

New, affordable housing units underway in Four Corners

By **Charlie Dorf, Reporter Correspondent**

Jul. 9, 2015

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Mayor Martin Walsh joined officials from The Vietnamese-American Initiative for Development (VietAid) and Nauset Construction at a groundbreaking ceremony on Monday in Four Corners. The project will create 35 affordable housing units as well as commercial space on Washington Street. Photo courtesy Mayor's Office

Mayor Martin Walsh joined several local officials, residents, and business people in a groundbreaking ceremony on Monday in Four Corners, where two new affordable housing buildings will be constructed on Washington Street. The \$15 million project, developed by The Vietnamese-American Initiative for Development (VietAid) and Nauset Construction will create 35 affordable housing units as well as commercial space. Designed by Utile Inc., the development is located on 9 city lots and 1 private lot and includes one three-story, 16,000 square foot structure located at 331-337 Washington Street and one four-story, 31,775-square foot building at 322-336 Washington Street.

The project is part of VietAid's transit-oriented development strategy to provide affordable housing along transit corridors. The organization received funding from a variety of public and private sources, such as the City of Boston Department of Neighborhood Development, the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, RBC Capital Markets,

Eastern Bank, and several others.

Speaking about rising rent prices in Boston, Van Paul Lee, Interim Executive Director of VietAid, stressed the importance of affordable housing developments such as this.

“At a time when there are skyrocketing rental prices and a widening gap between those who can afford the rents and those who cannot, this project reminds us that together we can indeed increase housing access and help stabilize our neighborhoods,” he said.

Mayor Walsh, who worked extensively with Dorchester-based VietAid during his tenure as a state representative, praised the partnerships between city, state, and the community that allowed the project to become a reality.

“The life of the Four Corners neighborhood really comes out of the residents and the business owners in the community who have dedicated so much to making sure that this is a thriving neighborhood, so I want to thank all of you. This project that we are about to break ground on is an example of how we can work together with partnerships, particularly with the city, the state, and the community, and that’s really what’s important,” Walsh said.

The Mayor also stressed the importance of preventing residents from being price out of their neighborhoods through affordable housing projects.

“We see our neighborhoods changing, as people are being priced out of our neighborhoods, and when that happens we have to create more housing stock to be able to keep more residents in neighborhoods because it’s the residents that are active, the residents that make this project possible, and the residents that care about the neighborhood, to fight to make sure that the streets are clean, to make sure we are doing our job in the city, to make sure the state is doing their job, and to make sure that our neighborhoods are safe,” said Walsh.

Both buildings will feature first floor commercial and community space totaling approximately 3,600 square feet. The buildings will be comprised of structural steel frame construction on the first floor with wood-framed construction above. One building will house 23 residential units and the other 12 units.

The unit mix will include 4 one-bedroom residences, 21 two-bedroom residences, and 10 three- bedroom residences, with nine of the units reserved for formerly homeless families. The project’s scope of work also includes extensive site work including an onsite playground and 25 parking spaces.

“This project aligns well with our extensive multi-unit residential and mixed-use experience with sustainable, tight urban infill developments.” said Nauset Construction President Anthony Papantonis. “And we are proud to be part of the team that is helping the City of Boston achieve its affordable housing initiatives.”

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