

# Vision for The Spectrum emerging

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*Robert Stanton wrote:*



*Conceptual view of Kirby*

*Road in The Spectrum.: Photo courtesy of Gateway Planning Group*

Big plans are in store for The Spectrum, a 1,000-acre prime tract in Pearland beside Texas 288 and south of Beltway 8, city officials say.

Earlier this month, The WaterLights District – a major partner in the development – announced that Amegy Bank had posted the 48-acre property for foreclosure. The mixed-use project would have included offices, restaurants and retail and residential components.

Perhaps the most anticipated aspect of the WaterLights District was the Presidential Park & Gardens that was to have featured giant busts of all the U.S. presidents.

With the WaterLights District in financial peril, Pearland city officials are moving forward with a vision for The Spectrum that includes a technology park with nanotechnology and biomedical research facilities, entertainment venues, educational facilities and retail and office space.

To make that a reality, the city has hired Ft. Worth-based **Gateway Planning Group**, which specializes in town planning, transportation design and economic development services for both public and private sector clients.

“What we have done is to pull all the stakeholders and landowners together, and completed a market study,” said Scott Polikov, Gateway’s president. “We looked at infrastructure in terms of transportation and drainage, and we’re talking to (the Texas Department of Transportation) about drainage right of way.”

Polikov said his firm also has consulted with Houston-area developers and “we think there’s the potential for several urban living units and 1 million square feet of office and major entertainment (space)” at The Spectrum.

Plans exist to bring light rail along Kirby Road, which runs through the center of The Spectrum. The city already has water and sewer utilities in place along Kirby east to Texas 288, Pearland Mayor Tom Reid said.

In light of the shaky national economy, keeping The Spectrum on the right track is a challenge, Polikov admitted.

“Some of the developers have struggled,” he said. “We want to make sure that The Spectrum is not dependent on the success of one developer.”

One idea on the table, City Councilwoman Felicia Kyle said, is to amend the drainage rules for developers and landowners in The Spectrum. Under current regulations, each developer or landowner must set aside a portion of their property for drainage.

A new proposed plan would allow property owners to buy into a regional detention facility, eliminating the need for on-site drainage.

“Each one (landowner) has their own individual interests in their land,” Kyle said. “The idea is to do something broadly with a unified approach to development. We’re looking for them to unite and come together collectively so that the land is used to the benefit of the whole.”

City Councilman Scott Sherman agreed.

“I think it makes sense,” Sherman said of the detention proposal. “When you look at the design and master plan that Gateway has come up with, regional detention makes the most use of the land, and it seems to be the way that most developments are going these days.”

In early April, St. Paul, Minn.-based **Cardiovascular Systems Inc.** plans to open a manufacturing facility in The Spectrum that will add 250 jobs over the next five years, Reid said.

To land the company, the Pearland Economic Development Corp. will contribute more than \$3 million in incentives from its 4B sales tax revenues and the Texas Enterprise Fund will contribute \$750,000 in incentives for the company, Reid said.

“This is a real home run for Pearland,” the mayor said of CSI’s entry into the Spectrum.

Gateway Planning Group is expected to present final plans to City Council in the coming weeks.

For more details, check out [The Spectrum](#)

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