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## Cape CRA eager to land the big one Major downtown project tops wish list

By JEFF CULL, [jcull@news-press.com](mailto:jcull@news-press.com)

Enticing a major developer to downtown Cape Coral is at the top of the Community Redevelopment Agency's wish list for next year.

The agency agreed Tuesday to 10 goals it wants to achieve in the upcoming fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1.

The list also includes changing land-use regulations downtown to mirror the recently completed master plan developed by Dover, Kohl & Partners and expanding the CRA's boundaries to include land near the Cape Coral Bridge.

With several developers already looking at projects downtown, the CRA wants to get at least one to the building permit stage within the year.

The agency is hoping that a combination of the new, less-restrictive land-use codes and some financial incentives, in the form of possible tax breaks, will lure a big project downtown.

"Once you get one major project going watch how it spreads," Assistant City Manager Howard Kunik told the board.

And it's got several projects in mind.

- Developer Russ Whitney is proposing to convert the Avalon Engineering building on Cape Coral Parkway into a town square with shopping, restaurants, offices and a convention center.
- The Chamber of Commerce of Cape Coral is working with developer Will Stout to build a 14,000-square-foot welcome center near its current location on Cape Coral Parkway.
- A Naples developer is looking to build a mixed use, residential and commercial development around Four Freedoms Park near the Bimini Basin.

Agency board members added they want to make the development process in the downtown as painless as possible.

"We want to streamline things," said Chet Hunt, the agency's executive director.

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