

Still controversial Temple Terrace project revamped, approved

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Temple Terrace's downtown revitalization project will live, but there will be some changes.

City Council members Tuesday night voted to move forward with the project that would construct a mixture of residential and commercial buildings near the 56th Street and Bullard Parkway intersection despite losing a referendum last month that would've raised \$20 million for the project through a 1-mill tax hike.

Under the proposals that city officials will present to developer Unicorp National Developments will include splitting the estimated \$300 million project into two phases. The first phase would include many of the commercial and residential structures that have been planned from the start. The second phase, which officials said they wanted to have ready within six years, could possibly include a new city hall as well as a cultural arts center.

But those civic buildings - estimated to cost more than \$18 million - weren't offered without controversy.

"People need to understand that this falls into Phase II," said Councilwoman Linda Shattles. "We would go to that point in time and do a financial feasibility study. It's not written in stone at this point. It's not written in blood."

Councilman Frank Chillura, however, said that including even the possibility of the civic buildings on the property at a later date would go against what residents have been asking city officials to do.

"I spoke with numerous people and the majority said, 'Don't put that there,'" Chillura said of the civic buildings. "'I'm not saying that we don't need (them). I just don't support putting it in the redevelopment area."

Other changes eliminated a high-rise condominium project, and capped all buildings in the area at six stories.

City officials will present their revised plan to Unicorp this week, and the Orlando company will have 30 days to respond whether or not they wish to proceed with the project under the new conditions. Unicorp officials said in the past that they would be interested in continuing even with a scaled-back redevelopment project.