

The background image shows a street scene with a clock tower on the right side. The clock tower has a white face with Roman numerals and a black frame. The name 'alexander's' is visible at the top of the clock tower. In the foreground, there is a yellow fire hydrant and a tree with yellow leaves. In the background, there are several cars parked on the street and buildings.

Section 6

Programming and Operations

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Key Issues

1. Limited funding is available for downtown marketing and promotion.
2. There is limited quantity and quality of public spaces within downtown.
3. Downtown destinations do not appeal to all ages, demographics, and levels of ability.
4. Outdoor spaces are underutilized or not as well-maintained as they could be.
5. There are limited activity generators outside of Monday through Friday normal business hours.
6. There are limited resources for promotion of downtown activities and programs.
7. Downtown spaces could be better leveraged for events, festivals, and programs.
8. It is often challenging to navigate city codes to establish and maintain a downtown business.
9. Parking spaces along storefronts are often taken up by respective business owners and staff, reducing the number of available spaces for customers and visitors downtown.

Goals

1. Enhance and **invest in downtown marketing efforts**, promoting activities, destinations, and improvements using an established downtown brand.
2. Create **partnerships and open channels of communication** with established community organizations and governmental entities, creating more local and regional awareness and excitement for downtown and solidify relationships that will benefit the community as a whole.
3. Foster **unity and excitement** for downtown through intentional efforts to organize activities and events.
4. Attract and **incentivize new business** downtown.
5. Encourage a **more active and open business environment** with longer operational hours and a **critical mass of activity** downtown.
6. Create and **leverage funding opportunities** for downtown investment.
7. Improve the **day-to-day maintenance** and clean-up operations of downtown.
8. Implement solutions to **reduce the presence of homelessness** downtown.
9. Create easier **navigation of complicated regulatory requirements** that does not minimize the importance of health, safety, and welfare of the community.

There are a wide array of systems, programs, operations, and efforts that contribute to the success of the community. These things are foundational to downtown success, as they work in tandem with the physical landscape of the community, and economic strategies to make sure that downtown is a well-oiled machine. Topics like operational hours, communication channels, code compliance, marketing, regulatory enforcement, trash collection, and homelessness are all addressed by programs and operational systems. Effective programs and operations ensure that resources are allocated in a way that supports downtown's long-term vision, while efficient operations guarantee that the services and infrastructure necessary for urban life are well-maintained and responsive to the needs of the residents.



Strategies

Strategy 6.1 – Establish a distinct and unified downtown brand to represent downtown’s identity and value as a whole

Strategy 6.2 – Invest in marketing and promotional activities to create ongoing awareness and excitement for downtown businesses and events

Strategy 6.3 – Utilize appropriate public and private gathering spaces to host festivals, markets, and niche attractions and encourage visitors and community members to engage with downtown

Strategy 6.4 – Foster clear communication among downtown entities to plan, organize, and execute an organized agenda of downtown programs and events

Strategy 6.5 – Establish longer operational hours among downtown retail businesses to create an atmosphere of activity and choice, especially on nights and weekends

Strategy 6.6 – Streamline code compliance requirements to make it easier and more enjoyable to operate a downtown business

Strategy 6.7 – Establish downtown advocates who are well-connected, knowledgeable about downtown forces, and empowered to make quick decisions that promote and benefit downtown

Strategy 6.8 – Uphold a high standard of operational fluidity, including trash collection, regulatory enforcement, street clean-up, and other day-to-day operations to equip downtown for both planned and spontaneous use of public spaces

Strategy 6.9 – Aid and prevent homelessness downtown to protect the health and safety of all members of the community

Strategy 6.1

Establish a distinct and unified downtown brand to represent downtown’s identity and value as a whole

An overall brand for downtown business, events, festivals, and attractions will assist in creating a cohesive identity that markets downtown as an attractive and dynamic destination to visitors, residents, and businesses alike. A unified downtown brand will represent downtown’s shared goals and boast in its eclectic offerings, creating an image of a place that is interesting, exciting, and meaningful.

