



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

PROJECT DOWNTOWN 2035:
THE DOWNTOWN WICHITA
ACTION PLAN

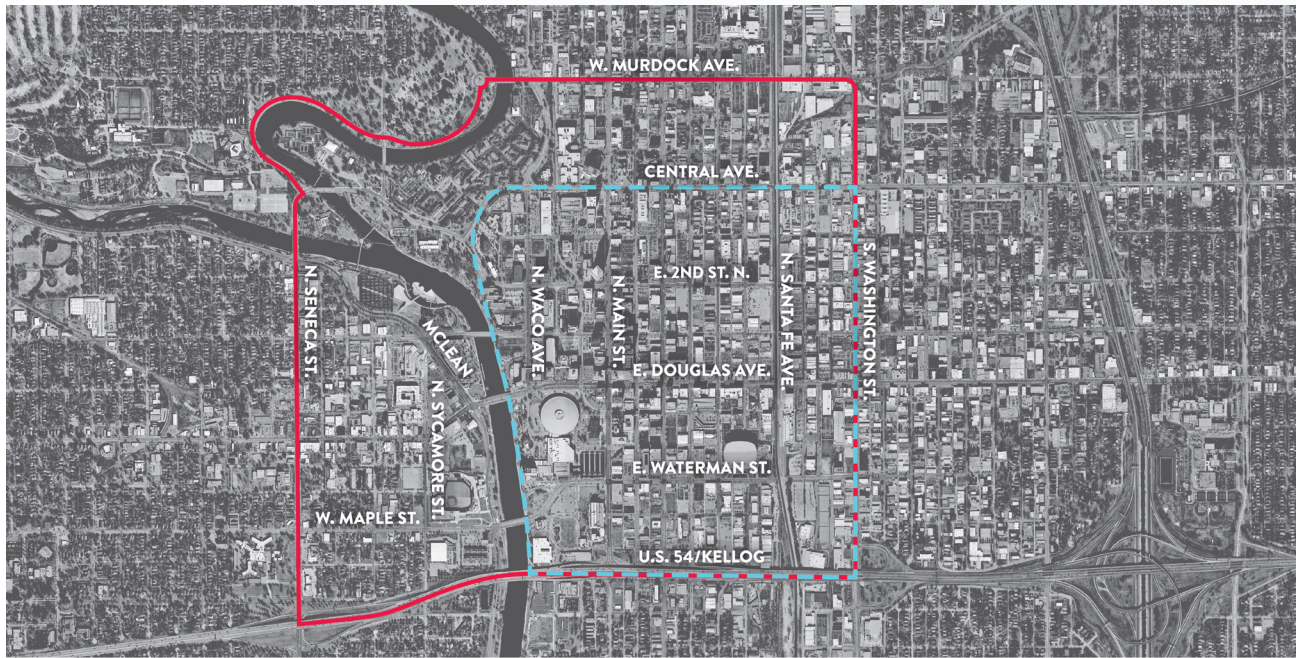
Commerce and Culture at the Core

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The area of focus for Project Downtown 2035 extends beyond the SSMID boundaries to include connections to first-ring neighborhoods. The western gateway into downtown includes Museums Along the River (Wichita Art Museum, Exploration Place, Botanica and Cowtown), Riverfront Stadium, home to the Wichita Wind Surge baseball team, and the Delano business district and residential neighborhood. The northern gateway abuts Ascension Via Christi St. Francis, the upper-most anchor of downtown’s burgeoning biomedical corridor. To the south, downtown merges with the South Central, or SoCe, district, and the Douglas Design District blends to the east.



— = PROJECT DOWNTOWN 2035 AREA — = SELF-SUPPORTED MUNICIPAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (SSMID)

