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Front Page

## Big solar statement for Fenway Center

Complex to have 1,200 panels

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The developer of a \$500 million complex in Boston is dramatically expanding its solar installation, creating the largest private solar facility in Massachusetts, and one that — with its prominent location next to Fenway Park — will become the most visible example of the state's embrace of renewable energy.

John Rosenthal's Fenway Center project will have 1,200 solar panels on the rooftops of its five buildings that will generate up to 650 kilowatts.

The panels will supply all the power needs of a new commuter rail station Rosenthal is also building, making it the first energy-neutral transit facility in the state.

Yesterday state officials granted Fenway Center its most important environmental approval, paving the way for Rosenthal to soon begin construction after more than a decade of planning and delays.

Patrick administration officials cited the expansive solar facility as a key factor in its favor.

It is also a particularly per-

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# Developer of Fenway Center redrafts plans to expand solar capability

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personal achievement for Rosenthal, a longtime environmental activist who was jailed three times in the late 1970s and 1980s for protesting nuclear power plants.

"To leverage my business to produce green power is a dream come true for me," he said. "This is certainly a wonderful turn of events."

Rosenthal had previously planned a smaller solar installation at Fenway Center, but decided to increase it substantially

**'It presents a tremendous opportunity for demonstration and education.'**

JOHN ROSENTHAL, developer

after the state and federal government boosted the value of tax credits that developers can use to finance such projects. It will cost \$7.5 million to build the 650-kilowatt array, but Rosenthal estimated the tax credits will allow him to recoup his installation costs within four years. He will then use the proceeds from electricity sales to pay off the debt used to purchase the panels themselves.

"The Fenway Center project is demonstrating that advanced environmental measures can be incorporated into private real estate development on a compelling economic basis," said Ian Bowles, state secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

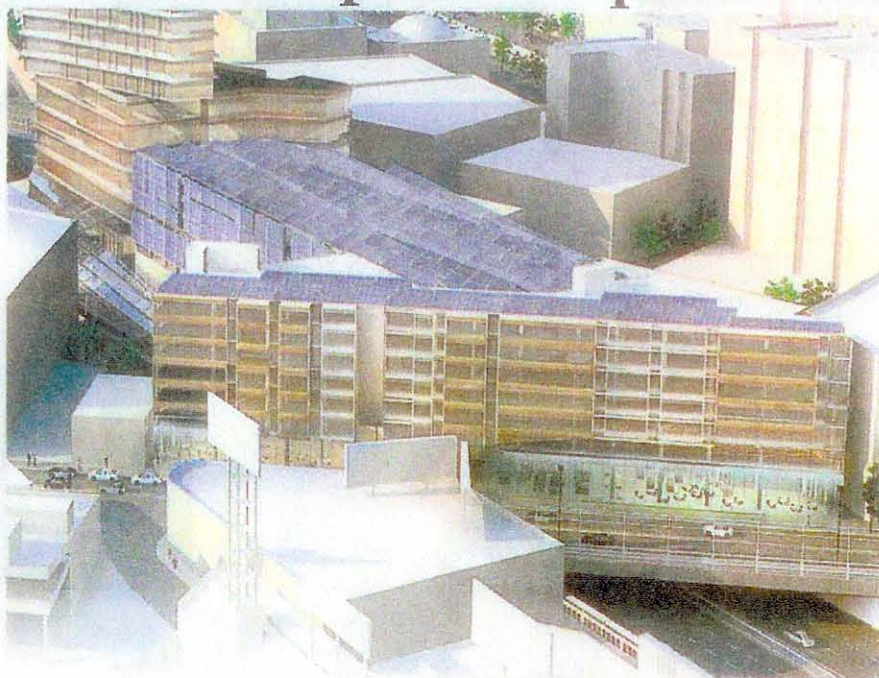
Rosenthal has created his own power company, Here Comes the Sun LLC, and in addition to supplying electricity to the train station, he expects to sell power to tenants of Fenway Center. He also hopes to add another 100 kilowatts of solar generation at a later date.

The complex is huge: 330 apartments, 370,000 square feet of office space, 90,000 square feet of stores, and a garage with 1,290 parking spaces, spread over 4.5 acres between Brookline Avenue and Beacon Street, on the Fenway Park side of the turnpike.

Also part of the development will be the new commuter rail station Rosenthal will build in exchange for winning the designation to build on public land, with the state picking up a portion of the cost.

The energy generated by the solar array will be enough to power not only the train station, but also about 100 apartments that are part of the development.

Rosenthal expects to begin the first phase of construction, on the train station, as early as next summer.



The proposed solar components at Fenway Center feature an array on top of the shared-use air rights garage and a vertical array on the south face of the garage.

State and city officials believe that because of its prominent location, Rosenthal's project will help demonstrate the possibilities of solar energy.

Several of Fenway Center's buildings will also straddle the turnpike on a large deck, making the solar panels visible from multiple directions in an area of the city traversed by thousands of commuters daily.

The next-largest privately built solar array in Massachusetts is a 500-kilowatt facility Harvard University is building at one of its buildings in Watertown.

There are several larger solar facilities proposed for the state, but those would be at government-owned properties: The biggest is a 1.5-megawatt solar system at a wastewater plant in

Pittsfield, while a 1-megawatt installation is proposed for the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center.

Rosenthal first proposed the project more than a decade ago, but he repeatedly ran into planning snags and neighborhood opposition. Fenway Center's size and makeup also changed during that period.

It received a major boost

earlier this year when the Patrick administration agreed to pay for some of the additional cost associated with building over the turnpike, a large expense that has stymied other developments such as the Columbus Center project nearby.

Because Rosenthal is building on and over turnpike land, he will have to lease the property from the state. So to help him get started, the state will allow Rosenthal to knock off up to \$65 million from his lease payments to cover the additional construction costs. Overall, his lease payments to the state should run around \$300 million over the 99-year agreement.

Fenway Center still needs several permits to proceed, including a final approval from the state Department of Transportation. Nonetheless Rosenthal expects to start on a new Yawkey commuter rail station this summer. Once finished, he is planning to put a kiosk in the station that will illustrate how the solar panels will be used to power the station.

"It's such a centrally located site that it presents a tremendous opportunity for demonstration and education," Rosenthal said. "Hopefully, people will see the power we're generating and see a way to turn their own meters backward."

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