The downtown brand should be created via a thorough exercise with downtown stakeholders, decided through careful consideration of downtown **identity, values, and visual appeal**, as well as an understanding of the businesses and visitors that downtown wants to promote and attract.

The downtown brand should include a **visual template**, creating a downtown brand guide that includes a logo, color scheme, font, and additional brand guidelines to inform the development of digital and printed materials, promotional or informative media, and public signage and wayfinding, and gateways, as appropriate.

The downtown brand should also consider **verbal elements** such as a downtown slogan or tagline that captures the values and attractions of downtown, to be used in digital and printed materials, promotional or informative media, and public signage and wayfinding, as appropriate.

The downtown brand should permeate all **downtown media, communications, marketing, and platforms**. The branding effort should consider the need for additional or improved means through which downtown is branded and promoted, including a downtown website, social media pages, digital and physical newsletters, fliers, and other means.

The downtown brand should be recognizable and meaningful, found throughout downtown, and creating a sense of unity and excitement around the growth of activity in Downtown Hutchinson.

Hutchinson may opt to build upon the branding created for this planning effort (shown below) or may go through a new community branding effort to establish a unique and attractive downtown brand.



BRAND GUIDE

LOGOS AND TAGLINE

Vertical Logo - Color



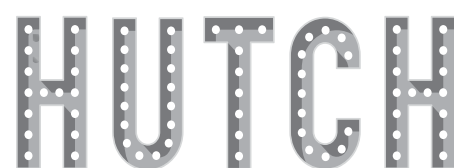
Vertical Logo - Grayscale



Hutch Text Logo - Color



Hutch Text Logo - Grayscale



COLORS

Primary Colors



CMYK 100 • 31 • 0 • 34
RGB 0 • 117 • 169

CMYK 100 • 41 • 0 • 71
RGB 0 • 43 • 73

Secondary Colors



CMYK 21 • 6 • 0 • 0
RGB 201 • 240 • 255

CMYK 0 • 42 • 63 • 25
RGB 190 • 110 • 70

CMYK 0 • 26 • 66 • 13
RGB 222 • 165 • 75

FONTS

Headers	Subheaders	Body Text	Accent Text
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Highgate Bold
ABCDEFabcd1234

Highgate SemiBold
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Highgate Light
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Highgate Regular
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Strategy 6.2

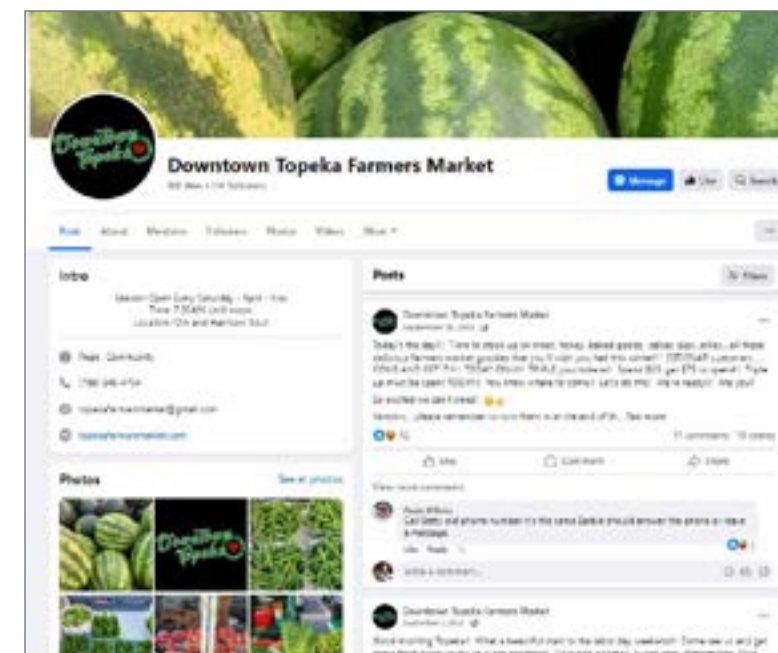
Invest in marketing and promotional activities to create ongoing awareness and excitement for downtown businesses and events

