

## BUSINESS

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ANNE CUSACK Los Angeles Times

**RUNNERS PASS BY** the construction of Ocean Avenue South, a project in downtown Santa Monica that will add condos, apartments, shops and eateries. It's part of a city push to enliven the Civic Center area.

## PROPERTY REPORT

# Projects to wake up sleepy section of Santa Monica

A residential and retail complex and a park are near completion

By ROGER VINCENT

A sedate seaside stretch of downtown Santa Monica is about to get busy as a sprawling residential and retail complex and a 6-acre city park are nearing completion along increasingly tony Ocean Avenue.

Under development for several years, the two big projects within sight of the ocean are part of a push by officials to enliven the city's Civic Center district south of the Santa Monica Freeway around City Hall.

The area has been pretty much a dead zone for decades compared with the bustling commercial district a stone's throw to the north around Santa Monica Pier and the prosperous hotel, retail and residential neigh-

borhood to the south.

"The Civic Center has been amazingly vacant of people," Mayor Pam O'Connor said. Streams of visitors with business at City Hall, the courthouse or civic auditorium passed over wide public lawns for years but rarely lingered.

"Clearly, something was wrong with that space," O'Connor said, and in 2005 the city adopted a plan to spark up the cold spot.

Finally, after hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent, the Civic Center is about to get a jolt of activity.

Anchoring the makeover is a \$350-million condominium and apartment complex rising over stores and restaurants along Ocean Avenue that is being built by Related Cos. a

formidable New York developer that built the mixed-use Time Warner Center in Manhattan and the deluxe Century condominium tower in Century City.

Related's Santa Monica condominiums are also aimed at high-end buyers, and prestigious designers Clodagh of New York and Marmol Radziner of Los Angeles will outfit the interiors.

Clodagh will apply her modern Zen simplicity to the 93-unit complex Related calls the Seychelle. Marmol Radziner will create the interiors of the 65-unit Waverly with finishes in white marble, cappuccino travertine and bleached oak flooring.

The units, which have just gone up for sale, start at \$800,000. The

[See Complex, B4]



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**GEORGE SOLIS TAKES** a photo of Ocean Avenue South. The project being built by Related Cos. includes two condominium developments, the 93-unit Seychelle and the 65-unit Waverly. Prices start at \$800,000.

## Santa Monica projects finishing

[Complex, from B1]

3.7-acre development called Ocean Avenue South will include 160 apartments where rent will be subsidized for middle-income tenants chosen through a lottery and a screening process that will be conducted by Related in the fall.

The complex will include an east-west walkway open to the public with ground-floor businesses intended to appeal to residents, Civic Center workers and guests of nearby hotels.

Some of the condo buildings will be connected by bridges. The first condos are set to be completed early next year.

"We'll probably have two or three bistro-style restaurants, a coffee house and food purveyors," said Bill Witte, president of Related California. "It will be very user-friendly."

The condos and apartments will mark a return to housing on the site. The city sold it to think tank Rand Corp. in the early 1950s after using it for an emergency housing project serving local World War II veterans and their families. Rand built a sprawling campus with low-slung concrete office buildings and surface parking lots. Wags joked at the time that it looked like a junior high school or small hospital.

In 2000, Rand sold most of its campus back to the city for \$53 million and razed the old buildings. The corporation built a new headquarters on a sliver of land it retained that faces Main Street. Santa Monica, meanwhile, set out to select a developer to improve the prime Ocean Avenue real estate. Related was picked and allowed to buy the land for development.

Santa Monica officials have also been busy building a 6-acre park on Ocean Avenue on former Rand land

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PAM O'CONNOR,  
mayor of Santa Monica

north of Related's complex. The \$47-million Tongva Park — named after an early local Indian tribe — was designed by the creators of New York's popular new High Line park and is set to open in the fall.

The park will abut Chez Jay, a nautically kitschy 53-year-old Ocean Avenue bar and restaurant that will continue to operate and may even get a makeover from its owners that could include an outdoor patio catering to parkgoers.

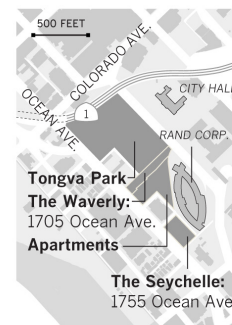
"Chez Jay is staying, and I think it should," Witte said. "It's part of the soul of Santa

Monica."

The city also plans to extend Olympic Boulevard — which now ends at Main Street — another block to Ocean Avenue. Work is under way on Ken Genser Square, a 1-acre park in front of City Hall across Main Street from Tongva Park.

"Several pieces are coming together," Mayor O'Connor said of the Civic Center. "Now it's turning into a real neighborhood and not just an institutional neighborhood."

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Sources: Related Cos.; County of Los Angeles

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