Contentious Broadway parking lot targeted for deal

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NYC Economic Dev. Corp.
Former Mets great Darryl Strawberry speaks at grand opening of Western Beef supermarket at 2050 Webster Ave. in East Tremont.
Try, try again has become the mantra at Broadway and W. 230th St. in Kingsbridge, where efforts to redevelop an 80,000-square-foot plot of city land have failed.

The New York City Economic Development Corp. has issued a new request for proposals for the parking lot, touting it as the potential linchpin of Broadway's booming retail corridor.

The RFP follows last month's sale of the former Stella D'oro cookie factory site at Broadway and W. 238th St. to local developers and the success of the River Plaza shopping mall at Broadway and W. 225th St. The Stella D'oro property is slated to become a mall with a wholesale club.

The EDC first hawked the W. 230th St. plot a half-decade ago and Kingsbridge residents cheered when Connecticut developer Ceruzzi Holdings announced plans to buy it and build a mall with a movie theater there.

But the city and Ceruzzi spent years haggling over the deal, with the developer spooked by the economic downturn and the discovery of water under the site.

In February, Ceruzzi agreed to buy the property for $6 million and start work by 2013.

But when it failed to close the deal in June, City Councilman Oliver Koppell (D-Riverdale) and state Assemblyman Jeff Dinowitz (D-Kingsbridge) urged the EDC to cut Ceruzzi loose.

EDC President Seth Pinsky said the agency is "confident that the site will attract significant private sector interest" this time around and create new jobs.

He added that Kingsbridge is a growing market, thanks to new housing like the Sycamore Court Apartments, a 12-story condo on Corlear Ave. and 231st St.

Koppell said he is "looking forward to the further revitalization" of Broadway, while Dinowitz described the site as "centrally located" and able to draw shoppers from not only Kingsbridge but also Marble Hill and Riverdale.

The EDC will accept proposals for the site until Oct. 24.

In 2009 after the EDC closed the parking lot to make way for Ceruzzi, Kingsbridge merchants complained, forcing the EDC to reopen the lot.

Produce sold FRESH

East Tremont boasts a new $11.5 million Western Beef supermarket, thanks to a new city program that awards tax breaks to stores in poor neighborhoods where fresh produce is scarce.

The FRESH program, launched in 2009, gifted Western Beef $5.6 million in real estate and sales tax breaks to help it build the 55,000-square-foot supermarket at 2050 Webster Ave., a former Pepsi bottling plant. The store opened last month with 120 permanent jobs, officials said.

Health Department Commissioner Thomas Farley heralded the opening, calling access to fruits and veggies the cure for obesity and Type 2 diabetes.
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