Building awareness and excitement for downtown takes considerable time and effort, but it is important that downtown leadership leverages its tools and resources to create a comprehensive digital and media presence to host promotional activities. An **engaging and user-friendly website** should be developed to showcase the diverse array of businesses and events downtown. Regularly updated content, including event calendars, business profiles, and blog posts highlighting local stories, can keep Hutchinson residents and visitors informed and intrigued.

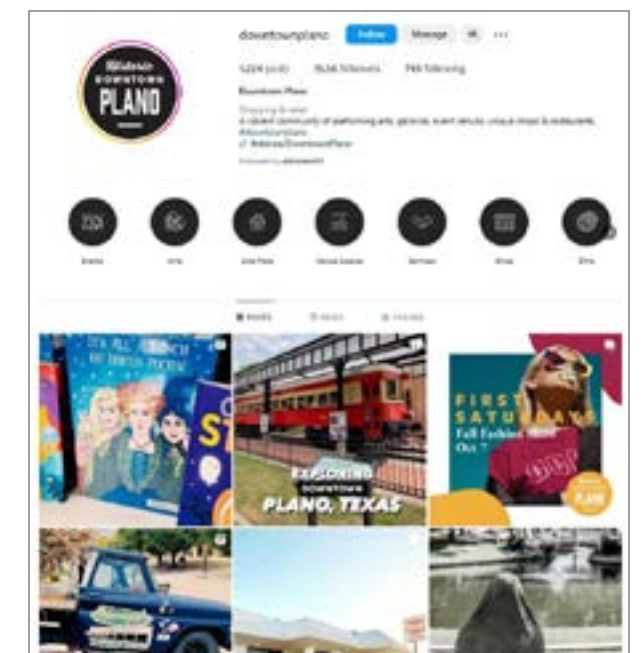
Influential Hutchinson entities such as the City, the Hutchinson/Reno County Chamber of Commerce, HutchRec, and others may partner with downtown efforts to **create or leverage social media profiles** on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and TikTok to promote downtown activities and connect with the community. Integration with social media platforms is vital for real-time interaction, enabling businesses and event organizers to share captivating content, respond to inquiries, and run interactive campaigns that involve the local community.

Fostering **collaboration and partnerships within the community** can amplify marketing efforts. Using a unified brand identity (as described in Strategy 6.1) that represents downtown's unique character and charm can reinforce a sense of place and belonging. Hutchinson needs to **work with existing entities** throughout the community and the region to boast its greatest community assets such as the Historic Fox Theatre. Not only does this venue retain the character of the downtown, it offers popular community events like the Fox Classic Film Series, 'Short Shot Film Competition', and Fox Live Series.

Community assets can be found throughout downtown, and investment should be made in visually appealing and eye-catching physical signage through the district can guide foot traffic, provide aesthetic appeal, and reinforce the area's brand identity.



