WICHITA'S BIOMEDICAL CAMPUS: AN INVESTMENT IN WICHITA'S FUTURE

By Emily Younger-Barnwell

Wichita has long been known for its rich aviation heritage and now it is demonstrating prominence in the field of biomedical sciences.

The city council's Aug. 1 approval of a Memorandum of Understanding for the development of the Biomedical Campus at 200 S. Broadway and 214. S Topeka in downtown Wichita is a momentous step in evolving the city's urban core.

The estimated $302 million center for innovation, a partnership between Wichita State University (WSU), the University of Kansas (KU) and WSU Tech will transform Wichita's downtown into a prominent center for cutting-edge research, advanced medical technologies, and high-value job opportunities.

"A project of this magnitude in the downtown core has transformative economic and healthcare benefits not only for Wichita, but the region and the state of Kansas," said Partnership President Jeff Fluhr. "The Biomedical Campus is an investment in Wichita's future and the health of all Kansans."

The establishment of the biomedical campus will co-locate the WSU College of Health Professions, WSU Tech health programs, KU School of Medicine-Wichita and KU School of Pharmacy-Wichita, resulting in an increased depth of healthcare professionals who can cater to the needs of residents throughout Kansas.

The campus will bring an influx of 3,000 students and 200 faculty and staff members downtown, driving increased foot traffic for local businesses, restaurants, bars and retail establishments.

"Strategically situating the Biomedical Campus in the heart of Wichita advances the residential and commercial market downtown, ensuring its continued strength. This is critical as we advance the downtown ecosystem and develop the workforce of the future," said Downtown Wichita Executive Vice President Jason Gregory.

Urban design, the connections between people and places, also plays a pivotal role in talent attraction and retention. The downtown location of the biomedical campus provides direct access to public spaces, transportation systems, and an array of services and amenities.

In addition, the project aligns seamlessly with three other design initiatives, namely the proposed convention center district and performing arts center, Exploration Place's Amphitheater and Destination Playscape and the private-sector development surrounding Riverfront Stadium.

Fluhr underscored the significance of these integrated projects, stating, "Each of these developments will further advance the distinctiveness of our downtown which is critical in the retention and recruitment of talent to meet the growing demands of our industries."