

William McQuillan Developer foresees a Fenway spark

The mix of auto repair shops, gas stations and parking lots along Boylston Street in the West Fenway neighborhood resemble Route 1 in Dedham more than the main road of a brownstone-lined community. But a renewed effort to spruce up the neighborhood, best known as the home of Fenway Park, is creating a dynamic real estate market.

William McQuillan, president of Boylston Properties Co., and his partner, Steve Samuels of Samuels & Associates, are building 576 apartment units as part of the Trilogy development at the intersection of Boylston Street and Brookline Avenue.

McQuillan predicts the neighborhood will continue to grow. He talked with Boston Business Journal reporter Michelle Hillman about his vision.

What is the vision for developing the Fenway neighborhood?

I think the core is going to look like a lot of people want it to look - that is the complete transformation of the Boylston Street block. There will clearly be a dramatic visual difference you can't ignore.

You began acquiring land with partners

in the neighborhood as early as 1997. Are the plans for the area coming to life?

It's more monitoring it and making minor adjustments to a plan that was developed from 1999 to 2004 by dozens and dozens of stockholders. In term of the uses, there's no doubt that everyone wants to see retail life on the street level; we certainly do not want to see dark uses. There could be some of the Longwood Medical Area uses that come over, whether it's back office or whatever. There could be a hotel. I think the LMA is under-hoteled.

What makes this the right time for a makeover of the Fenway neighborhood?

The image of the Fenway from a residential standpoint 10 to 12 years ago was not all that great. One of the rea-

sons it is better today is because the mayor and the Boston Redevelopment Authority encouraged two institutions - Northeastern University and Boston University - to build dorms on their campuses. (That, in turn, meant fewer students in the neighborhood's apartments.)

With competition from the Red Sox, do you anticipate future real estate opportunities will be harder to come by?

Of course. When we started in 1997 and 1998, the Red Sox were owned by a different group and that group was looking to build a new ballpark. So it couldn't be more different in that regard.

It's not that people shouldn't have been paying attention to the Longwood Medical Area back then, but I think in this day and age the Longwood Medical Area and its impact over here is more evident. Some part of what the current Red Sox owners have done at their ballpark has made people more aware of the fact that it can be a better experience to come to the ballpark. Our Trilogy project is hard to ignore now. Not just in and of itself, but what it's going to do for a neighborhood that is in transition.

HIGHLIGHTS ON MCQUILLAN

Got started in real estate thanks to his 10th grade Needham High School English teacher, William Finard of Finard & Co.

First job was with Boston-based Mugar Group

Served 10 years as a trustee at his alma mater, Babson College, including serving as chair of the building committee.