

STAFF REPORT

TO: Planning & Economic Development Committee **DATE:** 1/26/16

FROM: Todd Okolichany, AICP, LEED AP ND, Planning & Urban Design Director

PREPARED BY: Cathy Ball, PE, Executive Director of Planning & Multimodal Transportation
Todd Okolichany, AICP, LEED AP ND, Planning & Urban Design Director

SUBJECT: Process for City-Owned Properties at 68-76 Haywood Street and 33 and 37 Page Avenue

Summary

A staff briefing that outlines a process for designing a vision for city-owned properties located at 68-76 Haywood Street and 33 and 37 Page Avenue, in the city's Central Business District (CBD).

Background

At its December 12, 2015 meeting, the City Council directed staff to review alternatives for a potential process for the future use and design of two city-owned properties located at 68-76 Haywood Street (see attached map). The two subject properties – which measure approximately 0.55 acres in total - are located on the southern side of the intersection of Haywood Street and Page Avenue. One of the properties is currently being leased to a company for construction staging purposes. The lease runs through July 31, 2016.

The Haywood Street properties have a long and well documented history of potential development opportunities. Their location within the city's CBD make them very desirable as urban infill sites. The property was acquired for the purpose of constructing a parking garage with adjacent private development. The property was then proposed for a hotel development that did not occur. In the past year, the Economic Development Coalition solicited offers from developers for the purpose of developing an office building with an adjoining pocket park.

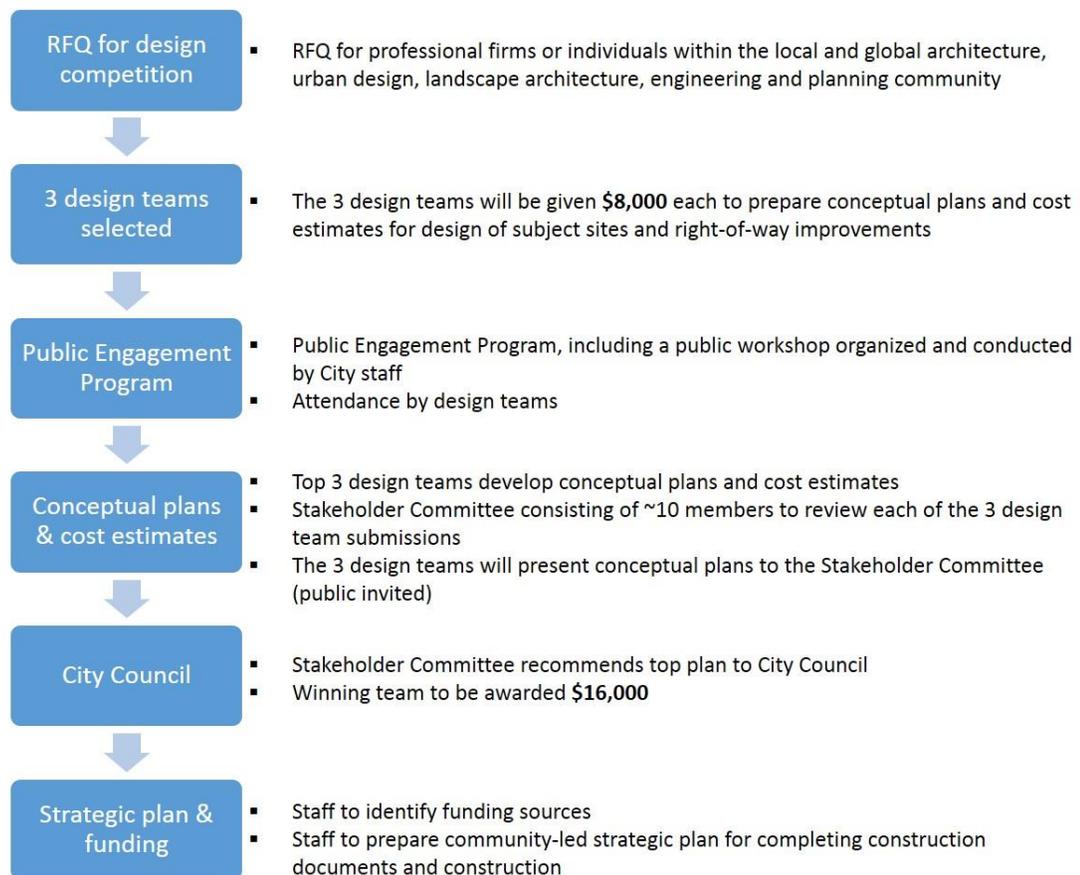
Many community members have expressed interest in a public space at this location, especially as the downtown continues to grow. A public process will be undertaken as part of the city's efforts to update its Comprehensive Plan in 2016-2017 in order to effectively sort through conflicting expectations, values and ideals for downtown parks and other types of public spaces in general; however, there is a current desire by the City Council to engage the public in an open process for a future vision for the Haywood Street properties so that these properties can begin to contribute to the downtown's dynamic environment and vibrancy.

