

STAFF REPORT

Date: July 26, 2023

To: Mayor and City Council

Thru: Doug Thornley, City Manager

Subject: Staff Report (For Possible Action): Presentation, discussion and potential direction to staff regarding the next steps of the Phase One Action Plan of Virginia Street Placemaking Implementation Plan Study and authorization for the City Manager to approve a consultant agreement for Urban Design Services in an amount not to exceed \$365,000. (American Rescue Plan Funding)

From: Amy Pennington, Special Projects and Outreach Coordinator

Department: Public Works

Summary:

On April 12, 2023, Council accepted the Gehl Virginia Placemaking Study and phased implementation plan. Staff was directed to pursue phase one of the implementation plan including streetscape furnishing zones, Locomotion Plaza 2.0, and the ROW Placita, and the Façade Improvement Program and to bring an update to Council on options for the use of the ARPA funding allocated by Council on March 8, 2023.

The Placemaking Study recommended that the actions for prioritization take place in three phases. The first phase of projects will require an agreement with an Urban Designer. City staff anticipates the scope to include management and coordination of design, landscape, survey, and specialty design services such as geotechnical, structural and electrical. This agreement will provide 100 percent design for streetscape furnishing zones, Locomotion Plaza 2.0, and the ROW Placita.

Phase 1 – Areas 1, 3 & 4

Streetscape/Locomotion Plaza/Placita



Staff recommends Council authorize the City Manager to sign a consultant agreement for an Urban Design Firm to bring the Phase One recommendation to 100 percent design.

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

Economic and Community Development Infrastructure, and Environmental Sustainability

Previous Council Action:

April 12, 2023 – Council accepted the recommendations of the Virginia Street Urban Placemaking Study, including the Phased Implementation Plan, directing staff to develop cost estimates and return to Council with an update on Phase One of Implementation.

March 8, 2023 – Council approved the allocation of the remaining \$28,150,044.97 in State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds received through the American Rescue Plan Act on May 19, 2021, including possible allocation to specific projects identified through the public, Council, and staff engagement process or general spending categories identified by Council as a priority for fund allocation by December 31, 2024.

February 23, 2022 - Council approved to finalize and enter into a Professional Services Agreement with Gehl Studio to complete a Virginia Street Urban Placemaking Study in an amount not to exceed \$150,000. (Regional Transportation Commission reimbursement and Street Fund)

September 8, 2021 - Council approved an Interlocal Cooperative Agreement with the Regional

Transportation Commission (RTC) of Washoe County to complete a Virginia Street Urban Placemaking Study in an amount not to exceed \$150,000 with the RTC agreeing to reimburse the City of Reno 50 percent of the costs, in an amount not to exceed \$75,000. (Street Fund)

Background:

Council has approved for \$3,000,000 for Placemaking in State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to help begin implementation of recommendations from the Virginia Street Urban Placemaking Study. \$1,000,000 for the Re-Store Façade and Tenant Improvement Program and \$2,000,000 for other Placemaking efforts on Virginia Street. With Council's acceptance of the Gehl final report, city staff was directed to create design and cost estimates for each project based on the recommendations set forth by the Placemaking study. As projects are developed in detail, they are being brought back to Council for approval.

Discussion:

Gehl recommended that Implementation be executed in three phases. Each phase has actions and staff is developing action plan steps to implement each phase, starting with phase one.

Phase One Actions:

- Streetscape furnishing zones
- Locomotion Plaza 2.0
- The ROW Placita
- The Façade Improvement Program.

Phase Two Actions:

- Streetscape improvements across the site
 - Signal timing, street parking and pick-up/drop-off, bike facilities
- Believe Plaza 3.0 Initiation

Phase Three Actions:

- Streetscape improvements upper area
 - Improvements with the buses and freeway overpasses
- Maker Row @Court – edge activation in the lower area
- Believe Plaza Capital Improvements

The next step for the Phase One action plan requires a consultant agreement for Urban Design services to bring Streetscape furnishings, Locomotion Plaza 2.0, and The Row Placita to 100% design.

Phase One of Implementation	
Area 1	Streetscape Furnishing Zone Improvements
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement public seating on every block of Virginia Street • Pilot wayfinding signage with walking distances to districts and destinations • Assess opportunities for integration of shade: trees where not in conflict with underground, other shade • Assess need for upgrades to event infrastructure
Action Plan	<p>Step 1: Hire Urban Planning and Design Consultant for coordination of design, landscape, survey, and utilities service for the streetscape furnishing zone improvements.</p> <p>Step 2: 30% design options brought to Council for approval</p> <p>Step 3: 100% design and construction bidding</p> <p>Step 4: Construction</p>
Area 2	Facade Improvement & Activation
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop program and source funding for facade improvement program to manage vacancies and support groundfloor activation • Example: Pilot ground floor activation, starting with micro-retail for local businesses in the edge of the Circus Circus parking garage
Action Plan	<p>Early July: City of Reno to launch The RE-Store Facade and Tenant Improvement Program</p> <p>Program Description:</p> <p>Downtown needs reinvigorated storefronts! The RE-Store Facade and Tenant Improvement Program is designed to enhance the visual appeal, economic vitality, and overall livability of commercial areas of downtown. The program provides matching grants to both property owners and business tenants for facade improvements and interior upgrades.</p> <p>Funding Limits:</p> <p>The City of Reno will reimburse applicants for 50% of eligible</p>

	costs up to maximum grant total of \$50,000 for exterior facade improvement projects, and up to \$50,000 for interior tenant improvement projects. Matching grants for facade and tenant improvements can be combined at select locations for up to \$100,000 in reimbursement.
Area 3	Locomotion Plaza 2.0
Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site and implement event infrastructure and storage facilities • Source and implement movable chairs and tables, including lounge style chairs • Pilot a shade structure • Develop and communicate a plan for recurring events
Action Plan	<p>Step 1: Hire Urban Planning and Design Consultant for coordination of design, landscape, survey, and utilities service for the streetscape furnishing zone improvements.</p> <p>Step 2: 30% design options brought to Council for approval</p> <p>Step 3: 100% design and construction bidding</p> <p>Step 4: Construction</p>
Area 4	The ROW Placita
Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source and implement seating elements, movable by forklift, and include wayfinding with walking distances to districts and destinations • Coordinate operations and maintenance agreement with the ROW and DRP, consider using this as a pilot for a partnership program for activation of privately owned public space
Action Plan	<p>Step 1: Hire Urban Planning and Design Consultant for coordination of design with the ROW, landscape, survey, and utilities service for the streetscape furnishing zone improvements.</p> <p>Step 2: 30% design options brought to Council for approval</p> <p>Step 3: 100% design and construction bidding</p> <p>Step 4: Construction</p>

Financial Implications:

Funding for design consultant agreement will come from the Council approved \$2,000,000 in State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to help begin implementation of recommendations from the Virginia Street Urban Placemaking Study not to exceed \$365,000.

Legal Implications:

Legal review completed for compliance with City procedures and Nevada law.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends Council approve the next steps for Phase One of the Virginia Street Placemaking Study Implementation Plan and authorization for the City Manager to approve a consultant agreement for Urban Design services not to exceed \$365,000.

Proposed Motion:

I move to approve staff recommendation.

Attachments:

Placemaking Implementation Gehl Recommendations
Staff Presentation