STAFF REPORT

MEETING
DATE: July 10, 2018
TO: City Council
FROM: Peggy Flynn, Assistant City Manager
Russ Thompson, Public Works Director
Jessica Deakyne, Senior Management Analyst
SUBJECT: DIRECTION ON REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE CITY-OWNED HISTORIC DOWNTOWN TRAIN DEPOT AND SITE

REQUEST

Consider and possibly take action to authorize the City Manager to proceed with a Request for Proposals (RFP) process for the renovation and reuse of the City-owned Historic Train Depot and Site, Marin County Assessor’s Parcel Number 153-057-22, located at 695 Grant Avenue.

BACKGROUND

On June 27, 2017, the City Council requested staff to agendize an item to “develop options and a plan of action to renovate and reuse the City-owned Historic Depot located at Railroad and Grant Avenues in Downtown Novato.” At their September 26, 2017 meeting, the City Council provided direction to begin outreach and information gathering on options for the potential renovation and reuse of the historic train depot and City-owned Depot Lot in Downtown Novato with cost for this initial process not to exceed $50,000.

Beginning in March 2018 and continuing through the present, the City has conducted extensive public outreach through innovative and inclusive approaches to bring the community together and develop a shared vision for the site. As a result, staff is prepared to issue a RFP—an invitation to propose ideas, concepts, approaches, and alternatives for the site to bring to reality the ideas developed during the community engagement process.

DISCUSSION

Overview of the Public Engagement Process

During the public engagement process, the City convened two formal workshops on Saturday, March 17 and Thursday, April 19, several individual and organizational meetings, produced a community survey, undertook on-the-ground canvassing, and utilized a variety of other methods to excite and engage the community in the process of developing a shared vision for what could be realized at the Depot site.
This process was intentionally designed to achieve two focused outcomes: a high degree of participation from across our community (including designing for attracting the participation of many who had traditionally not engaged in community planning activities), and instilling confidence in the community that the City would hear their input and put it into action. Through this process, rather than our community members referring to opportunities to be harnessed and challenges to be overcome as issues that “they need to do something about,” what came through clearly in all forms of engagement was “we can achieve something special here,” and “we have the opportunity to make a real difference with this project.” In short, our community members became strongly invested in this process.

Based on the community comments and input, six key themes reflecting what the community wished to see realized at the site became evident:

- **Downtown Revitalization**—bringing a comprehensive and exciting approach to creating a new dimension of a “city center,” which includes further activating the central core of the City, encouraging innovative approaches to economic development, and creating new ways of building the City’s economic base.
- **Sustainable Infrastructure/SMART**—embracing the City’s commitment to sustainability and elements of our Climate Action Plan and incorporating the SMART concept of transportation models of the future into utilization models for the site.
- **Placemaking/A Sense of Identity**—bringing, through both the engagement process, and the redevelopment/activation of this site, a sense of civic pride, a public, multigenerational gathering place, and a clear municipal identity.
- **Our Historic Roots/Community**—honoring the traditions and historical context of the City, including its rural character and connection to nature, and the diverse elements of the community.
- **Economic & Community Vitality**—forging a new community commitment to innovative and inclusive dimensions of economic activity in the City, benefiting all members, and demographics of our diverse community.
- **Civic Pride & Engagement**—creating a renewed sense that the City is capable of dreaming big, envisioning breakthrough approaches to bring the community together to envision and realize an exciting shared future and elevate expectations of the community in the context of seeking input and realizing that shared future.

The table below reflects these themes, expressed in terms of the detailed experiences (intangible activities and elements of community participation and civic pride) and uses (practical ways of utilizing the Depot site to achieve the desired experiences and give meaning to the themes expressed by the community). Summaries of the two community meetings and the input to-date is posted on the City’s website at [novato.org/downtowndepot](http://novato.org/downtowndepot).
### Community Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Downtown Revitalization</th>
<th>Sustainable Infrastructure</th>
<th>Placemaking/Identity</th>
<th>Historic Roots</th>
<th>Economic &amp; Community Vitality</th>
<th>Civic Pride &amp; Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depot as Gateway into Downtown Novato</th>
<th>Ease of Access Friendly Green</th>
<th>Creating a Shared Community Identity</th>
<th>Creative use of Depot Building</th>
<th>Food Play/Entertainment Retail</th>
<th>Community Gathering Uniquely Novato</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Uses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wayfinding</th>
<th>Active uses to bring in visitors</th>
<th>multi-modal transportation for circulation</th>
<th>Pedestrian-friendly Bikes, Bike Paths, Pedestrian Mall Trees/landscaping</th>
<th>Recreation Multi-generational</th>
<th>Design &amp; Colors to Reflect Historic Roots &amp; Modern Sophistication</th>
<th>Snacks/Restaurants/ Food Stalls/ Food Trucks Local Entrepreneurs Makers Space: “Novato Made”</th>
<th>Children’s Play Area Community Meeting Space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Results of the Engagement Process