In an effort to define the scope of the process, the city-owned property located at 37 Page Avenue has been included. This property is located just southwest of the Haywood Street parcels, directly across Battery Park Alley (see attached map), and is currently being used as a surface parking lot. When combined with the city-owned Haywood Street properties and the surrounding right-of-way, the Page Avenue property creates a larger study area and potential larger master planning opportunity for this area. The proposed scope does not include the property at 33 Page Avenue.

Review and Analysis

City staff conducted an analysis of several examples of successful efforts in other U.S. and international cities that involved planning for public spaces. Benchmark projects included community outreach and design competitions for public spaces in Dallas, Boston, Philadelphia, Miami and Ivano-Frankivsk in western Ukraine (see attached list of benchmark projects/cities and descriptions of design competitions). A combination of a public input process and a design contest were the focus of staff's benchmark comparison in an effort to (a) maximize public involvement in creating a vision for the study area; and (b) attract multiple design teams that would articulate the public's vision by facilitating a variety of solutions for this unique area.

Upon review of each of the design contests in the benchmark cities, the following potential framework was developed for community engagement, which includes a public engagement program and a design competition for the study area (see attached for a detailed project schedule):



The above framework includes elements of each of the benchmark projects that were reviewed. For example, similar to the Boston contest, the recommended scope of the project includes the public right-of-way within the vicinity of the subject parcels in order to improve the pedestrian experience, make this space more inviting, functional and user-friendly, and potentially integrate it into the overall concept for the area. Through the design process there is also an opportunity to examine the current roadway configuration and stormwater infrastructure. Similar to the Dallas design challenge, a community workshop is included in which staff would solicit public input on the vision for the study area, and which the three selected design teams would be invited to attend.

Financial Impact/Resources

The design competition would have a financial impact of \$50,000, which includes an \$8,000 stipend to the three selected design teams in order to prepare conceptual plans and cost estimates, and attend a public workshop and site visit; as well as a \$16,000 award to the winning team. The estimate also includes costs for conducting the public outreach and incidentals.

City staff resources would also be required to coordinate and conduct the public engagement program, identify funding sources after the preferred conceptual plan is selected, and develop the strategic plan for implementing the conceptual plan. Staff resources are anticipated from the following departments: Planning and Urban Design, Parks and Recreation, Transportation, Community and Economic Development, Public Works, Community and Public Engagement and Legal Services.

Unless directed otherwise, the proposed process would take approximately 12 months to complete. The deliverable would be a conceptual site plan developed with significant public engagement with costs for design, construction and maintenance. Funding for the design, construction and maintenance are not in the city's budget. Given the demands on the city's budget, it would be difficult to prioritize funding this project in the next several years without leveraging funding from other sources.

Next Steps

In order to move forward, direction from Council is needed on the following items:

1. The physical scope of the work:
 - a. Prichard Park, which is located within two blocks of this location (see attached map), could serve to compliment a public space at the Haywood Street location. Staff recommends that Prichard Park be included in the public process of the Haywood Street property.
 - b. The property at 33 Page, a part of the original plan for a parking garage at Haywood Street, was acquired to provide alternate access to the rear of properties on Haywood Street and Page Avenue. Currently these properties are served by an alley between the property at 68-76 Haywood Street and 37 Page Avenue. Direction is needed on whether the property at 33 Page Avenue should be included within the scope of this work.
2. Approval in concept for moving forward with a public process as outlined in this report for city-owned properties on Haywood Street and Page Avenue.
3. Approval of a budget for project funding to include a stipend, award and incidentals.

Attachments:

- (1) Map of Study Area
- (2) List of Comparable Contests
- (3) Project Schedule/Tasks
- (4) Map of Downtown Parks