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Before exit, Bruno delivers for Troy

KENNETH C. CROWE II Staff writer Published 1:00 am, Friday, July 18, 2008



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Sen Joseph L. Bruno talks to the press Thursday, July 17, about plans for the Troy riverfront.

TROY -- The city will receive \$6 million in state funds to transform its Hudson River shoreline by replacing the decaying City Hall with a park and retooling the waterfront with recreation and development opportunities.

State Sen. **Joseph L. Bruno** unveiled the funding package Thursday, making it his last economic development announcement before he retires today. He also urged the city's feuding Republican administration and **Democratic City Council** to work together and pledge \$2 million in city funds to get the entire \$8 million riverfront overhaul completed.

"City Hall is going to come down. In its place will be a 200-space underground parking garage. On top, it will be all grass," said Bruno, R-Brunswick.

The \$6 million from the state **Environmental Protection Fund** revives the push to demolish City Hall and relocate city government. The City Council must still decide how it

wants to raise the city's \$2 million share of the funding package. One option officials have discussed includes borrowing the money.

Mayor **Harry Tutunjian and City Council** President **Clement Campana** said they would follow Bruno's advice to work together.

"We're going to work with the council," Tutunjian pledged.

"We will work with the administration to bring this plan to fruition," Campana promised.

Tutunjian said City Hall at 1 Monument Square is deteriorating and has to be replaced. Campana agreed that the city needs a home for its government that is modern.

Tutunjian's proposal to sell City Hall last year became a major political issue in the city elections. While Tutunjian was re-elected to a second term, the **Democrats** took control of City Council.

A council committee reviewed the condition of City Hall, while Tutunjian asked for proposals to develop the City Hall site and relocate city government. Discussions about the future of City Hall have stalled since June 5. Talks between Tutunjian and Campana about City Hall began again in the past several weeks.

Campana said the entire City Council would be involved in developing the City Hall site and finding a new location. The city will either use reserve funds or borrow money to meet its \$2 million contribution to the project.

The City Hall site proposal calls for using part of the \$2.5 million the city received from the Restore NY program to demolish the existing building. On the south side of the City Hall site, a mixed-use building, including space for a possible new city hall and commercial space, is proposed.

Other aspects of the waterfront project include building an esplanade along the river; improving the Riverfront Park band shell and building a new amphitheater; building a **Troy Maritime Welcome Center**; improving the Ingalls Avenue boat launch; and relocating the rock salt piles to South Troy industrial areas from north of the **Beacon Institute** site.

The rejuvenation of the city waterfront has the support of local business leaders.

"It will help the perception of Troy as well as bring new businesses to the area," said **Jake Dumesnil**, vice president of the **Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce**.

"The one really positive aspect was the announcement of moving the salt dunes project. It opens up more prime riverfront," Dumesnil said.

Bruno's final news conference came in Rensselaer County, his home county which he has represented for 32 years in the state Senate.

"I've gotten a lot of satisfaction out of it," said Bruno, who spent 14 years as Senate majority leader feeding funds into his district and the rest of the Capital Region.

"One thing I'm not thinking about doing is retiring from life," said Bruno, maintaining his customary sense of humor. "I'm not going to lay down and play dead. I'm told it's not fun."

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