



MEMORANDUM

October 2, 2020

TO: Downtown Council of Kansas City (DTC)

FR: MIG, Inc.

RE: Summary of Imagine Downtown KC Community Conversation, September 22, 2020

In attendance:

- Scott Wagner, Mattie Rhodes
- Kelvin Simmons, Nexus
- Herbert Hardwick, Hardwick Law Firm
- Nia Richardson, BizCare
- Kelvin Perry, Black Chamber of Commerce
- John James, Wendell Phillips Neighborhood Association
- Erika Brice, Rector Development Ventures / Wheatley-Provident Hospital Redevelopment
- Gloria Ortiz-Fisher, Westside Housing Organization

DTC: Bill Dietrich, Ann Holliday, Mike Hurd, Riley Dietrich

MIG Team: Jamillah Jordan, Jason Parson (Parson+Associates), Erin Barham (Parson+Associates), Taylor Rippe (Parson+Associates)

Introduction

Downtown Kansas City is a thriving business hub, a vibrant arts and cultural center, and a growing residential neighborhood. The Downtown Council of Kansas City, Missouri, (DTC), in partnership with other civic organizations and the City of Kansas City, is launching a process to develop the community's shared vision for sustainable development and economic inclusion over the next 10 years. The Imagine Downtown KC Plan (Strategic Plan or Plan) will create a roadmap to guide future growth and

investments, including policy guidance and strategies to address community priorities such as economic opportunity, transportation networks, affordable housing, catalytic development projects and quality of life.

On Tuesday, September 22, 2020, the Downtown Council of Kansas City (DTC) held its first Community Conversation with community leaders. This interactive conversation, conducted online via Zoom, provided community partners with an opportunity to:

- **Share their organization's priorities**
- **Learn about the purpose of the Strategic Plan process and how to get involved**
- **Discuss partnering with DTC to advance projects already underway**
- **Help shape the future of Downtown KC and the adjacent communities**

I. Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review

Bill Dietrich of DTC welcomed the group and provided opening remarks. He shared the purpose of the Community Conversation and the high-level goals of the Imagine Downtown KC planning process. Next, Jason Parson of Parson + Associates shared the agenda and how to participate using Zoom. Jason invited each participant to share their name, organization and what brought them to the Community Conversation.

II. Imagine Downtown KC: Goals and Timeline

Jamillah Jordan of MIG (Consultant Team) briefly shared the purpose, goals and timeline of the Imagine Downtown KC planning process. This Plan will address key issues and opportunities that are critical to Downtown's recovery and continued growth, including:

- Economic Opportunity
- Infrastructure
- Housing & Affordability
- Mobility & Transportation Networks
- Open Space & Parks
- Arts & Culture
- Development Trends
- Catalytic Development Projects

Jamillah shared that the Imagine Downtown KC process began in Spring 2020, and the plan is anticipated to be completed in Winter 2021. We are still in the early stages of the plan development and DTC is committed to hearing from and engaging as many partners and community members as possible.

Along the way, the Plan Team will engage community members, businesses, partner agencies, and other stakeholders to collaboratively create and implement the plan. Developing a strategic plan for Downtown Kansas City involves ongoing community engagement, research, goal setting, development recommendations, and implementable action steps.

Jamillah also highlighted the numerous opportunities for community engagement, including community workshops, online polls, podcasts, social media and many other activities.

III. Group Discussion

Jason Parson led the group in a facilitated discussion to explore five key questions. The themes and ideas shared during the discussion are summarized below and categorized by question.

1. What's important to your organization?

18th and Vine

- Connectedness between 18th and Vine and Downtown
- A lot of potential forces shaping 18th and Vine and a lot of concerns about what that means for the people. There needs to be serious thoughtfulness about how we maintain our unique cultural heritage but also move forward.
- The heart of 18th and Vine was historically a business district (on top of Jazz and baseball). The unique cultural heritage of the area must be maintained as the area is revitalized.

Inclusion and Connectivity

- In the past, some people have not felt connected to the Downtown planning efforts, so we want all communities to feel connected from an East Side perspective
- More inclusive opportunities and intentional outreach, particularly on the East Side
- Independence Ave, 9th St, 12th St are important East/West corridors; how can we enhance connectivity? Consider the Streetcar or BRT
- The importance to connect not only the physical spaces but also the people and various communities to jobs in the Downtown area, specially the East Side.

Homelessness

- The increase of the homeless population is a big concern, aggravated by the COVID pandemic.
- This has led to more trash and a constant fight to keep our properties on the West Side cleaned up.
- There is a need for affordable housing, grants and policies to support the vulnerable population and create jobs.

Wealth-Building Policies

- Our issue would be more policy oriented. It is important to the Black Chamber of Commerce that there is a clear path for economic wealth to be created for the African American population of Kansas City.
- We want more equitable resources such as access to capital and business opportunities, with specific interest for businesses operated in low-income areas.

