

Urban renewal: The greenway and Boston's vitality

Boston enjoys extraordinary assets, including a unique concentration of academic, scientific and medical genius, investment and venture capital expertise, technical applications development skills, and enormous scientific infrastructure investments and intellectual contributions by our universities and hospitals. These and other

unique cultural and commercial resources contribute to a richly textured lifestyle and workstyle that we Bostonians sometimes take for granted.

Relatively soon, life in Boston will be further enriched by the completion and enjoyment of the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway. Along and near the developing greenway, tens of millions of square feet of new office, residential, retail and hotel spaces are in the planning and development stages. Among many greenway-adjacent projects are Russia Wharf, the South Station Towers, the Intercontinental Hotel and Residences, Folio and several others in the nascent phase. These mixed-use projects — condominiums, offices, hotel rooms, restaurants and retail spaces — will bring with them density and vitality and therefore a livability long sought after in this area of the city.

Elsewhere downtown there is the planned tower at Winthrop Square and the redevelopment of the Filene's site-

projects that will rejuvenate and refine their immediate neighborhoods. It is exciting to note that with projects like these, major investors are demonstrating great confidence in our city.

There is no better reflection of our city's good health than the deep investment and long-term commitment represented by these millions and millions of new square feet of mixed-use space.

Most exciting is the prospect of enhanced livability that the greenway itself will provide. For instance, within a few years, the greenway will have made an unprecedented difference to downtown life in Chinatown, the Financial District, the Wharf District and the North End. As a city-garden oasis, the greenway will mend and reunite these diverse neighborhoods.

Each will benefit from new and inviting open space, enhanced pedestrian amenities, clean air provided by expansive plantings and generally activated surroundings. New residences, restaurants and service establishments will bring people and a human scale to the Wharf District, encouraging and enabling people to live where they work and creating a walkable, livable urban village befitting one of the world's greatest cities.

Further enhancing the greenway lifestyle/workstyle will be the exciting



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cultural and nonprofit elements now on the drawing board. In addition, the Boston Harbor Island Alliance and the National Park Service propose a new harbor pavilion on the greenway in the Wharf District that would serve as a gateway to the Harbor Islands and act as an important initiative to connect the city with its harbor resources. All will attract diverse participants, offering educational opportunities along with entertainment and plain fun.

Admittedly, the path to the greenway's urban village ideal has not been entirely smooth thus far. There have been delays and controversies around the greenway's development. However, such problems will not be a deterrent in the long run — the greenway is too valuable in too many ways, and is thus inevitable.

It does, however, require continued support from The Massachusetts Turnpike Authority and the city of Boston — and the leadership of the Rose Ken-

edy Greenway Conservancy, A Better City and other committed nonprofit, civic, cultural, and business leaders. We should also acknowledge that the Central Artery project was extremely complex, and in many respects it went very well because of the hard work and dedication of the thousands of talented men and women who worked on it.

With farsighted leadership and continued commitment of civic leaders, and with the transformation that the greenway will bring about, Boston will become — even more than it is now — one of the most exciting cities in America.

Fortunately, there is a deep and active pool of committed leadership talent. At its best, civic leadership is a public-private partnership in which government and business leaders join forces and work side by side for the common good. For this purpose, the elected leadership of the commonwealth and city combined can access and encourage committed private sector leaders — in Boston's case, extraordinary people with an extraordinary commitment to accomplish extraordinary goals in one of the world's greatest cities.

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