

Nampa officials moving ahead with revitalization plans

Officials said at a meeting that the city soon will look into developers with experience in mixed-use projects.

Sandra Forester
The Idaho Statesman
12/12/07

Nampa city officials are on the verge of soliciting developers for the city's largest venture ever - several public and private developments that they hope will revitalize downtown.

"We've embarked on a very ambitious plan," said Mayor Tom Dale. "It's already paying dividends. Individual investment in downtown reflects city investments."

About 70 residents and business people got an update from officials Tuesday on plans for downtown revitalization but no word yet on where the projects will be located. They also watched a video, "Entrepreneurs Make It Happen," highlighting recent private business openings and renovations in downtown.

"We're coming around the clubhouse turn," said John Stainback, president and CEO of Stainback Private Public Real Estate, the city's consultant.

The next step is finding developers with experience in mixed-use projects and with deep pockets to carry the risk of up to \$30 million in cash equity, he said.

Requests for qualifications will be sent to up to 200 developers soon, Stainback said. The process to narrow the field to the top five should take about six months.

Revitalization plans call for a mixed-use block with housing, offices and shops; an 80,000-square-foot library with parking garage; an 80,000-square-foot public safety building with parking garage; and a public park.

A financial analysis earlier this year found a need in Nampa for 81 rental apartments, 121 condos, 80,000 square feet of office space and 73,000 square feet of retail space.

Officials say they will not announce the location of the projects until they have purchased all land sites, which are in negotiations.

"We just want to know where the library is going to be," said Barbara Luque, a longtime downtown resident.

The public safety building site could be announced by the end of January, and public bids for construction could open in the spring with construction beginning in the summer, said Beth Ineck, Nampa's economic development project manager.

Meanwhile, other tasks are being accomplished, she said.

A downtown traffic study is underway to determine how to move vehicles passing through around the area while slowing down traffic in the heart. Completion set for May 2008.

\$1 million water line upgrade should be completed in 2008.

Crosswalks were replaced at 1st Street and 13th Avenue South, with five more intersections to be completed by summer 2008.

Two faade projects have been completed, and a couple are under way.

Nampa Arts Commission was formed to promote and maintain public art downtown.

The city is considering ways to increase parking in historic downtown.

“Now it’s time to grow our personality,” Dale said.

“It’s not defined by the big shopping malls. It’s defined by who we are in our downtown.”