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Nampa moving quickly on plans for downtown

Trying to breath new life into downtown, Nampa officials are dashing to complete finance and development plans by this fall to build a new library, police station, court annex and city hall in the heart of the city through public/private partnerships.

"I am very excited about this," said Heather Richards, project development coordinator. "We are moving forward quickly and are producing a successful project that will be an enormous benefit to the downtown and the community."

Public/private partnership projects will allow the city to build the needed public facilities at little cost to taxpayers, and the new construction will serve as a catalyst for revitalization, Richards said.

Stainback Public/Private Real Estate representatives, hired by the city to accomplish finance and development plans, have visited Nampa twice, most recently two weeks ago, to meet with community stakeholders and city leaders, she said.

The company is finalizing the downtown Nampa master plan, putting together a conceptual design and analyzing building heights and total square footage for public and private needs, Richards said.

A comprehensive market analysis is under way by Economics Research Associates to determine what types of high-density development -- including residences, professional office space and retail development -- Nampa will be able to support in its downtown, and the amount of parking needed. City officials said the analysis will enable the private sector to secure financing for the joint project.

"This will change the face of downtown Nampa forever," said Nampa Mayor Tom Dale. "Engaging the private sector in creating a vibrant downtown just makes sense."

Economics Research Associates met with local businesspeople and officials last week.

City leaders and other stakeholders also had discussions last week with an architectural firm hired by the library board to work on design concepts for a new downtown library. The company is working closely with Stainback.

The city plans to announce design concepts with renderings for each project in the fall and to start construction next summer on the first phase, Richards said.

To offer story ideas or comments, contact reporter Sandra Forester at 377-6464 or sforester@idahostatesman.com