

\$100G State Grant for Journal Square Plan

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Ken Thorbourne

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CAPE MAY — All the jockeying to save the Beach Theatre, including three City Council votes on the subject, may have just been the coming attractions.

The largest "smart growth" grant in the state belongs to Jersey City.

The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs has awarded the Jersey City Redevelopment Agency \$100,000 to develop a comprehensive plan for Journal Square as an entertainment and retail hub, city officials said last week.

The grant is in keeping with the state's push to promote residential and commercial districts around mass transit centers, city officials said.

"We are very excited about this grant," said JCRA Executive Director Robert Antonicello. "It gives the city an opportunity to coordinate the growth of the (Hudson County) community college and other large-scale projects in the area."

The grant money will be used to hire the Princeton-based A. Nelessen Associates, an urban planning firm, and Hoboken-based architect and urban designer Dean Marchetto, Antonicello said.

The planners will be asked to help coordinate a plan for further entertainment and retail growth in the area, taking into account the new "City Center" towers being developed by Harwood/MEPT Journal Square, the steady expansion of Hudson County Community College, and attractions like Loew's Jersey Theatre, Antonicello said.

The "City Center" project is to have 120,000 square feet of retail, he said.

The city, through the state's Urban Enterprise Zone program, has set aside \$1.2 million to make facade improvements in Journal Square.