

The Boston Globe

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2004

Business

Neighborhood rising

10-acre project would include housing, library annex, supermarket

By Thomas C. Palmer Jr.

GLOBE STAFF

A new neighborhood the size of the minicity envisioned for Fan Pier could materialize over the next decade or so in an area between South Station and Chinatown that is now mostly a maze of highway ramps.

The Massachusetts Turnpike Authority yesterday received a single proposal, from Boston Residential Group LLC, for a 3.1 million-square-foot project to transform about 10 acres known as the South Bay, an area south of Kneeland Street and the Leather District.

The proposal includes mostly housing, with the tallest structure a 67-floor, 800-foot-tall tower on the southeast corner of the site.

The bid envisions about 1,700 condominium and rental residences, plus almost 600,000 square feet of office and commercial space. It would include about 2,000 parking spaces and would include a public library annex, a recreational facility, a supermarket specializing in Asian foods, and a park on Kneeland Street, a portion of a total of more than 200,000 square feet of open space and public amenities.

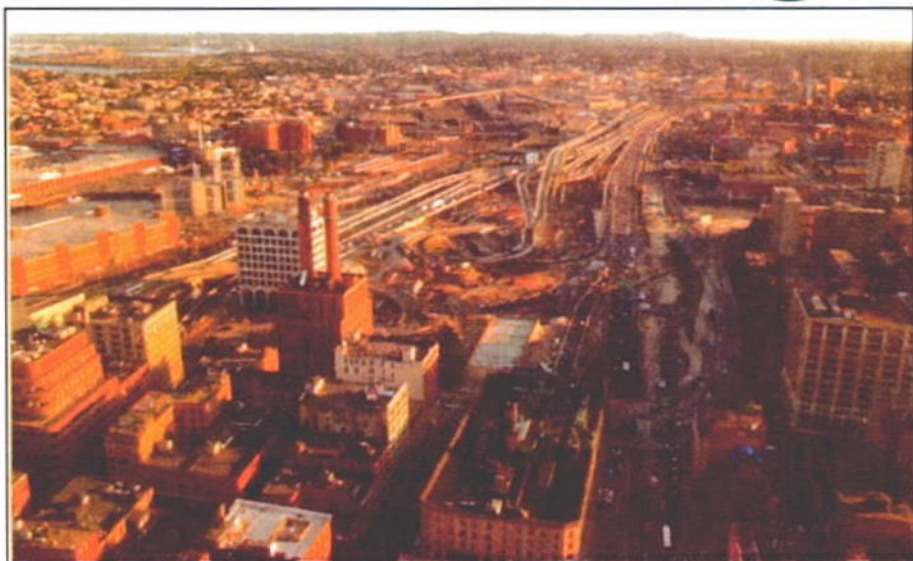
The park is billed as the southern end of the Rose Kennedy Greenway, the 30 acres of open and public space that are replacing the old elevated Central Artery.

The proposal, for a new neighborhood called Gateway Center, addresses the "critical need for housing and the needs of the Chinatown and Leather District communities," the developer, Curtis R. Kemeny, the chief executive and president of Boston Residential, said in a press release. The housing is planned in three residential towers and two midrise residential blocks.

The single bid is the end of a long-anticipated process in which the Turnpike, as steward of the Big Dig, is redeveloping former construction sites, restoring some of the urban framework missing since the elevated highway was built in the 1950s, and generating revenues from leases or sales of land to help pay some of its \$2 billion share of the highway project.

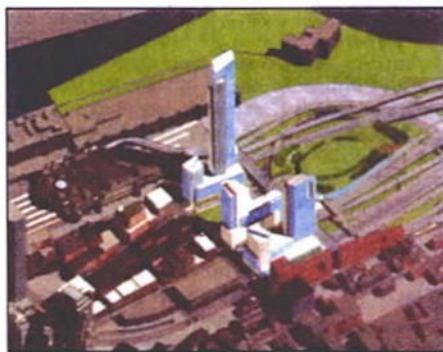
Stephen J. Hines, the chief development officer of the Turnpike Authority, said the proposal is for a long-term lease of the land.