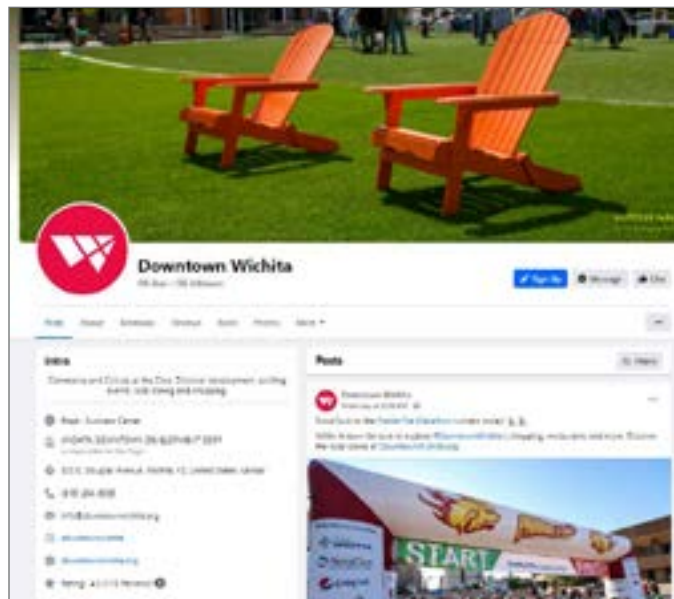
Topeka, KS - Downtown Topeka Farmers Market Facebook Page
Source: www.facebook.com/downtowntopekafarmersmarket



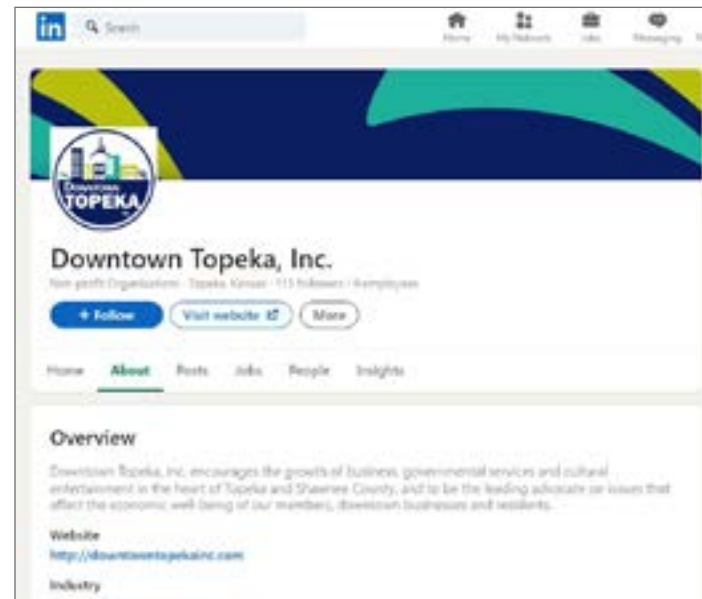
Plano, TX - Downtown Plano Instagram Page
Source: www.instagram.com/downtownplano/



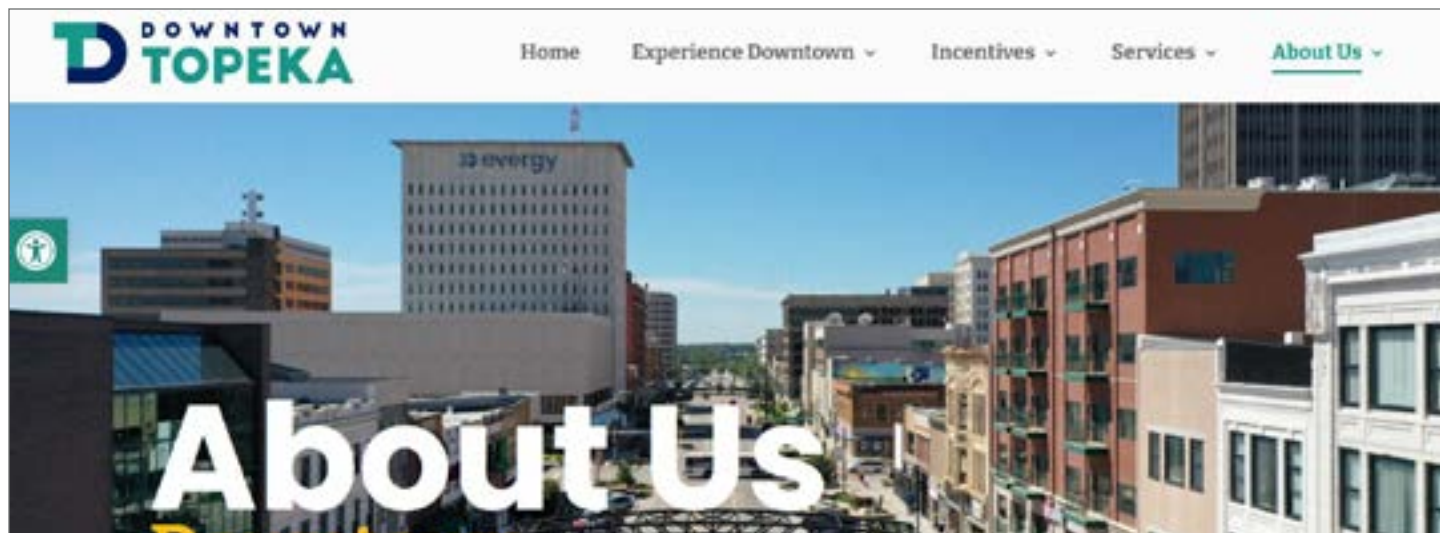
Wichita, KS – Downtown Wichita Website Header | Source: downtownwichita.org/



