PLACEMAKING PROJECT WILL TRANSFORM ALLEY IN DOWNTOWN WICHITA

WICHITA, KS – April 25, 2017 – The Wichita Downtown Development Corporation (WDDC) has received a $66,504 grant from the Knight Foundation Fund at the Wichita Community Foundation to transform an underutilized alley into a vibrant public space. The project, named Gallery Alley, will accelerate revitalization in Downtown Wichita through promoting urban, walkable, people-oriented development and local art.

Gallery Alley, located at 616 E. Douglas Ave., will activate the underutilized space with several sculptures by local artists, a portable concert stage, a screen for movie nights, and seating for outdoor dining and leisure; local visual artists will be exhibited monthly in conjunction with the popular Final Friday art crawl. Providing a space for casual interaction and cultural exchange will pull Old Town patrons across the railroad underpass and strengthen the burgeoning retail and entertainment businesses on the block, while exposing Wichitans to a variety of artistic forms in a casual and intimate setting.

Shelly Prichard, President and CEO of the Wichita Community Foundation, says, "We have seen what a tremendous catalyst the Pop-Up Urban Park has been at the Douglas and Market area of Downtown, and are happy to support another forward-thinking urban design concept in the core of our city, which integrates the arts and provides exposure for emerging artists to become entrepreneurs."

Launched on a one-year pilot basis, the alley will be closed off to Douglas Avenue with the installation of a parklet – artfully designed by local sculptor Lisa Rundstrom – in front of the curb cut and bollards, also acting as bike parking, at the rear. This unifies the block as a pedestrian-friendly space while providing an opportunity for the businesses on the block to collaborate and share their unique vibes in a public-facing realm.

"We expect Gallery Alley to become a well-recognized and beloved public space that accelerates revitalization in our urban core, and furthers the vision set forth in Project Downtown: The Master Plan for Wichita," says Jason Gregory, Executive Vice President of the Wichita Downtown Development Corporation.

The Gallery Alley project is a partnership between the Wichita Community Foundation and Knight Foundation, the Wichita Downtown Development Corporation, and Bokeh Development.

To celebrate, and kick off activities in the park, the Wichita Downtown Development Corporation (WDDC) will hold a Grand Opening on Friday, May 26, 2017. Learn more at bitly/GalleryAlleyEvent.

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