



nerej

Union Square Station Associates receive approval for 175,000 s/f lab building - aiming for LEED Gold certification

August 02, 2019 - Green Buildings

Somerville, MA According to Union Square Station Associates (US2) the city Planning Board voted to approve a 175,000 s/f lab building, a key part of the first phase of the revitalization of Union Sq. The new lab building will provide much-needed lab and office space for innovative companies already located in Union Sq., as well as new businesses looking to join this emerging employment center and innovative hub located in the middle of the triangle of brain power that spans Somerville and Cambridge.

“We are thankful to the Planning Board for their thoughtful consideration and approval. This will help to kickstart the revitalization of Union Square and unlock the neighborhood’s potential as an employment center and regional economic driver,” said Greg Karczewski, president of US2. “Our vision for this project is to make Union Square into a destination for employers, create more green space, achieve housing goals with a range of affordability, and preserve the neighborhood character that everybody loves today.”

The approval follows an announcement that Skanska USA plans to enter a joint venture partnership with US2 for development of the lab building. The building, designed by SGA, will aim for LEED Gold certification, feature a “blue roof” as a water retention strategy, achieve a reduction in greenhouse gases through above-code performance. The building will also feature 8,900 s/f of arts and creative space, rotating exterior art walls, and ground floor retail.

Recently the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Act (MEPA) office issued a key approval for the project, which followed an extensive review of the project’s Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) and examined all major potential environmental impacts associated with the revitalization program. The MEPA certificate affirmed that project complies with Massachusetts’ environmental laws and is ready to move forward with related permit approval processes.

At full build-out, the 15.7-acre USQ project will include 2.4 million s/f of new biotech, lab, office, residential and retail space that will support generating 5,300 new permanent jobs, along with more than 4,000 new construction jobs and will generate \$11.3 million annually in new property tax revenue.

Construction on the \$160 million lab building is expected to begin this year with occupancy slated for

2021. The project will be comprised of 60% commercial and 40% residential development and includes over 3.5 acres of open space.

The city has received significant support from local, state and federal partners in making the Union Square redevelopment possible including more than \$16 million in state MassWorks Infrastructure grants and approximately \$1 billion in federal funding for the Green Line Extension. The Green Line Extension will connect Union Sq. in less than ten minutes to the vibrant, Greater Boston economy and create a new regional destination, and make Union Sq. into an even better place for people to live and enjoy.

The city selected US2 as the developer for the Union Square Revitalization Project in 2014. In December, the Planning Board approved US2's coordinated development plan via a zoning special permit and the Board of Aldermen approved District Improvement Financing for \$60 million in infrastructure improvements to the square.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540