DOWNTOWN Colangelo leads drive for

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eral partner of the Arizona Diamondbacks and chief executive of the Phoenix Suns. "Jerde felt this is one of the biggest opportunities in the country (for transforming downtown)."

Among the plan's elements:

■ Jerde would identify areas to develop for specific purposes in a core bounded roughly by Seventh Avenue, Seventh Street, Interstate 10 and the railroad tracks.

■ The city may be asked to rezone land and fund streetscape improvements, walkways, utility projects and other infrastructure.

■ Developers would be sought to invest in downtown. A key element would be 15,000 new housing units, ranging from affordable to pricey. Also: a grocery store with an urban slant; diverse retail, food and entertainment; public gathering spots and unique attractions.

"You focus on what the community desires, and you create a place around that," said Rick Poulos, executive vice president for Jerde.

The cost of the effort cannot be estimated before a plan is crafted with input from the community and city leaders. But promoters said they expect Jerde's name and contacts will help entice private investment. It's not clear whether any public funds other than ones for infrastructure would be sought.

No 'Anywhere USA'

"Whatever we do, we're not looking to become Anywhere USA," said Brian Kearney, executive director of the Downtown Phoenix Partnership.

Colangelo has approached various business leaders to pay the $1 million needed for Jerde to craft an initial downtown plan.

Proponents say they want a plan that can be shaped and ultimately supported by businesses, neighborhoods, arts groups and the community.

"Our goal here is to have these folks be part of the outcome instead of telling them what the outcome's going to be," said Donald Cardon, chief executive of Cardon Development Group of Phoenix and former deputy city housing director.

The effort began after Cardon approached Colangelo in April with the idea.

Helping Cardon is Mo Stein, a Phoenix architect and chairman of the city Planning Commission. Other early supporters included Ken Kendrick of Paradise Valley, an investor in the Diamondbacks and Suns, and Jerry Bisgrove, Scottsdale developer and Stardust Foundation founder.

Cardon, whose company develops affordable housing, said that when he began pitching the plan, he realized he needed strong leaders to promote it. Kendrick, Bisgrove and Colangelo spent $95,000 for initial scoping by Jerde, and Colangelo has raised about half of the $1 million to reach the next stage. They've worked behind the scenes to muster support for a "believable" plan before going public, Stein said.

Among the businesses or leaders who have committed money or services are Bank of America; Bank One; Wells Fargo & Co.; Hunt Construction Group; Edson Cos.; Lewis & Roca; and William Post, chairman and CEO of Pinnacle West Capital Corp. Colangelo also has discussed the plan with Sue Clark-Johnson, chairman, chief executive officer and publisher of *The Arizona Republic*.

'Jazzed' by initiative

City Councilman Doug Lingner, whose west Phoenix district includes portions of downtown, said he is "jazzed" about the initiative, especially the housing.

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The Jerde Partnership

Based: Venice, Calif.
Employees: About 100.
Services: Architecture, urban planning, landscape design. Portfolio includes projects ranging from retail, hospitality, gambling, office, cultural, interior, entertainment, education and recreation to mixed-use districts and large-scale master plans.
People affected by Jerde projects annually: About 500 million worldwide.
Past projects: Horton Plaza, San Diego; 1984 Los Angeles Olympics; Bellagio and Fremont Street Experience, Las Vegas; Mall of America, Minneapolis; RiverWalk Kitakyushu, Japan; Namba Parks, Japan; Beursplein, Rotterdam, Netherlands.
Information: www.jerde.com.

"We have to make it so every one who wants to live dow here should be able to live dow here," Lingner said.

The plan envisions afford able and high-end housing, bu Lingner said it will be up to th city to ensure the range properties becomes a realit He suggested the city use ta credits and subsidies towar affordable housing.

Cardon, Colangelo and othe proponents said they are n motivated by personal gain pushing the project.

"I don't have plans to mak investments in projects for n benefit," Colangelo said. "I already here, I've alread made my commitments."

He said downtown develo ment will happen either piec meal or with a coordinated v sion that benefits the enti community. "If we don't do this way, then I think the ne 10 years will be piecemeal," said.

Cardon said he would co pete for housing projects in t area. "But does that mean th you can never participate something bigger than you self?" he said.

City Manager Frank Fa banks said he has received t briefings on the plan. T downtown area could only be