

Input sought on W. 25th

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By David Plata
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What redevelopment should take place along West 25th Street, including run-down features such as the former Aragon Ballroom and the closed Paris Art Theatre?

Those are questions Clark Metro Development Corp., the local nonprofit development group, is asking residents and merchants to help answer.

For the first time, there's going to be a five-year commercial corridor plan for West 25th Street between Ohio City and Old Brooklyn, said Steve Kruger, Clark Metro director.

The group, working on the plan with architectural and urban design consultants, already has sought input at four public meetings.

A draft presentation will be from 6:30-8 p.m. Nov. 15 at MetroHealth Medical Center's Rammelkamp Auditorium.

The study, costing from \$25,000-\$30,000, is funded by the Ohio Erie Canal Association, Dollar Bank and Charter One Bank.

The area in question is the 1.2-mile stretch between Train Avenue to the north and Interstate 71 at the south.

At the center is the West 25th Street and Clark Avenue intersection, already a high-traffic area, expected to get even more when the Steelyard Commons shopping center opens later this year.

Abe Bruckman, commercial development director at Clark Metro, said residents, merchants and other stakeholders have suggested three planning focus areas, building on existing uses. From north to south, they are:

A new identity area, from Train to Wade avenues, where manufacturing and housing, live-work and affordable living uses would be developed.

A cultural core, from Wade to Meyer avenues and including the Clark intersection, with pedestrian-oriented mixed-use buildings, new public spaces and plazas.

MetroHealth neighborhoods, from Meyer to I-71 and along the hospital, to be developed with hospitality and housing uses, including neighborhood connections to the Towpath Trail behind the hospital.

Concrete development plans and funding sources are yet to be made and identified. But Bruckman said the plan is meant as a guide for future investment.

We want this plan to suggest an investment strategy, he said. We'd like to save as many buildings as possible that are historically or culturally significant. But there may be some buildings or sites where it may be more appropriate to consolidate with adjacent parcels.