The engagement process has proven successful. More than 500 community members have engaged in this process through one of the many modalities of engagement that the City has employed. The community’s creative abilities have been fully activated through this process. Enthusiasm for the possibilities of what the site could mean to the City and the community has been greatly elevated.

This resulted from the process of convening open, yet structured, input sessions during the two community workshops (March 17 at City Hall, and the April 19 at the Depot site), and creating open and wide-ranging smaller input sessions with many diverse dimensions of our community. These include meetings with businesses of all sizes, non-profit and service groups, neighborhoods, community groups, and civic organizations.

Throughout the engagement process, three key messages were communicated: 1) the community’s input is deeply valued, 2) the community’s creativity truly matters, and 3) their voice will be heard and reflected in the development of this site. As a result:

- Expressions of excitement for the development and activation of the site, even from those whose homes and business are located proximate to the site;
- Very few intimations of negative concern or opposition to developing the site; and
- A high degree of alignment and common expression of interest in alternatives for site development.
Some examples of the ideas and experiences commonly expressed by the community for the site include:

- Multigenerational gathering places to build community and host celebrations, including food, performance, and music venues;
- Economic development and revitalization opportunities, including maker spaces and pilot or prototype sites for small, local entrepreneurs to test, develop, and launch their businesses;
- Flexible uses that could accommodate prototyping business and community uses that could migrate from the Depot location to other parts of the City, and that could vary seasonally;
- Inclusive, sustainable, and innovative uses that invite participation across the diversity of age groups, demographics, and culturally diverse members of our community.

Next Steps

Staff is recommending that the City issue a RFP to a broad range of potential development partners. Architects, city planners, general contractors, designers, financiers, developers, businesses, educators, makers and others will all be invited to propose. The City will encourage the formation of diverse teams of professionals and disciplines to propose together on this project. We will also encourage small business owners, individual entrepreneurs, and other creative partners to participate in the RFP process.

The most important tenet of the RFP responses will be that proposers honor the community’s vision for the site. The evaluation process staff will design for reviewing and vetting the responses will reflect this key priority.

The public outreach process enabled staff to gain and grow public trust, reinforced by the integrity of the engagement process. To continue to foster public interest and trust in this process, reinforcing and respecting what the community expressed as their desire for the project and to continue to include them in meaningful ways will be paramount as we move forward. The community has shown up, participated, and continues to show great interest and ownership in this project. Staff continues to be transparent and proactive in our outreach and it is incumbent upon staff to continue to foster that interest and trust throughout this process. We have therefore included continuing public engagement as an element of the project workplan below:

Proposed Timing:

- RFP out: July 30
- Tours upon request
- Responses due: October 1
- Community Open House/workshop to review proposals: mid-October
- City Council to select proposal(s) for negotiation: mid-November

Distribution:
All RFPs will be:
1. Marketed directly to development partners with experience in public-private partnerships
and/or the adaptive re-use of historically significant structures; and

2. Emailed to all parties who have expressed interest by signing up for updates on the Downtown Depot site or attending community meetings related to this project; and

3. Posted in a local newspaper of record, North Bay Business Journal, and San Francisco Business Times; and

4. Posted on oppsites.com, a website that provides exposure to a national audience of real estate professionals interested in redevelopment opportunities; and

5. Posted on the City website and promoted widely through City communications resources; and

6. Shared through partner communications including the Novato Chamber, Hispanic Chamber, the City’s Economic Development Advisory Commission, Novato Historical Guild, etc.

Selection Process:
1. Review of qualifying proposals will begin in October 2018 by a process led by an internal staff technical advisory team comprising staff throughout the organization.

