

PUBLIC WEIGHS IN ON EAST BANK SCENARIOS AND OVERALL VISION

Community engagement process yields multiple themes

At its public meeting at 4 p.m. on Monday at the Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Riverfront Legacy Master Plan coalition will provide a review of public input gathered over the last four-and-a-half months.

The coalition, made up of eight organizations, has had more than 5,000 responses to the vision, components and scenarios through opportunities to provide input for the 55+ acre east bank site including:

- Comments on website – July 31 – December 9
- Social media comments – July 31 – December 9
- Online questionnaire – November 14 – December 9
- 40 individual community meetings (examples District Advisory Boards, community and civic groups) – August – December
- Four public meetings
    - July 31 – Process kick-off and vision
    - September 23 and 24 – Urban Explorations
    - October 17 – Open House to review research and data
    - November 14 – Open House to review scenarios
- Four Coalition meetings – monthly from Coalition members and open to public
- Make Wichita Win (through the Knight Foundation Fund at the Wichita Community Foundation)
    - Online questionnaire
    - Shipping container on the site, and multiple events

Wichita State University Public Policy and Management Center analyzed the online questionnaire related to scenarios, in addition to Populous providing themes of multiple engagement activities.

Among the 5,000 responses and public comments, themes most often and consistently heard were:

- Green space, parks, open spaces
- River activation, access and connection
- Amenities such as restaurants, shops, bars, etc.

More information will be provided at Monday's coalition meeting about input to the various scenarios.

According to Misty Bruckner, Director of WSU PPMC, "The vast majority of themes were about green space and the river,

including connection and access to it, along with the overall design and building placement."

In addition to hearing and discussing the results of the public input, the coalition will also be hearing market and economic data based on the studies from the past eight years and a 2019 market analysis.

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.

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.

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