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Developers Seek OK To Change Projects

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Two Fenway development projects have filed proposed changes with the city that are needed to move forward.

The developer of One Kenmore, a mixed-used project to be built over the turnpike between Kenmore Square and Fenway Park, wants to include less office space and more rental apartments.

"The market conditions do not allow for financing speculative office space," said

developer John Rosenthal. "We're still in a recession. There isn't a lot of growth in the business sector or expansion of existing businesses."

On the other hand, "Rental apartments are in high demand in Boston and in this submarket, Fenway, in particular," he added. Plus, "There is less traffic, and having more neighbors is a good thing for supporting local businesses, creating community and for public safety, with more people around at night."

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The change in use would not alter the development's footprint, height or number of parking spaces.

Plans for the project, which already has approval from the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), previously included 245,000 square feet of office space in the second of four buildings. That building would now house 265,000 square feet of residential units.

To compensate for the larger space, Rosenthal is reducing the third building's square footage by 20,000 square feet.

Between all four proposed buildings, the project would feature 542 residential units and 145,000 square feet of office space.

The project has been in the planning stage since 2002, and has changed uses several times as the market fluctuated. However, Rosenthal expects to select an equity partner in the next few months and begin the four-year construction project in 2012.

These changes represent "a great step forward," Rosenthal said.

Another mixed-use Fenway development is undergoing zoning changes. Developer Steve Samuels' Fenway Triangle building is slated for a 2.2-acre site between Boylston and Kilmarnock Streets and Brookline Avenue.

Because the project's proposed 178 feet does not meet the usual 150-foot zoning limits for the area, developers want to convert the site to a Planned Development Area (PDA), which provides more flexible zoning regulations.

Samuels would designate 7.5 percent of the residential units as affordable housing, and would contribute as much as \$500,000 to the Peterborough Senior Center.

A road connecting Boylston Street with Van Ness Street and ultimately Brookline Avenue would also partially count as a community benefit, which some community members at a public meeting this week said was "a bit of a stretch."

However, "Yawkey Way is not traversable 90 percent of the year," said BRA Planner Jonathan Greeley. "The road has its merits."