B. Downtown Wichita History

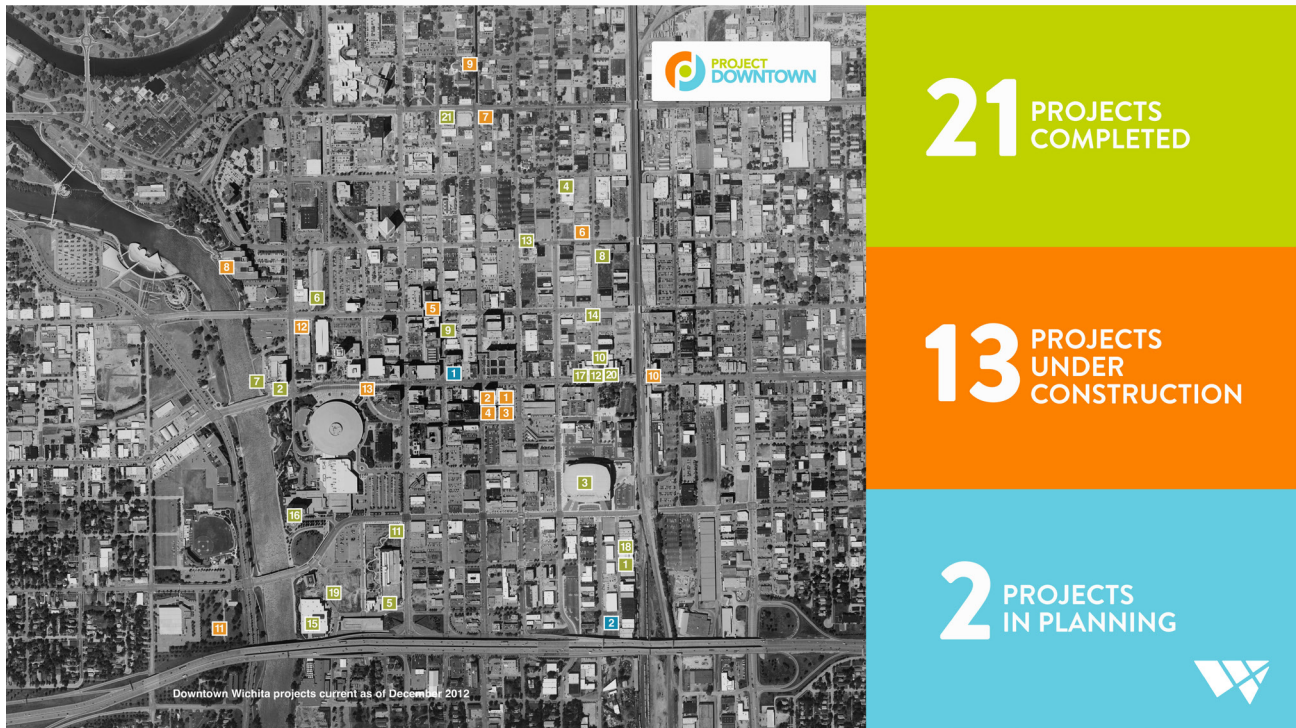
Cowboys, airplanes and agriculture have all shaped Wichita since its incorporation in 1870. Known today as the “Air Capital of the World,” Wichita is grounded in humble beginnings as a trading post where the Arkansas and Little Arkansas Rivers meet. Wichita’s rapid growth in the 1870s stemmed from the Texas cattle trade, as stock from southern Texas was driven north to Kansas along the Chisholm Trail. That same trail is known today as Douglas Avenue, the main east-west corridor transecting downtown Wichita.

Wichita evolved into a center for the oil, manufacturing and agricultural industries by the 1920s, and aviation pioneers birthed companies such as Stearman, Beech and Cessna. Wichita remains a leader in aviation today, supplying more than half of the world’s general aviation and military aircraft.