2. After a first review for completeness of proposals, staff will work with the qualified respondents to prepare a community workshop. At the workshop, respondents will briefly present their proposals to the community, guided by skilled facilitation to ensure a high level of transparency, engagement, and participation. These presentations will also be posted online and community members who cannot attend the workshop will be invited to give their input via an Open Novato survey. Proposals will then be presented to the Council and staff will seek direction regarding which team(s) to enter into an Exclusive Right to Negotiate agreement.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Guiding Principles:
The guiding principles of our public outreach process has focused on the goal of encouraging the public to share their ideas and staff documented this feedback in a variety of ways to ensure we got it right. At the beginning of the process, the availability of options was unlimited: there were no limits on the creativity process for this engagement. Despite this, the community has returned again and again with similar ideas in each iteration of feedback. Attempts to hear the community were not a “one and done” but rather a creative, flexible, iterative and inclusive process. We approached the community authentically and with purpose to ensure we learned concerns early in order to mitigate them.

Community Engagement:
Staff hosted two community workshops on March 17 and April 19, 2018 with more than 230 community members in attendance. As of June 25, 2018, we have received 110 responses on the survey posted on Open Novato, the equivalent of 5.5 hours of public comment at three minutes each. Each workshop considered the attendee and planned for their full participation. For instance, staff arranged for childcare, which attributed to staff hearing from a new subset at community meetings: parents of younger children. There was also food at each of the workshops, and on April 19, 2018, we invited the community to eat dinner with us at a pop-up on the site to help the community get a feel for the space. Many community members chose to stay for the duration of the workshop, but they could also drop in, give feedback and head out which also likely attributed to high attendance numbers.
The webpage novato.org/downtowndepot has received 626 unique page views since it was created on February 26, 2018. This is an important metric for staff as the community lists the website as its most frequently utilized public engagement tool. The webpage also provides the community up-to-date information on the project so they can access as its convenient for them.

Staff has also met with the community in several meetings including Whole Foods and the ownership of the Millworks building and their residents, the Novato Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Novato Business Association, businesses on Grant, large employers in the City, the Novato Historical Guild, the Depot “Caretakers,” and North Marin Community Services. Mailed notices in English and Spanish were also sent announcing each workshop.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The City owns the Depot site. Depending on the results of the proposals, the City may or may not convey the site in a lease or for sale transaction. The City expects proposers to use creativity and innovative financial models to ensure that the Project is, at a minimum, revenue neutral to the City.

While all financial models will be considered, the City will give favorable consideration to proposals that create revenues for the City. Revenue sharing, innovative cost and revenue modeling, and other alternatives will be open for proposers to consider and propose.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Authorize the City Manager to develop and issue a Request for Proposals for the City-owned Historic Downtown Train Depot and Site, Marin County Assessor’s Parcel Number 153-057-22, located at 695 Grant Avenue.

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Map of site
2. Community feedback received at Depot workshops
3. Presentation
### Art/Preservation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestion</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keep our future connected to our agricultural past</td>
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<tr>
<td>Build new station using old building cargo</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bring history museum downtown-across De Long to Simmons house</td>
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<tr>
<td>Big historic photos inside an activated depot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Put an old railroad at the depot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keep historical architecture of building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walk-through steam train or historic train/museum permanent installation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retain historic rail depot feel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keep the train station, put railroad or city artifacts in the depot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Move rail artifacts next to station</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respect legacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restore historical character of old train</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preserve it the way it is</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keep it quaint—people like to visit beautiful eye candy places</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keep historic depot architecture</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reference Downtown Historic District (signage)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keep the depot</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrate existing buildings into any project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community use room and keep history of depot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restore existing train station as mini-museum for history of Railroad and Novato, convert existing historic houses to form historic area and expand &quot;old town&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incorporate historic aspects to any new architecture and business-&gt;form displays</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have a display of railroad influence on Novato in the depot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preserve the history of the depot and revamp original building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts oriented community space</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Make depot the Novato Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Modern space with nod to history</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain historic feel of downtown</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Art benches downtown</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>More art in Novato</td>
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<tr>
<td>Build the depot building that burned down as originally built</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incorporate Novato History with multiple tile boards on the platform</td>
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<tr>
<td>Let the downtown keep pace with city's changing population</td>
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<tr>
<td>Echo design from old depot throughout the new design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art Center</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Keep historic character of building</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Local arts/crafts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Permanent/seasonal art of the past work, local wall for art as can provide a platform for young artists to showcase their talents while inspiring future local art</td>
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<tr>
<td>turn historic depot into museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Architecture that blends with history</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local artist rendering</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Use an oak tree as a common motif</td>
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<tr>
<td>Novato themed color and design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mural celebrating the Chicano, native, Anglo, unity through time to create this livable space we call</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community Feedback Received at Depot Workshops
March 17 and April 19, 2018

