

**downtown design plan
bismarck, north dakota**

phase 1

reconnaissance/ feasibility study

the
hodne/stageberg
partners
inc.

26 April 1973

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Mr. E. N. Sandwick
Executive Director
Bismarck Urban Renewal Agency
107 East Bowen Avenue
Bismarck, North Dakota 58501

Dear Gene:

The summary report attached represents completion of Phase I: Reconnaissance/Feasibility Study for the Bismarck Downtown Design Plan.

As noted in the report, in order to determine the best use of funds presently allocated for improvements within the urban renewal project area, it is first necessary to relate the project area successively to the "downtown", the expanded central area, and the community-at-large. Although the schedule is critical, it is essential, in our opinion, that a comprehensive design framework be established before detailed design of specific improvements.

We trust that this Phase I Study will substantiate that approach and serve as an important initial step in the process leading toward the realization of an improved downtown environment for Bismarck. We look forward to continuing the effort to achieve that goal.

Sincerely,

THE Hodne/Stageberg PARTNERS, Inc.


Thomas H. Hodne, Jr., AIA, AIP


Jon E. Gravender, AIA

DOWNTOWN DESIGN PLAN
BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA

PHASE I
Reconnaissance/Feasibility Study

Prepared by:
THE Hodne/Stageberg PARTNERS, Inc.
Minneapolis, Minnesota

26 April 1973

INTRODUCTION

THE Hodne/Stageberg PARTNERS were retained by the Bismarck Urban Renewal Agency to conduct a preliminary "Mall Feasibility Reconnaissance Study". It should be stated at the outset that the purpose of this initial study was not to design a "mall" or a "skywalk" system, but simply to review past proposals to that effect, review present conditions, forces, problems and potentials, and recommend a plan of action for future development within the context of urban design and planning. The study was to consider the entire central area or downtown, in relation both to the external forces of the community-at-large, and to the more specific internal forces of the three and one-half block urban renewal project area.

APPROACH

The study project was divided into two planning tasks: 1) to synthesize the available information and base data, and 2) to formulate a time/task schedule, or "action plan."

The URA staff assembled all requested base data available, including base maps, aerial photos, transportation studies, utility plans, public surveys, past planning proposals (by other consultants) and other miscellaneous information. This material was forwarded to us for review and assimilation. Following that, personal interviews with various individuals and groups selected by the staff as representative of community leadership were conducted over a two-day workshop period in Bismarck. In each interview, the respondent was asked to explain his role and relationship to downtown interests and decisions, to describe existing strengths and weaknesses of the downtown area, and to offer any suggestions for possible improvement. It should be noted that the intent was not to compile a statistically accurate or representative survey of opinion based on such limited samples, but rather to uncover issues as perceived by diverse interests and viewpoints in an attempt to define the problem. The workshop also served as a very small, but important, first step in fostering community participation in the planning process.

DILEMMA

The dilemma, of course, is to develop a sound process, plan and product within the severe limitations of schedule - a total period of only 14 months from inception to completion. It is our understanding that in order to take advantage of federal funding presently allocated or available, all construction within the urban renewal project area must be completed by June 30, 1974. An overrun would be at the risk of substantial interest penalty or even project close-out without further funding. Obviously, the advantage of conforming to the schedule and program would be to accomplish major public improvements without the necessity of any additional local assessments or tax revenues. The corollary disadvantage, however, is that the final product, even if possible, would likely suffer for lack of adequate planning and production time.

Without belaboring the difficulty of schedule, we nevertheless should note that the above schedule does not seem realistic -- even if the design objectives were agreed upon. Added to the programmatic shortcomings described in the next section, is the recognition that the priority of a mall or skyway project has not been clearly established within the community.

