

Developer Is Asked To Refine Proposals

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TEMPLE TERRACE - Agreement on downtown redevelopment inched forward Tuesday night, with the city allotting two weeks for refinement of two proposals by the master developer.

As mandated by the council Feb. 6, the amended proposals cut the city's costs for revitalizing the area southeast of 56th Street and Bullard Parkway.

Plan C, preferred by a majority of council members, retains 7.1 city-owned acres south of Chicago Avenue for future development, minus 2.8 acres for a municipal park.

The city's net investment under the plan would be \$1.38 million after tax increment financing income, federal grants and loans and proceeds from the sale of redevelopment area land to the developer, Pinnacle/Ram partnership. Under Plan C, the developer would pay the city \$16.9 million for 23 acres in the portion of the redevelopment area to the north.

The proposals did not please all.

Calling the proposed site plan "far from what I had in mind," Councilman Ken Halloway said it resembled another developer's rejected plan, with large parking lots fronting 56th Street. "Sorry, I can't support that plan," Halloway said.

The plan includes repainting and refurbishing the shopping center that includes Sweetbay Supermarket.

Mayor Joe Affronti said the development in the site plan is not what residents seek. "All I see from 56th Street is parking places. What this looks like to me is a modified shopping strip," Affronti said.

Councilman Ron Govin's motion to allow two weeks for the developer to tweak the plan and provide additional information was amended by Councilman Mark Knapp to keep Plan B under consideration. Plan B is superior and less costly for the city, Knapp said.

Plan B does not include \$3 million for "performing arts improvements" that city leaders have discussed including in the mixed-use development of retail, residential, office, restaurant and cultural/civic components.

"Is it the perfect plan everybody has envisioned? No, it's not," said Councilman Frank Chillura, expressing a willingness to discuss refined plans at the March 6 meeting. "We've been spinning our wheels for five or six years."

All three plans are identical north of Chicago Avenue but have a lot of flexibility south of there, said Michael Hammon, of Ram Development, Fort Lauderdale.

The parking lots in question will not be visible from 56th Street once they are screened with shrubs and retail stores at the property's front, Hammon said.

Council also wants more details about a 225-space parking garage to be included in the project and paid for with a \$6.9 million U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development loan.

After Govin's motion passed 4-1, resident Grant Rimbey criticized the plans he said fail to embrace the intended New Urbanism style.

"This will not rejuvenate the city. This is a building project," said Rimbey, an architect and president of Citizens for the Revitalization of Temple Terrace. "New Urbanism is not wallpaper you put on the outside of a strip mall."