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PARKS, COMMON AREAS HIGHLIGHT DESIGN CONCEPTS FOR RIVERFRONT LEGACY MASTER PLAN

Three design concepts with significant green spaces for public gatherings will be presented to people attending tonight's public open house for the Riverfront Legacy Master Plan at the Hyatt Regency Wichita. The meeting is from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

These concepts, as well as two alternatives, are a culmination of five months of reviewing previous studies done of the area, along the Arkansas River to Main Street and between Douglas Avenue and Kellogg, as well as public input and market-driven analyses of what could be supported in the area.

The goal of the master planning process is to create a comprehensive vision and master plan for future development on the east bank of the Arkansas River.

"The market-driven aspect of these concepts allowed us to propose the parks and civic commons that are public assets designed to serve the entire community," said **Amber Luther, planner and associate for Populous global design firm**. "We were pleased to hear from the community that green space, as well as activation of the river, are priorities, as those are common themes from what other successful communities are doing, and fits in nicely with the history of the site."

All of the concepts, which combined the work of Populous and Olin Studio, as well as market analysis from RCLCO Real Estate Advisors, include a **pedestrian bridge** that connects to the west bank of the river, as well as **new performing arts and convention centers**. These two priorities came out of previous studies showing market demand has outpaced what can be found in Century II, which has been used for decades for performing arts organizations such as Music Theater Wichita and Wichita Symphony, as well as convention space.

All concepts allow uninterrupted operations for performing arts organizations.

"It's exciting to see the concepts include a new convention center, which would generate approximately $50 million in economic impact annually," said **Susie Santo, President & CEO of Visit Wichita**. "The green space, as well as the recommendations for mixed use – which could include restaurants and retails shops, would create an attractive convention district for meeting attendees to enjoy.

The concepts also provide plenty of **parking**, though some parking will be in places not normally expected, including underground options. One scenario offers an option for repurposing Century II, with an alternative that gives an open-air nod to the 50-year-old structure.

The designs at the open house will be shown with **Key Performance Indicators**, which compare design elements with planning principles created specifically for Wichita. Preliminary costs for the design concepts range from $970 million to $1.5 billion.

"We appreciate all that the design team has put into these concepts, but for young professionals, we're just excited to see the energy that these concepts bring to downtown," said **Darryl Kelly, a board member for W/a community of young professionals**, another member of the Riverfront Legacy Master Plan coalition. "Any of these concepts would be attractive for young talent being recruited to the area."

The next step in the master plan process is to get public input on the concepts at tonight's open house, as well as during



community meetings over the next few weeks, and online at www.riverfrontlegacywichita.org. A final plan will be presented to the community in January 2020.

Wichita City Council member Brandon Johnson said he is excited to see the community's reaction to the revitalized ideas for the riverfront. "This has the ability to serve my children, and even my children's children, well into the future. I'm looking forward to getting this out in the community so we can all start thinking about the bold vision in front of us."

Anyone unable to attend the open house is encouraged to provide comments anytime at www.riverfrontlegacywichita.org or call the Greater Wichita Partnership at 316-500-6650 during regular business hours.

Organizations in the Riverfront Legacy Master Plan coalition are the City of Wichita, Downtown Wichita, Greater Wichita Partnership, Sedgwick County, Visit Wichita, Wichita Community Foundation and Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce/W – a community of young professionals/Wichita Educational Foundation, working together through the regional vision and action plan Project Wichita.