

## **7. STRATEGY FOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

The vision, goals, and objectives articulated throughout this document indicate clearly that the performance expectations for the Site are extraordinarily high. In order to achieve such expectations—or even come close to doing so—a thoughtful implementation strategy relying on a variety of recommendations with a realistic timeline should be established, and that strategy should be held to over time. While it is typical that minor refinements to such a strategy occur as time progresses and more opportunities present themselves, the key milestones of the implementation plan should remain fixed once set.

### **7.1 Decision to Build City Hall on Site**

An important decision for the city of Maple Valley is to determine where it will make the investment to build its first permanent City Hall. As the seat of local government and a highly symbolic focal point that should be serviceable for at least a half century, City Hall should be extremely well designed and well located. The location of the site has profound meaning and will convey a strong message about our community as we grow to a thriving city.

The performance expectations of this plan hinge upon its civic components. The most fundamental component is City Hall. This plan strongly recommends that City Hall be the cornerstone of the development of the Site. In addition to the formal review and adoption of this plan, the City Council should make a formal decision to build City Hall on the Site and decide a timeline for building City Hall.

### **7.2 Refinement of Needs**

If the City is committed to locating City Hall on the Site, and City Hall is to be the catalyst for the improvement of the Site, then related needs assessments must be conducted.

#### **7.2.1 City Hall Facilities Study**

In order to guide the plans for the City Hall, Maple Valley must know the facilities program. That is, how much office space is required? What are the needs for the City Council Chambers? How many meeting rooms are required and of what variety and size? What are the growth needs over time? A facilities study can answer all of these questions. Therefore, prior to, or concurrent with, the design/development competition and any other recommendations or processes that facilitate development of the new City Hall (see 7.3), the City should commission a facilities study to define current and projected space needs. The selected consultant will evaluate the demands of each City department and will project future needs based on population and other growth factors. The City Hall should serve the community for at least 50

years; therefore, it is important that it be designed to change over time to accommodate a growing community.

### **7.2.2 Market Research**

In addition to the civic components, which could include other public use opportunities as well, the Site composition may provide for commercial components including a restaurant, offices, and other commercial uses. Market research would help determine the specific types, quantity and feasibility of these uses on the Site. Preliminarily, the research may simply require interviews with real estate professionals and potential users, but as the program becomes more refined, more detailed market research may be required.

### **7.3 Design/Development Competition**

All of the uses on the Site, but perhaps especially the civic ones, should be architecturally interesting and visually inspiring; they should be a point of pride for the Maple Valley community.

One way to gain greater assurance that this will happen is to conduct a design/development competition. Such a competition could attract top-quality architects and development teams from throughout the region and beyond. A competition would be a high-profile process that would involve the community at key points and would generate attention and a “buzz” about what soon will start happening at the Site. A competition would allow the City to see multiple design options from architects before selecting a final plan.

#### **7.3.1 Select a Competition Manager**

A design/development competition is an involved process that should follow set guidelines. If this recommendation becomes the preferred choice for reviewing site development options and can generate sufficient response from the development community, the City should select a consultant who has experience organizing and leading such competitions to lead the effort for the City. The consultant would work with the City to define the process, identify potential participants, and manage the process through final selection.

#### **7.3.2 Conduct Competition**

With a Competition Manager in place and both a City Hall facilities study and other market research either complete or in process, the competition should begin by identifying and inviting selected architects and development firms to participate. The competition could be conducted in stages, beginning with a simple statement of qualifications and eventually leading to detailed design proposals. These steps are also appropriate to inviting Request for Proposals (RFP), Letters of Intent (LOI) and other marketing strategies. As noted above, the Competition Manager would prepare a detailed process and schedule with input from the CAC (see ongoing

CAC participation, Section 7.7). Because of their long-term involvement and understanding of the Site and its performance expectations, the CAC members should be part of the process for selecting a competition winner and/or participating in a development selection alternative based on the design competition process or other marketing strategies utilized.

#### **7.4 Review Financial Tools and Options**

Subsequent to requesting input from the development community in a formalized manner including possibly the design competition, a financial plan should be prepared that will identify the tools and strategies that can enable the City to plan for the construction of all components of the vision. Construction of a City Hall, plazas and open spaces areas, other civic uses, and commercial uses will require significant levels of public/private partnerships and investments.

Prior to any site development options the City should prepare financial strategies that identify all of the potential sources of financing. Though preliminary, such an itemization could include:

##### **7.4.1 Bonds**

The City can issue a variety of bonds (both general obligation and others) to finance parts of the program.

##### **7.4.2 Lease to Own**

Some public agencies have built city halls and other civic buildings through lease to own strategies. Under this approach, a private development firm constructs a public building to agreed specifications, and then leases that building to the public agency for a fixed term. The private development firm is sometimes able to get favorable financing, and is attracted to a low-risk option to build a project with a guaranteed tenant for established terms. Because the public agency is leasing the building but not financing it, the agreement is not considered debt service and, therefore, does not count against the public agency's debt capacity. But rather is an operating expense that hits the City's annual operating budget. At the end of the lease, the public agency gains ownership of the building.

This type of approach can also involve utilizing the primary land asset as an incentive and/or concessions on cost of land in order to encourage development and to defray potential costs associated with building, maintaining and operating a new municipal complex (see Section 7.4.4).

##### **7.4.3 Public/Private Partnerships**

With a vision for commercial uses (limited retail, restaurants, office) at the Site, there are many opportunities for the City to enter into public/private partnerships to achieve development of those portions of the plan. A public/private partnership could take many forms, including shared

facilities, land leases, infrastructure support, financial incentives, special entitlement procedures (e.g., tax abatement), and many more. As the City moves closer to implementation, these partnership opportunities should be fully explored.

#### **7.4.4 Grants**

A variety of private and government grants may be available for various components of the project, particularly for the open space elements. The City should aggressively seek additional funding sources in order to leverage the local investments.

#### **7.4.5 Land Sale**

Although this is not the vision of the CAC, the City may determine that the sale of portions of the Site is necessary. This would generate revenue that could be used either to help retire the debt for the initial land purchase or applied to help realize other parts of the vision for the Site. As noted in the preliminary market analysis for the Site, the greatest opportunity for a land sale may be for higher-end residential development.

#### **7.5 Phasing Plan**

The Site will have many components, not all of which must be built at the same time. A detailed phasing plan would identify the timing of each element, which would be an important factor for determining the financing strategy. A phasing plan may need to address physical issues (e.g., access, terrain) as well as market demand for each use. The phasing plan could be included as part of the competition or developed subsequent to it and/or utilized in whichever marketing strategy is deemed most appropriate at the point at which marketing for development begins.

#### **7.6 Care and Maintenance of Site**

Whether or not plans are implemented, the CAC recommends that the City allocate adequate resources to ensure that the trees and vegetation on the Site are properly cared for. The existing network of social trails shall be maintained so that, in the interim, the public can enjoy the Site until future development occurs. The Site shall be patrolled and monitored regularly so that it remains safe and clean.

The CAC's expectation is for the City to designate specific funds in the annual operating budget to provide for these needs.

#### **7.7 On-going Advisory Role**

The CAC shall have an on-going role throughout the development process including the competition and additional marketing strategies that may be undertaken to advise the City and review implementation of the winning development concepts. The CAC's role could be

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augmented with individuals whose professional expertise fits with the needs of the implementation plan. The CAC intends to continue to advise the City in the most appropriate format possible, be it continuation of the CAC in its current form, as part of a City based Economic Development Board or other configuration that provides for ongoing review and advice regarding potential site development strategies and implementation.

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