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Proposed CleanTech Corridor in downtown L.A. gets boost

Land use experts from the Urban Land Institute issue recommendations for the area envisioned as a hot spot for environmentally sustainable companies.

By Tiffany Hsu, Los Angeles Times

May 22, 2010

The four-mile stretch of land adjacent to the Los Angeles River in the city's downtown is rife with deteriorating buildings, crumbling sidewalks and potholed streets.

But a cleanup crew and the presence of creative, green-minded businesses could freshen up the strip and help transform it into a major clean technology district, a panel of land use experts said Friday.

The city's much-touted plan to turn the dilapidating industrial area into the proposed CleanTech Corridor got a boost when 10 land use and real estate professionals from the nonprofit Urban Land Institute unveiled their recommendations for revitalizing the area.

The panel said the city needed to spruce up the "underperforming" area by scaling back manufacturing activity while recruiting smaller start-up companies.

The section is being envisioned as a clean-tech incubator and industrial park that would draw jobs to the city, burnishing its profile as a hot spot for environmentally sustainable companies.

But the ambitious project has hit some rough patches — organizers originally hoped to see a CleanTech Manufacturing Center anchoring the south end of the strip this year or next. A push from Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's office last year to secure Italian rail manufacturer AnsaldoBreda as a tenant fell through.

The volunteer panel, sponsored by the city Community Redevelopment Agency and the L.A. Department of Water and Power, spent five days in Los Angeles touring the area.

The strip, they concluded, could someday model itself after the SoMa quarter of San Francisco or the Pearl District in Portland, Ore. — both areas that were known as decaying warehouse and industrial centers before being revamped with artsy, cutting-edge businesses.

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The land institute group focused on the middle portion of a corridor that stretches roughly four miles long and one mile wide along the river and east of Alameda Street. More than a quarter of the jobs in the area are in manufacturing, and most residents are renters whose median income is \$17,769, nearly \$30,000 below the city's median.

The neighborhood also has problems with lax garbage removal and illegal parking, panelists reported.

But the area, with its historic, multi-use buildings and its concentration of small companies, is attractive to high-tech firms, the panelists said. The city also could draw young entrepreneurs and creative companies by publicizing Los Angeles' urban lifestyle and its proximity to universities, Asian and Mexican markets, and the garment and crafts districts.

Innovators and boutiques that can make prototypes and custom goods such as Pixar Animation Studios and West Coast Choppers fit the bill, the panel said. So do a solar firm, electric-car manufacturers and even a garment recycling business that have already expressed interest.

Panelists also proposed an extended Metro system to boost access to the area, with three new stations and an outdoor art park near the river. Railways would be moved underground and greenery would be planted.

Buildings, panelists said, could embody eco-friendly ideals with rooftop gardens full of native plants, storm water recycling systems and alternative energy generators.

City officials also plan to offer employment and investment tax credits, permit expediting assistance, workforce recruitment and training, utility rebates and other financial incentives.

"To delay may mean that others cherry-pick on our target," said panelist Sharon E. Pandak, an attorney from Virginia. "L.A. can benefit by getting there first."

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The Buzz: Assembly Democrats split over business-backed bill on regulations

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Published Monday, Jun. 07, 2010

After a rare floor fight among key Democrats, the Assembly passed legislation last week that could make it easier to challenge future regulations on air, energy and other issues.

The controversy stemmed partly from a business-backed bill's release last week by its author, Assemblyman **Felipe Fuentes**, from the powerful Appropriations Committee that he chairs despite the fact that policy committees haven't voted on the bill's major amendments.

The measure, Assembly Bill 2529, would create a process in which critics of any economic impact analysis used by four key state agencies in creating new regulations could bankroll an independent study.

Democrats rarely quarrel openly among themselves on the Assembly floor and traditionally side with their leader, currently **John A. Pérez**, when high-stakes legislation threatens to create caucus fireworks.

Not this time.

After a handful of Democrats complained loudly that Fuentes had violated legislative protocol by sidestepping policy committees, the caucus split on the measure, with its 45-17 passage due largely to GOP support.

