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Mobil station closings OK with CRA

Pedestrian-friendly pursuits better for area, official says

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The corporate decision to close two Mobil gas stations in Cape Coral's downtown made for good news to the agency entrusted with making the area thrive.

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Charged with developing the downtown's 432 acres into a place where people live, work, dine out and play, the Community Redevelopment Agency wants pedestrians comfortable.

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"Gas stations don't really make for a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere," said Suzanne Kuehn, redevelopment agency executive director. "Instead of gas stations, we want offices, condominiums, restaurants and other people-friendly businesses."

The gas stations on Cape Coral Parkway sit shrouded in plywood. Typically when ExxonMobil Corp. closes stations they go up for sale, said Paula Chen, company spokeswoman.

The gas station at 805 E. Cape Coral Parkway has a 1,488-square-foot combination convenience store and gas-pump shelter building sitting on 30,873 square feet at the intersection of Coronado Parkway.

The gas station at 1206 E. Cape Coral Parkway features a 1,520-square-foot combination convenience store and gas-pump shelter building on 26,975 square feet at the intersection of Vincennes Boulevard.

The price per square foot of property sold in the redevelopment area from April 2005 to September 2006 averaged \$69.93 for 31 properties, stated a chart provided by the redevelopment agency.

Developers hunger for land to assemble for large projects in the area that the city's original developers pre-platted in 20-foot-by-125-foot lots downtown

"This is great corner property in the city," said Al Molin, a senior land broker with CB Richard Ellis Group Inc.'s Fort Myers office.

The Ellis Group, a national company with an office in Fort Myers, bought the Trammel Crow Co., which previously handled sales of Mobil stations for ExxonMobil.

"I'm seeking to find out the status of the property and who will handle it," Molin said. "It could be for sale and it could be already spoken for. I have interested buyers."

Molin declined to name the interested buyers or an asking price.

The closures leave four gas stations in the redevelopment area that stretches from the Cape Coral Bridge on the east along both sides of Cape Coral Parkway to Tudor Drive at the west.

A portion of the area extends north on Del Prado Boulevard from Cape Coral Parkway to Southeast 46th Street.

The gas stations include a Shell and a Citgo on Del Prado Boulevard and a Circle K and Hess on Cape Coral Parkway.

The Mobil closings didn't bother customers at the last of the company-owned Cape Coral stations on Pine Island Road near Santa Barbara Boulevard.

"We just stopped in because we were near it," said Cape Coral resident Sandy Whitty, 39. "It is price that matters, not the gas station."

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