City of Kansas City: Implementing the Vision for a Healthy Campus

The Unified Government of Kansas City and Wyandotte County (the UG) embraced a bold vision for downtown economic development, community revitalization, and improved community health through the creation of a Healthy Campus on the edge of its downtown. Using a grant from the REACH Foundation, LISC and Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City, the UG hired local planning firm Gould Evans to create a master plan for the Healthy Campus. Following a six-month planning process that engaged a range of local stakeholders, the UG and the firm unveiled a final plan the goals of which are to:

- Become a national model for healthy living
- Create an anchor that attracts new residents and businesses to a world-class downtown
- Improve resident health through access to a new community center and grocery store

A National Resource Network (Network) team helped the UG answer the question many local governments face after the completion of a vision plan: ***What Next?*** When the hard work of developing a vision is finished, the hard work of making it a reality is just beginning. As part of immediate next steps, local governments should ask themselves the following questions:

- **What are the staff resources required to implement the plan? What types of skills are needed? Does an existing staff member have the time and skills to take on a special initiative?** The Kansas City UG had an experienced staff that took on many of the key initial tasks to move the plan forward. However, they also realized they did not have all of the skills or the time to champion this effort. Thus, they obtained a grant to hire a dedicated person or firm with all of the project management, real estate, and communication skills required to implement the first phase of the plan. The Network supported the UG in drafting a Notice of Need for the UG's Owner's Representative/Development Project Manager, which is available on the UG procurement website (BID No. N25386).
- **What community assets can be used to support plan implementation**? In the case of Kansas City, key assets were initial funding contributions from the Casino Revenue Fund and Wyandotte Health Foundation, local road capacity to support new bike lanes and additional traffic from new development, broad community support, and strong government leadership.
- **What are the opportunities for partnership**? The UG had a strong track record of partnership with the private sector and civic institutions for revitalization projects. For the Healthy Campus, the UG partnered with local foundations for funding and capacity-building and the YMCA as operator of the community center. The local Kansas City chapter of the Urban Land Institute, LISC, and the National Resources Defense Council, were key partners, and the UG conducted extensive outreach to private developers for future partnerships for development.
- **What are the key questions that need to be answered to begin plan implementation?** The Network identified and helped the UG to answer critical questions in order to chart a path for successful implementation:

- o What are the infrastructure requirements and is there overlap between the UG's required investment as part of its EPA consent decree?
- o What actions or partnerships are required to enhance the feasibility of the grocery store and community center anchor projects? How can the UG partner with the private sector to assemble the desired sites and at what cost? Are there alternative sites or building configurations that would enhance feasibility? How much funding would be required from public or private sector sources to close any feasibility gaps?
- o What is current land ownership and which sites would need to be acquired to build the community center and grocery store?

This work by the Network and the selection of a Project Manager will help inform a set of next steps and provide direction on overall plan implementation.

The Network engagement in Kansas City and with the UG was led by consortium member HR&A.