



The Times

City seeks study on revitalizing waterfront

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BY ANDREW KITCHENMAN

TRENTON -- Plans to breathe new life into the sea of asphalt between South and New Warren streets and the Delaware River are taking a step forward, with officials crediting the collaboration between the city and a revived state agency.

The city and the Capital City Redevelopment Corporation are asking consultants to submit proposals to study how to make best use of the nearly 32 acres near downtown Trenton, including the current state Health and Agriculture buildings on South Warren Street.

"This goes from more than just words into action," Mayor Douglas H. Palmer said of the study.

The consultant would analyze the economic potential for the area, which is bounded by Memorial Drive, John Fitch Way, South Warren Street, Bridge Street and Route 29. This would lay the groundwork for a master plan for the area, which may include shops, offices and market-rate housing.

Under the redevelopment, the Hughes Justice Complex and the historic William Trent House would be the only properties left untouched by new building.

The redevelopment depends on Route 29 being converted into a "boulevard" with stoplights at a series of intersections with a grid of newly created streets. These streets would divide the parking lots around the state buildings into 14 new city blocks ripe for development.

State transportation officials are in the middle of a \$2 million study of the proposal to transform Route 29, according to Erin Phalon, spokeswoman for the Department of Transportation. This feasibility study is scheduled to be completed by September 2009.

CCRC Executive Director Monique King-Viehlend said the move to hire a consultant is a major step in the collaboration between the city and her state-funded agency.

Combined with a plan to expand Stacy Park along the river, the proposed redevelopment would connect downtown Trenton with the Delaware River for the first time in generations.

"It's really a landmark," King-Viehlend said, citing a joint effort to revitalize the city's waterfront. "This is exactly the kind of effort that CCRC was created to facilitate."

The consultant will be asked to analyze the current market value of the land, then determine the market value if Route 29 is turned into a boulevard, according to the request for proposals. The consultant would also examine several approaches to developing the area, with an emphasis on a potential mix of uses, including offices, retail and residential. It would also study ways to provide parking.

"This will really show how valuable the land is, how many jobs can be created," Palmer said. He credited Gov. Jon Corzine with investing in the city and the CCRC, which hired King-Viehlend in October.

The analysis by the consultant would lead to a cost estimate for the entire redevelopment project, as well as recommendations for how to fund and market the project.

The consultant is expected to be chosen this spring and to present its final report in September. King-Viehlend said she hopes to start a master plan next year and to begin development in two to five years.

Contact Andrew Kitchenman at akitchenman@njtimes.com or (609) 989-5706.

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