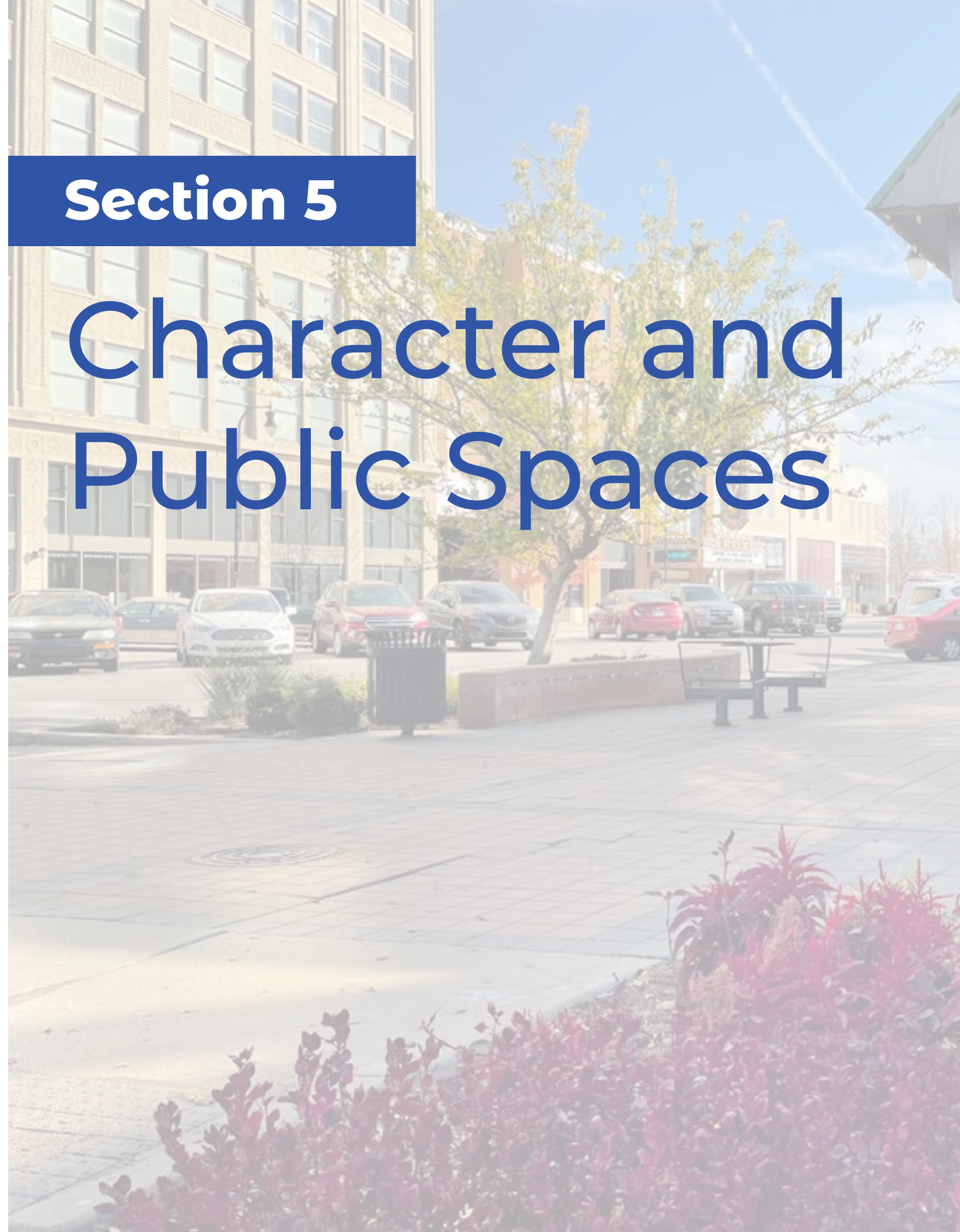


Section 5

Character and Public Spaces

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Key Issues

1. Historic architecture, building façades, and culture of downtown are at risk as incompatible development takes place and buildings deteriorate over time.
2. Some building stock is aged and deteriorating.
3. There is a lack of green spaces, open spaces, and public gathering spaces for festivals, performances, etc.
4. There is a lack of a distinct, unified downtown brand.
5. The overall first impression of downtown could be improved.
6. There is demand for comfortable outdoor seating and outdoor dining options.
7. There is a strong desire for an outdoor venue or amphitheater and more events and festivals.
8. There is a need for additional downtown signage, wayfinding, and lighting downtown.
9. Beautification efforts need to be continued and expanded downtown.
10. There are a number of vacant properties and spaces on the first and second floors of buildings in downtown.
11. There is limited shade, seating, landscaping, and wind protection exists along streets and sidewalks.
12. Downtown has limited public art.

Goals

1. Create a **distinct brand** that establishes the general **identity, character, and aesthetics** of downtown, integrating both its historic culture and its desire for the future.
2. Promote **improvements to the public realm**, creating spaces that offer additional **programmable environments** for social activities, festivals, and related attractions.
3. Preserve and maintain **historic elements** of downtown including the historic architecture, building façades, and cultural remnants.
4. Establish downtown as a **primary public activity center** of the community.
5. Integrate and **enhance elements of a safe and thriving public realm** including street trees, landscaping, flowers, shade structures, signage, outdoor seating, lighting, and public art.
6. Create **pockets of uniqueness** within downtown that attract residents and visitors and create an assemblage of **interesting and interactive destinations** and an overarching character for downtown.
7. Cultivate a **striking first impression** for downtown including defined gateways and iconic street features that make downtown appealing, exciting, and memorable.
8. Encourage, foster, and develop a quality public realm that highlights the **uniqueness of new and historic destinations**.

Strategies

Strategy 5.1 – Ensure that new development, redevelopment, and infill is compatible with the scale, form, and function of established downtown character to cultivate an eclectic downtown aesthetic

Strategy 5.2 – Implement a unified plan for beautification efforts throughout downtown to enhance the enjoyment and appeal of downtown spaces

Strategy 5.3 – Use gateways, monumentation, and art to improve the overall impression of downtown

Strategy 5.4 – Attract and integrate the Arts into downtown over time to reflect the creativity and interests of the community

Strategy 5.5 – Rehabilitate downtown buildings that are vacant or have deteriorating historic building façades to bring them up to the standard of care and beauty of other downtown buildings