home
Historic
Western heritage
Put history museum in the old depot
Downtown Art center
Restore downtown theater as performing arts center
Showcase local artists, include sculpture in landscape design, art displays in Depot building
And have the historical guild put up a history of rail in Novato-Rebuild old freight depot and use open freight doc area as stage for events, dining outside or bring in old passenger car for eating.
Historical influence will really be accomplished with restoration of old, historic depot. The Petaluma restoration of their depot was great, but there is nothing else nearby. This is a great opportunity for Novato.
Passenger station should be a period piece compatible with historic downtown and compatible with existing and intact historic station

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food/Beverage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pizza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put a coffee shop in depot buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rebuild the old freight depot and put a restaurant on the freight platform with some open air dining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local, wine, beer, and food</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baked goods/coffee local bakeries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open food truck access</td>
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<tr>
<td>local food, farms, farm to table</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food and drink center use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move Farmers Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European open dining and gathering areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and place to meet and talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food purveyors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Cream Shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beer garden and live music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snack/Coffee bar for depot riders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food trucks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food, wine, outdoor dining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better modern restaurants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More unique restaurants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place for food trucks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be open to new businesses and rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promenade with outdoor seating behind and eating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local wine, beer, food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor dining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local dining bars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community Feedback Received at Depot Workshops
March 17 and April 19, 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beer gardens</th>
<th>Bring Fairfax microbrewer downtown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dining and Drinking</td>
<td>Local food/produce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers market next to train</td>
<td>Indian Valley Brewing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Café shop near parks</td>
<td>Train stop with food, drinks meeting place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese Restaurant</td>
<td>More good food options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railcar restaurant</td>
<td>Railcar destination, turn depot into a bar restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Cream Store</td>
<td>Rotating food suppliers with picnic table seating and lights fenced in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor dining/entertainment HUB</td>
<td>Food trucks or kitchens, local breweries, artisan food makers, microbusinesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft beer on tap (local brewers), food trucks</td>
<td>Restaurants/cafes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rebuild the old freight building that burnt down—bring in a coffee shop/ice cream, etc.
Bring in old Rail cars for a restaurant. As people are dining or at the bar then can push a button to see the countryside passing them as they sit and dine/drink in the rail car booth. The digital age allows us to go anywhere while dining in Novato.
European style café/coffee, brandy, wine and beer
Farmers Market
Food trucks
Coffee shop or restaurant
Rotating food trucks, never perceived favoritism on the handful of food trucks that can fit in the space. Hopefully attract better lunch crowd.
Farmers market
Food truck with many different options and businesses that attract people downtown
Microbrewery with live music
Food trucks/coffee/drinks/eats/place to meet up with friends. Look forward to come in from Hamilton similar to Ferry Building SF. What type of businesses attract people to come downtown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landscape</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Railroad theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring people to our dairies and open space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Gathering and play area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restore the architecture, but make it progressive to bring people to Novato to experience our town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain/Restore depot as downtown gateway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini SF ferry/building adjustment park space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retain small town character and historic structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make Novato a destination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebuild the other depot buildings that burned down</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community Feedback Received at Depot Workshops
March 17 and April 19, 2018

