In 2013 Heartland Visioning Volunteers asked Topeka, “What do you want for your community in the future? Majority answered with emphasis on the following five priorities. Visioning has since tackled these requests in the form of network team volunteers. What has been happening since?...

Learn about the progress occurring
Verify the priorities for the community are accurate
Imagine what could be next

John Hunter, Executive Director, jhunter@heartlandvisioning.com
Kristen Brunkow, Communications & Community Engagement Coordinator, kbrunkow@heartlandvisioning.com
120 SE 6th Ave. Ste. 110
Topeka, KS 66603
785.231.6006
Dynamic Core

“It is inspiring to see the wide range of involvement working in a public/private partnership to solve issues related to the revitalization of the Dynamic Core. This process is so vital to our community’s future.”

-Mayor Wolgast

Chaired by Mayor Wolgast, the network team provides oversight on major projects along the Kansas Avenue corridor between 10th Street on the South and Gordon on the North, concentrating on how community leaders who are focused in the Dynamic Core can provide support. The team moves beyond being familiar with the many initiatives to understanding the challenges, suggesting creative solutions, anticipating future needs and suggesting people and organizations who could be engaged in the projects.

Primary Redevelopment Projects

• Downtown Redevelopment – DTI
• Riverfront levee system and wier (barrier) – Riverfront Authority
• Riverfront park on North side of the river – Shawnee County Parks & Recreation
• Great Overland Station
• NOTO Art Business District and NOTO Community Arts Center
• Topeka Rescue Mission Expansion
• Jayhawk Theatre
• Constitution Hall
• Main Post Office
• Oregon Trail
Entertainment

“Shawnee County is a vibrant community full of arts, entertainment and events. We work to bring an additional spotlight to existing events and identify new opportunities. The strength of Heartland Visioning will help develop new partnerships and collaborations.”

– Vickie Brokke, Executive Director, Topeka Civic Theatre

Chaired by Vickie Brokke, Topeka Civic Theatre and Academy, and Edie Smith, Downtown Topeka Inc., this information sharing Network Team brings together venues, organizers and attendees to coordinate and support our entertainment and cultural diversity in our downtown during the current transformation of our community.

Primary Projects

- Events planning and coordination with Visit Topeka, DTI, NOTO, Tourism Alliance, Shawnee County Parks & Recreation, etc.
- Partner with Washburn University Marketing Research class to develop a survey based on the interest of the Topeka residents with special focus on millennials in the community
- Collaboration on Jayhawk Theatre redevelopment project
- Facilitate changes in Topeka 365 marketing, managing expanding of current events
- Recruit new events to Topeka
Parks & Recreation

“Destination is a choice. A dynamic parks and recreation will win every time.”

- John Knight, Director Shawnee County Parks & Recreation

Chaired by Shelly Buhler, County Commissioner, Parks & Rec Network Team focuses on communicating the forward thinking Master Plan for Parks and Recreation to the entire county. The support and feedback will help the Master Plan lead Shawnee County Parks and Recreation into the future; being innovative while continuing to serve as the premier destination for citizens of Topeka and Shawnee County to live, work, and play for years to come.

Primary Projects

• Connecting the Master Park Plan to Dynamic Core including river front park planning (north side of the river)
• Communication of Master Plan to all areas of the city and county
• Interconnection of all trails – walking and bikeways through the county
Community Pride & Services

“These diverse, enthusiastic stakeholders take on the challenge of discovering the best way for entities to come together enhancing the lives of all Topeka citizens.”

- John Calbeck, Executive Director, Shawnee Regional Prevention and Recovery Services, Inc.

Chaired by Kristi Pankratz, Safe Streets, this project oriented Network Team investigates potential gaps in current public safety, public health and human services and ways to increase overall community pride.

Primary Projects

Neighborhood Development
• Formation of strategic partnerships: Heartland Healthy Neighborhoods, Prevention and Recovery Services (PARS), Safe Streets, Heartland Visioning, and City of Topeka for the purpose of empowering neighborhoods to address issues related to health, safety, and well-being
• Work with neighborhood to establish Neighborhood Improvement Association (NIA) in the downtown district by the end of 2015

Awareness Media Campaign
• Designed to bring focus to the projects and organizations Heartland Visioning supports through planned Television announcements, Heartland Visioning Website, social media, and other print advertising

2015  Pine Ridge Partnership
       Bike Share
       Downtown Redevelopment

2016  NETreach
       NOTO Arts District
       Riverfront
In Topeka, transportation is a multi-faceted subject that requires ongoing examination and attention to improve accessibility by all our citizens.”

- Susan Duffy, Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority

Chaired by Susan Duffy, Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority, this Research and Support Network Team focuses on research, involving the many modes of transportation issues in our community in an attempt to seek out the best practice methods.

Primary Research & Support Projects

- Examination of possible air, cab, & shuttle services to the city
- Bike Share Program, #100redbikes around the city
- Topeka Pedestrian Master Plan for strategic sidewalk development
- Direction finding signage
- Support the efforts of Complete Streets and Heartland Healthy Neighborhoods
1. What do you perceive as positive change in Topeka?

**Projects**
- Riverfront development
- NOTO
- Parks and Rec
- Neighborhoods
- Transportation
- Bike Share program

**Economic Development**
- MARS
- Target Distribution Center
- Bimbo Bakery
- JEDO
- Business Parks
- NOTO business growth
- City Leadership

**Quality of Life**
- Increased community pride
- Less apathy
- More optimism
- Community cooperation
- Visioning

What else?

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2. Why are you proud of Topeka?
(Circle as many as you desire and add others.)

**Places**
- Parks & Recreational Facilities
- Entertainment Venues
- Topeka Shawnee County Public Library
- Topeka Zoo
- Washburn University & WU Tech
- Shopping, where?
- Discovery Center
- Schools
- Restaurants
- State Capitol
- NOTO
- Downtown
- Hotels

**Qualities**
- Events, which ones?
- Faith community
- Economic opportunity
- Real people, real friends
- A notable (and comfortable) lack of pretension
- Lack of commute
- Affordability
- Ability to affect change
- Poverty alleviation efforts
- Housing
- Jobs
- Young professional opportunities
- Availability of healthy food
- Healthcare Availability

Why else?
3. What do you want for the future of Topeka?  
(Circle as many as you desire and add others.)

**Objects**
- More emphasis on infrastructure: roads, potholes, sidewalks, abandoned houses
- Economic growth, more jobs
- Riverfront re-creation
- Entertainment Plaza downtown
- More parks and swimming pools
- Large outdoor entertainment events
- More restaurants
- More locally owned businesses
- More biking friendly
- Lofts and apartments to live downtown

**Qualities**
- Entertainment
- Growth in NOTO Arts District
- Population growth
- General safety
- Positive internal and external image
- Meet millenial expectations
- More progressive community
- Dynamic leadership
- Trusting community
- Cooperation between city and citizens
- Well educated population
- Low poverty
- Low crime
- Thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem
- Population growth in under 40 demographic

What else?

4. How would you want to receive information about community change?  
(Circle as many as you desire and add others.)

**How else?**
- In a positive manner from word of mouth
- Heartland Visioning website
- City website
- County Website
- Chamber website
- GO Topeka Website
- Topeka 365
- Visit Topeka
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Apps
- Newspaper/CJ online
- Publications like magazines
- Through my church and other organizations
- Through my employer
- Community meeting updates
- At the library
- At community events such as parades and First Fridays
- Various locations
- One central location

If you would like to receive Heartland Visioning monthly updates provide email here: