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Passive House Network honors MP Boston's Winthrop Center with the Trailblazer Award

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Boston, MA On June 16, The Passive House Network honored developer MP Boston with the 2022 Passive House Trailblazer award for the development of Winthrop Center. The forthcoming 691-foot, mixed-use tower contains 812,000 s/f of office space built to rigorous Passive House standards, setting a new global standard for building performance and energy conservation. Upon completion in 2023, Winthrop Center will be the largest Passive House office building in the world, modeling the most energy efficient solution for large scale buildings and leading the industry into the future.

“Passive House is the route to zero operational carbon, which is why Winthrop Center is a globally important building. MP Boston is paving the path for developers searching for more energy-efficient solutions and for cities and states trying to meet carbon reduction goals,” said Passive House Network board chair, Craig Stevenson.

A typical class A building in the city's existing stock uses 150% more energy, and existing LEED

Platinum buildings use 60% more energy than Winthrop Center's office space is expected to use once completed. Winthrop Center's energy-efficient design advances Boston's climate change mitigation efforts. If the reduction in energy use and greenhouse gas emissions resulting from Winthrop Center's Passive House design were applied to existing building stock in the city, the city would save 3 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions. This savings would drive city emissions from 6.4 million tons of CO₂ to 3.4 million tons of CO₂, a full 10-12 years ahead of the city's goal.

"With class A office space expected to expand by billions of square feet between now and 2050, application of Passive House cannot come soon enough or spread fast enough in this ongoing fight against climate change," said Stevenson. "MP Boston is a true trailblazer for employing Passive House methods at a size and scale that has never been done before."

Uniquely integrating health and wellness, sustainability and technology, Winthrop Center will deliver 812,000 s/f of global class A office space and 510,000 s/f of residential space, including 321 residences to the center of the city. Designed by Handel Architects, in collaboration with SOCOTEC and Steven Winters & Associates, Winthrop Center's office space is a pilot project for Passive House development, representing the first time a developer has applied the Passive House approach to a building of this size, scale, and typology.

Winthrop Center is the most energy efficient large-scale building ever built in a cold climate, where the Passive House application is critically important because Passive House dramatically lowers heating demand. The building incorporates a well-insulated building façade, air-tight exterior envelope, and advanced energy recovery ventilation (ERV) system for its office space. In addition to eliminating heating and cooling inefficiencies, this integrated system allows the building to deliver better managed and higher quality air, positively impacting employee health, productivity, and sense of well-being.

"We are honored to receive the Passive House Trailblazer Award and are proud that Winthrop Center is at the forefront of this exciting movement of energy efficient buildings providing climate change solutions," said MP Boston's Director of Sustainable Development, Brad Mahoney. "Passive House plays a market moving role and the overall success of Winthrop Center will help drive further innovation and change in the industry. We're already seeing tenants enthusiastically embrace this building standard, eager to walk hand in hand with us in this shared vision for a more sustainable future."

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