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Controversial 2100 Hamilton enters high-end condo fray, may link to rail park

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Bock Development Group's new \$60 million condominium project called 2100 Hamilton — located next to the Rodin Museum along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway — is poised to directly compete with the Laurel, another high-end condo project under development in Philadelphia.

Though two different neighborhoods and two different projects architecturally, they are going after the same buyer who is comfortable plunking down a minimum of \$2 million for a condo. The 48-story Laurel is already under development and 25 percent of its 60 condominiums have been sold. Construction is expected to begin on 2100 Hamilton at the end of this month. The competition could grow when Dranoff Properties Inc. begins a high-end condominium project on South Broad Street. All of that doesn't worry [Tom Bock](#) of Bock Development.

"I don't think there are too many condominiums," Bock said. "There are condominiums out there but nothing comes close to what we are designing."

The project at 2100 Hamilton will have 29 condos in a 10-story building. While the Laurel overlooks Rittenhouse Square — one of Philadelphia's most sought after addresses — 2100 Hamilton has the parkway as its doorstep and Bock has retained Sikora Wells Appel to design a \$2.5 million, half-acre private garden that will be incorporated into the project.

"We want as much garden as we can have," Bock said. "It's a large commitment here. Every time people look out their window I want them to say 'Wow!'"

While the private garden will be accessible to residents of 2100 Hamilton, Bock said his team has been working with Friends of the Rail Park on a plan to preserve a parcel that would provide access to a segment of the rail park that hasn't been developed. "That makes sense," he said. "We are trying to tie into everybody. We want to be a good neighbor."

[Michael Garden](#), who sits on the rail park's board, said negotiations have been underway with Bock on an arrangement that involves the organization raising funds to develop and maintain the area that would provide a bigger area to access the rail park. The private garden would cap most of that area, leaving a small sliver for access. Garden said he asked Bock to "find a happy medium" and pull back some of the cap



COURTESY BOCK DEVELOPMENT GROUP/SIKORA WELLS APPEL
2100 Hamilton

if the group could raise an estimated \$3 million to \$5 million to execute on its plan. It would need to raise the money within roughly two years.

"Tom has expressed a willingness to have that conversation," Garden said. "This is an extraordinary opportunity to create a model for public-private partnership and I hope Friends of the Rail Park is able to demonstrate the capacity to take advantage of this opportunity and Tom and his team will see the benefits of keeping more of the area open."

Garden, who is also involved in the Philadelphia residential real estate scene, believes future residents of 2100 Hamilton will appreciate direct access and views of the rail park. "The amount of time people will spend time in a privatized garden that is open to three sides is pretty minimal," he said.

That part of the rail park is critical because it provides access to a tunnel and leads to what is referred to the Callowhill Cut, which is part of the trail that goes from 2100 Hamilton to Broad Street, said Kevin Dow, executive director.

Developers have taken a stab at building the site at 2100 Hamilton with nothing coming to fruition. It is one of the last, large developable sites on the parkway but complicated because of its location and nearby uses. At one point, a bank took back the property from a prior owner and that's when Bock bought it.

Bock's project wasn't without controversy and initially opposed by the organization overseeing the rail park, the Rodin and the owner of nearby apartment building. Bock expects to complete the building over the next two years.

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