



**REPORT TO REDEVELOPMENT
AGENCY BOARD**

AGENDA ITEM

TO: REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD

DATE: September 2, 2008

SUBJECT: Design Services Contract for Historic Downtown Plaza Project

Report in Brief

Redevelopment of the block between First and College on Bush Street has long been identified as a site that could be developed into an exciting public plaza that would increase activity in downtown and attract pedestrians and customers. Potentially the open space would include outdoor seating for restaurants, rear entranceways, a venue for after-hour events, and a place for appreciating the unique historic atmosphere that surrounds this block.

This plan has taken on new urgency with the recent interest of some property owners on this site to significantly invest in redevelopment. This report requests approval to enter into a contract with a design team that that can assist the Agency and the property owners in revitalizing this plaza.

Staff recommends that the Redevelopment Agency Board authorize the Executive Director to execute the contract with the HLA Group, Landscape Architects and Planners, Inc. to develop a site plan for the Historic Downtown Plaza Project.

Background

The one block area of Bush Street between First and College and immediately south of Main has long been viewed as underutilized with potential for development as a public plaza or parking area. (See excerpts from the Downtown Specific Plan – Attachment I.) Redevelopment concepts include creation of an outdoor courtyard behind the buildings between College and First streets. It is the Agency's hope that this will enhance the Downtown's street life and nightlife by creating a lively, vibrant courtyard area that will support neighboring businesses, especially restaurants and cafes. This would be a pedestrian-friendly environment connected to Main Street that would increase foot traffic and patronage of local shops/restaurants. It also could be the venue for community events such as a Farmer's Market. Its potential as a dynamic urban destination is enhanced by the historic buildings adjacent to the block, particularly the old Lee Grocery Store, the Purity Market, the Elks building and Hotel Woodland.

Because of the long narrow buildings, many of which have functional separate spaces in the back, there might be opportunities to transform this area by providing new entries in the rear of the

buildings and possibly a pathway (paseo) linking the courtyard directly to Main Street. Ultimately, this courtyard could consist of outdoor dining opportunities and build on the existing successes of some of the establishments there.

Recent ownership interest in redevelopment of the area has generated the need for the Agency to review ideas and alternatives for this area. However, such an undertaking can be costly to the surrounding property owners and to the Redevelopment Agency. Therefore, staff felt it was prudent to solicit ideas on the best practices and best approaches to redevelopment this block. Agency staff solicited design teams through a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) that was released in April 2008. The RFQ is included as Attachment II. A pre-submittal conference was held on May 2 attended by 10 firms. Subsequently eight firms sent in submittals. A selection committee comprised of City staff reviewed the submittals and invited four firms for interviews. Teams were scored on the following criteria:

1. Development team experience
2. Design and land use planning skills
3. Financial and real estate analysis experience
4. Knowledge of potential sources of state, federal and private financing sources that may be available for a project of this type.
5. Experience with mixed-use development
6. Experience in developing pedestrian friendly downtown places or projects.
7. Experience with incorporating historic preservation principles in new development proposals.
8. Estimated project costs
9. Experience in working with property owners and businesses involved in a prospective project site.

After evaluating the firms based on the written proposals, the interviews, quality of past work, and references, the HLA Group, Landscape Architects and Planners, Inc. (HLA) was selected. HLA has teamed with Nolte Engineering and is in the process of selecting an architect specializing in historic preservation.

Successful redevelopment of this area will require a collaborative approach beginning with the site planning and, if the project is feasible, culminating with the completion of construction. Therefore, all of the area property owners and Downtown stakeholders will need to be brought into the process. It is hoped that not only Agency funds will be used, but also that the other property owners will want to invest in improvements to the rear of their buildings and create attractive gathering areas. There may also be opportunities for investors to reuse some of the other underutilized buildings on adjacent blocks around this area as part of this project.

Discussion

Over the past 10 years or longer the Agency and the City have identified this as one of its top priority projects for improving Downtown. If the Agency is to proceed, it needs to resolve some of the obstacles that have stopped implementation up to this point in time, including lack of funds, lack of owner interest, lack of staff time, and conflicting priorities. Resolution of these issues will allow

preparation of a strategy that works for all parties involved and is achievable in today's context. New interest has focused on this site largely because two of the principal property owners are willing to partner with the Agency to renovate their buildings and develop the plaza. The Agency now has additional funds available from the bond issued in 2007. At this step in the process, the Agency is not committing any funds; the recommended action is directing staff to develop a site plan that will guide development of an implementation strategy.

