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Cathartes to earn silver LEED certification for Portwalk development

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The city has another reason to embrace the much-anticipated Portwalk mixed-use development, which will replace the antiquated Parade Mall downtown. Cathartes Private Investments, the real estate development company behind the project, announced that Portwalk will become the city's first LEED-certified mixed-use development.

Portwalk will include four buildings of mixed uses over an underground parking garage. Each building will offer retail on the ground floor, accommodating a total of 15-20 shops, cafes and restaurants. An extended stay hotel offering 128 rooms will be developed over retail shops and along Deer St. A total of 28 residences, offering a mix of one, two, and three-bedroom units, will be situated on floors 2 through 5 on Hanover St.

Approximately 170,000 s/f of office space will also be available on floors 2 through 4 of the two office buildings, abutting Hanover, Maplewood and Deer Sts.

Cathartes recently received approvals on the architectural design and site plan for Portwalk, and expects to begin construction in the summer of 2008. The heart of the development will be the main pedestrian "broadwalk", a one-way vehicular thoroughfare which will serve as the gathering place that connects each of the development's buildings. The broadwalk will have wide brick sidewalks with trees, flowers, outdoor café seating and storefront access to each shop and restaurant. Cathartes also successfully developed Portsmouth's Hilton Garden Inn and the Harbour Hill Condominiums as the first phase of the overall Portwalk project.

The LEED green building rating system is a nationally accepted benchmark developed by the non-profit U.S. Green Building Council for the design, construction and operation of high-performance green buildings. With the help of Elkus Manfredi Architects, DeStefano Architects and Conn. based LEED consultant, Viridian Energy and Environmental LLC, Cathartes expects to break ground in June on Portwalk.

"Today more than ever, companies are seeking buildings that are operationally efficient as well as environmentally conscious," said Jeff Johnston, principal at Cathartes Private Investments. "Our focus on sustainable development is good for the community as well as our business because it lowers operating costs for our tenants and they value an optimal environment for their employees and customers."

A prominent example of Portwalk's environmentally sustainable design is the development's underground parking garage, a first of its kind in N.H. Portwalk will also incorporate environmentally beneficial strategies such as using white roofing to reduce "heat island effect," deploying water efficient landscaping, and promoting alternative transportation. Portwalk is close to bus lines; bike storage will be provided and preferred parking will be offered for low-emitting and fuel-efficient vehicles.

