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## Miami developer plans mixed-use project with housing, commercial space

By Casey Conley

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The real estate investment company that owns Bayside Village student housing complex is finalizing a plan to buy more than three acres of vacant city-owned land in Bayside, according to city officials.

Federated Cos., which has offices in Miami and Boston, has been negotiating with the city for several months to buy seven parcels that run along Somerset Street between Elm and Franklin streets.

The tentative sale price for the 3.25 acres is \$2.28 million, city documents show.

Jonathan Cox, chairman of Miami-based Federated Cos., said the company is planning to build a mixed-use development that could include housing, retail space and office space. The project is also expected to include a 500-space parking garage at the site of the former E. Perry Iron and Metal Co. scrapyard.

Cox said the company plans to begin the development process as soon as the sale is official.

"We are intent on moving very quickly through the land-planning process, although a lot will be determined by the response we see from the city and also from the community," Cox said in a telephone interview.

"But our intent is to process this as quickly as possible and hopefully be in the ground as early as the beginning of next year," he continued.

The city council's Community Development subcommittee has spent several months reviewing the land sale in executive session. The three-person committee is expected to endorse the agreement tonight at 5 p.m. at City Hall, chair Cheryl Leeman said yesterday.

"It's huge news; it's very exciting," Leeman said yesterday. "We have been working for months trying to work out the details, and it's finally come together."

Asked whether she anticipated any hurdles, Leeman responded, "Absolutely not."

The full city council is expected to review the potential land sale in June.

Any development proposed on the land after it's sold would have to be reviewed and approved by the planning board.

The parcels up for sale include one along Elm Street near the start of the Bayside Trail and six others that run alongside Somerset Street. None of the parcels is developed, although an eight-story office tower was planned at the intersection of Chestnut Street and Somerset.

That plan fell through in early 2009, during the depths of the recession. Since then, the city has used the tract to dump snow collected from streets and sidewalks on the Peninsula.

Greg Mitchell, the city's economic development director, said Federated's plan for the parcels fits well within the decade-old Bayside Vision redevelopment plan. It's also in line with what Bayside residents want, he said.

Mitchell, who said there has been \$100 million in private investment in Bayside since 2007, described the Federated proposal as "a turning point."

Terms of the potential land sale would require Federated to start development on the site within about two years. If the company fails to meet the "pretty aggressive time line," the city can buy the land back, Mitchell said.

Such a provision prevents the developer from sitting on the land for several years until the economy improves further.

Neighborhood officials are also optimistic about the deal. Alex Landry, chair of the Bayside Neighborhood Association, said the development has the potential to reshape an important part of Bayside.

"I think this will be, depending on what comes out of it, a very big change for a lot people in how they view their neighborhood," Landry said yesterday.

Landry is hoping to see a mixed-use project that puts commercial and retail space on the first floor and housing on upper floors. What's been tentatively proposed, he said, is "exactly what we have been wanting to have."

Federated Cos. was formed in 1999, and since then it has developed more than 7,500 apartment units across much of the U.S., according to its website. The company bought Bayside Village student housing on Marginal Way on Dec. 30, 2010 for \$9.2 million, city records show.

Federated's "portfolio" includes apartment projects in various stages of development across the U.S., including Worcester, Mass., Manchester, N.H., and Hooksett, N.H., among several others.

Cox, the company chairman, says the firm is bullish on apartment projects across New England.

"We are very optimistic about the development prospects in the Northeast markets, particularly as it relates to apartment housing," he said.

As far as the proposed development on Somerset Street, Cox said it "presents a great opportunity to incorporate (housing) as a component of a larger project that may include some other commercial uses."



Promotion of Bayside Village student housing has escalated, with units for \$399 a month. "Bayside Village is one of the most recent acquisitions of ours that we're pretty excited about," said Federated Companies Managing Director