Fiscal Impact

No additional funds need to be allocated to this project as funds have already been included in the FY09 RDA operating budget. It is estimated that development of the site plan may cost approximately \$60,000 to \$80,000. After a site plan is completed, an implementation and funding strategy will be developed and, if feasible, presented for consideration to the Redevelopment Agency Board.

The potential impact of the State budget on the Redevelopment Agency based on the Governor's compromise budget proposal is estimated at 5% of gross annual Tax Increment income, or \$71,000 for three years. Staff is currently reviewing strategies to reduce the operating budget in order to absorb this impact should this proposal become part of the State's final budget; there are some accounts that could be reduced without impact to the Redevelopment program in order to offset at least part of the seizure of RDA funds. One strategy that could be considered is to fund part of the design services contract for this project through the bond proceeds. While use of the bond proceeds for design services is an eligible expense, such use would be considered if other alternatives are not feasible.

Public Contact

This project has been discussed at public meetings held during the preparation of the Downtown Specific Plan in 2002 and 2003. It has also been available through the posting of the City Council agenda.

Alternative Courses of Action

1. Authorize the Executive Director to execute the contract with the HLA Group, Landscape Architects and Planners, Inc. to develop a site plan for the Historic Downtown Plaza Project.
2. Cease further consideration of this project.

Recommendation for Action

Staff recommends that the Redevelopment Agency Board approve Alternative No. 1.

Prepared by: Cynthia Shallit
Redevelopment Manager

Reviewed by: Barry Munowitch, AICP
Assistant City Manager

Mark G. Deven
City Manager

Attachments: Resolution
Excerpt from Downtown Specific Plan
Historic Downtown Plaza Request for Qualifications

AGENCY RESOLUTION NO. _____

**A RESOLUTION OF THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF
THE CITY OF WOODLAND AUTHORIZING A CONTRACT WITH A DESIGN
CONSULTANT TO DEVELOP A PLAN FOR A DOWNTOWN PLAZA ON
BUSH STREET**

WHEREAS, the desire to improve the image of downtown Woodland (“Downtown”), restore historic buildings and have downtown once again become a social gathering place are goals of the General Plan, the Downtown Specific Plan, and the Redevelopment Implementation Plan; and

WHEREAS, the city block north of Bush street between College and First streets has tremendous potential as a commercial courtyard; and

WHEREAS, expert design and architectural services are needed to adequately plan for the redevelopment of this; and

WHEREAS, Agency staff issued a Request for Qualifications on April 15, 2008, to identify a firm to fulfill these needs; and

WHEREAS, consultants were evaluated through an extensive competitive selection process.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Redevelopment Agency Board authorizes the Executive Director to:

1. Enter into a contract with the HLA Group, Landscape Architects and Planners, Inc. firm to develop a design plan for this site, and
2. Execute any other needed documents to carry out this action.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT the foregoing resolution was duly and regularly adopted by the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Woodland, County of Yolo, State of California on the 2 day of September, 2008 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Marlin H. (Skip) Davies, President

ATTEST: _____
Sue Vannucci, Secretary

3. Land Use and Development

A2. Downtown Core (Main Street between Elm and Third Streets)



Setting

District A2, which is located between Elm and Third Streets, is the heart of the Downtown area. The uses along this portion of Main Street consist of one- to three-story structures housing a mix of retail and office uses. Residential uses are limited primarily to the Hotel Woodland, a Single Room Occupancy (SRO) facility.

The majority of the buildings in this district are zero lot line (i.e., no side yards) and directly front onto Main Street. Nearly all the parking for these buildings is located in the interior of the blocks and is accessed through alleys. Many of

the buildings on the south side of Main Street have functional spaces in the rear of the building and some buildings have breezeways that provide attractive pedestrian walkways connecting the rear of the building with Main Street.

3. Land Use and Development



Opportunities

- Main Street has excellent historic framework and architecture. The City should emphasize its history with historic walks, tour guides and path markers, information kiosks, and plaques on historic buildings.
- Redevelopment of Dead Cat Alley and China Town site
- Expansion of Heritage Plaza into parking area (with loss of very few spaces)
- Large pool of employees and visitors to the County facilities along Court Street
- Develop plaza behind the buildings along Main Street between College and First Streets (north side of Bush Street) to allow for ready access to spaces, potential subdivision of buildings, and to create an outdoor restaurant area that builds on the success of Morrison's
- Expand the use of paseos/breezeways to connect Main Street with the rear of shops and parking
- Encourage office and residential uses in currently vacant upper floors

- Reuse of existing Police Station facilities for potential expansion of City Hall
- Potential for streetscape improvements with unified street furniture

Vision

Once the primary shopping location in town, the Downtown has lost this role over the last few decades as other shopping types moved into the community. But even with this loss, the strength and beauty of the Downtown remains solid. The overall vision for this area is to again become a social gathering place and the main location in town for entertainment, dining, and specialty retail.

