, shops, hotel, and parking

Other Thoughts

"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"