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## **CRA searches for parking solutions** **Balancing demands tough for small projects**

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Builders of smaller projects struggle to meet Cape Coral's parking requirements in the downtown area's planned rejuvenation.

Plans for billions of dollars of business and residential development in Cape Coral's downtown have parking lots and garages within their developments.

The smaller businesses, such as planned single buildings, need alternatives to build on a site that may not have enough parking.

Builders of small or large projects have to balance between how much square footage must be built to make a profit on a particular size piece of land. Considering the costs of land and construction, the balance is tougher on smaller lots.

The Cape's Community Redevelopment Agency plans to meet 5:30 p.m. today at its 447 E. Cape Coral Parkway office to discuss how to help builders meet the challenge.

One alternative could be an opportunity for developers to pay for parking at other places rather than to have the parking at their building, said Suzanne Kuehn, redevelopment agency executive director.

A builder could chip in with another developer to build a garage that would cover both their needs and also provide free parking to the area.

The parking would be provided. It just might be at a site across the street.

"Suppose you have an employee at one office who parks in a garage and walks across the street to get lunch," said Suzanne Kuehn, "He only really needs the one space, not one at the restaurant too."

The city currently has no way for a builder or building owner to pay rather than providing the required parking, said Scott Hertz, vice president of Powell Construction.



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"Our Bartlett Office building is in city permitting right now," Hertz said.  
"The only thing holding it up is the lack of parking."

Hertz hopes to make a deal with a business owner for an alternative called satellite parking. Someone nearby with an excess of parking could take a fee to guarantee parking for the Bartlett building.

As another alternative, the redevelopment agency staff proposed payment in lieu of parking could be useful to builders. If a builder were short say, two spaces, and if providing those spaces made his project unprofitable, the builder could pay a fee.

The fee could go to building a parking garage in the redevelopment area.

Before the redevelopment agency suggests it to the city council, details, such as how much payment would be accepted instead of a parking space, would have to be worked out for the redevelopment area.

The redevelopment area covers Cape Coral's downtown from Tudor Drive to the west along both sides of Cape Coral Parkway to the Cape Coral Bridge to the east. A section runs north along Del Prado Boulevard to Southeast 44th Street.

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