Wichita, KS – Downtown Wichita Facebook Landing Page
Source: www.facebook.com/DowntownWichita



Topeka, KS – Downtown Topeka, Inc. LinkedIn Page
Source: www.linkedin.com/company/downtown-topeka-inc./



Topeka, KS – Downtown Topeka, Inc. Website | Source: downtowntopekainc.com/

Strategy 6.3

Utilize public and private gathering spaces to host festivals, markets, and niche attractions and encourage visitors and community members to engage with downtown

Strategic use of both public and private spaces can strengthen downtown and attract a wide range of visitors and community members. Hutchinson can seize the opportunity to **host festivals, markets, and niche attractions resonate with diverse ages, demographics and levels of ability** in the Hutchinson and Reno County area. Underutilized public spaces should be identified, including assets such as parks, plazas, and streets, that may be transformed into dynamic event venues and breathe new life into the downtown area. Great candidates for these restorations include:

- W. 2nd Ave. from N. Adams St. and Main St.
- E. 1st Ave. from Main St. and N. Walnut St.

Regular **festivals should be organized to celebrate local culture, arts, and traditions**, attracting diverse crowds and fostering a sense of community pride. Events like a St. Patrick's Day parade, Beer/Wine tasting festivals, and renaissance Festivals have been known to bring in large crowds downtown. Collaborating with local artisans, musicians, and food vendors can curate a vibrant atmosphere that showcases the downtown's unique identity. Additionally, converting these spaces into seasonal markets featuring fresh produce, handmade crafts, and specialty goods not only supports local businesses but also provides an interactive and immersive experience for visitors.

The City of Hutchinson and the Chamber of Commerce should seek to **partner with property owners to create pop-up attractions** that attract visitors and spur excitement downtown. There is great opportunity to partner with local business along Main Street to use storefronts to display art installations, thematic exhibitions, or interactive experiences that encourage exploration and engagement. These attractions may even be tailored to specific niches, such as car buffs, or artists and crafters to attract a dedicated audience and increase foot traffic in public spaces and downtown businesses. Local businesses should be encouraged to participate in thematic events and downtown leadership may opt to offer exclusive products or experiences during these events can further entice visitors to explore the downtown area.



Hutchinson, KS



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Strategy 6.4

Foster clear communication among downtown entities to plan, organize, and execute an organized agenda of downtown programs and events

Effective internal and external communication channels must be established and maintained in order to organize and advertise downtown events. Internal communication is critical to organizing events, and external communication is critical to sharing the news.

Internal communication among downtown leaders, businesses, and stakeholders should take place through **established channels and clear representatives**. The City and the Chamber should have designated downtown representatives who establish clear communication with the downtown community, and act as a consistent resource for their needs. There should be consistent recurring meetings that take place among downtown business owners and leaders to further establish a healthy, creative, business-friendly atmosphere for downtown.

