

Section 4

Transportation and Mobility

[BLANK PAGE]



Key Issues

1. Maintenance of downtown streets, sidewalks, and public spaces is lacking in portions of downtown.
2. There is need for safer pedestrian infrastructure downtown including sidewalks and intersections.
3. The multimodal connectivity of downtown destinations is lacking and in need of enhancements to promote safety and ease.
4. Downtown signage and wayfinding lacks attraction and appeal to promote local destinations and capture the attention of drivers and visitors.
5. Downtown needs improved transit and mobility opportunities for all.
6. Additional maintenance and improvements are needed to uphold the quality and function of downtown alleyways.
7. Downtown lacks lighting, seating, and safety features that enhance the pedestrian experience.
8. Infrastructure is needed for bicycle ridership to and through downtown.
9. Traffic signals need to be modernized and synchronized to ensure a smoother flow of multimodal traffic.
10. Railroad tracks can create physical and audible interruptions as well as safety concerns downtown.

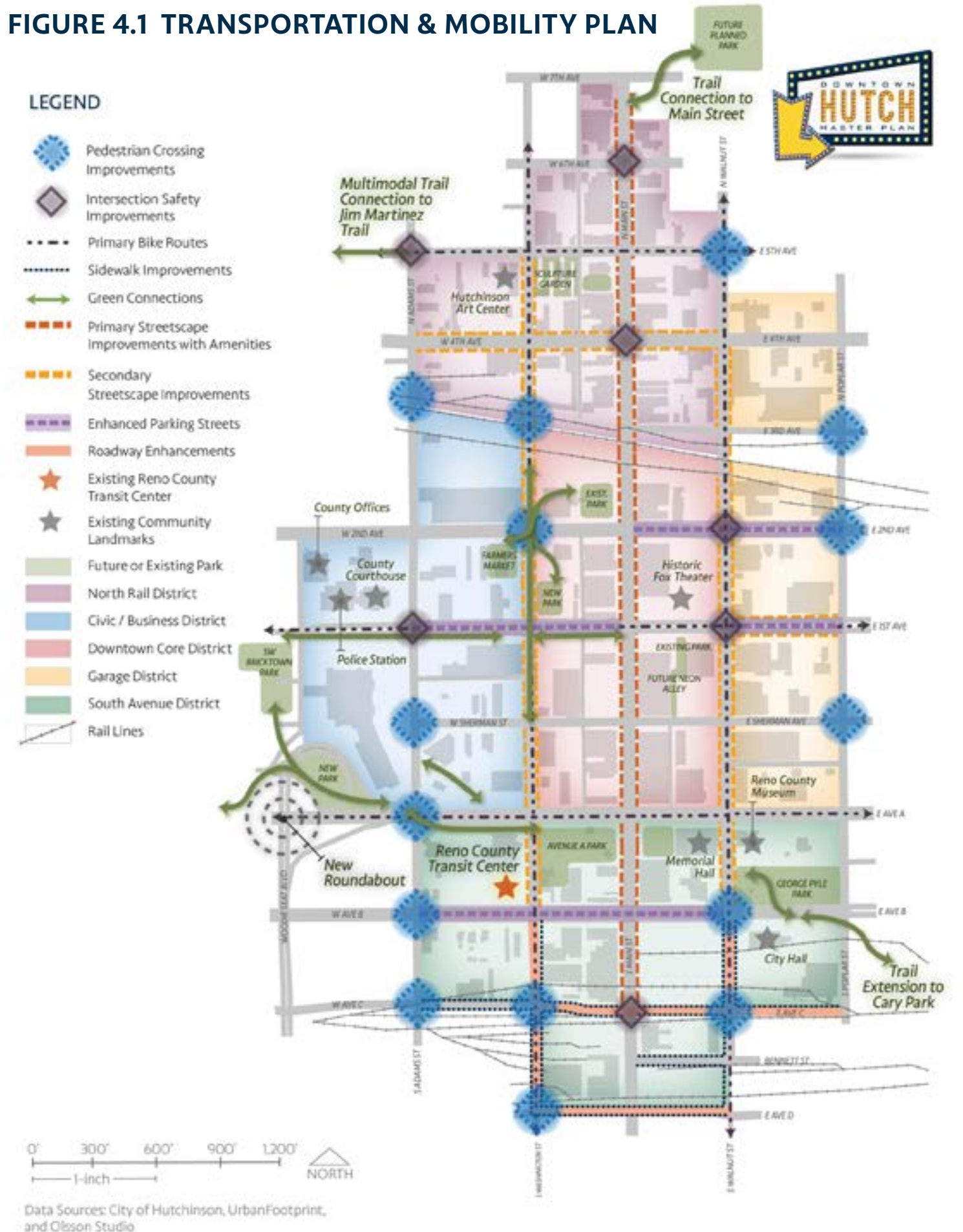
Goals

1. Enhance the **overall safety** of downtown mobility through **physical and operational improvements** for all existing modes of transportation.
2. Facilitate **easy access to and through downtown** for all existing modes of transportation.
3. Implement and **improve wayfinding and navigation tools** to make downtown mobility safe and intuitive, **connecting people to key destinations.**
4. Maintain high quality **health and safety of the downtown public right-of-way** through infrastructure **repairs and street clean-up.**
5. Leverage downtown mobility assets including the Amtrak station and RCAT Transfer Station to **enhance and improve downtown's functionality as a multimodal hub.**
6. Create and strengthen downtown infrastructure that makes downtown a **safe, enjoyable, and intuitive place to walk, bike, and park.**