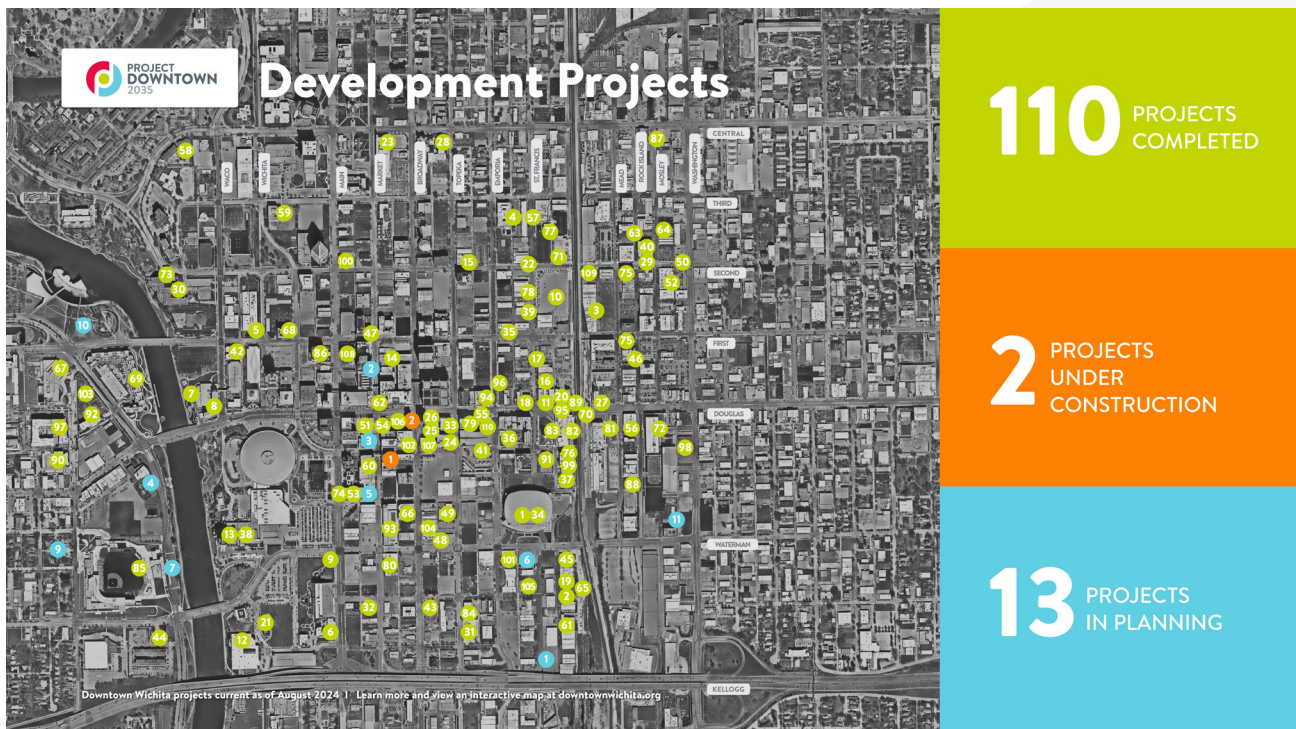
During the 20th century, downtown Wichita followed the arc of most American downtowns, evolving from a prominent mid-century shopping and entertainment district to a high-vacancy center in the 1980s. The redevelopment of a railroad warehouse district into the Old Town residential and retail district in the 1990s spurred downtown’s resurgence.



Since 2010, downtown development has been directed by a community vision called Project Downtown. The master plan has provided an aspirational vision and deliberate strategies for public and private sector investment. Serving as a living document, this development blueprint provided a framework to advance the economic vitality of downtown. The returns have been remarkable, with over \$1.7 billion invested to date and a pipeline of projects totaling more than \$760 million.



Downtown Wichita: 2012



Downtown Wichita: 2024



The residential base of downtown has more than doubled since 2010, and the office and hospitality markets have seen considerable growth. Reimagined urban spaces have been transformed into public parks and plazas such as Naftzger Park, Gallery Alley, Union Station District and the recently completed Chester I. Lewis Reflection Square Park. Downtown is once again known as a destination and is attracting regional and global headquarters.

Corporate headquarters in downtown Wichita include several regional banks (Fidelity, INTRUST, Emprise, Meritrust), insurance (IMA) and Cargill's 1,000-employee protein division. Wichita is the county seat of Sedgwick County, and both city and county facilities are located downtown. Cultural amenities abound, including five local theater groups, multiple jazz clubs, a regional performing arts and convention center, an arena, a historic theater, art and history museums, galleries and two professional sports teams (Double-A baseball and ECHL hockey).

