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### **Second Edition of *The Value of U.S. Downtowns and Center Cities* Report Released by IDA**

*Report expands data to 24 cities, identifies link between established downtowns and increased economic prosperity*

WASHINGTON, DC – Cities and regions have the potential to generate profound lasting benefits through investment in downtowns and center cities, according to *The Value of U.S. Downtowns and Center Cities: Second Edition* report released today by the International Downtown Association (IDA). While small in physical size, downtowns are immensely valuable, diverse, efficient, inclusive and resilient on multiple levels. From driving tax revenue and business activity to spurring smart development and innovative workplaces, downtowns play a pivotal role in the long-term health of a region.

The report updates *The Value of U.S. Downtowns and Center Cities* study released one year ago, with data and analysis that expands the scope to a total of 24 downtowns with urban place management organizations across the United States. IDA carried out the survey in partnership with Stantec's Urban Places team, an interdisciplinary hub joining the global firm's urban experts.

With two years of data, IDA grouped each of the center cities into one of three downtown tiers: **Emerging Downtowns, Growing Downtowns** and **Established Downtowns**. These tiers are defined by stage of development of the district in relation to its city and region, and based on average growth in employment, residential density, population growth, job density and assessed value per square mile.

Key trends identified in this year's expanded study are that downtown populations continue to grow and that their economic prosperity increases as they mature towards established downtowns. Additional key findings include:

- Downtowns all bring outsized economic value to their city, but tax revenue increases as downtowns move from emerging to established. Property tax revenue in emerging downtowns averages 11% of citywide property tax revenues but increases to 32% in established downtowns.
- Downtown population growth far outpaces citywide growth, and it accelerates as downtowns move toward the established tier. Between 2010 and 2016, population grew by 29% in established downtowns, 37% in growing downtowns and 14% in emerging downtowns.
- The data show that as downtowns grow more robust, the income of their residents rises relative to the rest of the city. Median household income in emerging downtowns was only 70% of the citywide median. Growing downtowns reached near-parity with their cities, at 96% of the citywide

median. Established downtowns outperformed their cities, with median income at 110% of the citywide figure. This pattern underscores the importance of developing policies and mechanisms for keeping downtown housing accessible to all income levels.

- Downtowns become more concentrated employment centers as their stage of development progresses. Emerging downtowns average 17% of citywide jobs, growing downtowns 30% and established downtowns have 52% of citywide jobs. Across all stages of development, downtowns are centers of knowledge-industry growth and of innovation.
- Downtowns are multimodal hubs that rely less on cars than their cities. Emerging and growing downtowns have higher Walk, Bike, and Transit Scores than their respective cities, and established downtowns have nearly perfect Walk and Transit Scores (96 and 98 respectively).

*"The Value of U.S. Downtowns and Center Cities* report demonstrates both individual and compelling collective results. With 24 center cities analyzed and tiers established based upon the value characteristics found in a given district, we are furthering our understanding of the development stage for an urban area in relation to its city and region," said David Downey, CAE, Assoc. AIA, President & CEO of IDA. "It's fascinating to imagine how the strategies and programs of an urban management organization are evolving through these tiers."

*The Value of U.S. Downtowns and Center Cities* focuses on understanding the value of downtowns through five principles – economy, inclusion, vibrancy, identity and resilience. The resulting report articulates the mutual benefits of downtown investment to a broad range of relevant stakeholders and shows the impact a downtown has on its city and region. The research in this study is designed to empower local leaders to work with the public and private sectors on multiple levels and support the continued evolution of downtown.

"For the second year, the data behind *The Value of U.S. Downtowns and Center Cities* report and rankings highlights the role downtowns play as the anchors and economic engines for their cities," said Craig Lewis, FAICP, Principal of Stantec's Urban Places team. "The things that matter most to urban success—jobs and investment, municipal revenue, cultural strength, economic mobility, and resilience in many forms—all begin with a healthy downtown. Successful urban place management organizations know that a city can't produce vibrant, memorable, walkable urbanism unless it pays scrupulous attention to the human experience. This investment in quality of place has been the differentiator that enables downtowns to produce outsized benefits for their cities."

In 2019, IDA will work with a third cohort of 12 downtowns to further standardize and benchmark the value of American downtowns.

*The Value of U.S. Downtowns and Center Cities: Second Edition* is now available as a free download on [downtown.org](http://downtown.org). IDA's CEO David Downey will join David Dixon, Planning and Urban Design Leader for Stantec's Urban Places team, and other panelists to present the current findings at the American Planning Association annual conference in San Francisco in April.

IDA thanks participants in the following organizations for their cooperation in the 2018 research: Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority (Michigan); Atlanta Downtown (Georgia); Downtown Austin Alliance (Texas); Downtown Dallas, Inc (Texas); Downtown Durham, Inc (North Carolina); El Paso Downtown Management District (Texas); Downtown Greensboro Inc. (North Carolina); Downtown Indy, Inc. (Indiana); MPLS Downtown Council and MPLS Downtown Improvement District (Minnesota); Downtown Oklahoma City Partnership (Oklahoma); and Downtown Tucson Partnership (Arizona).

### **About International Downtown Association**

The International Downtown Association is the premier organization for urban place professionals who are shaping and activating dynamic city center districts. Our members are downtown champions who bring urban centers to life, bridging the gap between the public and private sectors. We represent an industry of more than 2,500 place management organizations, employing 100,000 people throughout North America and growing rapidly around the world. Founded in 1954, IDA is a resource center for ideas and innovative best practices in urban place management. For more information, visit [downtown.org](http://downtown.org).

### **About Stantec**

Communities are fundamental. Whether around the corner or across the globe, they provide a foundation, a sense of place and of belonging. That's why at Stantec, we always design with community in mind.

We care about the communities we serve—because they're our communities too. We're designers, engineers, scientists, and project managers, innovating together at the intersection of community, creativity, and client relationships. Balancing these priorities results in projects that advance the quality of life in communities across the globe. Stantec's Urban Places team is an interdisciplinary hub within the firm bringing together leaders in planning and urban design, smart mobility, resilience, development, mixed-use architecture, smart cities, and brownfield redevelopment. We work in downtowns across North America—in cities and suburbs alike—to unlock the extraordinary urban promise of enhanced livability, equity, and resilience. Learn more at [www.stantec.com/urban-places](http://www.stantec.com/urban-places).

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