7. Construct a multimodal environment that **encourages economic activity, social connectivity, and accessibility.**
8. Integrate new and **innovative technology and future-oriented infrastructure** to accommodate future growth and demand downtown.

Strategies

- Strategy 4.1** – Improve the overall safety and functionality of multimodal connectivity to make it reasonable and intuitive to travel to and through downtown
- Strategy 4.2** – Enhance the safety and connectivity of downtown walkability to make it easy and enjoyable to traverse downtown on foot
- Strategy 4.3** – Enhance the safety of downtown intersections to create a more enjoyable and accessible place for every mode of transportation
- Strategy 4.4** – Construct and maintain bicycle corridors to make biking downtown safer and more enjoyable
- Strategy 4.5** – Improve the overall standard of maintenance for downtown streets, sidewalks, alleyways, and intersections to enhance the aesthetics and safety of the public right-of-way
- Strategy 4.6** – Create a unified plan for updated downtown wayfinding to facilitate safe and intuitive navigation through downtown and access key destinations
- Strategy 4.7** – Add or upgrade mobility safety features to create a smooth flow of multimodal traffic
- Strategy 4.8** – Improve RCAT transit access to downtown destinations to offer a more inclusive variety of choice in ways to access downtown
- Strategy 4.9** – Promote and leverage the Amtrak station to foster greater regional connectivity and attract visitors to downtown
- Strategy 4.10** – Improve connectivity from the west side of downtown from Avenue A to create a smoother and more accessible transition into downtown

FIGURE 4.1 TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY PLAN



Strategy 4.1

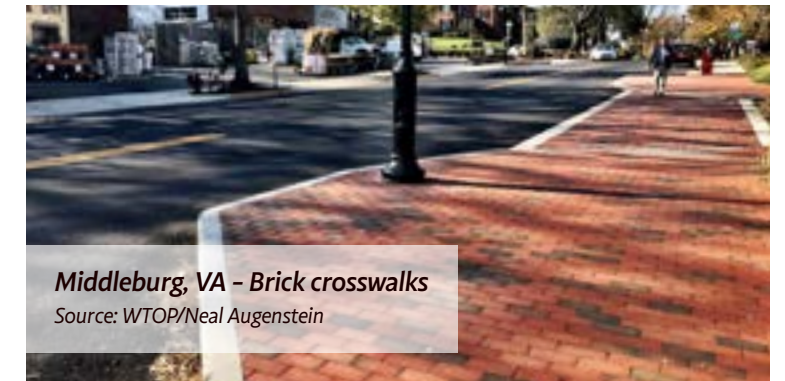
Improve the overall safety and functionality of multimodal connectivity to make it reasonable and intuitive to travel to and through downtown