Encourage walking and train
Open area beauty and fountain and open space/gathering all, including families
Make the train depot an annex to the history museum
Parking
Multi-story parking next to station
More outdoor dining and gathering areas
Redo the fountain
Roundabout on Redwood and Grant
Fire pits
Outdoor Lighting
Need pocket parking near Grant
More chess tables
Plant shade trees
Solar shade structures
Flexible space
More gathering places downtown
Trees, Plants, Sculptures, Benches
Keep open space around the depot
Harmonious design with Spanish tile roof, arched windows/doorways, color-light tan
Parking
Keep small town character
Parking
Unify building facades
Infill affordable housing near transit hubs
Fire pits
Trees
Make it a park or gathering place
A fun gathering space
Solar shade gathering
Benches for people to meet and talk
Beautiful shade trees in parking areas
A wonderful, vibrant entrance to our lovely historic town
Multi-cultural fountain on Redwood
More flowers/murals
Downtown garden, like they have at the fair, but more permanent, made by Master gardeners or high school gardening club could design/maintain
Horse and ranch themes
Bronze horses and a pond
Block street access from Grant walkway, playground, park setting
Beyond green building design
Angled parking on depot but keep trees
More trees
Pedestrian mall, street
Pedestrian mall, close Grant to cars from Machin to depot site
Historic railcar, civic pond with galloping horses and fountains
Pedestrian Mall
Community Feedback Received at Depot Workshops  
March 17 and April 19, 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preserve view to Mt. Burdell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cover parking lot with solar and on building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park here to walk to diners and theaters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish tile roofs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot of trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less parking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Localized water reuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solar panel cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuter parking lots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnic tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nice beautiful area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking on railroad at end by the freeway with a foot bridge over the train tracks. Avoid parking in front of businesses to attract more foot traffic and outdoor spaces along the street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This space next to SMART train could be best used landscaped and parking structure preferably below and landscaping on top. I am happy that smart train is here. As people get off the train you want them to move towards Grant Ave to enjoy the street/shops/restaurant/treats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fence (wood/privacy) *Length of path (follow path/property line)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recreation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make teen center into video game center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video game center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climbing wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More teen activities (laser tag??)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kids water play feature on closed streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay rides</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flea market gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candlepin bowling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuff for families with children to do something</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water feature that kids of all ages can play with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn depot into a movie theater</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community playground</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fair with rides</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laser Tag</td>
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<tr>
<td>Video Game Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unique shows</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting place where kids can play</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take train up to wine county for a wine tour for the day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We need a park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair everyday at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biking, hiking, scenery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Feedback about Downtown

- Restore community house
- Encourage mixed use buildings downtown
- Convert 1 block to open air promenade
- Keep downtown 2 stories
- Stimulate Nightlife (lots of thumbs up for this one)
- Keep downtown 2 stories
- Indoor all year farmers market in feed mill at Redwood
- Finish theatre
- Theater is key to bring people to Novato
- Renovated theater
- Expand retail and downtown North along Redwood Blvd
- Sufficient parking to support activities
- San Marin Hamilton Evenings events in Downtown Novato
- Billboards for Novato to tell people to go to Novato's downtown
- Visitors Center
- Water feature for kids to play in! (Flat with water squirting up)
- A place to sit and relax
- Battlebots for kids
- Cheaper Lego sets

### Multi-generational Considerations

- Place where both kids and adults can hang out together
- Place for kids to play and mingle while the adults mingle-family and fun
- Keep the depot, make it a wonderful space, kid fun
- Family friendly
- Family entertainment
- Entertainment: Bowling, Pool/Billiards, Shopping, Theatre
- Multiuse activities for kids
- Kids and adults mingling in one place
- Multigenerational things to do, younger people don't have things to do here
- Families
- Kid friendly science workshop
- Multi-generational
- Things for teens
- Kid's playground
- Kids play area
- Something enjoyable for all ages

### Multi-modal Transportation

- Make bikes at depot or possible to rent and easily bike to and from depot
- Bike pedals-wide and safe
- Connected bikeways
- Electric bikes
- Bicycle access and bike parking
### Community Feedback Received at Depot Workshops
March 17 and April 19, 2018

| Rental bikes with bicycle tour maps for visitors |
| Bike Rental lots with bike tour maps and bike sharing too |
| Shuttle buses |
| Less dependable on cars, transit-oriented and walkable |
| Rental bikes to be picked up at either Novato station |
| Bike racks and bikes |
| Provide transportation, buggies, trollies, cable cars, etc. |
| Shuttle to theater and shopping venues |
| Continue bike trail path connection from south end of Hamilton bay trail to San Rafael |
| Shuttle/trolley to bus depot downtown |
| No cars, pedestrian/bikes only |
| Commute Parking |

