

A public/private partnership supporting a downtown revitalization proposal is seeking a \$3.6 million grant and \$24 million federal loan to help fund the \$80 million project, which still needs City Council approval.

The loan from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development would be earmarked primarily for construction of a 130,000-square-foot Nordstrom at Main and Lincoln. The grant, applied for Wednesday, will help to ensure repayment of the loan.

The loan will also support other downtown improvements, such as an expanded parking facility; renovation of buildings between the new Nordstrom and The Bon Marche; and a two-story, glass-enclosed Post Street Atrium.

The city cannot apply for the loan until the Council approves the downtown project, probably in June, said Nancy Goodspeed, a consultant for the River Park Square project. Developers want a portion of Post vacated to accommodate the project.

The grant request does not require council approval, only the signature of City Manager Roger Crum. The deadline for grant applications was Friday, Goodspeed said.

River Park Square owners Citizens Realty Inc. and Lincoln Investment Co. would develop the shopping mall. The companies are affiliates of Cowles Publishing Co., publisher of The Spokesman-Review. River Park Square announced the project two weeks ago.

HUD Section 108 loans like that the city will seek are guaranteed, and come from a limited pool of money earmarked for urban renewal.

The loans go to those cities hoping to stimulate employment or help prevent an area - such as a downtown core - from becoming "a blighted area," Goodspeed said.

YES