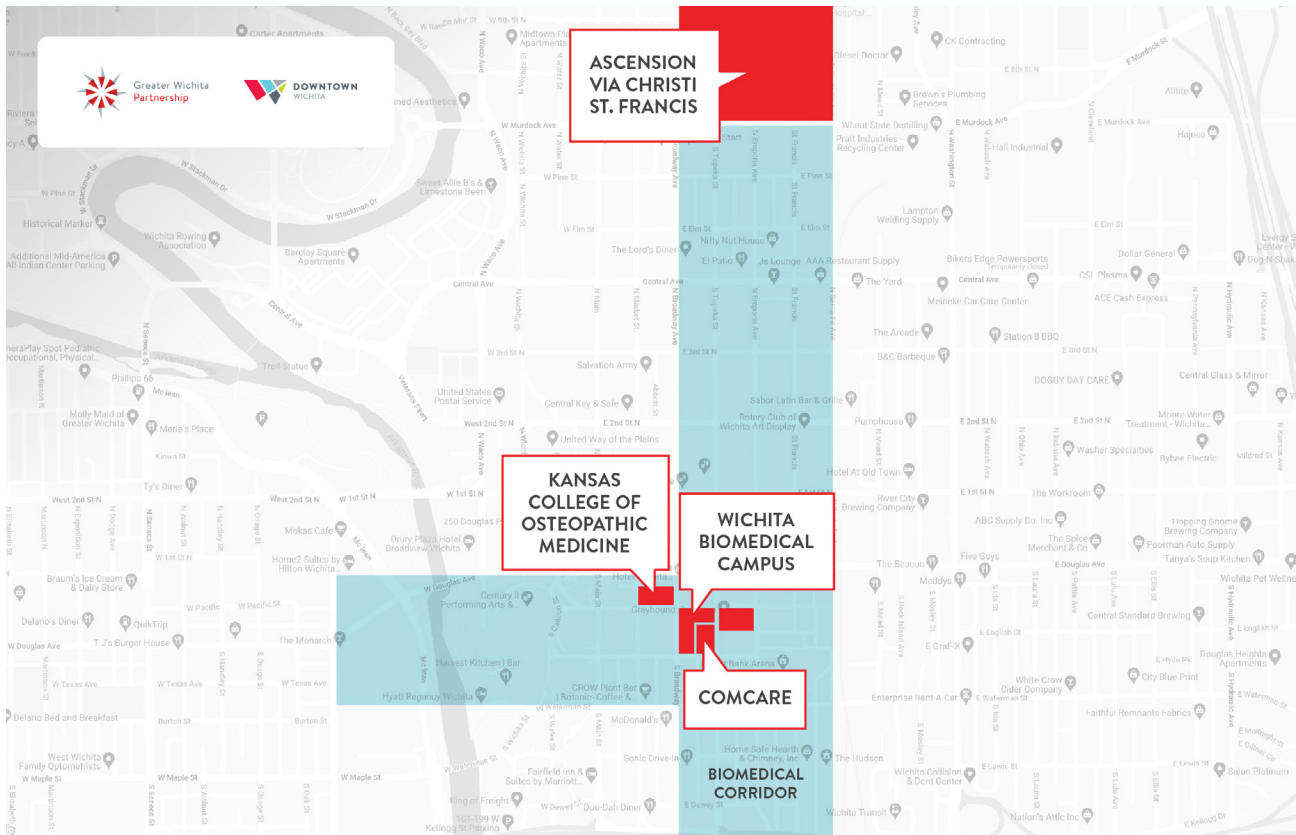
C. Purpose of Project Downtown 2035: The Downtown Wichita Action Plan

Despite unprecedented growth driven by Project Downtown, considerable work remains to be done, particularly regarding urban infill, connectivity and reimagining cultural resources. Whereas the purpose of the 2010 plan was to spark development, the plan update focuses on connecting the resulting developments and shaping future projects by providing design guidance, issuing site studies and cultivating neighborhood identity.

EXAMPLE OF URBAN INFILL: BIOMEDICAL CAMPUS AND NEW CORRIDOR

One opportunity for neighborhood branding and design guidance stems from biomedical investments downtown. Working in partnership, Wichita State University, the University of Kansas and WSU Tech broke ground in May 2024 on an estimated \$302 million Wichita Biomedical CampusSM. Phase One will include more than 470,000 square feet of new construction, 3,000 students, 200 faculty and staff, and approximately 1,600 support staff. This project will complement the recently completed Kansas College of Osteopathic Medicine located one block to the northwest. Scheduled for completion in the spring of 2027, the Wichita Biomedical CampusSM has already attracted additional health-related investment downtown. Sedgwick County has bought three properties next to the biomedical campus to expand its COMCARE Crisis services. In September 2024, Heartspring announced it acquired two buildings at Topeka and English to expand its outpatient services for pediatric neurodevelopment. With Ascension Via Christi St. Francis as the northern anchor, Wichita is cultivating a downtown biomedical corridor of bioengineering and healthcare-related research and development, stretching 10 blocks from English Street to Murdock Street.