He said the authority would be evaluating the proposal and getting community reaction in January, with a decision of whether to accept the proposal probably coming in February. Hines declined to



GLOBE STAFF FILE PHOTO

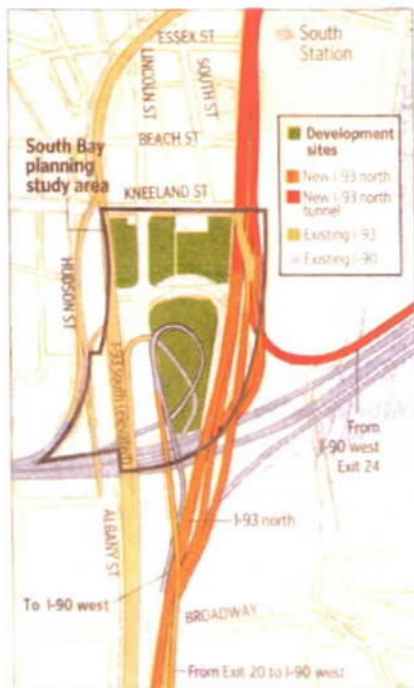
Aerial view of the South Bay area with its maze of highway ramps (above). Proposed 3.1-million-square-foot development (below) would encompass about 10 acres between Chinatown and South Station.



RENDERING/BOSTON RESIDENTIAL GROUP LLC

discuss the financial details of the proposal, which are likely to be complicated and tied to the future success of the development. Developers were offered the option of purchasing the land or leasing it. Boston Residential chose the lease option.

Although the authority always likes to have competing bids for land or air rights it puts up for devel-



GLOBE STAFF MAP

10-acre mixed-use project is unveiled

► **SOUTH BAY**
Continued from Page E1

opment, Hines said, "We're pleased that we received a proposal."

Boston Residential is a privately held development and management company that owns and manages about 1,200 luxury apartments, primarily in Boston and the western suburbs.

The company was founded only this year, but the families of the two principals have been in the real estate business for years.

The development of the land, controlled by the Turnpike Authority, will follow guidelines and a new set of zoning rules set out by the City of Boston, following more than a year of meetings where neighbors from the surrounding community told officials what they want.

"The way we're envisioning it is it becoming an extension of the surrounding community, Chinatown and the Leather District communities, down into that zone," said Marc Margulies, chair-

man of the 17-member South Bay Task Force Planning Committee, which was appointed by the city.

Lawrence Rosenbloom, a Leather District resident and member of the task force, said he was pleased that someone had responded to the challenge.

For a developer, Rosenbloom said, "It's very ambitious, in ways that are similar to the South Boston Waterfront," though he added that it is in some ways a superior location because it is adjacent to South Station.

The planning study accommodated the desire by Chinatown residents for affordable housing "at all income levels and different-sized units," Margulies said. Employment and employment training are supposed to be part of the package promised by developers, "items for the economic benefit of the adjacent neighborhood."

The proposal from Boston Residential is primarily for existing land, not for air rights over the ramps that proliferate on the

southern end of the South Bay site. But the master plan includes a vision of what could be built in later phases.

The southern end of the new neighborhood is envisioned as a gateway from the south as the Leonard P. Zakim-Bunker Hill Bridge is a door to Boston from the north.

But, under the first half of a master plan overseen by consultants Goody Clancy and hammered out over the last year, buildings would rapidly decline in height on blocks closer to Kneeland Street — where the maximum height would be about 110 feet.

The need for vehicular traffic in South Bay is expected to be minimal, because it is so centrally located for public transportation. — next to the South Station Transportation Center.

"We're using the proximity of this site to South Station and the nexus of all these roads to benefit development," said Margulies. "That's what transportation-oriented development is all about."

Thomas C. Palmer Jr. can be reached at tpalmer@globe.com.