DOWNTOWN WICHITA SELECTS SASAKI AS PROJECT PARTNER FOR DOWNTOWN ACTION PLAN

WICHITA, Kan., Dec. 9, 2024– Downtown Wichita is excited to announce Sasaki, a global urban planning and design firm, as its project partner for **Project Downtown 2035: The Downtown Wichita Action Plan (Downtown Action Plan).** This community engagement and planning initiative will provide a 10-year roadmap for the continued revitalization and transformation of the city's core.

"This is a significant moment in the future of Wichita and its downtown. By partnering with Sasaki on the Downtown Action Plan, we are building upon our downtown success and further advancing the economic vitality of our city center," said Downtown Wichita Executive Director Heather Schroeder.

The Downtown Action Plan is an update to the 2010 Project Downtown master plan that provided an aspirational vision and deliberate strategies for public and private sector investment. The 2010 development blueprint drove $1.7 billion in completed investment and created a more than $760 million project pipeline.

This updated plan will focus on attracting development and cultivating strong place identities by amplifying cultural assets, building strong connections between neighborhoods, and encouraging strategic, well-designed urban infill.

"Downtown Wichita has experienced transformative public and private investments in recent years, driving growth in residential, office, hospitality, and biomedical sectors. Our team is excited to build on this momentum, leveraging past and future investments to shape an authentic urban experience in downtown Wichita," said Sasaki Associate Principal Siqi Zhu. "We are committed to fostering meaningful relationships with the places we plan for and look forward to collaborating with the Wichita community to create a vision that supports the city's continued growth and downtown development for years to come."

Sasaki's expertise comprises planning and urban design, architecture, technology, and data science, reflecting the team's uniquely integrated and collaborative nature. For the Downtown Action Plan, Sasaki has rounded out the team's expertise with a team of national experts in downtown walkability, real estate finance, community engagement and public spaces.

The announcement of Sasaki follows a rigorous selection process, beginning with a Request for Proposal (RFP) in September. Seventeen national and global firms, including, but not limited to, firms located in New York, Chicago, Denver and Los Angeles, responded to the RFP. Four finalist teams were invited to present their approach in person in Wichita in November.

The selection committee, including representatives from private industry, nonprofits, and local government, chose Sasaki's team based on its proven track record of project execution. Sasaki's planning efforts have yielded physical transformations in downtowns across America. In recent years, the firms comprising Sasaki's team for the Downtown Action Plan have collaborated on downtown planning projects in Akron, Chattanooga, Detroit, Evansville, Kansas City, Little Rock, Oklahoma City, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Raleigh.

"This is another step forward in ensuring progress and future success in Wichita," said Wichita Mayor Lily Wu. "By investing in our downtown, we are not only enhancing the quality of life for our residents but also creating a destination that will attract visitors and businesses for years to come."

"This plan will strengthen the Wichita region's economy and help ensure we remain competitive in business attraction and talent recruitment and retention. Sedgwick County is excited to support the next phase of downtown's transformation," said Sedgwick County Chairman Ryan Baty.

Downtown Action Plan goals:

- **Leverage Past Successes:** The action plan will build upon the original master plan's foundational principles and strategies, with a focus on greater levels of implementation over the next 10 years.
- **Continued Cultivation**: The action plan will identify current development opportunities and cultivate new, targeted opportunities for future development while coordinating with various city plans and initiatives.
- **Elevate Design and Construction**: The action plan will be a guiding instrument to ensure that downtown development consists of excellent urban architecture built with high-quality materials and methods.
- **Provide Educational Tools**: The action plan will provide examples to inspire Wichita's development community and empower them with the tools to implement their vision.
- **Enhance Economic Vitality**: The action plan will identify the economic benefits of increased public and private sector investment that supports the collective vision.
- **Collaborative Engagement**: The action plan will represent a collaborative effort – combining the insights and knowledge of the design firm with ideas generated locally through extensive community engagement.
- **Improved Connectivity**: The action plan will introduce strategies to enhance connectivity between downtown districts and surrounding neighborhoods to promote shared resiliency.

The planning process will involve stakeholder engagement, with opportunities for Wichita residents to provide input and share their visions for the future of downtown. A series of public meetings and workshops will be scheduled for the first quarter of 2025 with the completion of the plan anticipated in summer 2025. More details regarding community engagement will be available in early January 2025.

For more information about the Downtown Action Plan and to stay updated on upcoming meetings, please visit downtownwichita.org.

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About Downtown Wichita
Downtown Wichita is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that amplifies the energy, capital and growth of downtown by empowering residents, visitors and businesses to explore the possibilities of the city's core. In collaboration with stakeholders, the organization stimulates continued investment and interest in downtown and connects resources from the private sector and local government that allow commerce and culture to thrive. For more information visit: https://downtownwichita.org/home.

About Sasaki
Sasaki has been a leader in the design industry for 70 years. The firm is known for its integrated design approach, engaging with clients and communities, drawing on history and context, and using data and emerging technologies to shape the built environment. With offices in Boston, Denver, New York, Shanghai, and Los Angeles, Sasaki's 300 professionals partner with education, civic, institutional, and commercial clients around the world. Sasaki's integrated services span architecture, interior design, planning and urban design, space planning, landscape architecture, and civil engineering. For more information visit: https://www.sasaki.com/