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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

Work begins on \$200M Charlesview relocation, expansion in Allston

Posted by Matt Rocheleau May 16, 2011 04:49 PM

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(Matt Rocheleau for Boston.com)

From left to right: senior project manager for The Community Builders Jim Perrine and Charlesview residents Kathleen Leahy, Irene McCall and Phyllis Harrington survey a miniature model of the planned development at Monday's groundbreaking.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Officials broke ground Monday on the first phase of a \$207-million, mixed-use, 340-housing unit project that will relocate and expand the outdated Charlesview residential complex to the former Brighton Mills shopping center several blocks away.

The 40-year-old, 213-unit [Charlesview development](#) will vacate its current 4.5 acre-site near Harvard Stadium after a new complex is built on a swath around twice that size along Western Avenue that Harvard University swapped with the complex's owners, Charlesview Inc., an interdenominational nonprofit formed by three neighborhood congregations in 1969.

The new site is officially dubbed Charlesview Residences at Brighton Mills, but

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speakers at Monday's ceremonial groundbreaking repeatedly referred to the development "Charlesview 2."

The project's plans stalled at times and evolved over the past eight years as residents raised and debated concerns over its scope and design. A slew of community meetings created tension particularly between the neighborhood and the city's redevelopment authority and also between residents and Harvard.

"It has a million reasons for never happening and yet we're here now to celebrate it," Patrick Clancy, president and CEO of the Community Builders, said of the project.

Elected leaders, officials from the state, city, and Harvard, and development partners joined local residents and religious leaders at the groundbreaking in the former shopping center's parking lot Monday morning.

"This is a wonderful development for the residents of Charlesview, the Allston-Brighton neighborhood, and the city of Boston," said Mayor Thomas M. Menino. "It will provide beautiful new homes for families, revitalize and enliven a section of our city, and add much-needed jobs."

The public-private project calls for 240 mixed-income rental units and 100 homeownership units set at both affordable and market rates. Officials said it will be "one of the largest new multifamily developments in the region."

The 22-building site will also include a new community center, 14,000 square feet of retail space, a half-acre park and a 243-space underground parking garage.

Officials hope the first occupants, most of which will come from the original complex, will begin moving in by mid-2014.

The bulk of the project will be built during its first, \$157-million, 28-month phase. The second, \$50-million phase's timing is market dependent and will add 80 condominiums on Telford Street, officials said.

The project will be developed by The Community Builders and financed through private debt, tax credits, and other funding, including a "substantial cash payment" from Harvard to cover the relocation costs and a \$106-million loan from the state's affordable housing bank, MassHousing.

MassHousing said the investment was its second-largest in its 45-year history.

The development is expected to create over 600 union construction jobs and 30 permanent jobs.

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(Matt Rocheleau for Boston.com)

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