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TOWN OF TONAWANDA

First draft of riverfront land-use plan unveiled

By DEIDRE WILLIAMS
News Northtowns Bureau
5/8/2002

Representatives of Wendel Duchscherer Architects & Engineers this week gave Tonawanda Town Board members a first peek at the first draft of a conceptual land-use plan for the town's Niagara Riverfront.

The firm is helping the town update zoning regulations that will govern development along the riverfront.

The study could eventually become the basis for making zoning changes along the entire waterfront, officials said. It includes several parcels in the town bounded by the Niagara River to the west, the City of Tonawanda to the north, and Sawyer Road to the south, Supervisor [redacted] said. The eastern boundary includes the the Niagara Thruway, the Youngmann Highway and Military Road.

At 210 acres, the largest parcel included in the riverfront proposal is the Isle View Park site. The North Youngmann Commerce Park, commonly referred to as the mud flats, stands at 80 acres.

There are two parcels near the Grand Island bridges. The waterfront part has 10 acres, while the inland parcel totals 25 acres. The Niagara River World commercial warehouse company takes up 62 acres with frontage on River Road and Niagara River. INS Equipment Co. has 30 acres, while the NOCO site off James Avenue encompasses 22 acres.

Features of the plan include preserving open space and public access, establishing retail/commercial property near the Thruway exits, opening office parks and perhaps a waterfront park.

Councilwoman [redacted] also suggested attracting restaurants and other eateries to the waterfront.

"There's nowhere to eat on the waterfront but Harry's (Harbour Place Grille)," she said. "People are dying for that."

The next step, said Councilman [redacted] chairman of the Waterfront Committee, is to present the proposal to affected land owners next Thursday. The plan then will be presented to the public at an information meeting as soon as a date can be arranged. Once consensus is reached, the consultants and the committee will begin formulating the proposed zoning changes.

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After the actual zoning proposal is completed, it will be presented to the Town Board for review. A public hearing will be scheduled to approve or modify it, Sinclair said. After the hearing, the Town Board will work on the legislation needed to implement the zoning changes.

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