# 2020 YEAR-END QUALITY OF PLACE UPDATE

The Greater Wichita Partnership team is focused on the economic recovery and growth of the region. As we work to fast-forward economic recovery initiatives, we continue to be focused on our three key priority areas – jobs, talent and quality of place. These priorities are driven by strategic, research-based plans, including the Regional Growth Plan, the Talent Marketing Blueprint, Project Wichita and Project Downtown. Discover how we are driving progress in the priority area of quality of place by viewing the following breakdown of 2020 accomplishments.

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## 2020 Downtown Development **Metrics**

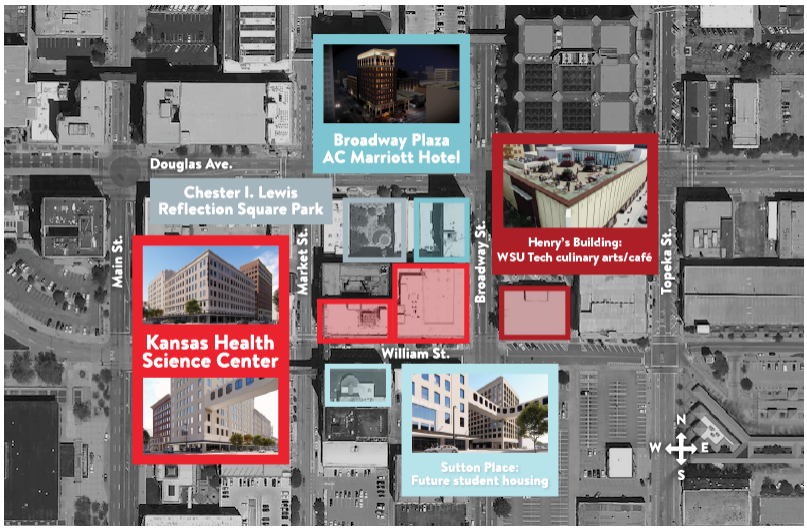
**10**
PROJECTS COMPLETED SINCE JANUARY

**21**
COVID-19 GRANTS FOR DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES

**70**
WICHITA LOVE NOTES POSTED THROUGHOUT DOWNTOWN

## We facilitate commerce and culture in the core to drive development and spur growth in the heart of our region

## Developing downtown




The proposed Kansas Health Science Center – Kansas College of Osteopathic Medicine (KHSC-KansasCOM) granted

candidate status
The proposed downtown medical school received candidate status from the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA) in December. This $75 million project will revitalize five historic buildings and reimagine a key urban park in downtown.

Within the full project, the proposed medical school will be located in two buildings that historically housed the Macy's and Innes department stores. More recently, it was the Finney State Office Building. The school will include a world-class osteopathic skills training center, standardized patient teaching rooms, large lecture halls, small group study rooms, a virtual anatomy lab and more. Additionally, the former Henry's building will be transformed into a culinary school through a new WSU Tech culinary and hospitality program. Learn more about the proposed KHSC-KansasCOM.

Chester I. Lewis Reflection Square Park improvements
The City of Wichita approved TIF funding to revitalize the existing urban park. The improvements to the park will honor the legacy of Chester I. Lewis, the namesake of the park, who was the president of the Wichita chapter of the NAACP and was a leader of the modern civil rights movement at the local, state and national levels. The park will also serve as the new Douglas entry to the Kansas Health Science Center.

Naftzger Park development complete
Identified in Project Downtown as a catalyst site, the development of Naftzger Park was completed in March. This urban green space features the Evergy Pavilion, a video screen for events, an open lawn, a dog run, new water and art features and more. A grand opening event in March was cancelled due to COVID-19 concerns, but the event is slated to be rescheduled following social distancing recommendations. The park was made possible through a $1.4M contribution from Evergy.

Downtown Wichita receives International Pinnacle Award
Downtown Wichita received a Pinnacle Award from the International Downtown Association (IDA) for the implementation of Project Downtown: The Master Plan for Wichita. Each year, IDA recognizes outstanding projects from downtown development corporations around the globe. The Pinnacle Award is the industry's highest recognition for the most creative and inspiring innovations in urban place management. This is the third Pinnacle award Downtown Wichita has received due to the success of Project Downtown. View press release.

