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Massive Quincy downtown renovation project presented to residents

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When Tom Koch, mayor of Quincy, announced in March a \$1.2 billion plan to renovate downtown Quincy, he and the project's master developer, New York-based Street-Works LLC, promised a community outreach effort unlike any other in the city's 350-year history. Following through on their pledge, Koch and the Street-Works team brought a board model of the plan, along with renderings and a PowerPoint presentation, to more than 25 community meetings in every neighborhood of the city.

The result? A redesigned plan, reflecting the comments and input from the more than 1,200 Quincy residents who attended the meetings.

"We made it very clear that we were going out to explain the project, but that it wasn't going to be just us talking. We were going to be listening too," said Koch. "At every meeting Quincy residents showed that they loved their city and that they had good ideas about how to make it better."

Koch and Street-Works heard a great deal about environmental aspects of the new center, and went to work on incorporating more environmentally-friendly features into the new design. Town Brook, which has flowed beneath downtown Quincy for decades in hidden culverts and pipes, will be daylighted along a significant stretch of the center, providing a pleasant viewing and gathering space for families and residents. The entire project will be designed "green," with captured rainwater runoff, numerous open spaces, parks, fountain areas and walkways, and accommodations for Smart Cars and Smart Bikes. The residential sections of the new downtown will feature green roofs, low-draw lighting, and many other green features.

"Our goal is to make Quincy Center a model for green use and sustainability," said Richard Heapes, founding partner of Street-Works. "It was a great experience for us to hear residents talk about the downtown, how it used to be and how they'd like it to be in the future. Input like that is invaluable."

In addition to the community meetings, more than 50 members of Quincy's business community took a bus trip to the recently opened Blue Back Square in West Hartford, a \$285 million Street-Works project combining residences, restaurants, offices and retail uses. The trip, arranged by Quincy 2000, gave the group a chance to look at Street-Works' design concepts and speak with West Hartford residents and town officials about the development process.

"We thought it would be helpful for the business community to see a Street-Works project and hear first hand from the folks who worked with Street-Works to make the project happen. I think everyone came away very impressed," said Edward Keohane, president of Quincy 2000 and owner of Keohane Funeral Home in Quincy.

Quincy is located about seven miles south of Boston and has a rich maritime and political history dating back to the 1600s. Two presidents, John Adams and John Quincy Adams, were born in Quincy, as was the Revolutionary War figure John Hancock. Street-Works has invested more than

\$15 million in property purchases in downtown Quincy thus far, and plans to spend another \$3 million this year on further purchases and site development work.

The downtown development project would be anchored by new and renovated office buildings, including a new building along Hancock St. that could reach 20 stories. The project envisions one or two new hotels. As part of its zoning requests to the city council, Street-Works will seek the ability to develop a building at the height in order to have flexibility in attracting a tenant. The downtown area would feature sidewalk level retail stores and restaurants, and the sidewalks would be widened to between 18 and 20 ft. in order to accommodate open cafes. The entire downtown area will be lined with mature trees.

Key to the project will be street and sidewalk reconfiguration around the downtown area's historic landmarks, including Hancock Cemetery, Old City Hall and the United First Parish Church, also known as the Church of the Presidents. This area, which borders the Quincy Center MBTA stop, will become a pedestrian-friendly mix of benches, lighting, trees and public walking paths.

A crucial feature of the downtown development project is the Quincy Center Concourse, a long-awaited east-west thoroughfare that will allow motorists to drive between Rte. 3A and the Burgin Pkwy. without having to impact any streets in Quincy Center. Phase II of the Concourse enabling the reconstruction of McGrath Hwy. and the removal of all overhead utilities lines is now underway. Street-Works plans to submit a site approval package to the Quincy city council by January 2010, and would anticipate beginning construction later in 2010. The project is expected to last five to eight years and create thousands of jobs.

Street-Works, formed in the 1990s, is both a developer and a consultant to other developers. The company has completed major urban redesign projects from coast to coast, and prides itself on creating attractive, pedestrian-friendly downtown areas that attract residents, shoppers and employers. In addition to Blue Back Square, the company's other endeavors include a \$200 million project in Bethesda, Md., a \$750 million project in San Jose, Calif. and a \$200 million project in New Rochelle, N.Y. Founding partner Richard Heapes told those attending the Blue Back Square visit that the company's vision for Quincy Center is based on the firm's knowledge of public urban areas and its past achievements.

Whether a company requires public transportation, a deep sea port, commercial rail, a beautiful waterfront, access to major highways, proximity to Boston, a quality workforce or a diversified community - Quincy is the place to live, work and invest in. Quincy 2000 Collaborative and the city administration are eager to convince you that here in Quincy We Mean Business!

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