An initial step in achieving this vision is to improve and enhance the aesthetic characteristics of Main Street through such improvements as enhancement of existing building facades and streetscape improvements to include new street furniture and landscaping.

The second step is to create exciting and inviting pedestrian-oriented areas such as courtyards, plaza, and attractive sidewalk areas. The north side of Bush Street, between College and First Street, has tremendous



potential as a commercial courtyard that can be modeled after the courtyard behind the building on the south side of Main Street between Second and Third Streets.

The City has the opportunity to expand Heritage Plaza as a focal point for social interaction. This would also include enhancing pathways from governmental buildings off of Court Street into the Downtown to increase patronage of the shops and restaurants. The last item is to encourage professional offices, educational facilities, and residential uses (e.g., live-work and senior housing) on the second and third floors of historic buildings.

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF WOODLAND

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Historic Downtown Woodland
Main Street Plaza
Design and Feasibility Analysis

INTRODUCTION

The Redevelopment Agency of the City of Woodland (Agency) seeks proposals from a multi-disciplinary firm for the design and development of a new outdoor courtyard behind the retail businesses along Main Street in Historic Downtown Woodland. This request is to use outside expertise in defining the details of a potential feasible project.

Proposals should be submitted to:

Redevelopment Agency of the City of Woodland
520 Court Street
Woodland, CA. 95695
Attn: Cynthia Shallit, Redevelopment Manager

Proposals are due no later than 3:00 on Friday, May 9, 2008

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this RFQ are to select a firm that will produce:

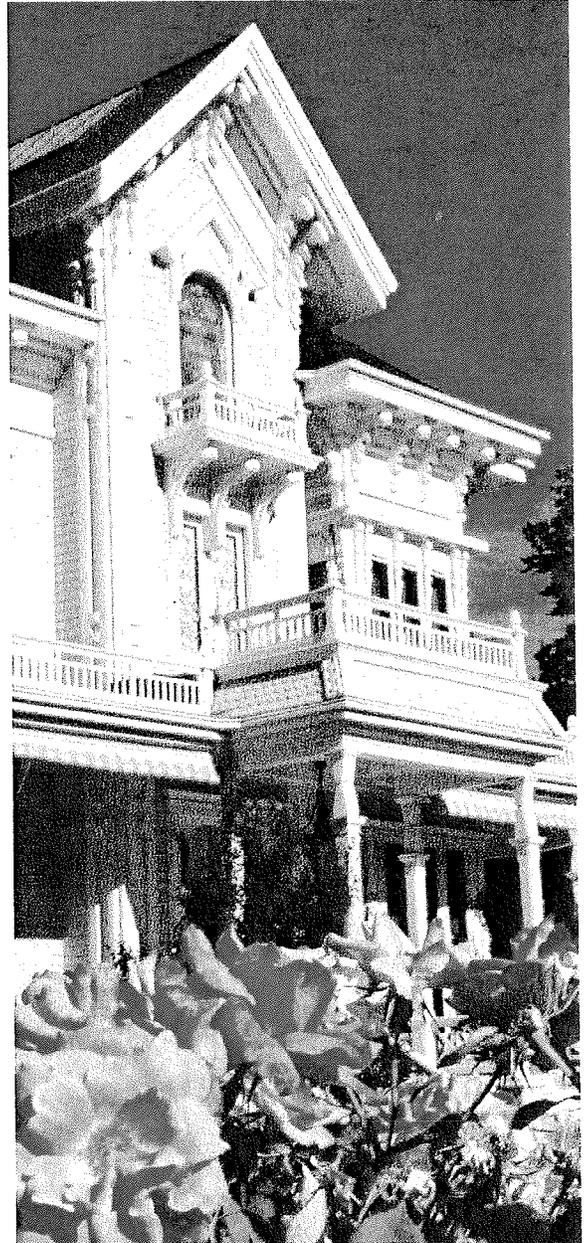
- A design and land use plan
- An engineering and development feasibility analysis,
- A financial feasibility and market analysis identifying a project budget and funding sources.
- An implementation schedule and strategy

BACKGROUND

The City of Woodland (the "City") is located in the Central Valley of California, which continues to be one of the most prosperous and fastest growing areas of the State. The City is 85 miles northeast of San Francisco, and, according to the State Department of Finance, the City population as of January 1, 2006 was approximately 53,000. Woodland lies on I-5 north of the state capital, Sacramento, and just a 15 minute drive from Sacramento Metropolitan Airport."

