

**To** Erik Thorvig, Director of Community Development

**From** Jeff McMenimen, Damon Farber

**Date** 9/2/2021

**Subject** September 13, City of Blaine City Council Work Session

**Project** Master Land Use and Redevelopment Plan for Northtown Mall and Surrounding Area

**Project Number** 21-175

The following memorandum provides an update to City of Blaine Council members regarding the planning effort for the Master Land Use and Redevelopment Plan for Northtown Mall and Surrounding Area.

#### **Planning Efforts to Date (August)**

- Conducted Kickoff Meeting with consultant team and Project Management Team (PMT)
- Conducted interview with Northtown Mall owner (WPG)
- Conducted tour of Northtown Mall with city staff and mall owner
- Identifying key stakeholders and engagement opportunities
- Gathering background data/information - plans, studies, GIS data, regulatory documents, etc.

#### **Next Steps (Sept - Oct)**

- Prepare Draft Community Engagement Plan
- Prepare for Worldfest - pop-up community engagement opportunity
- Collect and review background materials - plans, studies, GIS data, regulatory documents, etc.
- Conduct existing conditions assessment
- Conduct market analysis, development program and strategies
- Conduct stakeholder interviews, listening sessions, and community engagement opportunities
- Prepare online survey and mapping exercise to gather community input
- Conduct Design Charrette/Workshop - Late October

#### **Mall Owner Interview Summary**

- City staff and Damon Farber met with WPG (mall ownership) on Tuesday, 8/24. Toured the mall and discussed the planning process, schedule, and potential futures for the mall.
- WPG said they have studied multiple scenarios for the future of the mall and that they do not think the mall can succeed as is in the marketplace for a variety of reasons:
  - Marketplace competition
  - Lacking land to build new retail
  - Mechanical and HVAC systems prevent them from developing outdoor environments
- WPG discussed several mechanisms that have worked on other redevelopment projects for their properties, partnering with municipalities, including:
  - Overlay districts
  - Parking ratios
  - Codes and ordinances
  - Zoning changes

- PUD's
- TIF and tax abatement
- Port Authority financing
- Identify opportunity areas
- Development programming
- WPG is very excited to see what the consultant team and city come up with and are very supportive of the planning effort.

### **Design Charrette (October 26-28)**

#### Purpose

- To foster collaboration & alignment among City of Blaine (staff and decision makers), key stakeholders, and the consultant team
- Review stakeholder input, site assessment, and market analysis findings
- Explore potential futures for the Northtown Mall study area
- Create preliminary sketch plan alternatives/concepts that support project goals
- Build consensus around the most worthy redevelopment concepts
- Provide a foundation for subsequent preliminary redevelopment/revitalization alternatives

#### Process

- 3-day collaborative workshop involving consultant team, PMT, and key stakeholders
- Overview and discussion of stakeholder input, site assessment, and market analysis
- Design team break-out sessions
- Development of sketch plan alternatives – plans/diagrams, massing studies, land use programs, public realm/placemaking ideas, transportation improvements, etc.
- Pin-up session and discussion of redevelopment/revitalization concepts with PMT and key stakeholders

#### Participants

- Design consultant team members (Damon Farber, Gensler, SEH)
- Project Management Team (city staff)
- City Commission and Council members
- Selected key stakeholders – property owners, agencies, neighborhood representatives, etc.