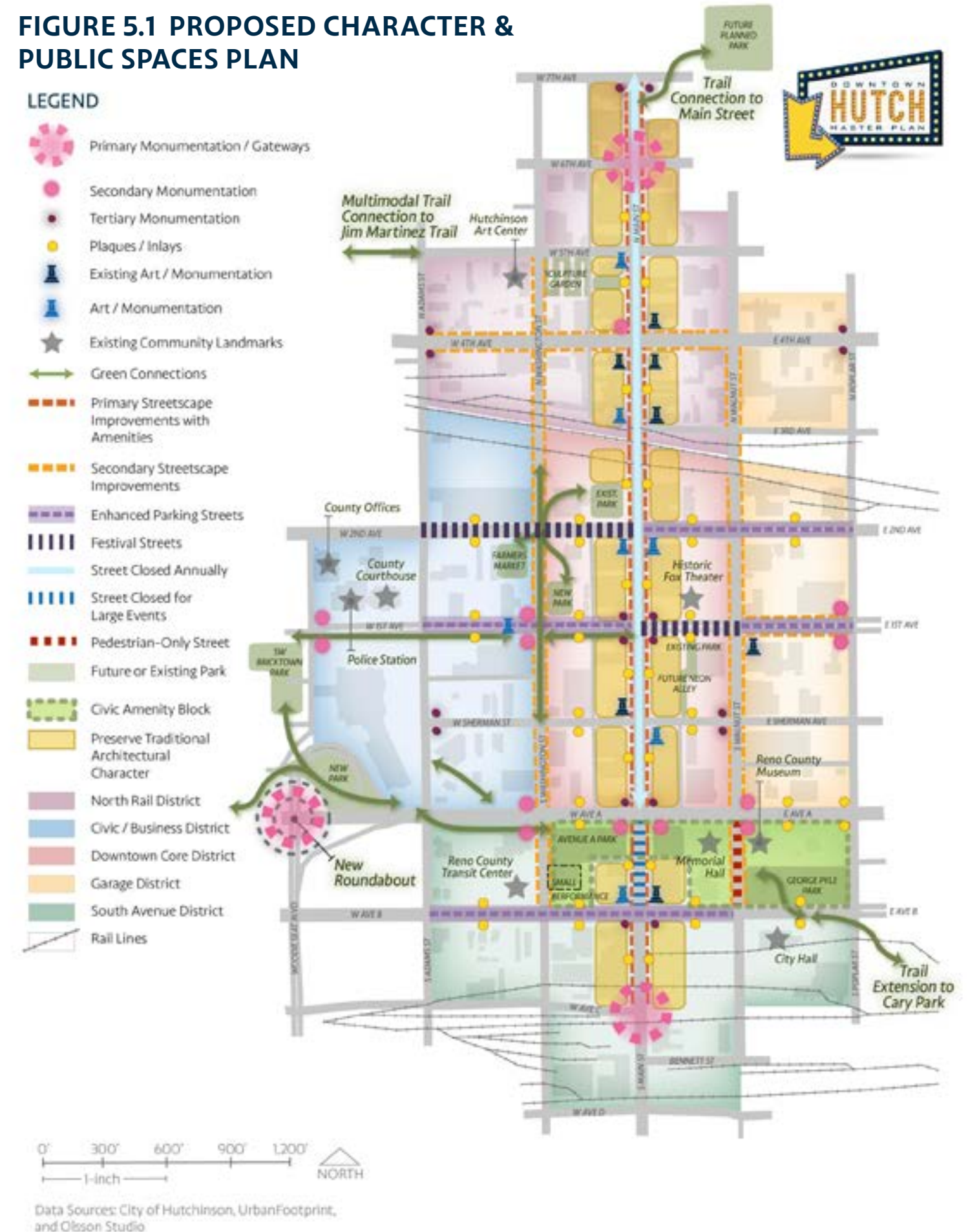
Strategy 5.6 – Increase the quality and quantity of outdoor public gathering spaces to create an assemblage of spaces that prompt recreational activity, social cohesion, and community building

Strategy 5.7 – Create organic transitions between indoor and outdoor spaces downtown to create continuity of activity and a strong and connected downtown

Strategy 5.8 – Implement a cohesive and connected public space “Civic Amenity Block” between Avenue A and Avenue B to cultivate an environment that welcomes activity and brings distinction to downtown

Strategy 5.9 – Expand streetscape enhancements to create continuity and aesthetic appeal throughout the downtown public right-of-way.

FIGURE 5.1 PROPOSED CHARACTER & PUBLIC SPACES PLAN



Strategy 5.1

Ensure that new development, redevelopment, and infill is compatible with the scale, form, and function of established downtown character to cultivate an eclectic downtown aesthetic

Downtown Hutchinson has a distinct and enjoyable character shaped largely by its architectural composition. As development and redevelopment takes place, **downtown character should evolve into a unique collection of building forms and functions** that complement the existing building stock and build upon the traditional design of the downtown core.

Guiding site elements and character considerations include, but are not limited to:

- Appropriate and historically sensitive building materials and façades.
- Very minimal setbacks, especially along Main St.
- Big windows and high level of transparency along the first floor/pedestrian level.
- Appropriate architectural styles that align with or compliment traditional downtown development, guided by existing development and recommendations provided for each district (as described in Strategy 3.1).
- Appropriate scales and building heights throughout downtown, guided by existing development and recommendations provided by district (in Strategy 3.1).
- Parking located on-street throughout downtown rather than in concentrated lots.

As development takes place, these considerations should be at the forefront, evaluating how well the aesthetics and character of new development and redevelopment fits into the vision for downtown.



Strategy 5.2

Implement a unified plan for beautification efforts throughout downtown to enhance the enjoyment and appeal of downtown spaces

To enhance downtown beautification, a unified plan should be set forth to guide the overall enhancement and implementation of elements that enhance the public image. While many of these elements also serve a functional purpose, the guidelines should provide standards and uniformity in the aesthetics of things such as lighting, banners, wayfinding signage, awnings, outdoor furniture, and landscaping. These elements should align with the unified downtown brand and enhance downtown appeal through their presence.

Public realm enhancements are important to economic development. Enhancements to the public environment are not only aesthetically pleasing, but also important economic drivers. They draw businesses, tourists, and residents, resulting in increased investment, higher property values, and a thriving local economy. Furthermore, they foster a sense of **community pride and engagement**, which enhances a region's social and economic fabric. Communities and businesses recognize the benefit of investing in their public realms, which impacts economic development for the years ahead.

When a downtown invests in creating and maintaining attractive streetscapes, well-maintained parks, and pedestrian-friendly walkways, it displays an investment in and a commitment to the community's well-being and quality of life. An inviting public realm can invite and increase foot traffic, which is essential for retail businesses. **Downtowns that reflect the investment and attention of the City attract businesses** looking for a supportive environment in which to establish themselves.

Enhancements to the public realm also have a **direct impact on tourism**, which may be a substantial economic engine in many communities. When cities invest in creating memorable public spaces, cultural attractions, and recreational amenities, they become more appealing to tourists. Visitors are more likely to spend money on dining, shopping, and entertainment in places that offer a pleasant and vibrant environment. Additionally, the beauty and functionality of public spaces often lead to increased events and festivals, which draw tourists and locals alike, providing a boost to the local economy.

Public realm enhancements can foster a **sense of pride and identity among residents**, which, in turn, can stimulate a sense of community and civic engagement. This community pride often leads to increase volunteerism, participation in local events, and support for local businesses. It also attracts new residents who are drawn to the area's vibrant public life and amenities. These residents, in turn, contribute to the local workforce and consumer base, reinforcing economic development.

Both **public and private dollars should be leveraged to implement these beautification efforts** throughout downtown, creating a unified but varied outdoor environment that is appealing and pleasing to the eye.



Source: landscapeforms.com

Lighting. Downtown lighting should be strategically integrated throughout the downtown public right-of-way. While streetlights should maintain some consistency along major corridors including Main St., other forms of public and private outdoor lighting should be eclectic and diverse, including:

- Area lighting
- Overhead lighting including string bulbs
- Lower pathlighting such as patterned bollard lights and lo-glo lights
- Wall and surface lighting

Banners. To define and brand downtown and promote its upcoming activities, banners should be utilized throughout downtown. These banners should match the designated downtown brand and should change throughout the year to reflect occurrences such as the holiday season, large festivals and events, and basic “welcome” banners. They should be found along the stretch of main street, affixed to lamp posts.

Public wayfinding. Public navigation signage and tools should be developed to make it easier to find and get to downtown attractions. Signage should align with the identified downtown brand and remain consistent throughout downtown. Wayfinding should include overhead signage affixed to lamp posts, making it easier to navigate downtown in a vehicle or on a bicycle, and pedestrian-friendly wayfinding and should be available on the street for more detailed information. Specific recommendations for wayfinding enhancements can be found in Strategy 4.6.

Private signage. To further facilitate navigation throughout, private business signage should be identifiable, visible, readable, and attractive, representing the distinct character and varied aesthetics of downtown. While private signage should not match, it should be attractive and readable to pedestrians as they walk along the sidewalk. Signage should use pedestrian-friendly heights and angles to enhance the feeling of “human-scale” design that encourages individuals to navigate downtown on foot, as well as via other modes of transportation.