### Safety

| Lots of seating for seniors and disabled |
| Make it wheelchair accessible |
| Nice lighting as pass by on train |
| Police foot patrol/meet people |
| Safe place for kids |
| Wide sidewalks |
| Closed streets safe for kids |
| Blinking cross walks |
| make it safe, police patrols on foot |
| Safe place for children to play |
| Ped Crossing |
| Safety first. On the adjacent sidewalks and streets need better control |

### Retail

| Put a book store in depot buildings |
| Small local businesses |
| Clothes for younger folk, house goods |
| Focus on local retailers |
| More grocery stores and farmers markets |
| Men's casual clothing shop |
| Maker spaces |
| Celebrate local markets and artists |
| Downtown pedestrian mall |
| Local retailers |
| Retail to attract folks downtown |
| Popup shop at station and buildings |
| Local entrepreneurs |
| Move Farmer's Market to depot site |
| Retail/Craft local |
| Advertise downtown business/Walking map |
| City's storyboards on fence-all great ideas-need significant stores. Include smart station so seniors can buy their cards/tickets |
### Music

- Music garden
- Live Music
- Small areas for musicians
- Music with outdoor dining
- Use depot as a stage
- Places for kids to perform
- Theater is key to bring people to Novato
- Live music
- Cultural Center for music/speakers and plays
- Night life with live music
- Community concerts
- Live music
- Space for bands to play
- Music Venue
- Live music
- Live music
- light fare, live music
- Music until 10 pm
- Stage for live music
- Millworks residents want music, just not past 10 o'clock. Young folks/millennials to come enjoy music that is family friendly

### Other

- Focus on creating a fresh welcoming space, don't be constrained by nostalgia
- Let go of the past and move forward
- Make it a wonderful space, kid fun
- Make people think, "When I come to Novato, what can I do?"
- Enjoy and hang out together
- "Modern" nod to history, but mostly a place to hang out in
- Refillable water station
- Cell reception
- Good Wi-Fi and cell reception
- Beautification of building
- Small open use space for musicians
- The Novato Zip line
- A way to keep people in Novato
- A beautiful place for people to be proud of
- Places for kids to perform
- Free internet access
- Garbage cans
- Maker spaces
- Parades
- Wi-Fi
- More marching bands in 4th of July parade
Capsule hotel might work
A place to meet your neighbors and friends
Depot that is environmentally sustainable and with outdoor open space
Restore the community as a meeting space for community groups
Let's make Novato a destination
Broadband internet
Invest more in affordable housing and live local, work local
Increase opportunities for startup tech firms to be based in Novato
Furniture to lounge and chill
A reason for people to get off the train at Novato
Multiuse facility
Movie night
Spanish translated materials and signage
Open past 9
Stay open later
welcoming, inclusive, diverse
expand holiday celebration; add xmas carolers
Paint the depot
A weather vane-coordinating with theme of City Hall
San Marin Hamilton night out
Off the grid, self-sustainable water and energy
Roundabout Scott Ct.
Show folks on train that Novato is a vibrant, welcoming place
Do one thing really well, an anchor element for the downtown to leverage
Refurbish community house for Novato players theater
Hometown feel
Face of Novato
Need to change mindset of Novato "status quo"
Wifi
Bathrooms at depot site
Trash cans with segregated waste
Troughs with edibles along streets
San Marin/Hamilton/Family/Couples/Friends Night out
Using play structure creates energy, lights for the site, "Kidnetic energy"
Chamber of Commerce
Lease depot to Chamber of Commerce
Sell tickets as a depot for SMART, GGT & MT
Get NWPRRHS old semaphore and install here or at rebuilt freight depot for character flavor
The horses have nothing to do with the area. Look stupid and expensive.
Public Bathrooms
The view at this end should be enjoyed with a glass of wine/coffee
Commercial shared kitchen
Kitchen area
Space for Novato
This is an amazing opportunity to snowball the improvement of downtown, Love that site is right next to train tracks. Unlike Downtown Petaluma and Santa Rosa, nobody would have to walk far to find
local food, wine, beer, culture, entertainment. This area could be a big draw for (blank) and those traveling in on bike, SMART train, etc. Easy access, friendly spot to enjoy live music, rotating food trucks, etc. Just needs to be sophisticated and inviting and this area will be GREAT!! :)

Reopen the depot to serve as a café or extension of the Novato History Museum. Shade structure. Bocce ball courts. Parking is important. Make it a public square with parking, trees for shade, café, chess tables, a bocce court, flower boxes and bicycle parking area a la Mill Valley. Free stop for Novato depot only. Town clock. Exhibit space of MMOCA

Make it Like...