2. How can DTC partner with you to help augment projects already underway?

- Have DTC representatives for the East, West and North-East areas and embrace projects coming from the East/West Sides using the DTC platform to help grow those projects.
- Sometimes developments on the East/West Sides don't get the same level of attention and marketing.
- DTC should embrace projects on the East/ West Sides and be visible champions and supporters
 - Utilize DTC's platforms to help grow these projects
- Commitment matched on the day to day operations on how DTC does business with diverse vendors and diverse membership
- Embracing the connection between the East/West Sides would benefit those communities and businesses, as well as bringing those voices to overall discussions on various committees.

3. How can the DTC be supportive of your organizations?

- Create more opportunities for areas to work with, interact with, network with some of the committee structures that DTC has.

- As the Downtown Council promotes new projects through their marketing and strategic plans, please be intentional in being inclusive of East Side neighborhoods in all things you do related to economic opportunity and business development. Please include us!
- One thing that DTC can do directly with members is be intentional about bringing in young, diverse employees and members of color.
- Integrate communities with the Downtown structure instead of being considered as an independent structure
 - Create synergy and additional funding and networking opportunities.
- Think differently to come up with an approach that empowers Black and Hispanic communities in a fundamental way. Approach it differently than in the past.
- Equity with and financial contributions
- Our MBE/WBE program is distinct about inclusion/equity. It is the one policy that can be pointed to in KC. And we are having significant problems implementing the program.
 - We should have more than one policy that expresses who we are as a city as it relates to fairness and equity. And then focus on implementation in a thoughtful manner.
- Create more policies and programs for inclusion and equity.

4. What input do you want to have include/addressed in the Strategic Plan?

- Focus on the “softer issues” and not just bricks and mortar. Issues such as job development, homelessness, communication
- Embrace the fact that going forward, what is good for DTC is also good for the areas surrounding the center of Downtown
- Policy issues that are good for Downtown should also be good for the East Side
- DTC should embrace economic inclusion
- The private sector can step up. We could use capital to be extended to our East Side capital improvement projects. We've got the best policies on the book but often we cannot unlock those incentives because of a lack of capital.
- We have lost out on development and investment because of the challenges African Americans face in KC. DTC has the opportunity to advocate for ensuring financial partners understand the dynamics of why it is hard for us to receive capital and what is subjective and not.

- People bent over backwards to make the Crossroads work and we can do the same in our neighborhoods
- DTC should actively work with East Side businesses; create a directory for members so they are aware of and introduced to East Side businesses
- Security must be intentional. We have 3 police stations Downtown, Central and on the East Side and no known policy commitment.

5. Who else would be great to include in the focus groups?

- Scott Wagner will provide a few recommendations to DTC.

IV. Next Steps

DTC hopes this is the first of many conversations with local partners. The Imagine Downtown KC Plan Team will launch a series of topic-based focus groups, including Sustainable Development & Catalytic Projects; Housing; Public Realm & Park; Jobs & Innovation Hubs; Major Employer COVID Impacts; and Mobility. In addition, there will be other ongoing communications with partners and community engagement activities.



MEMORANDUM

October 2, 2020

TO: Downtown Council of Kansas City (DTC)

FR: MIG, Inc.

RE: Summary of Imagine Downtown KC Community Conversation, September 25, 2020

In attendance:

- Carlos Gomez, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Kim Randolph, Heartland Black Chamber of Commerce
- Estella Morales, Civic Leader
- Pedro Zamora, Hispanic Economic Development Corporation of GKC
- Evie Craig, Paseo West Neighborhood Association
- Kate Barsotti, Columbus Park
- Lynn Carlton, HOK and DTC
- Nia Richardson, BizCare
- Pat Jordan, Pat Jordan & Associates and Vine Street Studio
- Kechia Smith, Bridging the Gap
- Manny Abarca, Office of Congressman Cleaver and Kansas City School Board Member

DTC: Bill Dietrich, Ann Holliday, Mike Hurd, Riley Dietrich

MIG Team: Jamillah Jordan, Jason Parson (Parson+Associates), Erin Barham (Parson+Associates), Taylor Rippe (Parson+Associates)

Introduction

Downtown Kansas City is a thriving business hub, a vibrant arts and cultural center, and a growing residential neighborhood. The Downtown Council of Kansas City, Missouri, (DTC), in partnership with other civic organizations and the City of Kansas City, is

launching a process to develop the community's shared vision for sustainable development and economic inclusion over the next 10 years. The Imagine Downtown KC Plan (Strategic Plan or Plan) will create a roadmap to guide future growth and investments, including policy guidance and strategies to address community priorities such as economic opportunity, transportation networks, affordable housing, catalytic development projects and quality of life.

On Friday, September 25, 2020, the Downtown Council of Kansas City (DTC) held its second Community Conversation with community leaders across Kansas City. This interactive conversation, conducted online via Zoom, provided community partners with an opportunity to:

- **Share their organization's priorities**
- **Learn about the purpose of the Strategic Plan process and how to get involved**
- **Discuss partnering with DTC to advance projects already underway**
- **Help shape the future of Downtown KC and the adjacent communities**

I. Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review

Bill Dietrich of DTC welcomed the group and provided opening remarks. He shared the purpose of the Community Conversation and the high-level goals of the Imagine Downtown KC planning process. Next, Jason Parson of Parson + Associates shared the agenda and how to participate using Zoom. Jason invited each participant to share their name, organization and what brought them to the Community Conversation.