San Marcos, TX
Source: www.sanmarcosrecord.com



Source: bradysigns.com



Baltimore, MD - Fell's Point
Source: Sean Pavone/Shutterstock



Palm Springs, CA
Source: Millicent Harvey/Courtesy RIOS

Shade structures. To encourage the longevity and comfort of experiences downtown, awning and shade structures should be integrated into public and private spaces. Awnings should be encouraged along Main Street, with opportunities for relief from the sun and precipitation along the sidewalk in front of each business and storefront. Shade should also be integrated into parks, plazas, and outdoor seating areas, making it enjoyable to spend extended periods of time downtown. Awnings, shade sails, umbrellas, trees, and other unique shade structures all enhance the experience of spending time downtown.



Source: www.dero.com

Outdoor furnishings. To further enhance the quality and experience of spending time downtown, the public right-of-way should include seating and other furnishings. Benches, chairs, dining tables, picnic tables, heating and cooling devices, umbrellas, trash receptacles, bike racks, and other furnishings are critical to an enjoyable extended downtown experience. Outdoor furniture should be aesthetically appealing, comfortable, and eclectic. It should include options for varying ages and levels of ability, making downtown an enjoyable place for all kinds of people to spend time together and coalesce through shared experiences and leisure. Some of these furnishings can be unique and unusual, doubling as attractions downtown.



Louisville, CO
Source: www.dcla.net

Trees and landscape. Downtown should continue to build upon its progress with downtown streetscape by including appropriate trees and landscaping that suits the existing physical environment and desired aesthetic of the community. Building upon recent landscape improvements downtown, landscape typologies should be created to enhance recent improvements and create an appealing and patterned assemblage of greenery throughout the area. Enhancements should include street trees, understory plantings, and above-ground plantings.



Camden, ME
Source: Christian Delbert/Dreamstime.com



Los Angeles, CA
Source: downtownla.com



Boston, MA
Source: www.bostonmagazine.com



Source: www.acer-landscaping.com



Plano, TX
Source: www.visitplano.com

Hardscape. In alignment with existing streetscaping, landscaping recommendations, and the character of downtown, hardscaping should include paving that is consistent with the existing streetscape enhancements from 3rd Avenue to 4th Avenue. Pockets of unique pavers should be integrated at high-traffic pedestrian areas and along some intersections to add dimension and intrigue. Warm colors and rigid edges should continue to be used throughout downtown, building off the existing hardscape patterns in place.

Stormwater Management Tools. To collect rainfall and runoff, additional stormwater management tools should be integrated into downtown, fitting into the character of designated landscape and hardscape recommendations. Tools may include permeable paving, swales, rain gardens, channels and runnels, infiltration boardwalks, or trench grates.

Public art. Critical to creating a strong sense of place is the integration of public art downtown. Public art should include murals, sculptures, statues, structures, tapestries and banners, and interactive public art, works of light and sound, installations, photography, and functional art, among other pieces. Art should be visible and accessible to be enjoyed by all. Art pieces can be temporary or permanent, shaping the character and enjoyment of public spaces. When possible, public art should be created by local, regional, and state artists, building upon community values and the downtown brand.

Sculpture garden. Adding a sculpture garden to downtown would enrich both its cultural and social fabric. An opportunity exists along Main Street, in the open green space between the Union Labor Temple and Point Blank Tattoo. The East side of the building would be a great location for sculpture garden including an open-air gallery of art installations, thoughtfully placed amidst greenery and pathways, creating a space for residents and visitors to connect with art in a serene and accessible environment. This will serve as a point of intrigue, an additional open space, and home to art and creativity embedded downtown.

Strategy 5.3

Use gateways, monumentation, and art to improve the overall impression of downtown

The overall impression of downtown is critically shaped by elements such as gateways, monumentation, plaques, inlays, and downtown art that depict the desired vision for downtown. These elements should be thoughtfully developed and integrated into existing downtown landmarks. Primary gateways, secondary monumentation, and tertiary monumentation should be developed. Complementary plaques and inlays, and publicly arts should also be strategically integrated into this Plan to improve the public impression of downtown.

Primary downtown gateways are powerful visual cues that differentiate one area from the next. Gateways should be used to create entry and exit points that clearly define the boundaries of downtown. Due to the large size of Hutchinson's downtown, a family of gateways should be created to bookend the district. Gateways should frame entryways through key corridors and welcoming visitors. The style of gateways should reflect the desired brand for downtown and represent downtown as a whole.

Primary gateways should be added at the following intersections:

- Main St. and 6th Ave.
- Main St. and Ave. C.
- Woodie Seat Blvd. and W. Ave. A.

Secondary monumentation should be used to create large recognizable downtown landmarks that align with the visual cues of the primary gateways, located along major downtown corridors at specific intersections:

- The northwest corner of Main St. and 4th Ave.
- The northwest and southwest corners of S. Washington St. and W. Avenue A.
- The southwest and southeast corners of Main St. and Avenue A.
- The northeast and southeast corners of S. Walnut St. and E. Avenue A.

Tertiary monumentation should be used in a similar way to secondary monumentation, creating smaller downtown landmarks that align with the visual cues created by the primary gateways and secondary monumentation to create a full family of monumentation that work together to develop a strong and lasting impression for downtown through the public realm. Tertiary monumentation should be implemented at the following intersections:

- All four corners of Main St. and 1st Avenue.
- The northeast and southeast corners of S. Adams St. and W. Sherman St.
- The northwest and southwest corners of S. Walnut St. and E. Sherman St.
- The northwest and northeast corners of Main St. and W. Ave A.



Primary Gateway Example
Source: Reed Architecture & Interiors



Secondary Monumentation Example
Source: www.cincinnati-oh.gov



Tertiary Monumentation Example
Source: www.cincinnati-oh.gov

Plaques and inlays should be implemented as a final tier of the family of monumentation downtown lining up with the design and aesthetic established by the downtown gateways. These plaques should “tell the story” of Downtown Hutchinson’s rich past, present, and future, communicating compelling stories through physical landmarks that are carefully strung together. The process of developing these plaques should be an exciting effort among members of downtown leadership that results in an enriched understanding of the people, places, and events that created our beloved downtown. The form of these plaques and inlays is up to interpretation but must be visually integrated into the larger vision for downtown monumentation and must “tell the story” of downtown. Plaques and inlays are recommended at the following locations:

- The west and east sides along Main St., mid-block between 6th Ave. and 5th Ave.
- The west and east sides along Main St., mid-block between 5th Ave. and 4th Ave.
- The west and east sides along Main St., mid-block between 4th Ave. and 3rd Ave.
- The west and east sides along Main St., mid-block between 3rd Ave. and 2nd Ave.
- The west and east sides along Main St., mid-block between 2nd Ave. and 1st Ave.
- The west and east sides along Main St., mid-block between 1st Ave. and Sherman St.
- The west and east sides along Main St., mid-block between Sherman St. and Ave. A.
- The west and east sides along Main St., mid-block between Ave. A and Ave. B.
- The west and east sides along Main St., mid-block between Ave. B and Ave. C.
- The north and south sides along W. 2nd Ave., mid-block between N. Adams St. and N. Washington St.
- The north and south sides along W. 2nd Ave., mid-block between N. Washington St. and Main St.
- The north and south sides along W. 1st Ave., mid-block between N. Adams St. and N. Washington St.
- The north and south sides along W. 1st Ave., mid-block between N. Washington St. and Main St.
- The south side of W. Ave. A, mid-block between S. Washington St. and Main St.
- The north side of W. Ave. B, mid-block between S. Washington St. and Main St.

