

# City Closes In On Deal With Developer

By CANDACE J. SAMOLINSKI [csamolinski@tampatrib.com](mailto:csamolinski@tampatrib.com)

Published: Jan 28, 2006

TEMPLE TERRACE - The city is about two months away from signing a contract with Unicorp National Developments to begin work on a redevelopment project, but the financial aspects remain uncertain.

However, the question of the project's cost could be closer to being resolved in about a month with a decision from three prospective tenants, said Redevelopment Director Ralph Bosek.

The redevelopment project stalled in August after a referendum was defeated to help pay for infrastructure. It regained momentum in December when the Temple Terrace City Council approved Unicorp's revised plan to redevelop a blighted strip mall at Bullard Parkway and 56th Street.

Since then, the city has been awaiting commitments from three commercial tenants that operate in the area. Residents who attended Tuesday's quarterly town hall meeting learned a resolution is in the works.

Representatives from Kash n' Karry/Sweetbay Supermarkets, Regions Bank and Burger King have been given about a month to decide whether the companies want to occupy spaces within the redevelopment area, said City Manager Kim Leinbach.

"The [chief executive officer] at Sweetbay said they are working on a redesign that is more urban," Leinbach said. "It's in the planning stages and will be ground-breaking."

Without commitments from those businesses, it's impossible to determine costs, Bosek said.

While the city waits, city employees are working with the Florida Department of Transportation on a plan for improving traffic conditions along 56th Street that would coincide with the redevelopment project.

"We have gotten \$2.1 million from the federal government and we are asking for another \$1.5 million from the state," Bosek said. "I would say it will be at least a year before there is any construction on 56th Street."

The city also is moving toward adopting design guidelines that would keep new construction or major renovations of homes and businesses within a 225-acre tract, which includes the targeted redevelopment area, in line with its proposed Mediterranean-style architecture. The tract stretches from 98th Avenue south to Riverhills Drive and from Ridgedale Road/Sunnyside Road west to the city limits.

"We would like to get something in place so we can have intelligent development that will be in keeping with the city's vision for the redevelopment area," Bosek said. "That's better than putting a moratorium on any new projects."

With so many elements in the works, Leinbach said, it may appear things are moving slowly.

"I wish it would happen faster," he said. "I wish it would happen next week."