

# The Palm Beach Post

## Real estate investor Greene buys two more West Palm Beach properties

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BY ALEXANDRA CLOUGH - PALM BEACH POST STAFF WRITER

Real estate investor Jeff Greene on this week bought the last two major parcels of land for sale along North Flagler Drive in West Palm Beach, giving the real estate mogul significant influence in an area set for a major rezoning.

Greene paid \$5.5 million for two parcels in the Currie Park corridor previously owned by affiliates of Lehman Bros. The properties are 2617 North Flagler Drive, once slated for the Prism condo, and Poinsettia, at 2609 Poinsettia Ave. Both wound up in the hands of Lehman Bros. affiliates after the real estate market went bust. (The properties now are occupied by vacant medical offices and a bank branch.)



Jeff Greene

Greene, a Palm Beach resident and billionaire real estate investor, already has stakes in two sites in the region: He owns property formerly slated to be the Barcelona Square condominium and is under contract to buy the former WCI property along Flagler Drive.

Greene said the Poinsettia property is “directly adjacent” to his Barcelona Square property “so it gives us the full block. It made sense to get that.” He’s not sure what will go on the property but it could be a supermarket or a combination grocery store, plus a residential property.

The deal was brokered by Brad Capas of CapasGroup Realty Advisors and Mark Pateman of Cushman and Wakefield.


Capas said the properties along North

Flagler Drive, once previously owned by lenders who took back parcels, “are now owned by private developers, positioning the (area) for an exciting transformation.”

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**North Flagler properties**

Jeff Greene on Tuesday paid \$5.5 million for two North Flagler Drive properties previously owned by affiliates of Lehman Bros., adding to Greene's already sizable holdings in West Palm Beach.



**1. 2.76-acre site** once slated for Prism condo, just purchased by Jeff Greene

**2. 1.36-acre site** once slated for Polinsettia condo, just purchased by Jeff Greene

**3. 2.71-acre site** once slated for Gramercy Court condo, now owned by BBX

**4. 2.5-acre former Barcelona Square condo site**, now owned by investor Jeff Greene, who plans to build multi-family housing on the property

**5. 4.49-acre site**, formerly the Palladio Terrace condo, now under contract to an investor group from Miami

**6. 1.5-acre property** owned by Neil Kozokoff, who plans to build multi-family housing

**7. 1.5-acre property** owned by Neil Kozokoff, who plans to build multi-family housing

**8. 1.55-acre property** under contract to Jeff Greene, who said he is not yet certain what he will do with land.

Source: Cushman & Wakefield

CHRIS SMITH

North Flagler properties

Efforts by these new owners to build have been hampered by zoning rules limiting building heights to four stories, Capas said. But last month, the city's Community Redevelopment Agency recommended that staff rewrite zoning rules to allow buildings to be as tall as 15 stories for residential and mixed-use construction.

The CRA sees condos and shops as a way to create a village and boost the image of nearby Currie Park. The process, including state approval, could take several months to complete.

In March 2013, Greene was iffy about acquiring more land in the north end of West Palm Beach, even as more sites went on the market. "I have enough property in the neighborhood," he said at the time. But since then, Greene said the city's real estate market has kicked into gear, with new condos, apartments and hotels planned. "It's time to buy the

last remaining pieces of land in these top areas by the water," Greene said.

The pending zoning changes to the Currie Park district were an added but unexpected boost, said Greene, who said he committed to buy the Lehman

Bros. properties before he knew about the changes.

Greene isn't sure of a timetable for construction, but he acknowledged it is possible property owners could do joint ventures so the area doesn't become a "mishmash." For instance, he recently talked with BBX, the Fort Lauderdale company that owns the Gramercy Court property, which is located east of his holdings.

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Capas said it makes sense for the district's stakeholders "to work together, whether formally or informally. Some level of collaboration will be to everyone's benefit."

There's no doubt Greene is bullish on Palm Beach County. Since 2009, Greene has spent \$237 million investing in the county, not including these recent purchases, property records show. Greene is particularly aggressive in West Palm Beach, where he owns land, commercial buildings, condo units and industrial warehouses. But he's not just an investor; he's also a developer. He's constructing apartments near the new Palm Beach Outlets mall and he plans a residential complex and an office complex downtown.