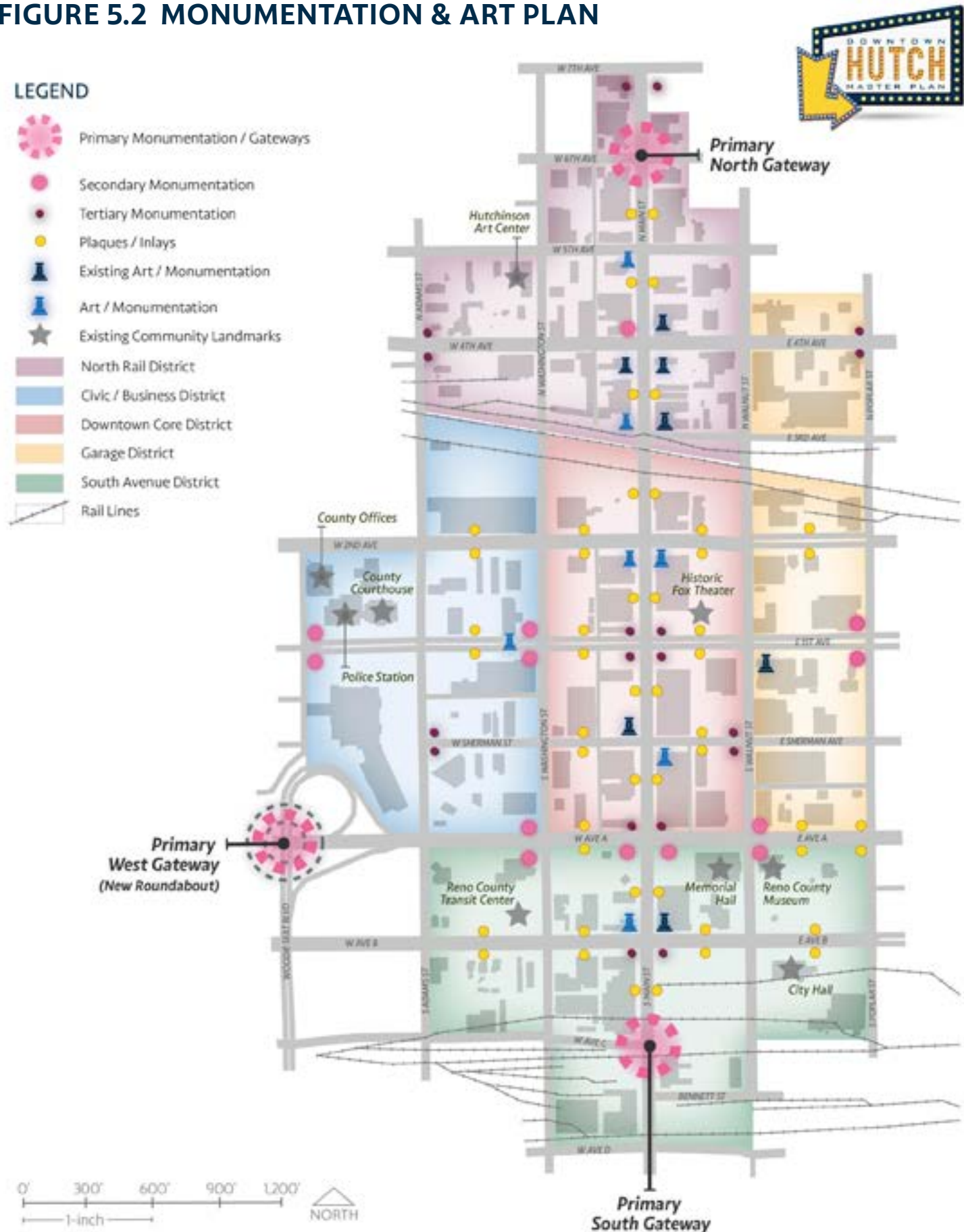


Downtown art should also be strategically integrated into public spaces, aligning physically and visually with the other proposed landmarks. The procurement and selection of downtown art should prioritize integration or accentuation of the downtown brand, unique and interesting pieces, and an eclectic assemblage of artistic pieces that add to downtown, recommended in the following locations:

- The southwest corner of Main St. and 5th Ave.
- The northwest corner of Main St. and 3rd Ave.
- The southwest and southeast corners of Main St. and 2nd Ave.
- The southeast corner of Main St. and Sherman St.
- The northwest and northeast corners of Main St. and Avenue B.



FIGURE 5.2 MONUMENTATION & ART PLAN



Data Sources: City of Hutchinson, UrbanFootprint, and Olsson Studio

Strategy 5.4

Attract and integrate the Arts into downtown over time to reflect the creativity and interests of the community

Art is an important component of communities, and it should be hosted, amplified, and expressed through downtowns. In addition to integrating public art to the physical environment of downtown, as described in Strategy 5.3, **Downtown Hutchinson should be home to the Arts**, including performances, classes, and other forms of self-expression that can be viewed and participated in by downtown visitors, culminating in an artistic environment. Professional and non-professional artists and the larger community should feel welcome and excited by opportunities to **perform and create downtown**.

People should come to downtown to enjoy and participate in the creativity of downtown by attending musical theater performances, attending concerts of varying types of music, participating in community theater, participating in literary arts, taking a painting class, taking a music class, joining a community choir, taking dance classes, taking a ceramics class, or have their photo taken, among other opportunities. Downtown will become an array of artistic opportunities over time by taking steps to encourage the creative arts:

Encourage creation of an arts advocacy group. Identify influential local artists and encourage them to organize and think strategically about the future of art in Hutchinson, working to develop stronger relationships, spark collaboration, and advocate for the arts. Work with this group to determine the best path forward in the creation of spaces, events, and marketing efforts to promote art downtown.

Develop artistic spaces. To make it easier and more inviting for artists to come downtown, appropriate spaces should be developed, including performance venues, exhibition spaces, galleries, studios, gardens, and other spaces that invite artistic activity. These spaces may be publicly or privately owned, and may evolve over time, but should be homes to artistic activity, creation, or performance.

Host art festivals and events. To begin inviting the arts into downtown, art festivals and specifically tailored events should be created to host artists and their crafts. Hutchinson should cultivate an accessible and open environment where artists can perform, host classes, and sell goods. Collaboration should be encouraged and downtown leaders should work with local artists and surrounding communities to gain traction in the region and promote events and festivals.

Identify and promote arts districts. As identified in Strategy 3.1, distinct downtown districts will be designated to create pockets of excitement and purpose. While the Arts will be embedded throughout the community, the North Rail District will be expanded as home to the Arts and night life, and the Garage District is home to redeveloped production and studio spaces, promoting the Arts through creation. These districts should be promoted as hubs for the Arts, attracting and compounding artistic interests downtown.

Create visibility for the Arts. Work collaboratively with other organizations and entities to promote opportunities to engage with the Arts through performances, festivals, classes, and other means. Leverage existing communication channels to promote downtown as a place to perform and create.

Engaging Placemaking for Innovative Communities (EPIC) Pilot Program 2023

“In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, non-profit and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, tribe, city or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired.” (Creative Placemaking: How to Do It Well, Ann Markusen, Anne Gadwa Nicodemus).

EPIC 2023 is a pilot program funded by the Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission at the Kansas Department of Commerce and the Patterson Family Foundation. This is an opportunity for arts-driven community development projects designed to connect cross-sector local and regional stakeholders. EPIC provides technical assistance, funding, and mentorship through planning and execution. Eligible community projects are diverse and must include significant involvement from artists, artisans, creative entrepreneurs. Projects may include festivals, performances, public art, public space revitalization, neighborhood development, community engagement, integrating arts and infrastructure, transportation, housing, youth development, and tourism.

Hutchinson should seek out and leverage such programs to enhance the quality and quantity of arts-driven community development downtown.