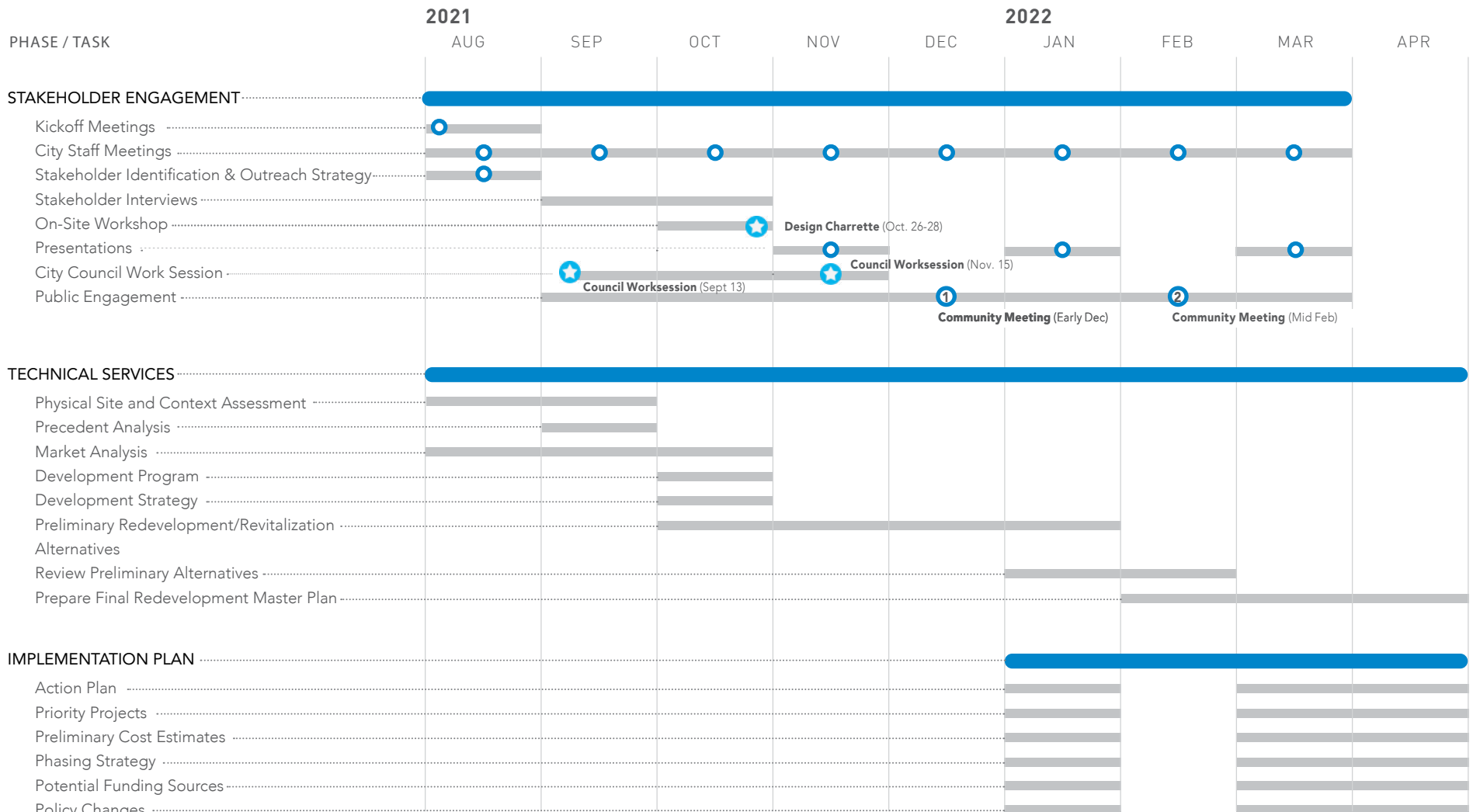
# PROJECT SCHEDULE

## TIMELINE

This is a significant and important project for Damon Farber and the consultant team. Each firm has identified and committed top leadership and talent contributing necessary time within the project timeline to create and deliver a process and products that meet the highest level of professional standards. We anticipate an 8-9 month process to complete the outlined scope of work. The following schedule outlines the anticipated timeline.

## CITY STAFF ENGAGEMENT/EXPECTATIONS

The core team will meet with the PMT on a monthly basis with bi-weekly phone or virtual meeting check-ins with the project manager and staff. We will look to the City to identify key stakeholders, arrange meetings for work sessions and engagement activities, and to review and provide direction on work progress and products.



- MEETINGS:**
- ① Community Meetings
  - Milestone Meetings
  - ★ Workshop/Working Session

**RECURRING MEETINGS (not depicted below):**

- Bi-Monthly Project Management Team (PMT) Meetings w/ City
- Bi-Weekly Project Manager Check-ins