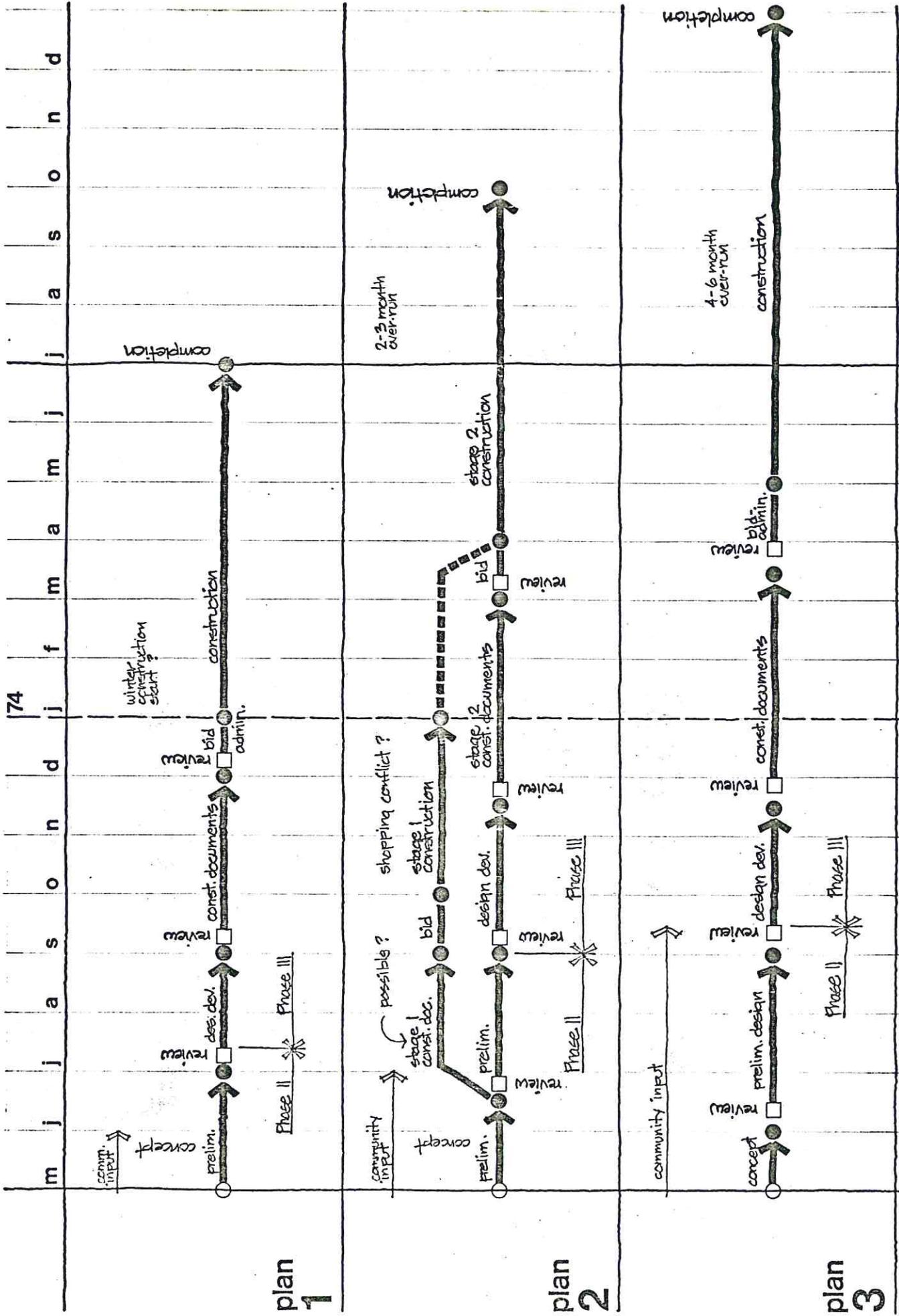
ACTION PLAN

At least four alternative strategies may offer possible resolution of the dilemma and provide a plan for action:

1. Proceed on a "crash" basis conventional approach within the given time constraints at the expense of limited, if any, time for adequate data base development, concept plan generation, preliminary design, community input and review, and agency approval. (Construction start January 1974).
2. Proceed on a "fast-track" basis in which it may be possible to stage some parts of construction, while completing final design and construction documents for subsequent construction and completion within a few months of the target date, but at the expense of some preliminary design and payment of the interest penalty. (Construction start: Stage I - October 1973; Stage II - April 1974).
3. Proceed on a "normal" sequential basis, providing most of the desirable program and preliminary design elements, but making a budgetary allowance for anticipated construction overrun. (Construction start May 1974).
4. Prepare a concept plan and preliminary design proposal to demonstrate intent and request a revision of project schedule, boundary, or financing from HUD.

Each of the first three plans is diagrammed in greater detail on the attached Time/Task Schedule. We would recommend Plan #4, but that is perhaps the least feasible administratively or politically. We would recommend Plan #1 only as a last resort. Of the two remaining, Plan #3 would be preferable if the interest penalty is acceptable.

In any event, it may be advisable to devote the initial three or four weeks to an intensive design effort to develop a long-range concept plan in order to better determine the remaining schedule requirements before selecting one of the four plans or variations thereof. It would be only a "pilot plan", subject to revision or rejection as the project progresses, because of its brush-stroke approach, but it would serve as a reference check and catalyst for action.



preliminary
time/task schedule
 downtown Bismarck

DESIGN COSTS

We would suggest that the costs for professional design services be considered in several parts, with the fees determined on a separate basis. Phase II would include all work through approval of the long-range concept plan and the immediate urban renewal project area preliminary design. For this phase we propose a per diem rate with an upset maximum amount of \$30,000, including the costs of any special consultants such as transportation planners, landscape architects or engineers, as appropriate. Because of the difficulty and inefficiency of "crash" design efforts, we would estimate the actual per diem costs to be scaled downward somewhat from Plan #1 respectively.

Phase III would include all design development, the preparation of construction documents (plans and specifications), project bidding and contract administration. Compensation would be based upon a percentage of estimated construction cost. A typical allowance for projects of this type is a range of between 15% to 25%, depending on the nature of the project and the scope of services. Construction supervision may be considered as part of Phase III or as a separate optional Phase IV, based upon a per diem rate. Because the nature and scope of the project has yet to be determined, Phase III or IV costs should be negotiated upon completion of Phase II.