EXAMPLE OF CONNECTIVITY: WEST OF THE RIVER

Following the construction of a new riverside baseball stadium in 2021, two new developments highlight new opportunities for neighborhood branding and connectivity west of the river. EPC Development, based in Kansas City, announced a \$110 million mixed-use development adjacent to Riverfront Stadium. This project consists of a 155-room boutique hotel, 150 residential units and over 10,000 square feet of retail/commercial space. The project will serve as the southern anchor of the riverfront. Meanwhile, Exploration Place also announced its EP2 initiative, a bold vision to create a one-of-a-kind tourist attraction along Wichita's riverfront. This includes a \$22 million Destination Playscape, currently under construction, and a newly opened \$3 million amphitheater. The museum estimates these transformative initiatives will draw 1 million visitors annually and will increase its overall economic impact from \$21 million a year to \$66.7 million by 2027. It will serve as a northern anchor of the riverfront. The Wichita Foundation Amphitheater opened in September 2024 and the Destination Playscape is scheduled to open summer of 2025.

EXAMPLE OF CULTURAL RESOURCES: BRANDING THE CULTURAL CORRIDOR

Joining the existing roster of galleries and performance venues along First Street, The Kansas African American Museum (TKAAM) purchased the American Savings Association building, constructed in 1965, and has hired the original architectural firm to adapt the structure into an inviting educational center and museum. Just down the block, the arts organization Harvester Arts has opened a gallery space in The Lux building. Wichita boasts rich cultural amenities in the urban core; however, these amenities lack cohesive marketing/branding and physical connections. Infill sites along First Street also provide the potential to reimagine modern performing arts facilities in Wichita. The “String of Pearls” envisioned among arts organizations in Project Downtown has not been realized, yet it remains a priority in terms of downtown attraction and connectivity.

Project Downtown is a plan that was developed with a 15-year outlook. As we approach 2025, it is clear this plan has delivered beyond the expectations set in 2010. Building upon the success of this plan and visioning to 2035, it is time to cast sights on how we continue to cultivate a downtown that is vibrant and increasingly attractive to talent. The action plan will be a key strategy to further position our region and state for success in North America and globally.

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES

A. Objectives

Proposals for professional consulting and design services for the development of an update to Project Downtown (2010) will address the scope of services defined in this section. Proposals will outline the approach by which the update will be developed by the design team, including a recommended timeline, a list of deliverables, and a fee schedule for services provided for each phase of the project as well as any other services recommended by the team. Proposals should indicate the design team’s thorough understanding of the following objectives of Project Downtown 2035: The Downtown Wichita Action Plan (Project Downtown 2035) and demonstrate the design team’s capacity to communicate, be creative, and use strategic, effective and innovative approaches.

The final Project Downtown 2035 plan should be delivered as an engaging document, rich with images conveying exciting case studies, diagrams and renderings. Written and graphic methods are not limited by this RFP but must convey a sense of excellence. The update must help move Wichita toward the goal of becoming a city of distinction. It will be submitted in electronic format (PDF), with an additional summary of the plan provided in PowerPoint for use by Downtown Wichita.



B. Project Team

Downtown Wichita is the client and leads the effort to update Project Downtown into an action plan shaping downtown's growth over the next decade. Downtown Wichita and the Greater Wichita Partnership (the 10-county regional economic driver for south-central Kansas) have together cultivated private and public sector partners, including the City of Wichita and Sedgwick County, to advise and financially support the plan's update. This investment is complemented by market analyses commissioned in the fourth quarter of 2024 by Zimmerman & Volk (Urban Residential) and W-ZHA (Urban Commercial and Hospitality). These market updates will be provided to the selected firm in December 2024.

As outlined above, the Project Team includes:

- Heather Schroeder, Executive Director, Downtown Wichita
- Jeff Fluhr, President, Greater Wichita Partnership
- Cynthia Wentworth, Executive Vice President of Strategic Communications, Downtown Wichita/Greater Wichita Partnership
- Matt Hamm AIA, Vice President, Schaefer Architecture
- Laurie Volk, Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc.
- Christopher Volk-Zimmerman, Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc.
- Sarah Woodworth, W-ZHA, LLC

C. Scope of Services

Build Upon Successes

Building upon the successes of Project Downtown, the Project Downtown 2035 update should not reinvent the master plan, but instead utilize the prior plan's principles and strategies with a focus on greater levels of implementation in the next 10 years. The update should provide strategic guidance for continued public and private sector investment by sharing specific strategies for achieving goals. It should assist by identifying and realizing current development opportunities while cultivating new, targeted opportunities for future development. Downtown Wichita is uniquely positioned to execute a visionary action plan, and the design team should be prepared to hit the ground running.

