

**Downtown Strategic Initiatives  
Doin' Business Committee  
Creative Business Implementation Actions - DRAFT**

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>
<i>These initiatives may begin in the short-term (planning, studies, etc.), however implementation will extend into the long-term.</i>
<b>C1. Establish “Downtown Creative Hubs.”</b> <i>(See also Movin' Around, Walk-Ability recommendation W4.17 Partner with the Chamber, DOKC and SBDC to help small businesses start and grow especially by guiding them through permitting and administration issues.)</i>
C1.1 Conduct an asset mapping exercise, giving particular emphasis to existing strengths that we are not fully capitalizing on such as Native American, Hispanic and Latino creatives.
C1.2. Identify and develop focal points of “creativity” including music, photography, film and visual and performing art. These hubs could be in refurbished buildings or venues that by the nature of their design, would reinforce that creativity is being practiced inside these hubs.
C1.3. Cluster talented creative individuals to draw inspiration from others, to share administrative services and gain economies for marketing their creative product(s).
C1.4. Create destinations for instruction, incubation centers for entrepreneurs and/or commercial sales.
C1.5. Link these hubs with others across downtown as tourist stops (i.e., via the Trolley), as well as online for greater retail opportunities.
<b>C2. Rehabilitate a Building for Creative (Live/Work) Space within a Creative Hub.</b>
C2.1. Investigate other cities' efforts, including Pittsburgh's recent successes.
C2.2. Identify dedicated, ongoing source(s) of funding for operations and maintenance.
C2.3. Design the space and operations to function as an incubator and provide educational opportunities.
C2.4. Consider soliciting proposals from private developers through an RFP process.
<b>C3. Recruit and Market Creativity (Phase I)</b> <i>(See also Movin' Around, Walk-Ability recommendation W4.17 Partner with the Chamber, DOKC and SBDC to help small businesses start and grow especially by guiding them through permitting and administration issues.)</i>
C3.1. C1 and C2 should be in place before C3 is started.
C3.2. Research peer cities and borrow from best practices like Austin’s 6th Street, etc. that will help OKC actively promote 'creativity' as a downtown destination for residents and visitors.
C3.3. Identify and enlist existing creative organizations and events to help position downtown Oklahoma City’s momentum in the creative arena.
C3.4. Conduct an event to spark interest and dialogue of “what ifs” that would generate collaboration and innovation.
C3.5. Conduct “FAM Tours” for artists (outside of OKC) who are exhibiting at the Arts Festival, the Girlie Show, and others to reinforce the positive “chatter” that OKC is aggressively developing its “creative class.”

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**C3. Recruit and Market Creativity (Phase II)**

C3.6. Once a conceptual plan for creative hubs, spaces, or virtual clusters has been developed, actively recruit prospective talent to serve as “early adopters” and “ambassadors” for attracting others to participate.

C3.7. Identify artists and other creative businesses on the OKC Chamber’s EDIS (SBDC) search program. Communicate with them the advantages of relocating to downtown.

C3.8. Package the benefits, services and incentives in a targeted marketing program that would entice the creative class to relocate to downtown Oklahoma City.

C3.9. Establish a “clearinghouse” for information, sales outreach and follow-up

**C4. Encourage building owners to lease vacant space to artists and other 'creatives' at reduced rates. This practice often provides the impetus needed to attract other tenants to upper floor spaces.**

**Downtown Strategic Initiatives  
Doin' Business Committee  
Financial Tools and Incentives Implementation Actions - DRAFT**

**RECOMMENDATION**

**SHORT-TERM (Less Than Two Years)**

**F1. Update the list of existing development incentives.**

- F1.1 Divide list into developer, residential, retail, and employer-focused incentives.
- F1.2 Provide a broad overview of incentives (without listing the details of each tool) on a City and/or Chamber website with contact information for further details.
- F1.3 Convene an annual forum to update and discuss with potential recipients of incentives.
- F1.4 Study how our incentives compare to peer cities' incentives. Begin with a focus on programs with smaller emphases, such as façade and/or landscaping grants. During this research, consider how State statutes and the State constitution may limit the types of incentives and means by which these incentives are implemented.

