



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Metro

Harvard's 10-year Allston project wins approval from BRA

By **Matt Rocheleau** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT OCTOBER 19, 2013

 ARTICLE

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Harvard's plan to build a new basketball arena, a 200-room hotel, and a number of new academic buildings in Allston has cleared a major hurdle, delighting university officials while reviving concerns among neighbors who have long criticized the expansion.

The Boston Redevelopment Authority board voted unanimously Thursday to approve Harvard's sweeping master plan in Allston. The 10-year blueprint calls for 1.4 million square feet of new development, and another 500,000 square feet of renovations across nine projects.

The projects, each requiring individual approval before construction can start, include a new 60,000-square-foot, 3,000-seat basketball arena and renovating and expanding the university's historic football

stadium, according to the BRA.

Harvard also plans to build a 200-room hotel and conference center; a 300,000-square-foot building, with retail and institutional uses, on the site of the Charlesview Apartments; and three new business school buildings that will feature a mix of academic, office, and common spaces, the authority said.

The other two projects call for renovating two student housing buildings on the business school campus.

The plan calls for two of the new business school buildings, one of the student housing renovations, and the football stadium project to be completed by 2018. The second student housing renovation and the third new business school building would be finished by 2020. The remaining three projects would be completed by 2024.

Harvard said it will finance the projects with, among other sources, money collected through a \$6.5 billion fund-raising effort it launched last month.

“The program represents important progress toward the long-term vision of a more integrated, expansive, and lively presence for Harvard on both sides of the Charles,” the university’s president, Drew Faust, wrote in a letter to Allston residents Friday.

Concerns remain about Harvard’s plans for Allston.

Neighborhood resident Harry Mattison said Harvard has not fully addressed residents’ worries about how the master plan will affect traffic, parking, retail, and public spaces. He said he hopes Boston’s new mayor will demand more from Harvard as the university moves forward on its expansion plans.

“Harvard handles development with an exclusive focus on what Harvard thinks is best for Harvard,” said Mattison, a member of the Harvard Allston Task Force, a group of residents appointed by the city to oversee Harvard’s expansion in the neighborhood. “There’s never any public discussion on what does the neighborhood need.

“Maybe with some different leadership we’ll get some different results,” he added. “We’ll see.”

The master plan underwent a city and community review process since it was unveiled last year. Its



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The university began pushing for an expansion in Allston during the late 1980s.

approval Thursday represented a key step forward in an oft-contentious process that has unfolded over more than 20 years.

Harvard began pushing for an expansion in Allston during the late 1980s. It now owns 359 acres in Allston, nearly double the size of its Cambridge campus. Large swaths of Harvard's property in the Boston neighborhood remain unused.

In late 2003, Harvard envisioned a massive, 250-acre campus in Allston that included academic space, student housing, entertainment facilities, and the transformation of Barry's Corner to replicate Harvard Square.

But in late 2009, Harvard stopped construction on the centerpiece of that plan, a new science center, as the value of the university's endowment fell along with the stock market during the recession.

The university halted major development projects for more than a year before opening an innovation lab and constructing a soon-to-open building for academic and housing use.

The university plans to resume work on a scaled-down version of the science center next year and to complete that project, which is not considered part of the master plan approved this week, by 2017. Harvard plans to move much of its engineering school there from its Cambridge campus.

Another project not included in the newly approved master plan — to have a private developer build a 350,000-square-foot retail and residential development on Harvard-owned land — that has received city approval is set to break ground soon.

Earlier this month, the university proposed a package of benefits for the surrounding community worth \$38 million, which impressed some residents, while others felt the proposal was too vague.

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