Hutchinson, KS - Third Thursday
Source: www.hutchrec.com



Hutchinson, KS - Third Thursday
Source: www.hutchrec.com



Pittsburgh, PA - Outdoor Dance Performance
Source: nextpittsburgh.com

Strategy 5.5

Rehabilitate downtown buildings that are vacant or have deteriorating historic building façades to bring them up to the standard of care and beauty of other downtown buildings

To preserve the quality and historic value of downtown buildings, steps should be taken to invest in rehabilitation and reinvestment throughout downtown. Rehabilitation incentives and financial assistance should be strategically considered and pursued, including, but not limited to, the following opportunities.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). This federal program out of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development supports community development activities to prompt investment in developing strong and resilient communities. The program funds activities such as infrastructure improvements, economic development projects, public facilities installation, housing rehabilitation, public services, clearance/acquisition, community centers, micro-enterprise assistance, code enforcement, homeowner assistance, and more. Several CDBG programs exist, offering various opportunities to acquire appropriate funding community needs such as commercial building renovation, blight removal, and preservation. Various requirements apply.

Heritage Trust Fund Grant Program. This state program provides funds for preservation of properties listed in the Kansas or National Register of Historic Places. The program reimburses qualifying expenses including professional fees and construction costs up to \$100,000, which must be matched by the grant recipient. Yearly grant rounds are highly competitive but can provide substantial assistance for community redevelopment and historic preservation.

Historic Economic Asset Lifeline (HEAL). This funding program was created in partnership between the Patterson Family Foundation and the Kansas Department of Commerce to restore buildings into spaces that support new or expanding businesses, childcare, housing, arts and culture, civic engagement, or entrepreneurship. Eligible applicants include nonprofit or local government organizations applying on behalf of building owners of underutilized, vacant, or dilapidated downtown buildings or those needing façade improvements.

Kansas Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program. State tax credits are available for project rehabilitation expenses for historic structures listed on the State or National Register. The program provides a credit equal to a percentage of the qualified expenses on the project.

Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit (Historic Tax Credit). These credits offer 20 percent income tax credit for income-producing historic properties including retail establishments, office buildings, and residential rental properties, among others. This program is designed to enable property owners to rehabilitate their historic buildings through a 20 percent tax break.

Revolving Loan Funds (Gap Loans). Property rehabilitation and renovation costs can be a barrier to local investment. Revolving Loan Funds can help fill the gap by providing the capital to fund property enhancements. These loans are then paid back over time to replenish the funds which should then be lent to others working to renovate or restore their downtown property. These loan funds can be capitalized on by local governments, private financial institutions, federal grant programs, or local philanthropic organizations.

Strategy 5.6

Increase the quality and quantity of outdoor public gathering spaces to create an assemblage of spaces that prompt recreational activity, social cohesion, and community building

Public gathering spaces are critical to a healthy downtown, creating opportunities to socialize and coalesce through intentional spaces that are designed to bring people together. Public outdoor spaces should be strategically designed to support organic socialization and activity, acting as common spaces for downtown visitors and residents. These spaces should be visible, accessible, enjoyable, and interesting, located along downtown corridors that easily capture the attention of passersby.

Hutchinson should seek to **increase the quality and quantity of outdoor gathering spaces**, integrating outdoor seating, parks and green spaces, open spaces, performance centers, festival streets, and trails that connect these spaces.

The overall **quality of existing outdoor public spaces** should be enhanced through strategic implementation of these elements:

- Addition and increased maintenance of landscaping and trees
- Enhanced visibility through lighting and connectivity to active streets
- Addition of public art including murals and interactive pieces
- Additions of visual intrigue such as fountains or unique sidewalk textures
- Addition of shade structures such as pavilions or shade sails
- Additional or more appealing lighting, such as string lights or lamp posts
- Additional safety features such as emergency call boxes
- More interactive pieces including playgrounds, outdoor games, art, and plaques
- Outdoor seating including picnic tables, lounging chairs, patios, and mobile furniture
- Enhanced cleanliness and maintenance of public spaces
- Additional amenities such as bike racks, trash cans, and public grills
- Additional physical accessibility elements including ramps, railings, and accessible amenities



The **function and flexibility** of outdoor spaces should be expanded to allow for multiple personal and social uses such as:

- Public performances
- Festivals
- Markets
- Food trucks
- Field games
- Exercise
- Leisure
- Cultural events
- Group classes or gatherings



The **quantity of outdoor public spaces** should be expanded to create more options and further connectivity of programmable gathering spaces. The following are opportunities to expand upon downtown's current offerings for outdoor public space:

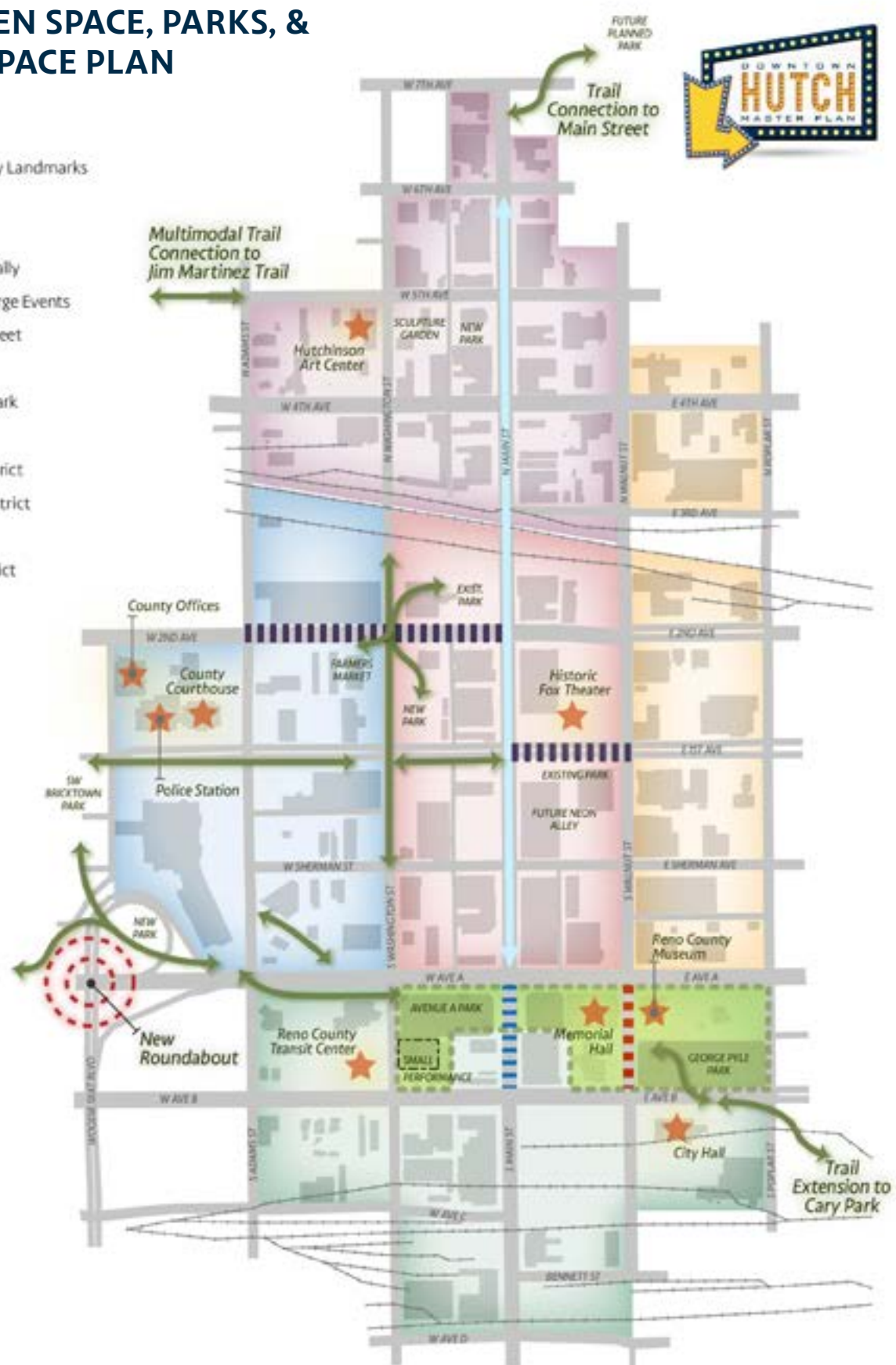
- New park to be located at the vacant parcel north of the intersection of N. Walnut St and E. 7th St., with a trail connection to Main St. along E. 7th St.
- Sculpture garden on the southeast corner of N. Washington St. and E. 5th Ave.
- New park located at the vacant parcel off Main St mid-block between E. 5th Ave. and E. 4th Ave., just south of the Union Labor Temple
- New park to be located at the current parking lot at the northeast corner of N. Washington St. and W. 1st Ave.
- New park to be located at the current location of the circle ramp at Woodie Seat Blvd. and W. Ave. A after new roundabout redevelopment
- New park at the southwest corner of S. Poplar St. and E. Ave. A
- Festival street on W. 2nd St. from N. Washington St. to Main St.
- Festival street on E. 1st St. from Main St. to N. Walnut St.
- Festival street on S. Walnut St. between E. Avenue A and E. Avenue B between Memorial Hall and George Pyle Park
- Neon alley to be located perpendicular to E. Sherman at the half-block between Main St. and S. Walnut St.
- Multimodal trail connection from W. Ave. A to Jim Martinez Trail
- Multimodal trail connection from W. 5th Ave. to Jim Martinez Trail
- Multimodal trail along W. 1st Ave. from Main St. west to Woodie Seat Blvd.
- Multimodal trail along N. Walnut St. from W. 3rd Ave. to E. Ave. A
- Multimodal trail extension from the southeast corner of S. Poplar St. and E. Ave. B to the southeast to Cary Park