Woodland is known for its historic downtown. Unlike downtowns in similar sized cities, downtown Woodland never died — not even when a regional shopping mall opened at the southern edge of Woodland during the mid-1980s.

Restaurants, watering holes, small professional service businesses and offices help keep Main Street as the center of town. In the heart of downtown sits the City Hall, a 19th century valley classic that was rebuilt during the Depression. The residential neighborhoods between East and West streets are filled with tall trees and well-maintained houses of Victorian, Tudor and Craftsman design. During the 1980's several local property owners renovated key historical buildings. A jewel in the center of town is the Woodland Opera House, a national historic landmark and, since the 1970s, a state park. The brick opera house was closed for 76 years before it reopened in 1989 and today provides a gorgeous setting for live theater. The productions attract visitors both before and after the show, strolling in Downtown. Besides the Opera House, the Yolo County Courthouse facade has been completely refurbished and there was a major renovation and expansion of the Woodland Public Library---a beautiful building constructed in the Mission Revival architectural style in 1862.



THE SITE

Just one block to the west of the Opera House is the area site of the proposed project. It is located in the section identified as the "Downtown Core" district between Elm and Third streets in the Downtown Specific Plan. Included in this area are key landmarks such as the Hotel Woodland, the Porter Building, the Opera House, Dead Cat Alley, the Chinatown site, and Heritage Plaza.

This is a 2.61 acre site---a full city block. (See parcel map in Attachment I). It is characterized by 14 storefronts along Main Street and five businesses along First Street. Behind the buildings is some open space, but most is taken up by the American Legion building and an old car dealership building that was historically referred to as the Meier Car Dealership Building. The building, approximately

20,000 s.f., was constructed in the Moderne style in 1921 and is now mostly vacant except for some storefronts along College Street.

There may be some significant infrastructure constraints on this site. Though the utility systems are currently considered adequate, any change in density of use could overburden the infrastructure, or renovation may cause damage. Furthermore, a large condominium project proposed just to the west of the project site may cause proposed near this Project Site consisting of 171 condominiums may cause this block to be inadequately served. For example the Downtown Specific Plan suggests that the existing galvanized water service laterals will need to be replaced with copper pipe. Any unlined pipelines will need to be cement-coated or replaced to improve flow capacity. The sewer line may need to be replaced. Several have commented that the overhead wires are particularly unsightly on this block and every effort should be made to underground them if possible.

A project of this size can be costly to the surrounding property owners and to the Redevelopment Agency. This is why it seems prudent to solicit ideas on the best practices and best approaches to financing redevelopment on this block. Such an analysis has to include considerations of the current economic market, Woodland's future economic growth and the cost of improvements. Since no one source of funds nor one property owner can expect to improve this area as a single entity the other property owners and stakeholders will need to be brought into the process. Ideally this RFQ will solicit firms that have experience with this kind of project and can apply that knowledge to Woodland.

THE VISION

This block has long been viewed as underutilized with potential for development as a public plaza or parking area. (See excerpts from the Downtown Specific Plan – Attachment II). An outdoor courtyard could be created behind the buildings between Main and Bush streets and between College and First streets. It is the Agency's hope that this would enhance the Downtown's street life and nightlife by creating a lively, vibrant courtyard area that will support neighboring businesses, especially restaurants and cafes. This could be a pedestrian-friendly environment with connections to Main Street which in turn would increase foot traffic in the area and patronage of local shops/restaurants. It could be the venue for community events such as a Farmer's Market. Its potential as a dynamic urban destination location is enhanced by the historic buildings adjacent to the block, particularly the Hotel Woodland and the historic Elks building which together create a strong historic fabric.

Because of the long narrow buildings, many of which have functional separate spaces in the back, there might be opportunities to transform this area by providing new entries in the rear of the buildings and possibly a pathway (paseo)

linking the courtyard directly to Main Street. Ultimately, this courtyard could consist of outdoor dining opportunities and build on the existing successes of some of the establishments there. Opening up this area could require demolishing the American Legion building and/or possibly the Meier Car Dealership Building.

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY PARTICIPATION AND ASSISTANCE

The block is within the boundaries of the Woodland Redevelopment Project Area. The Redevelopment Agency successfully issued a bond in 2007 and is prepared to lead the efforts to invest and redevelop this site as a catalyst project for Downtown. The Agency staff will assist in the planning and design process as necessary to obtain the information needed by the consultant team and to coordinate review from the different city departments and staff. Agency financial assistance may be available, but the more competitive firm will demonstrate knowledge of other possible sources of financing and creative ways to structure and finance development of this type.

