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Forest City Ent. gets \$49m financing from MassDev. for 305-unit Haverhill Mills

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MassDevelopment and the Massachusetts Permit Regulatory Office arrange a \$49 million financing package for Cleveland-based Forest City Enterprises, developer of Haverhill Mills, a 305-unit mixed-income apartment complex. Forest City is using tax-exempt bond proceeds to rehabilitate four, early 20th century mill buildings - once used for shoe manufacturing - located on a four-acre parcel adjacent to Duncan, Essex, Locke and Winter Sts. Of the housing units, 61 will be designated affordable and offered to individuals earning up to 50% of the area median income. Forest City officials broke ground for the mixed-use project last summer.

"The Patrick administration is delighted to see the city of Haverhill using the incentives of Chapter 40R to bring new life to these old mill buildings and surrounding neighborhoods," said undersecretary of housing Tina Brooks. "Actions like these are helping us to keep communities strong, vibrant and economically viable for residents all across the commonwealth."

"This project exemplifies what we can get done when government, quasi-public agencies and business work together," said undersecretary of business development Greg Bialecki. "We are excited to see growth and smart development throughout Massachusetts."

Haverhill Mills is the second project in Haverhill to utilize the city's smart growth overlay zone created under Massachusetts' new 40R legislation. The Department of Housing and Community Development oversees the municipal-level implementation of 40R and on February 8, 2007 approved the adoption of the Downtown Smart Growth Overlay District. The Downtown Smart Growth District contains three developable sub districts allowing for the construction of 526 residential units. For all developments within the district not less than 20% of the housing units constructed must be affordable. The new zoning regulations approved by the Department of Housing and Community Development also provide for an expedited zoning approval process.

"MassDevelopment's tax-exempt bond program is an important economic development incentive that can help attract companies willing to invest in the revitalization of the Commonwealth's cities and towns," said Robert Culver, MassDevelopment president/CEO.

Design for Haverhill Mills was provided by DiMella Shaffer Associates.

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