

Green Island revitalization plan dropped

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Body

- The Worcester Redevelopment Authority, urged on by city business and property owners, will back off a 5-year-old plan to redevelop the **Green Island** area behind Union Station.

The WRA board agreed last night that it will seek to amend its Union Station Urban Revitalization Plan, or USURP, to eliminate all areas south of Franklin Street, including the former Wyman-Gordon Co. property.

The remaining project area will include Union Station and some surrounding parcels. But under a second amendment, the WRA announced its support for a 50-acre area east of Grafton Street would be added to the project area for possible redevelopment as a Franklin Science Park.

Green Island property owners testified at a hearing yesterday that the WRA's promises to revitalize their area with infrastructure and building improvements never materialized for lack of money.

Instead, the neighborhood hovered in limbo as private developers shunned the area, fearful of the WRA's power to take properties by eminent domain.

Basically the USURP is dead," said Craig G. Richards, general manager of Patrick Motors Inc., 65 Temple St. We ought to revoke it."

The free market could function better if the WRA's shadow were removed from the neighborhood, several people said.

If people were free to buy and sell and trade their properties, a lot would've happened," said Philip Reid, a real estate broker.

We just want to feel like we have some control over our property," said Seth Derderian, owner of 55-61 Green St.

The area the WRA wants to remove from the plan is bordered by Franklin Street on the north and Wyman-Gordon Co.'s old property off Madison Street on the south. The eastern border is Interstate 290, and Worcester Center Boulevard, Francis J. McGrath Boulevard and Southbridge Street form the western edge.

The area is home to many small businesses, some owned by immigrants, and a major manufacturer, PresMet Corp.

Although anxious to see their neighborhood dropped from the plan, a number of business people and property owners said they were leery of the Franklin Science Park proposal, particularly because of the traffic and parking demands.

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The science park will affect the neighborhood whether or not the **Green Island** area is removed from the plan, said a letter submitted by Michael A. Gaffin, chairman of PresMet, and several other business people.

WRA board members, in a meeting after the hearing, said the comments demonstrated a consensus on dropping the **Green Island** neighborhood from the plan. They agreed to push simultaneously to drop the neighborhood from the plan while seeking to add the science park area.

The matter must still go to the Planning Board and City Council for approval.

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Company: WYMAN-GORDON CO (91%); PRESMET CORP (81%); WYMAN-GORDON CO (56%)

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