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West Side Stadium In Rudy's Proposal

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The proposed No. 7 subway line extension and a controversial domed stadium to house the Jets and Yankees could be built under an ambitious redevelopment plan released yesterday by Mayor Rudolph Giuliani to revitalize a long-neglected corridor on the West Side of midtown Manhattan.

The plan for "Far West Midtown" would develop 40 million square feet of new office and retail space, expand the Jacob Javits Convention Center and build sports and entertainment facilities, city officials said.

Giuliani said the city needed to develop the under-utilized 59-block area to help facilitate an expansion in the city's economy during the next 20 years.

"For decades this area has remained economically stagnant, despite being bordered by some of Manhattan's most vibrant neighborhoods — midtown, Chelsea and Clinton," Giuliani said at a City Hall news conference, where he was joined by New Jersey Gov.-elect James McGreevey. He and Giuliani stressed the importance of the region remaining economically strong.

Giuliani said the city is losing billions of dollars because it doesn't have adequate indoor convention space. "If you have to seat between 40,000 or 50,000 people, in an indoor arena, you cannot have your convention in New York City."

City Planning Director Joseph Rose said the long-range plan could take decades to complete and was "not contingent" on building a stadium or the city winning the 2012 Olympics.

Under the plan, outlined in a 65-page report, Rose said "the infrastructure improvements will pay for itself" through tax-based initiatives and zoning bonuses without drawing funds from existing city capital improvement projects.

But Gene Russianoff, staff attorney for the Straphangers Campaign, a citizen's public transportation advocacy organization, said he was "highly skeptical that it [the plan] wouldn't need a lot of public resources."

"It is an interesting idea to have the private sector pay for it," Russianoff said. "That is always the goal of projects as mammoth as this extension of the subway line . . . but in the entire history of the subway system it has been publicly financed, it comes from the taxpayers."



AP Photo

Mayor Giuliani sketches his suggestion for a Jets, Yankees stadium on the West Side.

Russianoff added that the city had more pressing transportation priorities, such as building a Second Avenue subway or restoring service to the No. 1 and No. 9 lines damaged Sept. 11.

Yesterday at City Hall, the mayor playfully drew a stadium on several large diagrams to reinforce his efforts for a facility that can hold up to 80,000 indoors.

The city is a finalist for the 2012 Olympics; the domed stadium is considered a major component for winning the bid. The mayor also has used the Olympics as an impetus to bolster an expanded Javits Center as an international draw.

Giuliani, whose term expires Dec. 31, said the plan would have to be carried forward by the next administration.

"The reason for the failure to put in a stadium there is political opposition," Giuliani said. "Most of the city politicians oppose putting a stadium . . . without thinking through what a major sports facility could do for the economy for the future."

The redevelopment zone borders Eighth Avenue and the Hudson River east to west, and West 42nd Street to West 24th Street north to south.

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