Downtown Planning Team Outlines Community Input Process

WICHITA, Kan. - 11/05/2009 - A six-month public engagement process seeking broad community input on downtown revitalization will kick off in early December.

The City of Wichita, the Wichita Downtown Development Corporation and Visioneering Wichita, working with various groups and downtown planning consultants Goody Clancy, outlined the public and stakeholder input process. The Goody Clancy team and its economic analysis partners will be in Wichita over the next few months to conduct numerous meetings to gather input.

"One of the reasons we chose Goody Clancy is because of their strength in getting the public involved in the planning process," said Mayor Carl Brewer. "They have a great combination of holding more traditional public meetings combined with some new interactive technology. This will truly be our community's plan."

Public input processes planned include:

~ December 4 and 5 –"Walk-shops" will gather ideas through people taking and sharing digital photos of downtown through a process led by PlaceMatters, part of the Goody Clancy team. Three walk shop sessions are planned to encourage as much participation as possible. All will be held at the Eaton Block at 523 East Douglas (formerly Eaton Steakhouse).
Friday, Dec. 4 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Saturday, December 5 – 9 a.m. to Noon and again from 12:30 to 3:30.
People interested in participating should sign up at Visioneering Wichita by calling (316) 268-1141 or by e-mail at dlongfellow@wichitachamber.org.

~ January 12 – A public meeting will present the results and themes from the Walk-shop process. Presentations will also cover a preliminary assessment of downtown housing and commercial market opportunities as a foundation for the overall plan. Breakout groups will allow people to discuss assets, challenges and goals for downtown Wichita. The meeting will be held in the evening with exact time and place to be determined.

~ February – On Saturday, February 27 individuals will be able to participate in a full-day, hands-on workshop to discuss visions, utilizing the economic and transportation analysis, and design principles. The event will follow the February 25th WDDC Annual Lecture with a speaker providing national perspectives on downtown revitalization. Place and specific times for the events will be announced.

~ March – A public meeting will present a preliminary vision and action strategies that integrate the community input with technical and economic analysis. Individuals will then provide feedback and discuss the information presented.

~ May – At a public meeting, the team will present the draft vision plan to allow discussion and input to the preliminary plan.

In addition to the monthly public input sessions, the Goody Clancy team is meeting each month with a variety of stakeholder individuals and regional groups, including Wichita City Council, Sedgwick County Commission, neighborhood groups, employers, arts and culture groups, developers, commercial brokers, retail, transportation, property owners, educational entities, churches and social service organizations. The Goody Clancy team began the stakeholder process this week, holding 45 meetings that involved more than 165 people. Input from stakeholder groups and the public will be integrated into the

final draft plan.

"This is an exciting time for the future of our community," said Larry Weber, WDDC Chairman. "In getting to this moment, we have known how much people want to be part of the planning process. We will continue to encourage everyone to be involved in the process and have their voices heard."

Goody Clancy was selected in October to develop a plan for the core area that focuses on:
· Connecting and maximizing various downtown areas, including Old Town, INTRUST Bank Arena and the River Corridor
· Community input to define the vision for downtown
· Specific implementation strategies and economic analysis to maximize private sector investment and return on investment of public dollars

The City of Wichita has committed $225,000 for a downtown comprehensive strategic plan. The Wichita Downtown Development Corporation provided $175,000 with an additional $100,000 from businesses, organizations and individuals contributing to the plan.

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