Safety is critical to the downtown experience. It is important that Hutchinson continue to invest in infrastructure upgrades that prioritize vehicle, pedestrian, transit, and cyclist safety using a multifaceted approach to addressing downtown transportation needs. Main Street is the most traveled road for those navigating to and through downtown, and it is connected to a network of other streets and points of connectivity that allow visitors and residents to traverse downtown. The Reno County Area Transit (RCAT) station should be connected to a bike lane corridor and add crosswalks with visibility enhancements allowing all users to have the option to safely walk or bike to their destination.

Traffic-calming measures should be strategically evaluated and implemented throughout the public right-of-way, including elements such as speed bumps, chicanes, raised intersections, and reduced speed limits to help create a safer environment for all road users. These measures should be implemented most generously in places where vehicle traffic is most dangerous to pedestrians and cyclists.

Smart traffic management systems may be integrated throughout downtown to enhance the coordination of various modes of transportation, minimizing congestion, and reducing the potential for accidents. Smart traffic management systems provide an integrated and organized approach to improving safety on city streets through connected technology. These systems help support improved emergency responses, infrastructure costs, and predictive insights through the analysis of smart traffic sensors.

Regular maintenance and repair of existing infrastructure should also be a priority to ensure that roads, sidewalks, and bike lanes remain in good condition. Without proper maintenance and repair, poorly maintained multimodal infrastructure can possibly lead to more incidents, and delays, thus impacting safety as well as economic activity. These upgrades will work in tandem to improve the overall safety and functionality of the downtown transportation network, making it easier and more enjoyable to walk, bike, ride, or drive downtown.



Strategy 4.2

Enhance the safety and connectivity of downtown walkability to make it easy and enjoyable to traverse downtown on foot

Investing in **pedestrian-oriented infrastructure** is essential. The installation of well-marked crosswalks, pedestrian islands, and countdown timers can enhance safety for all walkers. Wider sidewalks with attractive landscaping, seating, and shade structures will not only provide comfortable spaces for pedestrians but also contribute to the aesthetic appeal of the area. Creating designated pedestrian pathways separated from vehicle traffic can create safer and more inviting routes.

Connected footpaths, pedestrian hybrid beacons, rectangular rapid flashing beacons, and bicycle lanes can decrease pedestrian and bicycle injury risk. Narrower streetscapes may promote slower driving than wide, open streetscapes, thereby enhancing both livability and safety. Enhancements to the streetscape may also increase green space, enhance the sense of community, and reduce crime and tension.

Living in neighborhoods with greater street connectivity, more streetlights and bike paths, and other similar environmental characteristics is also associated with **higher levels of walking, increased physical activity, and better overall community health**. To help guide residents and visitors towards new living habits, this plan looks to implement new transportation and mobility infrastructure improvements throughout the Planning Area.

Pedestrian wayfinding plays a pivotal role in creating accessible and navigable areas to help guide users to different attractions and businesses such as key landmarks like the Historic Fox Theatre and Memorial Hall. Effective **wayfinding signage, maps, and directional cues** not only prevent confusion but also enhance safety by helping pedestrians navigate unfamiliar paths and intersections. Creating additional new sidewalks and improvements on Avenue C and Avenue D downtown will connect residents and visitors to new potential development areas. Not to mention, this helps create a new sense of connection to an area of downtown not traveled by most.

Local, regional, and federal funding opportunities should be evaluated and actively pursued in order to fund pedestrian infrastructure improvements. Potential funding opportunities may be available through the U.S. Department of Transportation or the Kansas Department of Transportation.

Refer to **Figure 4.1** for specific recommendations for downtown walkability enhancements.