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

For the selected firm, the final product will be a plan with the four elements described below. The goal is to provide a strategy for the Agency and the community to develop this site in accordance with the desired vision and design plans and in a financially feasible manner.

The plan should include

1. A Design Plan that will
 - Create an exciting and inviting pedestrian-oriented area in the block bounded by College, First, Bush, and Main streets
 - Incorporate land use planning requirements, and address historic preservation concerns
 - Enhance rear entryways of existing buildings and include an attractive pedestrian walkway connecting the courtyard with Main Street
 - Accommodate necessary parking spaces and consider any potential relocation of existing owners or tenants
 - Identify level of environmental review needed

2. An engineering and development feasibility analysis that will identify all development constraints or requirements, including utilities, water and wastewater infrastructure, traffic circulation.

3. A project budget and market analysis showing

- All costs required to implement the Design Plan, including renovations of privately owned buildings
- Recommendations for the highest and best use of the historic buildings facing First Street given the current and future economy, and
- A financing plan that identifies potential sources of funding including private, redevelopment, city, state, and/ or federal funding.

4. An Implementation Strategy prepared with community participation and review that includes

- A schedule with milestones and benchmarks needed to implement the project.
- Identification of the roles and responsibilities of the Agency, the City, existing property owners, existing businesses, and potential new owners, and
- A presentation of the plan to the public and governing bodies:

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

The proposal should demonstrate the team's ability to plan this project and prepare the four components. The proposal should not exceed seven pages plus the attachments described below.

1. Cover Letter (one page)

2. Statement of qualifications (five pages)

a. Project Team Resume and organizational chart (two pages)

The project team should be identified by key skills or specialized knowledge. An organizational diagram and a brief resume of each team member shall be included. Any proposed sub-consultant shall be listed. Provide sub-consultants' experience. Full resumes may be provided in an attachment.

b. Examples of work. (three pages)

Provide a description of 1-3 projects similar in nature and scope to this RFQ that your firm or team has completed in the last five years. Include the length of time required to complete the project and the consultant cost. Identify any unique strengths or approaches that your firm may have related to this project.

Include client names, addresses, and telephone numbers. If a team or joint venture is proposed for this project, indicate which firm was involved with the project and their role and responsibility. Only include those projects where there is significant involvement from individuals who are part of this proposed

project team. (Additional pages can be attached of site plans or building designs of comparable work)

3. Estimated cost (one page)

Though not all the details about the project can known until the work is started, provide an estimate of the project costs required to complete a plan of this nature. A pre-submittal conference will be held before proposals are due to talk about the scope of the project and the Agency's expectations.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Submissions will be reviewed and ranked based on the following criteria:

1. Development team experience
2. Design and land use planning skills
3. Financial and real estate analysis experience
4. Knowledge of potential sources of state, federal and private financing sources that may be available for a project of this type.
5. Experience with mixed-use development
6. Experience in developing pedestrian friendly downtown places or projects.
7. Experience with incorporating historic preservation principles in new development proposals.
8. Estimated project costs
9. Experience in working with property owners and businesses involved in a prospective project site.

Reference checks will be made on past projects. The selection panel reserves the right to incorporate references and previous work experiences into its evaluation.

Based on the results of the written submittals, there maybe interviews with the highest scoring firms.

SELECTION COMMITTEE

The selection committee will be comprised of the following members:

- Assistant City Manager or his designee
- Redevelopment Manager
- A primary property owner on the site
- A Redevelopment Agency Board member or designee
- Planning Manager or his designee

The selection committee will select the firm and enter into negotiations to specify the scope of work, costs, and implementation schedule. This draft contract will be brought back to the Redevelopment Agency Board for approval.

SELECTION SCHEDULE

Though attendance is not required, an informational meeting for all interested applicants will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, May 2, 2008 at:

Woodland City Hall
Council Chambers
300 First Street
Woodland, CA. 95695
10:00 am--- noon

The following is an estimated schedule for selecting a firm and negotiating a contract:

May 9	Proposals due
May 16	Notification of top proposers
May 30	Interviews
June 3	Scoping meeting, contract negotiations and award
June 10	Execution of contract
June 30	Draft plan and feasibility study due
August	Public meetings
September	City Council review of plan

SUBMITTAL DEADLINE

Submit five copies of your response to this Request for Qualifications to:

City of Woodland
Redevelopment Agency
520 Court Street
Woodland, CA 95695

All proposals are due **Friday, May 9 by 3:00 pm.**