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DAVIE

441 revival plan up for vote

The redevelopment proposal would bring stores, industry and possibly thousands of housing units.

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Today, the section of U.S. 441 that cuts through eastern Davie is a congested mishmash of warehouses and industrial businesses. But for the past year, residents, along with business and property owners, have been framing a long-term vision of a new 441, one where people live and shop, work and dine.

Tonight, that vision comes up for the first of many tests as the Davie Town Council votes on whether to accept a conceptual master plan for the corridor.

The plan envisions an evolution to a high-density mix of commercial and light industrial uses, bookended by as many as 3,200 dwellings. A significant, but unspecified, percentage would be dedicated to lower-priced housing.

The high-density development would create a transit-oriented corridor, meaning that residents could take mass transit to and from work.

Davie officials say they are eager for a new, more-prosperous 441, but in the past, Mayor Tom Truex has bridled at the proposed density of the corridor's residential development, which could be as high as 31 units per acre, the amount considered the minimum to support mass transit.

"That's not that many units per acre," said Town Council member Lisa Hubert, whose district encompasses the corridor. Hubert, who has persuaded some developers to include affordable housing in their Davie projects, takes issue with the plan's lack of solid numbers for that type of housing.

"They had a small percentage of residential units at affordable prices. What does that mean?" she asked. ``Not everyone can afford to live in a \$750,000 and above house."

The plans also call for a bicycle lane built into an extra-wide sidewalk to separate cyclists from motor traffic.

If approved, the plan would not require the town to take immediate action.

Development Services Director Mark Kutney said implementation was likely to require at least one town government staffer to shepherd the plan.

"If we don't do that, it'll just sit there on the bookshelf," Kutney said.

To implement the plan, the town will have to get the county's permission to: change the land use on certain properties; create a new land-development code for the area; assess needs for road, water and sewer improvements; and agree on an economic-incentive plan to attract developers.

As Davie plots redevelopment, the town faces a challenge: The Seminole reservation also borders 441.

The Seminoles have not made a commitment to redevelopment, said Karen Stenzel-Nowicki, chairwoman of the steering committee charged with drafting the plan, although tribe leaders have indicated they may locate some offices in the corridor.

"It is a diamond in the rough," Stenzel-Nowicki said of 441. ``It can be a gem if we all choose to cooperate."

The Town Council meets at 7 tonight at Town Hall, 6591 Orange Dr.