Use Mill Valley depot on model
Terrapin and Cornerstone
Victoria Station
San Pedro Square in San Jose
First Fridays
Terrapin
The Barlow
The SF Ferry Building
Cornerstone Sonoma
Denver Train Station
Farmers market at Civic center
The Block in Petaluma
Gathering place for community
A place to connect and create community
Day-care
Community groups need places to meet and hold events
Map for those who don't know Novato can know where to go
Make kids happy
San Pedro Square in San Jose
Mini soccer field like in San Rafael and AT&T Park
Depot café like Mill Valley food, coffee, books
Merry-Go-Round like the one at Davis Farmers Market
Make it like a piazza, a place to eat, mingle, dance, play
Like Mill Valley Depot
Something like Brewsters in Petaluma. Enjoyable for all ages
Like music, drinks, games, fun. Similar to Brewsters
DIRECTION ON REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL PROCESS FOR THE CITY-OWNED DOWNTOWN TRAIN DEPOT & SITE

CITY COUNCIL PRESENTATION: TUESDAY, JULY 10, 2018
BACKGROUND

June 27, 2017:
- City Council requested staff to agendize an item to “develop options and a plan of action to renovate and reuse the Historic Depot located at Railroad & Grant Avenues in Downtown Novato.”

September 26, 2017:
- City Council directed staff to begin outreach and information gathering for options for the renovation and reuse of the historic train depot and City-owned Depot lot in Downtown Novato; Council committed up to $50,000 for this initial process

March-June, 2018:
- City Staff conducted extensive engagement, outreach and information gathering to excite and engage the community in the process of developing a shared vision for what could be realized at the Depot site
The goals of the community engagement process were threefold:

- To build relationships & trust.
- During the engagement period, these relationships built a high degree of confidence that the City could accomplish something unique at the site.
- A deeper sense of civic pride and confidence in the City’s ability to build a common, shared vision of our future.
OUTREACH TO DATE

- Council meetings: June & September 2017
- Workshop #1: Saturday March 17, 2018 – generate themes
- Workshop #2: Thursday, April 19, 2018 – confirm themes
- Stakeholder outreach: March-June 2018
- Additional outreach via: Open Novato, social media, individual meetings, canvassing, business visits, flyers and mailed notices in English/Spanish
KEY THEMES

- Placemaking – A Sense of Identity
- Our Historic Roots & Community
- Economic & Community Vitality
- Sustainable Infrastructure/SMART
- Downtown Revitalization
- Civic Pride & Engagement
THEME 1: PLACEMAKING – A SENSE OF IDENTITY

What is Novato’s unique identity?
- Becoming a Destination
- Trees & green spaces; parks; Tree-City USA
- Child & Family Friendly Town
- Transit oriented/walkable
- Keep families & our youth in Novato
- Celebrate diversity & culture
- Blend the rural with the sophisticated
- Promotion of open spaces through “Green Path” connecting parks & public spaces

A place to connect and meet with friends
Multigenerational Inclusion
Community-gathering place
Events/Entertainment/ Food/Play
THEME 1: PLACEMAKING – A SENSE OF IDENTITY

Outdoor dining & community gathering areas

Similar experience: Terrapin/The Barlow/The Block/Mill Valley Lumber Yard

- Food stalls or trucks - seasonal and local offerings - design for flexible space or consistent and interesting food availability
- Beer/beer garden/fire pits
- Artisanal foods & beverages from northwest Marin
- Teen gathering spaces/burgers & shakes
- Live music/entertainment/inviting “grown-up” spaces
- Furniture (benches, chairs, tables) to lounge and chill
- Ice cream/snacks/coffee shop ; quick and slow options
- Farmers market experience
- Flexible spaces for multiple, complementary, and creative uses
THEME 2: OUR HISTORIC ROOTS & COMMUNITY

- Clear orienting & interpretive signage/displays our identity & invites further exploration of Novato
- Historic Guild/Museum presence/Visitor Info
- Train theme/icon/children’s train
- Design criteria for architecture for consistent look & feel of town buildings (i.e. The “Grange”)
- Novato Color Palette

