

In search of can-do attitude

There's some rumbling about plans for development projects along the Rose Kennedy Greenway. This seems to happen whenever there are plans for significant commercial development in Boston.

But try to imagine Boston without its dramatic private developments: Quincy Market. Rowes Wharf. Copley Place. International Place. In so many instances, inspired commercial development has transformed our city. In the Financial District, North End, Waterfront and Back Bay, commercial development has played a powerful role in revitalizing Boston, increasing our prosperity and improving our quality of life.

The Chiofaro Co. has recently purchased the Harbor Garage, which we plan to develop in an exciting and area-enhancing way. The Greenway, which is adjacent to the future Harbor Garage project, offers an unprecedented opportunity for Boston. And our mixed-use complex on the Harbor Garage site will contribute appropriate human density and vitality to that emerging

area — adding aesthetic, business and lifestyle value to Boston while creating jobs and generating business and tax revenue. The same is true for other projects in progress along the Greenway and Wharf District.



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Yet, despite the contribution commercial developments like these make to Boston, completing a project here is too often a struggle against the negativism inherent in our collective character. Despite all our region's gifts — in education, health care, finance, science and business — we are too often beset by a can't-do attitude. Our engineers have created life-changing inventions. Our scientists have conquered diseases. Our companies have changed the faces of whole industries. Yet we still can't overcome rivalries, bury our feuds and pull together instead of pulling apart.

The result is a problem-solving paralysis that leaves our regional needs unsolved. We need a plan to boost Massachusetts' job-creation rate and reverse our out-migration numbers. We need to retrain local

blue-collar workers to better reflect and match our employment requirements. We need to solve our regional transportation problems, improving access to a plentiful and affordable housing stock. We need to streamline conflicting government regulations on business. We need to recruit and retain business and human assets, including the talented students who attend our great universities.

Silicon Valley courts our MIT graduates. The Sunbelt promises an easier lifestyle. Yet we remain complacent, and it's at our peril.

Our region was once America's engine of change. We can be again, if we address our challenges with a can-do spirit, a commitment to progress and mutual support.

All of us who love Boston should work to create a dynamic, highly functional civic infrastructure. And we should recognize the role of forward-looking commercial development as part of the solution, and one of the keys to a vibrant, prosperous Boston.

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