

'Title Town' is going green for this parade

By **Donovan Slack**
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It is almost rote now: the duck boats, the huge crowds, the security plans. Championship parades have become so routine in Boston that Mayor Thomas M. Menino came up with another nickname for the city yesterday: "Title Town."

Today, Boston will celebrate the first NBA championship for the Celtics in 22 years, and officials expect the city to be awash in green as hundreds of thousands of fans line the victory parade route from the TD Banknorth Garden to Copley Square in the Back Bay.

Boston Celtics players, owners, and staff will board more than a dozen duck boats from Boston Duck Tours and set off at 11 a.m. on what officials predict will be a two-hour ride. Two flatbed trucks will carry the Celtics dancers, former Celtic greats, and championship trophies from past years.

This year's championship, clinched in a resounding 131-92 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Tuesday, is the team's 17th. It is also the region's fifth

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major sports championship in five years, and yesterday the mayor couldn't help bragging a little. "We are a city of champions," Menino said with a broad grin. "We are Title Town."

Previous parades have drawn as many as 1 million people to downtown Boston, officials say. This year's procession will feature a new array of heroes, from Kevin Garnett and Ray Allen to Rajon Rondo and Championship MVP Paul Pierce. There will be no stops along the route and no ceremonial

speeches. Rather, players will have microphones they can use to address crowds. Two Jumbotrons in Copley Square and the Boston Common will show the parade from beginning to end.

Roads along the route will be closed at 9:30 a.m. today, and officials yesterday urged fans to take public transportation to the parade, saying the route beginning at the Garden could pose more problems than previous rolling rallies that have started near Fenway Park. Streets around the Garden are major commuter thoroughfares, and Transportation Commissioner Thomas Tinlin said he expects more traffic congestion because of it.

"The MBTA is your best friend," Tinlin said.

Subway lines will be running near rush-hour service levels throughout the day. There will be some rerouting of buses that would otherwise clash with the parade route.

MBTA General Manager Daniel A. Grabauskas, who said he is expecting many riders who don't regularly use the T, pledged to keep employees on overtime shifts to help direct riders, and keep lines moving.

He is encouraging riders who are coming into town for the day to buy \$5 preloaded Charlie Cards so they will not have to wait in line at the end of the celebration for a return ticket. Extra employees will be selling the cards at Quincy Adams, Braintree, Alewife, Riverside, and North and

South stations.

"I think we're all looking forward to a crowd, but I think it's going to be a happy and celebratory crowd," Grabauskas said. He added that T employees now have lots of experience with sports celebrations, given the recent success of the Red Sox and Patriots.

"The good news is that we have been extremely fortunate in Boston," he said. "Our standard operating procedure is becoming pretty standard."

Boston Police Commissioner Edward Davis asked that celebrants revel responsibly, after 23 people were arrested during post-game celebrations Tuesday. He said police would be on the lookout for public drinking and disorderly conduct.

Davis was flanked by Menino and Celtics President Rich Gotham at a City Hall press conference yesterday announcing parade plans. Behind them hung a large banner, "We beat LA!"

Menino said the victory was a "spectacular" addition to the city's sports championships, and he praised the Celtics' teamwork in getting it done.

A bleary-eyed Gotham said that neither he nor his staff members had slept Tuesday night. "It was surreal," he said. "The feeling was just euphoric."

Noah Bierman of the Globe staff contributed to this report. Donovan Slack can be reached at dslack@globe.com.