- Maintain historic feel of Downtown
- Restore/integrate historic Depot
- Incorporate artifacts/design elements from Depot
- Honor our rural/agrarian roots in offerings
**Theme 3: Economic & Community Vitality**

- Local, unique purveyors
- Cultivate local art & culture
- “Promenade” to Civic Center via Grant
- Welcome center/gateway to Downtown
- Ensure connectivity of all of Downtown
- Encourage home grown businesses/entrepreneurship
- Maker-centric spaces; artisanal/local retail
- “Novato made” becomes a food and craft/arts brand

Integrate/connect with greater Downtown area

Maintain character, but modernize

Visitor kiosk & ease of wayfinding

Maker spaces/pop-up shops/co-working spaces
THEME 4: SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE/SMART

“A place I don’t need a car” – Multi-modal transport

“Grant Ave becomes a pedestrian mall”

Full access for all ages & abilities

Bike parking/ Electric bikes/ Bike lanes & equestrian paths

Similar Experience: Portland, Barcelona

- Self-sustaining renewable & locally sourced energy and water
- Designed to progressive building standards, e.g., beyond LEED
- Pedestrian-only street(s) to invite city access without cars
- WiFi, tech-friendly; support electric vehicles
- Clean energy buses/shuttles/street cars
- Walkable / Multi-modal (bikes, trains, buses)
THEME 5: DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

What Else We Have Heard

- Finish the Novato Theater
- Expand retail from downtown corridor north along Redwood
- Increase vibrant nightlife
- Give businesses reason to keep later hours
- Horse & bike friendly/historical and sophisticated
- Downtown becomes iconic destination for residents AND visitors
- Affordable/transit-oriented housing
- Make art fountain at Redwood & Grant
- Celebrate local makers and artists
- Farmer’s market like civic center
- Indoor all-year entertainment or other uses inside Feed Mill on Redwood
- Weekly flea market
What We Will Become

- A unique North Bay destination
- A “best cities to live” candidate
- Uniquely Novato: rural, sophisticated, friendly, inviting
- A place for our best and brightest young people to return to
- A beacon of hope and innovation for other cities
- Winner of design and revitalization awards
- A place where health, well-being, and vital lifestyles are celebrated
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – NEXT STEPS
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RFP designed to:

- Honor the creative and collaborative input received from the community
- Reflect the key themes raised by community members during the engagement process
- Evoke the creativity of responders, focusing on the larger opportunities for downtown activation, creating community pride, identity, and a sense of place
- Focus on flexible, scalable uses for the site, envisioning the Depot as a place to prototype innovative new business and business models to strengthen community and economic development
- Balance effectively the constraints of the site and the community’s creative input

CITY OF NOVATO CALIFORNIA
The most important tenet of the RFP responses will be that bidders honor the community’s vision for the site.
All RFPs will be:

- Marketed directly to development partners with demonstrated experience in creative public-private partnerships and/or the adaptive re-use of historic structures; and
- Emailed to all parties who have expressed interest by signing up for updates on the Downtown Depot site or attending community meetings related to this project; and
- Advertising in the North Bay Business Journal and San Francisco Business Times; and
- Posted on oppsites.com, a website that provides exposure to a national audience of real estate professionals interested in redevelopment opportunities; and
- Posted on the City website and promoted widely through City communications resources.
- Shared through partner communications including the Novato Chamber, Hispanic Chamber, the City’s Economic Development Advisory Commission, Novato Historical Guild, etc.
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS - PROPOSED TIMELINE

- RFP released: July 30, 2018
- RFP questions: August 13
- Tours upon request
- RFP responses due: October 1, 2018
- Community/Open House to review proposals: October
- City Council to select proposal(s) for negotiation: November
PROPOSED SELECTION PROCESS

- Review of proposals will begin on October 1, 2018 by an internal staff technical advisory team comprising key staff citywide.

- After a first review for completeness of proposals, staff will take all proposals back to the community via both a workshop and an Open Novato survey. At the workshop, community members can review each of the proposals and ask questions.

- The preferred proposals will be presented to the Council and staff will seek direction regarding which team(s) to enter into an Exclusive Right to Negotiate.
RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the City Manager to proceed with a Request for Proposal for the renovation and reuse of the Historic Downtown Train Depot Site, APN 153-057-22, located at 695 Grant Avenue.