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Cowdell has never been more optimistic about power line relocation, waterfront plans

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Despite the current economic downturn, Lynn Economic Development and Industrial Corp. (EDIC) Executive Chairman Jim Cowdell is as optimistic as ever that the city will achieve its goal of moving the harbor side power lines to free up approximately 250 acres of land on the waterfront. As soon as that happens, the Lynn EDIC's plan to develop the waterfront into one of the top attractions in the city can shift into another gear.

Cowdell said last week that, in addition to the relocation of the power lines, one of the short term goals connected with the waterfront plan is to find another use for the land that currently houses Building 19 and the flea market, one that will, hopefully, make for a more eye-catching and attractive "first glance" of Lynn for people traveling into the city via Route 1.

"That's a key area, and our goal is to move the power lines and develop that area into something special," Cowdell said. "Nothing against Building 19, but we feel we can do better than that. I spoke to the owner of the property, who told me that the lease has expired and that he is currently negotiating with Building 19. If Building 19 does move out of there, we will work with the owner to try to attract new business to that area."

Speaking on the waterfront plans as a whole, Cowdell said that the next crucial date for the plans will be February 17, when the City Council will vote on Mayor Edward "Chip" Clancy's request to bond \$4 million for removal of the power

lines. That sum, in combination with the \$2.5 million in grants that the city received from the state for the project in December, would give Lynn the \$6.5 million needed for the massive relocation. If the council acts accordingly,

National Grid will order the steel for the new poles in early March.

Cowdell said as long as the proper funds are secured, ground could be broken for the

project in late 2009. Once the physical work begins, the relocation project is expected to last between six and nine months, putting it on schedule for completion by the middle of 2010.

"I feel very confident that they are going to be moved," Cowdell said. "Once we move those power lines, then we have the oppor-

tunity of a lifetime. People say that we can't afford it. I quickly say that we can't afford not to."

Cowdell anticipated that, after the power lines are moved, the owners of locations like the Building 19 site and the vacant lot next to it would either look into new developments for those sites or sell the land to major developers. The council has already approved zoning changes for that area, meaning that few hurdles would remain if a developer

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COWDELL (continued from pg. 1)

wanted to construct, say, a 20-story Hilton Hotel where Building 19 currently stands.

High rise hotels and condominiums and other residential properties, and also commercial/retail spaces are all part of the master plan for the waterfront that was approved by the City Council in September, 2007. Cowdell said the complete report of the plan, which can be viewed publicly at projects.sasaki.com/lynnwaterfront, is still the city's main

compass for the massive series of projects.

The benefit of a first class waterfront area has never been more obvious than it is today.

"Waterfront land is always very attractive," Cowdell said. "Anything built there would

generate additional tax dollars. Every day, teachers, firefighters and police officers are in jeopardy of losing their job, so we desperately need an expansion of commercial and residential tax dollars. Right now, Lynn is land poor."