

Upgraded appeal eyed for Faneuil Hall Marketplace

Not just for tourists



Photo by:
Nancy Lane

MARKET REMAKE: Some of the ideas being considered for Faneuil Hall Marketplace include outdoor reading rooms, more diversified music and entertainment programming, including at the Quincy Market rotunda.

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By: [Donna Goodison](#)

An outdoor reading room, games from chess to Jenga available for public play, and artists-in-residence are among plans being considered to attract more Bostonians to the tourist-centric Faneuil Hall Marketplace.

The outdoor programming by New York's Biederman Redevelopment Ventures is part of Ashkenazy Acquisition's larger revitalization plans for the center, which also include building alterations and improvements, and bringing in new retailers.

The marketplace's appeal to city dwellers is "spotty" now, with bars and restaurants being the primary draw, according to president Dan Biederman.

"It's still a very engaging space, clearly, for tourists," he said. "It is less of a draw for people who live within miles and work within miles. And, obviously, Ashkenazy would like to see ... the real city Bostonians come at all hours of the day and night."

Biederman is an urban parks expert credited with transforming New York's Bryant Park into a refuge for city dwellers, a model liked by Ashkenazy because it remains busy during non-tourist seasons, he said. "They said what we want is the impact of Bryant Park on locals transplanted to Boston," said Biederman, who expects some changes to be tested this spring or summer.

Bryant Park's outdoor reading room is stocked with books, magazines and newspapers, and it offers events such as poetry readings and book clubs.

"Games is another thing that is hugely popular," Biederman said, noting families visit Bryant Park to play, as do office workers.

Faneuil Hall Marketplace's music and entertainment also will be diversified and offered in more locations. Moveable outdoor chairs and informational features, from historic flags to a weather station, also are being mulled.

"(Biederman) has an impeccable record for really looking at outdoor space and turning it into something wonderful," said Randi Lathrop, director of business development at the Boston Redevelopment Authority, which also asked Biederman to look at programming for the Quincy Market building's rotunda.

Biederman, who's been involved in smaller projects for Boston Common and South Station, likens the marketplace to New York's Rockefeller Center. "A lot of things like this, whether good or bad, have declined or have evolved in a way where they lose their draw to locals," he said. "Very few (New Yorkers) criticize Rockefeller Center and say it's dull. They just don't go there. The tourists go there."