Scheduled implementation for a regular series of in-person or virtual meetings can foster face-to-face **interaction and alignment among downtown stakeholders**. These gatherings can take the form of monthly roundtable discussions or quarterly planning sessions, where representatives from various entities come together to share progress and synchronize efforts. A liaison or coordinator should be responsible for each event or program can facilitate communication by serving as a point of contact inquiries and updates. New working committees can create a focus on specific aspects, such as marketing, logistics, or community engagement, can distribute responsibilities and ensure that all critical areas are addressed carefully.

The result of good internal communication should include **a growing agenda of upcoming downtown events, programs, pop-ups, attractions, and new businesses** that can be shared externally with the community to create momentum for downtown.

External communication with the public should be **easy, consistent, and accessible** in a number of ways. While some entities already maintain information resources that list upcoming events, there is potential to expand upon existing efforts. An informative, enjoyable, and accessible website is critical to information sharing today. This centralized platform should be dedicated to downtown initiatives and should streamline and amplify communication about downtown. This platform could consist of a shared online calendar that lists all upcoming events, workshops, and meetings related to the downtown area. Social media platforms should be established or better leveraged to represent downtown and share downtown information including events, programs, new businesses, and related news. **Digital and print newsletters and email blasts** should be used to spread the news about downtown happenings.

The result of good external communication is **heightened awareness of Downtown Hutchinson and all that it offers**, increased momentum and excitement for downtown events, greater attendance and more financial activity downtown, and bigger social and financial returns.

Strategy 6.5

Establish longer operational hours among downtown retail businesses to create an atmosphere of activity and choice, especially on nights and weekends

Limited hours of operation can be detrimental to a downtown. A healthy downtown is bustling outside of traditional weekday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. business hours, home to multiple vibrant dining options, entertainment choices, and shops and bars to pop into on a whim. Extending the operational hours of retail businesses will add activity and **vibrancy on nights and weekends** and provide residents more opportunity to check out what is going on in the center of their community.

Consistent dialogue between City leaders and local business owners should be established to explore local options for extending operational hours. Conversation during town hall meetings or focus groups can provide a platform for business owners to voice their concerns, preferences, and potential challenges regarding extended hours. Recognition of their unique circumstances and constraints will enable the development of a tailored plan that addresses their needs. Strategic collaboration with business associations and the Chamber of Commerce can amplify this effort, as these organizations can serve as advocates, providing resources and support to encourage participation.

An incentive program that rewards businesses for embracing longer hours, such as reduced permit fees or access to promotional campaigns, can be an effective motivator. Local government can make a big difference in this endeavor. Investing in downtown infrastructure enhancements, such as improved lighting, enhanced security measures, and more accessible parking, can boost the comfort and safety of the extended operational hours. Collaborative marketing campaigns showcasing experiences available during evenings and weekends, such as themed events, live performances, and special promotions, can attract both residents and visitors.

Longer operational hours help everyone. While it may take time for Downtown Hutchinson to become known for its nightlife, efforts such as downtown marketing efforts, independent promotion on the part of businesses, and word of mouth will spread the news that downtown is a great place to go after work to hit the shops, grab a bite, see a show, or have a drink with friends. **The weeknight and weekend presence of a downtown is critical to its success.**



Source: www.planning.org

Strategy 6.6

Streamline code compliance requirements to make it easier and more enjoyable to operate a downtown business

Hutchinson should **always be taking steps to be an innovative, business-friendly community** that attracts the newest, most exciting businesses into its community. Downtown should seek to attract unique and diverse commercial attractions, new and growing business offices, hotels, conference centers, housing, civic uses, entertainment venues, and a wide variety of other destinations. Each of these establishments could choose to build their business anywhere, and the City and the Chamber need to work together to make it attractive to come to Downtown Hutchinson.

A large part of getting a company to “bite” is making it intuitive and affordable to navigate the city code.

Code compliance requirements should be as simple and understandable as possible. This is a pivotal step in creating a business-friendly environment that encourages growth and innovation.

To seek insights into the lived experience of navigating code compliance, the city can establish a committee consisting of representatives from various sectors, including local businesses, legal experts, and city officials, to conduct a review of existing codes and regulations and provide constructive feedback and insights into the business perspective.

The approach ensures that the perspectives of those directly impacted by these requirements are considered. The goal should be to identify and eliminate redundancies, outdated regulations, and overly complex processes that hinder business operations.



Hutchinson, KS

Strategy 6.7

Establish downtown advocates who are well-connected, knowledgeable about downtown forces, and empowered to make quick decisions that promote and benefit downtown

Downtown advocates are critical to making things happen. **These advocates already exist, and they are deeply embedded into the businesses, systems, and social networks that impact downtown on the day-to-day.**

A downtown advocate is well-connected and holds influence in the community. They know what's going on with local businesses, people, and events. They care deeply about the success of downtown and are willing and excited to spend time planning for its future. The process for developing this Plan revealed that there are dozens of these people embedded in the Hutchinson community, and they should be leveraged for the greater success of downtown.

The city and the Chamber need to **identify these individuals** in a concrete way and empower them to inform decision-making, advocate for downtown, spread the news about downtown efforts, and be part of downtown's success in numerous formal and informal ways.

The city should empower downtown advocates by providing them with the necessary resources to spread the news about positive downtown initiatives. **City council meetings, workshops, and potential downtown conferences should include these advocates** as it can enhance their knowledge of downtown forces, trends, and best practices for urban growth. Clear guidelines and decision-making frameworks should be established, enabling advocates to take quick and effective actions that promote the well-being of downtown. Additionally, the advocates should have **open lines of communication with local government officials, business associations, and other relevant stakeholders**, allowing them to collaborate in pursuit of shared goals. Hutchinson should take advantage of establishing unique downtown commissions, like a Main Street program, that can be helpful in steering the growth of downtown towards a prosperous and vibrant future. This group or other groups as well can meet regularly to discuss ongoing initiatives, emerging challenges, and potential solutions.

Hutchinson has a huge community of people who care about downtown. **These individuals need to be strategically integrated into formal and informal decision-making to compound the potential for success.**



Hutchinson, KS

Strategy 6.8

Uphold a high standard of operational fluidity, including trash collection, regulatory enforcement, street clean-up, and other day-to-day operations to equip downtown for both planned and spontaneous use of public spaces

An environment that is conducive to both planned events and spontaneous utilization of public spaces can be achieved by maintaining a high standard of operational fluidity in downtown.

The City is responsible for the operations that keep downtown running smoothly, including trash pick-up, street clean-up, overall maintenance of parks and public right-of-way, and code enforcement. Downtown Hutchinson should be held to a high standard and its operations should reflect the city's dedication to serving the public and partnering with private landowners to make downtown a great place to be.

Partnerships are critical to downtown's success. Local businesses, community groups, and city authorities can work together to develop efficient schedules for tasks such as trash collection, street cleaning and regulatory enforcement. Hutchinson should maintain a safe and clean environment for future activities and festivals, which can help attract future residents and visitors to explore more of downtown.

Technology can play a role in enhancing operational efficiency. Implementing smart waste management systems that use sensors to optimize trash collection schedules can prevent overflowing bins and maintain the cleanliness of public areas. The City may choose to leverage a website or mobile app to make it easy to report maintenance issues, enabling swift responses from designated teams. Regular audits of operational processes can identify bottlenecks and areas for improvement, ensuring that the downtown area operates seamlessly even during peak usage times.



Hutchinson, KS

Strategy 6.9

Aid and prevent homelessness downtown to protect the health and safety of all members of the community

Homelessness is a complex and challenging issue, and it should be addressed through a multifaceted approach that considers both the physical and social environment of downtown.

In general, **homelessness is addressed through a wide and strategic array of tactics** including things like 1) affordable housing (shaped by land use/zoning policies, tax credits, and development incentives), 2) access to state/federal funding and homeless assistance programs, 3) advocacy groups that provide resources and career pathways at an individual level, 4) changes to the physical landscape that deter camping, and 5) the general creation of a more active/bustling downtown.

A strategy for people experiencing homelessness should be implemented that focuses on **both immediate relief and long-term solutions to end homelessness** for individuals and families and make the community stronger for all. Hutchinson should continue to take advantage of a coordinated network of shelters and outreach services to prioritize and match those experiencing homelessness to the most appropriate housing and services. Collaborate with local shelters, community organizations, and government agencies to promote available resources such as food, clothing, hygiene products, and medical assistance. The commitment of trained social workers and counselors can provide essential mental health support to help individuals transition out of homelessness. The City should collaborate with surrounding communities to understand and address the complexities of homelessness, learning from their experiences and working together to devise solutions.

Homelessness is complex and it requires a multifaceted approach that combines both physical changes to the environment and policy changes to provide diverse support and solutions for those experiencing homelessness. Hutchinson should employ a strategic combination of the following tactics to aid that ultimately helps the community as a whole.



Source: abcdistrict.com/homeless-outreach/

Physical Changes

- **Affordable Housing:** Invest in the construction of affordable housing units specifically for those experiencing homelessness. Consider converting vacant buildings or unused spaces into low-income housing. Investing in affordable housing initiatives will help both immediate needs and will serve as a preventative and long-term solution. Hutchinson may also opt to partner with developers and organizations to create affordable housing options specifically targeted at those experiencing homelessness.
- **Public Spaces Design:** Design public spaces with features that discourage loitering and maintain public safety while respecting the rights of all residents.
- **Access to Food and Water:** Support and expand programs that provide free or low-cost meals and access to clean drinking water to those experiencing homelessness. Encourage local businesses to participate in food donation programs.
- **Ramp up Engagement Efforts:** The ability to identify and engage individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, as well as connect them to available housing and services interventions in the community, relies heavily on persistent, coordinated, and creative outreach efforts.

Policy Changes

- **Housing First Approach:** Implement a “Housing” first policy, which prioritizes providing stable housing for homeless individuals as the first step, without preconditions such as sobriety or participation in treatment programs. To facilitate such a transformation, it is imperative for communities to embrace standardized indicators of achievement that prioritize the attainment of permanent housing, accompanied by appropriate levels of supportive services, as the primary objective for individuals facing chronic homelessness.
- **Mental Health and Addiction Services:** Increase funding and access to mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and case management to address the underlying causes of homelessness. States can also supplement Medicaid with behavioral health system funding, such as mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment block grants.
- **Medicaid and Behavioral Health Funding:** This is a resource available to finance the provision of services within the context of supportive housing. This includes supportive housing integrates cost-effective housing options with a customized array of supportive services aimed at facilitating individuals in attaining and maintaining stable housing conditions. The successful implementation of supportive housing necessitates the establishment of consistent and effective supportive services, which, in turn, rely on the availability of reliable and sustainable funding.

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Programs

- **Job Training and Placement Programs:** The City may encourage or incentivize local employers to establish programs that empower individuals to regain stability and independence, allowing unhoused individuals to gain access to employment opportunities.
- **Community Education Campaigns:** This kind of local programs can help raise awareness about homelessness, dismiss stereotypes, and foster empathy, encouraging a more supportive environment for those in need.
- **Homelessness Task Force:** City leadership may also formalize problem-solving by establishing a united group of local representatives and meeting monthly to develop an evolving strategy to prevent and aid homelessness in Hutchinson.