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Related Beal to redevelop Congress Sq. with help of Arrowstreet, CBRE/Grossman Retail Advisors and JLL

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Related Beal has launched Congress Sq., formerly known as "The Block on Congress." Related Beal acquired the properties in 2013 and is repositioning and reinventing the entire city block in downtown, creating dynamic office space and marquee, desirable retail. Related Beal has enlisted Arrowstreet to serve as the architect and to redesign the Congress Sq. buildings into a 24-hour mixed-use environment bringing bold vision to an iconic business address. Related Beal has also engaged CBRE/Grossman Retail Advisors to lead all retail leasing efforts, and JLL as the brokerage firm for Congress Sq.'s office space at 40 Water St. The entirely re-imagined, modern office space will be available for occupancy in early 2016 and the retail opportunities are available for occupancy in fall of 2015.

The Congress Sq. plans call for the creation and activation of Quaker Lane, which bisects the property and will connect Post Office Sq. to Faneuil Hall. Quaker Lane will offer a pedestrian experience lined with boutiques, indoor and outdoor cafes and restaurants, nightlife attractions and retail venues. The smaller buildings on Congress and Devonshire are anticipated to be converted to residential or boutique hotel uses, while the larger building at 40 Water St. is being re-imagined as a modern office location with efficient and versatile floor plates, a grand entrance, double-height lobby and ground floor retail. Congress Sq. will transform a historic building into modern, efficient and dynamic offices. Related Beal will spearhead the repositioning and leasing efforts and serve as property manager of the project.

Rich in culture, these properties were known as Congress Sq. when they were first built between 1899 and 1921. Related Beal is rebranding this special grouping of buildings in Boston's downtown to reflect its original identity. By returning all the ground floor spaces to retail use, they will enliven the streetscape while providing highly desirable shops and services.

"This block of buildings, to be known again as Congress Square, is ideally located in the heart of the infrastructure-rich downtown submarket and was the home to one of Boston's most successful financial institutions for the last 40 years," said Stephen Faber, executive vice president of Related Beal. "Our plan is to rejuvenate the entire block through a mixed-use redevelopment strategy. The market is looking for efficient, modern space, rich with amenities and energy. These buildings and this location present us with the opportunity to deliver a variety of uses, bring activity and retail to Post Office Sq., and create a real destination in Quaker Lane, which we are all very excited about."

"Congress Sq. will revitalize the block between State, Devonshire, Water, and Congress Sts. back to the lively, retail streetscape it once was, and re-establish a pedestrian-friendly connection between Quincy Market, City Hall, and Post Office Sq.," said Scott Pollack, principal of Arrowstreet. "The heart of the project will be integrating Quaker Lane with the surrounding buildings and turning it into an urban oasis of outdoor seating, food and entertainment - a surprising transformation given it is

just an alley today. Architecturally, our team will enhance the impressive historic details of the buildings and the original two-story bank lobby and use them as a backdrop for new, modern design elements. That combination of classical and contemporary will also play a major role in updating the office building to meet the look, feel and technical requirements of today's innovation economy."

Congress Sq. is located at the top of Post Office Sq. reaching back towards the Washington/State St. retail corridor, at the epicenter of Boston's downtown just steps from Faneuil Hall and Boston's historic Freedom Trail. This ideal location provides outstanding commuter access and the ability to integrate a variety of uses into the property, activating a long-dormant street level and bringing new businesses to the area that would not have previously considered it a viable location.

"The offices at Congress Square will undergo a total and complete repositioning," said Ben Heller, managing director of JLL. "With unparalleled branding and high profile signage opportunities, Congress Sq. transforms an iconic business address into modern, efficient and dynamic offices with wide appeal. Through careful restoration and reconfiguration, Congress Sq. infuses the grandeur of classic architecture with the efficiency of modern systems, dynamic aesthetics, upscale amenities and inviting public spaces."

"Newly transformed streetscapes in the heart of Boston will provide for incredible retail and restaurant leasing opportunities at Congress Square delivering in fall 2015," said Jeremy Grossman, senior vice president/principal of CBRE/Grossman Retail Advisors. "As Boston's Central Business District and Downtown Crossing continues to transform, CongressSquare will be a unique and vibrant retail and dining destination and serve as an anchor in the district."

Related Beal will be communicating with city officials through the entitlement process prior to implementing the planned renovations and mix of uses and looks forward to making its public filing with the city of Boston in the coming weeks.

Related Fund Management acquired Congress Sq. from a Fidelity entity in December 2013. This five-building portfolio consists of nearly 343,000 s/f of office and retail space and sits on more than one acre of land. The properties include: 40 Water St., 68 Devonshire St., 19 Congress St., 15 Congress St. and 54 Devonshire St. While Related Beal will execute the entitlement process and overall development plan for the property, it is anticipated that the boutique buildings including 68 Devonshire Street, 19 and 15Congress will be marketed to specialized developers for conversion to their highest and best use.