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HOLLYWOOD

Latest plan for closed mall: condos

The former site of the Hollywood Fashion Center might be redeveloped into a mixed-use development with shops and condominiums.

BY TODD WRIGHT
twright@herald.com

Hollywood's defunct The Millennium mall could be transformed into a mixture of condominiums, several city commissioners said Tuesday.

The commissioners said they have seen artist renderings of a new development for the site currently occupied by the mall at the corner of U.S. 441 and Hollywood Boulevard.

Such a plan could revive a place that was once a center of Hollywood commerce. The site was the Hollywood Fashion Center, which was put out of business as development moved west. The most recent attempt to redevelop the site was The Millennium, a flea market that opened in 2003. It closed about four months ago.

The potential development also could help with the city's efforts to redevelop the 441 corridor into a hub of residential development.

But a formal presentation of the proposal might not be made until late October.

Roy Oppenheim, an attorney for Millennium SuperMall, the group that leases the nearly million-square-foot site, said plans would not be unveiled to the public until after a series of private meetings with area community groups, which could take six weeks or more.

Still, city commissioners said they're happy they might be voting on a proposal soon.

"I think it is great. I have seen the rendering," said Commissioner Fran Russo, who has a meeting on the issue scheduled on her calendar Thursday. "We need more residential development because we have all these people wanting to move to South Florida, and they need some place to live."

The proposed conversion from mall to condos is not unprecedented in South Florida, with cities like Aventura, Coral Gables and Miami endorsing such projects in the past.

The Millennium mall opened in 2003 amid high expectations of revitalizing the area.

But the projected large crowds of shoppers never materialized and the indoor flea market closed soon after a series of suspected arson fires in May.

But the mall's demise could open the way for a new development.

Commissioner Beam Furr said he has also been informed of a proposal for a mixed-use development and attended a meeting Tuesday regarding the issue. Furr would not say whom he was meeting with.

It is not unusual for developers to approach individual commissioners in Hollywood to get a sense of whether an idea has a chance for approval. Russo said plans were presented to her by the city's redevelopment director Neil Fritz.

It is unclear what role the City Commission would play in attracting a developer for the site, said Furr, who noted the city didn't have a lot of money to offer incentives.

"We'd have to see what kind of proposal there was. I am open," he said. "We definitely want to do something there."