The conceptual plan could result in more than a billion dollars of investment in Cleveland and will create opportunities for significant public-private partnerships.

By JAMES W. WADE III

Staff Reporter

Mayor Frank Jackson unveiled a plan for transforming 90 acres from the Port of Cleveland to B urke Lakefront Airport
at a Press Conference at City Hall.

"Our goal in this plan is to have everything emanate from the lake," said Mayor Jackson.

The Browns, as a large tenant of the property, agreed to serve as a catalyst for lakefront

development back in April. Team President Mike Holmgren said, "Don't tell me why we can't do this, I don't want to hear it."

The renderings are impressive and are said to include much more access to the lake. A public field house, a possible Cleveland Clinic wellness facility and more. It played on a feeling that because of rapid and rail tracks, as well as the Shoreway, the lakefront was already too cut off from multi-millions of dollars in development going on in the city. Aerial walkways over the track and Shoreway will be a critical part of tying things together.

Be certain that whatever is on the city's drawing board won't include the land that Burke Lakefront Airport
sits on. It has always been hands off, and will remain that way. “This plan will redefine Cleveland
as a city that emanates from
Lake Erie
, whether through commercial maritime activity and business opportunities, or through public access for recreation and entertainment,” said Mayor Jackson. “We will transform Cleveland
into a city connected to its lakefront and all the opportunities and amenities it can afford.”

The groundwork for this plan was laid by two key decisions: Mayor Jackson’s decision in 2007 to keep Burke Lakefront Airport open as a general aviation airport and the Port Authority’s decision this year to right-size its operations at its current location. The City’s Department of Port Control contracted with EE&K Architects to develop the plan over the last 18 months.

Mayor Jackson’s plan for Cleveland’s Downtown Lakefront creates three distinct development areas: Harbor West, North Coast Harbor and the Burke Development District area and calls for 1.5 million square feet in new development, including office space, a hotel, green space, restaurants, retail space, recreational boating and a transient marina. It builds upon existing infrastructure and assets, including the Browns Stadium, the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, the
Great Lakes Science Center
and
Burke Lakefront Airport
and creates public space that can be programmed for special events and activities.

To move the plan forward, four pieces of legislation will be introduced to Cleveland City Council and the plan will be presented to the City Planning Commission on Friday, November 18. These ordinances, once approved, will give the City of Cleveland's Department of Port Control clear direction for managing city-owned land along the lake.

Similarly, the ordinances delegate responsibilities for key infrastructure maintenance activities within the harbor, including the Cuyahoga River (within the county) and Lakefront to the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority.

"The Port Authority is excited to work with the City of Cleveland on these initiatives, which set the stage for new development on the lakefront and critical infrastructure improvements along the Cuyahoga River's navigational channel," said Will Friedman, President and CEO of the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority. "We share the Mayor's vision for a vibrant waterfront that boasts both a working port and mixed-use development. We believe the plans and proposals announced are critical to turning his vision into reality."

The conceptual plan could result in more than a billion dollars of investment in Cleveland and will create opportunities for significant public-private partnerships. "The Browns believe that a revitalized waterfront will enhance the experience of everyone coming to downtown Cleveland. Mayor Jackson's plan is a positive step in the process of developing the Lakefront District.

EE&K Architects, working with the Departments of Port Control and City Planning, sought input and feedback from Cleveland's lakefront stakeholders. The public process will continue over the next three months with public forums as well as public hearings with Cleveland City Council and the City Planning Commission.

Key partner and community stakeholders, Will Friedman, President & CEO, Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority and Fred Nance, Special Counsel, Cleveland Browns, also spoke.