

THE BOSTON GLOBE

Business

Science & Innovation

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2010

Transit work kicks off Fenway Center project

By Casey Ross

GLOBE STAFF

After a decade of wrangling, developer John Rosenthal will break ground today with his ambitious plan to build a solar-powered neighborhood near Fenway Park, filling several acres of parking lots with apartments, offices, stores, and a revamped transit station.

The five-building complex, known as Fenway Center, will be unlike anything now standing in Boston, with solar panels to generate much of its electricity. The development will fill a large void between Brookline Avenue and Beacon Street, along and over the Massachusetts Turnpike, and result in the construction of new roads that will improve travel around the neighborhood.

"This is going to turn ugly, underutilized



CARLOS ZAPATA STUDIOS

Work is due to start by 2012 on Fenway Center's five buildings.

FENWAY CENTER, Page B9

With \$450m Fenway Center, developer promises a solar-powered neighborhood

► FENWAY CENTER *Continued from Page B6*

parking lots into a world-class neighborhood," Rosenthal said. He won city approval for the project in 2009 and has since been working to get state permits and secure financing in the down economy.

While private funding for the \$450 million project is not locked down, the groundbreaking kicks off the public transportation improvements that will help clear the way for the development.

The state will begin work on a \$13.5 million reconstruction of Yawkey Station, a dilapidated commuter rail stop near Fenway Park that will be fitted with longer platforms and a new glass-framed headhouse. It is planned to be the state's first solar-powered transit station, with energy to come from the panels installed on Rosenthal's buildings.

Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino and Governor Deval L. Patrick are scheduled to attend today's ceremony, though construction on the station is not expected to kick into high gear until the spring.

The state will also spend \$6.5 million to build a street off Brookline Avenue that will feed traffic to the transit station, as well as a new section of road that will connect Maitland and Overland streets through the development site.

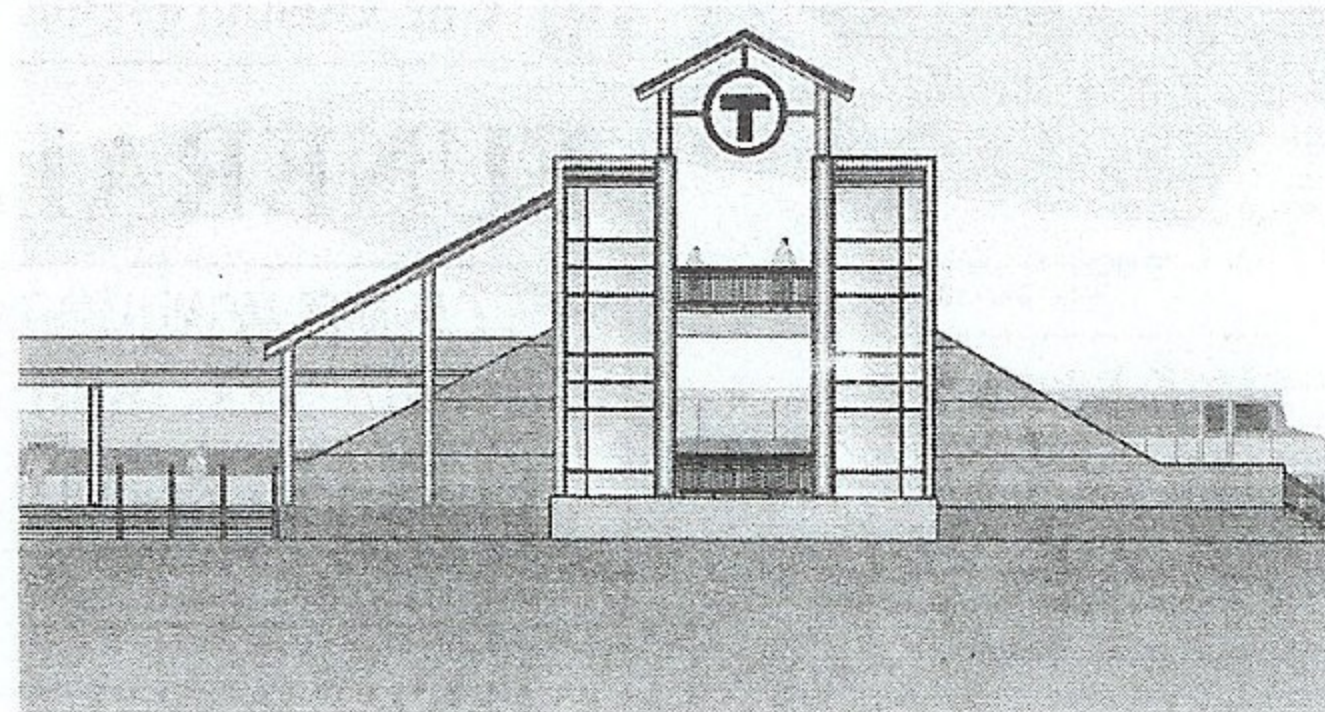
Rosenthal said he plans to begin construction by 2012. That work is complicated by the fact that part of the site spans the Massachusetts Turnpike, requiring that a costly deck be constructed to support the buildings.

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation is promising to share the cost of the deck through a lease agreement with

Rosenthal, who is renting state land for his project.

Officials have said they will give him a rent credit to help compensate for the increased cost of building over the highway. The credit could be more than \$30 million, but the state is still expected to net more than \$200 million during the life of the lease.

Once the deck is finished, the first building would be a 700-space parking garage over the turnpike that would be wrapped in solar panels. Rosenthal is in negotiations to lease 500 spaces during working hours to a business group that helps provide transportation and other services for hospitals and colleges in the nearby Longwood Medical Area. The garage will be available for use by those attending Red Sox games and others visiting the neighborhood's restaurants and



DHK ARCHITECTS

Yawkey Station on the MBTA's Framingham/Worcester commuter rail line will be upgraded as Fenway Center rises.

entertainment venues.

Also planned in the first phase of work is building a pair of seven-story apartment buildings — one adjacent to the garage over the turnpike and another at the corner of Beacon and Maitland streets. Rosenthal said the latter building will include a 10,000-

square-foot organic grocery store that will also help supply a farmer's market planned for the property. He declined to name the grocer because the deal has not been finalized.

The rest of the development will include a 10-story office building along Beacon Street and

a 27-story tower over the turnpike, with ground-floor retail stores, offices, and 130 apartments. There will also be a second, 590-space garage to support the residences and offices.

Those buildings will probably prove the most difficult to build. They include large amounts of office space, which is difficult to finance in the down economy, because few companies are looking for space.

Rosenthal said he is hoping to attract tenants from the Longwood Medical Area, where hospitals and research institutions have continued to expand during the economic downturn.

The bustling medical area, he said, is "going to continue to grow, and it's going to need offices to support that growth."

Casey Ross can be reached at ross@globe.com.