

Developers to unveil competing designs for downtown Federal Way project June 18

Federal Way officials get initial glimpse of vision

Puget Sound Business Journal (Seattle) - June 1, 2007 by [Deirdre Gregg](#) Staff Writer

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The city of Federal Way got tired of waiting for developers to create the city center it envisions. So, it decided to make it happen on its own.

"Having waited for 17 years, the city leaders are saying we've waited long enough. We need to take a more aggressive role," Doherty said.

For the past several years, Federal Way has been trying to encourage developers to build a denser downtown. The city had passed a 10-year property tax exemption for residential buildings, streamlined permitting and set up a \$6 million redevelopment fund. Finally, it even bought a piece of land and put out a request for bids for developers to build the city's vision.

Now, on June 18, those city leaders will see what their waiting and planning will get them.

Two developers will present separate plans for a new office, residential and retail project. The city leaders hope the new project will bring new

life to downtown Federal Way.

The city officials will chose which developer -- and design -- gets the bid, a week or two after the June 18 presentations.

Last December, the city more than doubled the height limit for residential and mixed-use buildings in the city center. That change may impact the new project. When the two teams submitted preliminary proposals in April, both plans included the new, taller height limits.

Last November, the city bought the site of the future development, a 4-acre slice of land that held a vacant AMC theater, for \$4.1 million. It is located at the southeast corner of 20th Avenue South and South 316th Street.

Federal Way will sell the property to whichever developer is chosen. Depending on the proposal, the city may use some of its \$6 million redevelopment fund to pay for a public component, such as an open plaza.

Federal Way waited out development booms in the late 1980s and late 1990s without seeing the kind of new commercial development Seattle and the Eastside saw, said Patrick Doherty, the city's economic development director.

A Federal Way committee chose the two teams, Vancouver, B.C.-based **United Properties** and the combo of Portland-based Williams & Dame and **Alpert Capital**, based in Seattle and Dallas, from a field of seven. A third developer chosen by the selection committee, Bellevue-based **Cosmos Development**, dropped out of the process.

The city wants the finished complex to include mid-rise or high-rise

buildings with stores and offices on the lower floors and residential units above. It will also include some public space.

Both developers have a long track record.

Williams & Dame has done residential and mixed-use projects in urban neighborhoods, including Portland's Pearl District and south waterfront area and downtown Los Angeles. The company also is working on a redevelopment of the old Elks Lodge in downtown Tacoma.

United Properties has developed more than 10,000 homes over the last 30 years, mostly in British Columbia.

Demolition and site preparation on the 4-acre site where the vacant AMC Theater stood began on May 15.

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