Strategy 4.3

Enhance the safety of downtown intersections to create a more enjoyable and accessible place for every mode of transportation

Elevating the safety of downtown intersections that prioritize accessibility and enjoyment for all modes of transportation will help increase the overall protection for users downtown. An assessment of intersection design and traffic patterns reveals that downtown intersections must integrate safety and aesthetic enhancements to increase the overall enjoyment of downtown mobility.

To enhance intersection safety these safety countermeasures should be implemented:

- Pedestrian countdown timers.
- Audible crossing signals.
- Backplates with retro-reflective borders.
- Clear crosswalk markings.
- Dedicated Left- and Right-Turn Lanes at Intersections.



Incorporating dedicated bike lanes and advanced stop lines for cyclists can reduce conflicts between bikes and vehicles. Regular monitoring and data-driven adjustments to intersection designs based on usage patterns can help maintain safety standards over time.

Intersection Safety Enhancements refers to the implementation of various measures and strategies aimed at reducing the frequency and severity of accidents at intersections. This involves improvements in infrastructure, traffic control devices, signage, and the adoption of advanced technologies to enhance the safety of vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists as they cross or interact at intersections. Refer to **Figure 4.1** for recommendations on downtown intersections. These enhancements should be added at the following intersections.

- Main St. and 6th Ave.
- Main St. and 4th Ave.
- N. Adams St. and W. 5th Ave.
- N. Walnut St. and E. 2nd Ave.
- N. Walnut St. and E. 1st Ave.
- N. Adams St. and W. 1st Ave.
- Main St. and Ave. C.

Pedestrian Crossing Improvements involve the enhancement of designated areas where pedestrians can safely cross the street. This includes measures such as installing crosswalks, pedestrian signals, refuge islands, raised crossings, and other infrastructure upgrades aimed at making pedestrian crossings safer, more visible, and more accessible for pedestrians of all levels of physical ability. These improvements should be added at the following intersections:

- N. Walnut St. and E. 5th Ave.
- Rail line crossing on N. Adams St.
- Rail line crossing on N. Washington St.
- N. Poplar St. and E. 3rd Avenue.
- N. Washington St. and W. 2nd Ave.
- N. Poplar St. and E. 2nd Ave.
- S. Adams St. and W. Sherman St.
- Poplar St. and E. Sherman Ave.
- S. Adams St. and W. Ave. A.
- S. Adams St. and W. Ave. B.
- S. Walnut St. and E. Ave. B.
- S. Adams St. and W. Ave. C.
- S. Washington St. and W. Ave. C.
- S. Walnut St. and E. Ave. C.
- S. Washington St. and W. Ave. D.

Enhanced Parking Streets should be improved in specific portions of the Planning Area. Enhancements should include smart parking systems, green parking, vehicle charging stations, and accessibility. Ensuring ADA-compliant accessible parking spaces, ramps and pathways for people with disabilities will allow for all users to easy access all locations in downtown. In order to determine the overall needs and accompanying design of the enhanced parking streets elements and their cost, detailed design studies will need to be conducted. These improvements should be specifically be evaluated for the following street sections:

- 2nd Ave. following from, Main St. to N. Poplar St.
- 1st Ave. following from, N. Adams St. to Main St.
- Ave. B following from, S. Adams St. to S. Walnut St.
- 1st Ave. following from, N. Walnut St. to N. Poplar St.

Roadway Enhancements should be made in specific portions of the Planning Area. Enhancements should include pavement markings and signage, roadside beautification, intersection upgrades, and complete streets. Redesigning roadways with a focus on accommodating all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and public transportation, to create safer and more accessible streets. In order to determine the overall needs and accompanying design of the enhanced roadway enhancements and their cost, detailed design studies will need to be conducted. These improvements should be evaluated for the following street sections:

- Washington St. following from, W. Ave. B to W. Ave. D.
- Walnut St. following from, E. Ave. B to E. Ave. C.
- Ave. C following from S. Washington St. to S. Poplar St.
- Ave. D following from S Washington St. to S. Walnut St.

