

Downtown could be a wireless community

Plan has fiber-optics under bike, foot paths

By Pete Skiba

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Building a downtown that could thrive well into the 22nd century might mean a Community Redevelopment Area that combines bicycle paths with fiber-optic highways, an agency official said.

The redevelopment area's board plans to hear a report at its meeting at 5:30 p.m. today on making the entire area a wireless community, said Suzanne Kuehn, the agency's executive director.

If the redevelopment board approves the trails and fiber-optic wiring, the next step would be to plan where the trails would go and buy the land to make them a reality.

When built the proposed billions of dollars of residential condominiums, offices, restaurants, coffee shops, sports bars and retail shops could all join the computer-accessible world more easily.

The broadband and fiber-optic wiring to make it happen could go under proposed bicycle and walking trails.

"We plan on having a bicycle trail connecting the whole CRA, with fiber-optic cables underneath," Kuehn said. "It would be fiber-optics below and fibrous above."

Well, maybe the bike trails would be brick pavers instead of fibrous mulch, Kuehn said.

The trails could wind through the CRA's entire 432 acres along Cape Coral Parkway from Tudor Drive at the west to the Cape Coral Bridge at the east and north on Del Prado Boulevard to Southeast 44th Street.

The board also plans to discuss applying for grants to expand the

banks sit. The banks could move into any number of new developments planned for the area, Kuehn said.

The neighboring Sunset Towers, with 56 condominiums, could be considered for purchase and inclusion in the park expansion if the residents approved the concept.

IF YOU GO

- What: Cape Coral Redevelopment Agency meeting
- Where: Cape Coral City Council chambers, City Hall, 1015 Cultural Park Blvd.
- When: 5:30 p.m. today
- What: Alleyway subcommittee
- Where: Community Redevelopment Agency office, Suite 108, 447 E. Cape Coral Parkway
- When: Noon today

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Residents have been kept from their homes in the towers since Hurricane sustained water damage and has been plagued with construction delays.

Asbestos removal in the 36-year-old buildings, skyrocketing construction costs, upgrades to new city codes and wrangling with the insurance companies all set significant work on the buildings back.

At least one Sunset Towers resident remained steadfast in her determination that the redevelopment area would not have her home for a park or anything else.

"I've suffered enough for two years. I wish they would all just leave us alone and let us go home," said condominium owner Maria Youngs, 65.

The community redevelopment board also plans to review another project for the area valued at \$211 million. If approved, the project will be submitted to city planning staff for comments before consideration by Cape Coral City Council.

Cape Coral resident and developer Robbie Lee submitted plans to the redevelopment agency for a 3.9-acre, multibuilding community he would like to build along Cape Coral Parkway between Southeast Eighth Court to the west and Southeast Ninth Place to the east.

The plans for Village Square call for 156 condominiums, 330,000 square feet of retail stores, offices and restaurants in buildings from four to 16-stories high.

Two residential towers in the village would have parking garages with room for 1,056 vehicles.

To provide parking relief for the redevelopment area as soon as it can, the board plans to consider leasing four empty lots. The lots, at 429 E. Cape Coral Parkway, Southeast 47th off Vincennes Boulevard, Lafayette Street and Vincennes Street, and at Southeast 47th Street and 15th Avenue would be covered with paver bricks.

"The upgrade to the lots would constitute our lease (rent)," Kuehn said. "When they want to build on the lots, we pull up our pavers and use them for something else."

In other parking business, the board plans to consider buying an empty \$650,000 building at 1231 Lafayette St. owned by the Dudas trust to contribute to a proposed public-parking building. The building would also allow parking for businesses and a proposed 75-room boutique hotel planned to be built on the site of Martinis Bar at 1306 Cape Coral Parkway.

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