

Yonkers Community Forum Struever Fidelco Cappelli LLC September 20th, 2006

The following is a synopsis of the discussion points raised by the public at Struever Fidelco Cappelli LLC's ("SFC") September 20, 2006 Community Forum, held at the Grinton I. Will Public Library. This meeting was the third "public outreach" meeting to solicit the community's ideas for the planning effort of SFC to produce a conceptual design plan for the Southwest section of the City of Yonkers; the previous meetings were held on June 28th and May 20th, 2006.

After an introduction and overview presentation of the project by Joe Apicella of Cappelli Enterprises, the public was invited to ask questions and comment on each of four umbrella areas of development: Transportation and Traffic; Arts/Culture/Historic Preservation; Open Space and Development; and Economic Development.

The following is a brief summary of each of these topics, followed by a detailed listing of the public's comments.

- **Transportation and Traffic:** There were many concerns about accessibility to the new areas of development, as currently there are few roadways leading to the area. Residents were enthusiastic about wanting better public transportation. There were also concerns about the increase of air pollution as the result of a better road system, and suggestions about using alternate energy sources.
- **Arts/Culture/Historic Preservation:** The public was enthusiastic about the possibility of cultural and arts institutions in Yonkers, and offered many new ideas for recreational and cultural activities. There was additional concern about preserving the integrity of historic buildings.
- **Open Space and Development:** The comments in this area included discussions of ideas for activities to develop on the waterfront and in open spaces. Several area parks and waterfront areas were named as models for what Yonkers could aspire to.
- **Economic Development:** There were many comments about the need for full-time, full-benefits jobs in Yonkers. Several concerns about costs of the project were also voiced.

Transportation and Traffic

- Improving east-west side access; limited access to waterfront
- Use of bridges to access the waterfront
- Air quality issues associated with increase in traffic
- Roadway access from Getty Square to the Bronx
- Future of school bus use/industry
- Installation of real-time computer traffic system that can:
 - control timing of cars
 - change the sequence of lighting
 - help keep traffic moving
 - allow cameras to see where issues are in order to fix them
 - redirect various roadways in order to distribute flow of cars
 - redirect cars to various parking areas so not all cars are directed to this one lot
- Installation/use of trolley car system loop to river/transit/retail center
- Use of alternate energy sources

Arts and Culture / Historic Preservation

- Citizens want to put Yonkers on the map, possibly with an aquarium
- Invite businesses who can't afford their own building (such as crafts people, local business people, jazz artists and other performers) into one large building, providing a constant stream of activities
- Other nature exhibits (e.g. butterfly exhibits)
- Redevelop Phillipsburg Performing Arts
- Preserve historic buildings
- Look to development as opportunity to create events that will drive people/money to the area; make sure no money is lost on such events
- Build cultural venues that are economically profitable
- Build a recreation/educational center on West Side, so youth can get off the streets
- Build a place like Chelsea Piers where there are indoor and outdoor activities
- Build pet parks in open space
- Build a skateboard park
- Create art gallery space in offices
- Have Vespa/bike rentals in parks
- Use proposed River Park Center ballpark for many different uses
- Create art centers where graffiti artists can express themselves – a wall that can be painted again and again.
- Build boutique hotels (i.e. Dream Hotel on 55th and Broadway)
- Incorporate Dutch influence (per the name “Yonkers”)
- Create botanical garden
- Create “Gateway to Hudson River Valley”. Keep the flavor of the “castles” – the elegant estates
- Incorporate influence of Hudson River School of Artists

- Old buildings should be restored/recycled when possible so Yonkers doesn't look like every other city. Yonkers is historically an industrial city; ideally, new construction and design will respect that history.
- Connect Hudson River Museum to the downtown area
- Consider a dome for the ballpark.

Open Space and Development

- Update parks
- Create places to swim (parts of the River, pools)
- Clean up contaminated spaces for use as parks
- Build more public restrooms around the River
- Build bike paths
- Build a marina
- Build running trails
- Build a fishing pier
- Make bike lanes on all streets, make sure city busses have bike racks for cyclists.
- Use Irvington Park as an example
- Use Battery Park City's example – places for kids, very family-oriented
- Build a skating rink
- Build handball, volleyball courts along waterfront
- Plant big trees along the water as a way to decrease pollution and improve air quality.
- Use park at 145th Street and Riverside Drive as a model for family use of space, including: basketball park, skating rink, outdoor skating rink, volleyball, skateboard.

Economic Development

- Develop the whole area, not just a few blocks
- Questions raised regarding the overall economic impact (real estate taxes, income taxes, etc)
- Build places that will need skilled workers – not just minimum wage jobs – to provide real income.
- Hotel will need managers, stores will need managers and buyers
- Aquarium could be a research facility, educational facility.
- Increased population will need more police and fire officials
- Look for an industry that could have a home here, like Greenwich with hedge funds.
- Keep it clean and free of graffiti
- Accommodations for current residents/citizens in developing areas
- Educational infrastructure, building of schools
- Think about 80/20 redevelopment in the city and affordable housing for low income.