Strategy 4.4

Construct and maintain bicycle corridors to make biking downtown safer and more enjoyable

Given that Main Street and other heavily trafficked corridors in the Planning Area do not currently include bike lanes, emphasis should be placed on making biking safer and more enjoyable downtown. Suitable routes should be identified to connect people to key destinations and ensure that these corridors are integrated with existing infrastructure to help downtown businesses connect with future and existing customers or patrons. Incorporating **proper signage, clear land markings, and well-designed intersections** with dedicated bike signals will work to facilitate traffic flow and reduce potential conflicts between cyclists and drivers.

Regular maintenance of bike lanes, pathways, and related infrastructure will enhance the safety and functionality of all users over time. Public **bicycle racks** should be available at convenient locations in the public right-of-way to facilitate and encourage the use of bicycles downtown.

Bike sharing programs should be implemented, funded, and promoted within downtown as a crucial element in making the downtown an attractive and accessible place to navigate without a personal vehicle. These programs provide bicycles for rent for short-term use at designated anchoring stations throughout a given area. Numerous third-party companies that offer bicycle share programs, like the Hutch Recreation Commission, could partner with the City of Hutchinson or Hutchinson/Reno Chamber of Commerce to supply, maintain, and administer the equipment necessary to promote this program. Bike sharing stations could be placed at key destinations such as Memorial Hall, City Hall, The Chamber of Commerce, George Pyle Park, Avenue A Park, and Southwest Bricktown Park. By connecting these destinations downtown, it will not only contribute to the overall vitality and connectivity of the area but also encourage an active lifestyle for all users.



Source: cyclingmagazine.ca/

Bike lanes should be defined and implemented as part of the public right-of-way, protected and defined by striping, signage, bollards, and pavement markings for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists. Bike lanes enable bicyclists to ride at their preferred speed without interference from prevailing traffic conditions and facilitate predictable behavior and movements between bicyclists and motorists.

Bike lanes should be added to the following corridors:

- Washington St. following from W. 6th Ave. to W. Ave. D, extending outside the Planning Area north and south on Washington St.
- Walnut St. following from just below E. 6th Ave. to E. Ave. D, extending outside the Planning Area going north and south on Walnut St.
- 1st Ave following from N Jefferson St. to N. Poplar St., extending outside of the Planning Area going east and west on 1st Ave.
- Ave. A following from Woodie Seat Blvd. to S. Poplar St., extending outside of the Planning Area going east and west on Ave. A.

The **network of bicycle improvements** is shown in **Figure 4.1**, working as one integrated system to make biking safer and more enjoyable downtown. These recommendations align with the identified bicycle corridors from the City of Hutchinson Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

Local, regional, and federal funding opportunities should be evaluated and actively pursued in order to fund bicycle infrastructure improvements and bike sharing programs. Potential funding opportunities may be available through the U.S. Department of Transportation or the Kansas Department of Transportation.



Strategy 4.5

Improve the overall standard of maintenance for downtown streets, sidewalks, alleyways, and intersections to enhance the aesthetics and safety of the public right-of-way

Maintenance of the downtown streets, sidewalks, alleyways, and intersections greatly increases the aesthetics and safety of the public right-of-way. An **updated comprehensive maintenance plan** can be developed, outlining regular inspection schedules and maintenance routines including procedures for prompt repairs of potential potholes, cracks, and uneven surfaces on streets and sidewalks, encouraging a smoother and safer walking, biking, riding, or driving experience. **Regular cleaning and removal of debris, litter, and overgrown vegetation** from sidewalks and alleyways contribute to a cleaner and more appealing environment.

Collaboration between local businesses and the community can preserve and uphold accountability for the standard of maintenance dictated in the comprehensive maintenance plan. Partnerships may be established to **share responsibility and resources** for maintenance efforts among public and private entities caring for both public and private outdoor spaces throughout downtown. Local businesses may be engaged in beautification initiatives such as the addition of landscaping, planters, or artistic installations along sidewalks to enhance the visual appeal of the area. **Education campaigns** directed at residents and business owners about their role in maintaining the public right-of-way can help foster a sense of community pride and a heightened degree of care for downtown spaces. However, the City should continue to take ownership and responsibility of the maintenance of public streets, sidewalks, alleyways, intersections, and other public spaces to improve the quality of the public right-of-way.



