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Cape OKs mixed use high-rises

 By **JEFF CULL**, jcull@news-press.com

Developers who are looking to invest about \$150 million in projects in downtown Cape Coral got some zoning help from the city council.

The council agreed Tuesday to allow multifamily units such as apartments and condominiums to co-exist in commercial buildings in the 340-acre downtown Community Redevelopment Agency area.

That means that developers can build multistory buildings with businesses on the ground floor and offices or residents on the upper floors — exactly what the agency wants.

One of several projects being considered for downtown is a large high-rise condominium with businesses on the ground floor and worth about \$140 million, said Joe Mazurkiewicz, a consultant to the developer.

That project, expected to be completed in about 18 months, would more than double the total value of downtown real estate, said Chet Hunt, CRA director.

The development, in the Bimini Basin area, is not in the CRA district. It's expected to be included when the city considers expanding the agency's boundaries next month.

Councilwoman Alex LePera called the council's decision a win-win situation because it gets people living downtown, thus helping make the CRA's master plan more pedestrian-friendly.

The zoning change is an interim measure until the CRA's new codes are completed and approved by the state. They will allow multi-use buildings and should be approved in six to eight months.

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