II. Imagine Downtown KC: Goals and Timeline

Jamillah Jordan of MIG (Consultant Team) briefly shared the purpose, goals and timeline of the Imagine Downtown KC planning process. This Plan will address key issues and opportunities that are critical to Downtown's recovery and continued growth, including:

- Economic Opportunity
- Infrastructure
- Housing & Affordability
- Mobility & Transportation Networks
- Open Space & Parks
- Arts & Culture
- Development Trends
- Catalytic Development Projects

Jamillah shared that the Imagine Downtown KC process began in Spring 2020, and the plan is anticipated to be completed in Winter 2021. We are still in the early stages of the plan development and DTC is committed to hearing from and engaging as many partners and community members as possible.

Along the way, the Plan Team will engage community members, businesses, partner agencies, and other stakeholders to collaboratively create and implement the plan. Developing a strategic plan for Downtown Kansas City involves ongoing community engagement, research, goal setting, development recommendations, and implementable action steps. Jamillah also highlighted the numerous opportunities for community engagement, including community workshops, online polls, podcasts, social media and many other activities.

III. Group Discussion

Jason Parson led the group in a facilitated discussion to explore five key questions. The themes and ideas shared during the discussion are summarized below and categorized by question.

1. What's important to your organization?

- A green and walkable community with native plants and trees
- Addressing gentrification, neighborhood identity and inclusion
- There's a lot of development in Columbus Park and there needs to be more communication and aggressive outreach to residents
- Overcoming trust issues and past history with developers; addressing "unintended consequences" of development
- Honoring and respecting the authenticity of neighborhoods
- Engaging small businesses in any development decisions
- Working with school districts and school district staff to determine what communities need
- Sharing of information is key; being involved early and often in planning processes that impact neighborhoods
- Supporting businesses that are struggling because of the COVID pandemic and the homeless population as well.

2. How can DTC partner with you to help augment projects already underway?

- Expand the job opportunities in the East Side

- Be more intentional with development, scoring for racial wealth building and inclusive procurement policies
- Partner with Minority-Owned Businesses and Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)
- Add more green areas, trees, landscaping to Downtown to enhance people's health and quality of life
- Focus on energy efficiency and conservation
- Need more affordable housing, including rentals and home ownership opportunities so people can build wealth close to their jobs
- Avoid top-down planning; ask the community what they need and inform them of projects early and often to allow for true collaboration and participatory decision-making
- Address deferred maintenance through TIF and alignment with public school priorities

3. How can the DTC be supportive of your organizations?

- Respect the communities and be more inclusive in the planning committees
- Walk around the neighborhoods to understand the different situations
- Do not make decisions without the community involvement
- Share scoring systems with communities and partners when making development decisions
- Partner with Spirit of KC Playbook to ensure alignment with the Imagine Downtown KC process

4. What input do you want to have include/addressed in the Strategic Plan?

- Promote and prioritize sustainable development, racial wealth building, local/minority businesses
- More inclusion opportunities for small businesses and minority artists (e.g., affordable spaces for small businesses to maintain cultural districts, Art in the Loop)
- Unbundle projects so local businesses can bid; think about "how do we grow our own"
- Make this plan through the lens of economic inclusion
- Create an implementation committee to make the plan happen
- Share what does DTC do? What impact do they have?

- The Downtown Council (DTC) is a private, nonprofit membership organization representing Kansas City's best businesses, property owners, nonprofit organizations and anyone who is invested in Downtown's success. DTC is a 501c6 association with a range of organizations that are members. DTC is an umbrella organization focused on urban management and design.
- Create community benefits agreements and more equitable criteria for developers, so they know what to expect and to support the developers that want to support Kansas City
- Make affordable housing a long-term component of the plan
- Include and address the challenges that COVID-19 is causing, such as vacancies in stores, people without jobs, not purchasing from local business
- Consider the impact of the pandemic on commercial and residential areas for the next few years
- Focus on developer accountability and compliance

5. Who else would be great to include in the focus groups?

- Diversify the focus groups
- Include local youth in the planning; inquire about what would get them to stay in Kansas City
- Connect with the UMKC Urban Planning program
- Don Bosco
- UMKC Center for Neighborhoods
- Asian Chamber, LGBT Chamber and Minority Contractors Association
- Housing Authority, parks and recreation department, community centers
- Ethnic diversity is be a critical factor to add to DTC's governance board
- Include neighborhood leaders on DTC's governance board

IV. Next Steps

DTC hopes this is the first of many conversations with local partners. The Imagine Downtown KC Plan Team will launch a series of topic-based focus groups, including Sustainable Development & Catalytic Projects; Housing; Public Realm & Park; Jobs & Innovation Hubs; Major Employer COVID Impacts; and Mobility. In addition, there will

be other ongoing communications with partners and community engagement activities.