Strategy 4.6

Create a unified plan for updated downtown wayfinding to facilitate safe and easy navigation through downtown and access key destinations

Finding key destinations downtown should be made simple and easy for visitors. Downtown wayfinding should be designed to be used throughout the year, making it safe and easy to find the destinations, attractions, and accommodations. Wayfinding updates should replace the aging downtown signage that currently exists downtown, using **modern, branded signage** to further distinguish Downtown Hutchinson as an exciting and inviting place.

Current wayfinding infrastructure should be evaluated and high-traffic areas, popular landmarks, and key points of interest should be identified in order to evaluate the effectiveness of existing signage.

Based on this analysis, a coherent and visually consistent wayfinding system should be designed, incorporating **clear and easily understandable signage, maps, and directional indicators**. Different modes of transportation, including walking, biking, public transit, and vehicle use should be considered and a multifaceted approach to downtown wayfinding should be implemented to make navigating downtown safe and easy for all modes of transportation. While vehicle wayfinding will require larger and taller signage along the public right-of-way, pedestrian wayfinding may take the form of interactive maps on street corners, or sandwich boards below eye level along the sidewalk. Some wayfinding signage will be permanent, designed for all-year use, while other wayfinding tools will be temporary, or designed to change throughout the year.

Special attention should be paid to **wayfinding at key mobility hubs and entrance points of downtown**, including along Main Street from both the North and the South, the Reno County Area Transit (RCAT) service station, the Amtrak station, and other key transportation points identified in the process.



Hutchinson, KS



Hattiesburg, MS - Wayfinding Signage
Source: www.hattiesburgms.com

Strategy 4.7

Add or upgrade mobility safety features to create a smooth flow of multimodal traffic

To establish a smooth flow of multimodal traffic downtown, there should be a focus on adding or upgrading mobility safety features that cater to various modes of transportation. Congestion hotspots, potential conflict zones, and areas of high pedestrian activity should be identified.

New upgrades should be integrated to allow for new, modernized, and synchronized transportation technology to be implemented, and create a smooth flow of traffic downtown. Potential upgrades include: **synchronized traffic signals** that prioritize pedestrian crossing times, **dedicated turning lanes for vehicles**, and clear digital and physical **signage indicating bike lanes and pedestrian pathways** can help contribute to ease and safety of traffic flow. The implementation of smart traffic management systems can dynamically adjust signal timing based on real-time traffic patterns, reducing delays, and enhancing the efficiency of all transportation modes.

Prioritizing the safety of vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists, through features like **raised sidewalks, protected bike lanes, and pedestrian refuge islands** will help with intersection safety enhancements around downtown and foster a safer and more inclusive environment. Intersections like Avenue C and Main Street, and E. 1st Avenue and N. Walnut Street are prime candidates for such enhancements.



Offset curb extensions on residential or low volume downtown streets create a chicane effect that slows traffic speeds considerably. Chicanes increase the amount of public space available on a corridor and can be activated using benches, bicycle parking, and other amenities.

Source: National Association of City Transportation Officials - Urban Street Design Guide | nacto.org

Strategy 4.8

Improve RCAT transit access to downtown destinations to offer a more inclusive variety of choice in ways to access downtown

Reno County Area Transit (RCAT) connects users throughout Hutchinson and serves a pivotal role in providing a diverse and inclusive range of transportation options for the residents and visitors of downtown. The RCTA Transit Center (Transit Center) is located downtown at the northwest corner of Avenue B and Washington. Downtown transit access should continue to expand, and current RCAT routes and schedules should be evaluated to identify service gaps within the downtown area. The City, the Chamber of Commerce, County, and other Hutchinson institutions should **work with RCAT to promote its existing services**, and potentially partner with RCAT through temporary or long-term financial partnership to **expand services and offer more viable and reliable public transportation** to make it more viable to visit or live downtown without a personal vehicle.