Multiple plans/initiatives are currently underway and should be referenced for coordination with the update. These include but are not limited to: The Wichita Parking & Multi-Modal Plan, Bicycle Master Plan, Wichita Transit Network Plan and Downtown Wayfinding Plan. See **VI. Resources** for links to previous and current planning initiatives.

Focus on Excellence in Design and Construction

As public and private investment in downtown continues to gain momentum, Project Downtown 2035 must become a guiding instrument to help ensure that downtown development consists of excellent architectural design and is built of quality materials and methods. Project Downtown (2010) provides a grand vision. Project Downtown 2035 facilitates great execution. The document should address the question of whether and how specific design characteristics should be created and enforced in fast-developing districts. Should sign ordinances, building codes and policies be modified to guide decisions? What best practices can the City of Wichita adapt and adopt to regulate and incentivize a richly designed urban tapestry?



Establish Educational Tools

The Project Downtown 2035 plan must be a guide and reference tool by providing examples to inspire and educate city and county officials, downtown businesses and landowners, developers, residents of downtown and the Wichita community. These examples should be modern and interactive, providing opportunities through which Downtown Wichita can expand and enrich its services to the community. Include shareable graphics, imagery, case studies and policy examples. Provide specific action-oriented development strategies, including implementation plans that include but are not limited to housing, office, retail, hospitality, cultural assets and dynamic public spaces. Provide policy-based approaches, public incentive programs, code ordinance updates, sign ordinance and design standards.

Make the Economic Case

In addition to stressing the importance of design and construction quality, the Project Downtown 2035 plan must also clearly identify the economic benefits of increased public and private sector investment that supports the collective vision. It should cultivate an economic environment that leads to remarkable development opportunities that build on existing assets, such as infill sites, with the goal of greater density and critical mass.

Driven by the Market

Downtown Wichita has, since the adoption of Project Downtown in 2010, maintained key market research through ongoing consultation with Zimmerman/Volk (Urban Residential) and W-ZHA (Urban Commercial & Hospitality). Originally part of the Project Downtown consulting team, these two firms have been instrumental in providing ongoing key data. They continue to serve as a resource to Downtown Wichita and have been retained to provide the selected team with current data for each of the aforementioned markets. They are to serve as a resource to the selected team and as an extension of the Downtown Wichita organization.

Engage Communities to Create Distinctly Wichita Recommendations

The Project Downtown 2035 document must represent a collaborative effort combining the broad experience and knowledge of the consultant with thoroughly explored ideas generated through extensive community engagement. It should be the result of the consultant's facilitation of multiple public and private meetings held with an open-minded approach, in which challenging questions are posed, leading to unexpected discussions. The document must demonstrate the consultant's understanding and appreciation of Wichita's culture while expanding the community's perspective on what is possible in an urban core.

The design team will propose a specific community engagement process that is inclusive of all stakeholders in downtown revitalization as well as the community at large. Varied techniques should be proposed to ensure a high level of participation from diverse segments of the community. The proposed community engagement process should detail the process by which the community will be educated about various disciplines involved with the development of the Project Downtown 2035 and how each discipline and plan development component is important to the development of an update to the plan and implementation strategies.



Downtown Wichita will maintain a website and social media platforms that will provide frequent updates on the process. These will be avenues for community input and dialogue. Downtown Wichita maintains a contact list of people and organizations that have participated in the process to date and will arrange, advertise and host community engagement sessions to be led by the consultant.

Develop Connections

The Project Downtown 2035 plan must include strategies for improving the interconnection among downtown districts and between those districts and critical neighborhoods and nodes that surround downtown. The walkability of the entire downtown area should be enhanced through the furthering of connection between assets. The update should establish steps to complete the long-desired “String of Pearls” plan for connecting the First Street cultural corridor and the Museums Along the River. The document must generate visionary ideas for strengthening connections between downtown and the Arkansas River, by engaging property owners and institutions located in its vicinity. It must envision a plan for a new connected downtown medical corridor that stretches from the new Wichita Biomedical CampusSM to Ascension Via Christi St. Francis. The document must also reinforce connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods: Riverside and Delano to the west, SoCe to the south, Douglas Design District to the east and Mid-Town to the north.