Pérez, Fuentes and Assembly Speaker Pro Tem **Fiona Ma** were joined by 14 fellow Democrats in voting yes, but 15 others voted no and 15 abstained.

Fuentes' measure would apply to regulations proposed by four state agencies that oversee key air pollution and environmental issues: Air Resources Board, Energy Commission, Department of Fish and Game, and the Department of Housing and Community Development.

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The New York Times

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June 7, 2010

Sen. Schumer Sees Climate Bill Reaching Floor as Amendment to Energy-Only Measure

By DARREN SAMUELSON of [Greenwire](#)

A Senate proposal setting up a cap-and-trade program to curtail greenhouse gas emissions likely will be offered on the floor later this summer as an amendment to a smaller, energy-only approach, Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) said today.

Appearing on MSNBC, Schumer said he expects Senate Democratic leaders to use legislation from Energy and Natural Resources Chairman Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.) as the base proposal to launch the floor debate. "It's going to be a good strong energy bill, and I think it's going to have new life," said Schumer, the third highest-ranking Senate Democrat.

As for climate change, Schumer predicted Sens. John Kerry (D-Mass.) and Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.) would have a chance to win 60 votes on their [plan](#) (pdf) during the floor debate on the underlying Bingaman bill.

"Kerry has a proposal that has pretty broad support; it has the environmental groups and the energy companies, etc.," Schumer said. "And of course, the extreme people on each side say it's not good enough. But he's done a damn good job, and he's going to, in my opinion, get a chance to offer that amendment, and we'll see if it has the votes."

A spokeswoman for Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) declined comment on the strategy outlined today by Schumer. Reid meets Thursday with Democratic committee leaders, including Kerry and Bingaman, to map out a plan for the climate change and energy issues ahead of a floor debate scheduled during the summertime work period that runs from July 12 until the August recess.

Top Democrats have been suggesting for months that Reid build the energy debate around Bingaman's bill given the uncertainty over whether Kerry and Lieberman could muscle together 60 votes on their proposal, also known as the "American Power Act" ([E&ENews PM](#), April 27). Kerry and Lieberman originally had a key Republican ally in Sen. Lindsey

Graham, but the South Carolina senator distanced himself from their effort in mid-April after Reid signaled plans to also put immigration atop the Senate agenda this year.

Tackling climate change on the Senate floor via amendment isn't a new strategy. Lieberman and Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) forced floor votes on their cap-and-trade bill during debate in 2003 and 2005 over standalone energy legislation, losing 43-55 and then 38-60, respectively.

Bingaman's bill ([S. 1462](#) (pdf)), approved last June on a 15-8 committee vote, would impose a national renewable electricity standard, overhaul federal financing for "clean energy" projects, establish a suite of efficiency measures, mandate new federal electricity-transmission siting power and allow wider oil and gas leasing in the eastern Gulf of Mexico.

Whether or not a Gulf of Mexico leasing plan remains in the Bingaman bill is an open question considering the public outcry following the BP PLC oil spill that has caused havoc in the region since late April. Last week, Reid ordered eight Democratic committee leaders to produce their ideas related to the oil spill so they can be folded into the energy legislation headed to the floor.

Schumer said he expected the energy bill to include provisions raising the \$75 million cap on an oil company's liability for economic damages caused by an offshore spill -- both past and future spills. And he called for "real constraints" on deepwater drilling below 5,000 feet, "which is a lot different than drilling at 1,000 feet."

On nuclear power, Schumer said he expected the energy bill that hits the floor to include provisions to expand the nation's fleet of power plants, even in the shadow of continued safety concerns. "You've got to be real careful, because if you screw up, you're going to pay the price," he said. "But do it. If people want to take that endeavor, they should."

The Kerry-Lieberman bill would set mandatory limits on greenhouse gas emissions for electric utilities, petroleum refiners and major industrial manufacturers. It also includes incentives for the construction of new nuclear power plants and allows states to share in the revenue earned if they approve oil and gas drilling off their coasts.

[Click here](#) to watch Sen. Chuck Schumer on MSNBC.

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