FIGURE 5.3 OPEN SPACE, PARKS, & COMMUNITY SPACE PLAN

LEGEND

-  Existing Community Landmarks
-  Green Connections
-  Festival Streets
-  Street Closed Annually
-  Street Closed for Large Events
-  Pedestrian-Only Street
-  Civic Amenity Block
-  Future or Existing Park
-  North Rail District
-  Civic / Business District
-  Downtown Core District
-  Garage District
-  South Avenue District
-  Rail Lines



Data Sources: City of Hutchinson, UrbanFootprint, and Olsson Studio

The option to temporarily close public streets to cars should be strategically utilized for downtown events to create hubs of activity and safer use of downtown spaces. This option should be utilized multiple time throughout the year, creating an attractive and mobile environment for pedestrians that encourages foot traffic and compounded economic activity. Below are specifically identified street segments that are especially primed to be closed down for festivals, events, and markets.

- Main St from 6th Ave. to E. Ave. A should be closed to cars and through traffic for very large downtown events, about once or twice a year, to attract a large group of people and enable them to move freely on foot throughout downtown
- Main St from E. Ave. A to E. Ave. B should be closed to cars and through traffic for downtown events a few times each year, to attract activity around the surrounding blocks and allow more free traffic on foot in the surrounding area

Broadband connectivity has become more of a necessity than an amenity in the modern day-to-day. People use Wi-Fi connectivity to work, to connect with loved ones, to make appointments, to enjoy entertainment, for social media, and for numerous other uses. Broadband connectivity is increasingly found in indoor and outdoor public spaces, and it can be attractive within a downtown. Hutchinson should invest in the installation of high-speed Wi-Fi infrastructure in key outdoor areas downtown, offering seamless internet access for residents and visitors as they enjoy the parks, plazas, outdoor dining, and other amenities offered downtown.

Wi-Fi availability would enable people to engage in a wide range of recreational activities, from streaming music and videos to playing online games or participating in virtual fitness classes. Additionally, the availability of free Wi-Fi can attract remote workers and students, encouraging outdoor study sessions or work meetings, attracting people to downtown to work, exercise, socialize, or just enjoy the outdoor spaces. Connecting residents and visitors through digital means fosters a sense of belonging and encourages community-driven initiatives, such as outdoor movie nights, live music performances, or art exhibitions. The integration of broadband into outdoor public spaces not only enhances recreational activities but also cultivates social bonds and community pride, making Downtown Hutchinson a vibrant, flexible, and cohesive environment.



Pittsfield, MA – A pop-up demonstration project by the urban design firm Team Better Block, an unwelcoming passage between Tyler Street and a parking lot became “Umbrella Alley.”
Source: www.aarp.org

Spaces to Places

The new and innovative “Spaces to Places” community development placemaking program is open to Kansas Main Street Affiliate communities across Kansas to support community-led projects that create, revitalize, or activate public spaces, and bring people together to create welcoming and thriving communities.

The program builds community cohesion, hosting community workshops and outreach, place assessments, and action plannings. Community Development staff guide communities through a four-step process over two months to engage cross-sector stakeholders, youth, and residents to create and pursue an action plan for their public spaces. Communities are connected with other community development programs for potential funding or technical assistance, such as the Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission (KCAIC), Kansas Main Street, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Community Service Tax Credit Program (CSP), or the Kansas Community Empowerment and Kansas State Research & Extension (KSRE).

Six months to one year after the community creates the action plan, Chamber Community Development staff checks in to evaluate progress and identify if additional assistance is needed. Chamber Community Development staff will track the change in community perception, partnerships, collaboration, and local investment to measure success of the program.

Programs like this one are powerful tools for communities hoping to build upon their existing strengths and develop quality public spaces that encourage arts, culture, activity, and community cohesion. Hutchinson should seek out and leverage programs like this to enhance community development downtown.



Brunswick, ME

Source: downeast.com/our-towns/brunswick-maine/

Strategy 5.7

Create organic transitions between indoor and outdoor spaces downtown to create continuity of activity and a strong, connected downtown

Outdoor public spaces and attractive indoor and outdoor businesses should attract people downtown, linked together through dynamic and enjoyable private businesses and institutions that serve as destinations, in themselves. Organic transitions should exist between land uses, districts, and public spaces, making it easy and enjoyable to visit multiple destinations and spend more time and spark more economic activity downtown. These transitions should act as destinations within themselves, offering attractive options such as comfortable outdoor dining, intriguing alleyways, and festival streets that cultivate strong ties between downtown activity hubs and form a well-connected downtown.

Outdoor dining. To create attractive downtown destinations and organic transitions between indoor and outdoor spaces, downtown should embrace the opportunity to expand outdoor seat options, using sidewalks and alleyways to offer comfortable outdoor seating options that have shade and lighting to serve people during both day and night. Attractive and comfortable weatherproof seating and tables should be visible from the street, and used to liven up downtown, especially along Main Street and other primary avenues.

Intriguing alleyways. Alleyways are a surprising and innovative way to build transitions through downtown. These narrow lanes for pedestrians or service that are found between or behind buildings. While originally integrated into cities to provide functional services, including trash access, deliveries, utilities, and parking, cities are taking their downtown alleyways back and converting them to more exciting and pedestrian-forward uses. It is recommended that alleys are enhanced in ways that complement the historic architecture and the recommended downtown streetscape enhancements. Simple additions can be made in concentrated areas to cultivate an environment that adds uniqueness and intrigue to downtown.

