



Fill in 'Hole' Plans for Chevy parcel should spark action

FLINT JOURNAL EDITORIAL

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Wednesday, June 13, 2007

Redevelopment of the old "Chevy in the Hole" site won't occur overnight to be sure, but it's guaranteed not to happen at all without visionaries who recognize the potential in this concrete-capped real estate and keep pushing their ideas forward.

Thankfully, we've been seeing such dreams put forth regularly in professional proposals, with graduate students at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor the latest to present concepts for transforming this riverfront wasteland. They've suggested two attractive scenarios, both of which would include park and recreational features, with the more optimistic infused with research labs and housing.

If the latter were accomplished - and let's be positive here - this 130 acres, which was crucial to Flint's economy for nearly a century, would claim that stature again. Oh, we don't pretend it will become a building block for another General Motors, which was the role of the old Chevrolet Manufacturing complex, but this key parcel has an enormous upside.

The sponsor for the UM students' work has been the Genesee County Land Bank, a major doer in Flint's renewal efforts. Though its primary work has been to collect tax-delinquent properties and retool them for productive use, this agency also is promoting bigger plans with more economic and eye-catching potential.

Toward that goal, it's hard to imagine a place of more strategic importance than this old Chevrolet property stretching from Kettering University almost to downtown. It's just the kind of location, with natural and man-made assets, that other cities have redeveloped into new identities for their communities. Preceding studies laid the groundwork for the UM students' work, and it now forms a predicate for more tangible developments.

While no one underestimates the enormity of this project, particularly the amount of industrial contamination to be removed, at least the burden will be shared by business and government institutions capable of heavy lifting. Those who can be counted on include GM and Delphi Corp., which control the property, along with Kettering, UM-Flint, the Mott Foundation, Genesee Regional Chamber of Commerce, Hurley Medical Center and city and county governments.

And alongside them at all times will be a batch of splendid UM graduate students, who, as a group, have become believers in what this "Chevy in the Hole" redevelopment could do for Flint. Now, if we could get a little action based on these latest plans, others would buy in, too.

©2007 Flint Journal

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.