

Project Downtown 2035: The Downtown Wichita Action Plan **Request for Proposal – Questions & Answers**

- Q. Evaluation Criteria and Selection Process identifies 7 evaluation criteria, but no quantitative scoring or weighing if each. Please confirm that the evaluation will be subjective. Further, who evaluates the submissions? Downtown Wichita? The Project Team? Moreover, if selected for an interview, how will the interview be evaluated? Will the selection consider cumulative evaluation of the submission and the interview, or will the selected consultant be chosen based solely on the interview? Will the input from the public who attend the interview be considered? Finally, we understand that the interview will be conducted by representatives from project partners. Is this the same as the Project Team? If not, who are the project partners?
- A. The evaluation will be subjective – we are interested in seeing how each team proposes to approach the master plan update, including team assembly. The proposal evaluators consist of the Project Team members. We have assembled a Selection Committee of approximately 25 local business and government leaders; these community leaders will be invited to participate in the in-person interview rounds. The evaluation will be cumulative
- Q. Connectivity is a key aspect of the project and we're curious what level of street (re)designs are needed. Do you think the designs will just be conceptual or do you think we should have a landscape architect or engineer on our team to provide more detailed street designs?
- A. For the connectivity component of the project, we are seeking conceptual illustrations and do not anticipate an engineer will be required. The City of Wichita has conducted several street design studies, including the Wichita Downtown Streets Conceptual Plan (<https://www.wichita.gov/1615/Wichita-Downtown-Streets-Conceptual-Plan>) and prior concepts detailed under Previous Planning Initiatives in the RFP. A landscape architect may be beneficial on the team to help reinforce connections between neighborhoods, and among the various elements of the built environment. Downtown Wichita has wide streets, substantial sidewalks, and many vacant and surface parking lots that provide a canvas for new ideas and best practices.

- Q. What goals or outcomes related to transportation and the public realm is the plan seeking to address?
- A. Regarding transportation and the public realm, we're interested in strengthening pedestrian connections throughout the mile-square downtown district. Wichita is not currently a walking city. If we are successful, this update (which we're calling an Action Plan) will provide recommended steps/actions for enhancing walkability, through neighborhood branding, infill/massing studies, placement of parking amenities relative to major users/uses, revisiting sidewalk scale, etc. We want downtown Wichita to be an easy and interesting place in which to walk, district wide.
- Q. We understand that the RFP requests guidance in identifying other existing districts in addition to Old Town. Can you offer us a sense of how many additional sub-districts might result from this analysis for the purposes of establishing and defining districts? Or offer a potential range?
- A. We anticipate 4-6 additional districts, but the actual outcome will be informed by the selected team's expertise and their interpretation of themes that emerge through community engagement with downtown stakeholders and members of adjacent neighborhoods.
- Q. Is place branding expected as part of the team capacity?
- A. Yes! We enthusiastically affirm that place branding will be a key component of the selected team's capacity.

Q. Can you share the locations or addresses as well as general description of dimension/size or scale of the selected urban design demonstration sites?

A. Each of the demonstration sites represents a new construction opportunity, either on vacant sites/surface parking lots or sites with existing small structures that are not of historic significance to the community. The exception here is the church site, which presents an adaptive reuse opportunity for former office space. By including urban design demonstration sites in the plan update, we're seeking to help communicate massing and urban design principles to the Wichita design/build and policy community, rather than being prescriptive about how exactly a new building would present on the site. For this reason, we aren't sharing addresses at this time but wanted to present the opportunity to share design principles on sample sites as a component of the scope of work.

Q. Is there any internal estimated duration for this project?

A. 6 months, exclusive of local approvals. The final document will be presented to local government for approval following the 6-month project period. Our intent is to engage the city and county throughout the process, so they are very familiar with the plan prior to submission of the final product. We do not anticipate that the consultants will be in attendance for approval hearings.

Q. Proposal Content and Format requests (bullet 5) a detailed proposal that includes a timeline with competition date within 6 months. We assume that the final document will not require any government hearings, e.g., Planning Commission and City Council, and approvals? If necessary, can these be outside the 6-month timeline?

A. The final document will be presented to local government for approval, and you are correct that this timeframe is beyond the 6-month project window. Our intent is to engage the city and county throughout the process, so they are very familiar with the plan prior to submission of the final product. We do not anticipate that the consultants will be in attendance for approval hearings.

Q. Is there any community or other form of advisory committee established or anticipated for this project?

A. Yes. We have assembled a Selection Committee of approximately 25 local business and government leaders; these community leaders will be invited to participate in the in-person interview rounds.

Q. Could you describe the “economic benefits” deliverables? Would this be quantified as real estate, jobs, visitors for example, or are you looking for financial, fiscal and econometric metrics.

A. The intent of the paragraph entitled “Make the Economic Case” and the statement “clearly identify the economic benefits” is to help Downtown Wichita show that investment by public and private entities creates value -- not only in quality of life, but also in a company’s or a city’s financial health. Providing examples of places where great design and quality construction have improved economic outcomes will be key; for example, demonstrating where increased density has resulted in higher property values and tax revenue, and where elevated design has raised the bar for subsequent construction plans.

Q. Does the market data to be provided by Zimmerman/Volk include demand and development forecasts to 2035, and are forecasts a desired output from this process?

A. The market analyses by Zimmerman/Volk and W-ZHA will be completed in December 2024 for use by the selected firm. We have requested market demand forecasts through 2035 and will not require that the project team assemble additional market forecasts as part of the Downtown Action Plan.

Q. Is there an expectation that an economics and development consultant would be part of the proposed team?

A. Downtown Wichita has engaged Zimmerman/Volk and W-ZHA for market research updates and analysis since 2009. We have engaged them as part of the in-house project team for this master plan update; these companies are currently providing updated analysis of our residential, office, and hospitality markets, to be completed by December 2024. The resulting market reports will be available to the selected planning firm for their use; therefore, we do not anticipate an economic development consultant will be required on the selected team.

Q. What are Zimmerman/Volk and W-ZHA's roles within the plan, and do you wish the selected team to include an economic development consultant to assist with their role?

A. Downtown Wichita has engaged Zimmerman/Volk and W-ZHA for market research updates and analysis since 2009. We have engaged them as part of the in-house project team for this master plan update; the companies are currently providing updated analysis of our residential, office, and hospitality markets, to be completed by December 2024. The resulting market reports will be available to the selected planning firm. We do not anticipate an economic development consultant will be required on the selected team.

Q. Proposal Submission Information (RFP page 12) indicates that proposals are *recommended* to be a maximum of 20 pages. We assume that providing a front and back cover and table of contents page in addition 20 pages of proposal content will be allowed. Please confirm.

A. Yes, confirming that the covers and TOC won't count toward the recommended page limit. Please note that the page limit is indeed a recommendation; if more pages are needed, that's quite alright.

- Q. Regarding the recommended 20-page limit, does this include "appendix" materials such as resumes or sample work(s), or would those be counted separately? In general, we understand the direction to be intentional and concise but wanted to make sure we weren't omitting certain key materials regarding our team and qualifications.
- A. The 20-page recommendation is just that – it's a guideline, not a hard limit, and appendix materials can certainly be counted separately.
- Q. Do the front and back cover and any divider pages count towards the 20-page limit?
- A. The 20-page recommendation is a guideline and should not be interpreted as a strict page limit. Please include covers, appendices, etc. as needed.
- Q. Is the 20-page limit inclusive of qualifications (i.e. resumes and project sheets)?
- A. The 20-page description is a recommendation rather than a requirement, so you can certainly include additional pages.