



## WEST WINDSOR: Council seeks redevelopment input

By Kristine Snodgrass, Staff Writer  
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WEST WINDSOR — In response to complaints from community groups that they have not been given sufficient time to give input, Township Council will hold a work session later this month on the draft plan of the redevelopment of the train station area, delaying final adoption until at least March.

Mayor Shing-Fu Hsueh said he is worried this delay will hurt the township's chances to receive stimulus funding for infrastructure improvements to the redevelopment area. He was told by Sen. U.S. Rep. Rush Holt's, D-12th, office to prepare a list of "shovel-ready" projects before Feb. 23, he said.

"I'm surprised that the council wants to vote in March," he said. "Without something tangible, we can't talk to the state. We are not going to be viewed highly in terms of the priorities."

At Monday night's council meeting, council President Charlie Morgan said the township needs to "get in line" to receive stimulus funding from the state. Council then passed a resolution he wrote, calling on the state Department of Transportation to take "any and all necessary steps to assure the allocation of federal stimulus funds" for the project.

But without a redevelopment plan approved by council, "that paper means nothing," Mayor Hsueh said.

"Government agencies are not going to deal with us if we don't have a plan," he said. "You have to show the tangible results."

It will be a difficult task getting back funding that has been dropped in the past, he said. In 2007, the state allocated \$159 million for improvements to Route 1, he said, but the funding was dropped after the township failed to produce a redevelopment plan.

"They're waiting for us to finish up with the plan before they talk about the funding again," he said. "It's going to hurt our chances to get the funding."

The work session was scheduled after the Planning Board completed its review process of the redevelopment plan last week, putting it back into the hands of council. The board sent a 17-page report to council this week, listing about 100 suggestions on the plan.

Mr. Morgan, who urged for the work session, said Monday night that the board's work was insufficient to allow the council to move forward with the plan.

"This group must do good planning," he said. "We must do what the Planning Board did not."

Alison Miller, who is involved with the West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance, the Parking Authority and FOWWOS, said an additional work session is a "very good idea" in order to resolve controversial issues.

"Hurrying up the council is not getting rid of the controversy," she said. "I think they should protect themselves and the town by trying to get it done right."

The completion of the review process by the Planning Board in 17 days was "puzzling" and "disappointing," she said.

"I think that we were just in the middle of a reasonably successful dialogue, and suddenly it was ended," she said.

WWBPA President Ken Carlson also expressed frustration at this result last week, stressing the importance of making the redevelopment area bicycle and pedestrian friendly.

Planning Board Chairman Marvin Gardner defended the board's review process.

"The record speaks for itself," he said. "Every issue was thoroughly vetted and discussed by the Planning Board in an open and transparent manner."

He was shocked by Mr. Morgan's remarks about the Planning Board, considering Mr. Morgan last week praised the board's work during public comment.

"We're volunteers on that board," he said. "To attempt this kind of disparaging of our work is unreasonable and unfair."

Planning Board attorney Gerry Muller said the board fulfilled its duty in reviewing the plan, which required it to submit a list of nonbinding recommendations to council within a 45-day period.

During its three meetings held on redevelopment, it allowed for unlimited public comment, he said. Township professionals and the board evaluated every submission and proposal, he added.

"It certainly did everything it was required to do, and I thought it did much more than it was required to do," he said.

The work session is scheduled for 6 p.m. Monday, Feb. 23, in the Municipal Building. According to a statement by council, comments should be submitted in writing no later than Feb. 20.

Comments should include specific suggestions in the draft plan document, available on the township's Web site at [www.westwindsornj.org](http://www.westwindsornj.org). Those comments related to bicycle or pedestrian friendly design, parking, or open space should be submitted through the relevant community groups.