- Overhead string lights bring lighting and aesthetic appeal.
- Enhanced, textured pavement signifies a pedestrian-focused space.
- Public art including murals and street art can create a dynamic appeal.
- Dynamic colors of paint on walls and street furniture can create a pocket of vibrancy apart from the regular downtown aesthetic.
- Neon signs and dynamic signage to attract nightlife.
- Flower and plant boxes underneath windows bring life during the day.
- Simple outdoor seating options, such as weatherproof chairs and benches offer places for people to sit or mingle.
- Outdoor rugs by shops and restaurants enhance the color and aesthetic.
- Fencing and screening around trash and recycling receptacles or utility boxes to make the alleyway feel more intentional and pedestrian-oriented.

While several opportunities exist to create intriguing alleyways throughout downtown, one stands out as a prime opportunity to enhance an existing space:

- Neon Alley to be located perpendicular to E. Sherman at the half-block between Main St. and S. Walnut St.



Pueblo, CO - Neon Alley
Source: Springs Magazine

Case Study: Neon Alley, Pueblo, CO

Neon Alleys are an innovative approach to taking back downtown alleyways. Historic neon signs have been rehabilitated and displayed with modern neon signs in a culmination of light that attracts and excites visitors downtown. This lively and unique experience can be leveraged to create continuity and intrigue when walking between downtown destinations.

This concept has been especially well done in Pueblo, Colorado where neon lights, once commonly used to advertise businesses in the 1920s-1950s, have become more of a rare vanishing art form. In Pueblo, one man's love for these beautiful glowing colorful tubes of light has transformed a simple city block into what is now called "Neon Alley." Founder Joe Koncilja says he has "one of the largest assemblies of neon art west of Times Square and east of the Las Vegas Strip." With more than 100 of these historical signs in his collection he has been slowly adding new lights in the alley which currently numbers 72 neon signs. Koncilja says that "there's something magical about neon." This is one place where you can truly be illuminated.



Pueblo, CO - Neon Alley
Source: The Durango Herald

Festival Streets. Transformational and flexible public spaces should be dedicated in pockets throughout downtown, serving as multi-functional destinations designed to adapt to various community needs throughout the year and over time. Festival streets should be established and used for markets, parades, music and performance-based events, food truck events, recreational events, movie events, art shows, and many other events for which the community wishes to coalesce.

By establishing these flexible spaces, the downtown opens itself up to several diverse opportunities to attract residents and visitors to downtown, where they will likely spend time, patron local establishments, and enjoy all that downtown has to offer.

Street design prioritizes pedestrian safety and enjoyment, implementing safety and aesthetic enhancements that result in an enjoyable experience for larger groups of people to enjoy the public space and interact with surrounding elements of downtown.

Three prime opportunities exist for festival streets in Downtown Hutchinson:

- Festival street on W. 2nd St. from N. Washington St. to Main St.
- Festival street on E. 1st St. from Main St. to N. Walnut St.
- Festival street on S. Walnut St. between E. Ave. A and E. Ave. B between Memorial Hall and George Pyle Park



Chicago, IL - A Street Festival
Source: bucketlisters.com

Strategy 5.8

Implement a cohesive and connected public space “Civic Amenity Block” between Avenue A and Avenue B to cultivate an environment that welcomes activity and brings distinction to downtown

Hutchinson has the unique opportunity to revitalize existing public spaces and unite them into a large, connected, and cohesive multi-faceted parks and public space offering in downtown. The Civic Amenity Block will offer a network of public spaces that cultivate community cohesion, recreational activity, performances, attractions, festivals, and events that continue to transform downtown into a dynamic and vibrant place. This connected array of public offerings has the potential to transform and catalyze downtown.

It will have numerous community impacts including improvements to **overall public health** as downtown utilizes and reclaims public space to help the city become cleaner, greener, and more physically active. This has the potential to reduce air pollution, noise, and heat and enhance access to green space, having a positive impact on the health of the residents and visitors by offering downtown public spaces that prompt activity.

By restricting vehicle traffic and prioritizing pedestrians, the Civic Amenity Block will become a **focal point for social activities and gatherings**, thereby increasing foot traffic to local businesses.

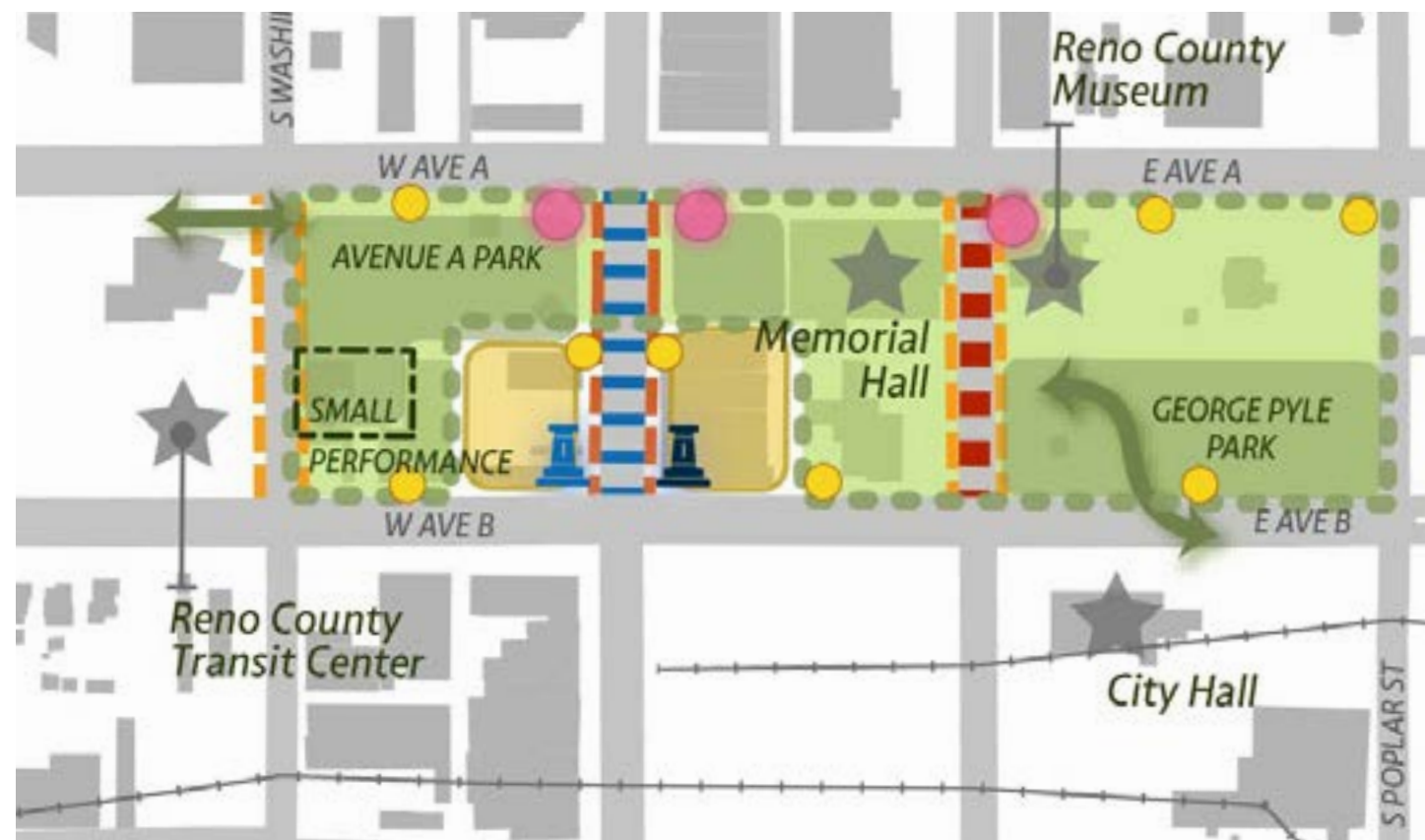
Regular cultural events, such as art exhibitions, live performances, and food festivals, should be organized to attract diverse crowds and maintain the Civic Amenity Block’s role as a dynamic, ever-evolving space. This entails re-purposing roadways into pedestrian-friendly promenades, creating green spaces, and integrating public art installations. By involving the community and local businesses in its development and operation, the Civic Amenity Block can truly reflect the unique character of downtown, creating a distinct and welcoming environment for all.