Micro-transit solutions that can connect RCAT routes to key downtown locations should be explored. These on-demand services could cater to specific needs, offer shorter wait times, and accommodate diverse schedules, providing a seamless link between RCAT and downtown destinations, and cultivating a more diverse and multifaceted downtown mobility system.

RCAT should work closely with local businesses and organizations to identify transportation needs and work together to develop **specialized public transportation programs** tailored to unique needs, such as late-night services for restaurant and entertainment employees or discounted group rates for events. Real-time tracking and user-friendly mobile apps for RCAT services should be evaluated and potentially funded to improve accessibility and transparency, enabling riders to plan their journeys more effectively.

Local, regional, and federal funding opportunities should be evaluated and actively pursued to fund public transportation improvements including additional vehicles, facility improvements, staff training, technology, and other enhancements. Potential funding opportunities may be available through the Federal Transit Administration or the Kansas Department of Transportation.



Hutchinson, KS - Reno County Area Transit (RCAT)

Source: Reno County Communications

Strategy 4.9

Promote and leverage the Amtrak station to foster greater regional connectivity and attract visitors to downtown

Throughout Kansas, there are only six Amtrak stations, and Downtown Hutchinson hosts one of them. To **promote regional connectivity and attract visitors** to the area, partnerships with regional chambers of commerce and neighboring cities can lead to collaborative marketing efforts that highlight the convenience and accessibility of the Amtrak station as a gateway to the region. Collaborative campaigns to emphasize the historical significance and cultural attractions of Downtown Hutchinson, position the Hutchinson Amtrak station as a central point for exploration and connectivity. Local entities should **partner with Amtrak to promote downtown events and attractions** to promote ridership and pique interest in downtown.

Special travel packages, discounted fares, or bundled experiences may be offered to travelers who use the Amtrak station, encouraging them to discover the unique offerings of Downtown Hutchinson and its surroundings. Investing in urban improvements, such as well-maintained pedestrian pathways, clear wayfinding signage, and welcoming landscaping, can create an attractive and inviting atmosphere for arriving visitors who ride the Amtrak. Furthermore, **the Amtrak station could serve as a hub for local cultural events**, art installations, farmers market, and pop-up markets, creating a vibrant and engaging atmosphere that draws visitors and locals alike.

Hutchinson should promote Amtrak internally to its own community, **boasting the unique mobility resource** that has the potential to connect them to destinations across the county. Amtrak should be considered a major resource to the community, and a potential attraction to businesses and individuals thinking of moving to Downtown Hutchinson.



Hutchinson, KS - AMTRAK Passenger Train

Source: The Hutchinson News

Strategy 4.10

Improve connectivity from the west side of downtown from Avenue A to create a smoother and more accessible transition into downtown

Unlike traditional four-way intersections, roundabouts offer continuous traffic flow without the need for traffic lights. As vehicles navigate the circular design, the need for abrupt stops is minimized, reducing the risk of traffic jams. The development of **the planned new roundabout** will allow the journey from the intersection of W Avenue A and Woodie Seat Boulevard to have an easy transition flow of traffic to and from the west side of downtown towards Main Street. The new flow of traffic from the west side towards the rest of downtown will also enhance safety by diminishing the likelihood of high-speed collisions, thereby creating a more secure passage for both motorists and pedestrians.

New pedestrian crossing improvements, new bicycle corridors, and the planned roundabout present an opportunity to create a **smoother and more accessible transition downtown for multiple modes** of transportation. By including designated pedestrian walkways and well-marked crosswalks, the roundabout accommodates foot traffic, enabling a safer and more convenient route for pedestrians venturing from the west side into the downtown core. Including new bike lanes within the roundabout design encourages eco-friendly commuting options and promotes a healthier, more mobile lifestyle.

[BLANK PAGE]



Hutchinson, KS - Woodie Seat Freeway (prior to 2023 updates)

Source: www.renogov.org