



To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

<< [Back](#)

Blight could mean more redevelopment

Consultant to update 1972 study; areas may be added

By Pete Skiba

pskiba@news-press.com

Originally posted on September 12, 2006

It might seem odd, but there are people in Cape Coral who want their property declared blighted.

The city's Community Redevelopment Agency plans to hire a consultant to update a 1972 blight study and include bordering areas that could double the redevelopment area's size.

DELIVERING YOUR WORLD

- [Subscribe to The News-Press](#)
- [Join our reader panel](#)
- [Printer friendly version](#)
- [Email this article](#)

..... ADVERTISEMENT

"It doesn't bother me to be called blighted," said Mary Kalabokis of MTM Real Estate. "The potential for growth and making a good downtown makes it worthwhile."

For the purposes of state redevelopment area certification, blight doesn't mean boarded-up buildings and burned-out Chevrolets littering the roads.

Under the statutes blight includes deteriorating structures, overgrown lots, deteriorating or a lack of sidewalks, gutters and paved driveways and open stormwater drains among other conditions.

If the \$38,000 study holds that further areas have blight, it means that the downtown area could hold even more businesses and homes.

It would greatly expand the amount of office space available in a city originally platted to be a bedroom community, allowing people to live, work and play in their city instead of commuting.

Kalabokis and her husband Taki live in the Yacht Club area and own property at Country Club and Palm Tree boulevards. That property sits just north of the present redevelopment area's 44th Street border.

Their three-lot site might only be suitable for a two-story condominium at present, Kalabokis said. If it were in the redevelopment area it could be designated "mixed use." With that designation the building could be mixed — bottom floors could be used for offices and condominiums could go above.

"The streets there are so busy that living on the ground floor might not be the best," Kalabokis said. "I'd like to move my real estate business office there. Professional office would be a better use on the ground floor at that intersection."

The blight designation didn't bother local real estate developer Elmer Tabor. With partners he built the Hampton Inn & Suites hotel smack dab in the middle of the redevelopment area's blight. It opened in April.

"Once we built the Hampton Inn, other projects began coming in the area and building owners began turning their properties around with new facades," Tabor said. "With no blight designation there was no incentive to turn it around."

The first blight study allowed the Cape Coral City Council to adopt the first Redevelopment Area Plan in 1987. Until recently improvements have been limited to landscaping in the 442-acre area.

The area's present boundaries extend from Tudor drive to the west along both sides of Cape Coral Parkway almost to Cape Coral Bridge. The boundary also juts north along Del Prado Boulevard to Southeast 44th Street.

The largest addition to growth for the area could come from two places to the south of the area's present boundary along Miramar Street and Waikiki Avenue. Smaller areas to the redevelopment area's north could also be added.

The Hampton Inn began the redevelopment area's rebirth in earnest. There is no doubt that once other developers saw what could be done, they became interested in the area, Tabor said.

If the next blight study allows the addition of land to the redevelopment area, that land could gain value, officials said.

Other reasons for development in the area include but are not limited to property tax breaks that can be negotiated according to how extensive the project.

<< [Back](#)