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ROXBURY

New \$17.5M police station opens in busy Roxbury police district

Posted by Matt Rocheleau August 1, 2011 04:17 PM

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(Matt Rocheleau for Boston.com)

The new Boston Police B-2 district station in Roxbury.

This story was updated Wednesday, Aug. 3 at 4:30 p.m. to include the Boston Police Department's response to questions asked earlier in the week, including about how B-2's response times have improved since lagging five and six years ago:

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

One of Boston's busiest police districts has opened a long-awaited, energy-efficient station on a plot of land adjacent to the old, run-down facility it is replacing.

The new B-2 district headquarters, a \$17.5-million total investment, will provide more space for the 200 or so who work at the station serving Roxbury, which in recent years has been the city's busiest police district.

Describing [the old B-2 station](#) as "more fortress than it was friendly," Mayor

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Thomas M. Menino at Saturday's ribbon-cutting said, "This station was a collaborative effort to ensure that the Roxbury community was equipped with the finest police facilities so that the men and women of area B-2 can better serve and protect our residents."

And, even before moving into their new facilities, B-2 has improved aspects of its service in recent years.

The [Globe reported previously](#) that in 2005 and 2006 the median police response time in the district was between two and three minutes longer than the citywide median, including the highest-priority calls which, at 9 minutes, took around one minute longer than the city median.

However, police spokeswoman Elaine Driscoll said Wednesday that B-2's response time for its most serious classification of 911 calls is now 7 minutes, which is also the current citywide average response time for such calls.

"B-2 has been located in Dudley Square for about 40 years," Driscoll wrote in an e-mail Wednesday responding to questions asked earlier this week.

"Naturally it is a central location in Roxbury. "It is estimated that approximately 30,000 - 40,000 people pass through Dudley Sq[ua]re] a day."

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Several years ago when B-2 response times lagged, police officials had told the Globe that Roxbury and Mission Hill typically saw slower response times because of the district's high call volume, hard-to- navigate streets, and B-2's heavy use of beat-walking, which has meant officers often patrol on foot instead of in cruisers. Critics then blamed budget cuts that they felt impacted certain district police units unevenly.

"This isn't just a place for police work," Menino said Saturday, referring to the large, "invit[ing]" exterior windows used around parts of the station, which features a community room inside. "It's a building that meets the needs of the community just as much as it does the officers that work here."

The 34,500 square-foot, three-story building in Dudley Square – an area slated for major development in the next few years – provides 40 percent more space and 90 off-street parking spots for the district's police vehicles which will help free up some of row of coveted curbside spaces on Dudley Street that cruisers had typically occupied.

In the months before the \$16.4-million new station's two-year construction period, the site received a \$1.1-million "exhaustive" demolition and clean up, or environmental remediation. The parcel has been used for a 50,000 square-foot electroplating plant for four decades until the mid 1990s when the state filed a court order to shut down operations there.

Hazardous waste was left behind by the industrial company and the 2.5-acre property, once considered one of the most contaminated pieces of land in the state, was acquired by the city through tax foreclosure about a year after the plant shut down.

The steel-framed, brick exterior facility is the city's first public safety building to earn the "silver" Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification. In May, the construction effort received an environmental award.

The new station will, "complement the city's attempt to promote energy efficiency, green technology, and alternative energy solutions," Menino said.

Along with energy efficiency and reduced water use, some of the building's "green" features include: day-lighting; expanded landscaped areas; a reflective roof, which is also the city's first vegetated roof; and comprehensive construction waste recycling. The station plans to promote alternative transportation methods, green education and maintenance initiatives, the city added.

Project costs include some upgrades made to adjacent sites, streets and sidewalks, city officials said.

About 40 percent of the work on the new station was done by city residents and 44 percent by minority workers, the city said.

The project team included J&J Contractors, Inc. as the general contractor, and Leers Weinzapfel Associates as the design firm.

The city announced major public-private developments for Dudley Square in the spring. The plans center on constructing a new office complex where the city's school department will be headquartered at the site of the old Ferdinand Furniture building. Officials expect to break ground on the multi-year, \$115-million effort next year.

The former B-2 station next door has been vacated by police, officials said. The site will be held for possible use by contractors working at the former Ferdinand property, according to the city's capital construction director

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“The transformation of this neighborhood doesn’t end when we cut the ribbon here today,” said Menino. “My administration is committed to building on the momentum and continuing to invest in the area’s future. Our goal is simple: bring more people and economic life to historic Dudley Square ... As we celebrate today, we can look forward to Dudley’s brighter future.”

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(Matt Rocheleau for Boston.com)

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