



DRAFT - NEWS RELEASE

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***Imagine!* Downtown KC leaders reveal plans for 2030**

Vision of an equitable, inclusive, vibrant Downtown

Embargoed for release at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 25, 2022

DRAFT- JAN. 21, 2022 - KANSAS CITY, MO - “*Imagine.*” Could there be a more inspiring way to contemplate tomorrow? Over the last 22 months, hundreds of local business, civic, governmental and neighborhood leaders banded together to do just that.

Led by the nonprofit Downtown Council of Kansas City, Missouri, (DTC) and the national consulting group MIG, the new strategic planning process to imagine the possibilities for Downtown began in March 2020 with the recruitment of long-time stakeholders along with emerging voices from 22 neighborhoods and districts of greater Downtown. Both large and small groups gathered in dozens of virtual meetings to discuss strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities facing greater Downtown.

The results of their labor will be revealed today in the form of the Imagine Downtown KC 2030 Strategic Plan.

“Participants were asked to think deeply and challenge conventional wisdom - particularly in the face of a global pandemic and a local awakening to racial injustice and social inequity,” said Jason Parson, chair of the plan’s implementation committee, and president & CEO of Parson + Associates, a public relations firm in the historic 18th & Vine Jazz District.

The plan is designed to elevate a new vision for Downtown, along with advancing a series of goals, transformative strategies, and catalytic projects designed to inspire and shape the future.

“The Imagine Downtown KC 2030 Strategic Plan reaches into the hearts of the people and neighborhoods that make greater Downtown Kansas City unique and remarkable. It’s filled with the spirit of compassion, fueled by the human experience, and the vision

to create an equitable, inclusive, and vibrant urban place,” said Lynn Carlton, vice chair of the plan’s implementation committee, and HOK’s regional leader of planning.

The plan embraces the complete Downtown footprint and is consistent with the City’s Greater Downtown Area Plan, (State Line Road east to Woodland Avenue; and the Berkley Riverfront south to 31st Street). That is in contrast to the Downtown “corridor” plan of 20 years ago that focused exclusively on the city center.

“The foundation of the new plan builds upon the vast improvements and resilience over the past 20 years that define the heart of Downtown in 2022,” said Bill Dietrich, president & CEO of the Downtown Council. “The vitality of today’s Downtown allowed us to leverage this strength to elevate the greater Downtown community into an equitable, inclusive, and vibrant heart of the region.”

The Imagine Downtown KC 2030 Strategic Plan, while designed to guide Downtown’s advancement, also will serve as the Downtown action plan within the City’s Greater Downtown Area Plan and the KC Spirit Playbook (the City of Kansas City, Missouri’s Comprehensive Plan update).

Another distinguishing quality of the Imagine plan, Dietrich said, is its reliance on a rigorous technical analysis of existing conditions via a thorough study of existing policies, reports, maps, and data related to demographics, economics, assets, and opportunities.

While today’s unveiling marks the close of the Imagine planning process, it also signals a new chapter in Downtown’s future.

“Today marks the official transition from planning to implementation,” said Warren Erdman, chair of the Imagine plan development steering committee over the last two years and executive vice president of Kansas City Southern. “Now, the real work begins. Whether you live, work, play, or govern in the neighborhoods that make up the heart of Kansas City, you can join us by turning the Imagine plan’s vision into a new reality for Downtown Kansas City today and for generations to come.”

The Imagine implementation team is led by Parson, Carlton, and Dr. Kimberly Beatty, chancellor of Metropolitan Community College who is serving as the Chair of Vision Enhancement. All three were active leaders and participants in the planning process.

They will lead a committee of 20 representatives of community and neighborhood groups, businesses, and civic/government entities who will begin meeting in February. The implementation committee is charged with advancing initiatives and projects introduced in the Imagine plan; foster decision-making through collaboration; ensure broad feedback and input; and coordinate communications and public/private funding.

"Alignment is also a key component of the Imagine Downtown KC plan," according to Dr. Beatty. "The plan was created in alignment with other civic organizations, the City, and Downtown neighborhood leaders. As we turn to implementation, we will continue to work in concert with these partners."

You are invited to join us for the release of the Imagine Downtown KC 2030 Strategic Plan from 4:30-6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 25 at the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, 1616 E. 18th St.

For more information, contact Michael Hurd, director of marketing and communications, at 816-447-2136 or mike@downtownkc.org.

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Please forward this message to colleagues who might be interested. If you wish to be removed from this list, have a more appropriate email address or know of a colleague to add, send an email message to: mike@downtownkc.org.

Downtown Council of Kansas City, Missouri

The Downtown Council of Kansas City, Missouri (DTC), is a not-for-profit membership organization that advocates, lobbies, plans, and works for a stronger, more resilient Downtown Kansas City. We envision an equitable, inclusive, and vibrant Downtown Kansas City that will thrive in the coming years and decades. We are committed to creating a vibrant, diverse, walkable, and economically sustainable model downtown for the next century.



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