**F2. Continue discussions with the state legislature to allocate more funding to support biotech and biomedical research, including unlocking the state's bonding capacity.**

- F2.1 Emphasize the overall importance of the Oklahoma Health Center to the entire state's economy.
- F2.2 Discuss with representatives in the State the need to issue general obligation and revenue bonds to carry out capital improvements on the campus.
- F2.3 Provide information / education to the legislature on good vs. bad debt and how bonding works.

**F3. Allocate additional funding to Urban Renewal so that it has greater capacity for land assembly to facilitate development of the Core to Shore area as well as potential housing and school site(s) and/or other initiatives identified through DSI.**

- F3.1 Develop and present a budget request for additional funding for OCURA dedicated to land assembly.

**MID-TERM (Two to Five Years)**

**F4. Facilitate the development of downtown housing that is more attractive and affordable for potential residents.**

- F4.1 Conduct a downtown housing study to determine obstacles and drivers to downtown housing. Use this study to build upon the Downtown Dwellers' Initiative to support workforce housing.
- F4.2 Develop programs that reward early pioneers and help build an economic base for retail recruitment.
- F4.3 Partner with major employers to develop employer-assisted-housing programs for their employees.

**Downtown Strategic Initiatives  
Doin' Business Committee  
Infrastructure - Implementation Actions - DRAFT**

**RECOMMENDATION**

**SHORT-TERM (Less Than Two Years)**

*The following initiatives should be implemented concurrently:*

**I1. Develop a system to improve project coordination to avoid duplication of efforts, (Such as ripping up a street for a streetscape project one week and then ripping up the same stretch of street the next week to replace a utility line.)**

**I2. Implement an improved tracking system for permits requested and issued. (ongoing)**

**I3. Develop a central GIS map of all relevant public easements that can be accessed by developers and others interested in investing in downtown.**

I3.1 Consolidate easement records from the County Assessor, Call-Okie and Oklahoma City GIS.

I3.2 Review existing infrastructure and easement records held by public and private utilities, Public Works, Telecommunications, Energy and other significant users such as the railroads and ODOT.

I3.3 Provide a simple public access service for developers and interested businesses to inquire about the existing infrastructure in and around a particular site.

**\*\* These initiatives may be limited by what different entities are able to make public information\*\***

**Downtown Strategic Initiatives  
Doin' Business Committee  
Vacancy and Real Estate - Implementation Actions - DRAFT**

**RECOMMENDATION**

**SHORT-TERM (Less Than Two Years)**

**V1. Publish a vacancy report that accurately represents downtown. Current reports count space that is not ready to be occupied (such as that in the First National and Dowell Centers) which negatively skews our vacancy rates. \*\***

*\*\* This has been attempted in the past, but has not been successful. Determine why it wasn't successful in the past before beginning implementation \*\**

V1.1 Discuss the need for a modified vacancy report with the local brokerage community.

V1.2 Secure agreement and cooperation from the brokerage community that they will work with the Chamber and DOKC to create a more accurate vacancy report that will be marketed both locally and nationally.

V1.3 Ensure that the City, DOKC, the Chamber and CVB use the new report to help legitimize it.

V1.4 To ensure the report's accuracy:

- Inventory all downtown buildings

- Determine a proper methodology for the inventory, tracking and updating

- Include owner occupied and public buildings (OG&E, ONG, Devon Tower, County/City office buildings etc.)

- Footnote the total vacancies for the Dowell Center and First National Center, explaining exactly how much of the vacant space can be occupied in its current state

**V2. Study the Rehabilitation Codes and other Rehabilitation Incentives/Tax Credits that other states and cities have implemented.**

V2.1 Determine what is feasible in Oklahoma City and whether the rehabilitation of buildings can be incentivized and/or otherwise made easier.

V2.2 If viable and advantageous, consider adopting a rehabilitation code.