



Vision + Goals

Downtown Kansas City is at the beginning of an amazing rebirth. Investments in excess of 4.5 billion dollars demonstrate Kansas City's commitment to the Greater Downtown Area, the heart of the region. An increase in population and urban density is having a dramatic effect on public life and urban spaces. These changes create further opportunities for improvement in the downtown area. Now is the time to step back, evaluate our situation, and make goals for the future.

To begin, we look to The FOCUS Kansas City Plan, Kansas City's Comprehensive Plan. The Greater Downtown Area Plan seeks to build upon the strong framework of this plan and provide the guidance required for the issues facing 21st century Kansas City. The FOCUS Vision provides the starting point for this endeavor:

FOCUS Vision for the Future

"We, as Kansas Citians, envision our city as a people-centered community. From economic development to the readability of street signs, we consider people first. Kansas City shapes and guarantees its future by examining first and foremost the impact of every decision on future generations.

We, as Kansas Citians, are full of hope. We demonstrate this hope through our investment in our families, our homes, or neighborhoods, our schools, our businesses and our city."

During the initial visioning process of the Greater Downtown Area Plan, the Steering Committee and citizens of Kansas City have stated their values and aspirations for the Greater Downtown Area. The following statement evolved from these visioning conversations:

*We must focus on **connecting** our neighborhoods to create a strong **community**, flourishing with **diversity**, fostering **business**, maintaining historic **neighborhood identities**, and sustaining a vibrant, healthy Greater Downtown Area for **current and future generations**.*

At its heart, this statement is recognition of our shared future. This statement emphasizes the importance of sustainability in its totality: The ability to satisfy the basic needs (socially, economically and environmentally) of today without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their needs. It informs every recommendation made in the plan and can be used gauge future initiatives. Only by working together and leveraging the unique characters of our diverse neighborhoods can we take advantage of this opportunity to create a vibrant and sustainable Downtown Area.

Attracting new residents to live in the downtown area requires new strategies and visions for identifying, developing, financing, and maintaining potential open spaces of all scales. The plan for the downtown area must include implementation strategies for increasing the health of the urban residents together with safe and interesting public spaces. These are the threads that will knit together the diverse neighborhoods into a cohesive urban patchwork.



The following set of goals establishes the framework to promote this vision of the Greater Downtown Area:

Livability

Goal: Create a high quality of life and ensure a safe, healthy, equitable and beautiful environment for all.

As we experience our downtown area, do we like what we see and hear? Are we happy and proud to be part of our neighborhood? Is our community meeting the needs of all lifestyles, incomes and ages? Do we feel safe? These considerations are essential to boost population and increase the vitality of the downtown area.

Ecological Sustainability (OR Natural Resources)

Goal: Mitigate our negative impact on the environment and integrate natural systems into every aspect of the plan.

Are we reducing our negative impact on the environment? Are we utilizing the free resources and services offered by the sun, wind, and rain? Are we integrating natural systems? The triple sided definition of sustainability (social, economic and environmental) is woven into all aspects of the plan, but it is valuable to focus on the big ideas of resource conservation and management in order to reinforce our commitment to future generations.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Goal: To create support for multi-modal traffic including pedestrians, bicycles, public transit, and automobiles, to rethink parking in the downtown area, and to explore options for sustainable infrastructure solutions.

Is transportation in the Greater Downtown Area convenient, reliable, and safe regardless of whether we choose to walk, bike, ride, or drive? Does the city's infrastructure meet our needs? Do we understand the return on investment for improved or sustainable infrastructure projects? Will future infrastructure improvements work together in a coordinated fashion to advance the goals of the community?

Housing and Neighborhoods

Goal: To capitalize on the diverse characteristics and latent opportunities in the neighborhoods of the Greater Downtown Area, to create a symbiotic relationship between neighborhoods, and provide diverse and equitable housing options.

Can the workforce of the Greater Downtown Area afford to live the area? As commercial development grows, how do neighborhoods maintain their identity? How are historic resources protected in the area?

Kansas City enjoys extremely diverse and interesting residential neighborhoods within close proximity to the downtown core. The histories and development of these neighborhoods and involvement from their residents are the underlying strength of the Greater Downtown Area Plan.



Revitalization and Economic Development

Goal: Increase the population and foster industrial and institutional development of the Greater Downtown Area by leveraging its geographic centrality, cultural amenities and increased employment opportunities.

Does the Greater Downtown Area have enough residents to support the retail and professional services desired? Do new business start-ups gravitate toward the Greater Downtown Area? How should the area focus its revitalization efforts to encourage increased investment without displacing current residents and businesses?

Kansas City's geographic centrality and exceptional access to rail for freight and travel are key advantages that must be leveraged to encourage economic development. The Greater Downtown Area is a nexus of local and regional advantages that should be marketed as assets to new residents, businesses, institutions and industries.