Downtown Streets Plan public engagement process reengaged
Street design is vital to increasing safety and walkability and has a significant impact on the development of downtown. Because of this, Project Downtown recognizes the need for a Downtown Streets Plan. The City of Wichita is in the final stages of developing this plan.

Continued promotion of Downtown Business Support Program
In May, Downtown Wichita received a grant from the COVID-19 Connection Fund at the Wichita Community Foundation to help eligible small businesses within the Self Supported Municipal Improvement District (SSMID) partner with local professional organizations to provide assistance. These organizations include Allen, Gibbs & Houlik, Howerton+White and Martin Pringle Law Firm. Downtown Wichita has awarded $1,500 grants to 21 participating businesses and applications are still available. In December, the Business Support Grant Program was expanded to include reimbursement for COVID-19 related expenditures and the City of Wichita's Open Air ICT Program. Find out more about the program on the Downtown Wichita website.

Gore Oil Company renovations underway
Renovations to the Gore Oil Building at 202 St. Francis Street are currently underway. Construction crews are working to restore the façade to brick to match the historic architecture in the district. The building is located between the Spaghetti Works development and INTRUST Bank Arena.

Shops at Gallery Alley construction initiated
Bokeh Development plans to renovate the ground-floor retail spaces at The Renfro building, located near Douglas Avenue and St. Francis Street. Plans include adding windows, exterior signage and storefront visibility and accessibility via Gallery Alley. The Renfro is located on the western side of the alley, which is a unique walkway featuring café seating and public art.

# Marketing downtown

**DOWNTOWN WICHITA COVID-19 RESPONSE**

As the business impacts related to the COVID-19 pandemic evolved, the Downtown Wichita team shifted communications efforts to support downtown small businesses and provide resources during these challenging and changing times.

- Downtown Wichita created a one-stop resource, named the Support Local Small Business webpage, to encourage residents to support local downtown businesses during the COVID-19 crisis. Many downtown businesses transitioned their services by offering specials, online ordering and delivery services. The webpage provided information for the community to support local shops and restaurants.
- To highlight the Support Local Small Businesses page, Downtown Wichita created a short video highlighting the resource and encouraging the community to shop local during the COVID-19 crisis. The video was shared on social media and has over 21,000 views.
- The Downtown Wichita team provided timely email updates to downtown businesses and stakeholders communicating COVID-19 funding opportunities, business updates and linking to the expanding Downtown Wichita COVID-19 Resources webpage.
- Downtown Wichita sent emails to subscribers – individuals who have signed up to receive downtown updates – providing ways to stay connected to downtown during the pandemic.

2020 holiday communications

To support downtown local businesses, Downtown Wichita transitioned holiday marketing to encourage residents to support local restaurants and shops during the holiday season. The "Share Local Love" campaign includes a website featuring downtown shops and restaurants and includes a list of "10 ways to share the local love". The campaign is being promoted through social media and email communications.

2020 State of Downtown Report released
View and download the 2020 State of Downtown Report, which documents the transformation of our downtown into a vibrant urban center. This year, in addition to providing market and economic data, the report features an in-depth look at how Project Downtown: The Master Plan for Wichita has driven over $1 billion of investment throughout the past decade.

Celebrating 10 Years of Project Downtown
In 2010, a community plan was launched to drive investment and development in the urban core – Project Downtown: The Master Plan for Wichita. This year our community is celebrating 10 years of progress driven by the master plan. Downtown Wichita has launched a campaign that highlights the successes of the plan. Follow along on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and subscribe to the email list to stay up-to-date.

## Enhancing vibrancy

Gallery Alley to be transformed into multi-sensory art experience
In collaboration with Envision, Downtown Wichita selected five local artists to create a multi-sensory art experience for Gallery Alley. The initiative is funded through a Knight Foundation Fund grant at the Wichita Community Foundation. In February, Downtown Wichita created a series of videos showcasing the artists selected for the initiative that were shared on social media and online. A launch party to showcase the transformation is to be determined per COVID-19 guidelines.

