

Interest in Los Angeles CleanTech Corridor Revived with DRA RFP

Feature Article

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Community Interest in Los Angeles' CleanTech Corridor, an ambitious project with a complicated history, has been revived thanks to a recent Request for Proposals (RFP) issued by the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA/LA). The RFP seeks industrial developers for a 20-acre clean tech site that forms the southern anchor of the Corridor, with a target start date for construction of 2013.



The CleanTech Corridor is envisioned by the City of Los Angeles as a national industrial manufacturing center for clean technology processes and services. The Corridor is a four-mile long district along the Los Angeles River that stretches from the Clean Tech Manufacturing Center on the south to the Arroyo Seco Cornfields on the north.

Plans for development of the Corridor have encountered a number of bumps in the road, with committed developers backing out and the fall-out of various means of funding. However, the CRA/LA hopes to reinvigorate development interest with the new RFP issued on September 3. The RFP solicits conceptual development proposals, qualifications, business and financing plans from developers or development teams. Teams might include developers, owners, and end-users of the space.

The RFP site is located at the intersection of Santa Fe Avenue and 15th Street, and is adjacent to the Amtrak service facility and the Alameda Corridor. The site has a history of environmental problems, but has been subject to extensive cleanup and remediation activities under the supervision of the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). It has been cleared for immediate redevelopment.

CRA/LA's goal is to attract cleantech industries to the site, and promote further redevelopment of the entire Corridor. In particular, the agency is hoping to promote permanent job creation at the site and in the surrounding area by targeting users in the areas of clean energy, green building, clean water technology, reduced emissions vehicle technology, mass transit solutions, advanced recycling, and similar cleantech initiatives.

Site planning, design and development must be sustainable and meet a minimum of LEED® Silver certification. In addition, CRA/LA hopes to achieve direct sales to provide funds to repay CRA/LA's \$15 million acquisition note at closing, or generate immediate and long term revenue stream from ground rent to service the acquisition note.

"The Clean Tech Manufacturing Center will kick start efforts to market the entire Clean Tech Corridor to potential users," said Estela Lopez, Executive Director of the Central City East Association (CCEA). "It will promote additional development in adjacent industrial areas, and serve as a catalyst for additional research and development, and light industrial users."

The City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) recently purchased a building for development of a research center and business incubator to promote new clean tech industry. This Downtown Arts District development will contribute to additional job creation and economic vitality for an area that is currently characterized by a declining employment base and aging infrastructure.

"The City's efforts, if successful, represent a positive contribution to the revitalization of the Arts District through the replacement of obsolete manufacturing facilities and the reuse of underutilized properties," said Lopez.

In May of this year, a ULI Advisory Service Panel formulated a series of recommendations addressing issues such as infrastructure improvements and zoning incentives for the development of new clean tech industrial uses in the Corridor, with a particular emphasis on development in the Arts District. A final presentation of the Advisory Panel's recommendations is scheduled for November 4.

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