Define Districts

For more than 25 years, Old Town has been one of the most recognizable districts in the downtown area. Even Wichitans who rarely or never visit its restaurants, bars, or clubs recognize Old Town as a popular, long lasting and successful neighborhood. Project Downtown 2035 must assist Downtown Wichita in establishing the character of existing districts that struggle with identity, and in recognizing possible new districts and their identities. By identifying opportunities to brand new districts within downtown, the plan will facilitate connections that help bridge the walking distance between Old Town and the Arkansas River.

Experiment with Sites

Downtown Wichita has collaborated with public and private property owners to identify several sites to be considered as Urban Design Demonstration Sites. The successful candidate can expect to freely utilize these locations for the study and modeling of ideal downtown archetypes and convey ideal structural massing and potential design character.

These sites include the following:

- Two sites, totaling more than 35,000 square feet, within the culturally significant Commerce Street Arts District, just south of INTRUST Bank Arena.
- A 6-acre site on Douglas Ave, east of the rail corridor and near a highly anticipated multi-level housing project.
- A 30-acre site, assembled by a development group, located on St. Francis Street, at the northern terminus of the quickly developing biomedical corridor.
- A 2.5-acre site, on First Street, across the Arkansas River from the new \$22 million Exploration Place Destination Playscape construction project.
- Several properties, owned by a local church, that are arrayed along Emporia Street north of Second Street.



D. Project Budget

The anticipated budget for this update to and extension of Project Downtown is between \$350,000 and \$500,000. As noted in **D. Proposal Content and Format**, an estimated total project fee as well as a breakdown of the fee by project component are required.

IV. IMPORTANT DATES AND INSTRUCTIONS

A. RFP Schedule

- Release of RFP: 9/27/24
- Deadline for emailed inquiries: 10/7/24
- Response to inquiries: 10/11/24
- **Deadline for submissions: 10/25/24**
- Selection committee evaluation: 11/4/24
- Notification of shortlisted candidates: 11/8/24
- On-site interviews: 11/18-11/22/24
- **Contract negotiation: 12/2/24**
- **Project Downtown 2035 kickoff: 1/6/25**

B. Point of Contact Information

Please direct all inquiries to Heather Schroeder at heather@downtownwichita.org.

C. Proposal Submission Information

- Date and time: **Oct. 25, 2024, 5 p.m. CST**
- Format: Electronic, single PDF file.
- Method of submission:

Proposal submissions are due electronically by October 25 at 5pm Central time and must be emailed to heather@downtownwichita.org with “Project Downtown 2035” and Proposer name clearly labeled in the email subject line. Proposers should include, within the submittal email, the contact information (name, position, and email) for communication during the selection process. Proposals should be submitted as one compressed PDF file and are recommended to be a maximum of 20 pages.

If files exceed 10 MB, please email heather@downtownwichita.org with a link to a file sharing service. Late proposals will not be considered.



D. Proposal Content and Format

- A profile of the design team with an organizational chart.
- A description of the team’s qualifications for the development of a downtown plan, including a description of relevant experience on similar projects. Special emphasis should be given to examples of updates to existing plans and to the resulting action taken based on those plan updates.
- The names and contact information for the specific staff members from each firm who will be assigned to the project, their role in the project and a detailed resume listing their individual work experience in this role on similar projects.
- A minimum of three (3) professional references for which a similar project has been completed within the last five (5) years.
- A detailed proposal, including recommended approach, plan development techniques/ processes, timeline, phasing, and deliverables, for the development of Project Downtown 2035 that includes, but is not limited to, the Scope of Services contained in this Request for Proposals. The master plan update known as Project Downtown 2035: The Downtown Wichita Action Plan must be delivered within six months of contract execution. A timeline showing how delivery will be achieved should be provided.
- A description of assistance or additional information that will be sought from Downtown Wichita, including assistance or additional information that the client can provide to the design team to lower the cost of the project.
- An estimated total project fee as well as a breakdown of the fee by project component. The project fee breakdown will identify each component of the proposal that the design team designates as a core service toward accomplishing the Scope of Services. Downtown Wichita reserves the right to negotiate the final fees and scope of work with the selected design team.
- All information submitted becomes the property of Downtown Wichita. Downtown Wichita reserves the right to issue supplemental information or guidelines relating to the Request for Proposals during the proposal preparation period, or to make modifications to the Request for Proposals. All costs incurred in the preparation of the submittal and participation in the selection process are the sole responsibility of the design team.

V. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SELECTION PROCESS

Final selection will be made following a review and ranking of proposals received. Respondents to the Request for Proposals will be invited to Wichita for interviews. The interviews are tentatively scheduled for the week of Nov. 18, 2024. The interviews will be conducted by a selection team comprised of representatives from the project partners. The interviews with consultant teams will include a session open to the public. The city’s objective is to select the design team best qualified to undertake the tasks identified. Proposals will be evaluated based on:



1. The design team’s experience with similar projects.
2. Qualifications of the staff assigned to the project.
3. Demonstrated capacity to communicate, be creative, and use strategic, effective and innovative approaches.
4. Demonstrated understanding of the Project Downtown 2035 Scope of Work.
5. Proposed approach, plan development techniques/processes, timeline, phasing and deliverables.
6. Ability to complete the work within the specified time period.
7. Cost of services.

VI. RESOURCES

A. Project Downtown: Downtown Wichita Master Plan for Wichita

1. [Project Downtown 2010](#) and [Appendix](#)
2. City of Wichita Plans incorporated into Project Downtown:
 - [Downtown Development Incentives Policy \(PDF\)](#)
 - [Downtown Parking and Mobility Management - Supplemental Appendices \(PDF\)](#)
 - [Downtown Parking and Mobility Management Plan \(PDF\)](#)
 - [Downtown Public Parking Resolution \(PDF\)](#)
 - [Downtown Wichita Streetscape Design Guidelines \(PDF\)](#)
 - [Parking and Mobility Master Plan, Aug 3, 2007 \(PDF\)](#)
 - [Sidewalk Cafe Application Requirements - City Council Approved - 5-8-12 \(PDF\)](#)

B. Current Planning Initiatives

[Wichita Transit Network Plan](#)
Anticipated Fall 2024.

[Wichita Downtown Streets Conceptual Plan - 2020](#)
The City of Wichita continues the conversion of one-way to two-way streets as outlined in the plan.

[Parking and Multimodal Plan - 2019](#)
City of Wichita is in the process of implementing this plan, which outlines methods for paid parking and parking facility maintenance in downtown Wichita.

[Wichita Bicycle Master Plan - 2013](#)
The City of Wichita is developing a new Wichita Bicycle Plan, which will update the 2013 Wichita Bicycle Master Plan.



Downtown Wayfinding Plan
Currently in development.

C. Previous Planning Initiatives

[Community Investments Plan 2015 - 2035](#)

The State of Kansas requires cities and counties to have a comprehensive plan to authorize subdivision regulation and to guide public spending decisions on capital infrastructure and facility projects.

[Riverfront Legacy Master Plan - 2020](#)

[Wichita: Places for People - 2019](#)

The Wichita: Places for People Plan, adopted in 2019 outlines several implementation steps. Among them are establishing a Wichita Land Bank, changes in the zoning regulations and identifying appropriate incentives that will prompt redevelopment in the Established Central Area (ECA).

[City of Wichita Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan - 2016 Update](#)

[Bicycle Wayfinding System Plan – 2016](#)

The Wichita Bicycle Wayfinding System Plan will serve as a guide for the City of Wichita, with recommendations for how the city should use bicycle wayfinding to make it easier for people to get around the city.

[Multi-Modal Policy & Street Design Guidance - 2014](#)

The Wichita City Council endorsed the Wichita Multi-Modal Policy and Street Design Guidelines on December 2, 2014 (Resolution 14-341).

[Pedestrian Master Plan - 2014](#)

The Wichita Pedestrian Master Plan is a guide for the City of Wichita, identifying the community needs, vision, and future goals related to walking in the city.

[Douglas Avenue Corridor Transit Oriented Development Study – 2012](#)

[Arena Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan – 2007](#)

[River Corridor Improvement Project – 1999](#)

[RTKL Plan - 1989](#)



D. Market Studies and Plans

[Wichita Biomedical CampusSM Office/Residential Market Impact](#) (June 2023).

[2021 Residential Forecast \(Zimmerman/Volk Associates\)](#) (July 2021).

[2021 Office Forecast \(W-ZHA\)](#) (October 2021).

[2021 Downtown Market Forecast \(RCLCO\)](#) (August 2021).

