

## Fan Pier fantastic

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After 20 years of controversy, a building has been constructed on the parking lot that occupies the best undeveloped site on the Boston waterfront. This one-story marketing center looks nothing like the lavish 18-story office building or 20-story hotel/condominium building that are among those planned for the site. But it's an indication that Josepha Fallon, the developer, is ready to start construction on the project. If the final build-out looks as good as the developer's computer-rendered image shown above, it will be worth the wait.

The enhanced photo hangs inside the marketing center, which Fallon will open in a couple of weeks to seek tenants for his first office building, with a groundbreaking scheduled the fall. The office building will be located just to the downtown side of the park that is at the lower left of the image. Fallon will soon put up another marketing center to seek tenants for a residential/ hotel building in back of the Institute of Contemporary Art. He hopes to begin construction of the second building next year.

With office space in greater demand than residential property, this construction sequence makes sense. Fallon said in an interview last week that the office market is tightening and that tenants are looking for energy-efficient space. It's not hard to imagine the marketing pitch – a beautiful site and a thrifty, “sustainable” building.

While it will take a decade or so for all eight buildings to be completed, Fallon plans to immediately construct the park and the dock that will form a cove across from the ICA. Creation of the park will lessen the unpleasantness of construction. And the dock will facilitate the expansion of water taxi services.

Development of the Fan Pier means the erosion of the huge parking lot that has served commuters for decades. The MBTA Silver Line is one alternative to the car, but that bus service is getting crowded because of development elsewhere on the waterfront. The Massachusetts Port Authority is planning to build a water transit stop farther down the waterfront. People who live or work on the Fan Pier will need reliable water transit as well.

The computer-enhanced image is a wonderful seagull's-eye view of the development, which emphasizes the green space and the docking facilities along the water. But the image doesn't offer much information on the office building planned for the far interior next to the federal courthouse. The Boston Redevelopment Authority, which has final say over the design, needs to make sure that this area is not left in shadows for most of the day by looming high-rises.

“There’s no other site on the East Coast like this,” Fallon said, referring to the waterfront location, proximity to downtown, and the cultural amenities of the ICA next door. With luck and a tweak or tow, Fan Pier will become an enduring enhancement of the city.