

City To Unveil Redevelopment Plans

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TEMPLE - TERRACE -- The city is on track to unveil plans for its redevelopment district at a Dec. 15 town hall meeting.

Since September, city leaders have been scrambling to pin down details of the first phase of redevelopment along Bullard Parkway and 56th Street. The Temple Terrace City Council laid out a 21-point plan to guide developer Unicorp National Developments, of Orlando, in its vision for the area. The process hit a snag earlier this month when Unicorp couldn't reach an agreement with Kash n' Karry for a Sweetbay store in the district, City Manager Kim Leinbach said.

"That's something Unicorp hasn't been able to get resolved," he told the council at a Tuesday meeting. "Hopefully, that will be done with the city getting involved."

Leinbach and Ralph Bosek, who is leading the redevelopment effort for the city, planned to meet with Kash n' Karry representatives this week. Once a decision is made, Unicorp's planners can complete renderings of the project and present them to the city council. The first phase of the project would stretch from Bullard Parkway and 56th Street south to Chicago Avenue and would include mixed-use buildings for shopping and residences, Bosek said. A second phase would stretch from Chicago Avenue south to the Hillsborough River and could include condo-style residences along the waterway. Both phases are to be completed in six years.

If everything goes smoothly, the council will show residents the plans at 7 p.m. Dec. 15, Mayor Joe Affronti said. The city anticipates a large turnout at the meeting, so seating will be available in city hall and at the Public Works Department on 53rd Street. The meeting will be televised in that building and on the government access channel for those who aren't able to attend.

Affronti said Tuesday he wants to make it clear that residents will be allowed to ask questions. "We hope to set up some sort of two-way radio system so people in the public works building also can ask questions," he said.

Questions likely will be plentiful. Councilman Ron Govin said he continues to receive e-mails from residents who want to know where the city stands in its redevelopment effort and what are the guidelines for the project.

"I think we need to make everyone aware those [21] points [the council voted on Sept. 27] are clearly stated," Govin said. "Until we see what Unicorp comes back with, we are under the assumption they have accepted those points."

The council discussed ways of better updating the public about the process and agreed to include a mention in utility bills and in a newsletter to be posted on the city's Web site. Mailing a newsletter to every resident could cost \$5,000 to \$9,000, said Paula MacDonald, the city's public information officer.

One key element the council wants included in any public announcements is a timeline for the project. Leinbach said Tuesday he hopes to begin discussions about the construction schedule in the first quarter of 2006.

There's plenty of work to be done before then, Affronti said.

"Just because we approve the plan in December doesn't mean it's a done deal," he said. "Once

[real estate adviser John Stainback] gets to the point to determining financial feasibility, then it will come back to council. Once we approve that, then we have to approve the contract."

Bosek assured the council that Torti Gallas, an urban planning firm that shepherded the city in creating its original redevelopment plan based on residents' feedback, is being consulted. The consultations involve the planner who worked with the city in the early stages, despite the fact that he has left the firm to start his own business, Bosek said.

"We're not just bringing you any plan," he said.

By industry standards, the city's plan to complete the two phases of redevelopment in six years is ambitious. That doesn't mean the initial process will go as quickly, Govin said.

"I think people need to understand this is a slow process," he said. "We've got a lot of deliberation yet to do."

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JOE AFFRONTI Temple Terrace mayor