

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Planners target revitalization in Homestead

By Justin Vellucci
TRIBUNE-REVIEW
Saturday, May 31, 2008

A panel of experts issued a nine-point proposal Friday for revitalizing a roughly half-mile stretch of Mon Valley land between The Waterfront and business districts in Homestead and West Homestead.

Though the plan's specifics aren't worked out, officials said they hope to extend the commercial success of The Waterfront development further toward Eighth Avenue, a Main-Street-style road lined with shuttered businesses that is separated from The Waterfront by train tracks.

"It's our responsibility to bring it over to this side, to Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Avenue ... and up the hill," said state Sen. Jay Costa, D-Forest Hills, at a news conference along Seventh Avenue. "We believe in what needs to take place here."

The road map to revitalizing Sixth, Seventh and Eighth avenues, experts said, calls for developing an intergovernmental agreement and updating a revitalization plan crafted in 2000.

Other points in the proposal include hiring someone to bring together different groups, seeking grants and expanding the existing planning committee.

"We all know the success across the tracks," said Allegheny County Council President Rich Fitzgerald, D-Squirrel Hill, referring to The Waterfront. "This side of the tracks is now going to continue with some of the investments."

Dennis Davin, who heads the county Department of Economic Development, estimates \$10 million has been invested on the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth

avenues side of the railroad tracks.

Karl Haglund is part of that investment. His Urban Design Ventures moved from Shadyside to Homestead and gutted an existing building to create and rent out two, roughly 1,700-square-foot lofts. Haglund wants to see more local businesses sprout near his Seventh Avenue building to serve a growing number of residents.

"People want to be part of The Waterfront but they don't want to live in it," Haglund said. "They're living here (because) they kind of have a downtown feel."

The area pegged for revitalization stretches along Sixth, Seventh and Eighth avenues between McClure and Neel streets, said Meredith Meyer Grelli, program coordinator of Carnegie Mellon University's Western Pennsylvania Brownfields Center. The land is owned by about 20 property owners and includes the roughly 40-acre WhemCo site.

A meeting to further discuss the revitalization effort will take place at 7 p.m. Wednesday at the Moose lodge building on Eighth Avenue, Homestead.

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