The Civic Amenity Block will include **several key components**:

- Park space, including Avenue A Park, George Pyle Park, and newly developed park spaces
- A small performance center for outdoor performances attached to Avenue A Park
- A pedestrian-only street between Memorial Hall and George Pyle Park
- Streetscape improvements
- Trail extensions that lead to Cary Park
- Memorial Hall at the heart of it, included recommended reinvestment in the building

The Civic Amenity Block will prompt activity downtown, serving as a catalyst for economic activity and downtown growth and development. It will also bring attraction and intrigue to downtown as a place to spend the day engaging in an array of both indoor and outdoor activities throughout the year. The Civic Amenity Block will reflect the unique stories and history of Hutchinson, while spurring excitement for the future.



Strategy 5.9

Expand streetscape enhancements to create continuity and aesthetic appeal throughout the downtown public right-of-way

Building upon the existing streetscape improvements in downtown, a family of streetscape improvements should be integrated into downtown with amenities all along Main Street in the Planning Area.

Primary Streetscape Improvements should be added along Main Street throughout the entire Planning Area, complimenting existing improvements that currently exist to accommodate the needs for all users. Enhancements should include wide sidewalks to accommodate outdoor seating for restaurants and cafes, regular street trees, landscape beds, and greenery for shade and aesthetics, as well as regular decorative street lighting to create a welcoming ambiance during evening hours. The integration of public art installations and historical markers should also be integrated to provide a sense of identity for those exploring downtown.

Proposed Primary Streetscape Improvements:

- Main St. following from North of 6th Ave. to Ave. C.

Secondary Streetscape Improvements should be added throughout other portions of the Planning Area. Enhancements should include consistent pedestrian lighting, and the addition of bicycle racks to improve functionality and safety. Additionally, enhancing secondary streets with public seating areas, landscape beds, and pocket parks could provide pleasant spaces for relaxation and social interaction. The incorporation of some street trees, and some well-placed street furniture could help increase the flow of foot traffic to other connected streets from Main Street. While the Secondary Streetscape Improvements will not be as robust as the Primary Streetscape Improvements, they will work to create a stronger sense of place and enjoyment while traversing downtown on foot.

Proposed Secondary Streetscape Improvements:

- Washington St. following from, W. 5th Ave. to W. Ave. B.
- Walnut St. following from, E. 4th Ave. to E. Ave. B.
- 4th Ave. following from, N. Adams St. to N. Walnut St.
- 1st Ave. following from, M. Walnut St. to N. Poplar St.



The two streetscape improvement types proposed here should be implemented to build upon Hutchinson's existing streetscape. The addition for the primary and secondary streetscape improvements not only shape the visual appeal of Downtown Hutchinson but also provide a tangible connection between its past, present, and future. The next step to help Hutchinson is to treat downtown as a district, implementing streetscape improvements beyond Main Street.



Faribault, MN - Downtown Historic District
Source: Faribault Daily News/ www.southernminn.com



Hutchinson, KS



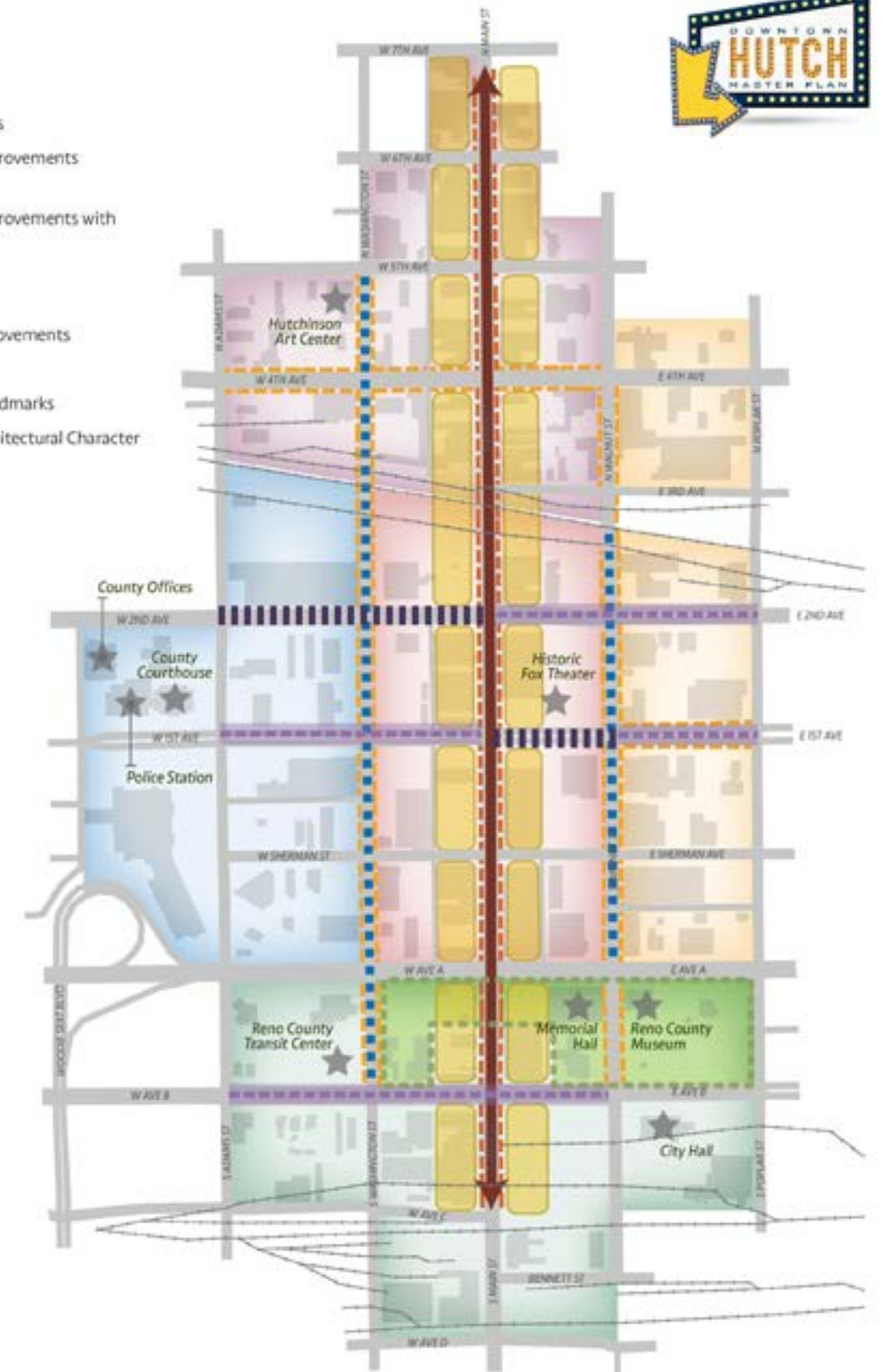
Hutchinson, KS

FIGURE 5.4 STREETScape & CHARACTER PLAN



LEGEND

- Enhanced Parking Streets
- Existing Streetscape Improvements with Amenities
- Primary Streetscape Improvements with Amenities
- Secondary Streetscape Improvements
- Hybrid Streetscape Improvements
- Festival Street
- Existing Community Landmarks
- Preserve Traditional Architectural Character
- Civic Amenity Block
- North Rail District
- Civic / Business District
- Downtown Core District
- Garage District
- South Avenue District
- Rail Lines



Data Sources: City of Hutchinson, UrbanFootprint, and Olsson Studio