THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

Staff Report

Council Meeting Date: October 27, 2020

Subject: Master Concept Plan for City-Owned Properties on Haywood St and Page Ave

Staff Resource(s): Todd Okolichany, AICP, LEED AP ND, Planning and Urban Design Director
Steph Monson Dahl, Strategic Design and Development Manager

Action Requested: Consideration to Adopt Concept Plan for City-Owned Property at Haywood and Page

Background:

- In 2019 City Council authorized (Attachment 1) the City Manager to hire Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects to complete a Concept Master Plan based on the Haywood Street Vision Report (attachment 2).
- The report contemplated the future re-development of City-owned properties at 68 Haywood Street and 37 Page Avenue in the historic core of downtown Asheville.
- The Master Concept Plan ("Plan") requested by Council is now complete.
- This long-range plan was informed by;
    - the Council-appointed advisory board ("Vision Implementation Committee"),
    - public engagement,
    - economic and geographic data collection and analysis; and,
    - urban design activities that took place during the past year.
- See attachment 3a and 3b for documentation on Plan process and site history.
- The Plan incorporates a mix of uses, including
    - a multi-story mixed-use building that opens directly to a public space and provides ground floor activation on all four sides;
    - a central plaza for creative play, community gatherings and special events;
    - a community garden located next to a shared-use,
    - rentable kiosk;
    - a contemplation area featuring public art and cultural/historic interpretation;
    - native planting beds connected via universally accessible walking paths;
    - an active alleyway with market stalls between Haywood and Page; and,
    - a flexible seating area under a grove of trees along Page Avenue.
    - See attachment 3C for site plan and renderings.
- The Plan includes other streetscape improvements adjacent to the subject site, including across the street at the Harrah's Cherokee Center and Basilica of Saint Lawrence, as well as a realignment of Page Avenue.
- The level of detail at the concept plan level is medium; it provides the City with a clear understanding of the community's vision for the site and is flexible enough to adapt or modify during future implementation efforts.
- Deliverables also include a financial model that the City can use to analyze any future private development proposals for the mixed-use building.
- See attachment 3D for economic analysis and information on the financial model.
- The plan addresses a geographic area beyond the boundaries of the City-owned parcels.
- While staff has heard broad support for the plan, including support from the Vision Implementation Committee, some downtown stakeholders remain opposed to the new park component because of concerns over the City's capacity to maintain and care for parks in general.
- Some condominium owners at 60 Haywood have expressed opposition to having a building obstruct their existing views.
- The plan does not include an implementation section; staff could return to the Planning and Economic Development Committee and/or City Council next year with suggested implementation strategies, if requested.

Council Goal(s):

- A Well Planned and Livable Community

Committee(s):

- The Planning and Zoning Commission heard this item on 10/7/20 and voted 7:0 in favor of Council adopting the Plan.
- The Downtown Commission was introduced to this item on 9/11/20 and heard this item on 10/9/20 when they voted 9:1 in favor of Council adopting the Plan.
- The Planning and Economic Development Committee heard this item on 10/12/20 and voted 3:0 to forward the plan to Council and recommend adoption of this concept with no implementation plan.

Pro(s):

- The Plan provides clear guidance on how the community would like this site to be redeveloped in the future.
- Creation of the Plan occurred through a collaborative process with the community.

Con(s):

- Future implementation will require public resources including the development of partnerships for land acquisition, project funding and park maintenance.

Fiscal Impact:

- None currently as this is only a concept plan at this time. Approval of the Plan does not authorize the City to allocate any funds toward the Plan's implementation.
- An implementation plan and consideration of City funds would occur at a later date.

Suggested Motion:

- Motion to adopt the proposed Haywood and Page Concept Master Plan.

Attachment(s)

1) Council Authorizing Resolution
2) Haywood and Page Vision Report (2017)
3) Master Concept Plan Chapters:
   a) Process
   b) Historic Analysis
   c) Master Concept Plan
   d) Economic Analysis
4) Resolution to Adopt Master Concept Plan