

SEAPORT DEVELOPERS WANT RETAIL SANS REGULATION

Feb 28, 2017 | Cameron Sperance, Bisnow Boston

Developers agree: The Seaport needs a better supply of smaller retailers — just don't regulate them on it.



High-profile tenants like Equinox, ShowPlace Theatres and Big Night Entertainment have signed to **One Seaport Square**. The trio will open later this year in the 1.1M SF development, a sign that significant retailers are attracted to the market.

But basic services like a dry cleaners and a grocery store are still absent, a weak spot in the Seaport's path to becoming an established neighborhood, according to panelists at *Bisnow's* State of the Seaport event last week.

"The challenge of the grocery store is enormous," Drew Co. president John Drew said. "We've tried and failed several times."



While food shopping in the neighborhood is limited to places like CVS and a gourmet market on Fan Pier, Drew thinks retailers will move in lockstep once more residential developments hit the market. He points to **Waterside Place** Phase 2 and One Seaport Square as the catalyst for smaller retail.

"We just need to bring more people down here," he said.

What developers do not need is more regulation, said Boston Global Investors CEO John Hynes. He cautioned against any potential city intervention to get mom-and-pop shops into the area before the market is ready.



"The government can get a little too aggressive, and it defeats the purpose of what you're trying to accomplish," Hynes said. "The market will take care of itself, and there are good intentions."

He pointed to his Seaport Square development, which segregated the street-level retail from the high-rise component above and got

Chestnut Hill's [WS Development](#) involved to handle the retail. WS Development is tasked with making the neighborhood distinct from anywhere else in the country while activating a human scale to the mammoth project.

“It’s all about synergy,” Hynes said. “You can’t have successful residential without good retail. You can’t have successful offices without good retail ... WS Development is a great retail developer — they’ll figure it out.”

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