

The Metro Section

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Developer Will Compensate Merchants Evicted From Bronx Market

By WINNIE HU

The redevelopment of the Bronx Terminal Market into a shopping mall cleared its last major hurdle yesterday after the developer agreed to compensate displaced merchants and create a \$3 million job training program for local residents.

The City Council approved the \$400 million project after weeks of intense negotiations between the developer, the Related Companies, city officials and community groups. It will transform a stretch of crumbling buildings in the shadow of Yankee Stadium into a shiny complex of brand-name stores, restaurants and a wa-

terfront park.

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg had supported the project, which is expected to create jobs and generate revenue for struggling neighborhoods. In addition, the borough president, Adolfo Carrión Jr., and Bronx members of the City Council pushed the project forward.

But the redevelopment had been opposed by about two dozen wholesale produce and ethnic foods merchants being displaced from the city-owned terminal; some of these merchants have since relocated. Community groups have also expressed concerns that the shopping mall

would increase noise and traffic.

Related agreed yesterday to help pay for the relocation of the remaining merchants. The merchants will receive up to \$9.6 million if they relocate within an economic empowerment zone in the South Bronx, and substantially less if they move elsewhere. The merchants have until June 1 to vacate the terminal.

"The deal is poor compensation for merchants who have worked in the Bronx for decades," said Richard Lipsky, a lobbyist for the merchants. "They are being summarily evicted with no relocation opportunity for the market to survive intact."

In addition, Related will provide additional benefits to the area, like a job training program for local residents and preference to local contractors for construction jobs. When leasing space to a warehouse discount store, it will require the store to accept food stamps, and will even subsidize half the store's membership fee for up to 2,000 families for five years.

In an unusual move, Related specifically agreed not to lease space to Wal-Mart, in deference to concerns among council members and community groups about the company's labor practices.