

# Developer To Consider Revitalization Project

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TEMPLE TERRACE Residents should know in a month whether an interested developer intends to pursue a redevelopment project in the areas along 56th Street and Bullard Parkway.

What that project will look like remains unclear, and it may be up to the next generation of elected city leaders to make tough decisions.

The Temple Terrace City Council set out Tuesday night to develop general guidelines for the project and initially agreed on 13 points. The points include a two-phase redevelopment plan completed within six years, sticking with "New Urbanism" principles and Mediterranean design styles, allowing buildings up to six stories and limiting commercial tenants to retail operations. The council wants to calm traffic on 56th Street and negotiate for a Regions Bank and Kash n' Karry/Sweetbay store in the redevelopment district.

The recommendations will be sent to Orlando-based Unicorp National Developments, the sole developer under consideration for the project, which has 30 days to respond.

Decisions about the most contentious elements of redevelopment were delayed by separate council votes. It could take five years before residents know whether the city will build a cultural arts center and city hall. Councilwoman Linda Shattles referred to both buildings as optional visions.

The council's actions echoed a prediction by Councilman Ron Govin on Sept. 20: "If we don't resolve these issues, we're going to be back here in three years reopening this entire can of worms."

The first vote Tuesday, which passed 3-2, allows Masque Community Theatre to continue occupying the former T.J. Maxx building, which is in the heart of the redevelopment district, for up to five years while the city looks for another space. Govin and Councilman Frank Chillura opposed the idea. Govin said he was concerned that waiting would delay the second phase, considering the project is to be finished in six years. Chillura said he couldn't support leaving the community theater in the redevelopment district at all. "I'm not saying we don't need a cultural arts center. I support putting it somewhere in the city of Temple Terrace," Chillura said. "But the citizens said no, and that's the position I'm going to take."

Throughout the discussion, Chillura and Govin said that an Aug. 2 bond referendum, which would have helped pay the city's portion of the proposed \$300 million redevelopment, failed because the scope was too large and included municipal buildings and the cultural arts center. Councilman Ken Halloway said the referendum, which was defeated 57 percent to 43 percent, failed because people don't want higher taxes.

The plan presented in advance of the referendum estimated that city hall would cost \$6 million to build, while a cultural arts center would require \$12 million. The city has \$500,000 from Hillsborough County to go toward cultural arts and has set aside \$2.5 million in community investment tax revenue for the project. However, on Monday, Shattles suggested using the investment tax money to build a new police station.

Chillura and Govin also voted against setting aside land in Phase 2 for a new city hall. The measure passed of 3-2. Shattles and Councilwoman Glenda Venable, who teamed to support the issues of a cultural arts center and city hall, said the men had not talked to the right people before deciding to vote no.

"How many people did you meet with?" Venable said during the meeting. After Govin answered, Venable countered, saying, "Do you think 150 people is the majority? You didn't talk to everybody."

Govin said that setting aside the land would take away from the taxable value of the redevelopment district. He also said waiting to decide what to do with city hall was contrary to another vote the council took Tuesday. In a unanimous decision, the council voted to build a police station, which Govin said he would like to see finished within three years. The second phase of redevelopment could take four years.

Chillura then asked the council a question that he said was on voters' minds: "How are you going to pay for it all?"

During a council workshop Monday, outgoing city Finance Director Lee Huffstutler discussed paying for redevelopment. Among options he presented, but didn't endorse, were using money from the city's gas tax and community investment tax. Other funding could become available once some buildings are completed.

Another alternative, he said, was for the city to borrow \$10 million to \$16 million to finance the project.