

## 15-YEAR, 3-CITY NORTHPOINT PROJECT KICKS OFF TODAY

*The Boston Globe*, by Chris Reidy

**March 21, 2005** -- A groundbreaking is set today for the first phase of NorthPoint, a proposed \$2 billion-plus planned community consisting of housing, office buildings, and retail and lab space that will start in East Cambridge and ultimately stretch into Charlestown and Somerville.

The 45-acre site is currently a no man's land of railroad yards and industrial space between Monsignor O'Brien Highway and Interstate 93. A goal of the first phase is to give NorthPoint a sense of identity and some critical mass by luring residential buyers, developers said.

With a price tag of over \$100 million, the first phase calls for two buildings with 329 condos and a 5.5-acre park on about nine acres. The current price range for most of the condos is \$350,000 to \$600,000. One building should be ready for occupancy by late 2006, the other by early to mid-2007. Some housing in later phases is likely to be priced higher.

"The park, even more than the buildings, will transform the space from a rail yard to a place to live; this will allow people to see what NorthPoint will be," said Daniel O'Connell, a principal of Spaulding & Slye Colliers, a real estate services firm that is developing NorthPoint with Guilford Transportation Industries Inc. while working with the cities of Cambridge, Boston, and Somerville.

The park and two condo buildings contemplated in the first phase would be near an existing neighborhood in the Lechmere section of Cambridge, not far from the Museum of Science and CambridgeSide Galleria, said Ken Greenberg, the project's master planner and principal of Greenberg Consultants of Toronto.

"The real challenge is to take this hidden site and tie it to existing neighborhoods," he said.



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Later development would penetrate deeper into the rail yards as NorthPoint gradually expands toward the MBTA's Orange Line and the Community College stop in Charlestown. The project's second phase is likely to be the development of two office and lab buildings near Gilmore Bridge, said Lisa S. Serafin, a Spaulding & Slye Colliers vice president.

The entire project, which would include a new, relocated Lechmere MBTA station on the Green Line, is expected to develop roughly 20 buildings and take 15 years to complete.

By clustering housing and office buildings near T stops, NorthPoint is "the epitome of smart growth development," Serafin said.

In 2020, NorthPoint's expected completion date, developers envision a neighborhood of 2,700 housing units, 2.2 million square feet of commercial development, and 150,000 square feet of retail space.

Plans call for a "necklace of parks," about 10 acres in all, that will help create "a spine of open space" to complement parks along the Charles River, according to a Spaulding & Slye Colliers description of the project. There are also plans for a bike path through NorthPoint that could connect to a proposed extension of the Minuteman Bikeway that's contemplated by the City of Somerville.