Wichita Love Notes spread positivity downtown
Downtown Wichita received a grant from the Knight Foundation Fund at the Wichita Community Foundation to launch the Wichita Love Notes initiative. The goal of the project was to inspire positivity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nine local artists created posters as "love notes" to Wichita featuring uplifting messages. More than 70 posters with over 30 unique designs were distributed throughout downtown and neighboring districts.

Open Air ICT sidewalk permit announced
In August, the City of Wichita implemented the Open Air ICT program to support businesses and protect public health during

the pandemic. Restaurant, bar and retail store owners can apply for a free permit to expand operations outdoors to utilize adjacent sidewalks, streets and parking areas for dining, shopping and advertising purposes. Applications can be submitted here.

Artists bring vibrancy to vacant Caldwell Murdock Building
Downtown Wichita partnered with several local artists to bring a pop of color and cheer to a downtown façade. Artists painted hearts in the windows of the seven-story Caldwell Murdock Building. Downtown Wichita plans to activate other vacant buildings and storefronts in downtown through ongoing partnerships with local artists.

Alley Doors launches
The Alley Doors project repurposes alley and back-of-building doors into a discovery-driven urban gallery. Earlier this year, Kansas-based artists contributed to an online artwork database. Participating downtown property and business owners

used this database to select artwork that was then printed and applied to their alley or back-of-building doors. The list of the doors and an interactive map can be found on the Downtown Wichita website.

Holiday storefront activation
The Downtown Wichita team worked with local artists Hallie Linnebur and Meghan Miller to create an art installation featuring Bigfoot Brian at the southwest corner of Douglas Avenue and Emporia Street. The installation ties to an "I Spy" game which can be downloaded at the Bigfoot Brian: The Winter Birdwatcher webpage.

## We focus on developing a distinctive quality of place that attracts talent, visitors, and economic growth

### Project Wichita

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Plan presented to City and County
The Mental Health and Substance Abuse Coalition presented their final plan at a joint meeting with the City Council and County Commission in February. The mission of the plan is to develop a sustainable, accessible and integrated system of care that serves people with mental health and substance abuse disorders who are in crisis, in order to efficiently and effectively deliver services that create positive outcomes.

Financial support for Project Wichita initiatives
To support the development of funds for initiatives identified in the Project Wichita Community Report, the Partnership has hired Blais & Associates for grant writing assistance. This resource is made possible through the support of Fidelity Bank.

Anchor institution initiative re-engaged
The Project Wichita Strong Neighborhoods and Communities Action Plan identifies a need to develop a replicable “anchor institution” model that streamlines and leverages access to resources and community partnerships to innovatively address critical community issues. Along with partners, the Partnership and members of the Project Wichita Advancement Team is re-engaging stakeholders and leading organizations to mobilize resources in response to issues facing children and families due to the pandemic. The initiative was paused initially due to COVID-19 social distancing recommendations.

Wichita Literacy Coalition awarded three-year, $300,000 grant from Kansas Health Foundation
To improve early childhood literacy and kindergarten readiness, the Wichita Literacy Coalition – guided by the Project Wichita Lifelong Learning Action Plan – has been awarded a three-year, $300,000 grant from the Kansas Health Foundation. Learn more.

### Riverfront Legacy Master Plan

Riverfront Legacy Master Plan process paused
In January, the Riverfront Legacy Master Plan Design Team presented their final recommendations for the master plan. A final report was expected to be presented to the City Council and County Commission in late March, but was postponed due to the impacts of COVID-19. The Coalition will re-activate the process when timing is appropriate.

## Addressing racism and discrimination

**Partnership works alongside community partners to address racism and discrimination**
Following important, thoughtful conversations, the Partnership is working with the Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce’s leadership and other community partners to listen, discuss and advance meaningful action in addressing discrimination and

racism experienced by African American and people of color in our community.

View the 2020 End of Year Update

View the 2020 Jobs Update

View the 2020 Talent Update