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# Greenway to get hotel, food market

By Casey Ross

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**T**he Patrick administration selected a developer on Friday to build a hotel and retail complex on one of the last prime sites along Boston's Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway, punctuating a series of rapid improvements to the downtown park system.

The hotel and European-style market by Normandy Real Estate Partners will add to several new restaurants, a pavilion for the Boston Harbor Islands, public art installations, and a [long-planned carousel](#) that will open Labor Day weekend.

"The vision for the Greenway is starting to take hold, and there is still more to come," said Richard Dimino, president of A Better City, a business group heavily involved in the park system. "These new activities not only help shape the urban character, they also bring economic activity."

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[Normandy's building](#), to reach up to 10 stories, will anchor a district of food businesses that will center around the Haymarket pushcart vendors and include a new indoor farmers market above the Haymarket MBTA station, as well as several restaurants and specialty food stores. The firm is partnering on the \$65 million project with the real estate firm Jones Lang LaSalle.

"This is a very visible and critical site, and we want it to be a destination for

people from across the city,” said Justin Krebs, a principal of Normandy who added that the firm is seeking a mid-priced hotel operator for the property. “Our goal is to bring in a product that won’t be cost prohibitive for tourists and others visiting the area,” he said.

The project, which still needs approvals from city agencies, will be among the largest developments along the Greenway since the park system was completed in 2007.

Officials had initially envisioned a series of cultural and civic buildings such as a YMCA, a museum focused on Boston History, and a striking “garden under glass.” But those projects proved too complicated and costly, and they failed to move forward in the faltering economy.

The pace of the improvements along the Greenway has since picked up over the last several years. A 31-story office, retail, and apartment project opened at Atlantic Wharf in 2011, bringing several new restaurants to the edge of the parks near Dewey Square. A number of new food trucks have begun operating in the area, and The Palm restaurant recently opened at One International Place, with a new patio overlooking the Greenway.

“For so many years, this property was everybody’s back door,” said Greenway chief of planning and design Linda Jonash, recalling when the elevated Central Artery cut through the area, spewing soot and smoke onto adjacent properties.

“Now you see these new buildings punching through with new windows and patios and cafes,” she said. “Seeing the edges become activated is a wonderful thing.”

Jonash said the next major addition will be a custom-designed carousel scheduled to begin turning Aug 31. The 36-seat carousel will feature 14 unique characters including a sea turtle, a cod, a peregrine falcon, a

grasshopper, a harbor seal, and other animals.

It will be situated a short distance from Normandy's planned hotel project, which will be on a triangular sliver of property at Hanover and Blackstone streets, next to the weekend gathering of pushcart vendors.

The Massachusetts Transportation Department, which owns the property and the adjacent Haymarket MBTA stations and garage, has gone through multiple rounds of bidding for the property, weighing other proposals for offices, a museum, and apartments.

Jeffrey Simon, head of real estate for the transportation department, said that among the bidders Normandy offered the most significant benefits to the community, including \$2 million in upgrades to the facilities of the Haymarket vendors. He said the firm also offered to pay the most rent.

The state will collect between \$7.3 million and \$8.5 million from the transaction, although the terms of a 99-year lease still must be finalized.

Normandy is planning to build a hotel of up to 10 stories with a community room, fitness center, and pool that would be open to the public. The project, designed by Perkins + Will, will also include a restaurant and a ground-level market selling specialty foods and other products.

The firm was selected over another finalist — a team of Cresset Group and DeNormandie Cos. — that was proposing a 10-story apartment building, several restaurants, a food market, and a community center.

Normandy's plan will result in \$2 million in improvements to Blackstone Street in support of the pushcart vendors, who will also get water and electrical upgrades, retractable stall covers, and interior space for trash compaction, storage, and vendor rest rooms. The pushcart association supported Normandy's rival during the bidding process but pledged to work with the firm Friday.

"One way or another, we have to make this work," said Otto Gallotto, the association's president. "The pushcart vendors will not leave this market. We will always be here."

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